

Abstract

In a time where literature and its value is diminishing outside of the academy, it is important that scholars, and in particular Christian scholars, look to see what makes literature applicable to all people—not just the academy. This paper seeks to provide the link between literature and the common man by defining good literature as that which magnifies its subjects in order to reveal their true essence, and how these subjects fit together in a cohesive narrative, which in turn provides readers with a lens through which to see how their own narratives also possess a cohesive structure. To provide such a definition, this paper synthesizes the works and ideas of notable literary scholars and writers including Flannery O'Connor and her idea of magnification and distortion in literature, Philip Sidney and Aristotle's perspectives on mimesis, and Marshall Gregory's concept of unity in art in order to demonstrate how good literature magnifies and distorts its subjects in order to reveal their true essence. The paper then provides readers a lens in which to differentiate between good and bad literature through Neil Postman's concept of the typographic mind. The paper concludes by providing the link between good literature and its effect on the reader through a discussion on Alberto's Perez-Gomez's perspectives on literature, Roger Scruton's perspectives on beauty, and Henri Nouwen's concept of the lost modern man from the first chapter of his *The Wounded Healer*. This conclusion attempts to demonstrate that when readers engage with good literature, they are able to see how all the entities of reality have a place in a divine narrative, and that readers also have their own place. By providing such a connection, this paper attempts to demonstrate that good literature serves a purpose outside of the academy: to help all people find their place in God's overarching narrative.