The Bull, the Ledger, and the Throne

Economy, Business, War, and Geopolitics in Luis Herrera's Toro Blanco, Read Through the Governing Philosophy of the Book of Gabriel

A Doctoral Dissertation in Literary Theology and Comparative Hermeneutics

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Contents

Abstract

This dissertation advances a single, sustained argument: that the moral and political imagination of Luis Herrera's Toro Blanco is not, as a first reading might suppose, generated by its flamboyant narrator Samael, but by a small and easily overlooked interpolated text — the Book of Gabriel — which functions as the work's governing monolith, its hidden keystone, the legal code against which every subsequent scene is silently measured. Where Samael supplies the voice, Gabriel supplies the law; where Samael seduces, Gabriel adjudicates. I read the whole of Toro Blanco as a casebook assembled around this code, and I attend in particular to the way the work handles the seven *"hard"* categories of fallen human striving — economy, business, war, geopolitics, power, strength, and corruption — and the seven *"soft"* categories by which the text insists those strivings be redeemed — redemption, peace, prosperity, wholeness, mercy, humility, and truth. My thesis is that Toro Blanco refuses to let these two registers stand opposed. Its deepest and most heretical wager, dramatized through the figure of the white bull and ratified by the Book of Gabriel, is that the hand that condemns and the hand that saves are the same hand, and that economy, war, and empire are not the enemies of redemption and peace but the very furnace in which they are forged. The work is, in the end, an extended meditation on a single sentence from Gabriel: *"to fear God is to fear only God."* Everything else — markets, armies, thrones, and the men who covet them — is commentary.

I. Introduction: The Memoir, the Monolith, and the Method

Toro Blanco arrives in the world wearing a confession on its sleeve. Before a single line of narrative is permitted, the author's preface discloses that the work is *"only 61% original content,"* a syncretic weave of scripture, cited authorities, and acknowledged collaboration with machine intelligences the author names Claude, Aurelian, and Plex. This is an unusual way to open a sacred parody, and the unusualness is the point. A book that means to dismantle the idolatry of the written word begins by refusing to let its own writtenness pretend to purity. The reader is told, in effect, that what follows is a constructed object, a high-quality bootleg — the author's own simile is *"a high quality Pink Floyd concert from the seventies dutifully filmed on a personal camcorder"* — and that its truth, if it has any, will not be the truth of provenance but the truth of resonance. *"It's not so much from me as through me to you, the eager seeker."*

This prefatory honesty matters for the argument I wish to make, because it establishes from the outset that Toro Blanco is a work obsessed with the difference between a text and the authority behind a text. That obsession is the seed of everything. It is the obsession that will later indict Mammon, indict the war machine, indict the Roman Council of Nicaea, indict the Apostle Paul, and indict the modern believer who *"quotes you chapter and verse, quite literally sending you to hell with all authority."* And it is the obsession that finds its most concentrated, undiluted expression in the Book of Gabriel.

The narrator, Samael, presents himself in the opening chapter with a borrowed swagger that any reader of a certain rock-and-roll vintage will recognize at once: *"Truth be told I am a man of wealth, and taste. All that said… pleased to meet you; I hope you guess my Name."* The allusion to the Rolling Stones' *"Sympathy for the Devil"* is not decoration. It announces the book's central interpretive maneuver, which is to take the most maligned figure in the Western religious imagination and grant him the dignity of self-narration. Samael is not Milton's wounded titan nursing his pride, nor the cackling adversary of the medieval morality play. He is, by his own account, God's most faithful operative, the deep-cover agent whose eternal mission is to be hated for doing precisely what the Almighty requires. In the extraordinary dialogue of Chapter One, the Father commissions him in language that will govern everything that follows: *"You must pretend to lead the rebellion in heaven and on earth… You will be simultaneously feared, hated, admired and reviled… You must be steadfast. You must be strong."* The entire moral architecture of the book is laid down in that scene, and it is laid down as obedience, not rebellion.

But here is the difficulty the book wants us to feel. If the narrator is the Father of Lies, then his self-justifying memoir cannot be trusted; and if his self-justifying memoir cannot be trusted, then the reader has no firm ground from which to evaluate any of its claims about money, war, power, or God. Samael himself names this trap and springs it deliberately: *"if I were lying to you, why would I tell you that I might be? What con man tips his hand mid-swindle?"* The memoir, in other words, is engineered to produce what one might call epistemological vertigo. It is for precisely this reason that the Book of Gabriel is indispensable to any serious reading. Gabriel is the one voice in the work that does not belong to Samael, does not flatter the reader, does not perform, and does not wink. If Samael is the advocate, Gabriel is the statute he is arguing under. To understand what Toro Blanco believes about economy, business, war, and geopolitics, one must first understand what Gabriel decrees, and then watch how the narrative tests each human institution against that decree.

That is the method of this dissertation. I treat the Book of Gabriel as the work's constitutional text and the surrounding chapters — the Horsemen of Book II above all — as a series of cases brought before its bar. I proceed first by a close reading of Gabriel itself, then through the seven hard themes the author has asked us to examine, then through the seven soft themes by which the hard ones are answered, and finally to the unitive vision in which the whole structure resolves. Throughout, I take the work seriously on its own terms: not as a tract to be approved or condemned, but as a coherent and demanding piece of literary theology whose internal logic rewards patient exposition.

A word, finally, about the work's formal strategy, because it bears directly on how its themes are delivered. Toro Blanco is built on a deliberate and disorienting alternation of registers. It moves without warning from intimate first-person memoir to inset scripture, from celestial dialogue to Latin American magical realism, from forensic macroeconomic analysis to the cigarette-smoke noir of Samael and Lilith in a hotel they happen to own. The author flags this in the preface as intentional — *"this book means to keep you on your toes; psychologically and emotionally engaged"* — and it is essential to grasp that the formal instability is itself a thematic claim. A book whose central proposition is that truth is not binary cannot afford to be formally monolithic; it must enact, in its very structure, the refusal to be collapsed into a single, manageable register. The reader who wants a treatise is given a memoir; the reader who wants a memoir is given a prophecy; the reader who wants a prophecy is given a stock ticker plunging into negative numbers in a dying man's wine-dream. The form is the argument. And the Book of Gabriel, dropped into the middle of this churn as a sudden island of unironic, unsmiling prophetic speech, gains its authority precisely by contrast: it is the one

passage the narrator does not destabilize, the fixed point around which everything else is permitted to spin.

II. The Book of Gabriel as Governing Monolith

The Book of Gabriel sits inside Chapter Six, *"What we Fear, We Worship and Serve,"* and its placement is itself an argument. Samael spends the preceding pages dismantling the idea that scripture can ever bind God — *"God is not beholden to the scribbles and musings of man, no matter how inspired and authentic may have been his intentions at the time of authorship"* — and only then, having taught the reader how all so-called inspired writing should be received, does he present a text he considers genuinely worthy of attention: *"a non-canonical book authored in the years of 2017 and 2018 that goes by Gabriel."* The framing is deliberately paradoxical. Having just warned us against worshipping the written word, the narrator hands us a written word and asks us to weigh it. The paradox dissolves only when we grasp the distinction the book is drawing: Gabriel is not offered as an idol to be obeyed but as a witness to be heard, ranked *"thousands of rungs below the actual voice of God Himself."*

What does Gabriel actually say? Its five short movements form a remarkably compressed theology of fear, law, truth, and judgment. The first movement opens not with comfort but with descent: *"Enjoy this descent into the heart of darkness. For days will grow much darker, and increase ever in darkness, before there a light breaks through."* This is the tonal signature of the entire prophecy — a refusal of the easy consolations, a willingness to name catastrophe before it names hope. The LORD of Gabriel promises to *"release from mine storehouses, from my vaulted treasuries, dark and heavy clouds that contain within the wrath of my indignation,"* and yet, in the same breath, to *"do a new thing upon the earth."* The prophecy is structured as an unresolved chord: judgment and renewal sounded together, never separated into the tidy sequence that human religion prefers. The crown promised to those who endure is inscribed with a paradox of its own — *"a peace that will know no end"* reached only by passing through a darkness that grows before it breaks.

The second movement supplies the work's load-bearing aphorisms. Here the prophet asks, *"What of the angelic tongue?"* and the answer is a discipline of speech and humility: *"Let your words be few, let your words be true."* It is here that Gabriel diagnoses the characteristic sin of the age, the sin the book will later locate in defense contractors, market manipulators, and crowd-pleasing preachers alike — the sin of the *"sons of Belial,"* who *"specialize in self-effacing righteousness and false contrition, while yet brilliantly boasting and puffing themselves up."* They *"perfectly flip truth upside down, then believe their own lies, and are altogether masters of outward appearance; expertly they veil the eyes."* This is, in a single sentence, the moral physics

of corruption that the rest of Toro Blanco will dramatize at industrial and geopolitical scale.

And it is here that Gabriel delivers the two sentences the author has chosen, significantly, to set as the epigraph to the very chapter that contains them: *"In a world ruled by idolatry, vanity and pride; to possess neither idolatry, nor vanity, nor pride, is to be freed from the designs of this world. Yea, to fear God is to fear only God."* I will argue that this couplet is the single most important utterance in the book, the axis on which all fourteen of our themes turn. To fear God alone is to be unafraid of everything else — and everything else, in the economy of this work, means precisely the market, the army, the throne, and the grave. The man who fears only God, Samael glosses, *"fears not war," "fears not a sour economy," "fears not for [his] personal safety," "fears not hell."* Fear, in Gabriel's grammar, is the truest index of worship. What you dread is what you serve. The entire critique of economy and power that follows is a working-out of this one diagnostic principle.

The second movement also contains the work's compact philosophy of law and liberty, a passage indispensable to the political reading I will develop: *"lust prevents bondage, bondage prevents freedom; yet the law prevents them all. For where no law is there can be no freedom; and liberty with neither order or restraint is darker than slavery."* This is not the libertine creed one might expect from a memoir narrated by the Devil. It is, on the contrary, a profoundly ordered account of restraint as the precondition of freedom — the very argument Samael makes elsewhere when he calls himself *"the shard of glass that does not allow the thief to escape unscathed,"* and when he praises Saturn as *"keeper of limitations and setter of boundaries."* Gabriel supplies the doctrine; Samael and Saturn supply the enforcement. Liberty without restraint, the prophecy insists, is *"darker than slavery."* Hold that sentence in mind; it will return when we reach the trading floors and the war rooms.

The third movement turns to doxology and to the absolute sovereignty of God over *"all spirit and over all flesh, and of all substance that there exists in the earth… even to every galaxy and throughout all the realms of the stars."* Here Gabriel establishes the cosmic scale against which every earthly kingdom will be measured and found small. The fourth movement is the most ferocious — a direct address to the proud one who says *"in thine heart… 'Lo, I am a god, who will detain me?'"* It reads, on its surface, as a rebuke aimed at a satanic adversary, but its language — *"you have perverted my words and coopted my message… there has never been one original thought in your mind… all you claim to have and all the knowledge you possess you have coopted, corrupted and stolen from me"* — applies with uncanny precision to every human pretender to

godhood the book will parade before us: the magnate, the general, the emperor, the manipulator of nations. The fifth and final movement closes the circle by exposing the false prophet — *"the one who is adored by the masses… loved by the crowds"* — and asks the devastating diagnostic question, *"have I sent him?"* The answer condemns those *"who invoke my very name, for their own profit and gain,"* promising that *"for every last penny of ill-gotten gain, will I demand an accounting at their hands; with interest, and at a price."*

Notice the metaphor: an accounting, with interest, at a price. Gabriel speaks the language of the ledger. The God of this prophecy is not indifferent to economy; He is its ultimate auditor. This is the conceptual hinge that allows Toro Blanco to move so fluidly between the prophetic and the financial, between Sinai and the stock ticker. The Book of Gabriel establishes that the moral universe is, at bottom, a system of exact accounts — debts incurred, debts called in, interest compounding on ill-gotten gain — and the rest of the memoir simply follows those accounts as they come due across history and across markets. With this code before us, we may now read the cases.

III. Economy: Mammon, the Black Horse, and the Theology of Scarcity

No theme is treated with more sustained attention in Toro Blanco than economy, and none is more thoroughly subordinated to the logic of Gabriel. The book's economic argument begins not in Book II's apocalyptic set-pieces but in the quiet diagnostic of Chapter Six, where Samael holds a mirror to the modern unbeliever: *"Men today say they have no god, yet at the same time live in dread of a stock market decline… yet Mammon rules over their most banal decision and organizes their day."* This is Gabriel's principle applied with surgical exactness. If what you fear is what you worship, then a civilization that fears recession above all has confessed its true religion. The secular man's atheism is exposed as a polytheism of *"doubt, worry, concern and driving priorities,"* chief among them the market. Economy, in this reading, is not a neutral mechanism; it is a pantheon, and its god is Mammon.

The fullest economic dramatization is the Black Horse of the Apocalypse, the third rider of Book II, *"and he who sat on it had a pair of scales in his hand."* Here the book's prose turns analytical, almost forensic: *"All the world is held together by a thin string of complex financial interdependencies. A local disruption in oil supply soon reverberates in global markets. One toppled domino strikes down the next… until the whole house of cards comes crashing down. Man thinks himself strong and independent, that is until his financial affairs are tinkered with."* The Black Horse is, explicitly, a parable about the fragility of the modern economy and the spiritual delusion of self-sufficiency it breeds. Samael's instrument of judgment is not a plague of frogs but a supply shock: he *"enticed the head of the United States to attack a sovereign Iran, which choked off the Strait of Hormuz, which then sent a supply shock to international oil, which slowly but surely disrupted inflated stocks, top-heavy with untried, astronomical AI-company valuations."*

This passage repays close reading, because it shows the work updating biblical apocalypse into the grammar of contemporary macroeconomics. The four horsemen of Revelation become a cascade of geopolitically-triggered market failures. Artificial intelligence — the very technology the author confesses to using in the preface — appears here as a speculative bubble and a labor-displacing force: *"People were tasked to do much more in much less time… Some adapted and thrived. Many others fell by the wayside, technologically incapable of keeping up with the racing trends of the zeitgeist."* The crash is engineered to force the over-leveraged to *"trim the fat (the first to go being highly paid individuals, with bulk middle-earners next on the chopping block)."* The text does not flinch from the cruelty of this. It calls it *"cruel and cold to*

wreak these circumstances on large swaths of humanity," and yet it insists, in a phrase that could stand as the motto of the entire economic theology, that *"it was all written to transpire in just such a manner."*

Why must it transpire? Because, in the logic of Gabriel, economic catastrophe is a pedagogy. *"Man cannot be distracted to contemplate the higher ideas in life when he is busy with commerce, earning handsomely and freely spending on all his heart desires."* Prosperity anaesthetizes; scarcity awakens. *"As the wallet grows thin and the bank account goes negative, some turn to crime… while others look inward and choose to seek their God fervently."* The crash is a sorting mechanism, a furnace: *"Gold is tested in the fire, where lesser elements go up in flames. What does not survive simply did not have the mettle."* The economy, in other words, is conscripted into the same alchemical process that governs the rest of the book — the nigredo, the blackening, the necessary death that precedes refinement. Here the seventh of our hard themes (corruption) and the third of our soft themes (prosperity) are already braided together, for the test of scarcity is precisely the test of whether a man's prosperity was a gift received or an idol served.

A further refinement deserves emphasis, because it guards against a vulgar reading. The Black Horse does not present God as a capricious destroyer who delights in breadlines. It presents Him, rather, as *"a God of natural law; for he authored it and stands by its simplicity, beauty and design."* The economic collapse is not a magical intervention but the working-out of physical and systemic laws already in place: *"his true modus operandi is slow, steady, logical, chronological and certain."* The vision Don Melchor suffers under the influence of the Vista Opaca wine — the stock ticker falling *"from 25,000 to 18,000, then another sharp drop to 9,000… until the numbers were inverted completely and somehow ended up at negative 36,000,"* the *"endless breadlines,"* the *"whole families of beggars wrapped in rags"* — is apocalyptic in tone but mechanistic in logic. The economy destroys itself when its idolaters push it past the boundaries Saturn exists to enforce. Judgment, here, is simply the bill arriving.

This is the place to register the work's crucial distinction between three economic conditions: the poor, the rich, and the prosperous. In the *"Saturn's Turn"* passage, Samael draws the line with care. Poverty carries *"no inherent virtue,"* for *"many are poor due to laziness, vice and sheer stupidity."* Wealth and worldly power are treated with deep suspicion — *"wealth and power are rarely, if ever, the fruits of righteous living,"* and even *"Father Abraham became wealthy byway of cowardice."* But between these poles stands prosperity, and the book's definition of it is one of its most beautiful and least apocalyptic passages: *"Heavenly prosperity is always having enough. You*

have sufficient time, your needs are met, your household is warm, fed, clothed, dry, comfortable and secure. You do not thirst for the primary blessings in life, which are peace, health, happiness, rest and genuine love." Over such a life, Samael says, Saturn *"holds very little authority… because they do not, as a matter of course, transgress boundaries and limitations."* The economic ideal of Toro Blanco is not accumulation and not renunciation but sufficiency — the contentment of the man who fears only God and therefore does not need to hoard against a future he has surrendered to providence. The Psalm Samael quotes is the hinge: *"I have been young, and now am old; / Yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken, / Nor his descendants begging bread."* The economy is real, its dangers are real, but the man tuned to Gabriel's frequency does not fear it, because his treasury is elsewhere.

This is also where Toro Blanco refuses the cheap consolation of quietism. The faithful man who does not fear the economy is not thereby excused from laboring within it. *"We are commanded to have faith but also to work and put in maximum effort,"* Samael insists; *"We are not to cross our arms and wait for bread to rain down from heaven."* The God of natural law does not suspend the natural law of effort. Providence, in this book, meets the man who is already moving — *"an unexpected job opens up. An exciting, exclusive opportunity falls in the lap of the faithful"* — and never the man who has mistaken trust for passivity. The economic teaching of the work is thus a fine balance, easily lost in either direction: fear nothing, because your treasury is elsewhere; but labor at everything, because the furnace tests the diligent and the idle alike, and only one of them emerges as gold.

IV. Business: Don Fernando Marquez and the Sovereignty of the Unseen Proprietor

If economy is the book's macro-theme, business is its incarnation in a single, unforgettable character: Don Fernando Marquez, the ageless vineyard owner of Cusco who is, of course, Samael himself in human disguise — El Toro Blanco, the white bull. Through Marquez, Toro Blanco offers a sustained meditation on what right proprietorship looks like, and on how the structures of modern enterprise both mirror and parody divine sovereignty.

Marquez is described in terms that deliberately invert every norm of contemporary corporate life. He is the antithesis of the transparent, networked, committee-run enterprise. *"There was no board of directors, no shareholders with voting rights; this was no representative democracy by any stretch of the imagination. Don Fernando wielded absolute control as CEO, Chairman and 100% private equity shareholder over all his interests and holding corporations."* He communicates by handwritten letter, shuns video conferencing, and is *"harder to spot than a white bunny in a snowstorm."* His sole human intermediary, the Estate Executor, *"served somewhat like a Pope, wielding uncontestable power of attorney,"* a *"lifetime appointment"* with *"no daylight between him and the master."* The theological allegory is unmistakable: Marquez is the hidden God of absolute sovereignty, and his Executor is the priestly mediator who speaks with delegated but never independent authority. The structure of his empire is a parable of the structure of heaven.

Marquez's holdings, moreover, are a quiet catalogue of the modern commanding heights: wine and agriculture, real estate (*"the second most vast and powerful holder after the Vatican"*), *"transportation vessels via air, land, sea, and rail,"* and *"telecommunication holding corporations for television, radio, internet and artificial intelligence."* The book is making a pointed claim: the infrastructure through which contemporary humanity lives, communicates, and forms its beliefs is owned — and the one who owns it is the very figure religion has taught us to fear. *"They say the greatest trick the devil ever pulled was convincing the world that he doesn't exist."* But the deeper trick, the book suggests, is convincing the world that business is morally neutral, a realm of pure transaction insulated from the divine audit. Marquez gives the lie to that. His commercial empire is, he tells us plainly, secondary to *"a much heavier crown to wear and burden to bear, which is the careful administration of souls. More specifically, what to do with all those who do not meet the King's standards."* Business, for Marquez, is the visible face of an invisible accountancy — exactly the ledger-theology that Gabriel established.

The ethical heart of the business theme is the Socratic dinner of Chapter Two, where Marquez debates Don Melchor on the meaning of humanism. The widow señora San Marco has proposed that *"the highest good of man was to amass obscene amounts of wealth in order to give back in orderly, structured and prudent ways."* Marquez's reply is the book's clearest statement of its commercial ethics: *"A humanist, my dear Melchor, is a person that has no god besides him or herself… Man is the greatest good, man is the highest power and authority."* The sin is not the wealth but the enthronement. *"It is no sin to work towards these things. It is a sin to place them on the Throne of the Eternal as the only worthwhile masters. To have them for their own sake, versus rewards for righteous living."* The test, as always, is the heart, and Marquez quotes scripture against his own kind: *"the Lord does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart."* The philanthropist and the predator may be outwardly indistinguishable — *"Two people may be outwardly famous, rich, successful and of lasting memory, but they fueled these outcomes with divergent motivations"* — and only the divine auditor can read the difference. We *"serve that which we fear,"* Marquez tells Melchor, *"be it anonymity, poverty, ill health, death or irrelevance, the sin of being forgotten."* The entire critique of business is, once again, Gabriel's diagnostic in a frock coat: show me what a man of commerce fears, and I will show you the god he serves behind the god he professes.

The book's portrait of Job belongs here too, for Job is its model of righteous enterprise. Samael is at pains to correct the sentimental reading. Job was *"supremely wealthy and successful not only materially… but also spiritually,"* and his greatness lay not in stoic endurance but in the accuracy of his accounting: *"All things come from God, and so to God all things must return. Therefore, blessed be the name of the Lord."* Job's *"only virtue was his honesty"* — his *"willingness to deal fairly with the Lord… under duress, loss and pain, as it was during his golden years of surplus."* Here is the business ethic of Toro Blanco distilled: the righteous proprietor holds his holdings as a steward, not an owner, marking every asset as borrowed and every gain as a debt of gratitude. He is the man who can lose everything without losing his bearing, because he never confused the inventory with the self. Marquez, who tips no less than forty percent and refuses every discount, who has *"all of eternity"* and is therefore never in a rush, is the same lesson wearing a top hat.

It is instructive to set Marquez beside the book's portrait of Christ as an economic actor, for the two figures define the poles of right and corrupt enterprise. Christ, in the *"Why they hated Christ"* meditation, is the proprietor who *"cannot be purchased, corrupted or compromised,"* who *"refused to pay to play,"* who *"did not come to suck up to the ruling elite, hoping to curry favor with them."* His overturning of the

money-changers' tables is read not as a rejection of commerce as such but as a rejection of commerce that has colonized the holy — the conversion of the temple into a marketplace, the subordination of worship to transaction. The corruption the book indicts is never the existence of business but its inversion of ends and means: the moment the ledger stops serving the soul and the soul begins serving the ledger. Marquez, the hidden proprietor who administers souls behind the screen of his vineyards, and Christ, the incorruptible king who would rather be executed than bought, are the two faces of legitimate sovereignty over the material world. Between them stands the whole damned economy of Elrond Jassy and the humanists who have placed the inventory on the throne.

V. War: The Red Horse, the Forever Wars, and Sanctioned Violence

War enters Toro Blanco at two altitudes. At the low altitude of human politics, it is the subject of the most explicitly topical passage in the book; at the high altitude of cosmic order, it is one of Samael's permanent offices. The Book of Gabriel governs both, for Gabriel insists that the man who fears God *"fears not war,"* and that the LORD will *"submit the powers of the princes of this earth beneath the dreadful weight of his vengeance."*

The contemporary critique is concentrated in the figure of Elrond Jassy, who appears under the White Horse — *"He who sat on it had a bow; and a crown was given to him, and he went out conquering and to conquer."* Jassy *"owned the world's largest defense technologies company and business was great! Forever Wars in the Middle East kept the coffers overflowing and production lines running piping hot."* The book's indictment of the military-industrial economy is unsparing and entirely in Gabriel's register of the boastful sons of Belial who veil predation in righteousness: *"There was always a handful of countries willing to invade, murder, bomb, oppress, mutilate, impale, starve: as long as the narrative could be presented just right. Always, without fault, these campaigns were conducted under righteous banners — freedom, liberty, democracy, national security... the list is long."* Here is Gabriel's diagnosis made flesh: the masters of outward appearance who *"perfectly flip truth upside down, then believe their own lies."* The political class is implicated by proximity to the money: *"They were never more than two or three degrees removed from the money printer contracts that they themselves... were authorized to release."* And the cost falls, as it always does in this book's economics, on those least able to bear it — *"The general populace? These suffered. They bore the brunt of rising costs, rocketing inflation. The defunding of local, community, recreational, environmental, health, educational and wellbeing programs."*

Jassy's death is one of the book's most quietly devastating set-pieces, and it dramatizes the Gabriel principle that judgment arrives not through spectacle but through natural causation. He dies not by lightning but by a slip on *"an invisible puddle of water"* while shaving with *"an old-fashioned barber's blade,"* his throat opened on the edge of his own sink while he prepares for *"another glorious day of death, darkness and deposits."* Outside, on his manicured lawn, *"a mysterious white bull grazed openly."* The accounting Gabriel promised — *"with interest, and at a price"* — is collected without a single miracle. The war profiteer is undone by the most ordinary physics, and the bull simply watches, the silent auditor of a debt come due. The triple

alliteration of *"death, darkness and deposits"* is the book's compressed verdict on the entire economy of war: a machine that converts the first two into the third, and that the divine ledger will one day reverse.

The Red Horse proper — *"it was granted to the one who sat on it to take peace from the earth, and that people should kill one another; and there was given to him a great sword"* — is handled obliquely, through the long meditation on Boleskine House, Aleister Crowley, and Jimmy Page's abandoned Lucifer Rising soundtrack. This is the book's subtlest treatment of war as a metaphysical rather than merely political reality. Boleskine is *"a geography of the damned,"* a site where a ritual was opened and never closed — Crowley *"departed before the operation was complete… The house was left in a state of ritual suspension."* War, the chapter implies, is what happens when humanity opens doors it lacks the discipline to close; it is liberty without restraint, the very condition Gabriel warned is *"darker than slavery."* The unfinished ritual, the curse Anger lays on Page, the soundtrack that goes *"underground"* as Walk in the Ruins — these are images of consequence outrunning intention, of the seed of violence germinating in soil that *"remembers what happened to it."* The grimoire's warning that *"to invoke and not bind is to open a door and walk away, leaving it ajar"* is, read at the level of the book's argument, a warning about every war ever begun without the wisdom or will to end it.

It is worth dwelling on the theological audacity of locating war's truest portrait in a rock-and-roll ghost story. By routing the Red Horse through Boleskine rather than through a battlefield, Toro Blanco refuses the obvious move of cataloguing twentieth-century atrocities and instead diagnoses the spiritual mechanism beneath all of them. War, in this reading, is a species of botched magic — the summoning of forces one cannot bind. Crowley's Abramelin operation required the magician, having invoked his Holy Guardian Angel, to then *"call forth the Four Great Princes of Evil… and bind each of them to his will,"* and the grimoire is *"explicit: to invoke and not bind is to open a door and walk away, leaving it ajar."* Every war begun under a righteous banner and then abandoned to its own momentum is exactly this: an invocation without a binding, a door left ajar so that *"the consequences extended outward in directions you had not anticipated."* The two fires that gut Boleskine in 2015 and 2019 become, in the book's symbolic logic, *"the house returning, by the most ancient method available to it, to the condition it preferred"* — which is to say, war's tendency to keep burning long after its authors believe they have concluded it. This is a far more unsettling account of violence than any tally of casualties, because it locates the engine of war not in particular villains but in the perennial human refusal to count the cost of the doors we open.

Crucially, Toro Blanco does not pretend that God's own hand is clean of violence. Samael presides over the Flood, over Sodom, over the death of the Egyptian firstborn, and he does not euphemize. Of the tenth plague he confesses, *"I take no delight in this aspect of my work. It is not pleasant… what did all those children, infants and newborns have to do with the sins of Pharaoh?"* The book's answer is the doctrine of the potter and the clay — *"He is the potter who molds his clay as is most pleasing to him"* — softened by an eschatological consolation: *"the great majority of them were received with open arms in Paradise."* This is the hardest edge of the work's theodicy, and it should not be smoothed over. War and divine violence are not denied or explained away; they are absorbed into the larger claim that physical death is not the final accounting, and that the God who fears nothing and is feared by all reserves the right to *"pluck up, to pull down, and to destroy,"* as the prophet Jeremiah is shown at the potter's wheel. The fearlessness Gabriel commands is, finally, fearlessness in the face of this — the willingness to trust the Auditor even when the audit is terrible.

VI. Geopolitics: Empire, Nicaea, and the Binding of God

Geopolitics in Toro Blanco is never merely the contest of nations; it is always, underneath, the contest between human institutions that would bind God and the God who refuses to be bound. The political theology of the work is governed by Gabriel's declaration that the LORD alone holds *"dominion over all things… from everlasting to everlasting,"* against which every empire is a usurpation awaiting its accounting.

The most striking geopolitical argument concerns the Third Temple and the Dome of the Rock. Samael presents the Evangelical and certain Jewish expectations that the Messiah cannot return *"unless humans somehow clear the way by erecting this third temple"* as the paradigm case of human politics attempting to *"bind the hands of the Eternal." "In essence they say, 'Until God abides by our demands… then he is not free to simply do as he wishes.'"* This is geopolitics as idolatry — the conscription of God into a real-estate dispute on Temple Mount, the reduction of cosmic sovereignty to a precondition that human statecraft must satisfy. The same critique falls on the doctrine of the Rapture, with its competing factions each able to *"furnish scripture to back their claims,"* and the verdict is Gabriel's verdict on the false prophets: *"in the end if we're honest, no one knows jack shit for sure. A truly pious man would admit as much."*

The deepest geopolitical claim, however, is the book's treatment of the Council of Nicaea, which it reads frankly as an act of imperial power masquerading as theology. *"What the Nicaean Council cemented in 325 AD was a political compromise dressed in theological robes. Three hundred bishops assembled by a Roman emperor who cared nothing for truth and everything for unity; his unity, the administrative cohesion of his empire."* The Nicene Creed becomes *"the official recipe for God, the theological equivalent of a corporate mission statement drafted by committee and approved by management."* This is a remarkable fusion of the book's geopolitical and business vocabularies — empire and corporation collapsed into a single image of institutional power capturing and caging truth. The bird in the cage is the recurring figure: *"The truth is in there, yes, thrashing against the bars."* Geopolitics, in Toro Blanco, is the history of such cages: the Roman empire caging the gospel, the church franchising the executed heretic, the modern nation-state wrapping its wars in righteous banners. The Albert Pike epigraph — *"The truth must be kept secret, and the masses need a teaching proportioned to their imperfect reason"* — names the perennial geopolitics of knowledge that the book sets itself against: the management of populations by the calibrated rationing of truth.

The Strait of Hormuz scenario, already discussed under economy, is equally a geopolitical parable, and it is worth returning to here for its structural lesson. The

world's interconnection — *"all the world is held together by a thin string of complex financial interdependencies"* — means that geopolitics and economy are no longer separable; a single act of statecraft *"upstream"* (the attack on Iran) propagates *"downstream"* into every household's solvency. This is the modern form of the ancient lesson the book draws from the Ten Plagues, which it reinterprets as *"not ten separate miracles, but ten links in a single chain; a cascade of interlocking ecological, biological, and atmospheric disasters triggered by one initiating event upstream."* The Nile cascade and the Hormuz cascade are the same parable in different centuries: complex systems, divinely ordered, in which one upstream act of human pride or one upstream act of divine judgment propagates with *"the precision and elegance of Swiss clockwork."* Geopolitics is thus subsumed into the book's master-doctrine of natural causation — God *"does it through physical laws, sheer causation, raw power,"* needing no miracle because the system itself is the instrument of judgment. Empires rise and fall not because angels descend with flaming swords but because, as the white bull knows, having *"watched every empire rise, and every empire fall, and every empire fool itself into believing it would be the one that lasts forever,"* the accounts always, eventually, come due.

There is, finally, a quiet geopolitics of the remnant running beneath the book's geopolitics of empire, and it too descends directly from Gabriel. The prophecy's second movement promises that the faithful will be set apart as *"Goshen in the midst of Egypt,"* spared the judgment that falls on *"the heathen of these days"* — a political theology not of conquest but of preservation, of the small and silent community that survives the collapse of the great powers around it. Gabriel's fifth movement insists that the true servants of God are *"little in number and quiet in deed,"* that *"they do not cause their voice to be heard in the streets, nor are they heralded in the public squares."* This is the inverse of every geopolitical ambition the book anatomizes. Where empire is loud, visible, and self-aggrandizing, the remnant is quiet, hidden, and self-effacing; where empire builds monuments to a name *"that soon passes away,"* the remnant builds, in the language of the Solomon chapter, *"a temple within consciousness."* The book's ultimate political claim is therefore deeply anti-political in the worldly sense: the nations and their wars are real, their cascades of consequence are real, but they are not where the decisive history is being made. That history is being made in the unobserved hearts of the few who fear only God, and it is to them, not to the princes whose power Gabriel promises to crush, that the future belongs.

VII. Power and Strength: Solomon's Ring and the Fear that Frees

Power and strength are distinct categories in Toro Blanco, and the distinction is one of the book's finest achievements. Power is the capacity to command external forces; strength is the inner condition of the one who fears only God and is therefore unmoved by anything that power can threaten or promise. The book's verdict is that power without strength is the surest road to ruin, and that true strength looks, from the outside, almost like its opposite.

The great parable of power is the long retelling of the Testament of Solomon, *"A Little Building Project."* Solomon is granted, through a ring *"wrought of no metal known to craftsmen,"* the authority to bind the disordered spirits that hinder the Temple's construction — to compel *"even rebellious forces, when rightly ordered, [to be] turned into servants of the good."* This is power at its most legitimate: power exercised *"not for dominion over men or for the swelling of his own name, but for the ordering of disorder."* And yet the narrative is, at heart, a tragedy of power's corruption. As Solomon's authority grows, *"so did the subtle temptation that accompanies mastery, the whisper that comes not from outside alone but arises from within when the will tastes command."* He begins to *"believe that his wisdom was his own possession rather than a continual gift,"* to *"experiment with the ring beyond its original purpose,"* until *"the line between wisdom and manipulation blurred, and some practices he would once have judged as sorcery he now considered as tools of statecraft."* The lesson is delivered with aphoristic force: *"knowledge without humility leads to fragmentation, making the soul a kingdom at war with itself, and… authority without obedience to the Highest becomes tyranny, first over others and then over the self."* Power, the Solomon parable concludes, *"is a small thing beside the vastness of the human heart."* The chapter's most important structural insight is that the spirits Solomon binds *"corresponded to states within men"* — that the external mastery of power is always shadowed by an internal disorder it cannot reach, so that *"the binding of spirits without the cultivation of virtue merely shifts the battlefield inward."*

Against this anatomy of power stands the book's portrait of strength, and here we return to Gabriel. Strength is the condition Samael describes when he says, *"I fear no enemy. No one and no thing can harm me… any damage inflicted can only be superficial and temporary… all the harm can be suffered as surface scratches on the exterior of a precious diamond, which cannot reach the underlying beauty of the stone beneath."* This diamond-strength is not invulnerability — Samael explicitly denies that — but invulnerability where it counts. It is the strength the Father demanded in the

commissioning scene: *"You must be steadfast. You must be strong."* And it is the strength Christ models in the book's reading of the temptation in the wilderness, where the desert ordeal is reframed not as a battle Samael hoped to win but as a test he was honored to witness: Christ's refusal to be *"controlled by man"* made him *"perhaps the one true man."* The strongest figure in the book is the one who *"feared no one, he feared no man. His only fear, the only power he was beholden to, was his own Father, with which he was One."*

The Lilith chapters supply the psychological mechanism by which such strength is achieved. Lilith teaches *"not minding,"* which the text is careful to distinguish from *"cold, callous indifference"*: it is *"resting in assuredness… That all consequences are meted out with exacting precision. That there is no escaping karma."* From this not-minding flows *"Peace. True, quintessential calm,"* and from peace flows fearlessness: *"You learn nothing can in fact hurt you because you are the definition of impermeability… You lose all fear; because if all things work for your good then even the bad is to be welcomed with open arms."* This is strength as surrender — the paradox at the book's core, that the unconquerable soul is the one that has stopped trying to conquer. The man who fears only God has nothing left to lose and is therefore, in the only sense that matters, the strongest man alive. Power covets; strength rests. Power accumulates; strength suffices. The bull standing motionless in the field, before whom *"the grass bent… of its own accord,"* is the book's final emblem of strength: a being so secure in its commission that it need not move at all.

No account of power in Toro Blanco is complete without the figure of Saturn, whom Samael names *"among my closest allies and partners"* and without whom *"humanity and earth itself would be irreversibly doomed."* Saturn is the cosmic enforcer of the limit Gabriel decreed when the prophecy declared that *"the law prevents them all."* He exists to answer the one appetite that power cannot govern in itself: the appetite for more. *"It is man's purview to want no resistance or boundaries on his ambitions. He would take and take, even beyond available supply… to financials, resources, land, influence, pleasure, power, time. There is never enough to satiate that infernal thirst."* Saturn is the principle that ensures the bill always arrives — that the magnate who *"would rule over mankind"* is given *"poverty, shame and destitution,"* that those who *"would be gods"* are handed *"terminal disease."* This is the book's deepest statement on the relationship between power and strength: power, left to itself, is an infinite and self-destroying hunger, and strength is precisely the soul that has made peace with limit. The strong man does not need Saturn's correction because he has already internalized Saturn's lesson — he has accepted the boundary, surrendered the appetite for more, and

discovered, in that surrender, the sufficiency that is true prosperity. Power fears Saturn; strength is Saturn's friend.

VIII. Corruption: The Counterfeit Word and the Sin of Presumption

Corruption is the hinge between the seven hard themes and the seven soft ones, because in Toro Blanco corruption is precisely the perversion of a good thing — the counterfeiting of truth, the misappropriation of the Word, the enthronement of the means as the end. Gabriel names it directly in the fourth movement's indictment of the one who has *"perverted my words and coopted my message… defiled my covenant and made a mockery of my decrees."* All the book's corruptions are species of this single act.

The most developed and most provocative treatment of corruption is theological rather than financial: the corruption of scripture itself into an idol. This is the burden of Chapter Six and the justification for presenting the Book of Gabriel at all. *"Monotheistically-inclined man suffers from grave delusions provoked by his blind idolatry of scripture itself! The word serves God in context, but is never meant to replace the Almighty."* The corrupt believer is the one who has substituted the map for the territory, elevating *"the work of pen and ink above Him whose very breath animated the author in the first place."* This is corruption at its most insidious because it wears the mask of piety: *"They think themselves godly and pious in elevating the prophets' words… not realizing the horrible sin of presumptive pride they commit in the process."* The book's most cutting line on the subject is aimed at the institutional church: *"'Heresy' is the technical term for any truth that threatens the salary of the man in the pulpit."* Corruption, here, is always finally about money and power dressed as devotion — the *"salary,"* the *"collection plate circulating,"* the franchise built on a man who *"did not come to suck up to the ruling elite."*

The figure of Paul concentrates this critique. Samael grants that Paul *"wrote many beautiful, true and immortal things,"* but charges him with *"an emperor complex about having to be the founding father of the Church — often at the expense of treading Jesus' words underfoot."* The corruption Paul represents is the corruption of authority claimed rather than granted — *"Paul is a usurper of authority, not me"* — and the institutional church compounds it *"every time they uphold the musings of Paul over the truth of Christ."* Whether or not one accepts this reading (and it is, by the author's own cheerful admission, *"grade-A blasphemy in the highest"*), its structural role in the book is clear: Paul is the test case for corruption as the substitution of the messenger's authority for the sender's, the same sin Gabriel locates in the false prophet *"adored by the masses"* whom God did not send.

At the political and economic level, corruption is the ordinary medium of worldly ascent. The Saturn passage states it baldly: man's *"nature is dishonest and cowardly,*

especially among their top magnates and generals, for one does not ascend to power but by obfuscation, corruption and negotiated souls. The honest man has no place among leadership, for this coveted influence is bought at princely sums and never relinquished." This is why Jesus' camel-and-needle saying is, for Samael, simple realism: *"wealth and power are rarely, if ever, the fruits of righteous living."* Corruption is not an aberration in the systems of business, war, and geopolitics; it is, in the book's bleak diagnosis, their default operating condition, the price of admission to the rooms where power is exchanged. The fourth and worst category of souls in the *"Magic White and Black"* taxonomy — those who *"pursue evil for evil's sake"* — are revealed to be, ironically, the ones who imagine themselves Samael's servants, when in fact *"they serve one another from a place of political self-interest, until they're caught in the net of their own schemes."* Corruption, the book insists, is self-consuming; it builds no lasting kingdom; *"demons have no hierarchical structure for their very nature is anathema to order."* This is the final, important claim: corruption is not a rival order to the divine order but the absence of order, *"a distortion, a misalignment, a refusal of proportion."* It cannot win because it cannot cohere. Saturn always comes to collect. And that collection is the doorway through which the soft themes enter.

IX. Interlude: Superposition and the Metaphysics of the Same Hand

Before we can read the seven counterweights as the redemptive faces of the seven hard themes, we must pause over the metaphysical proposition that makes such a reading coherent rather than merely consoling. That proposition is supplied in Chapter Eight, *"Quantum Superposition,"* a passage attributed to *"Samael on Quantum Mechanics"* and easily mistaken for a digression. It is, in fact, the philosophical engine of the entire book, the argument that licenses every paradox the work asks the reader to hold. Without it, the claim that condemnation and salvation issue from one hand is a rhetorical flourish; with it, that claim acquires the dignity of a cosmology.

The chapter's exposition of superposition is patient and deliberately vertiginous. A particle *"does not possess a definite state until the moment it is observed. Until then it exists as an explosion of all possible states simultaneously, each one fully real, each one canceling and reinforcing the others in ghostly interference patterns."* Light leaving a distant star *"spreads outward as a wave, occupying every possible path at once,"* and collapses into *"a single point of reality"* only at the instant of contact with an observing eye. *"Your observation did not discover its location. Your observation created it."* From this the narrator draws a startling participatory theology: *"you are co-creating with the Creator eternally, simply by being here, by breathing, by looking up and around you."* The act of attention is dignified into an act of creation; the reader is enlisted, whether or not she consents, into the ongoing fabrication of reality.

But the decisive turn comes when Samael applies the principle to God Himself. Where the particle is *"forced by your gaze into one fixed outcome, God exists in every state, every location, every moment simultaneously, and remains un-collapsed by an act of witness. He is the unobserved; the infinite superposition that underlies all things, the wave function that never breaks."* This is the metaphysical ground of the book's radical monotheism. God is precisely that which can be everything at once without contradiction — *"now a babe in a manger, now an executor doling out lethal justice. Now a nurse's tender hand… Now a stern judge, now a loving mother. To be all and to be nothing; I AM THAT I AM."* The divine name revealed to Moses is here reread as a quantum proposition: the One who is what He is is the One who is not forced, by any creature's observation, to be only one thing.

The implications for our fourteen themes are total. If God is the wave function that never collapses, then the apparent opposition between judgment and mercy, between the Black Horse and the open arms in Paradise, between Samael the prosecutor and Christ the redeemer, is an artifact of the observer's limited instrument, not a feature of

the reality observed. Human religion, with its *"1's and 0's computer-language-conditioned lexicon,"* collapses the divine superposition into binaries it can file and manage — saved and damned, God and Devil, sacred and profane. But the collapse occurs in the observer, not in God. *"La verdad no es binaria,"* the dying woman's grandson whispers at the book's emotional climax, and the phrase now carries its full metaphysical weight: the binary is the measurement, not the thing measured. This is why the book can insist that economy and prosperity, war and peace, corruption and truth are not two sets of things but one reality seen under two collapses of the same wave. The hand that condemns and the hand that saves are the same hand because, at the level where God actually exists, they were never two.

This interlude also reframes the book's treatment of death, and therefore of redemption, which we are about to examine. When Rosario Melchor dies, her grandson intuits that *"the superposition wave function had not collapsed; it had simply moved past the range of his instruments."* Death, in the metaphysics of Chapter Eight, is not annihilation but a change of state that exceeds the observer's measuring apparatus — exactly as the photon's other possibilities are not destroyed but *"extinguished in the same breath that one version of it came to life,"* closed *"quietly, unceremoniously."* The book's entire economy of judgment and mercy presupposes this: that the slain Egyptian children *"received with open arms in Paradise,"* the bereaved who experiences *"calm that does not erase grief but transmutes it,"* and the war profiteer collected by ordinary physics are all instances of states changing rather than ending. Superposition is the doctrine that makes the ledger survivable. It is the reason the furnace can be trusted: because nothing of value is ever truly burned, only transmuted, only moved past the range of our instruments. With this metaphysics in hand, the seven counterweights cease to be a softening of the seven hard themes and become their completion.

X. The Counterweights: Redemption, Peace, Prosperity, Wholeness, Mercy, Humility, and Truth

Having traced the seven hard themes to their common root in fear, idolatry, and the perversion of order, we arrive at the seven counterweights by which Toro Blanco insists the ledger is balanced. It would be a misreading — and the book anticipates this misreading — to treat the soft themes as a separate and gentler department, a consolation appended after the wrath. The whole formal and theological wager of the work, expressed in its constant refrain that *"the Truth is not Binary,"* is that the hard and soft themes are the same reality seen from two sides. The hand that wields the scales of the Black Horse is the hand that lifts the dying grandmother *"as gently as a parent lifts a sleeping child."* I take the seven counterweights in turn, but under a single thesis: each is the redemptive face of a hard theme already examined.

Redemption

Redemption in Toro Blanco is radically de-institutionalized. It is not a transaction completed at an altar or secured by a creed; *"Faith cannot save you, neither can works. Salvation itself is a misnomer."* Redemption is, instead, the alchemical passage from nigredo through albedo to rubedo — from blackening and death, through cleansing, to the *"fire-tested Gold"* of a soul *"transformed… from the base, temporary and common into the precious, rare and lasting."* The economic crash, the war, the bereavement: each is a nigredo, a necessary death, and redemption is what survives the furnace. The book's most luminous image of redemption is the death of Rosario Melchor, witnessed by Samael himself: *"I drew the breath from her lungs as gently as a parent lifts a sleeping child from the backseat of the car… She did not suffer. She simply left."* Her grandson experiences *"a calm that does not erase grief but transmutes it. Nigredo to albedo in a single breath."* Redemption, here, is not rescue from death but the recognition that death is *"changed states"* rather than annihilation — *"The superposition wave function had not collapsed; it had simply moved past the range of his instruments."* The Christ who *"tossed out the money-changers"* and *"refused to pay to play"* is the pattern: redemption is purchased not by the avoidance of the world's furnace but by passage through it without being corrupted by it.

Peace

Peace is the direct fruit of Gabriel's *"to fear God is to fear only God,"* and it is defined negatively, by everything it is free from. It is the peace of the one who *"fears not war… fears not a sour economy… fears not for [his] personal safety."* It is the Lilithian *"not minding,"* the *"true, quintessential calm"* of the soul that has surrendered its

outcomes to a providence it trusts. Crucially, this peace is not the absence of conflict but composure within it — the diamond untouched beneath its surface scratches. Gabriel promises it as the eschatological reward: *"those that stand firm to the end… will receive my crown of life… And for a peace that will know no end."* The book is careful to distinguish this from the false peace the war-makers destroy when the Red Horse *"take[s] peace from the earth."* Real peace cannot be taken, because it was never lodged in circumstance. It is the stream's peace in knowing the sea exists. This is why Marquez is *"never in a rush to do anything,"* possessing *"all of eternity in which to not be there"* — his unhurriedness is peace made visible, the body language of a being who fears nothing.

Prosperity

We have already met the book's redefinition of prosperity as *"always having enough,"* and it stands as the redemptive counterpart to the hard themes of economy and business. Where Mammon demands accumulation without limit — the flame that *"will lick up every last bit of matter and will not extinguish until it has all been burnt up"* — true prosperity is the contentment of sufficiency: *"your needs are met, your household is warm, fed, clothed, dry, comfortable and secure."* It is the condition over which Saturn has no jurisdiction, because it transgresses no boundary. Prosperity, rightly understood, is not the opposite of the economic furnace but its purified residue — what remains when the test of scarcity has burned away the idol of more. The Psalm that anchors the Black Horse — *"I have not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his descendants begging bread"* — is a promise not of wealth but of provision, the daily bread of the one who seeks first the kingdom. Prosperity is economy redeemed: the same daily commerce, the same warm household, now received as gift rather than seized as conquest.

Wholeness

Wholeness is the book's most metaphysically ambitious counterweight, and it is the secret toward which the entire structure has been building. It is announced in the Pale Horse dialogue, when the Father cries out, *"How did they not see it!… That you two are identical, that you are the Perfected, Completed Whole? That you are as the Left and Right Arm… As the Left and Right brain?"* The wholeness Toro Blanco envisions is the reunion of the binaries that fallen religion has torn apart — *"good and evil, light and dark, saved and damned"* — into a single integrated reality. *"The Christ and Samael are the Right and Left arms of God."* This is why the book's epigraph is *"The Truth is not Binary,"* and why its narrator is at once prosecution and defense, *"the venom and the antidote, the darkness that makes the light visible."* Wholeness is the healing of the split

that produces all the hard themes: the split that lets a man wage war under righteous banners, worship Mammon while professing atheism, or send another to hell *"with all authority."* To become whole is to stop *"parcel[ing] them out as so many opposing pieces of the chessboard,"* to hold contradiction *"without crushing either."* Psychologically, it is the alchemical integration of the Lilith and Christ energies, the dark feminine and the suffering masculine, into one undivided self. Theologically, it is radical monotheism pressed to its limit: *"Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one!"* — one, echad, *"not two, not three-in-one, not a council, not a committee."* Wholeness is the form redemption takes when it is complete.

Mercy

Mercy is woven through even the book's most violent passages, and it functions as the constant qualifier on judgment. The plagues fall, but the slain children are *"received with open arms in Paradise."* Sodom burns, but the angels' *"task was not persuasion, but extraction; removing the last fragile thread of righteousness."* The Black Horse rides, but *"to those who do"* turn inward and seek God, *"God never fails to show: an unexpected job opens up… they receive unexpected monies, properties or other inheritances."* Mercy in Toro Blanco is never sentimental and never cancels justice; rather, it is justice's companion, the *"open arms"* waiting on the far side of the furnace. The Father of the Pale Horse dialogue is, tellingly, a God who keeps postponing the final judgment out of something very like mercy — *"I think he keeps waiting them out,"* Samael says, *"in vain, I'm afraid."* Even the prophet Gabriel, for all his ferocity, ends his second movement with the implicit mercy of a door still open: *"While there remains the breath of life in your nostrils… there is yet hope for you. Turn to me and I will turn to you."* Mercy is the patience of the Auditor who would rather forgive the debt than collect it, and who delays the reckoning as long as a single soul might still turn.

Humility

Humility is the precondition of every other virtue in the book, and Gabriel commands it first: *"Humble yourself before me… Let your words be few, let your words be true."* It is the virtue whose absence defines all the hard themes — the pride of the magnate, the boast of the war-maker, the presumption of the believer who weaponizes scripture. Solomon's tragedy is the loss of humility (*"the memory of dependence may grow faint"*), and his recovered wisdom is its recovery: *"mastery begins with humility."* The book even stages its own humility in its preface, confessing its borrowed sources and refusing to claim more originality than it possesses. And it locates the deepest humility in the admission of unknowing: *"in the end if we're honest, no one knows jack shit for sure. A truly pious man would admit as much."* This is humility as epistemic

honesty — the refusal to bind God to one's own certainties, which is, in this book's theology, the opposite of the cardinal sin. The narrator who can say *"All of it. Every word. And also, perhaps, none of it"* has performed the humility he preaches: he relinquishes even his own authority over his own tale, leaving the reader to *"do with it what you will."*

Truth

Truth is the book's first word and its last. Its epigraph, repeated like a tolling bell, is *"The Truth is not Binary,"* and its closing gift to the reader is *"not answers, but better questions."* Truth in Toro Blanco is not a proposition to be assented to but a reality to be sought, and the seeking is itself the finding: *"the seeking is the finding. The journey is the destination… the only thing required of you is to keep flowing."* This is why the work can present itself as both true and possibly false without contradiction; truth, in its understanding, *"changes color and texture, ever so subtly, depending on what set of eyes you bring to the inspection,"* like the bottle of Vista Opaca held up to the light. The Franz Hartmann epigraph that opens the Gabriel chapter supplies the metaphysics: truth *"is the great spiritual sun that knows that it exists… It knows neither doubt nor fear… We may blind ourselves to the perception of the truth, but the truth itself is not thereby changed."* Truth is the sun; human creeds are merely the various windows through which, or against which, it falls. The corruption of truth into dogma — the caging of the bird — is the book's great enemy, and the liberation of truth from its cages is its great project. Gabriel's promise that in the latter days God will *"multiply lies and vanity and deceit… so that truth and clarity become ever more nebulous"* is the diagnosis; the whole memoir is the attempted cure, a deliberate unsettling meant *"to crack the surface of what you thought you knew, and let a little light seep through."*

XI. Conclusion: The Same Hand

Every thread of this dissertation converges on a single question, and Toro Blanco has the discipline to end not with an answer but with that question, posed by the bull to the reader across the whole expanse of the work: *"If the one who condemns and the one who saves turned out to be the same hand; would you still reach for it?"*

This is the question the Book of Gabriel was written to make askable. By establishing, in its compressed five movements, that fear is the index of worship, that law is the precondition of freedom, that truth is a sun no creed can cage, and that all accounts are kept with interest and called in at a price, Gabriel supplies the legal framework within which the rest of the book can stage its astonishing reconciliation of opposites. The seven hard themes — economy, business, war, geopolitics, power, strength, corruption — are revealed, under that framework, to be not the domain of the Devil opposed to God but the furnace of a single divine pedagogy. The market crashes to wake the sleeper; the war profiteer is audited by ordinary physics; the empire that would cage truth is itself caged by time; the king who mistakes power for strength loses both; and corruption, lacking all order, devours itself. And the seven soft themes — redemption, peace, prosperity, wholeness, mercy, humility, truth — are revealed to be not a separate consolation but the purified residue of the hard ones, what remains when the fire has done its work. Prosperity is economy redeemed; peace is the strength of the unafraid; wholeness is the healing of every binary the hard world tore apart.

The figure who holds these two registers together is the white bull, El Toro Blanco, and it is no accident that the book's title names him rather than its narrator. The bull is the symbol of integrated power — strength without violence, sovereignty without anxiety, a being *"present, unhurried… Waiting for nothing because everything that needed to happen had already done so."* He is the prosecution and the defense, *"the test, the mirror, the shard of glass, the venom and the antidote."* In him the whole argument of the book is made visible: that the same hand which sets the limit also opens the door, that the same intelligence which engineers the supply shock also slips the unexpected inheritance into the lap of the faithful, that the condemnation and the salvation are administered by one undivided will.

It would be possible to read Toro Blanco as a heretical provocation, and the author invites that reading with evident relish. But the more demanding and, I think, more accurate reading is the one this dissertation has pursued: that the work is a sustained meditation on the unity of God pressed to a point that conventional religion finds unbearable, and that its handling of economy, business, war, and geopolitics is finally inseparable from its handling of redemption, peace, mercy, and truth, because all of

them are functions of the single sentence at the book's hidden center. To fear God is to fear only God. The man who has learned that sentence fears neither the market nor the army nor the throne nor the grave, because he has located his treasury, his peace, and his prosperity in the one place none of them can reach. He has, in the book's final image, become the stream that knows the sea exists — and has therefore stopped being afraid of running dry.

The Book of Gabriel offers a benediction and a warning fused into one: *"I the Lord am he who orders your steps, and apart from me there is no life… Turn to me and I will turn to you."* Toro Blanco, read whole, is an extended commentary on that turning. Its bull, its ledger, and its throne are three faces of a single summons — to seek, with all one's heart, the One who condemns and saves with the same hand, and to reach for that hand anyway. That, the work insists from its first page to its last, was always the test. It was always the only test. And whether the light that breaks upon the one who reaches *"is from heaven or from hell,"* the bull tells us in his parting line, *"depends on where you are standing when it hits you."*