WEEK 14, 2019 • 1

THE EPOCH TIMES

ARTS© TRADITION





THE EPOCH TIMES





THEATER REVIEW

WHEN THE MND FAILS

JUDD HOLLANDER

EW YORK-The turmoil of a confused, failing mind is examined in French playwright Florian Zeller's "The Mother." Translated by Christopher Hampton and having its U.S. premiere at the Atlantic Theater Company, the work is an attempt to view one woman's disintegrating psyche from the inside.

Anne (Isabelle Huppert) is a middle-aged woman in an unhappy marriage. Once completely devoted to her two children, she has precious little to do now that they have grown up and moved away. She prefers to stay inside and brood about what she has lost rather than trying to get on with her life.

(Chris Noth), have grown apart over the years, though exactly which of them is to blame for this is impossible to say. On this day, Peter is preparing to leave for a four-day

It doesn't help that she and her husband, Peter

work-related seminar. Anne, however, is convinced that Peter is planning to dump her for a much younger woman. This accusation he vehemently denies. Anne equates Peter's pending departure with the

fact that both her children have left her. She's especially hurt by the departure of their son Michael (Justice Smith), and the fact that he's now living with his girlfriend (Odessa Young). Anne is so jealous of this new woman in her son's life that she refuses to say her name aloud correctly.

It's not long before it becomes obvious that something is amiss. Anne's actions and comments change from ones that initially seem funny, snide, or deliberately obtuse (such as her continually asking Peter how his day has been), to something bitter, mean-spirited, and at times, overtly sexual.

This effect is accomplished by the replay of certain scenes and dialogue, with the different characters altering their delivery accordingly. Anne changes the most during these moments, with a clear indication that she is suffering from some form

"The Mother," the second in a trilogy of plays by Zeller about family, offers some tantalizing possibilities, with an early sequence being especially funny. Noth and Huppert have excellent back-and-forth banter here, even though it soon becomes obvious

that what we are seeing is anything but comedic. While running through the entire work is the importance of Anne's dignity-even as she quickly becomes unlikable for her actions—we soon real ize that we are seeing pretty much the entire play through the prism of her mind. She reacts to situations as she perceives them, not necessarily as they

This premise is a major misstep by the show's creative team. We are left to determine what, if anything, presented has some basis in fact. Without a **Closes** clear fixed point to serve as a reference or anchor, it's impossible to figure out who to believe on any

subject. As such, any opportunity to connect to the characters is lost. We are reduced to passive observers, with little chance to become emotionally invested in what those on stage are experiencing. It doesn't help that there is little character development in the play. The intention of the playwright may have been to keep the audience guessing as to what is real and what is not, but it would have been far better if some sort of backstory were included for these people. Everything that is offered is colored by Anne's own personal filters, no matter how damaged they might be.

Huppert is excellent as a woman whose life is falling apart. Her descent was perhaps, at one point, of her own making, but she has long since lost any control over it.

Noth, basically relegated to a reactive character, comes off wonderfully in the early portion of the play as a befuddled husband, with a perfect, slow burn, as he tries to make sense of his wife's actions. Smith is fine as the son, although some insight as

to the exact nature of Anne's relationship with her son would have made the play much more effective. We can assume it included overprotection on her

Young, the only actor who plays multiple roles in the show (such as the husband's girlfriend, a nurse), is quite good. Her turn as Michael's girlfriend is particularly striking. She's initially a loving and caring person who turns into someone quite callous and cruel, all depending on how Anne happens to see her at any specific moment.

Trip Cullman's direction is fine as far as it goes, but it can't overcome the weaknesses in the script. Mark Wendland's set is nicely antiseptic, and Ben Stanton's harsh lighting works quite well. Yet their efforts only serve to further defuse the story rather than allow it to coalesce into anything more substantial. It's interesting to note that the play script subtitles the show as "a black farce." This distinction, though, is not mentioned in the actual theater program or the press materials.

While "The Mother" touches on a subject the playwright obviously cares deeply about, the work refuses to let the audience get any closer than arm's length and reduces a potentially powerful message to little more than an afterthought.

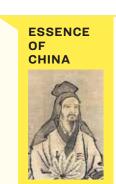
Judd Hollander is a reviewer for Stagebuzz. com and a member of the Drama Desk and the Outer Critics Circle.

'The Mother

Linda Gross Theater 336 W. 20th St.

Running Time 1 hour, 30 minutes (no intermission)

Tickets 866-811-4111 or AtlanticTheater.org



Week 14, 2019 THE EPOCH TIMES

Qingming Festival:

Tomb-Sweeping Day in Honor of Ancestors

'Be pure and bright,' the loyal official advised the king

DUOYU ZHONG & TANYA HARRISON

any Chinese will be visiting he tombs of their ancestors on April 5 to pay their espects, as the Qingming Festival, also called Pure Bright Day or Tomb-Sweeping Day, falls on that day this year.

Qingming is an important traditional Chinese festival celebrated on the 15th day after the spring equinox. It's not only a day for honoring one's ancestors but also a time to celebrate spring.

The origin of the Qingming Festival can be traced back to a legend recorded in "Zuo Zhuan," one of the earliest Chinese works of narrative history, which covers most of the Spring and Autumn Period (770–476 B.C.).

A Solemn, Stirring Story

As the legend goes, Chong Er (697–628 B.C.), once the crown prince of the state of Jin. was driven out of the state by Liji, who was then his father's favorite concubine. During his 19-year exile, Chong Er lived in extreme poverty, with only a few faithful men to serve him. One of them was Jie Zitui.

One day, close to death from starvation. Chong Er lost consciousness. To save his life, Jie cut a piece of flesh from his own thigh and prepared a bowl of soup for his

Chong Er was deeply moved and promised to repay Jie in the future. Jie insisted he wanted no reward; his only wish was for Chong Er to become a king who had a pure and bright heart while governing the state of Jin, keeping it peaceful and orderly. After Chong Er ascended the throne, he

summoned the people who had stayed loyal to him and generously rewarded them. As the new king, he even rewarded the people

who had betrayed him but now supported

When a minister suggested that they set

trace of Jie and his mother. the half-burned tree, there was a note write

Cutting off my own flesh to respectfully present to my monarch, offering loyalty

be pure and bright. Dead under a willow tree and seen no

Better than accompanying my monarch as a remonstrating minister. Your Majesty, if you have me in your heart,



him. However, he forgot Jie. When Chong Er finally remembered Jie and his sacrifice, he was filled with regret. He sent a messenger to find Jie and invite him to the palace. But Jie had already moved with his mother deep into the forests of Mount Jin (in the northeast of China). The king personally went to the mountain to

a large willow tree. In a hole on the side of ten with blood on a piece of cloth. It read

with all of my heart



look for Jie but failed to find him.

fires on three sides of the mountain to force Jie to come out, Chong Er agreed. The fires raged for three days, but there was still no

Jie was later found dead, leaning against

Only wishing Your Majesty will always Celebrating the Qingming



Festival at Longshan

Temple in Taipei City, Tai-

wan, on April 4, 2018.

The burning of

offerings during the Qingming Festival.

Your minister in the underworld died with a clear conscience, Be diligent in governing the country so that purity and brightness will be renewed.

Tears rolled down Chong Er's cheeks. He was so sad that he cried aloud. He tucked Jie's note in a sleeve pocket and vowed to be a pure and bright king for his people.

King With a Righteous Heart

Jie was buried under the willow tree, and in his memory, Chong Er ordered that no fire or smoke be allowed on that day. That day was called Hanshi Day (Cold Food Day) because without fire, the people had to eat cold meals.

Continued on Page 12



TRUTH and TRADITION

ANEWSPAPER GEORGE WASHINGTON WOULD READ

The very fabric of America is under attack our freedoms, our republic, and our constitutional rights have become contested terrain. The Epoch Times, a media committed to truthful and responsible journalism, is a rare bastion of hope and stability in these testing times.

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Split-double fore-edge paintings on an 1863 edition of "The Works of William Shakespeare.

CRAFTSMANSHIP

The Disappearing Art of Vanishing Fore–Edge Painting

An interview with fore-edge painter Martin Frost

LORRAINE FERRIER

"Wow! I didn't see that coming." For over 40 years, these have been the words that fore-edge painter Martin Frost has heard the most when people have seen his work for the first time, and it's a delight he never tires of hearing. Frost continues the critically endangered UK

heritage craft of fore-edge painting, in particular vanishing fore-edge painting, a craft whereby images are painted on the fanned page edges of a book and are therefore hidden under the gilded tips of a page, or less commonly, under the marbled tips of a page.

In the 2019 New Year Honors list, Frost was honored for his services in preserving the disappearing art of fore-edge painting and awarded a Member of the Order of the British Empire, a national honor.

Below, Frost shares his thoughts about the dying tradition of fore-edge painting and reveals how the hidden images can be seen.

THE EPOCH TIMES: Please tell us about your work. **MARTIN FROST:** Vanishing fore-edge painting is a form of book art for book decoration unlike any



Vanishing fore-edge painting is a form of book art for book decoration unlike any other.

Martin Frost, artist

work; it's fun, basically For example, I do a lot of copies of Leonardo da Vinci's "Last Supper," basically on Bibles and prayer books, but each one is slightly different. That's the joy of hand-created work. You can put a bit of yourself into it, and you don't get that when you're producing work for the print trade-where you produce an image and then it's just repeated by the thousand. There's a lot less zest, as such,

THE EPOCH TIMES: How did you come to be a foreedge painter?

MR. FROST: Well, I've always been a painter and artist. My father was a professional painter. He was a member of The Pastel Society, so as I grew up, there was always painting going on, there was always drawing going on, and so there was no fear of art. It's what we did.

I didn't really want to do painting; I wanted to do something a bit different, so actually my training was in theater. I produced set designs, stage designs, costumes, props, and backdrops.

It was when I was working at Glyndebourne, the local opera house, that I met up with Don Noble, a colleague who was also doing stage work.

Noble had been doing fore-edge painting for decades, and he showed me what he did. And I thought, "I could do that; that's pretty straightforward. I'll have a go at that."

And I did. I tried my hand, and offered them to one of the local bookshops, and they said, "That's not bad;

we'll buy that." Admittedly, it took me a few years to actually move away from my work in the theater, and I then moved into newspaper design, typography, and print, but all the time, I was still painting on the edges of books.

Back in the 1980s, there was a revival of fore-edge painting, so there was enough work for me to actually call myself a full-time professional fore-edge painter, and it's been like ever since.

THE EPOCH TIMES: Can you give us an overview of the history of fore-edge painting? **MR. FROST:** The earliest examples of fore-edge painting that we know of–now, that doesn't mean that they are the earliest, but the ones that we have evidence of-go back to about 1650 in London. They tended to be of armorial crests, coats of arms, lettering, and emblems. They weren't picturesque, but they did vanish under the

edge gilding. About a hundred years later, in the late 18th century, Edwards of Halifax, in Yorkshire, resurrected it. The Edwards family really commercialized vanishing fore-edge painting, and they did

some very nice work and some very nice bindings as well. They were primarily a bookbindery, but they were always interested in trying other things as well. They were quite the trailblazers, and their work is very collectible now. They produced picturesque vanishing paintings on the edges of books; they were views of houses, seascapes, and townscapes-the sort of paintings that were being hung on walls at the time.

The story of fore-edge painting is the story of a sort of wave formation: It comes in, it's popular, then it sort of drifts away, and then it is rediscovered a generation or so later. That's what happened in my time, really. Back in the 1980s, it was riding high. It was very popular.

It's not as popular now. We don't sell as many; we don't produce as many because it's a fashion thing, really.

I started fore-edge painting around 1970 and have produced around 3,500 so far.

THE EPOCH TIMES: Can you tell us about the actual process of the fore-edge painting? **MR. FROST:** The technique I use is to fan out the book, and then I put it into a press, and a clamp holds the book into position for me to do the

The books don't always fan easily; sometimes if the paper is very stiff, they don't fan very well. If the paper is too thin, they over-fan, so there are optimum types of books to work on.

The painting is a little strange, actually. I use English watercolors because I'm a bit of a traditionalist. However, painting with English watercolors is usually a very wet process. First you put water down on the paper, then you add color afterward, and you get a lovely blur and blend. But you don't do that with fore-edge painting because if you add a lot of water onto the fan edge of the book, the pages will ripple and you end up with a very wobbly-looking book.

So it's a dry brush technique that I use, which is very unusual for English watercolors, but I find it's the technique that works for me.

THE EPOCH TIMES: Do you only paint on antique

MR. FROST: No one had thought about combining modern binding with fore-edge painting until I really got involved. I could see that the market was changing. The market for the old books was beginning to wither, and I thought the technique of vanishing fore-edge painting could be applied to modern books just as easily as old books, so long as you could involve the binder, who needs to remake the book and apply gold on the edges because modern books do not have gilded edges. It then became a necessity to find out how to rebind and gild modern books in order to hide the painting. So fore-edge painting onto modern books is a lot more work than going out and buying an old leather book with the gold edges already on it and painting that.





I like working in leather and gold, using the old artisan techniques, the old crafts of bookbinding, so I'm working within a tradition.

Martin Frost, artist



other. I decorate books in a way that is invisible unless you know how to open the book properly to show the image. It's sort of very English; we English, we're great ones for doing things a bit strange. We like the odd, we like the quirky, we like the unusual, and vanishing fore-edge painting is certainly that.

I'm a painter; I don't call myself an artist because an artist will create new images. I do a lot of images that I've acquired from elsewhere, so there's a fair amount of copywork going on. But I'm a painter, and I paint images, and I'm happiest when I've got a paintbrush in my hand. It's not

Martin Frost's painting of Leonardo da Vinci's "The Last Supper" is a popular choice for the edges of Bibles and prayer books.



My preference is to always create a new binding rather than use the old production binding. I like working in leather and gold, using the old artisan techniques, the old crafts of bookbinding, so I'm working within a tradition.

You can produce some very interesting modern work. I tend not to do that: I'm a bit of a traditionalist here. Some of the techniques that I use for putting a book back together again are the same methods bookbinders have used for the last

THE EPOCH TIMES: Where did you learn the skills of bookbinding and gilding? MR. FROST: You learn it on the job; there are no ap-

prentices these days. The old bookbinding guilds have just about vanished, so I've had to learn the skills myself. But I've got a lot of friends who are bookbinders, who have been doing it for a long time, so I pick their brains mercilessly.

The handcraft bookbinders, they're all basically like me: They're all people who love what they are doing and are invariably happy to pass on the information to others who show an interest. I'm a one-stop craftsman now. I can take it from

the printed pages straight up to the finished job, and I am on my own like that. I am the only one doing fore-edge painting, book gilding, gilding the pages, and binding as well.

This is handcraft work, which is a skill, and I've been doing it for over 40 years now, and it's taken me that time to get up to where I am now. It's not something that you just look at on YouTube and say, "Oh yeah, that's how you do that." It's something that you have to plod away at, and we've got to the stage now where people are appreciating

In fact, I like to think that craft in the arts is enjoying a bit of a revival. People are saying: "Yes, we can get our iPhones. They're produced by the hundreds of thousands. They're amazing things, but they're not really human."

Now a book, a book by its very nature is a very tactile thing. It's a very enjoyable thing. You can pick it up, you can put it down, you can rifle through it, you can feel it, and you can even smell it if it's a leather-bound book. It's quite distinctive, and then if you can find a special secret surprise on it that has been handcrafted just for that book, it becomes something really special. And that, to my mind, is what craft is all about. These are one-offs. What you'll get with a foreedge painting is something absolutely unique in your hands, and there will never be another one quite like it.

This interview has been edited for clarity and brevity.



Vanishing fore-edge paintings are on all the edges of this family Bible; the images are revealed when the book is twisted, as in this photo.

Two chariots race each other in a scene from ancient Rome on the edge of "Cassell's Illustrated Universal History," 1887 edition

LITERATURE

Great Books I Wouldn't Want to Be In

"Reading Woman" (portrait of artist's wife), after 1866, by Ivan Kramskoy.

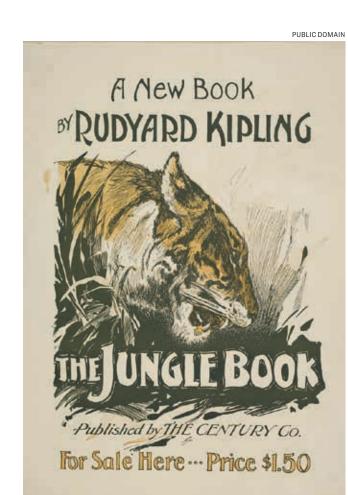
(And Some I Would!)

SUSANNAH PEARCE

f there's something book lovers like almost as much as reading books, it's talking about books. About the plot details. About the characters. About the meaning. We feel for and with the characters. We immerse ourselves in the details. We virtually put ourselves into the stories. Just for fun, I thought I would imagine what it would be like to be a character in the works of a selection by well-known authors. I imagined myself being an inhabitant in the world and story the author created, not always the protagonist, and not necessarily as myself. It turns out, I would not like to be in many of them as much as I enjoyed reading them.

What follows is my rating of each. The authors are listed chronologically by the dates of their birth.

Continued on Page 12



Rudyard Kipling (1865–1936, English)

■ I have the courage for this. I'd have to be raised by wolves to not want to be in his books. Oh, wait. I'd probably enjoy it even more if I were raised by wolves, like Mowgli in "The Jungle Book"! Excitement, rites of passage, and becoming a grown-up are the advantages Kipling's characters enjoy in his jungle and sea adventures. American Book

Kipling offered loads of adventures. Poster for "The Jungle Book," circa 1900. The New York Public Library, The Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Division of Art, Prints and **Photographs**

Geoffrey Chaucer (circa 1343–1400, English)

Count me in! Basically, in "The Canterbury Tales," I get to go on a long pilgrimage on foot, to the shrine of Thomas à Becket, with a passel of mix-and-match mates, telling and listening to entertaining tales along the way. Accommodation in inns is assured, and the whole thing is entirely voluntary. What's not to like?

William Shakespeare (1564–1616, English)

To be, or not to be in his works? I'll go with his comedies, but pass on his tragedies. Who would wholly opt out of the chance to speak the brilliant dialogue penned by The Bard, maneuvering in and out of hilarious plans within plans? The beauty of it is, anyone with a penchant for the stage can be in them! Shakespeare wrote plays!

Jane Austen

(1775–1817, English)

My good opinion of the prospect has been easily gained.

On the liability side, I would almost certainly be a poor young woman with little $prospect\, of\, a\, good\, marriage.\, But\, on\, the\, asset$ side, by Austen's reckoning, "poor" means that I can afford only one servant. Balls and walks in the English countryside are guaranteed. Best of all, my witty personality will result in my becoming the wife of a man in possession of a good fortune (and handsome, in the bargain).

Charles Dickens (1812–1870, English)

Low expectations for this one.

What I don't understand is where the expression "A Dickens Christmas" came from. Haven't those who use the phrase read any of his masterful books? A true Dickens Christmas is sure to be populated with selfish, gruesome, underhanded, and unlikable figures if it were anything like his books. I would definitely not like to enter a world like that.

Charlotte, Emily, and Anne Brontë

(1816–1855, 1818–848, 1820-1849, English)

■ I would always rather be happy than be in their books.

These gals can write! But they can write me out of their novels. Gothic romance and melodrama is not for everyone. The damp English weather may not have been conducive to good health and cheerfulness for these young ladies, but it did a potential character in their books, I opt for less of the moors.

Fyodor Dostoyevsky **and Leo Tolstoy** (1821–1881, 1828–1910. Russian)

Nyet. For space considerations, I'm lumping together these two Russian literary geniuses. Remembering the names and nicknames of hundreds of people and the faces they go with is not my forte. And I like to be happy. While I might learn great moral lessons, if I had to be in one of their books, I just might throw myself in front of a train.

Jules Verne (1828–1905, French)

i I'm sure to go far in his books. Adventure on the cutting edge of future Steampunk technology with plenty of financial resources—and a servant—actually appeals to me. It would be like a science field trip to plunge the depths in Captain Nemo's Nautilus, or explore the depths of the Earth. Or a speed vacation, circumnavigating the globe in 80 days. I'd go a long way for inclusion in Verne's novels. Perhaps even 20,000 leagues.

Mark Twain (1835–1910, American)

Any friend of Twain's is a friend of mine. Not unlike the celebrated frog of Calaveras County, I'd jump at the chance to be in any of Mark Twain's books. (Though, I'd better be sure no one filled me with a handful of shot first.) Fun, adventure, and more than a

handful of sharp American wit fill his pages.

Oscar Wilde

lems, those lovely late Victorian fashions, and happy endings! Sounds like an ideal

Kenneth Graham

(1859–1932, English)

■ Believe me, there would be nothing half so much worth doing as messing about in

Although "Wind in the Willows" is a talking-animal book, it ought to be in every well-read adult's library. Friendship is the main thing here. There is plenty of lolling about in boats, picnicking, and visiting neighbors. The main turmoil comes from Mr. Toad's wild streak, which necessitates continual rescue by his faithful friends. Graham's idyllic English countryside is one I

I admit, the foremost reason I do not wish to be in London's books stems from my aversion to being cold. I could not bear to be cast in a scene in which the temperature is 50 degrees below zero. And you just can't trust this author to let your hands work well enough to strike a match to start a fire. I'm not going there.

₩ What ho! I'll go!

I would generally get to hobnob with the upper classes of the unrealistically idyllic 1930s England. His characters are endearing, and the hilarious predicaments he creates are thoroughly G-Rated. Yet, his stories are peppered with references enjoyed by the well-read and highly educated. I would let Wodehouse write me into anything!

Homer

(circa 750–650 B.C., Greek) Just kill me first.

There are many unpleasant ways to die in "The Iliad" or "The Odyssey." I would consider myself lucky if I were killed off in the Trojan War in "The Iliad" rather than head home victorious, say no to drugs, resist the temptation of the siren song, avoid becoming a Cyclops snack, skirt a whirlpool while at the same time not being swallowed by the six-headed Scylla, to ultimately be drowned in a sea storm as punishment for eating a

Odysseus and the sirens, 2nd century A.D., mosaic at the Bardo Museum in Tunis, Tuni-



(1854–1900, English)

■ I would earnestly enjoy being in some

of his works. Delightfully convoluted first-world probmarriage to me! But please, I'd rather not be in "The Picture of Dorian Gray."

would inhabit with enthusiasm!

Jack London (1876–1916, American)

■ I don't hear the call of his books.

P.G. Wodehouse (1881–1975, English)

Odysseus's Journey Part 1

ODYSSEUS AND THE ENNEAGRAM

An ancient personality tool, the enneagram

Finding the True Self

JAMES SALE

After the Trojan War, it took Odysseus 10 years to get home. Each of the adventures on his journey required that he master an aspect of his own character. A detail from "Odysseus und Polyphemus," 1896, Arnold Böcklin.

In this multipart series, "Finding the True Self," we will discuss nine types of personalities and their flaws, and show how Odysseus, through his adventures, overcame them to find his way back home.

The "Odyssey" is the most famous homecoming story in Western literature and mythology. It is justly famous because it is a work that one can truly say is divinely inspired: In its opening few lines, Homer invokes the Muse, whom he calls the "daughter of Zeus," the king of the gods, as the inspiration for the

There is so much in the "Odyssey" to provoke the imagination and to touch the heart. For example, this isn't just a story about a man finding his way home to his wife and son, but the journey of mankind in search of our own souls. In other words, this is not just some physical adventure, but a deeply psychic, symbolic, and spiritual

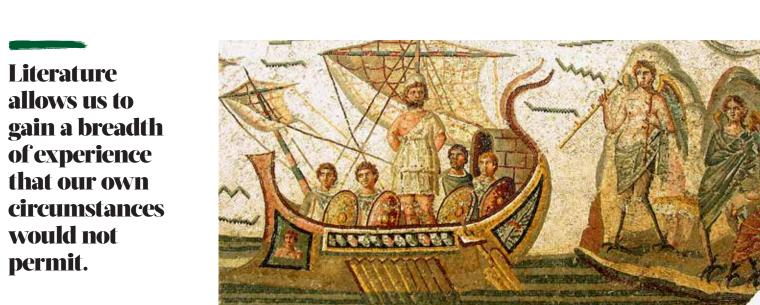
Indeed, it is quite early on in the tale when Polyphemus, the Cyclops, calls on his father, the Sea God, Poseidon, to avenge his blindness, and Poseidon hears his son. Thus, it is that the very depths of the sea, symbolizing our raging emotions and deep subconscious, are pitted against Odysseus. He must contend with them if he is ever to get home and become himself; for home is where we are our selves. Only at home can we relax.

What Is the Enneagram?

What is surprising, perhaps, is the discovery that the "Odyssey" is not just a story but also a heuristic, personality tool! The Enneagram (from the Greek, meaning nine points) is, among other things, a personality-typing device or symbol

It came to recent prominence in California in the 1950s. There is some dispute among experts as to the exact origins of the Enneagram, but according to Judith Searle in her book "The Literary Enneagram," the Enneagram was known as early as 2500 B.C. in Babylon or the Middle East, and that its symbol was familiar to the Greek mathematician and philosopher Pythagoras (circa 582-507 B.C.).

Continued on Page 12



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

Dragged Across Concrete'

Hyperviolent Pie in the Face of Political Correctness

MARK JACKSON

Police skill-sets of tracking, outmaneuvering, outshooting, apprehending, kidnapping, interrogating, and coercing bad guys contain the temptation (during times of financial scarcity) to loot looters. The line between law enforcement and criminals is often thin.

Officer Brett Ridgeman (Mel Gibson) and his new partner, Anthony Lurasetti (Vince Vaughn), constantly have to deal with the cop equivalent of parents not being able to spank their kids anymore. But, as has been made abundantly clear in recent years, cops get rough all the time, regardless, for many reasons. Racism might be one reason, but mostly it's exasperation, and knowing from experience that violence gets quicker results. But now smartphones lurk everywhere, and Brett and Anthony are videoed using excessive force on a perp. They get dragged before the boss, who happens to be Brett's for-

they are suspended without pay. Brett's furthermore subjected to a lecture about the fact that he's a perennial doorkicker, never wanted to ride a desk, and now he's 60. And, how, in his line of work, if one gets "dragged across too much concrete" (the movie's title), one has to be careful not to lose one's ability to keep the higher, benevolent scope of law enforcement in perspective. The boss feels Brett's dangerously close to policing purely on bile.

mer partner (a top-notch Don Johnson), and

And indeed, Brett's too hard-bitten for the lecture to take. While he's not as cynical as the brutal, self-righteous cop Nick Nolte played in "Q & A," or the worse cop Richard Gere played in "Internal Affairs," he's close. Brett's ex-cop wife (Laurie Holden) has MS, and his daughter (Jordyn Ashley Olson) is

getting bullied by neighborhood teens to the

to soon talk to a rape counselor. Brett wants to move out of the seedy city of "Bulwark" in the worst way, and now he's suspended without pay.

One can imagine his thought process: Here I am, risking my life to save the populace from drug dealers. I do my job with one hand tied behind my back, and now I get suspended? Are you kidding me? Well alrighty then. I'm going to get a little payback.

"Payback" is the name of one of the grittiest, pulpy, noir, cop movies ever, which Mel Gibson starred in before his public fall from grace a few years back. While that movie was hip and very funny, "Dragged Across Concrete," while even more violent, is also more realistic and therefore sadder. But Gibson also hereby reclaims his status as one of our better actors. And "Dragged" is not without humor.

Who's Going to Pay?

Henry Johns (Tory Kittles) just got released from jail. He'd kind of like to try going straight, but discovers mom is doing bad things to pay the bills, and that's all it takes to accept an offer from an old crime associate (Michael Jai White) to drive some bank robbers to a bank.

Suffice it to say, the bank robbers rob a bank, and our bad off-duty cops attempt to rob the bank robbers, and director S. Craig Zahler takes a long, leisurely time (presumably born of the mindset of also being a writer) to tell his tale. Which results in patches of boredom offsetting bouts of high tension. Which results in the whole movie feeling

About a third of the way through, however, Jennifer Carpenter (Dexter's cop sister in the morsel of a ham-and-cheese sandwich with challenges today's PC standards, and then HBO series "Dexter") plays a mother trying to go back to work at said bank, after taking three months off to have a child. Juilliardpoint where his wife imagines them having grad Carpenter single-handedly turns the





(Top) Vince Vaughn (L) and Mel Gibson play suspended cops in "Dragged Across Concrete."

(Bottom) Tory Kittles as a newly released ex-convict, in "Dragged Across Concrete."

tension up to 10, portraying the anguish of a of a stakeout is the eating. Gibson replies, "A mother needing to go to work and bring home the bacon, while in the throes of postpartum

Which underscores director Zahler's rather traditional take on things. He sees women as needing strong men to guard and take care of them. Also, political correctness is thrown like a pie in the audience's collective face by officers Ridgeman and Lurasetti: "I'm not a racist. I always order a cup of dark roast on MLK day" is the mild side of it.

This is definitely not a movie for feminists and/or liberals; it's pretty much exclusively for hard-bitten veteran law enforcement personnel living in a time when the friendly, short-sleeves and wingtips-wearing neighborhood policeman of Norman Rockwell's era has given way to paramilitary outfits and submachine guns. And, of course, the ubiquitous first-responder graveyard humor that always accompanies seeing too much death.

Best scene: On a stakeout in the car, Vaughn loudly munches, masticates, lip-smacks, sighs, swallows, tooth-sucks, paper-crinkles, twist-and-turn-surveys each remaining immense, phlegmatic relish, all the while being balefully, slow-burn glared at by Gibson. Who's incredulous. Because it goes on forever. Vaughn then blithely offers that the best part

single red ant could have eaten that faster.'

Director as Provocateur

Casting Mel Gibson (who got thrown out of Hollywood on his ear due to real-life racist remarks) as a racist cop who, like Nick Nolte's aforementioned dirty cop, pines for the pre-PC days when cops weren't hamstrung by nice-y-niceness-is a perfect and perfectly cynical showbiz ploy.

Director Zahler has Ridgeman's ex-cop wife talk about how her former liberal stance has been obliterated by living in a crime-ridden black neighborhood.

At one point, Vaughn's character says it all went downhill for men when men started saying "we're pregnant" instead of "she's pregnant."

And the story is basically about a black ex-con and two white, probably-soon-tobe ex-cops, involved in a heist that each one hopes will give them an advantage over the bad hand they've been dealt in life. How are these lives alike

Ultimately, "Dragged Across Concrete" turns around and challenges the audience by making all involved (with the exception of the bank heist crew) more or less under-

'Dragged Across

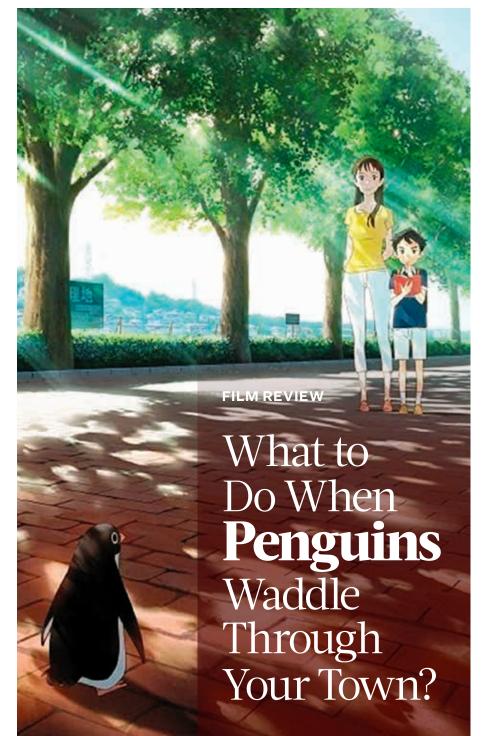
Director S. Craig Zahler

Starring Mel Gibson, Vince Vaughn, Tory Kittles, Laurie Holden. Jennifer Carpenter Michael Jai White, Don Johnson, Udo

Running Time 2 hours, 39 minutes

Release Date March 22

FILM REVIEW





JOE BENDEL

When scores of penguins suddenly appear in this rural Japanese village, it is a little like "Magnolia," but exponentially cuter. In fact, these penguins might just save our world as we know it, but until then, they are quite charming to have around in Hiroyasu Ishida's "Penguin Highway," which won the Satoshi Kon Award for Excellence in Animation at the 2018 Fantasia International Film Festival.

Aovama is a reasonably well-socialized fourth grader, considering how smart he is. Nevertheless, the compulsively experimenting science whiz is already looking forward to his future success. When "waddles" of penguins start waddling through his baffled town-way outside their natural habitat, obviously–Aoyama is the first to start formulating

Of course, that means he starts researching in the field, with the help of his loyal pal Uchida. However, he is also rather interested in the mysterious woman One-san, now working at the local dentist, whom he gallantly refers to as "The Ladv."

She is smart and has attitude, as well as other things a boy on the verge of puberty might notice. (She is voiced by Yu Aoi, after all.) Aoyama realizes he can learn a lot from her just from their conversations and chess games. However, his interest in her rises to a higher level when he realizes she apparently has a

mysterious connection to the penguins. As if that were not enough, Aoyama and Uchida also help their classmate Hamamoto investigate a phenomenon that pretty clearly holds cosmic signifi-

cance. Hamamoto is also quite the junior scientist, which is probably why she has a crush on Aoyama. "Highway" is surprisingly intriguing as science fiction, warmly endearing as a coming-of-age story, and it is just the living end as a penguin fantasy. Despite

the borderline "Summer of '42" relationship between Aoyama and The Lady, the film has a lot to offer family viewers, including lessons on the scientific method and the depiction of two fathers who are smart and engaged parents (Aoyama's and Hamamoto's dads). Plus, there are all those fun-loving penguins.

The animation (with character design work from Yojiro Arai) is visually quite lovely, but it is the film's bittersweet vibe that really sticks with you. The trappings are contemporary, but the narrative has a time-

When you get right down to it, it would be ever so nice to stroll through this burg in the foothills, with a dozen penguins for company.

To his credit, Makoto Ueda never dumbs down his screen adaptation of Tomihiko Morimi's source novel. There is some clever stuff in here, and the stakes get planetary in scope. Yet, it still faithfully evokes all the optimism and confusion of young adolescence-with

This film is just a total winner that is just too good for American anime fans to miss out on. Very enthusiastically recommended, "Penguin Highway" had its international premiere at this year's Fantasia and

Joe Bendel writes about independent film and lives in New York. To read his most recent articles, visit JBSpins.blogspot.com

'Penguin Highway Director Hirovasu Ishida

Starring

Kana Kita, Yu Aoi,

Rie Kugimiya

1 hour, 58 minutes **Release Date** April 12



Running Time



Tevye (Steven Skybell) and his milkcart, in the Yiddish production of "Fiddler on the Roof" directed by Joel Grey.



A highlight of the show is the bottle dance.



(L-R) Raquel Nobile, Rosie Jo Neddy, Rachel Zatcoff, Stephanie Lynne Mason, and Samantha Hahn play Tevye and Golde's five daughters.

THEATER REVIEW

Tradition, on 42nd Street

DIANA BARTH

EW YORK-It was a decision of genius for The National Yiddish Theatre Folksbiene to transfer this production of "Fiddler on the Roof" from its original site at downtown's Battery City to its present run on Manhattan's Theatre Row-Stage 42, in the heart of New York's theatrical melting pot.

And in Yiddish? You bet. Because now you're experiencing this brilliant, beloved musical in the language the stories of Sholem Aleichem (upon which the musical is based) were meant to be heard in. Furthermore, handily placed English supertitles on either side of the stage are barely needed, so clear

Under the direction of that consummate performer Joel Grey, the story of Anatevka, the fictitious Russian village, and its citizens unfolds so firmly, so realistically, that one often feels oneself in an actual place–not sitting in a theater.

Here the milkman Tevye (Steven Skybell) plies his trade. When his horse that pulls his milkcart goes lame, he himself bears the burden. Presently, he is dealing with getting the oldest three of his five daughters married off. The underlying thread to this process is tradition-holding on to it, or being forced to let it go.

All in this place are Orthodox Jews, wherein it is tradition that the father must choose his daughters' husbands. Firstborn Tsaytl (Rachel Zatcoff) readily complies-almost. She wants desperately to marry Motl (Ben Liebert), an impoverished tailor, if only

Although the break is accomplished, hard feelings Tevye (Steven Skybell) Hodl (Stephanie Lynne Mason) convinces Tevye and his wife, Golde (Jennifer Babiak), in the won-

derful Yiddish production

of "Fiddler on the Roof."

that she will be happy living in Siberia with her beloved Perchik (Drew Seigla). Tevye blesses her departure with a heavy heart. Khave (Rosie Jo Neddy), her love for the non-Jew Fyedka (Cameron Johnson) is unforgivable. Tevye

pronounces her dead to him, although he himself is pained by his decision. Tsaytl and Motl's traditional wedding scene, interspersed with the famous bottle dance (men dancing while balancing bottles on their heads) with original choreography by

> simplicity I could not account for my eyes tearing during much of the performance. Am I, and others in the audience, suffering from the loss of tradition? Or are we stressed by various insecurities wrought by contemporary life?

fireworks display bursting the threads of

The worst possible situation Stage 42 ultimately reaches Anatevka. A pogrom will soon take place. All must pack and leave everything within three days. Where to go? Tevye's wife Golde (an excellent Jennifer Babiak) embraces

and comforts her close

Tevye will break his agreement with the wealthy friend, matchmaker Yente (the inimitable Jackie butcher Leyzer-Volf (Bruce Sabath) to marry Tsaytl.

> Skybell is not tempted to play for laughs, or to introduce shtick. His is a performance that conveys authenticity, virility, and true caring for his character's plights.

When the characters sing "Lekhayim!" ("To Life!"), they truly mean it. Other songs (music by Jerry But tradition can only be pushed so far. As for Bock, lyrics by Sheldon Harnick, with the book by Joseph Stein) are also already familiar and resonate strongly, such as "Do You Love Me?" (a touching duet between Tevye and Golde), "Sunrise, Sunset," and "Far From the Home I Love."

Musical staging and new choreography have been added to Jerome Robbins's original by Stas Kmiec. The minimalist set by Beowulf Boritt and Ann Hould-Ward's deliberately shabby costumes Jerome Robbins, is extravagant and vivid—a complete the picture.

Here is art. But it is not artificial. Here is a "Fiddler" overflowing with exuberance and warmth.

Diana Barth writes for various theatrical publications and for New Millennium. She may be contacted at diabarth99@gmail.com

'Fiddler on the Roof'

422 W. 42nd St. New York

212-239-6200 or FiddlerNYC.com

Running Time 3 hours (one intermission)



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Finding the True Self Odysseus's Journey Part 1

Continued from Page 7

So this easily means that Homer could have been familiar with the Enneagram and incorporated it into his masterwork.

To take a more contemporary tool, the Myers-Briggs might be considered a rival of the Enneagram. But the Enneagram seems sourced with wisdom from a much deeper level in the human psyche. And once it surfaced in California, there was an explosion of books and literature on the topic, and Enneagram studies became mainstream and popular around the world.

What, then, is the Enneagram? At the risk of oversimplifying, the Enneagram is a personality tool that classifies all people into one of nine types. Although there are only nine, there is massive complexity within and across the types.

Before considering how this works in the "Odyssey," let's consider what these types are that each one of us corresponds to.

The Nine Types of People

Each of us is one number that has a specific selfimage and positive motivation, and each has one "deadly" sin that tends to be his or her Achilles' heel, and which must be overcome to reach one's full potential.

It is important to understand that one can only be one number, and this doesn't change over one's lifetime. However, that said, the numbers are fluid as the Enneagram symbol suggests. Adjacent numbers (called "wings") may impact one's primary number, and there are other ways in which numbers interact with each other.

If we go around in order from One to Nine and describe each's essential characteristics, it may be possible to identify what one's Enneagram number is. Usually, most people identify with two or three numbers, and then it's a question of getting feedback to narrow the options down. I like the oral tradition of ascertaining where one is by careful sifting of the qualities of each number.

Starting Clockwise, With Ones

Number Ones believe "I am right" and have a basic desire to do good and so tend to be idealistic. Their deadly sin, often repressed, is anger. Because Ones are perfectionists, and so reformers, their anger is repressed for they know that if they

were perfect, they wouldn't experience it!
At their best, Ones are good people wanting to improve the world. Of course, at their worst, they are self-righteous, arrogant, and highly judgmental of others.

The Enneagram is a personality tool that classifies all people into one of nine types.

1. Using his wits,

Perseus, possibly

a Six, was able to

slay the monster

Florence, Italy,

most likely a Two,

sometimes called the

Heaven and Earth to

Witness Her Sincere

Affection to Ulysses,'

Angelica Kauffmann.

18th century, by

Lover. "Calypso Calling

Medusa. "Perseus," by

Benvenuto Cellini. In the Loggia dei Lanzi of

The number Twos' self-image is "I help," and their basic desire is to feel love and to be a loving person, but their deadly sin, again often hidden even from themselves, is pride. This is surprising but arises because in their desire to help others, they often develop a sense of superiority over those they help: But for my help, what a mess so-and-so would be in.

Furthermore, while wishing to help others, they can deny that they need help themselves. This can, perversely, create exactly the opposite effect of the love that Twos intend.

At their best, Twos are generous helpers, loving, and openhearted friends; at their worst, they are flatterers, martyrs, and manipulators.

Number Threes' self-image is "I am successful," and their basic desire is to be valuable, or an effective person, but their deadly sin is deceit, and often they fool themselves about their true motives. This is because image is vitally important to Threes. So as they sculpt their own images to appear successful, they can easily end up believing their own hype!

Some writers on the Enneagram think that whole countries can be characterized by a dominant number: Threes' quest for success is often considered typically American.

At their best, they are motivating, goalorientated achievers; at their worst, they are workaholics, and as Michael Goldberg says in his wonderful book "The 9 Ways of Working," "soulless hustlers."

Who Wants to Be Different?

Fours see themselves as "I am different," and their desire is to be unique or original people. Their deadly sin is envy because they can't help but look on others and compare themselves, and feel they come up short. Hence, they focus on authenticity and originality as a way of compensating for comparative deficiencies. Fours are often considered artistic types.

At their best, Fours are sensitive, aesthetic, and profound; at their worst, they tend to be depressive, self-absorbed, and spiteful.

Fives' self-image is "I see through," and their basic desire is to master, as in becoming a wise person. But their deadly sin is avarice: There is never enough knowledge, so they tend to hoard it. They have a fear of not knowing enough. If the Americans are generally expansive Threes, the Brits are sometimes considered introverted Fives. At their best, Fives are perceptive, objective, and wise; at their worst, they are cold, pedantic, and

The Sixes' self-image is "I do my duty," and my basic desire is to be supportive and supported, and to be perceived as a loyal person. If Fives tend to be loners, then Sixes tend to be social and team workers. Their deadly sin is fear, especially of not being supported, or of being betrayed, which can create massive anxiety for them.

At their best, Sixes are committed, loyal, self-sacrificing team players; at their worst, they are suspicious, paranoid, and centers of deep negativity.

Sevens see themselves as "I am happy"; to be satisfied is their desire, and to be a joyful, optimistic person. But their deadly sin is gluttony, or excess. They seemingly cannot get enough positive experiences and are always propelling themselves forward to find the next one. Because of their quest for excess, important things often never get completed, as they move to the next

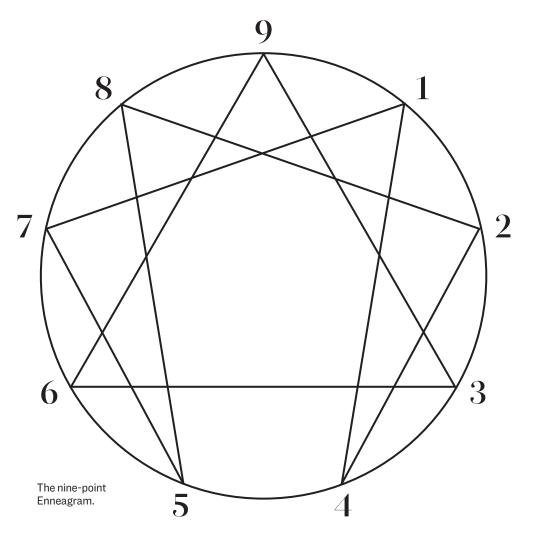
At their best, Sevens are innovative, inspirational, and big-picture people; at their worst, they are irresponsible, shallow, and underachievers.

Here's the Boss, at Eight

Eights perceive themselves as "I am strong," and their basic motivation is to protect themselves and to be a powerful person. Their deadly sin is lust, not just in a sexual sense but also as in a desire or lust for power. They want to know who's in control, and they want it to be them! Being weak is what they must avoid.

At their best, Eights are high-energy, takecharge, and responsible individuals; at their worst, they are confrontational, reckless, and









indictive.

Finally, Nines see themselves as "I am content." They wish to experience wholeness and be a peaceful person, but their deadly sin is sloth, or what the ancients called acedia—the inability to take effective action. Part of this inactivity is due to their ability to see both sides of a position, and so to fail to choose either.

At their best, Nines are empathetic, reliable, and harmonious; at their worst, they are apathetic, littless, and stubborn

Having read an overview, you might consider what number you think most represents your personality. And while you are thinking about it, our Part 2 of this series will begin to explore how these are revealed in Homer's "Odyssey."

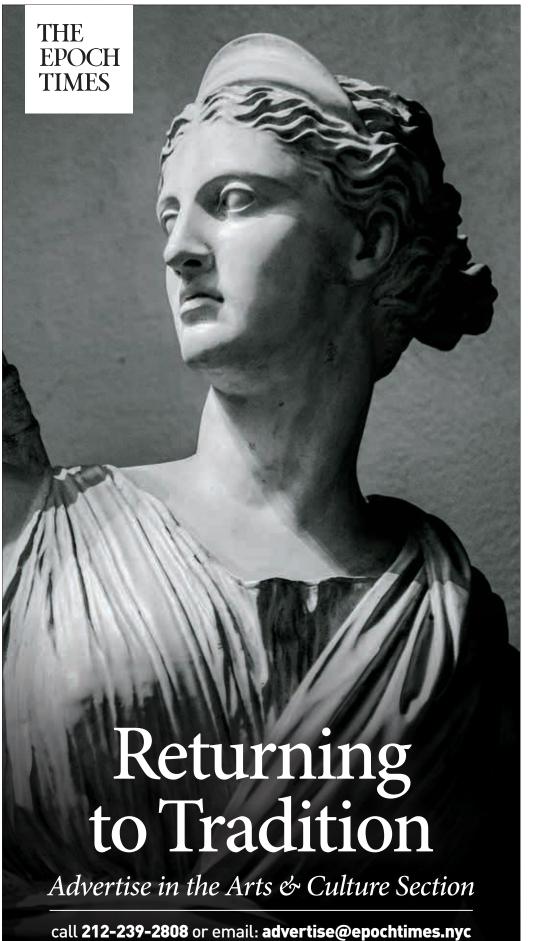


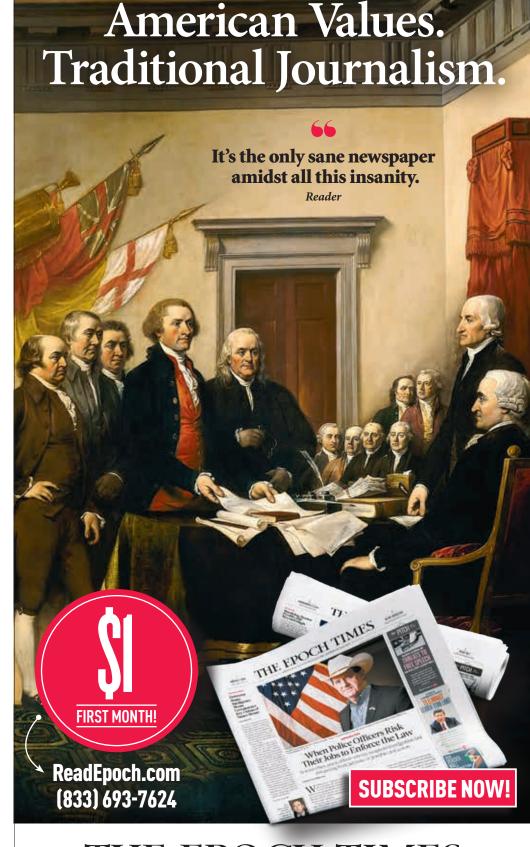
James Sale is an English businessman and the creator of Motivational Maps, which operates in 14 countries. He has authored over 40 books from major international publishers, including Macmillan, Pearson, and Routledge, on management, education, and poetry. As a poet, he won first prize in The Society of Classical Poets' 2017 competition.

3. Narcissus shares some traits with number Four types, sometimes considered the artist type. "Narcissus Changed Into a Flower," 1771, by Nicolas-Bernard Lépicié.

4. Achilles, likely an Eight and certainly a man of strength, could be vindictive, as he was to the Trojan Hector, whose dead body he dragged behind his chariot. "The Triumph of Achilles," 1892, by Franz Matsch. A fresco on the upper level of the main hall of the Achilleion at Corfu, Greece.

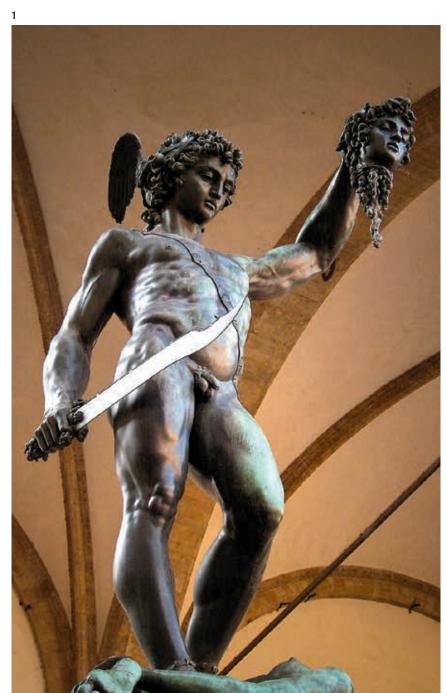
5. Odysseus must confront Poseidon, who represents the very depths of Odysseus's soul. "Travel of Poseidon by Sea," 1894, by Ivan Aivazovsky.







TRUTH AND TRADITION =



LITERATURE

Great Books I Wouldn't Want to Be In

(And Some I Would!)

Continued from Page 6



I'll skip the journey with the hobbit. Dust jacket for "The Hobbit," April 1937, by J.R.R. Tolkien. Bodleian Libraries.

J.R.R. Tolkien (1892–1973, English)

They can go without me.

I once went on a 22-mile hike over two days. That was enough for this not overly outdoorsy girl. These people (and hobbits, and dwarfs, and elves, and whatever else) were on their arduous, dangerous, Middle-earth saving journey for over six months—one way!



C.S. Lewis

(1898-1963, English)

■ Did someone say wardrobe?

I'm not up for inclusion in his space trilogy, but I'd be willing to go to Narnia. Finding a secret passage to a mysterious, magical world filled with potential danger wouldn't be so bad, under the providential protection of a good, albeit not tame, lion. Who wouldn't want to encounter centaurs, winged horses, and all manner of mythical characters?

George Orwell (1903–1950, English)

■ I vote No.

Orwell is mostly known for dystopian political commentary. Dystopia is not my ideal place to hang my hat. Mostly, his books make you glad you don't live there, and that's the point. Despite my

reluctance to be in them, I do want to put in a good word for one of his more humorous and delightful novels, "Keep the Aspidistra Flying." I still don't want to be in it, but I assure you, it has an uplifting, buoyant ending.

Evelyn Waugh (1903–1966, English)

■ A vile idea

Wough may

Waugh may be a great writer, but even in his masterful novel "Brideshead Revisited," one finds no character truly lovable. I get the feeling that even Waugh didn't like them. Who knows what he might do with me in one of his books!

Flannery O'Connor (1925–1964, American)

The 1812 Battle of Borodino is vividly depicted in Leo Tolstoy's Why Live About It? It is interest great book

"War and Peace."
"The Battle of
Borodino," 1822,
by Louis-François, Baron
Lejeune, 1822.
Versailles, Château et Trianons.

Why Live It If You Can Read

It is interesting that at least half the great books I considered were stories I would not want to enter, but loved reading.

Literature allows us to gain a breadth of experience that our own circumstances would not permit and at very little expense to us. A good writer can show us the world. He or she can take us into battle, demand rigorous moral discrimination, and allow us to grapple with evil, unharmed. We then step back into our mundane lives better people than we were before.

For this, I am truly grateful to the gifted authors of the past.

Susannah Pearce has a master's degree in theology and writes from her home in South Carolina.

ESSENCE OF CHINA





(Left) Three generations of a Chinese family pay respects to their ancestors during the Qingming Festival, also known as the Tomb-Sweeping Festival. (Right) Kite flying is a popular activity during the traditional Chinese Qingming Festival, which falls on Friday, April 5, this year. An old Qingming custom involves writing down one's misfortunes on a kite, often shaped like a hawk, and cutting the string while the kite is flying high, which symbolizes letting troubles and illnesses be gone with the wind.

Qingming Festival:

Tomb-Sweeping Day in Honor of Ancestors

'Be pure and bright,' the loyal official advised the king

Continued from **Page 3**

On the first anniversary of Jie's death, the king, with officials in attendance, visited Jie's tomb. To their surprise, they discovered that the large willow tree was alive and full of new branches with green leaves. It was as if Jie was greeting them and encouraging the king to remain pure and bright.

Seeing this, Chong Er felt happy and comforted. He remembered the word "qingming" from Jie's note and named the day Qingming Day (Pure Bright Day).

It was later recorded that Chong Er was indeed a pure and righteous king, and the people of Jin lived in peace and harmony under his reign.

From that time on, Qingming Day became an important occasion for Chinese people to

remember the sacrifices of their ancestors. Later, it became a festival, while Hanshi Day, which was originally on the eve of Qingming Day, was incorporated into the Qingming Festival.

Qingming Customs

Today, sweeping tombs and graves has remained the most important tradition of the Qingming Festival. People clear away debris and weeds and place offerings to honor their departed relatives. The offerings are usually rice wine, fruit, steamed buns, or the deceased's favorite foods.

Traditionally, as part of the ceremony, people burn incense and paper articles resembling special items like money or other treasures in hopes that the deceased would not lack any comforts in the afterlife. Today,

Celebrating spring has become an important part of the festival.

flowers are often used instead. Prayers are respectfully expressed as well.

In some regions, people place willow branches on their gates and front doors. It's believed that, if one is kind and upright, the branches drive away evil spirits and invite heavenly blessings of longevity.

Celebrating spring has become an important part of the festival. Many people enjoy hikes and family outings on this occasion. Families often combine their outings with a visit to the tombs or graves of their ancestors.

Kite flying is also popular, all day and into the night. At night, people tie small, colorful lanterns to the kites so that they look like twinkling stars in the sky. Cutting the string and setting the kite free is believed to bring healing and good luck.