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**Ecofeminism in Selected Poems by Linda Hogan****A B S T R A C T**

This study reveals the close relationship between women, nature, and animals, and how that connection is the key to end violence against them and to value each of their roles. This is what the Native American poet Linda Hogan (1947) includes in her poetry, whose aim is to preserve the ecosystem and reconnect it with nature, specifically through using water and night symbols to demonstrate this relationship.

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الباحثة: تبارك صادق علي
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الملخص:

تهدف هذه الدراسة الى كشف العلاقة الوثيقة بين المرأة والطبيعة والحيوانات ، والى توضيح كيف أن هذا الارتباط هو الحل لإنهاء العنف الموجه ضدهم وإحترام دور كل منهم. هذا ما تتناوله الشاعرة الأمريكية الأصلية ليندا هوجان (١٩٤٧) في شعرها ، الذي يهدف إلى الحفاظ على النظام البيئي وإعادة الاتصال بالطبيعة، باستخدام رمزي الماء و الليل لشرح تفاصيل هذه العلاقة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: رمزا الماء والليل، الاميريكيون الأصليون، ليندا هوغان، النسوية، الحيوانات، النظرية البيئية ، النساء.

Introduction:

Linda Hogan is an influential writer in contemporary Native American literature. She is a poet, a novelist, a playwright, a short story writer, an essayist, and an environmental activist. In 1947, Hogan was born in Denver, Colorado. Her family travelled a lot because her father was an army man; thus, she did not grow up in a Native community. She grew up in Oklahoma and Colorado for the majority of her life. Hogan graduated with a master degree in English from the University of Colorado in Boulder in 1978 and has lectured at both that institution and the University of Minnesota (McClinton-Temple & Velie, 2015, p.167). She is currently working as an assistant professor at the University of Colorado Boulder, teaching Native American and American studies (Coltelli, 1990, P.71).

Her art is influenced by the native culture ideology which respects the other creatures, the land, and the water. She has spent her life perceiving the various knowledge systems of native peoples and Western culture as a mixed blood daughter of a white mother and a Chickasaw father. Through her writing, she attempts to transmit an ecologically sustainable perspective of

the world based on her nurtured traditions (Anderson & Edwards, 2002, p.316). In an interview with Laura Coltelli, Hogan declares:

My father is a Chickasaw and my mother is white, from an immigrant Nebraska family. This created a natural tension that surfaces in my work and strengthens it. And as my interest in literature increased, I realized I had also been given a background of oral literature from my father's family. I use this. It has strengthened my imagination.

(Coltelli, 1990, P.71)

Her Chickasaw tribe perceives the natural environment as a mother, father, and sibling, referring to the land as "mother," the sky as "father," and the animal as "sibling." In her writings, Hogan reflects this spiritual kinship and familial relationship with nature. Hogan uses her writings to demonstrate the striking contrast between Native Americans' spiritual connection to their land, their respect for animals, and their efforts to conserve all aspects of nature, which is the polar opposite of white occupiers' view of nature as raw material for consumption, justifying their destruction of the environment (Iskarna et al., 2019, p.145).

Her poetry explores themes such as nature, women, identity, and Native American history and culture. She believes that all living things are interconnected and that nature, animals, and women have a unique bond. This connection between the three reflects the contemporary and historical harm each has suffered the consequences of colonization and patriarchy (Dailey, 2017, p.36). Therefore her works are related to "ecocriticism, ecofeminism, and environmental justice" (Sadek, 2013, p.61).

Native Americans have a very spiritual relationship with nature. They use symbols and signings to pass down their history, thoughts, ideas, and dreams from generation to generation. For example, they use the water symbols, which is crucial since water is one of the most necessary ingredients for life's nourishment in all of its forms. The water symbol is meant to represent life, fertility, and purity. Some Native Americans tribes believe that a mysterious group known as the "Water Indians" live in the waters of lakes, rivers, and oceans (Alchin, 2018). Additionally, Suzanne C. O'Brien (2020) declared that:

The ceremonial power of water can also be seen in the Native American Church, where water is acknowledged as the source of life and is a central symbol within their ceremonies...These ceremonies...promote sobriety and renewal, supporting those in recovery or healing from abuse. As a symbol of life and purification, water is central to these services. (p,79)

The Lakota phrase “Mníwíčhóni,” or “Water is life,” highlights the spiritual bond that exists between Native Americans and nature and that water, in particular, is sacred to them (LaPier, 2019). Water symbolizes the power of cleansing. "Dreaming, healing, flowing, fluidity, purification, regeneration, stability, strength, change, fertility, devotion, receiving, and unconditional love" are all represented by this symbol. It stands for both death and rebirth. So the symbol of water may be both life-giving and destructive (Purelycrstals, 2018). Moreover, Nicholas E. Heyneman (1996) remarked that:

Symbols of water are our most common dreams of the soul and occur in virtually every culture. Water is the source, and therefore the symbol of life, not just of mortality, but of eternal spiritual life. Just as water is neither created nor destroyed, but recycled (there is essentially the same amount of water on earth today as there was when our planet was formed), so life and death are merely transitions in the state of awareness. (p.151)

Since water is considered as the source of life and a sacred place for Native Americans, Linda Hogan's poetry incorporates many symbols of water and sea creatures. In her poems, water is portrayed as a source of power, longevity, fertility, life giver, and healer. On the one hand, using an ecofeminist perspective, Hogan refers to the symbol of water and its animals throughout her poetry, giving it feminine qualities such as pregnancy to connect women, nature, and animals. On the other hand, using an ecocritical post-colonial perspective, she uses water as a symbol of the Natives' land and loss of heritage, and how the colonizer destroys this legacy and cruelly kill the inhabitants that are represented by marine animals.

The poem "Hunger", from *The Book of Medicines* collection (1993), which represents the intimate interaction between nature, animals, and women, is the best example of this connection. The word "hunger" stands for various implications such as globalization, colonialism, and production. Each of these processes, greed and the desire for more, destroys and seizes the rights of both nature and man (Dailey, 2017, p.38). The first line of the poem, which says: "Hunger crosses oceans," indicates that the act of crossing the ocean searching for the riches of nature is the same colonial act that the colonizers (hunger) practice when they cross the Native American's

land (ocean) (Mohamad,2019,p.35). The following lines ravel out that "hunger " is a masculinepower:

Hunger was the fisherman
 who said dolphins are like women,we
 took them from the sea
 and had our way with them.

(ll. 10-14)

These lines depict the physical abuse of women as well as the exploitation of sea animals. It demonstrates how both women and animals are subjected to colonists' ongoing oppression and exploitation. In this sense, dolphins combine the three categories of animal, woman, and Native American. The rape of these marine creatures and plundering of the sea's resources represents the Native Americans' deprivation and dispossession of their land, as well as colonists' usurpation (Mohamad, 2019, p.35).

Hence, the symbol of water (the ocean) in this poem represents the land of the Native Americans. Whereas, the marine creatures that were exploited and killed, stand for the Native American people. The reckless death of the animals reflects the colonists' conquest of Native American country, their killing of its inhabitants, and their exploitation of the women category. As the poem advances, another maternal metaphor is presented:

It is the old man
 who comes in the nightto cast
 a line
 and wait at the luminous shore.He
 knows the sea is pregnant with clear
 fish. (ll. 17-22)

In these lines, Hogan presents " hunger" as "the old man" who sneaks in the night to steal from the fertile sea its treasures. Hogan links the sea to women by giving it maternal merits which are pregnancy, fertility, production, and rebirth. This scene connotes the harm and damage that women and nature are exposed to by imperialists (Dreese, 2002, p.34). She uses the symbol of the night to convey what the old man performs at night is nothing more than a sign of

darkness and death. Otherwise she gives the sea the quality of illumination to symbolize the colonists' dark intentions and deeds toward nature and Native Americans.

Hogan attempts to convey her message that man must appreciate and strive to preserve nature to achieve harmony (Ahmed, 2016, p.213). She presents two sorts of hunger, the first of which is described by the colonizers as a violation that results in the devastation of nature and the loss of its elements, which are the basic ingredients of life, resulting in their regret "They sat on the ship and cried" (l.9) . On the other hand, the healthy type leads to a love of nature: "and it is a kind of hunger/ that brings us to love" (ll.36, 37). Native Americans have this type of positive hunger. They take only what they need from nature and work hard to ensure the long-term sustainability of natural resources, emphasizing the value of nature in their life and appreciating it. "Hunger knows we have not yet reached/ the black and raging depths of anything" (ll.15, 16) which indicates that they do not have the dark side of hunger that cause damage to the natural resources.

This poem reveals that both women, animals, and nature are subjected to oppression and injustice at the hands of colonialists or male forces who justify their dominance and exploitation of women and nature by claiming that both women and animals are weak creatures who are easy to control and manipulate, which is precisely what the ecofeminist perception rejects (Sadek, 2013, p.63). "Harvesters of Night and Water" ,from the same collection, presents the same idea about the importance of preserving nature and stopping its destruction, as well as finding a balance in the relationship between humans and natural resources to ensure its sustainability.

This poem is about men in boats in the middle of the sea and at night trying to brutally fight an octopus (Dreese, 2002, p.35). Hogan characterized this octopus as solid and resilient, which identifies Native Americans, particularly those of her tribe. The devastation inflicted on the octopus by whites is symbolic of Europeans' harm inflicted on Native Americans. In this context, Hogan gives the octopus, which represents Native Americans, the attributes of bravery and resistance. In contrast, she depicts the white hands as weak and scared:

In night's broken waters here is
 the boat
 white and small with
 tiny men

with impotent nets limp as
poverty (ll. 1-6)

As a result, the symbol of the night represents colonists who sneak during this time as thieves. While the water symbol symbolizes Native American land, and the octopus, a sea animal that struggles to return to the ocean, represents native people fighting to retrieve their homeland:

the octopus

the men pulling at it, but its many arms fight

hard, hold fast and tight

against the held boat

in struggle with air and men holding as

they scream. (ll. 26-31)

Sadek(2013) stated that:

the description of the octopus stands in sharp contrast with its enemies. While the enemies appear in the dark, scream violently, use weapons of destruction and confinement, and hunger after wealth, the octopus appears at daybreak, shines like the sun, and looks as beautiful as an angel, its arms resembling 'those of four mothers'. (p.65)

As the poem progresses, Hogan emphasizes her frustration and anger with the violence directed at nature, as well as the never-ending desire to destroy nature and exploit it for the economic gains of white hands, as was the case with the colonists' abuse of Native Americans for personal gain:

It will sell for two hundred dollars It will

be cut into pieces

will be taken from the cut insides of halibut and used again. (ll. 36-40)

In this poem, Hogan emphasizes the necessity of taking only what man needs, without corrupting and destroying nature, and not allowing greed to prevail, as is the case with white men who take more than they need "that when it ends / takes more than it needs"(ll.7,8). She is tired of a world ruled by selfishness, materialism and injustice, where the strong have the right to subjugate the weak, as Charles Darwin's concept of "survival of the fittest" implies:

Hungry, we are hungry for the whole world.

We are like the small fish in the sea

the ones who swim into the mouths of larger ones to take

what's there. (ll.94-97)

In an interview, Hogan states that: " I am tired of war. I am tired of the anger. I am tired of all the things that people are that they do not have to be" (Oklahoma, 2021). Therefore, Hogan expresses her wish to put an end to this violence against animals, the environment, women, and Native Americans. She aspires to live in a kinder world to all of its inhabitants and where equality and harmony reign. As she demands in the last stanza:

I want the world to be kinder I am a

woman

I am afraid

I saw a star once, falling toward me It was

red with brilliant arms

And then it was gone. (ll.98-104)

Hogan links nature, animals, and women in her poem " Milk" because they are all subjected to the same harm. Hogan "compares the sight of cows hooked up to milking machines with her own memories of the smell of her mother's breast milk". She paints "a harrowing picture of the fate of cows and, by implications, of people"(State University of New York College at Oneonta, 1997.p.45). This bleak depiction is given late at night, indicating the conquerors' dark intentions:

At night

inside the steamed windows of

the milk barn,

the milking machines are at work steel

amidst the animal warmth Of cattle,

nipples just washed brought in from

the field.(ll.1-7)

It tells how the smell of cattle's milk reminds her of her mother's milk, which she is used to feeding everyone, making her feel as if all those who are breastfed by her mother share one body, reflecting the profound spiritual link between Native Americans people. The mother could

represent nature's infinite munificence and generosity, reinforcing the indigenous people's love for their land and nature, as well as their longing for the taste of beginnings:

I remember the smell of my mother's milk .the
taste of beginnings
when she was food for another child.

I am a body
grown from nipple.from
when we were
sharers of the same body. (8_14)

Unfortunately, the colonists' greed has damaged and spoiled these earlier golden days. They prioritize their interests above anything else. Hogan switches from comparing the colonists to thieves to milk sellers, implying that they are land and soul sellers who are unconcerned about death or lives since their gain is paramount:

and the milk sellers hoisting
up the dying.thirsty cow
too weak to stand
in leather straps and milking death. drinking its watery milk.eating
land.
they were hungry. (11.30-37)

Hogan's poetry advocates the preservation of natural resources and taking what man requires without destroying it to ensure the preservation of life, which is precisely what Native Americans do. They are devoted to their land and want to preserve it, as it is the source of their power and constructs their cultural identity. In contrast to colonizers who are motivated by greed to destroy nature and seize what is not theirs.Hogan illustrates her desire to prevent harm directed to nature, animals, and women in her poems. Since all of them are exposed to endless abuse at the hands of patriarchy, Hogan rejects and condemns the patriarchal valuation, which considers both nature and women as passive and justifies their subjugation. So, she gives maternal traits to animals to highlight the idea that the attachment of nature with a woman is a source of empowerment. Because the environment is a life provider, women are responsible for

giving birth to new generations. Thus, both are essential for the sustainability of life and should be valued and treated well.

To conclude, Hogan's poems *Hunger*, *Harvesters of Night and Water*, and *Milk* portray the close connection among women, animals, and nature. She demonstrates how patriarchal society regularly harms women and animals because man perceives himself as superior and at the centre of everything, with unlimited rights to dominate those weaker than him. The solution, according to Hogan, is to find a harmonious relationship between man and nature. As a result, Hogan highlights the need to respect women and nature to ensure the continuity of life. Both provide subsistence: women give birth, and nature provides living sources.

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معلِّمًا ، وشيخًا، ومؤلفًا، فانتشرت سمعته في أرجاء العالم ، فكان نتيجة لذلك إعجاب معاصريه، ومُنَّ جاء بعده من خلال قراءة مؤلفاته التي تعددت اتجاهاتها واختصاصاتها.