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Alright folks, it's 10 o'clock. My time, which means I believe. We can go ahead and start here.

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Welcome everyone. Good morning, good afternoon, good whatever time it is in the time zone that you are in.

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We are here for our, session of the keynote speech with Taylor Driggers.

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Before we get started, I want to remind everyone the session is being recorded. I also just, I know that we've likely all heard the reminders, but I'm just gonna go through them one more time, which is that adhere to the community guidelines for the Mithopaic Society.

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Those can be found through the various links in your program. And if anyone is not adhering to those community standards and guidelines, then we do have the right to kick you out of the room and all of that.

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We won't tolerate any, any meanness. I will be giving Taylor a quick reminder of time as via close to the end of the session.

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But otherwise. We can go ahead and introduce Taylor. Taylor Driggers is the author of *Queering Faith and Fantasy Literature*, which was the finalist for the 2,023 Mithopaic award myth and fantasy studies.

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His research examines how fantasy literature can reimagine the relationship between Christian theology, queer desire, and gendered embodiment, especially via the theologies of failure.

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A member of the University of Glasgow Centre for Fantasy and the Fantastic as well as the AGRC funded research network, future voices of Scottish science fiction and fantasy.

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He's also interested in ways of curating fantasies queer histories beyond mere representation and inclusion.

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Taylor holds a PhD in English literature from the University of Glasgow. And with that being said, welcome Taylor.

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Go ahead and take it away.

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Thanks so much for that intro, Grace. And huge thanks to the organizers and to the Mythopaic Society for inviting me to deliver this keynote.

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I'm just going to share my screen just now.

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Okay, can everyone see that okay?

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Yep, you're good.

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Okay, excellent.

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So, my top today is called cruising fairy further notes on querying faith in fantasy literature.

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Picture it. South Carolina, 2,006. A gangly 15 year old hunches over a copy of JRR Tolkien's The 2 Towers in the high school cafeteria.

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Lingering over the passage in which Sam Wise contemplates the beauty and seeming age of Frodo's sleeping face.

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I love him, Sam murmurs to himself. He's like that, and sometimes it shines through somehow.

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But I love him, whether or no.

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Son of a Southern Baptist minister. The reader is well versed in the Christian underpinnings of Tolkien's fantastic imagination and his friendship with CS Lewis.

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But something else pulls at him in this passage. Some surplus of meaning that tugs at an inarticulable longing.

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Picture it. Oxford, 2012. A 21 year old hunches over his laptop in the upper reading room of the Bodleian Library, finishing off his final essay on Christian heroism in the Lord of the Rings and idols of the King for his semester abroad.

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His mind keeps wandering to 2 men who have reshaped his religious life over the past few months.

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The deep bonds he feels with each of them. One shared and acknowledged but never spoken aloud. The other a painfully unrequited projection.

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Start to blend in his mind with the image of Tennyson's Arthur. Himself possibly a projection of Tennyson's lingering grief for his male companion, Arthur Henry Hallam.

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These 2 images drawn from my own personal history are illustrative of how theology and queer reading have often converged in my reading of fantasy.

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They also bring to mind Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's location of an origin point for queer reading in the interpretive absorption of a child or adolescent whose sense of personal queerness may not yet have resolved into a sexual specificity.

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And who reads for important news about herself. This news can surprise us and offer us very different answers than the ones we are looking for.

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It can even reveal to us news that we were not even aware we were seeking and to which we might even initially be hostile.

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In my case, what outwardly presented itself as solely an interest in the theological affordances of fantasy turned out to be messily entangled with as yet unnamable homosexual desires and fixations.

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Fantasy became a medium in which these strange bedfellows Christian theology and queer desire occupied the same space of EU catastrophic longing for another world, without either of them quite resolving into the other.

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If queerness complicated my view of fantasy as reinvigorating Christian imagination, then Christianity for me also added a further wrinkle to Jazz Battus observation that queer fantasy emerges from a psychic lack that can only be recuperated through mythical discourse.

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And yet the question remains. How can we map the relations between these longings?

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In my debut monograph, queering faith and fantasy literature, I argue that fantasy affords sexually marginalized people the ability to creatively revision Christian theology in queer ways.

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Thanks to its fixation on strange bodies, it's longing for other worlds, and the ways in which both of these may reflect back on theological narratives of incarnation and salvation.

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This project emerged out of a particular sense of dissatisfaction with the limitations and exclusions then and to some extent still present within dominant scholarly attempts to map the relationship between fantasy writing, theology, and religious devotions.

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Over the monographs 4 chapters, I argue that by both confronting theology with its others, And by de-familiarizing the incarnation of Christ as other, Fantasy and acts a transformative theological activity comparable to the subversive play of gender on display within drag performance, in which dominant Christianity's horizons of possibility fail in the face of the Messianic, a new

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catastrophic encounter with the other. This is a project that continues to have relevance, not just for Christian trans and queer people, but also unfortunately for trans and queer people worldwide of all faiths and none who are affected by the continued legacies of Christian heteronormativity, the colonialism, genocide, censorship, denial of health care, reproductive control.

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familial exclusion, and other forms of violence. As Marcela Althouse Reed has argued, the question that animates much of queer life Will love prevail is at its core a theological one.

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Yeah, while I continue to couch this discussion in terms of Christian theology and practice for the aforementioned reasons and because it is the theological paradigm in which I locate my own religious formation.

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I find that I now come to the subject of querying faith in fantasy literature with a different set of questions and priorities than I did when I initially wrote the book.

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In this keynote, I aim to further develop the arguments I advance in querying faith. While also taking the opportunity to engage in critical self-reflection as part of a reconsideration of how fantasy can not only tell a more liberating story about Christian theology and queerness, but also help us map more ambivalent relationships between them.

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Especially as they intersect with other axes of privilege and oppression. Additionally, I want to consider what implications this exercise may have for analyzing queerness and fantasy beyond the confines of Christian theology, including reflection on how the frame of Christian theology may itself constrain or prematurely foreclose queer fantasy's own horizons of possibility.

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And I should also mention here at the outset that, in this talk, I will, be talking in quite explicit detail about specific sex acts.

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That are depicted in the text that I am discussing. This will be relevant for, reasons that will become clear, towards the end of the talk.

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But I wanted to sign post that upfront as well.

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I've titled this talk Cruising Fairy as a deliberate reference to Jose Esteban Munoz's influential work of queer theory, cruising utopia.

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Munoz characterizes clearness as that thing that lets us feel that this world is not enough.

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That indeed something is missing. Queerness is essentially about the rejection of a here and now, and an insistence on potentiality or concrete possibility for another world.

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There is something theological, something messianic. And indeed something fantastical in Munoz's positioning of queerness as a hope in a world to come.

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This characterization echoes both the eschatological contours of Tolkien's definition of U catastrophe, or the happy ending of fantasy associated for Tolkien with the hope of the resurrection and the second coming of Christ.

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As well as Batas's contention that fantasy releases a global queerness, a force like an enormous spell that can change human relations.

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Bodies, psyches, class positions, and gender expressions. Fantasy provides us with the ability to imagine otherwise, as Ursula K.

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Leguin puts it, seemingly by a denial or evasion of current reality, fantasists are trying to assert and explore a larger reality than we now allow ourselves.

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In the pages of fantasy, liberating and treacherous lands like Kayashante Wilson's wildeeps from his 2,015 novella the sorcerer of the wild deeps and Lguenes own Gethin from the left hand of darkness become names of possible worlds where gender, sexuality, and relational structures can be recast.

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If Munoz views the project of queerness as one of mapping the conditions for new ways of living and relating.

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Then following Batas, I would like to suggest that we might very well have the most success enacting them first within the field of fantasy, by expanding our sense of pleasure.

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Applying Munoz's utopian and world making view of queerness to a theorization of fantasy literature means looking beyond questions of representation and self recognition.

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For Munios to identify a utopian potential within queerness is also to refuse a self-congratulatory liberal queer politics that enshrines whatever LGBTQIA identities are currently legible within the dominant social frame as all there is to know about queerness.

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Such a politics mines the dominant order it purports to resist in recasting the current status quo, structured by the same conditions that many trans and queer people find unlivable as itself utopian.

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By contrast, deposit queer as the possibility of another world is also to suggest that we are not quite clear yet.

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That queerness, what we will really know as queerness does not yet exist. As Munoz suggests.

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Orienting queerness toward this eschatological horizon. And theological terms locating in queer cultures and sociality, an already not yet state of messianic anticipation.

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And genders a humility that staves off the ossifying effects of neoliberal ideology and the degradation of politics brought about by representations of queerness and popular culture.

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Munoz is here responding to the decades long process from at least the 19 seventys onward by which some LGBTQIA individuals came to be integrated into the dominant mainstream culture.

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As Jennifer Evans has recently noted, this adoption of a politics of visibility, legibility, and representation traded the radical oppositionality of a post-war queerness for a seat at the table.

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Resulting in some LGBTQIA people being taken up as models of a new civic ideal.

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While others have been marginalized as a challenge to the norms of respectability. It has, in other words, often sacrificed the drive to realize another world in favor of incorporating some into the present state of things.

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All of this suggests that if we are to continue to champion fantasy as participating in a transformative activity of queer world making.

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We must take care that queer scholarship of fantasy does not itself ossify into a mere practice of identity cataloging.

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Online publications, fandom platforms, social media outlets like TikTok, and publishing industry press releases proliferate lists of fantasy novels and short story anthologies that represent LGBTQIA identities, often accompanied by archive of our own style tags detailing what types of relationships or gender identities appear in text.

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In a recent conversation, my husband likened this practice to lapidoptery. The practice in which butterflies are pinned to a board and labeled for the purposes of collection, cataloging, and study.

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This is an exercise in which the vibrant desires, pleasures, longings, transformations, couplings, and uncouplings of queer lives and culture in motion are immobilized.

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Reduced to data points for marketing directors to exploit for profit, offering us not the promise of another world, But a meager sense of validity.

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There are no surprises to be had here. No thrill of unexpected pleasure or unlooked for encounters that shift the ground beneath our feet.

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No horizon of possibility yet to be realized. Just sanitized versions of ourselves repackaged and sold back to us.

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The danger of a marketized politics of representation carrying over into scholarship is epitomized by Stephen Kinnely's attempt to curate a canon of pre 2,000 LGBT fantasy.

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Which premises its inclusion of texts based on their mimetic representation of identity categories that exist within the 20 first century Anglophone primary world.

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And devises a coding system for labeling them accordingly. This methodological basis leads Keneally's study by his own admission to exclude texts whose depictions of gender and sexuality are more fantastical and speculative than strictly my medic.

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Or who secondary worlds themselves diverged so thoroughly from heteronorativity as for the characters sexualities or genders to have no clear primary world analog.

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Among these is Laurie Marx's children of the triad trilogy. Which Kennely states was excluded as its representations were considered to diverge so significantly from human experience that it could not be said to possess an LGBT main character in any meaningful understanding of the term.

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Yeah, a closer look at Mark's series shows that it is in fact deeply invested in a project of queer world making as outlined by Munoz.

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Centered around the lives of the Ares, a species of Androgenous winged creatures. The trilogy chronicles the struggles of a community called Triad to bridge the cultural divides between the Ares, the sea-dwelling Mer people, and the humanoid walkers.

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Oh while contending with the looming threat posed by the dominant and rapidly industrializing Walker society.

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The fragile but intimate bonds forged across species are necessary for maintaining the precarious existence of all life within the novels secondary world.

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But the mutual dependency between characters that this creates also extends to their sexual politics. Airy society is open and polyamorous by default, and characters sexual encounters from the pleasurable to the traumatic.

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Are one of the primary means by which the texts engage in their exploration of the opposing impulses between struggles for dominance and mutual cooperation.

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When Ares come of age, they are assigned a companion who is supposed to be as much parent as lover to study them through the transition year, instructing them in all areas of life, including sex.

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Meanwhile, the triad itself owes its existence to the love affair between Lianne, a walker, and Pilgrim, a Mer.

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And similar cross species relationships crop up throughout the series. Such as that between the airy martial artist Lorrille and the Walker which bet in the Moon Bane mage the series second volume.

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Thus, not only does Ay society already present itself as a queer other world. But the more surprising cross species bonds that occur over the trilogy also require constant negotiation of intimacies across bodily difference.

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Mark's presentation of such a radically alien world calls to mind Sammy Shock's observation that non-human and non-realist worlds defamiliarize social categories.

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Thereby demonstrating how the meaning and experience of disability, race, gender, and sexuality vary based on individual body minds as well as social and environmental contexts.

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The Triads home base is carefully constructed and situated to accommodate its inhabitants widely varying physiologies and normal habitats.

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Which becomes even more complex once the triad forms an alliance with the Earth, a society of large mammals from a neighboring continent.

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At 1 point, noticing an orph's difficulty in navigating the house, the area Dalan remarks, Some day will widen this doorway.

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To which the orph laughingly responds, some day. Someday you'll widen the house, yes?

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Contrary to Keneally's dogged insistence on Mimesis and LGBTQIA representation, it is precisely in its departures from primary world, human, gender, and sexuality that the children of the triad novels are able to gesture toward more expansive understandings of these categories.

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And prompt serious consideration of the possibilities as well as the difficulties of maintaining kinship bonds across difference. The triad is not a wholly successful utopia, but as Munales reminds us, this is not terribly surprising.

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Utopia can never be prescriptive and is always destined to fail. But within failure, we can locate a kernel of potentiality.

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The triad embodies this potentiality, consisting of people living in the here and now of the novel's setting, but continually striving to manifest the promise of a different world in the same way that primary world queer communities enact performative gestures of fantasy.

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In Batas's analysis, for instance, collective actions like the kissings and dions of act up and queer nation function like a magic spell.

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At once articulating a longing for pleasure curtailed by the systemic homophobia and government inaction in the face of AIDS.

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While also heralding the possibility of something different. By untethering embodied existence from the bounded categories of the human and recasting it as something altogether stranger.

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Marx is able to chart relationships to embodiment, including how we understand our bodies in relation to others, that are both surprising and revealing.

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As bad as notes, fantasy makes us monsters to ourselves. Providing us with a unique arena for the corporealization of our own bodily daydreams, extensions, and gender prostheses.

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In a rendering gender and sexuality strange through the strategies of fantasy, we can humble ourselves to what is still strange and unfamiliar within ourselves and to what more might be possible.

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Despite Munios's insistence on the malleability and inevitable failure of Utopia, however, The utopian impulse is not the only thing fantasy offers to either queer reading or theology.

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While Batas does consider fantasy to be a critically utopian genre, They equally stress that fantasy's magical grammars are often oriented around the work of mourning.

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Rather than suggesting a solution to melancholia, they suggest. Fantasy becomes part of the negotiation of the space between lack and hope.

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Engendering a queer mode of life that both allows for and celebrates. Gaps, dissonances, and imperfections in the prima materia of survival.

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I speak frequently in my work of you catastrophe and of liberation. But this is crucially not to be mistaken for what Tolkien characterizes as the flight of the deserter, in which the escape into fantasy crosses over into a refusal to acknowledge the present complications of the primary world.

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Cruising does not just suggest traversing and mapping the contours of a space. It is also a metaphor, albeit one that Munez is careful not to simplistically valorize.

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For clandestine promiscuous sexual activity, often occurring in the midst of queer marginalization.

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To cruise fairly then is also to be attentive to the fleshy encounters the sidelong glances and gestures the complex interchange of designers fulfilled and frustrated, pleasures given and denied.

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The overflow and exchange of substances that linger that we may encounter there as well as in our own world.

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As talking, taking cues from the Victorian fantasist George McDonald contends. The road to Fairyland is not the road to heaven.

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Nor even to hell. It is instead a third space. A perilous realm both familiar and alien.

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Well, I have previously given attention to fantasy's potential to place queerness and theology in conversation in a positively transformative and even liberative sense.

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I want to turn now toward ways it can map more ambivalent relationships between sexual and religious desires.

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And I'll demonstrate this through Chas Branchley's novel *Tower of the King's Daughter*.



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Set in a secondary world closely modeled after Palestine and surrounding lands at the time of the Crusades, Tower of the King's daughter chronicles the homoerotic bond that emerges when Maron, a lowly monk in a militaristic religious order occupying the land of Utemare.

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Comes into the service of the night ransomer, Sir Anton Descrave as his squire.

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The intensity of this relationship is complicated not only by the fact that homosexuality is prohibited by the order to which both men belong.

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But also by Maron's growing horror at his complicity in the atrocities wrought by the orders religious authority in the land.

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And the shift in his loyalties that follows from this. Both the potency and fraughtness of the bond between knight and squire are signified by a wound in Maron's arm that Sir Anton gives him in a practice duel.

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And it is this initial act of wounding that initiates Meron's status as Anton Squire and seems to seal the bond between them both formal and erotic.

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Meron even goes so far at 1 point as to reflect that the wound seems to be a sign from the god or perhaps from Sir Anton.

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A brand of ownership that he could mar but not mend. Over the course of the novel, this wound repeatedly reopens and festers as Maron experiences multiple ethical crises that cause him to cyclically question, transgress, and often after an infused penance, recapitulate his vows of fidelity to God, Sir Anton and the Church.

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Meron spends much of the novel trapped between allegiances, choosing to free an indigenous Qatari family condemned for heresy and at another point conversely alerting Sir Anton to a sneak attack by nomadic Shirai warriors on the castle of Rock Durand Song, resulting in the slaughter of countless Shirai and Qatari.

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The physical pain, swelling, and oozing of Meron's wound, aggravated by Meron's military training as well as the tasks of fleshly mortification he must perform as penance for his transgressions against the church.

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Their witness to the untenability of this position. The repeatedly ripped flesh of Maron's arm signals a rupture in his sworn bodily service to the church.

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Thatas has additionally read Maron's wound as a mark of queerness, a kind of organic lack that cannot be healed, as well as a permeable space, perhaps even a genital space.

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This mark then is a stigma in more than one sense. It marks Maron as other, but more specifically cement him as a viable and penetrated male body in a way that closely aligns, aligns his wounds with the wounds of Christ, which remain unhealed even after the resurrection.

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For many medieval saints and mystics, such as Catherine of Siena, whose oral fixation on the spear wound and cry's side signifies a heightened version of the bodily intimacy suggested by the Eucharist.

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The stigmata of Christ exist as a site of pleasure and spiritual communion as well as of suffering and violation.

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And are often represented in a manner that evokes a vulva, thus ambiguously sex in Christ's body.

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Lin, Marie Tonstad has cautioned against too readily adopting what she terms womb, wound, in imagery as a redemptively queer emblem of the incarnation.

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Arguing that it prematurely installs suffering and violence into sexuality in a way that poses particular problems for women and other gender marginalized subjects.

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However, when approached more ambivalently in the context of Brentley's novel, it becomes a potent way of considering the relationships between religious marginalization and violence.

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Relationships to religious authority and sexual pleasure.

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In Batter's reading, Meron's wound doubles as an uncanny significance of Anton's own sense of lack, which he inscribes upon Meron.

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Anton's position within the Knights ransomers places him both at the center and at the margins of this religious institution.

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Commanding authority even as his homosexuality remains an open secret among the other knights.

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A stigma that also extends to Maron as his squire, even long before the 2 are sexually intimate in actuality.

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That is, that is argues that in the scene when the 2 men finally do have sex in which Maron has to patiently coach Anton through carefully navigating around his wounded arm.

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The wound becomes a fetish object. He is able to control and produce pleasure through his wound precisely because his body has been marred or damaged in a specific way.

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Merlon effectively transforms his own physical lack. The market of his failure as a squire and the signifier of his incompleteness or openness into an erotogenic zone.

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Doubly penetrated by the night, first in the training duel and later in this scene of pleasure.

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Merlon asserts the control that comes from submission from allowing oneself to be viable in the act of bottoming.

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This would seem to be underscored by the lightly kinky dynamic that emerges in Maron and Anton's verbal exchanges in this scene.

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With Anton asking Maron not to call him sir in the bedroom, to which Maron replies, No, sir, I like it.

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Again, verbally as well as physically, Meron assumes a position that simultaneously appears to mime the formalized power dynamic between himself and the night, while also subverting it in terms of who is controlling the scene.

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Yeah, while I concur with Batas reading of Meron's sexual agency in this moment, I don't think that's all that's happening here.

01:25:56.000 --> 01:26:08.000

One crucial question remains. Just to whom or what is Meron choosing to submit?

01:26:08.000 --> 01:26:21.000

On multiple occasions throughout the novel, Meron associates Sir Anton with God. Or at the very least with a force that directs his attentions to the God, especially at daily prayers.

01:26:21.000 --> 01:26:29.000

We are told that Sir Anton's voice was a guide, drawing his attention back to the God each time it threatened to wander.

01:26:29.000 --> 01:26:42.000

Anton's position within the hierarchy of the order, and specifically his position of power over Meron, already aligns him with the with the authority of God, which Meron is duty-bound to obey.

01:26:42.000 --> 01:26:59.000

But Marilyn's desire for Anton carries the sense of devotion even beyond its official significance, such that Meron, who could school his mind to the words and his mind's eye to the God most of the time when he prayed with Sir Anton.

01:26:59.000 --> 01:27:07.000

Could do nothing like it when Fra Piette, Meron's immediate superior as a monk, said the prayers.

01:27:07.000 --> 01:27:22.000

This association to Sir Anton and devotion to God culminates when the bell for midnight prayers rings in the middle of their lovemaking and the 2 men recite the prayers while Anton is still inside Maron.

01:27:22.000 --> 01:27:32.000

Prayers mumbled, almost whispered like love talk to each other. Like those times when no matter what is said, it's the whispering that counts.

01:27:32.000 --> 01:27:39.000

As provocative and moving as this passage is. It's tempting to grasp for a redemptive reading of it.

01:27:39.000 --> 01:27:49.000

To claim that in re-situating prayer in the context of queer lovemaking, the text reclaims expressions of devotion to a liberating queer project.

01:27:49.000 --> 01:27:56.000

But liberating for whom? Certainly not the Sh the Sharai and Qatari peoples.

01:27:56.000 --> 01:28:03.000

Whose lands Meron and Anton's people have occupied by force in the name of the God they serve.

01:28:03.000 --> 01:28:10.000

The novel takes pains to continually remind the reader that Marons and Anton's bodies are not their own.

01:28:10.000 --> 01:28:19.000

In the religious and political imaginary of their culture, they are arms of the church militant, sworn to carry out its will.

01:28:19.000 --> 01:28:26.000

While Anton acknowledges at several points that the deeds he is required to do in service to the church are terrible.

01:28:26.000 --> 01:28:33.000

He decidedly does not share Merron's misgivings about the rightness of fulfilling his duty.

01:28:33.000 --> 01:28:44.000

Along with his fellow knights for instance, he is whipped into a genocidal fervor at Marshal Fulke's invective sermons against the apostate territory of Surayon.

01:28:44.000 --> 01:28:53.000

Thus, while Anton's queerness makes him not entirely reducible to the body politic for which he serves in part as a representative.

01:28:53.000 --> 01:29:10.000

The Nor is he fully separable from it. The insertion of queer desire into a religious context defined by settler occupation and militant nationalism, thus does not by default transform or redeem these structures of power.

01:29:10.000 --> 01:29:16.000

It can even mime and collude with them in ways that confuse and bewilder young Meron.

01:29:16.000 --> 01:29:23.000

Maron's relationship with the knight, as with the church, proves untenable by the novel's conclusion.

01:29:23.000 --> 01:29:33.000

In which he must betray Sir Anton yet again by helping his friends, fugitives from Surrey, to escape into the desert.

01:29:33.000 --> 01:29:51.000

The narrative of Tower of the King's daughter can caution those of us seeking to queer faith in fantasy literature against too easily reducing the combination of design and devotion to a formula that always produces a radical ethics or politics as its end product.

01:29:51.000 --> 01:30:06.000

On the contrary, Brentley's novel invites us to consider the ways in which the collusion of religious and sexual desires can express an implicit erotic fidelity to discourses of racial supremacy and the nation-state.

01:30:06.000 --> 01:30:16.000

For instance, in the demonization of queernesses that do not map on to dominant standards of legibility, political expediency, or respectability.

01:30:16.000 --> 01:30:24.000

And in the pink washing of genocidal and colonial campaigns in the name of Western liberal gay rights.

01:30:24.000 --> 01:30:38.000

As Melissa Sanders has already noted in the context of early modern English devotional poetry, the profession of Christian faith hasn't many times implicitly been a way of asserting racial boundaries.

01:30:38.000 --> 01:30:59.000

Conceptually, as she puts it, attention to historical moments when race, always a promiscuous construct, was explicitly intertwined with religion, can be instrumental in allowing us to recognize past and present racisms that cannot be pinned to prejudice against particular phenotypes.

01:30:59.000 --> 01:31:15.000

And Marons and Anton's case, the shape and direction of their queer desires are fundamentally constituted by the religious, nationalist, and militaristic social sphere they inhabit, even as they break with their moral prohibitions.

01:31:15.000 --> 01:31:27.000

That's queerness itself, especially as it is articulated within Western contexts shaped by Christianity must also be an object of intersectional critique.



01:31:27.000 --> 01:31:47.000

Notably, Evans criticism of the liberal politics of representation that I discussed earlier in this talk highlights the ways in which its gains came on the backs of the stratifications of race, class, and gender presentation that continue to stigmatize non-normative kinship to this day.

01:31:47.000 --> 01:31:54.000

Similarly, just Beer Poor has resisted a deterministic view of queerness as necessarily progressive.

01:31:54.000 --> 01:32:15.000

By instead theorizing it as a loose assemblage of desires, practices, aesthetics, sensations, and modes of life that accounts for the messy ways in which queer desire remains inseparably and unpredictably in meshed with in other systems of identification, liberation, and power.

01:32:15.000 --> 01:32:26.000

If our readings of fantasy are to stage provocative dialogues between theology and queerness, as I have proposed throughout my work that they have the potential to do.

01:32:26.000 --> 01:32:35.000

Then they must contend with the variety of shapes these can take. Not simply the ones whose implications we find agreeable.

01:32:35.000 --> 01:32:36.000

2 min warning Taylor.

01:32:36.000 --> 01:32:54.000

They must Okay, thank you. I'm just wrapping up. They must crucially ask how the wounds we bear from the traditions that form us affect more than just ourselves, and how we might learn to cast a different spell from within them.

01:32:54.000 --> 01:33:20.000

And I'm going to quickly jump over this concluding bit here essentially What I what I want to stress in this talk is that while fantasy, carries the potential to imagine other worlds in a way that links it to both theology and to queerness.

01:33:20.000 --> 01:33:35.000

We have to do more than just imagine. We also have to situate those. Attempts to realize another world within queer life as it is already being lived all around us.

01:33:35.000 --> 01:33:50.000

And in closing this talk, I want to provide one more brief illustration from the pages of fantasy that I think models how queer readers can respond to fantasies critically utopian potential.

01:33:50.000 --> 01:34:04.000

And Laurie Marks is fire logic, Emil, a middle-aged warrior and scholar, involved in a resistance movement opposing the colonial occupation of the land of Shaftal by the militaristic Sianites.

01:34:04.000 --> 01:34:10.000

Forms an unlikely bond with metric, a young seer and half seenite child of the occupation.

01:34:10.000 --> 01:34:18.000

Both fire mages with powers of intuition and insight, the 2 men are drawn to each other by shared prophetic dreams.

01:34:18.000 --> 01:34:29.000

When metric deserts the occupying Seanite army. Bringing with him a trove of books and manuscripts salvaged from the destroyed library at the University of Keysha.

01:34:29.000 --> 01:34:45.000

In the world of the novel when 2 firebloods share a dream it is said their fates are linked forever As Emil pouring over the salvaged texts, resolves to commit his life to building a new library for Shaftal.

01:34:45.000 --> 01:34:53.000

And he and Medric bond over their shared love of Chaftali literature. Metric shares yet another fission.

01:34:53.000 --> 01:35:00.000

Sometimes this summer I have envisioned myself in another place. A stone cottage in a lonely land.

01:35:00.000 --> 01:35:06.000

With sleet tapping on the shutters and a warm fire burning. And I'm not alone there.

01:35:06.000 --> 01:35:14.000

I ask a question and you come and sit down next to me. You tell me how the past became the present.

01:35:14.000 --> 01:35:22.000

You get a book down from the shelf and read it to me. Hearing of this vision, Emil is overcome with desire.

01:35:22.000 --> 01:35:30.000

And in a bed that was made of as much book as blanket, he made love to the son of an enemy.

01:35:30.000 --> 01:35:40.000

In this scene, Mark's interweaving of literary discourse, visionary prophecy, and desire dramatizes the role of reading in queer world making.

01:35:40.000 --> 01:35:46.000

Though set in a world in which families are sprawling polyamorous units, and romantic affection seems primarily reserved for same sex pairings.

01:35:46.000 --> 01:36:01.000

This encounter between Emil and Medric still sees them transgressing boundaries of nation, race, and culture, with a view toward forging an alternate path for the war-torn shaftal.

01:36:01.000 --> 01:36:08.000

Mutual reading and shared visions become sites at which their lives are inextricably intertwined with one another.

01:36:08.000 --> 01:36:21.000

The intimacy shared between them is thus ethical as well as sexual. Mapping the connections between their desire for each other and the long labor of realizing a new world toward which this desire calls them.

01:36:21.000 --> 01:36:29.000

Echoing Munoz's call for a queer futurity that navigates between desire for both larger semi-obstractions.

01:36:29.000 --> 01:36:39.000

Such as a better world or freedom, but also more immediately, better relations within the social that include better sex and more pleasure.

01:36:39.000 --> 01:36:48.000

Metric's vision of reading by the fire is crucially not a final destination for the world he and Emil are trying to realize, however.

01:36:48.000 --> 01:36:55.000

This is no cottage core ideal, but a ground for forging a new relation to past and present.

01:36:55.000 --> 01:37:01.000

Likewise, the other worlds of fantasy are not ends in and of themselves for queer readers.

01:37:01.000 --> 01:37:13.000

But if we are willing to traverse them curiously and read promiscuously, We might just find new ways of being queer and of making queer worlds within our own.

01:37:13.000 --> 01:37:23.000

Thank you.

01:37:23.000 --> 01:37:39.000

Thank you so much for that, Taylor. We do have a few minutes that are available if folks have any questions that they'd like to ask.

01:37:39.000 --> 01:37:54.000

I can see that in the chat everyone is clapping and Same thing, really excellent thought-provoking.

01:37:54.000 --> 01:38:06.000

I have to say I Just I picked up so many things during your talk, but the last thing that just really resonated with me was the idea of reading promiscuously and I love that.

01:38:06.000 --> 01:38:07.000

Hmm.

01:38:07.000 --> 01:38:12.000

I'm adopting that. That's that's part of my my daily lingo now.

01:38:12.000 --> 01:38:19.000

I'm glad. Yeah, I think, yeah, I think what fantasy affords us.

01:38:19.000 --> 01:38:45.000

Is this ability to not have these imagines of another world be set in stone this is something that I talk about a little bit in in querying faith as in fantasy literature as well is is that this notion that fantasy Is this space that allows us to seriously consider ways we might reconfigure gender and sexuality and and religion but it's also a space of play.

01:38:45.000 --> 01:39:00.000

It's a space where we can experiment with what these things might look like as well. We can allow those worlds to fail.

01:39:00.000 --> 01:39:19.000

We can give them space to, be incomplete. And I think that's really powerful. I think that's something that I find really valuable in fantasy.

01:39:19.000 --> 01:39:20.000

Go ahead then.

01:39:20.000 --> 01:39:32.000

I have 2 questions. This talk was.

01:39:32.000 --> 01:39:33.000

Yes.

01:39:33.000 --> 01:39:39.000

An expansion or. A corollary to your book, right? The book is sort of It's expensive on, you know, that I can see.

01:39:39.000 --> 01:39:42.000

Yeah.

01:39:42.000 --> 01:39:43.000

Cause it's, I guess it's academic, it's roughly. Is this talk available somewhere?

01:39:43.000 --> 01:39:48.000

Have you have you published it separately or similar talk?

01:39:48.000 --> 01:40:00.000

I have not published the talk separately, but I'm hoping to be able to to publish it in myth floor as part of the proceedings of the conference.

01:40:00.000 --> 01:40:01.000

Okay. Yeah, yeah.

01:40:01.000 --> 01:40:06.000

So, to stay tuned. This is very, very new work, but, it will be available at some point.

01:40:06.000 --> 01:40:17.000

Maybe you missed lore too or instead. Alright, second Meron's wound came during a, is it fencing practice with Sterrent on his fencing master?

01:40:17.000 --> 01:40:34.000

Yes. It's it's sort of a a training dual in which People are sort of paired up with opponents on a kind of impromptu basis.

01:40:34.000 --> 01:40:57.000

So this is. Essentially the the first time that Maron and Sir Anton are interacting with each other and in the novel it's a very detailed scene where they there is a lot of fixation on how they physically interact with each other in in this scene.

01:40:57.000 --> 01:41:05.000

So it's very important as an initiation of their relationship. But they haven't met before this time.

01:41:05.000 --> 01:41:16.000

It's only after wounding Maron that Sir Anton decides to take it, take him on as his squire.

01:41:16.000 --> 01:41:17.000

Yeah.

01:41:17.000 --> 01:41:18.000

It's possibly out of guilt. But it's also, due to, some intangible connection.

01:41:18.000 --> 01:41:21.000

These in share within the duel itself. Yeah.

01:41:21.000 --> 01:41:44.000

There's an attraction. There's some kind of attraction happening. So. I thought of and I haven't read it but just from way you described it Some it's also you said it incompleteness but also perhaps it's sort of incompetence.

01:41:44.000 --> 01:41:45.000

Hmm.

01:41:45.000 --> 01:41:50.000

I mean, in the sense of He's neophyte, he's not good. It's not good at at either his tasks or his relationships.

01:41:50.000 --> 01:41:51.000

Right. Yeah.

01:41:51.000 --> 01:41:55.000

So he's made a mistake that results in the wound.

01:41:55.000 --> 01:42:05.000

Well, and it's also Anton's failure as well because he wounds Meron, because he, allows his rage to overtake him within the scene.

01:42:05.000 --> 01:42:09.000



Okay.

01:42:09.000 --> 01:42:10.000

Okay.

01:42:10.000 --> 01:42:16.000

So it's it's it's a failure in both and again in the way that Batas reads it there is some lack within both that is mirrored in the other.

01:42:16.000 --> 01:42:17.000

There.

01:42:17.000 --> 01:42:20.000

Yeah, that's that's it. That's such a fascinating way to look at that.

01:42:20.000 --> 01:42:21.000

Thank you.

01:42:21.000 --> 01:42:23.000

Thank you.

01:42:23.000 --> 01:42:27.000

We only have about another moment or 2 here. So I do want to just highlight some good news for all of us that has been happening.

01:42:27.000 --> 01:42:42.000

In the chat. It's a few reminders that Taylor's book querying I'm going to botch the title now because it's not on my screen anymore.

01:42:42.000 --> 01:42:43.000

Literacy.

01:42:43.000 --> 01:43:00.000

Couring faith and fantasy. Thank you. It is available in several different formats, including an e-book for only about 20 US dollars.

01:43:00.000 --> 01:43:01.000

Yeah.

01:43:01.000 --> 01:43:04.000

It's Luke points out that the series that your book is part of has negotiated with the publisher to always publish a paperback edition a few years after the hardbacks are first published.

01:43:04.000 --> 01:43:05.000

So that is good news for everything.

01:43:05.000 --> 01:43:11.000

And that paper back is currently out. That, just came out, in August of 2023.

01:43:11.000 --> 01:43:12.000

Yes.

01:43:12.000 --> 01:43:22.000

So, yes, that's out now and there's a lot more affordable, still a little bit pricey, but definitely more affordable than the hardcover.

01:43:22.000 --> 01:43:23.000

Yes.

01:43:23.000 --> 01:43:36.000

Yes. And then Phillip also notes this video will be available on the Mythsoc Digital repository and Alicia points out that tentatively we're looking at spring of 2025 for the myth floor section.

01:43:36.000 --> 01:43:48.000

So be on the lookout for that. As well this video will be live long before that so Alright, with that said, we are at the end of our time.

01:43:48.000 --> 01:44:06.000

So if anyone has further questions for Taylor or wants to continue, with the discussion, take that over to the Discord channel for this talk and the conversations there will be able to be archived as well in a way that the chat here is not.

01:44:06.000 --> 01:44:07.000

So. Thank you. So much.

01:44:07.000 --> 01:44:13.000

Yeah, I'm just pop over to the discord now also looking forward to chatting if people want to chat.

01:44:13.000 --> 01:44:27.000

That is wonderful. Coming up next in this session in the zoom room is, minds bigger than yours, uncovering the gender blindness and the mass effect franchise.