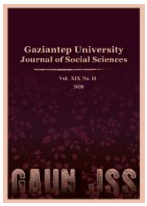

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Mending Shells, Mending Worlds: Postcolonial Ecofeminism in Linda Hogan's *Solar Storms*[1]

Kabukları Onarmak, Dünyaları Onarmak: Linda Hogan'ın Solar Storms Romanında Postkolonyal Ekofeminizm

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ABSTRACT

Adopting a postcolonial ecofeminist framework, this paper explores Linda Hogan's *Solar Storms* (1995), which makes a significant contribution to Native American literature, to investigate the intersections of environmental exploitation, Indigenous resistance, and women's agency, while highlighting the novel's recognition of Indigenous knowledge systems, its narration of collective trauma and healing, and its articulation of the intricate relationship between women and nature. First of all, this article examines the theoretical background of postcolonial theory and ecofeminist approaches that rely on the views of various thinkers and scholars in the relevant literature. Thus, it provides a rich background for the analysis of the novel. The novel's political critique of colonialism and its legacy forms of domination, as well as the combined exploitation of land, animals, and Indigenous communities, especially women, are discussed in the context of ecological destruction and the strategies of resistance developed by native peoples against such destruction. Hogan offers the resistance practices that these communities have adopted against Eurocentric, anthropocentric, and patriarchal ideologies through the preservation of ecological wisdom, collective solidarity, and cultural healing processes. Furthermore, this study analyses how the novel, which is based on historical events such as the James Bay hydroelectric project, situates female characters such as Angel, Bush, and Dora-Rouge in the context of environmental activism, cultural resistance and feminist struggle. In conclusion, this work aims to prove that *Solar Storms* can be interpreted through a postcolonial ecofeminist lens in terms of its exposure of the interconnections between environmental degradation, cultural erosion, and the marginalization of Native American women, as well as its affirmation of Indigenous ecological knowledge and resistance to anthropocentric colonial structures.

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ÖZ

Sömürgecilik sonrası ekofeminist bir çerçeve benimseyen bu çalışma, Amerikan Yerli edebiyatına önemli bir katkı sunan Linda Hogan'ın *Solar Storms* (1995) adlı romanını inceleyerek çevresel sömürünün, yerel halkların direnişinin ve kadın öznesinin kesişim noktalarını araştırmaktadır. Çalışma ayrıca romanın Yerli bilgi sistemlerine verdiği değeri, toplumsal travma ve iyileşme süreçlerini anlatımını ve kadın ile doğa arasındaki karmaşık ilişkiyi dile getirişini vurgulamaktadır. Öncelikle, bu çalışma, postkolonyal kuram ile ekofeminist düşüncenin temel noktalarını, ilgili çeşitli düşünür ve akademisyenlerin görüşlerinden hareketle tartışmaya açmaktadır. Böylelikle, romanın analizi için sağlam bir kuramsal zemin hazırlamaktadır. Bunun yanı sıra, sözü geçen eserin sömürgecilik ve onun mirası olan tahakküm biçimleriyle birlikte toprak, hayvanlar ve Yerli kadınların iç içe geçmiş sömürüsüne yönelik sunduğu politik eleştiri, ekolojik yıkım ve yerli halkların bu yıkıma karşı geliştirdiği direniş stratejileri bağlamında ele alınmaktadır. Nitekim, Hogan, yerli halkların Avrupamerkezci, insanmerkezci ve ataerkil ideolojilere karşı geliştirdiği direniş pratiklerini; ekolojik bilgeliğin korunması, kolektif dayanışma ve kültürel iyileşme süreçleri üzerinden sunar. Sömürgecilik sonrası teori ve ekoeleştirinin temel kavramları doğrultusunda yapılan bu incelemede, travma ve iyileşme anlatılarının yanı sıra, yerli kadınların ekolojik bilgeliğin ve kültürel sürekliliğin taşıyıcısı olarak sunulması arasındaki ilişki sorgulanmaktadır. Ayrıca, James Bay hidroelektrik projesi gibi tarihsel olaylara dayanan romanın, Angel, Bush ve Dora-Rouge gibi kadın karakterleri çevresel aktivizm, kültürel direniş ve feminist mücadele ekseninde nasıl konumlandırdığı analiz edilmektedir. Sonuç olarak, bu çalışma, *Solar Storms*'un çevresel yıkım, kültürel aşınma ve Yerli Amerikalı kadınların ötekileştirilmesi arasındaki bağlantıları ortaya koyması; aynı zamanda yerel halklara ait ekolojik bilgiyi yüceltmesi ve insanmerkezci sömürgeci yapılara karşı direnmesi bakımından postkolonyal ekofeminist bir bakış açısından yorumlanabileceğini kanıtlamayı amaçlamaktadır.

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Introduction

A single definition or methodology of colonialism risks ignoring the diverse histories, cultures, and especially the ecological knowledge and sustainable relationships with nature which Indigenous communities have maintained. A distinctly reductionist approach that aims to generalize the colonial experiences of various communities is reflected in this viewpoint. In postcolonial discourse, especially following the Second World War, scholars from previously colonized regions have thoroughly examined the issue in question. Many postcolonial theorists still claim today that literary criticism must interact with the unique historical and cultural contexts of each community in order to comprehend Indigenous experiences. As these debates continued in the theoretical discourse, the critical voices emerging from the colonized territories in literary works began to provide the platforms and opportunities for the expansion of these reflections through the themes, motifs and identities they persistently addressed. Ironically, as Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin argue in *The Empire Writes Back*, the rapid and often unregulated expansion of imperial powers, particularly the British Empire, combined with the ongoing cultural resistance of the older civilizations in the colonized territories, led to their marginalization. Yet it was precisely from these marginalized positions that counter-discourses emerged and ultimately challenged and destabilized the authority of the imperial center. As they also mention, it is important to note that all the processes and experiences discussed here are interactive phenomena of change that constantly influence one another, and as a result, the dominant "center" pushed the colonial world to the outer limits of human experience, inadvertently moving awareness to a stage where unquestioned belief in a single, centralized perspective across all fields of thought could no longer be valid. Thus, while this attitude of the dominant center positioned them as the other, it also diversified the ways in which they challenged the center. In fact, the process of alienation, which was intended to push aside the postcolonial world, reversed itself and pushed it beyond a cognitive threshold into a space where all experience could be interpreted as decentered, diverse and complex (2002, p. 12). This, in turn, has multiplied the perspectives that postcolonial theory has created within itself, and thanks to this multiplicity, it can easily intersect with other disciplines.

The worldwide scale of colonialism, as well as the interdisciplinary scope of postcolonial studies, renders them particularly ideal for strengthening and globalizing ecocritical approaches. In "Ecocriticism: Some Emerging Trends", Lawrence Buell explains this development by stating: "To date, the area in which ecocriticism's aspiration to expand its geographical horizons has so far come closest to realizing its potential has been its cross-pollination with (so far mostly Anglophone) postcolonial studies, on which more below" (2011, p. 93). Besides, the materialist ambitions of the colonial order, which often resulted in the excessive exploitation of land, natural resources, precious minerals, and human labor, contributed significantly to the development of interdisciplinary approaches, as well as the emergence of postcolonial, ecofeminist, and other critical perspectives. The process that began with the exposure of colonialist and imperialist order not only destroyed ecosystems and the livelihoods of Indigenous peoples, but also added another dimension to the literature by revealing the deep connections between environmental degradation, patriarchal domination and colonial violence.

Accordingly, postcolonial ecofeminism is a major theoretical framework that emerges from the interaction of postcolonial and ecological criticism. Postcolonial ecofeminism aims to explore the various interrelated aspects of the environment, patriarchy and gender while concentrating on the everyday experiences of marginalized women and their particular strategies of resistance. It also politicizes its critique through distinguishing both nature and women from a broader category of beings historically marginalized by Western discourse.

Huggan and Tiffin provide a clear explanation of this perspective's core concerns and political commitment:

> Postcolonial feminism draws attention to the contemporary social injustices of the postcolonial state, not just the historical injustices of the imperial/colonial system; postcolonial ecofeminism adds another layer to the struggle by insisting on the gendered interconnectedness of social and environmental struggle, and on the leading role played by women in addressing and providing often collectivised alternatives to abusive systems of imperial/colonial acquisition and state administrative control. (2009, p. 79)

Postcolonial ecofeminism, which draws its strength from postcolonial feminism's argument that feminist perspectives are only challenged by Eurocentric oppositions, focuses on how Indigenous women are silenced under patriarchal systems. Additionally, it deals with how women's traditionally harmonious relationship with nature has been broken by the male-dominated structures of colonialism and imperialism imposed by European colonial powers. This critical approach finds strong theoretical support in Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's essay "Can the Subaltern Speak?" (1988). Spivak argues that patriarchal construction in the context of colonialism is perpetuated in order to maintain male dominance. Indeed, according to her, subaltern women are systematically silenced within colonial discourse and patriarchal traditions, and she argues that they are doubly disadvantaged: "If, in the context of colonial production, the subaltern has no history and cannot speak, the subaltern as female is even more deeply in shadow" (2013, p. 83).

For this reason, the works of Native American writers, whose colonial and postcolonial experiences are quite different from those of other colonized nations, provide a solid basis for postcolonial ecofeminist readings. These texts generally prioritize the preservation of ecological knowledge with an emphasis on changes in the relationship between humankind and nature. In her work on *American Indian literature*, Donelle N. Dreese describes the intersections of ecocriticism and postcolonial identities as follows: "Many twentieth-century poets and prose writers of diverse ethnicity have attempted to recover a sense of home, identity, community, and place in response to various forms of displacement caused by colonization, oppression, and environmental alienation" (2002, p. 17). Dreese argues that the various dimensions she identifies (such as home, identity, community, and place) are not merely thematic concerns, but are also intimately connected with Native Americans' understanding of nature. For them, these elements are linked with cultural memory and spiritual ties to the land. As a result, writers from these communities or writers with ancestral and cultural ties to them often speak of their experiences of return to their roots through narratives in which nature functions as a central and versatile symbol. In other words, nature becomes a tool for expressing belonging, continuity, and identity. Taking these and other discussions in the introductory section into account, this article aims to argue that *Solar Storms* offers a valuable platform that enables a thoroughly postcolonial ecofeminist analysis that integrates the critique of patriarchal colonialism with environmental ethics, because Hogan's highly influential novel, on the one hand, reveals the complex connections between environmental degradation, the erosion of Indigenous cultures, and the systemic marginalization of Native American women, and on the other hand, stresses the value of preserving Indigenous ecological knowledge as a form of epistemic resistance that subverts anthropocentric and colonial paradigms through its narrative strategies.

Animals, Environmental Degradation, and the Female Voice

The traditional belief that there is a strong connection between humans and non-human beings, especially animals, has been shaped around themes that treat nature as a dominant figure. In contrast to Western cultural perspectives in which animals are generally perceived as inferior or secondary, in Native American traditions animals are considered relatives, teachers, and spiritual guides and they are attributed divinity within the belief system their ancestors built. It stands in clear contrast to the Western dichotomy that separates nature from culture and

re-evaluates both. As Val Plumwood has argued, these binaries such as nature/culture, male/female, and human/animal, have become strongly embedded structures within Western thought: "Forms of oppression from both the present and the past have left their traces in western culture as a network of dualisms, and the logical structure of dualism forms a major basis for the connection between forms of oppression" (2003, p. 2). They not only function as conceptual divides, but also as justifications for other forms of dominance, such as the exploitation of women and Indigenous peoples, and the destruction of the environment.

Native American women writers have recognized and responded to this marginalization with remarkable narratives which mainly focus on the interconnectedness of women, land and cultural identity. Through the texts they have written, which refer to the forgotten Native American culture and history, they seek to remove the traces of a traumatic assimilation process and transform them into a narration of the resistance forms that Native American women have developed in response to their marginalization. In particular, Linda Hogan, who frequently explores these themes in both her fiction and non-fiction works, was born to a white mother and a Chickasaw father, and grew up in a multicultural environment that allowed her to develop a unique critical lens through which she could connect her experiences of Indigenous identity from both inside and outside.

Widely known for her numerous literary texts since the 1980s, including *Mean Spirit* (1990), *Power* (1998) and *The Woman Who Watches Over the World* (2001), Linda Hogan as a "poet, novelist, short story writer, playwright, essayist, and environmental activist" ("Linda Hogan," McClinton-Temple & Velie, 2007, p. 167), presents her unique perspective on Indigenous life and socio-political issue through fictional and non-fictional narratives in contemporary Native American literature. Also, as Chipade Tanaji Prabhakar points out, Hogan encourages ecological awareness through her fiction, poetry, and essays, emphasizing the connection between women and nature. Especially since the early 2000s, her works have increasingly been associated with ecocriticism, ecofeminism, and environmental justice literature, and the themes she delicately explores serve as both a mirror to society and a guide for social change. Additionally, the events that launched the plots of her novels *Power*, *Mean Spirit*, and *Solar Storms* were inspired by real historical events. Hogan's grounding of her concerns about the environment and feminism in concrete social realities enabled her to gain recognition not only within Native American literature but worldwide (2015, p. 1).

Considering all these aspects, it becomes evident that in her novel *Solar Storms* (1995), she elevates her narration style to a new level in addressing the historical, cultural, and political challenges that American Indigenous communities have faced. Actually, the novel tells the story of protagonist, Angel Jensen's return to the reservation at Adam's Rib in a search for her Native American roots, her female ancestors, and her foster mother, and perhaps even her biological mother. Although Angel's journey seems like an individual experience that symbolizes a departure from a life which is mostly shaped by displacement and foster care, she starts a process of both personal healing and political awakening with her struggle to protect her native land and sovereignty. Within this process, as Christa Grewe-Volpp suggests, Angel's journey toward self-realization is accompanied by an ecological awakening through which she recognizes her inseparable connection to the natural world and redefines her identity beyond human-centered boundaries: "She learns that there are no boundaries between herself and the natural environment as well as between species; that there exists a social relationship comprising not only human beings, but all living and nonliving entities" (2002, p. 275). In addition, her individual journey becomes a symbol of a return to roots within her community. Portrayed by Hogan as both a physical and spiritual journey, this transformation process continues towards the north of America with her grandmothers Dora-Rouge and Agnes, as well as Bush, who once raised both Angel and her mother as foster children, and leads to their

participation in mass protests there. When each woman reconnects with the traditional ecological knowledge that had been lost during the colonization period and after, the novel explores the formation of Indigenous peoples' identities. As Schultermandl notes:

> Hogan examines the effects resulting from the dislocation of the individual from her natural and cultural landscape. She thus adds to a large canon of Native American texts whose characters engage in identity formations that entail negotiations between their native heritages and the impact of the dominant society. (2005, p. 67)

Even though the story mainly focuses on personal reconnection, Hogan ultimately situates it within the historical context of the James Bay Project, Canada's 1971 hydroelectric development plan in the Cree and Inuit territories of northern Quebec. The Project, although initiated as an endeavor to resolve Quebec's energy needs and build its economy on electricity exports from the revenues generated, disregarded the indigenous peoples' legitimate settlements in that territory, which had existed for centuries. The disastrous consequences of this project, taking years to construct and causing a devastating impact on both the local population and the environment, are expressed by Barry M. Pritzker as follows:

> Roughly 40 percent of the local native people lost their livelihood as a result of the resulting wildlife destruction and environmental contamination. Flooding released bacteria that transformed naturally occurring, insoluble mercury into soluble, toxic methyl mercury that poisoned the fish on which the people depend. (1999, p. 87)

Hogan places this catastrophic event at the resolution of the novel, thereby including the project in the plot of the work in a political context as a modern extension of colonialism. Also, she highlights both the specific environmental and cultural threats of the project and its broader implications for Indigenous resistance on the American continent. Thus, *Solar Storms*, in addition to being a narrative about Native people's search for identity, also it offers a broader critique of the exploitation of American lands that began in 1492, linking this history to the ecological degradation resulting from colonial expansion which is an ongoing process that continues to threaten the natural world of Native American people. In fact, Angel Jensen points out the balance that has been disturbed since the day the colonizers stepped into the territory of the region with the following words, and gives a clue as to how the discussions will take shape in the following chapters of the novel:

> I was seventeen when I returned to Adam's Rib on Tinselman's Ferry. It was the north country, the place where water was broken apart by land, land split open by water so that the maps showed places both bound and, if you knew the way in, boundless. The elders said it was where land and water had joined together in an ancient pact, now broken. (Hogan, 1995, p. 21)

Accordingly, it is observed that the novel's gradual depiction of nature's degradation indicates the protagonist's journey and the author's concern for a slow erosion of equilibrium rather than a sudden collapse. Besides, the fact that the destruction of America's nature is not limited to changes in soil and water is also seen in Angel's observations of nature and her frequent references to changes in the animal population which are native to America. Angel's poetic language about the slaughter of this animal population, which she declares from a female perspective, also emphasizes the strength of Native American women's bond with these animals: "The waterways on which I arrived had a history. They had been crossed by many before me. When they were frozen, moose crossed over, pursued by wolves. There were the French trappers and traders who emptied the land of beaver and fox" (Hogan, 1995, p. 21).

Not only Angel, but almost all the female characters in the novel seem to possess a kind of supernatural insight into animals. In particular, Angel's grandmother Agnes forms a deep bond with a bear that was captured, imprisoned, and exhibited for profit by a Euro-American trader during a formative period of her childhood. Disturbed by the animal's suffering, Agnes ultimately kills the bear to end its pain, and from that moment on, she carries and wears its hide

as a protective force. This act not only reflects her compassion but also symbolizes the resistance of a female character in Hogan's novel to the mistreatment of animal which is profoundly rooted in colonial and postcolonial times. The cost of these processes has been heavy for all living things in nature in every aspect. Like the Native American tribes, they were first exiled from their habitats, then they were left to the mercy of European settlers to become extinct in the vast territories of America. Dora Rouge's words stress a painful historical truth not only about the bear but about all other living beings that have been exterminated so far: "The bear was the color of ice. It was the last of its kind. It still makes me sad. It wandered down to California. No one knew why it was so far from home. But it hid out and it lived. It was the mother, they said, of twin cubs" (Hogan, 1995, p. 45).

Throughout almost the entire course of the novel, instances of animal slaughter are presented. However, references to animals are not limited to these instances in the novel. The spiritual significance that animals hold in Native American tradition is also strongly emphasized in Hogan's narration. Notably, the characters Hannah and Agnes, both of whom die, are later seen by other members of community in the form of animals that symbolically represent them. The portrayal of female characters and animals as marginalized beings, both connected to nature and subjected to similar mistreatment, reflects them as successive spirits and serves as an extension of Hogan's political critique of colonial and postcolonial systems:

> The first generation of the Abandoned Ones travelled down with French fur trappers who were seeking their fortunes from the land. When the land was worn out, the beaver and wolf gone, mostly dead, the men moved on to what hadn't yet been destroyed, leaving their women and children behind, as if they too were used-up animals. (Hogan, 1995, p. 28)

In fact, these characters are confronted with the senseless outcomes of lives disrupted and transformed by anthropocentric colonial structures and their enduring legacy of violence against both people and the natural world.

In her article "Ecological Imperialism in British Colonial Fiction", Serpil Oppermann emphasizes that during the colonization process, the British, guided by an anthropocentric worldview, intensified environmental degradation through ecological imperialism by introducing plant and animal species from the Old World to the American continent in order to facilitate their daily lives in the new settlements. She explains:

> In other words, when the British entered into the colonized territories so did their Old World explosive plant and animal species, Old World disease organisms, infectious germs, and explosive microbes, which led to the extinction of many native plants and animals. The biological expansion significantly disrupted the ecological balance in practically every bioregion the British invaded. (2007, p. 182)

The consequences of this biological expansion are clearly depicted in *Solar Storms*. After Angel's long journey to the north, she reaches an island and she actually finds this island completely uninhabited and scattered with the bones of animals left to die. Angel describes the scene with deep sorrow and implies how the colonial, anthropocentric perspective has caused lasting damage on both the land and all living beings on it: "Then came the Europeans, who left the bodies of their horses who did not survive the cold. Soon, too, they took the bones of their pigs to that place. The pigs had carried diseases that wiped out tribes of people, and all those dead were left on the island, too" (Hogan, 1995, p. 196). In previous chapters, in the scene where Angel describes the island where Bush lives alone and has taken under her protection, she again underlines the effects of ecological expansion and the European exploitation of nearly every part of animals—whether they died from disease, hunting, or other causes. By focusing this anthropocentric perspective, the narrative presents Bush as the only person who truly cares for the island, portraying her as a revolutionary figure who takes a firm stand against the European destruction of nature: "When the water wasn't frozen, animals were stranded by their solitude on this island, where Europeans sought their skins and other wealth. This place of trade

and barter was a meeting place, a crossing ground. But after all that, it became an isolated parcel of land; "now Bush was the only one who was there" (Hogan, 1995, p. 65).

In particular, *Solar Storms* aligns with Karen J. Warren's assertion that the connections between feminism and environmentalism are "historical (typically causal), conceptual, empirical, socioeconomic, linguistic, symbolic and literary, spiritual and religious, epistemological, political, and ethical" (2000, p. 21). Through the spiritual journey of Angel and her female relatives, Hogan illustrates several of these layers, particularly the symbolic, spiritual, and political dimension and shows how colonial violence against the land is completely linked to the marginalization of women. While Warren acknowledges that "such connections may be historically contingent rather than universally necessary" (Glazebrook 2002, 15), Hogan's narrative presents a context in which these interrelations are not only present but fundamental to both resistance and healing. Dilek Direnç, in her critical essay "Remembering a Dismembered Past and Community: Linda Hogan's Narratives of Healing, History and Survival," claims that for Hogan, "remembering" serves as a powerful form of resistance: "In these texts, remembering, in the sense of giving voice to memory, both personal and communal, emerges as a powerful political strategy, for it is implied that it is the way to reclaim both personal and collective histories and to ensure individual and cultural survival" (2007, p. 101). After Angel's search for identity to acquire her lost Native American insights, she develops expertise in plants based on the dreams she has seen. Similarly, in the different stories presented by other female characters, the value of these insights is constantly emphasized, even if not explicitly articulated, suggesting that Indigenous women's forms of diverse resistances are a key solution to ecological degradation and only with the help of regaining the collective conscious, cultural survival is possible. As Hogan suggests in her memoir: "For some that may be true, but memory is also a field of healing that has the capacity to restore the world, not only for the one person who recollects, but for cultures as well. When a person says "I remember," all things are possible" (2001, p. 51).

These concerns are, in fact, central to the work of many Native American writers. Yet, in *Solar Storms*, Hogan not only shows the diversity of the ways in which female writers and the female characters that they create resist ecological degradation, but also strategically positions women as leaders of resistance in the tensions surrounding the construction of hydroelectric power plants and other discussions on environmental destruction. This literary portrayal of women as defenders of the land strongly echoes the core claims of ecofeminism.

Indigenous Knowledge as Resistance to Ecological Alienation

The idea that the nature and the organisms living within it form an integrated whole gained further significance in Western thought through the concept of the metabolic rift, which was developed from the work of Karl Marx following the transformations associated with the Second Agricultural Revolution. Marx actually used the concept of the metabolic rift to point out how capitalist society removes people from the natural conditions necessary for their existence. Existence, as a philosophical and narrative concern, is of critical importance in this context. Actually, it is impossible to think of human existence apart from nature. John Bellamy Foster in his essay, "Marx's Theory of Metabolic Rift", notes that Marx argued that large-scale capitalist agriculture, by creating a metabolic rift between people and the land, most of all violates the basic conditions of sustainability. This is where the duality of labor-capital and nature-human duality must be considered together rather than separately (1999, p. 383)

Based on Marxist theory, Indigenous intergenerational knowledge systems which are grounded in a holistic understanding of land, life, and community can be examined through the concept of alienation from nature, which John Bellamy Foster articulates as the "metabolic rift". For many Indigenous cultures, land is not a passive resource but an active part of existence; it

is something to be cared for, learned from, and lived with over generations. It is obviously seen that these knowledge systems do not posit a dichotomy between humans and nature; rather, they emphasize a mutual relationship in which sustainability is an integral part of life itself. When capitalist agriculture disrupts ecological relationships for the sake of productivity and profit, Indigenous knowledge preserves this continuity through storytelling, rituals, and life practices, and despite everything, strives to maintain intergenerational continuity in opposition to the dualistic division between nature and humans that Western perspectives attempt to impose. So, intergenerational Indigenous knowledge isn't just an alternative to metabolic rupture, but it is also a long-standing opposition that has always resisted it.

Within this context, an analytical examination of Linda Hogan's narrative perspective, which is presented through the characters in the novel, reveals that the female characters consistently engage in actions to heal the metabolic disruption, in contrast to the dominant Eurocentric worldview that was imposed during the occupation of Indigenous lands and so on, and which has led to the Indigenous peoples' estrangement from the natural world. In contrast, the male characters tend to internalize and conform to this Western and colonial anthropocentric structures, which is already estranged from nature and resistant to reintegration. For instance, John Husk, who is introduced in the novel as Angel's grandmother Agnes's boyfriend, often makes statements that demonstrate his interest in Western science. His curiosity for scientific explanations and rationalism contrasts dramatically with the spiritual and earthly ecological knowledge that Agnes and other women in the community hold. That distinction indicates the contradiction between Western intellectual ideas and Indigenous worldviews, which value knowledge as practical, ancestral, and communal. Accordingly, Husk functions as a narrative tool to highlight the cultural tensions between modern scientific frameworks and intergenerational Indigenous knowledge systems. Husk appears to be in accordance with natural wisdom and sensitive to Indigenous ways of knowing in the novel's current time period, but the narrative shows that this has not always been the case. In his past, Husk is shown to have embraced a capitalistic worldview while participating in commodified hunting practices which were motivated by profit rather than sustenance or relational ethics:

> He knew this firsthand from the many long, fierce winters he'd endured, including two he'd survived in the near-arctic north when he'd once been forced to give up his values and trap for money. All these years later, he still felt guilt for having done this. There had once been a covenant between animals and men, he told me. (Hogan, 1995, p. 35)

However, it could also be interpreted as a break from ecological wisdom, reflecting the breakdown of the agreement between man and nature caused by Western colonial forces, and as Native American people resorting to such means for survival: "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, 1995, p. 35).

Additionally, in the novel *Solar Storms*, LaRue Marks Time is described as a taxidermist who trades in bones, pinned butterflies, hides, traps, and firearms. He is portrayed as a man the narrator feels no affection for. A mixed-blood man from the South, likely Dakota, Rue had only recently returned from the Vietnam War. Due to his experience in the war, he becomes emotionally detached and cruel toward nature. He is the Native American character in the novel that most exemplifies the concept of metabolic rift, which represents a great alienation between humans and the natural world. Rue's cruelty toward animals is clearly depicted in a disturbing memory that Angel tells. In this scene, he places live fish- skinned and bleeding- on a stone slab, their gills still moving. His inconsiderate behavior towards them is evidence of his internalized cruelty towards other living beings besides humans. This moment leaves a lasting impression on Angel, intensifying her hatred toward him. She imagines that Wolverine, a

spiritual force in the novel, has followed LaRue's tracks to strip him of whatever luck or fortune he had left a symbolic punishment for his severe detachment from nature.

On the other hand, some male characters in the novel, especially those involved in the construction of the James Bay hydroelectric project, experience the deep effects of metabolic rupture, while female characters such as Angel, Agnes, Bush, Dora-Rouge and others actively strive to heal this fracture. Their efforts unfold through both physical and spiritual journeys. For instance, Dora-Rouge expresses a desire to return to the northern lands where she was born so that her body will merge with the earth and her life will end in unity with nature. Likewise, Agnes loses her life along the way and her body is left on a raft in the river and ultimately, she becomes sustenance for the surrounding wildlife. That was the end she herself had desired. Through these acts, both Agnes releases her own spirit and that of the bear believed to live within her, symbolically reuniting with nature. According to Geoffrey Stack, Agnes's death gains significance not in its physical occurrence but in Angel's retelling of it, which transforms a seemingly tragic event into a narrative of redemption, interconnectedness, and intergenerational resistance against colonial hegemony: "She illustrates that although governments and colonizers have long and often asserted their stories with an irresistible force, those with a voice can still tell their own, and by doing so resist the hegemonic narrative in which they are not included or, worse yet, in which they are destroyed" (2010. P. 171). In addition, Bush and Angel each contribute to the restoration of ecological harmony in different ways as they reclaim traditional knowledge and mend the fractured relationship between humans and the natural world. Angel's journey shows a symbolic transformation that aligns with the figure of the healing woman in ancient Native American traditions. During their voyage to North America, she starts having dreams about plants with medicinal properties. These dreams symbolize her growing connection with nature and reflect her own inner healing. Thoroughly explaining the significance of dreams in Native American culture, Angel contextualizes her own experience as follows: "It was the oldest bond of survival. I was devoted to woods the wind walked through, to mosses and lichens. Somewhere in my past, I had lost the knowing of this opening light of life, the taking up of minerals from dark ground, the magnitude of thickets and brush" (Hogan, 1995, p. 171). This shift is clearly not only a personal awakening; it is also a reconnection with ancestral ecological wisdom which has been passed down through generations. At first, Angel sets out to find her biological mother. However, this search soon turns into an unexpected mentorship. Shortly after they reunite, her mother dies, and Angel takes care of her baby sister. As a foster mother, Angel finds herself in a cycle in which she can share the ecological knowledge and healing skills she has reacquired without even realizing it. Hogan thus offers the reader a sense of hope that the cycle of intergenerational wisdom and care is sure to be preserved in the future through Indigenous women.

To sum up, the theme of intergenerational ecological wisdom, which Hogan places at the heart of the novel, can be understood in relation to each character's journey regardless of gender as a search for identity that ultimately leads back to the values of ancestral tribal life, a time when, in Marx's terms, the metabolic relationship between humans and nature remained whole and unbroken, and the two were not seen as separate entities. It is also directly related to the Gaia hypothesis proposed by British atmospheric scientist James Lovelock in the early 1980s. According to, Donelle N. Dreese, the Gaia hypothesis, which does not simply consider ecology as a human-nature relationship, but rather asserts that the world should be perceived as a single living organism functioning on a global scale to maintain all balances, and like Native American traditions, it places humans inside nature, not as a separate organism. Indeed, the theory also positions its eco-criticism and Dreese explains it as follows: "Similarly, Gaia theory, which recognizes the earth as a living, conscious organism, introduced an ethical component into colonial and contemporary uses of the environment, calling into question the objectification

necessary for abuse of the natural world" (2002, p. 6). As Angel points out at a crucial moment in *Solar Storms*, the ultimate goal of identity search is aligned with the main idea of the Gaia theory, which is to recognize humans and nature as a single interconnected organism. This conclusion unifies the novel's central debates and underlines the inseparability of self-identity and ecological harmony: "Everyone had a gift, each person a specialty of one kind or another, whether it was hunting, or decocting the plants, or reading the ground for signs of hares. All of us together formed something like a single organism" (Hogan, 1995, p. 171).

Indigenous Women's Healing Practices as Ecofeminist Resistance

Ecofeminism centers on how women and the environment are both marginalized and oppressed by patriarchal systems, and it grounds a theoretical context for the various forms of resistance that have come up in response to these oppressions. Besides, the political discourse of ecofeminism, shaped around marginalization, is continued by the comprehensive alignment of environmentalism and feminism, and further radicalizes each other in the name of addressing injustices that arise in processes of subjugation. Noel Sturgeon provides the simplest definition of ecofeminism in line with this: "Most simply put, ecofeminism is a movement that makes connections between environmentalisms and feminisms; more precisely, it articulates the theory that the ideologies that authorize injustices based on gender, race, and class are related to the ideologies that sanction the exploitation and degradation of the environment" (1997, p. 23). Sturgeon's definition illustrates that ecofeminism seeks to transform and reverse the connections between social and environmental injustices, such as gender inequality, with a focus on their root causes, which also places it on a political agenda.

However, Vandana Shiva extends this perspective as she brings the marginalization of Indigenous peoples into focus. She identifies structural similarities between patriarchal systems and capitalist objectives, and she argues that these interconnected forces result in both the suppression of women and the destruction of biodiversity. She writes: "The marginalization of women and the destruction of biodiversity go hand in hand. Loss of diversity is the price paid in the patriarchal model of progress which pushes inexorably towards monocultures, uniformity and homogeneity. In this perverted logic of progress, even conservation suffers" (1993, p. 164). This force may be interpreted as another dimension of Western colonial and imperial efforts. Shiva adds, "Diversity is, in many ways, the basis of women's politics and the politics of ecology; gender politics is largely a politics of difference. Eco-politics, too, is based on nature's variety and difference, as opposed to industrial commodities and processes which are uniform and homogeneous" (1993, p. 165). Shiva emphasizes the significance of diversity and the distinct contributions of women. She argues that patriarchy aims to impose monocultures, and this tendency toward homogenization forms the foundation of invisible connection between the exploitation of Indigenous natural resources and the systematic marginalization of women within patriarchal systems.

Applied to the experiences of Native American women, ecofeminism introduces a new context in the postcolonial ecofeminist sense that questions the place where Indigenous peoples, who for thousands of years have grounded their entire culture and belief systems in an ecocentric understanding of life, and questions the position they have been placed in, adding a new frame within the context of postcolonial ecofeminism. In other words, the postcolonial ecofeminist approach focuses on the fact that the marginalization of women and the destruction of biological diversity are not irrelevant issues, and it prioritizes to develop a political framework that brings to the fore the deeply interconnected, multi-layered processes involved. This exclusion is not only a product of Western anthropocentric thought, but also a reflection of androcentric perspectives. As Hogan clearly emphasizes, the dualistic perspective mentioned above, which disrupted the ecological, cultural and spiritual balance of the American continent, led to the gradual otherization of Indigenous communities, who had once lived in harmony with

the land and generally followed matriarchal traditions, following the intervention of patriarchal Western powers. These marginalizations are also clearly presented in Solar Storm as a process of trauma and healing, unfolding through female characters within a historical context. At the same time, the novel suggests that Angel and her close relatives, through different narrative forms, can only escape from this process of subjugation of women and nature, which has been marginalized along with them, through resistance movements, which are methods of healing from trauma:

> In *Solar Storms*, Angel's present narration is regularly interrupted by the narrations of her female relatives. This jumping in space and time allows the text to repeatedly contemplate the origin of her ancestors' trauma. The novel includes eight of these italicised sections, which I term "insert narratives," each a meditation by one of the three grandmotherly figures on the historical sources of trauma and healing. (Harrison, 2019, p. 7)

When considered in the context of reconnecting with Native American culture, these traumatic experiences and the healing process require a collaboration between all structures that have been excluded by the colonial patriarchal order. After all, in the novel, both the solidarity that develops between the female characters during their journey and their shared direction, as well as their increasingly strong connection with nature, are mirrored in the methods they develop during their healing process, and ultimately, at the end of this process of marginalization, it is seen that they engage in a process of healing each other. This aligns perfectly with Glazebrook's definition of ecofeminism:

> Environmental and feminist issues have their basis in the logic of domination that underwrites patriarchy, so feminists and environmentalists can form an alliance in the face of a common enemy, as it were, but for the connection between feminism and ecology to be necessary, it would have to be shown that patriarchy is inherently naturist. (2002, p. 15)

Moreover, in *Solar Storms*, the characters such as Bush, Agnes, Dora-Rouge, and eventually Angel, who fulfills her quest for identity through personal transformation, strive to protect nature in a compassionate and empathetic response while also acknowledging their mutual experience of oppression and marginalization. In Hogan's portrayal, the female characters in the novel act upon a profound ecological consciousness shaped by collective memory, which is deeply embedded in ancient Native American cultural traditions. Accordingly, their behaviors demonstrate a deep sensitivity to the belief that any harm to the natural world is ultimately harm to oneself—an understanding which stresses the oppressed ones' interconnectedness with the nonhuman other. This conscious and conservationist stance also shows how Hogan addresses the interconnectedness between personal, cultural and environmental survival. It is powerfully illustrated in Bush's act of sewing broken turtle shells and bones back together which symbolizes his commitment to healing and repairing the fractured relationship between humans and nature: "Bush was a brooding type of woman. She was, most always, exactly as she appeared to be. She had no need or use for social graces. Complex and simple at the same time, she was the right woman for the island of frogs, the island of feral children and wolves, of healing milk" (Hogan, 1995, p. 75). Harrison notes: "The trauma that public discourse forgets resurfaces in Indigenous bodies and is passed down through generations" (2019, p. 11). In such acts, the female characters do not only resist destruction, but also embody a particular mode of ecological and spiritual restoration that is actually grounded in Indigenous consciousness as a clear remedy to break free from a centuries-long cycle of traumas. In this way, they are building on the forms of resistance they have developed against marginalization. In another example, similarly, Bush attempts to heal the broken sense of family through embracing Angel, first as a caregiver and then as a member of her foster family. The traditional Native American understanding of kinship, in which family is not limited to blood ties but is determined by care, responsibility and spiritual bonds, is one that has been preserved from generation to generation. Although they are not related by blood, Bush's choice to mother

both Angel and her mother Hannah, as well as Angel's settling in and helping her to adapt when she returns to the community, coincides with the values of care, responsibility and spiritual bonds. In the novel, Hogan posits that just like the kinship ties of native communities, all other values that are broken, disintegrated, shattered, or the ecological destruction, animal massacres, and fragmented organisms in nature to the same extent, can only regain their integrity through the transmission of ancient Indigenous knowledge over generations. For this reason, at one of the novel's key points, Angel makes the following statement: "At first I thought these were more painted stones, but Bush said it was the skeleton of a sea turtle that would one day come together again, large as a room. For a living, she assembled things" (Hogan, 1995, p. 68). It is not just turtle shells and bones that have been broken and are waiting to be repaired, as in the case of the island where Bush lives, everything about Native American communities' perceptions of the earth has been fractured by colonial and postcolonial impositions and waits to be mended one day: "The island itself was a place of undone, unfinished things and incomplete creations" (Hogan, 1995, p. 68). Besides, just as she mends the turtle shells and bones back into wholeness, Bush symbolically brings together the broken bonds of community and reaffirms Indigenous values that prioritize the environment, family, and cultural identity as inseparable and interdependent. In particular, the way she behaves and lives, often reminding Angel of her deep knowledge about nature, indicates that she has already internalized the interconnectedness of all marginalized components. Angel, who spent a significant part of her life in foster care, expresses her growing admiration for Bush in the following words. "At first when I saw her, I thought she was a deer, thin and brown, smelling the direction of wind. She was standing at the edge of the island when we arrived, her dark, already graying hair down around her shoulders. She seemed rooted where she stood, at the boundary between land and water" (Hogan, 1995, p. 67). After a life in foster care, her attempt to return to her roots in the company of an Indigenous woman who has embraced nature, and Bush's embrace of her in a way that restores her shattered family, is the result of a shared resurrection from the Eurocentric dichotomous marginalization. Through revealing and illustrating her profound ecological knowledge, Bush shows Angel a way to survive and offers her the possibility of sustaining this solution for the next generations. It can be interpreted as a challenge and, moreover, a rebellion against both androcentric and anthropocentric colonial structures.

Traveling through the vastness and wilderness of the Americas without the aid of a modern map as known today is an integral aspect of the Indigenous peoples' cultural memory. As Harrison agrees, "instead of relying only on paper maps, characters in Hogan's novel access "dream maps," considered a form of land-based and communal memory, to find sources of food, plants, or even spiritual sustenance" (2019, p. 18). Such dream maps that Harrison refers to form parts of ecological wisdom passed down through generations, and are intricately embodied in Indigenous culture in a space somewhere between reality and imagination. However, *Solar Storms* also puts special emphasis on the partial loss of this ancestral insights or wisdom over time with colonial and postcolonial interventions, resulting in a sense of disappearance that resonates with a broader ecological and cultural marginalization. Over time, dream maps, healing methods, and Indigenous insights into animals and plants have been gradually displaced while Indigenous lands have been literally destroyed by capitalist impulses. However, Hogan precisely recognizes the power of Indigenous women in the patterns of their resistance to this complete devastation:

> It didn't escape anyone's notice that by now Dora-Rouge was the only one who believed wholeheartedly that we would complete the journey. Even Bush now realized the magnitude of our responsibility. She wore a stern, tight-lipped look. It didn't help, either, that all the men thought we were crazy, and even worse, they said so. (Hogan, 1995, p. 35)

Despite the countless challenges Angel, Bush, Dora-Rouge and Agnes face before, during and after their long journey north, their commitment is based on rediscovering nature, rescuing it from its isolation and rebuilding unity with it.

Shortly, at the climax of this journey, Hogan places the James Bay Project within a broader historical context of Indigenous resistance by presenting it as both an environmental threat and a site of counter-insurgency. She also describes it as the core of the protagonist's transformation process. It also shows how Indigenous peoples in the Americas came together to protect their land from exploitation and how women were at the forefront of this conflict to highlight the importance of women's unique connection to nature. Thus, Angel, Bush, Dora-Rouge, and the women they meet in the North appear as key figures in this resistance, as they assert their rights and protect the natural world. In particular, Hogan argues that the solution to the mutual marginalization of women and nature lies in standing up together. Opposing an imperialist project that threatens to alter and disrupt the ecological balance, Hogan's characters epitomize a powerful alliance of environmental activism, cultural preservation and gendered resistance.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Linda Hogan's *Solar Storms*, which holds an essential place in Native American literature, features a powerful postcolonial ecofeminist critique of the interconnected exploitation of land, animals, and Indigenous women under colonial and imperialist systems. It is clearly observed in the novel that Indigenous peoples have developed ways to resist the anthropocentric and patriarchal ideologies that have been imposed from a Eurocentric perspective by colonizers such as preserving Indigenous ecological knowledge and acting together to heal from the traumas of the oppressed and marginalized. The author strengthens her political critique around historical events, such as the construction of the hydroelectric power plant, through observing Indigenous communities that are marginalized in various ways, both from the inside and the outside, and shows the path to the healing of traumatic situations caused by colonial and postcolonial situations, with female characters in the fictional context, by presenting narratives of resistance. Moreover, *Solar Storms* employs diverse accounts to portray Indigenous women as keepers, storytellers and maintainers of ecological wisdom, and situates them at the center of both cultural survival and environmental restoration. The novel eventually posits the recognition of Indigenous knowledge and the healing of both land and identity from the wounds of colonial history, which in turn would restore lost collective consciousness. At the climax of the novel, Hogan presents the James Bay Project as both an ecological threat and a symbol of Indigenous resistance. Women characters such as Angel, Bush, and Dora-Rouge lead this struggle by standing at the point where environmental activism, cultural survival, and feminist power intersect. The resistance and other elements clearly illustrated by Hogan in the novel represent both the anti-colonial struggle, and the unique relationship women have with nature, makes *Solar Storms* a rich and powerful text for postcolonial ecofeminist reading.

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