

**Displacement and Identity Crisis in Linda  
Hogan's Novel, Solar Storms (1995)**

الانزاسمة واللازمة الهوية في رواية "العواصف الشمسية" للكاتبة

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### Abstract

This study examines one of the ecological issues represented in the destruction of the natural habitat in Linda Hogan's novel, *Solar Storms* (1995). It focuses on what ecocriticism is and what it aims at. Moreover, it sheds light on Hogan, as a prominent eco-novelist. It also throws light on the impact of displacement on the identity of Native Americans in *Solar Storms*, where they experienced identity crisis, as a result of being distanced from their natural world. *Solar Storms* traces the journey, which the protagonist, Angel, makes to discover her identity. This journey consists of three stages: the first one is to recognize her past, the second to connect with the place and belong to it, and the last one to defend the place and to protect it. After this journey, the protagonist manages to discover her identity and defend her environment, because of reinitiating her own cultural legacy.

### المستخلص

جاء منهج النقد البيئي كرد فعل للكوارث البيئية المتزايدة، حيث يفترض أن الأدب يمكن أن يسهم في حل العديد من المشكلات البيئية؛ من خلال رفع الوعي البيئي لدى القراء، والتأكيد على أنه لا يمكن للإنسان إلحاق الضرر بالبيئة دون دفع الثمن؛ لذا فمن الضروري أن يعيش الإنسان في انسجام ووثام مع بيئته. كما استطاع النقاد مناقشة بعض المشكلات البيئية؛ والتي يُعتقد بأنها نتاج التفاعل بين ثقافة الإنسان وبيئته؛ ومن ثم يركز النقاد البيئيون على الولايات المتحدة لما لها من ثقافات متعددة؛ حيث يعتقدون أن ثقافة الهنود أفضل بكثير من ثقافة الأوروبيين، لأنهم عاشوا في انسجام مع بيئتهم، في حين كان الأوروبيون منعزلين عنها؛ لذا كانت مهمتهم الأساسية هي تغيير سلوكيات الأوروبيين ليس فقط تجاه البيئة، ولكن أيضا تجاه الهنود الذين اضطهدوا، بمعنى أدق أن هدفهم هو "تحقيق العدالة البيئية والاجتماعية" لجميع البشر.

يناقش البحث قضية بيئية وهي "دمار المواطن الطبيعية للبيئات الحيوانية والنباتية والبحرية"؛ نتيجة بناء مجموعة من السدود، وبعض المشروعات الكهرومائية على الأراضي الهندية؛ مما أدى إلى إلحاق أضرار بالغة بالبيئة وبالهنود الأمريكيين، سواء نفسياً أو بدنياً، كذلك تناقش هوجن في روايتها "العواصف الشمسية" رد فعل الهنود الأمريكيين تجاه دمار بيئتهم، من خلال مشاركتهم في المظاهرات، والاحتجاجات المناهضة للسد حتى تم إيقاف بنائه من قبل المحكمة عام ١٩٧٥.

## Introduction

Eco-criticism is so closely related to environmentalism. It emerges as a response to these growing problems and as an attempt to direct the critics' attention to the fact that nature "is an oppressed and silent class, in need of spokespersons" (Buell, *Imagination*: 20). Studying ecology and literature enables humans to find the solutions for the current ecological crises. The main goal of eco-criticism is to rethink of the impact of culture on nature because "the present ecological crisis is a bi-product of human culture" (Mishra 169). Consequently, eco-critics tend to indicate how culture affects nature and aim at "understanding nature and culture as interwoven rather than as separate sides of a dualistic construct" (Wallace 4).

Consequently, Sueellen Campbell affirms that nature writers often suppose that "aboriginal cultures are simply better than Western culture. For example, the Natives lived in perfect harmony with their surroundings. But Europeans have always destroyed theirs" (127). They recognized how nature was exploited badly at the hands of the Whites because the Indians were so oppressed and dominated. Making humans change their social behavior is the main goal that eco-critics wish to fulfill. This goal is related to 'environmental justice. Julie Sze confirms that the movement of the environmental justice is related to "issues of environmental racism", where it focuses on "people, especially racialized communities and urban spaces" (163), and makes them "at the center of what constitutes environment and nature". So, eco-critics want to achieve social and environmental justice with the aim of securing for all the peoples, and that they deal with the ecological disasters, that face the communities or the peoples who are not politically free. Currently, the environmental crises stimulated eco-critics to follow the Natives' behavior towards their environment and their vision of it. Some ecological literary critics considered that the Natives were the true patrons of nature. Contrarily, they condemned "Western civilization for its oppression of nature" (McDowell 384).

Most writings about Native Americans were written by non-Indians, who protested against their cultural values and deformed their image, depicting them as “promiscuous, child-like, primitive or backward” (Krasteva 56). But, these false stereotypes disappeared after the Native American Renaissance in the 1970s, and the emergence of the American Indian writers like Joy Harjo, and Linda Hogan (1947- ), one of the ecological novelists, whose writings especially focus on the Native communities. In her novels, she shows how this environment affects and is affected by the human beings, who live in it. The motivation for writing *Solar Storms* comes back to Hogan's interest in preserving environment and its protection. Another reason is her desire to “use the power of words to heal the injured world” (*Woman* 21), and to correct the deformed history of her people. She wants to change the distorted images, which depict the Natives as naïve and primitive. The final reason for writing is that Hogan strongly wants to pay the other people's attention to the way, which Native Americans observe their environment, and to show their deep connection with it.

This research focuses on the ecological and cultural conflict between the Natives and the Whites. However, in *Solar Storms*, Hogan takes readers to the Natives' different response to their ecological issues. In this novel, she depicts the materialistic damage resulting from the dams and the concomitant sense of displacement, one of the worst ramifications of ecological degradation. Healing of the ecological crisis is highly juxtaposed with that of the identity problem. Accordingly, the novel traces the protagonist's journey, named Angel, towards recognizing her past and reuniting with her familial, tribal, and ecological bonds. Through this journey, Angel also attempts reinitiating her cultural legacy and defense of her environment for survival, so that she could reach a state of psychological balance and true cultural identity.

*Solar Storms* is set in the border waters between U.S.A and Canada, the place where the Cree tribe had lived in the past. It is a historical novel; it is based on real events in the history of the Cree Indians. It is inspired by the idea of building the James Bay hydro-electric project during the 1970s. This project was about constructing a set of dams in the major rivers, which drain into the James Bay. The stated purpose of setting these dams up was to launch water as an urgent need for Canadians. However, the real reasons for building these dams were to bring much money by exporting electricity, and to provide the Canadians with more job opportunities. Government started to establish the first stage of the project in 1971 without taking into consideration the Natives despite the extreme harms caused to them and their environment. In 1984, the government finished building two dams and announced a new stage that is building more than eighteen dams. But this decision was rejected by the Cree Indians living there thousands of years ago because of its high risks. Hence, the Natives protested against construction of these dams until they got some victory in 1975, when the court overruled decision and the work on the dam stopped. With regard to this historical event, Laura Virginia Castor comments:

The protests and legal struggle mobilized against the dams gained support from numerous environmental groups...When, in 1975, the Cree, the government, and Hydro-Quebec signed the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement...In practice, however, the project and the protest against it continued to expand for more than 25 years...Although this agreement requires the government and power company to negotiate with the Cree as an independent nation, the debate continues as to whether the agreement is yet another form of cooptation and assimilation, and Cree communities continue to pay the heavy cultural costs. (157-158)

*Solar Storms* consists of twenty-one chapters in addition to a prologue. It centers on five characters. Angela Jensen (or Angel) is the narrator and protagonist. Four women characters: Dora-Rouge, Agnes Iron, and Bush are Angel's three grandmothers, besides

Hannah Wing, her mother. It revolves around Angel during her return to her home in Adam's Rip. Angel grew up in various foster homes since she was five and suffered from many of the physical scars because of the bad treatment of her mother, Hannah Wing, who "had used weapons against [her]" (231). In Adam's Rip, Angel meets her grandmothers, Dora-Rouge, Agnes Iron, and Bush, who tell Angel about the miserable past of her mother. Thus, Angel seemed better and became capable of adapting gradually to her life there. Besides, Angel's sense of safety in her new home makes her appreciate all aspects of beauty there, form strong ties with her environment, and decide to go with her grandmothers in a journey for defending her home after she had known that the Whites will build some dams on their lands. Angel's goal of journey is to prevent an eco-disaster and to protect environment from an expectable danger. Her belonging to her homeland and connection with nature provides her with strength to resist this project.

As an eco-novelist, Hogan sheds light on the influence of the hydroelectric project on the Indian environment to indicate how the western culture and the colonial tradition consume the natural world. She shows how this project leads to destruction of natural habitat that is considered as a source of protection and safety of humans or non-humans.

Natural habitat is defined as "a specific environment that provides a population or a community of organisms with the conditions under which they can survive" (Kemp 217). Hence, like all the ecologists, Hogan does not "look favorably on major hydroelectric projects" (167), which cause diversion of the rivers and streams, and submersion of large plots of islands and forests, and which consequently affect natural habitat becoming unable to support the species present. In this regard, Castor comments: In 1971, the Canadian government began to set up the Hydro-Quebec on the Indian lands. Hydro-Quebec began diverting the energy of the rivers...The diversion of the La Grande and Eastmain Rivers produced widespread, comprehensive damage...the area upon which the project was built, the southern tip of the James

Bay, is considered a refuge for migratory birds and habitat for a wide variety of fish and mammals, the region was home to native Cree communities whose lives traditionally centered on hunting caribou and fishing. (157-158)

As a result of building the hydro-electric project, large plots of the lands and islands were flooded, and enormous numbers of the trees and forests were removed, which had a great impact on the natural habitat of flora and fauna. The best example is “the fur island” (S.S 65) depicted as “the navel of the world”; it is a plentiful place of all species such as “marten, otter, and beaver, a large concentration of animals in so small place”. But, this natural habitat becomes devoid now of all the animals which sank in the vast region of mudflats on derivation of the rivers. Another example is “the flower island” (205) full of the “long trees and the rich plants” before building the dam, but it turns into another place covered by water. Even the rivers upon which the dams were built also supported large species of fish and, therefore, derivation of these rivers affected fish migration. So, this would necessitate being installed the fish ladders to make it easier for fish to travel past the dam. Despite these ladders, thousands of fish died. In the same year when the dam was built, there were not fishing camps due to death of huge quantities of fish in addition to poisoning a large number of species (273). Moreover, some waterfowl such as caribous, geese, and moose were so affected to the extent that “there would be no animals escaping two by two”. All these scenes are one of Hogan's attempts to draw her readers' attention to damage caused by European exploitation. Therefore, Hogan calls the necessity of leaving eco- systems alone to live on their own terms where she gives her readers a good example as represented in “Ammah's Island” (265). This place is covered with rich vegetation and seeds. This island stands as a symbol of the unspoiled beauty that grows away from the human encroachments, which the Westerners commit. “Ammah's Island represents the place of hope and beauty where no one was permitted to walk there. The reason for this is that all things grow there.”

Undoubtedly, ecological deterioration greatly affected not only on the environment but also on the Natives. Among the serious consequences of the project was displacement. As a result of devastation of their lands and homes, the Cree communities were forced to leave their natural habitats and places where they lived more than ten thousand years ago. Thus, ecological degradation causes changes in their life style and customs. The environment became wholly destroyed where it became impossible to stay in it. So, the government gave the people two weeks to move to another place. About this scene, Hogan says: “Those men's people, my own people had lived there forever, for more than ten thousand years...If the dam project continued, the lives of the people who lived there would cease to be, a way of life would end in yet another act of displacement and betrayal (58).

When Hogan mentions “another act of displacement”, she asserts that it is not the first time when the Natives are forced to displacement or from which they suffer this painful experience. This means that she resumes the incidents of her previous novel entitled *Mean Spirit*; the last scene of this novel is that of displacement. Therefore, she highlights the impact of displacement on her people in *Solar Storms* to discuss an important ecological matter; it is the influence of place on humans' lives. Through the life of the protagonist of Angel, Hogan sheds light on the identity crisis, from which her people suffered due to their displacement away from their natural world in the 1920s. Their broken bonds with their old environment are the reason for their identity crisis. Angel embodies the Natives forced to leave their homelands and lands. At the age of five, she was snatched away from her homeland, and was brought up in foster homes, and so, she suffered from an identity crisis.

Needless to say, displacement is a painful experience with a profound psychological impact. In fact, the American Indians had experienced an identity crisis after their separation from the places, where they had lived for long years as they had felt alienated and uprooted. Hogan tries to reflect how the Whites

always conduct a sustained campaign for removing the identity of minorities, the Natives, through cutting their relationships with their heritage and their cultural roots by their displacement. For the Natives, their displacement is considered to be an experience of rupture because they become uprooted from their place, their past, and their community. In *Solar Storms*, Angel feels alienated and isolated after her removal from her homeland for her belief that she becomes “a rootless girl” (25). Her sense of alienation makes her feel unsafe in her new place where she now lives, and pushes her to recall memories of her lost past. So, Angel carries her picture when she was a baby, and shows it to the people. This is an indication of her need for love and safety. About her life, Angel says: “All what I had been a life on paper stored in file cabinets, a series of foster homes” (26). Therefore, she makes a promise to stay with anyone of her family members when she finds him/ her.

At the age of 17, Angel searches for her family members, and manages to find three of her relatives, Dora, Agnes, and Bush, in a place called Adam's Rip. Angel's search for her familial bonds represents the Natives' search for their original roots. To Hogan, one of the ways of healing of identity crisis is to return to the past for searching for the historical roots of ecological degradation and the suffering of her people. The past is one of the ways of preserving the ecological cultural ties threatened to erasure. In Adam's Rip, Angel meets her grandmothers who tell her about her painful history. Through Angel and her relatives, Hogan connects the past with the present to give a more obvious picture of the future: “the hope for the future in *Solar Storms* is contingent on a deeper understanding of the historical roots” (Hellegers 22).

Through Angel's journey to Adam's Rip, Hogan recalls the colonial past where she narrates the long ecological history, since the earliest arrival of the Westerners at America, until the period when the dam was built. Angel's painful story represents the history of the earth and the people too. Angel's journey is not to a specific place, but it is a journey across the ecological history for

discovering the real reasons for all these violations committed by the Westerners. As stated in *Solar Storms*, when her returning to Adam's Rip, Angel wants to know why her body is covered with the scars for her belief that these scars may “vanish, if only she could remember where they'd come from”. Scars have shaped her life (25).

It is worth mentioning that the place of Adam's Rip will enable Angel to discover her true identity through three stages. The first stage is to recognize her past; the second one is to connect with the place and belong to it; and the last one is to defend the place and to protect it. The journey that Angel makes is the same one which the Natives made in the past. Most people in Adam's Rip are among those who were forced to displacement in the past. Adam's Rip is the place, where it includes the Natives who lost their homes and lands in the period of the bloody massacres. Thus, those people are more aware of the history and abler to narrate it. Through this journey, Angel discovers her identity.

The first stage of discovering identity begins with Angel's arrival at Adam's Rip. In this stage, Hogan aims to revive the past to show that marginalization of the natural world has deep historical roots. She confirms that a series of ecological violations has been ongoing since colonization until now with the goal of erasing their ecological cultural values. She also mentions that the early colonizers have exploited the environment well for their own gains by giving some examples. “The French trappers and traders, for instance, emptied the land of beaver and fox. Their boats carried precious tons of fur to the trading post at LeDoux” (S.S 21). The British, Swedes, and Norwegians had also the same utilitarian policy where they “cut the trees” and removed the forests for timber trade. Besides, the Indian lands were destroyed as a result of mining and extracting oil. “The lands were being drilled to see what else could be taken, looted, and mined before the waters covered this little length of earth” (219). In other words, the land was abundant of wealth, but after the environment had become “empty and useless” (58), the colonizers desired to add a

new meaning of exploitation through building these dams: this project means the depletion of the natural resources.

Hogan connects between what the environment is exposed and what the Natives suffer to show how the place affects and is affected by humans living in it. Like environment, it is not the first time when the Natives are exposed to injustice and oppression. In the past, the Natives were prone to mismanagement by the colonizers whose aim was to control over their oil- rich lands. The worst living conditions reached its peak to such an extent that the people were forced to displacement due to ecological devastation and the bloody atrocities. Similarly, Angel is told by her grandmothers that the wounds, found in her body and face, were not the first: her mother's body, Hannah, "was a garment of scars...like someone had written on her. The signatures of torturers" (99) In other words, Hannah was tortured and mistreated by her mother, Loretta, who was similarly exposed to violence. This means that the scars found on the bodies of Angel, Hannah, and Loretta, were inherited from generation to another. In this respect, Melani Bleck says: "Hannah's body becomes the vessel for all violations that American Indians suffered at the hands of their colonizers. Moreover, the rape of Hannah's soul by "the signatures of torturers" represents symbolically the theft of Native American land by signatures on treaties." (35)

The significance of narrating history is to make the new generation, embodied in the character of Angel, to realize the damage which the Whites had inflicted on the Natives and their environment, and the real reason why they behave in such a way. Angel becomes aware of the fact that all these crimes go back to the consumerist culture and the colonial thinking, and that what happens to the Cree people and their environment is a result of "the painful repercussions of the phallogocentric culture dominating women, ethnic minorities and nonhuman nature" (Schultermandl 74). This means that both the people and environment are regarded as nothing except economic profits. Materialism makes the Whites achieve the most utmost profit in return for removing their

environment by cutting the trees and forests for building the dams and roads in addition to using the Natives as workers for building their homes and projects. About their culture, Angel says: "Their legacy had been the removal of spirit from animals, trees...all things the Indians had as allies. They'd forgotten how to live" (S.S 180).

In the second stage of forming an identity, Angel tries to connect with the place where she lives, and to belong to it. Thence, this stage comes after Angel's attempts to develop closely strong ties with her new environment in Adam's rip. This occurs after her decision to live with her grandmother named Bush, a symbol of nature in the novel, in the "fur Island" where none lives. Bush's house is called as "the House of No" (69) as there are no rooms, electricity, and bathrooms. In other words, there are no boundaries between humans and non-humans. Although Bush's house includes nothing, Angel feels relaxed in it as she has a room on her own for the first time. During her stay with Bush, Angel watches her union with nature. For example, Bush puts the bones of the animals together to sell them to schools and museums "as if the animals would come back down a road of life that had been broken through the felled forests". Through this behavior, Bush tries to recall the forgotten sacred treaties between humans and animals (22).

Through the character of Bush, Hogan clarifies the Natives' union with environment. In her writings, she always connects "the small world of humans with the larger universe" for her belief that "our whole life depends on other creatures on the planet" (Smith 128). She emphasizes that union with nature is considered one of the ways of healing. "The ability to hear and communicate nature's sound is one way to heal the Western-inscribed alienation between humans and nonhuman nature" (Love, "Rhetorics" 82). The Whites are utterly separate from nature that "has no longer the power to create itself again" (S.S 86). Their materialistic values push them to use all the means for turning the natural resources into money. Hence, they are unable to realize the serious consequences of their blatant behavior towards nature. About their behavior, Angel says: "They were men who would reverse the

world, stop the cycle of life...such men could not see all the way to the end of their actions. They were shortsighted.” (289)

Reconnection with nature is a means of getting in touch with the past and of preserving the ecological heritage. Thus, Hogan focuses on the necessity of conveying the traditional ways from the old generations to the new ones with the aim of restoring the old bonds with the environment. So, Bush teaches Angel all the ecological practices and introduces her to the old world of traditional knowledge. For example, Angel learns how to swim like the turtle after she feared water. She also learns how to fish, to collect the seeds, and to live in the wilderness. Really, these teachings are important as they help Angel to reunite with her lost heritage and give her stability she wants.

Angel's close association with Bush reflects her close link with nature to the extent that Angel says: “If the world comes to an end, I want to be with Bush” (171). Indeed, Bush is similar to Angel: she is taken away from her homeland, Oklahoma; however, she was able to adapt herself to her new environment where she makes of Adam's Rip a homeland to which she ties and belongs. So, Angel does what her grandmother, Bush, did in the past where Angel becomes connected with Adam's Rip. The longer Angel stays with Bush, the more she is attached to the people there, and their ecological history. Moreover, because Angel is a mixed-blood Indian, she quickly feels integrated in Adam's Rip community because most people there are mixed like her. Thence, she begins to recognize that “the person who exists outside of community is an incomplete and usually damaged person who requires to return to community as well as sort of healing ceremony to restore him/ her to harmony and balance” (Fauth 100).

Indeed, Angel's union with her new environment represents a turning point in her life where Angel is able to achieve inner harmony that is certainly reflected in her behavior. Before the process of reconciliation, Angel expresses her confusion and rage due to her bodily wounds by hitting the mirror with her hands (*S.S* 52). Besides, she thinks none will love her. But after her ties with

nature, she becomes reconciled with herself; she learns how to see herself without wounds in the mirror where she shows “only the good side of her face” (147). She also falls in love with Tom, a resident in Adam's Rip.

Julie Sze elucidates that Angel's reconciliation with herself makes her vision of life look deeper. Among the signs of reconciliation is her understanding that “the maternal abuse she suffered was a result of pain and violence – not just as individual acts, but a result of complex cultural and intergenerational wounds directed at Native peoples” (“Boundaries” 481). Thus, Angel was able to forgive her mother for what she committed against her. Besides, she understands that her life is related to everything around her, and that her life is similar to her mother's. She says: “My beginning was Hannah's beginning, one of the broken lives, gone animals, trees felled and kindled. Our beginnings were intricately bound up in the history of the land (*S.S* 96). In fact, the beginnings are similar, but the endings are different because Angel becomes stronger than her mother due to her immersion in nature, and her recognition of her past as well as her attachment to the place of Adam's Rip, and thence, she confesses: “For me, it would be different. One day I would wake up and know, that everything had started to change, that I was no longer empty space, that I had become full, or was growing toward it” (106).

As a result of reconciliation with her mother, Angel is able to restore her cultural legacy that enables her to discover her ecological talents such as listening to sounds of the birds and animals, seeing the fish under water, and sensing any ecological potential danger. She also finds safety and recognizes the meaning of belonging to her family. In other words, through learning indigenous cultural practices, she is capable of healing her personal, familial, and cultural wounds, and of resolving her identity crisis. She is always to search for her true bewildered identity, and finds it when she connects with the place where she lives and belongs to it. Bethany Fitzpatrick affirms: “Through the teachings of her grandmothers, water, plant dreams and an

immersion in nature Angel learns to love, to cry, to heal and to honor her connections with the natural world” (7).

Actually, healing of her wounds and her belonging to her environment makes Angel realize well that “the history repeats itself in the colonization” (Schultermandl 74). This means that the long history of violence directed towards her people and their environment has not finished yet, and that it is impossible to separate the past from the present. What Angel's ancestors and grandmothers had faced in the past is the same destiny which she, or the new generation, confronts in the present, but in a different way through building the dams. The colonizers aim at Angel's abduction away from her environment again. The Natives were forced to displacement due to the ecological ruin caused by oil wells in the past; however, now they are supposed to repeat the same tragedy because of the dams. Hence, Angel becomes furious when she is informed by the Quebec officials about the project as she realizes that their lives are going to change, that nothing would remain the same, not the land, neither the people present, nor her (S.S 59). She is aware of the fact that the miserable deep past of her people makes the Westerners persecute them more and more. In the 1920s, the Natives were silent and did not have any angry response to their issues and thence, the Whites wanted to regain this past, expecting that the Native people are going to have the same reaction now. About this point, Angel says: “To others, we were such insignificant people. In their minds we were only a remnant of the past. They romanticized this past in fantasy, sometimes even wanted to bring it back for them-selves... but now we were present, alive, a force to be reckoned with”. (343)

Really, her strong ties with her people and her new environment push Angel to search for a solution to the suffering of her people who lost their lands and homes resulting from building the hydroelectric project. The bad living conditions that the people suffer make them fall prey to a state of despair. The physical and psychological pain is so unbearable that some drank alcohol while the others wept without an end, and tried to cut or burn their own

bodies. In fact, what happens there is “murder of the soul with no consequences to the killers” (226)..In this context, Fauth says: “*Solar Storms* does not only portray the physical pain, but it also portrays the emotional one that the Natives undergone by leaving their lands and tribal groups. Thus, they lose a lot of their beliefs and culture. Despite this fact, Hogan's main aim is the ability to heal and to believe that a tribal community is important and is still possible.” (97)

What Angel aims at is to get her people back their lives and heal what remains of their environment. To her, it has been time for her people to have a reaction against their issues where she has come to the conclusion that she does not wish to go through an identity crisis again that accompanies living in another place because it is not easy to integrate in any new place quickly. So, Protest against the project is the message that Angel wants her people to convey to all, that they have never kept silent after now as it was in the past. To her, “the protest against the dams and river diversions was their only hope. Those who protested were the ones who could still believe they might survive as people” (226). In this regard, Sze mentions that “Angela understands that the dam is the most recent incarnation. Thus, she understands that anti-dam activism is how ‘broken’ communities can reclaim their identity and dignity” (“Boundaries” 481). So, Angel along with her grandmothers decided to make a journey north for defending their environment.

The journey that Angel makes is considered the last stage of finding out her identity. Her motivation for making this journey is to defend her environment. This stage starts with Angel's furious reaction when she knows what the Canadian government intends to do. She is told by the Quebec officials that the government is going to build a set of the dams on their lands without paying any compensation for her people. Her recognition that these dams are going to affect the animals, plants, and everything, even humans who are going to be displaced, motivates Angel and her grandmothers to make a journey so as to see the changes taking place there.

This journey is of great significance for the four women, Angel and her three grandmothers. Indeed, each of these four women has a specific purpose of making this journey. Angel wants to meet her mother, Hannah, who lives in the north while Bush desires to see the ecological impacts of the dams. Dora Rouge also wants to make this journey to go to the place of her birth to die there, and her daughter, Agnes, decides to accompany her mother. The journey which the four women make is “a spiritual journey toward personal and political awareness, one that involves moving through and beyond one's own physical body as a means of understanding our mysterious but essential connection with the earth” (Smith 121). Thus, during her journey, Angel felt delighted because she becomes closer to her family and her environment. Through this gathering, Angel enjoys the warmth of the family which she misses for many years. She also becomes certain about their strong ties with their environment. For instance, Angel admires Dora Rouge's talk with water and her promises of fight against the dams. In this vein, Fisher comments that during journey, Angel “learns trust, skill, surrender, and the beauty and power of her grandmothers, whose path on the earth is rich but possessions are not material” (64).

After her arrival at the city of “Two-Town “, Angel and her grandmothers discover that those who build the dams don't know that water runs north, that the animals are gone, and that the plants become covered with water. Actually, this journey reveals to what extent the Whites are materialistic people who are ready to destroy anything coming in their way for making money. This is clear in the following excerpt:

Those with money, the investments, and the city power had no understanding of the destruction their decisions and desires brought to the world. If they'd known what their decisions meant to our people, in spite of that knowing, then they were evil. They were the cannibals who consumed

human flesh, set fire to worlds the gods had loved and asked them to care for. (343)

In the novel, Hogan states that protest against the project is a direct result of the reality which her people live (225). Since their arrival, Angel and her grandmothers have noticed that the lands “they'd lived on since before European time” completely changed. Reality was “something altogether different. The animals were no longer there, nor were the people or clans, the landmarks, not even the enormous sturgeon they'd called giants: and nor the water they once swam in”. All damage was a result of building these dams. Even the people were resettled after losing their homes and lands.

Accordingly, the protest against the hydroelectric project is the only hope for resistance to colonialism and ecological ruin around them. Resistance is considered clear confirmation of the close ties between the Natives and their natural world, and the only possibility of their survival. “Not to strike back has meant loss and death. To fight has meant that we can respect ourselves, we Beautiful People. Now we believe in ourselves once again that we are still returning.” (325). To Hogan, resistance is like an anchor into the future “to where we would dream new dreams” (344). In other words, through the demonstrations and protest in which her people take part, she desires to put an end to their suffering and gives a sign of hope for the future.

Additionally, shedding light on the demonstrations in which the Natives take part is considered one of Hogan's attempts to break historical silence that characterizes her people over centuries. She lends voice to a community previously doomed to silence and marginalization. During the 1920s, the Natives were silent victims incapable of doing anything towards their ecological issues and were forced to displacement. But now they become active and reactive towards their ecological rights. “All the Indian tribes gather to talk about the continued building of dams” (213) and share in the peaceful political actions and grassroots protests for defending their environment.

Through this suffering and oppression experienced by the Natives, Hogan draws her readers' attention to existence of some distorted misrepresentations about her people in an attempt to deconstruct these false stereotypes about them. She desires to offer fairer representation about these victims depicted as savage and violent people. She shows how reality is in contrast to these images. She affirms that her people share in the peaceful demonstrations, and that they don't use violent ways in their protests. For example, they use petitions, community meetings, and legal lawsuits for keeping their ecological rights. In this way, Hogan negates all misrepresentations attributed to them. She affirms that Native Indians resorted to protest after the negotiations had failed as the government had refused to negotiate with them, reversed the truth, and claimed that the protesters are "terrorists" (S.S 283) despite being victims of racial discrimination and misrepresentation. Plus, the government used some sort of gratuitous violence through "assault rifles, tanks, machine guns" (327) against them. About the different reaction, Cook states that "when Native Indians protest, they don't tend to violence. They show the world how their culture is great and their need to save it. Their issues make them stronger where the Natives combine together and remember old songs and stories" ("Narratives" 49).

This distortion and conflict are resolved through the negotiation on a middle place. According to Hogan, "the meeting place" in which "all the Indian tribes meet" (S.S 101) is the ecological basis. Hogan depicts these different tribes as "like day and night, summer and winter, and two parts of the same thing" (234). However, what unite these tribes are their cultural values related to nature as well as their recognition of the colonial history and the materialistic vision towards them and their environment. The protest against the dam represents both their real identities and the hope of creating a better future. In other words, their cultural heritage is the link between the past and the future. Added to this, the deterioration of their eco-system is the cause of the Natives'

unity and strength in their struggle. To Hogan, the utilitarian policy which the colonizers adopt towards the Natives and their environment turns both of them into angry power capable of “tearing out dams and bridges” and passing the materialistic culture. There is a meeting point combining her people and their environment: both of them are oppressed.

As stated in the novel, all the inhabitants and the tribes in Adams' Rip had an effective role in their defense of their environment. Their reaction is forceful; the elders guided the younger into organizing their political actions. With the help of the youth, Dora Rouge could put wheelchairs in front of the barricades to block the train trucks. Bush also worked as a journalist to spread the facts related to the dams to her people. She “seemed always to be in the thick of things when trouble started. Camera was in her hand. She could get the photographs to “The Nation or The New York Times” (308). The youth had also a prominent role where Angel attempted to show devastation in which her people lived and terrorism to which the activists were subjected through media and broadcasts. Plus, she endeavored to “starve out the soldiers and police” (322) by destroying their food stores to force them to leave.

Hogan thinks that having a positive reaction of the Natives against marginalization and injustice is the only refuge because she does not want them to end up leaving the place again. Her main impulse is to rescue her people and their culture. The novel ends with Angel and the protestors returning to Adam's Rip. Unfortunately, Angel and the protestors could not stop the construction of the first phase of the dams and therefore, they brought a lawsuit against the corporation. In fact, the struggle of Native Indians for their ecological rights means that their culture connected to environment hasn't vanished yet. The Cree people have ever chosen protest and resistance against these dams and have achieved some victory in the courtroom where they have stated the dangerous effects of the project on the animals, fish and plants as well as the inhabitants. The court's rule took a year, from 1973 to 1974, to stop building the rest of the dams. In fact, their

reaction reflects their awareness of the current ecological situation and necessitates dealing with what it entails. About the court ruling, Angel comments:

We have to believe, true or not, that our belated victory was the end of something. That one fracture was healed, one crack mended, one piece back in place. Yes, the pieces were infinite and worn as broken pots, and our human pain was deep, but we'd thrown an anchor into the future and followed the rope to the end of it, to where we would dream new dreams, new medicines, and one day, once again, remember the sacredness of every living thing. (344)

To sum up, *Solar Storms* animates relationship between the Natives and their environment and what happens to one another when one is destroyed. Indeed, Hogan has successfully managed to establish close and strong ties between humans and non-humans, and to attract attention to the historical roots of ecological ruin caused by the government and its selfish and indifferent decisions to the indigenous people and their environment. Dresse asserts: "By exploring the history of the natural world in regards to its Native America mythological and spiritual significance, Hogan highlights how close the lives of non-humans are to human life, in order to combat the human/ nature alienation created by Western thought" (10). In her interview with Laura Coltelli, Hogan says: If you believe that the earth, all living things, and all the stones are sacred, your responsibility really is to protect those things. I do believe that our duty, to be custodians of the planet (79).

The novel connects the lives of the Natives with their environment. In the past, because of ecological deterioration resulting from oil wells, the Natives were forced to leave their homes and lands, and to live in a new place, Adam's Rip. However; their old bonds with nature enable them to discover their real identities and turn them into powerful people capable of doing anything to keep their new environment, and ready to sacrifice their lives for its protection. Such an intimate relationship makes them find a new meaning of their lives which deserves the struggle.

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