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Okay, so, the title of my paper today is Feasting at the Threshold, Queer Eucharistic eroticism and homo nationalism in Diane Duane's *The Tale of the 5*.

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So I'm just gonna begin with a little bit of background before I get into the main, need of what I'm going to be talking about today.

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In his essay on fairy stories, JRR Tolkien suggests that by rearranging and offering variations on elements of the primary world.

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Fantasy can reinvigorate our appreciation of everyday things such as stone and wood and iron.

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Tree and grass, house and fire, bread and wine. The Eucharistic applicability suggested by the inclusion of bread and wine in this formulation is likely no accident.

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As a devout Catholic, Tolkien's theorization of fairy story by his own acknowledgment shares a complex relationship with his understanding of the Christian story of salvation.

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Alana and Vincent goes so far as to link fantasy to the Eucharist by way of the Catholic principle of sacramentality.

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While sacraments such as the Eucharist confer grace immediately. Within a Christian framework, literature can be understood as sacramental.

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A facet of everyday life that awakens a sense of the numinous and leaves the soul disposed toward the reception of grace.

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Fantastic recovery in particular carries a sacramental potential to inspire entirely new dimensions of theological understanding.

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Because the aura of mystery which pervades the fantasy world is well situated to illuminate the real world by proxy.

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Well, fantasy is incapable of serving as a direct stand in for the Eucharistic sacrament per se.

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A Christian theological reading of fantasy positions it at the threshold where material concerns of everyday life turn towards communion with the divine.

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A communion that remains rooted in fleshly acts centered around the fulfillment of bodily needs and desires, in this case eating and drinking.

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Even as it gestures toward transcendence.

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As I've suggested, in my monograph, querying faith and fantasy literature, fantasy's ability to critically reimagine the primary world and matters of the body in the primary world in particular also enables it to re-vision sacramental practices from the margins of gender and sexual difference.

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Uncovering subversive queer alternatives to the doctrines that govern them. After all, if recovery consists in viewing the other not as an extension of oneself, but as an entity outside of and equal to one's self.

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Then the sacramental revelation enacted by fantasy can also challenge dominant expressions of theology to commune with.

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Brush up against and commingle with the image of God as embodied by the sexual other often institutionally barred from receiving the material and spiritual goods of communion in the first place.

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As a sacramental production, fantasy that takes up this queer theological task can dispose theology towards the grace of what Marcela Althouse Reed has described as God as a stranger at the gates of hegemonic theology amongst loving expressions of relationships at the margins of the defined, decent, and proper in Christianity.

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Diane Duane's ongoing pulp fantasy series, *The Tale of the 5*, explicitly articulates a queer sacramentality with specific applicability to the Eucharist along these lines.

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In this paper, I'll demonstrate how the *Tale of the 5* emphasizes acts of eating and drinking as important components not only of its secondary world's goddess-based religion, but also of its characters pansexual, polyamorous relationships.

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These instances provocatively link religious devotion with the pursuit of erotic pleasures and relational formations deemed indecent within many primary world expressions of Christianity.

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The goddess's affection for humanity and humanity's love for the goddess spill over into queer sexual encounters between humans.

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Which in turn are revealed as extensions or permutations of the former. And human characters additionally experience personally transformative sexual encounters with the goddess.

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Yet the overall narrative of Dwayne's series also falls back on fantasies of monarchy, race, and nation.

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In a manner that exists in uneasy tension with and raises serious questions about the limits of its queer theological imagination.

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The Tale of the 5 is set in a secondary world called the Middle Kingdoms and consists of 3 novels, the door into fire, the door into shadow and the door into sunset.

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In addition to the novel, the Leven Gad, and the novella, the Landlady.

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With at least one more novel at the librarian and a fourth novel, The Dora in the Starlight, still to be published at the time of this presentation.

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The religion of the Middle Kingdoms, structured as it is around the tripartite goddess motif of maiden and mother and wise woman, and animistic magic rituals associated with the earth.

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Draw some notable influences from neopagan beliefs and practices. However, these are also intertwined with heterodox, but nonetheless clear variations on Christian doctrines and theological concepts.

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Such as the belief that humans are made in the goddess's image. It's concerned with a deity who is incarnated in human flesh and exists alongside humanity.

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And the investment in motifs of eating, drinking, and transubstantiation that gesture towards Eucharistic sacrament.

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So just to start with an example of the latter. Chapter 6 of the door into sunset opens with an epigraph from a fictitious text telling the tale of a woman who roams the earth seeking the goddess, but is unable to find her.

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Returning home dejectedly to an empty larder. She ventures into the Darthis City marketplace.

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Where she encounters a woman wearing that cloak which is the night sky and with a basket over her arm.

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And bread in it and wine.

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And the woman looked at the goddess in amazement, and the goddess sighed and smiled.

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And said to her, it's such a nuisance, but sometimes you just have to go into town.

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And she kissed the woman and was gone.

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This scene communicates much about the Eucharistic and incarnational theology that characterizes the Middle Kingdom's cosmogony.

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Both evoking and subverting the biblical account in which the prophet Elijah encounters God not in the great wind or the earthquake or the fire.

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But in a sound of sheer The goddess is found not in the remote corners of the earth, but among the ordinary women in the bustling marketplace.

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The Eucharistic motif of bread and wine appears here both to underscore the incarnate nature of the goddess's existence, since of the Eucharistic sacrament, bread and wine correspond to the body and blood of the incarnate Christ.

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And to signify the material goods that they literally are. As a setting for this exchange. The market is particularly laden with meaning for queer theology.

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Outhouse Reads, Marxian analysis of traditional theology, for instance, observes that economic desires walk hand in hand with erotic desires and theological needs.

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And that theology deals with a market of souls and the definition of their needs. Sacraments, prayers, ritual ordinances, and an allegiance to beliefs, which regulate people's lives in order to effectively distribute the spiritual goods of redemption or forgiveness or even eternal life amongst them.

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The spiritual clientele. As in the Eucharist, material and spiritual goods here are distributed directly by the goddess herself appears simultaneously in bread and wine at the moment of fulfillment for the unnamed woman's material needs and theological desires.

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And yet the goddess is playful, almost camp remarks to the woman, avoid conflating the goddess with the marketplace itself.

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The sly suggestion that it's such a new sense to go into town, but that sometimes you just have to position the goddess as imminent within the everyday business of economy and its material goods.

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But lovingly transcending any regulatory system, structuring it, although as I'll demonstrate later in this paper, this becomes complicated when we consider the political structures.

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That govern the material the middle kingdoms as a whole.

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The encounter with the goddess in the marketplace is instructed in tracing the links between worship of the goddess, the shared consumption of food and drink.

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And the exchange of queer sexual pleasures. I argue that the tail of the 5 is permeated with instances of transubstantiation and transfiguration in which relations and encounters slide freely between these categories or inhabit more than one simultaneously.

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The series is already notable from a queer standpoint thanks to the open and dynamic nature of its sexual landscape.

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While inhabitants of the Middle Kingdoms are subject to a divine obligation to have at least one child in their lifetime, similar to yet distinct from the injunction to be fruitful and multiply in the biblical creation narrative.

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Their sexual lives otherwise are open and varied, with most characters taking on multiple partners of all genders.

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The central pairing in the series initially appears to be a gay romance between 2 of its central protagonists, Herois and Freeln.

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But these characters romantic and sexual lives branch out over the course of the texts to encompass multiple relationships of varying types and durations with characters of multiple genders.

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These entanglements also continually reshape the dynamic between these 2 men, even as they remain committed to one another.

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Already we can see here a fluid and shifting sexual landscape that markedly contrasts with what Outhouse Read analyzes as the regulatory frame of sexual decency that dictates who is worthy of receiving material and spiritual goods within Christian institutions.

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Yeah, even beyond this, the Tale of the Fives world and narrative are marked by constant bodily transgressions and surprises.

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A human and dragon can occupy the same body and become lovers. Human subjectivities can expand to inhabit the tectonic plates beneath the mountain range.

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And a one night stand can bring one face to face with a divine. At the time when the serious narrative takes place, the world is at a critical juncture in the constant struggle between the goddess who creates and loves and her fallen offspring the shadow who devours and destroys.

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And as such, the rules and norms that govern the world are shifting even further. Harris is the first man in centuries to wield the mystical power of the blue fire usually reserved for women.

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And one of his sexual partners is a fire elemental named Sunspark for whom sexuality and romantic love should be impossible.

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And whose physical appearance shifts fluidly between human and non-human forms, as well as between genders.

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Throughout the series, human bodies and subjectivities expand, change shape, and multiply through various magical and divine means to exceed and destabilize the bounds of self-identity.

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Always weaving her way through these experiences of queer excess and impossibility is the goddess who plays an active role in the sexual lives of all her creations.

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The door into fire establishes that once in a lifetime, a person will know the joy of being held in the goddess's arms.

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Although she comes as just another person with human quirks and wrinkles. Sometimes she comes in the form of someone you know.

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Perhaps even your own loved. Later in that novel, Herois Freelorn, the sorceress, and Bora, and the rest of their traveling companions.

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Happened upon an inn in the wilderness. Where the woman who keeps the inn agrees to let them stay the night in exchange for sex in place of money.

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An apparently commonplace occurrence within the middle kingdom's sexual economy. After sitting down to a sumptuous meal, the companions depart to their respective rooms, with Simba chosen to go to bed with the innkeeper per their agreement.

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However, the innkeeper surprises each of the others in turn by appearing to all of them simultaneously at moonrise.

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Where they each eventually recognize her as the goddess, and she spends the night with them.

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As in the encounter with the goddess in the marketplace, here the goddess first appears in the midst of everyday exchanges before exceeding them in the abundance of the material, sexual, and spiritual gratification she bears.

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The initial sexual arrangement she negotiates with Simba as the innkeeper becomes multiplied 7 fold among the company and leaves them fulfilled far beyond any normal sexual encounter.

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Reminiscing about the experience afterward. Simba contrasts it with ordinary sex in which, give as you will, there's only so much that can be shared in one evening or one day before the body gives out, gets sore, gets tired.

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Whereas the goddesses attentions satisfied all of me. All the depths, the corners, the little fantasies I never dared.

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The bounty of the goddess's table at the end and the rest and shelter she provides for the travelers.

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Gives way to a fulfillment of sexual needs beyond the usual bounds of possibility within human relations. Which in turn leaves the company spiritually enriched and edified for their journey.

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The bound to full multiplication and loving commingling of divine and human bodies in this exchange and its mediation through the hospitality of the meal table.

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There is a strong resemblance to Lynn Marie Tonstadt's queering of the Eucharistic Feast.

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Rather than the straightforward transmutation that characterizes traditional readings of transubstantiation. Tomstad proposes an additive model that she refers to as impanation to make sense of the presence of the body of Christ within the Eucharist.

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In this model, the word assumes a bread nature in addition to a human nature that is freely distributed among and comes to dwell within the bodies of all who take part in the feast.

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This additive understanding of the Eucharist Challenges us to see the distribution of spiritual goods as intimately bound up with the free sharing of material goods.

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Since the multiplication of the breaded Christ means enough Christ for all. And signals the form of good relations that the grace of Christ initiates among humanity.

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As Tonst puts it, our participation in taking part in Christ brings us together in face to face relations that show us to each other more clearly.

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Or at least have the potential to do so for better and worse. The sufficiency of the Eucharist and the intensified relationships among humans that it symbolizes and makes possible.

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Suggests reconfiguration of the conditions of bodied material existence themselves. Christian theology tends not to explicitly imagine God as pursuing sexual relationships with humanity in the same way that the goddess does in the tale of the 5.

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And certainly, Tanstan's reading of the Eucharist makes no literal claims to this effect either.

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Yep, Tom said following outhouse Read is heavily invested in showing how Christianity's theological metaphors and practices are always already sexual in nature.

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They're inherent sexuality simply tends to be invisible within a society that accepts patriarchal and heterosexual views of reality as natural.

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The Eucharist is no exception. I'll read, for instance, identifies that in the Catholicism of her youth, the traditional pose in which one receives the Eucharist involves kneeling at the altar, which places the communicant in proximity to the priest's penis.

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A whole matrix of power relations is thus implied by this gesture. Linking the Catholic Church's enforcement of patriarchal and heterosexual gender relations to the innumerable instances of sexual abuse within the church that have come to light in the past few decades.

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As well as the church's historical role and colonial exercises of domination and conquest. As Outhouse Read puts it, Hierarchical church models are constructed from the access of priests penises.

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Similarly, at stake for Tom Sad is finding an alternative to patriarchal redemption models in which the church is positioned as a submissive bride to Christ the penetrative bridegroom.

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The prevailing image in her Eucharistic theology is instead one of loving co-inhabitants.

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Where the body's limits do not disappear but spatial location becomes coinhabitable and the co-locality of different bodies.

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Presence in the same place at the same time. Transforms the nature of relationality and community. Okay, impanation thus envisions a form of loving relation in which communicants commingle with God and one another without assimilation or loss of particularity.

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The additive logic of information materializes in Duane's series in the way the goddess multiplies herself to initiate pleasurable relations with the human characters.

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In the way that these encounters in turn intensify the close bonds that the protagonists share while preserving the distinctions between them.

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And in the way that food and drink serve as reminders of this love and intimacy. The door into sunset expands on this notion and its conclusion with a seven-way wedding between Harrowis, Freelorn, Cinboro, the Fire Elemental Sunspark, the resurrected Dragon Hasai, Queen Fgan of Darthan, and her husband, in which they all vow

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to do right by one another as the goddess would were she marrying in, which of course she was.

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Before partaking of sacral wine. While this latter instance is the only depiction in the series of an official religious sacrament in which the act of drinking signifies a good relation with the goddess as among and within the loving relationships of her creation.

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Instances of eating and drinking elsewhere in this series serve as articulations of this relationship that exists on the sacramental threshold between every day life and religious observance.

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Terrace's own encounter with the goddess at the end is mediated by a shared cup of bright wood white, a wine significant to Harris's homeland.

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Later, under the influence of the soul flight drug that the goddess gives him to help him unlock his fire.

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Here was perceives within the wine the cries of ecstatic agony uttered by the vines as their burden was ripped from them.

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And the silver touch of rain. He caught the languorous thoughts of one of the young girls who had helped to press out the vintage.

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And he felt how it had been for her the night before under the pomegranate trees with her lover.

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The tangled vivid selfhoods of bees and ventures and young girls flowed down his throat like cinnamon fire and left an aftertaste like a summer dawn.

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For heroists, the simple act of drinking a cup of brightwood white is revealed to be a sacramental act in which he comes into profound contact with other lives, including on human ones.

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This revelation embodies with Tolkien identifies as the sacramental role of recovery in fantasy.

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Insofar as it involves seeing things as things apart from ourselves. So it occurs via fantastical means.

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The realization is ultimately a mundane one regarding the interconnectedness of all life. The sacredness of wine in every even in every day context.

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Is further underscored by the events of the Leven Gad. In which Leary, the bouncer at a tavern, saves heroists from the shadow by smashing a bottle of wine.

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Which flaming like sunlight made molten, splashed and sprayed everywhere. In the flare of liquid light, the darkness's limbs flailed out and it went down like so many dropped rocks, sprawling crooked and limp on the slaty floor.

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Drinking wine via the ceremonial object of the lover's cup. Is also the means by which lovers in the middle kingdoms pay homage to their love for each other and the goddess made manifest in and through that love.

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In the door into fire, the cups roll in daily life is established as follows. It was the goddess's cup.

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The cup poured for her at each meal to remind those who ate that all set before them was one way or another the product of her love.

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As were the people with whom they ate. When the meal was done, if there were lovers there, the youngest of them would drain the cup together in her name.

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If one was alone, one said the blessing for the sundered and drank it in his own name and the name of his lover, wherever that one might be.



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The Lover's Cup features in most scenes featuring Herois and Freel, and eventually their 5 other spouses.

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Serving as a reminder to the reader as well as the characters themselves of the goddess's presence within and mediation through the love between them.

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In both name and function. The lovers cup invites comparison. To the loving cup used at love feasts within the Methodist Christian tradition.

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Both theologically co-expensive with and liturgically distinct from the official sacrament of the Eucharistic feast.

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The love feast can be read as an example of what Rachel Muir's and Rhiann and Grant have termed threshold practices.

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That is practices that are theoretically and institutionally neither church nor not church. The use of threshold here implies the limitality of such practices, the point at which worship crosses over into the work of everyday life and vice versa.

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But importantly, for an account of quasi Eucharistic practices especially, also etymologically evokes the thrashing floor, a space where the theological values of a community are thrashed out like wheat and constituted via everyday encounters.

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Instituted by Methodism's founders, Charles and John Wesley in the eighteenth century, Love feasts were thought at the time to be a revival of the early church practice of the Agape.

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Which Frank Baker characterizes as a common meal symbolizing the union of Christians with their Lord and with each other.

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Central to the Methodist reimagining of this practice was the loving cup. A 2 handled mug pass around from hand to hand, from which participants share a drink of what initially would have been wine and later as the practice has evolved, and eventually it was switched out for water or tea.

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Although the love feast is not a substitute for the Eucharist, it shares many of its theological concerns.

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From the standpoint of bodily theology, the passing of the loving cup provokes a meditation on what it means to share in the body of Christ as made up of a gathering of bodies that exist in relation to each other.

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As a quasi liturgical object designed for the sharing of drink. The loving cup mediates profoundly intimate physical contact that crosses bodily boundaries between participants as it passes between lips.

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Signifying participants unity in partaking of the meal. While maintaining the difference that enables their loving interrelation.

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And transforming the loving cup into the lovers cup. Dwayne explicitly eroticizes this quasi liturgical object and by extension names desire in all its unpredictability and all its forms, both as a central part of religious observance and as a crucial sight at which characters in the series turn from theological reflection to engagement with each other in the world.

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Sitting afford the line between religious observer and everyday life, the cup is a ritual means of acknowledging the presence of the goddess in the hospitality of the meal table.

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The community and common labor of all those present. And the intimacy of those joined in erotic and romantic love.

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It also represents for the romantically unattached a Messianic hope for the goddess's love express as erotic longing.

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As they call on the loved who will be to await their coming when they drink of the cup. Here, not only are queer desire and sexualities named as revelatory incarnations of the goddess's love.

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But hospitality itself is reframed as a complex and multi-directional flow of love, desire, and care oriented labor.

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Importantly, the Lover's Cup status, status as a threshold object, both liturgical and mundane in function.

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Would seem to imply that the Eucharistic theology of the Tale of the 5 is a liberated from the forces that normally regulate the flow of spiritual material and sexual goods.

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In the primary world.

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However, the queer utopianism and radical Eucharistic theology potentially suggested by the Tale of the Fives world building.

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Make for strange bedfellows with its narrative. Which is in large part concerned with restoring Freelorne to his hereditary position as King of Ireland.

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Nearly every principal character in the series claims noble lineage to an extent that jars with the non-hierarchical communion suggested by the series Eucharistic Most egregiously, the entire plot of the landlady concerns Cinboro's quest to restore her family name and maintain her landholdings.

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Leading assigned the incoherent of a world as sexually open as the middle kingdoms. Where lineage inheritance and familial structure should therefore be far messier matters than depicted.

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Being ruled by hereditary monarchies and preoccupied with noble lineages. It is especially strange that the system of governance appears to be divinely sanctioned.

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Not only is Freelorn personally invested in winning back the throne from his illegitimate half brother, Silmont.

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His ascent is crucial for maintaining the magical royal bindings forged from the alliance between Darth and Arland that keep the shadow at bay.

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In the door into shadow, the stakes of installing free lawn as king become apparent when the bindings come under direct threat.

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The text makes clear that the end of the royal bindings was unthinkable. Such a calamity would turn the shadow loose in the kingdoms as it hadn't been loose in centuries.

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The goddesses struggle is thus yoked to freelance quest for the throne. And Arlene Commoner remarks to Freeloren, travelling through the Arlene countryside in disguise, that the young king is an instrument of the goddess, a tool of hers.

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And that's such a ones to be pitied, poor thing. Similarly, when advising Free Lauren on the responsibilities of rule, Fskin declares that even if I do die, the goddess who gave me this responsibility will hold me responsible still.

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That hereditary monarchs are positioned by the narrative, especially ordained instruments of the goddess's will.

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And that moreover they are to be pitied for this responsibility. It's an odd recapitulation of the divine right of kings.

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And a rather galling reframing of the real power monarchs wield. Where the Eucharistic threshold practices commonplace in the Middle Kingdoms hint at a dissolution of institutional forces that regulate the distribution of spiritual material and sexual goods.

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Monarchy rears its head as yet another regulating body in the market of souls.

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It would be tempting to read this facet of the series as merely in conflict. With its otherwise egalitarian, queer world building and theological imagination.

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Yeah, I contend that when the tail of the fire is fascination with monarchic rule is examined alongside its Eucharistic imaginary via Jasper K.

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Poor's critique of homo nationalism. A different and more complicated picture emerges. As theorized by poor, homo nationalism is the process by which aspects of homosexuality have come within the purview of normative patriotism.

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Incorporating aspects of queer subjectivity into the body of the normalized nation, often to legitimize military and imperial incursions into non-Western territories by Western states.

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We can see this process literalized in the way that the queer Eucharistic motif of impanation extends to the ritual involved in maintaining the royal bindings.

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As Freeln and Evans spill their blood upon the earth and declare themselves as embodiments of the lands of Arland and Darthen respectively.

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Simba hears their chanting as the goddess speaking to herself. One lover speaking to the other in solemn celebration of their eternal relationship.

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Here, Freelorn and Evans blood also becomes the land, while they in turn also become the goddess speaking to the land and to herself.

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The commingling of bodies that accompanies communion with her here extending to the national body.

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This motif continues in the door into sunset when Freelorn increasingly perceives a mystical connection between himself and the landscape of Ireland.

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Leading to an understanding of kingship as the sense that your flesh, that your fleshly body, and that earthy body were the same.

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And that earthy body and the goddesses were the same. That you were her lover.

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And the land's lover too. What seems to materialize here is a form of erotic religious nationalism.

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We're erotic desire and religious devotion translate into erotic fidelity to the nation state.

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This sense of religious homo nationalism becomes more disquieting when it is directed against the other race of the lotta who are more commonly referred to as the Reavers throughout the series.

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The lotta are first properly introduced in the door into shadow as a faceless horde enlisted by the shadow to pillage the lands of the middle kingdoms.

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They're a curious construction of the text in that while they don't cleanly map on to Ebony Elizabeth Thomas's theorization of the Dark Other, the racialized monster inhabiting the margins of Western fantasy.

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They share some points of commonality. Descriptions of them tend to foreground their difference and their seeming primitivism.

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They are a nomadic tribal people whose language was utterly different from any spoken in the kingdoms and who wore no trues or breeches but a strange long undivided sh shin length garment.

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Wielding crude curved swords in rude sheaths. These would seem to hearken to a racialized, location of non-Western cultures.

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In contrast, the Middle Kingdom's medieval European inflected one, similar to the depictions of barbarian cultures that Helen Young critiques in Robert E.

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Howard's Conan series. Yeah, the door into sunset conspicuously takes pains to describe their fair hair and pale faces.

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They are objects of fear and loathing. Initially appearing as a threat to the stability of the Middle Kingdom's clear utopia.

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We are told that historically there had never been much use in talking to revers and that their constant raids on the farms and wheat fields of the kingdoms means that it was rare.



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To know anyone from the South who did not hate them with the same resigned and impersonal hatred, one usually resigned for plague or root belt.

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Following the racial counter reading strategy proposed by Thomas of reading literary and cultural texts from the perspective of the monster.

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We may ask how the Reavers figure into the sacred banquet of the goddess. Whether the goods she proffers also extend to these strangers at the gates and whether the secondary world of the texts can in turn recognize the goddess's grace within and among them fully and not just fleetingly.

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The series move to rehabilitate these characters beginning in the door into sunset, prolongs these questions more than it resolves them.

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A diplomatic meeting with a lot of chieftain reveals to Freelorne that the Lotto raids were due to hunger.

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He demands a free lawn. What gives you right to keep all the good for yourselves, to shut us out forever?

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Our beasts have little. Our children die. Here the grass is green and the sun is warm. So why must we die and you live?

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That the lotta are kept in poverty and starvation, while in the rest of the series expressions of the goddess's love abound with images of consumption in abundance and plenty is conspicuous.

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Well, this encounter does result in Freelorán granting the Lotta a more fertile plot of land within Ireland's borders subtle.

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This is done only in exchange for their tacit support of his bid for the Arlene Crown.

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The text does not linger on this exchange much further. And when it does come up, it is in terms that preserve the presumed innocence of the kingdoms, their rulers, and their inhabitants.

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When a party of Lotta turn up to the royal wedding at the novel's conclusion, Freelorn chalks up their past cultural and racial animosities to the fact that we didn't know any better.

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Such a pat dismissal of past injustices. Coupled with the fact that this new arrangement positions Arland as a paternalistic benefactor instructing the primitive Lada and proper agricultural techniques.

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Preserves hierarchies of power between the 2 cultures. In this way, it echoes the self-congratulatory message of inclusion that Tonstat identifies within many non-homophobic liberal Christian institutions.

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One that does not humble itself before the grace of God as the stranger at the gates. But instead seeks to be left as the good in our own goodness.

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As those mediating the goods we already enjoy to those we identify as others. With the librarian set to center around Freelorn embarking on a quest with a lot of ally, the full story of the Middle Kingdom's relationship with the latter is yet to be told.

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You have the one that already exists. Tells of a queer theological community unwilling or unable to part with a sense of its own supremacy and privileged access to the divine.

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Or with the national bodies that regulate that access. And I'm coming up, on time now, so I'll just be very quick.

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And wrapping this up. By contrast with all of this. Tomstad argues for a queer theology in which the failure rather than the success of the church is the means of its symbolic pointing toward the body of Christ that lies outside the walls in whomever the church understands as its others.

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That the theology of the Middle Kingdoms occupies a space of bodily chaos that can break primary world codes of gender, desire, and identity, but not those of monarchy and nation.

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Indicates that fantasies queer theological potential exists in fraught relation to what Young has identified as the habits of whiteness and troubled histories of racialization in the genre.

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With this in mind, queer theologians may approach fantasy both as an object of critique.

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And as the grounds on which to continue to seek to tell a different story about Christianity. One in which the distribution of the goods of the body of Christ is not the sole domain of kings and nobles.

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In which the church bears witness to its failure and humbles itself in the face of its others. And which stewardship of the goods of creation.

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Is articulated in terms other than blood and soil. And I'll end there for, for today.

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Thank you. So much for that presentation. Now the floor is open for anyone with questions or comments if you don't want to turn on your mike you can write them up in the chat and then you'll, the floor is open for anyone with questions or comments.

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If you don't want to turn on your mic

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There were some comments during the presentation that you can check in in the chat and also in the Discord channel, Janet is asked if you could share the reference to the Vincent paper or book your reference at the beginning.

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Yeah, so, that reference comes from, a book by a lot of instance called Culture, Communion and Recovery.

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Tolkienian fairy story and religious exchange. And essentially what Vincent is arguing is that fantasy is particularly well positioned to kind of talk about the difficulties of cross religious dialogue or across religious communication.

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So there's an entire chapter where she talks about Tolkien's theorization of fairy story and how that connects to the Catholic literary tradition.

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But then she also, And the latter half of the book goes into a lot of detail about.

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The Jewish fantastic tradition. So she talks about Neil Gaiman and Lev Grossman's *The Magicians* series and other texts that kind of engage with Jewishness and particularly Jewishness in dialogue with fantasy as constructed, within a very Christian paradigm.

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So really, really highly recommend that book.

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Thank you. I'm not sure how I missed that one. Sounds very interesting. I had thought at one time listening to you talking about the, sacramentalism of eating and drinking.

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Now it's not to the extent that it is in this Diane doing series, but have you read the monk and robot series by Becky Chambers.

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Okay.

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No, I haven't. It's on my radar. I've had a few people recommend it to me, but yeah, I'm really the title alone, Yeah.

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Oh yeah, yeah, it's got an interesting theological system. So yeah, that it'd be interesting to see what you have to say about that.

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I just wanted to kind of kind of branching off of that. I thought that it was really interesting how you mentioned that, Help a goddess in.

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Hmm.

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This series kind of finds herself in this. Sort of dualistic struggle with sort of seems at odds with the rest of the kind of kind of you know polymer is polytheistic sort of animist sort of way of being.

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And, I guess I just kind of wanted to kind of hear a little bit more about how fantasy kind of seems to find itself.

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For all of its kind of like radical, possibilities. It kind of seems to. Distill itself down again into you know a fight between light and dark or good and evil.

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I think I really need to read this series. It sounds right up my alley, but, But yeah, I guess I just wanted to hear a little bit more about how.

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Hmm.

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About how like this dualism kind of puts itself at odds in this series and maybe another series.

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Yeah, I mean, I think this series is a particularly interesting example of that because, there's a lot about it that I think is really, really radical and really doing things that, I think, is really, really radical and really doing things that I think, to be honest, I think more fantasy should take cues from, I really love the way that Dwayne

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endeavors to. Kind of establish a history of sexuality and a kind of, network of relations and relationship models that are very, very different from what we normally see in our world.

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And yet at the same time, she kind of falls back on this very dualistic, struggle as, you said.

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It is interesting because the, the mythology of the series when we get into the story of the goddess and the shadow and how the shadow came into being.

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It does kind of complicate that dualism. And, and yet at the end of the day, it is still the struggle of the goddess.

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Does strike me as in some sense as a quite conservative narrative, narrative setup. So yeah, that's it's really interesting.

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Yeah, I don't know that I have much more to say about that except that, I think this series is interesting for the ways that it's radical elements.

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Almost make, the way that it uncritically rehearses some other, common motifs with an epic fantasy all the more conspicuous.

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So I absolutely highly recommend it. It's a really, really enjoyable read. And I think Dwayne's pro style is very unique as well.

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She has a very lyrical way of describing magic that I find really, really enjoyable to read.

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Yeah, it sounds lovely. And yeah, what you were saying about like, it kind of, down to not just light against dark, but like order against chaos.

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Hmm.

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Hmm.

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Especially like that feels like such a, a dark but like order against chaos. Especially like that feels like such a, a marked contrast to the kind of, Kind of gentle, I guess, chaos of, all of these relationships and, you know, the goddess existing as in, you know, basically in and of everyone.

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I think that looks such an interesting, I think it's such an interesting duality and that's something that doesn't.

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That's something that's not, you know, It's not restricted obviously to just, like a Christianity.

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But to a lot of different religions. And so I think that's a really, Lots of for me to sort of think about in there, but.

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Yeah.

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Definitely. And I think another aspect of this, just in terms of this series context, Dwayne has written at length about how, her, conception of the kind of struggle against entropy is kind of drawn from her own, experiences of personal tragedy before she began writing the series.

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But then I think it's also relevant to note that as the series is being written, Diane Dwayne is living in New York City at the time and the AIDS pandemic is sort of in full force.

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As she's riding the door into shadow. And that's the novel in which the shadow really, really becomes a very present entity within the text so it's way i think yeah it is interesting she's playing with different ideas of chaos and this kind of pleasurable chaos versus entropy and death.

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And pleasure as a theological response to death. Even at a time when pleasure and death are quite front.

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And the popular understanding at least. Intertwined. Things.

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Within public sexual life.

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We're coming up on time. So if everyone agrees, we will end the discussion here, but feel free to keep talking on the Discord channel.

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And, enjoy the next presentation. Thank you.

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Thank you.

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Thanks, Taylor.

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Yeah, it was great.