Environmental Justice in the Works of Linda Hogan

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Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

Double Major MA Study Programme in English Language and Literature and German Language and Literature – Teaching English and German as Foreign Languages

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Master's Thesis

Supervisor: Dr. Sanja Runtić, Full Professor

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Abstract

This master's thesis analyzes the fight for environmental justice in three works of Linda Hogan – the novels *Mean Spirit* (1990) and *Solar Storms* (1995) and the collection of essays *Dwellings* (1995). It discusses the ways in which the analyzed texts incorporate ecofeminist notions in the Indigenous fight for environmental justice. All three texts depict the everlasting negative impacts of the colonization on the environment, culture, and lifestyle of Native Americans – its damaging physical, mental, and spiritual consequences including the Indigenous peoples' generational trauma and the alienation from their tradition and their land. The paper argues that Hogan represents the fight for environmental justice as a predominantly female issue informed by Indigenous gynocratic and matrilineal tradition and draws attention to the connection between the oppression of nature and the oppression of women through both linguistic practices and various forms commodification. It also explores the roles of men in the (ecofeminist) fight for environmental justice. Drawing upon ecofeminist principles set by Greta Gaard and Karen J. Warren and the work of the late American Indian studies scholar and author Paula Gunn Allen, this paper argues that Hogan's texts intertwine the environmental and ecofeminist notions in order to pave the way towards healing from the environmental trauma and restoring and protecting the Indigenous peoples' bond with their ancestral tradition and their land.

Keywords: Linda Hogan, *Mean Spirit*, *Solar Storms*, *Dwellings*, Native American literature, environmental justice, ecofeminism.

Introduction

A well-known saying coming from a Cree prophet contains the following warning to all humans: "Only after the last tree has been cut down, only after the last river has been poisoned, only after the last fish has been caught, only then will you find that money cannot be eaten" (Cree Indian Prophecy). This prophecy is aimed at all those who are preoccupied with extracting natural goods with the aim of material wealth, and it became self-fulfilling as the world started facing environmental issues. However, it is the Indigenous communities all over the world, especially Native Americans, who have suffered the largest extent of environmental injustice, ranging from rapid climate change, extreme weather conditions, such as droughts and floods, pollution of water, land, and air. The environmental justice movement raises awareness to the fact that these conditions are a result of imperialism, colonization, and capitalism as corporations from rich and dominant countries, such as the United States, ruin poor people, people of color, and minority communities by extracting their natural resources and, consequently, polluting their environments.

Many of these conditions are highlighted by Linda Hogan, a prominent and acclaimed Chickasaw authoress and activist whose works address the environmental issues in the lives of Native Americans, mostly concentrating on the lives of Native women and their roles in preserving the environment. The purpose of this paper is to explore the ecofeminist perspective in the Indigenous fight for environmental justice in Linda Hogan's novels *Mean Spirit* (1990) and *Solar Storms* (1995) and the collection of essays titled *Dwellings* (1995), whose female protagonists/narrator carry the central role in the fight for environmental injustice.

The first chapter of this paper presents an overview of the life and work of Linda Hogan. The second chapter provides the theoretical background on the environmental justice movement, Native Americans' and other Indigenous peoples' environmental justice in the historical context, and the concept of ecofeminism, which are crucial for understanding the topic of environmental justice in the analyzed works. The third chapter provides basic information about these texts, focusing on the plot, the main characters, setting, historical references, themes, and motifs of *Mean Spirit* and *Solar Storms* and the themes and motifs of the collection of essays *Dwellings*. The fourth, and most important, chapter analyzes the fight for environmental justice in the three mentioned works from an ecofeminist perspective, paying special attention to the strong link between the oppression of women and nature, the roles of female-centered communities, and men in the fight for environmental justice.

1 The Life and Work of Linda Hogan

Linda Hogan is a prominent contemporary Native American writer and activist for the environment and Indigenous rights and culture. She is a mixed-blood member of the Chickasaw Nation whose descendants inhabit south-central Oklahoma. Her prolific literary oeuvre includes essays, novels, short stories, plays, and poetry. In addition to her literary significance, Hogan is also an acclaimed and internationally recognized reader and public speaker on Native American and environmental issues. Her most notable works are the collections of poems *Seeing Through the Sun* (1995) and *The Book of Medicines* (1993), and novels *Solar Storms* (1995), *Power* (1998), *People of the Whale* (2009), and the Pulitzer Prize finalist *Mean Spirit* (1990).

Fig. 1 Portrait of Linda Hogan ("Linda Hogan Biographical Information").

Born in 1947 in Denver, Colorado, to Charles Henderson (Chickasaw) and Cleona Bower Henderson (Anglo-American, from an immigrant Nebraska family), Hogan grew up outside the Native community as her father worked in the military service (Van Dyke 97). However, Hogan herself claims that this did not make her less of a Native American as there were many Indians serving in the military ("An Interview with Linda Hogan" 111). She spent most of her childhood in a housing project in Colorado Springs and lived three years in Germany, but she upholds a close relationship to the ancestral Oklahoman roots of her family (Wilson 429; Murray).

Hogan's private life was marked by many hurtful relationships and traumatic events. In her memoir, *The Woman Who Watches Over the World* (2001), Hogan revealed and tackled the most challenging periods. To begin with, she confessed that she felt depressed and suicidal from the earliest years of her life because of her dysfunctional family (*The Woman Who Watches Over the World* 42). A long traumatic period was caused by alcoholism, which first started in the family and later continued in her own life (*The Woman Who Watches Over the World* 53-58).

Just as many other Chickasaws, her grandfather lost his land due to legal issues, the Depression, foreclosures, and banks closing, which led him to alcohol. Hogan's father also had an addiction to alcohol. Hogan described their world as a "bottle-contained world" and explained that she had followed her ancestors' footsteps into the same "geography of drunkenness" in her "lost years" as a young woman (*The Woman Who Watches Over the World* 53). She admitted that there were many moments which she did not recall due to her drunkenness. Together with depression, alcohol almost brought her to suicide, as there were times when she suicidally drank peroxide and cough syrup. Alcoholism also led to her divorce from her husband, Pat Hogan, shortly after which she reached her turning point and started attending a Native AA group.

Another trauma was Hogan's relationship with a much older man (*The Woman Who Watches Over the World* 34-46). As a twelve-year-old in Germany, she was involved with a soldier named Robert, who was twice her age. Even though she understood that the relationship, to which she had consented, was that of a minor and an adult man, she admits of it not feeling right back then. According to Lauwers, Hogan engaged in such a relationship because she was neglected by her mother. The neglect was both of an emotional and a physical nature as the young Linda was depressed and shy, and her teeth decayed. What is more, Lauwers highlights Hogan's acknowledgement of childhood wounds relating more to the collective destiny of Indigenous people rather than to her personal life path (131).

Next, before her divorce from her husband, Pat Hogan, the couple went through the adoption of two Native girls (*The Woman Who Watches Over the World* 74-78). Hogan had hoped that a caring environment would heal the adopted half-sisters from their painful history of maternal neglect and abuse. Nonetheless, she was devastated because the adoptees, Jeanette and Marie, avoided intimacy, human touch, and closeness. Sadly, the adopted daughter Marie recreated her own trauma and abuse upon her own children; she even went so far to deny their existence. Hogan was unaware that the sense of deep childhood trauma and troubled personalities related to collective destinies would echo again in her life after the adoption (Lauwers 132).

Last but not least, after the distressing experience with the adoption, Hogan lived through another shock – she found out that she suffered from fibromyalgia. This disease causes pain in the whole body (also known as widespread pain), leading to sleep problems, tiredness, and fatigue and is often accompanied by mental and emotional pain (Lauwers 133). After an unsuccessful year-long search for a cure, Hogan confessed: "The physical healing never came. Finally, there were medicines that helped, but I did not ever return to what I had been before

illness, nor have I ever been out of pain in all this time" (*The Woman Who Watches Over the World* 134).

Interestingly, Hogan's parents were not readers. As Hogan revealed in "An Interview with Linda Hogan," the only book in her childhood home was a copy of the Bible that belonged to her maternal grandmother (115). Writing did not interest her until her late twenties, in which period she also decided to continue her college education. She first went to college in Colorado Springs, then to College Park in Maryland for one semester, when she was already married, and finally graduated in English and Creative writing at the University of Colorado (Murray). While at College Park in Maryland, she worked as an assistant to orthopedically impaired students at Montgomery County Public Schools. In the interview "Sea Level," conducted by Summer Harrison, Hogan recalls that her husband gave her a book of contemporary poetry by Kenneth Rexroth, in which she read a poem about a cow (163). Motivated by this poem, she started writing poems about nature during lunch breaks in school. Later, in Maryland, she also took poetry classes and was first introduced to contemporary poetry by Rod Jellema ("An Interview with Linda Hogan" 113). Consequently, her first published work was the book of poems *Calling Myself Home* in 1978. Hogan reflects on writing poetry as "a whole body experience and not just an exercise that's mental" (Miller and Hogan 2) and states that writing is "like a form of meditation" (Harrison, "Sea Level" 163).

Since her literary debut, environmentalism and environmental issues regarding Indigenous peoples have been the central themes in Hogan's works. A particular feature of both her nonfictional and fictional narratives is that, at the same time, Hogan does not only voice her own environmental and political concerns but also tells the history of Native Americans from a Native perspective. For instance, most of her novels have a fictional plot but are used by Hogan as artistic equivalents to her nonfictional activist writing (Gaard, "Strategies for a Cross-Cultural Ecofeminist Ethics" 84). Moreover, she views writing as the most effective form of activism for voicing Indigenous and environmental concerns: "I pick these events and make them stories because only then will people listen. If I carry a sign, I am ignored. So I do it in the work" (Cook 12). In addition, Hogan claims to have an important responsibility as a writer: "Opening the eyes is the job of storytellers, witnesses, and the keepers of accounts" ("An Interview with Linda Hogan" 113).

Because of her dedication to environmentalism, her writings mostly reflect Native American interactions "with the natural world" and the ways in which these relate to the spiritual world (Fitzpatrick 8-9). To understand her writing, the reader must be aware that Hogan has

different views on being a part of the world and philosophies regarding nature. Dreese describes Hogan's perspective to nature as "mythical, mystical, and magical" (8) and uncovers that "much of her philosophy and view of nature is founded in American Indian mythology" (8). Hogan emphasizes the importance of myths, explaining that myths present a universal form of truth, as opposed to the widespread Western belief of myths being false. In that sense, Hogan understands animals and places in the natural world as bearers of symbolic meanings. Her worldview is shaped by those beliefs, and she uses these to disassemble the prevailing Western views on myths (Dreese 7-8). A consciousness of spirit-presence in the world is important both in her personal life and works. Because Hogan was not raised in a tribal community within a traditional framework, at first, she felt that her spiritual experiences, such as visions, were not ordinary. Eventually, after sharing her experience with a Native friend, who had undergone the same doubts and experiences, she stopped perceiving herself as crazy. Her friend enlightened her with the words that "she was not crazy, just an Indian" (Allen 229). In other words, Hogan fully acknowledged her ancestral precondition of spirituality and visions. This is important for her writings as she incorporates her spiritual visions in them. Allen notes that Linda Hogan has a "spirit-based vision," of which she is fully conscious, and that she uses "its vibrant spherical power to unify divergent events and conflicting views" (229).

Literary critics often label Hogan as a feminist writer, but she does not identify herself as one. In her own words, she is "a traditionally-minded person" (Stein 114). Her poetry reflects her mindset as much of it celebrates the traditional, daily role of the Native American woman as a caretaker. She even extends this role from caretaking to tending to earth (Van Dyke 97). On the other hand, Hogan stated that she is "more of a feminist mind now" (Cook 13-14) than she was before. Fiandt highlights Hogan's unusual use of the word "feminist" and explains that "she uses 'feminist' as an adjective, not a noun, hinting at a continuing difference from white feminists" (577). Furthermore, Fiandt reveals Hogan's response to the same question regarding feminism which was asked by Barbara Cook in 1980 for an article in the journal *Frontiers*. Namely, Hogan responded that the fight of the Native people had been isolated from the feminist fight because, during the 1960s, Natives had had little recognition as people and had suffered from poverty and despair (Fiandt 577). According to Paula Gunn Allen, Hogan utilizes "her spirit-centered consciousness to develop a growing feminist consciousness and activist orientation" (229).

In 2007, Hogan's important contributions to Indigenous literature and culture were officially awarded when she was "inducted into the Chickasaw Nation Hall of Fame" (Stump).

Another notable milestone is that she serves as Writer in Residence for the Chickasaw Nation ("Authors"). Besides her successful writing career, Hogan is an important figure in academia. She has taught at many universities, and her most notable position has been Professor Emerita from the University of Colorado at Boulder. She still holds lectures, does readings, and participates in conferences, both nationally and internationally (Van Dyke 98). What is more, she has also volunteered in wildlife rehabilitation. Therefore, Hogan is acknowledged for her work, which combines new Indigenous and environmental knowledge, Native science, and activism ("Linda Hogan Biographical Information").

Her latest works were published in 2020 – a collection of poems called *A History of Kindness* and a nonfiction collection of essays *The Radiant Lives of Animals*. She currently resides in Idledale, Colorado ("Linda Hogan Biographical Information").

2 Theoretical Background

The works of Linda Hogan deal with complex issues in the lives of Indigenous people. Most of her works are focused on issues regarding the environment and the roles of women in Native American communities. What stands out in her works is that these two themes are often intertwined. Therefore, the theoretical concepts of environmental justice and ecofeminism are to be explained.

2.1 Environmental Justice

In the United States, environments in which communities of color reside are plagued by inequalities. In particular, the air which poor and colored communities breathe is dirtier, landfills and incinerators are located in their neighborhoods, and the people have higher blood lead levels. Further, the jobs with the highest environmental risks are performed by minority populations. Similarly, poor communities in developing countries are faced with hazardous waste being exported from the United States and a rapid increase in dirty industries relocating in these areas. Bullard uncovers that "in 1967, students at predominantly African-American Texas Southern University in Houston were involved in a campus riot triggered by the death of an eight-year-old African-American girl who had drowned at a garbage dump" (491). Likewise, the predominantly African American community of Warren County in North Carolina demonstrated in 1982 against the decision of placing a PCB landfill site in their county. All those occurrences raised questions which ignited the movement for environmental justice (Shanklin 336-37).

The environmental justice movement advocates "the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income, with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies" ("Environmental Justice"). The authors of *The Environmental Justice Reader* define environmental justice as "the right of all people to share equally in the benefits bestowed by a healthy environment," extending it to "the places in which we live, work, play, and worship" (Adamson et al., Introduction 4). As stated by Schlosberg, the term "environmental justice" covers "two overlapping sections of the grassroots environmental movement: the antitoxics movement and the movement against environmental racism" (46).

In the article "Environmental Justice: A Roundtable Discussion," Adamson et al. acknowledge the 1987 "publication . . . of a report sponsored by the United Church of Christ Commission for Racial Justice (UCC-CRJ)" as "one of the defining moments in the history of

the environmental justice movement" ("Environmental Justice" 155). According to Adamson et al., the report unveiled the following results: firstly, race was the main factor in locating hazardous and other waste facilities, and, secondly, poor and communities of color experienced a disproportionate health risk of both their families and environments ("Environmental Justice: A Roundtable Discussion" 155). Precisely, the areas with "one or more uncontrolled toxic waste sites" were present in sixty percent of African American and Latino communities and more than fifty percent of Native American and Asian/Pacific Islander communities. Adamson et al. reveal that the term "environmental justice" was created and first used by Reverend Benjamin Chavis, who acted as the executive director of the UCC-CRJ. Chavis defined this unique term as:

> racial discrimination in environmental policy-making and the enforcement of regulations and laws, the deliberate targeting of people of color communities for toxic waste facilities, the official sanctioning of the life-threatening presence of poisons and pollutants in our communities, and history of excluding people of color from leadership in the environmental movement. (Adamson et al., "Environmental Justice" 155)

Another important event for the environmental justice movement was the 1991 National People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit, where seventeen Principles of Environmental Justice were developed and accepted (Schlosberg 48).

According to Faber and McCarthy, the environmental justice movement emerged from at least six famous political movements: "the civil rights movement, the indigenous land rights movement, the public health and safety movement, the occupational safety and health movement, the solidarity movement (for human rights and self-determination of peoples in the developing world), and the social/economic justice movement" (qtd. in Schlosberg 48).

The vast majority of environmental justice research has been done from the distributional approach (Schlosberg 56). Based on this approach, environmental inequality happens when all demographic and geographic spectrums do not share the same benefits of a good environmental policy and the same costs of environmental risk. To illustrate, each phase of the nuclear cycle (from uranium mining, testing, and disposal of nuclear waste) unfairly and disproportionally impacts Native American nations. Almost throughout the whole Cold War, uranium mining took place in the Navajo Nation, which is the biggest Native American reservation in the USA. In spite of that, the Navajo miners were paid less than the national measure by the mining companies. What is more, basic safety-standards were not enforced in Navajo mines as were

enforced elsewhere. Most disturbing, the companies even left behind large, contaminated tailing piles all over the reservation and poured radioactive water-waste into the surface and the waters. The wells on the reservation are so far contaminated. This issue impacted not just individuals but also the whole community as wells were used for ceremonial purposes. Schlosberg accentuates the results of this unfair behavior towards the Navajo people: ". . . studies have shown lung cancer risk is doubled for people living near tailings piles, and organ cancer rates for Navajo teens are seventeen times the national average" (57). Another example stressed by Schlosberg is the Shoshone Nation, whose members belong to "one of the most bombed out nations on the planet" (57). The Yucca Mountain, on which the Shoshone people live, is publicly known as the Nevada Test Site as it holds the burial for the disposal of mined uranium. Shaklin points out that communities of color are at special risk due to unequal environmental protection (337). To conclude, Taylor states that

> Environmental justice activists looked at the relationship between class, race, power, control, money and the exposure to environmental hazards and saw that increasing numbers of undesirable facilities and land uses were being foisted on communities after they were successfully blocked in other communities. (49)

2.2 Native Americans' and Other Indigenous People's Environmental Justice

In environmental literature, issues that plague Indigenous peoples and their lands are often more distinctly treated than issues that affect other groups (Shanklin 372). Goldtooth explains that "Indigenous people have a unique cultural and legal claim in U.S. history and cannot be treated as simply one among many ethnic or socioeconomic groups" (qtd. in Shanklin 372). Since the discovery of the American continent in 1492, Indigenous people have suffered in many ways. In 1493, the subjugation of Indigenous nations and their lands was guided by the religious imperatives from the Papal Bull "Inter Caetera" issued by the Pope Alexander VI. The first colonies and then empires violently and forcibly oppressed Indigenous peoples in order to convert and annihilate them (Goldtooth 9). Historian Howard Zinn writes that the Indian Removal "cleared the land for white occupancy between the Appalachians and the Mississippi, cleared it for cotton in the South and grain in the North, for expansion, immigration, canals, railroads, new cities, and the building of a huge continental empire clear across to the Pacific Ocean" (115). Ortiz adds that the American nation believed in Manifest Destiny as their "sacred duty not only to bring law and order to the Wild West but to secure its borders from sea to

shining sea, brought in its wake the Indian Wars and the final removal of Indian people to reservations away from the white man's civilization" (6).

In the article "Stolen Resources: Continuing Threats to Indigenous People's Sovereignty and Survival," the Native American activist Tom B. K. Goldtooth explains how the long history of environmental injustice towards Native America started with the treaty-making policy:

> Through a number of treaties and agreements with the U.S. government in the 18th and 19th centuries, Indigenous tribes relinquished control of territory and agreed to retain much smaller tracts of land. In return, the government promised protection, education, health care and other forms of compensation. The government made many promises, including one major agreement that became known as the "U.S. trust responsibility." Under this framework, Indigenous lands or reservations were to be held in "trust" for the tribes and protected by the United States. As trust territories, tribal lands are recognized as separate from U.S. domestic lands. (9)

However, towards the end of the nineteenth century, the Government decided to end treaty-making. The growing governmental interference in Native affairs, which continued into the twentieth century, resulted in "a massive relocation project" that began in the 1950s (Goldtooth 9). What followed was a period of voluntary relocation of Native tribes into urban areas "with the promise of jobs and opportunity" (Goldtooth 9). Goldtooth describes the opposite reality of the project: "Once in the city, tribal members found themselves without the promised prosperity or the security of tribal life. Some returned home but many stayed in the cities and became known as 'urban Indians'" (9). This assimilation policy resulted in "the creation of dreadfully poor urban Indian communities in such places as Chicago, Los Angeles, and New York City" (West and Gover 224). As revealed by Goldtooth, in 2004, about 55 percent of U.S. Indian population resided off reservation. However, many of those lived within low-income urban areas (9).

Another unsuccessful policy revealed by Goldtooth was the so-called "Termination Act," which lasted from the mid-1940s to mid-1960s (9). During this period, Indians experienced new challenges. Firstly, Goldtooth explains that this act "meant to assimilate tribes into the mainstream society irrespective of their history, culture and unique political relations with the United States" (9). Secondly, with a large money incentive, several tribes were encouraged to break their former treaties and sell their territories. However, breaking the treaties meant losing

the status of sovereign entities. Yet, some tribes sold their lands, which led to disastrous consequences for their members (Goldtooth 9).

This brief overview of important events in the relations between Indian tribes and the U.S. government shows how political decisions impacted the lifestyle of the tribes and the environmental situation. According to Wilkinson, the Westward expansion serves as an important example for understanding environmental issues which Native Americans face today (118). Hagan explains how "in a remarkably brief period – the thirty-eight years from 1848 to 1886 – the Indians of the western half of what is today the United States lost their fight against the white invaders and had most of their land taken from them" (156). Even though the invasion into their lands had already begun in the 1820s, the downfall of the Plains Indians was accelerated by the discovery of gold in California. Out of the western tribes, the Plains Indians suffered the most because their traditional way of life as nomadic buffalo hunters became impossible. The Gold Rush brought Anglo-Americans searching for precious metals everywhere, consciously ignoring Indian territorial claims, along with stagecoach-operators, and then telegraph-line and railroad construction crews. In the 1850s, the Plains Indians would get to know the complexity of treaties with the United States. As frustration in the tribes grew, they vented it by attacking stagecoaches, wagon trains, and ranches. The States responded by forming more military posts in those areas, which attracted even more settlers to the West. In response, the Indians grew more concerned, and the fighting continued. This led to a series of new treaties in 1867 and 1868 to end warfare. Through these treaties, many tribes committed themselves to selling their lands to the U.S. and moving to reservations. Reservation life meant the Indians "were supposed to begin farming and send their children to school" as their traditional nomadic lifestyle was not possible anymore. Yet, the treaties caused even more turmoil in the Plains. Buffalo herds became rarer as the white hide hunters relentlessly slaughtered them, and army patrols were present everywhere. This made the Plains life impossible for the Indians and many tribes gave in to the treaties just to continue living (Hagan 156-61). What followed after this turbulent period was described by Wilkinson as "an amalgam of water, mining, public land, Indian, and national resources issues that arise most often in the arid western states with large concentrations of federal and Indian lands" (118).

Shortly after the formation of Indian reservations, began the environmental and economic exploitation of Indian lands. Goldtooth reveals how Indian lands were abundant in natural resources: minerals, timber, petroleum, minerals, fur bearing animals, fish, and, of course, water (10). According to Goldtooth, after the treaty-making period, the U.S. government wanted to

gain straightforward access and control over the newly-found resources on Indigenous territories:

> Oklahoma, where many Indigenous tribes were sent through forced relocation, was abundant in oil. The Black Hills in South Dakota, sacred to the Lakota nation, had gold. Coal reserves were discovered in the homelands of the Dine (Navajo) and Hopi nations in Arizona, and the Crow nation in Montana. The last frontier within the United States was Alaska, where the government and its timber and petroleum corporate partners negotiated one of the biggest land grabs in modern history. (10)

Despite these findings, Indigenous people have not directly benefited from their resource abundant reservations. On the contrary, places where Indigenous people reside are used as the base from which wealth is obtained by corporations and governments. Yet, in these places, the most severe forms of poverty exist. By giving the example of the Black Hills, Goldtooth proves how resource-abundance has proven to be a curse rather than a blessing to the Native Americans (10). Namely, the Lakota Sioux claimed ownership over the Black Hills region, but the government breached that agreement when, in 1847, gold was found on the Lakota-owned territory. Interestingly, Lakota nation's claim over the Black Hills has been a legal issue to this moment. As presented by Goldtooth, the same reservation, today's Pine Ridge Reservation, was the poorest county in the U.S. in 2004, along with an unemployment rate of eighty percent, and the highest mortality rate of infants in the country (10). Furthermore, the life expectancy of men was forty-eight years and for women fifty-two. Indigenous territories are of crucial importance for the U.S. industry as in these places mega hydroelectric dams, along with copper, coal, uranium, and other metal mines, are located. However, Indigenous lands were heavily polluted as they were used for testing nuclear weapons during the Cold War (the Navajo nation), for the development of oil wells and pipelines (Oklahoma), and, finally, for the disposal of all kinds of waste, from municipal and industrial to federal and toxic, even radioactive waste (Goldtooth 10). It is important to emphasize that, in many cases today, the tribes themselves do not manage the natural resources on which they rely, but the government and other entities do (Ranco et al. 222).

Land-grabbing injustice is not the only issue that Native Americans face today. As a result of land and resource exploitation, they also face the alarming issue of climate change. Even though climate change is a global problem, "Indigenous peoples, people of color and ethnic groups, small island countries, women, youth, coastal peoples, fisher peoples, poor people, the elderly and the ecosystem" are, according to Goldtooth, most threatened by the

resulting weather changes (10). Namely, each stage of the fossil fuel industry, from exploration of lands, production, cleansing and refining, distribution, to consumption and waste disposal, leaves a mark on the ecosystems of Indigenous people and all others who rely on water and land for food and culture. Environmental justice activists, therefore, emphasize the roles of the environment in the lives of Indigenous people – traditional fishing, protection of sacred sites and religious practices, as well as the preservation of cultural activities and the traditional economy (Schlosberg 73). In other words, the environment is important for both the community and the individuals. Goldtooth also notes that it has become difficult for the tribes to maintain a sustainable way of life in which they "practice their traditional ceremonies and preserve their hunting, gathering and fishing cultures" (11). The reason lies in the disrupted access to their traditional ancestral lands, which include spiritually and historically significant sites. Moreover, many activists view threats to Native-owned lands as straightforward assaults on Native people and their deep-rooted cultural practices. The destruction of land is viewed "as an erosion of traditional lifestyle, health, and culture—in a word, genocidal" (Schlosberg 72).

According to Goldtooth, the "imperatives of conversion and annihilation" were replaced by modern forms of oppression – development schemes, assimilation, privatization of water and land, and economic globalization. What earlier used to be done by conquistadors and colonists, is now done by transnational corporations and economic elites in the United States (Goldtooth 9). Finally, Ranco et al. conclude that "environmental justice in the tribal context cannot be contemplated apart from a recognition of American Indian tribes' unique historical, political, and legal circumstances" (221).

2.3 Ecofeminism

Since the late 1980s, the term *ecofeminism* has been widely used to name an increasing cultural, political, and intellectual movement, on both activist and academic fields. The major claim of ecofeminists (ecological feminists) is that there is a deep link between "the destruction of the environment and the historical oppression of women" (Clark 111). Warren has extended this definition, stating that "important connections exist between the treatment of women, people of color, and the underclass on one hand and the treatment of nonhuman nature on the other" (3). What is more, ecofeminists claim that water, trees, "animals, toxics, and nature language" appertain to feminist issues as understanding these issues aids the understanding of the status and troubles of women cross-culturally (Warren 3).

The term *ecofeminism* was coined and first used in the 1974-published book *Feminism or Death* by the French feminist Françoise d'Eaubonne. Over the decades, the term has been used in a variety of ways as it embodies many ideas. According to Vijayaraj, the ecological consciousness of the environmental justice movement, together with the feminist consciousness, paved the way for ecofeminism (69). Similarly, the feminist theorist Ynestra King has called ecofeminism the third wave of the women's rights movement (qtd. in Clark 111).

There is not one ecofeminist philosophy, or one ecofeminism, just as there is not only one feminist philosophy. The background of the ecofeminist movement lies in a wide variety of feminist movements – radical, socialist, liberal, Marxist, black, Third World. However, ecofeminism is a distinct movement because it relates naturism (the unjustified domination of nature) and nonhuman nature to feminist issues. Moreover, well-known feminist critiques of social domination (-isms; racism, sexism, classism, heterosexism, antisemitism, ageism) are extended to nature, i.e., to naturism (Warren 4). In other words, various systems of oppression are mutually interconnected.

Furthermore, ecofeminists assert the dualism and hierarchy of the Western systems as the base for all ecological inequalities (Gross 18 qtd. in Vijayaraj 71). In this sense, ecofeminists particularly criticize dualistic reasoning in form of "polar opposites, such as male/female, human/nonhuman, culture/nature, mind/body, reason/emotion, freedom/necessity" (Brennan and Lo). In her essay "Living Interconnectedness with Animals and Nature," the ecofeminist scholar Greta Gaard emphasizes that the stem of dualistic reasoning is authorized by patriarchy (2). Since its breakthrough, the ecofeminist movement strongly disapproves of the patriarchal system's social construct of superiority, which, they claim, is based on binary oppositions, such as "self, man, human, culture and white as superior and their counterparts like other, woman, animal, nature and non-white as inferior" Vijayaraj (17). Finally, the movement insists on a new paradigm, which is only achievable through cooperation, care, and love for the world (Vijayaraj 71).

3 About the Works

All works by Linda Hogan are focused on nature and Native people's environment. This paper analyzes three of them: the novels *Mean Spirit* and *Solar Storms* and the essay collection *Dwellings*. Before the analysis of the environmental justice in the mentioned works, basic information about them needs to be provided.

3.1 *Mean Spirit*

Mean Spirit is Linda Hogan's debut novel. The publication of the novel in 1990 and its Pulitzer Prize nomination in 1991 established Hogan as one of the important American Indian fiction writers, alongside James Welch, Louise Erdrich, and Leslie Marmon Silko (Sarris 553).

Mean Spirit is best described as a historical novel with a remarkable list of characters as its large plot features more than thirty characters. While researching the material for the novel, Hogan realized that in order to reach the emotions of the readers and deeply affect them, her novel must contain an intriguing story and not just historical references (Harrison, "We Need New Stories" 5).

Nevertheless, the historical background is still of high importance for the novel. In the 1920s, oil was discovered in Oklahoma and many Indians became rich overnight. The Osage Tribe stood out during this period as the richest tribe because their lands in northeast Oklahoma contained huge oil deposits. Oil auctions were held in Pawhuska, also known as "The Osage Monte Carlo," beneath the famous "million-dollar elm." However, this stroke of luck turned out as a curse rather than a blessing. The Osage tribe underwent the so-called "Reign of Terror" when William. H. Hale, a white opportunist, conspired the murders of the members of the Kyle family and others connected to that Osage family. The "Reign of Terror" started with the murder of Henry Roan and continued with Hale hiring assassins to kill members of the Kyle family with the intention to obtain their rights and possession over oil-rich land allotments. The murders during the "Reign of Terror" were done in the most gruesome ways, from poisoning, shotgun blast murders, bullets in the head, to even a nitroglycerin explosive to blow up one Indian family house. Fear reigned in the area, and Osage families armed themselves and put electric lights around their houses for protection. A three-year-long investigation connected Hale, the self-proclaimed "King of the Osages," to the murders. Three federal agents posed under various roles during the investigation – one as an insurance salesman, another as a cattle buyer from Texas, and the last posed as a medicine man on the Osage reservation (Fixico 159-60).

The plot of *Mean Spirit* revolves mostly around the fates of the Grayclouds and the Blankets, two opulent, oil-rich and land-owning Osage families, which, alongside other wealthy individuals, are swindled out of their land and rights by oil barons and government agents during the 1920s oil-boom (Sarris 553). This instant rich-status turned many Osage away from their traditional lives. What is more, it put them on a spiritless and reckless pursuit of the dominant, white culture's materialism. Families started acquiring the white man's symbols of status, such as expensive cars, big houses, fashionable furniture, and clothes. Furthermore, it made them targets for the white man's limitless greed, leading to many being killed. The villains of the novel, Jess Gold and John Hale, are supported by a legal system which they manipulate for their gain as they acquire the ownership of Indian-owned properties by cheating, intimidating, and murdering the Osage families of Oklahoma (Hadella 261).

The novel concentrates on the Osage matriarch Belle Graycloud, a beekeeper and a green thumb with an outstanding garden. In her bones, Belle senses before all other characters that something is off. Shortly after, a relative raised by her, Grace Blanket, gets killed on her way to church. The murder of Grace Blanket marks the beginning of a series of brutal events which disband the Osage from their lands and from each other. What follows is continued violence, which, along with arbitrary laws passed by the government, turns once land-and-money-owning Natives into landlessness and poverty. What once used to be Indian-owned land becomes to those same Natives foreign and unrecognizable as it gets barren due to oil wells and overgrazing by white-owned livestock (Sarris 554).

Yet, not all characters in the novel get a tragic ending. Interestingly, the Hill Indians, who live separately of the Indians residing in Watona, preserve their "old way" of life in the hills far-off the oil-destroyed town. The character of Stace Red Hawk, an undercover federal agent with Lakota heritage, whose work to solve the Osage oil-murders helps him find peace and understanding of the dual life as an Indian in the white culture, is also notable. Then, there is the Osage water diviner Michael Horse, who resists living in a modern house. His spirit is strengthened instead of broken by the violence against his people. The turbulent situation with the murders motivates him to re-write the Bible, adding one chapter based on a Pan-Indian view on life. Above all, the character of Lettie Graycloud stands out in a special way. Even though she has lost the man she loved and every material possession, she attains new strength in the only possession she has left – her Indian heritage (Sarris 554).

Besides its apocalyptic ending, the world in *Mean Spirit* is delightfully lyrical and mysterious. Animals – bats, bees, and horses – take on a special role in the novel. An Osage

man, John Stink, rises from the dead. Among all the greed, brutality, injustice, and grief, Hogan shows her respect for the beauty and mystery of the natural world (Hadella 261).

3.2 *Solar Storms*

Hogan's second novel, *Solar Storms*, was published in 1995. Just like her first novel, *Mean Sprit*, it has an iconic status due to its captivating story about the dispossession of land, the struggle for cultural survival, and the female wisdom and strength (Blair, "Review of *Solar Storms*" 301).

The novel consists of a prologue and twenty-one chapters. The plot is set in a region known as the Triangle, which has long been an ownership dispute between tribal nations, Canada, and the U.S. (Hogan, *Solar Storms* ch. 4). Interestingly, an illustration of a down-pointing triangle is added at the beginning of each chapter.

The novel is a mixture of two stories: a fictional plot and a historical fictionalization. The fictional story revolves around Angela Jensen, who is a mixed-blood Inuit and Cree young woman searching for a way in which she would heal from a traumatic intergenerational history. Returning to her tribe in the Great Lakes Boundary Waters area, Angela is faced with the destruction of her tribe's culture and land by a massive dam project built by the BEEVCO company. The dam project seems to have been inspired by the real events from the 1970s related to the Cree-led protests against the James Bay hydroelectric dam project on the U.S.-Canada border. Like the fur trade, which destroyed natural resources during the nineteenth century in that area, the dam project is an act of environmental injustice. Namely, while consumers in southern Canada and the U.S. benefit from it, Native people face an ecological catastrophe and fight for their survival. The aim of this historical connection is to show how current environmental malpractices were legalized by colonial narratives (Harrison, "We Need New Stories" 3) and to bring the attention of the readers to "the interrelated political, personal, and spiritual dimensions of the issues surrounding the hydroelectric project, rather than to escape into the imaginary lives of the characters" (Castor, "Claiming Place in Wor(l)ds" 163).

The initial focus of the novel is the trauma of the seventeen-year-old protagonist and narrator, Angela Jensen, whose original Indian name is Angel Wing. Angela is a survivor of emotional and physical abuse who hides her scarred face with her long, dark hair. At the beginning of the novel, she returns to her birthplace in the fictional village called Adam's Rib after being in foster care in Oklahoma, as she traced her roots by the name of her great-

grandmother, Agnes, in a court record (Castor, "Our Combined Voices"). Back in her ancestral homeland, Angela initially aims to find her birthmother, Hannah. During her search, she is accompanied by her female relatives: her great-grandmother Agnes, great-great-grandmother Dora-Rouge, and Bush, who, although not directly related to Angela, acts as a grandmother figure to her (Harrison, "We Need New Stories" 6).

The quartet embarks on a sensational canoe journey north to Two-Town in Canada, where the Fat-Eaters reside. This small community is where serious protests against the development of the massive dam-project take place. Each of Angel's companions has a different intention of the travel to Two-Town: Agnes reluctantly goes only to support her mother Dora-Rouge, who wants to die in her ancestral camp, and Bush goes to join the protests against the dam project. Ironically, in the middle of the journey, Agnes dies first. The death of Agnes is not the only shock the group experiences as, alongside the river, they are surrounded by dying fish and caribou in the mud-lands. Arriving in Two-Town, they are faced with the devastation of the remaining small Fat-Eaters community and their natural habitats. Finally, Angela finds her mentally ill and dying mother, Hannah, and learns that she has a baby-half-sister Aurora (Castor, "Claiming Place in Wor(l)ds" 162-63).

This key event unveils the shocking history of intergenerational trauma and violence in Angela's family – her scars come from her mother, who tried to kill the then baby Angel with her own hands and teeth and by using weapons. This mother-daughter reunion is an important step for the improvement of Angela's mental health as she progresses towards healing from the childhood physical and emotional trauma caused by her abusive mother. What is more, it directs Angela's healing and extends it to her growing sense of political activism (Castor, "Claiming Place in Wor(l)ds" 163).

Furthermore, other events from the horrific chain of colonial abuse of nature and people are revealed. Arriving in Adam's Rib, Angela presents a brief overview of environmental destruction of the North:

> There were the French trappers and traders who emptied the land of beaver and fox. Their boats carried precious tons of fur to the trading post at old LeDoux. There were iceboats, cutters and fishers, and the boat that carried the pipe organ for the never-built church. The British passed through this north, as did the Norwegians and Swedes, and there had been logjams, some of them so high and thick they'd stanched

> the flow of water out from the lake and down the Otter River as it grew too thin for its fish to survive. (Hogan, *Solar Storms* ch. 1)

During the quartet's journey, we learn about the abuse other members of Angela's relatives endured. The tribe of Angela's grandmother, Lorreta, (Hannah's mother) had been abused by settlers. First the settlers destroyed their traditional hunting grounds and wiped out almost all animals during the fur trade. Then, as a consequence, followed hunger, and Indians were forced to eat the only food left – poisoned deer-carcasses which remained as bait for the wolves (Harrison, "We Need New Stories" 9).

The second thematic part of the novel concentrates around the protests on the land of the Fat-Eaters. Miscellaneous disagreements about how to act around the political conflict regarding the building of the dams are brought up on the tribal meetings. Some participants believe that it is right to compromise and accept money from the corporations, while radical participants see violence as the only way of survival. Of course, some believe that the extension of the project can be stopped by making wide audiences aware of the extent of the destruction. Bush insists on speaking to individual whites and writes articles in order to influence the attitudes of the developers. On the other side is Agela, who takes on a unique approach to the project, motivated by a Native myth about Wolverine she learnt from Dora-Rouge on their journey north. Wolverine often becomes angry and irritates people because they have forgotten the pact in which they promised to respect animals. Angela reenacts the myth of a wolverine trickster and sneaks into the white-owned grocery store, where she steals loads of food for the tribe, leaving the store savaged so the owners cannot save any rests (Castor, "Claiming Place in Wor(l)ds" 171).

However, these actions block the development of the project only for a little amount of time until military forces are sent in to drive away the protestors. At the end of the novel, floodwaters rise and destroy the rests of the Fat-Eaters community, while the remaining protestors are fleeing from the police, and Angela runs away with her little half-sister, Aurora (Rainwater 105).

As Blair writes in "Review of *Solar Storms*," the novel has no "tidy resolutions" (302). Indeed, it is a compelling narrative about Native survival and resistance. It deals with the most terrible way of cultural loss – dismantlement of Indian families and the loss of their children. But in the form of the story about one Native family, it conducts a healing ceremony to bring the children back (Blair, "Review of *Solar Storms*" 302). As an example, at the beginning of the

novel, Angela Jensen refers to herself with her American, foster family name. What is more, she is ashamed of the scars on her face and body. Notably, at the end of the novel, she accepts her real name (Angel Wing) and embraces the beauty of her face. The transformation from Angela Jensen to Angel Wing reflects the communal and political struggle of Native Americans. As stated by Stacks, "written on her two faces are the stories of the violence against her land and the emerging political resistance to that destruction" (161).

3.3 *Dwellings*

Dwellings: A Spiritual History of the Living World is a non-fiction collection of essays. It was first published in 1995. The collection consists of sixteen essays and a preface. At the beginning of each chapter, i.e., essay, is a line illustration.

All the essays have in common Hogan's exploration of various American relationships with the natural world. According to Dreese, the work is best described as "creative nonfiction given that it interweaves history, philosophy, autobiography, and storytelling within the framework of the rubric we call "a sense of place" (6). The work is, accordingly, named *Dwellings* as its focus is on the terrestrial intelligence and the spiritual dimension of dwelling places. Besides the physical locations, the work is also concentrated on the living creatures and their dimensions. In other words, the sense of dwelling refers also to the spiritual and intellectual pursuit of our place in the natural organization of things (Hearne 398). Through her philosophy on dwellings and creatures, the authoress also adds to the understanding of the planet as an essential, living organism on which the creatures live. What is more, all these are connected to a bigger cosmic realm (Dreese 7).

In the essays, Hogan discusses her personal relationships with animals – wolves, snakes, eagles, porcupines, fish. The reader develops a feeling for each animal through Hogan's vivid language of imagery, story, and facts. At times, the reader is surprised by the turns of the language and the brilliant phrases used by the writer. Several essays cover complex themes such as the nature of water and creation stories (Hearne 398).

Throughout the work, Hogan insists on the need for the humanity to reconnect with its environment on a spiritual level, referring to how her Native ancestors held onto the spiritual connections for survival and figuring out the great earth they lived on. Furthermore, she remarks that others, who tried to grasp the world by science and intellect, have not succeeded yet in comparison to the Native American philosophies and spirituality. Finally, she notes that Indian

spirituality is deeply personal and that it encompasses the understanding of the world around her (Darr 57).

Dwellings has a powerful message – humans must live in a reciprocal and respectful way with the living creatures and the earth. According to Hearne, such a relationship must be achieved through art and what Hogan calls "an intuitive inner language" (qtd. in Hearne 398). Although such ideas are not new, the authoress expands them through her one-of-a-kind style, which is a mixture of poetry, life experience, cross-disciplinary knowledge, and private memories of her life as a Native woman and authoress. Even though Hogan refers to scientific and academic sources, her writing is, indeed, poetic and intuitive. To this also adds her constant intellectual activity, which is fueled by the personal experiences, images, and memories (Hearne 398-99).

4 Environmental Justice in the Works of Linda Hogan

Through an ecofeminist reading of Linda Hogan's works, it can be noted that mostly female characters carry the central role in the fight for environmental justice. In other words, in the works of Linda Hogan, achieving environmental justice is an ecofeminist matter.

4.1 The Connection between the Oppression of Women and the Oppression of Nature in Environmental Injustice

According to Warren, "there are important connections between the oppression of women and the oppression of nature" (qtd. in Tong 241). The core of ecofeminist theory is the nature/woman subordination. Booth and Jacobs illustrate that women and nature are suppressed and dominated for similar reasons: "Each was, and is perceived as dangerous and in need of control" (29). The many works of Linda Hogan deal with this important ecofeminist issue, which is present at many levels.

Firstly, the oppression of both nature and women is done through language, which is being used as a tool for discrimination. According to Warren, in both spoken and written discourse, women and nature are described by sexist and naturist language (12). There are numerous phrases for describing women in animal terms, such as cows, pets, chicks, sows, bitches, pussycats, and so on. In a patriarchal culture, such animalizing and naturalizing of women approves and strengthens the women's status as inferior (Warren 12). Moreover, Warren illustrates how the same description is present when nature is feminized in such cultures, which perceive animals as subordinate to humans, i.e., men, and authorize the domination over nature (12). Likewise, the domination over nature is described by the following expressions: Mother Nature is conquered, mastered, raped, and mined; virgin timber is felled; fertile soil is tilled, whereas useless land is fallow. As stated by Warren, it is evident that "the exploitation of nature and animals is justified by feminizing them; the exploitation of women is justified by naturalizing them" (12). Notably, Linda Hogan also draws attention to this unjust use of language. In her interview for the poet Patricia Clark Smith, she stated that "women and Indians are often equated with animals, in ways that have negative connotations for all three" (qtd. in Alaimo 58).

In *Mean Spirit*, the exploitation of oil in Watona on the allotments owned by the Osage people is described by similar language. In the early 1900s, the Dawes Act had given Indians claim to 160 acres of land, which were called allotments. However, this act seemed generous

until Indians realized they had been tricked, as many tracts of land were turned into open property for white owners, such as settlers, ranchers, and homesteaders. During that period, Grace and Sara Blanket selected the land that no one else wanted, as it was dried-up and barren. Interestingly, Grace Blanket humorously titled it as "The Barren Land." Suddenly, oil was discovered on this lot, and "she called it 'The Baron Land,' for the oil moguls" (Hogan, *Mean Spirit* 8). Land that was previously unwanted and useless land, overnight became a source of profit for the white settlers, and with this change, also came the change in the connotation it was given. This sudden discovery of oil fueled the already present money-hunger of the white community. Hogan describes the extent of the white domination over Mother Earth as the clash of two opposing worlds: "The Indian world is on a collision course with the white world. . . . It's more than a race war. They are waging a war with earth" (*Mean Spirit* 14).

Hogan expresses a similar idea in the chapter "Creations" of *Dwellings*. She contemplates about the hatred towards minority groups, which was the basis of the Holocaust. In this sense, Linda Hogan claims that the holocaust began "on this continent, with the genocide of the tribal people, and with the ongoing war against the natural world" (*Dwellings* 89). A powerful lesson is offered by her, namely, that "what happens to people and what happens to the land is the same thing" (Hogan, *Dwellings* 89).

The protagonist and first-person narrator of *Solar Storms,* Angel Wing (Angela Jensen), retells the history of her ancestral lands from a Native point-of-view on her return from an American foster family. She reveals the dark history of the first generation of women at Adam's Rib, the Abandoned Ones. These women were mostly born as a result of the bad match of French fur trappers and Native women. After the French trappers eradicated beaver and wolf from their habitat, leaving skinned-off carcasses on the worn-out soil, they also left their women and mixed-blood children on those devastated lands. Angela makes an implicit comparison of the trappers' actions towards the Indian women and children, stating they were left behind "as if they too were used-up animals" (Hogan, *Solar Storms* ch. 1).

Secondly, storytelling of various cultures depicts the domination of the human world over the non-human world, making cultural stories one of the causes of environmental injustice. Harrison remarks that the work of Linda Hogan "contemplates the effects of Western stories through a storytelling approach that combines an awareness of the material devastation of peoples and lands with an examination of how stories may serve to legitimate this devastation" ("We Need New Stories" 5).

The essay "Creations" in *Dwellings* is dedicated to various creation stories, including Native American, Mayan, Greek, and Biblical creation stories. With the help of these stories, Hogan illustrates the direct and harmful results of the humankind's distance from spirituality. In particular, Dreese highlights this chapter of *Dwellings* as Hogan compares the cyclic nature of the Mayan creation story to the Western beliefs of a linear story leading to apocalypse, explaining that these stories tell a lot about their creators (9). Dreese explains Hogan's comparison – people of Western cultural backgrounds live in a destructive one-point-of-view way, without thinking and giving back to the earth, which, conclusively, brings them to their own doom (9). Dreese also points out Hogan's mindful solution, which suggests "that if people take responsibility for one another as well as the earth, and perceive life as circular, with transformations instead of conclusions, their attitude toward life prioritizes preservation and sustaining what they may someday need" (9). She adds that many Native American philosophies share the same concept of gods and goddesses walking amongst people at times in spirit form, and occasionally taking the shape of animals and even other people. This is opposed to the Western belief of God living apart from earth, and Hogan asserts that Western religion and philosophies are the cause of alienation, ultimately leading to a collective destruction of the environment (Dreese 9). Hogan calls for rethinking not only the stories of cultures but also where these stories take people, as the Western thought has led the humanity to devastating consequences (*Dwellings* 94). She concludes that "we need new stories, new terms and conditions that are relevant to the love of land, a new narrative that would imagine another way" (Hogan, *Dwellings* 94).

The novel *Solar Storms* is set in a fictional place called Adam's Rib. According to Stacks, the ideology behind the name reveals negative stories in reference to the place's Indigenous heritage (162). The name alludes to the second chapter of Genesis, in which Eve is created by God removing one rib from Adam's body, which is an example of bodily violence. Interestingly, Adam was created out of earth and breath, while Eve is a result of separation. However, the violent overtone of the name is not the only negative information regarding this village. Namely, as the homeland of the Indians, it is marked by what Goeffrey Stacks calls "a Judeo-Christian tradition of the colonizers" (162). He explains that the name Adam's Rib attests to the fact that this Native territory was named by the colonizer and not the by Natives themselves, adding that this English name on a map reveals the disregard of the cartographer to its original, Indigenous name. The act of replacing the name of an Indigenous place with a Biblical reference refers also to the stories and history of the same Indigenous place being

removed. Preparing for the canoe journey North to find her biological mother, Hannah Wing, Angel examines various maps of the river with Bush. Angel remarks on the history and stories which were created by nature, not by explorers: "What I liked was that land refused to be shaped by the makers of maps. Land had its own will. The cartographers thought if they mapped it, everything would remain the same, but it didn't, and I respected it for that" (Hogan, *Solar Storms* ch. 9). Significantly, Bush notices the flaws of cartographers as each map shows a different riverbed. She reveals the reason behind these discrepancies – for centuries, the cartography of Indigenous lands was shaped by beavers, as these hardworking animals continuously changed and improved the environment:

> Beavers were the true makers of land. It was through their dams that the geographies had been laid, meadows created, through their creation that young trees grew, that deer came, and moose. All things had once depended on them. And on these maps, we could read back to how land told the story of the beaver people. (Hogan, *Solar Storms* ch. 9)

In this sense, Angel acknowledges the importance of beavers and equals their smartness to those of humans. This revelation also shows how Indigenous storytelling was influenced by the positive attitude towards nature. Additionally, it shows how the Indigenous way of life depended on the creations of nature, as opposed to the Western lifestyle, which subjugated nature.

Thirdly, the double oppression of land and Native American women lies in the historical treatment of both women and land as commodities and resources. Petrović argues that "in the colonizing frame of mind, land and nature are considered to be commodities to be exploited and used for the purpose of taming the wilderness and acquiring land and wealth" (229). This idea was first presented by ecofeminists, who claimed that a connection between the capitalist exploitation of resources and the degradation of women exists (Taylor 58).

One of the themes of *Mean Spirit* are the lives of Native women in the dominant white culture. In particular, Hogan portrays the treatment of Native women as exploitable resources by the white society. According to Petrović, in *Mean Spirit* "both Native people and the land are used as commodities to be exploited for the purpose of obtaining wealth" (229). Mayer lists several strategies pursued by the money-hungry killers for claiming Native-owned land that occur in the novel: murder, which is often declared as suicide by the authorities; then forcing Indians who lease their lands for cattle grazing into debt with the help of new, invasive grasses and new breeds of cattle, life-insurance policies, and legal guardianship (5-6). Interestingly,

mostly men are using both Native women and nature for financial benefit. For example, the teen daughter and heiress of the murdered Grace Blanket, Nola Blanket, is married to the young Will Forrest, whose father acts as a legal guardian to Nola. The underage Nola is suspicious of the actions of her loving husband, Will, but it is his father, Mr. Forrest, who has bad intentions towards her. Mr. Forrest reveals to his son, Will, that he intentionally spent money from his daughter-in-law to increase oil-investments made by Hale to outbid competitors in an oil-auction. Disappointed by the actions his father made behind his back, Will remarks to his father that he should ask before spending Nola's money. However, Mr. Forrest reveals that he perceives Nola as a usable resource: "She is your paycheck. Now she is the one who pays for your good suits and hats" (Hogan, *Mean Spirit* 191).

The link between exploitation of both nature and women as natural resources is extended to violence against both nature and women in *Solar Storms*. As stated by Du, the novel "reveals the wounds upon both nature and women inflicted by the Western patriarchal ideology in a more explicit way" (797). Namely, in *Solar Storms*, Hogan straightforwardly displays the patriarchal drive to dominate and exploit nature: "Take, I thought then, what a strange word it is. To conquer, to possess, to win, to swallow" (ch. 20). The mental and bodily trauma endured by three generations of female characters from the Wing family, Loretta, Hannah, and Angel, correlates to the exploitation and destruction of Native land done by the European immigrants. First and foremost, Agnes traces the link between violence against both nature and women all the way back to the beginning of the colonization:

> Old Man said it was in the train tracks that went through the land and came out of the iron mines. . . . It might have started when the crying children were taken away from their mothers or when the logging camps started and cities were built from our woods, or when they cut the rest of the trees to raise cattle. (Hogan, *Solar Storms* ch. 9)

The turbulent life of Angel's biological grandmother, Loretta Wing, serves as another example of how violence impacts both Native women and nature. Agnes mentions how a specific odor followed her, coming from the poisoned wolf-bait her desperately hungry ancestors ate: "She was from the Elk Islanders, the people who became so hungry they ate the poisoned carcasses of deer that the settlers left out for the wolves" (Hogan, *Solar Storms* ch. 1). Notably, this refers to a real incident when Native people died due to having eaten poisoned meat, which Hogan mentions in *Dwellings* (68). The starving members of the Nakota Tribe in South Dakota were killed by strychnine, which they consumed in wolf-bait. Sadly, the Nakota were forced to

eat meat left as bait for wolves as the government had not sent the treaty-guaranteed payment for Indian land. Revealing to Angel the turbulent life of her mother, Hannah, Agnes recognizes that the resulting trauma was passed down from generation to generation: "Loretta was sold into sickness and prostitution, and those things followed Hannah into dark, dark places" (Hogan, *Solar Storms* ch. 9). Similarly, Du notes that "the bodies of Loretta Wing and Hannah bear the marks of the long legacy of patriarchal violence" (794).

The second generation, to which Hannah belongs, is without doubt the one most marked by the violence. According to Bleck, through the figure of Hannah Wing, Hogan shows many deep-rooted worldviews (35). The first and the most important one is the discrimination of Native women based on the "the destructive belief that American Indian women were somehow less than human and that their bodies represent an 'other' lack to inscribe and an 'other' territory to own" (Bleck 35). Through Hannah Wing's character, Hogan also shows how dangerous it is to follow the dominant worldview of a society, as such a worldview justifies "writing over the 'other' experience" (Bleck 35). Moreover, Hogan's description of Hannah's body as "skin that others wore" (*Solar Storms* ch. 4) implies that her body was "an empty space to the men who try to own her and to fill her with the language of violence" (Bleck 35). Hogan specifies that Hannah's body "was a garment of scars. There were burns and incisions" (*Solar Storms* ch. 6). She emphasizes the extent of violence: "Like someone had written on her. The signatures of torturers . . ." (*Solar Storms* ch. 6). In this sense, Harrison remarks that a strong link between body and land violence exists: "the bodies of these women become material markers of the damage inflicted on their ancestral lands" ("We Need New Stories" 9).

The third generation of the Wing family, portrayed by Angel, also showcases the connection between violence against nature and violence against women. What is special in Angel's character is that she survived not only violence by the dominant culture but also violence done by her own kin. Angel was severely abused and later abandoned by her mother, Hannah, which resulted in Angel being taken into foster care. The kind of abuse Hannah had done to her daughter is similar to the most common method used by the colonizers – obliterating and harming by using weapons: "She had used weapons against me, I learned later—hot wire, her teeth. Once she'd even burned me with fire" (Hogan, *Solar Storms* ch. 15). Returning to her tribal community, Angel is eager to find out about her life story before foster care. Instead of presenting Angel with a story beginning with her birth, her grandmother, Dora-Rouge, presents an interpretation which starts with the colonization of Native lands. Stacks explains the intention of this storytelling, claiming that Angela's own traumatic history is intertwined with the history

of abuse on the land of her tribe as the scarring on her body reflects the violence inflicted upon land by corporation owners, engineers, and construction workers (162). At first glance, the narratives of colonization of nature and Angel's personal trauma do not have any connection. But Dora-Rouge's storytelling about ancestors and the exploitation of land make Angel realize the interconnectedness of trauma. She personally reflects on the historical ties between violence against both women and nature: "My beginning was Hannah's beginning, one of broken lives, gone animals, trees felled and kindled. Our beginnings were intricately bound up in the history of the land" (Hogan, *Solar Storms* ch. 6).

In *Dwellings,* Hogan, as a mixed-blood Native woman, reflects about communal violence done to Native people, especially emphasizing violence done to Native women. Pointing out the materialistic incentive the Spanish conquistadors had, Hogan shares one story from the Mexican expedition done by the famous explorer and conquistador Hernando de Soto (*Dwellings* 43-44). An Indigenous woman was abducted by de Soto because she possessed a pearl. He planned on stealing the pearl and killing the woman on the journey far from her homeland. However, the woman broke free. The woman's escape infuriated de Soto, and he relentlessly killed other Indigenous people and destroyed their land. Writing about this incident in *Dwellings*, Hogan remarks that "Humans colonizing and conquering have a propensity for . . . burning behind them what they cannot possess or control, as if their conflicts are not with themselves and their own way of being, but with the land itself" (44). In this sense, Hogan indicates that the male conquistadors initially embarked on a materialistic driven conquest to exploit as much goods as possible from the Indigenous people but prolonged their conquest onto ruining both the people and the land.

In the chapter "Deify the Wolf," the authoress mentions and reflects on real historical events which illustrate the anti-nature and anti-women mindset of the settlers, such as the Sand Creek massacre. This incident of 1864 involved military troops from the First and Third Colorado Volunteers led by the politician John Chivington and the tribes of Cheyennes and Arapahos. In 1861, these tribes were displaced in and moved to the US military reservation Sand Creek in southeastern Colorado. They peacefully resided on the territory as they were granted permission to hunt buffalo outside the reservation. However, in early 1864, the Colorado governor removed their permission to leave the reservation for hunting purposes, and the tribes complied to this order. Yet, on November 29, 1864, Chivington led seven hundred soldiers to the reservation and attacked the tribes without any provocation or warning. The attack resulted in 133 dead Native people, the vast majority of those being women and children (Dunbar-Ortiz

137). As revealed by Hogan in *Dwellings*, this attack is even more brutal because of the sexist act done by soldiers who "pinned the innermost parts of Indian women's bodies to their hat and over their saddlehorns" (73). This infamous incident is another example of hatred and violence towards Native people, especially Native women.

4.2 The Roles of Gynocratic and Matrilineal Communities in the Fight for Environmental Justice

To begin with, in her groundbreaking work *The Sacred Hoop,* Paula Gunn Allen states that "traditional tribal lifestyles are more often gynocratic than not, and they are never patriarchal" (17). Allen further explains that American Indian tribes endured physical and cultural genocide mostly due to the colonizer's patriarchal mindset, which feared gynocracy (18). Namely, Puritans and other Christian missionaries, such as Quaker and the Catholic, together with the government leaders, could not accept a society in which women occupied leading positions and had a voice in making decisions. Hogan, who is recognized as a leading ecofeminist and environmental activist, also views patriarchy as responsible for the subjugation of both women and land (Benabed 240). In her novels, the base of gynocratic communities is formed by a powerful female archetype which is present in the female protagonist.

First and foremost, *Solar Storms* depicts the Indigenous world in which "woman-centered tribal societies in which matrilocality, matrifocality, matrilineality, maternal control of household goods and resources, and female deities . . . are present and active features of traditional tribal life" (Allen 19). A powerful female archetype is present in this world, namely, in the character of Bush, who acts as a mentor to the young Angel. The character of Bush is a reminder of older, pre-colonial times, when Indigenous women had important roles in their societies (Benabed 240). Women had a word in tribal wellbeing and made decisions for the whole community. They possessed hunting and fishing skills, which made them food providers, opposed to their position after the colonization, when they were reduced to their birth-giving ability.

Since Angel has spent most of her life in foster care in Oklahoma, Bush helps Angel adapt to the tribal lifestyle upon her return to Adam's Rib. Bush takes her fishing, unaware of Angel possessing a rare talent. Namely, Angel can see inside the water, which no one else from the tribe can do: "I did fish again, after all, in the canoe with Bush, finding the fish with my eyes" (Hogan, *Solar Storms* ch. 6). Bush not only praises Angel for her unique gift but she also guides Angel to use this gift for wisdom: "She said I could see to the bottom of things" (Hogan,

Solar Storms ch. 6). Later in the novel, when the workers start intimidating the remaining residents of the shacks which are to be destroyed, Bush takes Angel and Aurora on a fishing trip. However, this fishing trip is a keyword used by Bush which serves as a clue for Angel to prepare for anything possible as the workers grow suspicious to possible attacks from the remaining Native people in Two-Town. Angel realizes that Bush taught her many skills: "In a way, I truly was fishing, though I never cast a line. I was learning a new element, observing creatures unfamiliar to me, struggling with people and ideas from another world" (Hogan, *Solar Storms* ch. 18).

The role of Bush as a mentor to Angel plays an important role in the development of Angel's activism. With her vivid storytelling, Bush creates a strong bond with Angel, offering guidance towards healing from personal trauma through Native wisdom. At times, Angel is impressed with Bush's storytelling ability: "If I could watch Bush long enough, I thought, I would see the meat and skin and fur return to the bones. I would see an animal begin at a bony center and grow. The wolverine eyes would start to shine" (Hogan, *Solar Storms* ch. 8). Moreover, the stories Bush tells Angel not only serve as a guidance for living a truly tribal life but they also direct Angel towards fighting to save both her matrilineal community and the environment. Her initial intention to find her mother and reconnect with her roots turns into a much larger objective – to protect and preserve her ancestral lands along with her tribespeople. Along with Bush, who writes stories about the situation regarding the BEEVCO project for Canadian and American newspapers, Angel becomes involved in activism and gives an interview to the radio program "Indian Time" (Hogan, *Solar Storms* ch. 18). Especially those Native stories told by Bush inspire Angel to take action when the construction workers make progress on the dam project. Encouraged by the story of the trickster character, Wolverine, Angel embodies this Native myth figure on her food-stealing spree in order to drive away the workers: "Without words, I, like Wolverine, would speak, would destroy their food so they would grow hungry, so they would have to leave" (Hogan, *Solar Storms* ch. 19).

Interestingly, upon her return to Adam's Rib, Angel blamed her mother's mental illness for all the problems in her life, from the lack of love, identity, and home to the lack of Indigenous knowledge (DeTavis 15). Due to a chain of generational trauma, the mentally ill Hannah is often labeled as crazy. Yet, only through Bush's stories does Angel realize that Hannah's condition stems from violence done by the colonizers. As Castor states, "the stories Angel hears from her grandmothers . . . become part of a metanarrative that helps her make sense of the psychological illness for which her mother and her mother's lover were not to

blame" ("Our Combined Voices Are a Chorus" 455). These stories also help Angel heal from the abuse done by her mother. Moreover, the same stories of violence and survival help Angel as she progresses to save her baby half-sister, Aurora, aware that "She'd live. She'd come in from water like Loretta, Hannah, and me" (Hogan, *Solar Storms* ch. 19). In other words, after being alienated from her home for almost her whole life, Angel restores the broken bonds by listening to the Native stories told by her female ancestors.

The novel *Mean Spirit* also depicts a gynocratic and matrilineal community with a strong, wise female archetype. The Graycloud family matriarch and one of the main tribal elders, Belle, can be categorized as a strong female archetype. Throughout the novel, she successfully manages to cope with living in a time where the Indian and white culture clash. Hogan describes her as "small, but in spite of her slight stature, she was a giant on the inside, and hard to reckon with" (*Mean Spirit* 13).

After Grace Blanket, the richest Osage Indian of Watona, is murdered under suspicious circumstances, the Graycloud family adopts the thirteen-year-old Nola Blanket, the heiress of the murdered Grace Blanket. Belle takes care of the traumatized girl who witnessed the murder of her mother, Grace. As a result, Nola rarely speaks and suffers from nightmares despite taking sleeping pills. In this case, Belle acts as a motherly figure and comforts the scared girl: "Belle would tiptoe down the cold wooden hallway, pull the covers up to Nola's chin, and sit with the frightened girl until she fell asleep" (Hogan, *Mean Spirit* 162). Aware that Nola's life is in danger due to her inheritance, Belle ensures protection over Nola by hiring watchers. It is important to note that Nola is a half-blood member of the Hill Indians as her unknown father was one of them. Hogan describes the Hill Indians as "a peaceful group who . . . depended on returning to a simpler way of life, so they left behind them everything they could not carry and moved up into the hills and bluffs" (*Mean Spirit* 5). By hiring watchers, Belle cares for the gynocratic remnant of the Blanket family. The watchers, who are sacred runners, follow and watch over Nola everywhere, from the Graycloud house, school, and when she marries and moves in with Will Forrest, the son of her legally appointed guardian, Mr. Forrest.

Interestingly, Will Forrest, who makes a living by selling Indian artifacts, falls in love with Nola the moment he sees her. Nola's caretakers, especially Belle, are not happy with Nola's future husband as "white men marrying Indian women to possess their wife's and children's allotments of land" (Hogan, *Mean Spirit* 165) is a common practice in their surroundings. Although young and at times acting very immature, Nola Blanket shows her wisdom with her comment regarding Will's marriage proposal: "Even if he's crooked, I'm worth more to him

alive" (Hogan, *Mean Spirit* 165). With this comment, Nola suggests that she is marrying Will for her safety and not out of love. Initially taken over by Will's outpouring love in form of white roses and expensive gifts, Nola spots the difference between them as Will hoards their house with Indian artifacts of questionable origin. Moreover, she starts questioning his love as she gets the impression that he considers her a living artifact: "She began to think that she herself, as an Indian woman, represented something old and gone to him, something from another time" (Hogan, *Mean Spirit* 195). After finding out that her father-in-law swindled most of her money on unsuccessful investments, she also becomes suspicious towards Will's late-night returns home; the pregnant Nola starts fearing for her own life and the life of her baby. Finally, she shoots him and finds refuge at her own place of birth, the Hill Indian's settlement, where she gives birth to a baby girl named Moses.

According to Petrović, "Native people who are able to mediate between worlds seem to be successful in *Mean Spirit*" (241). For instance, because of the shock Nola Blanket experiences when her mother is killed near her, Nola spends some time in-between two worlds. As stated by Blair in "The Politics of Place in Linda Hogan's *Mean Spirit*," Nola "walks for a time in the netherlands between the dream world and the world of the living after the murder of her mother, Grace" (17). In addition, during this hard period in her life, Nola exhibits a ghost figure as she suffers from sleep disorders, mostly sleeping with her eyes open. Hogan describes Nola's paranormal behavior: "The girl turned over in bed, then sat up like a ghost. . . . Her eyes were black and haunted-looking, with dark circles beneath them. . . . The air seemed to go out of the room" (*Mean Spirit* 31). Interestingly, after a close encounter with one of her watchers, Nola stops having sleep issues and continues with her life after the trauma of her mother's murder. Blair notes that the child-Nola is remodeled by the presence of her watchers as she turns into a rebel who refuses to conform to the dominant cultural norms pushed onto her by the Watona Indian school ("The Politics of Place in Linda Hogan's *Mean Spirit*" 17). Namely, she resists wearing the school uniform and, instead, proudly wears her traditional Osage clothing; she speaks in her language and eventually becomes the exception to every school rule, which makes her a hero in the eyes of other Indian children: "Her anger and defiance spoke for all of them. She alone stood up for what they feared to say and do" (Hogan, *Mean Spirit* 128).

Belle Graycloud is another notable character who mediates between two worlds. In her case, she is aware of how the white world functions and uses this knowledge for her benefit. After Benoit is arrested as the prime suspect in Sara's death, Belle and Lettie want to know his side of the story. As Benoit is in prison, and visiting him would raise suspicion towards them,

Belle occupies her thoughts until a solution comes to her in a dream. In her dream, she sees a woman in an Osage "tear" dress, and after she wakes, she comes to the realization that "white people rarely concerned themselves with Indian matters, that Indians were shadow people, . . . and that this shadowy world allowed for a strange kind of freedom" (Hogan, *Mean Spirit* 81). Inspired by her dream, Belle successfully navigates between the two worlds as she raises no suspicion dressed in Native clothing while visiting Benoit in prison, justifying her visit as that of religious nature. In a clever way, Belle uses the Native spirituality stereotype and embodies the trickster character to deceive the system and achieve her goal.

Another example of her wisdom is seen in the moment when she discovers oil on her cornfield. In contrast to other Native residents of Watona, who joyfully react when oil is found on their parcels, as they will financially benefit from it, Belle is worried. To her, land is not a source of financial income but a sacred place. Hogan describes Belle's special relationship with her land: "A cornfield was the very heart of life and Belle nursed her corn. She knew it needed more than water, light and food; it needed the care of a woman" (*Mean Spirit* 225). What is more, once oil forms holes in her cornfield, Belle tries her best to hide the holes by filling them with soil as she is aware that oil will attract money-hungry whites onto her land and family. Thus, she manages to protect her family for a short time as oil explodes from her parcel at the end of the novel.

Secondly, a central ecofeminist tenet states that the female connection to nature should be recognized and celebrated, along with the traditional values linked to women (Du 790). Very often, female abilities of giving birth and nurturing are associated with Earth, which is often called Mother Earth. However, the patriarchal mindset degrades the female notion of Earth as both nature and women are binary oppositions to the more valued culture and men. Benabed notes that due to the historical destruction of Native matrilineal communities, contemporary Indigenous literature revives women as communal caretakers and leaders and emphasizes their roles in preserving Indigenous knowledge, healing traditions, and ritual ceremonies (239). Notably, the three works of Linda Hogan mentioned in this paper also cover this ecofeminist idea.

Besides being a protector, Belle of *Mean Spirit* is mainly defined by her lifestyle as a beekeeper and green thumb. She exemplifies Native oneness with nature as she sleeps in "her herb garden with a stubborn golden chicken roosting on the foot of the bed, a calico cat by the old woman's side, a fat spotted dog on the ground, and a white horse standing as close to Belle as the fence permitted . . ." (Hogan, *Mean Spirit* 10). As Petrović explains, "Hogan portrays

Belle Graycloud as a woman who is in tune with the land and off the land" (236). She tends a garden with many vegetables; she cultivates a cornfield, maintains bees, and manages a farm with her husband, Moses Graycloud. Moreover, Hogan describes how Belle sympathizes with bees by comparing them to Indians: "Bees were like Indians, Belle thought to herself, with a circular dance, working together for the survival of the next generations" (*Mean Spirit* 312). She cares for her family, as the fruits of her labor feed them, and Belle rightfully claims: "The earth is my marketplace" (Hogan, *Mean Spirit* 16). Belle upholds a special relationship with nature and all living beings. After planting corn, she nourishes her fields by singing in a ceremony. Even though some younger Indians, who plant corn and fertilize it with chemicals, make fun of Belle's old ways of fertilizing, she still helps them and performs her blessing ceremony when their crops do not grow: "When Belle went out to his cornfield to bless the ground and the corn, Lettie went with her. Lettie carried the large basket with the meal and tobacco and sat down on the bare earth while Belle walked up and down the furrows" (Hogan, *Mean Spirit* 210). Likewise, Belle has a kind approach to her domestic animals. Even though she sells chicken eggs, she does not treat those animals solely as a source of profit, but equally, just as all other living beings: "All the while she raked fresh gold straw, she spoke to her chickens in the same affectionate tone as she used when speaking to her girls and to the corn" (Hogan, *Mean Spirit* 211).

The most notable aspect of Belle's caretaking trait is her restless commitment in the fight for environmental justice. Abd El-Hady notes that Belle exhibits extreme resistance to the oppression of nature by the white community (27). On her way to Watona to bring eggs to a customer, Belle spots white eagle hunters in the back of a truck filled with eagle carcasses as they count how many of those are going to be sold in the city as souvenirs. Utterly shocked at this scene, Belle envisions the dead eagles as Indians: "They looked like a tribe of small, gone people, murdered and taken away in the back of a truck" (Hogan, *Mean Spirit* 110). Infuriated by their deeds, Belle assaults them by kicking and spitting at them, destroying a window on the truck, but the men manage to tie her and deliver her to jail.

Despite being in jail for a day, Belle is not discouraged from her fight to save the environment, even when she once again must disobey authorities. Similarly, Belle enacts the role of a woman-caretaker when she protects the bats at Sorrow Cave. In an environmental incident, bats are killed by a violent mob of unemployed white oil workers, accompanied with Sherriff Gold and Deputy Wills: "[A] good number of well-dressed young men and their fathers stood outside the cave and shot into it, knocking the frightened bats to the ground, then shooting

randomly while the animals screamed with terror" (Hogan, *Mean Spirit* 277). The whites plan to exterminate bats in Watona due to a false belief that they carry rabies, as a young girl died of this disease. Their killing spree is even more motivated by the one-dollar-bounty per dead bat. Belle courageously blocks the entrance into the cave with her body, and, in the meantime, Hill People gather to support her protest. Even though she gets arrested again, her protest helps to save the bats as these animals succeed in hiding farther in the back of the cave. Abd El-Hady notes that Belle is a woman connected to nature and at all means ready to prevent the destruction of nature (28).

As Casteel points out, Belle's protection and activism for nature pay off as "in return her bees avenge the attack by Jess Gold" (66). Before getting shot by the Sheriff, Jess Gold, who wants to gain control ovel Belle's oil-rich allotments, the angry behavior of her bees tells Belle that something is wrong. Gold attempts to kill Belle, but she survives as his bullet hits her meteorite necklace. Only when a warrant for Belle's arrest is put out along with a charge for involuntary manslaughter does Belle realize that her bees have killed the Sherriff.

The female connection to nature and traditional values associated with women are also celebrated in *Solar Storms*. Arriving in her homeland after being in foster care for the most part of her life, Angel acknowledges that the strong bond between women and nature has been broken: "Between us there had once been a bond, something like the ancient pact land had made with water, or the agreement humans once made with animals" (Hogan, *Solar Storms* ch. 1). After a few days in Adam's Rib, Angel feels as if she belonged to her homeland, which also invokes the strong connection to nature: "I'd searched all my life for this older world that was lost to me, this world only my body remembered. In that moment I understood I was part of the same equation as birds and rain" (Hogan, *Solar Storms* ch. 4).

Throughout the novel, her initial aim of resolving family issues shifts towards restoring her bond with nature as a Native woman. Guided by the connection to land, exhibited by the storytelling of her great-great-grandmother, Dora-Rouge, Angel learns about Native medicine and the healing power of plants. Soon, Angel becomes accustomed to the Native way of life and, accordingly, describes her special relationship with Dora-Rouge: "We would breathe together the way wolves do with their kith and kin, the way they nurture relations by breathing. This breath was alive. It joined us as we were joined in so many other ways" (Hogan, *Solar Storms* ch. 2).

The most important nature-connection that Angel develops is with water. Brígido-Corachán explains that "Water is a living entity with a central role in Indigenous practices,

creation stories, spirituality, and cultural identity throughout the Americas" (41). Quite scared about their journey, due to her inexperience in canoeing, Angel associates the dangerous waters with the spiritual force: "something godly was bringing us through" (Hogan, *Solar Storms* ch. 11). During the journey, Angel grasps the importance of "knowing the current of water and living in the body where land spoke what a woman must do to survive" (Hogan, *Solar Storms* ch. 12). In this sense, Angel yet again acknowledges the deep connection between womanhood and nature.

Harrison notes that "by positing land itself as a living source of story, Hogan's fiction challenges two-dimensional representations' depiction of land as a passive container of exploitable resources" ("We Need New Stories"17). By listening to the stories of her female relatives, Angel realizes that she "heard the voices of the world, of what was all around us—the stones, the waters flowing toward their ends, the osprey with its claws in fish, even the minnows and spawn" (Hogan, *Solar Storms* ch. 11). In other words, Native storytelling enables Angel to feel connected to the land, which later guides her resistance to the oppression of nature.

Hogan also expresses the connection between women and nature in *Dwellings.* To highlight the importance of traditional roles associated with women, Hogan describes her dreams in which she visited a cave. In those dreams, she sees women who sew bodies together and, in that way, create life. Hogan praises the interconnectedness of nature and womanhood, which appeared to her in that dream: "I was there, in that dream, searching for my mothers: the earth, my human mother, my own life as a woman" *(Dwellings 32).*

Similar to her Angel character of *Solar Storms*, who has lost the connection with land, Hogan remarks that many people, including Natives, have forgotten the mystery of nature and spirit. Hogan adds that "for tens of thousands of years such things have happened and been spoken by our elders and our ancestors" (*Dwellings* 17).

Finally, Hogan emphasizes the role of ceremonies for establishing a strong connection to nature. When visiting a cave, she sees a woman who also values the connection to nature as she offers tobacco and sage to the land: "Another woman, purified by heat and steam, felt the earth's heartbeat, heard the murmuring sounds of breathing and shifting" (Hogan, *Dwellings* 33). By sharing a very personal experience during a ceremony, Hogan suggests that the power of ceremonies restores broken bonds with nature: "We who easily grow apart from the world are returned to the great shore of life all around us, and there is the deepest sense of being at home here in this intimate kinship" (*Dwellings* 41).

4.3 Roles of Men in the (Ecofeminist) Fight for Environmental Justice

In the article "Toward a Queer Ecofeminism," the ecofeminist scholar Greta Gard asserts that ecofeminist thinking ultimately rejects dualism and, therefore, equally acknowledges women and men as part of nature and culture (25). Such thinking can be traced in the works of Linda Hogan. Even though female characters lead the fight for environmental justice, the roles of men in fighting environmental injustices are equally worthy.

In *Solar Storms*, the image and role attributed to men conforms to the cooperative and communal principles of Indigenous ecofeminism (Benabed 240). Male characters of the novel, John Husk, Tommy Grove, and Tulik, maintain a good relationship with nature. They preserve the ecological system of their environment along with tribal traditions. For example, the tribal judge, Tulik, is a good hunter and fisher. Referred to as "Grandfather" by young people of the tribal community, Tulik embodies the role of a wise counsellor. His words encourage the lost and scared Angel upon her return to her original community: "You know, Angel, here a person is only strong when they feel the land. Until then a person is not a human being" (Hogan, *Solar Storms* ch. 15). Furthermore, his role in teaching Angel tribal traditions, such as fishing and gathering plants, is even more important for the development of her persona. Tulik is the first person who detects that Angel is a plant-dreamer, and he, accordingly, takes her on his gathering trips. On those trips, Tulik shares Native creation stories and teaches Angel the importance of sustainability in Native life: "Some of the plants we would cut. Others had to be pulled by the roots, but only if there were enough left to survive. . . . We were careful, timid even, touching a plant lightly, speaking with it, Tulik singing, because each plant had its own song" (Hogan, *Solar Storms* ch. 17).

Another man who assists Angel after her return home is Tommy Grove. Even though he is a year younger than Angel, she recognizes his kindness and wisdom as he takes care of the old people living on the Hundred-Year-Old-Road by hunting, fishing, and providing them with food. His qualities, such as respect for animals while hunting, immediately make Angel attracted to him. Angel remarks that "Tommy was different from the boys I'd known before. They were interested in cars, rock-and-roll music, ball games, and girls; they were children. He was a provider already" (Hogan, *Solar Storms* ch. 9). Finally, when they confess their love to each other, Hogan depicts their love as a deep bond between humans and nature: "When I am with Tommy, I have no words, and together we are awake in a still-unnamed forest" (*Solar Storms* ch. 21).

John Husk is another character who influences Angel's worldview. He strongly values nature and animals, although he used to make a living by trapping animals. Notably, he regrets his actions, even though a strong winter forced him into breaking the bond with nature. He reveals to Angel: "There had once been a covenant between animals and men. . . . They would care for one another. It was an agreement much like the one between land and water. This pact, too, had been broken, forced by need and hunger" (Hogan, *Solar Storms* ch. 1). Interestingly, Husk is an avid reader of science magazines, and his wisdom is based on Native teaching and scientific facts. Angel acknowledges the strong influence of his stories on her life: "[W]hen I walked from land to land, or cut wood, or daydreamed at the window, it was always with a head full of knowledge or stories I'd gained from Husk" (Hogan, *Solar Storms* ch. 9).

Men with similar characteristics are present in *Mean Spirit*. Michael Horse is probably the most influential male character of the novel. Known as the last Indian near Watona living in a tepee, Horse is a water diviner, seer, and a tribal elder. His seeing ability made him the first Indian to spot oil on owned land. However, after the discovery of oil, he embraces luxuries and materialistic possessions in his life. In contrast to his traditional tepee, Horse owns a Cadillac. Yet, as more and more rich Indians get killed under mysterious circumstances, Horse withdraws from materialism and leaves his possessions to live with the Hill Indians. He and Ona Neck take turns in keeping the sacred fire alive. According to Musher, Horse is "a keeper of the sacred fire in both a literal and metaphoric sense" (29) as he takes care of the actual fire and writes down the history of events in Indian County in his diary. However, his most important deed towards achieving environmental justice is writing a new chapter for the Bible. Even though he is warned by Father Dunne that adding a new chapter to the Bible is not allowed by Christian law, Horse criticizes Dunne by stating that "the Bible is full of mistakes," and asks: "Where does it say that all living things are equal?" (Hogan, *Mean Spirit* 273). His Pan-Indian version of the Bible includes guidelines for living harmoniously and sustainably with the planet and a prophecy that people will honor the Earth like they used to.

Secondly, Allen states that "tribes have seen a progressive shift from gynocentric, egalitarian, ritual-based social systems to secularized structures closely imitative of the European patriarchal system" (259). Due to this immense change in social systems, many Indians forever left their old ways of life and adapted to modern, white living. Allen adds that a systematically planned genocide with the aim of ruining ritual traditions was practiced against the Indians, and she lists methods used for their destruction: conversion to Christianity, renaming and rebranding of Indian ritual days as Christian feasts, degradation of women, ban of ceremonial practices,

forced attendance of Indian boarding schools, imprisonment, and exploitation of economic resources (259-60). Both *Mean Spirit* and *Solar Storms* depict male characters who also left their initial, Indian way of life and conformed to the lifestyle imposed by the dominant society.

The mixed-blood character LaRue Marks Time is a great example of a man who lives by white-imposed beliefs. Vernon claims that "he was considered a 'poor excuse for an Indian' because he ignored the respect between animals and humans" (39). Namely, the ways in which LaRue lived strongly oppose Indian beliefs – he worked as a taxidermist and additionally sold arms, animal hides, traps, and pinned butterflies. His "poorness" is traced back to his involvement in the Vietnam War. What is more, he openly confesses hate to "what men were capable of, he hated, and his hatred included himself" (Hogan, *Solar Storms* ch. 1). Similarly, in *Mean* Spirit, a negative influence of the dominant society is exemplified in Ben, the grandson of Belle Graycloud. Meeting with the council of elders in the Hill Indians' settlement, Belle asks for help as her grandson "came back from Haskell school and he was sick" (Hogan, *Mean Spirit* 272). By describing him as sick, Belle means that her teenage grandson does not respect the laws of nature and his other family members. Namely, Ben suffers from drunkenness, which resulted in him being expelled from school, stealing a horse, cursing at his father, and even cutting himself. However, by being watched over a Hill Indian, Ben manages to heal from his "sickness." Based on this resolution, Hogan suggests that by restoring a bond with nature and community, Native individuals can be healed from the imposed beliefs.

On the other hand, *Mean Spirit* contains a character who breaks free from the imposed lifestyle – Stace Red Hawk. First appearing in the novel as an undercover federal agent in Watona, Red Hawk is a Lakota Sioux Indian from South Dakota who believes he will achieve justice by using his powers from the U.S. Bureau of Investigations. After an unsuccessful trial against the lead villain, John Hale, Stace grows disappointed by the law enforcement: ". . . his younger mind once believed he could help the people by going to work in Washington" (Hogan, *Mean Spirit* 336). Musher notes that Stace Red Hawk is fully aware that he cannot do right for himself and his people by collaborating with the government, one of the lead sources of oppression (32). Stace entirely gives up on law enforcement and finds solace in Sorrow Cave. There he is visited by Cry or Na-pa-cria, a Native woman figure who takes him home, to the Hill Indians.

Thirdly, in both *Mean Spirit* and *Solar Storms*, the collaboration of male and female characters is essential to successfully overcoming environmental issues, even for a short period of time. Even though female characters lead the fight against environmental injustices done by

the white society, without the help of the male characters they would not succeed in protecting the environment. For example, in *Mean Sprit*, Belle Graycloud and Silver, one of the Hill Indians, come by Sorrow Cave when bats are mercilessly killed by a group of white men. Although Belle prevents the attack from escalating by blocking the entrance into the cave with her body, Silver, accompanied by fellow Hill Indians, Stace Red Hawk and Moses Graycloud, completely stops the incident. By driving away the protestors and saving the bats, Hogan showcases the strength of the community in which men and women equally take care of their natural surroundings: "[T]hat night inside the cave, after the old women tried to help the bats that were injured and the men placed the bodies of dead bats outside the cave, the people laughed and talked" (*Mean Spirit* 282). Musher highlights the trust all community members have towards Belle's judgment: "All who have gathered affirm their Indian values in their willingness to place their lives on the line to preserve the lives of the bats" (29).

The novel *Solar Storms* also contains examples of a successful collaboration between men and women. After photographs of the ruined environment, taken by Bush, were smuggled to other Indian groups in the region, the grassroots movement in Two-Town draws on more volunteers who are willing to stop the construction of the dam. The grassroots movement, led by Bush and Angel, becomes more powerful when Arlie Caso House and his twelve companions, the so-called Apostles, join the movement. Arlie is a former political prisoner whose presence intimidates police officers in Two-Town as he successfully escaped from prison several times: "And the Junior Police, as we called them, looked even more afraid when they saw these new men, mature and strong; their presence changed the terms of the struggle" (Hogan, *Solar Storms* ch. 18). Even though undercover police informants arrive in the area after Arlie's arrival, he successfully tricks them. As the movement became larger, more meetings were held, but they had to be done in secret as the informants watched over the area. By strategically sending his Apostles to different locations before the meetings, Arlie confuses the informants. Notably, this type of collaboration blocks the development of the dam even for a short period of time.

Conclusion

Environmental justice issues have been present in the lives of Indigenous people since the discovery of the North American continent. The three works of Linda Hogan analyzed in this paper tackle the long history of environmental injustice and its effects on the past and present lives of Native Americans. Considering that *Mean Sprit* and *Solar Storms* are novels based on real historical events, and *Dwellings* is a collection of non-fiction essays based on Linda Hogan's individual experiences as a mixed-blood Native woman, in all three works, the fight for environmental justice is primarily a female issue as the main female characters and the female narrator exhibit the leading roles in resisting environmental injustices. The three works analyzed in this paper exhibit an Indigenous female-led world which conforms to Paula Gunn Allen's study on traditional Indigenous communities as well as the ecofeminist principles set by prime ecofeminist scholars Greta Gaard and Karen J. Warren.

First and foremost, all three texts demonstrate the link between the oppression of nature and the oppression of women through the subordination of both nature and women by language, storytelling of the dominant culture, which includes anglicization of Indigenous places and names, along with the rebranding of Indigenous traditions to Christian feasts, and the treatment of both women and nature as exploitable resources and commodities. Hogan's two novels show that these linguistic and environmental practices are degrading as they damage the mental, physical, and spiritual health of Indigenous communities and individuals, causing long chains of unhealed intergenerational trauma. The historical fiction novel *Mean Spirit*, which is set in Oklahoma during the 1920s oil boom, covers the destruction of Native lands and people, concentrating on the fates of two matrilineal families, the Grayclouds and the Blankets, as their women become targets of exploitation by money-hungry white men. The second historical novel, *Solar Storms*, depicts the intergenerational trauma of three women stemming from the long history of environmental injustice done to their homeland, which lies on the U.S.-Canada border in the Great Lakes area. Based on Hogan's personal Indigenous knowledge, the sixteen essays of *Dwellings* not only relate to living a life that is in balance with nature and the spirit and mythic worlds but also remind of the long history of environmental injustices through which Natives were removed from their traditional way of life.

Secondly, in all three works, gynocratic and matrilineal communities, as well as their female members, lead the Indigenous communities in the fight for environmental justice. The novels *Mean Spirit* and *Solar Storms* especially stand out as they exhibit the underage female

characters, Angel Wing and Nola Blanket, who are at first oppressed but, throughout the novel, reclaim their power by reconnecting with their ancestral roots, which prompts them to fight various forms of environmental injustice. On their path to recovery, these young female protagonists are guided by old, wise female matriarchs, whose characters embody the powerful female archetype. A notable female matriarch in *Mean Spirit* is Belle Graycloud, who lives according to the "old" ways. She protects and cares for the environment and people around her, the Blanket family heiress, Nola, in particular. Similarly, an important female figure in *Solar Storms* is Bush, who acts as a mentor and protector to Angel Wing. Her storytelling and Native knowledge lead Angel to healing from both the personal and communal history of abuse and trauma, motivating the young mentee to fight the oppressors by enacting the Native trickster myth of the Wolverine. In *Dwellings*, Hogan praises the traditional female role of Native women and proposes that ceremonies are the key to healing from environmental trauma as they restore the broken bonds with the land.

Thirdly, Hogan's fiction and non-fiction also includes men in the female-led fight for environmental justice. The authoress highlights the cooperative and communal features of Indigenous communities as such communities include men who care for nature, rather than destroy nature like white men. Notably, men who care for nature have a positive influence on the central female characters as their wisdom and behavior guide the women in resisting environmental oppression caused by the white community. Such characters are Tulik, Husk, and Tommy from *Solar Storms* and the water diviner Michael Horse from *Mean Spirit*. On the other hand, Hogan reveals that white-imposed beliefs and modern lifestyles have led to the destruction of traditional Indigenous communities, and especially notes that Indigenous men have acquired destructive behavior towards nature and community. Characters who exhibit this notion are the trapper LaRue Marks Time from *Solar Storms* and the teenager Ben Graycloud from *Mean Spirit*, who steals horses and suffers from alcoholism. Notably, equally to healing from environmental trauma, Hogan re-rights these characters' mindset by restoring their bond with their Native communities. Finally, all three texts stress the inevitability of collaboration between males and females in the fight for environmental justice. Even though Natives in the novels do not entirely succeed in protecting their environment, through collaboration, they form a union between themselves and nature, just like their ancestors used to, so that they can live harmoniously with the planet.

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