

# Film Capsules June (+ May) 2016

*Sorry, May was such a busy month that I completely forgot about Film Capsules! Some further down the list have left the art house theaters they were released in, but should soon be available on disk or streaming video. The titles are embedded with hyperlinks that will take you to the full review at [visualparables.org](http://visualparables.org).*

## [Genius](#)

Rated PG-13. Running time: 1 hour 44 min. Psalm 133:1; Psalm 41:9

There are two geniuses in this true story of the relationship between a famous writer and his editor. Thomas Wolfe can scarcely believe Max Perkins's words accepting for publication his mss. of what will become *Look Homeward Angel*. Gifted with the ability to see what should be left out of a book, Perkins, who also discovered Ernest Hemmingway and F. Scott Fitzgerald, struggles mightily with his writer, the latter wanting to add more, rather than taking away words. A fascinating study of contrasting characters, this is a near perfect film for those who love literature.

## [The BFG](#)

Rated PG. Running time: 1 hour 57 min. Proverbs 17:17

Steven Spielberg's adaption of Roald Dahl's beloved novel is a delight for young and old. When 10 year-old Londoner Sophie, an outsider due to her being a book-loving orphan is abducted at night by a giant, she discovers he too is an outsider, a vegetarian runt barely tolerated by the other child-eating giants of Giant Land. How she and The BFG (Big Friendly Giant)

thwart the evil giants is heartwarming and hilarious. I finally came to enjoying a fart joke thanks to an extremely funny scene at Buckingham Palace.

## The Fits

Rated R. Running time: 1 hour 12 min.

Filmed in Cincinnati, this is the story of a black girl training to be a boxer at the gym of a community center on the city's west side. However, she peeks in frequently to see what is going on at a girls' dance team practice. They seem to be having far more fun, and besides, she is the only girl in the boxing gym, few speaking to her other than her brother and his friend. Slowly she learns the moves and becomes friends with a younger girl. Then a series of mysterious happenings occur: one by one the older girls are overcome by spasms that send them to the hospital. Are the fits due to the drinking water, something more sinister, or—? An unusual coming of age film about a girl who wants to belong.

## Finding Dory

Rated PG. Running time: 1 hour 37 min. Psalm 77:5; Luke 15:8; 17-24.

Dory, the blue tang fish with a short memory, helped clown fish Marlin find his son Nemo in the 2003 film *Finding Nemo*. Now almost 13 years later she is the one who becomes lost, not even able to remember the names of her parents or her home. How Marlin, Nemo and a school full of other sea creatures, including a cranky octopus, help reunite her with her parents adds up to an exciting and heartwarming adventure that bears some semblance to the parables of the lost in Luke 15.

## **The Lobster**

Rated R. Running time: 1 hour 59 min. Isaiah 10:1

This somewhat droll, dark dramedy is set in the near future when the old question bedeviling those who prefer not to be married—"When are you going to meet the right (girl-boy)?"—has become a command, and all singles reaching a certain age are sent to the Hotel where they must find a mate based on a similar interest or physical trait. After 45 days, if they find no one, they are transformed into an animal of their choice. Our protagonist prefers a lobster because they live a long time and are sexually active until the end.

## **The Meddler**

Rated PG-13. Running time: 1 hour 40 min. Proverbs 31:20

Susan Sarandon, the movie Mother of Mothers, is Marnie, mother of TV writer Lori, who transfers all of her considerable devotion to her daughter after her husband dies. She cannot hold back from wanting to help almost everyone she meets—her daughter's best friend wishing she'd had a public wedding; the tech helper at the Apple Store in need of a college education; a retired Harley-loving cop estranged from his child—and of course, Lori. Heart-warming, funny, and a good example of what theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer wrote about Christ and his followers being there for others.

## **Angry Birds**

Rated PG. Running time: 1 hour 37 min. Mark 3:5; Ephesians [4:26](#)

This is another delightful animated film for adults as well as children—even though it is based on a video game. Red, having been sentenced to anger management school, is an outcast

because of his temper, so when a ship arrives on Bird Island captained by a green pig, no one listens to his advice of not trusting the stranger. Of course, he and a hidden crew steal the eggs and sail back to their island for a big feast. The other birds turn to Red for leadership, and they all discover that anger has a positive side.

## Money Monster

Rated R. Running time: 1 hour 38 min. Matthew 6:24; 1 Timothy 6:10

A hot shot TV financial guru (George Clooney) lands in hot water when stock he highly recommends heads south, and an angry blue-collar investor holds him hostage in the studio. Beamed throughout the world, this creates a huge public festival, which turns the spotlight on the company, revealing that its CEO was not all he seemed to be. In the aftermath of the violent event, both the guru and his producer (Julia Roberts) are changed forever.

## Love and Friendship

Rated PG. Running time: 1 hour 32 min. Jeremiah 17:10

In this lesser Jane Austin work (*Lady Susan*), set in 1790s England, Lady Susan Vernon schemes her way toward security after the death of her husband. Kate Beckinsale plays her so well that we come to love—no, better, to enjoy—this deceitful woman who regards her own daughter as just a pawn in her game of success.

## A Bigger Splash

Rated R. Running time: 2 hours 5 min. John 2:16

Set on an exotic island between Italy and Tunisia, this is the

story of a rock star singer and her lover seeking solitude while she recovers from a throat operation. Intruding into their hideaway are her former lover/manager and a young woman he claims to be his daughter. Does he have a hidden agenda for this unwelcome visit?

## **Pelé: Birth of a Legend**

Rated PG. Running time: 1 hour 47 min. Psalm 10:7; Romans 12:3a.

This inspiring story of the rise of a Brazilian slum boy to the heights of international soccer includes the theme of embracing a heritage that the world regards with disdain.

## **The Man Who Knew Infinity**

Rated PG-13. Running time: 1 hour 48 min. Proverbs 18:15; 1 Corinthians 13:1-2.

Prejudice is a problem in England also, as this true story of a young Indian math genius shows. Just before World War One Srinivasa Ramanujan sends some of his theorems to Cambridge mathematician G. H. Hardy, who despite the young man's lack of formal education is so impressed that he invites him to England so they can work together. However, persuading the rest of the snobbish academics to accept the newcomer proves to be an uphill battle, with the young man also dealing with homesickness, and at the end disease.

## **Maggie's Plan**

Rated R. Running time: 1 hour 38 min. Proverbs 21:21; Philippians 2:3-4

Kind-hearted Maggie, seemingly unable to maintain a relationship beyond six months, decides that if she is to

become a mother, it will have to be soon. However, her plan for self-insemination is interrupted by her meeting and falling in love with a would-be novelist trapped in a loveless marriage. What next, especially when this relationship proves to be a mistake?

## **Pop Star: Never Stop Never Stopping**

Rated R. Running time: 1 hour 27 min. Romans 12:3a.

If you liked *This Is Spinal Tap*, you should enjoy this spoof of pop music stars who take themselves too seriously. Also a “mockumentary,” this is the wild tale of the rise and fall of Conner, and of his acquiring a better understanding of himself and his former friends and band mates who contributed more than he had realized to his success.

## **Sing Street**

Rated PG-13. Running time: 1 hour 46 min. Romans 12:2a (J.B. Phillips)

When Dubliner teenager strikes up a conversation with the girl to whom he is attracted, he blurts out that he would like her to be in a video for his band. She is impressed enough to say, “Yes.” However, Conor has no band, but quickly sets out to form one. This is a delightful tale of how an outsider, mentored by a musically gifted older brother, becomes accepted by his peers when he is able to gather a talented group that can actually sing and produce their own music.

## **Miles Ahead**

Rated R. Running time: 1 hour 40 min. John 8:34.

Don Cheadle brilliantly directs himself in this film based on jazz legend Miles Davis’s comeback. Though a major character

is fictional for dramatic purposes, the film captures the intensity of the genius of the musician who, despite his heavy drug use, became a great trumpeter.

## **The Congressman**

Rated R. Running time: 1 hour 38 min. Leviticus 25:10b

Although no *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington*, this tale of a jaded Congressman from Maine makes a good point as to what is true patriotism. When the Congressman is caught on camera lounging with his feet up on his desk while the other House members are reciting the Pledge of Allegiance, he has to defend himself. In the background a scheming lobbyist out to get rid of him. During a visit to an island in his district, the jaded, recently divorced politician discovers a new lease on life when he meets the town librarian. Yes, just like in *The Music Man*. Never take a librarian for granted!

## **Everybody Wants Some!!**

Rated R. Running time: 1 hour 58 min. Proverbs 1:8-10

In Richard Linklater's finally observed film freshman Jake arrives a few days before classes to join his fellow baseball team members. All they want during those pre-class days is to drink as much beer as possible and score with one of the myriad of attractive coeds. When Jake connects with a drama major, his sights are raised a bit.

## **Captain America: Civil War**

Rated PG-13. Running time: 2 hours 27 min. Psalm 106:3; Psalm 72:4.

Another fantasy for teenagers and Marvel Comics fans, this one also includes snappy, funny dialogue, as well as spectacular

action scenes. Escapist fare, it does deal well with the relationships among the screen full of superheroes.

## [A Hologram for the King](#)

Rated R. Running time: 1 hours 37 min. Psalm 27:14; Romans 8:28 (RSV).

Although it will be a minor film on Tom Hanks' list of starring roles, it is still a delightful fish out of water story. Hanks has one last chance at business success when he is dispatched to Saudi Arabia to pitch a sophisticated computer communication network for a proposed new metropolis being built in the desert. The problem is, like Godot, the King fails to show up, day after day. What to do when you are a stranger in a strange land?

## [Barbershop: The Next Cut](#)

Rated PG-13. Running time: 1 hour 52 min. Isaiah 11:6-9

Calvin again has to make a decision about the barbershop he has inherited from his father when gang violence in the hood threatens his teenaged son. Most of the old crew is back, joined this time by a group of strong women who have merged their beautyshop with the men's establishment. Great fun and racial humor—and insights!

## [The Jungle Book](#)

Rated PG. Running time: 1 hour 45 min. Ecclesiastes 4:9-12

A heartwarming fantasy about inter-species friendship and love, this, the best of the filmed version of Kipling's stories, features a spectacular blend of CGI-generated animals with the live boy playing Mowgli. A great film for the family!



## [Zootopia](#)

Rated PG. Running time: 1 hour 48 min. Isaiah 11:6; Matthew 7:1.

In this animated fable about a small bunny wanting to become a policeman in the big city of Zootopia is embedded the lesson of tolerance and the danger of prejudging—making this a very relevant film for young and old.

## [Batman v Superman: Dawn of Justice](#)

*Possible spoiler in the last paragraph.*

Rated PG-13. Running time: 2 hours 31 min. Isaiah 1:17.

Another superhero fantasy that raises the burning question that I'm sure you've been asking as to which of the D.C. Comics' crime fighter is the greatest. Lots of huge special effects. You do not want to be close by when these two all but destroy their surroundings when they go at it with each other!

## [Elvis and Nixon](#)

Rated R. Running time: 1 hour 26 min. Matthew 7:7.

In this whimsically told true story about the great star's visit to the White House to obtain a badge so the patriotic star can go undercover to ferret out leftists for the Secret Service, we see an amusing and human side to the two legendary figures.

## [Midnight Special](#)

Rated PG-13. Running time: 1 hour 52 min. Psalm 7:1; Hebrews 11:1

With a nod to E.T., this sci-fi tale is about a father and

mother's flight to save their supernaturally gifted young son from the clutches of a religious cult and also of government security agents who see the gifted boy as a potential weapon.

## **Born to Be Blue**

Rated R. Running time: 1 hour 37 min. 2 Corinthians 4:16-17  
(The Message)

One of several biographies (well not quite a biography) of musicians to be released this year, this is the story of Chet Baker who faced the daunting problem of coming back after a beating by thugs damaged his mouth so badly that he could not play his trumpet for a while. In an unusual reversal see him as an outsider because he is a white man viewed by some blacks as an interloper into their world of pain and suffering.

## **I Saw the Light**

Rated R. Running time: 2 hours 3 min. John 1:5

Hank Williams led a short, alcohol and drug drenched life, but he left an enduring legacy of country songs most of us love. This film biography came out at almost the same time as two films about jazz men Chet Baker and Miles Davis

## **Eye in the Sky**

Rated R. Running time: 1 hour 42 min. Matthew 10:28-30

Drone warfare is the subject of this taut film, with those controlling the lethally equipped drone spying on a terrorist hideout in Afghanistan debating whether or not to launch a missile at the house. Those urging "No" are concerned for the little girl outside the walled compound who is selling bread made by her mother. Plenty to discuss in this film, especially the sobering conclusion.

## Whiskey Tango Foxtrot

Rated R. Running time: 1 hour 52 min. Ecclesiastes 1:1-3

A young and ambitious female correspondent learns the ropes in Afghanistan, while fighting for time on her network because the public's attention has moved away from the war in that country to Iraq.

## Papa: Hemingway in Cuba

Rated R. Running time: 1 hours 37 min. Ecclesiastes 1:1-3; Job 14:1-3; 7-10.

A Miami journalist is surprised to receive a telephoned invitation visit the great writer after Hemingway read and liked one of his articles. The first Cuban visits leads to others, during which the older and younger man become friends. Set during the early days of Castro's rebellion, there are also fireworks in the Hemingway home between the alcoholic writer, his wife, and anyone the author thinks might be betraying him—eventually including the journalist as well.

## Francofonia

Not Rated. Running time: 1 hour 28 min. Ecclesiastes 9:18a

The auteur of *The Russian Ark* turns his attention to the Louvre in what amounts to a visual essay on art, war, and the resultant spoils of war. We see Napoleon roaming through the museum enjoying the plunder brought back from Egypt and the Middle East, as well as portraits of himself. The majority of historical re-enactments deal with the Nazi occupation of Paris when a Francophile Nazi strove to stall Hitler's plans to find the treasures that the director of the museum had taken down and hidden in the countryside. Fascinating true tale that art lovers should enjoy.

## [My Big Fat Wedding 2](#)

Rated PG-13. Running time: 1 hour 32 min. 1 Corinthians 13:4a

The large Portokalos family is back again, with the daughter and non-Greek son-in-law caught between a feud between Mamma and Papa over whether the older couple should make their marriage legal when it is discovered that the priest in Greece forgot to sign their license. After Papa upsets her, Mamma kicks him out of their bedroom.

## [Allegiant](#)

Rated PG-13. Psalm 94:15.

The action in this post apocalyptic tale moves from the ruined Chicago and beyond the ravaged countryside to a new city where Tris and her fellow Insurgents find shelter. The director recognizes she has the unique gifts to bring all the warring factions together, but can he be trusted, or will he prove as power hungry as the other faction leaders in Chicago? There is one more sequel in this [Maze Runner](#) series.