WEEK 34, 2023

THE EPOCH TIMES ARTS& CULTURE



▲ One of Aesop's most famous stories involving talking animals. This illustration shows a great race. "Fable of the Hare and the Tortoise," 17th century, by Frans Snyders. Oil on canvas. The Prado Museum, Madrid.

LITERATURE

'Lions and Tigers and Bears, Oh My!'

The talking animals of literature

Talking animals

in our literature

seem so natural

that we rarely

pause to ask why.

By Jeff Minick

"Talk to the Animals" from the 1967 film "Doctor Dolittle" won the Academy Award for Best Original Song. Here are the opening lyrics:

Oh, if I could talk to the animals, just imagine it

Chatting with a chimp in chimpanzee

Imagine talking to a tiger,

chatting with a cheetah

What a neat achievement it would be

Talking with animals may be an impossibility, but human beings down through history have certainly talked to animals. Hundreds of millions of pet owners around the globe do so every day, as when reprimanding their dog for snatching a hamburger from the kitchen table or talking to a kitten as if to a baby.

Not only do we talk to animals, but

we attribute to them human emotions and thoughts—another custom in play from the dawn of recorded history. We find this anthropomorphism in Genesis, when the snake hoodwinks Eve; in the ancient fables of Aesop and similar legends told by people around the world; and in tales where rabbits, crows, mice, tigers, and other beasts are endowed with human powers. This same holds true in the fairy tales of the last 500 years and in many of our contemporary children's stories.

Continued on Page 4



A Life-Changing Bestseller



huan Falun expounds on the profound principles of Truthfulness, Compassion, and Tolerance. It focuses on a long-forgotten term called "cultivation" and the importance of moral character on one's path to spiritual perfection. The book is the main text of the spiritual practice Falun Dafa. It was a national bestseller in China in the 1990s, and has since been translated into more than 40 languages. Find out why it has captured the

hearts and minds of tens of millions of people in more than 100 countries worldwide. What made Falun Gong stand out from other gigong exercises and meditation practices was a moral system-compassion, truthfulness, and forbearance—unmistakably Buddhist in origin.

Arthur Waldron LAUDER PROFESSOR, UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

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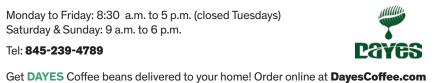
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▲ "A Fishing Boat off a Rocky Coast in a Storm With a Wreck," circa 1664, by Jacob Adriaensz Bellevois. Oil on canvas. Royal Museums Greenwich, UK.

MUSIC

A Biographical Hymn That Čaptured American Hearts

A life-changing experience inspires 'Amazing Grace'

By Rebecca Day

On March 21, 1748, former Royal Navy serviceman and ship worker John Newton prayed for the first time in many years, as his boat was tossed around by a violent, sudden storm off the coast of Ireland. After surviving the bad weather and making it to shore, though he had led a life thus far that abstained from religion, he committed himself to Christianity right then and there.

Each subsequent year, he'd spend the day of March 21 in deep spiritual reflec- al experience of converting to Christiantion. He also spent some time studying ity as a message of hope with the people theology and experienced a resounding of his humble parish. moral renaissance.

From a young age, Newton exhibited Singing the Word a rebellious temperament. His quick wit While the hymn remained confined to trouble. When he was required by the government to serve in the Royal Navy, he was occasionally ousted and sent to different ships by the captains for his insubordinate behavior.

ing along the Atlantic slave trade route. eling revivals that attracted hundreds Because of his unruly personality that of followers and attendees. "Amazing rivaled even the notoriously haughty Grace" soon became an integral part of captain, he was left behind

in Sierra Leone along with the slaves, forced to work on a plantation run by the native Sherbro people.

After several months, his about 10 million father was finally able to times each year. track him down and free him. Newton would spend

along the slave trade route, but the moral implications involved weighed on his conscience. He eventually became an outspoken abolitionist and an ordained clergyman with the Church of England.

Although he didn't have the university degree to join the church in an official way, he was offered a position as a curate remains such a core part of spiritual cul-(priest) for a rural parish in Buckingham- ture that music critic and historian Gilbert shire County after the landlord read his Chase remarked that it is "without a doubt writings on his faith. This unique, ministerial role in the Olney parish focused on community and encouraged citizens of the parish to maintain a personal relationship with the curate for counseling and fellowship.

God's Saving Grace

Newton believed that God's mercy had served as the guiding force behind his life-changing experience in 1748 on the storm-battered vessel. While tending to Olney as a curate, he also took time to write poetry and songs. When he paired Library of Congress comprises more than up with professional composer William Cowper, the dedicated minister would experience yet another spiritual awakening. and ensembles.

Both the beloved curate and the talented Cowper contributed original works Rebecca Day is an independent musiin 1779 to a set of hymns dedicated to *cian, freelance writer, and frontwoman*

Within this historic edition, "Amazing Grace" made its official debut.

Originally used as a small part of a New Year's Day sermon in 1773, the song's initial rendition contained only lyrics. Historians believe the first versions of this powerful hymn were sung a cappella or chanted by the congregation. And Newton's moving, honest lyrics were written with the intent of being autobiographical. Newton had penned the song's reflec-

tive words as he thought about Christ's grace, and he wanted to share his person-

'Amazing Grace'

is performed

and penchant for pushing the envelope the streets of Olney, Buckinghamshire, meant that he often found himself in in 1779, once it managed to make its way across the pond to America in the 1800s. it reached widespread acclaim.

Its arrival in America coincided with one of the nation's biggest religious movements, the Second Great Awaken-Ultimately, he ended up on a ship work- ing, which gave rise to independent travthese events, especially in the South.

The song has taken on many different distinct melodies over centuries, but it was the 1835 hymn "New Britain," written by South Carolinian composer William Walker that

years working intermittently for ships became the go-to melody worshippers paired with Newton's lyrics. Even today, this version of "Amazing Grace" is considered to be the official rendition and is the one most often performed.

In contemporary times, estimates show that the treasured tune is performed about 10 million times each year. The song the most famous of all the folk hymns."

True to the song's message and proving once again that its beauty transcends location, "Amazing Grace" has extended to wider circles which have included mainstream artists who also enjoy covering hymns. It has appeared on over 1,100 records by both Christian and secular musicians.

Since its first official recording in 1922 by the Sacred Harp Choir, the enduring, centuries-old hymn has been recorded over 7,000 times. The collection at the U.S. 3,000 published recorded performances of "Amazing Grace" by various musicians

Newton's parish called "Olney Hymns." of country group, The Crazy Daysies.

HISTORY

3 Americans Cross the Atlantic in a Balloon

The first successful transatlantic crossing in history

By Dustin Bass

son. San

Diego Air

and Space

Museum.

Eagle, descended rapidly toward the frigid waters off the coast of Iceland, Ben Abruzzo and Maxie Anderson appeared doomed to meet the same tragic end as the five bal-A 1978 loonists before them. It was September photograph 1977. The pair had been in the air for 66 of the Dou-Since 1783, there had been 13 attempts that ble Eagle II crew (L-R) Larrv Newman, Ben Abruzzo. keep their canopy afloat and trying unsuc- Lindbergh's in 1927, was Paris. and Maxie cessfully to stave off frostbite. Ander-

As their helium-filled balloon, Double

Unlike some of those previous at-

States to recover, and then began making plans for a 15th attempt.

As August 1978 approached, Abruzzo and Anderson headed back to their starting point along the northeast tip of the country. This time, they brought along Larry Newman, an accomplished and experienced pilot and balloonist. On Aug. 11, the three climbed into the canopy of the hours and had covered nearly 3,000 miles. Double Eagle II with the black and silver 11-story-tall helium-filled balloon in full failed to make the transatlantic crossing bloom. The balloon, and the one before via balloon. Abruzzo and Anderson's latest it, was named in honor of their aviation attempt found them bobbing up and down hero, Charles Lindbergh, known as the on the surface of the Atlantic, working to Lone Eagle. Their destination, much like

In fact, the French-American balloon connection ventures back deep into U.S. tempts, Abruzzo and Anderson had history. Jean-Pierre Blanchard, the French the capability to radio for help. Soon a inventor and aeronaut, made the first balrescue helicopter could be heard in the loon flight in America from Philadelphia distance. The two returned to the United to Gloucester County, New Jersey, on Jan.

9, 1793. George Washington was actually in attendance to view the balloon's launch.

As people gathered in Presque Isle, Maine, the three balloonists said their goodbyes to friends and family, then liftequipment, specifically the altimeter, which measures the balloon's altitude. Their diet was hot dogs and canned sardines, and a consistent dose of excitement and adrenaline.

Those first four days were smooth floating. On the fifth day as they neared the Irish coast, floating at approximately 20,000 feet, they were hit with turbulent weather. It seemed to be a repeat of Abruzzo and Anderson's 1977 attempt.

As the atmospheric pressure continued to change, the balloon lost altitude, dropping quickly from 20,000 feet to a precarious 4,000 feet. The three pilots began tossing over anything they didn't need. The group had to lighten their load before they crashed into the ocean. Slowly but surely, the balloon began to rise and they finally reached a safe altitude.

During the final leg of the adventure, as they floated past the southern part of England, a small plane came by. Its passengers were the wives of the three men. As they



blew kisses to each other, the plane zoomed on to meet them at their destination.

They had hoped to land at Le Bourget Field, where Lindbergh had landed, but they had been blown slightly off course ed off. The flight would cross the Atlantic and had to make do with landing in a Ocean over the course of nearly a week. wheat field just 50 miles west of the City Alternating with rest, the three stayed of Lights. When they finally made landfall focused on their surroundings and their this week in history, on Aug. 17, 1978, the three had broken the duration and distance records for balloon flight at 137 hours and 6 minutes and 3,120 miles.

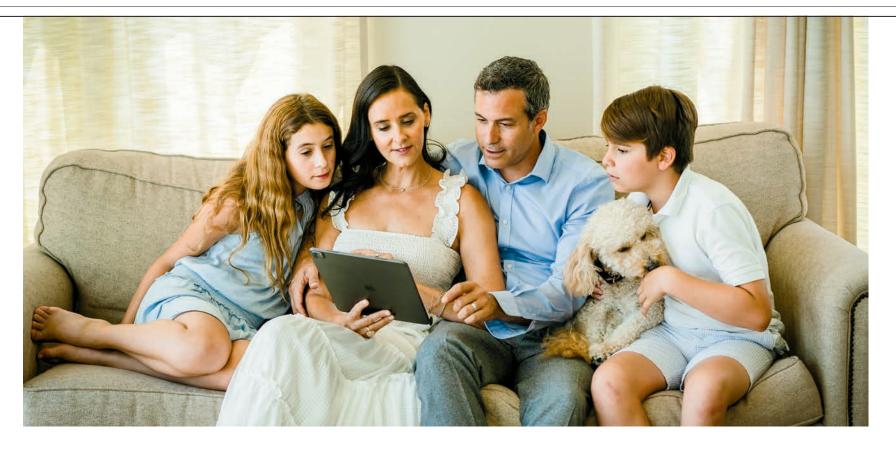
More History Making

The three, however, were not done setting records and making history. Two years later in 1980, Anderson and his son, Kristian, in their balloon named Kitty Hawk, became the first to balloon across the American continent. Anderson also was the first to at least attempt an around-theworld flight. His balloon for that attempt was named Jules Verne, in honor of the author of the classic novel "Around the World in 80 Davs."

For Abruzzo and Newman, in 1981 they would take their 13-story-tall Double Eagle V with several others, including Ron Clark and Rocky Aoki, to cross the Pacific Ocean from Nagashami, Japan, to Mendocino National Forest in California. Though it took about half the time-84 hours and 31 minutes—it set a new distance record of 5,768 miles.

Tragically, both Anderson and Abruzzo were killed in flying accidents. In 1983, Anderson was killed during a balloon race in France when the balloon's equipment malfunctioned and he, along with his co-pilot Don Ida, attempted to make a crash landing in order to avoid flying into communist East Germany. In 1985, Abruzzo died along with his wife in a plane accident. The Anderson-Abruzzo Albuquerque International Balloon Museum in Albuquerque, New Mexico, was named in their honor. Each year, the museum hosts the Albuquerque Balloon Fiesta where approximately 500 multicolored hot-air balloons float throughout the city and surrounding areas.

Dustin Bass is an author and co-host of The Sons of History podcast. He also writes two weekly series for The Epoch Times: Profiles in History and This Week in History.



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LITERATURE

'Lions and Tigers and Bears, Oh My!'

Continued from Page 1

Some writers of fiction for adults also bring fying each species. In that long-ago past, anthropomorphic magic to their stories. In people also called favored domestic ani-George Orwell's "Animal Farm," his acer- mals by name. Alexander the Great tamed bic takedown of totalitarian governments, and rode his war horse Bucephalus, and domesticated livestock are the key players. in the "Odyssey," Homer specifically refer-In Richard Adams's "Watership Down," a ences Argos, Odysseus's dog, who before warren of rabbits takes center stage. Cre- dying recognizes his long-absent master. ated in 1916 by newspaper columnist Don Today's pet owners follow this same cus-Marguis, a cockroach named Archy and the alley cat Mehitabel appeared as narra- a walk in the evening or entertaining Miss tors in hundreds of poems and stories, and Kitty with a bit of twine. Like storytellers became enormously popular with readers. old and new, we personify our pets.

Why the Attraction?

This integration of animals into our literature seems so natural that we rarely pause to ask that question. Why, for instance, did Aesop match a tortoise against a hare in a footrace rather than two of his contemporary Greeks? Jump forward more than 2,000 years in time, and we might well ask why Brian Jacques in his popular "Redwall" series substituted mice, moles, bad-

mal Farm" by gers, rats, and other species for George Orwell. human characters. One obvious answer surely has to do with

familiarity.

Until recently, our ancestors around the globe lived much more intimately with nature than we do today. The hunters who for eons brought food from field and forest to the fire were as familiar with the ways ing a story more enjoyable. But they also and habits of deer, rabbit, and bear as we add a degree of emotional distance for the are with the aisles of our grocery stores. Evidence of this long intimacy is also vis-

ible in our naming of animals. To return briefly to Genesis, Adam "gave names to Three Little Pigs." As they lose house after

all cattle, and to the birds of the air, and to every animal of the field," thereby identitom of nomenclature, taking Maverick on

Given such close connections, it seems only natural that fabulists and bards would weave animals into their tales, using them as vehicles of amusement and as a means of passing on wisdom and morality to children. The folklore created by the griots of Southern Africa, for example, featured local wildlife like rhinos, lions, and giraffes, while Native Americans told stories of coyotes, buffalo, and foxes.

Emotional Distance

In "Anthropomorphism in Children's Literature," Dr. Lara Gray, an expert on children's literature, makes an interesting point regarding the widespread use of animal protagonists and characters in books for kids. She writes that animals "can bring silliness and incongruity, makreader, which is important when the story message is personal, painful, or powerful." As one example, Gray chooses "The

Featuring animals rather than human beings allows for universality.



▲ An illustrated plate of the wolf blowing down the pigs' straw house from the 1904 adaptation of "The Three Little Pigs" by L. Leslie Brooke. Library of Congress.

house, "we roll along with the rhyme; the same situation involving homeless children is far less palatable.

This holds true for many folk and fairy tales. Transform Peter Rabbit into a boy, and the story changes completely. The natural instinct of a rabbit is to slip into a garden for a bite to eat; the boy who does the same is either starving or a vandal. Make the Big Bad Wolf in "Little Red Riding Hood" a man, and we have a vicious murderer on the prowl.

Symbolism

In his article "Aesop's Fables," Edward Clayton, professor at Central Michigan University, introduces another related reason for using animals as characters in fables and, by extension, in other fiction as well. By observation and daily experience, our ancestors associated certain human traits with other living creatures. Ants and bees, for instance, were industrious. Donkeys and camels were stubborn, and goats, as in "Three Billy Goats Gruff," were wily and tough.

Remarking on these similarities between human beings and other species, Clayton then writes: "This allows the author to suggest or imply a lot of backstory in a format which is partially defined by its brevity. So, whereas establishing that a human character is clever might take considerable effort, if the author chooses a fox as one of the characters in the fable, then cleverness is already established as a trait for that character. Similarly, it takes less time to say 'this fable is about a mouse' than to establish the timidity of a particular human being."

C.S. Lewis's imaginative creation of the lion Aslan in his "Chronicles of Narnia" is a classic example of this tactic. The lion is the "king of the beasts," symbol of authority and power. To have personified a sparrow or a squirrel, or even an earthly human king, as Aslan would have destroyed an idea central to Lewis's story.

Stories for Everyone

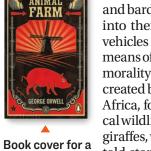
Finally, featuring animals rather than human beings allows for a universality that might not otherwise exist. Expose a reader from Poland, Peru, or China to Aesop's "The Ant and the Grasshopper,"





2008 paperback

edition of "Ani-



ALL IMAGES IN THE PUBLIC DOMAIN

and the story flows effortlessly across 1. "Alice in Wonderthe cultural divide. "Animal Farm" nicely illustrates all the

above points. Pigs, who become dictators after leading the revolt against a farmer, are known for their intelligence and greed. They train the farm's dogs to become their vicious, personal guards. The sheep follow wherever the wind blows.

Orwell intended "Animal Farm" as an ex- 2. An Illustrated plosive critique of Soviet communism and totalitarian government in general. Had he used historical Russian figures like Stalin and Trotsky, and fictional citizens, the novel might have won immediate acclaim, but it would have lacked staying power. The anthropomorphism of this fable for grownups instead makes it a timeless tale of revolution, government and ideals corrupted, and oppression.

The same holds true for much of children's literature. The young person traveling off to the big city from a farm or a small town, or vice versa, has long served as a popular theme in literature and film—it's a standby in many Hallmark movies—but the grandfather of this storyline is Aesop's "The Town Mouse and the Country Mouse." The story illustrates the contrast between the peaceful, humble life of the country mouse and the affluent but dangerous lifestyle of his city cousin, and has endured for more than two millennia.

A.A Milne's "Winnie-the-Pooh," Rudyard Kipling's "The Jungle Book," Lewis Carroll's "Alice in Wonderland," E.B. White's "Charlotte's Web," and countless other books are all descendants of such early fabulists and storytellers, still entertaining adults and children alike while their wolves and bears, rabbits, and spiders pass along their lessons of wisdom.

Jeff Minick has four children and a growing platoon of grandchildren. For 20 years, he taught history, literature, and Latin to 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.

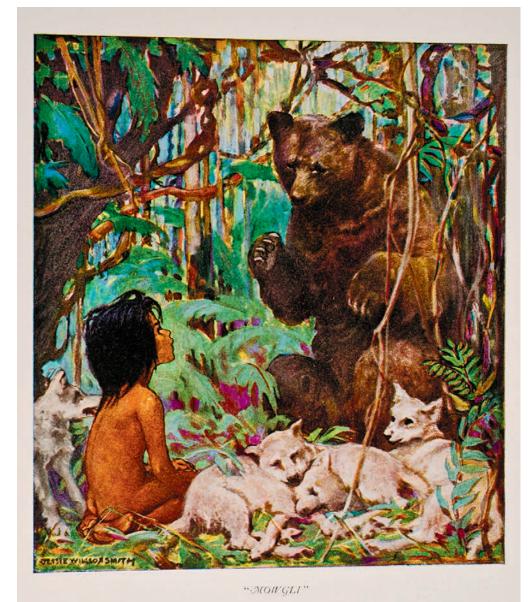
land," circa 1879, by George Dunlop Leslie. Oil on can vas. Brighton & Hove Museums, United Kingdom.

plate of "Little Red Riding Hood," 1911, by Jessie Willcox Smith from the book "A Child's Book of Stories."

3. An illustration of Kipling's Mowgli and Baloo, titled "Moweli," 1923, by Jessie Willcox Smith from "Boys & Girls of Bookland."

4. "Adam Naming the Creatures," 1847, by N. Currier. Handcolored lithograph. Library of Congress.





AUAM NAMINE THE CREATURES. 223. Septen Club, Office to Sent. 1.4. Some. 17. 1821

TRADITIONAL CULTURE

Wordsworth Inspired by Reflecting on Nature

The Highland girl's song of 'A Solitary Reaper'

PUBLIC DOMAIN

By Marlena Figge

ehold her, single in the field, Yon solitary Highland Reaping and singing by herself;

Stop here, or gently pass!

A Portrait of William Wordsworth, 1798, by William Shuter.

Alone she cuts and binds the grain,

And sings a melancholy strain; O listen! for the Vale profound Is overflowing with the sound. No Nightingale did ever chaunt More welcome notes to weary bands

Of travellers in some shady haunt,

Among Arabian sands: A voice so thrilling ne'er was heard

In spring-time from the Cuckoo-bird

Breaking the silence of the seas Among the farthest Hebrides. Will no one tell me what she sings?-

Perhaps the plaintive numbers flow

For old, unhappy, far-off things, And battles long ago:

Or is it some more humble lay, Familiar matter of to-day?

Some natural sorrow, loss, or pain,

That has been, and may be again?

Whate'er the theme, the



▲ "The Reaper," 1872, by William Bouguereau.

Maiden sang As if her song could have no ending; I saw her singing at her work, And o'er the sickle bending;-I listened, motionless and still; And, as I mounted up the hill, The music in my heart I bore, Long after it was heard no more.

"Stop here, or gently pass!" we are bid in William Wordsworth's "A Solitary Reaper," and thus we are invited to admire the beauty of the song of a Highland girl while she tends to her work. Wordsworth's poetry depicts everyday scenes from country life, as he believed that under simpler circumstances the passions of the heart could reach their maturity.

According to Wordsworth, poetry finds its origin in emotion recollected in tranquility. Poetry, therefore, was not merely a and still" lest he should interrupt the feeling immediately written down but was song. The unconscious beauty he has mediated through contemplation later on. stumbled across is uncontrived, and

The society of his day, however, was often an impediment to this process, filled with constant stimulation and ceaseless activity. It was therefore best, according to Wordsworth, to borrow scenes from rustic life and to use an accessible, everyday language to describe ordinary emotions.

The poem was published in 1807 and could have been partly inspired by Wordsworth's trip to Scotland in 1803. However, he drew more direct inspiration from a line in Thomas Wilkinson's book, "Tours to the British Mountains" (circulated among friends for years before its publication in 1824): "Passed a female who was reaping alone: she sung in Erse as she bended over her sickle; the sweetest human voice I ever heard: her strains were tenderly melancholy, and felt delicious, long after they were heard no more" (Erse being a Scottish variant of the Gaelic language).

So, too, the song described in the poem lingers in the listener's heart long after its conclusion. The poem prompts us to reflect on what makes the song so impactful that it would impress itself "I saw her," "I listened," "I bore." deeply upon the memory.

Wordsworth demonstrates that, beyond the simple beauty of the melody, the song provokes a marked emotional and intellectual response in the listener because of certain qualities that point to the particularity of man's relation to

nature and to his fellow human beings. her song in memory.

The Highland

girl's song

endures in

memory.

Invitation to Listen

The speaker in the poem is arrested in his travels by the song of the Highland girl: the music stops him on his determined path and gives him pause for derstand its lyrics, he responds to its thought. The speaker acts as mediator to the reader: Though he bids us to stop and listen to the song, we can only access his experience of the song through the poem. As he recounts the tale, he sonal loss, but rather his own imaginatells us that the immensity of the valley overflows with the melancholy tune, and he commands us twice to pause the imagination that impresses itself so and appreciate its beauty.

There is urgency to these commands: "Behold her," "Stop here," and "O lis- Forging Connections ten!" They crescendo until they reach the exclamation, insisting that there tributes to the melancholy lilt of the is something extraordinary to wit- song, the poem is just as much about ness here. If we choose to ignore it, the connections as it is about solitude. speaker gives us an alternate command to "gently pass."

He echoes the universal call to appre-

poem as the girl stands solitary against the backdrop of the field of wheat. Wordsworth evinces a deep appreciation of the beauty of the natural world, for in the second stanza he contrasts the voice gether as he ponders how the melanof the Highland girl to that of the nightingale and cuckoo.

To these singers too, the natural backdrop of the desert or sea is given impor- day. All people, regardless of age, lantance in the poem, just as the setting of guage, or culture, are able to find beauty the girl's song is incorporated into the in it and to draw from their own experimusical panorama. The character of the ence and memory so as to understand backdrop brings the song into relief in each case: The barren, sandy landscape emotion is one that needs no translation, of the desert renders the nightingale's for it has touched the hearts of us all. delicate beauty especially welcome, and the silence of the sea and the remote is- Marlena Figge received her M.A. in lands lends a dramatic emphasis to the Italian Literature from Middlebury solitary voice of the cuckoo bird that College in 2021 and graduated from the shatters that quiet.

However, the speaker attests that there's in Italian and English. She currently no competition between these feathered *has a teaching fellowship and teaches* musicians and the solitary reaper. The *English at a high school in Italy.*

girl's song is superior by far. The speaker's love of nature has served as preparation for love of man. In both, he is able to appreciate the simple, natural beauty of creation and recognize that it is good.

The girl's song, however, is infused with meaning, though he does not understand it. Language has imbued the song with both historical and cultural significance. The speaker can distinguish between the rational capabilities of man and the instinctive beauty of the birds, but without being able to appreciate the beauty of nature, he cannot appreciate the elevated status of the girl's song. The same natural beauty runs through both of them, but through their difference, the speaker can more fully appreciate the gifts of emotion, intellect, and memory that are given to man.

Melody to Memory

The speaker demonstrates reverence for the girl's work. He watches "motionless there is a sense that the girl may stop in her song if she were to become aware that it was heard by others.

As it is, she beautifies the difficult task before her, exemplifying the notion that duty makes us do things well, but love bids us do them beautifully. The girl clearly demonstrates a love for her art and her work, singing "as if her song could have no ending.

In a sense, the girl's song really does have no ending; it endures in memory and in its impact on others. The speaker notes, "The music in my heart I bore, long after it was heard no more." Whether the song describes the history of a people or tells of a singular sorrow, it is woven into the individual history of the speaker, who in turn shares it with others.

Michael O'Neill and Charles Mahoney, in their commentary on the poem, write: "At the end, with its unexpected movement into the past tense ('the Maiden sang', l. 25), it turns out, too, to be a poem about the role played by memory in preserving and internalizing experience." In the final stanza, the speaker details several actions:

Both sensory perception and intellectual engagement are involved in properly beholding the scene, but there is also a

notion of work on the part of the speaker. In the end, it is not only the Highland girl who is busy at her task; the speaker too is engaged in the work of carrying away

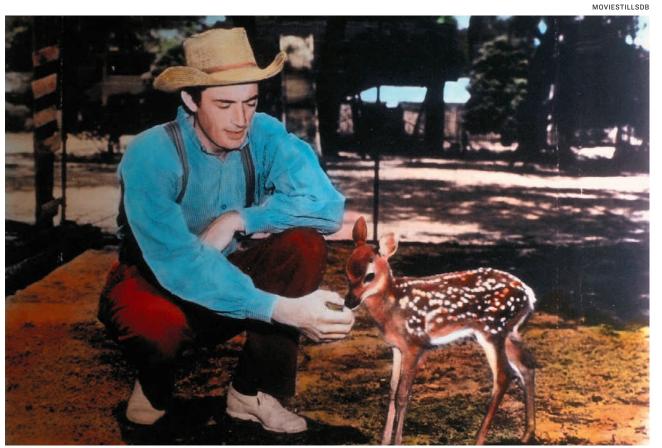
By saying that the song remains in his heart, the speaker implies a deeper connection to the song than having it stuck in his head. Rather, there is an emotional response to it, and since he cannot uncontagious melancholy and is left to imagine what particularly it is about.

It is not the song that supplies him with images of historical battles or pertion. The melody evokes these images wordlessly, and it is its power of stirring keenly upon the memory.

Though the solitude of the reaper con-O'Neill and Mahoney write: "This solitary, however, is associated with connections, harmony and doubling (eviciate all beauty in nature and art even dent in verbal patterns such as 'Reaping if, like the speaker, we cannot fully un- and singing' (1.3) or 'cuts, and binds' (1. derstand it. However, if we choose to be 5), and in the fact that the solitary reaper unresponsive, he bids the reader to not is celebrated by the solitary poet." In this disturb the beauty of the scene for others. way, connections are forged between the The human figure is central in the actions of the reaper and the poet who internalizes her song.

> These connections point to how the speaker ascribes a universal nature to this song. He ties past and present tocholy strain could just as easily be describing heroic battles of old as it could be telling of the sorrows of the present the emotion conveyed by the song. The

University of Dallas in 2020 with a B.A.



▲ Ezra "Penny" Baxter (Gregory Peck) gives a young deer to his son to raise, in "The Yearling."

POPCORN AND INSPIRATION

A Coming-of-Age Tale in Old Florida

By Rudolph Lambert Fernandez

Clarence Brown's coming-of-age film is set in late 19th-century Florida.

The film opens with Penny Baxter (Gregory Peck) narrating why he ended up in scrub country. Following service in the Civil War, he'd sought refuge away from towns and wars and civilization and headed to the wilderness, to "the sources, the beginning of things."

He'd intended a quiet life with his wife, Orry (Jane Wyman), cultivating crops on Baxter's Island, a patch of land amid a "rolling sea of trees." But tragedy struck. Several of their children died, leaving them with their lone pre-teen boy, Jody (Claude Jarman Jr.).

As the movie unfolds, it is Orry's despondency that darkens Penny's fatherson bond with his son, not the state's of their lives and works, we remember clouds, or rains, or floods. Not even disease or dangerous animals raiding their farm. Overly fearful of losing Jody too, frets over Jody's playfulness, convinced that he'll carry it into adulthood.

Penny, however, prefers giving Jody in the woods and, reluctantly, allows Fittingly, Jody's first bear hunt is a

him to adopt an orphaned fawn as a pet. But Jody adopts more than he bargained for: a new way of seeing himself and his place in the family.

Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings's Pulitzer Prize-winning novel inspired the film, which won two of its seven Oscar nominations. Brown's sober script before the opening scene makes clear who he dedicates his film to:

"We dedicate this picture to those who came to our land long ago and made it their home—and our inheritance! For us they faced the unknown. For us they hungered and toiled. Their endurance is our prosperity, their struggle is our freedom, their dream is our certainty, their dawn is our day. From their dust we spring, and reaping the great harvest them with blessings."

Rawlings's message is hidden in Penand with only Penny to help out, Orry ny's backstory. He and his family live on "half-fertile" land. They must eke out their livelihood. Life, by its nature, is double-edged. Sorrow snaps at the time to savor the miracle of growing up heels of joy, as want pursues abundance.

The director's biblical hints are hard to miss.

'The Yearling' Director Clarence Brown Starring Gregory Peck, Jane Wyman, Claude Jarman Jr. **Running Time**

2 hours, 8 minutes **MPAA** Rating Not Rated **Release Date**

 \star \star \star \star

sweat-and-saliva lesson about facing fears and fulfilling responsibilities.

Hunting dogs Perk, Rip, and Julia lead Penny, gun in hand, and Jody into the forest, chasing a bear that has just savaged their farm animals. Rip and Julia fly fearlessly at the bear, but Perk flees while Penny's gun backfires.

Seemingly inconsequential, the bear's escape changes everything.

Back at the farm, Jody ponders the price others pay when he shirks his duty. He ponders his itch to go "ramblin'" when his Ma and Pa sorely need him. And Penny, laid low for weeks from a rattlesnake bite when the crop needs reharvesting, is like a gun misfiring at a crucial moment.

Coming-of-Age Story

Brown's biblical hints are hard to miss. When Jody goes missing, it's for three days. When he returns, it's a resurrection of sorts; he dies to his old self, taking on the new. When Jody is sheepish about his selfishness, Penny reassures him, "When I was a child, I spake as a child."

Fodderwing, the crippled neighbor boy Jody befriends, mirrors Jody's hobbled, willful self. Fodderwing's idea of shielding himself from reality is to be stuck in a fantasy world of eagles, racoons, monkeys, deer, wolves, and Spaniards on big black horses! Jody's tempted to linger, but too much of the real world awaits for him to cling to dreams.

Jody realizes that the woods may burst with wondrous sights, sounds, smells, and sensations, but if you make your home there, less uplifting moods haunt its brooks and breezes too: the drudgery of digging a well, the harshness of harvesting a crop, the solitude of stirring a dish on a fire, the aching sorrow of nursing a wounded animal or burying your dead.

Apparently, Rawlings got along fabulously with her father, who loved the outdoors and owned a farm, but she detested her socialite mother. With no obvious villain in her story, she writes Orry's character in as a sourpuss. Still, Wyman's interiority and depth make Orry believable. Peck is perfect as the warm, gentle Penny. The wise perspective he offers Jody at the end is a model of introspective parenting.

And for a debutant, 10-year-old Jarman Jr. brilliantly captures Jody's tortured excitement with his expressive eyes, his expectant drawl, his unguarded smile, and the way he skips rather than walks across those beckoning hills.

You can watch "The Yearling" on Vudu, Prime Video, and Apple TV.

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

REWIND, REVIEW, AND RE-RATE Fighting Corruption in a Small Town

Our founding principles are worth defending

By Tiffany Brannan

Should you get involved if you see a probbusiness? "A Stranger in Town" vividly shows a man who gets involved with a small town's problems, and ends up inspiring change in a whole community.

stranger in this film showcases the dra- for their own profit. matic side of his acting.

A Small Town Story

John Josephus Grant (Morgan), a Supreme Court justice, goes on a duck hunting trip to get away from the pressures in Washington. On the first day of his trip, Grant is stopped by a local sheriff (Irving Bacon), who says that he needs a stamp on his hunting license from the who shines as the serious man of the law. united." nearby town of Crown City. Grant opts to appear in court instead.

In Crown City's courtroom, Grant observes that the town's government is riddled with corruption. Mayor Connison older judge to outwit his enemies. (Robert Barrat) controls the judge (Porter Hall), as well as the sheriff. He's in cahoots toonishly evil. They are average Ameriwith hotel owner Roscoe Swade (Andrew cans who appear decent enough to fool Tiffany Brannan is a 21-year-old opera

Tombes) and store owner Vinnie Z. Blax- at least some of their constituents. ton (Donald MacBride), who help him

The only person fighting for justice for the citizens of Crown City is Bill Adams (Richard Carlson), a young lawyer who is running against Connison for mayor. Grant quickly sees that Bill and his campaign manager (Chill Wills) are using entirely the wrong approach. He challenges the because I am a Justice of the Supreme eager young man to use his legal knowledge to expose the town leaders' corruption through the court system. Before long, Grant is very involved with the fight in Crown City.

lem, or should you just mind your own unexpectedly when Grant's smart yet men to public office, we cannot do it as *fashion enthusiast, and conspiracy film* pretty secretary, Lucy (Jean Rogers), ar-lightly as we flip a coin. It means that after *critic, advocating purity, beauty, and* rives with some papers for her employer.

"A Stranger in Town" shows a Washington citizen who helps transform a small for Frank Morgan. Although best re- shows the unfortunate reality that our membered for playing the Wizard in great nation has always been corrupted "The Wizard of Oz," Mr. Morgan was a in spots by dishonest, selfish individuals,

> America is noble and incorruptible, even ment we want. if it is distorted by those in power.

a wonderful cast of character actors. The focal point is veteran actor Frank Morgan, Richard Carlson brings a lot of realism to the role of Bill Adams, who isn't overly idealized; he has a good heart and good intentions, but he needs a little advice from the

Connison and his company aren't car-

maintain his stranglehold on the town. A Citizen's Duty

The best part of this movie is Joe Grant's speech to the town of Crown City, explaining why got involved in the town's politics: "It's only right that you should know why I, a stranger, have become involved in your affairs. Believe me, it's not Court. It's because, like all of you here, I am a citizen of this country.

"That is no little honor. Men have fought revolutions, have died, to be called 'citizen.' And as citizens, we carry a burning Bill also finds himself getting involved responsibility. It means that when we elect *singer, Hollywood historian, vintage* we've elected them, we can't sit back and tradition on Instagram as @pure_cinesay, 'Our job is done. What they do now ma_diva. Her classic film journey started doesn't concern us.' That philosophy of *in 2016 when she and her sister started* This is one of the few starring roles town. Like many Capra films, this story indifference is what the enemies of decent the Pure Entertainment Preservation government want.

grow strong and vicious, then the heroic *is launching Cinballera Entertainment* multifaceted performer. His role as the who will manipulate entire communities struggle which welded thousands of lovely this summer to produce original perfortowns like this into a great nation means *mances which combine opera, ballet,* Although this movie is honest about nothing. Then we're not citizens, we're trai- and old films in historic SoCal venues. showing that corruption can exist in aver- tors. The great liberties by which we live age American towns, it's very patriotic as it have been bought with blood. The kind of shows that the ideal of the United States of government we get is the kind of govern-

> "Government of the people, by the These noble ideals are brought to life by people, and for the people can mean any kind of government. It's our duty to make Starring it mean only one kind—uncorrupted, free,

These words explain why it's important to fight corruption of any kind, even if it doesn't seem like any of our business.

This movie can be viewed for free on YouTube.



Society to reform the arts by reinstating "If we allow them to have their way to the Motion Picture Production Code. She

A Stranger

Director Roy Rowland Frank Morgan, Richard Carlson. Jean Rogers **Running Time** 1 hour. 7 minutes **MPAA** Rating Not Rated **Release Date** April 1943 \star \star \star \star (L-R) Judge John Josephus Grant (Frank Morgan), Bill Adams (Richard Carlson), and Lucy Gilbert (Jean Rogers), in "A Stranger in Town."

REWIND, REVIEW, AND RE-RATE

Friendship and Grit in Old South Savannah

Despite his wealth, a man seeks a simpler life

By lan Kane

Having just thoroughly enjoyed watching and reviewing "Sound of Freedom" starring Jim Caviezel, I was interested in his other projects and came across 2013's "Savannah." It also stars another actor I admire—Chiwetel Ejiofor, who blew me away in "The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind" (2019). "Savannah" is based on a nonfiction book by American author John Eugene Cay Jr. titled "Ward Allen: Savannah River Market Hunter."

The film begins in 1954, when 95-yearold Christmas Moultrie (Chiwetel Ejiofor) is talking with middle-aged friend Jack Cay (Bradley Whitford). Moultrie relates some of the trials, tribulations, and triumphs he shared with his best friend Ward Allen via flashback decades earlier, which forms most of the movie.

Both Ward Allen (Jim Caviezel) and Moultrie were born during the mid-1800s and came from completely different worlds. Allen was born into a life of wealth and privilege. His father John Elliot Ward owned a plantation in Savannah, Georgia, but died when Allen was only 10 years old. Although Allen was the sole heir to the plantation, he sought out the much simpler life of duck hunter.

Moultrie, on the other hand, was the last child born in slavery in Savannah at another plantation located there. By the time he and Allen became duck-hunting buddies, he'd already been freed from slavery but still endured some of the endemic racism that lingered afterward.

Allen and Moultrie are quite the dynamic duo, trading quips back and forth as they launch their rowboat out onto the Savannah River just before dawn, and then sitting silent among the reeds until the first ducks take flight. They stand in unison and fire their rifles at the ducks, and as the flights of fowl fall into the water, Allen's trusty dog swims out to retrieve the carcasses.



▲ Ward Allen (Jim Caviezel, R) and best friend Christmas Moultrie (Chiwetel Ejiofor), in 2013's "Savannah."

The two have formed a market hunting business together and sell their little duckies at local businesses. However, duck hunting has been sharply curtailed by law, and the men sometimes get busted for their fowl-slaying forays.

Fortunately for them, Allen has quite the gift of gab. And with his Oxford-educated vocabulary and command of the classics (from which he often quotes), he manages to get them off with a mere slap on the wrist after he charms local judge Harden (Hal Holbrook).

Allen keeps bumping into Lucy Stubbs (Jaimie Alexander), a pretty young socialite. Each time, they seem to be more and more attracted to each other, although Allen keeps his distance. And that's fine by her father, Mr. Stubbs (Sam Shepard), who considered Allen's skallywag ways to be unsuitable for his daughter. Of course, this only makes her want Allen more, so when the two fall for each other and decide to get married, that isn't too popular with daddy.

On their wedding night, Mrs. Allen wakes up to hearing her husband riding up and down the streets outside of their newhome in Savannah, while shooting his pistol into the air and waking up the neighbors. This is when we see the first signs of trouble, namely, Allen's propensity for getting highly drunk and causing ruckuses.

Sometime later, Allen and Moultrie have warning shots fired at them when their boat trespasses onto an ornery neighbor's property during one of their duck-hunting exploits. Moultrie becomes upset when Allen doesn't acknowledge that the neighbor, had Allen not been present, was fixing to shoot him because he's black. As a result, a rift forms between them.

This is when that I realized that this wasn't as light and Hallmark-y as I thought it might be. There's some real grit here, told well through excellent writing and deft delivery by top-drawer actors.

What could have come off as an inef-

fectively rendered historical drama with a rose-tinted portrayal of Ward Allen, instead seemed more like a complex tale about a complex man. This is in no small part to Mr. Caviezel, who could charm the skin off a snake. It's the kind of performance that makes one want to further investigate the real-life trials, triumphs, and tribulations of Allen, and the turbulent times he lived in.

The supporting cast also hits all the right marks, with Jaimie Alexander turning in a convincing performance as Allen's conflicted love interest. Mr. Ejiofor is likewise game as Allen's loyal friend who keeps his dignity in the face of adversity.

"Savannah" is a beautifully shot film with incredible natural scenery. It's also a well-told movie that has to do with friendships across color lines, something that was a lot more common in the Old South than most Hollywood productions would have you believe.

"Savannah" is available on Apple TV, Vudu, and Plex, and on DVD and Blu-ray.

Ian Kane is an U.S. Army veteran, author, filmmaker, and actor. He is dedicated to the development and production of innovative, thought-provoking, character-driven films and books of the highest quality.

'Savannah'

Director Annette Haywood-Carter

Starring Jim Caviezel, Chiwetel Ejiofor, Jaimie Alexander, Sam Shepard

Running Time 1 hour, 41 minutes

MPAA Rating PG-13

Release Date Aug. 23, 2013

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TRUTH and TRADITION

In Our Own Words

From the Desk of Our Puzzle Master



I've benefited greatly from the many relationships and friendships formed making the puzzle pages better and better with each passing year.

Tom Houston

Puzzle Master



Learn more about The Epoch Times at **EpochSubscription.com** Dear Epoch VIP (and Puzzler!),

Thank you for subscribing to The Epoch Times and for supporting our journey of providing the world with truthful, uncensored journalism as well as analysis of world events, especially in China.

My journey with The Epoch Times actually began in 2009 when I discovered the publication's outstanding coverage of events in China, something of which I had studied for over 30 years principally as a linguist and China analyst. The Epoch Times' coverage was unique and included many aspects and facets of Chinese life under the Chinese Communist Party that were either not covered or were entirely avoided by the mainstream press. After reading this coverage, I felt compelled to "climb aboard" and support The Epoch Times on its journey toward truthful reporting that would not be beholden to any kind of censorship, whether it's from a government or commercial entity. After discussions with the editor-in-chief on what the newspaper actually most needed and what I personally could do to support the paper, I published my first puzzle page on Jan. 4, 2010-over 12 years ago. Since then, my Epoch Times journey has been eventful, to say the least. I have learned and grown a great deal, and so has our puzzle page! It's grown from a single page of puzzles in a 16-page edition to two pages of puzzles (and a half page on the Wednesday "For Kids Only" page) in what is now a 52-page paper! Along the way, hundreds of puzzlers have reached out through our feedback@epochtimes.com email to comment on the puzzles, send me pictures of their unique solutions, ask questions, point out my mistakes (I've made many!), pass along a compliment or constructive criticism and offer to help. I've benefited greatly from the many relationships and friendships formed making the puzzle pages better

and better with each passing year.

Thank you, readers! We wouldn't be where we are today without you! **Each and every one of you** who has subscribed, advertised, or who has sent in encouraging words, constructive comments, or ideas has helped to make The Epoch Times what it is today.

A number of Epoch Times readers (and puzzle fans) actually contribute to our puzzle pages! "Coder Chang" developed a "4 Numbers" puzzle tool (4Nums.com) that we have been using since January 2018. Our skydiving chess master, Michael Gibbs, began donating "Chess Challenges" to The Epoch Times over two years ago. Liz Ball, an accomplished puzzle developer whose work has appeared in more than 300 publications (HiddenPicturePuzzles.com) began donating her popular "Hidden Picture" puzzles to The Epoch Times' kids page over a year ago.

We sincerely appreciate these puzzles, and for me, they are a kind reminder of the community that has built up around this newspaper.

In short, seeing people genuinely moved by The Epoch Times' commitment to journalism and truthful reporting of events, often glossed over or "slanted" by other media outlets, has been a heartwarming experience for me.

I hope that your journey with The Epoch Times will be as educational, satisfying, and fulfilling as mine has been. And, please, always feel free to drop us a line at **feedback@epochtimes.com**. We appreciate your insight, and who knows—I could always use

a few more hands in the puzzle workshop.

In truth and tradition,

Tom Houston The Epoch Times

