

# THE EPOCH TIMES

# ARTS & TRADITION

GRACE HALE

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Sometimes, in the right light, the daily opulence of ancient Pompeii just comes to life.

William Wylie,  
photographer

## Pompeii Time

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BEHOLD THE BEAUTY

# Florida's 'KNIGHTS'

## Displays Exquisite European Craftsmanship

**LORRAINE FERRIER**

The Sunshine State plays host to "Knights," an exhibition at The John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art, in Sarasota, Florida. Some of Europe's finest suits of armor and arms, on display until April 21, are from the prestigious Stibbert Museum collection in Florence, Italy.

The exhibition addresses European knights of the Middle Ages through the Renaissance and the 19th-century medieval revival, in terms of their armor and arms history, function, and fine craftsmanship.

More than 100 rare pieces are on display in the exhibition, including horse-mounted figures, helmets, swords, and other weapons. A comprehensive catalog, "Knights in Shining Armor: Florence's Contemporanea Progetti in collaboration with Museo Stibbert, 2017," is also available. Here are three different pieces of armor from some of the countries represented in the exhibition:

**France**

The French favored embossing armor as a decorative technique. The close helmet shows allegorical figures and warriors intermingled with flowers and fruit. On inspection, one can see that the embossed steel strips glisten ever so slightly with gold patches where once-bright gilding has worn away. Such an exuberant and opulent design could only be afforded by someone with high social status and wealth.

**Germany**

Simple and yet striking is a German suit of

armor from 1500–1510 that seems to show pleats in line with the curvature of the body. The design is known as the "Maximilian" since the Holy Roman Emperor Maximilian I enjoyed the design. But the pleats are actually ridges and grooves elegantly shaped into the steel. Small shield-like pieces of steel with fan-shaped ridges, and discs with ridges that radiate from the center almost like the spokes of a wheel, can be seen on the armpits and elbows. These, perhaps, were to further protect the knight's joints.

The Maximilian design fell from favor around 1525 when Italian influences for armor came into vogue.

**Italy**

One stunning example of Italian armor from 1540–1550 is made up of lots of thin steel plates called lames, set in horizontal rows. At first glance, the lames appear to flex and adapt when a knight moves, a little like fish scales. But in this example, the scalloped edges are fixed to the bronze-edge surfaces, which incredibly restricted any movement for the wearer.

The precursor to this design was a breastplate from the 1300s that was worn under a leather doublet (close-fitting jacket), although the lames were not fixed to the surface in the earlier design and, therefore, flexible. It was this 1300s breastplate that the bulletproof vest was based on.

To learn more about the "Knights" exhibition at The John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art, visit [Ringling.org](http://Ringling.org)



Suit of Armor, 1500–1510, German manufacture. Steel, leather, and fabric; 73 1/4 inches by 28 3/4 inches by 19 11/16 inches. Stibbert Museum, Florence.



Suit of armor, 1540–1550, Italian manufacture, Lombardy. Steel, leather, fabric, wood; 74 13/16 inches by 29 1/2 inches by 19 11/16 inches. Stibbert Museum, Florence.



More than 100 rare pieces are on display.



Close helmet, circa 1590, French manufacture. Steel, 11 3/4 inches by 13 inches by 7 7/8 inches. Stibbert Museum, Florence.



PHOTOGRAPHY

# POMPEII TIME

An interview with photographer William Wylie

LORRAINE FERRIER

At first glance, the archaeological site of Pompeii seems frozen just moments after Mount Vesuvius erupted. Yet time never stands still.

In the exhibition “Pompeii Archive: Photographs by William Wylie” at The Fralin Museum of Art at the University of Virginia, renowned American photographer William Wylie’s poignant shots reflect the ancient city of Pompeii as a living landscape rather than a historic relic. It’s a landscape juxtaposed between past and present, decay and preservation, and absence and presence.

Wylie’s photographs are on display until June 9 and are exhibited with a selection of images by 19th-century German photographer Giorgio Sommer (1834–1914) from Wylie’s personal collection. Sommer documented the excavation of the Pompeii site in the mid-19th century, and it’s Sommer’s work that inspired Wylie to photograph Pompeii.

Wylie’s photographs and short films have been exhibited widely in the United States and internationally. His work can be found in the permanent collections of The Metropolitan Museum of Art, the National Gallery of Art, Smithsonian American Art Museum, and more.

He has been awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship and a Virginia Museum of Fine Art Professional Fellowship, and Yale University’s Doran Artist in Residence Fellowship at the Sol and Carol LeWitt estate in Praiano, Italy.

He has published five books of his work, most recently “Pompeii Archive,” published in 2018 by Yale University Press.

Wylie lives in Charlottesville, Virginia, and kindly took time away from teaching photography and his work as director of the Studio Art Department at the University of Virginia to share by email his creative process, and how he sees Pompeii both through the camera lens and through time. And essentially, what Pompeii means to him.

**THE EPOCH TIMES:** What inspired you to photograph Pompeii?

**WILLIAM WYLIE:** For over 30 years, my photography has focused on how history and culture are revealed in the landscape. Pompeii had been an interest for a long time due to circumstance: Basically, it was an ancient city and culture, stopped and preserved, so to speak, by a cataclysmic event.

This situation created something very much like a photograph, in that the city was frozen in time. I loved that concept.

Then, I discovered Giorgio Sommer’s photographs from the 19th century. After that, I needed to go myself and see what I could do there as an artist.

**THE EPOCH TIMES:** How did Giorgio Sommer’s photographs influence your approach to photo-

“It locked me into the present moment in a way few photographic experiences have for me.

William Wylie, photographer

“It’s not a city of the past, but one very much in the present, as an archive.

William Wylie, photographer



William Wylie at his “Pompeii Archive: Photographs by William Wylie” exhibition at the Fralin Museum of Art at the University of Virginia.

graphing Pompeii?

**MR. WYLIE:** For starters, I was intrigued by the way Sommer seemed to flatten space in his albumen prints, turning three-dimensional space into a collage-like representation of two dimensions.

The materials of the site—columns, walls, doorways, and so on—definitely lent themselves to this, but he seemed to have an eye for enhancing the idea of the archaeological, of strata and layering, through his photographs.

At first, I was thinking I would pursue a sort of re-photographic project, visiting the exact same sites 150 years after he did and making new photographs. But I quickly realized that there was more interesting work to do there than simply looking for change.

The project continued to embrace Sommer’s work as a reference, but the physical site of Pompeii became the true subject of my work.

**THE EPOCH TIMES:** Why did you decide to shoot in black and white?

**MR. WYLIE:** I work mainly in black and white.

I love the graphic way it denotes tonality and texture, and I also prefer the “space” it creates between the subject and viewer. It is a very subtle layer of abstraction that can work to help identify the photograph as a representation, as an art object.

**THE EPOCH TIMES:** What were the challenges of photographing Pompeii’s iconic architecture?

**MR. WYLIE:** All the architecture, with the exception of the amphitheater, is a single story, and it mostly followed a prescribed plan. One challenge was how to keep making new interesting photographs.

I worked over a five-year period, and one key was that each time I arrived, after the first few days, I would have exhausted my sensibilities with the iconic, and I could begin to see things afresh.

**THE EPOCH TIMES:** Can you please tell us a little about some of the shots you took?

**MR. WYLIE:** “Room G, House of the Golden Cupids (V1.16.7),” 2015: This home was among the



WILLIAM WYLIE

To learn more about the exhibition, visit [UVAFralinArtMuseum.Virginia.edu](http://UVAFralinArtMuseum.Virginia.edu)



WILLIAM WYLIE

“Looking east, Amphitheater (II.6), Pompeii,” 2015, by William Wylie.

(Top left) “Sanctuary of Apollo (VIII.7.32), Pompeii,” 2013, by William Wylie. Archival pigment print, 37 inches by 45 inches.

(Below) “Peristyle, House of the Colored Capitals (VII. 4.31), Pompeii,” 2015, by William Wylie. Pigment ink print, 45 inches by 56 inches.

more sumptuous in the ancient city, belonging to the Poppeii family. It is named for the gold-leaf cupids depicted among its many frescoes.

Sometimes, in the right light, the daily opulence of ancient Pompeii just comes to life.

This beautiful floor mosaic and the rich fresco paintings on the walls of the room were protected by a new roof. The interior darkness created by the angle of the afternoon sunlight created a sense of mystery and lived experience. The fresco represents a transaction of some sort. It’s like a dark memory. Whatever is going on, with the crumbling plaster and empty space of the contemporary room, it doesn’t feel like it is going to end well.

“Sanctuary of Apollo (VII.7.32),” 2013: It’s an old idea, but you cannot escape the importance of time, the precise moment, and being in the right place in photography.

I knew the photographs made in the sanctuary in the 19th century by Giorgio Sommer. I likely stood on the exact spot he had when I made this image because there are versions in his oeuvre that are very close. But the statue of Apollo was not present in Sommer’s views. It was only later that the scattered fragments of the original bronze statue were assembled and determined to have been located on that pedestal.

I was surrounded by the ruins of the ancient world and was looking at an attempt to reconstruct at least part of what had been lost, and yet I was also thinking of a specific 19th-century image of that place. Then, I noticed the intensity of the light and that simple shadow projected on the column base, and it locked me into the present moment in a way few photographic experiences have for me.

It was things like this that pushed the conceptual basis of the project toward a recognition of the ongoing moment of Pompeii. It’s not a city of the past, but one very much in the present, as an archive.

“Basilica (VIII.1),” 2013: This photo uses the space-flattening technique that I see in Sommer’s work, with a layered composition showing Mount Vesuvius, Pompeii’s Basilica, and the glassy plane of floodwater that had invaded the site the day I took the photo.

Vesuvius is always a looming presence above the city, a constant reminder to the visitor why these ruins exist.

In this photograph, the mountain is squeezed into the flatness of the scene, which is further enhanced by the columns embedded in the wall like a collage, which is further activated by the reflections in the flooded space of the Basilica, doubling the foreground (but not the volcano) across the picture-plane reflection.

I was also very conscious of that 20th-century drain in the foreground: one more aspect of the site as a contemporary place, continuing to change and evolve as needed.

**THE EPOCH TIMES:** What impression did Pompeii leave on you personally?

**MR. WYLIE:** One surprising impression Pompeii had on me was that it is not the static frozen place of our imagination, but a site that continues to keep pace with time; that entropy is on display. I refer to this in the introduction of my Yale book, but Pompeii continues to be both uncovered and to fall into ruin. This is happening because it is exposed. Human use, pollution, and natural phenomena continue to leave traces on the site.

*This interview has been edited for clarity and brevity.*



WILLIAM WYLIE



WILLIAM WYLIE

“Basilica (VIII.1), Pompeii,” 2013, by William Wylie.



COURTESY OF WILLIAM WYLIE

“Entrata della casa del balcone, Pompeii,” circa 1860–90, by Giorgio Sommer. Albumen print.



# World-Class Masterpiece Comes to Auction

William Bouguereau’s ‘La Jeunesse de Bacchus’ to be sold by Sotheby’s

KARA LYSANDRA ROSS

There are a few rare major masterpieces in this world that are equal to William Bouguereau’s “La Jeunesse de Bacchus (Youth of Bacchus).” Of equal significance would be Rembrandt’s “Night Watch” or Botticelli’s “Primavera.” People travel from all over the world to view paintings like this in a museum, and they are rare and far between. Even rarer is for such a painting to come to auction and be available for sale. It is almost unheard of.

“La Jeunesse de Bacchus,” which is still owned by Bouguereau’s descendants, will come to auction at Sotheby’s New York on May 14. Although normally the artist’s works are included in the sales of the most important works from the 19th century, “La Jeunesse de Bacchus” will be included in Sotheby’s Impressionist & Modern Art exhibitions starting May 3 in the newly expanded and renovated New York galleries.

In fact, this work is to be included in the Impressionist & Modern Art Evening Sale. Its presence in this sale marks the first time that a work by Bouguereau is being presented in Sotheby’s marquee evening auctions, designating the importance the artist has attained in the 21st century and the significance of this specific work. The work is estimated at \$25 million to \$35 million, but in truth, a work of this nature is priceless and belongs to all of humanity. Hopefully, it will be acquired by one of the world’s largest and most prestigious museums.

William Bouguereau (1825-1905), the most popular artist in all of 19th-century France, is indeed becoming one of the most popular artists of all time. By the final three decades of his life, Bouguereau’s fame extended across all of Europe and America. Winning every possible award and accolade available to a French artist at the time, he was also a known fighter for justice and equality, donating considerable amounts of time to help the poor and the misfortunate.

“La Jeunesse de Bacchus (Youth of Bacchus),” 1884, by William-Adolphe Bouguereau. Oil on canvas, 20 feet by 11 feet. Private collection.



William Bouguereau, the most popular artist in all of 19th-century France, is indeed becoming one of the most popular artists of all time.



Details from “La Jeunesse de Bacchus (Youth of Bacchus),” 1884, by William-Adolphe Bouguereau. Oil on canvas, 20 feet by 11 feet. Private collection.

The artist was all but forgotten by the 1950s. By the late 1970s, public opinion began to change, and The Metropolitan Museum of Art put its three Bouguereau paintings on display in April of 1980, on permanent exhibition, for the first time since the artist had gone out of fashion, as Hilton Kramer reported in The New York Times. By 1984, there was the first major retrospective of the artist’s works, which traveled from the Musée du Petit-Palais in Paris to the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts and finally to the Wadsworth Atheneum in Hartford, Connecticut, in 1985. “La Jeunesse de Bacchus” was included in this exhibition, and it has been the only time this specific work has left Bouguereau’s studio since his death in 1905.

During Bouguereau’s life, the work was unveiled at the Paris Salon of 1884, followed by exhibitions in London and Antwerp through 1885. The work then accompanied the Paris Exposition Universelle in 1889.

This immense painting measures 20 feet in length and is 11 feet high, featuring 20 figures all at life size. The complexity and skill required to harmonize this number of figures in a fluid and melodic fashion is nothing short of astounding. Intertwining hands, overlapping feet, incredible precision in foreshortening, and an imaginative interpretation of the subject matter result in an awe-inspiring work.

#### About William Bouguereau

Bouguereau was known to have painted four main types of paintings that were most prevalent throughout his body of work, namely, his

In truth, a work of this nature is priceless and belongs to all of humanity.

mythological works, religious works, works featuring peasants, and finally, portraits. Works of mythological subject matter and those featuring cupids were known as his “fancies.” The origins of his interest in this type of work most likely stemmed from his time at the Catholic college in Pons, where he studied ancient history and Latin and Greek mythology. This was later reinforced by his time in Rome, early in his career, after winning the Prix de Rome in 1850.

Bouguereau painted this work over the course of three years. The subject of “La Jeunesse de Bacchus” is that of a young Bacchus. However, this is only the superficial subject of the work. In truth, it is an allegorical painting of the human capacity for joy and ultimately love of life, nature, and beauty, all of which the artist held dear.

Benjamin Dolter, chairman of Sotheby’s Americas, said in a press release: “I remember so clearly when I first saw “La Jeunesse de Bacchus” at The Wadsworth Atheneum in 1985 that I was struck by the monumentality of the work and the life-size scale of the figures. Not only was I impressed by the size of this great painting, but I was so enamored with the life-like quality of the figures. Technically brilliant, each figure seemed to have its own unique personality. Seeing the painting in Bouguereau’s studio, hanging on the very wall where he painted, it was an emotional experience for me. I was attracted once again by the magnetic presence of the central group of dancing figures. Indeed, for a few seconds, I felt they were dancing ‘in front’ of the picture, as if the painting were three-dimensional. When you see the true majestic scale

and technical brilliance of this masterpiece, you realize this is one of the greatest pictures painted in the 19th century. Its appearance on the market, something I would have only dreamed of back in 1985, will present a truly singular opportunity to acquire a work that is the last and greatest of its kind.”

The timing of this work’s surfacing to auction could not be more appropriate. There is currently another major exhibition of the artist’s work that will travel. The show is titled “Bouguereau & America” and includes over 45 works by the artist. The exhibition is currently on view at the Milwaukee Art Museum until May 12 and is scheduled to travel to the Memphis Brooks Museum of Art from June 22 to Sept. 22. Finally, the show is scheduled at the San Diego Museum of Art, where it will be on view from Nov. 9 to March 15, 2020.

The work “La Jeunesse de Bacchus” has also just been featured in a new publication titled “William Bouguereau: The Essential Works” written by myself and the co-author of the “William Bouguereau Catalogue Raisonné,” Frederick C. Ross.

All students, scholars, and art enthusiasts are encouraged to come to Sotheby’s to view this masterpiece while it is on public display. Depending on who purchases the work, it could be the only time it will be available for public viewing in the foreseeable future.

Kara Lysandra Ross, the chief operating officer for the Art Renewal Center (ArtRenewal.org), is an expert in 19th-century European painting.





ESSENCE  
OF  
CHINA



# The Blind See BUDDHA

ANONYMOUS

The ancient city of Vaishali, India, was home to 500 blind people. Because of their disability, they couldn't work for a living and had to beg for food. They suffered from discrimination on a daily basis.

The blind people heard that Prince Siddhartha (also known as Shakyamuni) had become a Buddha, and they were full of hope. They believed that the Buddha had the ability to relieve people of all diseases, troubles, and sorrows, and they sincerely wished to follow the Buddhist path to cultivate their wisdom and moral character so that they may be worthy of this mercy.

After some discussion, they decided to find a way to meet the Buddha in person. The leader of the group suggested that they take the initiative to visit the Buddha rather than wait for the Buddha to come to them. They hired a guide to lead them on the journey since they could not see.

The blind people trailed behind their guide, hand in hand, forming a spectacular long line that twisted and turned. Although the trek was arduous, with faith in their hearts, the more they walked, the brighter their spirits and the lighter they were on their feet.

Then the group reached a swamp that they had to cross before reaching the Kingdom of Magadha, where the Buddha lived. Seeing the danger ahead, the guide became afraid, and with no regard for the safety and well-being of the blind people, he stole their money and deserted them. Oblivious to this, the blind men

waited and waited in vain.

The leader then heard the sound of water and asked everyone to walk in that direction.

Right at that time, he heard the angry voice of a farmer. "You beasts, are you blind? All my seedlings are being trampled to death!" cursed the farmer.

"Oh, heavens! We're so sorry. We truly cannot see. If we could see, we would never trample on your seedlings," the leader deeply apologized. "Ahi! Please be kind and have mercy on us. Please tell us how we can find our way to see the Bud-

dha. Our money has been stolen, but we will certainly compensate you for the seedlings later on. I promise."

Feeling bad for the plight of the blind people, the farmer sighed and said, "It is all right. Just follow me. I will take you to the Buddhist temple in Shravasti, where the Buddha is." The group rejoiced and thanked him over and over again.

The farmer indeed brought them to the temple as promised, and the blind people were excited to finally reach their destination. But they were disappointed to

be informed by the abbot that they had come too late, as the Buddha had already returned to Magadha.

The group then made the difficult journey to Magadha, overcoming hardships of all kinds. Once there, however, they learned that the Buddha had gone back to Shravasti.

Despite their exhaustion, they were determined to see the Buddha, so they turned around and went back to Shravasti. They did not expect that the abbot of the temple there would once again tell them that the Buddha had returned to Magadha, but that's what he did, though with great sympathy.

These dedicated people vowed that they would never go home without seeing the Buddha. In the end, they traveled back and forth seven times. The Buddha saw their faith and devotion, and when they arrived back at the temple in Shravasti for the seventh time, the Buddha was there waiting for them.

"Oh, Great Buddha! Please give us light! Let us see the Buddha's magnificence!" Implored the group. All 500 of the blind people knelt down and kowtowed, paying the highest form of respect to the Buddha.

Seeing their hearts, the Buddha said: "You are so sincere and have traveled so many long journeys, unwavering in your belief and determination. I will grant you light."

Immediately, all 500 people were able to see. They thanked the Buddha for his immeasurable grace. They all became diligent disciples of the Buddha and reached the level of Arhat at the end of their cultivation.

Translated by Dora Li into English, this story is reprinted with permission from the book "Treasured Tales of China," Vol. 1, available on Amazon.



© 2013

The Buddha performed many miracles in Shravasti, a city in ancient India. Buddha displaying the Miracle of Sravasti, circa, second century A.D. From an the 'Indian Buddhist Art' exhibition that organized by the Indian Museum, Kolkata.



PUBLIC DOMAIN

A thangka, or Buddhist painting, of "Buddha with the One Hundred Jataka Tales," 13th–14th century, Tibet. The "Jataka Tales" are stories telling of the previous lives of the Buddha, either in human or animal birth, each revealing some lesson or virtue. Collection of Heidi and Helmut Neumann.

ALL PHOTOS BY CAROL ROSEGO

## THEATER REVIEW

# Let Positivity Rule the Day

DIANA BARTH

NEW YORK—Set in Newark, New Jersey, Chisa Hutchinson's new play "Surely Goodness and Mercy," presented by the Keen Company on New York's Theater Row, depicts the efforts of a young lad and his companions to maintain their integrity and goals against an often unwelcoming world.

The lad, Tino (Jay Mazyck), struggles against tough odds to do the right thing, as life with his abusive aunt Alneesa (Sarita Covington) doesn't make things easy for him. But he's devoutly religious, and this fact helps him weather many storms. He also turns for support to others.

It might seem odd, but he strikes up an acquaintance with the rather prickly lunch lady Bernadette (Brenda Pressley) at his school, and, remarkably, they bond in a warm relationship. Later, when a tough crisis erupts, Tino is able to help Bernadette get through a difficult time. But he's also aware of a young girl his own

age. This classmate, Deja (Courtney Thomas), is mutually drawn to Tino.

Tino is exceptionally bright, and while Deja may not be as smart as Tino, she makes up for any deficit by supplying street smarts to their arsenal of coping skills, which makes for a quirky and amusing relationship.

Under Jessi D. Hill's detailed direction, the acting is fine throughout. Each of the young duo is supposed to be 12 years old. Jay Mazyck admits to actually being 19, and Courtney Thomas is a young woman. But their actual ages in no way detract from the authenticity of their performances. They both convey the naïveté and sensitivity required by the characters they are portraying.

Rounding out the cast of five is Cezar Williams, double-cast as the preacher and principal of the school.

Scenic design by Lee Savage was a bit heavy-handed, inasmuch as various settings required by the text are all onstage at the same time. The



'Surely  
Goodness and  
Mercy'

Theatre Row—The  
Clurman Theatre  
410 W. 42nd St.,  
New York

Tickets  
212-239-6200

Running Time  
1 hour, 35 minutes  
(one intermission)

Closes  
April 13



positive factor in this is that no time-consuming set changes are required. Nicole Wee's costumes are entirely appropriate.

Overall, the play projects a sense of positivity—that there is goodness in the world and that it outweighs the bad. It's in the power of each and every one of us to do his or her best to seek to bring about the good.

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

1. (L–R) Courtney Thomas, Brenda Pressley, and Jay Mazyck in a lunchroom scene from "Surely Goodness and Mercy."

2. The two 12-year-olds, Tino and Deja, are played by the young adults Jay Mazyck and Courtney Thomas in "Surely Goodness and Mercy."

3. Tino (Jay Mazyck) and his sometimes abusive aunt Alneesa (Sarita Covington).

4. Bernadette (Brenda Pressley), the school cafeteria lady, faces a crisis, which her young friend Tino (Jay Mazyck) helps her through.





“Land of the Lotos Eaters,” 1861, by Robert Seldon Duncanson.

ODYSSEUS AND THE ENNEAGRAM

# Finding the True Self

Part 2

# The Sin of Sloth

JAMES SALE

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.

In Part 1 of this series of articles, we introduced the nine types of personality that constitute the Enneagram and invited you to consider what your own number type is. But we also said that the “Odyssey,” through its narrative, reveals the Enneagram numbers as challenges to Odysseus and that in each case he had to overcome it. How he overcomes each number is indicative of how each of us, perhaps, might also overcome our own besetting “deadly sin.”

Odysseus encounters the sins in reverse order, so starting at type Nine, we travel round with Odysseus until at last we encounter the sin of type One.

Thus, in this Part 2, we start at the end and look at type Nine. As a reminder, Nines on the Enneagram’s wheel of types see themselves as “I am content.” They wish to experience wholeness and be peaceful people. At their best, Nines are empathetic, reliable, and harmonious; at their worst, they are apathetic, listless, and stubborn, because their deadly sin is 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.

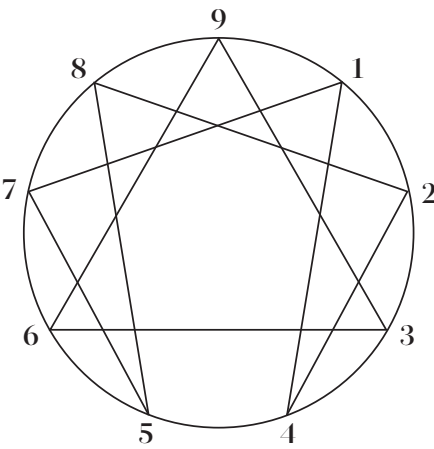
The Nines must overcome the deadly sin of sloth.

The Lotos-Eaters

Odysseus has spent 10 years fighting in Troy and has at last, through his cunning and stratagem of the Trojan Horse, succeeded in overcoming the walls of Troy. What all the direct aggression of Achilles and the other great Greek fighters failed to do, Odysseus managed, because he, as Homer says, is the “man of twists and turns,” and of whom Zeus says, “Great Odysseus excels all men in wisdom.”

It is this sense of resourcefulness, wisdom, and resilience that is the key marker in understanding how Odysseus is able to overcome what appear to be overwhelming odds.

The “Odyssey” itself begins in what is called



The nine-point Enneagram.

in medias res, or in the thick of things, so that we don’t start at the beginning but in the middle. It is only later, in Chapter 9, that we learn that on leaving Troy, one of Odysseus’s and his crew’s earliest encounters is with the Lotos-Eaters.

Unlike the traditional enemies that they have met before—typically, kings and soldiers who wish to kill them—the Lotos-Eaters mean them no harm at all. Rather, they offer them the “honey-sweet fruit”—the Lotos—that they themselves are eating. This fruit immediately banishes all their worries, concerns, fears, and yes, even their desires. Those of his crew who eat the fruit lose all desire to return to Ithaca, to home.

In a way, this temptation is a most brilliant example from the ancient world of what we are almost too familiar with in Western culture: our numbing out.

Instead of being truly alive, we prefer our drug and drink options, or our sex and gambling obsessions, or even more low-key still, our addictions to TV and today’s net surfing or social-media imbibing (really doing nothing at all), or workaholicism (never stopping the doing of something).

In the 1960s, as the West began its long descent into nothingness, Timothy Leary, the American academic, put it this way: “Drop Out—detach yourself from the external social drama which is as dehydrated and ersatz as TV. Turn On—find a sacrament which returns you to the temple of God, your own body. Go out of your mind. Get high. Tune In—be reborn. Drop back in to express it. Start a new sequence of behavior that reflects your vision.” In short,



Odysseus forcing his men off the island of the Lotos-Eaters. An 18th-century French engraving.

ignore reality and act as if illusion or delusion were where it would be better to be.

Apathy rules, and one is resigned to life at a low level of nonachievement.

Overcoming Sloth

The deadly sin here, which all Nines must confront if they are to escape it, is sloth. How easy it is for Odysseus’s men to fall for it and to think they have found paradise!

Odysseus immediately grasps the enormity of the danger he and his crew face and swings into action. Indeed, action here is the key.

He does not “experiment” with the lotus himself; he does not reason, “Well that’s a valid point of view”; and he does not entertain the idea that his men have the right to their own opinions and that he should thereby leave them to it.

For one thing, he fully gets the implication of their behavior on himself and all their families awaiting them back in Ithaca. And instead, he issues decisive commands to those of his crew still unaffected and forces them all back to the ships. There, he lashes them into their seats and demands that they row like mad to get off the island.

The antidote to sloth is willpower: decision-

making driving immediate action—just do it! It is with the clear order to row, even though at this point Odysseus is not even sure to where—only through this expedient—that they can escape the grip of sloth.

What sloth as a deadly sin manifests is the terrible and terrifying idea of a life unlivd, a sort of permanent state of being divorced from reality. At perhaps its less extreme level, sloth becomes an acceptance of things as they are: the failure to want to innovate, to improve, whether it be the world or, primarily, oneself.

It is a sort of fatalism that saps the will to do, to achieve, and ultimately to succeed in life. And the ultimate success, of course, is to get “home”—for the mind to find its own true soul and so be enraptured by its own beauty.

This is what Odysseus cannot forget: In Ithaca, his wife, his soulmate and also symbolically his literal soul, awaits him. No sacrifice must be spared to get there, as we shall see.

Keep in mind that Odysseus sets off with 12 ships and full crew complements, but all of his men and his ships are lost on the voyage; he alone makes it home. That is why, to be a hero or heroine, we must adapt, as Odysseus did (remember the man of “twists and turns”?) to each of the deadly sins that besets us.

In our next episode, we find Odysseus at number Eight, encountering a deadlier and much more ferocious enemy than sloth: the Cyclops, Polyphemus, and the sin of lust. Here, “just doing it” would be precisely the wrong strategy to overcome the sin. Read Part 3 to find out how Odysseus twists and turns to overcome its irresistible strength.

Note that I am strongly indebted for many ideas here to Michael J. Goldberg’s wonderful book, “Travels with Odysseus,” and I strongly recommend it for those seeking more detailed information, although, curiously, Goldberg does not directly draw parallels with the Enneagram and only mentions it in the endnotes of his book.

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.

“The Lotos-Eaters,” by W.E.F. Britten. An illustration for “The Early Poems of Alfred, Lord Tennyson.”



“Te Hongi, or Maori Greeting, Rotorua, N.Z.,” 1903. Postcard. Leonard A. Lauder collection of Raphael Tuck & Sons postcards. The Newberry, Chicago.

The salutation known as the ‘hongi’ is typically thought of by non-Maori as simply the rubbing or pressing of noses.

CULTURE

# THE HONGI

## A Traditional Greeting Recaptured

RAIATEA TAHANA-REESE

Eyes closed, they touch nose to nose, forehead to forehead: The two embrace in a traditional greeting peculiar to the indigenous people of New Zealand, the Maori.

The salutation is known as the “hongi,” typically thought of by non-Maori as simply the rubbing or pressing of noses, an intermingling, and exchange of breath, the “ha.”

But for me, a daughter of the Te Arawa tribe that settled in the thermal regions of the North Island, this description of the hongi is a denigration of an ancient and sacred tradition.

I recall as a young child strolling down the street clutching the hand of my grandfather, when we chanced upon an old friend he hadn’t seen in a while.

Eyes smiling in recognition, the two men drew close, arms extended as if to shake hands. The gesture only drew them closer. And then, forehead to forehead, nose touching nose, with a hand on each other’s shoulder, they embraced, not a word exchanged. Yet within the silence, a volume of words was spoken.

The longer the two men held the position, the higher the esteem that was shown. Then as their feelings deepened, tears of regret and sorrow would flow as they remembered unshared moments stolen by time that had slipped by them.

The head is regarded by Maori as “tapu,” the most sacred part of the body, and as the process deepens, those who have since departed this world are remembered and grieved.

Their foreheads touching, the two become as one bonded by their ancestral ties, and they enter a still deeper level. The connection to their ancestors reminds them of who they are, where they come from, and whence they will return. In making this connection, they honor each other, thereby honoring themselves.

Embodied in the sacredness of the hongi are their primal parents: Ranginui, the sky father, and Papatuanuku, the earth mother, back to the supreme god known to Maori as Io Matua. But that is natural to the Maori bearing, needing no mention.

In bygone days, the name Io Matua was considered too sacred to be spoken. But today, we pay homage in songs and chants and recite genealogy for future generations.

However, it was not until each level of the hongi

was felt and acknowledged that the hongi was considered finished and the two could talk freely.

The image of this meeting between the two men, the “aroha” (love) and respect that flowed, will forever be etched in my mind, and up to this day, never have I seen nor witnessed anything so powerful and dignified.

Back then, the hongi was known to last from a few seconds up to several minutes, depending on the circumstances.

The Maori stem from a world steeped in spirituality, the word “Maori” itself meaning ordinary, according to H.W. Williams’s “Dictionary of the Maori Language.”

Elders believe the word was derived directly from the gods to make a distinction between being human and being divine.

It is also believed the hongi was god-given. But in today’s world, many perspectives offered by non-Maori tend to undermine its sacred form.

Performed mostly on formal occasions at the “marae”—the ancestral home of the Maori, where the spiritual well-being of the tribespeople is maintained—the hongi signals that formalities are over and guests and hosts are able to freely mingle at their own leisure.

On these occasions, at the “powhiri” welcoming ceremony, the hongi is imparted with a light touch of the nose (maybe once or twice) and a handshake between men and a peck on the cheek between women called the “hariru.” A long line of people file through to be properly welcomed with hongi, after which visitors are free to mingle and no longer regarded as guests.

The hariru is usually followed by a “hakari,” a celebratory feast usually cooked in a “hangi,” best described as an earth oven.

However, living outside of the marae environment in a foreign country, nothing gives me more pleasure than seeing this centuries-old tradition carried into the new millennium by Maori people, young and old alike—especially at times when strolling down the street they chance to meet and greet with the traditional Maori hongi, a gift from the gods.

But unfortunately, as the years roll on, few Maori witness the spirit of the hongi the way that I had as a little girl. Though still kept alive by many, the full meaning of hongi is lost, compromised by Westernization, as more regard the greeting about as meaningful as a handshake or a kiss on the cheek.



ALL PHOTOS BY JOAN MARCUS



THEATER REVIEW

# ‘Kiss Me, Kate’

Not perfect but thoroughly enjoyable

JUDD HOLLANDER

NEW YORK—“Kiss Me, Kate,” one of the most beloved shows in the musical theater canon, makes a welcome return to the Broadway stage at Studio 54 as presented by the Roundabout Theatre Company.

Set in 1948, the somewhat bombastic, totally ego-centric actor-producer-director Fred Graham (Will Chase) is about to present his latest theatrical production: “The Shrew,” a musicalization of William Shakespeare’s “The Taming of the Shrew.”

The show is taking its first hopeful steps toward Broadway with an opening in Baltimore. Playing the male lead in the show-within-a-show, Fred has chosen as his co-star Lilli Vanessi (Kelli O’Hara), a woman whose talent is without question. Lilli’s presence in the show is enough to attract financial backers to the project.

However, Lilli is just as well-known for her hair-trigger temper and diva-like attitude. These qualities caused the film studio to which she was under contract to fire her.

Fred and Lilli also have a volatile personal history. Formerly husband and wife, the couple’s marriage did not end well. Indeed, it’s not long before old hurts and new misunderstandings set them at each other’s throats. At one point, Lilli receives flowers that Fred intended for another actress in the cast—Lois Lane (Stephanie Styles).

Further tension backstage springs from the on-again, off-again romance between Ms. Lane and company dancer Bill Calhoun (Corbin Bleu), a fellow with a weakness for gambling.

When a fuming Lilli plans to walk out of the show and leave the theater forever to marry her fiancé Harrison Howell (Terence Archie), a military man with major political ambitions, Fred finds himself at wit’s end.

If that weren’t enough, he also has to contend with two local mobsters (John Pankow and Lance Coadie Williams) who come calling about a certain debt.

It’s the way the show’s creative team chooses to address these issues that makes almost everything so enjoyable. For while the entire show is basically

a love letter to the world of the theater (as well as blessed with a brilliant score and book by Cole Porter, and Sam and Bella Spewack, respectively), “Kiss Me, Kate” is, at heart, a show about compromise and learning to properly focus one’s desires—that and the ultimate belief love will win out, for this is a show populated with characters who may just find that the needs of those nearest and dearest coincide with their own far more closely than first expected.

The Roundabout’s Artistic Director and CEO Todd Haimes refers to the production in the program notes as one “that resurrects all of the magic of its 1948 premiere while rising to the responsibility of a 2019 revival.”

One way the company has modernized the production is to soften some of the musical’s so-called “battle of the sexes” elements. They removed a spanking sequence and altered a few lines here and there, with the apparent approval of the various estates.

They’ve also made some adjustments to a climactic scene, which works beautifully.

Where the show does falter a bit is with the two leads, both of whom are supposed to be larger than life. O’Hara is able to make Lilli work for the most part, but Chase never really rises to the occasion as Fred. His portrayal is neither interesting enough to be endearing nor exaggerated enough to be outrageous.

That said, while in his “Shrew” persona (as Petruchio), Chase plays his scenes perfectly. He comes off as a scoundrel with a twinkle in his eye and a song on his lips. He’s particularly effective in the numbers “Where Is the Life That Late I Led” and “I’ve Come to Wive It Wealthily in Padua.”

As her “Shrew” character Katherine—“Kate” of the title—O’Hara does a fine job in such numbers as “I Hate Men.”

The supporting performers come off better thanks to some high-voltage dancing and the absolutely superb choreography by Warren Carlyle, which never once disappoints.

Styles is excellent as a sweet-faced girl, who definitely did not just fall off the turnip truck, as seen



(Top) Kate (Kelli O’Hara) and the cast of “Kiss Me, Kate.” (Above left) Kelli O’Hara as actress Lilli Vanessi and Will Chase as director Fred Graham provide the weakest moments in the show. (Above right) James T. Lane and the Roundabout company of “Kiss Me, Kate,” in a moment of the excellent choreography by Warren Carlyle.

‘Kiss Me, Kate’

**Studio 54**  
254 W. 54th St.,  
New York

**Tickets**  
212-719-1300 or  
RoundaboutTheatre.org

**Running Time**  
2 hours, 30 minutes  
(one intermission)

**Closes**  
June 30

in the wonderfully comic “Always True to You in My Fashion.”

Meanwhile Bleu does some impressive dancing throughout and shows great chemistry with Styles, especially in “Tom, Dick, or Harry” where, in Lois’s “Shrew” persona of Bianca, she struggles to choose between her various suitors.

Stopping the show is a spectacular rendition of “Too Darn Hot,” a number that opens Act 2. James T. Lane particularly does a fantastic job here, as does Adrienne Walker, who powerfully delivers all the right notes.

Other musical highlights include “Brush Up Your Shakespeare,” allowing Pankow and Williams to add a vaudeville touch to the proceedings, and “Another Op’nin, Another Show,” basically Porter’s personal salute to the theater and all who inhabit it.

While this version of “Kiss Me, Kate” is not completely perfect, most of the time it comes awfully close. Offering great entertainment for one and all, this is one show that should be on everybody’s “must-see” list.

Judd Hollander is a reviewer for Stagebuzz.com and a member of the Drama Desk and the Outer Critics Circle. He may be reached at bnchpeop@aol.com