

Senior Thesis Orations



Wyoming Catholic College

Spring 2019

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12:30 pm Lunch begins at Frassati Hall

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Mr. Dominic Antunes

The Fate of Modernity: How All Roads Lead to Totalitarianism

Wednesday, February 20th, 11 am

Augur Building, Rm. 114

Modern culture in America has become a place of chaos. Over the past several decades we have seen the rise of powerful social movements whose principles and goals seem more contradictory to each other than congruent, creating a society that is rampant with relativism, nominalism, and in the end, atheism. These differing modes of thought eventually lead to a culture that is so confused as to its philosophical principles that these are impossible to argue against, since there is in fact no logical argument to be made. As these movements continue to drive apart the ideological beliefs of different groups in this country, political unrest will inevitably follow. In this oration, I will argue that George Orwell in his book *1984* predicted not only the type of social movements we have now in our modern world, but also the type of political state we would end up in because of them. His description of totalitarianism and its comparison to communism provides for us a blueprint for how modernity (this conglomeration of differing ideas and principles) will eventually stabilize itself after its conflict, bringing with it peace, but also a complete lack of intellectual freedom.

Thesis: Freedom or Happiness? Whether Modernity Can Have Both

Thesis Advisor: Dr. Stanley Grove

Second Reader: Dr. Pavlos Papadopoulos

Third Panelist: Dr. Tiffany Schubert

Miss Katharine Baron

Man Against Nature: The Unnatural Creation in Frankenstein

Wednesday, February 20th, 9:45 am

Augur Building, Rm. 112

The name Frankenstein invokes a stitched together murderous monster. While this is the monster from the book, the legacy of *Frankenstein* has strayed far from its origin. Mary Shelley's original novel is a deeply nuanced book containing elements that are often lost in its adaptations. At its core *Frankenstein* is a story about a man struggling against nature by creating an unnatural monster. This story is sourced from western tradition relying heavily on *Paradise Lost*. *Frankenstein* deals with the theological implications of man creating unnaturally and has many parallels to the story of creation. The novel explores what it means for Dr. Frankenstein to be a god for his creature and how he fails in creation. It also explores the monster's own introspective journey as a new creation. The monster tries to understand his place in the world and in relation to his creator. *Frankenstein* centers around the struggle between creator and creation. Through this conflict the book shows that there is a natural order and that this order is not to be taken lightly. Ultimately Shelley's novel shows that crimes against nature do not go unpunished.

Thesis: The Theological Implications of *Frankenstein*

Thesis Advisor: Dr. Glenn Arbery

Second Reader: Dr. Michael Bolin

Third Panelist: Dr. Thomas Zimmer

Mr. Mark Beckman*Re-Enchanting the Modern Cosmos: How the Hippies and Philosophers Get It Wrong*

Wednesday, February 20th, 8:30 am

Augur Building, Rm. 114

Contemporary existence is characterized by stale sensation, banal subsistence, and the tedious everyday. Modern philosopher, Charles Taylor, describes our world as “disenchanted” where we are caged in by an “Immanent Frame” that fortifies against any transcendent experience that would remedy our unhappiness. This was not always so, nor should we be content with it. To escape the immanent order we must have a conversion from mere materiality toward a transcendental truth. Using the literary and historical accounts of both Charles Taylor and Fyodor Dostoyevsky, I intend to show the cracks within that frame that allow for beauty to enter the soul and thus reveal our forgotten *telos*. But is this accomplished through prolonged experiences in uncomfortable backcountry environments? Or is it in the ease of the philosopher’s armchair? Or perhaps it is in a profoundly tragic experience that fractures our modern paradigm and, paradoxically, re-enchants our broken world.

Thesis: The Consolation of Conversion: Cracking the Immanent Frame Through Wonder

Thesis Advisor: Dr. Michael Bolin

Second Reader: Mr. Eugene Hamilton

Third Panelist: Dr. Scott Olsson

Miss Brianna Bolin

Proving the Central Limit Theorem with Moment Generating Functions

Tuesday, February 19th, 2:45 pm

Augur Building, Rm. 114

The Central Limit Theorem (CLT) is one of the most important theorems in the field of statistics, without which many of the statistical claims we encounter daily would be nearly meaningless. This theorem explains why many observable phenomena have probabilities with certain kinds of patterns, such as the bell curve distribution, that is, the normal distribution. These distributions in turn allow us to assess the significance of a given statistic, for example by telling us how close an estimate probably is to the desired quantity. Formally, the CLT says that the sum of independent and identically distributed random variables will approach a random variable with a normal distribution as the sample size increases. Several proofs of the CLT exist, and one of the most simple depends on the concept of moment generating functions. In this oration, I will prove several basic theorems about these functions and provide a sketch for how they can be used to prove the CLT.

Thesis: The Supreme Law of Unreason: A Study of the Central Limit Theorem

Thesis Advisor: Dr. Scott Olsson

Second Reader: Dr. Michael Bolin

Third Panelist: Dr. Stan Grove

Miss Eilis Brooks

Transcending “Weary and Ardent Ways”: Reclaiming Art for Beauty’s Sake

Tuesday, February 19th, 11 am

Augur Building, Rm. 111

In a world that no longer recognizes Beauty and disregards its participation in the Transcendentals, art becomes divorced from any transcendent end. Consequently, the artist grows weary and disillusioned in his pursuit of the Beautiful. James Joyce captures the nature of this search for Beauty in his 1914 novel, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. In the character of Stephen Dedalus, we find an artist in love with Beauty and one who devotes his life to art, but falls prey to the restricting ideas of modern aesthetics. Emerging from Joyce’s *Portrait* are the questions intrinsic to the artist and the heart of every man: “What is Beauty? Why has it seemingly bid farewell to our world? Who will beckon it back?” The answers lay in the artist’s rediscovery of what and who Beauty is and how to reclaim art for that Beauty’s sake.

Thesis: “To Live, To Err, To Fall”: Reclaiming Art for Beauty’s Sake

Thesis Advisor: Dr. Glenn Arbery

Second Reader: Mr. Christopher Hodkinson

Third Panelist: Dr. Jeremy Holmes

Miss Logan Christie

Nuptial Union with God: St. Teresa's Seven Steps to Spiritual Fortification

Thursday, February 21st, 1:30 pm

Augur Building, Rm. 114

Without God's gifts and graces no soul could hope to receive Him. St. Teresa of Avila wrote *The Interior Castle* based on a vision in which God showed her the interior part of the soul with an analogy of a crystal castle with seven rooms through which the soul travels on its journey to God. In Teresa's book, she describes these seven stages and what to expect in each, providing guidance for every soul and the necessary steps for spiritual ascent. I intend to briefly explain this interior castle, especially the seventh dwelling place, the center of the castle in which the King of Glory dwells, the destination all souls desire to attain. I will explain how crucial it is for the sanctity of every soul to enter into this book and study these seven stages of the interior castle.

Thesis: The Soul's Ascent to God: The Necessity of Descent into Humility

Thesis Advisor: Mr. Kyle Washut

Second Reader: Mrs. Susan Rasmussen

Third Panelist: Dr. Henry Zepeda

Miss Veronica Clarke

The Penelopiad: The Centrality of Feminine Memory in The Odyssey

Thursday, February 21st, 9:45 am

Augur Building, Rm. 111

“‘There is no trusting women.’” One is inclined to agree, however mildly or strongly, with Agamemnon’s words, which seem charged with the weathered knowledge only possible from beyond the grave. The Homeric woman embodies the “pandoric” archetype, a curse among men; she murders her husband upon his homecoming; lustful desires mother ten years of bloodlust; and the monstrous sirens seem to be material conceptualizations of the grotesque, feminine psyche.

But at the closing of the *Odyssey*, Agamemnon’s lamentation is transformed into exaltation: “‘How good was proved the heart that is in blameless Penelope / ...and how well she remembered Odysseus, her wedded husband.’” In this easily overlooked passage, Penelope’s capacity to remember, as the conceptualization of the feminine ability to carry the physical “memory” of humanity by bearing children, points towards the crucial role of feminine memory within the epic.

This oration will present a close analysis of Penelope’s heroic ability to “remember well” in the *Odyssey* (with reference to other Homeric women), and how it is through this ability that the feminine mind ultimately becomes the framework wherein the memory of masculine heroism resides and is perpetuated: “Tell me, muse, of the man of many ways. . . .”

Thesis: *The Penelopiad: The Centrality of Feminine Memory in The Odyssey*

Thesis Advisor: Dr. Jason Baxter

Second Reader: Dr. Pavlos Papadopoulos

Third Panelist: Dr. Thomas Zimmer

Miss Margaret Dowling

Dwelling in the Hearth: Remembering our Place on Earth through the Couple

Tuesday, February 19th, 8:30 am

Augur Building, Rm. 114

In Aristotle's *Politics*, the household is the foundation of the city. The conjugal relationship is primary to the household. Many households make a village, and the village grows into a city, but there is another dimension to man's social relationships than as seen in Aristotle. Martin Heidegger's "Building, Dwelling, Thinking" invites us to look at the nature of dwelling. Heidegger studies the etymological development of the term and uncovers profound relationships. He labels this relationship as the fourfold: earth, sky, mortals and divinities. In this oration, I will seek to parallel the conjugal relationship to Heidegger's fourfold using the image of the hearth as seen in Fustel de Coulanges' *Ancient City* and as illustrated in two stories from William Faulkner's *Go Down, Moses*. By leaving out the conjugal relationship, Heidegger shifts the focus from social relationships to man's place on the earth. Faulkner's stories—*Fire and the Hearth* and *Pantaloons in Black*—although about marriage, pair nicely with Heidegger's views. Heidegger awakens a sense of place which evokes an ontological and experiential placement, as does Faulkner's stories set in the South.

Thesis: The Nature of the Dwelling Place: Dwelling and its Fundamental Connection in the Conjugal Relationship

Thesis Advisor: Dr. Virginia Arbery

Second Reader: Dr. Stanley Grove

Third Panelist: Dr. Glenn Arbery

Mr. William Eby*Understanding the Writings of God: Truth, Relativity, and the Third Author of Scripture*

Tuesday, February 19th, 9:45 am

Augur Building, Rm. 114

Benedict de Spinoza, in his work *Theologico-Political Treatise*, makes the controversial yet well-argued claim that the Bible is essentially unintelligible. Due to vast cultural differences, ambiguous grammar, and poor historical records, the circumstances that conditioned the message the author wished to convey are completely lost to anyone reading the Scripture in Modernity. Perhaps because of this difficulty, there have been a variety of distinct and contradictory interpretations of what this protean work is saying. Catholics, Protestants, Episcopalians, Anglicans, and every other Christian denomination claim to have gathered the true meaning of the Bible. Scripture is like Boethius' image of Lady Philosophy in *The Consolation*: its supposed disciples rip off fragments of it to justify their own position. An outside observer may conclude that they do so because in the ignorance of the author's circumstances, they substitute their own prejudices and interests that the text may have meaning. In other words, it is all subjective. Is the Bible intelligible? Can we overcome the problem subjectivity poses and establish a universal and objective interpretation? And if so, how?

Thesis: "Truth, a Pebble of Quartz?": Gadamer, Subjectivity, and the Third Author of Scripture

Thesis Advisor: Dr. Jeremy Holmes

Second Reader: Mr. Kyle Washut

Third Panelist: Dr. Stanley Grove

Miss Mary Evinger

What Must I Do to Receive a Pure Heart? On the Obstacles, Causes, and Practical Application of Purity of Heart

Thursday, February 21st, 11 am

Augur Building, Rm. 111

Do we really know what it means to be pure in heart? Understanding purity as willing one thing, this oration will consider man's double mindedness and the world's obtrusiveness as obstacles that taint the heart and man's ways of seeing in accordance with willing the eternal Good. This will develop into considering the components of purification, God's active presence in our lives and our conscious response to willing and living in His presence. Finally, the oration considers the practicality of attaining purity and offers an exemplar for living out the process.

Thesis: Commitment to the Eternal: The Heart's Journey to Purity

Thesis Advisor: Dr. Kent Lasnoski

Second Reader: Dr. Stanley Grove

Third Panelist: Dr. Tiffany Schubert

Mr. Peter Fay

Returning Creation to the Uncreated Logos

Tuesday, February 19th, 8:30 am

Augur Building, Rm. 111

Maximus the Confessor holds that the first principles of creation are found in God's unchanging will. God's will for creation is not a vague universal, but descends to the level of each created particular; Maximus calls each of these individual principles- God's will for each creature—a *logos*. Thus, Maximus teaches that every created thing has its own particular origin in God. Adam's sin "has perverted the relationship of the creature to the *logoi* of the world-order" (Tollefsen) and caused creation to "flow down from above" (Gregory of Nazianzus) into its corrupted state. Things no longer act completely according to their *logoi*. However, just as man was able to turn creation away from God by his actions, so can redeemed man begin to repair the rift between fallen creation and its *logoi*. Church tradition maintains that by engaging creation through art, science, technology, and contemplation man is able to reorder it to more perfectly reflect the Logos, thus fulfilling his role as steward of creation.

Thesis: The Many *logoi* are the Logos: How Christ's Incarnation in Creation Affects Man's Understanding of Miracles

Thesis Advisor: Dr. Michael Bolin

Second Reader: Dr. Scott Olsson

Third Panelist: Dr. Jason Baxter

Mr. Sean Floody

Blessed are the Ordinary, for They Will Have a Life

Tuesday, February 19th, 1:30 pm

Augur Building, Rm. 111

“Men are dead, dead, dead; and the malaise has settled like a fall-out and what people really fear is not that the bomb will fall but that the bomb will not fall.” Modern man has rejected his role as a created pilgrim in this life. He cannot see himself as a wayfarer on a transcendent journey, and so he is forced into a life of physical pleasure and sensationalism. Through an investigation into the novels and philosophy of Walker Percy, I propose to show that this rejection leads man into an “everydayness.” Most men treat of this everydayness as something to be conquered, but in fact, the cure to this malaise is to be found in the everydayness itself. Like Dante, one must plunge through the depths of hell before rising to the glorious heights of Paradise. In order to escape the everydayness, one must sanctify it by submission to his role as a created pilgrim, and wayfarer.

Thesis: Blessed are the Ordinary, for They Have Had A Life

Thesis Advisor: Dr. Kent Lasnoski

Second Reader: Dr. Virginia Arbery

Third Panelist: Dr. Jason Baxter

Miss Bibiana Grimm

The Shattered Mirror: Tennyson's "Lady of Shalott" as a Depiction of the Dejected Artist

Thursday, February 21st, 9:45 am

Augur Building, Rm. 114

The word “artist” often has negative connotations. In our minds, the artist’s life is often associated with poverty, loose ways of living, and dramatic bouts of melancholia—but behind these derogatory stereotypes lies a deeper psychological reality that is inherent in the artistic soul. True artists have a specific kind of temperament which makes them especially suited to practice their art. The artistic soul has certain qualities—active imagination, acute exterior senses, and emotional sensitivity—which do not arise through mere practice of the art, but rather are inherent to the artist’s personality. These artistic qualities, though they are essential to producing beautiful works of art, also have a dark side to them. The artist is “cursed” in that the richness of his interior life is in constant conflict with real life. Tennyson’s famous poem “The Lady of Shalott” is an allegory for this conflict in the artist’s soul. The title character, cursed never to look at the real world outside of her tower, dies when she dares to look down directly at Camelot. This tragic end is analogous to the artist’s tragedy when he exits his interior world and is struck by the harshness of real life.

Thesis: “I am half-sick of shadows”: Tennyson and the Disillusioned Dreamer

Thesis Advisor: Dr. Stanley Grove

Second Reader: Mr. Christopher Hodkinson

Third Panelist: Dr. Jeremy Holmes

Mr. Graham Harrison

Stuck in the Middle with Everyone: How Lewis and MacIntyre Save our Ends and Endings

Thursday, February 21st, 8:30 am

Augur Building, Rm. 114

Beginning, middle, end: all stories, including ours, are made of these stages. We the protagonists, begin in one place and one upbringing. Complications arise: we may go on a journey or confront a problem at home. Either way, we cannot remain static. To remain still, and think of ourselves as such, is to lose the meaning inherent in our existence. It is to lose the sense of who or what we are. We must traverse the middle towards and for the sake of one thing: the end of our story, our *telos*. Our endings are unified in the grand narrative of which they are a part. This unity applies to characters as well—Dante as much as to Raskolnikov, to Sam and Frodo as much as Scout Finch and Boo Radley. They do not have stories merely because we bestow them: they have stories because we understand ourselves through stories. It is through the understanding of this narrative unity, as articulated by Alasdair MacIntyre and brought to act by C.S. Lewis, that modern man can at least begin to be rescued from his place in the middle and rediscover his identity and purpose in action.

Thesis: *Volo Ergo Sum? . . .*: C.S. Lewis, Alasdair MacIntyre, and Modern Identity

Thesis Advisor: Dr. Kent Lasnoski

Second Reader: Dr. Pavlos Papadopoulos

Third Panelist: Dr. Jim Tonkowich

Mr. Nathaniel Heithoff

The Few and the Many in the Political Community: A Comparison between Aristotle's Polity and the American Constitution

Thursday, February 21st, 8:30 am

Augur Building, Rm. 111

Solving the problem of faction poses a challenge to both classical and modern political thought. A political community rises or falls based on its ability to overcome the potential conflict between the rich, who are usually the minority, and the poor, who are generally the majority. The central challenge is to achieve distributive justice. How can a regime keep both polarized elements united? As a solution, Aristotle proposes the mixed polity, which combines elements from democracy and oligarchy (both degenerate regimes, according to his thinking) to form the best practical solution to the division between rich and poor. The United States Constitution founds a regime based on popular government but with elements which provide stability and energy; without these no regime can last. By examining the interaction between the House of Representatives (liberty), on the one hand, and the Senate (stability) and Executive (energy), on the other, we see that the Constitution's design resembles that of the Aristotelian mixed polity. Thus, the connection between modern and classical political theory is not as tenuous as some might surmise.

Thesis: *The Few and the Many in the Political Community:
A Comparison Between Aristotle's Polity and the American
Constitution*

Thesis Advisor: Dr. Virginia Arbery

Second Reader: Mr. Kyle Washut

Third Panelist: Dr. Thomas Zimmer

Miss Kateri Houser

Abandoning Pietas: Feminism's Rejection of God, Family, and Nation

Thursday, February 21st, 11 am

Augur Building, Rm. 114

Though seemingly inherent to human nature, modernity appears to have lost a sense of *pietas*, the three-fold virtue of respect of nation, family, and God. Man has taken his nature into his own hands, denied the dignity of family, and lost his pride of country. Though an examination of modern man would prove most fascinating, I suggest a close look at one group: the feminists.

The feminist movement is generally divided in two groups: family feminists and liberative feminists. These are radically different groups, though the second receives far more publicity than the other.

Third-wave feminism consists primarily of the latter. Promoters of “women’s rights” reject *pietas*, which is such an integral part of femininity (as well as masculinity). An examination of third-wave feminism suggests that though the three-fold virtue is not actually there the potency for *pietas* is. This rejection of virtue robs women of their uniquely feminine dignity, denying the wonderful traits which differentiate women from men. Third-wave feminism aims to make men and women the same rather than using their complimentary differences to foster a society of equal dignity and respect.

Thesis: *Pietas*: The Threefold Virtue of the Christian, the Pagan, and the Patriot

Thesis Advisor: Dr. Jim Tonkovich

Second Reader: Mrs. Susan Rasmussen

Third Panelist: Dr. Virginia Arbery

Miss Michaela Houser

“That Day We Read No More”: A Defense of Courtly Love

Wednesday, February 20th, 2:45 pm

Augur Building, Rm. 111

In Dante’s lustful second circle of hell, Francesca illustrates medieval romance as a genre of erotic passions. This is just. After all, it was medieval romance that guided her and her lover to fulfill their sexual desires. This genre has tales of Tristan and Lancelot’s adulterous affairs. It is the genre of impassioned day dreams. It is a genre about intertwined bodies, poems, passions, and impropriety. Although this is many people’s image of medieval romance, my quest is to provide an alternate reading and to encourage a re-evaluation of the medieval romance. Chretien de Troyes’ story *The Knight of the Cart* (Lancelot and Guinevere), and Beroul’s *Tristin and Iseult* are the two most widely known adulterous tales and are the subjects of my thought. Despite the obvious flaws in the heroes, there are qualities in these stories that appeal to us: true love, loyalty, and pure admiration. Looking past the physical action of the affairs there is hidden beauty that is often over-looked or contorted due to the focus on the immoral aspects; this beauty deserves to be revealed. Through an exploration of these romances, which people both love and despise, readers can more fully appreciate the admirable aspects of these heroes and tales.

Thesis: Love Bade Me Welcome but My Soul Drew Back: A Defense of Medieval Romance

Thesis Advisor: Dr. Tiffany Schubert

Second Reader: Dr. Michael Bolin

Third Panelist: Dr. Henry Zepeda

Miss Caitlynn Hunt

The Poet of the Pulps: Redeeming Science Fiction

Wednesday, February 20th, 4 pm

Augur Building, Rm. 114

“It cannot be denied that the ‘pulp’ have a reputation for [being]... kinetic, fast-paced, and exciting tales that are also clumsily written, hurried in conception and morally crude.” Adam Roberts here describes what many people think of as science fiction. There is a ubiquitous “sense that it does not provide readers with many of the things that serious literature does: for instance, beautiful or experimental writing styles, detailed and subtle analyses of character or psychological analyses.”

These statements are true of some science fiction works, certainly. But distilling the whole genre down to this summation deprives the audience of books that need to be read, especially by future leaders. Science fiction has shaped the present, is shaping the future, and will continue to influence the opinions and decisions of the general public; we should not ignore the shifting of our culture, and we cannot stop it, but we can and should help direct it. Science fiction can play a key role in this process; it has a special way of putting philosophy, theology, and history into dialogue with modernity, while also engaging the typical American. And, as demonstrated by Ray Bradbury, it can achieve this with rhetorical finesse and literary depth.

Thesis: Whether Learned Men Can Learn From Science Fiction

Thesis Advisor: Dr. Stanley Grove

Second Reader: Dr. Jim Tonkovich

Third Panelist: Dr. Henry Zepeda

Miss Mary Frances Johnson

Flannery O'Connor and the Freedom of Limitation

Tuesday, February 19th, 9:45 am

Augur Building, Rm. 111

After introducing the image and concept of the modern consciousness, I will describe its major characteristics according to Flannery O'Connor and Carl Jung, as well as reveal the relation between the modern consciousness and the false notion of freedom that is absolute autonomy. Next, I will describe and analyze "Everything That Rises Must Converge," focusing on the transformation of guilt within the main character Julian. Similarly with O'Connor's "Good Country People," I will reveal the solitary nature of the main character Hulga and how it is revealed to her own consciousness. Finally, in "The Enduring Chill," I will highlight Asbury's inability to escape his past and show how this ultimately frees him to receive grace. After commenting on the transformative effect of these stories taken together, we will turn to one of O'Connor's agnostic readers, Hazel Elizabeth Hester, and describe the stories' effect on her. In O'Connor's correspondence with Hester, we can see how her art reconciles the modern consciousness with true freedom through grace-filled limitation rather than the self-determined "freedom" of the infinite void.

Thesis: Flannery O'Connor and the Freedom of Limitation

Thesis Advisor: Dr. Glenn Arbery

Second Reader: Dr. Jason Baxter

Third Panelist: Dr. Kent Lasnoski

Miss Michele Kaiser

“An Imaginary Dot on the Horizon of the Sea”: The Venture for Greatness of Soul in Everydayness

Wednesday, February 20th, 1:30 pm

Augur Building, Rm. 111

Observing Gabriel García Márquez’s use of magical realism in *A Very Old Man With Enormous Wings*, we see that the dullness and indifference present in the everyday have stunted the sense of the extraordinary. Along with the works of Franz Kafka (who heavily influenced Marquez’s writing) and the modern philosopher Martin Heidegger, I will explicate the nature of everydayness and its powerful influence on man’s pursuit for greatness. Finally, I will conclude how everydayness and greatness of soul are reconciled through Marquez’s stunning perspective of magnanimity present in a world that only sees greatness as “an imaginary dot on the horizon of the sea” (Marquez).

Thesis: To Be or Not to Be: Modern Man’s Venture for Greatness of Soul

Thesis Advisor: Dr. Glenn Arbery

Second Reader: Dr. Jason Baxter

Third Panelist: Dr. Jeremy Holmes

Miss Carol Kilman

Seeing God Face to Face: The Necessity of Wonder

Thursday, February 21st, 2:45 pm

Augur Building, Rm. 112

Reality is saturated with the supernatural, and wonder opens the mind to seeing this reality and living a life of fullness. In his work *Till We Have Faces* C. S. Lewis portrays a world enchanted by the divine in a story loosely based on the ancient fairytale, *Cupid and Psyche*. Through the lens of Charles Taylor, we can see Lewis' suggested solution to the problem of living with a disenchanted vision. With examples of an open-minded character and a closed-minded character, Lewis sets a contrast between the way one ought to live to experience the fullness of life, and the unhappy way most 'enlightened' moderns live with clouded vision. The most relatable character for us, however, is The Fox, who neither seems to be completely open or completely closed. While he has some philosophy and poetry, his intellectual piety only takes him as far as the threshold of encountering the Divine, but leaves him in a state of limbo, cut-off from fullness. From this example Lewis emphasizes the necessity of wonder in order to live a full life and shows us how we can attain that experience by taking the step of wonder to go beyond intellectual piety.

Thesis: Surprised by Joy in an Experience of the Transcendent: The Journey from Modern Emptiness to Divine Fulfillment

Thesis Advisor: Mr. Eugene Hamilton

Second Reader: Dr. Michael Bolin

Third Panelist: Mr. Christopher Hodkinson

Mr. Nicklaus King

De Saltatione: Why the Virtuous Man Should Dance

Wednesday, February 20th, 2:45 pm

Augur Building, Rm. 112

From Plato to Lewis, from the Bible to our own “Philosophical Vision Statement,” the great authors of the western literary tradition stress the importance of dance. What inspires these writers’ praise for this art, and why should we care about it? In this oration, we will seek the answer in the legacy of Plato, Boethius, and Dante: dancing is an image of the life of heaven, and this sacred character bears fruit in those who dance. Come learn how dance conforms us to the cosmos, redeems our earthly corruptibility, cultivates virtue, and more.

Thesis: *De Saltatione*

Thesis Advisor: Mr. Christopher Hodkinson

Second Reader: Mrs. Lorine Sheehan

Third Panelist: Dr. Kent Lasnoski

Mr. Wyatt Klein*The Soul in Silence Speaks: Tolstoy on Love as Man's True Language*

Wednesday, February 20th, 9:45 am

Augur Building, Rm. 114

An author of hard won skill in his own right, Ernest Hemingway declared that “nobody’s going to get me in any ring with Tolstoy unless I’m crazy or I keep getting better.” It is not without some irony then that Tolstoy feared that he as an author was powerless to ensure the reader perceived the truths he wished to convey. A darker fear fed this paranoia. Tolstoy found himself losing faith in the ability of conventional language to effectively communicate the most intimate facets of the self to the other. If the void between the consciousness of self and the other was insurmountable then full communication of truth was impossible. Man would be imprisoned in intellectual isolation. In his novel *Anna Karenina* Tolstoy offers the language of love as a tentative solution to this crisis. In this oration I will use what Tolstoy saw as false language to reveal that his solution is not found in the popular romantic language that Anna herself employs. Instead, I claim that it is only in the quiet, prosaic love of Levin that Tolstoy found the surest language.

Thesis: The Abyss of Self or a Secret Garden: The Dehumanizing Effects of Isolation and the Solace of Solitude in *Anna Karenina*

Thesis Advisor: Dr. Jim Tonkowich

Second Reader: Mr. Christopher Hodkinson

Third Panelist: Dr. Pavlos Papadopoulos

Miss Marie Lawless

Cinema: As Image, as Medium, as Toxin or Tool: a Philosophical Discourse Built on the Minds of Plato, McLuhan, and Postman

Tuesday, February 19th, 9:45 am

Augur Building, Rm. 112

Plato believes the image as medium can be dangerous since it is not reality but a representation of it, easily corrupted and directed towards untruth; it can be used to glorify evil. Conversely, he believes it can correctly depict reality and, through the senses, lead the mind towards a particular or universal truth, promoting and encouraging virtue. Marshall McLuhan, the first media critic, believes “the medium is the message.” Each medium *as medium* affects the way we perceive the world around us. Neil Postman, a disciple of McLuhan, narrows in on the medium of cinema and how its use of the medium of image leads ultimately to valuing entertainment above thought, thereby deserving considerable and immediate attention. Thus, with a Platonic foundation, and further refinement from McLuhan and Postman, I will argue that cinematography is both worthy of serious consideration and demands critical and cautious management.

Thesis: Mere Entertainment? Toxin or Tool: A Thesis on the Effects of Movies on Society

Thesis Advisor: Dr. Scott Olsson

Second Reader: Dr. Jim Tonkowich

Third Panelist: Dr. Michael Bolin

Miss Olivia Long

Our Dead Beating Hearts: The Vampiric Obsession

Wednesday, February 20th, 11 am

Augur Building, Rm. 111

We are all familiar with the seductive vampire in modern novels and films; indeed, there seems to be an obsessive attraction towards the genre. How and why did a folk monster inspiring fear and horror become a romantic obsession? What is vampirism exactly?

“Our Dead Beating Hearts” is an analysis of modern man’s psyche, a search into the consequences of the divide between body and spirit. The thesis expounds upon Jacques Maritain’s idea of the “angelic imagination” a concept expressed in Eliot’s famous “Hollow Man”, the idea that man can, like an angel, know material things in a non-material way.

As a few classic examples of this concept, authors Milton, Edgar Allen Poe, and Bram Stoker depict in the vampiric the hollow and erotic desire to consume being. Vampirism is a spiritual disorder found greatly in human beings and is perhaps a defining element of our time. The remedy comes through such thinkers as Plato, Ficino, and Maximus the Great, who emphasize the necessity of spiritual and physical unity in the act of love. I will employ Dante’s *Commedia* and Josef Pieper’s *Leisure, the Basis of Culture* to address the proper response to the disincarnate nature of the vampire.

Thesis: Our Dead, Beating Hearts: The Vampiric Obsession

Thesis Advisor: Dr. Virginia Arbery

Second Reader: Dr. Jeremy Holmes

Third Panelist: Dr. Jim Tonkovich

Miss Catherine Mershon

Prudent or Prudish? A Call For Innocence in Modernity

Wednesday, February 20th, 9:45 am

Augur Building, Rm. 111

Close your eyes and imagine that it is Friday night and your friends have invited you to go to the movies. That sounds like fun, and you didn't have any other plans anyway. You check Parent's Guide online. One movie received reviews with high ratings for language and violence, but otherwise it's clean. Another is reported to be full of dirty jokes and sexual innuendos, but it's supposed to have a great story line and "let me tell you about the cinematography!" You are hesitant. Do you go? Why wouldn't you? What would your friends think if not?

This is one of many common examples of innocence (or the lack thereof) in action. Innocence is thought of in a derogatory sense in modernity and equated with ignorance, prudishness, or naiveté. In Scripture, however, it is never used in this derogatory sense. This oration will explain that innocence is a virtue that allows proper sight of creation as gift, convince you that a recovery or preservation of this virtue is necessary on a personal level, and show you how to attain it through shame and custody of heart.

Thesis: "The Holy Ghost Over the Bent World Broods:" The Necessity of the Virtue of Innocence in Modernity

Thesis Advisor: Mr. Kyle Washut

Second Reader: Dr. Kent Lasnoski

Third Panelist: Mr. Eugene Hamilton

Miss Madison Michieli

“The Marriage Supper of the Lamb”: The Pure of Heart as Temple and Bride

Wednesday, February 20th, 4 pm

Augur Building, Rm. 111

Following Scripture, Aquinas, and John Paul II, this oration will explicate Matthew 5:8—“Blessed are the pure of heart, for they shall see God”—by contemplating the pure through the images of the temple and the bride. By purity of heart, we acquire “[the] eye whose clear gaze wounds the Spouse with love” (St. Bruno) and become “the temple of God by contemplating” (Aquinas). As ritual purifications cleansed Solomon’s temple for divine worship, the gift of *intellectus* cleanses the heart for divine contemplation; as a bride’s chastity dedicates her love to the bridegroom, the virtue of temperance sanctifies the heart for divine love. Finally, these two images of temple and bride are united in the single image of the Church, the temple which Christ has espoused (Eph 5:25). Thus the pure of heart are the Church in miniature, called to be the bride at the marriage supper of the Lamb (Rev 19:9).

Thesis: Blessed are the Pure of Heart, for They Shall See God: The Ecclesial Image of the Pure in Aquinas and John Paul II

Thesis Advisor: Mr. Kyle Washut

Second Reader: Dr. Jeremy Holmes

Third Panelist: Dr. Michael Bolin

Mr. Joshua Mireles

The Weight of Beauty: How All Art Can Sanctify

Thursday, February 21st, 4 pm

Augur Building, Rm. 111

“There is also a third kind of madness, possession by the Muses, which enters into a delicate and virgin soul, and there, inspiring frenzy, awakens lyric” (Plato, *Phaedo*). As moderns, Plato’s idea of the Muse seems to be a fantastical and outdated idea. For most of us, the experience of beautiful art seems to be a purely emotional endeavor. Although a Mozart Sonata might evoke a pleasant and (hopefully) cathartic experience, it seems unlikely that such a melody could “tune our souls,” as Plato would assert. In this oration, I will describe the effect of true art on the soul and how Plato’s idea of the “muse” unfolds in the Christian vision. I will conclude by asserting that not only does art “tune our souls,” but, in fact, every piece of true art draws us deeper into a life of sanctity.

Thesis: Holiness Through Beauty: How Art Can Sanctify

Thesis Advisor: Dr. Jeremy Holmes

Second Reader: Dr. Virginia Arbery

Third Panelist: Dr. Henry Zepeda

Miss Dominique Nemeth

*“And close your eyes now, hush now, all is well.”
Gjertrud Schnackenberg’s Universal Eulogy*

Tuesday, February 19th, 4 pm

Augur Building, Rm. 111

While Gjertrud Schnackenberg’s “Fusiturricula Lullaby” may initially read like metered scientific jargon, I argue that these three pages of carefully-worded poetry mirror the cosmic consolation found in ancient, archetypal sufferers, such as Boethius and Job. By delving deep into this lullaby-poem, we will see how her setting of the ocean floor and the metaphor of the shell, in context of her own losses, can be seen as a universal eulogy. With an understanding of poem, poet, and definition, I will directly compare this beautiful poetic work to the ancient accounts of Boethius and Job, showing how her universal eulogy is a continuation of the cosmic consolations of these earlier examples. With this understanding of Schnackenberg in context of archetypal sufferers, I will conclude by explaining how this poetic illustration is able to give a eulogy that is metaphysical and universal, but does so without losing the individuality of the particular sufferer.

Thesis: “And close your eyes now, hush now, all is well.” Gjertrud Schnackenberg’s Universal Eulogy

Thesis Advisor: Dr. Jason Baxter

Second Reader: Mr. Christopher Hodkinson

Third Panelist: Dr. Virginia Arbery

Miss Sarah Rahilly

Gazing at Divine Mystery: Unraveling the Mystery of Silence

Wednesday, February 20th, 2:45 pm

Augur Building, Rm. 114

Did I check my email? What homework do I have left? If I could be a hero, what would I be? Let me just check Youtube; maybe I will find the answer there. Exhaustive distractions consume our minds, yet we strangely find it comforting. With the rise of technology, distractions have become incessant and even addictive in today's society. They form a sort of aversion to silence by preventing us from engaging in silence. This aversion, however, is unnatural, and, to correct this behavior, we must change our attitude toward divine silence. Silence allows us to develop a loving relationship with God and an understanding of our own nature. It is an encounter with divinity itself, God's loving embrace. This is an extraordinary phenomenon that strengthens love through profound knowledge and mystery. God is offering love, Himself, as a gift to mankind through silence. Why do we flee from something so good and beneficial and reject silence's true, beautiful nature? This oration will discuss our fear and discomfort with silence and the need for divine silence.

Thesis: A Call to God's Silence: Silence as the Birth of Words Leading to Informed Contemplative Prayer

Thesis Advisor: Mr. Eugene Hamilton

Second Reader: Dr. Scott Olsson

Third Panelist: Dr. Thomas Zimmer

Mr. Anthony Isaac Reynolds

Beacons to Happiness: How Heroes Guide Us Toward the Best Life

Tuesday, February 19th, 1:30 pm

Augur Building, Rm. 114

From the earliest recorded history man has been writing about his heroes. But why are they common across cultures? I argue that this is because the purpose of heroes is to guide us to what we all desire: Happiness. Using an American hero, the Virginian, as an example, I will illustrate that heroes are not just characters from a story, but an important tool used to direct Man toward his ultimate end.

Thesis: How Heroes Guide Us to Happiness

Thesis Advisor: Mr. Eugene Hamilton

Second Reader: Mrs. Lorine Sheehan

Third Panelist: Dr. Tiffany Schubert

Miss Sophia Sage

Virgil's Poetic Sculpture: Examining the Untranslatable in the Aeneid

Thursday, February 21st, 9:45 am

Augur Building, Rm. 112

In the *Aeneid*, Virgil intentionally orders his words to signify meanings which are not inherently signified by the words themselves. This arrangement is a kind of verbal sculpture in which the poet enriches the literal meaning of his words with finer, more intricate details. In examining these nuances of Virgil's art, we stand at the base of his sculpture seeing its intricacies clearly instead of straining from a distance able to discern only its outline. Because word order in Latin is less constrained than it is in English, the details the poet chisels into his poetry cannot be re-cut in English. The richness of the original sense is lost. To unlock this wealth, I will conduct a formal analysis of specific examples—much as one would examine the works of Bernini or Monet—thereby revealing the abundance of meaning which Virgil deliberately carves into his poetry.

Thesis: Understanding the Linguistic Craftmanship of Virgil's Aeneid and Why it Cannot Be Translated

Thesis Advisor: Dr. Scott Olsson

Second Reader: Mr. Eugene Hamilton

Third Panelist: Mr. Kyle Washut

Miss Hannah Scheidel

Amiability and Constancy

Tuesday, February 19th, 2:45 pm

Augur Building, Rm. 111

In this oration the focus will be on the virtues of amiability and constancy, particularly as they are described by Jane Austen. They are relevant virtues that are not usually talked about but are nonetheless important in our daily lives. First, I will define them and then show examples of them in the character of Fanny Price in Jane Austen's *Mansfield Park*. After establishing what these virtues are and what they look like in action, I will discuss how they bring together prudence and charity. Once this connection is drawn it will establish the importance and relevance of these virtues today.

Thesis: Amiability and Constancy: An Aristotelian Reading of Jane Austen's Commentary on Social Virtue

Thesis Advisor: Mrs. Lorine Sheehan

Second Reader: Dr. Tiffany Schubert

Third Panelist: Dr. Pavlos Papadopoulos

Mr. Donan Scholl

Orality: An Endangered Species Worthy of Conversation

Wednesday, February 20th, 1:30 pm

Augur Building, Rm. 114

Poetry, once a ubiquitous artform, is now something mostly academic. Where once, in the age of oral poetry, the everyday man's exposure to spoken verse was a constant, now it is practically non-existent. In the transfer to the page, we have isolated poetry, quarantined it away from the hearing society. Like a shy suitor in a tower, poetry now waits for maiden ears to seek him out. However, it was not always this way. Poetry was once the active supplicant intent on a hearing, who, lyre in hand, sought out listeners to woo.

In my oration I will set out to prove that orality is inherently good, authentically human, and as the advance in communication technology threatens its existence, we ought to take conservation measures to preserve it. Over its course, I will analyze the works of the great master of orality Homer, explain the academic studies of Milman Parry and Albert Lord, and explore the poetry, both written and oral, of a variety of poets, including E. E. Cummings and Donald Davidson.

Thesis: *Orality: An Endangered Species Worthy of Conversation*

Thesis Advisor: Dr. Virginia Arbery

Second Reader: Mr. Christopher Hodkinson

Third Panelist: Dr. Tiffany Schubert

Mr. Brandon Seedorf

Until Philosophers Rule as Kings: Plato and Aristotle on the Nature of Politics

Wednesday, February 20th, 8:30 am

Augur Building, Rm. 111

How can the Church deal with politics? This seems to be today's question, but it is the conflict of every age: How must we deal with the Roman Empire, the German king, the French Republic? Such a problem seems to resolve by grace alone, but grace builds on nature. Before discerning how to approach politics with grace, we must know the nature of politics.

Plato through his *Republic* and Aristotle in his *Politics* shall be our guides into the ideals and practicalities of politics. These great texts provide persuasive—and seemingly contradictory—accounts of political origins and ends. Examining the subtleties in Plato's dialogue and the implications in Aristotle's systematic approach reveals a play of ideas between these seemingly disparate works.

Both thinkers face the power and perversion of the human soul writ large in the city and compensate for such corruption with a surprising and often unsettling solution: The Philosopher must take matters into his own hands, for “until philosophers rule as kings. . . cities will have no rest from evils, Glaucon, nor, I think, will the human race.”

Thesis: The Philosopher Tyrant and His Tradition of Lies: Plato and Aristotle on How Philosophers Lie to the Masses and Control Regimes for the Sake of the Good

Thesis Advisor: Dr. Pavlos Papadopoulos

Second Reader: Dr. Glenn Arbery

Third Panelist: Mr. Kyle Washut

Mr. William Stivers

Science Fiction and Pieper: A Wellspring of Philosophical Thought

Thursday, February 21st, 2:45 pm

Augur Building, Rm. 114

Josef Pieper in his work, *Leisure the Basis of Culture*, says that the modern man is no longer satisfied unless he works hard for an end and disciplines himself. However, what Pieper wants to call “Intellectual Work” does not require the herculean effort that one might think. Enter H.G. Wells, who in writing his Science Fiction, brings an enchantment that can lead into the Leisure that Pieper advocates for. His stories highlight both the wondrous possibilities but also dangers of technology. They bring philosophical questions like justice into the modern world, and they make the extraordinary something concrete and possible. Based on the general abilities of science fiction as a genre, and the unique approach of H.G. Wells, we will see how science fiction can enchant the modern man and then lead him to Leisure. We should let the sense of wonder in this new genre move us to look beyond ourselves, and let Pieper’s Leisure and Philosophical act begin, but not end in Science Fiction.

Thesis: H.G. Wells and the Imagination: The Liberating Power of Science Fiction and Josef Pieper

Thesis Advisor: Dr. Jeremy Holmes

Second Reader: Dr. Scott Olsson

Third Panelist: Dr. Glenn Arbery

Mr. Jack Thrippleton

“What’s in a name?”: Ockham’s Nominalism and Thomistic Realism

Thursday, February 21st, 1:30 pm

Augur Building, Rm. 111

Many students at Wyoming Catholic College find that Renaissance and Enlightenment thinkers often seem to make nonsensical or specious arguments. Indeed, if the reader applies Thomistic definitions and premises, their arguments make no sense. Yet, this is rather unfair to those thinkers, who were among the most intelligent men of their age. Every philosopher defines their terms idiosyncratically, and most philosophers of the last seven hundred years use a philosophical system completely different from ours, with incommensurable premises and drastically different conclusions. This “Nominalism” differs drastically from our Thomistic Realism; these systems cannot argue against each other. In this talk, I will explain what Nominalism is and how it differs from the philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas, using the work of William of Ockham and his successors. Understanding the point of departure for modern thought is vital to understanding and combating the evils of our day; for “A small error at the outset can lead to great errors in the final conclusions.” —St. Thomas Aquinas

Thesis: Essence and Parsimony: The Metaphysical Revolution that Rent Scholastic Philosophy; How Ockham’s Nominalist Solution Fails

Thesis Advisor: Dr. Kent Lasnoski

Second Reader: Dr. Scott Olsson

Third Panelist: Dr. Tiffany Schubert

Mr. Patrick Tippmann

Literature's Contribution to the Spiritual Pilgrimage: The Hope it Instills by Relating Spiritual Instruction through a Literary Mode

Tuesday, February 19th, 4 pm

Augur Building, Rm. 114

In this oration, I will be addressing how a work of medieval writing (Dante's *Divine Comedy*) can lead one through a spiritual pilgrimage in a way similar to spiritual works like St. Theresa's *Interior Castle*.

It is an extension of my thesis, which explained how literature of the medieval period could transport a man of any time period into a cosmos that realizes a divine order to which one must conform. It began by claiming that literature is a sufficient means of delving into this interior, spiritual pilgrimage, through literature's relatable and humble characteristics, enabling one to have confidence to go on the same pilgrimage that the characters endeavor on. Spiritual instruction gives straightforward advice on how to endeavor upon the pilgrimage journey, while the literary mode highlights the human interactions of the certain stages in the spiritual life.

Although I posit that the literary works of Dante, Boethius, and Chaucer relate themselves in a humble and relatable manner, they do still have many extraordinary aspects to them. I will attempt to reconcile these and show how literature, while focusing on Dante, still stands as an effective means to communicate the same intentions of spiritual instruction, yet through a literary mode.

Thesis: "Than longen folk to goon on pilgrimages": Modern Man's Spiritual Journey through Chaucer, Dante, and Boethius

Thesis Advisor: Dr. Pavlos Papadopoulos

Second Reader: Mr. Eugene Hamilton

Third Panelist: Dr. Henry Zepeda

Miss Veronica Walsh

Exalting the Uselessness of the Poetic: Wendell Berry on Reconciling Tradition and Modernity

Thursday, February 21st, 2:45 pm

Augur Building, Rm. 111

The industrial nations are now divided, almost entirely, into a professional or executive class that has not the least intention of working in truth, beauty, and righteousness, as God's servants, or to the benefit of their fellow men, and an underclass that has no choice in the matter. (Wendell Berry)

The modern philosopher and author Wendell Berry presents this harsh critique of the state of modernity and its deficiency in truth, beauty, and righteousness: characteristics essential to the culture of the classical tradition. Wyoming Catholic College students in particular must negotiate this discrepancy upon concluding this education. An attempt to reconcile these traditions with the seemingly meaningless culture of modernity asks how man ought to act in accordance with his *telos* while inhabiting a society that has strayed from the unifying influence of truth. Berry seeks to remedy this loss by returning to a traditional understanding of community and the proper ordering of man's nature, affections, and actions in light of his final end.

Thesis: The Simple Worker: The Restoration of Edenic Stewardship

Thesis Advisor: Dr. Pavlos Papadopoulos

Second Reader: Dr. Stanley Grove

Third Panelist: Mrs. Lorine Sheehan

Mr. Andrew Westerman

Where Has the Hero Gone?

Thursday, February 21st, 4 pm

Augur Building, Rm. 114

History is full of literary, cultural, and historical heroes that could be admired and emulated by all men. Today, however, there is a striking lack of such figures in modern society and culture. With the advent of social contract thinkers, particularly Hobbes, the primacy of the self-preservation mentality created a social paradigm completely antithetical to the idea of the hero as he previously existed. Thus the definition of the hero was expanded, such that now any sacrifice, no matter how meagre, in the course of one's occupation now seems adequate criteria to call someone a hero. This is a far cry from the idea of the hero as one who risks or gives his life for the sake of a good beyond himself. The hero cannot merely be the same as a decent, or even a virtuous man: he must go beyond the dictates of the cardinal virtues at risk to himself, even his life, in order to truly be called a hero.

Thesis: The Death of the Hero: A Comparison of the Ancient and Modern Concepts of a Hero

Thesis Advisor: Dr. Jason Baxter

Second Reader: Dr. Glenn Arbery

Third Panelist: Dr. Jim Tonkovich

Miss Mary Woods

Law, the Soil of Story: Beauty, Fiction, and the Rules of Subcreation

Tuesday, February 19th, 2:45 pm

Augur Building, Rm. 112

According to Tolkien, writing fiction is a kind of lordship over reality, a way for man to share in God's creative power. Jacques Maritain's analysis of the Scholastic definitions of art and beauty lends philosophical and theological support to Tolkien's claim. Extending Maritain's argument into the practical realm of the working artist, I show how the three essential aspects of beauty—integrity, proportion, and radiance—can be used as guidelines to create good fiction. Because of the inherent relation of divine and human creativity, the fiction writer has a responsibility to follow these rules of subcreation.

Thesis: *Law, the Soil of Story: Christian Fiction and the Rules of Subcreation*

Thesis Advisor: Dr. Jeremy Holmes

Second Reader: Dr. Kent Lasnoski

Third Panelist: Mr. Christopher Hodkinson

Miss Izabela Zagorski

There and Back Again: Reconverting Men to Real Paganism

Tuesday, February 19th, 11 am

Augur Building, Rm. 114

By creating an ordered world infused with wonder and enchantment, Tolkien addresses modern man's plight; he invites readers to embrace beauty so that they may begin to appreciate the "fulfilled transcendent desire" found through Samwise Gamgee. Tolkien notices a culture caught within a cage of trite familiarity: modern man is out of tune with reality and the world around him. Like C.S. Lewis, who wondered "whether we shall . . . have to re-convert men to real Paganism as a preliminary to converting them to Christianity," Tolkien wants to pull his readers from the void of drab mundanity, and to foster within modern man a heart filled with wonder, desire, hope, and childlike awe. Only then can Tolkien aspire to foster within his readers "the ennoblement (or sanctification) of the humble." Thus, Tolkien must create a hero relatable to modern man, captivating readers with the virtuous heroism found within his weakest, oddest creature, the hobbit. Through his chief hero, Tolkien believes man can begin to contemplate the ordinary act carried out in an extraordinary manner and imagine himself becoming the Christian hero. Thus he demonstrates that even the plainest and most ordinary creature can achieve heroism through servility.

Thesis: Tolkien's Everyday Hero: Ennobling the Humble

Thesis Advisor: Mr. Kyle Washut

Second Reader: Dr. Jim Tonkowich

Third Panelist: Dr. Henry Zepeda

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