The Rock Creek Review

"What is Justice?"

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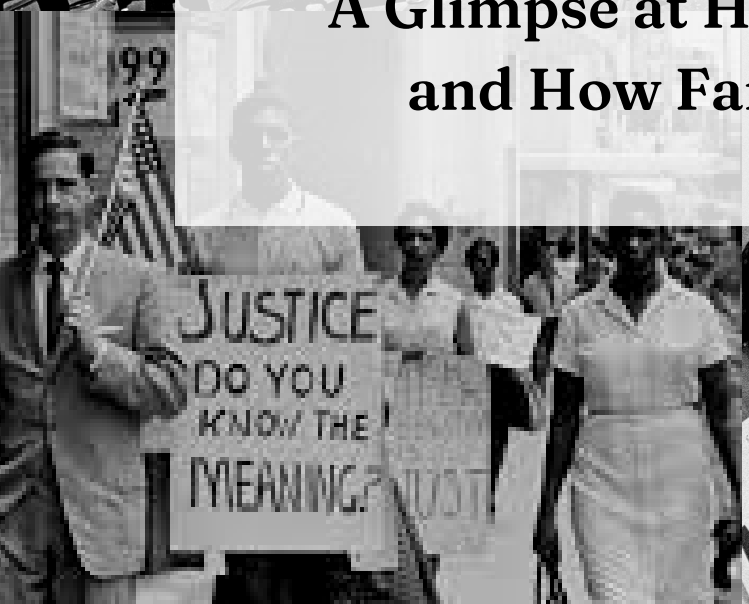
A Glimpse at How Far We've Come and How Far We've Yet to Go



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What is Justice?

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About the Editors

Kelsey Stanfield is the Managing Editor of *The Rock Creek Review*. She is a third-year English and Communication major with a minor in Philosophy. Kelsey has been honored to be recognized as an Emerging Student Leader in 2022 and to receive the Charles M. Legalley Prize in Speech in 2022 in recognition of her contributions to the Heidelberg Speech Team. She is currently the President of the Berg Allies and the Berg Body Positivity Association and the President-Elect of her sorority, Zeta Theta Psi. When she is not organizing events or catching up on assigned readings, she can often be found working as a writing tutor and tour guide for Heidelberg University. With what little spare time she does have, Kelsey enjoys drinking concerning amounts of fruit tea and listening to thrifted records.

Makenna Finnegan is an editor of the *The Rock Creek Review* 2023 team and an editor for *Morpheus Literary Magazine* 2022-23. She is a sophomore AYA English Education major. Makenna wishes to be a high school English teacher and eventually go on to earn her PhD in something related to literature. Makenna acts as both a writer and the entertainment editor for *The Kilikilik*. She also is a tutor for the P.A.C.E program. Makenna was a finalist for the Garver Memorial Prize for First-year writing. In her spare time Makenna reads an abundance of books along with painting and drawing her unique ideas.

Sophia Lee is a third year English Literature and Music double major from Wooster, Ohio. She is the secretary for the Delta Sigma Chi sorority, and vice president of the Tau Mu Sigma music honorary. She is also a member of the Sigma Tau Delta English honorary and the Alpha Lambda Delta first year

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Kelly Peterson is an editor of *The Rock Creek Review* 2023 team. Kelly is a sophomore Environmental Science & Sustainability major with a concentration in watershed science and a minor in Business Administration from Copley, Ohio. She is also involved with Heidlberg's Alliance for Sustainability and a tutor for the P.A.C.E program. Kelly hopes to work in a field related to resource management and/or conservation. In her free time, she enjoys hiking, skiing, and doing arts and crafts.

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Dr. Barry Devine is the Editor-in-Chief and a Founding Editor of *The Rock Creek Review*. He is an Assistant Professor of English at Heidelberg University and teaches Irish and British literature, Literary Theory, and Women's Literature.

A Note from the Managing Editor

Dear Reader,

What a year it has been!

I first joined *The Rock Creek Review* staff as an editor in January 2022. I had the pleasure of reading a plethora of unique, diverse literary criticism. As a mere proof editor, though, I had no clue that I would soon be extended the opportunity to assume the role of Managing Editor. However, accepting the offer was one of the best decisions I could make.

Looking back on our previous two editions, I knew I had big shoes to fill. Emileo Swain had established a strong reputation for *The Rock Creek Review* as its first managing editor, and Chayenne Powers had certainly risen to the challenge as his successor. With the help of my Editors Makenna Finnegan, Sophia Lee, Kelly Peterson, and Cameron Spraggins, and the support of our Editor-in-Chief Dr. Barry Devine, I have been able to create what I hope is an accomplished third edition.

Selecting a theme for the third edition was difficult, but also incredibly easy. Trying to find one thought that could encapsulate the broad field of literary criticism was a formidable challenge. Yet, when I looked around the world, I realized that the answer was right in front of me. I saw people marching in the street, calling for an end to racial violence. I heard the cries of women who felt their reproductive care was under attack. Now, I feel the pain of transgender and queer individuals as they fight for autonomy over their own bodies. In a time when justice feels unattainable, it is important to examine what justice is.

Plato posed the question, "What is justice?" in his iconic book *The Republic* and proceeded to create a world that he saw as just. Though his own response may be disagreeable, the suggestion of an in-depth examination of a term we so desperately call for remains important. While we strive for it, justice seems to be elusive and ambiguous.

On behalf of *The Rock Creek Review* editorial team, I encourage you to read these essays as a response to the question posed. Our submissions this year span across issues of justice, such as the justice sought in fictional worlds and how justice looks in our own. I implore you to examine closely how each author interprets and defines justice. Then, dear reader, I ask that you look within yourself and ask, what is justice?

Thank you for reading *The Rock Creek Review*,

Kelsey Stanfield

The Rock Creek Review

Volume III: What is Justice?

Contents

Elena Rabin is a third-year undergraduate student at Oberlin College majoring in English and minoring in History.

Class and "Comical" Characters in *Romeo & Juliet* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*

Elena Rabin

Oberlin College

Shakespearean plays are often efficiently categorized as either tragedy or comedy, setting up genre expectations for readers or viewers. However, the themes, complex characters, and dialogue within his plays defy assimilation to this binary; Shakespeare seems at times to be "at war with comedy" and the simplicity of an audience's expectations of humor. A result of this "war" is an unease to the laughter that his jokes or witty dialogue elicit; we are laughing because we're being led to do so through wordplay or physicality, but perhaps the content itself is at odds with this portrayal and reaction. The paradox of comedy is that where there is a punchline, there must be (for lack of a better metaphor) someone getting punched. In Shakespeare's work, somebody or something always seems the butt of the joke, therein lying the tragic component of tragicomedy. The person (or God, or fate, etc.) making the joke has power over its subject and power over others' perception of that

subject. In this paper, I will use examples from *Romeo & Juliet* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* to demonstrate how several "comedic" scenes, while often played for laughs, have a darker tone to them that in these instances primarily come from humor at lower class characters' expense.

The first example of this phenomenon that I will explore is an exchange between Lady Capulet, a moderately wealthy woman, and her daughter Juliet's nurse who is a lower-class citizen and servant of the household. The two are trying to pinpoint Juliet's age since she will soon be getting married and Nurse launches into an explanation of how Juliet must be younger than fourteen. The memories and anecdotes that she references are often played comedically which makes sense given that on the surface Nurse is somewhat ridiculous; she's always worrying, running about, and generally serves as the comedic relief in contrast to Juliet's earnestness. Even scholars condemn the Nurse's digression as "a vast irrelevance" that "comically slows the action of the episode and provides us with a picture of robust indelicacy combined with supremely confident simplemindedness" (Sutherland, 127; Toole, 21). However, I reject this interpretation and propose instead that when looking past this outward appearance of humor and into the actual content of her speech, it becomes apparent that her memories are far from a laughing matter. Nurse tells Lady Capulet "Come Lammas Eve at night shall she be fourteen. / Susan and she, God rest all Christian souls, / Were of an age. Well, Susan is with God; / She was too good for me. But as I said, / On Lammas Eve at night shall she be fourteen" (Shakespeare 1.3.18-22). Nurse knows that Juliet is not fourteen

because she knows her daughter who died as a child was the same age and her fourteenth birthday hasn't happened yet. The contrast between this statement of profound grief and the audience's potential laughter to it is striking.

Additionally, beyond learning of the tragedy of her daughter's death, we learn that Nurse knows her daughter's birthday while Lady Capulet does not know Juliet's. The implication that this lower-class servant is a more caring mother and is more invested in her child than the wealthy Lady Capulet makes us question the assumptions we made of their characters and abilities because of their socioeconomic statuses. Shakespeare takes a moment of situational humor – Lady Capulet doesn't know her own daughter's age and the Nurse is telling a long, repetitive story – and makes us question responding with laughter. He folds in implications of their class differences by making plain the Nurse's grief and ability as a mother even as we and Lady Capulet don't take her seriously. Furthermore, by aligning us with Lady Capulet and giving us the same power over Nurse that she has, our laughter implicates us in the perpetuation of these power dynamics.

The artisans in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* also demonstrate the way that class defines and tragedizes comedy within Shakespeare. Puck refers to the players as "rude mechanicals" (Shakespeare 3.2.10). The OED defines "rude" as "uneducated or unsophisticated people…impolite or discourteous people as a class." Through their minimizing and even derogatory title, the players are set up as "lower-than" characters who are present for our entertainment, but also to serve as a reminder of the superiority of the Faeries, Theseus, Hippolyta, and the lovers.

When the players perform in Act V, they are met with skepticism and a reluctant audience to take them seriously; there is talk throughout their performance about their mistakes and ridiculousness. Hippolyta says of Quince, "Indeed, he hath played on this prologue like / a child on a recorder: a sound, but not in government" to which Theseus responds, "His speech was like a tangled chain: nothing / impaired, but all disordered. Who is next?" (Shakespeare 5.1.122-125). The royals' comments on the unsophisticated and simple nature of the performance are justified if we take it for granted that the "rude mechanicals" are actually rude and untalented as actors; on the surface this is a fair assumption given their true professions as a weaver, carpenter, tinker, joiner, tailor, and bellows-mender. Theseus' final question, "Who is next?" also shows us that he views the players as interchangeable and only valuable for as long as they may be fodder for his laughter and derision. In her article "Playing No Part But Pyramus: Bottom, Celebrity, and the Early Modern Clown," Louise Geddes writes that "the play itself condemns Bottom's attempts at artistry as hubris" (77). However, there is no actual evidence for the mediocrity of the performance in the text beyond the comments made by its upper-class, onstage audience. The play does not "condemn Bottom's attempts," unlike Theseus, Hippolyta, and the audience. Like with Nurse in *Romeo & Juliet*, we are led into alignment with the laughing high-class character(s), allowing us to vicariously experience their sense of superiority.

In his 2016 production of *Midsummer* at the Folger's Shakespeare Library, director Aaron Posner rejected the idea of the players' performance as mediocre

fodder for the audience's laughter. A reviewer of the show wrote of Act 5, "The tedious and brief play broke the mold of the ridiculous and delivered the only sincere and beautifully performed deaths of Pyramus and Thisbe I have ever seen. So much so that it left me feeling guilty about the assumptions I had initially made regarding their characters." This presentation of the players and their skills gets to the heart of what Act V seems to be about beneath its façade as a happy ending of sorts. The reviewer continues on to say that "until this production I had never stopped to consider that Bottom could have or be driven by actual talent instead of just by delusions of grandeur for unattainable talent…surprising as it was refreshing, Bottom's validation left tears of sadness instead of laughter in everyone's eyes" (Skow, 3). Posner leaned into the potential that Shakespeare created for exposing the socioeconomic discrimination underlying the end of the play. The result was a more emotional and reflective experience for the offstage audience who were forced to confront how the play had made them active participants in that discrimination. By refusing to make assumptions of characters' abilities based on their class, Posner revealed how tragic and limiting it is when we do so; if we instead allow the possibility that the "rude-mechanicals" are talented, the result is a more moving story as a whole and a play-within-a-play

that might just do its Ovidian source material justice.

Bottom's transformation and Titania's subsequent pursuit of him also provokes the audience into laughing at the lack of agency the two experience; it is important to note the power dynamics inherent in this "comedy" as Oberon, a

powerful male figure, manipulates a lower-class character and a woman. Bottom remarks "I see their knavery. This is to make an ass of / me, to fright me if they could; but I will not stir from / this place, do what they can. I will walk up and down / here, and I will sing, that they shall hear I am not / afraid" (Shakespeare 3.1.16-19). Once again, our first impulse is to laugh at Bottom's predicament, his visual appearance, the play on the word "ass," and the image of a donkey-man singing in the woods to prove his bravery. However, unlike the play in Act V where the characters' choices and abilities are the butt (ass?) of the joke, here it is Bottom's total lack of control that is the comedic fodder.

Oberon is playing a joke on Titania, although her forced pursuit of Bottom and our laughter at the two of them is also a punishment and reassertion of their status; they are not the most powerful. Oberon begins by laughing at this "romantic" farce he is the puppet-master of before relenting and saying of Titania, "Her dotage now I do begin to pity. / For meeting her of late behind the wood, / Seek sweet favours for this hateful fool" (Shakespeare 4.1.46-48). Oberon dehumanizes Bottom by literally making him part animal and again by insulting him as a "hateful fool." Bottom is not to be pitied; only Queen Titania deserves that from us. Oberon laughs at his trick until he sees Titania "seek sweet favours" from Bottom at which point the joke is taken too far. There is a "tension between order and disorder that characterizes A Midsummer Night's Dream" (Geddes, 76). We are supposed to laugh at the disorder and appearance of upheaval within the class hierarchy but when upheaval takes place through romantic mixing between someone on the

bottom (Bottom) and the Queen, order must be restored. We are given permission to laugh at and withhold pity from Bottom despite the only difference between him and Titania, who we do pity for and find her predicament tragic, being their class. Geddes also writes that "The play repeatedly encourages Bottom to overstep dramatic boundaries then mercilessly mocks him for doing so…" (70). However, Bottom is not so much encouraged to overstep boundaries as he is thrown into situations outside of normal expectations for his person (acting as Pyramus, being transformed into a donkey) and then laughed at for not fitting into these new roles. The laughter is not inherent or necessary to the play but comes from accepting the exploitation of Bottom's socioeconomic position and corresponding vulnerability.

Nurse in *Romeo & Juliet* and Bottom and the other players in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* are most often characters played for laughs; their actions and struggles are a spectacle for an audience that is encouraged to consider them comical even when their situation is tragic. They illustrate the theatrical paradox of "fake" personhood; since they are characters, we laugh at them but simultaneously we must grapple with the uncomfortable knowledge that they are also real people onstage demonstrating real dynamics of power and control. What do we do when the content is real, but the characters are not? Shakespeare leaves the door open to interpretations like Aaron Posner's that defy the assumptions we are also open to make about the nature of a scene, a character, etc. Upper class characters in these two plays such as Oberon, Theseus, and Hippolyta do laugh at the expense of lower-class characters, but do we have to laugh along with them? The tragedy of Nurse,

Bottom, and the players is that we have the power to laugh at them and that we choose to do so despite the textual evidence for the hardships they experience. These characters are important because they make us question the potential comedy has to be a tragic exploitation and reassertion of power dynamics, especially class differences. Shakespeare rejects a simplistic view of comedy and tragedy and instead weaves the two together in an examination of class hierarchies, audience/actor power dynamics, and the stereotypical assumptions we make.

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Patriarchal Limitations to Cosmopolitanism

Sarah Varnadoe

Berry College

In *Three Guineas*, Virginia Woolf argues that women are naturally more inclined to explore the world and its diverse cultures due to the constraints of their birth country. However, this also imposes limitations on the extent of women's cosmopolitanism. Martha Nussbaum asserts that one must understand their own country and culture before they can learn about other countries' in her article "Patriotism and Cosmopolitanism." She explains that if women are so displaced in their own country that they try to become a world citizen too quickly, they can never truly be cosmopolitan. Woolf brings to attention the important issue of women creating a constricted cosmopolitanism while trying to escape the limitations of the

patriarchy. Woolf's argument for women's world citizenship in comparison to Nussbaum's ideas on cosmopolitanism highlights how the bounds of patriarchy are great enough to also limit escape.

Woolf continuously emphasizes how women were not granted all of the rights in their country that men were. She highlights how, even when women are able to do something, men often have to approve it, and if they do not, the women lose what limited power they have. She writes:

> …both the Army and the Navy are closed to our sex. We are not allowed to fight. Nor again are we allowed to be members of the Stock Exchange…The less direct but still effective weapons which our brothers, as educated men, possess in the diplomatic service, in the Church, are also denied to us. We cannot preach sermons or negotiate treaties. Then again although it is true that we can write articles or send letters to the Press, the control of the Press—the decision what to print, what not to print—is entirely in the hands of your sex. It is true that for the past twenty years we have been admitted to the Civil Service and to the Bar; but our position there is still very precarious and our authority of the slightest. (Woolf 11)

In this quote, Woolf lists various rights that men have in England that women do not, calling to attention the extent of the power men hold over women. She continues by discussing how even women that are part of the elite class hold very little power and how the power that they do hold is so slow that it is virtually

ineffective. She states the "influence of the kind that can be exerted by the daughters of educated men is very low in power, very slow in action, and very painful in use" (Woolf 13). Woolf is part of the elite in that she is the daughter of an educated man; however, this does not afford her the power it would to the son of an educated man. She has some influence in that she can whisper in her father's ear and perhaps convince him to do something out of affection for his daughter, but she herself cannot take any truly effective action. This is true even in terms of education. As part of the elite, she should be able to get a college education, but "the daughters of educated men are not members of Cambridge University" (Woolf 30). Therefore, they cannot receive the same education or speak on matters of education as men of the elite class can. This difference in rights was vast enough that it caused a rift in women's relationship to the men in their country, and therefore, the country itself since the men ran it and determined which rights women had.

Women were in such a subservient position that they could not even give their opinion on topics deemed as men's tasks. For instance, Woolf mentions how the letter she is responding to is "remarkable" and "unique" because "when before has an educated man asked a woman how in her opinion war can be prevented" (Woolf 3). Throughout her life, war was considered a man's job, as made clear by women not being allowed to join the Army or Navy. This letter was the first time that she was allowed to partake in the topic of war in any manner, and it is still merely asking for an opinion without the promise of putting her thoughts to use.

This extreme lack of rights for women led Woolf to believe that she was "a stepdaughter of England" (Woolf 13) rather than a full daughter of England as men would consider themselves sons of their home country. Her disconnect from her country and women's low status are made clearer in her discussion of how a woman's idea of patriotism is different from a man's:

> But the educated man's sister—what does 'patriotism' mean to her? Has she the same reasons for being proud of England, for loving England, for defending England? Has she been 'greatly blessed' in England? History and biography when questioned would seem to show that her position in the home of freedom has been different from her brother's; and psychology would seem to hint that history is not without its effect upon mind and body. Therefore her interpretation of the word 'patriotism' may well differ from his. And that difference may make it extremely difficult for her to understand his definition of patriotism and the duties it imposes. (Woolf 8-9)

Woolf believes that men would unanimously agree to fight in a war and kill others for the sake of loyalty to their country because of the position they are afforded merely due to being men (Woolf 8). However, as a woman, she does not feel this same patriotic feeling or the sense of duty that accompanies it, and that is due to her inferior position in British society. Her being devoid of the patriotism men have thanks to their rights leads her to say "As a woman I have no country. As a woman I want no country. As a woman my country is the whole world" (Woolf 129). This statement makes it clear that Woolf considers women citizens of the world, or

cosmopolitans, because of their lack of rights in, and therefore patriotism for, their home country. No matter which country women come from or go to, they will always be treated unequally because patriarchal standards are everywhere.

Woolf's claim is substantiated by Jeannie Im, a senior language lecturer at New York University who provides further evidence of how women were treated as disposable and inferior citizens in Britain. Im discusses how there was "a series of Acts on both sides of the Atlantic [that] formalized the policy of coverture or relational nationality, whereby women lost their nationality when they married a foreign national" (Im 570). She remarks how, in *Three Guineas*, Woolf discusses the "citizenship gap" that leaves women susceptible to statelessness (Im 571). Woolf expounds on how a woman's "political views must then be entirely reversed, and her filial piety transferred" (Woolf 175) to the nationality of the man she marries because of the laws that Im believes were enacted to prevent "intermixture of ethnic and racial groups" (Im 571). This too shows how women were considered disposable citizens. They were denaturalized if they married a foreigner, but the same policy did not apply to men marrying foreign women. Furthermore, Im highlights how "these citizenship policies put women at risk for statelessness because marriage did not guarantee that a woman would be naturalized in her husband & country, and women were not guaranteed repatriation once they lost their citizenship" (Im 571-572). Women would have been forced to become citizens of the world if they married a foreigner because Britain would denaturalize them and there was also the

potential that they would not be naturalized by their husband's country. Consequently, they had no country to call home.

However, women being forced to become world citizens either because of marriage laws or because of lack of rights does not automatically make them cosmopolitan. In fact, it may hinder their cosmopolitanism. A common misconception about cosmopolitanism is that to be cosmopolitan, you do not have a home and that you should learn about all people everywhere right away with no special attention on your country of birth. Martha Nussbaum, a philosopher and the Ernst Freund Distinguished Service Professor of Law and Ethics at the University of Chicago, rejects these ideas. Her definition of cosmopolitanism is based on the Stoics' concept of concentric circles:

> The Stoics…suggest that we think of ourselves not as devoid of local affiliations, but as surrounded by a series of concentric circles. The first one is drawn around the self; the next takes in one's immediate family; then follows the extended family; then, in order, one's neighbors or local group, one's fellow city-dwellers, one's fellow countrymen—and we can easily add to this list groupings based on ethnic, linguistic, historical, professional, gender and sexual identities. Outside all these circles is the largest one, that of humanity as a whole. Our task as citizens of the world will be to 'draw the circles somehow toward the center' (Stoic philosopher Hierocles, 1st-2nd CE)…

> In other words, we need not give up our special affections and identifications…We may and should devote special attention to them in education. (Nussbaum)

This idea of concentric circles eradicates the possibility of women being cosmopolitan simply because they are forced to be world citizens. Women who feel a vast lack of connection to their home country do not fulfill all of the necessary concentric circles. They may not even, in some cases, fulfill the second one. If their male family members enforce women's lack of rights too severely within the home and the family dynamic, a rift may form between the women and the male family members that would not allow the woman to make it past the initial concentric circle. Some of the other unfulfilled concentric circles are more obvious, such as the "fellow city-dwellers" and "fellow countrymen." All of the circles with the exception of the first one around the self include the men that are oppressing women, the very reason that makes women feel as if they have no country to call their own. The men in a patriarchal society are the ones who determine what rights women have, and it is women's lack of rights and treatment as second-class citizens that cause the disconnect between them and their home country, therefore not permitting them to be cosmopolitan.

Woolf examines how a "lack of rights and privileges" is transformed into "freedom from unreal loyalties" (Woolf 78), but having "unreal loyalties" to your home country prevents you from being truly cosmopolitan. As Nussbaum states,

special attention must be given to your own nation. An understanding of yourself is necessary for cosmopolitanism, and this can only occur when you understand your home country and culture. Patriarchy forces women into a statelessness from which there is no escape. Women who are forced to become world citizens, as Woolf claims they are, may be forced into it before they understand their country enough to be cosmopolitan. Another possibility is that women's lack of rights leads to a growing contempt for their country that causes them to not want to have a special attention on it, therefore not allowing them to be cosmopolitan. No matter which route they follow to become citizens of the world, the consequences of patriarchal society limits women's cosmopolitanism.

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Paradoxical Legitimacy: Understanding LGBTQ+ Christianity through the Poetry of Jay Hulme

Madison Tenney

Brigham Young University

"Blessed are the queers;

Who love creation enough to live the truth of it,

Despite a world that tells them they cannot."

Jay Hulme (90)

During the Covid-19 Pandemic, transgender author, Jay Hulme, stole a bible, devoured its pages, and found God. He met weekly on a park bench six feet from his local priest, found Christianity outside of culture, and connected with Christ through imperfect people and brittle bible pages. I will use the theoretical background of liberation theology, feminism, and queer religious ethics to explore how Hulme's work expands the religious praxis of queer Mormonism. By

understanding the implications of Hulme's claim to divine legitimacy, his poetry expands the current understanding of how LGBTQ+ Latter-Day Saints balance the conflict between religious rejection and heavenly legitimacy. Hulme suggests that queerness is not the antithesis to divine connection but the antithesis to a stagnant patriarchal church culture that belies Christianity's doctrine. Queerness, both as a lived sexuality and as a theoretical concept, brings humanity back into religious orthodoxy. In our post-Christian age, queerness provides a needed revival that destroys hypocrisy and revives Latter-Day Saint religious tradition.

This paper explores how Jay Hulme's poetry expands the lived implications of the potentially contradictory forms of legitimacy that arise within the intersection of the LGBTQ+ community and Christian theology. The scope of this paper is not to explore the truism of God, the different religious claims to authority, or even the truism of Latter-Day Saint theology utilized within this paper. I will then apply this to the theology of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints as an experiment in critical literary application and analysis. Within queer LDS discourse, there are two primary critical conversations. Petrey, McDannell, and Ostler take a historical approach, navigating the relationship between the queer community and the praxis of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints citing cultural trends as the foundation for homophobia within Church doctrine and policy. At the same time, Bird, Christofferson, and the contributors to *Mormon Feminism* conclude that while there are spaces within the Church to be openly queer, they are either silent or exclude the ability to be in queer relationships within the church. While McDannell

and Ostler argue that the church's past practice of polygamy is inherently queer by today's standards and provides a complex step forward for the cultural acceptance of LGBTQ+ individuals, Petrey cites the church's conservative views on sexuality and gender as a blocking point for future development. There is little work currently done within this discourse that explores how the complete expression of queerness is not an exception to some divine mandate. Hulme's work enters the conversation, arguing that queerness is not exceptional at all, but it is the key to achieving holy unity with Christ and revitalizing Christianity.

Liberation theology within Christianity reapplies the call to "set at liberty them that are bruised" and provides a valuable background to contextualize Hulme's work (Luke 4:18 KJV). The inclusion of Hulme's work into the discourse of queer Christian and Mormon theology also follows the intertextual framework of Julia Kristeva. She wrote, "we understand texts not as self-contained systems but as differential and historical, as traces and tracings of otherness since they are shaped by the repetition and transformation of other textual structures" (Alfaro 268). The act of drawing from and writing within the interplay of the bible as a literary text, combined with the cultural performances of Christianity, strikes at the root of queer academic practices and Mormon cultural tradition. As a literary text, the New Testament calls directly for the inclusion of the "other," which Hulme uses to critique the phenomenon of Christian rejection of the LGBTQ+ community. Cosgrove argues that at the basis of liberation theology is seeing hypocrisy within Christianity, liberation theologists call for a complete social and political liberation

of both state and church (506). The work Hulme does is, at its root, liberation theology. Still, instead of calling for the freedom of a group of people from a social system, Hulme calls for the release of Christ from cultural Christianity. Hulme writes, "these structures you've built would be trampled / beneath the leveling might of our Savior's feet," reminding the reader of the independence movements of Latin America during the 1960s and '70s where liberation theology found its roots (43). However, while Hulme does critique different churches' cultural practices of Christianity, Hulme does not call for a complete rejection of Christianity or complete societal reconstruction. Instead, he calls for a queering of Christianity that utilizes foundational views of Christ as both captive and liberator to transform devotional practice into transcendental grace.

Hulme's poetic call for a "queerer church" pushes our understanding of the tension between liberation and belonging within Protestant Christian theology and expands our knowledge of queering a literary text. Historically, queerness, by definition, has been limited to the culture, society, or values it seeks to reject (Whittington 158). Instead, I define queerness, similar to Dozier, as a wholly new transcendent experience or understanding outside of the patriarchal norms and values that currently define one's worldview (298). Similar to the arguments of Butler, I argue that the values of a patriarchal society belie the ethics of Christianity. Queerness is more than a rejection. It is a liberation that divides silver-plated social values from divine alignment. Within this paper, I will use the word queerness to reference sexualities other than cisgendered heterosexuality, and

as a critical move to gain new insight and understanding through Sedwick's methodology. Sedgwick referred to queer as "the open mesh of possibilities, gaps, overlaps, dissonances and resonances, lapses, and excesses of meaning when the constituent elements of anyone's gender, or of anyone's sexuality, aren't made (or can't be made) to signify monolithically" (8). Queerness invites us to challenge current understandings of biblical texts and seek resolution in spaces that challenge us to apply Christianity's foundational grace, inclusion, and love.

Queering Christianity in this way may initially feel uncomfortable, but Hulme argues that discomfort is a disconnect with patriarchal culture, not divinity. He writes in the poem, *The Love of God; The Loss of Church*, "Shake the dust of their hearts / from the soles of your feet," citing that the rejection he faces as a gay man isn't from God Themselves. It is a byproduct of the cultural dysphoria surrounding his congregation's contemporary understanding of Christ. His phrases parallel the admonition of Christ in the New Testament, who Matthew quotes, "If anyone will not welcome you or listen to your words, leave that home or town and shake the dust off your feet" (Matthew 10:4 NIV). He concludes this stanza by writing, "There's a God out here far bigger / than the best of them." This separation between congregational culture and Christ can feel like a dismissal of organized religion as a whole. However, Hulme doesn't call for a rejection of Christianity, but instead sees his rejection as an opportunity to reshape his congregations to align with biblical teachings more closely. While a church made up of imperfect people will innately be an imperfect reflection of Christ's teachings, Hulme balances this,

and still calls for a complex and more nuanced understanding of Diety and religious legitimacy. Hulme doesn't altogether reject all forms of organized religion, but instead seeks spaces that leave conservative Christian culture in favor of grace-filled inclusion.

Ultimately, Hulme cites contemporary Christian culture as the stumbling block preventing an alignment with New Testament theology and doctrine. In the thread of Kristeva's theory of intertextuality, Hulme notes human prejudice as the instigator for current attitudes towards the LGBTQ+ and not a Heavenly mandate writing:

> God sings hymns
>
> based on sermons,
>
> based on books,
>
> based on Bibles,
>
> based on old
>
> mistranslations.
>
> God got lost
>
> in this translation. (39)

The cultural understanding of Christianity, Hulme argues, isn't a direct God-to-person pipeline, but we build it through imperfect layers of meaning that

accumulate and inform each other. Hulme places cultural artifacts of Christianity, while in conversation with his religious legitimacy, at a lower priority than his relationship with the Divine. Within Hulme's framework, legitimacy from God is vastly more important than cultural or social legitimacy- even when it conflicts with religious legitimacy. For Latter-day Saints, this creates a divisive complication. Currently, the Church teaches that the only way to secure a space in the highest realms of Heaven is through heterosexual, cis-gendered marriages performed in temples. For queer members, they can remain celibate, enter into mixed-orientation marriages, or church leaders will excommunicate them for being in LGBTQ+ relationships. The complete expression of queerness, neither celibacy nor ex-communication, provides an option within Mormon theology for heavenly success. At its core, the church rejects queerness. Despite this, Ostler argues that current church policies surrounding the LGBTQ+ community are mired in cultural prejudice. They call for a return to the original tenets that inspired the faith (96, 107). Holme expands this conflict, and suggests holiness is found in rejection by a church culture that upholds unethical patriarchal values. From this, lived queerness acts as sanctification for divine favor and an opportunity for systemic change.

Hulme utilizes the metaphor of the renovation of the Coventry Cathedral physical building to envision the implications of this cultural divorcement, saying, "What you hold on to / doesn't have to be this; heat-kissed stonework and / fallen beams" (65). He argues that what we believe is essential to our faith; the cultural

relics of tribalism and homophobia could be released in favor of something that "preach[es] promises of peace" (65). Hulme creates meaning in the sting of rejection. Instead of the current either/or approach to queerness and Christianity, Hulme uses discomfort as a tool to reconnect himself with Deity while inviting organized religion to slough off toxic narratives surrounding LGBTQ+ identities. Legitimacy with God borne during rejection sits at the heart of the New Testament storytelling. As the central figure, Christ openly troubles and rejects the cultural creations surrounding popular understandings of Judaism. He invited his followers to queer traditional interpretations of the Old Testament. Instead, He practiced a religion that held to the tenets of the Old Testament without its accompanying cultural practices. He proposed the way to find this new religious tradition was by having a personal relationship with Divinity. Compared to the New Testament narrative, Hulme's invitation to "Repair the damage / without renewing all that has been" provides a practical navigational tool for LGBTQ+ Latter-Day Saints to sort through their faith and keep what they can repair from cultural corruption.

Restructuring requires more than just keeping the good parts. It also requires confronting beliefs that queerness is inherently sinful. Hulme's most powerful poem imagines Christ dancing in a gay bar. Like the woman's story with an issue of blood, a boy reaches out to Christ and begs to be healed of his queerness. Hulme images Christ saying, "my beautiful child / there is nothing in this heart of yours / that ever needs to be healed" (88). Within this framework, neither internal queerness nor queering our understanding of Christianity is a liability. Hulme

transforms them into innate and eternal strengths. Ostler argues for the inherent queerness of Latter-Day Saint theology, saying, "Becoming queer in Christ means that we encompass a broad spectrum of genders, orientations, races, abilities, and experiences. Embracing our collective queerness and peculiarity is an important step towards godhood" (44). Hulme and Ostler propose that queerness is not a step away from Christianity or godliness, but the explicit lived expression of queerness aligns individuals with Divine legitimacy. Akin to the transcendental alignment offered during sacramental rituals, the lived expression of sexuality and identity becomes a holy union with Divinity. Hulme compares in the poem, *The Alter Frontal at St. Nicks's is a Rainbow Flag*, a lesbian couple's partaking of the eucharist to the communal body of Christ. He writes:

> A toddler cries.
>
> His mothers rise to a squat, hold his hands,
>
> walk him slowly round the aisles. They circle the front
>
> where he was baptized alongside one of his mothers. (Hulme 53)

In the middle of this queer family, Hulme proposes that they are "The body of Christ. The Blood of Christ. / The fellowship of Christ" (53). In this space, Hulme resolves the paradox between Christian cultural rejection of the queer community with Christian tenets and the foundational call in the gospel of Matthew to love God and love neighbor. He centers the LGBTQ+ family as an expression of divinity itself. The queer community transcends the label as a neighbor, and in their

rejection, they become the contemporary embodiment of Christ. To love the queer community is to love a lived embodiment of God. The recent rejection of the LGBTQ+ community by organized religion that LGBTQ+ Christians and Latter-Day Saints face is unjust, but Hulme molds their othering into holy union with the divine, even when it contradicts current organizational practices and policies.

However, Hulme continues to hold space for those whose congregations crucify them at the feet of cultural supremacy. He explores themes of martyrdom and othering as a gateway into holy unity through the poem, *In Search of St Sebastian.* In comparing how he was rejected as a gay man by his church culture, Hulme compares himself physically with the stained glass representation of St Sebastian in his cathedral writing:

> It's said if you stand on the pew and
>
> line it up - just right- you'll see yourself
>
> somehow both dying
>
> and daring, in the agony
>
> of his eyes. (55)

Hulme finds himself rejected by his church because of his sexuality; St Sebastian's countrymen reject him for his religious belief, yet he resolves his destruction through daring to exist despite persecution. Hulme nuances the paradox of being LGBTQ+ and Christian through similar moves to Hegel's dialectic. Hulme believes

his identity is given by God and feels like he is given divine legitimacy from Them. Despite this, Hulme faces rejection from organized religion and Christianity, claiming to speak for God. To resolve this conflict, Hulme travels the roads of Damascus and Jerusalem and cites that the real issue isn't God, nor Christian tenets, but the man-made cultural artifacts surrounding both. Queer Mormons, despite organizational rejection, are currently doing the same, which I argue is one way to solve the moral quandary within cultural Mormonism and queer Latter-Day Saint practice.

As a queer Latter-Day Saint myself, I argue that if the church as a whole continues to value contemporary Christian culture over the biblical teachings of Christ, it will lose its foundational moorings and eventually crumble like Hulme's Coventry Cathedral. Meanwhile, I do see space where we can "learn to forgive, / let us build an edifice that speaks of this; let us turn / this shattering to sunlight, and preach a promise of peace" (Hulme 65). When Joseph Smith faced rejection by his community because of the legitimacy he believed came from God, he created a new space to hold both his newfound relationship with God and the tenets of biblical faith he grew up with. He founded a church with an open canon, encouraged individual legitimacy and relationship with God, and put personal revelation before organizational legitimacy. Hulme, a transgender, queer man over 200 years later, goes through the same journey with his faith and shares how he resolved conflicting legitimacy through poetry. Hulme ends his work with this proposal, "And blessed are those / who believe themselves unworthy of blessing; / what inconceivable

wonders you hold." Hulme suggests that those who experience rejection hold the answers to creating a larger, queerer church. When faced with the conflict between Mormonism and validity and acceptance from God, LGBTQ+ members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints resolve this conflict by embracing the innate queerness of themselves and their religion, even if they have to face rejection by a culturally organized religion. While they may leave their pews, their rejection places them next to St Sebastian, Hulme, and Christ himself.

When the Church rejects its LGBTQ+ members, it belies its queer origins and the inherent queerness in the New Testament teachings of Jesus Christ and the apostles. Christ proclaimed his mission that, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised" (Luke 4:18 KJV). Christ cited his divine legitimacy as justification enough despite the rejection by Jewish leaders. As Latter-day Saints, if we truly intend to adhere to our founding principles, we must reject cultural exclusion in favor of the holy embodiment of inclusion and encourage a queering of our doctrine, policy, and praxis. Queerness is not a rejection of Christ but an internal alignment with the divine, a holy rite, which inevitably puts us at odds with patriarchal cultural values. To expand our theology, we must be unafraid to be a 'peculiar people' and find meaning and unity from the inevitable cultural rejection that comes when we practice radical inclusion

and grace. Otherwise, we will continue to fall short in creating communities of belonging, and the body of Christ will never have all its vital members.

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"Notes from Coosa" and Indigenous Cosmopolitanism

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As a self-identified multicultural person and a member of the Muscogee Creek Nation, the work of poet Jennifer Elise Foerster is fraught with exploration of her indigenous roots. In her poem "Notes from Coosa," she searches for evidence of her Muscogee heritage in pursuit of what she calls "invisible maps" over a landscape that has changed since the residence of her ancestors. However, as her poem explores both specific and global identity, it problematizes the existence of Eurocentric cosmopolitanism, an ideology that purports to stand for world unity while simultaneously centralizing European cultural viewpoints. Foerster develops a sense of cosmopolitanism in "Notes from Coosa" through its exploration of cultural loss and the natural world, ultimately advocating for the development of a hybridized version of cosmopolitanism.

In "Notes From Coosa," Foerster explores the loss of her Native American roots through finding evidence of their displacement in the natural world. She begins the poem lamenting that she finds her ancestors "[...] nowhere that is here nor there. / Below the sunken Uchee path—iron ore" (Foerster 1-2). These lines show that her Muscogee ancestors exist just outside of her reach in a space of liminality, neither "here nor there" because evidence of their existence lies far beneath traceable trails. Not only does this poem convey Foerster's own disconnect from her people, but it also implies their history of displacement and erasure in the United States. Foerster additionally reckons with this history of being forced off their land, saying, "If it were easy to leave our bodies / in the fork of Red River, two mounds of earth" (Foerster 9-10). Her specific use of "fork" conveys a splintering off of cultural history where they were torn from their geographical roots; it is difficult for Foerster to find a past that has been deliberately erased. The Red River borders Oklahoma and Texas on former Native American territory, furthering her motif of divides through mirroring cultural differences with the river bisecting this contested territory. The "two mounds of earth" that she mentions have multiple meanings, both culturally and in the physical world. Firstly, it refers to the two land masses on either side of the river, but even moreso the mounds that many Native Americans built. It also connotes burial mounds, summoning implications of indigenous genocide at the hands of colonialism. Connecting these ideas to the Western modernist idea of cosmopolitanism, Native American descendants are unable to truly connect with their cultural origins, meaning that they would fail to achieve this type of cosmopolitanism since it

necessitates a deep understanding of their own citizenship. Therefore, Foerster's writing illustrates the difficulty that indigenous peoples have in attaining the typical, Western sense of cosmopolitanism because of Native Americans' disconnect from their cultural roots, necessitating a different version of cosmopolitanism that accounts for their struggles.

Whereas Foerster is unable to make a concrete connection to her ancestors, she finds culture through the natural world. She further grieves over her inability to find her native forebears in "[...] the language where I lost you/ as if you were a sentence in this poem / and this poem an archive of the forest" (Foerster 13-15). Here, Foerster makes a connection that fringes on metafiction, saying that this poem itself is her way of trying to "archive" the forest, and by extension, archive her ancestry. The idea of the natural world chronicling its inhabitants conveys its ability to retain the cultural and historical imprints of a group of people, meaning that land is inseparable from its occupants. This idea is later present in the final lines of the poem, wherein she observes that on the bluffs, there are "[...] strawberries thinly scattered/and in the old beaver ponds, briar root, / a bread made of it for times of famine" (Foerster 17-19). The strawberries mentioned in these lines are evidence of indigenous modes of subsistence and Foerster is able to find even more evidence of her ancestors through a sign of survival: the very briar roots they would have used to make bread during famines. Through these scattered bits of natural evidence, she is able to find a link to past indigenous ecological knowledge, and through this, the poem necessitates a new way of considering cultural belonging: one that is interwoven with the environment

itself. Consequently, "Notes from Coosa" conjures the cosmopolitan idea of "global citizenship" in a uniquely indigenous way, in which boundaries have no bearing on cultural identity, but rather all humans are intertwined through the natural world. Contrasted with the original definition of cosmopolitanism, this new version would not purely focus on European-descended identities, such as American citizenship, but take into consideration colonialism's erasure of marginalized identities and how the shifting landscape has cataloged this history. In this way, the poem not only reaches a cosmopolitan conclusion, but also proposes a solution to Eurocentric ways of thinking such as connecting geography with a new form of post-colonialist cosmopolitanism.

In a similar fashion, Barney Warf's journal article "Cosmopolitanism and Space" explains this link between physical geography and ideology, seeking to subvert the domination of Eurocentric narratives. The essay itself opposes nationalism and the prioritized existence of nation-states on the basis that these divides enshrine certain ways of thinking above others, promoting exclusionary ideals and xenophobia (Warf 5). Through this argument, Warf outright rejects the notion of Eurocentric cosmopolitanism, further contending that cosmopolitanism should take into account how cultures are affected by their geographies and the differences that spatiality creates in values. The article concludes that, because ideology is linked to place and circumstance, the hybridity of cosmopolitanism should be embraced, stating that a geographical focus of ideology reveals that "[...] no single ideology exemplifies cosmopolitan ideas; rather a series of context-dependent practices in

which broad notions of cosmopolitan civility are tailored to the specifics of individual cities and cultures form complex hybrids of similarity and difference" (Warf 5). By comparison, Foerster's poem similarly presents a spatially-cognizant portrayal of cosmopolitanism. Because Native Americans have experienced both deep cultural connection to their indigenous lands and displacement from these spaces, it is necessary that cosmopolitanism takes into account these geographical complexities. It should also consider how the removal of many Native Americans from east of the Mississippi River and subsequent forced assimilation through residence schools resulted in the mingling of European and indigenous culture. Therefore, this new version of cosmopolitanism should not blindly enforce the same European values on all other cultures, but should seek to thwart the domination of white, colonialist narratives in favor of honoring indigenous roots through acknowledgement of their links to geography.

Furthermore, in his article "Nationalism, Indigenism, Cosmopolitanism: Critical Perspectives on Native American Literatures," Arnold Krupat demonstrates how to apply this indigenous-conscious cosmopolitanism towards analyzing native works. As was demonstrated by Warf, the distance between the ideas of nationalists and indigenists is immeasurable, but Krupat broaches a solution to this divide through cosmopolitanism. In response to nationalists, Krupat acknowledges that the crux of the ideological divide hinges on the concept of sovereignty, wherein First Nation peoples want to be recognized as independent nations, but have not been afforded sovereign rule because of colonialism (Krupat 618). In contrast, indigenists

come from a position of geocentric ideology, in which physical place is more important than sovereign boundaries. Krupat puts forth cosmopolitanism to bridge these cultural divides because it recognizes the long history of hybridization that has complicated the connection between spatiality and its peoples. Through taking into account this ever changing sphere of multiculturalism, he advocates for a cosmopolitan hybridization approach to overcoming cultural colonialism. In practice, considering the works of indigenous people in a cosmopolitan way means that critics can both acknowledge the political significance of sovereignty and combine it with the importance of place-specific values. Krupat summarizes that cosmopolitanists know that "[...] a commitment to sovereignty and the home place are 'roots'" that Native American literature is sure to carry with it wherever it may go—or, indeed, choose to remain" (Krupat 622). Likewise, Foerster's poem presents this same idea of indigenous roots being both the physical geography where those roots originated from and the ways in which those roots have changed through multicultural hybridization. Through showing the native links to the environment, "Notes from Coosa" further shows that indigenous people cannot be viewed as the cosmopolitanist idea of "citizens of the world" without first acknowledging their spatial struggles from colonialism.

Therefore, based on these concepts, it becomes clear that Foerster's poem is not only an example of native cosmopolitanism, but can become a guide within itself for how to approach cosmopolitanism as a global ideology with spatial implications. Even as she explores the changing natural world of native Western America territory,

"Notes from Coosa" is never able to quite reach a strong connection to Foerster's indigenous roots because of the impact of colonialism and erosion of the land itself. Foerster ultimately concludes that the issue of finding her roots is a difficult one, not able to be solved through a purely geocentric exploration, as even she herself has "[...] burned the remaining pine" (Foerster 16). However, despite this barrier between past and present that Foerster acknowledges as inevitable in indigenous lives, she does not judge the hunt for these roots as fruitless, because the poem itself becomes a way for her to connect with the natural world, meaning that the culture of her ancestors is not irrecoverably lost in time but lives on in her pursuit of it. In this way, Foerster's words become a roadmap for others in reconciling indigenous cultural loss with modern implications of cosmopolitanism.

Overall, "Notes from Coosa" is a poem that bridges divides past and present, ancestry and modernity, geographical origin and world citizenship. Foerster's writing ultimately reaches the conclusion that cosmopolitanism should account for the complexities of spatiality and the long history of colonialist erasure of indigenous cultures. From this verdict, cosmopolitanism can be seen as a remedy mediating between the loss of native roots and subsequent cultural hybridization. In its totality, cosmopolitanism should not only unite people across cultural and physical boundaries, but also acknowledge the reasons for and impacts of those divides in order to create an ideology that is truly globally applicable.

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Cosmopolitanism and the Call for Justice in Lehua M. Taitano's "Current, I"

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The idea of cosmopolitanism has long been hailed as an equalizing force, as a way to solve global issues and to break down traditional barriers and biases that impede cross-cultural interaction. The cosmopolitan emphasis on learning about one's own culture and then expanding outward to encompass the entire world allows for a great deal of exploration, both of the self and of cultures and worldviews beyond one's own. Since both poetry and cosmopolitanism can be seen and used as groundbreaking forces, it is no wonder that cosmopolitan ideas can often be found in poetry, especially poetry written by poets from marginalized identities. Through the

lens of philosopher Martha Nussbaum's definition of cosmopolitanism, Lehua M. Taitano's poem "Current, I" can be considered a cosmopolitan poem because it emphasizes the importance of knowing the self before learning about the world without ignoring the importance of expanding one's knowledge and worldview beyond one's immediate community. Poems like "Current, I" that develop a cosmopolitan worldview are also proponents of justice for marginalized identities. This is achieved not only through cosmopolitanism's unique approach to identity and culture but also through the way in which these poems allow writers from marginalized identities to speak openly about their experiences and to create a space for themselves in fields which have been historically closed off or hostile towards them.

In addition to cosmopolitan ideas, the condemnation of colonialism is a recurring theme in the work of many Indigenous American figures, such as in a speech given by Anton Treuer, a Professor of Ojibwe at Bemidji State University. Treuer's speech examines how identity is linked to language and culture and how important a sense of self and community is for a fulfilling life. In his speech, Treuer asserts that colonialism is "something that has thoroughly dehumanized everyone" (226). Indigenous Americans, as survivors of colonialist efforts, continue to grapple with the trauma of the attempted erasure of their identities and cultures. Works like Lehua M. Taitano's poem "Current, I" demonstrate this struggle and reiterate the profound amount of damage that colonialism has caused. Each individual handles trauma and adversity in different ways, and as previously mentioned, poetry has long been an outlet for writers to work through their experiences and struggles. The use

of poetry to process trauma and to call for justice is reflected in much of Joy Harjo's work. Harjo is an accomplished Muscogee poet who served three terms as the United States Poet Laureate. In her article "Poetry Can Be All This: All of You, All of Me, All of Us," Harjo explores the idea of poetry as a liberating force and as an outlet for self-expression. She explains her realization during her youth that "poetry lived within our native lands, our communities," that poetry was for everyone, including her (Harjo 2). For poets like Harjo and Taitano, poetry is a way to celebrate their Indigenous American identities and cultures, while also bringing light to the injustices of colonialism that have haunted Indigenous American communities for centuries. In addition, Harjo explains that, for herself and her community, "[…] poetry became a refuge in those times of gathering together, standing up, and reconfiguring" (2). Harjo discovered that she could use poetry not only to express herself, but to give her community a voice as well. She realized that poetry is not simply a form of passive rumination upon suffering, but an active outcry against injustice and wrongdoing.

Before examining the cosmopolitanism of a specific work, it is important to establish how cosmopolitanism is defined in this context. The idea of cosmopolitanism was first introduced by Stoic philosophers, and later explored by Enlightenment philosopher Immanuel Kant. A number of philosophers have since provided alternative views on the subject, including Martha Nussbaum. Nussbaum's 1994 article "Patriotism and Cosmopolitanism" defines and contextualizes the idea of cosmopolitanism for a more modern, globalized world. According to Nussbaum,

cosmopolitanism is the view that all people should be seen as human equals, with no regard for nationality as a differentiating factor between groups. It emphasizes the idea that all humans are a part of a global community. Nussbaum takes this idea a step further in "Patriotism and Cosmopolitanism" by asserting that it is also imperative to examine oneself and one's immediate community before seeking to know more about other cultures or the world in general. She draws on Stoic philosophers' ideas of concentric circles to make this argument: "The first one is drawn around the self; the next takes in one's immediate family; then follows the extended family; then, in order, one's neighbors or local group, one's fellow city-dwellers, one's fellow countrymen" (Nussbaum 2). The concentric circle model allows for one to know oneself and one's community properly, as a strong sense of self-identity is necessary for understanding other cultures without losing one's own identity in the process. Nussbaum is not calling for a self-centered worldview, but rather one that seeks to situate the self appropriately within the world, a worldview that acknowledges the importance of an individual's own experiences and culture in comparison with other cultures.

Despite Nussbaum's emphasis on the self, she is not advocating for the removal of national, cultural, or other identifying distinctions between groups of people, nor is she dismissing the importance of such distinctions for the creation of community and belonging. Rather, Nussbaum argues that these distinctions do not need to be considered "superficial," and that "[…] we may think of our identity as in part constituted by them" (2). Humans can and should retain the various allegiances and

differences that allow them to identify with others similar to themselves. However, these allegiances should be acknowledged in order to better connect with others and with one's own identity, and the ultimate goal should be a sense of global citizenship: "We should work to make all human beings part of our community of dialogue and concern…and give the circle that defines our humanity a special attention and respect" (Nussbaum 2). In order to be cosmopolitan, finding commonalities with people across the world is just as important as connecting with one's neighbors. However, forming connections with others begins in one's immediate community, which is why Nussbaum advocates for the stoic idea of concentric circles. The concentric circle model emphasizes the necessity of finding one's own identity and community before seeking to learn more about the world beyond that community. It is far more difficult to meaningfully engage with other cultures and identities if one does not have a sense of self identity. Furthermore, Nussbaum's definition of cosmopolitanism is a judicial way of looking at the world, as it focuses on the distinguishing features between individuals and groups while maintaining a focus on global citizenship and the equality of all people, regardless of these distinguishing attributes.

In the context of "Current, I", the concept of justice is best defined as the pursuit of equity and fairness between all members of a society, and by the idea that past wrongdoings against specific social groups should be acknowledged and rectified. The concepts of cosmopolitanism and justice, as well as the relationship between them, are displayed throughout Lehua M. Taitano's autobiographical poem "Current,

I" as Taitano explores her identity and how she fits into a world that would rather she stay hidden, as well as analyzing how her identity as a queer Indigenous American woman has affected her worldview. Lehua M. Taitano identifies as a queer CHamoru woman, and her explorations of her queer and CHamoru identities in "Current, I" add another level to the poem's cosmopolitanism. The CHamoru, or Chamorro, people are the indigenous people of the Mariana Islands, including Guam, where Taitano is from. For members of marginalized identities, such as the LGBTQ+ community or an ethnic minority group, discovering one's identities can be difficult because these identities are often affected by the presence of the dominant culture's more negative views of them. Even if the culture is not openly hostile towards a certain identity, there are still individuals who may be, as well as lingering systemic biases against members of marginalized groups. Through the discussion of her queer and CHamoru identities in "Current, I," Taitano creates a dialogue about marginalized identities and how members of these identities experience the world differently than members of a majority identity, and it is through dialogue that deeper understandings of people and cultures are reached. Only by exploring other perspectives and learning about others' experiences can one become more cosmopolitan and begin understanding the call for justice for people of marginalized identities, and "Current, I" helps facilitate that understanding.

A technique that Taitano employs in "Current, I," which creates a sense of cosmopolitanism in the poem, is the use of both singular and plural first-person pronouns. After a note explaining the significance of the scientific symbol 'I' as an

indicator for the intensity of an electrical current, the poem opens with "Consider: we are made almost entirely of water and electricity," which creates a sense of commonality between the speaker and the reader (Taitano 1). By beginning with inclusive language as well as with a focus on the common state of all human beings, Taitano lays the groundwork for a cosmopolitan theme in her poem. Placing emphasis on the equality of and similarities between all people is a crucial component of cosmopolitanism, and its inclusion in the beginning of the poem helps to create the poem's cosmopolitan theme. In another display of cosmopolitan ideals, the poem shifts to first person singular pronouns like "me" and "I" as the speaker begins to explore her ancestry and identity (2-3). Then, the poem shifts back to first person plural pronouns, beginning with, "Our people were shaped from stone and the pulsing sea," which is a reference to the CHamoru creation story (Taitano 4). Because Taitano identifies as CHamoru, this exploration of the CHamoru creation story is a representation of her personal experience of drawing a sense of strength and community from her CHamoru identity. The speaker later describes the CHamoru people as "whole together," another suggestion of the sense of community that Taitano feels in regard to her CHamoru identity (Taitano 5). By displaying the uniting power of collective stories and beliefs within a community through the example of the CHamoru creation story, Taitano further emphasizes the importance of knowing the self and drawing strength from one's community, an idea which, as previously noted, Martha Nussbaum also argues for in "Patriotism and Cosmopolitanism."

Later in the poem, the speaker describes herself as "Prism, I. And culture bending through me," which is a simultaneous acknowledgement of both personal identity as well as one's connection to one's culture (Taitano 12). This sentence alone is remarkably cosmopolitan in its blending of the self with one's culture and community, a blending which effectively prepares an individual for further self-reflection as well as further exploration of cultures beyond one's own. Taitano furthers the idea of the enthusiastic exploration and discovery of the self by acknowledging the oppression that members of marginalized groups often face when trying to engage in self-discovery: "The world spits grapples tries to tie me up in basements to rid themselves of my insistence" (12). Here, the speaker directly confronts the dominant American culture's discomfort with her identity and existence and acknowledges the United States' history of trying to erase people like herself from the cultural narrative. This acknowledgement pushes back against those who would try to silence her and those like her, and emphatically declares the speaker's refusal to be subdued when faced with injustice and suffering.

In one of the speaker's most emphatic declarations of her identity and her autonomy, the speaker says in the final lines of the poem, "I expand, I empty, I carry within a hundred thousand wombs of spectacular light" (Taitano 13). The speaker's heritage and her confidence in herself allow her to define herself on her own terms, not by external expectations or pressures. Through the use of insistent phrases containing first person singular pronouns, Taitano develops the speaker's unassailable sense of self, which refuses to be subdued by others' potential discomfort

with her identity as a queer CHamoru woman. The combined use of both singular and plural first-person pronouns throughout the poem gives "Current, I" a distinctly cosmopolitan theme that equally acknowledges the importance of having a strong sense of self along with the view that one is not merely a citizen of a particular country or culture, but a global citizen. It is this deliberate use of language that makes "Current, I" not just a poem about the self and one's identities, but also about how the self relates to culture and to the rest of the world, which makes "Current, I" a cosmopolitan poem.

In addition to her CHamoru identity, Taitano also identifies as queer, an identity which further complicates her presence in a country where the dominant culture has only fairly recently begun to shift towards acceptance of the LGBTQ+ community. She acknowledges the sometimes painful experience of existing unapologetically as oneself when it seems that the world does not want to make space for one's identities. In her exploration of queer identity in "Current, I", Taitano analyzes the relationship between queerness and the self. The speaker asserts that she is "concurrent with every iteration of subatomic movement," declaring her sense of connection with the natural world, her innate sense of belonging to the universe, and her self-confidence (Taitano 8). She then asks, "How, then am I queer? Queer? Queered?" which reflects the speaker's sense that "queer" is a label that has been projected onto her, not necessarily one that she fully resonates with (Taitano 9). The speaker's sense of self does not require a label like "queer," but nevertheless she has adopted the label because it is what the majority culture in America expects her to

do. The speaker explains, "I am also only (queer) because there is a world outside of mine" (Taitano 8-9, author's parentheses). The speaker is only queer because the majority culture in America considers her sexuality to be outside the norm. By deconstructing the use of labels like "queer," Taitano furthers the poem's cosmopolitanism, because cosmopolitanism requires one to critically examine and deconstruct cultural frameworks, especially if those frameworks exist to divide society into 'in' and 'out' groups.

Though the LGBTQ+ community has reclaimed the word "queer," it was originally used as a slur to shame and ostracize people who did not conform to heterosexual, cisgender norms. Furthermore, with the poem's deconstruction of the "queer" label, Taitano also calls for justice for queer people like herself. The speaker's questioning of the "queer" label demonstrates a miniscule part of the queer experience in the United States. She acknowledges that, "If the world were only me, I would seem just so," that the only reason her queer identity makes her stand out as "different" is because American culture considers queerness to be abnormal, that if the speaker were in her own world, she would not have any reason to consider herself "abnormal" (Taitano 10). By exploring how queer people experience life differently than heterosexual people in America, Taitano is able to subtly call for a change in America's cultural view of queer people, a shift towards equal and just treatment for the LGBTQ+ community. Because of its ultimate goal of equality between all humans regardless of nationality or other identities, cosmopolitanism is an inherently judicial worldview that can, when implemented appropriately, be a force for justice for

marginalized groups. The cosmopolitan view of the world and the self that the speaker takes in "Current, I" advocates for a sense of global citizenship and equality between all humans, which can only be reached if justice is pursued for those who have historically been denied equal treatment in culture and politics.

In a similar vein as her analysis of queer identity in "Current, I", Taitano's analysis of her Indigenous American identity in this work takes a cosmopolitan view of ethnic and cultural identity that condemns the United States government's historic violence towards Indigenous Americans and calls for justice for indigenous groups. The speaker alternates between the condemnation of violence against indigenous people and the celebration of indigenous culture, specifically CHamoru culture. In one such denunciation of the violence and injustices committed against Indigenous Americans, the speaker explains that, "[…] my mother was conceived during a war waged on brown bodies and birthed me under a moon obscured by flags" (Taitano 2). In one sentence, Taitano effectively highlights the violence against her people that has been a shadow over her life and her mother's life and even her grandparents' lives. She directly acknowledges how Indigenous Americans were singled out and stripped of their autonomy, and subtly yet clearly communicates the suffering that resulted from the atrocities inflicted upon Indigenous Americans by the United States. Additionally, the mention of a "moon obscured by flags" evokes the sense of intrusion and destruction that Indigenous Americans have experienced for centuries as a result of the harmful idea that non-Western cultures are somehow "primitive" or "backwards" and must be erased. Throughout the poem, the reader is confronted with

the destructive nature of colonialism and forced to acknowledge the need for justice for those wronged by colonialist and racist practices and beliefs.

"Current, I" embodies the idea that poetry is for anyone, and that it can be used as an outlet as well as a way to advocate for oneself and one's community, just as Harjo explains. The use of poetry to advocate for justice and to unite and comfort a community is especially cosmopolitan, because it focuses on the humanity of those who have faced injustices. Taitano uses "Current, I" to condemn the centuries of violence that Indigenous Americans have faced and to call for a better future in which those injustices are acknowledged and atoned for. The poem's theme of cosmopolitanism helps to emphasize the importance of these actions, because cosmopolitanism requires injustices to be corrected and inequalities to be addressed in order to create a world of equal human beings who consider themselves citizens of the world, instead of focusing solely on their own nations and forsaking all others in the process.

Lehua M. Taitano's poem "Current, I" has a uniquely cosmopolitan theme because it emphasizes the importance of both the self as well as knowledge of the world and the correction of injustices in order to create a world of global citizens. Based on the concentric circle model of cosmopolitanism, knowing oneself and one's community is a crucial foundation for authentic cosmopolitanism, which Taitano's poem explores in depth. In addition, the deconstruction of dominant cultural narratives around marginalized identities, as well as the acknowledgement of injustices that members of those identities have historically faced are also important

for developing a holistic, authentic sense of cosmopolitanism. Not only that, but these actions also help further the movement towards justice for marginalized communities. The combined ideas of cosmopolitanism and justice in "Current, I" allow the poem to function as an unapologetic assertion of the self and the community that points the reader towards ideas for a better future for humanity as a whole.

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How the Relationship between the Environment and Gender Effects the Depiction of Characters in Helon Habila's *Oil on Water*

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Helon Habila writes a fantastic novel on the subject of environmental conflict in the Niger Delta. The book follows a young man named Rufus, who is on the tail of a story that has huge potential to take his career to the next level. As he traverses the delta with washed up reporter Zaq, he learns that the story he is chasing is more than just a means to fortune and fame. As corporations destroy the environment, militant fighters wreak havoc in the name of retaking control of resources for the people, and the military fights a seemingly never-ending battle against these hardened rebels. All the while, the locals are caught in the middle of the three parties, finding little respite in their oil-drenched homeland. Through Habila's puzzle piece

style of storytelling, the reading slowly assembles an intricate picture of what the situation in the Niger Delta really is. The images Habila conjures are filled with characters of different backgrounds, identities, and unique motives. The interactions between these diverse characters demonstrate an interesting trend throughout the story as well. In Helon Habila's novel *Oil on Water,* the male character's personal exploits come at the expense of the environment, as well as the female character's well-being.

In Habila's story, many characters are in it for themselves, and the men in this story are no exception to this. For example, the Major is a high-ranking officer of the Nigerian military, tasked with battling the rebels hidden in the humid enclaves of the Niger Delta. These rebels are notorious for kidnapping, the risks of which the Major is all too familiar with. His own daughter was a victim of kidnapping at the hands of a group of young men; she was assaulted by them, suffering greatly, and the men did not see justice by the law. The Major decided to take the law into his own hands to avenge his daughter. The narrator learns that this experience has haunted him ever since. The Major's fight against the militants includes many questionable tactics such as torturing his prisoners every morning by dumping gasoline on their heads, drenching them in the wretched fuel. Rufus witnesses The Major douse a group of prisoners firsthand, watching as he "started to pour the water on the head of the man on the outer right. Then the unmistakable acrid smell reached [him]" (Habila 59). The Major is also not averse to destroying property, striking fear into the innocent inhabitants of the riverway. Rufus is told by The Major himself that the once

untouched and peaceful island of Irifeke "is now mostly ashes and rubble, bombed by the gun helicopter over there" (Habila 166). It seems that these immoral and destructive methods may be about more than just serving his country. Furthermore, surely pouring out gasoline and bombing villages cannot be healthy for the already war-ravaged environment. Another example of a man with a questionable mission is The Professor, the leader of the militants. The Professor preaches liberation of the environment and the end of military interference with their fight for justice. One scene shows The Professor telling Rufus what he must write about his mission in the Delta, telling Rufus that when he returns home, he must:

> Write only the truth. Tell them about the flares you see at night, and the oil on the water. And the soldiers forcing us to escalate the violence every day. Tell them how we are hounded daily in our own land. Where do they want us to go, tell me, where? Tell them we are going nowhere. This land belongs to us. That is the truth, remember that. (Habila 232)

This rabble-rouser is responsible for many kidnappings in the nearby city of Port Harcourt, his most recent victim being the wife of a notable employee of a powerful oil corporation. The money from this ransom will certainly be used to help pay for some of their most recent losses. Rufus learns from a militant that "The Professor needed to raise money quick quick to pay for a consignment of guns he was expecting from overseas" (Habila 213). The militants stand to make "At least five million" (Habila 226). It is later made apparent that The Professor is willing to put his hostage's safety at risk if this money is not delivered. The Professor tells Rufus to

inform Mr. Floode that "his wife is safe, but after two days, if we don't hear from him, we can't guarantee her safety anymore" (Habila 231). Knowing how much the militants could profit from their hostage and seeing how willing they are to harm her suggests something important. The Professor must be quite confident in his ability to find another hostage as valuable as Isabelle, especially in his time of need. This reinforces the idea that The Professor only sees this innocent woman as a means to an end, despite her lack of involvement in supporting the oil industry. He could easily replace her with another asset as if she were a burnt-out light bulb, no longer of use. The Professor is also a bit hypocritical in how he goes about fighting for the environment. His methods include such tactics destroying oil depots. The Professor tells Rufus that his soldiers are "going out on an operation; you may have noticed the whole camp getting ready. By this time tomorrow, one of the major oil depots will be burning" (Habila 231) While in the grand scheme of environmental liberation, this may be a small cost to pay. Regardless, there is no way that entire depots of oil spilling into the soil can benefit the local inhabitants. These examples show how the hypocritical quests of these men leave a path of destruction, endangering countless innocent men, children, and of course women, as well as the environment.

The oppression of women in this novel is entangled in the exploitation of the environment by patriarchal figures. The women in this story have their own goals and ambitions, but these are cut short by the men seeking their own fortunes, whether it be their claim to seek environmental liberation, or outright exploit it. The character Isabelle is a prime example of a woman who just wants to be happy but is

taken advantage of by men for their own gain. Isabelle is the woman taken hostage by The Professor and is the wife of Mr. Floode, a wealthy and important employee of a major oil corporation. Isabelle is having a tough time when she is kidnapped, which only makes things worse. After years of a strained marriage to her distant husband (both literally and figuratively), she decided she was "going to go to Nigeria on a surprise visit," and "get pregnant" (Habila 200) in order to save their marriage. However, sometime after she arrives in Nigeria, where her husband is currently employed, she learns that he "was seeing someone else" (Habila 200). Not only does Isabelle learn that her husband is cheating on her, but the "affair had been going on for a while … and that she was pregnant" (Habila 201). After her plans to fix things are ruined by Mr. Floode's selfishness, she learns that her driver, Mr. Salomon, was engaged to the maid that Mr. Floode was having an affair with. He tells Isabelle that, "Yesterday she told me she was pregnant," and that, "She is pregnant by the Oga [Mr. Floode]" (Habila 202). Despite the connection they now share through grief, Mr. Salomon decides to hold Isabelle for ransom after being convinced by his friends. This act is justified to Salomon by one of these friends, who tells Salomon that "technically it wasn't even kidnapping' [he would] just be collecting payment for all the pain these people caused [him]" (Habila 220). The plan eventually goes awry, with Salomon and Isabelle ending up in the clutches of The Professor. Floode's connections to the exploitation of the environment make his wife a perfect target for kidnapping by the enemies of his employer. While Salomon's connections to environmental degradation are much vaguer, he is still a man taking advantage of a woman's value for his own

personal gain, which he does despite their common suffering. Rufus's sister is another noteworthy example of a woman whose own ambitions are foiled by selfish men and the conquest of natural resources. The father of Rufus and his sister Boma was once a teacher and a practicing Christian. Rufus recalls how everyday his father "wakes us up at six a. m. daily to seek God's intervention in our affairs" (Habila 67). His fall from grace is propelled by the search for a better paying job after the oil company leaves town. When the oil company leaves, their father and many others are left unemployed and in search of new work. Rufus recalls that "he [had] lost his job, just like half the town. They had all worked for the ABZ Oil Company, and now the people, once awash in oil money, watch in astonishment as the streets daily fill up with fleeing families" (Habila 67). The father turns to selling illegally refined oil, telling Rufus that "This is the only business booming in this town. I buy from little children. I buy cheap and I sell cheap to the cars that come here at night" (Habila 69). His father shows him a "large barn at the back of the house,"of which Rufus remarks how "Even before he opened the door [he] could smell the petrol, and when he turned on the light, [he] saw more than ten drums" (Habila 69). The dangers of such a practice are made apparent when a fire starts. There was "An explosion in the barn with the oil drums. The fire flew on the wind from house to house, an in minutes half the town was ablaze." (Habila 3). It is this blaze, caused by Boma and Rufus's father's barn of petrol, that maims Boma. Rufus laments that "as [his] sister burned, and [his] family disintegrated, [he] was in Lagos listening to lectures, eating dinner in Chinese restaurants, and [he] didn't hear the tragedy till [he] returned home with [his]

journalism certificate" (Habila 3). Once again, another woman in this novel is the victim of a man's selfishness, as well as the dangers created by resource extraction. Her father's illegal petrol starts a fire that maims his own daughter, petrol that, while he chooses to sell illegally, would not have to be sold at all if the oil company had not left him unemployed. These examples demonstrate the adversity faced by two of the most significant women in this novel's cast of characters at the hands of men and the exploitation of the environment.

In conclusion, the connection between the environment and gender is demonstrated numerous times throughout *Oil on Water*. Feminine characters are repeatedly taken advantage of by men who are only worried about their own personal gain. In the same light, these men are also not concerned about the plight of the environment unless it serves to get them closer to getting what they want, whether that is revenge, money, fame, or happiness. This similar conclusion was also made in an article published in the *International Journal of Language and Literary Studies,* that states that:

> The patriarchal exploitation of women and the natural environment is the novel's other major issue. Women in the novel are depicted as victims of men in many ways. They are represented as victims of rape, assault, and abduction. Women and girls are exploited by men from all walks of life. Furthermore, the novel bluntly depicts the exploitation of Mother Earth. International oil companies are repeatedly accused of extracting oil for their profit and then polluting the environment in the novel. As a result, the novel depicts the

> parallel exploitation of both women and nature in general. (Michael& Daniel, 16)

In the end, it is powerful men's search for their own happiness through the exploitation of environmental catastrophe that, much like the oil on the water, smothers the ambitions of the women around them.

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Personal Growth Amidst Environmental Injustice in Linda Hogan's *Solar Storms*

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Linda Hogan's novel *Solar Storms* (1995) tells the story of Angel, a young indigenous woman who has lived in foster homes her whole life. When she turns seventeen years old, Angel is united with her great-grandmother Agnes Iron, who tells her to come to stay with her. Agnes lives in a fictive place called Adam's Rib, a coastal indigenous community adjacent to the upper Midwest region of the US, but in dispute between the US, Canada, and their indigenous nations. At Adam's Rib, Angel also meets with Dora-Rouge (Agnes's mother) and Bush, her step-grandmother, and the caretaker of Angel's alienated mother. Angel begins to form relationships with her family members and other residents of Adam's Rib. She learns many new skills that help her assimilate into a new way of life, such as swimming, canoeing, and fishing. One day, two men arrive at Adam's Rib and

inform the community of BEEVCO corporation's plans for building dams on the lands of the so-called Fat Eaters, which is near Dora-Rouge's ancestral homeland of Holy String Town. Soon after their encounter with the two men, Angel, Bush, Dora-Rouge, and Agnes decide to travel to Holy String Town, a fictive place near the Boundary Waters region. Bush wants to aid in the resistance movement against BEEVCO's plans in Holy String Town whatever ways she can. As to the others' reasons for traveling, Angel wants to meet her mother Hannah, Dora-Rouge wants to die peacefully in her ancestral homeland, and Agnes wishes to accompany her mother Dora-Rouge. The rest of the novel follows the four women as they make the long, treacherous journey to the land of the Fat Eaters to support the locals' fight for their indigenous rights. Hogan's novel incorporates two major narratives, namely that of Angel's personal growth and that of the native resistance against BEEVCO's dam-building project near Dora-Rouge's ancestral homeland. These two narratives are intertwined throughout the novel, such that Angel is able to find a sense of purpose and her place within her new indigenous community after joining the resistance movement. The experiences she has in Holy String Town (the site of the proposed dams) and the people she meets while protesting the dam construction (including significant indigenous activists) contribute to the changes that take place in Angel's personality throughout the novel.

Angel's character develops greatly from the beginning to the end of the novel, creating an important narrative arc. Angel, having grown up in the foster care system, attempts to assimilate into the life she would have lived with her

indigenous family members. When Angel arrives in Adam's Rib to meet her grandmothers, Angel is depicted as a girl who does not know who she is or where she belongs. Angel is mentally and physically scarred from her childhood, her face contains scars given to her by her mother, who seemed to have been taken over by a violent mythical force that inhabited her. Angel fears many things, hiding her facial scars wherever she goes. The three women Angel joins in Adam's Rib play important roles in Angel's personal growth and healing process. Theresa Smith and Jill Fiore explain how Angel is helped by Dora-Rouge, Agnes, and Bush. The co-authors write, "As Dora-Rouge, Agnes, and Bush begin to provide missing pieces that mirror the reality of Angel's identity, and as she finds her place among them, Angel begins to see possibilities of a very different self" (Smith and Fiore 73). The women provide a path for Angel to grow into the woman she likely would have become if she grew up in the care of the women and the rest of their people instead of in a series of foster homes. Bush especially aids in Angel's mental growth. Angel, previously terrified of water, asks Bush to teach her how to swim in the freezing water (Hogan 92). Taking on new and frightening challenges is something that Angel would not have considered previously before arriving at Adam's Rib. With Bush's encouragement, Angel develops the mental toughness and bravery needed to learn this new skill, showing the growth of her character. Later in the novel, Bush also explains to Angel that her scars should not be looked at as a sign of weakness, but one of healing (Hogan 125). Angel puts this wisdom into practice when later she is asked by Tommy, Angel's love interest in the novel, where she acquired the scars.

In response, Angel pretends not to notice the scars (Hogan 125). Angel's response proves that she can see past her childhood trauma, and she is now able to see that there is more to her than her scars.

Angel begins to form deeper connections with the people in Adam's Rib, especially with Tommy. Their relationship becomes a significant indicator of her emotional growth. Before Angel's arrival at Adam's Rib, she suffered from an extreme lack of self-esteem and self-respect, which caused her to be content with unhealthy forms of relationship. As Irene Vernon explains, "Similar to other traumatized women, Angel engages in unhealthy relationships, for she has a diminished sense of self and little self-respect" (Vernon 44). Before returning to Adam's Rib, Angel would give herself to any boy or man who would take her, regardless of the presence of love (Hogan 54). Once she even used sex as a tool for gaining money, proving her lack of self-respect (Hogan 117). Signifying a change in emotional maturity, Angel develops her first healthy relationship with Tommy, proving how she is beginning to find her sense of self, and gaining respect for herself and her body. Creating deeper relationships leads her to realize the importance of community and love, two things she never found in the series of foster homes she previously lived in. Angel continues to grow mentally and emotionally throughout the rest of the novel with the help of friends and family.

Angel's personal growth narrative is also propelled by her finding active roles in her indigenous community, including being the caretaker of Dora Rouge and her stepsister Aurora. First, Angel takes on the role of being Dora Rouge's caretaker

when they commence on their journey to Two-Town and Holy String Town. On their lengthy journey to Two-Town, Angel often carries Dora Rouge, who cannot not walk, in a chair over long stretches of land. As Smith and Fiore explain in their article, Angel is acting by the native custom of returning the favor of the grandmother's healing and wisdom by acts of respect and service (Smith and Fiore 74). These acts show Angel acknowledging their indigenous customs and due to this transition into being a caretaker, rather than being one who needs to be taken care of. Her next caretaking role comes later, after reaching Two-Town and meeting her estranged mother, Hannah. Until meeting Bush, Angel did not know anything about her mother. Before Angel goes to visit Hannah, Bush explains to Angel that her mother is dangerous and the reason for the scars on her face. Two weeks after Angel meets Hannah, she dies of an unexplained stab wound. Angel comes to the realization that Hannah's drawbacks as a mother have shaped her into the person she is at present. She explains, "Her desperation and loneliness was my beginning. Hannah had been my poison, my life, my sweetness and pain, my beauty and homeliness. And when she died, I knew that I had survived in the best of ways for I was filled with grief and compassion" (Hogan 251). This realization signifies a major change in Angel's self-image. Angel sees the importance of her "compassion" along with other characteristics that would not be as strong if her life had been different. Even though she never fully got to know her mother, Angel is now able to fully accept her situation for what it is, and is able to move on from her past. Also, meeting Hannah has allowed her to find her baby stepsister, Aurora, of whose existence she was

previously unaware. Angel acts as a mother to baby Aurora, carrying on her role as a caretaker, as a way of staying connected to her people. Such a motherly role gives Angel another outlet to come to terms with her past trauma, by preventing her stepsister Aurora from falling into the foster care system.

The second important narrative arc in the novel is the native resistance movement against BEEVCO's dam construction projects in Holy String Town. Although *Solar Storms* is a work of fiction, the book is inspired by real life events, as noted by Laura Castor. In 1971, James Bay, near the border between the United States and Canada, became a center of tension between the government of Quebec and the native Cree communities. The government wanted to use hydropower technologies to be able to harness the power of the rivers to generate electricity. The proposal was passed on the basis that the water would benefit all Canadians, while displacing Cree communities and separating them from their source of food. Castor states that, "The diversion of the LaGrande and Eastmain Rivers produced widespread, comprehensive damage to the James Bay ecosystem and displaced Cree communities who suffered from marked increases in rates of alcoholism, family, violence, and suicide" (Castor 158). These extreme negative consequences of diverting the rivers were left unnoticed by the mainstream media until numerous environmental groups helped draw attention to this injustice. With the help of environmental groups, in 1975 the Cree, Quebec government, and the hydropower company signed an agreement stating that the government and power company

must negotiate with the Cree as an independent nation. However, the project continued for more than 25 years afterwards.

Similar to the historical James Bay conflict, there is a conflict in the novel over natural resources between the hydropower company BEEVCO, and the indigenous peoples who live close to Holy String Town. The BEEVCO company along with the government has started the process of building a reservoir consisting of several dams which would destroy and flood the native's land. These activities force the natives to leave the land they have occupied and lived off for more than 10,000 years, in the interest of electricity for the people in the surrounding area. The power company acts on the fact that the natives do not have legal rights to the land in the form of deeds and, because of this, neither BEEVCO nor the government provide any compensation to the natives despite destroying their homes. The effects of this construction will be seen for miles around the original site due to different bodies of water being reshaped and many land areas being flooded.

Oftentimes, and in this case, the natives are forced to suffer for development that they either do not want or do not benefit from. Once the process of construction began and the land was being torn apart in search of minerals, the natives were taken to "resettlement sites" and forced to live in overcrowded "fast-made shacks" with a food source consisting of a few Coca-Cola and candy machines (Hogan 226). Once Angel, Dora-Rouge, Agnes, and Bush arrive on the Fat-Eater's land, Angel narrates, "The people were in pain, and even if Dora-Rouge had known the people of the last generation or two, she would never have recognized their puffy faces and

empty eyes, their unkempt, hollow, appearance. It was murder of the soul that was taking place there. Murder with no consequences to the killers" (Hogan 226). The previous passage proves the extent of the negative effects of the construction of the dam on the indigenous people's land. The people are not physically recognizable because of how defeated they feel after being forced to resettle in shacks and old military huts by the government. By building the dams, BEEVCO and the government are not only tampering with the land and ecosystem but are also inflicting damage to these people's lives and "murdering their soul." Destroying the land also results in a separation from the sacred connection indigenous people share with their land. As Angel narrates "Above us and to the east, trees were being felled, the coal stripped away, and roads had been cut into every sacred site the people had grown from, known, and told stories about" (Hogan 295). This passage further shows how the natives' lives are being torn apart by ripping them from the land which has, over many generations, become a sacred place to them and their people. Nixon gives this injustice a name of "slow violence" to better explain the range of effects that it causes on the natives. Nixon says, "By slow violence I mean a violence that occurs gradually and out of sight, a violence of delayed destruction that is dispersed across time and space, an attritional violence that is typically not viewed as violence at all" (2). As Nixon explains, this does not exclusively affect the natives forced to move in the forms of "nutrition, health, infant mortality, life expectancy, and environmental viability" but will affect all future generations as well (152). It is not a form of violence that society is used to, but violence was

inflicted upon these people just the same. The people who once occupied the land are now seen as what Rob Nixon refers to in his book *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor* as "surplus people," or people "deemed superfluous to the labor market and to the idea of national development" (Nixon 151).

To combat this injustice, the characters in the novel get involved in a resistance movement with indigenous groups from the surrounding area. The resistance movement is first introduced to the main characters at the beginning of the novel when two men arrive in Adam's Rib to explain the situation they are facing on their land. Their goal is to obtain enough protestors to stop the construction in time. Soon after their conversation, the women start the treacherous journey to Two-Town. Once arrived in Two-Town, the women meet other protestors, such as Arlie, a smart man who becomes very helpful within the resistance movement, and Auntie, Bush's passionate friend. The group later meets with the BEEVCO workers who propose their construction plans to them, explaining how the natives will not get a say in what they do. Resistance takes three forms within the novel. The first form, direct action, is shown after the meeting. The group builds a blockade made from junk and oil barrels, which will prevent the trains from carrying the land and trees away. Bush holds a special job which makes up the second form of resistance. She takes pictures and writes articles about the happenings in Two-Town which are smuggled out by others in hopes of gaining more attention and supporters outside of the town. The last form of resistance and often the most overlooked form is the day-to-day acts of survival such as stealing

food and escaping when the protests become more violent. When the resistance movement gains more people, soldiers are soon deployed in the area, and the group is faced with large amounts of teargas. Further violence ensues when the construction workers attempt to bulldoze Tulik's house, an elder Two-Town resident who lets the three women stay with him while in town. His house is later burnt down in retaliation for their protests. Soon after, Aurora falls ill. With the help of other protestors, Angel and Bush rush back to Adam's Rib to get medical attention for Aurora. The other protestors' readiness to help Aurora shows how protesting together has created a bond between them.

Hogan provides the reader with several overlaps between the two important narrative arcs mentioned above. Once the women reach the Fat Eaters' land, they find the once beautiful piece of land to be barely recognizable. The people, trees, animals, and landmarks were gone due to the plans for the dams. Angel describes the scenery, "It was a raw and scarred place, a land that had learned to survive, even to thrive, on harshness… Like me, it was native land and it had survived" (Hogan 224). This previous passage shows that Angel connects herself with the land. The girl who felt like she did not belong anywhere, finds her identity in this "raw and scarred" place. Angel's realization is a milestone in her growth narrative where she finally feels as if she belongs somewhere and has a purpose, to try to protect the land. Her newfound purpose will cause her to grow into a stronger and more confident woman throughout the rest of the novel. The passage is also a crucial description that adds to the BEEVCO resistance narrative by setting the

scene for the destruction that is being caused to the land calling it a "raw and scarred place" that is surviving on "harshness."

Another important overlap occurs right before the climax of the conflict between the indigenous people and the people for the damming project. Angel reflects, "For my people, the problem has always been this: that the only possibility of survival has been resistance. Not to strike back has meant certain loss and death. To strike back has also meant loss and death, only with a fighting chance. To fight has meant that we can respect ourselves, we Beautiful People" (Hogan 325). Her reflection proves how she has found her identity with the people that she united with during the resistance movement. The shared purpose of fighting to protect the land helps Angel to find herself and grow into a strong woman. Also, the passage shows just how committed the people are to their cause. They fought an unfair battle that they had little chance of winning, showing their strength and resilience under dreadful circumstances. The overlapping of the two narrative arcs deepens the plotline of Hogan's novel.

Even after all their efforts, the protestors fail to stop the first phase of construction which causes the area to be mostly flooded, destroying indigenous lands and homes. After nearly a year, BEEVCO's construction is finally paused, when the conflict is taken to court and Tulik is asked to give his testimony. While the court rules in their favor, they cannot undo the damage that has already done. As Angel narrates, "It was too late for the Child River, for the caribou, the fish, even for our children, but we had to believe, true or not, that our belated victory was the

end of something" (344). Their movement for environmental justice ends on a hopeful note that one day they may be able to regrow traditions without the intervention of others. Throughout the novel, Angel grows from a scarred and self-conscious girl into a strong indigenous woman. Her coming-of-age narrative often overlaps with the native resistance movement against the construction of big dams on indigenous lands. She is helped along in her growth narrative by the people she meets and the rewarding experiences she has while fighting for indigenous rights in her maternal homeland.

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The Alchemyst, the Powerful, and the Power of Ideology

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Myths are full of gods, goddesses, and monsters that are unable to be checked by humanity, allowing them to cause incredible destruction. Only rarely does a human have the power to counteract them, while most people live at their mercy. If that is the consequence of magic, is a world full of magic everything it seems? Fantasy is used to show the effects of powerful beings and how they use that power to control the world. It can discuss real world subjects using metaphor, showing abuses of power as fantasy while really saying something about what is happening in the real world. Fantasy novels tackle the question of what would happen in a world with magical power; the novel *The Alchemyst* by Michael Scott shows that the magical world has been ruled by ancient tyrants for millennia. *The Alchemyst* follows twins Sophie and Josh Newman as they discover the historical figures Nicholas Flamel, the titular Alchemyst, and his wife Perenelle Flamel are alive

hundreds of years after their supposed deaths. They are in possession of the Codex, a book of immense magical knowledge, until another unageing human from history, Dr. John Dee, steals most of the pages and imprisons Perenelle for his magical masters. Sophie and Josh are then swept up in the rush to protect Nicholas's remaining pieces of the Codex from the ancient beings known as the Dark Elders who wish to use it to cause the end of the world. While on the run, the twins are stunned by the revelation about magic existing in the world, as well as the news that they are prophesied to change the world. The world contains a wide variety of creatures that includes wereboars, the god-like ageless Elder Race, and humans (referred to as humani by the Elder Race and other magical beings). Humans have various levels of knowledge about magic existing in the world, with most being ignorant of magic's existence, therefore preventing them from training and using their magical ability. In *The Alchemyst*, magic is used as a metaphor for power, with magic serving as the power that is competed for within the book. Groups and individuals are shown judging each other based on their magic to the point where it affects their place in the hierarchy. The novel allows the reader to see how power shapes the environment of the world even when the leaders are not present. Ideology affects how people live their lives, giving their leaders control of them by ingraining the ideas they live by into their heads. Even the characters who resist Elder Race rule still believe in their ideology, thus showing how powerful ideology is.

In *The Alchemyst*'s world, power, especially magical ability, is seen affecting every level of society. Louis Althusser talks about power in the real world, specifically in terms of how leaders and organizations maintain control of society. One way is through the Repressive State Apparatus (RSA), which he says includes "the Government, the Administration, the Army, the Police, the Courts, the Prisons" with the goal of control with force (Althusser 1290). A Repressive State Apparatus controls through various forces, forcing the people to act in ways they do not want under fear of punishment. Another way power is shown is through his idea of the Ideological State Apparatus (ISA), as he says, "Ideological State Apparatuses function massively and predominantly by ideology" (1292). It is seen primarily in institutions like the family, church, or schools which teach ideology. These ISA and RSA methods differ, but they work together to maintain power for the ruling class. By perpetuating the ideology that maintains the world and convinces people of their place, power is maintained as society generates future workers to carry out the values of the society. Magical power is used as the basis for the society of the magical world, as the Elder Race gained their place at the top due to their immense magical ability and rank other beings by their magical power. However, by showing the inconsistencies of the hierarchy of the magical groups, the system is proven to be flawed. Magic is used to define the structure of the world, but magic is not a fixed power. People can increase or decrease their own or other's power, which affects their status. The expected limits of power are shown to be false, and, therefore, the magic that defines the hierarchy also forces changes in the hierarchy. This shows

how weak the hierarchy and the ideology is. By studying the hierarchy of the magical world in Scott's *The Alchemyst* through the lens of Althusser's Repressive State Apparatus and Ideological State Apparatus, this essay will show that the ideological hierarchy the magical world is built on is fragile, and that the Elder Race weaken their hold on power throughout the novel by adhering to their own belief in their flawed ideology. The fact that the ideology is still holding on shows YA readers the power of ideology, and the paradoxical nature of power.

In both the novel and the real world, the State Apparatuses are used for control. In terms of control, the RSA is what people think of being controlled by in society, as it is seen through punishments like monetary fines or physical force, not the societal repression of the ISA. But RSAs and ISAs cannot be separated. However, ISAs contain more power than the RSA, as stated when Althusser argues, "Ideology represents the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence" (1300). People use ideology to define their world, giving that ideology the power to control and shape their world. They believe in the world the ideology teaches them about, even if that is not really the world they live in. Ideological State Apparatuses convince the people that they believe their ideology is the best way, which causes them to ignore its flaws. They may not even realize all the effects an ISA has on their lives, or that they are affected by multiple ISAs every day. Successful ideologies are taken for granted.

The Elder Race use an ISA that promotes the ideology that because they are extremely powerful beings who have the strongest magic power, they should rule

the world. This ideology causes them to refuse to give up their fight for control of the human world, ignoring the downsides of conquering the human world, and the fact that they see a successful alternative. The Elder Race use their magic to place themselves at the top of the magical world's hierarchy and force others to respect them as gods and goddesses. The most prominent supporters of the ideals of Elder Race control are a faction called the Dark Elders. Scathach describes them by saying, "There are those amongst the Elders who cannot accept that our time is past, that this age belongs to the humani. They want to see a return to the old ways… They are called the Dark Elders" (Scott 84). Scathach admits they have lost the world, and that the world has moved on. The Dark Elder ideology refuses to accept this. Their goal is to control the entire world, not just the magically created lands hidden from humans called Shadowrealms, and force every other being in the world to serve them. The pervasiveness of this world-ruling ideology is evident, even in the more neutral stance of the Elder Race like Hekate. Her Shadowrealm operates under the ideals of the Dark Elders, but on a limited scale. She has full control of her Shadowrealm and all the beings within it, and the beings are subject to her ISA where she teaches them that she is their creator and should be worshipped as such, ensuring their loyalty. While she has no authority outside her Shadowrealm, visitors to her Shadowrealm are still forced to respect her because of her devoted followers. For someone who fights the Dark Elders in the novel, she ironically acts to show the success of the goals of the Dark Elders in the magical world, even though she does not support their goal of conquering the human world.

The refusal of the Dark Elders to admit their loss shows the failure of their ideology, as they could be following in Hekate's footsteps of success and have complete control in the magical world. Because Hekate's method is so successful, many Elder Race feel no need to conquer those outside of their Shadowrealms, as their ISA and RSA are successfully working in tandem. Their in-fighting weakens the Elder Race. When Hekate is killed in the conflict, the Elders reduce their number and lose a powerful Shadowrealm forever. The Dark Elders therefore weaken the magical world in their quest to conquer the human world instead of gaining more power.

The Elder Race once had full control of the world, but they are unable to accept the fact that they lost it. A long time ago, the Elder Race ruled from the city of Danu Talis, also known as Atlantis. However, a battle destroyed the city, and was so damaging it changed the very nature of the Elder Race forever through the creation of the Next Generation. Scathach describes the change by saying, "We were not Elders. All of us who were born after the fall of Danu Talis were completely unlike our parents; we were *different* in incomprehensible ways" (Scott 310). Scathach emphasizes the word "*different*," placing it in italics to emphasize to the reader that there are differences between the Elder Race and their offspring. These were not seen as positive differences because they had very different biology which gave them less powerful magic. The older generation are seen as respected gods and goddesses, while the following generations are seen as less desirable and monstrous creatures such as were-boars and vampires. These offspring became known as the

Next Generation Elder Race (Next Gen). These differences caused the divide between the two groups, leading to the present hierarchy. The Elder Race is unable to create more powerful gods and goddesses, meaning they are unable to keep increasing their power. It also means they could become extinct and lose all their power. Humanity claimed the world, forcing the Elder Race to make changes to keep better control of the magical world and their offspring, leading to the creation of ISA and RSA in a smaller community of believers in the Shadowrealms they created. Those losses cause the Elder Race to hold on to their remaining power. Ideology affects everyone from Dee to the Dark Elders, even if they are not aware. The Elder Race believe in their own ideology, and believe they need to reclaim the human world despite all the evidence working against them. This flawed ideology has persisted in the magical world for centuries, showing the power of ISA to maintain power instead of embracing changes that could be more beneficial for everyone.

This ISA appears through hierarchical categorization of the beings in the magical and human worlds. The Elder Race rules the magical world, which consists of less magically powerful magical beings as well as the occasional human magician. The Elder Race uses underlings who believe in their ideology to act as an RSA, which is designed to punish those who do not obey them. This makes it so when ideology fails, they can still force the non-believers to respect them using the RSA's oppressive methods. This combination of an ISA along with its supporting RSA is successful in allowing the tiny group first-generation Elder Race to control the

magical world, but the RSA and ISA both fail when it comes to control of the greater human world. The Elder Race have limited power as an RSA outside the magical world. Furthermore, humans do not even know that the Elder Race or the magical world exist, so they are not affected by the ISA and the ideology it produces. Despite this separation, humans are still counted as the bottom of the socio-political hierarchy. Yet they are the ones who control most of the world, which the Elder Race was unable to take back when human civilizations were in their infancy. Humans were put at the bottom to control them because they could upset the system. The hierarchy is so weak that it is vulnerable to people who have never heard of the Elder Race. After seeing how the ISA works, or at least claims to work, the reader can then question its legitimacy within the book.

Fitting with the use of the real-world concepts of RSA and ISA, Scott's world of *The Alchemyst* resembles the real world. The fantasy genre indirectly comments on real world events and themes, allowing the reader to draw parallels. As this is a YA novel, it is important because it teaches young readers how to see how people use power and ideology in their lives. In *A Short History of Fantasy* by Farah Mendlesohn and Edward James, they argue, "The obvious construction of fantasy in literature and art is the presence of the impossible and the unexplainable" (Mendlesohn and James 3). Fantasy features magical power as well as kinds of power seen in the real world. Multiple types of power feature within *The Alchemyst,* with magical power featuring most prominently. Magical power is seen in a person's ability to do great feats of magic. *The Alchemyst* is part of the literary tradition of

the fantasy genre. Many aspects of fantasy seen within *The Alchemyst a*re also in other famous fantasy works, including the effect of power, RSAs, ISAs, and humans' conflict with non-humans.

Within the fantasy genre, *Harry Potter* has lots of literary criticism. Scott works both with and against ideas seen in *Harry Potter*. In the *Harry Potter* series, there is a hierarchy which leads to many similarities between *The Alchemyst* and *Harry Potter*. Assumed superiority based on magical ability creates the hierarchy, as wizards live separate lives with their gift of magic and deny muggles (non-wizards) access. Wizards commonly believe their magic makes them better than muggles. The literary critic Luisa Grijalva Maza argues the readers "slowly internalize the greatness of the magical world with its castles, magic potions, tricks, and magical creatures and, by the end of the first book, the predominance of magical over nonmagical is accepted" (Maza). Not only do the wizards in the world accept this idea, but the readers are also affected by it. The magical is also separated from the human in *The Alchemyst*, as most humans remain unaware of the existence of magic. Nicholas does not fight for the merging of the two worlds, or the liberation of the Shadowrealms, but rather he fights to keep the two worlds separate and the Elder Race out of human sight. Wizards are separated by biological power from humans, just like the Elder Race are. No one in either book series pushes to merge the worlds, leaving their options as either secrecy or conquest, which shows how the ISA of the magical world affects them. This comparison to Harry Potter is important to understand the effect of fantasy works.

A comparison of how different ISA and RSA are structured allows the reader to understand the ways in which power can be distributed and to learn about their weaknesses.

The major power seen within The Alchemyst is magical power, particularly regarding the ISA and the hierarchy it creates. Magical power is the cornerstone of all the ideology in the book. It is how the Dark Elders ruled long ago, and why they believe they should rule again. Many types of people appear in the book who have magical abilities as part of their biology. This biological magic-based division determines the structure of the magical world, as each group is ranked based on their perceived biological power compared to others' magical biology. First in the ranking is the Elder Race, as Shadowrealm creators who have powerful magic and physical prowess. Under them is their offspring, the less powerful Next Generation of Elder Race, who range from being respected to working as servants for the original Elder Race. Many other magical beings are also seen, though most are shown serving the Elder Race. Below all the naturally magical beings are the humans, who are almost entirely separate from the magical world. However, each of these categories has rankings within itself, as some members of each group are stronger than others. Human magicians are exponentially more powerful than humans who do not use magic for example.

At the top of the hierarchy is the Elder Race, self-proclaimed gods and goddesses of legends throughout history. They are the dominant force in the novel, as they are the antagonists chasing the twins, the ones controlling non-Elder Race

people like Dee or the wereboars, the ones in control of the magical world, and the ones seeking to rule the human world. The Elder Race contains many types of mythical creatures, though they are divided between the goddesses and gods of legend (referred to as the Elder Race), and the Next Generation, the term used to describe non-deity characters and monsters from mythology. Unlike the Next Gen, first generation Elder Race are unable to be around iron or the Codex. Thus, the Elder Race is revealed to have a variety of weaknesses and are not the infallible powerhouses they pretend to be. Their Repressive State Apparatus fails outside the magical world as they are unable to conquer humans. The Codex drove the Elder Race out of the human world. The Codex is the only object capable of reversing these spells, leading to the hunt for the Codex as they believe it is key to world domination. They are incorrect, as iron is the reason the Elder Race lost the world and will never be able to reclaim it. The book says, "In the way that lead was poisonous to humans, iron, the metal of mankind, was deadly to the Elder Race" (Scott 188). Iron is everywhere in the human world, much more now than when the Elder Race were forced away by its presence. Some Dark Elders are in such denial that they live on Earth, even though that choice keeps them confined to iron-free areas. They are still clinging to life on Earth and refusing to let go. The Elder Race claim that their difference from humans makes them strong, as it gives them incredible magical power, which is the basis for the ideology that they should control everything. This is where the Ideological State Apparatus fails. The Elder Race justify their control because of their superior biology, yet it has major

weaknesses other beings do not possess. The Dark Elders fail to separate their ideology from their reality. The Elder Race could not freely walk in the human world, even if they could overpower all resistance, because of the presence of iron. The Dark Elders' plan itself is flawed, showing that even they, the beneficiaries of their ideology, fall victim to it. The Elder Race are a comparatively weak species, but they have been convinced by their ideology that they could and should rule the entire world, even though the fight to do so will harm them.

Unlike the Elder Race, the Next Generation have adapted to the changing world and are better suited for modern life, leading to their Elder Race relatives trying to control them. Next Gen are more resistant to iron and the Codex, making them better suited to the modern world, but they are less powerful magically. Scathach, an ancient world-renowned warrior, describes, "I'm Next Generation-not pure Elder like Hekate. I can bear to be around iron" (Scott 158). The Next Generation is better suited to the changing world, as they do not have the original Elder Race's weakness to iron. Scathach describes the original Elder Race as being "pure" (Scott 158). This implies that the Next Generation are impure members of the Elder Race. The ideology of Elder Race superiority uses terms like this to differentiate the Next Gen from the original Elder Race and cast the Next Gen in a negative light, even if that is not what Scathach feels about herself. This negative light prevents the Next Generation from recognizing their strengths.

While the original Elder Race has the same biology with different magical focuses, the Next Generation varies wildly from each other, and not just their Elder

Race ancestors. The book's primary example of a Next Generation clan is the were-boars, who serve their relative Hekate and show the difference between how the first Elder Race and their Next Gen descendants are treated. Were-boars are not given the respect given to the god-like members of the Elder Race, as they are notable only as Hekate's defenders. They enforce the very system, the very person, who denies them their power, therefore participating in their own oppression. The were-boars are used by Hekate, just like she uses the other inhabitants of her Shadowrealm, in crucial roles in her RSA and ISA that use their extraordinary gifts to benefit her. Hekate claims, "The clans still worship me as a goddess. I do what I can for them" (Scott 112). She acts as a benevolent goddess to the were-boars who worship her, giving them a place to live and supporting their growth. This is a religion based around Hekate, and religion is one of the dominant ISA in people's lives. They help her enforce this view onto others, by working as her RSA and threatening all who come near her if they do not meet expectations. RSA is shown to be a weaker form of control. Her RSA is shown getting temporary results from visitors, while her ISA gains her a dedicated army. Her ISA works with her RSA to give Hekate full power within her realm.

Below the Elder Race, Next Generation, and were-creatures, are the humans, even though humans control most of the world and were successful in driving the magical beings away. Humans are looked down upon as their biology lacks the Elder Race's magical power. Yet they outcompeted the Elder Race so successfully to claim control of the world that they do not believe magical creatures exist anymore.

The biggest threat to the hierarchy of the magical realm are the prophesied twins, Sophie and Josh, as they are naturally gifted with powerful auras and destined to decide the fate of the world. What makes this a hierarchy-shaker is their human biology. Dee dismisses that they could be prophesied since they are human, thinking, "[…] they were twins. That was curious. He looked at them again and then shook his head: they were humans" (Scott 67). Dee, an enormously powerful human magician who works against the hierarchy system, thought it impossible humans could have that sort of power. That is the power of ideology. It causes people to doubt that humans can be powerful when they are living proof. The Elder Race's ideology causes people to find it unthinkable that humans could be dangerous, proving how pervasive it is as Dee is a human thinking this. The magical world took it for granted that the magical twins would not be human, because humans do not typically have magical power let alone strong magical power.

Nicolas's ideology becomes the lens which the twins use to examine the magical world, though they are not aware they are learning his ideology which gives him control over them. While he is not teaching them to obey the dominant ideology of the Elder Race, he is inducting them into the world, which involves teaching them ideology. Teaching occurs in schools, which is one of the largest ISAs. Nicholas teaches the twins his ideology about the magical world, as he plans to use them for his own goal of defeating the Dark Elders. He lives his life in the human world, not as a resident of the magical world. Nicholas does not hold the majority view of the

magical world, who either want to remain isolated in Shadowrealms, like Hekate and the wereboars, or have the Dark Elders lead to a reclaiming of the world by the Elder Race. Both Dee and Nicholas try to sway the twins to their side with calculated information, though while *The Alchemyst* is clear Dee is twisting the facts when talking, Nicolas is portrayed as the correct choice despite leaving out crucial details and not discussing options with the twins. Even when the twins question Nicholas's actions, they do not question the ideology he taught them about the magical world. They refuse to listen to Dee's points about the Elder Race's return to the world having benefits. While Dee is lying about their interests, the twins have only had a few hours of experience in the magical world, so they are mainly rejecting his claims based on Nicholas's Elder Race ideology. The twins are unwilling to question whether Nicholas's ideology, their first ideology of the magical world which they were unwittingly drawn into, is the better ideology. They do not consider Dee's ideology to be worth hearing, even though he has benefited greatly from the Elder Race.

Dr. John Dee, supposedly the loyal servant of the Dark Elders, represents the ultimate failure of the Elder Race's hierarchy. He is powerful in both the human and magical worlds. He may not be as biologically powerful as the Elder Race, but he is very clever and uses methods to compensate for their difference in power. By employing and empowering Dee, the Elder Race have given him opportunities that he used to acquire the power to destroy them. Dee has learned from the Elder Race and follows their example of how to build power by using the power of his loyal

underlings to aid him. Perenelle thinks, "Dee had always been fascinated by the idea of creating his own followers and had spent decades experimenting with Golems, simulacra and homunculi" (Scott 251). Just like the Elder Race expect other beings to serve them, Dee made his own creations to serve under him. He wanted to be obeyed, just like the ISA helps the Elder Race achieve the status of god or goddess. The ideology causes others to try and replicate the Elder Race's success. While his creations are mindless and not controlled through ideology, he is also able to bend existing beings to his will to serve his goals. Nicolas describes how Dee, "[…] loosed a Fire Elemental after us, a savage, mindless creature that almost devoured the city. History calls it the Great Fire" (Scott 43). Dee has the power to destroy an entire city, even if it is only achieved by use of a fire elemental. This also shows Dee doesn't care about human lives, just like the Dark Elders. He lives by their ideology. He knows he, despite being a powerful human magician, cannot match the raw power of others like the Elder Race or the fire elementals. But he can use the power of those under him, and he does, just like Hekate with her were-boar followers. He even does this in interactions with the Elder Race, even though the Elders think they are in charge. He uses them to assist him when he calls in Morrigan to track Nicholas, and again when he goes to find Bastet to use her raw power in attacking Hekate. He uses them, just like the Elder Race call him to aid in their goals by having him serve as the Codex holder for them. Instead of fighting the hierarchy and ending up hunted like the Flamels, he uses the system to become

powerful, despite its intent to convince him that he is weak and the fact that he works for those who believe him to be powerless.

The hierarchy in *The Alchemyst* represents a flawed ideology that is failing, and the Dark Elders's efforts to reclaim the human world are weakening their hold on the magical world. Scott shows the reader the value of questioning their beliefs by showing the effect of the hierarchy and magic power. The importance of pointing out these themes in the novel is to be able to show the theme of how power can be used in many ways to the reader. Ideological hierarchies exist in the real world based on gender, race, nationality, sexuality, religion, etc. By showing a fictional hierarchy and showing characters resisting it, young adult readers' minds will be able to apply the lessons learned, and apply them to real world events and ideology they encounter in the future. They will learn to question what they see in the future, which is an important skill to teach young readers.

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