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Water and Indigenous Resistance in Linda Hogan's *Solar Storms*

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ABSTRACT

In her 1997 novel *Solar Storms*, Chickasaw writer Linda Hogan emphasizes the role of water in decolonial resistance and Indigenous healing. Solar Storms is a coming-of-age novel about 17-year-old Angel, who arrives at her ancestral homeland, a community called "Adam's Rib," in the boundary waters between Minnesota and Ontario. The language in Hogan's text assigns sentience and agency to bodies of water. Hogan's water imagery stresses the interconnectedness of humans and nature that neocolonialism aims to sever with the construction of the dam in the novel, echoing the real story of the James Bay Hydroelectric Project and its destruction of the James Bay Cree and Inuit lands in the 1970's. Hogan's indictment of the hydroelectric industrial complex and her use of water as a counternarrative to extractive capitalism remain relevant, as Indigenous people continue resisting in places such as Standing Rock and the lands of the Wet'suwet'en Nation in Canada.

KEYWORDS

Decolonization, neoclonialism, counternarrative

Water and Indigenous Resistance in Linda Hogan's *Solar Storms*

This article explores the ways in which water's animacy in Linda Hogan's *Solar Storms* (1997) privileges Indigenous resistance against the ongoing colonial projects that are invested in water's commodification. The dual motifs of water and Wiindigoos in *Solar Storms* complicate Western constructions of animacy and resist the myth of vanishing Indigenous people, respectively.[1] My intervention is to unpack how the animacy of water in the novel is a counterpoint to the extractive capitalist figure of the Wiindigoo. In tandem, these two concepts critique the colonial epistemologies that reify land and to give interiority to the Anishinaabeg community's continuous resistance to that reification. Water is an extension of the human body and a symbol of the matrilineal, Indigenous nurturing and resistance that helps Angel heal from her colonial trauma and work against colonial maldevelopment. Hogan then contrasts the defiant water with the ice-cold, cannibalistic imagery of the Wiindigoo. I argue that the Wiindigoo cosmology is an example of harnessing Indigenous hauntology to articulate intergenerational colonial trauma. Hogan's use of the Wiindigoo as a symbol of colonial hauntings unsettles harmful tropes of Spectral Indigenous People[3] and instead establishes Indigenous contemporality, granting authority to Anishnaabe cosmologies, characterizing land and water as living entities rather than static commodities.

In her most recent book *To Be a Water Protector* (2020), Anishinaabeg scholar Winona LaDuke discusses the growing role of what she refers to as "Wiindigoo economics". In Anishinaabeg stories, the Wiindigoo is a cannibal "fueled by insatiable greed and a relentless desire for human flesh" (83). By extension, Wiindigoo economics is the moniker LaDuke gives to fossil fuel era capitalism: "it is a system based on colonization, wastefulness and ravenous greed," (83) destroying the planet it devours. It is Wiindigoo economics, the capitalist logics of privileging profit over people, commodities over entities, that has built on settler colonialism while leaving the planet and marginalized people in its wake.[4] The settler politics of Wiindigo economics, which are organized by an ethos of disposability and accumulation, is a system in which Indigenous lands and people are considered sacrificial fodder for the profit of fossil fuel industries, the hydroelectric industrial complex, and other visages of colonialism. For decades,

[1] I intersect my own reading of water's animacy with the work of Anishinaabeg scholars--such as Melissa K. Nelson, Winona LaDuke, and Robin Wall Kimmerer---as well as previous literary scholarship done on *Solar Storms*, primarily the work of Fiore, Jespersen, Hellegers, and Vernon.

[2] Although there are many spellings of "Wiindigoo," for the sake of the consistency I chose this particular spelling because I use Winona LaDuke's definition of Wiindigoo economics as my framing of the article.

[3] Much of the material I cite uses the terms "Spectral Native" or "Vanishing Indian," but I have chosen to use "Indigenous people" as consistently as possible in this chapter.

[4] LaDuke contextualizes Wiindigo economics through the history of colonialism, or "the transformation of ecologies of the many into systems of circulation and accumulation to serve the few is the project of settler colonial infrastructure" (Cowen and LaDuke 245).

pipelines and dams have put Indigenous people and their ancestral land and water in danger. In the 1970's, Canadian company Hydro-Quebec built dams that dammed, flooded, and/or poisoned the lands of the Anishinaabe, the Inuit, and the James Bay Cree, significantly upending the lives of the land's inhabitants.

Chickasaw writer Linda Hogan fictionalizes the resistance against the dams in *Solar Storms,* in which she situates Indigenous resistance in the context of Anishinaabeg views of water's animacy. Hogan's novel remains a vital work in historicizing and articulating the disastrous impacts of extractive capitalism on Indigenous communities. The novel depicts the protagonist Angel Iron's returning to her ancestral homelands after the passing of the Indian Child Welfare Act. Angel's story chronicles how her matrilineal family and community cultivates not only her bravery and empathy, but her ancestral relationship to the land and water. Her relatives guide her progression from the abused, deracinated Angela Jensen to activist Angel Iron, whose stewardship of the land is forged through honoring traditional knowledge. Angel becomes a confident and compassionate community organizer against the colonial powers of the fictionalized development company BEEVCO, a fictionalized Hydro-Quebec.

Throughout her novel, Hogan connects water's exploitation and Angel's people's exploitation as interrelated in the same way Angel's personal history and her people's history are interrelated. Dam building, a part of the patriarchal and colonial subjugation of the land, is situated as a repeating instance of cannibalism. In contrast, Angel's traditional knowledge becomes a key component in acknowledging water as a decolonizing force, and that stewardship of the water must recognize its animacy in the face of its commodification. The disregard for Indigenous traditional knowledge takes on new forms as corporations have been encroaching on Indigenous territory with the help of the settler governments that have done the same. Hogan's resistance to Wiindigoo economics is represented through her use of water in the novel, tying it to the interconnectedness of reciprocity, maternity, and community reflected in Indigeneity.

Hogan's use of water as a theoretical counterweight to the symbols of colonialism offers a vivid picture of Indigenous resistance, contrasting to Western culture's relationship to water through extractive, colonial means. Through the use of symbols and motifs that are integral to Anishnaabe storytelling, Hogan's novel un-reifies water and places its exploitation in the context of ongoing projects of colonialism. *Solar Storms* allows the reader of literature to reimagine water beyond the Cartesian binary of living and non-living that have rationalized the destruction of bodies of water, because Wiindigoo capitalism refuses to see living things beyond its status as a commodity.

Indigenous communities have been disproportionately harmed by the environmental colonialism caused in capitalism's wake. The ideology of settler colonialism portrays Indigenous

land as a *terra nullius* that exists to bring wealth to white settlers (Huggins 55), resulting in capitalist endeavors that destroy whole ecosystems and sacred tribal land belonging to Indigenous tribes under the guise of development. Vandana Shiva's term "maldevelopment"[5] is useful here, as it indicts the term "development" for occluding the human and environmental cost of exploiting nature and robbing Indigenous people of their land, culture, and livelihoods.

In the United States, Indigenous lands have been under attack by maldevelopment for centuries. Narratives of colonialism often portray Indigenous people and their colonization as a thing of the past to justify the continued exploitation of their lands.[6] The Navajo Dam that was built between 1958 and 1963 on the San Juan River resulted in "tribes being forcibly removed by the United States Army, traditional sacred lands and engraved images inundated by the rising waters" (Huggins 62).[7] Other dams have displaced people and ruined the entire ecosystems of fish and other wildlife that rely on water. A part of the project of neocolonialism has been to erase the damming evidence through the discursive removal of Indigenous people. American history often situates Indigenous people in the permanent past of the nineteenth century, with no throughline between the colonial past and present. As Nick Estes (Lower Brule Sioux) mentions, Indigenous people's struggles against the US government in the nineteenth century is narratively severed from "the implementation of the reservation system and then onward to the construction of the dams in the middle of the twentieth century" (Estes). That narrative severing of Indigenous people from the present is rampant in the global north. As George Yúdice observes in *The Expediency of Culture,* NGOs and global north solidarity groups often appropriate Indigenous art not only "to be consumed in tourism" (26), but to portray Indigenous people as "images in museums, tourist guides, crafts advertising" that are treated as "anthropological curiosit[ies] or colorful detail[s] of a remote past" (Marcos, qtd. in Yúdice 106). Johannes Fabian similarly states that for Western anthropologists, time is a "key category with which we conceptualize relationships between us (or our theoretical constructs) and our objects (the Other)" (28) through "denial of coevalness," or: "a persistent and systemic tendency" (31) to place the objects of study in a different time than that of the studier. Mita Banerjee notes the similar problem of that narrative severing, where Indigenous people's existence is "premised on a nostalgia for the

[5] Shiva's definition of maldevelopment is a reframing of "development projects" done by neocolonial nations that become a "violation of the integrity of organic, interconnected, and interdependent systems, that sets in motion a process of exploitation, inequality, injustice, and violence" (6). Although applying the term to Indigenous groups in the Global North might seem like a misattribution, I justify its use because it is an indictment of patriarchal neocolonial practices globally.

[6] For a comprehensive exploration of this idea, please see Mita Banerjee's ""The Myth of the EcoNative? Indigenous Presences in Ecocritical Narratives."

[7] In addition to Huggins, other work on the environmental history of the settler state's exploitation of Indigenous people's ancestral rivers include Jane Griffin's "Hoover Damn: Land, Labor, and Settler Colonial Cultural Production," DeJong's work on the Gila River, Jeff Crane's on the rivers of the Northwest, and Nick Estes' work on the Missouri River.

Indian [Banerjee's term] as a vanishing race" (217). This "discursive removal" (220) portrays Indigenous people and the colonialism violence *done to* them solely in the past, erasing the legacy of colonialism from neocolonial maldevelopment projects as a way to justify them. Banerjee posits that the solution to this removal is Indigenous contemporality.

The disparity between Western discursive removal and Indigenous contemporality is evident in Hogan's text. When the Beautiful People attempt to persuade the government to stop building the dam, Angel comments on how white settlers of past and present view the water and land as commodities rather than entities: "To the white men who were new here, we were people who had no history, who lived surrounded by what they saw as nothingness. Their history had been emptied of us, and along with us, of truth" (280). Here, Angel and the other Beautiful People observe their discursive removal happening before their own eyes, where the government and BEEVCO take no account of the traditional knowledge and valuing of land that is so vital to Angel and her people. In contrast to the Wiindigoo economics at play, Hogan portrays Angel's stewardship of water as an extension of her traditional knowledge, exemplified throughout the book as a relationship between water and the body.

Hogan's juxtaposition of water and the body represents the continuity between the water of the environment and the water within humans through Angel's matrilineal heritage. Western epistemologies believe in a very strict dichotomy between the body and what is outside, but Hogan challenges this dichotomy by calling attention to the ways that our bodies produce water as a means of transforming, showing vulnerability, and bearing children, and giving birth. For example, Dora-Rouge describes Angel's birth as leaving forever "the waters of your mother" (109), and the novel ends with Angel being visited by her great grandmother, Dora-Rouge, and hearing her say "that a human is alive water" (350). When Dora-Rouge "makes a deal with the water" (215), Angela recognizes, "[s]he had tricked something, all right.…Maybe it wasn't water she'd bartered with, after all, but she'd struck up one hell of a deal with something. …What she'd traded in exchange, she wouldn't say, but this much was clear: something godly was bringing us through" (195). By posing these challenges, Hogan connects the body to the greater ecosystem, rather than viewing them as separate entities, and privileges the view of the world as a part of human beings, and human beings as part of the world.

Hogan positions Angel's education in traditional knowledge as part of matrilineal nurturing that cultivates the relationship she has with water. As Angel becomes more involved in the activism against the damming of her land, she asserts that "My heart and the beat of the land, the land I should have come from, were becoming the same thing" (236). Toward the end of the novel, Angel's elders give her the name Maniki, a "true human being," one who honors the traditions of reciprocity and stewardship of the land. The definition of humanity through the lens

of stewardship unsettles the colonialist definition of humanity, one based on domination, in favor of one that honors matrilineal heritage, the earth, and traditional knowledge. As Winona LaDuke states, "most matrilineal societies, societies in which governance and decision-making are largely controlled by women, have been obliterated from the face of the earth by colonialism and industrialism" (213). Hogan honors this matrilineal legacy, imbricating the patriarchy and colonial epistemologies with their Cartesian understanding of the binary between nature and humans.

Solar Storms makes poignant connections between the animacy of water and traditional knowledge in Anishinaabeg epistemology. In Anishinaabeg cosmologies, the water is not only living, but is viewed as a relative---which creates a culture of reciprocity that values community and is critical of hoarding, greed, and selfishness. It is important to note here that animacy does not equate water to personhood, but rather equates people to water's students, acolytes, and younger relatives. In *The Manitous: The Supernatural World of the Ojibway*, Anishinaabeg writer Basil Johnston defines the Anishinaabeg word "manitou" as mystery, essence, substance, matter, supernatural spirit, anima, quddity, attribute, property, God, deity, godlike, mystical, incorporeal, transcendental, invisible reality" (242) in the book's glossary. As Melissa K. Nelson notes in "The Hydromythologies of the Anishinaabeg," water or "*niibi,"* is "a primary sacred element in life and therefore must be cherished as an essential relative, elder, and teacher" that both "is a manitou" and "contains manitous" (217). In contrast, the grammar of animacy in English is colonial in nature: "the arrogance of English is that the only way to animate, to be worthy of respect and moral concern, is to be a human" (Kimmerer 910), in which "human" is defined through dominion over nature rather than stewardship. Settler logic strips these conceptions of animacy away from water, which justifies its conquest in the same way stripping animacy from Indigenous people and winning justifies that conquest. In response, Hogan ascribes thought, will, and emotions to water in *Solar Storms* by referring to it in conjunction with nature, history, and the body. After all, "Human is alive water," (Hogan 350) as Dora-Rouge teaches Angel.

In contrast to Angel experiencing trauma from her birth mother, it is the mothering of the water, like the mothering of the women in her life, that transforms her into an adult. When Angel is preparing to do activist work against the BEEVCO company for the hydropower dam, she reflects on her desire to "hold [her] breath and remain inside water" as a way to ask the water what it wants. The image of Angel remaining inside water is a yonic one: it symbolizes Angel growing in a maternal womb. That symbolism emphasizes the importance of maternity and, by extension, the matrilineal society that increasingly shapes her adulthood. Throughout the novel, Angel sees inside water or is engulfed in it; the water nurtures her, womb-like, often offering her

perspective and guidance: "Water, I knew, had its own needs, its own speaking and desires" (279), she says in one instance. In water, Angel finds the motherhood she wasn't able to receive from her mother.

In return, Angel becomes a speaker for the water, an important aspect of Anishinaabeg womanhood. The role of Anishinaabe women, according to Anishinaabe scholar Deborah McGregor, "is to speak for the water" (12). An Anishinabe view on the importance of water and its relationship to the people is expressed by ceremonies and traditional knowledge: "the Earth is said to be a woman. In this way it is understood that woman preceded man on the Earth...Water is her lifeblood. It flows through her, nourishes her, and purifies her" (Benton-Banai, qtd in McGregor 3). Additionally, in some Anishinaabeg cultures, the protection of water is tied to womanhood. To the Potawatomi people, "women are the Keepers of water." In *Braiding Sweetgrass,* Kimmerer discusses how the waters of the womb are an extension of the waters of lakes and rivers, and that "being a good mother includes the caretaking of water" (1412). Thus, the conquest of water is also a conquest of women, as the theft of water severs the sacred tie between women and water.

Angel's understanding of these multiple conquests (patriarchal, colonial, and ecological) coincides with Angel's decolonial *bildungsroman*: Angel's connection to water and to her matrilineal line are intertwined through traditional knowledge. Angel's relationship with water, as well as Dora Rouge's, then, are a continuation of the Anishinaabeg traditions of women as water protectors. It is no mistake, then, that Fur Island is called "the Navel of The World" (65), or that Angel sees the world as "that which gave birth to fish, the great natal waters parting to make as birds left the sea and opened their wings in air" (81). Within a short period of time in her new home, Angel finds that she has the power to "see[s] inside water" (81). When Angel "live[s] inside water," she notes that water "was blood spilled on the ground. Some of it was the blood of my ancestors" (78). This relationship between Angel and water gives Angel a perspective on the history of water as not just life-giving, but life itself. In the way a mother's womb nourishes a fetus, Angel is culturally nourished with historical knowledge when she is inside water.

Angel experiences one of these moments of clarity inside the womb of water later in the novel, when she realizes that the capitalists who want to destroy the land only view the water as a commodity rather than a living entity with a rich history. Similarly, Hogan asserts that water's exploitation and her people's exploitation are interrelated in the same way Angel's personal history and her people's history are interrelated. Hogan progressively imbues water with characteristics relating to nurturing and vitality. When Angel is preparing to do activist work against the BEEVCO company for the hydropower dam, she reflects on the reification of sacred water in the hands of the colonizers: "Water, I knew, had its own needs, its own speaking and

desires. No one had asked the water what it wanted. Except Dora-Rouge, who'd spoken with it directly" (279). As the novel continues, Angel's understanding of water builds from an understanding of her matrilineal relatives---Bush, Dora-Rouge, and Agnes, specifically---to an understanding of her people and the history of their resistance to those who would steal the land and water for their greed. Through both water and protest, Angel and other activists attempt to communicate to the BEEVCO developers that "nature and humans are trans-corporeally silted in and sifted by the earth," that "people land, and water can never be reduced entirely to a discursive site such as the cartographers' maps that the developers bring with them" (Huang 78). In contrast to the developers', Angel's understanding of water, as passed down from generations of Indigenous women's knowledge, is one based on reciprocity rather than commodification.

The animacy of the land and water is a careful detail in *Solar Storms.* Hogan privileges the Anishnaabe cosmologies that characterize water and land as sentient by situating the water's history with the history of colonial conquest and the people's resistance to conquest. The reciprocal nature of Anishnaabe culture—-exemplified by Bush honoring the bear's life and Dora Rouge's deals with water—is thus used to resist the extractive, colonial ideologies of Wiindigoo maldevelopment. Hogan articulates this divide by privileging the Indigenous reciprocity of Angel's lineage of women as water protectors, who contribute to Angel's understanding that water "had its own needs, its own speaking and desires." The role of women in Anishinaabe culture is that of the water protector, and that the sanctity of water and the respect for women is often intertwined. In contrast, masculinist maldevelopment sees the work of women, their traditional knowledge, their leadership, as useless.

The wiindigo economics of privileging masculinist maldevelopment is evident in Angel's history of being abused by her mother and of being exploited by men prior to her coming to Adam's Rib. The intersecting subjugation of women, Indigenous people, and the environment create a structure of white heteropatriarchy that puts these three groups at risk. Brenda Hill (Siksika) states that heterosexist gender violence ''condones and encourages violence against women by endorsing the misperceptions of male superiority, ownership and control of women and children, and men's rights to control the environment'' (195). The white, male desire for power and wealth is endemic to a system that rewards the needs of the rugged white male individual's greed over entire communities, whose lifeways and land have been diminished by said structure.

Angel's experiences prior to her arrival in Adam's Rib exemplify the long-lasting trauma that the state exacts against Indigenous women. In *Solar Storms,* Angel is arrested (290) and then abandoned in the snow because the Canadian law enforcement worked in tandem with BEEVCO to silence the anti-dam protests. Angel experiencing family separation, sexual assault, and then

police brutality are all consequences of the continuation of colonialism. As Lakota scholar Hilary N Weaver states, the "process of colonization led to the acceptance of stereotypes and rigid gender roles that define indigenous women as less deserving of respect and protection from violence" (1559). The internalization of colonial ideas of women as inferior, and the colonial ideas of nature as property are what propels the state to ignore violence against Indigenous women like Angel. The separation of Angel and the other Fat Eaters from their land is a legitimately traumatic experience for them[8], and Hogan conveys it as such. Through Angel's assertion that she is "water going back to itself," Angel not only expresses her ties to her ancestral land through her matrilineal heritage, but exemplifies how the conquest of land and water are interrelated in the conquest of women and Indigenous bodies. The cultural dominance of male-ness and whiteness are the foundation of Western legal systems, the same legal system that tore Angel away from her family and declared the Indigenous activists who "occupy" (Hogan 302) Two Town Post as terrorists despite the violence enacted against both the people and the land by the state. Hogan's writing builds upon these ideas through her descriptions of the land and water through the lens of Indigenous history and traditional knowledge.

The novel describes the relationship between human beings and non-human beings as agreements that are often broken by unfettered capitalism. In a story that the elder Tulik tells Angel, the water is the one who finally denies their desire for conquest, showing water's role of resistance in the novel. The story begins with the humans who ask for attributes that animals have, killing the animals they replace. When they ask for more, they are denied by the defiant water: "The water said, you have asked for too much, and then all of it was taken away from them. With all their wishes they had forgotten to ask to become human beings" (347). In this passage, the humans see nature and ignore the balance that reciprocity allows. They continue to conquer different parts of nature, letting their greed dictate their will. The water acts as an ally to animals and land, being its steward and protector against the greed of colonialism. This story that Tulik tells Angel when she begins to become a part of her community explains the totalizing effects of greed. Greed thematically connects other instances of consumption—both Hannah's abuse and BEEVCO's destruction—to the stories of the Wiindigoo.

Hogan historicizes Indigenous resistance by connecting the continued defiance of the Indigenous people with that of the land. When Angel first learns about BEEVCO's construction of the dam, her thoughts are about land's response to this destruction: "It was against the will of

[8] Additionally, extractive industries will house workers near maldevelopment projects, where the "combination of patriarchal and colonial attitudes" as well as the projects' proximity to Indigenous land makes these places particularly dangerous for Indigenous women (LaDuke 191) and have lead to increased rates of murder, sexual assault, and sex trafficking.

land, I knew, to turn rivers into lakes, lakes into dry land, to send rivers along new paths. I hoped the earth would one day forgive this breach of faith, the broken agreement humans had with it" (Hogan 330). Here, Hogan characterizes the land as an entity with will and the ability to defy, which she does again when she refers to Holy String Town as a "defiant land" (123) that resists maldevelopment in the same way Indigenous people have resisted colonialism. Angel understands that the land is an "'extended relative' of this created earth" (Nelson 216) and that its history is just as rich and filled with trauma as Angel herself. Indigenous peoples "work hard to maintain, restore, and renew these stories of kinship" (216) as a way to listen to the story of the land.

Angel internalizes the importance of speaking to water and finding out its desires, giving her an understanding of the capacity for destruction BEEVCO has exacted on the land and water, and the necessity for resistance. Angel knows that BEEVCO's values are attached to the "million-dollar dreams of officials, governments, and businesses," (279) rather than "the life of water, or a regard for the land that sustained people from the beginning of time" (279). Angel's acceptance of Indigenous thought and her healing from parental and institutional abuse are interrelated, thus highlighting the importance of reciprocal deals as an antidote to the extractive nature of Wiindigoo capital.

The nature of the Wiindigo is antithetical to Anishinaabeg traditional knowledge values of "resistance against the insidious germ of taking too much" (Kimmerer 4477). Building on the writings of both Basil Johnston and Stewart King, Kimmerer distills the needs of the wiindigo: "the name for that within us which cares more for its own survival than anything else" (4468). Hogan uses the Wiindigoo's cannibalism to connect intergenerational trauma to that of colonialism. Within a person, a Wiindigoo is someone like Hannah: biting her own daughter and abusing her for her own survival. Within a system, a Wiindigoo is a multinational corporation like BEEVCO whose bottom line matters more than human lives. The ice-hearted Wiindigoo, a cannibal with corporate, self-serving, colonial, and extractive associations, is diametrically opposed to the association of water with community, reciprocity, and healing. Through her use of the Wiindigoo motif, Hogan situates Angel's abuse by her birth mother Hannah and the water's abuse by BEEVCO as interwoven sites of trauma. Similarly to how *Solar Storms* creates a continuum between water in the land and water inside humans, the cannibal-coded imagery of Hannah Wing and those of the colonizers are similarly imbricated to convey how interlocked the parental and colonial abuse of Angel and the land are. Cannibalism is Hogan's imaging of what happens when the web of reciprocity and communal life are frozen by the privileging of greed and conquest instead.

When the novel begins, the parental and colonial abuse at the hands of Wiindigoo systems are intertwined through Angel's history with family separation. Angel arrives at Adam's Rib "after being raised in foster care in the era before the 1978 Indian Child Welfare act" (Hellegers 3) to a community to Adam's Rib. Angel's experience of trauma through her mother and then through the foster care system is "an experience that mirrors that of many [Indigenous] children, who are overly represented in child protective services and the foster care system" (Vernon 43-44). The neglect Angel faces in foster care as well as the isolation from her family shows how the settler colonial state continues to displace and deracinate Indigenous children. That Bush is not allowed to take Angel because Bush is not Angel's blood relative is an example of the Canadian government ignoring Indigenous family dynamics in favor of the Eurocentric nuclear family, the construct that put Angel in danger of Hannah's care in the first place. After Angel's confrontation with Hannah is met with silence, Bush takes Angel "on her lap like the mother [she] never had" (232). Bush, whose character embodies the maternal and reciprocal, is Angel's introduction to her Indigeneity. Had the federal government shown any real care for Angel's wellbeing, she would have stayed on her own land. But because Wiindigoo economics requires both physical and discursive removal of Indigenous people to justify settler colonialism, Angel must cope with her abuse for the first 17 years of her life with little support.

Hogan connects Angel's abuse at the hands of her birth mother with the water's abuse at the hands of BEEVCO through three main motifs: ice, poison, and cannibalism. Angel describes her abuse by Hannah as being cannibalistic, symbolized by Hannah giving Angel a scar on her face by biting her. Bush recounts that Hannah has the smell of almonds on her, evoking the poison that shows up in the novel again thematically as "Poison Road"—the road where settlers poisoned wolves using cyanide during the fur trade—as well as the methylmercury contamination that poisons the people during the dam's construction. The explanation that Angel's elders give is that Hannah's heart is frozen like a Wiindigoo's, and that the same affliction applies to the settlers and colonizers. Angel even uses the language of cannibalism to describe Hannah's abuse: "She tried to kill me, swallow me, consume me back into her own body, the way fire burns itself away, uses itself as fuel" (251), where the use of consuming and fuel evoke the goals of extractive maldevelopment to consume the land and use it as fuel. Hannah's cannibalism is as Desiree Hellegers says, "a microcosm and a casualty of the cold calculus of capitalism, which relegates animals, Native people, and lands to objects of consumption to satisfy the needs of urban centers in both Canada and the United States" (10). Anishinaabe translator and writer Basil Johnston characterizes the modern Wiindigoos as "corporations, conglomerates, and multinationals" (235), where the desire for unfettered profit results in cannibalizing humans and more-than-humans alike. The fact that Angel's trauma stems

partially from the scar that Hannah has imprinted on her face parallels not only how Indigenous people have been colonized by white people, but how the winter of greed's discontent forces people like Hannah into patterns of abuse, greed, and selfishness. A cannibal becomes separated from the web of reciprocity, privileging their own survival over the community. Hogan mythologizes and makes this colonialist disruption into a monstrosity, connecting white settlers with cannibal imagery and the Wiindigoo.

Hogan uses Indigenous stories as an indictment of capitalism, characterizing colonialism and capitalist greed as cannibalistic. To further explicate the relationship between nature and capitalism, Hogan uses the traditional story of the Wiindigoo to carve out the themes of Western capitalist greed, connecting the Wiindigoo to cannibalism and intergenerational trauma.[9] According to Basil Johnston's *The Manitous: The Supernatural World of the Ojibway*, the greed of the Wiindigoo grows with each feeding: "the more it ate, the bigger it grew; and the bigger it grew, the more it wanted and needed" (Johnston 234). In the traditional stories, "Wiindigoo stories reinforced the taboo against cannibalism, when the madness of hunger and isolation rustled at the edge of winter lodges" (Kimmerer, loc 4462). Wiindigoo stories are cautionary tales that emphasize the self-discipline that comes with valuing reciprocity, or as Robin Wall Kimmerer phrases it, "to build resistance against the insidious germ of taking too much" (4473). Kimmerer suggests that the stories of the Wiindigoo started as an act of remembrance of who wanders without passing on to the next world, those "banished from the web of reciprocity" (4507). In this way, Wiindigoo are akin to ghost stories, visages of the past that carry us toward a better future. The specific use of Wiindigoos in *Solar Storms* provides an additional function in the text: establishing Indigenous values as a way forward into a decolonial future. Wiindigoo hauntology unseats the Indigenous ghost story by using the traditional knowledge of Wiindigoo stories to support Indigenous sovereignty.

The use of the Wiindigoo is also important in establishing Indigenous contemporality and problematizing the way the Western tendencies to cast Indigenous people as ghosts. As Emilie Cameron states in "Indigenous Spectrality and the Politics of Postcolonial Ghost Stories," ghosts have the potential to "embody the mismatch between the ideal and real, the present and the absent" (383). However, Cameron points out that ghosts in the writings of settler Canadians and Americans become a trope called "the spectral native" (Cameron 284)—-a trope akin to that of the "Vanishing Indian"—that situates Indigenous people in the past. Cameron rightfully observes that despite haunting's potential for decolonial storytelling, Canadian writers use the

[9] For more specifically on the role of Wiindigoos in *Solar Storms,* see Arnold, Hellegers, Harrison, and Castor.

[10] Among the culprits is Duncan Campbell Scott, a poet who lamented the Cree and Ojibway as "the race [that] has waned and left but tales of ghosts" (Scott, qtd. in Cameron) and served on Canada's Department of Indian Affairs as Deputy Superintendent from 1923-32 during a time of legislative violence against Indigenous people (Cameron 385).

spectral native as "an aesthetic link between the 'Indian past' and the settler present" (384).[10] The motif of haunting in these stories centers the settler present in lieu of Indigenous contemporality. In contrast, *Solar Storms* disrupts the pernicious trope of the Spectral Native by using the Anishinaabe story of the Wiindigoo to articulate colonial violence, thus reversing the haunting/haunted dynamic.

Superimposing whiteness onto the Wiindigoo story disrupts the colonial gaze because it shifts the focus away from "haunted settlers" to thinking about Indigenous contemporaries and futures. The hauntology of the Wiindigoo figure conveys colonialism's proclivity for hollowing out life through consumption. The Wiindigoo's cannibalistic nature is defined not only by the absence of caring for others as well as an absence of the thing it craves. Hogan's use of the Wiindigoo situates the Fat Eaters as the haunted ones and the white settlers as the figures on which ghost stories are inscribed. Rather than using the "spectral Native," which focuses on putting Indigenous bodies to rest so that the white settlers do not have to think about them. The point of ghosts is not to situate marginalization in the past, or to even solely understand the past as monolithic emblem of despair,[11] but to imagine moving forward with the past. By using the Wiindigoo as a spectral presence of colonialism, abuse, and capitalism, Hogan shifts the settler discourse of haunting to the possibilities of an Indigenous future and a settler past. The absent-presence of colonialism is no longer the justification of further exploitation, but rather the use of Indigenous storytelling to contextualize and justify resistance to Wiindigoo capitalism. The Wiindigoo's iciness, its spectral heart frozen by greed, is a narrative foil to the running water of life. Water has more animacy, more dignity, than the Wiindigoo, and thus exists as a counter narrative to the totalizing narratives of Wiindigoo capitalism that justify greed.

The all-consuming trauma of Hannah[12]'s absent presence, for example, is healed only after Angel accepts water's animacy and capacity for healing. Healing as a way towards resistance is what thaws the ice of Wiindigoo greed into the waters of reciprocity. Angel's character is essential to resisting narratives of colonialism that center entirely around the ghosts of the past. Angel not only carries forward the wisdom of her people, but her process of healing herself from trauma establishes not just an Indigenous contemporality, but a decolonial future. Angel's body is a microcosm of the water, meaning that her process of healing throughout the novel evokes the potential for land and waterways to also heal from their own trauma caused by

[11] Among the culprits is Duncan Campbell Scott, a poet who lamented the Cree and Ojibway as "the race [that] has waned and left but tales of ghosts" (Scott, qtd. in Cameron) and served on Canada's Department of Indian Affairs as Deputy Superintendent from 1923-32 during a time of legislative violence against Indigenous people (Cameron 385).

[12] Interestingly, Hannah is still treated with more humanity and compassion than the trope of a "spectral Native" allows. Angela's forgiveness of Hannah is the compassion Hogan shows to individuals within a system, and the possibility of restorative justice that resists "native spectrality."

the cannibals. Hogan thus portrays healing, an action traditionally associated with femininity, an act of resistance that Angel is already embedded in before she learns of the BEEVCO dam building. Angel's coming-of-age—when she learns about Indigenous reciprocity, the history of her people, the relationships to water and its surroundings—-are vital to the formation of resistance, because those are the elements that inform how urgent resisting the dam's construction is.

Like Bush's reciprocal hunting as a contrast to LaRue's taxidermy, Hannah's icy Wiindigoo heart exists as a foil to Angel's affinity to running water. In this contrast, we see that Angel attempts to thaw the ice of her trauma by developing her relationship with water not only as a deeper understanding of her people, but also as the source of her healing from the intergenerational and colonial trauma.

The novel's use of Wiindigoo imagery to connect cannibalism with colonialism is important here, as it situates Angel in a legacy of being victim to and healing from colonial violence. This dynamic coincides with the larger themes of the novel: that scars, as Angel observers, "were proof of healing" (Hogan 125). Angel's ability to see herself as someone who is growing and strengthening converges with her ability to see the earth and water as entities with their own will that also grow, strengthen, and change. This dynamic again contrasts with the capitalist reification of earth as a resource or obstacle, both of which characterize nature as something static and therefore easy to manipulate without consequences.

At the culmination of Angel's healing journey, she transforms into a Wolverine, a trickster figure who acts as an ally to water. In the traditional stories Bush tells Angel, Wolverine not only steals and sabotages traps laid by settlers, but also vanquishes the twins of war and starvation by making skin bags out of them and "fill[ing] them with berries and meat" (186). The stories of Wolverine as a decolonial figure depict a force that heals strife by nurturing strife and resisting settler greed. Angel similarly adapts the Wolverine story by "[taking] care of her dying mother" and by "becoming Wolverine" (Castor 172) thus breaking the cycle of abusive anger. After becoming more involved in the activist struggles against the dam-building, Angel becomes the trickster figure of the Wolverine when she steals food from the white store owners. Hogan foreshadows this transformation: first, when Bush tells Angel that Wolverine "takes away [human's] luck in hunting" when humans "forget to respect the bond" between humans and more -than-humans" (82); and again when Angel learns that Wolverine can inhabit "a strange, two-legged body, wearing human skin" (253) which is how Wolverine knew to steal what was valuable to humans as a way to humble them.

[13] See page 10.

Angel-as-Wolverine acts as the culmination of her transformation into *Maniki*[13], where her education in traditional knowledge aids her in the decolonial struggle of her people. Angel understands that Wolverine wanted the dammers to leave, and it is with this understanding that she conceives of the idea of sneaking into the colonizers' food supply. Angel "[knows] Wolverine and his destruction perfectly well," that she, "like Wolverine, would tell the men to leave our world" (322). Angel's history of being accused of theft finally comes full circle here, as she reclaims this accusation as a way to challenge the greed of the white people hoarding excess food while her people starve. Angel's role as Wolverine mirrors and subverts Hannah's transformation into a Wiindigoo: Angel "embodies a mythical figure that poses a threat to humans, like her mother once did when she enacted the Wiindigoo in the collective narrative of her community" (Castor 172). But Angel does so because her "ultimate motive is to restore the world to balance. Hogan uses Angel's trickster narrative as a way to "draw attention to the text as a story that raises questions about changing power dynamics in the actual world" (172). Angel is told her habit of "taking things" (43) was a reason for her being kicked out of a foster home, but here we see the interiority of theft as protest, specifically as protest against the bigger, more destructive capitalist theft of land. Angel's use of Wolverine also provides context to the criminalization of Indigenous resistance by putting it into context: although Indigenous resistance is often characterized as violent or "looting," it pales in comparison to the theft of colonialism.

Wolverine's resistance to colonial theft mirrors water's resistance to the reifying coloniality of maps. Throughout the novel, Hogan problematizes Western cartography, which relies on two-dimensional drawings. Maps and blueprints, thought by the colonizers to be objective drawings of land and water, are a staple metaphor in Indigenous literature, where resistance to colonialist cartography is given interiority and subjectivity. When Angel encounters the maps that Bush collects, she states that "They [maps] were only as accurate as the minds of their makers" (122). Bush's collection of maps presumably comes from the fur traders, whose use of mapmaking came from a colonial desire to control and shape the land without considering the repercussions of dominance.

Land and water both resist the colonial cartography of mapmaking and damming, articulated through the Angel's recognition of the water's animacy. When Angel looks at Bush's map collection, Angel admits that although the maps were "incredible topographies," they are incomplete images that only tell "the territories and trick and lies of history," excluding "the people or animal lives or the clay of land, the water, the carnage" (123). In contrast, Angel refers to the land as a "defiant land" and observes that "land refused to be shaped by the makers of maps" because "Land had its own will" (123). The inadequacies of maps play an important role in Agnes' death, as Angel attempts to use the map given by two white people—heavily implied

to be Wiindigoos—to find healing plants for Agnes. Upon Angel's return, Agnes has already passed away. Those who rely on maps rather than an intuitive and respectful relationship with the land are viewing the land as something to be traversed and conquered. The maps, like colonial revisionism, exclude "the viewpoints of the people or animals who suffered from conquest, and whose inaccuracies lead to fatalities" (Jespersen 280). Angel's use of maps results in Agnes's death—this is significant because Angel's choice to eschew using her ancestral gift (of seeing through water) facilitates the literal death of one of her ancestors. In maps, the water is reified and commodified, viewed as an afterthought, whereas Angel's more complex gift honors the water's long arc of history. The sentiment of maps and blueprints being pernicious in their incompleteness echoes the view of capitalist maldevelopers: a shallow view of water that ignores the depth of its significance to the people and the ecosystem.[14] Angel and her peoples' cultural tradition and epistemology are in deep contrast to the BEEVCO official's view of the land: "They saw it only on the flat, two-dimensional world of paper" (279). Furthermore, the motif of maps foreshadows how Hogan characterizes the BEEVCO blueprints as capitalist cartography that commodifies the land.

Maps and blueprints symbolize a process of continuing reification that characterizes the earth and water as means to an end rather than as advancing poor and Indigenous communities' livelihoods. This commentary conveys the environmental displacement that the characters in the novel suffer through; their health, vitality, and cultural traditions are entirely at stake. The BEEVCO company seeing Indigenous people as an afterthought is part of a long history of colonialism where the act of conquest is emphasized over the people who originally lived there: "Their history had been emptied of us, and along with us, of truth" (280). For the community, BEEVCO's construction doesn't just mean the displacement of the land, but an erasure of history that has been caused by and continuing after settler colonialism and the fur trade.

The language of animacy that Hogan uses, then, acts as an antidote to the scar of Windiigoo capital. As Schultermandl notes, "Hogan in particular juxtaposes the healing powers of the ancestral landscape with the protagonists' fighting for a restorative healing of the landscape" (70), where the land and the people have parallel narratives of healing: Angel's coming-of-age is imbricated with decolonial resistance. Her acceptance into her family, her

[14] My chapter section only touches on the exploration of the relationships between maps and coloniality in *Solar Storms.* For further discussion of this element of the novel, please see Fiore, Hellegers, and Jespersen (cited in the bibliography).

[15] Tommy is an example of how Hogan also uses certain male characters to convey what masculinity looks like when untangled from the roots of colonial violence. It's no surprise that Angel's relationship with Tommy is based on her admiration of his respect for tribal elders and care for Angel's female relatives. Similarly, Tulik, who offers Dora Rouge food, listens to her speak when they meet in the land of the Beautiful Ones, and offers his house as a communal place, depicts a masculinity that values community and reciprocity over the individualist petro masculinity of whiteness.

relationship with water, and her relationship with Tommy[15] are predicated on continuing her people's traditions of honoring traditional knowledge and reciprocity, resisting Wiindigoo greed in all its forms. Angel's embrace of traditional knowledge—particularly of Wolverine, the windiigoo, and the reciprocal deals with water—depict how Angel's transformation is a culmination of centuries of decolonial resistance told through story.

As a work of resistance, *Solar Storms* highlights the urgency of listening to and reading Indigenous people's stories. Hydropower as a neocolonial enterprise has been dangerous for Indigenous communities worldwide, and Hogan's decision to set her novel about hydropower near Canada is one that makes *Solar Storms* a relevant work in the current landscape of Western maldevelopment.[16] A study on hydroelectric dams in Canada found that, as of 2016, "all 22 Canadian hydroelectric facilities being considered for near-term development are located within 100 km of indigenous communities" (Calder et al. 13115). In addition to First Nations people dealing with the loss of their land and the lifestyle tied to it, they have also faced an epidemic of methylmercury poisoning caused by the dam-building's chemicals poisoning the water and the wildlife. The three-phase James Bay Project had already began construction in 1971, and the James Bay Cree had already begun seeing "thousands of square miles of land" being flooded by the project before even hearing about its existence (Hellegers 1). The capitalist projects that destroy the land are often greenlit without consideration for the land and water's material and cultural significance to Indigenous people, whose lands have been stolen and exploited for capital for centuries. Hogan bridges the colonialist gap between water and people that Western epistemology has privileged, tying the sanctity of water to life—life that is being destroyed by colonial masculinist capitalism.

Capitalism's death grasp on Indigenous land is a continuation of heteropatriarchal colonialism. To quote Winona LaDuke, the "predator/prey" relationship that capitalism has with the Earth is analogous to the relationship male patriarchy has with women: women are often "in the role of the prey to a predator society whether through sexual discrimination, exploitation, sterilization, absence of control over our bodies, or being the subjects of repressive laws and legislation in which we have no voice" (213). The destruction of the environment and the ways "industrial society is consuming the lifeblood" (LaDuke 105) of the world is inextricably linked to the destruction of matrilineal societies and the subjugation of Indigenous women's bodies through instances of gendered colonial violence like forced sterilization and rape. *Solar Storm's* emphasis on the importance of the matrilineal, Indigenous society that raises Angel to become an

[16] For more on methylmercury poisoning, see Hellegers' "From Poisson Road to Poison Road: Mapping the Toxic Trail of Windigo Capital in Linda Hogan's *Solar Storms*" and Hori et al's "Use of Traditional Environmental Knowledge to Assess the Impact of Climate Change on Subsistence Fishing in the James Bay Region of Northern Ontario, Canada."

activist on behalf of the water stresses the importance of storytelling as a site of resistance. Hogan reclaims and reshapes the history of colonialism that has been so central to understanding the toll of maldevelopment on stolen land.

In *Solar Storms*, water is a resistant counterpoint to capitalistic maldevelopment and settler colonialism. Through this framework, Hogan asserts the interconnectedness of different heads of a colonial Cerberus as it explores the lives of four generations of women and their trauma and healing. Hogan gives authority and interiority to Angel as a way to historicize and articulate the disastrous impacts of extractive capitalism on Indigenous land, water, and communities, encouraging readers to empathize with Angel, and by extension, the water and her people.

Solar Storms provides an alternative narrative that indicts dam-building as neocolonialism and emphasizes the importance and necessity of resistance. Just as Bush smuggles the stories of resistance "out to newspapers in the United States and to cities in Canada" (300), so does Hogan introduce her own story that directly confronts and protests a history fraught with violence against land and people. The awareness that Hogan facilitates of Indigenous sovereignty gives readers an opportunity to conceptualize Indigenous contemporality and Indigenous resistance through the lens of fiction, a space where readers are encouraged to feel empathy for fictional characters. Through empathy for Angel and vicarious pride in her capacity for compassion and resistance, Hogan encourages readers to unsettle the preconceived ideas of Wiindigoo capitalism.

Solar Storms is a work of resistance, as it simultaneously tells the story of exploitation, as well as the resistance to that exploitation predicated on embracing community and recognizing the sanctity of nature. The novel uses the animacy of water and the hauntology of the Wiindigoo as contrasting motifs of Indigenous reciprocity and settler greed, respectively. By doing so, *Solar Storms* illuminates the colonizing forces behind the commodification of water—a force that has become even more relevant in the wake of pipelines that threaten to ravage Indigenous land and endanger Indigenous people and their lifeways. Honoring the memories of water is the first step to protecting it and being its steward. As settlers, witnessing and believing Indigenous scholars and leaders is not only essential, but long overdue. Kimmerer's assertion that "Our relationship with land cannot heal until we hear its stories" (loc 203) extends to the relationship between humans and water, and the pact between them at which colonialism eats away. By listening to those who tell water's stories through fiction, protest, and resistance, settlers can help heal the scars of Wiindigoo capitalism and participate in true allyship with Indigenous land, water, and people.

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BIO

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