

Research Article

# Spiritual Disorientation: A Study of Place in Linda Hogan's *Solar Storms* from the Perspective of Human Geography

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## Abstract

Linda Hogan is a Chickasaw writer grown up in the Native American Renaissance, who feels much obliged to figure out an effective way of guiding the colonized native people out of ecocide and ethnocide wrought by the Euro-American colonization. As an author wholly drenched in the indigenous cosmology, Hogan bestows great concern on the issue of place in the literary creation, which is a pivotal cosmological element in the native epistemological system and thus can be taken as a means for her to decolonize her people. This paper is to investigate the issue of colonization and decolonization through the lens of place in the register of human geography by exploring the spiritual disorientation attributed to land loss represented in her novel *Solar Storms* (1995). Based on detailed textual analysis, it is unfolded that the spiritual disorientation in the Indian community has been overtly embodied in two aspects: native men's alcoholism and their conceding to white masculinity, and child abuse conducted by women for their suffering from intergenerational trauma, which truly represents the mental or psychological crisis of indigenous peoples triggered by and attendant to the land loss. In conclusion, the decolonizing process in Hogan's fiction necessitates reviewing the horrible outcome of the native people's land loss history so as to enhance their recognition of the communal place, stimulate their sense of community and develop new sites and strategies of resistance.

## Keywords

Linda Hogan, Place, Land Loss, Spiritual Disorientation, Euro-American Masculinity, Child Abuse

## 1. Introduction

Place is a pivotal cosmological element in the native epistemological system and thus becomes a recurrent theme in the literary works of Linda Hogan, a Chickasaw writer wholly drenched in the indigenous cosmology. As an author grown up in the Native American Renaissance, Hogan feels much obliged to figure out an effective way of guiding the colonized native people out of ecocide and ethnocide wrought by the Euro-American colonization. In this sense, her indigenist commitment and native heritage locate place as a means through which she can help decolonize her people in the lit-

erary creation. This research aims to foreground the centrality of place in representing the Indian's colonial history, particularly the land loss history in their local place, thereby enhancing modern Indian people's awareness against the colonial trauma, and ultimately achieving their survival of the colonization.

As is known to all, place is a principal concept in Human Geography, which comprises three elements—location, locale and sense of place—and thus gives rise to its typical characteristics: materiality, meaning, and practice [1] (p.

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4157). Possessing a material structure, place refers to the locale that consists of all the tangible things within a physical site, which are especially meaningful to the people inhabiting it. What's more, meanings can be very personal, connected to individuals, and shared by a community as well. Finally, places are practiced. The sense people get of a place is heavily dependent on their practice and experience is at the heart of what place means. Given this, Native American Indians' sense of place is irrevocably impacted by their ongoing colonized experience of land loss in the physical level, thus resulting in the sense of disorientation in the spiritual level. It is not difficult to discover that in Hogan's fiction such disruption in a sense of place mainly manifests itself in a spiritual disorientation in the native community. This paper will investigate thoroughly the damaged sense of place, presenting spiritually colonized situation of indigenous people driven out of their ancestral land and now dwelling in the devastated environment.

## 2. Literature Review

Previous studies of place in Linda Hogan's work demonstrate that the critics have conducted their research through the following aspects: the politics of place [2] (p. 20), the narrative power of place, the ecofeminist approach to place [3] (p. 67), the multidisciplinary approach to place, and the ecocritical studies of place and sense of self [4] (p. 112). In some of the analysis, scholars attempt to utilize specific places to expose their political function in resisting the colonial forces, or their narrative power of creating empathy between the writer and readers, or creating dialogue between literary texts and environment [5] (p. 175). And Chinese critics as well take some physical settings as the cynosure to prove the relation between identity and place, and unfold the changeability of place-attachment within the context of globalization [6] (p. 96). Besides the focus on specific physical places, other studies are apt to highlight the imaginative function of place in the anti-colonial discourse or its ecological connotation in the ecocritical venue, even draw on its function in both sides.

Reviewing the previous study on Hogan's works on the scope of place, the study is to fill the research gap by drawing on the issue of colonization and decolonization through the lens of human geography, and particularly exploring the spiritual disorientation attributed to land loss represented in Linda Hogan's second novel *Solar Storms* (1995).

## 3. Spiritual Disorientation Attributed to Land Loss

According to the land cession process in American Indian history, since the outset of the European colonization in the American continent, white settlers have often tried removing native peoples from their tribal land through various means, including the implementation of reservation system based on

a series of acts. Most notably, the Indian Removal Act of 1830 that triggers infamous events surrounding "the Trail of Tears"<sup>1</sup> has caused a series of forced relocations of native Indians who have to split from their homes, communal regions and cultural roots inherited from their ancestors. As Dreese argues, "[t]he specific landscape from which a tribe derives determines its means for survival, its cultural symbols, its sense of self and its spirituality; therefore, removal from these landscapes initiates a split from many other aspects of the tribe's way of life" [7] (p. 17). The early land cession history witnesses separations of native peoples from their ancestral place, and thus from their traditional economic modes of gathering and hunting, which directly gives rise to the social disintegration from within the tribal community.

As they continue pushing westward, white settlers still take the daily practice of the Indians as savage and barbaric, and come into conflict with them time and again. Hence the forced assimilation of native peoples into the mainstream white society is assumed as an effective solution to these conflicts and the result is the passage of the Dawes Act which authorizes the government to divide tribal land by partitioning it into plots and only those who accept the allotments are allowed to be American citizens. This Act is originally assumed to assimilate Native Americans into the white society by breaking up communal land and protecting them from some white settlers endeavoring to encroach on their reservation land again, however it turns out that the Act has failed in its attempt to provide protection for about ninety million acres of tribal land has been stripped from the Indians and sold to non-natives<sup>2</sup>. In so doing, native dwellers have been deprived of their best land again and hence have lost their last means of living and then been cast into the permanent tragic lives of poverty and sufferings.

As some scholars proclaim, "[t]he systematic displacement of native peoples from their land base, which was both their economic source of livelihood as well as their spiritual foundation, set up conditions for colonially induced despair" [8] (p. 213). Therefore, induced social despair can be taken as a natural coping mechanism and a collective indicator for adapting to the social disintegration and economic breakdown. Moreover, induced social despair, also called spiritual dislocation, generally "manifests itself in joblessness, poverty, poor health, cultural malaise, family disintegration (spouse and child abuse), alcoholism..." [9] (p. 262). In Hogan's fiction *Solar Storms*, spiritual dislocation has been overtly embodied in these two aspects: native men's alcoholism and their conceding to white masculinity, and child abuse conducted by women for their suffering from intergenerational trauma, which truly represents the mental or psychological crisis of indigenous peoples triggered by and attendant to the land loss.

1 See [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trail\\_of\\_Tears](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trail_of_Tears)

2 See <https://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/us-history/the-gilded-age/american-west/a/the-dawes-act>

### 3.1. Men's Conceding to Euro-American Masculinity

It is reported that although they only make up 1.7% of American population, Native Americans experience enormously higher alcohol abuse rates and alcoholism has had a severe impact on their living conditions over centuries<sup>3</sup>. The high prevalence of alcohol addiction can be significantly attributed to the Indian's land loss experience in European colonization in the American continent.

To account for such high rates of alcoholism, some researchers have attempted to propose an "adaptive view", a "medical model", and a "sociobiological theory" [8] (p. 213). The adaptive view posits that alcoholism stems from "lack of will power and strength of character" [8] (p. 214) and can be taken as a negative adapting mechanism when Native Americans experience the ongoing grief over land loss, family disintegration, poverty and unemployment. According to the medical model, alcoholism is a disease attributed to heredity, which adequately speaks to the intergenerational trait of alcoholism in the native households. The sociobiological theory assumes that social disintegration "undermines the protective influence of neighborhood and community" [8] (p. 214) and such attendant problems as disillusionment and hopelessness are likely to predispose indigenous people to alcohol addiction as an escape.

Most characters in Hogan's fiction suffer ravages of alcoholism. In *Solar Storms*, Two-Town is a place of degradation or wasteland, inhabited mainly by a group of indigenous people who are afflicted with the environmental devastation effected by both the early colonization and the current dams' construction. And the broken land and the relocated native people are depicted in the novel: "the resettled people lived in little, fast-made shacks, with candy and Coca-Cola machines every so often between them, and in Quonset huts left behind from the military who had recently used this native land as bombing range" [10] (p. 226). According to the protagonist, Angela, Two-Town is a "raw and scarred place" that has survived the poisonous treatment in the early fur trade and is now facing the environmental damage in dam construction promoted by the government. "The animals were no longer there... and not the water they swam in. Most of the trees had become nothing more than large mounds of sawdust" [10] (p. 225). There is no evidence of vitality for the land has been recently pocked by military planes as bombing ranges and burnt-out areas. "The devastation and ruin that had fallen over the land fell over the people too" [10] (p. 226). Their puffy faces, empty eyes and their unkempt, hollow appearance indicate that the people are in pain and "it was murder of the soul that was taking place" [10] (p. 226) here in Two-Town. This barren and scarred place is unable to sustain native dwellers economically and the further environmental ruin attendant to the dam construction even deprives their last hope

of survival. To escape from disillusionment and to ease grief over the economic dilemma and harshness in future life, most adolescents in the neighborhood turn to alcohol addiction:

The young children drank alcohol and sniffed glue and paint. They staggered about and lay down on the streets. Some of them had children of their own, infants who were left untouched, untended by their child-parents. Sometimes they were given beer when they cried. It was the only medicine left for all that pain. Even the healing plants had been destroyed. Those without alcohol were even worse off, and the people wept without end, and tried to cut and burn their own bodies. [10] (p. 226)

Alcohol, viewed as effective medicine by the young children, assists them to drive away their pain and hopelessness confronting the extreme poverty. The sense of dispossession caused by the land loss makes these children-parents become alcoholics who even feed their infants with beer. Dependence on alcohol at least may keep these young people alive in the world, although their soul has already been murdered and they are purely living corpses with puffy faces and empty eyes. However, to other young people without alcohol, they can't survive even like living corpses but to commit suicide for the healing plants have been destroyed in the hydropower project.

Representing different ways in which Native Americans usually respond to social disintegration and economic breakdown, Hogan tries offering variety of reactions through characterization in her novel. As mentioned above, some people are apt to react by drinking, weeping, crying, and self-hurting, while others, particularly some native men, attempt to resemble the colonizers by conceding to Euro-American masculinity. Tracing back to the source, people might recognize that the series of land Act concerning not only dismantle the social organization but disrupt native ideology system in other ways, and the Dawes Act in particular. By designating plots of land within a family according to social status, the Act has imposed a model inherited from the European hierarchical system and made men the heads of Indian families. Essentially, it has promoted a European approach to marriage and family among native households and divested native women of the power and status they used to have in the native community. The Act explicitly seeks to destruct the social cohesion and economic vitality of Indian tribes as a whole and to thereby eradicate remaining vestiges of national characteristics. And it is assumed that only by disavowing their own values and concepts could the Indians become truly "American." Through the characterization of LaRue in Hogan's fiction, *Solar Storms*, eradication of national traits is embodied in the native male's resembling the colonizer by conceding to the European's masculinity.

Whether the tribe is matriarchal or patriarchal, both native men and women are playing equally significant roles in the daily activity and even the survival of their communities<sup>4</sup>. Although regions and customs are different among tribes, the

3 See <https://americanaddictioncenters.org/alcoholism-treatment/native-americans>

4 See <http://plainshumanities.unl.edu/encyclopedia/doc/egp.gen.026>

division of labor between men and women is approximately similar and each of them takes crucial responsibility for the wellbeing of every household. Rather different from the European American pattern, traditional Indian families adhere to beliefs like relation, reciprocity, balance, wellness and spirituality, which constitutes their family structure based on gender equality and harmony. However, with the advent of induced social despair and the introduction of European masculinist concept into Indian tribes, a group of native men headed by LaRue deviate from these family beliefs that highlight equality and reciprocity between genders. "Conceding to Euro-American definitions of masculinity, they have become disassociated from indigenous traditions and from themselves, losing the wilderness within" [11] (p. 287) and losing their native identity. Therefore, LaRue and his followers are called men of "uncertain identity" [10] (p. 316) owing to their awkward state quo of being neither Indian nor European, which mainly manifests itself in these two facets: objectification and aggression toward women and animals, as well as self-hatred attributed to colonial violence and war trauma. In most cases, these native men of uncertain identity resort to violence to revitalize and reconstruct their identity.

As a mix-blood from the south, LaRue always smells of cologne and dresses himself handsomely in the Tom Jones kind of way [10] (p. 130). Living in the Indian community, LaRue, though rich and handsome, has always been turned down by Angel's native grandmother, Bush essentially for his being neither Indian nor white. LaRue is "a taxidermist and dealer in bones, pinned butterflies, hides, traps and firearms" [10] (p. 28), whose occupation implies his deviation from the traditional animal concept that sustains the harmony between animals and humans for centuries by bounding "hunters and their game in a relationship of respect and reciprocity" [12] (p. 8). The advent of taxidermy can be traced back to the prevalence of fur trading in the early colonial era, which works as a metaphor reflecting the destructive effects of European consumerism on human and nonhuman bodies and societies. As a primary practitioner of taxidermy, LaRue chooses to embrace the western ideological ideas of anthropomorphism and trade or treat animals with a sense of supremacy and cruelty utterly regardless of the native pact between indigenous peoples and animals.

While going fishing with LaRue at one time, Angel found LaRue "placed them (fish) on rocks and cut the skin off them while they were still alive, not killing them, not removing their organs" [10] (p. 83). When Angela insists that he should kill fish first rather than peel them off, LaRue is shouting with irritation, "[t]hey are too hard to kill.... They don't feel anything. They don't have nervous systems. What, do you have a Bambi complex or anything?" [10] (p. 83) Although she admits that LaRue is partly right about nervous systems of fish, Angel does believe that the native people always observe the traditional nature belief that treats fish and other animals well in respecting their lives and death, and putting them out of the pain as soon as they are caught. Thus, she

cannot tolerate LaRue's brutality inflicted on fish for he has "offended the spirits of fish" [10] (p. 84). Just as his name, LaRue Marks Time suggests, modern native people have to confront the increasingly constrained choices in the widening toxic and economic wake of colonial exploitation [12] (p. 8) and there will be more and more followers of LaRue who are willing to concede to Euro-American masculine ideology to adapt themselves to the prevalence of white concept. Undoubtedly, this concept has played a crucial role in the process of the ecocide and ethnocide in the native community.

In addition to his brutality inflicted on animals, LaRue's aggression toward women is symbolically mirrored in his dwelling place, Old Fish Hook that is "a nearby settlement on another finger of land that curved like a hook into water and pointed accusingly at Adam's Rib, as if it had sinned" [10] (p. 28). Adam's Rib, a place of domination over animal and women, conjures up years of mistreatment and gendered violence involved in the early colonial fur trading era. Hence it, once inhabited by the Abandoned Ones (native women), has witnessed European businessman's exploitation of and domination over native women and animals:

The first generation of the Abandoned Ones travelled down with French fur trappers who were seeking their fortunes from the land. When the land was worn out, the beaver and wolf gone, mostly dead, the men moved on to what hadn't yet been destroyed, leaving their women and children behind, as if they too were used-up animals. [10] (p. 226)

For white fur trappers, native women in Adam's Rib always function as good helpers in their business, a sexual mate in their life and even an object for their consumption so that once used up, these women are prone to being abandoned by their male master. As the setting place of the novel, Adam's Rib carries too much memory of native women's subordination and harshness of life, and thus is viewed as the representative inhabitancy of victimized women suffering from western masculine violence. Though situated in opposite to Adam's Rib, Old Fish Hook, "point[s] accusingly at Adam's Rib, as if it had sinned" [10] (p. 28). So does the man who lives here. Rather than keeps company or sympathizes with native women inhabiting in Adam's Rib, LaRue, as an Indian, takes advantage of women and animals to promote his business. Here, Hogan deliberately associates LaRue with the early fur trappers, underscoring his masculine manner towards animals and native women as a result of being infected with the western ideology. "He didn't care enough for life" [10] (p. 131) so Angel called him "a poor excuse for an Indian" [10] (p. 83).

What's more, LaRue's aggression toward women has further been confirmed soundly in his "willingness to 'trade' the mummified bodies of a mother and child in order to finance the museum he dreams of opening" [12] (p. 8). Taxidermy as well as mummies and museums, so-called products of western civilization, seemingly connects LaRue with fortune hunting and archeological cause in his business career. His



profession engages himself with violence and economic motive which promotes him to be active in making profits from dead bodies of humans and animals. Actually, as some scholars argue, his gruesome profession as a taxidermist and dealer in bones and animals is indicative of his internalization of Euro-American masculine ideologies that are prone to taking animals, women, and marginalized people as objections of consumption. [12] (p. 8) In effect, LaRue's decision to adopt the concept of objectifying women and animals marks their alienation from and betrayal of native ideologies based on harmony, balance, equality and reciprocity.

For these native men of "uncertain identity", another dilemma confronting them is the self-hatred or a sense of criminalizing themselves. To some degree, their objectification and aggression toward women and animals can be viewed as a release of their inner pressure of self-hatred rather than a real recognition with the western ideological beliefs. According to some scholars, native men's "self-hatred is an effect of his own sense of being both a victim and perpetrator of colonial violence" [12] (p. 9). Take LaRue as an example, his nickname, "Done Time" [10] (p. 49), truly implies the long history of criminalizing Native men during the colonization. LaRue's self-hatred stems from his experience partaking in Vietnam War that has had pitted him against Vietnamese who are struggling to fight against the colonial invasion from American imperialism. On one hand, as a victim, LaRue together with his Indian ancestors, has been undergoing centuries' colonial violence from Euro-Americans since their initial settlement on the continent, and on the other, as a perpetrator, LaRue himself joins the American colonizers in exerting colonial violence on Vietnamese people who shares the same misfortune as that of his Indian people. When he calls himself "a warrior and a soldier" [10] (p. 317) in an aggressive way, LaRue conjoins a Euro-American version of Indian identity, "a warrior", with a colonial military role, "a soldier". As opposed to tribal men safe in their native identities, he and other young men of uncertain identity desperately make their contradictory identity as a whole by reconnecting representations of themselves in the name of distorted versions of western masculinity. The role of both victim and perpetrator stimulates his self-loathing, which keeps haunting him for years and aggravates a sense of guilt with the passage of time. LaRue's aggression toward native women and animals is therefore a release of his own self-loathing and a projection of his internalization of the colonist's patriarchal ideologies.

To sum up, successive displacement of Indian people from their land base and home is believed to deprive them of their economic source of livelihood and cast them into the mental crisis. Exposed to poverty, joblessness and disillusionment, most indigenous people tend to be caught in "induced social despair"—an adaptive coping mechanism responding to the social disorganization in the colonial era. To release this kind of induced social despair, some native men are prone to alcoholism, drinking away their sense of displacement, their

sense of dispossession and their sense of failure while others are apt to resemble the colonizers by conceding to the western masculine ideology and adopting the concept of objectifying native women and animals.

### 3.2. Women's Suffering from Intergenerational Trauma

Systematic displacement and continued colonial violence conducted by colonizers against the indigenous people will result in the production of induced social despair across the Indian community. As demonstrated above, some native men usually turn to alcoholism for escape and others prefer conceding to western masculinity by exerting violence on women to release their inner pressure. While for native women, confronting the dual suppression from both white colonizers and native men, they are prone to child abuse and even self-destructing for they are usually the victims of intergenerational trauma. To represent the terror of child abuse and victimization of native women, *Solar Storms* brings violence among the native people to the forefront, underscoring the distorted impact of the white colonization on psychological status of women and children. It is reported that the rate of violent victimization for native women is over two times the rate of all females and rates of mistreatment among children are the second highest across the country because of "an erosion of traditional parenting norms and practices" among native families [13] (p. 7). To trace back, some scholar unfolds that the native women suffering from the intergenerational trauma are about to lose their parenting capacity [14] (p. 187).

Hogan emotively reproduces the issue of child abuse in the native community, Adam's Rib, by recounting the story of three generations of Native women, Wing Family—Lorretta Wing, Hannah Wing and Angela Jensen. Generally speaking, infants and children in the novel have always been maltreated by their mothers through lack of love, abandonment, even suffocating and killing. First and foremost, the novel unfolds the shocking experience of the protagonist, Angela Jensen through recalling her history of physical abuse and abandonment by her mother Hannah Wing in her infancy. At the outset of the novel, Angela, a seventeen-year-old native girl returns to her community from a foster care, yearning for the secret behind her scarred face. Living in foster homes as an orphan for over a decade, Angela has always been haunted by a sense of loss, fear and rage because of her scar on the face. Taking this return to Adam's Rib as a new beginning, she remarks while approaching to it:

All I carried with me into this beginning was the tough look I'd cultivated over the years ... the makeup I used, along with my hair, to hide my (scarred) face, and a picture of an unknown baby, a picture I'd found in a one-dollar photo machine at Woolworth's. I used the picture to show other people how lovely I have been as a

child, how happy. I used it to feel less lost, because there were no snapshots of me, nothing to say I'd been, had kin, been loved. All I had was a life on paper stored in file cabinets, a series of foster homes. [10] (p. 26)

As an orphan growing up in foster homes, Angela takes her life as "a life on paper stored in file cabinets" [10] (p. 26) and has always been tortured by the sense of loss and abandonment from her mother that she has never met so far. To make up for this sense of loss, she has to create the fascinating story of her birth and happy childhood by "borrowing" a picture of an unknown baby. As for the scar on her face, Angela is obsessed with a strong sense of shame so she uses makeup and her long hair to hide it. The mysterious history of being abandoned and scarred face infuses her life with anger and fear for years, and thus motivates her to return for an answer.

While reuniting with her great-grandmother Agnes and her grandmother Bush, Angela gradually learns that her mother Hannah Wing is such a dangerous woman that she is prone to hurting her own children. Based on Bush's account, Hannah even attempts to kill the baby Angela the moment she gives birth to it though Bush tries her utmost to protect the baby from violence. Here the novel employs the italicized words to depict how Bush flashes back to that snowy day when she rushes to save the baby Angela from being murdered by her mother Hannah:

You (infant Angela) were nowhere to find.... An empty black kettle sat on the stove smoking over a dwindling flame. I (Bush) took it off the fire and looked inside. I was afraid that I would find you there. But you were not in the kettle. You weren't in the oven, either. And you weren't smothered beneath a pillow. I went outside ... I found you tucked into the branches of a birch tree. You were still and blue and a thin layer of snow had fallen over your head and naked stomach, the kind Indians call pollen snow because it meant more was coming, that wither wound continue. You were alert, alive, but silent and cold as ice. [10] (p. 112-13)

The italicized words employed here faithfully reproduce the original site of rescuing and imply the horrifying nature of the killing story concerning Angela's birth. Bush's rescue helps Angela survive from her mother's violence. Though scarred on the face, Angela is whole in her soul, while her younger sister Henriette is not as fortunate as her. When she finds her sister in South Dakota, Angela thinks Henriette's existence both terrifies her and fills her with great despair for she realizes that Henriette "was lovely and quiet, but she was a girl who cut herself, cut her own skin, every chance she had ... She cut herself with scissors and blades as if she could not feel pain" [10] (p. 118). In effect, both Angela's scar on the face and Henriette's scars on the skin are not only just wounds but a language spoken through blazes and translated through knives in the aim of uttering the intergenerational trauma developed in the course of colonization. The mother Hannah tortures and abuses her baby girls as savage

as beasts only because she has been deserted by her own mother Loretta Wing. The grandmother Loretta and her people of Elk who smell of almond odor as they have to eat "the poisoned carcasses of deer that the settlers left out for the wolves" [10] (p. 38) and even other villagers' poisoned corpses owing to the extreme starvation in the fur-trading era. Therefore, it can be argued that the mother Hannah and the grandmother Loretta function as both victim and victimizer who speak to a long brutal history of colonial conquest enormously embedded in the native people, then carry and pass down such colonial trauma from generation to generation within the native clan.

As the father of psychoanalysis Sigmund Freud explains, trauma is "a wound inflicted not upon the body but upon the mind... and the response to an unexpected or overwhelming violent event or events that are not fully grasped as they occur, but return later in repeated flashbacks, nightmares, and other repetitive phenomena" [15] (p. 35). Considering the colonization experience of the native people, the scholars posit that the events of land conquest and environmental devastation, violence and various forms of oppression combined, create a trauma "so deep that it reaches the vital core of their being" [16] (p. 64), bringing forth serious mental health problems of succeeding generations as well as fracturing the native communities into pieces [17] (p. 36). In *Solar Storms*, through the horrible experience of the protagonist, Hogan reveals layers of trauma emanating from European fur traders, experienced and witnessed by the native peoples in Adam's Rib, Elk Island, and then passed down within the Wing family, from the grandmother, Loretta to the mother, Hannah and finally to the daughters Angela and Henriette. According to Eduardo Duran, this type of trauma is called intergenerational trauma that is supposed to continue into the next generation and even turn more severe with each passing if it is not addressed wholly in the first generation [16] (p. 16).

How does this intergenerational trauma emanate from the early colonizers? As the native philosopher proposes, laws of "interconnectedness, obligations, and responsibilities between people, animals, land, water, and air" are always strictly observed in the native community so that "an individual suffering will have far-reaching consequences" [17] (p. 36). As the setting of the novel, Adam's Rib is the place that contains scars of devastation and mistreatment. Many European trappers and traders—French, British, Norwegians, Swedes—have passed here, each participating in the destruction of the land and appropriation of its resources. To slaughter beavers to provide raw material for their European fur trading, these colonizers have brutally killed and poisoned its natural predators, wolves and foxes in an unimaginable scale. As the game have been trapped, poisoned, and even slaughtered over decades, the native Indians are totally deprived of their food supply and become so hungry that they have to eat the poisoned carcasses of deer left as baits for wolves by colonizers [10] (p. 38). Angela's blood grand-

mother Loretta and her people of Elk Island are such group of starving native Indians who always smell of sweet almonds, an odor of cyanide for fur trappers keep taking deer poisoned with cyanide. On the other hand, Adam's Rib still displays scars of sexual exploitation for it is the French trappers that bring the first group of native women here as their helpers in the fur trade. Although they are hard-working, these women still cannot escape the fate of being abandoned by their French husbands who resolutely move on to the next virgin place once the beavers and wolves have been killed out, leaving their children and women behind just like used-up animals. The removal from their homelands and abandonment from their white husbands often leave these women in the loneliness and hopelessness for they have to make a living to feed their mixblood children on their own. Therefore, it can be concluded that the environmental, sexual and mental abuse conducted by the European colonizers and suffered by Loretta would be passed on to her daughter, Hannah Wing whose body is marked significantly by "signatures of torturers" [10] (p. 99).

Then how is the intergenerational trauma passed on within Wing family in the form of child abuse? As a powerless young girl, Loretta, although coming out of starvation as one of few survivors of the community, "is taken and used by men who fed her, beat her and forced her" [10] (p. 39) and finally sold into prostitution by the men "speaking English" [10] (p. 39). The experience of being a witness to her land and her people and a sufferer of sexual exploitation contributes to her inability to love and feel loved, to observe any belief and conscience, which turns her into a Windigo<sup>5</sup>, a mythic Algonquian ice cannibal who is cold-hearted, greedy and tricky, and feeds on human flesh even that of its own children. Without healing and recovering from her trauma, Loretta is apt to pass on this illness of Windigo to her daughter Hannah who will go on carrying her mother and other ancestors' pain and grief by means of mistreating her children in a more severe sense.

Maybe Hannah's existence lies in her transmission of trauma from her mother to her children, the intergenerational passing of the illness of Windigo. Similar to her mother Loretta, Hannah, "with a heart of ice" [10] (p. 98), has no love, no conscience, no belief and smells of the same bitter almonds and apple seeds [10] (p. 97). As the receiver of the intergenerational trauma, Hannah is marked with colonial maltreatment on her skin, "a garment of scars. There were burns and incisions. Like someone had written on her" [10] (p. 99). While touching the scars on her back, the surrogate grandmother Bush even could feel the hands of the white abuser with the ice-cold fingers and hearts [10] (p. 100). These layers of trauma have infused her with the morbid mentality, thus in Bush's eyes, Hannah looks like a person of soul loss:

I watched her walking about in all that clothing, looking

larger than she was, looking like a rag picker and an old, broken woman instead of the girl she was. Her eyes had no trust, not in anything or anyone. They were dark and flat. No light. It was the expression the tortured wear. [10] (p. 98)

Carried with the sickness of soul loss, Hannah always looks like an old and broken woman though in her young age. What's more, Hannah behaves like a Windigo for she lies, steals, abuses others, especially her infant girls, Angela and Henriette who have to go Windigo as well. Tortured by the intergenerational trauma, Hannah has already lost her parenting capacity in a physical level for her breast becomes dry and her body has nothing to offer to her infant baby. Besides, in a mental level, her inability to love her baby and her attempt to murder her newborn infant prove that the intergenerational trauma caused by colonization has given rise to the victimization of native women and children and the damage of family bond attaching people together within the native clan, thereby dismantling the basic tissues of social organization and impairing the native sense of community.

## 4. Conclusion

In conclusion, the ongoing practice of removing the native people from their homelands and economic source is destined to initiate a split from their spiritual foundation, triggering the spiritual disorientation which mainly manifests itself on one hand in native men's conceding to western masculinity and on the other, in women's child abuse and their undergoing of intergenerational trauma. Confronting the geographical displacement during the colonization, native men are likely to internalize the patriarchal concept of objectifying women and animals to get rid of their sense of loss and dispossession, while native women are trapped in morbid mentality of going Windigo by means of conducting child abuse and thus passing on intergenerational trauma. Under the stress of colonialism, both men and women are forced to take the dual roles of a victim and victimizer, which suggests that the destruction of the land inevitably brings forth the damage of people's mental health as well as the annihilation of life ways that make families and communities connected.

Reviewing the history of colonial processes and its impact of people's spiritual disorientation owing to land loss means inevitably facing historic trauma as well as all the implications. However, one effective way of sustaining a sense of community for the natives in the modern time is through creating certain quite specific representations of the past, particularly referring to the radical evil events of holocaust or genocide. And such representations of these collective events usually acknowledge an ethical dimension to understand the meanings of sense of ethnicity. As is shown in this paper, the decolonizing process in Hogan's fiction initially necessitates reviewing the horrible outcome of the colonial land loss history so as to ultimately enhancing the native

5 See <https://development.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/windigo>

people's recognition of the communal place, stimulate their sense of community and develop new sites and strategies of resistance. Hence, mapping the expanding web of imperial capital across time, illustrating its roots in colonial process, and increasing people's awareness related to native places is the integral parts of her work in creating *Solar Storms*.

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## Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest.

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