

**MVAH ZOOM Movie Club**  
**April 5, 2022, 3pm**  
**Next Movie Club: May 3rd at 3PM**

**Attendees:**

Host: Barbara Brennan

|                |                |
|----------------|----------------|
| Cher Terry     | Sarah Tatum    |
| Louise McLean  | Betsy Stephens |
| Robert McLean  | Kathi Hanrahan |
| Carol Mattaino | Caryl Curry    |
| Joe Mattaino   |                |

**Movie 1. Lost Daughter -2021- Olivia Colman- Netflix**

**Rating: 2.8**

Starring Olivia Colman, Ed Harris

A woman's quiet seaside vacation takes an unsettling turn when her fixation on a young mother staying at a nearby villa awakens memories from her past.

It's hard to figure out at first what is going on with Leda. The woman with the symbolic Yeatsian name is a professor and translator, taking a brief vacation in Greece, and looking forward to relaxation in the sun. However, almost immediately upon her arrival in the small seaside town, things start to go strange. Leda is the center of the strangeness. Is she generating the strangeness, or is it the world that's strange? Why are her reactions to things so intense? Why is she so paranoid and awkward? What is going on with her? "The Lost Daughter," an adaptation of Elena Ferrante's 2006 novel of the same name, is Maggie Gyllenhaal's directorial debut, and what a debut it is. Harrowing, unpredictable, painful, confrontational, this is a movie for grown-ups.

**Movie 2. Power of the Dog – 2021 (Netflix) – Starring Benedict Cumberbatch, Kirsten Dunst. 12 Academy award nominations**

**Rating: 3.7**

The Power of the Dog is a 1967 novel written by Thomas Savage. The story deals with two very different brothers named Phil and George, who live on a ranch in Montana, and the events following the marriage of George. Phil looks with disdain at the wife Rose and her son Pete, after which dramatic events begin to unfold.

The Montana-raised writer is barely known, even in his own state. Let's hope Jane Campion's film changes that.

By Alan Weltzien. Washington Post

Jane Campion's outstanding adaptation of Thomas Savage's novel "The Power of the Dog" — which won three Golden Globe Awards and has been nominated for a dozen Oscars — finally spotlights a first-rate novelist who never received much recognition in his lifetime, or even well beyond it.

Savage, who died in 2003 at age 88, was, for the most part, ignored — even in his home state. Montana's famous state literature anthology, a fat book arrogantly titled "The Last Best Place" (1989), made no mention or inclusion of Savage or his novelist wife, Elizabeth Savage. That's inexcusable, given the quality of their fiction.

I've lived in Thomas Savage's hometown, Dillon, for three decades. A generation ago I was advised by a literary friend to read Savage, whom I'd never heard of. I've not looked back. Campion became obsessed with the novel when her stepmother lent her a copy in 2017. It was not the first time Hollywood took interest in "The Power of the Dog." The novel had been optioned multiple times, with Paul Newman and Gérard Depardieu in mind for the role of Phil Burbank, the book's complicated protagonist, according to Deadline. But Campion's tenacity paid off. Her film captures the harder, harsher human landscape of Savage's brilliant book.

Savage was gay, though he married a woman and had three children. He loved family more than anything. But in Adrienne Rich's immortal phrase, he was "split at the root," and the sexual and gender tensions infused his life and fiction. Savage's West is also a queer West. His plots don't feature happy endings. He tended to mask his gay self through self-accusation and self-condemnation. Though he claimed to never write autobiography, he wrote deeply autobiographical fiction. He kept rewriting his home ground and town, as well as family members.

Phil Burbank is based on Savage's step-uncle, eccentric William "Bill" Brenner, who died of blackleg just as Phil dies of anthrax. A mechanical wizard, Bill bathed rarely, avoided gloves, didn't go to town and played excellent banjo. Rose Gordon and George Burbank represent versions of Savage's mother, Beth, and his stepfather, Charlie Brenner. Peter Gordon poses the first clear self-representation of Savage, also a stepson on the Brenner (Burbank) cattle ranch. In the next half-dozen novels, Savage fictitiously grows up, and in "Sheep Queen," the protagonist narrator is a middle-aged novelist named Tom Burton. When Campion visited me in 2018 in preparation for the film, she took dozens of photos of Savage's home ground. When she left the ranch, she looked back and saw the dog formation in rock that she's said felt like a blessing from Savage to make the movie. She and Benedict Cumberbatch have repeatedly saluted Savage's "Power" as a classic in American literature. I hope the movie brings him the recognition he deserves.

## **MAY MOVIES**

### **THE EYES OF TAMMY FAYE - 2021– Amazon**

Tammy (Jessica Chastain) is an idealistic young Christian who has big, new ideas of how to minister to the faithful. She finds her match in Jim Bakker (Andrew Garfield), and together the pair build a huge televangelism career — but their foundations are shakier than they look.

### **UNDER THE TUSCAN SUN - 2003 -Amazon**

When Frances Mayes (Diane Lane) learns her husband is cheating on her from a writer whom she gave a bad review, her life is turned upside down. In an attempt to bring her out of a deep depression, her best friend, Patti (Sandra Oh), encourages Frances to take a tour of Italy. During the trip, the new divorcée impulsively decides to purchase a rural Tuscan villa and struggles to start her life anew amid colorful local characters, including the handsome Marcello (Raoul Bova).