

THE EPOCH TIMES

ARTS & CULTURE

PUBLIC DOMAIN



▲ "Heraldic Panel With the Arms of the Eberler Family," circa 1490, by unknown maker. Pot-metal, flashed, and colorless glass, vitreous paint, and silver stain, lead came; 17 5/16 inches by 12 3/16 inches. J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles.

FINE ART

Meaning at a Glance

Simple, colorful stained glass works and the stories they tell

By Michelle Plastrik

Since ancient Rome, stained glass windows have been valued for their beauty. With the creation of sacred windows in houses of worship, this art form reached its peak during the Middle Ages, inspiring the faithful with luminous narratives. As the centuries pro-

gressed, stained glass became a fixture in private homes, was later revived, and eventually entered museum collections worldwide.

To make stained glass, sand and wood ash are first mixed and melted into a liquid that, when cooled, becomes glass. To create glass with color, specific powdered metals are added to the mixture while it is in a molten state. For the cre-

ation of a stained glass panel, pieces of colored glass are placed over a design drawn on a board. Further assembly requires that the edges of the glass be fitted into cames (strips of lead) and then soldered together to fortify the window.

Memoirs of St. Germain

The medieval stained glass panel "Vision of Saint Germain of Paris" comes from the Abbey of Saint-Germain-des-

Prés. This powerful Parisian Benedictine abbey was founded in the sixth century and later named in honor of St. Germain. Germain was born in Burgundy and went on to become the bishop of Paris. One of his great achievements was to persuade the worldly Merovingian King Childebert I to lead a more Christian life.

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▲ "The Ohio Whiskey War: The Ladies of Logan Singing Hymns in Front of Barrooms in Aid of the Temperance Movement," 1874, by S.B. Morton. Library of Congress.

HISTORY

'Lips That Touch Liquor Shall Never Touch Mine'

The temperance movement and its influence on America

By Jeff Minick

Mention Prohibition and anyone familiar with American history will likely think of the Roaring Twenties, of bootleggers and rumrunners, speakeasies and bathtub gin, of Eliot Ness and Al Capone. Some may recollect that the 18th Amendment to the Constitution, enacted in 1919, was the foundation stone of this clampdown on spirits, wine, and beer. The 1919 National Prohibition Act, also called the Volstead Act after one of its major supporters in Congress, was then enacted to enforce the amendment. Blamed for the rise of mob crime in the United States, and with many Americans unhappy with the rigid laws, the 18th Amendment was repealed in 1933 by the states.

What fewer people may realize is that the forces which had brought about Prohibition had deep roots in the American past. These had emerged nearly a century earlier, in the 1820s, and though this temperance movement fluctuated at times in membership and influence, it had continued throughout the 19th century, calling first for moderation and then for abstinence in the use of alcoholic beverages. History textbooks list various impulses driving this movement. Anti-immigrant and anti-Catholic sentiments, a rural dislike of big-city dwellers, and the religious fervor born of the Second Great Awakening are often cited, and perhaps rightly so, on such inventories.

But by far, the chief impetus behind the temperance movement was much closer to home: An enormous number of American husbands and fathers drank like fish.

Shaking Hands With John Barleycorn

Search online for "Did 19th-century American men drink more liquor than today?" and website after website answers that question in the affirmative. The National Archives site includes an article titled "Spirited Republic," in which author Bruce Bustard writes: "In 1790, we consumed an average of 5.8 gallons of absolute alcohol annually for each drinking-age individual. By 1830, that figure rose to 7.1 gallons! To-



▲ Carry Nation, circa 1900.

day, in contrast, Americans consume about 2.3 gallons of absolute alcohol in a year." Bear in mind that "absolute alcohol" means liquid alcohol that is 99 percent alcohol.

At the time, to down a beer with breakfast, the same or spirits for lunch, a pick-me-up in the afternoon, and an evening of drinking both during and after supper was not at all extraordinary. Supplies of water were often unsanitary, and alcoholic beverages could be easily made at home. Farmers often distilled liquor from corn for consumption and for sale—an excise tax on this product was the cause of the Whiskey Rebellion of 1794. George Washington himself, whose government put down this first test of the federal power, owned and maintained one of the largest American distilleries of the time at Mount Vernon.

This alcohol-soaked culture unleashed a counterforce driven overwhelmingly by women, with broader consequences than no one then could have imagined.

An Army on the March

That women should direct and participate in such numbers in the temperance movement came about from a convergence of forces. Many pastors gave their blessings to this endeavor and encouraged female participation. In addition, women and their children were the victims when their husbands took to drink. A drunk could bring his abuse home and unleash it on his family. The factory worker who spent his paycheck in the saloon or the farmer whose befuddled condition prevented him from working his fields damaged not only his own health but also the financial well-being of his household.

Hand in hand with the religious revivals led by such clergy as Lyman Beecher and Charles Finney came the earliest anti-alcohol movements. By 1831, 24 women's temperance groups had sprung up across the country. Within 20 years, several hundred local organizations were advocating for moderation in drinking or demanding it be banned altogether. Members marched in the streets, prayed in front of saloons, distributed pamphlets and newsletters, and sang songs and chanted slogans like "Lips that touch liquor shall never touch ours," originally from a poem by Harriet A. Glazebrook.

Slowly, their efforts paid off, considerably lowering the consumption of beer, wine, and liquor. In many places, Americans signed temperance pledges, forswearing drink, and so joined what was called the "Cold Water Army."

In late 1873, Boston "physician" (he was never licensed to practice medicine) Dio Lewis delivered a powerful speech in a Baptist church in Fredonia, New York, attacking the "alcohol trade" and calling on the women of the church to organize against it. The enthusiastic



▲ A lithograph supporting the temperance movement, "The Drunkard's Progress: From the First Glass to the Grave," circa 1846, by Nathaniel Currier. Library of Congress.

response—more than 300 women and men met at the church the following Monday morning—gave birth to the politically powerful Woman's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU), which protested saloons and alcohol, and promoted family values.

Of all those associated with the temperance movement and with the WCTU, the most famous, and certainly the most colorful, was Carrie Nation (1846–1911).

'Hatchet Granny'

After carefully selecting rocks that she deemed ideal for throwing, in the summer of 1900, Carrie Nation took her weapons, rode her buggy into Kiowa, Kansas, and stunned the entire town by smashing three bars, throwing stones through mirrors and liquor bottles, and

using pool balls when she ran out of ammunition. Because the saloons were operating illegally, she was never charged.

Later, she did the same to other saloons, sometimes using a hatchet to break up these establishments. She was arrested more than 30 times, spent some nights in jail, and was repeatedly fined. From her lectures and the sale of various temperance souvenirs, including replicas of her famous hatchet, she raised the money to pay these debts.

Nation was regarded as a heroine by some and as a "crazy lady" by others; it is the latter label that shadows her to day. Yet as Mark Schrad writes in his admirable article "Hatchet Nation," history has, in many respects, missed the mark in its judgment of her. Like others involved in the temperance movement, her husband died of alcoholism

and left her impoverished. During one phase of her life, when she volunteered as a prison evangelist, she asked each inmate what had caused him to commit his crime, to which came an almost inevitable reply: "Drink." Finally, she had little recourse within the political system to seek change. When corrupt government sometimes tolerated illegal saloons and distilleries, and then arrested her for her saloon-busting, Nation would shout, "You wouldn't give me the vote, so I had to use a rock!"

In addition to advocating the vote for women and her prison ministry, Nation organized food and clothing drives for the needy, founded a battered women's shelter, and opened "Hatchet Hall" in Arkansas, where she ministered to the elderly and to abused women and their children.

The Ripple Effect

In certain ways, Carrie Nation's work and commitments to various causes embody the enormous influence of the temperance movement on American history. Like her, some of the women who spearheaded this drive against demon rum became involved in abolitionism, rights for women, helping the poor, and attaining female suffrage.

We can see this expansion of commitment in the "Do Everything" philosophy and practices of the WCTU's second president, Frances Willard (1839–1898). Passed in 1882 by the WCTU, Willard's "Do Everything" policy freed local chapters to tackle other social and political issues as they wished. A conservative chapter, for example, might be opposed to the Home Protection Ballot (the women's vote), but it could exist alongside a chapter supporting that cause. Willard herself favored women's suffrage but wanted the WCTU to remain focused on battling the bane of alcohol and building up family life.

In many ways, then, the temperance movement is the grandmother of all similar social movements guided so often by women today. Groups like Enough Is Enough, for example, which seeks to better family life through teaching internet safety for children and protecting them from online predators, as well as all similar organizations, owe a debt for their existence to the ladies of long ago.

A final note: The Woman's Christian Temperance Union is still in existence. As its website declares, "The WCTU is the oldest, continuous woman's organization in the world." The site also tells us that "the WCTU continues its work to educate about the dangers of alcohol and other drug use. The WCTU works to protect families from all negative influences under its 'Do Everything' policy."

In 2017, the WCTU was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize.

Jeff Minick has four children and a growing platoon of grandchildren. For 20 years, he taught history, literature, and Latin in seminars of homeschooling students in Asheville, N.C. He is the author of two novels, "Amanda Bell" and "Dust On Their Wings," and two works of nonfiction, "Learning As I Go" and "Movies Make The Man." Today, he lives and writes in Front Royal, Va.

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▲ "The Virgin Mary and Five Standing Saints above Predella Panels," 1440–1446, by unknown German artist. Pot-metal glass, white glass, vitreous paint, silver stain; each window 12 feet, 4 1/2 inches by 2 feet, 4 1/4 inches. The Cloisters Collection, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City.

FINE ART

Meaning at a Glance

Continued from Page 1

As a result, Germain helped Childebert sponsor the building of the great abbey.

Titular saints of abbeys are often depicted in stained glass. This panel is from a cycle of scenes about St. Germain's life and miracles. It was created from 1245 to 1247 and was housed in the abbey's Lady Chapel. While the chapel is no longer extant, the abbey's church still stands on the famous Boulevard Saint Germain.

"Vision of Saint Germain of Paris" depicts a posthumous miracle by St. Germain in which Germain, the figure with a red halo, appears as a vision in a monk's dream to warn of an impending Norman invasion of the abbey, along with the reassurance that his relics will remain unharmed. The monk, with an ashen face, turns away from the figure. The panel's composition is dominated by the two figures and the richly saturated blue background, contrasted by lines and masses of red. The rest of the scene is minimally detailed, which effects an otherworldly tone.

The invasion that the saint is forewarning did actually happen, but the Abbey of Saint Germain-des-Prés survived and flourished throughout the Middle Ages, becoming one of the richest and most powerful monasteries in all of France up until the French Revolution.

In 1791, the abbey's Merovingian tombs, which included King Childebert's, were vandalized by the revolutionary regime. Religious buildings that survived the mobs were used as regime offices, prisons, barracks, or were leased to businesses. The Abbey of Saint Germain-des-Prés was closed and transformed into a refinery for the making of saltpeter, an explosive chemical component of gunpowder.

Dramatically, the storage room for this material exploded in 1794, causing several windows in the Lady Chapel to suffer damage. It is unclear whether this stained glass panel was removed before or after the explosion, but in either case it survived and was moved to a storehouse specifically for art displaced from religious buildings. Some of the stained glass panels of the Abbey of Germain-des-Prés later returned to an ecclesiastical setting or ended up in private collections and museums. This panel is now part of The Met Cloisters collection and is on permanent display in a Gothic-style window case that fittingly evokes its original presentation.

Titular saints of abbeys are often depicted in stained glass.

Renaissance Interior Designs
Ecclesiastical stained glass windows continued to flourish in Renaissance Europe. As glass became more affordable in the late 1400s, glass windows became more common in domestic architecture—with stained glass being a popular decorative accessory. Examples of such glass are noted for their use of color, light, and even humor. Standard subjects include signs of the zodiac, sacred scenes, portraits, and heraldry.

The late-15th-century Swiss "Heraldic Panel Showing the Eberler Family Arms," now part of the J. Paul Getty Museum's collection, was likely made for a private home. The panel is highly sophisticated due to the complex technical skills employed in the making of the glass as well as the superb artistic appli-

cation of silver stain and vitreous paint. This specialized paint is composed of glass particles in a liquid binder that melt and fuse with a glass panel during firing.

The Getty panel shows a family coat of arms along with a beautiful maiden armed with a sheathed dagger. She wears a patterned blue dress, long gloves, a gold belt, necklace, rings, and a long white veil attached to a sumptuous headdress. Similar to "Vision of Saint Germain of Paris," the composition shows one figure turned away from another. In this panel, though, the figurative pair consists of a maiden and a menacing red boar, an animal that is the heraldic motif of the Basel family Eberler. They are layered on top of a damask-patterned ground, a much more detailed background than the medieval minimalism of the Saint Germain panel.

The family's coat of arms shown at the bottom of the panel encompasses a shield with the symbolic boar on a patterned gold ground, a helmet, and the dense decoration of red and gold curled leaves. A frieze at the upper part of the panel shows a landscape with a group of young men and women engaged in falconry: a hunting sport using birds of prey that was an activity associated with courtly flirtations. Decorative birds adorn the sides of the panel, connecting all of the scenic divisions.

Victorian Gothic Revival

In Victorian England, an interest in medieval architecture and art was revived, and the corresponding Gothic Revival style in architecture reinvigorated the market for stained glass. One of the era's greatest designers in this medium was Sir Edward Burne-Jones, a member of the Pre-Raphaelite movement and a dis-

tinguished painter of religious, mythical, and literary scenes.

The Pre-Raphaelites were inspired by artists working before the time of Raphael, especially medieval craftsmen and their imagery of nature. William Morris, a leader in the English Arts and Crafts movement, applied these ideas to the decorative arts, founding a firm with his Oxford friend Burne-Jones to produce stained glass, tapestries, wallpaper, and other objects.

Burne-Jones created an estimated 750 stained glass designs in his lifetime. His acclaimed St. Cecilia design from the storied Burne-Jones and Morris collaboration was especially popular and was used to create nearly 30 windows over many years. The version that now resides in the collection of the Princeton University Art Museum (circa 1900) may have originally been installed in a private dining room or entertainment area.

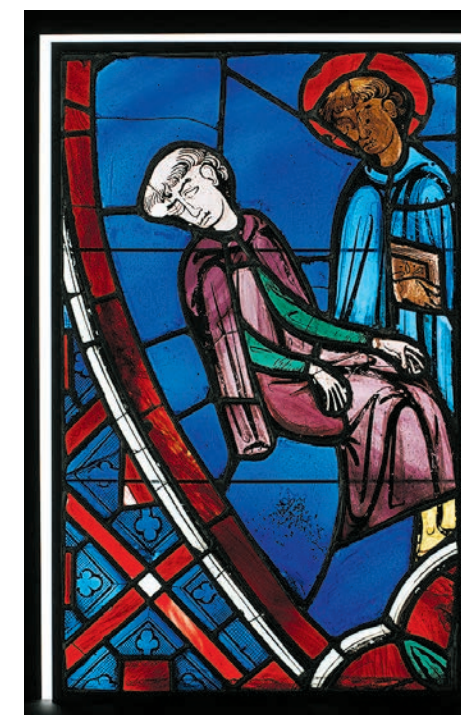
The latter would have been a melodious setting given that St. Cecilia is the patron saint of music and has an attribute of an organ. She was an early Christian Roman martyr, and Burne-Jones depicts her in this window playing a 15th-century version of a portable organ. The museum notes in its "Handbook" entry that the "flat, abstracted, linear style and the wilting pose of the impossibly tall, graceful woman make reference to the work of Botticelli, ... while the tapestry-like screen of pomegranate trees and fruits and the rich patterned brocade fabric recall the latest Gothic phase of Italian art." Rich colors, patterned textiles, and foliate motifs are used to dazzling effect, as in "Heraldic Panel Showing the Eberler Family Arms." Burne-Jones masterfully evokes the style of medieval and Early Renaissance stained glass creations in his innovative style.

Burne-Jones is critically commended for his rarefied ability to convey emotion and personality in stained glass despite the medium's restrictions. St. Cecilia illustrates Morris's dictum that it is crucial for artists to use bright colors in all stained glass designs. The window

showcases his belief that figures should be simply composed so that they can be comprehended by a viewer at a great distance. The work also reflects the artist's view that comes contribute to a stained glass window's overall beauty.

All three of these stained glass objects are representative of their production era as well as being exemplary works of art. Digging deep into their glassy façades, beyond their lush colors and forms, reveals their connections to religious worship, scientific techniques and innovations, as well as artistic movements. They are windows that illuminate history and continue to enthral viewers today with their beauty and storytelling.

Michelle Plastrik is an art advisor living in New York City. She writes on a range of topics, including art history, the art market, museums, art fairs, and special exhibitions.



▲ "Vision of Saint Germain of Paris," 1245–47, by unknown French artist. Pot-metal glass, vitreous paint; 25 1/8 inches by 15 3/4 inches. The Cloisters Collection, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.



▲ "Portrait of Anne-Marie-Louise Thélusson, Comtesse de Sorcy," 1790, by Jacques-Louis David. Oil on canvas.

FINE ART

Natural Beauty

A portrait of Anne-Marie-Louise Thélusson

By Yvonne Marcotte

The Sun King, Louis XIV (1638–1715) launched haute couture, the business of fashion. It was a brilliant move. He made personal appearance important for social interaction.

At court, the king himself was impeccably dressed, and he required the same of his courtiers. Clothing had to fit perfectly, be made with beautiful fabrics, and be impeccably clean. This strict dress code affected every part of one's life. The king required a certain etiquette of dress for every time of the day: dressing gowns for morning, day dress for the afternoon, and evening gowns for social events. Certain fabrics were made for each season (which we still use today): silk in summer, velvet in winter. These changes made aristocrats in France aware of their behavior and appearance.

Awareness of one's personal appearance continued after Louis's reign but lent itself to extremes. Women wore high, intricately structured powdered wigs bedecked with jewels, feathers, and ribbons that were a sight to behold. A lady's gown, over a corset, was voluminous, open from the waist down displaying an underskirt or petticoat, and had to be colorful. There were hooks and laces galore.

Perhaps the only benefit to come from the French Revolution and its devastation was that it did help curb excesses in fashion. Fashion extremes ended when the Estates General convened in 1789, and a new fashion statement soon emerged. Three colors—blue, white, and red—became de rigueur. French citizens, high and low, felt compelled to wear the tri-color cockade, or knot of ribbons, on their hats.

From sizeable, powdered coiffures, women adopted a natural hair color, with curls forming closely around the face. Styles were simplified with one-piece dresses in ordinary fabrics, such as cotton.

A Natural Beauty

The portrait of the Comtesse de Sorcy (1790), by eminent artist of the day Jacques-Louis David, gives us a young woman who presented this simple yet elegant style to perfection. The comtesse was one of two sisters, and the daughter of Swiss-born Parisian banker Jacques Rilliet. Both sisters married rich and titled husbands; Anne-Marie-Louise's husband was also of Swiss ancestry.

The lady is dressed modestly in a simple white cotton gown and shawl with patterned edges. She sits comfortably on a red velvet chair, against a bare taupe backdrop. Her dark blonde hair falls around her face, highlighting her natural composure, beautiful features, and kind expression.

The simple gown flows wonderfully around her, thanks to the artist's skill. The soft tan shawl seems to imitate the wrap of her arms. From the shawl's tip, the line flows upward to her shoulder, where the focus continues around her hair that frames her face. How far she had come from the extremes of aristocratic dress. As noted on The History of Art website, the sisters "did not wish to have their portraits to be too extravagant, wearing relatively simple but smart clothing which they would have felt best represented their own characters."

David painted in the classical style and was in demand as a portrait painter for wealthy aristocrats. He accepted this commission one year after the revolution had begun, just as the country's political and social upheaval was gaining steam. As the revolution wore on, it was not kind to French elites. Most lost everything, and in some cases, even their lives.

It has been said that for generations, French women have cultivated their natural beauty to perfection, and the lady de Sorcy certainly shows it in this compelling portrait.



▲ "Saint Cecilia," circa 1900, by Sir Edward Burne-Jones. Stained and painted glass; 84 1/16 inches by 29 3/4 inches. Princeton University Art Museum.

ALL IMAGES IN THE PUBLIC DOMAIN

ART RENEWAL CENTER



▲ The balance between “mythos” and “logos” with science and faith harmoniously presided over by the personification of “Light, Love, and Life.” Central panel of “Education,” 1890, by Louis Comfort Tiffany. Stained glass window in Linsly-Chittenden Hall, Yale University.

TRADITIONAL CULTURE

When a Culture Loses Touch With Its Myths

Myth teaches us the meaning of life

By James Sale

In her wonderful book “The Battle for God,” Karen Armstrong, drawing on the work of other eminent scholars, introduces us to a central reason why there has been a resurgence of religious fundamentalism in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam in the modern world. Indeed, her book points out some intriguing and insightful parallels between all three religions. But perhaps the really central concept she adumbrates occurs in the Introduction to the book: This is the distinction between mythos and logos.

This distinction is, in my view, vital in seeking to understand why the West is in decline.

What Are Mythos and Logos?

Put simply, the ancient world, including the medieval one, operated on the basis of both understandings: People understood that mythos and logos were two different ways of interpreting the world, but that both were necessary and that each had its own domain, or area of applicability.

Apply the wrong approach to a given situation and you would draw a false result, interpretation, or conclusion. Of course, people in the ancient world often did exactly that. As Dorothy L. Sayers notes in her book “Unpopular Opinions”: “The error of the Middle Ages, on the whole, was to use analogical, metaphorical, poetical techniques for the investigation of scientific questions. But increasingly, since the seventeenth century, we have tended to the opposite error—that of using the quantitative methods of science for the investigation of poetic truth.”

But at least in the medieval period, people did know that there were these two approaches or methods for interpreting reality. We in the West now seem to have only one methodology, and thereby are impaired.

According to Karen Armstrong: “Mythos was regarded as primary; it was concerned with what was thought to be timeless and constant in our existence. Myth looked back to the origins of life, to the foundations of culture, and to the deepest levels of the human mind.”

She goes on to say, “Myth is not concerned with practical matters, but with meaning.” Logos, on the other hand, “was the rational, pragmatic, and scientific thought that enabled men and women to function well in the world ... unlike myth, logos must relate exactly to facts and correspond to external realities if it is to be effective.” Armstrong warns us that it is “dangerous to confuse mythical and rational discourse.”

A Shallow Understanding of Reality
Dangerous in what sense? How is it dan-

gerous? I would like to suggest for now that there are three revealing ways in which it is dangerous to confuse these methodologies of understanding reality. The first danger is well-expressed in a Chinese saying that substitutes the words mystic-science for mythos-logos; the sense and the parallel, however, is very clear:

“Mystics understand the roots of the Tao but not its branches; scientists understand its branches but not its roots. Science does not need mysticism and mysticism does not need science; but man needs both.”

There is something dramatically incomplete about our knowledge, and so our lives, when we ignore one fundamental modality of our being and overemphasize the other. Even atheists, such as American philosopher Thomas Nagel, can see the danger here: “Some people leave all cultural religious forms in disgust, despair, or desolation, and walk into the sterile kingdoms of atheism and materialism, in which no transcendent expression will be found. I find the confidence among the scientific establishment that the whole scenario will yield to a purely chemical explanation hard to understand, except as a manifestation of an

axiomatic commitment to reductive materialism.”

Mythos and logos were two different ways of interpreting the world.

So, confusing mythos with logos is dangerous because it misinterprets reality. We end up with science-logos pretending that it can explain the meaning of life, which it can't.

But in the phrase “reductive materialism,” Nagel leads us toward a second danger observed by Allan Bloom 30 or so years ago: “Men and societies need myths, not science, by which to live.” As we witness all around us in the West the disintegration of society, of communities, of values, we increasingly realize why it is important to have myths to live by.

The Romans—and the Roman Empire—were very good at this (until, of course, they became complacent, self-indulgent, and lost the plot). They were forever generating myths about what it meant to be a “good” Roman. Most famously, this is incorporated in one of the world's greatest epics, “The Aeneid,” written during the reign of Rome's first and greatest emperor, Augustus.

What were the qualities that made Aeneas so great, so Roman? Piety, commitment to family, and steadfastness. These were three of the vital components of the Roman mythology that they told about themselves.

Aeneas demonstrated all of them in



▲ “Venus Giving Arms to Aeneas,” 1704, by Jean Cornu. Terracotta and painted wood sculpture. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

his initial escape from Troy. He was led by the goddess Venus (showing piety); he saved his father, Anchises (commitment to family), by carrying him on his back; and he showed remarkable steadfastness of purpose as the slaughter and massacre was going on all around him. The point is that by being consistent with this myth and its values, which are palpably enacted in the story, it made you a good and admirable Roman. Romans sought to emulate Aeneas, to be like he was. He was what we would call a good role model.

It is worth noting that these were civic values that seem completely alien to today's world: Piety? Family? Steadfastness? Just to steadfastness, for instance, which has now been replaced by “vulnerability.” Demonstrating that you have mental health problems seems to be chic today!

The further point here, however, is that whatever good, noble civic values (and myths) we once enjoyed (perhaps you might want to consider what your top three are), these are now being eroded in the West, and the result is the breakdown of society.

In our time, reductive materialism has led to the depletion of myths through which to live by since logos has taken over and debunked mythical thinking. This shallowness (looking only at the branches) has a deleterious effect both personally and socially.

It seems almost too wide a generalization to say it, but every civilization of any note has experienced this process: In the initial phase, belief in the myth(s) is strong and the empire is established. After this initial success, it seems as if people begin to believe less in the myths, but more in their own hands in creating success, so that myths become not so much a belief but more a ritual. Finally, few believe at all, rituals hollow out, and contention enters—endgame.

The Rise of Fundamentalism

Thus, we come to the third reason why this point is dangerous, and this really is the central argument of Armstrong's book. Essentially, it is the principle (a logos statement) that for every action there is an equal and opposite reaction; or to put it another way, when yao over-reaches itself, it rebounds to yin, and vice versa.

The rise of fundamentalism in the three major religions that Armstrong reviews (though fundamentalism is not exclusive to these religions; all religions have this tendency, including atheism itself) is linked to the atrophy of mythical thinking. Because ever-increasing numbers of people can no longer “believe” the myths, religion itself ebbs away. But as that happens, a core of believers react against this, and they turn their attention to rendering the holy texts and scriptures in a more literal, more fundamentalist way.

One irony of this is that they often claim to be going back to basics. The Protestant Reformation (which coincides with the beginnings of the rise of science as we know it today) did this. The Catholic church, they claimed, had corrupted the teachings of the Bible and of the early church Fathers.

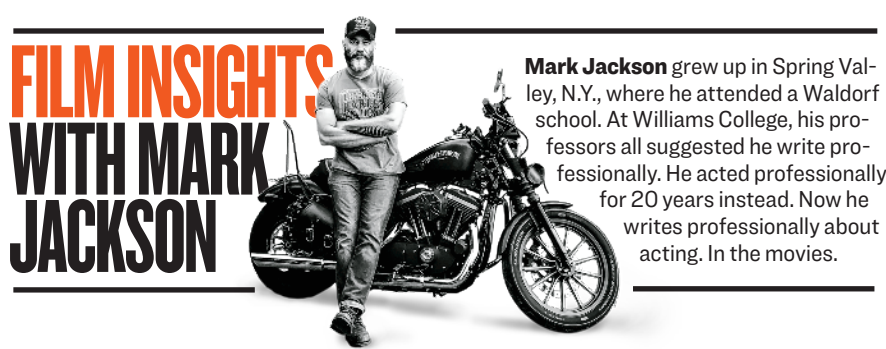
But the Protestants themselves fractured into various subgroups whose own practice, especially in regard to how to read the Bible, also—in its literalism—did not always follow the early church Fathers. This was a literalism of interpretation unknown to many of the early church leaders, and it provided an ideal target for science-logos to attack, beginning in the mid-19th century and continuing to this day.

I would like, therefore, in part 2 of this article, to consider a famous passage in the Old Testament of the Bible in which a mythical understanding—rather than a literal or scientific interpretation—enables us to glean far more truth—truth about God's creation—than either literalism or scientism can.

Indeed, to read as mythos means there is not a dispute between science and religion in terms of domains of relevance. Surely, something we all want?

James Sale has had over 50 books published, most recently, “Mapping Motivation for Top Performing Teams” (Routledge, 2021). He has been nominated for the 2022 poetry Pushcart Prize, won first prize in The Society of Classical Poets 2017 annual competition, performing in New York in 2019. His most recent poetry collection is “StairWell.” For more information about the author, and about his Dante project, visit EnglishCantos.home.blog

▶ To read part 2 of this series, visit <https://ept.ms/MythosPt2>



Mark Jackson grew up in Spring Valley, N.Y., where he attended a Waldorf school. At Williams College, his professors all suggested he write professionally. He acted professionally for 20 years instead. Now he writes professionally about acting. In the movies.

Remembering that Silly Summer Vacation

‘National Lampoon’s Vacation’ is almost a national treasure

By Mark Jackson

I remembered “National Lampoon’s Vacation” as being fairly hilarious when it debuted in 1983. Back then, it had newness going for it, director Harold Ramis was on a roll (“Ghostbusters”), and Randy Quaid created a backwoods cousin “icon” with his hilariously skeezy cousin Eddie. There was supermodel Christie Brinkley in a red Ferrari, a hit song by superstar rock band Fleetwood Mac’s Lindsey Buckingham (“Holiday Road”), and the Americana-nostalgia topic of the ubiquitous 1960s–70s middle-to-lower class, whole-family-crammed-into-a-gas-guzzling-station-wagon summer road-trip vacation. “National Lampoon’s Vacation” is back in theaters, and Warner Bros. has released the film in 4K for the 40th anniversary celebration.

Clark Griswold (Chevy Chase) is an every-dad whose fond childhood memories of family vacations spur him to bequest his family just such an experience. Paying lip service to such wisdom nuggets like “nothing worth doing is easy” in response to his wife Ellen’s (Beverly D’Angelo) mild warnings of potential disaster, he purchases the ugliest puke-green ‘70s station wagon imaginable and sets out from Chicago for Walley World, a California amusement park, with children (Dana Barron, Anthony Michael Hall) in tow.

Family songs are sung with enthusiasm! Paper maps are consulted, there being no such thing as GPS. But as anyone who’s ever gone on such a vacation knows, they’re subject to immediate

onset chaos, and Clark Griswold’s attempt at a vacation becomes a Sisyphean mission to conquer every mishap and Murphy’s Law manifestation that stands in the way.

Such as ending up in an inner city neighborhood and asking for directions while his hubcaps, er, rims, get stolen; showing off for his family and annoying a local bartender to the point of getting shot-gunned; being so incredibly shallow that he cheats on his gorgeous blond wife by flirting with a different gorgeous blonde, on and off, for at least 700 miles, which triggers his own midlife crisis.

Cousin Eddie

Then there’s the stop-off in rural Kansas to visit Clark’s cousin Eddie and the rest of his extended-family-from-hell, and trotting out, deliciously, every possible stereotype of the things that make us Americans squirm regarding this topic.

Further adventures: losing Ellen’s bag and credit cards; losing Aunt Edna’s vicious dog due to Clark inadvertently dragging it behind the car; and the loss of Aunt Edna herself, who needs to be strapped to the roof of the car pending a proper burial.

Harold Ramis’s “Vacation” hasn’t really aged that much, other than GPS and better-looking cars, because the family vacation has only so many permutations and combinations of possible story lines. We’re still happily telling vacation stories.

While it might be a stretch to call “National Lampoon’s Vacation” a national treasure, it’s good to note that it was a box office success despite mixed critic

What ties it all together is a tangible sense of family nostalgia.



reviews. It was, after all, backed by a boatload of talent in director Ramis and writer John Hughes (“Ferris Bueller’s Day Off” and a long string of hit movies).

Carload of Nostalgia

Ultimately, I think the reason it still resonates is because what ties it all together is a tangible sense of family nostalgia, a little pang in the chest from that silly but sweet “Holiday Road” song, and that ghastly green station wagon navigating America’s truly beautiful landscapes (and truly tacky roadside attractions) from sea to shining sea.

One scene in particular sums up the magic of this movie for me. The family, truly tacky roadside attractions) from sea to shining sea.

It was, after all, backed by a boatload of talent in director Ramis and writer John Hughes (“Ferris Bueller’s Day Off” and a long string of hit movies).

If that isn’t a metaphor for humans navigating life while safe in the palm of a higher plan, I don’t know what is. I think that dream sequence is the essence of why we still like this movie so much, and so magical that John Hughes wrote a different version of it for the ending of “Ferris Bueller’s Day Off.” You remember the one. Where Ferris, racing to beat his parents’ return, high tails it

documentary, and foreign language titles.

Although it was not the original intent, director Raphael Sbarg’s brilliant documentary “Only in Theaters” dedicates roughly a third of the 93-minute running time to the fallout of COVID-19 on the Laemmle chain.

With seven locations in Los Angeles County and another in Washington state, the Laemmle (pronounced: lemlee) chain is arguably the most well-regarded and historically significant collection of independent art house theaters in U.S. movie history.

In operation since 1938, the Laemmle Company was co-founded by brothers Max and Karl Laemmle who were cousins of Carl Laemmle, the co-founder of Universal Pictures. All three men were Jewish and hailed from Germany; however, Mr. Carl Laemmle immigrated to the United States in 1884 and was able to convince his cousins that the reign of Adolf Hitler would lead to no good, prompting them to leave their homeland in the mid-1930s.

Mr. Sbarg (who also provides narration) dedicates roughly one-third of the running time to the Laemmle family history, and it is indispensable not only to the success of this film but also in providing an invaluable history lesson of the U.S. movie industry from its inception. Any fan of the medium needs to see the film if only for this portion.

Principal shooting began in 2019, a time prior to the arrival of COVID-19. This was a time when Greg Laemmle, with regular input from his father, Bob (Mr. Max Laemmle’s son), was contemplating selling the family business, citing the proliferation of streaming services and their ever-increasing negative effect on the bottom line. This is easily the most engaging and emotionally impactful portion of the movie.

From Bad to Worse

Wanting to sell and having to sell are also different animals. It’s evident that Mr. Bob Laemmle, and Mr. Greg Laemmle with his wife and triplet sons, didn’t want to sell, an option that all but dissipated in 2020. How salable are eight or nine theaters when they’re indefinitely closed? While nowhere near as challenging or

through estates and subdivisions, past a backyard grill, porches, and kitchens to a jungle gym with a trampoline for a climactic bound into his own backyard. These types of montages would appear to be Hughes’s favorite way of celebrating all-American suburbia, and Harold Ramis clearly said, “Amen.”

“National Lampoon’s Vacation” spawned a franchise of six movies, and Cousin Eddie embedded himself forever in American pop culture in “National Lampoon’s Christmas Vacation,” in the ineffable scene where he delivers the choicest two-word response in cinematic history. I jest, of course. But that scene is funny.

“National Lampoon Vacation” is available at DirecTV and Vudu.

‘National Lampoon’s Vacation’

Director Harold Ramis
Starring Randy Quaid, Christie Brinkley, Chevy Chase, Beverly D’Angelo, Anthony Michael Hall, John Candy
Running Time 1 hour, 37 minutes
MPAA Rating R
Release Date July 29, 1983
★★★★★

possibly life-altering as Mr. Greg Laemmle’s conundrum, Mr. Sbarg had to figure out a way to conduct interviews without making them look like a series of staid and static Zoom meetings.

Throughout the movie, Mr. Sbarg dots the narrative with testimonials from critics (Leonard Maltin, Kenneth Turan) and an array of esteemed filmmakers including Ava Duvernay, Nicole Holofcener, Allison Anders, James Ivory, and Cameron Crowe. While most of these were done via Zoom, Mr. Sbarg found a way to make the presentations wholly unique and visually pleasant.

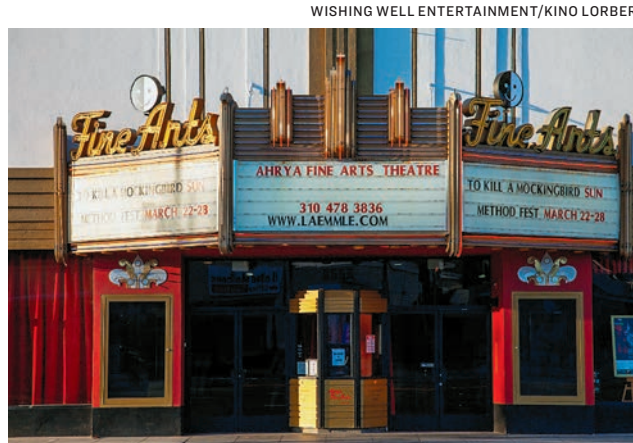
For the duration, Mr. Greg Laemmle displays the patience of Job and displays a type of courage and love of family that is beyond uplifting and inspirational. We should all be so lucky.

“Only in Theaters” is available on home video, and streaming on Apple TV, Vudu, and Amazon Prime.

Originally from Washington, D.C., Michael Clark has provided film content to over 30 print and online media outlets. He co-founded the Atlanta Film Critics Circle in 2017 and is a weekly contributor to the Shannon Burke Show on FloridaManRadio.com. Since 1995, Mr. Clark has written over 4,000 movie reviews and film-related articles. He favors dark comedy, thrillers, and documentaries.

‘Only in Theaters’

Documentary
Director Raphael Sbarg
Running Time 1 hour, 33 minutes
MPAA Rating Not Rated
Release Date Jan. 18, 2023
★★★★★



▲ A Laemmle theater in the documentary “Only in Theaters.”

POPCORN AND INSPIRATION

A Family Affair

Engrossing documentary profiles a multi-generational art house exhibitor family

By Michael Clark

There was a time when the movie tagline “only in theaters” carried with it considerable artistic and marketing cachet. You could watch a film only in a stand-alone, brick-and-mortar theater; it was an event meant to be shared with others.

I put this in the past tense—“was”—because the theatrical experience, due to COVID-19 overreach, ceased to exist for close to three years and only now is returning to a full state of normalcy.

Movie theaters were among the first businesses shuttered in early 2020. And while the major chains did suffer, it was nothing compared to what was incurred by the independently owned exhibitors, particularly art house theaters.

From Coast to Coast

Present in all 50 states and the District of Columbia, art houses specialize mostly in low-visibility, high-brow, live-action,

REWIND, REVIEW, AND RE-RATE

'His Girl Friday,' a Hilarious Send-Up of Fake News

Howard Hawks's comical critique of contractual connections

By Rudolph Lambert Fernandez

Howard Hawks's opening screen text about "the newspaper game" bears a cheeky qualifier: "You will see in this picture no resemblance to the men and women of the Press of today."

That's Hawks teasing audiences to disagree with him. He's spotlighting the transactional nature of the era's news business to critique the superficiality of day-to-day relationships. He's asking if ends, such as selling more newspapers, justify the means, such as short selling people and what they mean to each other. He's saying, with all the comic sense he can muster, that life is not the game we think it is.

As editor of *The Morning Post*, Walter Burns (Cary Grant) will stop at nothing to sell crime reporting as journalism. He'll even hook his ex-wife and former star reporter, Hildy Johnson (Rosalind Russell), on to the next story to keep her from marrying another man, Bruce

Baldwin (Ralph Bellamy).

Hawks's screen adaptation of "The Front Page," Ben Hecht and Charles MacArthur's Broadway comedy, uses the more sensationalist strand of journalism (the crime beat) to expose the shallowness of some relationships and, ironically, their potential depth. In style, Hawks mimics tabloids, tied more to trivia than to the truth. In substance, however, they're doing the opposite; they are promoting truth-telling (the hallmark of journalism) rather than entertaining (sensationalist news).

Hawks's Message

Tragically, too many critics misread Hawks's film. He's not trashing marriage, family, or faithful relationships. He's not showing how things should be, but how they shouldn't. Read the print, but be aware of the spaces between the lines. Amid all the sound that his characters generate, watch for a mo-

ment when a shaming silence shrouds their newsroom.

Much has been written on Hawks's epoch-defining use of quick-fire dialogue to mirror the impatience of real-life people who claim to not have the time to wait for others to start or stop speaking. His characters rattle off dialogue at around 240 words per minute (wpm), twice the average rate of speech of around 100 wpm.

Hawks matches that audio speed with a visual speed that's no less breakneck. His camera tracks a newsroom like it's being dragged in one direction while trying to gaze in another: reporters yelling into phones, typists typing copy, subeditors checking headlines and editors rechecking them, operators plying switchboards, men hastening down elevators, women hastening up them—all criss-crossing each other in the madhouse of the media business. They're barely seeing, let alone hearing, each other.

As Bruce accompanies Hildy, a newsboy recognizes her, stops what he's doing, and smiles, "Morning, Hildy!" Hildy smiles back, "Oh, hi, Skinny."

As Hildy rushes away, Bruce whispers to show how much he cares for her. She stops; the camera's forced to stop with her. She swivels, cocks her head, smiles, walks back as if in slow motion, stilling her line delivery almost to a standstill, "What did you say?"

Bruce flushes, falters. Hildy waits until he regains composure, then prompts him—not once, but twice—to repeat himself. Then, she glows: "I heard you the first time, I like it. That's why I asked you to say it again."

Hawks is quietly sharing the opposite of what his screen cues are shouting. If we slow down enough to see and

hear each other better, we'll be happier ourselves and happier together. Hilariously, Hawks shows how we (here, reporters at crime scenes) interpret what's happening by twisting the truth to our purpose.

False Choices

Commentators often taunt people with false choices, such as job or marriage, promotion or family, career or children, as if one path guarantees the happiness that the other denies.

Hawks is saying that choice doesn't ensure happiness, only a good choice does. Real choices, the ones we have greater control over, are the ones we ignore: Do we care enough to listen to and be sensitive to those we claim to care about? If we care enough, the choices will take care of themselves, and we'll be happy. But if we don't care, our choices, whatever they are, won't matter; we'll be, and stay, unhappy.

Walter does care and so does Hildy, but more for themselves than for each other. It's why they settle for a middle ground, a tempered togetherness. Hawks is saying the opposite of what many think his characters are saying. He's saying that you can't have it both ways; you must sacrifice something to have something else.

Expertly, Hawks meditates on managed mediocrity, but we should be in no doubt about where his model lies.

You can watch "His Girl Friday" on Prime Video and Apple TV.

Rudolph Lambert Fernandez is an independent writer who writes on pop culture.

'His Girl Friday'

Director
Howard Hawks

Starring
Cary Grant, Rosalind Russell, Ralph Bellamy

Running Time
1 hour, 32 minutes

Not Rated

Release Date
Jan. 18, 1940

★★★★★

MOVIESTILLSDB



◀ Walter Burns (Cary Grant) and Hildy Johnson (Rosalind Russell), in "His Girl Friday."

TRUTH and TRADITION

In Our Own Words

In the Footsteps of My Grandfathers

Dear Epoch VIP,

Sometimes when I look around and see our staff working hard out in the field or back at the office, I can't help but think of my grandfathers. One was a paramedic and the other a paratrooper in World War II, fighting for the freedoms we cherish.

While our goal is to report the news and inform readers of important events as they unfold, the tasks involved are many and the skills required are diverse. Producing a daily newspaper requires a great deal of coordination and discipline. At times it feels like we too are fighting a battle, one against a powerful force of misinformation.

Like soldiers, much training is involved as we become proficient with investigating stories, shooting photos, and planning each day's reports to be informative and engaging.

Some challenges we face also seem like impossible missions. For instance, in the early days we stayed up all night working on the paper's inaugural and subsequent editions. Another challenge was finding enough funding to keep growing our readership as the vast majority of advertising dollars go to a few giant tech firms. But no matter how hard it's been, it's been worth it.

There's something special to me about working at this newspaper that goes beyond the sacred responsibility of informing the public. The Epoch Times provides me with an endless pursuit of self-improvement and elevation in my skills. Jobs like this are becoming harder to find.

Though what I'm doing is nowhere near as intense as jumping out of a plane or taking enemy fire, I like to think that the reason my grandfathers fought, and the reason why I fight today, is the same: to resist tyrannical propaganda and defend against the devastation of socialism and communism. I get inspired whenever I'm reminded of the fact that, in my own small way, I am carrying on in my grandfathers' footsteps.

As an opinion editor, I hold our editorials to the same rigorous standards of fact-checking as we do with our news. It's important to hear from a variety of perspectives, but these opinions must have a basis in fact. **One key thing we strive for in our opinion section is to focus only on issues, and to avoid criticizing or attacking people.** We aim to help people understand the important issues of our time, not to make enemies.

It's sad to think that the noble profession of newspaper journalism could be on the verge of extinction. That's why I'm grateful to be surrounded by a staff of professionals who not only take their craft seriously, but who constantly strive to improve their skills and enrich the newspaper we produce every day. This process starts by putting the reader first in all that we do.

With your continued support, we'll innovate a new way forward based on hard work and determination. After all, it's what got us this far.

You the reader also play an important role in shaping our paper. You are what holds us up and keeps us going. By listening to you, we learn where we can do better. You are a critical part of our improvement cycle, and we hope you continue to watch us grow and move forward in pursuit of the truth.

Most of all, you remind us of the great responsibility we have and that countless eyes are watching. I enjoy reading all the letters you send. I look forward to hearing from each and every one of you.

Thank you for your trust.

In truth and tradition,

Adam Ainsworth
The Epoch Times



Adam Ainsworth
Opinion Editor

THE
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TIMES