University of St. Thomas, Minnesota

UST Research Online

School of Divinity Master's Theses and Projects   Saint Paul Seminary School of Divinity

Fall 12-2019

The Reality of Fantasy

Thomas Rausch

THE SAINT PAUL SEMINARY SCHOOL OF DIVINITY
UNIVERSITY OF ST. THOMAS

The Reality of Fantasy

A THESIS

Submitted to the Faculty of the School of Divinity

Rev. Thomas Rausch

Of the University of St. Thomas

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree

Master of Arts in Theology

St. Paul, MN

2019

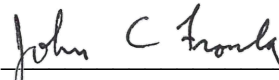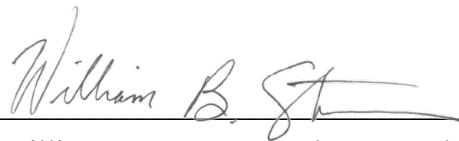This thesis by Thomas Rausch fulfills the thesis requirement for the Master of Arts degree in Theology approved by Stephen A. Hipp, S.T.D., as Thesis Advisor, and by John Froula, Ph.D. and by William B Stevenson, Ph.D. as Readers.

_____

Stephen A. Hipp, S.T.D., Thesis Advisor

_____

John Froula, Ph.D., Reader

_____

William B. Stevenson, Ph.D., Reader

The Reality of Fantasy
Table of Contents

Introduction

"Fantasy…is…not a lower but a higher form of Art, indeed the most nearly pure form, and so (when achieved) the most potent."[1] Art has always been able to communicate truths that were otherwise inexpressible. Through music, the visual arts, or the written word, reality is not so much captured as it is magnified. Tolkien claims that fantasy has a preeminent place within art as an expression of reality. That anyone could make the claim that a fictional work could best express reality is fantastic. But that a venerated Catholic would assert this raises many questions; specifically, how can a fiction magnify reality?

I propose to write upon the theological principles necessary for a literary work of fiction of the fantasy genre to be credible and true. In our everyday experience, the immaterial world cannot be seen and for some, rarely experienced. But, in the fantasy world, the immaterial realities are made visible and have a close connection with the senses. This means that the immaterial is made more accessible in fantasy. There is then an important role that fantasy can play in one's spiritual life. This role would be to point towards the interior life, underscore its importance, and provide a taste for it. Millions enjoy fantasy and many describe them as "more real than real life." This could only be the case in the sad reality that many people are lacking any kind of spiritual life and so they consciously or subconsciously fill the void with pastimes such as sports, music, clubs, or work. Any of these could be a healthy practice in moderation but they should never be used to fill a spiritual void. The fantasy genre, likewise, can be a healthy pastime in moderation. However, the value of fantasy is rejected by most. In fact, fantasy is often

---

[1] J.R.R. Tolkien, *Tolkien on Fairy-stories: Expanded edition, with commentary and notes* (London: HarperCollins*Publishers,* 2008), 60.

associated with escapism and childishness. Since any medium of recreation is highly formative in how one perceives reality, it is important that fantasies relate to the real world at least in the foundational principles that govern this world. These principles are a matter of the truth about creation, anthropology, and the mystery of human redemption. From the theological perspective, therefore, the value of fantasy must be measured with reference to the theology of creation, theological anthropology, and ecclesiology. I argue that any good fantasy will accord with these principles regardless of the author's intention and therefore correspond to reality in an essential way.

Creation

I will first discuss how God creates (which is by way of his ideas and as an expression of his will), and a comparison will then be made as to how man creates, as an image and in the likeness of the Creator. Next is looked at what God creates, the material and immaterial orders. This section will deal with the connection between these orders and how fantasy's visible portrayal of immaterial things emphasizes that relationship. Sacramental theology will help shed light on the reality that material things point towards immaterial realities and can cause an immaterial effect. If a work of fantasy is successful at conveying something true about the immaterial, then it will keep in mind these principles of the material/immaterial order and sacramentality.

Theological Anthropology

Second is theological anthropology. This branch of theology asks the question of what man is in light of God's revelation. What is man's place in the cosmos? What is man's need for salvation? The main concern about any work of fiction is understanding man properly. Stories can say something about the realities man is made for and highlight his strengths, weaknesses, and ultimate destiny. However, they can also lead man astray. What is read can be very formative and can warp the intellect's understanding of reality. Therefore, it is very important that the truth about man and his destiny be emphasized or—in other words—glorified. If man and his destiny are not glorified, then something else that is less human, less real, less important, less valuable will be strengthened, being the main focus or point of the work and thus moving the formation of readers away from reality.

What ought to be glorified are the Transcendentals: the Good, the True, and the Beautiful. The Transcendentals are what all men long for, what all things participate in, point towards, and lead people to encounter the living God. In and of themselves, the Transcendentals are identical to God. God is True. He is Good. He is Beautiful, and he is One. Fantasy is only valuable in so far as it participates in that which is objectively True, Good, and Beautiful. The importance of this section cannot be understated because this is what makes fantasy worthy of one's time. Fantasy that participates in the Transcendentals is able to elevate the thoughts, desires, and tastes of an individual, and is simply more conformed with reality, and therefore it elevates man toward and conforms him with God. This encounter with God is an invitation from him to be in a deeper relationship with him. The desire for God through the Transcendentals will

be explored through the ideas of nostalgia, which is a deep longing for completion and fulfillment, and the numinous which is the presence of God as it is experienced by the creature.

Ecclesiology

The last section is ecclesiology. This section elucidates on the fact that man is made to live in community. The intention of creation is for all of creation to return in union with the Father which takes place in the unity of Christ and his members in the Mystical Body the Church. This reality is not often emphasized in fantasy today; however, this principle is unavoidable, even in stories that focus on one hero and ought to be more explicitly present in fantasy. Fantasy commonly depicts one hero who seems capable of saving everyone, but very often that hero relies on those closest to him to bring unity to the world.

Ultimately, this work is envisioned to help authors, readers, and formators of all kinds to understand the value of fantasy and how it can be best put to the service of the glory of God and the salvation of souls.

CHAPTER I
CREATION

God as Creator of the Primary World

Introduction

God creates by means of his ideas and as an expression of his will. His creation reveals himself to the intellectual soul. Man as a maker, creates in a similar way as God, by means of his idea and as an expression of his will. The difference is that man creates using the material that God has brought into existence. Fantasy is grounded in this reality of creation even though what is depicted is not real.

God Creates by Way of His Ideas

"In the beginning God created heaven, and earth…. And God said: Be light made. And light was made"[2] (Gen 1:1, 3 *DRA)*. This beginning of things is in their principle the very Word of God. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God…All things were made by him: and without him was made nothing that was made" (John 1:1, 3). God creates everything by his Word. "For in him were all things created in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible…: all things were created by him and in him" (Col 1:16). The spoken word is a sign of the interior workings of the subject. This spoken word reveals that God has ideas and that he creates by way of these ideas. When anything is brought into existence,

---

[2] *The Holy Bible: Douay-Rheims Version* (London, UK: Baronius Press, 2009).

there is an idea of it in the mind of God, for Aquinas says, "In the Divine Mind, there are the proper ideas of all things."[3] "All things" implies everything that has being or existence. And so, anything that is in act necessarily has an idea by which it is participating in. Ideas exist apart from the thing itself "to be the type of that of which it is called the form"[4] or "to be the principle of the knowledge of that thing."[5] In other words, ideas are either the exemplar cause of a thing or the principle by which something is intelligible. This means that anything in act is dependent on the idea for its expression and for its intelligibility. God does not just have ideas of concrete things like people, places, or things, but also actions such as thinking, speaking, and writing. The speaking is in act. So is writing, painting, composing, sculpting, and making. These activities have being and so does that which is produced from these activities. God has a Divine Idea of even these. The fantasy genre exists in the Divine Mind as a Divine Idea, and each individual thing of fantasy has its own Divine Idea in the Divine Mind. Thus, since the Divine Idea is identical to God's essence,[6] we can know God as far as the actual thing itself participates with its Divine Idea and as far as our intellect is conformed to reality.

---

[3] Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 15, a. 1, in *Latin/English Edition of the Works of St. Thomas Aquinas*, vol. 13, trans. Father Laurence Shapcote, O.P. (Lander, WY: The Aquinas Institute for the Study of Sacred Doctrine, 2012), 175.

[4] *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 15, a. 1, trans. Father Laurence Shapcote, O.P., 173.

[5] *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 15, a. 1, trans. Father Laurence Shapcote, O.P., 173.

[6] *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 15, a. 1, trans. Father Laurence Shapcote, O.P., 175.

Creatures as Expressions of the Creator's Will

God's Will is Expressed/Realized in his Creative Work and Redemptive Work

In the Divine Mind, God has Ideas of all things. And this is either as an exemplar or as a principle of knowledge. "As a principle of knowledge it has respect to all things known by God, even though they never come to be in time."[7] This means that there may be things that exist in the mind of God that the human intellect will never know until the beatific vision. What does exist according to its idea exists because God willed it to exist.

Aquinas says that God's will is the cause of things in three ways: 1) in the order of causes, God is first and so acts by both his intellect and his will; 2) God is the perfection of being and so determined effects act according to his infinite perfection according to the determination of his will and intellect; 3) effects proceed from God after the mode of the will, for his inclination to put into act what his intellect has conceived appertains to the will.[8] Ways two and three are important for our consideration because God determines what he creates and agents produce their like. These two together mean that God chose how he reveals himself in creation. For "in all creatures there are found traces of the Trinity…according as it is one individual [the Father], and according as it is formed by a species [the Son], and according as it has a certain relation to order [the Holy Spirit]."[9]

---

[7] *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 15, a. 3, trans. Father Laurence Shapcote, O.P., 177.
[8] *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 19, a. 4, trans. Father Laurence Shapcote, O.P., 213. "Since God is first in the order of agents, He must act by intellect and will…but determined effects proceed from His own infinite perfection according to the determination of His will and intellect…they proceed from Him after the mode of will, for His inclination to put in act what His intellect has conceived appertains to the will."
[9] *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 45, a. 7, trans. Father Laurence Shapcote, O.P., 471.

Man is Creator of the Secondary World

Man Creates by Ideas

Man also creates by means of his ideas but these ideas are dependent on the Ideas of God. Therefore, all artifacts are ultimately dependent on the Idea in the Mind of God as well as the mind of the author. This type of creation is called 'sub-creation.' Sub-creation is "a fully realized and internally consistent imaginary (or 'secondary') world."[10] One can enter into this fully realized and internally consistent secondary world and explore its foundations much like philosophers and theologians explore the foundations of the real world, or primary world. Now, no work of fiction could ever compare to the beauty and order of the world created by God; however, the world that an author creates could bring a greater understanding of the truths, the goods, and the beauties of the primary world. When an author, as a sub-creator, writes well, the mind can enter into the secondary world of fantasy, and what is related there is believable because the world is consistent. "The story-maker proves a successful 'sub-creator.' He makes a Secondary World which your mind can enter. Inside it, what he relates is 'true:' it accords with the laws of that world. You therefore believe it, while you are, as it were, inside."[11]

Unfortunately, many works of fantasy fail to measure up to a semblance of a fully realized and internally consistent world. There are too many sub-creators who do not take into consideration the consequences of their myth of creation or basic anthropology when developing characters, or how relations between characters play a role in the lives of the inhabitants. If

---

[10] Oxford Dictionary, "Subcreation," at Lexico (9 December 2019), at www.lexico.com/definition/subcreation. "Fully realized" is referring to an origin and an end. At least in the mind of the author, the world has an origin and a direction in which the conflict is heading towards.
[11] Tolkien, *Tolkien on Fairy-stories: Expanded edition, with commentary and notes*, 50.

fantasy is to be truly a sub-creation, then it must really be *sub-* or "under" creation. Fantasy is not perfected reality nor beyond reality. It is dependent upon reality. This is at the core of what makes any work of art good. But, since fantasy has a unique relationship with the invisible and can tend toward escapism and false ideologies, it is especially important for fantasy to be grounded on the foundations of reality.

It is for this reason, then, that the idea of the author ought to be conformed to the idea in the mind of God. An artifact can conform to an idea more or less and any artist knows that a good piece of art is one that imitates the image that the artist preconceived.[12] Likewise, the idea of the author—if it is to be in harmony with the reality created by God—must conform to the idea of God. By being submissive to the principle of creation, an author is able to have a better idea of his secondary world because it is conformed to reality, the expressed ideas of God.

Man's Created World Expresses his Will

Like God, man also wills what he creates. He discerns and decides what is brought into "being." When man does this, part of himself has taken shape outside of him. His creation is an image of himself, much like primary creation is a reflection of the Creator. By choosing what ideas to bring into reality he reveals his own will and ultimately, his very self. Art reveals something about the artist. Christian art reveals the faith of the artist and, ultimately, reveals God who is the primary Creator of all reality.

---

[12] This is not to say that all art is just a copy of some real thing. There are many forms of art from realism to abstract. But the artist is applying a method or technique to his work, as well as having something interiorly conceived. The frustration and cross of the artist is that the piece rarely comes out as it was conceived and is often a pale imitation of the vision.

When an artist wills to portray reality, he can do so in two ways. Either by following his own will, i.e. his own perception of reality, or by following the will of God. He follows the will of God by allowing his image of reality to be conformed to God's idea of reality. When an artist knows this reality, it transforms his entire being to be able to recognize the true good. When the intellect knows the true good, a free individual is in a place to choose God's will. The art that this artist makes is then a carrier of the divine realities. In a certain sense the artist mediates the Divine Ideas by his work. When the Divine Ideas are mediated, the artist has a responsibility to act to the full extent of his ability in order for the thing to participate in the Divine Idea. This is no less the case for fantasy. "To serve God…means referring and offering the work to God in prayer; but it also means, essentially, to do the work well: one must be prepared for it, work hard at it, and so far as possible be well qualified for it."[13]

The Material and Immaterial Orders of Creation

Introduction

Since man cannot create *ex nihil,* he is reliant on what God has already created for him. Fantasy necessarily takes its building blocks from the primary world. The secondary world is dependent upon the primary world which God has created.[14] God is the Creator of the visible and the invisible; the material and the immaterial. There are two types of beings in reality, material

---

[13] Yves Congar, *Lay People in the Church: A Study for a Theology of Laity* (Westminster, Md: Newman Press, 1965), 433.

[14] Tolkien, *Tolkien on Fairy-stories: Expanded edition, with commentary and notes*, 27. "Personality can only be derived from a person. The gods may derive their colour and beauty from the high splendours of nature, but it was Man who obtained these for them, abstracted them from sun and moon and cloud; their personality they get direct from him; the shadow or flicker of divinity that is upon them they receive through him from the invisible world, the Supernatural."

beings and immaterial beings. All beings can be categorized into one or the other order. Material beings are characterized by having a transient nature, subject to time and space. Immaterial beings are not transient, they may be present in all times and all places. The human person is the unique exception to both of these rules. Man is an embodied soul. This means that his body is material while his soul is an immaterial reality. The whole of man is this body and soul union. As the unique bridge between the two orders, man makes a claim on both orders as his locus of being. It is this intimacy between the two orders in man that gives rise to a new way of looking at creation.

The immaterial order is of a higher nature than the material order. Anything that is unchanging and unlimited is always better than something that changes through time and is limited by space. These higher goods find their particular expression in the material. The human person is made to be able to desire after the higher goods of reality. It is therefore better for the human to possess immaterial goods than to possess material goods. However, man only comes to know the immaterial through the material. "It is part of man's nature to acquire knowledge of the intelligible from the sensible."[15] Regretfully, many in today's materialistic culture no longer believe that there exists the order of immaterial beings: There is no God, there are no angels, and there is no excellent virtue that perfects man's particular mode of being. Even thoughts are just synapsis firing in the brain.

Fantasy has become a place for people to encounter more than just material realities. A secondary world employs both the material order and the immaterial order. It is quite clear how the material order is used in fantasy. It is the building blocks for everything tangible. All the

---

[15] *Summa theologiae*, III, q. 60, a. 4, trans. Father Laurence Shapcote, O.P., 5.

senses are engaged in fantasy. The grandness of sights[16], the smells of the world[17], the taste of exotic food and the feeling of power[18]. All of this makes use of sensible things in the material order. The immaterial order is what makes fantasy something more, something real in a deeper sense. Fantasy has an incredible ability to make the immaterial, the insensible, tangible. The immaterial is encounterable in a real way through the fantasy genre. In the primary world, spirits and universals can be known but not touched, not seen. This makes it difficult to keep in mind the ever-greater reality of the immaterial order that is combined with the material. Fantasy does not have this problem because the immaterial is made incarnate through visible realities. Goodness and evil, Truth and lies, Order and chaos are often personified and take visible form. Even when these attributes are not personified, there is something very visible about their presence. A noble man stands a certain way, he commands attention, he treats others with excellence, and this is visibly seen. There is nothing hidden about his goodness and it is often named. Forests, for example, are imbued with goodness or malice. Think of Lothlorien from the Lord of the Rings.[19] In the primary world, nobility is not always recognized as such. And most people find declaring a place good or evil to be silly. Places are places. And yet, when man encounters the visible he immediately encounters the immaterial and he makes a judgement upon

---

[16] J.R.R. Tolkien, *The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company,1994), 89. "They passed slowly, and the hobbits could see the starlight glimmering on their hair and in their eyes. They bore no lights, yet as they walked a shimmer, like the light of the moon above the rim of the hills before it rises, seemed to fall about their feet."

[17] Tolkien, *The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring*, 202. "And at all times they smell the blood of living things, desiring and hating it."

[18] Jim Butcher, *The Dresden Files: Grave Peril* (New York: RoC, 2001), 2. "'Lord be with us,' Michael said, and crossed himself. I felt a stirring of something; powerful, placid energy around him—the power of faith."

[19] Tolkien, *The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring*, 364. "As soon as he set foot upon the far bank of Silverlode a strange feeling had come upon him, and it deepened as he walked into the Naith; it seemed to him that he had stepped over a bridge of time into a corner of the Elder Days, and was now walking in a world that was no more….In Lorien the ancient things still lived on in the waking world….Evil had been seen and heard there, sorrow had been known."

the quality of the place or act. Although, his ability to make this judgement has been hampered, he, nevertheless, has been made for the goods of the immaterial order. Experience would claim that the best goods are of the immaterial order and it is these goods for which man longs. Fantasy can serve as a place to educate the person in what they truly desire.

Material Things as Signs of (and as Leading Us Toward) Immaterial Things

Material things by their very nature point towards the spiritual realities that imbue and form the visible world. When man encounters the material realm, he automatically abstracts from the matter its intelligible form. Man can do this because all things participate in a universal. This universal, such as "horseness," is what gives a thing a descriptive. If a material thing has no universal giving it shape then man has no description for the thing. Think of the concept of prime matter. Every freshman taking a philosophy class stumbles to understand their professor's poor descriptions of matter with no form. And yet, because of material bodies, man is unable to get at immaterial realities, qua immaterial realities. He must first take in the material to abstract the immaterial. "In order to contemplate the First Principle, who is most spiritual, eternal and above us, we pass through his vestiges, which are material, temporal, and outside us."[20]

In fantasy, it is nearly impossible for an author to move away from this principle of reality: moving from the material to the immaterial. Any attempt would be nonsensical; for, in order to describe the immaterial, one has to point to examples that can be known only through our encounter with sensible reality which is through the five senses. A denial of this principle

---

[20] Bonaventure, *Bonaventure: The Soul's Journey into God, the Tree of Life, the Life of St. Francis,* trans. Ewert Cousins (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1988), 60.

would reduce the storytelling of fantasy to blank pages. Our encounter with the immaterial is through the material. The angel Gabriel is experienced through his external announcement; Raphael by his physical healing; Michael, protection from evil. The power of a wizard is felt and seen. The effects of a curse have physical consequences in how a person looks or feels. Not only do the immaterial aspects of fantasy cause effects but the effects are signs of the immaterial. In the primary world, exploring the material order can lead to deep discoveries of the immaterial order because of the intimate tie between the material and immaterial orders.

The Principles of Sacramentality

For the Christian, the relation between the material and immaterial is a sacramental relationship. Sacraments are often misunderstood as Catholic magic rituals or purely symbolic actions that call on the believer to have faith. So understood, sacrament-like-rituals are often times depicted in fantasy to try to flesh out a world with ritualistic action that puts one in touch with the divine. Or they are used to show an institution who uses fake symbols to illicit "belief" in a lie to suppress a people under its dominion. Either depiction can help or hinder the context for the fantasy. However, the reality of sacraments as understood by the Catholic Church can generate greater content that not only fleshes out the visible aspects of a fantasy world but can explain the relationship that the visible world has with the invisible world. The principles of sacramentality, when applied to fantasy, are able to bring to life the fantasy world, credibly

16

connect with the supernatural, and maintain "the inner consistency of reality."[21] The fundamental principles of Catholic sacramentality are those of signification and instrumental causality.

Principle of Signification

There are three things to consider in sacraments: sign, sensible thing, and word. "A sign is that which conveys something else to the mind, besides the species which it impresses on the senses."[22] Signs communicate to the mind a concept other than what the sign actually is. It points towards a different concept than the one normally abstracted from the sensible thing. When relating signs to sacraments, the underlying question could be whether sacraments point to concepts beyond themselves. Aquinas answers that sacraments are signs of holy things in so far as they make men holy.[23] Therefore, sacraments as signs communicate concepts other than the basic elements of the sacrament, namely, the sanctification of man. It is important to keep in mind that "signs are given to men, to whom it is proper to discover the unknown by means of the known"[24] because signs impart knowledge upon man that he might not have known on his own. This knowledge is obtained by him by means of a sign; and sensible things serve as just that, signs of other things, namely supra-sensible things.

"Now it is part of man's nature to acquire knowledge of the intelligible from the sensible."[25] Sensible things are necessary for sacraments at least because what is signified by the

---

[21] Tolkien, *Tolkien on Fairy-stories: Expanded edition, with commentary and notes*, 59.

[22] *Summa theologiae*, III, q. 60, a. 1, Obj. 2, trans. Father Laurence Shapcote, O.P., 1.

[23] *Summa theologiae*, III, q. 60, a. 2, trans. Father Laurence Shapcote, O.P., 3. "A sacrament, as considered by us now, is defined as being the *sign of holy thing so far as it makes men holy*."

[24] *Summa theologiae*, III, q. 60, a. 2, trans. Father Laurence Shapcote, O.P., 3.

[25] *Summa theologiae*, III, q. 60, a. 4, trans. Father Laurence Shapcote, O.P., 5.

sacraments are intelligible and spiritual goods.[26] When considering immaterial things, man must have sensible things to get him there. Signs point up; from sensible to intelligible. God cannot be a sign for man, nor could an angel be a sign for gravity. "So long as we know *through a glass in a dark manner,* (1 Cor 13:12) we need sensible signs in order to reach spiritual things."[27] All signs have some kind of sensible thing connected to it. It seems that a sign points toward something else of a higher being.

According to Aquinas, "sensible things are required in sacraments for the purpose of signification."[28] For this very reason, "words are the principal signs used by men."[29] It is fitting then that sacraments employ both words and sensible things because "words and things, like form and matter, combine in the formation of one thing, in so far as the signification of things is completed by means of words."[30] This is all to say that a sensible sign points to many things naturally. Water points to cleansing and refreshment on account of its nature.[31] It is the words that indicate the specific signification of the sensible sign.

The combination of word and sensible thing is related analogously by Aquinas to the combination of form and matter. The form determines the matter. If there is matter, then there must be form since matter is pure potency in need of actuality so that it may become intelligible. "The words are as the form, and sensible things are as the matter…The determining principle is

---

[26] *Summa theologiae*, III, q. 60, a. 4, trans. Father Laurence Shapcote, O.P., 6. "Consequently, since the sacred things which are signified by the sacraments, are the spiritual and intelligible goods by means of which man is sanctified, it follows that the sacramental signs consist in sensible things."

[27] *Summa theologiae*, III, q. 61, a. 4, obj 1, trans. Father Laurence Shapcote, O.P., 20.

[28] *Summa theologiae*, III, q. 60, a. 5, obj 1, trans. Father Laurence Shapcote, O.P., 6.

[29] *Summa theologiae*, III, q. 60, a. 6, trans. Father Laurence Shapcote, O.P., 9.

[30] *Summa theologiae*, III, q. 60, a. 6, ad 2, trans. Father Laurence Shapcote, O.P., 9.

[31] *Summa theologiae*, III, q. 60, a. 6, ad 2, trans. Father Laurence Shapcote, O.P., 9. "For water may signify both a cleansing by reason of its humidity, and refreshment by reason of its being cool."

on the part of the form, which is as it were the end and terminus of the matter."[32] The words determine what a sign signifies. Which words are used is important because words are tied to reality as understood by the intellect. So, to call a rock a flower would be nonsensical because there is no meaningful association between their respective notions. However, some notions have an affinity towards one another. Durability and friendship, for example, have an affinity in that most desire their friendships to be durable. It would follow that a rock could be a sign of friendship, but words would still be needed in order for the recipient of the rock to understand that this rock is a sign of the giver's friendship with the recipient.

Likewise, fantasy uses signification. In order to communicate that something has more power than just its natural power, words are used to either tell what a thing does or to show that a thing can do something. An example of signification in fantasy would be the Aragon series. The series' magic system employs the use of words that gives the person control over the matter. The word is the thing's true word. It names the essence of a thing and thus grants power to the magic user. For example, *stenr reisa* means "rise stone" and is the spell to raise a stone. The word signifies an action or reality which is manifested in a material object.

This simple magic system points to something that is truly fantastic in the magic user. Something that points our mind to the immaterial. Just like water and the words, "I baptize you…," point to the forgiveness of sins so does raising a stone and the words *stenr reisa* point to a power that is not human.

A fantasy world uses a combination of what are known as "natural sings" and "free signs." "Those are natural which, without any desire or intention of signifying, make us aware of

---

[32] *Summa theologiae*, III, q. 60, a. 7, trans. Father Laurence Shapcote, O.P., 10.

something beyond themselves, like smoke which signifies fire."[33] Free signs "are those which living creatures show to one another for the purpose of conveying, in so far as they are able, the motion of their spirits or something which they have sensed or understood."[34] Natural signs do not require anyone or anything else to confer upon them the power to signify. Free signs demand for their power to signify an ulterior determinant of the signification. When there are no natural signs for a reality, an author can choose any number of things to serve as a sign for that reality. "The creator of a symbol determines freely the meaning his act expresses."[35] In the case of the friends, it is within the authority of the friend to name a sign of his friendship towards the other; but, it would not be in his authority to name a sign of the other's friendship towards himself.[36] In regard to the sacraments, for which there exist no natural signs, God chooses the physical signs freely. It is proper to Him to designate the proper signs of man's sanctification. Concerning free signs in general, many signs can be employed to signify one thing, it belongs to one who has authority to designate one sign that must be used.[37]

When multiple natural things have a power in causing something in another, the use of one over the other as the sensible sign for the effect is irrelevant. An earthquake, a flood, and a tsunami, for example, all cause destruction and any one of these could be chosen to be *the* sign for destruction. But when the thing is granted a power, such as destruction, that it otherwise would not have, then it is up to the one who grants the power to choose the sensible thing for the

---

[33] Augustine, *On Christian Doctrine*, trans. D. W. Robertson, Jr. (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1958), 34.

[34] Augustine, *On Christian Doctrine*, trans. D. W. Robertson, Jr, 34-35.

[35] E. Schillebeeckx, O.P., *Christ the Sacrament of the Encounter with God* (Lanham, ML: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc, 1963), 192.

[36] *Summa theologiae*, III, q. 60, a. 5, trans. Father Laurence Shapcote, O.P., 7. "It is not for anyone to determine that which is in the power of another, but only that which is in his own power."

[37] *Summa theologiae*, III, q. 60, a. 5, ad 1, trans. Father Laurence Shapcote, O.P., 7. "Though the same thing can be signified by diverse signs, yet to determine which sign must be used belongs to the signifier."

sign.[38] For example, the Killer Rabbit of Caerbannog is a sign of destruction even though rabbits are not associated with that power.[39]

This is no less true in fantasy. A natural sign of danger is when the ground begins to rumble. However, a walking staff is not a sign of danger. The sign of a dangerous wizard could be many things, his staff is just one of many free signs that could communicate danger, and this depends on the signifier. What is necessary is how people respond to the signs. The sound of screeching eels is a natural sign of danger. The secondary world assumes this natural sign and has its characters act accordingly. In the secondary world, a free sign is very much like a free sign in the primary world. The Yin-Yang symbolizes balance. However, it is a free sign and so it could signify something other than "balance." Because of this, when the same sign is used in fantasy, it could mean something else entirely.

> Suddenly he found himself facing something scrawled on the inn door, a curving line scratched with a charred stick, a charcoal teardrop balanced on its point. So much had happened that it hardly surprised him to find the Dragon's Fang marked on the Winespring Inn. Why anyone would want to accuse the innkeeper or his family of evil, or bring the inn bad luck, was beyond him but the night had convinced him of one thing. Anything was possible. Anything at all.[40]

In this excerpt from the Wheel of Time, the Dragon's Fang looks like the dark side of a Yin-Yang symbol, but it means something different in this world. This sign is an accusation that someone is a Darkfriend. This mark is a symbol to others that the person or place is evil and should be treated as an enemy of the Light. Later in the same book we see someone reacting to

---

[38] *Summa theologiae*, III, q. 60, a. 5, ad 2, trans. Father Laurence Shapcote, O.P., 7. "Sensible things are endowed with natural powers…if two of them have the same virtue, it matters not which we use. Yet they are ordained unto sanctification not through any power that they possess naturally, but only in virtue of the Divine institution."

[39] *Monty Python and the Holy Grail*, special ed. DVD, directed by Terry Gilliam and Terry Jones (Culver City, CA: Columbia Tristar Home Entertainment, 2001).

[40] Robert Jordan, *The Wheel of Time: The Eye of the World* (New York: Tor Fantasy, 1990), 95-96.

the Dragon's fang. "'There's already been the Dragon's Fang on some people's doors.' This time he did spit."[41] The author uses people's reactions to show the significance of what the mark signifies in the secondary world. Throughout the story, people use hushed tones, or they will quiet a friend who is talking about it in public. "'Say no more,' Lan said, so softly Rand almost could not understand. 'These are bad days to speak of Trollocs, or Darkfriends, or the Father of Lies, with strange ears to hear. Such talk can bring worse than the Dragon's Fang scrawled on your door."[42] Without the author telling us how people respond or talk about the Dragon's Fang it would be difficult for us to relate to the sign in the appropriate way.

Sign, sensible thing, and word come together to direct man from lower things to higher things, from corporeal things to spiritual things. Without words the sacrament would be more mysterious than it already is. For example, the person needs to be washed with water before having the 'special' bread. Why is the person washed? What does the washing do? What is the 'special' bread and why is it special? Without the words, it is impossible to go from natural to supernatural realities via sensible signs. Yet, a sign, purely as such, merely draws attention towards something else. Signs can also do more than just signify: they can also cause the things they signify. If a sacrament cannot affect what it signifies then what good is the sacrament? Signification is only one of the principles that govern sacramentality. The principle of instrumental causality is what allows some signs, like sacraments, to affect what they signify.

---

[41] Jordan, *The Wheel of Time: The Eye of the World*, 187.
[42] Jordan, *The Wheel of Time: The Eye of the World*, 163.

Principle of Instrumental Causality

The principle of instrumental causality is relevant to fantasy due to the extensive use of objects in fantasy. Also, the use of events and persons! In the great fantasy classic of *The Lord of the Rings* or the myths of King Arthur, objects have their own history and inner power. They have a "personality" and they play an important role in the story. These objects to some extent become extensions of their creator or extensions of the user. They are elevated from mere objects to objects of power - power that is ordinarily foreign to the object. The One Ring in *The Lord of the Rings* greatly exemplifies how a common item plays a much greater role than would be expected of a common item. Instrumental causality can help explain how these magical objects could possess power otherwise foreign to them.

Consider the three elements of instrumental causality: the principal agent, the instrument, and the effect. The principal agent provides to the instrument the motion whereby it is responsible for the effect that they together produce. "The instrumental cause works not by the power of its form, but only by the motion whereby it is moved by the principal agent: so that the effect is not likened to the instrument but to the principal agent."[43] The principal agent is the necessary subject which acts. He acts to bring about some desired effect. The principal agent can then be said to be moved by the good which it perceives. Principal agents must be self-moving things, otherwise they would not be able to use a thing as an instrument but when they act on an object they would be instruments themselves. That is to say, only self-moving things can be principal agents.

---

[43] *Summa theologiae*, III, q. 62, a. 1, trans. Father Laurence Shapcote, O.P., 22.

Further, the instrument has a twofold action: one is proper to the instrument and the other it receives from the agent.[44] For example, a pen's proper act is to dispense ink while its instrumental act is to write. However, "it does not accomplish the instrumental action save by exercising it proper action."[45] The instrument only acts as instrument when it is acted upon by a principal agent; at the same time, it exercises its own proper operation when acting as an instrument.

Now, instruments when acted upon are elevated to a different order of dignity. A pen sitting on a table is of a lower dignity than that of man but the pen that scribed the Constitution of the United States of America has been elevated and, in a certain sense, shares in the dignity of the man who wrote the Constitution. The instrument has become, temporarily, an extension of the principal agent granting it quasi-equal dignity. The Stones of the Palantiri are a good example of an instrument.

> Now these Stones had this virtue that those who looked therein might perceive in them things far off, whether in place or in time. For the most part they revealed only things near to another kindred Stone, for the Stones each called to each; but those who possessed great strength of will and of mind might learn to direct their gaze whither they would.[46]

The Stones of the Palantiri were made to have a power not natural to stones. A person can use these stones to see and to communicate over great distances. The agent takes the stone and uses its power for his own purposes, elevating the stone to participate in the dignity of the agent because it shares in bringing about effects it otherwise could never produce. In the Wheel of

---

[44] *Summa theologiae*, III, q. 62, a. 1, ad 2, trans. Father Laurence Shapcote, O.P., 22. "An instrument has a twofold action: one is instrumental, in respect of which it works not by its own power but by the power of the principal agent: the other is its proper action, which belongs to it in respect of its proper form."

[45] *Summa theologiae*, III, q. 62, a. 1, ad 2, trans. Father Laurence Shapcote, O.P., 23.

[46] J.R.R. Tolkien, *Silmarillion* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1977), 292.

Time, there are instruments that can greatly augment the natural powers of the magic users as well as grant them new abilities that they do not have.

> Sa'angreal were like angreal, allowing an Aes Sedai to channel more of the Power than she safely could unaided, but far more powerful than angreal, and rare. *Ter'angreal were* something different. Existing in greater numbers than either angreal or sa'angreal, though still not common, they used the One Power rather than helping to channel it, and no one truly understood them. Many would work only for someone who could channel, needing the actual channeling of the Power, while others did what they did for anyone. Where all the angreal and sa'angreal Egwene had ever heard of were small, ter'angreal could seemingly be any size. Each had apparently been made for a specific purpose by those Aes Sedai of three thousand years ago, to do a certain thing, and Aes Sedai since had died trying to learn what; died, or had the ability to channel burned out of them.[47]

In both of these examples, objects are used as instruments by agents, increasing or granting a power to great effect. The natural response to such instruments is to have a deep respect and to give a certain honor to such items. But if they are positively esteemed, it is only because of the good that the agent accomplishes through them. In fantasy, items that bring about fell deeds are feared and sought to be destroyed. The Black Cauldron,[48] the One Ring,[49] Horcruxes[50] are all examples of an item that is feared solely because of the means employed in its use. What these three items have in common is the evil intent for which they were created.

---

[47] Robert Jordan, *The Wheel of Time: The Dragon Reborn* (New York: Tom Doherty Associates, 1991), 169.
[48] Lloyd Alexander, *The Chronicles of Prydain: The Black Cauldron* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1965), 16.
[49] Tolkien, *The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring*, 56-60.
[50] J.K. Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince* (Broadway, NY: Scholastic Inc., 2005), 497-499.

Application of these Sacramental Principles to Fantasy

The two principles, signification and instrumental causality, form the groundwork in which to understand how a sensible thing can be a sign and cause of an invisible reality. The sacraments themselves are visible signs of invisible realities. They point towards and cause the very thing they signify, namely, salvation, an invisible reality. This groundwork prevents us from thinking about the sacraments, and about physical symbols in a fantasy world, as if they involved nothing more than symbolic words and actions. Fantasy, by its very nature deals with invisible realities in a visible way. Much of the "sacraments" of fantasy make the impossible possible. And while authors and readers tend to use this as means of escapism, a true understanding of sacramentality, sign and instrument, can ground the work in a reality that is greater than the fantasy. And yet it is through the fantasy that one can be brought to reality. These principles guide the creation and explanation of a credible fantasy world.

A very clear example of the sacramentality at work in fantasy would be Excalibur, the Arthurian legend.. Excalibur is a sword stuck in a stone enchanted to be pulled out only by the rightful king of England. The words "whoever pulls this sword from this stone will be King of all England," were combined with the object. The sword in the stone is a sign of the future king to come. The completed action of this man pulling this sword, with the words, from this stone is both the sign and cause of this man becoming the new King of England. He becomes king by having legitimate authority over those who live in the land. Him wielding the sword is enough for local lords to unite peacefully with him. Those lords who do not unite with the king are subdued by this same sword which is a way of establishing his kingship.

Conclusion

The theology of creation asserts that all things are either material or immaterial. From God, who is immaterial, processes the creation of the material and immaterial orders. Standing between the two orders is man. Starting with the material, man is led back to the immaterial. "In type and in shadow…The reality had to be depicted beforehand in type…The type carries us a long way but how much further does the reality go."[51] The sacramentality of the faith elevates the material to something more. Water is no longer mere water; words are no longer mere words. Matter has been elevated to the dignity of the immaterial due to its sacred use. Good fantasy, too, takes the material reality and elevates it to a much higher dignity which, in turn, showcases God's creation.

> Fantasy is made out of the Primary World, but a good craftsman loves his material, and has a knowledge and feeling for clay, stone and wood which only the art of making can give. By the forging of Gram cold iron was revealed; by the making of Pegasus horses were ennobled; in the Trees of the Sun and Moon root and stock, flower and fruit are manifested in glory.[52]

When fantasy stays faithful to these principles concerning creation and sacramentality the secondary creation itself is more real and conveys the truth of reality in a clearer way.

---

[51] Jean Danielou, *From Shadows to Reality* (Ex Fontibus Co, 2018), 129.
[52] Tolkien, *Tolkien on Fairy-stories: Expanded edition, with commentary and notes*, 68.

CHAPTER II
THEOLOGICAL ANTHROPOLOGY

Man's Place in the Created Order

Introduction

Man shares a unique relationship with his creator and with creation. He stands at the top of the material order, ordering all things back to the Creator. He also breaches into the immaterial order under the angels, taking part in the image of God. This union of matter and spirit is important to fantasy because it dictates both how man receives from and contributes to reality. The hylomorphic nature of man also prescribes certain acts and ends of man. Man is made to know and to love the Truth and the Good as his heightened end and is attuned to these invisible realities. Fantasy does well to stay close to these realities when portraying characters with a rational nature.

Man is a Union of Spirit and Matter

Man is a hylomorphic union between a body and a soul. The body is a material component and without a form to give it a substantial reality it remains just prime matter, pure potency. The form brings the potency of matter into act. A human soul forms matter into a human body. Therefore, the soul is the form of the body and is the only form of the body.[53]

> Notwithstanding the concrete difference between the two components of man's substance, body and soul, the latter by nature indestructible and immortal,…man

---

[53] David Berger, *Aquinas and the Liturgy* (Ann Arbor, MI: Sapientia Press, 2005), 54. "The soul is the only substantial form of the body that corresponds to primary matter."

is nevertheless an *unum simpliciter*: a substantial unity between the soul as the actuating principle and the body as the principle that makes concrete reality possible.[54]

It is in this concrete reality that man encounters the immaterial. Departing from man's senses, he extracts intelligible forms from material things which bring him into contact with higher realities than the material order. The process of coming to know higher realities by the lower realities of the senses emphasizes "the body's, that is, matter's integral affiliation to the human person.…affiliation that naturally ennobles the body to prepare it for ascension into the kingdom of grace."[55] Another way of putting this simple yet noble reality is that man naturally moves towards that which is true, from his body to the spiritual domains of his soul, and from there to what transcends him altogether.

Man is Destined for Unity with God through Truth and Love

"In reality it is only in the mystery of the Word made flesh that the mystery of man truly becomes clear."[56] Jesus, the man, shares in all things with man but sin. Christ who is God, is Truth. In a certain sense, man's final destiny is union with Truth itself. There is a deep affinity in man for the truth and when he begins a pursuit for truth, this desire becomes the main drive of his life.[57] Since it is proper for man to possess the truth, this drive for the truth is well founded.

---

[54] Berger, *Aquinas and the Liturgy*, 54.

[55] Berger, *Aquinas and the Liturgy*, 54.

[56] Second Vatican Council, *Gaudium et spes* (7 December 1965), §22, in *Vatican Council II: The Conciliar and Postconciliar Documents*, ed. Austin Flannery, OP (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2014), 922.

[57] Marie-Dominique Philippe, "Le probléme de le personne, sommet de le philosophie premiére," *Aletheia* no. 4 (1993): 25. "Ne suis-je pas responsable de la profundeur, de l'ampleur et de la largeur de ma propre personne par cette recherche de la vérité qui est vraiment ce qui structure ma personne, c'est-à-dire qui me permet de rejoindre mon autonomie et qui me permet d'être conscient du développement de ma personne? Par là, je découvre que la recherche philosophique, tout orientée vers la vérité, est mon bien premier, parce qu'elle me permet de faire le discernement entre les opinions et la vérité." "Am I not responsible for the depth, the fullness, and the grandeur of

Ultimately, man must be in union with Truth itself. Love is the only unitive power that brings about the kind of intimacy man longs for in pursuing the Truth. Man, therefore, is fulfilled in friendship with God. Jesus, Truth, God calls us friends not slaves.[58] Man is destined for friendship with God, with Truth. Friendship is the height of man's call to love God above all things and his neighbor as himself.[59] The love of friendship binds men together.[60] Friendship drives men together to seek a common good, namely Truth.[61] This finality of man brings man's desires to a deeper reality. Friendship calls man outside of himself and turns his concern towards the good of the other. This call to make of himself a self-gift would fulfill man's potency. This unity with God brings the whole of the material order back to God. It is man's destiny to offer to the Father all of creation on behalf of creation because man stands on the border of the material and the immaterial orders.

---

my own person in this search for truth, which is truly what structures my person, that is to say, what allows me to attain my autonomy and be aware of the development of my person? In this way, I discover that philosophical inquiry wholly geared towards the truth is my primary good because it allows me to discern between opinions and truth."

[58] See "You are my friends, if you do the things that I command you. I will not now call you servants: for the servant knoweth not what his lord doth. But I have call you friends: because all things whatsoever I have heard of my Father, I have made known to you" (Jn 15: 14-15).

[59] Philippe, "Le probléme de le personne, sommet de le philosophie premiére," 26-27. "Voilà la troisième dimension de la personne humaine, de ma personne: je suis un être assoiffeé d'aimer, qui ne peut pas trouver en lui-même son bien absolu…Or la recherche de la vérité elle-même me fait découvrir que la personne humaine peut *toujours* aimer un autre homme d'un amour spirituel d'amitié; cela donne à sa vie un sens, une signification réelle." "The third dimension of the human person…is that I am a being who thirst to love, who cannot find in himself his absolute good…The search for truth causes me to discover that the human person can *always* love another with a spiritual love of friendship; this is what gives life meaning, true significance."

[60] Philippe, "Le probléme de le personne, sommet de le philosophie premiére," 27. "Aucune personne humaine n'est seule au monde; elle a un lien réel avec les autres hommes, lien qu'elle est capable de développer." "No human person is alone in the world; he has a true bond with others and is capable of developing this bond."

[61] Philippe, "Le probléme de le personne, sommet de le philosophie premiére," 29. "Elle me fait découvrir non seulement la noblesse de ma personne, mais aussi la profondeur de mon esprit et de tout moi-même, de mon 'je suis', manifestant ma capacité d'être le bien véritable de mon ami; en effet, si je ne suis pas à moi même mon bien, je peux être pour une personne son véritable bien, et cela surtout si je cherche la vérité." "It not only causes me to discover the nobility of my person, but the depth of my spirit and my whole self, the depth of my 'I am' as well, and thus manifests my capacity of being my friend's true good. Indeed, while it is impossible that I be my own proper good, I can be a true good for a person, especially if I seek the truth."

Man stands as the bridge between the material order and the immaterial order. Man is conditioned by the body, locating him within time and space. However, the immortal soul of man gives him access to the spiritual gifts of eternity. "Man, though made of body and soul, is a unity. Through his very bodily condition he sums up in himself the elements of the material world. Through him they are thus brought to their highest perfection and can raise their voice in praise freely given to the creator."[62] This unique constitution of man gives him the unique position as pontifex between the created material order and the immaterial order. By being the ultimate creature on earth, he stands as head of the physical creation.[63] Man elevates the dignity of creation by exercising dominion over lower creation through his work. Further, when man gives himself in service to God and his neighbor, i.e. the other, this offering of his very self is what elevates the material order back to the Creator. This work not only elevates the dignity of creation but redeems creation. Unfortunately, man in his fallen state is incapable of elevating or redeeming himself.

Man's Need for Salvation

Man is in dire need of salvation. With the fall of Adam, man was put out of right relationship with his creator and the rest of creation, and consequently creation is no longer in right relation with itself.

---

[62] *Gaudium et spes*, §14.

[63] Stephen A. Hipp, "Nature's Finality and the Stewardship of Creation According to Saint Thomas Aquinas," *Nova et Vetera* 10, no. 1 (2012): 159. "In man, the entire universe (matter and spirit together) is propelled toward God as to its goal in a more perfect and complete manner. Thus all creation comes to God through man and in man."

For the expectation of the creature waiteth for the revelation of the sons of God…in hope…. For we know that every creature groaneth and travaileth in pain, even till now. And not only it, but ourselves also groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption of the sons of God, the redemption of our body. (Rom 8:19-23)

Not only has the relations between the material order been broken but also the human soul has been partially corrupted. "It is wounded in the natural powers proper to [the soul]: subject to ignorance, suffering, and the dominion of death; and inclined to sin--an inclination to evil that is called 'concupiscence.'"[64] This corruption of both the material order and the immaterial order in man has rendered him incapable of redeeming himself or others to God. His destiny in the cosmos is unattainable because his work is no longer able to be pleasing to God. The only thing that fulfills man and truly drives him has been taken from his grasp by the enemy of mankind. Yet, man still longs for this fulfillment and he still strives after his destiny.

The whole of man's history has been the story of dour combat with the powers of evil, stretching, so our Lord tells us, from the very dawn of history until the last day. Finding himself in the midst of the battlefield man has to struggle to do what is right, and it is at great cost to himself, and aided by God's grace, that he succeeds in achieving his own inner integrity.[65]

This conflict in the story of man is the foundation for every story ever told. There is conflict in every story, otherwise, it is not a story but a report. With the conflict comes hope for resolution. In the story of man, God always promised to save his people. He promised that he would send a savior who would bring back all of creation into right relationship with him. The incarnation was the Word, the principle of creation, becoming flesh. This was most fitting in redeeming man since, "this debt was so great that, while none but man must solve the debt, none

---

[64] *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2nd ed. (Washington, DC: United States Catholic Conference, 2000), 405.

[65] *Gaudium et spes*, §37.

but God was able to do it."[66] Thus, Jesus-the Word-fully God and fully man brought all of creation back to the Father. Jesus shared with us all things but sin, and so, all of creation is assumed by him and redeemed by him. This story of creation, fall, incarnation, and redemption becomes the exemplar for storytelling, especially fantasy storytelling.

Glory

In Every Story Something is Always Glorified

When it comes to storytelling, there is always a point to a story. Storytellers emphasize some areas and events more than others. This emphasizing is called glorifying.[67] Whatever work is done to draw more attention to one object over another, that work glorifies that object. Glory, simply, is telling someone that this is good and avoid that evil. As fallen creatures, man has a fascination with evil. Man's soul tends toward that which is evil even though we still long for the Good. This tension in man makes it very difficult to engage in the works of men. Some works glorify God, and some glorify sin and others have a mix of God and sin; but something (or someone) is always glorified. Sometimes man engage in a story for the pleasure of rest and sometimes he engages in a story out of curiosity of evil. "For pleasure seeketh objects beautiful, melodious, fragrant, savory, soft; but curiosity, for trial's sake, seeketh even the contraries of

---

[66] Anselm of Canterbury, "Cur Deus Homo," at EWTN (9 December 2019), www.ewtn.com/catholicism/library/cur-deus-homo-1316.

[67] See C.S. Lewis, *The Weight of Glory and Other Addresses* (New York: Macmillan, 1949), 7. "For glory meant good report with God, acceptance by God, response, acknowledgement, and welcome into the heart of things." Emphasizing is drawing attention to someone or something and calling it good. Ultimately, only God can name something good. Therefore, when we name something good it is then measured against God and reality.

these, not for the sake of suffering annoyance, but out of the lust of experiment and knowledge."[68]

This applies in the making and the reading of fantasy. The author could be writing a new world as a means of exploring forbidden ideas or acts. Books like *Carmilla,*[69] *Game of Thrones,*[70] *Dungeons & Dragons*[71] and *Harry Potter*[72] would be good examples of fantasy works of literature that are or could be used as means of exploring forbidden ideas or acts. Arguments have been had time and again over the appropriateness of one story over another and whether a work is worth reading despite the darkness present in the work.

The Darkest Vices can be explored as long as the Light is Glorified

There are dark realities in the history of man, yet there is never a lack of hope. The shadow of man's reality should not be something to hide. It is something to shed light into. These are realities in life which calls for the glorification of the True Good. In order to most greatly glorify the True Good, sometimes it is best seen in contrast. Nobility is best seen beside cruelty,[73] otherwise, nobility is just a nicety. For this reason, vices can be depicted in order to show how the Good overcomes even this evil.[74]

---

[68] *Summa theologiae*, II-II, q. 167, a. 2, trans. Father Laurence Shapcote, O.P., 589.

[69] Novella about a female vampire who preys upon a woman. A lot of lesbian overtones.

[70] Immoral acts are engaged in by main characters; most of the time, acts are considered evil, however, too much detail and time is spent on these acts for the emphasis to be anything but the glorification of the act.

[71] *D&D* in and of itself is not evil but many Dungeon Masters and writers for the official world take the opportunity to explore into the demonic nature of magic, sorcery, necromancy, mediums, and superstition.

[72] *Harry Potter* is widely debated in Christian circles, but it should be acknowledged that *Harry Potter* has heightened the popularity of magic in the mainstream culture in a way that does not adequately warn of the dangers thereof.

[73] C.f. R.A. Salvatore *The Dark Elf Trilogy: Exile* (Renton, WA: Wizards of the Coast, Inc.), 113-114. "The hatred and ambition fostered by these amoral tenets are the doom of my people, a weakness that they perceive as

Distortion of Anthropology cannot be Glorified

Unfortunately, because of original sin, man no longer knows the True Good as readily as he did before the fall. Due to this, man's intellect has been darkened and he fancies many false beliefs about the world around him. An author will create a world that is reflective of how he views man. This is why it is important to be formed in the truth of reality. When an author has been formed in false intellectual foundations, his sub-creation reflects this distortion of anthropology. It is imperative that creators get their anthropology right or it will affect their entire sub-creation.

Rational creatures have a rational nature. That means humans, elves, dwarves, halflings, goblins, etc. all share in the powers of the soul even though the body that is informed by the soul may be different. This does not exclude adding powers to a person of a different rational species, although, most of the time powers are not added so much as certain qualities are emphasized and exaggerated as opposed to other qualities. One could say, certain qualities are glorified. For example, elves have better sense of sight and sound; dwarves have better technical skills; halflings are more innocent; goblins are crueler. However, being crueler is not a desirable quality and any attempt to show the vice as a good as opposed to evil would be contrary to reality.

strength…I do not know…how I discovered the falsehoods early enough to use them in contrast, and thus strengthen, those ideals I most cherished." Drizzt D'Urden is a Dark Elf exiled because of his principles that are antithetical to his whole society. His entire society is based off of station, which is often achieved through assassination. Drizzt was different. He had a father who loved him and that was the difference for him. Vowing to never kill another Drow Elf, he left his homeland. Due to the reputation of the Drow, Drizzt found little welcome on the surface but by his goodness he won himself friends and companions and became a unifier of different races in the Forgotten Realms.

[74] This is not to say that anyone can watch/read anything. A story can do an admirable job of glorify the good, and as a whole, tell a very good story, while at the same time have very graphic depictions of evil. However, some may be too sensitive to what is depicted and they become more or less disturbed. There is nothing wrong with this and a person ought to know themselves well enough to avoid those things which will disturb their peace.

In fact, things contrary to reality lack being and so they lack participation in the Transcendentals of the Good, the True, and the Beautiful. The Transcendentals are what ennobles fantasy with reality. It is participation with the Transcendentals that allow us to relate to a work of fiction in the first place. The glorification of evil, therefore, cannot lead us to true fulfillment. While man may enjoy evil in his perversion, it cannot replace his destiny or fulfill his deep desire to be in relation with the Creator.

The Transcendentals

This reality we have been describing, the material world, the spiritual world, the relation between the material and the spiritual, the sacramentality there involved, and the immersive role that man has in that reality, is imbued with wonderful perfections man admires. Preeminently among them are unity, truth, goodness, and beauty. Every one of these is an intrinsic element of good fantasy.

True

Truth is the object of the intellect. Truth is the conformity of mind with reality, or of reality with a mind. Now, as was said above, God creates by way of ideas. "First, the work of nature is the work of divine intelligence and is therefore true."[75] And so, reality has some conformity with God's mind since reality receives its form from God. This conformity is also

---

[75] Alice M. Ramos, *Dynamic Transcendentals, Truth, Goodness, and Beauty from a Thomistic Perspective* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2012), 19.

called a relation between God and the creature and the relation is called truth. This truth is essential to the creature. This means that the creature is reliable; that it has real existence.

When humans encounter the world around them, they too have a mind that conforms to reality. "Second, there is a principle…which can grasp the truth of things and nature tends toward the emergence of that principle, namely, the human intellect, because intelligence is at the very core of nature."[76] The human intellect encounters the material world by abstracting from reality the form. When we have the form in our intellect, there is a relation that occurs between the mind and reality. Again, we call this relation truth. This truth is accidental to the reality known because the existence of reality does not depend upon the human intellect.

So, reality is true because it is in relation with the mind of God "Things are termed true because of their conformity with the divine intellect;"[77] our ideas are true when they are in relation with reality which is in relation with the mind of God. Our relation with reality can change when it becomes either more or less conformed to it. This means that the truth which we possess is a subjective truth, i.e. it is capable of changing. Things in reality can only change if God's mind were to change, but God's mind does not change. Since God's mind is the measure for reality, the truth God possesses is objective not subjective. "The divine intellect, therefore, measures and is not measured; a natural thing both measures and is measure; but our intellect is measured, and measures only artifacts, not natural things."[78] Otherwise, reality would be capable of changing on an essential level. The subjective truth man holds says something about reality.

---

[76] Ramos, *Dynamic Transcendentals, Truth, Goodness, and Beauty from a Thomistic Perspective*, 19.
[77] Ramos, *Dynamic Transcendentals, Truth, Goodness, and Beauty from a Thomistic Perspective*, 33.
[78] Thomas Aquinas, "De Veritate," at Clerus (9 December 2019), www.clerus.org/bibliaclerusonline/en/g14.htm. "Sic ergo intellectus divinus est mensurans non mensuratus; res autem naturalis, mensurans et mensurata; sed intellectus noster mensuratus et non mensurans res quidem naturales, sed artificiales tantum."

And the objective truth of reality says something about God; in other words, the truth of reality is ordered back to God who made it. "The end of the universe is the truth since its first maker is Intelligence."[79] This means that the relation that the intellect is in with the truth tends toward an intellectual union. In fact, the capacity of the intellect to know the truth demands a union with the transcendent Truth in which things participate.

Good

Reality is not only true, it is also good. The Good is that which is desirable. Now, all desire their perfection. "The essence of goodness consists in this, that it is in some way desirable…It is clear that a thing is desirable only in so far as it is perfect."[80] So, food is desirable because it perfects what is lacking in hunger. Sleep is desirable because it perfects what is lacking in tiredness. Virtues are desirable because they perfect a person. Saying that the Good perfects is dealing with the language of actualization. Something is more perfect, the more actualized it is. "Everything is perfect so far as it is actual. Therefore it is clear that a thing is perfect so far as it exists; for it is existence that makes all things actual."[81] But a thing that is actualized has being which is act itself. In some sense, the perfection of a thing is the fact that it exists rather than not existing. Therefore, in so far as reality exists it is good. God is the supreme Being and so he is the supreme Good or the Good. All things, since they participate in being, also participate in the Good.

---

[79] Ramos, *Dynamic Transcendentals, Truth, Goodness, and Beauty from a Thomistic Perspective*, 19-20.
[80] *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 5, a. 1, trans. Father Laurence Shapcote, O.P., 43.
[81] *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 5, a. 1, trans. Father Laurence Shapcote, O.P., 43.

When we receive the form of a thing our minds are put in relation to it. We called this relation truth before, and this is in relation to the intellect. The good is the object of the will. The will is that which desires; and since the Good is the object of the will, the Good is that which is desired. It is desirable because the good perfects being. It is a final cause because it moves the agent to fulfillment. "For a thing outside the soul moves the intellect, and the thing known moves the appetite, which tends to reach the things from which the motion originally started."[82]

Beautiful[83]

Beauty is associated with light. Especially when referring to the beauty of God, this is most clearly associated with the Light of God. For light is the reality to which we refer by words like "resplendence," "splendor," "clarity," and "glory." All these words have a relationship with beauty as well. This connection between light and beauty is important because the way light operates in the natural world is essential to our experience of material beauty. Light bounces off of objects and our eyes receive the light. When this light pleases, we say the thing is beautiful. Thus, a common definition is "Beautiful things are those which please when seen."[84] More fully, it can be said that beautiful things are those which please when apprehended. All the senses are pleased by beautiful sights, but also sounds. In a real way something can feel beautiful or taste beautiful because it pleases.

---

[82] Aquinas, "De Veritate." "Quod res quae est extra animam, movet intellectum, et res intellecta movet appetitum, et appetitus tendit ad hoc ut perveniat ad rem a qua motus incepit."

[83] The Beautiful is probably the most elusive Transcendental. It is difficult to agree on a definition and then it is difficult to agree on what falls under this definition. I will be applying a realist understanding of beauty, meaning that beauty has an objective reality outside of any particular taste and we can come to know this reality through our senses which are formed by reality. I will be following Aquinas and Aristotle in this regard as presented by Alice Ramos in her book, *Dynamic Transcendentals*.

[84] *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 5, a. 4, ad. 1, trans. Father Laurence Shapcote, O.P., 48.

But beauty is not merely a matter of external light bouncing off external objects. "Since every agent produces something similar to himself, and God in creating through his divine wisdom makes creatures participants in being, in the intelligibility of being which is also their light, all creatures, then, by virtue of their very being, will be luminous or radiate light."[85] Also, "no one cares to make an image or representation, except for the sake of the beautiful,"[86] therefore, "All things participate in beauty, just as they participate in being. 'The beauty of a creature is nothing but the likeness of divine beauty participated in [it].'"[87] "All creatures may thus be called images and as such are beautiful in some way."[88]

In the arts, man creates for sake of the beautiful. Its achievement leads to a deeper revealing truth. In artistic representations, Ramos notes what she refers to as external and internal representation.[89]

The external representation is the material aspect of art. All those elements which attract the external senses. The internal representation is the conformity with reality taking place in the mind of the beholder. It is interesting to note the experience of pleasure from art which depicts painful things such as death and cruelty, or pleasure from art which depicts something of which the individual has no previous experience. This is not just because the author imitated the reality,

---

[85] Ramos, *Dynamic Transcendentals, Truth, Goodness, and Beauty from a Thomistic Perspective,* 82.
[86] Ramos, *Dynamic Transcendentals, Truth, Goodness, and Beauty from a Thomistic Perspective,* 138.
[87] Ramos, *Dynamic Transcendentals, Truth, Goodness, and Beauty from a Thomistic Perspective,* 72.
[88] Ramos, *Dynamic Transcendentals, Truth, Goodness, and Beauty from a Thomistic Perspective,* 84.
[89] Ramos, *Dynamic Transcendentals, Truth, Goodness, and Beauty from a Thomistic Perspective,* 212. "External representation is the relationship of likeness which holds between a statue and its subject; when the statue is compared to the subject and found to be a faithful representation of the subject, it is said to be a *true* likeness…Internal representation does not therefore refer us to an 'original,' to an external model, as it were; it is rather by means of the representation itself that we come to see and know what is represented. The world of the work of art unveils or reveals truth to us, and thus truth is a property not only of external representation but of internal representation as well."

even though that is essential, it is because he imitated the reality well, so much so that one is able to learn about the reality the art represents.

> The pleasure derived from an imitative work does not come therefore from a comparison of the work to an original; the pleasure of learning is caused rather by the artist's skill, by his skillful use of colors or words, by a fitting arrangement of parts, and the 'proper magnitude' of action. If the imitative work is well done, the spectator learns: he comes to know universals and to perceive the relationship of the particulars to the universals, and this learning is pleasurable.[90]

When the intellect discovers and learns reality there is a joy that is experienced. This knowledge that the person discovers is said to be beautiful because it is pleasing to know.[91] As is clear from the appetitive dimension of the discovery of truth in skillful art, material and immaterial realities, are deeply connected in man's encounter with beauty; and this connection is itself beautiful (and at once pleasing and enlightening).

The True, the Good, and the Beautiful Must Always Come Together

The True, the Good, and the Beautiful share an identity with each other, for they are nothing other than the intrinsic properties of being itself. Something is only intelligible because it has being. Or desirable because it has being. Or "eye-catching" and pleasurable because it has being. If a thing has being then it is True, Good, and Beautiful, and all these are one. The

---

[90] Ramos, *Dynamic Transcendentals, Truth, Goodness, and Beauty from a Thomistic Perspective,* 213. This is clearly evident when actors portray villains well. There is high praise, not for villains, but for actors who portray villains. Thus, we can talk about Jack Nicholson's, Heath Ledger's, or Joaquin Phoenix's Joker and which one is a more beautiful portrayal of this broken individual.

[91] Ramos, *Dynamic Transcendentals, Truth, Goodness, and Beauty from a Thomistic Perspective,* 150. "Now the beautiful may involve the apprehension of the sense of sight or the apprehension of the intellect. A beautiful object that is grasped by the senses gives pleasure to the sense appetite, whereas the beautiful that is known by the intellect results in joy in the intellectual appetite or the will. The latter type of beauty is called intelligible beauty, while the former is sensible beauty. Instances of intelligible beauty include mathematical equations, abstract ideas, moral conduct and institutions."

Transcendentals are different facets of Being. As such, the Transcendentals come together or not at all. In other words, there is no such thing as the Beautiful which is not also True and Good; there is nothing good that is not also true. This unity of the Transcendentals is crucial in the creation of good fantasy and in the role good fantasy plays in the lives of individuals.

The Role of the Transcendentals in Fantasy

One will often hear the phrase, "My fantasy books seem more real than reality," from lovers of the genre. This makes one wonder why. What makes a fantasy seem more real than reality itself? First off, fantasy cannot be more real than reality. The phrase reveals ignorance of reality itself. To answer the question simply, parts of the fantasy are so conformed to reality that what is received by the reader communicates something real. These fantasies sometimes communicate reality in such a way that it is easier to perceive the Transcendentals in this secondary world as opposed to the primary world. The True, the Good, and the Beautiful are encountered more fully than they are encountered in reality. The logical result is that the fantasy seems more real than reality itself. This is because of what the Transcendentals do for fantasy. The True, the Good, and the Beautiful keep the fantasy in touch with reality, and in such a way that stirs the depths of man's soul and calls out to his deepest aspirations.

True

Fantasy Contains Truth (Interior Consistency)

Good fantasy will have interior consistency. Interior consistency has all the things in the world rightly ordered to one another. They have right relations to each other. All things are in relation to each other to a greater or lesser extent and so there are degrees of interior consistency. The degrees of consistency can be seen by how the secondary creation maintains its relationships throughout the story and exposition. A basic level would be consistent descriptions of the world and characters that live in the world as well as consistent mechanics of a magic system. An advanced level of consistency would incorporate character consistencies, including not only consistent descriptions but consistent actions of characters. Characters become real in that they have a personality and a history. This requires that what a character does is in line with who they are. A coward will run at the sign of danger or have a very hard time overcoming his fear to do the good. A character who has been established as a coward should not easily accomplish heroics. This would be out of character. Good character development would involve the overcoming of a vice through hard work. An expert level of consistency would involve multiple works pertaining to the same world. The plot, driven by world geography, character development, and magic mechanics, needs to have a logical flow from work to work.

This is because interior consistency touches every aspect of the work. The characters, the conflict, descriptions of the world, and the magic system of a particular fantasy all must be interiorly consistent. This means that the details are important. What is mentioned earlier in a fantasy story must be taken into account later. There are no incidents that are isolated from other events. Inconsistencies make a fantasy world very hard to believe. If characters do not act

consistently with what has been revealed about their character, then the character is no longer believable. The character does not seem like a real person. Real people act consistently, taking into account their personalities, temperaments, virtues and vices.

For example, Lancelot from the King Arthur tales has a rough background. He is a great knight and has overcome much, but his passion can get the better of him sometimes. In one of the stories, Lancelot falls in love with Arthur's wife Guinevere. Because of his passion, which he has trouble controlling, he seduces her to have an affair with him.[92] This kind of behavior is not out of character with Lancelot. It is believable.

Interiorly consistent worlds, magic systems, and plots need to keep in mind what has been done before. All of these elements of fantasy need to be consistent with themselves and each other. Plot can affect the world. In J.R.R. Tolkien's world of Middle Earth, the first battle to destroy Sauron was done on the Gladden Fields, a plain near Mordor. By the Lord of the Rings it has been well established that this plain is now the Dead Marshes.[93] Plot changed the world. Magic systems can be affected by the world. Winds of magic influence available energy across the world in the Total War: Warhammer franchise.[94] The world changes aspects of the magic system.

The greatest issues that a world will run into is that the creator will forget or not take into account what has come before. This can be as simple as describing something twice in two

---

[92] *First Knight*, VHS, directed by Jerry Zucker (Los Angeles, CA: Zucker Brothers Entertainment, 1995).

[93] J.R.R. Tolkien, *The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1994), 235. "The Dead Marshes. There was a great battle long ago…. It was a great battle. Tall Men with long swords, and terrible Elves, and Orcses shrieking. They fought on the plain for days and months at the Black Gates. But the Marshes have grown since then, swallowed up the graves; always creeping, creeping."

[94] *Total War: Warhammer*, Microsoft Windows, directed by Mike Simpson and Ian Roxburgh (Tokyo, Japan: Sega Games Co., Ltd., 2016).

different ways. Such as a castle with four towers overlooking the area is later described as only having three. This mistake, though small, breaks consistency and is a reminder that the world is not real because the things in it are not in right relation with each other and so cannot be true. It can be as complicated as explaining the laws of magic in the world. Since magic is not real in the primary world the only knowledge available about magic is in this secondary world. If the expressed rules are broken, consistency is broken in a major way. When consistency is broken, it is easier to disbelieve the world.

Interior consistency rightly orders all things to each other in the secondary world. This right ordering makes the fantasy world true. The characters are true, the plot is true, the magic is true. They all interact together which keeps consistency and so the world is true. Interior consistency does not guarantee that the world itself is a true reality, but it is necessary for a credible world.

A credible world is at the heart of fantasy. Everything that fantasy does well is based off of believability. When a person encounters an interiorly consistent world, the mind is put in relation with that world–and all its parts. The harmonious relation between the mind and that world is a kind of truth. While this is a matter of subjective truth, this real relationship is the prerequisite for believability. This fantasy is credible. When interior consistency is broken, the credibility of the world is broken as well. Disbelief enters into the mind. The person now has to decide whether to suspend disbelief or never enter into the world at all.[95] The mind does not find

---

[95] Tolkien, *Tolkien on Fairy-stories: Expanded edition, with commentary and notes*, 52. "[The sub-creator] makes a Secondary World which your mind can enter. Inside it, what he relates is 'true': it accords with the laws of that world. You therefore believe it, while you are, as it were, inside. The moment disbelief arises, the spell is broken; the magic, or rather art, has failed. You are then out in the Primary World again, looking at the little abortive Secondary World from outside. If you are obliged, by kindliness or circumstance, to stay, then disbelief must be

false things attractive. When a person knows something is false, consumption of that thing becomes a burden.

However, because of the believability of secondary worlds, it can be very easy for fantasy to be a means of escape from our reality to something "more real." There must then be another type of consistency that establishes a real connection with the primary world.

The Fantasy is True (Exterior Consistency)

Exterior consistency protects against escapism and connects the fantasy with reality, building a relation from the whole fantasy world to reality. Exterior consistency is nothing other than the fantasy world itself having a real correlation with reality itself. Every fantasy has some exterior consistency to a greater or lesser degree. This universal claim is seen most clearly in the particulars. As was said above, the material order is the building block of fantasy. This would be a sub-basic level of consistency: a relation to being. Things exist in the primary world; things exist in the secondary world. There is a continuity concerning how things are.

A basic level of consistency would be an accurate depiction of primary realities in the secondary world. For example, an expert of horses knows that a girth strap is meant to keep the saddle snug and comfortable upon the horse but "Moiraine hurried to Aldieb, stroking the white mare's nose once before she tucked her staff under the girth strap."[96] This would greatly irritate the horse, causing all sorts of trouble. The casual reader may not realize that this is inconsistent,

---

suspended (or stifled), otherwise listening and looking would become intolerable. But this suspension of disbelief is a substitute for the genuine thing, a subterfuge we use when condescending to games or make-believe, or when trying (more or less willingly) to find what virtue we can in the work of an art that has for us failed."

[96] Jordan, *Eye of the World*, 255.

but fantasy can lead to many interests in the primary world. When someone discovers new knowledge of reality it can be disappointing to compare that knowledge to things in a secondary world. In a world where things are made up, it is important to ground the familiar in reality.

An advanced degree of consistency would deal with immaterial realities. Virtues in the primary world are virtues in the secondary world. The understanding of man in the fantasy is related to the real understanding of man in the primary world. Man's need for salvation (whether it is called "salvation" or not) is a reality in fantasy. The moral life is present in both. Interior consistency says that the world is logically consistent. Exterior consistency says that the world communicates truth about the primary world. Not only is it the case that a particular action of King Arthur is depicted as noble, the so-called nobility of King Arthur is true nobility. It is not just the case that Samwise Gamgee is loyal to Frodo, but his loyalty is true loyalty. Exterior consistency protects against redefining certain norms of reality. A sun can be green because matter is changeable, but loyalty cannot change because immaterial, spiritual realities are unchangeable. If loyalty in the fantasy no longer meant what loyalty means in reality, then that loyalty would no longer be true loyalty even though there could still be interior consistency.

Much of exterior consistency is assumed. Traits like loyalty and nobility are not often defined in a glossary in the back of a fantasy book. The author assumes the primary world reality when using virtues and vices in the fantasy. If the author does describe the virtue or vice, it is normally in the context of a cultural expression of what it means to be loyal or noble. However, if the author has a malformed conscious or intellect, what he assumes is the understood definition of certain virtues and vices will manifest themselves in the world in a malformed way, breaking exterior consistency. So, while it may be true that this character would act this way according to

this definition of the virtue, it is not a true virtue. Most expressions of love fall into this category. Love is no longer an act one does for the good of another but a feeling out of which one acts. This is not true love, no matter how many people say it is.

An exceptional level of consistency would take into account the existence of God. Even if God is not explicitly mentioned in a fantasy world, God is the Creator of the primary world and so something like the creator must exist in the secondary world. But this creator would also need to parallel the true God and so is in effect God. If God is intentionally left out of the world, then there is something fundamentally lacking in this world. The secondary world, done well, is most reflective of the primary world and therefore, is most relatable.

Exterior consistency adds objective truth to a fantasy. This means that it is possible to learn something about reality itself through fantasy. The objective truth puts one in contact with universal realities that allows the person to grow in understanding of the primary world. When exterior consistency is lost, so too does the ability to learn something relevant to reality. This is why losing exterior consistency is so dangerous. If a person does not know that the fantasy world is not exteriorly consistent, then it is possible for that person to be deceived about reality. At the very least, the person could be convinced that reality should be a different way, disgruntled by the fact that God made creation a certain way and calls it good.

A dangerous combination would be a world with interior consistency and little exterior consistency. If written well, this world would be easily be an escapist's dream. This is the major critique of fantasy. It lends itself to escapism and would be malforming to the intellect. Escapism is becoming more and more an issue in the society. Individuals find their lives to be so meaningless and painful that they seek escape in worlds that seem better than this one. These

48

secondary worlds offer an alternative to the perceived primary world. A person who is ignorant of the Christian truths of the world are prone to despair and seek a different world, especially if they feel powerless to change this one.

Escapism is not just for an interiorly consistent and a non-exteriorly consistent fantasy. A fantasy that had both consistencies could also be a means of escapism. This would be caused by the person's ignorance of the truths of the primary world, the truths that the fantasy world depends on. Now, an individual could escape into this kind of fantasy for two reasons. (1) The individual experiences the fantasy as a real thing because it has a relation with reality that makes it contain truth; or (2) the individual finds those elements that are not exteriorly consistent to be the most attractive part of the fantasy due to ignorance. (1) This is seen most clearly when neo-pagan groups praise Tolkien for his work of Middle Earth not recognizing, but attracted to, the deeply Christian realities that truly make his world related to reality. (2) This is most characterized by those who love fantasies similar to the Game of Thrones series. Not because of the interesting plot, great characters, and fantastic world; but, because of the sex and violence that is overtly present in the story.

Unfortunately, escapism does not allow a person to truly behold the True, the Good, and the Beautiful as one ought. Because when the real is not satisfying then the counterfeit has no chance of replacing it. What is seen is an anxious consumption of anything that may fill that need but nothing can fill it.

> Curiosity does not care to perceive and to understand what is seen, it just concerns
> itself with seeing. Curiosity seeks what is novel, only to quickly gaze at one novel
> thing after another. The aim of curiosity, of this kind of seeing, is not the

attainment of knowledge, of truth; it strives rather for 'possibilities of abandoning itself to the world.'[97]

Effect of Truth

Interior consistency makes a fantasy contain truth in a subjective way. The characters act in a way that is true to their character. The magic truly works according to the rules and the world is truly affected by the actions of the characters. Everything is ordered rightly, one to another, inside the world. Exterior consistency is what makes a world true objectively. The fantasy as a whole is in right relation with reality and so is true. These two consistencies make the world credible and can teach the individual the truth about reality itself.[98] A secondary world is modeled after the primary world which means that insofar as the secondary world approaches the primary world in imitation the secondary world participates in the Transcendental of Truth. "For everything has truth of nature according to the degree in which it imitates the knowledge of God, as the thing made by art agrees with the art."[99]

Good

What does it mean for Fantasy to have Goodness?

When people encounter a fantasy world, there is often elicited a deep desire. And this can be achieved through a multiplicity of elements in fantasy. "The good of that which is measured

---

[97] Ramos, *Dynamic Transcendentals, Truth, Goodness, and Beauty from a Thomistic Perspective,* 55.
[98] Ramos, *Dynamic Transcendentals, Truth, Goodness, and Beauty from a Thomistic Perspective,* 33-34. "Things are termed true because of their conformity with the divine intellect…a thing is said to be true insofar as it imitates that upon which it was modeled."
[99] *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 14, a. 12, ad. 3, trans. Father Laurence Shapcote, O.P., 118.

or ruled consists in its conformity with its rule; thus the good of things made by art is that they follow the rule of art."[100] The measure of the good for fantasy is many things because so much is involved in the production of this form of art. Firstly, the method in which is employed in the writing of the text is a measure. Insofar as the work freely expresses itself within this method, it can be said to be good and therefore desirable. A commentary on writing theory is outside the scope of this paper and it suffices to say that those who know want good writing. However, goodness resonates with a person and, for someone who is reflective enough, they may be able to intuit when they have encountered something that is technically[101] well done even if they are unlearned in the method.

On top of the writing, which is obviously the mode by which the content comes to the reader, there is a great longing on the part of the reader for the Good portrayed by the characters, specifically in their virtuous activity. People have a deep desire to overcome evil in their own lives and fantasy constantly tells story after story of the Good triumphing over evil. In fantasy, there is a deeply felt difference between good places, people, and things, and evil places, people, and things. Unfortunately, evil mistakenly becomes a new category of being. Tolkien avoids this in his world by firmly observing the principle that being is good, establishing that evil is merely a corruption of something rather than an objective reality. That being said, the evil in Middle

---

[100] Ramos, *Dynamic Transcendentals, Truth, Goodness, and Beauty from a Thomistic Perspective,* 44.
[101] It is important to note that my freshman year in college I read a passage in Plato that considered *techne* as craftsmanship, craft, or art. This has always stayed with me that any technical work or a work that requires a technique could be a sort of art. This is why we say, the art of basketball, the art of reading, the art of fantasy, the art of whatever, and we are not necessarily referring to the splendor of activity but to the necessary foundational framework on which we drape splendor. So, when I say "technically" I am referring to art, well done, according to a method, or technique, and this has its own participation with the good. Likewise, when technique is ignored or not properly executed, then the art should be considered poor. This consideration has raised my standards of art because that which is done poorly is less desirable than art that is technically good, which, by definition, is more desirable. While, one is free to believe that something is technically bad but still entertaining and thus, desirable on that level, it is a sign of an ill-formed person who judges the quality of a product based on accidental characteristics.

Earth is a very concrete thing and while redemption and mercy is offered to betrayers, many refuse to accept it, and some are incapable of redemption. In order to better understand the Good, particularly in fantasy, it will be helpful to turn toward a brief consideration about the nature of evil so we can later juxtapose the two.

Evil

Evil is understood to mean the privation or corruption of being. This means that the privation found in things is a lack of being and is therefore a lack of conformity to the Transcendentals. This lack of conformity makes it very difficult for the object to point towards God. The greater conformity a thing has with the True, the Good, and the Beautiful the more that thing acts as a medium between creation and God.

Jesus tells us to be "perfect, as also your heavenly Father is perfect" (Matt 5:48), meaning that man is to actualize his being by being conformed to him who is the fullness of being. When man fails to do this conformity, he acts contrary to his nature which is ordered to the Good, the True, and the Beautiful. Such men who habitually act against the Transcendentals are said to be evil, meaning they are most inclined to the anti-transcendentals: the untrue, the undesirable, and the deformed.

After the fall, unredeemed man finds that malice has entered his will and that he is inclined to evil and his intellect is darkened. Passions rule him and he finds himself a slave to his disordered desires. The attraction to evil and its mark on creation can be so heavily felt that evil is given its own unique category of being. This would be incorrect and is unhelpful in the understanding of the triumph of good over evil. To eradicate evil in this case would be to play

into the hands of evil. Evil tends toward non-being and to bring a thing into complete non-being is the goal of evil. The victory of the Good would be rather to make complete what is lacking in evil.

Fantasy literature often makes the mistake of making evil its own category of being. It makes for a good story to have conflict between heroes and enemies; however, when evil enemies become pure evil incarnate it lacks external consistency. There is no thing in the primary world that is pure evil. Therefore, there is no reality that is pure evil and nothing for the individual to relate to. The villain becomes a caricature not a character, not a person.

It is interesting to note the rise of storytelling's emphasis on sympathetic villains in the last two decades. The increase of stories about villains come from the desire for relatable characters in a story.[102] Pure evil is nothing. And nothing does not exist. The villain, despite the evil that deprives them of true fulfillment, is in the same category of being that the hero is in. A good villain's lack of being ought to point towards the greater good that the hero is fighting for. "For his knowledge of the good is increased by comparison with evil, and through suffering evil his desire of doing good is kindled."[103] The actions of the villain are understandable in the context of the story and the character, and they are relatable because one can see the potential for one's own personal evil, and this is juxtaposed to the Good that the will desires, strengthening this desire. "But by the grace of God, I am what I am" (1 Cor 15:10). In order to defeat evil one needs to bring about fulfillment which comes from the Good. The Good is the perfection of

---

[102] This, along with a lack of hope in the world. Young people are more and more losing the hope to be morally upright, to overcome vices, and to be the hero. More and more it is easier to relate to a villain, someone who has fallen and failed than it is to relate to someone who is flawed and yet triumphs. Ideally, these stories can give hope to those who have none. But this requires that the good character and the evil character be portrayed realistically, in other words, the argument of this chapter.

[103] Ramos, *Dynamic Transcendentals, Truth, Goodness, and Beauty from a Thomistic Perspective,* 93.

one's being; and, no one is the source of their own goodness except for God. Therefore, all personal evil is overcome with the help of another, a theme which will be returned to.

Good vs Evil

Fantasy is the natural place to tell a story of Good vs evil because of the ability to personify the good and corruption of the good, i.e. evil., in a way that reflects the spiritual battle in which man finds himself. The war between Good and evil involves everything, or at least, all things are caught up in the war between good and evil. There is a war between the characters. Good and evil objects play a role in the conversion or defeat of Good and evil characters. The land itself is often a part of the struggle with creatures trying to protect and maintain sanctuaries of peace while corruption from the source of evil turns forests, caves, lakes and mountains into places treacherous to the normal traveler.

Aspect of Intrinsic Truthfulness

This reality of a conflict between Good and Evil is a very close reflection of the true conflict in the primary world. Sin has entered the world and Satan, the adversary, wants nothing more than see the corruption of every good thing especially man, the height of material reality. If a fantasy world did not have a conflict between Good and evil, then there would be something that was fundamentally missing from the world that would make the exterior consistency absent. It would lack exterior consistency due to the fact that it does not relate to the primary world in one of the most fundamental realities of the human experience and renders the person unable to

relate fully to the fantasy world. It would also lack interior consistency because if there is no conflict between good and evil, then whatever conflict existed would be a conflict which lacked real meaning placing the things present in the world in unfit relations with each other. Different goods are never in conflict with each other. One good may be unachievable while the other is pursued but that is not conflict. Rather, goods are placed in a hierarchy of value and the goods are pursued accordingly. Goods placed in conflict with each other is a misunderstanding of the relative value of those goods. Conflict between Good and evil is different than the opposition of one good to another. When fantasy keeps the conflict between Good and evil, the world communicates something truthful about reality. There is a spiritual war and it involves the corruption of reality and its perfection.

The Effect of the Good

<u>The Effect of the Good moves the Will/Appetites/Desire towards the Good</u>

The effect of goodness in fantasy is very apparent in that people are very aware when they are moved by the good. It involves the appetites which people are very sensitive to. People are inspired by the Good to act. But not just to act, but to imitate the good which is experienced. This call to act is a call to possess the good that they desire. They want to be like what they have seen or heard or otherwise sensed. Good fantasy naturally calls man to imitate the virtues of its heroes, and to seek the goods it exalts.

As fantasy is striving to create a world that is interiorly and exteriorly consistent, it is striving to present us with goodness that attracts. Because the right ordering of the multitude of things in the universe is among the highest goods, the very consistencies just mentioned are not

only essential to good fantasy, but an essential part of its goodness. When these consistencies are present, goodness is present. When they are absent, goodness is absent. In a fantasy enjoying these consistencies, the right relations that the characters have with each other and the world stir in us a desire to actualize our potential to be in right relation with ourselves, others, the world, and ultimately God. The writer also proposes to a person the means by which this goal is achieved. The desire is for our perfection, and for the means to our perfection, and to be a part of that process.

The Effect of the Good makes the Reader Good

This movement of the will is the first step to change. There is a need to grow in habits that make one more conformed to the objective good. This process, which is started by the desire of the good, which a good fantasy elicits, ultimately makes the reader good.

The reader is made good because the fantasy is teaching the person what goods one should desire. The more one reads good fantasy, the more one's appetites are properly ordered toward authentic goods. It does this by showing characters struggle to grow in virtue and striving after those virtues that are most valuable for the perfection of man. Their actions in response to the world around them also teaches a person how to behave in the world.

Growth in goodness can also order the movements of the heart. The way good stories are written can help train the person to be filled with joy at appropriate times, to experience just anger, or to be sad when good characters die or fail, or shame when they over identify with a villain's actions. All of this is caused from the rightly ordered fantasy world. Where good people

are good and evil people are bad and there are good things to do and evil things to avoid.[104] The world keeps its consistency and so it is credible. Because it is credible, the good that is offered as an example is effective in forming the person. Because the world is exteriorly consistent, this formation tends toward the supreme Good.

Beauty

What does it mean for Fantasy to be Beautiful or have Beauty?

Fantasy, in a unique way, can portray the world at its most beautiful since it can show the True and the Good in a resplendent way. In fantasy the author is in control of every sunset, of every mountain, of every tree to the very leaf. The very best fantasies portray characters, villains and heroes, as persons with real motivations. Now, the glory or tragedy which these characters take part in, point towards a way to approach life showing the attractiveness of virtue and the ugliness of vice that is rarely perceived in reality. This is not to say that secondary worlds are more beautiful than reality. On the contrary, the human senses are very capable of picking up on the sensually beautiful through our sense of sight and hearing. It is the intellectually beautiful that is difficult for the person to perceive. In fantasy, the author has the opportunity to make explicit to the readers imaginative senses what is always present in reality. In this way, fantasy is said to be beautiful. When the author portrays the truly good in a perceptible way one can say that fantasy is beautiful.

---

[104] I am not trying to be over simplistic in regard to characters. Obviously, a well written character is going to be much more nuanced in his moral standing. But people do, generally, tend towards good will or malice. And a good will informs people of the good. A malicious will informs people away from the good. "Good people are good," is only stating that a character who is tending toward the true good is desirable; while, "evil people are bad," is only stating that a character who is tending away from the true good is not desirable.

A well written work has depth, and depth is an aspect of the proportion or harmony that defines beauty.[105] There is a felt presence of time in the world, the history is meaningful. The locations seem real. A reader can lose themselves in the settings. The narrative gives us a look into the lives of the inhabitants of this world. All of this is alluding to the methods of literature theory and technique which is outside of this scope of this work; however, it has to be affirmed that technique done well is an important part in a fantasy world being beautiful or not. For example, the charge of the Rohirrim on the Fields of Pelennor is beautiful because of the elevation of courage and nobility. The death and carnage which is present in the scene is not elevated but is interwoven expertly in the prose.[106] There is right proportion between the reality of virtue and the reality of evil. If one were to contrast this with Conan the Barbarian, most of his violent actions have little to do with noble virtue and have more to do with, "Crush your enemies, see them driven before you, and hear the lamentation of the women!"[107] This depiction fails to keep things in proportion.

---

[105] *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 39, a. 8, trans. Father Laurence Shapcote, O.P., 400. "For beauty includes three conditions, integrity or perfection, since those things which are impaired are by the very fact ugly; due proportion or harmony; and lastly, brightness or clarity, whence things are called beautiful which have a bright color."

[106] J.R.R. Tolkien, *The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1994), 111-113 "A smell of burning was in the air and a very shadow of death. The horses were uneasy. But the king sat upon Snowmane, motionless, gazing upon the agony of Minas Tirith, as if stricken suddenly by anguish, or by dread. He seemed to shrink down, cowed by age. Merry himself felt as if a great weight of horror and doubt had settled on him…The bent shape of the king sprang suddenly erect. Tall and proud he seemed again; and rising in his stirrups he cried in a loud voice, more clear than any there had ever heard a mortal man achieve before: Arise, arise, Riders of Theoden! Fell deeds awake: fire and slaughter! spear shall be shaken, shield be splintered, a sword-day, a red day, ere the sun rises! Ride now, ride now! Ride to Gondor!... For morning came, morning and a wind from the sea; and the darkness was removed, and the hosts of Mordor wailed, and terror took them, and they fled, and died, and the hoofs of wrath rode over them. And then all the host of Rohan burst into song, and they sang as they slew, for the joy of battle was on them, and the sound of their singing that was fair and terrible came even to the City."

[107] *Conan the Barbarian*, DVD, directed by John Milius (Universal City, CA: Universal Studio, 1998).

Conclusion

The realities of the Transcendentals can seem cerebral at times, but it is man's experience of life that makes present the realities of the Good, the True, and the Beautiful. This experience of the Transcendentals elicits from the individual nostalgia, a desire for fulfillment. Only God can fulfill this desire because as has been shown, the Transcendentals are God.

The Numinous

As we conclude this chapter on theological anthropology, it is important to recognize that the Transcendentals are not stagnate realities but, since they are identical with God, the Transcendentals take on an active role in the life of Man. Man was made for God. He is made to be fulfilled by the Supreme Being, and so he nostalgically longs for God. This is the spark for the return to God which is always a response to God's presence. God makes himself present to his creation. It has been said above that material things point towards immaterial things and (finite) immaterial things point towards God. They do this by their participation in the Transcendentals. Man can become aware of this presence of the Transcendent in all things, and it elicits a desire for completeness. This presence is called by Rudolf Otto and C.S. Lewis the "numinous."[108] The numinous is something completely other that is unapproachable, overpowering, and at the same time, captivating and lifegiving while evoking a feeling of creaturehood.[109] In a word, it is God.

---

[108] Lilia Melani, "Otto on the Numinous," at Brooklyn College (9 December 2019), at academic.brooklyn.cuny.edu/english/melani/gothic/numinous.html.

[109] Cf. Rudolf Otto, *The Idea of the Holy: An Inquiry into the Non-Rational Factor in the Idea of the Divine and its Relation to the Rational*, trans. John W. Harvey (New York: Oxford University Press, 1958), 10-31. There are six elements of the numinous: creature-feeling, awefulness, overpoweringness, energy, wholly other, and fascination.

That which brings about an encounter with the numinous are the Transcendentals as found in finite things. In order to encounter anything in the immaterial order one must first pass through the material order. The material object participates in the transcendental in a greater or lesser extent, though it realizes none of them in their fullness. And so, while there is an encounter with Truth, Goodness, and Beauty, the material thing does not contain *the* Truth, *the* Good, or *the* Beautiful.[110] The sheer multiplicity of material things thus contributes to better expressing the limitlessness of Truth, Goodness and Beauty; and this is part of what makes fantasy, with its multitude of fantastical beings, an authentic expression of Being.

In western society, people are becoming blind to the immaterial realities of the world and so begin to look for the numinous in material things. This is incredibly unfortunate because the whole meaning of man is profoundly tied to the immaterial world, namely, his destiny for Truth, friendship, and his need for and the realization of his salvation. When people are closed off to what truly fulfills, they will search for this fulfillment wherever they can. Fantasy withdraws one from the mundane and transports him to a world that often seems more real than the primary world. When lifting us beyond the sensible order, fantasy fulfills its highest vocation:

God does not leave man in his disillusionment but calls out through the Transcendentals in which the fantasy participates. Since all things have being and participate in the

---

[110] C.f. Ramos, *Dynamic Transcendentals, Truth, Goodness, and Beauty from a Thomistic Perspective,* 32-33. "God is called the measure of all things, insofar as everything has being and according to its being approaches him. All beings other than God that are substances have some sort of composition and therefore recede from the divine simplicity. The mode of being of each creature is a contracted participation in the perfection and being of God…Since the being of creatures is contracted or determined by their essence, creatures exist only by participation, and thus although there is a similarity between God and creatures, there is always an infinite distance between them… What is by participation is caused by what is essentially Being by essence, Being itself, is the Neoplatonic One from which proceed in an orderly way a multiplicity of beings, each of which takes its place or grade in the scale of being according to its closeness to the Highest Being, the First Cause, which proximity determines the mode of a thing's being."

Transcendentals, God reaches through all of his created reality. Man again encounters the numinous, something completely other and immanently present to him. His nostalgia, his longing for completion convicts him to search for the numinous, of which he finds vestiges in creation but ultimately, he finds intimately present to himself.

> Lo, you were within, but I outside, seeking there for you, and upon the shapely things you have made I rushed headlong, I, misshapen. You were with me, but I was not with you. They held me back far from you, those things which would have no being were they not in you. You called, shouted, broke through my deafness; you flared, blazed, banished my blindness; you lavished your fragrance, I gasped, and now I pant for you; I tasted you, and I hunger and thirst; you touched me, and I burned for your peace.[111]

When the Transcendentals are experienced, there is a particular "feeling" that happens or occurs. This "feeling," the numinous/nostalgia[112] is in the natural mode of religion and an essential part of the purgative way of the spiritual life. Initially, created realities serve to point towards God and the creature's need for intimacy with him. Eventually, material realities are no longer the primary mediator of the soul in meeting the Creator. In the illuminative way, God weens the soul away from the purely material aspects of fantasy (phantasy) so that, in the unitive, the soul is fed by God directly, present in all things.

---

[111] Augustine, *Confessions,* X, 27, 38, trans. Maria Boulding (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2012), 296.

[112] See Otto, *The Idea of the Holy: An Inquiry into the Non-Rational Factor in the Idea of the Divine and its Relation to the Rational*, trans. John W. Harvey, 10-31. And Lewis, *The Weight of Glory and Other Addresses*. Nostalgia=Numinous; Desire=Fascination; Smallness=Overpoweringness; Lifegiving=Energy; Humility=Creature-Feeling; Unreachable=Unapproachability; "Wholly Other" is present in both as such. Nostalgia is always directed outside of oneself. Either mediated by an experience of art or activity or immediate to the contemplative. The Numinous is directed interiorly. It is God present to the soul. Nostalgia and the Numinous are both supernatural experiences. God chooses who to present himself to, we do not make God present.

Nostalgia

Many people liken the "feeling" just described to "nostalgia". Nostalgia is used by society differently than it is being considered here. Society uses "nostalgia" mostly to mean the bitter-sweet feeling associated with memories from the past. In other words, "nostalgia" is a longing to bring a more simple, unified time in someone's life to the present. There is something true being named by this definition, but "nostalgia" as considered here goes deeper than memories from the past and feelings. Nostalgia is pointing to an ache of deep longing for completeness.[113] There is a desire for completion. This is nostalgia for the numinous, and it ultimately finds its fulfillment and culmination in union with God. "Our heart is unquiet until it rests in you."[114]

The Weight of Glory by C. S. Lewis talks very briefly on nostalgia which is an experience that surrounds the Transcendentals. Nostalgia, related to fantasy, is the mystical experience of the Transcendentals present in good fantasy because good fantasy will always be an image of the life in Christ; this is not done by a direct parallel but through types, foreshadowing, and symbolisms. Lewis says about this experience that "We cannot tell it because it is a desire for something that has never actually appeared in our experience. We cannot hide it because our experience is constantly suggesting it, and we betray ourselves like lovers at the mention of a name."[115] He also states that nostalgia is a cheap word to use because it pales in comparison to

---

[113] Lewis, *The Weight of Glory and Other Addresses*, 7-8. "Apparently, then, our lifelong nostalgia, our longing to be reunited with something in the universe from which we now feel cut off…is no mere neurotic fancy, but the truest index of our real situation."

[114] Augustine, *The Confessions,* I, 1, 1, trans. Boulding, 3.

[115] Lewis, *The Weight of Glory and Other Addresses*, 3.

what that word really implies. "Our commonest expedient is to call it beauty."[116] Our experience

of the Transcendental is through a veil and so even though we experience God intimately, we are

still infinitely far from Him, thus the bitter-sweet longing for more, i.e. nostalgia. There is a

danger in these things, too. Lewis says, "

> The books or the music in which we thought the beauty was located will betray us
> if we trust to them; it was not *in* them, it only came *through* them, and what came
> through them was longing. These things—the beauty, the memory of our own
> past—are good images of what we really desire; but if they are mistaken for the
> thing itself they turn into dumb idols, breaking the hearts of their worshippers.[117]

What the Christian fears in fantasy is well founded true, and it is good to remember to be

conscientious of the danger of idolatry present in all material goods.

Fantasy and theology are very similar, not in content but in expression of their mysteries.

There is great gravitas and specific vagueness to theology, e.g. "the ever Virgin Mary, having

completed the course of her earthly life, was assumed body and soul into heavenly glory."[118]

Definitive, yes, but there are still questions in the definition. This adds to the beauty of our faith,

and when done well in fantasy, adds to its beauty also. Tolkien references something very similar

to this definitive mystery, "They say that the One will himself enter into Arda, and heal Men and

all the Marring from the beginning to the end."[119] Definitive, but what does this really mean?

The Christian knows but the neo-pagan cannot begin to imagine. It leaves him in wonder and

fascination. The imagery that is used between the two are very similar. Think of the categories of

---

[116] Lewis, *The Weight of Glory and Other Addresses*, 3.
[117] Lewis, *The Weight of Glory and Other Addresses*, 3.
[118] Pius XII, "Munificentissimus Deus" at Vatican Website (26 November 2016),
w2.vatican.va/content/pius-xii/en/apost_constitutions/documents/hf_p-xii_apc_19501101_munificentissimus-deus.html.
[119] J.R.R. Tolkien, *Morgoth's Ring: The Later Silmarillion, Part One: The Legends of Aman* (London: HarperCollins, 2004), 321.

philosophy separated into powers and attributes and the question of the essence and nature of a thing. Ecclesial considerations such as states of souls, hierarchical relationships, sacramental objects, and the divine word. Theological ideas include a creator and creature relationship surrounded by mystery. All of these things can and are used as the building blocks of a good fantasy. Theology and philosophy communicate the Good, the True and the Beautiful. Fantasy uses aspects of these lofty sciences to communicate a story in a world not our own, yet it is important to remember that something more is able to be communicated.

Man encounters the Transcendentals and is transformed by them, into them. Remember, the Transcendentals are not separate realities but are different facets of being. When man is transformed by the Good, the True, and the Beautiful, he is being transformed into man fully actualized; into an integrated whole, participating in the Transcendental of the One. This actualization draws him closer to Being, with God himself. In a religious sense, when the Transcendentals are experienced, God is experienced. Typically, in fantasy it is said that when the Transcendentals are experienced, it is a good story. It is not just a good story; there is a longing for something so much more. An invitation to experience more than just entertainment. This desire, this experience of the Transcendentals through fantasy is an experience of God.

CHAPTER III

ECCLESIOLOGY

Introduction

So far, we have considered two important areas of theology. Namely, creation and anthropology. Creation is important to fantasy because it provides the building blocks from which an author sub-creates his secondary world. Anthropology presents the nature of man that is universal to each person, i.e., his endeavors for fulfillment, his need for salvation, his call to greatness; and this nature is therefore present within all rational characters of fantasy. Yet, man is not isolated in his call, endeavors, and need. The individual finds himself in relation to others in a particular culture and in a particular society.

All men were originally created to be in union with one another and with their Creator. Consequently, societies and cultures of various expressions have arisen throughout the world all aiming towards this unity with God and man. Due to the fall, this is now achievable only through reconciliation which is achieved and worked out through union with Jesus Christ in the Church, through the saving action of his Church in the liturgy, or public worship of the Church. Salvation and the liturgy both find their culmination in the Blessed Sacrament.

Secondary worlds use the perennial need of man to live in unity to build various cultures and societies in which characters are formed. This dramatically influences how the secondary world relates to the transcendent, the divine. As we have seen, fantasy is done well when it leads towards a primary world encounter with the divine. Fantasy does this best when it clearly points towards union with Christ and his Church.

Salvation with Each Other (Community and Reconciliation)

"And God created man to his own image: to the image of God he created him: male and female he created them" (Genesis 1:27). In the beginning, God intended man to live in community with each other. In fact, God has made it that no one person is able to live independently from all others. No one person has all the gifts necessary to flourish on their own.[120] But, as was said above, man has fallen due to sin and this community has been broken. True communion, then, only becomes possible with reconciliation between God and man, which occurs parallel to reconciliation between man and man. This is because sin is against God and neighbor.[121] Forgiveness liberates the person from the chains of sin, conforming all of man into one, who is Jesus Christ.

> Forgiveness touches on the very core of the person, it gathers men together and is also the center of the renewal of the community. For when the dust and filth that disfigure God's image in me are removed, I thereby become similar to the other who is likewise God's image; above all I become similar to Christ, who is the image of God without qualification, the model according to which we have all been created.[122]

For we are all one in Christ[123] and it is this unity of multiplicity that allows man as a community to partake in the Transcendental One. In a way, the One is the unifying Transcendental that

---

[120] Catherine of Siena, *Catherine of Siena: The Dialogue,* trans. Suzanne Noffke (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1980), 311. "That you may practice charity in action and in will, I in my providence did not give to any one person or to each individually the knowledge for doing everything necessary for human life."

[121] Catherine of Siena, *Catherine of Siena: The Dialogue,* trans. Noffke, 33. "I would have you know that every virtue of yours and every vice is put into action by means of your neighbors. If you hate me, you harm your neighbors and yourself as well (for you are your chief neighbor), and the harm is both general and particular."

[122] Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, *Called to Communion* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1996), 153.

[123] See "There is neither Jew nor Greek: there is neither bond nor free: there is neither male nor female. For you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal 3:28).

brings all being into unity with God.[124] "I am wrested from my isolation and incorporated into the communion of a new subject; my 'I' is inserted into the 'I' of Christ and consequently joined to the 'I' of all my brothers."[125] Man, then, is destined for a relationship with Jesus and also, all other men. The perfection of man truly comes about in the full communion in the Body of Christ wherein the process of salvation, redemption, and glorification occurs. And it is this reality of every person's need for salvation that leads us to discover and "know that when any one of us falls he falls alone; but no one is saved alone."[126] The unifying principle of communion and reconciliation is Jesus Christ. And Jesus Christ, therefore, becomes the principle of unity within all authentic expressions of communion and reconciliation.

> Good fantasy should have a Christological element that permeates its fabric; especially if a secondary world is to fully achieve extrinsic consistency. Without this a fantasy could not hope to lead "persons toward the fullness of the good and source of happiness, for 'No one is good but God alone' (Mk 10:18). Nor can it express the truth about man, for 'only in the mystery of the incarnate Word does the mystery of man take on light' (*GS* 22).[127]

This Christological fabric is unavoidable in an extrinsically consistent secondary world. In my first year of seminary, Dr. Bob Schuchts led us in an exercise where we would name a main character of a movie and we would name Christological features of that character. His point was that every good character is a Christ figure, a type of Christ. "The type is a manifestation of things to come through an imitation allowing us to see in advance the things of the future in such

---

[124] *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 11, a. 3, trans. Father Laurence Shapcote, O.P., 95. "But things that are diverse do not harmonize in the same order, unless they are ordered thereto by one."

[125] Ratzinger, *Called to Communion*, 153.

[126] Alexei Khomiakov, "The Church is One," at Orthodox Christian Information Center (8 May 2019), at orthodoxinfo.com/general/khomiakov_church.aspx.

[127] Stephen Hipp to Thomas Rausch, "Reviewed all…," attachment in a personal e-mail (7 December 2019).

wise that they can be understood."[128] Modern non-Christian works also contain manifestations of "things to come." Only these things are already present and so the imitation now points to a reality which "is within you" (Lk 17:21). Christian authors are in a unique position in that they come from a Christian milieu and so their secondary worlds can and ought to be imbued with these theological truths. Lewis has very explicit Christological symbols in his story telling and Tolkien has unmistakable theological foreshadowings and types of all kinds. This is part of what makes these two writers giants in the fantasy world.

Not only are there Christ figures and types but there are also present prefigurations of the perfection of Creation and the Church. The Church is often prefigured or typified by individuals' attempts to build communities and navigate reconciliation with each other and with the immaterial, with the divine. Unfortunately, individualism, the ideology that an individual is an autonomous, self-sufficient person, has crept into many fantasy stories.

And yet, man cannot avoid his desire and need for community. It is the expression of community that is too often lacking in most fantasy literature. In the anime movie *Princess Mononoke* there is great conflict between the Wolf Tribe and Iron Town. The Wolf Tribe is trying to protect the Forest Spirit while Iron Town is trying to destroy the Forest Spirit. Both tribes are being played against each other by the Emperor. Ashitaka, who is an exiled warrior prince from a faraway land, comes to "see with eyes unclouded by hate."[129] San, who is raised by the wolves of the Wolf Tribe, despite being a human, hates humans. But then she meets Ashitaka who draws out her humanity and it is through Ashitaka that balance is brought back to the forest despite the Forest Spirit being killed. The story hints that the two of them will be united together

---

[128] Danielou, *From Shadows to Reality*, 188.
[129] *Princess Mononoke*, DVD, directed by Hayao Miyazaki (Tokyo, Japan: Studio Ghibli, 1999).

along with peace between the forest and the town. However, by the end San says, "Ashitaka, you mean so much to me, but I cannot forgive the humans for what they have done."[130] The very conflict that drove the story in the beginning is not resolved by the end. San represents the conflict between the two communities, and, while the relationship shared between Ashitaka and San should communicate a deeper message about reconciliation, they remain separated, and the conflict, while slightly healed, remains. The movie elicits from the viewer a desire for communion and there is even in the movie itself movement towards unity. And yet the full expression of this unity through reconciliation is lacking. The Wolf Tribe is still isolated from Iron Town, an expression of individualism. Unity between individual characters is promised and yet unfulfilled; peace between communities is the goal and yet not achieved. The conflict is unresolved and so the story about redemption is ultimately lacking.

While it has been a common trope for a long time, in most stories today the team surrounding the hero resembles a community but usually does not treat its members as valuable persons as such but values them based on what they can do for the team. A true community values each person for their character as opposed to their usefulness. In fantasy, a community can have the team trope, each person taking certain roles, but, if the fantasy is good fantasy, like the original *Star Wars* trilogy, the characters are not defined by their role; rather, they are defined by the choices they make which reveals their character, and relationships with others occupies a large place where choices can be made for one another. In *Star Wars*, Luke is the main character who comes up with the choice to save the princess, but he cannot execute the plan on his own. He needs Han Solo and Chewbacca who choose to go with him. When the plan goes

---

[130] *Princess Mononoke*.

south, it is not Luke that comes up with an escape, nor Solo, but the Princess who makes a decision. Even then, without R2-D2 to step in they would not have escaped. Every character makes choices that affect other characters, contributing to the story at hand. They are relatable people even if there is not much time given to each character. This is a great example of a community that eventually triumphs together over evil by restoring the fallen (Darth Vader) into community. This redemption is satisfying because one of the main protagonists, Anakin, had to restore justice by giving his life. There is something right and just about this sacrifice that does not cheapen forgiveness.

All too often, however, forgiveness is expressed by brushing aside fault or cheapening the actions of the guilty. "Don't worry about it," and "Not a problem," are common phrases used in the place of forgiveness. Or forgiveness is expressed to be more powerful than is reasonable. Imagine if Darth Vader did not die but was able to return to the Rebels. Would a simple sorry suffice to bring about a reconciliation with the community? It seems that it would not, and he would have to prove his contrition and his loyalty. "We discover that there is nothing magical about forgiveness. But neither is it a fictitious forgetting, a refusal to accept the truth, but an entirely real process of change carried out by the Sculptor."[131] In fantasy, the manifestation of forgiveness and reconciliation has an opportunity to communicate the deep realities of this process of change. The Beast is cursed for his selfishness in the Beauty and the Beast. It is through reconciliation with Beauty, who represents the rest of the world, that breaks the curse and heals the humanity of the Beast. This kind of fantastical expression can communicate the deep power that forgiveness has in the salvation of a community.

---

[131] Ratzinger, *Called to Communion*, 149.

70

Furthermore, fantasy must take into account the effect that community or the lack of community has upon a character. Characters cannot overcome evil on their own. Isolation is never a healthy thing and an exaggeration of autonomy leads to individualism and a false picture of human victory. A good fantasy will refute the individualistic/isolationist ideology, whether it pertains to individual characters or whole societies, as an insufficient understanding of the human person. It does this by naming and challenging the faults of characters and within communities. Authors who force characters to act as if nothing is wrong with their troubled society and culture create very poor characters and very bland communities. A reader will constantly question why a character doesn't see the blatant issues surrounding them. If an author ignores these questions, there is something exteriorly and interiorly inconsistent. For example, a society that is structured in such a way that deception and murder are valued above honesty and life occasions many questions and introduces problems of functionality. If the characters walk around like nothing is wrong and the exposition of the world describes nothing wrong with the society, then there must be something wrong with the author and this secondary world is a poor creation.

Fortunately for *The Dark Elf Trilogy*, the creator of the ailing society did provide a character that was contrary and noticed the great lack. "The hatred and ambition fostered by these amoral tenets are the doom of my people, a weakness that they perceive as strength…I do not know…how I discovered the falsehoods early enough to use them in contrast, and thus

strengthen, those ideals I most cherished."[132] Later, in this same story, Drizzt had to deal with the loneliness brought on by his isolation from those he grew up with.

> As I became a creature of the empty tunnels, survival became easier and more difficult all at once. I gained in the physical skills and experience necessary to live on. I could defeat almost anything that wandered into my chosen domain, and those few monsters that I could not defeat, I could surely flee or hide from. It did not take me long, however, to discover one nemesis that I could neither defeat nor flee. It followed me wherever I went-indeed, the farther I ran, the more it closed in around me. My enemy was solitude, the interminable, incessant silence of hushed corridors.[133]

In this story, the whole development revolves around Drizzt's need for community. He starts out within a society that is entirely foreign to him, is then exiled from his evil home, and finally grows and encounters others that become his new, healthy community. It is this community that is called upon to save the world from oppression time and time again.

This is all to say that fantasy must and can express the communal nature of man. It needs to be expressed yet does not need to be an explicit part of the story. In the example of the original *Star Wars*, there is no statement about or manifest struggle about whether to rely on cooperation with each other in order to defeat the Empire. That is not the drive of the story. The reality within the story makes the conflict and the characters real. In any case, the resolution to our stories must resonate with man's desire for unity. "It is then that we shall behold 'how good and pleasant it is for brethren to dwell in unity….It is like the dew of Hermon that falls upon Mount Zion; for there the Lord grants blessing and life forever' (Ps 133:1, 3)."[134]

---

[132] Salvatore, *The Dark Elf Trilogy: Exile*, 113-114.
[133] Salvatore, *The Dark Elf Trilogy: Exile*, 283.
[134] Ratzinger, *Called to Communion*, 156.

Liturgy

Where man, through the Sacraments of Initiation, is brought into the unity of the Body of Christ which is the Church, there Christ is and it is this reality of union between the two that makes present the life of grace in the believer, transforming them into the reconciled man. This is Liturgy. In one sense, Liturgy is an *exitus* and *reditus* of the divine life. Creation is the *exitus,* and the *reditus* is the return of creation through the salvific work of Christ to the Father. The Liturgy is the place where this *exitus* and *reditus* is acted out by man and applied to man. In other words, the liturgy is the source of divine gift.

> The economy of salvation that emerges from the Father through his Christ in the Holy Spirit expands to become the divinized life that Christians live in the Holy Spirit, through the name of Jesus, the Christ and Lord, in movement toward the Father…The celebration of the liturgy is the place and moment in which the river of life, hidden in the economy, penetrates the life of the baptized in order to divinize it. It is there that everything that the Word experiences for the sake of man becomes Spirit and life.[135]

In a similar way, an author who creates a good secondary world sends the reader within this world to form the reader and, ultimately, to conform him to God himself, placing him in the *exitus* and *reditus* of divine grace. Good fantasy becomes a stream flowing out of the "river of life." Fantasy is not just analogous to the liturgy but is a sub-expression of the liturgy;[136] for a secondary world is a mediation to the immediate realities of the Transcendentals found in the Divine Liturgy of the Church. When this mediating sub-expression is detached from the source of the Transcendentals

---

[135] Jean Corbon, *Wellspring of Worship* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2005), 221.
[136] Sub-expression: lesser and under the Gospel message; brings about the same end, i.e. transmitting the life of grace through the Transcendentals.

a [fantasy] becomes self-contained, as it were, without any vital link to before and after. Finding it foreign to them, some turn their backs on it and return to life, their own life. Others persist in crossing the threshold into this foreign world in order that their life may be absorbed into it for a moment or to give their experience dramatic expression. To the former [fantasy] is unimportant because their desire is to remain in real life, but what is the life they regard as real? To the latter, life is meant to find its meaning in [fantasy], but in what kind of [fantasy] do they seek this meaning?[137]

Without the source of the Transcendentals feeding fantasy, this sub-expression becomes antithetical to reality, proving harmful to the individual who dares to enter into this foreign land. All of the material necessary to make a good fantasy may be present but without connection to the Transcendentals, the fantasy will fall flat (much like the liturgy).

Many people adhere to the truths of the faith, but they do not think that expression of those truths in worship is a necessary part of their life. A major reason for this is poor disposition, and poor disposition is, in part, a consequence of the way liturgy is done. Disposition enables the person to encounter the mystery.[138] "An undisciplined rite clamantly asserting direct links with the production of the numinous has little chance of representing the latter successfully when compared with one that humbly petitions the

---

[137] Corbon, *Wellspring of Worship*, 24. I insert "fantasy" into the quote instead of liturgy because it perfectly expresses the reality and danger of fantasy. "A liturgical celebration becomes self-contained, as it were, without any vital link to before and after. Finding it foreign to them, some turn their backs on it and return to life, their own life. Others persist in crossing the threshold into this foreign world in order that their life may be absorbed into it for a moment or to give their experience dramatic expression. To the former the liturgy is unimportant because their desire is to remain in real life, but what is the life they regard as real? To the latter, life is meant to find its meaning in the liturgy, but in what kind of liturgy do they seek this meaning?"

[138] Aidan Nichols, *Looking at the Liturgy: A Critical View of its Contemporary Form* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1996), 100. "While we must be always aware of the seduction of Liturgy into art for art's sake, it must be recognized that man engages more readily in the dialogue of worship when its forms please his sensibilities at the same time as they are appropriate to the majesty of God."

holy in solemn mode."[139] God is the initiator of contact with the person and he chooses how and when he encounters people. It is not that God cannot or does not reveal himself in poor liturgy, but the disposition necessary for receiving God is lessened. The key to this disposition is the numinous. Of course, man does not control the numinous and cannot force its presence.

Fantasy, when done well, reveals a small look at the real mysteries of the faith. "Something really 'higher' is occasionally glimpsed in mythology: Divinity, the right to power (as distinct from its possession), the due of worship; in fact 'religion.'"[140] When the person is properly disposed to recognize and enact authentic mysteries of religion, fantasy can lead the reader toward real world expressions of faith in the living God. The Christian reader of fantasy is best poised for the journey. But when the reader finds himself separated from the truth of Jesus Christ, then the fantasy too easily becomes the object of its own religion. Practitioners of this religion often can be found at Comic-Con, which is a convention of fantasy art. The convention itself is a place where mutual lovers of these secondary worlds can come together and attempt to make real the secondary world through cosplay (creating realistic costumes for fictional characters), roleplaying, and the sharing of visual and audio art associated with the secondary world. Of course, in its proper context, Comic-Con is a beautiful event where a community can come and enjoy a mutual love together. This activity is in many ways like the activity at the celebration of the liturgy. Practitioners dress a particular way, what is believed to be real is proclaimed, and these realities are made present through a roleplay that is more real than character acting. And this is, moreover, a context for a community to come and share a mutual

---

[139] Nichols, *Looking at the Liturgy: A Critical View of its Contemporary Form*, 70.
[140] Tolkien, *Tolkien on Fairy-stories: Expanded edition, with commentary and notes*, 44.

love. Liturgy is, of course, the action of God primarily, and action having supernatural effects. In this respect, there is nothing really like the Liturgy in fantasy. Nevertheless, like the Liturgy, fantasy can mediate the experience of transcendent realities, bring about conversion of hearts, provoke new ways of looking at reality, and lead to an authentic encounter with God. At the same time, it is an invitation to look at the Christian Liturgy in a highly encouraging light!

Gravity

Man must take the liturgy seriously. Unfortunately, anything that cheapens the acts of the liturgy makes the participant dubious as to its efficacy. In a certain sense, bad liturgy places the credibility of the worship of God in doubt, compelling the faithful to suspend disbelief if they wish to take it seriously. While the seriousness of Liturgy is clear enough, the form that Liturgy assumes and its mediatory character have led to its comparison with "play". Liturgy is often compared to "play" in the sense that it pulls us out of the burdens and worries of our life and prepares us to live in the world.[141] It must be mentioned with what great seriousness children play. Children take their games very seriously, and it is their sense for the gravity of the imaginative situation that allows children to play in the first place.

Like children, man must enter into the sacred liturgy with respect for the gravity of the sacred mysteries. Certain aspects of liturgy help with this. "Optimally, ritual is a symphony of expressive genres, rather [like] opera [which] works simultaneously through a multiplicity of art forms in prose and poetry, music and acting. Unlike opera, however, ritual escapes theatricality

---

[141] Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, *The Spirit of the Liturgy* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2000), 13-15.

by the seriousness of its ultimate concerns."[142] Liturgy also transforms and transcends secular culture. "If ritual…is partly to protect and partly to express truths which make men free from the exigencies of their status-incumbencies, free to contemplate and pray as well as to speculate and invent, then its repertoire of liturgical actions should not be limited to a direct reflection of the contemporary scene."[143] The individual coming to a liturgy is entering a wholly other world that touches upon ours and speaks to our religious nature. This calls for one to be disposed to the numinous. In these respects, fantasy shares something in common with Liturgy.

To the extent that fantasy is understood as a sub-expression of liturgy, fantasy needs to be engaged and executed with gravitas. The author of good fantasy takes his world seriously by paying attention to details. Many consumers claim that fantasy's purpose is for mere entertainment; that they want something with which they can "shut their brains off" while reading or watching. "But this suspension of disbelief is a substitute for the genuine thing, a subterfuge we use when condescending to games or make-believe, or when trying (more or less willingly) to find what virtue we can in the work of an art that has for us failed."[144] Interestingly enough, the only way one could "shut their brain off" is if the author has put in the work, so that, the consumer, like a child, can enter into the world without a care for his own safety. But even then, it is better to engage in entertainment as an adult and not as a child because a child will not be able to see clearly the beauty of the world that it is in. Precisely in seeing and admiring that beauty, the adult will be in full possession of the "childlike" character that is praiseworthy. "But

---

[142] Nichols, *Looking at the Liturgy: A Critical View of its Contemporary Form*, 79.
[143] Nichols, *Looking at the Liturgy: A Critical View of its Contemporary Form*, 77.
[144] Tolkien, *Tolkien on Fairy-stories: Expanded edition, with commentary and notes*, 52.

humility and innocence — these things 'the heart of a child' must mean in such a context — do not necessarily imply an uncritical wonder, nor indeed an uncritical tenderness."[145]

Regardless whether one enters into a fantasy or a liturgy like a child or an adult, man is searching for meaning in a larger community and a larger world than their own individual world. "We want something else which can hardly be put into words—to be united with the beauty we see, to pass into it, to receive it into ourselves, to bathe in it, to become part of it."[146] And this only occurs in the self-transcending and communal actions found in things like fantasy which must point toward, advocate, and lead to the public work of the Liturgy.

---

[145] Tolkien, *Tolkien on Fairy-Stories: Expanded edition, with commentary and notes*, 57.
[146] Lewis, *The Weight of Glory and Other Addresses*, 8.

Conclusion

Looking at creation, anthropology, and ecclesiology, I have made the case that the fantasy genre is a viable medium to encounter the living God. From the view of creation, fantasy reflects the primary world that reveals God. Anthropology teaches that man, whether he likes it or not, is only fulfilled by God, who is foretasted through the Transcendentals. Sub-creations are a place where readers can learn the truth about reality, be formed to desire the good, and to be inspired by beauty, so that, in the primary world, man is better equipped to follow God and enter into communion with his neighbor. Good fantasy teaches man that he cannot save himself or be saved by himself but that he is created to live with others on a similar adventure towards heaven. And yet, fantasy alone, with all its fantastical wonders, is not great enough to satisfy the desires of the human heart. We desire so much more.

> I put before you the one great thing to love on earth: the Blessed Sacrament. ....There you will find romance, glory, honour, fidelity, and the true way of all your loves upon earth, and more than that: Death: by the divine paradox, that which ends life, and demands the surrender of all, and yet by the taste (or foretaste) of which alone can what you seek in your earthly relationships (love, faithfulness, joy) be maintained, or take on that complexion of reality, of eternal endurance, which every man's heart desires.[147]

Everything we love in fantasy: the story, the characters, and the world, are truly present in Jesus Christ, present in the true numinous: The Blessed Eucharist. "In fact…the reality of the Eucharistic Presence is in itself and in its consequences (for time, geography, spatiotemporal relationships, and interpersonal relationships) more fantastic than fantasy."[148] The realities that have been described can really be present in the secondary world, but it is like the presence of

---

[147] J.R.R. Tolkien, Humphrey Carpenter, and Christopher Tolkien., *The Letters of J.R.R. Tolkien* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1981), 62.

[148] James O'Connor, *The Hidden Manna: A Theology of the Eucharist* (San Francisco, CA: Ignatius Press, 2005), 293.

shadows at the edge of sight: if you are unaware that they are there, then you miss them altogether. But the realities present within the Blessed Sacrament are most really there, even as they remain hidden under the veil of faith:

> *There* is the Creator, with his created humanity, come to redeem and transform creation; *there* is the man (*ecce homo*), the archetype of every man and the means to authentic manhood; *there* is the locus of union with God and with one another, the source of reconciliation and of access to the True, the Good, and the Beautiful; *there* is the Head who weds himself with his People and makes of her the place of every blessing, and bearer of the reality by which she is born; this august sacrament which, as visible sign and cause of divine life, epitomizes the heights to which physical creation is called; and which, as ultimate gift of self, displays the itinerary of human redemption; and which, as supreme act of worship and sanctification, embodies all the Church is called to do and to be; and which, exceeding every superb work of fantasy, written or yet to be conceived, is the culmination of the greatest story ever told.[149]

---

[149] Stephen Hipp to Thomas Rausch.

Bibliography

Alexander, Lloyd. *The Chronicles of Prydain: The Black Cauldron.* New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1965.

Anselm of Canterbury. "Cur Deus Homo." At EWTN 9 December 2019, at www.ewtn.com/catholicism/library/cur-deus-homo-1316.

Augustine. *Confessions.* Trans. Maria Boulding. San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2012.

Augustine, *On Christian Doctrine.* Trans. D. W. Robertson, Jr. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1958.

Berger, David. *Aquinas and the Liturgy.* Ann Arbor, MI: Sapientia Press, 2005.

Bonaventure. *Bonaventure: The Soul's Journey into God, the Tree of Life, the Life of St. Francis.* Trans. Ewert Cousins. Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1988.

Butcher, Jim. *The Dresden Files: Grave Peril.* New York: RoC, 2001.

Catechism of the Catholic Church. 2nd ed. Washington, DC: United States Catholic Conference, 2000.

Catherine of Siena. *Catherine of Siena: The Dialogue.* Trans. Suzanne Noffke. Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1980.

Conan the Barbarian. DVD. Directed by John Milius. Universal City, CA: Universal Studio, 1998.

Congar, Yves. *Lay People in the Church: A Study for a Theology of Laity.* Westminster, Md: Newman Press, 1965.

Corbon, Jean. *Wellspring of Worship.* San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2005.

Danielou, Jean. *From Shadows to Reality.* Ex Fontibus Co, 2018.

First Knight. VHS. Directed by Jerry Zucker. Los Angeles, CA: Zucker Brothers Entertainment, 1995.

Hipp, Stephen A. "Nature's Finality and the Stewardship of Creation According to Saint Thomas Aquinas." *Nova et Vetera* 10, no. 1 (2012): 143-191.

Hipp, Stephen A., to Thomas Rausch. "Reviewed all…" Attachment in a personal e-mail of 7 December 2019.

Jordan, Robert. *The Wheel of Time: The Dragon Reborn.* New York: Tom Doherty Associates, 1991.

Jordan, Robert. *The Wheel of Time: The Eye of the World.* New York: Tor Fantasy, 1990.

Khomiakov, Alexei. "The Church is One." At Orthodox Christian Information Center 8 May 2019, at orthodoxinfo.com/general/khomiakov_church.aspx.

Lewis, C.S. *The Weight of Glory and Other Addresses.* New York: Macmillan, 1949.

Melani, Lilia. "Otto on the Numinous." At Brooklyn College 9 December 2019, at academic.brooklyn.cuny.edu/english/melani/gothic/numinous.html.

Monty Python and the Holy Grail. Special ed. DVD. Directed by Terry Gilliam and Terry Jones. Culver City, CA: Columbia Tristar Home Entertainment, 2001.

Nichols, Aidan. *Looking at the Liturgy: A Critical View of its Contemporary Form.* San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1996.

O'Connor, James. *The Hidden Manna: A Theology of the Eucharist.* San Francisco, CA: Ignatius Press, 2005.

Otto, Rudolf. *The Idea of the Holy: An Inquiry into the Non-Rational Factor in the Idea of the Divine and its Relation to the Rational*. Trans. John W. Harvey. New York: Oxford University Press, 1958.

Oxford Dictionary. "Subcreation." At Lexico 9 December 2019, at www.lexico.com/definition/subcreation.

Philippe, Marie-Dominique. "Le probléme de le personne, sommet de le philosophie premiére." *Aletheia* no. 4 (1993): 9-39.

Pius XII. "Munificentissimus Deus." At Vatican Website 26 November 2016, at w2.vatican.va/content/pius-xii/en/apost_constitutions/documents/hf_p-xii_apc_19501101_munificentissimus-deus.html.

Princess Mononoke. DVD. Directed by Hayao Miyazaki Tokyo, Japan: Studio Ghibli, 1999.

Ramos, Alice M. *Dynamic Transcendentals, Truth, Goodness, and Beauty from a Thomistic Perspective.* Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2012.

Ratzinger, Joseph Cardinal. *Called to Communion.* San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1996.

Ratzinger, Joseph Cardinal. *The Spirit of the Liturgy.* San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2000.

Rowling, J.K. *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince.* Broadway, NY: Scholastic Inc., 2005.

Salvatore, R.A. *The Dark Elf Trilogy: Exile.* Renton, WA: Wizards of the Coast, Inc., 2000.

Schillebeeckx, O.P., E. *Christ the Sacrament of the Encounter with God.* Lanham, ML: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc, 1963.

Second Vatican Council. *Gaudium et spes* (7 December 1965). In *Vatican Council II: The Conciliar and Postconciliar Documents.* Ed. Austin Flannery, OP. Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2014.

The Holy Bible: Douay-Rheims Version. London, UK: Baronius Press, 2009.

Thomas Aquinas. "De Veritate." At Clerus 9 December 2019, at www.clerus.org/bibliaclerusonline/en/g14.htm.

Thomas Aquinas. *Latin/English Edition of the Works of St. Thomas Aquinas.* Vol. 13. Trans. Father Laurence Shapcote, O.P. Lander, WY: The Aquinas Institute for the Study of Sacred Doctrine, 2012.

Thomas Aquinas. *Latin/English Edition of the Works of St. Thomas Aquinas.* Vol. 18. Trans. Father Laurence Shapcote, O.P. Lander, WY: The Aquinas Institute for the Study of Sacred Doctrine, 2012.

Thomas Aquinas. *Latin/English Edition of the Works of St. Thomas Aquinas.* Vol. 20. Trans. Father Laurence Shapcote, O.P. Lander, WY: The Aquinas Institute for the Study of Sacred Doctrine, 2012.

Tolkien, J.R.R. *Morgoth's Ring: The Later Silmarillion, Part One: The Legends of Aman.* London: HarperCollins, 2004.

Tolkien, J.R.R. *Silmarillion.* Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1977.

Tolkien, J.R.R. *The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring.* New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1994.

Tolkien, J.R.R. *The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King.* New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1994.

Tolkien, J.R.R. *The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers.* Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1994.

Tolkien, J.R.R. *Tolkien on Fairy-stories: Expanded edition, with commentary and notes.* London: HarperCollins*Publishers,* 2008.

Tolkien, J.R.R., Humphrey Carpenter, and Christopher Tolkien. *The Letters of J.R.R. Tolkien.* Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1981.

Total War: Warhammer. Microsoft Windows. Directed by Mike Simpson and Ian Roxburgh Tokyo, Japan: Sega Games Co., Ltd., 2016.