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Title: Tom Berry vs Tomorrowland

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3/26/2017—I watched two videos/movies this week—the Tom Berry documentary, The Great Story, and the recent movie, Tomorrowland. Both of them are tremendous stories of hope amid a warning of danger. In both, humans threaten their own existence and in both we are capable of change. Both emphasize story. If humans are enacting a bad story, we will act badly. There needs to be a good story for us to enact. Readers of this blog know how much I love Tomorrowland. (See below 12/9/2015). I especially love the exchange between Casey and her father: ***** The underlying theme of the 2015 movie Tomorrowland is that we are succumbing to a mood of despair versus an earlier mood of hopefulness and that this change is itself making things worse. People in despair do not improve their situations. This theme plays out both expressly and implicitly in the movie. In one exchange, the hero, Casey Newton, repeats to her father a story he has often told her: Casey Newton: There are two wolves who are always fighting. One is darkness and despair. The other is light and hope. The question is... which wolf wins? Eddie Newton: The one you feed. ***** But Berry makes one point that Tomorrowland actually exemplifies. Berry says that Western civilization has a deep rage against nature—against the terms of human life we have been given. This rage leads to an emphasis on millennium, on the idea that history will come to an end and that humans will then live in a kind of post-mortal existence. For Berry, this is a pipe dream and dangerous. This existence, this natural state we are in, is the state humans will always live in. We can live well, but we will always live here, basically this way. I am drawn to Berry in this way. Hallowed Secularism is a rejection of the millennial air in religion. Tomorrowland, for all its strengths, needs another place—Tomorrowland—in another dimension in which to ground its hope. I did not notice this in 2015, but I saw it better this week because we had just watched Berry in Philosophy of Law. So, take your pick. You would think that a rapidly secularizing society would want to live in its natural state. But all the vampire movies and so forth suggest otherwise.