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## THE CATASTROPHIC OPEN WOUND: THE APPLICATION OF COMPLEX POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER IN LINDA HOGAN'S SOLAR STORMS AND EDEN ROBINSON'S MONKEY BEACH

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THE CATASTROPHIC OPEN WOUND: THE APPLICATION OF COMPLEX POST-  
TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER IN LINDA HOGAN'S *SOLAR STORMS* AND EDEN  
ROBINSON'S *MONKEY BEACH*

By

Kawther I. Abbas

THESIS

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THE CATASTROPHIC OPEN WOUND: THE APPLICATION OF COMPLEX POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER IN LINDA HOGAN'S *SOLAR STORMS* AND EDEN ROBINSON'S *MONKEY BEACH*

This thesis by Kawther I. Abbas is recommended for approval by the student's Thesis Committee and Department Head in the Department of English and by the Dean of Graduate Education and Research.

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## ABSTRACT

### THE CATASTROPHIC OPEN WOUND: THE APPLICATION OF COMPLEX POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER IN LINDA HOGAN'S *SOLAR STORMS* AND EDEN ROBINSON'S *MONKEY BEACH*

By

Kawther I. Abbas

This thesis argues that Judith Herman's theory of Complex Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder can provide a lot of insight in analyzing the trauma of several characters in Linda Hogan's *Solar Storms* and Eden Robinson's *Monkey Beach*. The analysis first employs the two authors' Native American ideas of trauma and then adds Herman's theory of CPTSD to help bridge the gap between the Native American and Western cultures and to create more understanding without undermining cultural differences.

I chose Herman's theory for my analysis because it has many commonalities with the Native American trauma theories such as belief in the fact that trauma can be ongoing and chronic and that it can have catastrophic consequences extending to multiple families, communities, and generations. The other reason that I believe Herman's theory is a good fit for my exploration of the Native American characters in these two novels is because her ideas regarding healing and recovery come very close to Hogan and Robinson's with these two authors' emphasis on the importance of re-establishing lost familial and communal ties, resisting all forms of oppression, be it private or public, civil or political, and narrating one's story of trauma and survival in order to situate it in the larger frame of the Native American peoples' fight for justice and recognition.

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Kawther I. Abbas

April 2020

## DEDICATION

To all ‘‘Angelas’’ and ‘‘Lisas’’ who are searching for a way back Home.

To Kurds and all the other Indigenous peoples worldwide whose beautiful culture and heritage  
live on.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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This thesis follows the format prescribed by *the MLA Style Manual* and the English Department.

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## Introduction

In this thesis, I read Chickasaw poet and author, Linda Hogan's *Solar Storms* (1995) and Haisla author, Eden Robinson's *Monkey Beach* (2000) from a psychological perspective that uses a combination of the two authors' Native American views and theories regarding trauma and Judith Herman's theory of Complex Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder demonstrated in her book, *Trauma and Recovery: The Aftermath of Violence--from Domestic Abuse to Political Terror* (1992/2015). I will also shed light on Hogan and Robinson's views concerning healing and recovery from trauma followed by Herman's theories and ideas concerning the traumatized individuals and communities' healing process. While CPTSD is developed by a Euro-American person working within the framework of western medicine, it still takes into consideration ideas about trauma and healing that are similar to what Robinson and Hogan relay in their novels. For this reason, this theory is a good fit for analyzing these two novels after applying the authors' own Native American views and ideas. Herman's trauma theory which acknowledges the fact that sometimes trauma can extend over a long period of time with consequences that are far more serious than a single or limited exposure to trauma comes very close in resonating Hogan and Robinson's ideas concerning trauma. I believe this theory is very useful in analyzing the characters of these two novels because alongside acknowledging the catastrophic nature of the trauma suffered by oppressed people worldwide, it is very inclusive and open to embracing

cultural differences. It also acknowledges that trauma does not affect individuals only but also communities on cultural, social, and political levels.

In addition, Herman acknowledges that trauma is transmittable. Despite the fact that she refers to it in the context of a therapist and patient, her acknowledgment still shows how being in contact with traumatized people can affect a person's well-being: "trauma is contagious. In the role of witness to disaster or atrocity, the therapist at times is emotionally overwhelmed. She experiences, to a lesser degree, the same terror, rage, and despair as the patient. This phenomena is known as traumatic countertransference or vicarious traumatization" (153). This statement implies that Herman believes being in close contact with a traumatized person makes one liable to be "infected" with that trauma. In different parts of *Trauma and Recovery*, she also acknowledges that trauma does not only affect one person, but it can also affect all of the traumatized person's family and community where a more intense level of "transmission" happens. Moreover, even though not demonstrated by Herman herself, CPTSD symptoms are proven to be transmitted to the traumatized people's children as well. This finding comes from a study published in the journal *Psychiatry Research* in the context of Tutsi genocide survivors which demonstrates that CPTSD has devastating consequences not only for survivors themselves but also for their children who were born after the genocide and other highly traumatic events (Shriraa et al 121-123). Hence, this finding confirms another connection and common ground between CPTSD and the Native American theory of intergenerational trauma.

CPTSD's ideas for healing and recovery are also in a way similar to the Native American ideas of healing expressed in *Solar Storms* and *Monkey Beach*. Herman suggests seeking help from the community and re-establishing the lost bonds with one another and consequently with whatever the traumatized person holds valuable are powerful healing methods. She also believes

that recovery cannot take place without a public recognition of the wrongs that have been committed. In *Trauma and Recovery*, Herman discusses the history of trauma and how trauma relates to many other concepts such as politics and warfare (35). She believes that mental health and politics remain connected because mental health intrinsically relates to oppressed people and the blows they suffer (250). She also emphasizes the role of political truth-telling and testimony in recovery and healing: “When the truth is finally recognized, survivors can begin their recovery” (1). Herman believes that even without being in an official court, the very act of narrating the trauma turns it into a form of testimony. She concurs with Inger Agger and Soren Jensen who have worked with refugee survivors of political persecution and who believe in the “the universality of testimony as a ritual of healing” (194). She goes on to say that: “Testimony has both a private dimension, which is confessional and spiritual, and a public aspect, which is political and judicial. The use of the word testimony links both meanings, giving a new and larger dimension to the patient’s individual experience” (194). Thus, Herman, like Hogan and Robinson, acknowledges the interconnectedness of the private and public, civil and political, and the fact that trauma, far from being an individual occurrence is connected to a larger context; therefore in order for recovery to take place, justice and public recognition should occur first.

Applying Herman’s theory, which shares a lot of commonalities with the Native American worldviews regarding trauma and healing, to analyze these two novels by Native American authors can be an attempt in bridging the gap between the Western and Native American cultures; an act of mediation that according to James Ruppert in his *Mediation in Contemporary Native American Fiction*, many Native American authors pursue in their literature (10). While Hogan consistently writes about the dangers of adopting purely Western ideologies, she still acknowledges the importance of having a global perspective. In an interview, she notes:

I ask myself how best to let my words serve. I know that part of that is to take a global perspective, because I see what's happening in the world, and others see, and our combined voices are a chorus, a movement toward life. They are a protest against human-imposed suffering. They are a vital energy going out into the world. We feed each other with that energy when we read each other's work.

(Patricia Clark Smith 154)

Native American writers like Hogan and Robinson do criticize the Western society and reveal its past and present injustices; however, at the same time, their emphasis is on healing, survival, and continuance of their culture. Their fiction aims to produce cross-cultural understanding rather than divisiveness. Therefore, after investigating the authors' cultural views concerning trauma, it is important to include cross-cultural interpretations of trauma as well. Trauma is a universal concept and happens in more than one place and geographical location; this mediated structure allows us to understand the Native American peoples' trauma better, and at the same time, to be able to make connections across different cultures, times, and geographical locations without flattening cultural differences.

I believe CPTSD theory can work as a cultural bridge especially because it resembles, to some degree, Hogan's Native American ideas of trauma even though it uses culturally different terms. For example, Hogan's idea of "soul loss" is somehow similar to CPTSD's concepts of "dissociation" or "constriction", and "doublethink" where the traumatized person not only loses touch with a part of themselves but also go through a complete loss of the core of their identities. In this way, complex trauma has the power to completely change the personality of the person, and in some cases, even their entire belief system (Herman 63). In some cases, the traumatized individual also struggles with two very polarized aspects of their personality

resulting in an acute mental turmoil which can be seen in some of the characters of *Solar Storms* and *Monkey Beach*. While this theory does not completely explain all the “symptoms” the characters experience as a result of trauma, it can work as a foothold into understanding conditions like the Cree conception of Windigo. After examining Hogan and Robinson’s cultural views on trauma, I use CPTSD to analyze the trauma of the characters who suffer from intergenerational trauma as a result of being sent to residential schools, or being forcibly removed from their parents for various reasons. Moreover, the focus of this thesis is not only on trauma but also on recovery and healing; the thesis also attempts to answer the question posed by one of the characters in *Solar Storms*, “How do conquered people get back their lives?” (195) Hogan and Robinson do adequately answer this question, and Herman’s theory, due to sharing many commonalities with the two Native American authors’ views comes very close to answering the question, too.

The two novels, *Solar Storms* and *Monkey Beach*, are discussed in two different chapters of this thesis. Chapter One explores concepts such as trauma and healing in *Solar Storms*, and chapter Two discusses the same concepts in *Monkey Beach*. In their novels, Hogan and Robinson not only shed light on the nature of trauma but also on its being chronic, far-reaching, and ongoing. They emphasize the idea that the past trauma of their Native tribes has morphed into new problems that still threaten their characters’ lives and values because the source of trauma, colonialism, is still there and affects the characters every day. Hence, they acknowledge that trauma, far from being merely an isolated occurrence, has grounds in a larger political and social landscape. The novels show that since systematic oppression has a role in causing trauma, healing can become possible through resisting this oppression and through social and political activism.

Both novels demonstrate examples of political activism in its different forms. The acts of telling the truth about all the hardships Native American peoples have had to deal with and fighting misrepresentation of Native Americans' stories become resistance by themselves. For this reason, the authors are very adamant in showing their Indigenous ways of seeing in opposition to the dominant Western cultures' views and values alongside creating representations of Native American characters whose lives, cultures, land, and identities are threatened by colonialism. The novels consider finding one's cultural identity and establishing connections with one's community as well as getting involved in political and social activism crucial to the characters' physical, psychological, and spiritual well-being. They also show how the identities of the characters have been shaped not only by their Native American cultural backgrounds but also by their interactions with colonial forces such as residential schools, forced removal of native families from their lands, and their separation from their children.

Through their depiction of the larger social contexts of trauma, Hogan and Robinson use the novels to testify against the wrongs of the past and present. They recognize what Shoshana Felman calls the importance of testifying about what has been forgotten or repressed: "To testify is thus not merely to narrate but to commit oneself, and to commit the narrative, to others: to take responsibility - in speech - for history or for the truth of an occurrence, for something which, by definition, goes beyond the personal, in having general (nonpersonal) validity and consequences" (204). Thus, both authors acknowledge that the silenced victims of trauma need to be heard and understood by others, and they cannot heal on their own without the help of their community. In giving each of their characters the opportunity to speak and voice their suffering, Hogan and Robinson show us how traumatized people can be freed from their victim status and surpass their grief and suffering. Herman, too, comes close to this realization through her

alignment of trauma with righteous political struggle. When voicing their trauma story, the traumatized person can become part of a larger battle with violence and oppression that extends through time and space (83). According to Herman, even pursuing one's own case and seeking justice is a social and political act of resistance that means more than its immediate outcome. She recognizes that holding the perpetrator accountable for his crimes is important not only for personal well-being but also for the health of the society (224).

### **Intergenerational Trauma**

For Indigenous peoples in Canada, one of the factors causing intergenerational trauma is embodied in imposed social and legal injustices in the form of colonial practices and policies such as the Residential School System. The residential schools attempted to eliminate Native Americans' world views and value systems that have existed for thousands of years and replace them with Western ideologies that continue to have destructive effects for Aboriginal peoples. The Indian Act of 1876 established the federal government in Ottawa as the "guardian" of Aboriginal peoples. This guardianship was based on hierarchical decision-making processes that did not reflect traditional Aboriginal values and practices. The real purpose of the Act was to enable the Canadian government to control the everyday life and decisions of Aboriginal peoples across Canada (Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples).

Over the course of the system's more than hundred-year existence, about 150,000 Indigenous children were sent to residential schools for the purpose of assimilation and integration into mainstream Canadian society (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada 2). The schools' policies included the banning of traditional religious ceremonies, forced cutting of Native American boys' hair, and forced conversion to Christianity. The motto of this policy was expressed by "the Father of the US Boarding School Movement," Richard Henry Pratt, in

1980 as thus: ‘‘Kill the Indian and save the man’’ (Hirschfelder 129). That is, destroy the identity of the Native Americans and then assimilate them into the dominant white society. In the schools, the children were deprived of any identification with tribal life including speaking their Native language or performing religious rituals. Consequently, the Native American children could not develop a strong sense of identity as a result of not using their own mother tongue and their cultural and spiritual traditions. Children attending these schools also experienced physical, sexual, emotional, spiritual, and psychological abuse (Ottawa’s Assembly of First Nations).

When the residential schools started to close, child welfare became the new tool for colonialists’ assimilation policies. Child-welfare authorities removed thousands of Native American children from their families and placed them in non-Aboriginal homes without thinking about preserving their cultural identity. Children were sent to foster homes across Canada, in the United States, and even overseas. This practice continued beyond the 1960s, until the late 1980s (Honoring the Truth 186). Because of these governmental policies, a lot of residential schools and child welfare survivors cannot blend in society and achieve balance and spiritual well-being even as adults. These factors alongside their unresolved grief have contributed to the high rates of suicide, violence, excessive drinking, and other communal problems among Native Americans (Brave Heart and DeBruyn). Marie-Anik Gagne, senior manager at Health Canada, identifies the residential school experience as a key factor causing the cycle of trauma experienced by Aboriginal peoples. She emphasizes the fact that the effect of the residential schools was also felt by the offspring of the residential school students: ‘‘at least two subsequent generations were also ‘lost.’ The children of these students became victims of abuse just as their parents became abusers because of the residential school experience’’ (363). Gagne’s statement shows how the traumatized individuals transmit their trauma intergenerationally to

their children and other close family members creating a cycle of trauma that is very difficult to break free from.

In *Solar Storms* and *Monkey Beach*, one of the sources of the trauma of characters is being sent to residential schools or being forced to live with white foster families. In *Solar Storms*, the author explores this trauma mostly through the characters of Angel and her mother, Hannah. There is also another kind of traumatic separation which is the spiritual separation of the characters from their own cultural heritage even when they are physically living with their own families and communities. Besides shedding light on the horrors of residential schools in *Monkey Beach*, Robinson first discusses this spiritual separation by showing the alienation of some the characters as a result of embracing the Western values, and, then, toward the end of the novel, she demonstrates this separation through the self-alienation and self-exile of her main character, Lisa, whose sense of identity and selfhood are highly damaged in the process.

### **Complex PTSD**

Many previous researchers aiming to use a Western trauma theory to analyze Native American fiction have mostly relied on Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder theory. While PTSD focuses on the individual's response to trauma, it does not acknowledge the systemic conditions that cause trauma to persist within families and across generations (Brave Heart and Yellow Horse). Furthermore, research on PTSD does not connect the traumatized individual's experience to a broader societal level of trauma. Kirmayer, Brass, and Tait in their journal article, "The Mental Health of Aboriginal Peoples: Transformations of Identity and Community," agree that the focus on individual trauma does not adequately reflect the collective Aboriginal reality as it is experienced by the individual (613). Furthermore, it does not account for culturally specific trauma triggers such as the residential school system which is one of the main factors behind

Native Americans' intergenerational trauma. For these reasons, PTSD is not adequate in fully addressing the Native Americans' trauma. In addition to incorporating Native American concepts such as intergenerational trauma, I believe it is useful to apply CPTSD to the analysis of trauma in Native American literature because unlike PTSD, CPTSD addresses severe traumas that are ongoing and connected to a broader social and political landscape. In addition, the fact that CPTSD is not included in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) makes this category even more suitable for analyzing the characters of the novels because it shows that it does not fully fit the Western category of trauma that fails to acknowledge chronic and severe trauma on a large scale.

Judith Herman, a clinical professor of psychiatry at Harvard Medical School and director of training in the Victims of Violence Program at the Cambridge Hospital, first coined CPTSD in *Trauma and Recovery* (1992). The book was written as a result of extensive research and studies on the effect of trauma on women, children, and Holocaust victims' conditions. Ever since, it has also been proposed by other clinicians and researchers such as Marylene Cloitre, Bradley C. Stolbach, Bessel van der Kolk, and Robert Pynoos as a diagnostic category. Although CPTSD stems from classical PTSD, the syndrome varies from classical PTSD in many aspects. While originally conceived to address the effects of extended child abuse, CPTSD has also been used for understanding the aftereffects of traumatic events consisting of prolonged domination by any malevolent abuser over another person.

The trauma symptoms of CPTSD are divided into three parts; hyperarousal, intrusion, and constriction (or dissociation). Herman describes the symptom of hyperarousal in survivors of trauma as "the human system of self-preservation going into permanent alert, as if danger might return at any moment" (46). She explains that in this state of hyperarousal, "the traumatized

person startles easily, reacts irritably to small provocations, and sleeps poorly” (46). Concerning intrusion, Herman explains that trauma can be experienced long after the actual and initial danger has passed; in other words, trauma survivors relive the trauma as if it was repeatedly happening in the present which prevents them from being able to resume the “normal course of their lives” (48).

Herman believes the constriction symptom involves a person becoming completely powerless and going into a “state of surrender” (54) and explains that the individual’s self-defense system shuts down. At times, a person who cannot remove themselves from the danger physically relies, instead, on escaping by shifting their state of consciousness. She adds that this change in consciousness is at the core of constriction. The traumatized person still remembers the dangerous event but elements are detached from their usual meaning-making, and the perceptions of the event are numbed or distorted. She also explains that with regards to constriction, a person can very realistically imagine that they are outside that traumatic event and that it is not happening to them – very much like an observer looking at things from outside their body (54). In extreme cases, this dissociation can lead to what Herman calls “doublethink” in which a person can hold two contrary beliefs or even identities at the same time. They can also suppress their thoughts voluntarily and sometimes deny certain thoughts altogether (101).

In both *Solar Storms* and *Monkey Beach*, several characters experience some, if not all, of these symptoms, and the intensity of the symptoms depends on the severity of the trauma they have experienced. For example, because of her traumatic abuse as a child and her separation from her family, Angel in *Solar Storms* exhibits some of the CPTSD symptoms. However, her mother, Hannah’s symptoms are worse as she has experienced a greater degree of trauma. In *Monkey Beach*, both Lisa and her mother suffer from a form of “doublethink,” but in the case of

Josh, one of the characters who has been sent to the residential schools as a child, the duality of his character is more severe and disturbing. Looking at the characters from the lenses of these symptoms can help shed light on the severity of the characters' trauma as a result of the ongoing and catastrophic nature of their horrid experiences.

The words "catastrophic" and "ongoing" are very important when looking at Native Americans' trauma which is the reason for their inclusion in the title of this thesis. Vikki Visvis in her article "Culturally Conceptualizing Trauma: The Windigo in Joseph Boyden's *Three Day Road*" mentions that the Native American understanding of trauma is generally based on two terms: *catastrophe* and *wound*. The first, *catastrophe*, refers to the site of trauma; something that is beyond the range of everyday experiences (228). In this context, trauma is not simply another word for disaster, it is a reaction to events of catastrophic proportions which in Native Americans' case is the destruction and damage brought about by colonialism. Visvis goes on to say that trauma is derived from the Greek word for "wound" which can be a suitable term to use for Native American trauma (228). I believe a better expression for this trauma is "catastrophic open wound". The word open suggests "ongoingness" and the fact that Native peoples' trauma has never had the time to heal. This is because Native Americans remain living in places where historically traumatic events occurred and, therefore, experience constant reminders of these events. The other issue is that colonial abuse still goes on in one way or another with catastrophic consequences. Hence, it is important to focus not only on gaining recovery but also on maintaining health in the face of the historical and current trauma. Hogan, Robinson, and Herman regard social and political activism as necessary in ensuring that the trauma cycle is broken and that full and lasting recovery can take place. Both heroines in the novels have role models that inspire them to pursue activism and involvement in getting the voices of their people

heard. In this way, Angel and Lisa function as case studies who represent the necessary practices for not only survival but also thriving through regaining their cultural identity and resisting colonialism in different ways.

## **Chapter One: Catastrophic Scars and Possibility of Healing in *Solar Storms***

In her novel, *Solar Storms*, the Chickasaw writer, Linda Hogan explores both the contemporary and historical problems of Canada's aboriginal peoples as her main themes. The characters of the novel deal with not only traumatic personal pasts but also collective and historical traumas of their tribes. Hence, she places contemporary and urgent cultural, historical, and social problems within the larger context of history. She is very adamant in tracing the root of Native American peoples' traumas- personal and collective- which she identifies as colonialism. To her, it is the catalyst for a lot of her Native American characters' problems including damage to land, culture, system of meanings, and familial and tribal values and connections. She shows how the traumas of Native Americans have been parallel to those traumas suffered by the land, water, and animals, and that the history of Native Americans is united with the history of the destruction of land, water, and their inhabitants. She sheds light on this aspect mainly by discussing the construction of dams at James Bay region that is on the borderlands of Canada and the United States as well as discussing colonialists' mistreatment of people, land, and animals in Adam's Rib and Elk Island.

Hogan also explores another important aspect and one of the means by which colonialists targeted and damaged the Native Americans which is forcibly removing indigenous children from their families and sending them away to live in white foster homes. By discussing this tragic practice through her protagonist, Angela Wing, Hogan shows the tremendous effect this

removal has on the Native American child's sense of culture, well-being, and identity. The Association on Indian Affairs conducted a study in the 1970's that found between 25 percent and 35 percent of all Native American children had been forcibly removed from their families and placed mostly with non-Native families (George 3). These governmental forced separations show lack of appreciation and understanding of the Indigenous ways of living which cherishes extended families who keep the child's cultural identity alive. Thus, the removals resulted in a lot of these children being traumatized as a result of losing touch with their culture and communities (Josephy 124).

Hogan operates as a detective who is eager in tracing the source of trauma and regard this process as important in getting back in touch with one's identity and culture. In the novel, it is through going back in time and memories in order to know the source of the damage that the characters also discover their lost "beginning". This going back in time is done mainly through some of the characters' storytelling who share one piece of story at a time till all the information is put back together. Another objective of tracing the source of trauma is to assign blame to the real culprits behind the suffering of the Canadian aboriginal peoples. One of the ways Hogan traces this culprit is by exploring a concept named "soul loss" which is connected to the Windigo myth. This myth is a Cree story of humans losing their soul and heart to winter, and consequently, developing an overwhelming hunger and lust for human flesh among other things (Hogan 6). "Soul loss" here in the novel refers to being processed by the evil spirit of colonialists which can turn victims into victimizers and abusers, in the manner of Windigo. Moreover, it is a result of an "open wound" in the traumatized individuals that has not been tended to leading to catastrophic results.

Hogan not only sheds light on the nature of trauma but also on its being chronic, far-reaching, and ongoing. She emphasizes the idea that the past trauma of the Canadian aboriginal tribes in the novel has morphed into new problems that still threaten the characters' lives and values because the source of trauma, colonialism, is still there and affects the characters every day. The novel shows that systematic oppression has a role in causing trauma, and by doing so, it turns trauma from an isolated occurrence to a larger political and social issue. Besides using Hogan's cultural ideas about trauma, I believe it is also helpful to use the category named Complex PTSD which is coined by Judith Herman, professor of psychiatry at Harvard and director of the Victims of Violence Program at the Cambridge Hospital. Herman's theory is useful for this analysis especially because it states that trauma can be chronic and complex extending beyond individuals to families and communities. I also believe this theory is, to some degree, similar to Hogan's idea of trauma even though it uses different terms. For example, Hogan's idea of "soul loss" is similar to this theory's "dissociation" where the person not only loses touch with a part of themselves but also goes through a complete change and even loss of their identity.

It is true that Hogan dedicates a large portion of her novel to discussing trauma and its effect on some of the Canadian First Nation families, but she also focuses on healing and recovery from trauma. She emphasizes the fact that since this trauma has been a result of many years of colonial abuse, healing takes a lot of time and involves many steps too. She acknowledges the importance of establishing an uninterrupted connection between a person's present and the past and identifies the first step of healing as locating the source of pain and trauma by looking closely at both the past and present. In this sense, healing comes from getting in touch with one's heritage and history and placing personal trauma in the context of an ongoing

collective suffering of Native Americans. In *Solar Storms*, the characters realize it is Colonialism that has caused an abruption in all aspects of their existence and has endangered not only their lives but also their culture and way of life. By locating the source of trauma and re-establishing their connection to their heritage, the characters are able to turn the story of trauma and suffering into a narrative of not merely survival but thriving and resilience. The characters are able to achieve this thriving toward the end of the novel and what seems to be the second and final stage of healing which is establishing justice through social and political activism. Moreover, *Solar Storms*, besides showing how to testify, does the testifying by itself too. In this way, the very act of narrating the trauma becomes political. Hogan turns the tables on the dominant Western history in order to expose the colonialists' wrongdoings and also to make sure that the Indigenous voices are heard. Herman's suggestions for recovery also come very close to Hogan's Native American ideas of healing which are seeking help from the community and re-establishing the lost bonds with one another and consequently with whatever the traumatized person hold valuable which in the Native Americans' case is the land, culture, and community. Herman also suggests that healing can have a political dimension, and testifying in court or achieving any kind of public recognition through getting one's story told is not only therapeutic for individuals but it's also necessary for the well-being of all the members of the community.

Thus, Herman's theory is useful in analyzing this novel as it, too, believes in the role of systematic oppression in generating trauma, and it showcases the interconnectedness of the public and the private realms. Belief in this interconnectedness can elevate the survivor's struggle and remove their sense of isolation and loneliness through making individual experiences part of important social causes. In the afterword to *Trauma and Recovery* written five years after the book's first publication, Herman summarizes her initial account and states

that, “The study of psychological trauma is an inherently political enterprise because it calls attention to the experience of oppressed people”(250). This comes close to Hogan’s statement that her writing is political: “the writing I do is politically centered because it is about a world view that can’t be separated from the political” (Hogan “Of Panthers and People”). This statement explains Hogan’s characters’ personal traumas being deeply grounded in history and politics and shared by their tribes. Both Hogan and Herman agree not only on the fact that trauma can be catastrophic and ongoing but also that recovery is not merely personal victory, it is, in fact, also a triumph over evil which leads to promoting both the individuals and communities’ social and political cause. I intend to place these two views side by side because of the commonalities between the two views which, I believe, can provide a good opportunity to bridge the Native American and Western ideas of trauma and healing.

*Solar Storms*, Hogan’s second novel which was published in 1994, uses two parallel narratives which become even more connected as the novel progresses. The first narrative is the story of Angela Wing, a seventeen-year-old girl who after being separated from her family by the Canadian government has decided to go back to her tribe and family in search of her past, identity, and mother who has abused her as a child. The second story is about the construction of dams at James Bay region on the borderlands of Canada and the United States which is causing numerous problems for the land and its Native American inhabitants. In the town of Adam’s Rib, Angel meets with her great grandmother, Agnes, her great-great grandmother, Dora-Rouge, and her step-grandmother, Bush; all these women have a tremendous effect on Angel’s healing journey and recovering her past and cultural identity. Inspired by Bush, Angel joins her great grandmothers in a journey to north, to the land of Fat-Eaters, in order to take action against the dam project and save both her people and the land. There, she is able to meet with her mother,

who is still being traumatized and damaged and dies shortly leaving Angel with a baby stepsister named Aurora. As the government's plans for building reservoirs and dams in the land of the Fat-Eaters is put into action, Angel meets one of her relatives named Tulik who inspires her sense of activism even more. She joins the activism which protests the redirecting of the river, the disturbance of animal life, and the government's arrogant demand that the Native American people change how they have been living for centuries so that the government can profit from the land. As a result of the government's policies, a lot of Native land is largely underwater. Although Angel is deeply hurt at the damage perpetrated on nature and the Native American way of life, she still has hope that because of resistance not all is lost, and that there is still a possibility that there will be more understanding and interconnectedness with nature in future.

Hogan places destruction of nature and land next to the trauma her characters suffer. When Angel first comes to Adam's Rib, Hogan describes the land as being emptied by the French hunters of its beaver and fox (22). Angel feels she is emptied of her culture and identity too as a result of being forced to live away from her family. The novel offers other examples for the atrocities committed against land. For example, the poison road has gotten its name because it was "one of the places where the remaining stray wolves and fox were poisoned to make more room for the European settlers and the pigs and cattle they'd brought with them, tragic animals that never had a chance of surviving the harsh winters of the north" (23). This passage is important in bringing to the front the history of the colonialist damage; it functions as a reminder that the colonialists have a long history of causing abuse to both Native American land and people. It also shows colonialists' lack of knowledge of the Native lands to the point of interacting with the ecosystem in destructive ways. Angel, too, can be seen as an abused and misunderstood "land" full of scars and signs of exploitation. Just like with their misunderstanding of the Native land, the white government could

not understand Angel's needs as a Native American child to be raised in her own family and within her community. Being misplaced, she starts to wither away as a flower cut off from its root. Because of her unhappy life after the forced removal from her family, she also relentlessly searches for love but is instead taken advantage of and used by men.

Hogan moves back and forth between Angel's story and the land's and uses the building of dams by the BEEVCO company at James Bay to place her novel into a larger context of politics and history. This governmental project is destructive to animals, land, and people. The effects are described very well in the words of two young men who bring the news of the construction to Adam's Rib:

In the first flooding ... they'd killed many thousands of caribou and flooded land the people lived on and revered. Agents of the government insisted the people had no legal right to the land. No agreement had ever been signed...no compensation offered. Even if it had been offered, the people would not have sold their lives. Not one of them. Overnight many of the old ones were forced to move. Dams were already going in. The caribou and geese were affected, as well as the healing plants the people needed (56-7).

This passage shows the conflict between the Aboriginal peoples and Western ideas very well. The Aboriginal peoples are concerned with the damage done to the land, animals, and people. For them, selling the land equates selling their lives, therefore it does not make sense to them that the lands are being destroyed for the excuse of advancement and profit. Even if they had been offered compensation for the stolen lands, they would not have accepted it as unlike the white government, they are not maddened by greed and can clearly see that the land is more important than economic gain. Later in the novel, it is mentioned that these changes are so traumatizing that there are no

longer happy young people in those affected areas and everyone feels so devastated they have to be ‘‘held back from killing themselves’’ (194). Any group of people losing their land can suffer tremendously, but this is even more traumatizing to many First Nations communities as their sense of health and well-being is directly connected to the land. Willmon-Haque (The University of Oklahoma American Indian Research and The Oklahoma City Indian Clinic) and Subia BigFoot (Northern Cheyenne Tribe) explain that for Native peoples to be healthy, they need ‘‘a strong sense of connection through harmony and balance of mind, body, and spirit with the natural environment’’ (53). This quote shows the effect of the well-being of the natural environment on mental, spiritual, and physical health of Indigenous peoples. Hence, the land’s trauma is also Native peoples’. Anything afflicting the land, afflicts the indigenous individuals and communities as land and humans are an interconnected and single entity.

The novel explores this land/human connection through sharing the stories of some of the characters such as Angel and Hannah. For example, Angel’s beginning of her story of trauma starts not in her birth and the abuse she suffers at her mother’s hand, but it goes back to ‘‘around the time of the killing of the wolves. When people were starving’’ (Hogan 35). Here, the wolves and humans are treated as equals and anything affecting wolves affects humans too. Coming to Adam’s Rib, Angel realizes the interconnectedness of her trauma not only with her family’s but with trauma of her community and land:

My beginning was Hannah’s beginning, one of broken lives, gone animals, trees felled and kindled. Our beginnings were intricately bound up in the history of the land. I already knew that in the nooks of America, the crannies of marble buildings, my story unfolded. This, I suppose, was the true house of my mother. The real place office full of abused and neglected children she’d picked up late at

night, a locked file cabinet, lost papers, a hierarchy of administrators and secretaries. It was systems we ended up fighting. But it went even farther back than that, to houses of law with their unkept treaties, to the broken connections of people to the world and its many gods (80).

The very first sentences places humans, animals, and trees in one place thus showing how connected they are to each other and how equally important they are considered to be to Native Americans. Land is not merely something to be used and exploited; it has its own history which is also the history of the Native peoples. By referring to governmental offices and institutes as the true house of her mother, Lisa is tracing her mother's abuse back to the white government hinting at the fact that her mother's monstrosity is actually a result of what the government has been doing to First Nation peoples, their children, and their land. Her mentioning of the abused and neglected children can also refer to the government's forced removal of Indigenous children of which Angel has been a victim too. Angel says the abuse did not start there, however, and she goes even further back in time to trace the early roots of trauma which she identifies as the settlers' broken treaties and their abuse of the Native peoples which caused a disruption in the Native Americans' connection to the land and their spiritual realms.

The novel also uses the stories of Loretta and Hannah (Angel's grandmother and mother) as a way to discuss intergenerational trauma and its far-reaching and devastating effects. When Angel asks Bush, her surrogate mother, to tell her about her biological mother, Hannah, Bush tells her about Loretta first because she believes Angel's mother has gotten her trauma from her own mother. Thus, Hannah's story would not make so much sense without being placed next to the story of her mother. Loretta is one of the only Elk islanders who survives contact with the settlers. Almost all of her community die when they become so hungry that they have to eat the

poisoned bodies of the deer the settler hunters has left out in the open as baits for the wolves. (29). This is why Loretta smells of a sweet and almond-like odor which is the smell of cyanide, the same poison that has killed her people. (38). After experiencing various forms of colonialists' abuse, Loretta ends up having 'no love left in her...for when she was still a girl, she had been taken and used by men who fed her and beat her and forced her. That was how one day she became the one who hurts others. It was passed down'' (30). Being taken and kept by white men is definitely as much a source of trauma for her as the death of her entire family and tribe. The idea of trauma passed down suggests an intergenerational trauma, especially the fact that this suffering and trauma can become cyclical by turning the abused into abusers.

The novel mentions that this intergenerational trauma and cycle of abuse is the direct work of the 'backward' settlers in their 'reverse' worldview who have replaced love with destruction, balance with chaos, and deep connections with isolation and fear (71). Their effect is so destructive that even powerful emotions such as motherly love are metamorphosed into monstrous abuse and hatred. What links the three generations of Loretta, Hannah, and Angel are the reminders of pain and trauma instead of motherly love and bond. Loretta's smell works as a physical reminder of trauma, and Hannah, her daughter, smells of the same 'unwashable' odor. The other physical manifestation of trauma and one of the other things that in a twisted way 'links' the three generation is scars. Loretta has a scar beneath her eye. The scars are then transmitted to, first, Hannah who is 'a garment of scars''(83) and, then, to Angel to whom the scars are a constant reminder of pain and cause her a lot of shame and self-consciousness.

The scars are a testimony that the lives and plights of these three women (Loretta, Hannah, and Angel) are insidiously intertwined. This interconnectedness is the reason why Bush thinks it is important for Angel to know about her grandmother and mother. However, she

dedicates more time and focus to Hannah's story because she regards it as one of the main pieces of the puzzle of Angel's trauma narrative. Hannah as a young girl is found one stormy night emerging out of the water while wearing men's clothes. She does not speak or interact with others, and the only way Agnes and Bush know it is Loretta's daughter is through her cyanide-like smell. She acts like a scared and trapped animal and does not let anyone remove her clothes (81). When Bush is finally able to give her a bath and sees her body, she discovers the truth behind her strange behaviors:

There were burns and incisions. Like someone had written on her. The signatures of torturers, I call them now. I was overcome. I cried. She looked at me like I was a fool, my tears a sign of weakness. And farther in, I knew, there were violations and invasions of other kinds. What, I could only guess. I held up first one of her arms, then another. I washed her back and poured water over her. She sat still. She waited for me to hurt her (84).

Hannah's body is full of wounds and scars, and she behaves like someone to whom pain is an ordinary aspect of being and life. The other shocking revelation here is that she has been sexually abused which can be deduced from the word 'violations'. The fact that she 'expects' to be hurt again shows that this must have been a repeated occurrence in her life before coming to Adam's Rib rather than a one-time exposure to a traumatic event - a factor that causes her trauma to be very complex and multi-layered.

Hannah, soon, becomes abusive herself and in doing so shows her inability in breaking the cycle of abuse initiated by colonialism. Hogan links Hannah's failure to surpass her abuse and inflicting it upon others to a condition named 'soul loss' and also the Windigo myth which is a Cree story of humans losing their soul and heart to winter, and consequently, developing an

overwhelming hunger and lust for human flesh among other things (Hogan 6). Hannah fits into this definition of Windigo because of some of the unspeakable acts she commits such as torturing and killing Bush's dog and molesting a young child. Later on, when she gives birth to Angel, she treats her very badly from the very moment she is born. She first attempts to kill Angel by abandoning her outside her house in the cold, and then later uses hot wire and her teeth on Angel's body as if trying to consume her flesh (200). Having lived away from her own family and cultural values at a young age can definitely be a factor in Hannah not feeling any motherly love and attachment for her own daughter. It is not mentioned if she has been sent to residential schools; nevertheless, it is mentioned that she is separated from her family and kept by white men who brutally abuse her in various forms. Her being away from family and a support system is one of the main reasons she suffers intergenerational trauma and soul loss and develops a very complex trauma.

A lot of Hannah's trauma symptoms can be explained using CPTSD theory too because Herman's theory was originally developed to explore the effects of prolonged and repeated trauma on children. According to Herman, victims of child abuse find it hard to regulate themselves: "Unlike the adult victim, the child has yet to develop any sense of self having no previous experience of being able to self-regulate their body, (because the child's body is at the disposal of the abuser) normal biological cycles of sleep and wakefulness, feeding, and elimination are chaotically disrupted or over controlled" (122). Growing with abusive parents or other abusive people, when the child has never or rarely experienced the regulation of biological needs in a safe environment, they usually develop "chronic sleep disturbances, eating disorders, gastrointestinal complaints, and numerous other bodily distress symptoms" (122). Because of being separated from her family and kept with men who abuse her on multiple levels, Hannah

suffers from inability to regulate normal human functions such as sleeping. Her sleeplessness, however, is beyond insomnia as Bush says she never really sleeps at all and not even Dora-Rouge's medicine is able to help her in that regard (82).

The inability to sleep can be viewed as CPTSD symptom named hyperarousal. Hyperarousal refers to the victim of trauma being constantly on alert for anything suspicious. This causes sleep disorder, constant suspicion, mood swings, irrational behavior, depression, anxiety, and many other problems (86). Hannah is not able to sleep because she feels she cannot let her guards down even for a short time and has to be on a constant lookout. She never feels safe and acts like a trapped and scared animal: "The old people used to say that animals in danger from men could shrink themselves, go off into a cave or lake or beneath a stone where they would hide until the world was safe again. I think it was like that. Maybe [Hannah] waited for the world to be safe" (Hogan 83). It is true that Hannah does not seem to be in active danger anymore, nevertheless, she still feels threatened as her sense of safety and faith in the world are shattered as a result of her ongoing and brutal abuse. Hannah has "shrunk" and "hidden" herself and her existence while being constantly alert of the perceived danger. Her case is so severe that, in fact, she never feels the world can be safe again.

Hannah suffers from another CPTSD symptom which is called intrusion which can be defined as a defense mechanism formed at the moment of trauma which is unnecessary for everyday life and normal events (Herman 86). Herman explains that intrusion becomes problematic for victims of trauma as they find it hard to "turn it off" even after the threat is gone. This inability to shut this mechanism down leads to the victims' fixation on the traumatic event in their minds in way that is intrusive to the ordinary memory. This symptom can be seen in Hannah especially when her trauma interrupts her entire being and existence to the point of

being haunted by “[those who] came awake at night, those who’d hurt her”(Hogan 84). Dora-Rouge’s diagnosis of Hannah’s condition is accurate as she attributes it to a problem with memory: “it was what could not be forgotten, the shadows of men who’d hurt Loretta, the shadows of the killers of children. What lived in her wears the skin of children” (84). This statement shows Hannah is not only haunted by her own trauma but also the trauma of her people and other Native American children which causes her problems and symptoms to be even more extreme. Hannah’s traumatic and over-burdened memory also explains Hannah’s nightmares and the many flashbacks she has. She does not recognize the abuse to be merely in the past. She tells Bush about a hand that lives inside her and which steps out of her body at night and tries “to molest her, to strangle her” (100). And in another occasion, she says she sees a man who unbuttons her dress (86). Her statements show that she relives her trauma constantly and feels the abuse she has suffered are happening all over again. Besides these rare occurrences of talking about her trauma, Hannah does not really share what has happened to her. The inability to articulate her trauma make things worse and cause her escape from the traumatic memory very difficult as Herman points out “traumatized people relive in their bodies the moments of terror that they can not describe in words”(252). This silence leads to a vicious cycle alternating between inability to tell one’s trauma story because it is too extreme and unspeakable, and this lack of narration leading to even more trauma.

Hannah also exhibits an extreme form of constriction which is also called dissociation. Herman suggests dissociation occurs as a defense mechanism used by trauma victims who become skilled in the “arts of altered consciousness” as a way to cope with harsh situations (101). This refers to the victim’s suppression of unpleasant thoughts and memories and even changing the unbearable situation in their mind through their imagination and escaping reality.

An extreme form of this dissociation can be observed in the way Bush describes Hannah as a child: “Sometimes she sat in a corner and became still. She became a part of the wall itself, nearly invisible... She was a body under siege, a battleground. But she herself never emerged. The others, with their many voices and ways, were larger than she was. She was no longer there” (Hogan 83). From this passage, it becomes clear that if some trauma victims’ self is fragmented and dissociation happens from time to time, Hannah does not seem to have any cohesive self at all, and her dissociation seems to be a permanent part of her which can especially be seen in Bush’s statement that Hannah became one with the wall, and that she was not there anymore. This extremity makes sense especially because Hannah has suffered an extreme level of abuse and trauma at such a young age with no family or support system around until she is finally found by Bush and Agnes. The dissociation also occurs when Hannah turns into an abuser. When questioned about why she has done some horrible things, Hannah keeps saying that it wasn’t her. Bush seems to be aware of Hannah’s dissociation and says in more than one occasion that the bad things that Hannah does are not her fault. Even when Hannah kills Bush’s dog and molests a child, Bush knows that Hannah is just a vulnerable and traumatized child who has no control over the horrible things that she does.<sup>1</sup> “This was what she’d learned, you know” (Hogan 85). Sadly, Hannah’s case is so extreme that even Bush’s unconditional love, compassion, and support are of no use.

Hannah’s trauma is passed on to Angel when Hannah physically and emotionally abuses her, and also as a result of Angel being sent away to live with white foster families. Before coming to Adam’s Rib and before being reminded of her ties and connections to her Native land and community, Angel lives in a state of limbo in which she does not even know what she is looking for. Her life before Adam’s Rib is unhappy and feels incomplete. She is not even

comfortable in her own skin and feels especially ashamed of the scar on her face that has been caused by her mother (24). Without knowing her past, all she can see is the scars and being reminded of pain, and without fully embracing her scars and the pain, she cannot truly be herself.

As a result of her trauma, Angel is fearful and feels it is hard to move on with her life and look forward to the future. She has to force herself to stay in one place and will herself to trust people even her own family members. This fear and inability to trust even close people becomes clear when she meets her great grandmother, Agnes, for the first time: "I watched her walk toward me, but my own legs refused to move. They were afraid. So was my heart, having entered this strange and foreign territory with the hope of finding something not yet known to me, not yet dreamed or loved" (Hogan 15). The fact that she calls her own homeland as "strange and foreign" shows her extreme level of alienation and disconnection from her own motherland. Her language also shows that her fear and mistrust extends beyond people to land itself. So, in order to find her place in world, she has to reconnect not only with her community and family but also with her Native land. The passage also sheds light on Angel's internal duality and conflict which Herman calls "the central dialectic of psychological trauma" (12). On the one hand, she is afraid of moving forward with her plan of visiting her land and family, on the other hand, she knows this move means hope for her and her future.

Angel exhibits the same internal conflict and duality in other parts of the novel as well. For example, she constantly tries to run away from her own reflection and her scars by shattering the mirrors she is around, and also by covering her scars with her hair which can be viewed as her attempt in hiding one of the reminders of her trauma. At the same time, she acknowledges that knowing the story of the scars can help them heal: "I hoped [my hair] covered the scars I believed would heal, maybe even vanish, if only I could remember where they'd come from"

(Hogan 17). And in another occasion, she says that her fear of knowing the truth is equal to her desire to uncover it (44). As a result, Angel's life is a constant conflict and a battle between the inability to face the truth and her trauma and the need to know herself and her life better and achieve a complete self-realization. This conflict between the desire to know and not wanting to know her past and trauma is closely related to the struggle between her desire to remain silent and the burning need to tell her traumatic story in order to make sense of it. When Angel moves in with Bush, she has a strong desire to talk but feels that she is unable to despite having so many things to say: "I wanted to talk to her but I didn't know what to say. I was full of words inside myself; there were even questions in me I hadn't yet thought to form, things not yet come to words"(16). Her inability to form words and a cohesive story is one of the things hindering her to free herself from trauma and also according to Herman, one of the signs of a deeply traumatized person: "...far too often secrecy prevails, and the story of the traumatic event surfaces not as a verbal narrative but as a symptom"(2). Herman's statement shows that if trauma narrative does not come out as a story, it can be turned into something that reinforces the trauma further which is the case with Angel in the beginning of the novel.

Interestingly, in order for Angel to learn how to articulate her sorrow and trauma, she needs to learn how to be silent first. This silence is very different from the secrecy that Herman mentions as this silence means she can have more room in her mind for a new story and narrative to be constructed. Prior to silence, Angel has room and space for only two emotions: one is the fear of silence and almost everything else which leads her to keep escaping from the foster houses, and the other room contains her intense anger:

In my life this far, there had been two places, two things that shaped and moved me, two things that were my very own, that I did not ever leave behind or allow to

have taken from me. They were like rooms I inhabited, rooms owned, not rented. One, the darkest, was a room of fear, fear of everything—silence, closeness, motionlessness and how it made me think and feel. Fear was what made me run, from homes, from people. Moving made me feel as if I left that fear behind, shed it like a skin, but always, slowly, a piece at a time, it would find me again; and then I would remember things that had never quite shaped themselves whole. And there was the fire-red room of anger I inhabited permanently, with walls that couldn't shelter or contain my quiet rages (Hogan 18).

The way Angel describes these emotions clearly shows their intensity and the way they have overtaken her life and continue to overshadow her perception of things. For example, because of her intense fear, she is unable to stay in one place or to commit to one thing and therefore is unable to have a normal life. She feels hopeless because she knows she cannot run away from her fears for a long time, and that they will always find her because they are a huge part of who she is. As for anger, to her, it is so intense that it can barely be contained within her mind, so there is not even a temporary escape from it. She feels completely dominated by these two emotions. Therefore, the construction of a third room in her mind, of silence, which comes as a result of her coming to Adam's Rib and her interaction with her family is a new hope for her: "Now I could feel another room being built, but without knowing it, I was entering silence more deeply than I had entered anything before. I was entering my fears head-on. I was about to stare my rage and history in the face" (Hogan 18). Hence, this new room is one of the things that makes her feel resolute in standing her ground and facing her fears and rage.

The intensity of Angel's emotions which are a direct result of the trauma passed on to her can also be understood in terms of CPTSD as Herman believes that intense fear and anger are

definite symptoms of this condition leading to more symptoms such as alterations in mind and memory. Herman explains that when a person is faced with danger, their first reaction is a rush of adrenaline and fear. Intense danger evoke feelings of anger too. When the event is too traumatic and escape is not possible, these symptoms reach their heights and even after the threat is removed, they tend to persist in the victim's mind and consciousness causing changes to the structures of their mind. The damage extends to the person's memory too. They develop an abnormal memory that is at times disconnected from the emotions they are feeling making it hard for the patient to locate the source of their distress (53). Because of going through the trauma of facing danger and being harmed by her own mother, Angel exhibits trouble with memory and remembering. She "would remember things that had never quite shaped themselves whole" (Hogan 18). In addition to this, the extreme trauma that she suffers as a result of being sent to the foster homes also contribute to her memory being dysfunctional which makes it nearly impossible for her to remember the early part of her life when her traumas took place: "I did not remember [Bush], nor did I remember having been loved. I had an entangled memory, with good parts of it missing." (59). Her body and soul are living evidence of the trauma yet her mind is not very efficient in remembering what really happened which makes it hard for her to confront her trauma and to move on with her life.

Angel's helplessness as a result of her chronic trauma can be explained in terms of CPTSD not only because of her own traumas but also because of her mother's CPTSD's symptoms being passed down to her. This transmission of symptoms is confirmed by a study<sup>2</sup> that observes the effect of Tutsi genocide survivors' trauma on their offspring. The study concludes that traumatized parents could indeed pass on their CPTSD symptoms to their children. In the novel, this transmission can be seen in the fact that Angel, Hannah's daughter

suffers from a lot of symptoms her mother suffers from too. Related to her symptoms of fear, anger, and non-cohesive and incomplete memories, Angel, too, displays symptoms related to hyperarousal, intrusion, and constriction which her mother suffers from. Angel exhibits hyperarousal on many occasions before her healing. One example of this symptom is her inability to sleep (27). Another example is her sudden anger and mood swing after Angel's neighbor, Frenchie, asks about her scar. She reacts by breaking the bathroom mirror and hurting herself (41). She also demonstrates irrational behaviors such as tattooing her own arm (57) and many reckless sexual encounters with strangers (44). These behaviors show how restless and troubled Angel is in the absence of healing and a support system. They can also demonstrate her lack of love for herself and her life as she indulges in risky habits.

Angel suffers from other CPTSD symptoms such as intrusion and constriction as well. She suffers from intrusion by being constantly haunted by the thought of her mother and her own scars in a way that it interferes with her everyday life and happiness. Additionally, Angel seems to suffer from constriction because her core identity seems to be shaped by her trauma. This is connected to what Herman calls as one of the far-reaching effects of repeated child abuse; the child's personality goes beyond merely being warped by the trauma: it is formed by it. She explains that "when a child is trapped in an abusive environment the child is faced with formidable tasks of adaptation" (110). Herman further explains that children, unlike adults in some cases, do not have the ability of removing themselves from the source of trauma and, thus, become exposed to many layers of abuse over a long period of time rather than one single traumatic event. This prolonged trauma not only changes their still developing personalities and identities but also completely shapes them; the trauma is not merely a mold shaping the outlines of self but an intrusive force that penetrates into the child's very essence of being making it very

difficult for the child to fight against and defy even as they become an adult (96). Being exposed to repeated trauma at the hand of her own mother and her later removal from her roots do indeed affect Angel's core identity and character. Up until the age of seventeen, Angel is trapped in that cycle of repeated trauma and does not even know where to start in order to improve her life. Her life seems to be reduced to a constant alteration between her two most prominent emotions of intense rage and fear. The fact that she describes these emotions as 'rooms' shows that they are not just passing feelings, but rather, they are a deep part of her consciousness and, therefore, are hard to remove and overcome.

Another way Angel exhibits constriction is through her internal dissociation and duality. Although this symptom is not as extreme as in her mother's case, Angel does alter her consciousness as a way to cope with difficult circumstances and memories which cause her to be even more removed from her true "beginning". One example of this alternation is when Angel keeps photos of children she finds near a photo booth and pretends that they are personal photos of her own childhood (Hogan 58). Later on, we even become aware of the fact that she has created a full story of her birth in which she is happy and her mother loves her:

I was born wet and shining and open-eyed in a sunny room. That's how I imagined my beginning. In the light of sun, with the radiance of dust as it floated through sunlight, the air full of it, and I was one of the chosen...my mother was beautiful and kind and her love for me went deep. Sorry to leave me, she died in a large bed with a flowered cover and beloved people, relatives, all about her. I was the last thought on her mind. When I was a child, this mother was the one I talked to in my many sleepless nights, eyes squeezed shut, praying to her as I cried. She was the one whose voice I heard inside myself (61).

Here, Angel exhibits what Herman refers to as doublethink because even though she knows this story of her mother is not real, she still believes in it. Thus, she is holding two contrary beliefs at the same time. Because of not having a “beginning” and not knowing her full life story, she fills in the gap with her own imagination. It is certainly more bearable to her to think of her mother as loving and kind instead of a troubled woman who harmed her. Because of not knowing about her other family members especially her grandmothers, she seems to feel she needs to have proof of being loved at some point otherwise her life would become unbearable. Her need for love is so overwhelming and urgent that she searches for it anywhere and everywhere starting with her own imagination and moving to external sources even when the love they offer is not genuine: “My need for love had been so great I would offer myself to any boy or man who would take me... I believed any kind of touch was a kind of love...It would heal me, I thought...But the truth remained that I was wounded and cut and no one could, or would, tell me how it happened and no man or boy offered what I needed”(44). Telling what happened is indeed an important part of her recovery. Not knowing her life story and her family and community that love her has created a big void in her heart that she keeps trying to fill whenever she gets a chance.

Dora-Rouge, Angel’s great great grandmother, is another character who seems to be living in two realities and two worlds but in her case, it is certainly more positive because she never seems to lose sight of her connection to her culture and family. The novel shows Dora-Rouge’s deep connection to her cultural beliefs especially the idea that the world of the living and the dead are not really two separate realities and are interconnected through her frequent chats with her dead husband, Luther. She does not feel afraid of him as modern people are afraid of ghosts. On the contrary, she treats Luther as a very good and wise company who even helps her make decisions (22). In this way, although he is dead, he still participates in the lives of

Dora-Rouge and the people around her. None of Dora-Rouge's family members shows any sign of disbelief or surprise that she talks to the dead so this means that this behavior is seen as natural and acceptable. Even though Dora-Rouge has also been traumatized, she is still able to remain positive and happy because of her strong ties to her culture.

Besides her strong relationship with her culture, Dora-Rouge has been able to preserve a deep familial connection too which is another factor that helps her in overcoming grief and trauma. She is such a positive and happy person that one might think that she has not been traumatized or at least not as much as the other characters. In reality, her trauma is not less than others, and she, too, has been separated from her family and has suffered the colonialists' abuse as a result of being sent to the residential schools. Moreover, she witnesses the brutal beating of her sister by the school agents and hears about her untimely death later on. She also risks her life in escaping from the school and walking thirty-two miles in winter just to get back to her family (143-44). The fact that Dora-Rouge is ready to risk even death in order to escape from the school says a lot about the residential schools' harsh and unbearable conditions. It is important to note that these schools were used as a colonizing and assimilating tool to separate children both physically and spiritually from their parents. Besides the schools being rampant with sexual abuse, violence, and neglect, the colonialists also damaged the children's sense of their heritage and identity by separating them from their parents and families (Llewellyn 258); all of these conditions contribute to children developing complex and chronic trauma. In this situation, the only factor that can help restore the child's well-being is restoring the very thing the colonialists targeted by organizing these schools which is re-establishing strong cultural and familial connections. And here lies the difference between Dora-Rouge and other traumatized characters such as Angel and Hannah; Dora-Rouge never seems to lose sight of the most important thing in

her life which is her family. She even dreams of them on her harsh journey back home; a dream that gives her even more strength and resolution to survive, and for many years to come, keeps her alive and happy (Hogan 144).

Later on, Angel is also able to see the role of having strong ties to one's culture and family in overcoming trauma and healing, but before achieving this recovery, she first makes the realization that the past and the present are interconnected and that the shadows of the abusers of the past still linger to this day. Dora-Rouge certainly helps with this realization as it is in her that Angel sees the past and the present intertwined. Right after telling Angel about her residential school trauma, Dora-Rouge "looked at her hands as if she was seeing them young, new in all this history...Through her [Angel] could see into the past...the deep past, even before the time of Dora-Rouge"(143). Seeing this deep and long past leads to Angel thinking about the first woman who saw the colonizers approaching her land on their ships; the woman thought they were going to have a positive impact not knowing about all the atrocities they were about to commit in the Native American lands and peoples (143). Angel is also able to trace the scars of the past to the problems of present especially through her mother, Hannah, and her troubling past: "I'd think of my own scars, and of Hannah's body with the words of the newspaper reversed across it. 'Man Injured in Hunting Accident,' and 'Dam Construction Begins at St. Bleu Falls'"(263). Both Angel and Hannah's scars are not merely individual wounds; they are resulted by a deep history of colonialist abuse which still haunts the Native American characters' lives. The dam construction with all destructive consequences for people and land alike is a modern manifestation of the historical atrocities committed by the European settlers.

Bush helps Angel see this connection between the past and present trauma even more through reminding her that it is colonialism that is behind Hannah's turning into an abuser. For

example, Bush interprets the medicine man's words about Hannah being "the meeting place" (85) as Hannah's body working as a living and walking record of "the original sin" (30) which Hogan defines as the evil deeds of the colonialists. She shares this knowledge with Angel saying that Hannah's life goes "backward to where time and history and genocide gather and move like a cloud above the spilled oceans of blood. That little girl's body was the place where all this met" (85). Thus, Hogan connects "soul loss" to the trauma both people and the land are suffering in the present and the past. Having learned Bush's valuable lesson and after seeing the destruction brought to the land and people by the governmental projects, Angel contemplates:

[the settlers] had trapped themselves inside their own destruction of [the world], the oldest kind of snare, older than twine and twigs. Their legacy, I began to understand, had been the removal of spirit from everything, from animals, trees, fishhooks, and hammers, all things the Indians had as allies. They'd forgotten how to live. Before, everything lived together well—lynx and women, trappers and beaver. Now most of us had inarticulate souls, silent spirits, and despairing hearts (154).

Here, the narrator compares the present time of hopeless and silent hearts and spirits with how things used to be in the past. The past here refers to the time before the arrival of the settlers when humans, animals, and plants lived together harmoniously. The use of the word "allies" is important here because in a Western context, this word is usually used to refer to cooperation among humans whereas in this "Indian" context, it is used to discuss the beautiful unity, connection, and respect that used to exist between the humans and the more than humans' world. It also shows that unlike the Western settlers, Native Americans view the more than humans' world as their peers with whom they can form pacts and enjoy mutual understanding and benefit

even when they are in the hunter and prey roles. This passage also establishes the similarities between colonialist settlers and Windigo through using phrases such as “removal of spirits” which reminds one of the “soul loss” condition. In the Native American view of the more than humans’ world as human’s peers, any form of abuse and mindless destruction of their spirit and being can be seen as “cannibalism”.

The novel, thus, directly points at the colonialists as the real Windigo with their pattern of greed and deceit. In the words of Bush, “they were the cannibals who consumed human flesh, set fire to worlds the gods had loved and asked the humans to care for”(297). This view can be seen especially when Bush touches Hannah’s scars and notices the trace of cold fingers and the work of cold hearts which reminds us of Windigo: “I touched the scars on her back and I could feel the hands of the others. They had ice-cold fingers. They had hearts of ice. Just like the old people said”(84). Jack Forbes in his book *Columbus and Other Cannibals: The Wetiko Disease of Exploitation, Imperialism, and Terrorism* affirms the points the novel is making and believes that the Western society show symptoms of the “Windigo disease” through its insatiable greed and bloodlust which has been affecting Native peoples starting from the time of colonization and continuing to the present moment (43). The author goes on to say that the colonialist Windigo (which he spells as “wetiko”), “believes that he has a right to use another human being (or his property) in a manner which is decidedly one-sided and disadvantageous to the victim... [with] lying [being] an essential factor in this form of thievery. Lying is .. almost always a factor in wetiko behavior, and in fact may represent a key strand in the entire epidemiology of wetikoism” (48). He then quotes Black Hawk, Sauk leader, saying, “How smooth must be the language of the whites, when they can make right look like wrong, and wrong like right” (48). This reversal of truth and lying of the colonialists is mentioned in *Solar Storms* as well especially when Angel reflects on the way the government officials view the Native

American protestors: ‘Reversing the truth, they would call us terrorists. If there was evil in the world, this was it, I thought. Reversal’ (245). She also mentions this reversal of facts and misrepresentation when she says people outside the two towns rarely knew what was happening concerning the dam construction and its destructive consequences because government official kept twisting the facts: ‘It’s them against each other,’ they’d repeat when anyone got wind of the events, and it was true; we were reduced to that’ (Hogan 270). Here, we can see the extent of the falsification committed by the colonialist government which is only a link in the long chain of the government’s lying and breaking of treaties and pacts with the Native peoples. The term ‘reduced’ is very important here as it shows when this falsification and injustice is not fought, entire people and communities could be reduced to whatever the government decides for them and presents them as.

Protesting injustice brings us to one of the central themes of the novel that is very well expressed in a question asked by Dora-Rouge when she thinks about the condition of her people as a result of the destruction of nature because of the dam construction: ‘Most were too broken to fight the building of the dams, the moving of waters, and that perhaps had been the intention all along. But I could see Dora-Rouge thinking, wondering: how do conquered people get back their lives?’ (195) The answer to this, the novel suggests, is in resilience and fighting oppression. Angel reflects on this perspective as the following: ‘For my people, the problem has always been this: that the only possibility of survival has been resistance. Not to strike back meant certain loss and death. To strike back has also meant loss and death, only with a fighting chance. To fight has meant that we can respect ourselves, we Beautiful People. Now we believed in ourselves once again’ (325). This passage shows how for the Native American characters, resistance and political activism become the only way of protecting their identity, culture, and land. When both fighting and not fighting means

“certain loss and death,” it is far better to fight than not to fight because with the former comes empowerment in the form of believing in and cherishing oneself and one’s culture.

Besides helping her great grandmothers in their activism, Angel becomes even more personally involved when she decides to make it her own mission to chase the dam builders out of the Native Americans’ lands. She assumes the role of Wolverine; a Native American spirit figure who is the protector of animals and land and who avenges those who abuse them (69) She assumes the role by sneaking into the camp of the BEEVCO company workers and stealing and damaging their food supply as a way of forcing them to cease the project and leave (279). The way she achieves this mission, by assuming the role of a Native American spirit being, is very important because it shows how wise and empowered she has become as a result of knowing her cultural heritage. This new Angel is very different from the “rootless” Angel of the beginning of this novel. Before Adam’s Rib, Angel’s life does not have a clear purpose, but after having the chance to “travel toward [herself]”(51) as a result of being reunited with her land and family and becoming part of her people’s just struggle, she finally finds her purpose in life and place within her community. She re-discovers her forgotten talent of plant dreaming and partakes in the environmental activities joining a “close circle of courageous women and strong men who had walls pulled down straight in front of them until the circle closed” (90). The imagery of cycles shows the interconnectedness of the individual and their community and therefore the interconnectedness of the public and private trauma. Herman acknowledges this relation between trauma and political struggle too and says that when one can finally see the interconnectedness of the personal and a larger collective trauma, one becomes part of a larger battle with violence and oppression that extends through time and space (225).

Consequently, Angel fulfills the novel’s vision for healing which consists of re-establishing lost connections, safety, and links with family, community, and everything the person holds dear.

Herman's ideas for recovery are similar to this too. According to Herman, there are three necessary steps to recovery: "The central task of the first stage is the establishment of safety. The central task of the second stage is remembrance and mourning. The central focus of the third stage is reconnection with ordinary life" (155). With the help of her "many grandmothers," Angel is able to fulfill all three requirements: firstly, these strong women give her all the love Angel can ask for and provide her with a safe environment in which she can heal (Hogan 90). Secondly, by sharing the many stories of her mother and her people, they teach her the power of remembering and mourning. All of these factors help Angel to reconnect with everyday life and outgrow her sorrow and trauma.

One of the main ways Angel reconnects to everyday life is through breaking out of the cycle of trauma not only by not turning into a Windigo like her mother but also, and more importantly, through having the strength to forgive her mother. In a way, Angel knows Hannah's asking to be killed by the man she lives with, Eron, is her only and last act of love. Knowing how damaged she is, Hannah wants to remove herself from her daughter Aurora's life and world so that the child can have a chance of a happy and fulfilled life. Yonka Krasteva in her essay, "Trauma, Madness and Coming of Age in Linda Hogan's *Solar Storms*" points out that by forgiving her mother, Angel is freed from her initial anger and moves to understanding, grief, and even love (24). She also mentions that it is indeed with love that Angel washes her mother's body which she calls "the house of lament and sacrifice that it was" (qtd. in Krasteva 24). Through not letting rage consume her, Angel is able to break the chain and cycle of abuse and not to turn into a Windigo herself. This helps her to grow as both a person and a woman: "I was no longer a girl. I was a woman, full and alive. After that, I made up mind to love in whatever ways I could. I would find it in myself to love the woman who had given life to me" (217). She acknowledges the power of her newly felt emotions saying that she has survived as a result of

being filled with love and mourning which take the place of her previous intense rage and fear. Aurora, too, helps with Angel's last stage of recovery as the child shows her that there is still hope for the future.

The other factor that helps Angel to reconnect with everyday life positively and to restore her hope for the future is Tulik's testimony of the crimes committed against the Native land in an official court. Even when it takes more than a year for the court to pass orders to stop the building of the dams, and even when so much damage is already done, Angel is still able to see hope:

we had to believe, true or not, that our belated victory was the end of something. That one fracture was healed, one crack mended, one piece back in place. Yes, the pieces were infinite and worn as broken pots, and our human pain was deep, but we'd thrown an anchor into the future and followed the rope to the end of it, to where we would dream new dreams, new medicines, and one day, once again, remember the sacredness of every living thing (298).

This passage shows how protesting injustice even if the result is a belated victory is still important. Fighting for one's cause can bring about change and the possibility of a better future where one is empowered enough to be able to dream and hope again. The passage also shows the importance of testimony and truth-telling in healing; even if this is a gradual and "one fracture" at a time healing, it is still worthy because it means no matter how bad the wound of the trauma is, healing is not impossible. The political protest and testimony are also a way for the Native American characters to "distill the truth out of history" (149) and to remind everyone of the sacredness of the earth and every living being.

The other role of seeking justice and testifying is enabling one to hold the criminals accountable which also serves as part of the recovery process. Holding the perpetrators accountable is especially important for Native Americans because the colonialists have been very adamant in denying the crimes they have committed; an attitude which is described very well in the novel as the following: “Nothing had changed since the Frenchman, Radisson, passed through and wrote in his journal that there was no one to stop them from taking what they wanted from this land. ‘We were caesars,’ he wrote, ‘with no one to answer to’” (247). This passage brings to light one of the main reasons for Native Americans’ protest and seeking justice which is to show colonialists they do indeed have someone to answer to: the Native American peoples and the land itself. This exposing of the wrongdoers is important in healing because as it is shown in the novel, Angel feels there is a possibility for healing and hope after Tulik’s courtroom testimony and his eventual winning of the case against the colonialist dam builders. Herman, too, emphasizes the role of truth-telling in recovery and healing and believes that “when the truth is finally recognized, survivors can begin their recovery” (12). This recognition should be public as healing relies upon revealing the truth of trauma and harm for everyone to see and “a public acknowledgment of the traumatic event” (83). In this case, recovery happens as a result of the traumatized individuals and communities’ sense of justice and order being restored (83). Moreover, she states that even without achieving immediate success in court, when trauma is narrated, it turns into an instrument for survival and recovery (225). Therefore, even when Tulik and the other Native American characters’ victory is a belated one, it is still a very important aspect of healing. As Herman suggests pursuing one’s own case in court is a social and political act of resistance that means more than its immediate outcome and can be an important aspect of recovery for the traumatized individuals and communities.

Through the help of the strong women in her life, combined with the power of stories and testimonies and her political activism, Angel is able to rewrite her traumatic story and turn it into a story of love, survival, and sacrifice. She is able to transform not only her life but those of others around her as well; Aurora, her step-sister will be raised among her people who love her and who will help her stay connected with her roots- the very thing Angel was deprived of growing up. Angel can finally see hope and new possibilities just like Bush can see the possibility of healing when looking at scars (Hogan 106). Angel finally feels something wonderful lives inside her, and she believes achieving this and healing is possible for everyone: “Something beautiful lives inside us. You will see. Just believe it. You will see” (106).

## Notes

1- In her book *The Woman Who Watches Over the World* Linda Hogan says that her own adopted daughter, Marie, has been violated and tortured, and has “lived through horrors most of us could not imagine” (76). Marie has been abused by her biological mother and the mother’s boyfriend who burned her by cigarettes, hot wires, and even raped her. They finally leave her in a desert in order to “rid” themselves of her (76). Marie seems to have inspired the character, Hannah as like her, she mistreats a dog, physically attacks people, and hears voices in her head (88). Hogan says that Marie might have survived her abusive mother, but she has never had the chance to develop and have a healthy self (77).

2- The study which is published in *Psychiatry Research* journal is conducted by Dr. Amit Shrira from the Interdisciplinary Department of Social Sciences of Bar-Ilan University, Dr. Ben Mollov, a political scientist at Bar-Ilan University, and Chantal Mudahogora, a therapist and survivor of the Tutsi genocide.

## Chapter Two: Catastrophic Lies, and Resistance, and Healing in *Monkey Beach*

*Monkey Beach* by Eden Robinson ties personal stories and traumas to a larger historical context of colonialism and its horrors for the Haisla people. By focusing on collective memories rather than the individual ones, the novel shows how trauma can be far-reaching and disastrous affecting a huge number of Native peoples and communities for long periods of time. It also emphasizes the idea that far from being merely an isolated occurrence, trauma can have social and political aspects too. One of the ways this connection of the personal to the collective is made in *Monkey Beach* is through memories. The novel is narrated in a series of flashbacks that uncovers the characters' pasts and their inner worlds. It feels like a detective story in which readers are given clues to solve the mystery behind the characters' misfortunes. There is a shift of the first-person narrator to a second person narrator which makes readers feel as if they are more involved in what is unfolding, and thus, they are able to act as witnesses to a historical account that is often suppressed or forgotten in the official historical records.

*Monkey Beach* focuses on correcting the dominant Western version of history records because of its acknowledgment that trauma can occur due to misrepresentation too. One of the ways the author resists the trauma of misrepresentation in the novel is through relying on distinctly Haisla stories and ways of seeing the world. The main character Lisa's making sense of her trauma story is only possible through hearing the Haisla stories that are weaved seamlessly into the fabric of the narrative. The other way the novel achieves resistance is by not using

traditional Western storytelling techniques which relies mostly on the rational and the physical world; the plot of the novel advances not through ‘rational’ occurrences, but it rather engages a spiritual Native American structure in which certain events and pieces of the story are revealed only through some of the characters’ spiritual Haisla experiences and gifts.

The novel shows the traumatic effect of colonialists’ systematic oppression and how the private world can be connected to the public and political. When trauma in the novel is a result of big governmental systems, healing from trauma cannot occur without fighting their oppression. This is why the novel demonstrates the important role activism plays in the characters’ lives and their healing journey. Throughout the novel, Lisa’s main inspiration for indigenous activism is her uncle Mick who also helps her stay connected to her native roots. Ma-ma-oo, Lisa’s grandmother is another source of inspiration for Lisa. Even though Ma-ma-oo is not politically active, the very fact that she tells Lisa stories from her past and tries to teach her the Haisla language is a form of activism and resistance too. Besides using Robinson’s own Native American view about resistance and healing, I believe it is also helpful to use Judith Herman’s theory because she, too, equates trauma with oppression. Herman, a professor of psychiatry at Harvard and director of the Victims of Violence Program at the Cambridge Hospital, believes that a person is not alone in their fight against the sources of trauma, and they are part of the bigger struggle against injustice and subjugation. Both Robinson and Herman believe that healing is not merely personal victory but is also a victory over social evil and wrongdoings. They both acknowledge the importance of holding criminals accountable in the traumatized individuals and communities’ healing journey because, in this way, the victims’ sense of justice and faith in their community and the world is restored. Because of the many commonalities these two views share, I believe using them side by side in my analysis can help

bridge the Native American and Western views regarding trauma and recovery and add a new angle to my discussion of trauma.

The novel *Monkey Beach*, published in 2000, opens with Lisamarie (Lisa) Hill and her parents, Gladys and Al, being told by the coast guard that their son Jimmy and his fellow fisherman Josh have gone missing at sea while on a fishing trip without leaving any trace behind. The parents leave to search for Jimmy while Lisa stays behind with her mind drifting away to different memories from her past. The memories are non-linear and make up most of the novel. Through these recollections, we become acquainted with Lisa's family and also her encounter with sasquatches on Monkey Beach. She also remembers her childhood memories where she would see different supernatural beings and how she gradually became aware of her special ‘gift’ — one that she has a hard time understanding and using. For example, she is visited by a little man with red hair each time before a tragedy happens to her family. As she grows older, Lisa does not know entirely how to react to this little man because she feels his presence can be a little intimidating and confusing at times. She also learns that these spiritual abilities run on her mother's side of the family; However, Lisa's mother has chosen to suppress her own gifts in order to better fit into the modern Western way of living. Not able to rely on her immediate family to help develop her cultural identity, Lisa's main means of connection to her cultural heritage are her grandmother, Ma-ma-oo, and her uncle, Mick. Ma-ma-oo helps this connection through telling Lisa about Haisla cultural values and traditions, and Uncle Mick helps her by making her aware of the struggles of the Native Americans and their political activism. The novel also introduces the themes of intergenerational trauma and residential schools and their devastating effects on characters such as Mick, Trudy, and Josh. These characters deal with their trauma through unhealthy ways such as excessive drinking, reckless behaviors, and in Josh's

case, abusive conducts towards others. Even though Lisa was not sent to these schools, she is emotionally and spiritually separated from her own family and culture, and later on in the novel, she exiles herself from her own community as a result of not being able to cope with her identity crisis and trauma. Alienation from Native American concepts and disconnection from Haisla traditions are issues Lisa tries to navigate throughout the novel. Jimmy's disappearance makes Lisa think even more of her past, her gifts, and her cultural traditions, and it also challenges her to face her fears, and in the process, to become stronger.

One of the factors that leads to intergenerational trauma in the novel is the clash of the Western and Native American cultures and the internalization of the Western values in favor of the Haisla ones. This is because Lisa's parents' own sense of culture and identity loss is passed on to Lisa as well. Right from the very beginning of the novel, Lisa relays how she never felt she could rely on her family for cultural insight and how she could never tell them about her gifts and be taken seriously. This alienation from cultural values and lack of family support lead to Lisa developing a conflicted relationship with her Haisla gifts; on the one hand, she wants to know what her gifts mean and believe in them, and on the other hand, she doesn't fully embrace her gifts and does not appreciate what the little man tries to tell her: "I'd convinced myself that the little man was a dream brought on by eating dinner too late—Mom had told me she always dreamed of earthquakes if she ate too much lasagna" (86). This passage shows the degree to which Lisa distrusts her visions and gifts, and her mother not only does not offer any help in reconnecting her daughter to her own cultural views, she reinforces the idea that those visions are just bad dreams brought about by eating too much. The conflicted relationship to her culture turns into a torturing device that keeps feeding Lisa's trauma and fear. She constantly blames herself for not listening to the warnings of the little man, feels guilty for Mick and Ma-ma-oo's

deaths that happen later on in the novel, and throughout most of the novel is in constant dread and fear that something terrible will happen to Jimmy. As a consequence, she has this conflicting desire of ignoring her powers and, at the same time, gaining the ability to use them correctly.

Lisa's mother exhibits signs of this internal conflict as well; she, too, has had gifts that she seems unwilling to acknowledge or to use. This conflict becomes clear in Ma-ma-oo's account of Lisa's mother's gifts: "When Gladys was very young, lots of death going on. T.B. Flu. Drinking. Diseases. She used to know who was going to die next...She doesn't tell you when she sees things. Or she's forgotten how. Or she ignores it"(98). This passage shows that Lisa has inherited her gift of predictive visions from her mother who does not tell her about them either because she has forgotten them or that she chooses to ignore them. Not only does she not provide Lisa with an understanding of Haisla culture and spiritual abilities, but she also constantly calls Ma-ma-oo's truthful accounts of the past and Native American heritage as "stories" and asks Lisa not to believe them (122). On many occasions, she makes fun of Lisa's belief in spirits and sasquatches too. There are times, however, when Lisa's mother talks about sasquatches and some other Native beings (76). These shifts happen mostly when she is out in nature so it could mean that nature can inspire her to think more about her Native ways. The occasional mentioning of her culture also shows that she hasn't completely forgotten about it and that like Lisa, she too suffers from an internal struggle.

Lisa's father is not supportive either and does not provide her with a reliable cultural input because he, too, has internalized non-indigenous values. Lisa mentions how telling her father about her gifts would always make him look at her like she is insane: "Sometimes I want to share my peculiar dreams with him. But when I bring them up, he looks at me like I've taken off my shirt and danced topless in front of him" (20). In absence of validation of her gifts, Lisa

starts calling them ‘‘peculiar’’ and finds it hard to believe in them as well. Her father’s account of the b’gwus story also shows his internalization of Western ideas in which sasquatches are bloodthirsty monsters. Ma-ma-oo brings on another less told version in which the b’gwus are merely victims of some people who intrude upon their land:

‘‘You’re telling it wrong,’’ Ma-ma-oo had said once when she was over for Christmas dinner. Every time Dad launched into his version, she punctuated his gory descriptions with, ‘‘That’s not how it happened.’’

‘‘Oh, Mother,’’ he’d protested finally. ‘‘It’s just a story.’’

Her lips had pressed together until they were bloodless. She’d left a few minutes later. Mom had kissed Dad’s nose and said family was family...Ma-ma-oo’s version was less gruesome, with no one getting shot and the first trapper just seeing the b’gwus crossing a glacier, getting scared and running back to the camp (13).

This passage is important in showing the cultural conflict within Lisa’s father who has internalized the dominant white society’s values. This internalization is passed on to Lisa as well, and it becomes obvious when she says she prefers the bloody version. When Lisa’s father says this is just a story, and it doesn’t matter to know the right version, Ma-ma-oo gets very angry and presses her lips to the point that they lose their color. Her anger is a result of knowing the importance of believing in one’s cultural stories and how empowering it can be to set the account of that story right whenever it is misrepresented. Later in the novel, Lisa herself feels ashamed of telling people that she has seen a b’gwus and fears people would ‘‘snicker about it the way they did when Ma-ma-oo insisted they were real’’ (18). This quote demonstrates that not all the

Native American characters believe in this important cultural figure and that they are distant from their own culture's values, and also the fact that this alienation can be passed on intergenerationally and harm many generations.

Not merely a cultural figure, b'gwus can be regarded as a metaphor for the Canadian aboriginal characters of the novel. One of the reasons this metaphor makes sense is that like b'gwus, the Native peoples have often been misrepresented or romanticized and commercialized too. This misrepresentation can be seen in Lisa's reflection on the way Sasquatch is viewed by the majority of people: "To most people, he is the equivalent of the Loch Ness monster, something silly to bring the tourists in. His image is even used to sell beer, and he is portrayed as a laid-back kind of guy, lounging on mountaintops in patio chairs, cracking open a frosty one" (195). This reflection reveals some of the painful ways the Native peoples' image has been sold and commercialized. Since Loch Ness monster is a mere mythical figure, the fact that Lisa mentions it is important and could reflect Lisa's lament that her Native people and some of their history and struggles have been reduced to mere myths and monsters.

One example of this reduction to myths can be seen in a part of the novel where Lisa is in the class listening to a lecture on some Native American tribes by a white teacher. The teacher not only gives a false account concerning those Native people, she also intends to force Lisa to read a section of a textbook that mentions that falsification aloud: "the Indians on the northwest coast of British Columbia had killed and eaten people as religious sacrifices" (49). This charged sentence is significant in showing the amount of misrepresentation concerning Native Americans. It also talks about them as distant historical monsters and not ordinary people who were living their lives. This brings to mind Lisa's father's version or the mainstream version of b'gwus which is gory and bloody versus Ma-ma-oo's version which is very peaceful. The

sentence also brings to mind Western ideas about Windigo and how it can be regarded as a symbol of the “savage” Native American with cannibalistic urges. This view is an oversimplification and falsification of the myth because just as the Windigo disease happens only in certain extreme occasions mostly due to starvation — which the European settlers have certainly played a role in through misusing the land, animals, and people — reducing Native American people to violent stereotypes erases the violence and destruction of colonialism and reduces complex cultures to caricatures.

Viewing Native Americans as cannibalistic savages is also an attempt on the part of colonialists to escape responsibility and accountability for the atrocities they have committed against the Native Americans. They view Natives as a cannibal and a Windigo so as to say their trauma and suffering are their own fault. This can be seen in another reflection Lisa has concerning b’gwus:

Most sightings of this shy creature are of single males, but B’gwus is part of a larger social complex, complete with its own clans, stories and wars. There are rumours that they killed themselves off, fighting over some unfathomable cause. Other reports say they starved to death near the turn of the century, after a decade of horrific winters. A variation of this rumour says that they were infected with TB and smallpox, but managed to survive by leaving the victims to die in the woods. They are no longer sighted, no longer make dashes into villages to carry off women and children, because they avoid disease-ridden humans (195).

This passage is one of the most important ones in the novel as it is charged with a lot of variations of falsification and misrepresentation that are committed against the Native American peoples if we continue the metaphor of b’gwus as an Indigenous character. One of the

misrepresentations includes the idea that the Native Americans fought amongst themselves and killed each other off for no good cause and reason. This statement reinforces the idea that the Native peoples are not civilized and are savages. The other rumor that discusses the diseases the Natives suffered such as TB and smallpox is ironic because these diseases were, in fact, brought to Native Americans by the European settlers, a fact that is not mentioned at all in the rumor. Instead of mentioning the settler's involvement in the calamities, the rumor reinforces the idea that indigenous people are monstrous and do horrible things to their own people. The last part of this passage where it states that b'gwus were no longer seen brings to mind the idea of viewing Native Americans as far-away mythological figures with problems that are merely in the past and history and no longer relevant. This view of the indigenous people as myth also helps the colonialists escape accountability and responsibilities for the crimes they have committed and continue to commit against Native Americans. Some of Herman's views concerning persecutors and abuser versus the victims are relevant here: "In order to escape accountability for his crimes, the perpetrator does everything in his power to promote forgetting: it never happened; the victim lies; the victim exaggerates; the victim brought it upon herself; and in any case it is time to forget the past and move on" (18). Here, Herman demonstrates her theory that the oppressors always try to bury the truth and to misrepresent the trauma. By showing the victim as the person who is in the wrong and in Native Americans' case, claiming that they are bloodthirsty and savages, it becomes easier for the wrongdoers to convince everyone that the victim brought it upon themselves, and in this way, the persecutors become able to escape responsibility for their crimes.

One of the ways the novel holds colonialism accountable for the intergenerational trauma is through discussing residential schools and their nightmarish effects on the characters such as

Mick, Trudy, and Josh who had to attend these schools. It also discusses the far-reaching effect of the schools through showing other characters who are also traumatized even though they never attended the schools themselves as a result of the trauma of residential schools being passed down to them. Examining the role of Canada's residential school system, it becomes clear that "Indian Residential School System set in motion a cycle of trauma, with some survivors reporting subsequent abuse, suicide, and other related behaviours" (Elias et al. 1560). Mick, Trudy, and Josh are deeply traumatized as a result of being sent to the residential schools as children and deal with the resulting trauma in unhealthy, non-productive, and destructive ways. According to Jodey Castriciano, among the most unspeakable things to happen to Haisla people is "the psychological and emotional damage to Aboriginal children in residential schools where the suppression of language and culture and the outlawing of First Nations spiritual practices all manifest in emotional and spiritual trauma" (802). Being sent to the residential school by their mother is a big source of trauma for Mick and Trudy, Lisa's uncle and aunt. In the schools, both children are exposed to repeated and prolonged abuse. Josh, too, has traumatic experiences in the school, and upon returning, he transfers that abuse to others.

In order to understand the magnitude of the trauma of Mick and Trudy, it is important to first discuss their father Ba-ba-oo and his own trauma as a result of being an unacknowledged and underappreciated veteran. In the novel, we first hear about Ba-ba-oo as an abusive father and husband, but later on, his wife, Ma-ma-oo reveals the details of his story and the reasons why he has become abusive; he is a World War II veteran who after losing his arm in battle, never gets any kind of recognition and compensation from the government, and as a result, feels a lot of resentment and disappointment:

When he came home, he couldn't get a job or get the money he thought he should get from Veterans Affairs because they said Indian Affairs was taking care of him. Indian Affairs said if he wanted the same benefits as a white vet, he should move off reserve and give up his status. If he did that, they'd lose their house and by this time, they had three children and my dad, Albert, was on the way (Robinson 56).

He feels helpless, depressed, and 'useless' as a result of not being able to support his family, and he believes 'Fighting didn't get [him] anything but lots of scars'(65). This emphasizes another aspect of the intergenerational trauma in which traumatizing is not only limited to soul wound and genetic transmission but also to traumatized parents' maladaptive and violent behavior. Ba-ba-oo releases his anger and disappointment on his children and wife and exposes them to physical and emotional violence and abuse. It is because of this behavior that Ma-ma-oo sends Mick and Trudy away to residential schools ironically as a way to save them from the intergenerational trauma and also as a way to stop herself from killing Ba-ba-oo while defending them against his abuse (157). The effects of Ba-ba-oo's behaviors on Mick and Trudy mixed with the residential school trauma result in these two characters suffering from intergenerational trauma. Trudy continues the cycle of abuse and trauma by exposing her daughter to her own trauma by being violent, demeaning, and abusive toward her. Mick does not continue this cycle and transference of trauma to the next generation, but only because he is not even interested in and has a fatalistic view toward forming a family and having children.

As a result of their prolonged and repeated trauma, many characters who are exposed to intergenerational trauma also exhibit symptoms of CPTSD. Mick shows many symptoms of this condition as a result of being sent to the residential schools where he is exposed to prolonged and

repeated trauma. It would be helpful to analyze his symptoms using Herman's theory so as to gain another cultural perspective, besides the intergenerational trauma theory, on his situation. In *Trauma and Recovery*, a distinction is made between the effect of a single traumatic blow, called "Type I" trauma, from the effects of prolonged and repeated trauma, called "Type II"; symptoms of Type II trauma include "denial and psychic numbing, self-hypnosis and dissociation, and alternations between extreme passivity and outbursts of rage" (135). The type II symptoms apply to Mick in that he alternates between the two moods of passivity and rage on multiple occasions in the novel. For example, when asked to babysit Lisa and Jimmy, he chooses to give that responsibility to Lisa and goes to sleep instead (Robinson 29). He also does not take his life and money problems seriously and relies on his brother to help him even in doing his taxes. On the other hand, there are many instances in which he bursts in rage at the smallest trigger. For example, he is triggered by seeing the tax forms sent by Revenue Canada: "I don't see why we have to file at all...The whole fucking country is on Indian land. We're not supposed to pay any taxes on or off reserves... This whole country was built on exploiting Indians..."(26). His brother's response to this —"god, not again" — shows that this is not the first time Mick has this kind of outburst. This interaction between the brothers is also important in showing how differently they react to their cultural past and all the atrocities that have happened in their history. Despite his trauma, Mick is very engaged and connected with his past whereas his brother, Lisa's father, dismisses Mick's justified anger as an annoyance.

This lack of understanding from Mick's own family has a major role in worsening his trauma symptoms which can be seen in another heated conversation between Mick and his sister Kate who triggers Mick's trauma by saying Grace before eating. Mick is infuriated and his response "They were after numbers! That's all [the priests] wanted! How many converts they

could say they had. How many heathens they—” (73) shows that he is not just mad at the act of saying grace itself, but his mind has traveled back to the time when his life was controlled by Christian priests in the residential schools. Kate is surprised and does not understand Mick’s reaction. Mick interprets her lack of understanding as “You never went to residential school. You can’t tell me what I fucking went through and what I didn’t... You don’t get it. You really don’t get it. You’re buying into a religion that thought the best way to make us white was to fucking torture children—” (74). The author does not reveal the exact nature of this torture in the novel, but Mick’s trauma symptoms show that the trauma was nothing short of severe and catastrophic — too painful to talk about easily. Herman explains, “Certain violations of the social compact are too terrible to utter aloud: this is the meaning of the word unspeakable”(12). She goes on to say that the trauma symptoms of traumatized people call attention to the existence of an unspeakable secret and at the same time deflect attention from it (12). This is most apparent in the way a traumatized person such as Mick alternate between feeling numb and reliving the event and bursting in rage as a result and his symptoms worsening as a result of lack of understanding from family and community.

Hence, Mick fulfills the hyperarousal symptom of trauma in which “the traumatized person startles easily, reacts irritably to small provocations, and sleeps poorly” (46). Later on in the novel, we get to know that Mick exhibits symptoms such as difficulty sleeping and having multiple flashbacks which cause him to shout and sob aloud (Robinson 72). In regards to intrusion (the second symptom of PTSD), Herman states that it can be experienced long after the actual trauma or the initial danger has passed, in other words, trauma survivors relive the trauma as if it was repeatedly happening in the present and prevents survivors from being able to resume “the normal course of their lives”(48). Herman mentions Freud, who after dealing with the

trauma of the First World War veterans, declares that the patients' states are "fixated to the trauma" (48). Herman states that the trauma symptoms caused by repeated sexual, emotional, and/or physical abuse are so severe that they can resemble those suffered by the traumatized veterans. Thus, even when not a veteran, Mick always seems to be fixated on his trauma of the residential schools – a trauma that has shaped his life and identity. The fixation and inability to let go of intrusive memories lead to the manifestation of another complex trauma symptom, constriction, where the victim feels helpless, out of control, and does not seem to be able to have a normal life as their entire psyche and consciousness are affected and changed negatively. Herman explains that because the traumatized person's personality was formed under abusive control, growing up does not lead to freedom from the symptoms; their personality doesn't adapt well to adult life because they have major problems regarding trust, inventiveness, and independence (125). As a result, the adult traumatized person still experiences extreme "impairments in self-care, in cognition and memory, in identity, and in the capacity to form stable relationships" (125). Mick fulfills this aspect because he feels vulnerable even as an adult, and finds it hard to settle down and have children of his own. When Lisa's mother insists that he should settle down, he responds with: "That's it? That's your advice? Pump out some kids and die?" (Robinson 76). This response shows his fatalistic worldview and cynical approach toward life and happiness. His trauma is so complex that growing up does not liberate him from it especially as a result of lack of support from his family and the fact that his pain is not understood and acknowledged.

The only person in the family who seems to understand Mick a little better is his sister Trudy because she, too, has been sent to residential schools as a child. However, she cannot offer much support as she has to deal with her own demons of trauma. The kind of abuse she suffered

is never stated directly; however, some aspects of it are revealed in Trudy's conversation with Lisa right after Lisa fights back against some white boys who are trying to harass her:

Honey ... if you were some little white girl, that would be true. But you're a mouthy Indian, and everyone thinks we're born sluts. Those guys would have said you were asking for it and got off scot-free... Facts of life, girly. There were tons of priests in the residential schools, tons of fucking matrons and helpers that 'helped' themselves to little kids just like you. You look at me and tell me how many of them got away scot-free (157).

This passage is very important because it not only shows that Native American women and children are at a higher risk of sexual assault and death, but it also sheds light on the realities of residential schools and the extent of the supposedly holy men and priests' abuse. Trudy saying "You look at me and tell me" suggests that she, too, could have been a target of not only physical and emotional abuse but also sexual assault.

As a result of her complex and prolonged trauma in her most vulnerable years as a child, Trudy not only exhibits many symptoms of CPTSD but also exposes her daughter, Tab, to this trauma. Like Mick, she has her periods of numbness, passivity, and outburst of anger; she drinks excessively, lets days pass by without being productive, and doesn't seem involved in her daughter's life or in life in general: "We could hear her vomiting in the upstairs bathroom, then clomping down the stairs to Tab's room, hungover and cranky" (38). These episodes of drunkenness are an everyday sight for her daughter. Trudy uses Tab to direct her anger toward, and she also humiliates her on many occasions in front of others. Trudy's other target of rage is her mother Ma-ma-oo to whom she is very openly hostile and rude. She blames her mother for sending her and Mick to the residential schools instead of leaving Ba-ba-oo as she feels her

mother has chosen her father over her and her brother (157). This incident of what Trudy perceives as familial betrayal and abandonment is traumatizing in itself and is mixed with her later residential school trauma. As a result of her traumas, Trudy does not seem to be able to have a normal bond and relationship with neither her daughter nor mother. Trudy exhibits signs of another CPTSD symptom, doublethink, in which she becomes abusive to her daughter while accusing her own mother to have been abusive to her. This is noted by her sister Kate who says Trudy “thinks Mother’s dirt, while she goes out and parties and treats Tab worse than what she blames Mother for” (176). Therefore, she also exhibits what Herman calls one of “the core experiences of psychological trauma” which is “disconnection from others” (146). Herman points out that even if certain trauma symptoms fade, they are never eliminated and can be revived by reminders, or triggers, even years after the event. Due to this altered state of consciousness after trauma especially seen in the constriction symptom, victims are not able to develop normal social and personal connections. In working with trauma survivors for nearly three decades, Herman has found that those who have experienced trauma find themselves questioning human relationships on a basic level of love, friendship, family, and community leaving the trauma victim to isolate themselves from others (108). Trudy as a result of her complex and deep wounds and trauma passed on to her from her father’s violent behavior and her mother’s seeming passivity finds it hard to break out of the cycle of trauma and subjects her daughter to the same trauma as well. Hence, her trauma is so strong that it even affects her motherly bond and love.

Josh, too, forgoes his familial bonds and continues the cycle of abuse and intergenerational trauma albeit in a more severe and perverse form. In the novel, it is revealed that Josh is sexually abused by Archibald, one of the priests in the residential school Josh was

sent to. Josh passes down his trauma to his niece, Karaoke, by sexually abusing her. This abuse leads to Karaoke developing maladaptive behaviors such as violence and social isolation. She engages in very violent fights with others and other times she behaves like a social recluse. She seems to be in her own world and does not speak even to her boyfriend Jimmy unless she is spoken to. The story of how she acquires the nickname, Karaoke, is also full of violence; “She’d got the nickname Karaoke last year after she hijacked the machine at the bar and his older brother had to stop her from killing the bouncer who tried to throw her out” (Robinson 172). This passage shows the extreme impulsiveness and violence Karaoke is capable of to the point of putting her own life at risk by her willingness to fight with and kill a “bouncer” — someone with a physical advantage over her. The novel also reveals that she has been in juvenile prison for “kicking the shit out of some girl” (173). The fact that she directs her anger towards other innocent people rather than her own abusive uncle shows a form of “doublethink” and internal conflict. Besides rage, Karaoke also exhibits numbness and dissociation in both physical and psychological sense. One example is when Lisa occasionally catches her empty stares: “Her eyes focused on something behind me, and I thought Mom might be coming up the stairs to check on who was visiting, but Karaoke was just staring through me” (221). This passage can remind one of the traumatized soldiers’ “thousand miles stare” in which they dissociate themselves from their surroundings in order to escape their harsh reality. This comparison is further justified because of Herman’s alignment of veterans’ trauma with ongoing and prolonged sexual, physical, and/or emotional abuse. As for physical numbness, Karaoke seems not to be able to feel pain in a normal way. This becomes more clear in her encounter and fight with her classmates in which she gets hurt badly but “grin[s] as if she [doesn’t] even feel it” (221).

What makes the trauma even worse for Karaoke is the fact that she does not seem to have a strong support system not because the people around her are not willing to help but mostly because she does not articulate her trauma and pain to others. Vikki Visvis in her analysis of the character of Karaoke mentions that, ‘‘Her nickname, Karaoke, signifies her muted state. Like a karaoke singer, who is denied her own lyrics or her own language’’ (11). This voicelessness is indeed traumatizing for Karaoke and worsens her symptoms mostly because it increases her feeling of isolation and loneliness. However, toward the end of the novel, she finally gets her voice heard through holding not only Josh but the priest, Archibald, and the residential school system accountable. She does this through her shocking ‘‘gift’’ for Josh which Lisa accidentally finds in her brother’s pocket:

In the pocket of Jimmy’s brown leather jacket, I found an old photograph and a folded-up card. The picture was black-and-white. Josh’s head was pasted over a priest’s head and Karaoke’s was pasted over a little boy’s. I turned it over: Dear Joshua, it read. I remember every day we spent together. How are you? I miss you terribly. Please write. Your friend in Christ, Archibald... The folded-up note card was a birth announcement. On the front, a stork carried a baby across a blue sky with fluffy white clouds. It’s a boy! was on the bottom of the card. Inside, in neat, careful handwriting it said, ‘‘Dear, dear Joshua. It was yours so I killed it’’ (Robinson 222).

Father Archibald’s picture and language especially his rather excessive sentimental tone on the back of the photograph can be interpreted as a suspicious act of intimacy and an indicator of sexual relations. Karaoke changes the priest’s head with uncle Josh’s and Josh’s head with her own to say that it is the white priest from the residential school that has started this chain of

abuse. Herman suggests that traumatized people find themselves re-enacting some aspect of the trauma scene in disguised form without realizing what they're doing which is a version of the repetition compulsion: "Adults as well as children often feel impelled to re-create the moment of terror, either in literal or in disguised form"(51). Sometimes this can take a twisted form when the victim repeats the abuse and enacts it on someone else. Vikki Visvis says this is a way of changing the power dynamics and regaining power. In the case of Josh, he tries to reconcile his past not just by replicating his trauma but mainly by inverting the power structure he experienced during his own abuse (21). This twisted inversion of power structure is one of the ways trauma is passed on intergenerationally. As Kramer-Hamstra notes in his analysis of Josh: "Returning home, Josh brought back his abuse to the individuals of the young generation in the Haisla community, repeating what had been done to him" (114). In this way, trauma acts as an infectious disease that can be pervasive and infect the whole community. One person's trauma can be transferred to that person's loved ones and relatives starting a cycle of abuse that can be difficult to break out of.

Lisa is another character who is trapped in her own chain of intergenerational trauma; this trauma is mostly caused as a result of her family not providing her with cultural input and guidance and passing to her their own internalized Western values. Initially, she is able to resist these issues to some degree through relying on her two sources of support: Ma-ma-oo and Mick. Ma-ma-oo helps Lisa know both herself and her culture better by making her understand her gifts and how they can be both good and bad depending on how she uses them (Robinson 97). She helps her make sense of the little man telling her that he is a tree spirit and that she cannot always be reliable that is why she should use her own personal judgment endorsed by her cultural knowledge (97). Ma-ma-oo also introduces Lisa to the spirits and the spiritual realm that

she herself encounters on a daily basis making Lisa feel that this is an ordinary aspect of life and that the world of the living and the dead are interconnected (54). Furthermore, she shows Lisa how to respect and properly mourn the dead using the right rituals (148). Mick, the passionate and fearless activist also helps get Lisa reconnected to her culture by sharing stories from his own personal life and also Haisla history. Lisa's parents do not approve of his telling Lisa about the urgent and current Native Americans' issues, but he insists that "She's got to know about these things"(49). If not for Mick's insistence, Lisa would have missed out on knowing her cultural story and the history of her people's struggle.

This knowledge about "these things" is one of the ways Lisa is able to resist internalized Western ideas through gaining a better understanding of her cultural stories — one example being the story of b'gwus which is an important aspect of her Haisla culture. Because of her connection to her grandmother, Ma-ma-oo, and her influence, Lisa knows the real version of b'gwus' story, and because of her uncle Mick the activist's inspiration, she has the strength to resist the misrepresentation of the Native Americans especially when their history is presented similar to the extreme and bloody version of the b'gwus story. One instance of this "activism" is when Lisa protests her teacher's falsified and shocking account of Native Americans by repeating some of the things Mick says and wears on his "Message T shirts": "I started singing 'Fuck the Oppressors.' The class cheered, more because of the swearing than anything else, and I was promptly dragged, still singing, to the principal's office" (49). Hence, one of the ways Lisa tries to fight and resist both her intergenerational trauma and also the misrepresentation and falsification of Native American heritage is through strengthening her ties with her cultural values and heritage. Lisa also feels more powerful as she knows more about the Haisla ways of seeing the world and knowledge.

Consequently, it is no surprise that Mick and Ma-ma-oo's deaths are such a big shock and trauma to Lisa. She does not only lose two beloved family members but also her ties to her own culture and all the things worth fighting for. Mick's death comes first which leads to Lisa displaying many symptoms of CPTSD. Among these symptoms are feeling numb, empty, and emotionless: "Some days, it was hard to do anything. Even eating seemed like too much trouble. I'd lie in bed and stare at nothing, and hours would pass in a flash. Then the next thing I knew, Mom would be calling me for dinner. It wasn't even painful. I felt nothing. Blank" (99). This passage shows how in the presence of an unresolved trauma, even doing everyday activities is nearly impossible. At other times, Lisa feels restless and in extreme pain and agitation: "Other days I wanted to run. Really run, push myself until I fell down. I ran up and down the highway, up the power lines, around and around the village. When taking a breath hurt, when sweat soaked me right down to the tips of my hair, when my muscles spasmed and ticked, I stopped" (99). These two passages show Lisa's extreme trauma and pain and how she is stuck between two very extreme states of being: one in which she feels nothing at all, and the other state in which her pain becomes so unbearable she feels her only way out is by running away. These extreme symptoms hinder the course of Lisa's everyday life and go side by side with her constant guilt of not being able to use her gifts properly. This loss also triggers severe dissociative symptoms in her. Not only does she want to run away from home, but she also wishes to run away from herself. This is when she develops sleepwalking during the nights which she fails to remember during the day (163).

Another example of Lisa's dissociation occurs when her parents take her to a psychiatric hospital. The experience is so unpleasant that she has an out of body experience there: "The hallways were filled with ghosts. They stood watch over their families. Some of them watched

me with strange, sad eyes. When I came back to my body, the nurse had called the doctor and they were watching me curiously. They said I had been walking around and around the bed” (164). Her description of the hospital and the way she sees it as filled with fearsome ghosts show how uncomfortable Lisa is in that environment to the point that she “leaves” her body for some time. This time, her sleepwalking happens during the day, in broad daylight, but she still has no memories of it, and the nurses have to tell her what she has been doing; this incident shows that her trauma symptoms are getting more severe and out of control.

In the hospital, the doctors examine Lisa but cannot find out what is wrong with her. This scene in the novel can in a way reflect Robinson’s mistrust of the Western ideas of therapy and healing especially in the absence of cross-cultural understanding and attempts to understand the Native American patients and their cultural views. As Herman whose theory is more understanding of the Native American ways states, healing is not possible in the absence of an attentive listener (196). Dori Laub calls this an “addressable other” (68) or an understanding listener “who can hear the anguish of one’s memories and thus affirm and recognize their realness” (68); there are no such addressable and understanding listeners in the hospital. On the contrary, there are cultural conflicts even between the therapist and Lisa. For example, the therapist is shocked to hear that Lisa believes in ghosts and has to ask her again to make sure she has heard it right. The irony is that Lisa can see a terrifying ghost in the doctor’s office at the time of their conversation (Robinson 167). For Lisa, this is not a safe place as the hungry ghost which can be a reminder of her unresolved trauma feeds first on the therapist and then on Lisa. Herman suggests that healing is not possible without a safe place. She goes into details saying that when the essential features of psychological trauma are disempowerment and disconnection from others, the recovery process is based upon the empowerment of the survivor and restoration

of relationships (146). This healing and recovery can happen in three stages: establishing safety, retelling the story of the traumatic event, and reconnecting with others (168). In her visit, Lisa does not achieve any of these and constantly feels in danger. She does not share her trauma story and does not open up about Mick's death. She also feels disconnected and defeated which becomes obvious when she does not even try to correct the therapist and just repeats what she wants to hear — that she is imagining the ghosts and also that the therapy has helped her a lot in overcoming her trauma.

As it can be seen, Mick's death has a devastating effect on Lisa. However, it is Ma-ma-oo's death that is the final straw for her and her emotional and mental well-being. Because with Ma-ma-oo's death, Lisa feels she has lost the last of her connections with her Haisla heritage. She feels lost, and the only way she feels she can deal with the unresolved pain and trauma in the absence of communal and familial support is by running away and trying to forget everything. However, the self-exile and separation from her family and community are traumatizing in themselves too. She goes to Vancouver, and there, she develops many destructive habits. Among her maladaptive behaviors are drinking alcohol, using drugs, having reckless intercourse, and spending her money:

I was here last year with Jimmy. 1988. Another banner year. A catalogue of the parties I remember, the amount I drank, the drugs I did would be pointless. It's a blur. A smudge. Two years erased, down the toilet, blotto. The first year, I managed to slog through grade ten, but I gave up on grade eleven altogether and took off to Vancouver with people I thought were friends but, it turned out, were not. Some of it was fun (182).

The fact that Lisa feels these two years have gone ‘‘down the toilet’’ shows her dissatisfaction with herself and her life, and even her excessive fun-seeking behaviors are not enough to make her feel better. She does admit that sometimes it has been fun for her, but through the language she uses in describing that time, it becomes obvious that it was merely her way of escape from pain and doing whatever she can to turn her memories into a ‘‘blur’’ so that she won’t be haunted by the ghosts of trauma.

The spiritual world has a tremendous effect on Lisa’s recovery as in the absence of real connections and friends, it is the only thing that saves her from her bad situation in Vancouver and reminds her of her lost cultural heritage. This reconnection happens when she sees a spirit which she first mistakes as her cousin, Tab. The spirit encourages her to get her life together and to go back to her family and to where she belongs. ‘‘I would have stayed that way for years if it wasn’t for Tab [the ghost that resembles Tab]’’ (183). Her encounter with the spirit and her listening to it are important because this is one of the first instances in which she fully trusts the spirit world and leaves Vancouver and her excessive way of life. Lisa starts to recover when she goes back to her family; she stops drinking excessively and goes back to school. She also works on re-establishing her severed ties with her family members (203). Before Lisa is able to make a full recovery, she is shocked by yet another trauma that tests her strength and her connection to her culture and people. However, this trauma which is Jimmy’s disappearance at the sea is a catalyst for her final full recovery.

It is by going back to Monkey beach to find her brother that she fully trusts and uses her Haisla gifts. Along the way she encounters many spirits whom she is able to listen to and understand (223). By listening to them and using her gifts, she has a vision about Jimmy and gets to know what exactly happened — the fact that he has attacked Josh for abusing Karaoke and

has pushed him off the boat followed by his own falling into the water and drowning (224). Without this vision, Lisa would not have known what has happened to her brother and Josh, and she might not have achieved the semi-closure she achieves at the end. It is important to note that some of the pieces of the puzzle in this novel especially those surrounding Jimmy's disappearance are revealed through what the Western literature might consider fantastical elements that are not fantastical to Native Americans and are very real to them.

In the final scene of the novel, Lisa gets full support from the spiritual world where most of her family is; she sees the spirits of Ma-ma-oo, Mick, and Jimmy under the water accompanied by some form of singing that Lisa does not understand in the beginning (228). This vision is very important as it reconnects Lisa with her cultural world and shows that she has the support of her community and family in the spiritual realm. Ma-ma-oo warns her about her gifts. "You have a dangerous gift...It's like oxasuli. Unless you know how to use it, it will kill you" (226). This is one of the best pieces of advice Lisa gets as it shows her how to properly control her powers and use them to their best capacity. Uncle Mick's spirit encourages Lisa to continue her activism by saying "You go out there and give 'em hell. Red power!" (227) This encouragement is very important because Lisa's knowledge about Native American activism through Mick has been one of the main factors that has helped her stay in touch with her community and culture.

After these two encounters, Lisa is finally able to make sense of the song: "For a moment, the singing becomes clear. I can understand the words even though they are in Haisla and it's a farewell song, they are singing about leaving and meeting again, and they turn and lift their hands. Mick breaks out of the circle and dances, squatting low, showing off" (228). The fact that she remembers the words of the Haisla language shows that she is fully reconnected

with her own culture. The farewell song reinforces the idea that this is not the end and that the spirits will always be there for her till she has to join them which Ma-ma-oo makes clear is not the time being. She encourages Lisa to go on living as she has an important task as a survivor — the task of letting her culture live on through her and using her gifts properly. Another task becomes more clear in the spirit of Jimmy's words: "Tell her" (228). These words remind Lisa of the importance of telling and passing on the story in order to fulfill justice. "Her" here can refer to Karaoke. By telling her about what Jimmy has done for her, killing Josh, her faith in justice might be restored again, and she might get a chance of getting her life back. This is Jimmy's way of passing his integrated and understood trauma story on to future generations. Herman calls this process as acquiring a "legacy" that expresses the traumatized person's desire to protect others from trauma and from what they themselves have suffered (221). According to Herman, this passing of knowledge is empowerment and a major part of healing. She also emphasizes the fact that a survivor's "recovery is based not on the illusion that evil has been overcome, but rather on the knowledge that it has not entirely prevailed and on the hope that restorative love may still be found in the world" (226). In standing up for one's cause while supported by family and community, the survivor regains their faith in the world and is able to accept that it contains more than evil and injustice which enables them to work through some of the trauma. This passage of "story" can help Karaoke's faith be restored in life and provides her with hope for a better future. In this same process, Lisa's faith in magic and the spiritual aspects of her culture has been restored too. She feels relieved knowing that there is still magic in the world (Robinson 194).

## Summary and Conclusion

Among the many things that I have learned from reading and analyzing Linda Hogan's *Solar Storms* and Eden Robinson's *Monkey Beach*, alongside using Judith Herman's theories of trauma and healing, is the fact that Native Americans' fight for their rights is the fight of all subjugated and oppressed peoples and nations around the globe. The novels address a question all wronged nations have asked at some point: "how do conquered people get back their lives?" The answer is straightforward; they get back their lives through resistance which is a universal formula for not only survival but also, and more importantly, thriving and flourishing as people. Hence, in both novels, resisting oppression and giving voice to the characters that are otherwise ignored by the dominant society leads to survivance; a theory founded by Gerald Vizenor which entails: "Native survivance is an active sense of presence over absence, deracination, and oblivion; survivance is the continuance of stories, not a mere reaction, however pertinent..."

(vii). Similar to Vizenor's vision here, both Hogan and Robinson explain that as long as there is resistance and fighting against injustice, the conquered people are not conquered at all, and they are more than merely passive victims. Judith Herman agrees with this formula too and adds that even if no "tangible" victory is achieved, pursuing one's cause and seeking justice is a triumph in itself because it shows that the traumatized person is empowered with the knowledge that their trauma has outside sources and fighting means the possibility of putting an end to the abuse and hope for a better life and future.

Hogan and Robinson teach us that the struggle of Native Americans is also the struggle for the safety and continuity of the planet itself because everything is indeed interconnected, and in order not to disturb the balance of life, it is important for everyone and everything to cooperate with one another. In *Solar Storms*, although Angel is deeply hurt at the damage imposed on nature and the Native American way of life, she remains optimistic that the state of humanity is intricately connected with nature and that one day nature and humanity will enjoy a more harmonious relationship. Similarly in *Monkey Beach*, Lisa restores her faith and hope in life as she comes to realize that magical things still exist in this world, and in a world where everything is connected, that magic is automatically part of everyone as well. This hope and faith are the reason why both protagonists are able to break and transcend the cycle of abuse initiated by colonialism and man's greed; they are able to move beyond their personal stories and join the universal fight of the good against the evil.

Both Hogan and Robinson encourage empathy and understanding between people from different cultures and geographical places so using Judith Herman's theory is in part a nod to their desire. Native American ideas and Judith Herman's theory can work side by side because of their many commonalities. They can also both be applied to other oppressed indigenous people. Hogan, Robinson, and Herman all stress the fact that just like collective and intergenerational trauma having a political dimension, healing can only be possible when one engages in that political aspect too. They agree that taking one's story of injustice and trauma public can be as strong a tool as appearing in the court of justice or participating in demonstrations and protests. Therefore, the novels work as testimonies in themselves, and they show how to achieve healing rather than merely telling how to.

Angel and Lisa represent the hope both Hogan and Robinson have for Native Americans' future, and they also reflect resilience and strength in the face of ongoing problems and struggles. To use Bush's words in *Solar Storms*, it has been important for the Native peoples to look at the scars and see proof that healing exists (106). Many traumatizing events in the Native Americans' past only show their resilience and strength in the face of those hardships. The authors do acknowledge the damaging impacts of trauma on their characters, but they still demonstrate their faith and belief in the healing powers of resilience and cultural knowledge. Therefore, the sites of trauma are also sites of hope and faith. Looking at trauma and healing in this way, victims of trauma, now survivors, transcend to the status of heroes and fighters for justice.

Through demonstrating their characters' retaining their cultural identity despite the colonialists' attempts at assimilation, Hogan and Robinson make sure that their stories do go on, free from colonial misrepresentation and falsification. By exposing colonialism as the "original sin" and the perpetrator of many atrocities against the Native American peoples, they are able to "exorcise" their characters from its evil spirit. They remind us that trauma can affect entire nations and in the Native Americans' case, it is far from a single and individual occurrence, and the perpetrator is the Western system of governing and values. Likewise, healing cannot occur in isolation and should cover the broad range of the affected communities. Hogan emphasizes the fact that being abusive does affect the perpetrator as well, and their acknowledgment of their wrongdoings and atoning is beneficial to all parties involved. Similarly, Herman reminds us that of the importance of oppressive countries atoning and wronged nations taking time to heal. She gives the example of many countries who have suffered under the reign of a dictator or as a result of civil wars and who have worked through the trauma to achieve healing. She believes

that healing does not occur merely as a result of putting an end to the abuse; the wrong-doing parties should publicly acknowledge and atone for their atrocities and also be held responsible for their crimes before the law. If justice is not achieved, the ghost of trauma will fester and continue to haunt future generations. Hogan, Robinson, and Herman remind us that it is important for the entire countries to remember, take action, and mourn in order not to relive the past's horrors. It is also important to rebuild social connections so that the traumatized individuals do not feel alone in their struggle because what affects one person affects everyone else as well. Moreover, the novels tell us that survivors of trauma who have worked through their pain and suffering, have reconnected with their communities and the world around them, and have channeled their personal experiences into larger efforts for justice become transcendent beings who teach us a great deal about life, the world, and ourselves.

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