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*I will not have my life narrowed
down. I will not bow down to
somebody else's whim or to
someone else's ignorance.*

– bell hooks

Danke

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1. Introduction

As it has been shown by studies in the last years, Native American women are the most vulnerable female ethnic group in the U.S. when it comes to oppression, discrimination, and abuse (see Crossland, Palmer, and Brooks 772–3). Finding themselves at the intersection of being indigenous and female in a white male-dominated society, they are frequently affected by poverty, a limited access to education, and are particularly often subjected to physical and sexual violence (see for instance Allen, *Sacred Hoop* 191, or Hogan, “Native Women” 1). According to a regional investigation that concentrated on six different Native American nations, as many as 45% of the female members of the tribes had been “physically assaulted and 14% had been raped since turning 18 years old” (Crossland, Palmer, and Brooks 773), and, as another study has shown, three in four women have experienced physical abuse “in a relationship [...] and 16% of women reported forced sex by a partner” (Crossland, Palmer, and Brooks 773), with almost 50% of these women stating that they suffered injuries which required medical treatment as a consequence of these incidents. In addition, statistics suggest that Native American women are eight to twelve times more likely to become victims of domestic violence than non-Native women in the U.S. (see Crossland, Palmer, and Brooks 773) and that overall “more than four in five American Indian and Alaska Native women (84.3 percent) have experienced violence in their lifetime” (Rosay). While significantly more indigenous women are being subjected to physical or sexual abuse by non-Native men, the perpetrators of approximately a third of the women are indigenous men (see Rosay). Woman-identified Native Americans therefore not only become victims of violence with a shockingly high likelihood, but they also experience abuse both within and outside their community.

These numbers and the hardships indigenous women frequently have to face are even more dismaying when taking into consideration that the majority of all Native American nations have traditionally held women and ‘the feminine’ in great esteem or can be even characterized as matriarchal, women-centered societies, as scholars such as Paula Gunn Allen, Kate Shanley, or Devon Mihesuah stress. Moreover, most tribal concepts of gender and sexuality were traditionally not limited to the binaries of female and male and a normative heterosexuality. This discrepancy between the high status indigenous women originally had in their communities and their likelihood to become victims of oppression, discrimination, and abuse in present-day America has therefore

become one of the main fields of research of Native American feminist theories. Focusing on the unique situation of indigenous women and indigenous people who do not identify along heteronormative lines, Native American feminisms have identified the structures of settler colonialism and heteropatriarchy as the factors responsible for this drastic decline of status tribal women have experienced and propose ways to dismantle these structures and to reinvigorate the position of Native American women. The adoption of a Native American feminist stance is therefore essential in order to oppose oppressive systems and can thus be regarded as a highly important approach to a discussion of literary works by indigenous authors.

For that reason, a Native American feminist perspective will also be employed in this thesis and its analysis of two novels by renowned female Native American authors. In the discussion of Linda Hogan's fictional work *Solar Storms* (1995) and Leslie Marmon Silko's widely-received novel *Ceremony* (1977) it will thus be examined in what ways settler colonial and heteropatriarchal structures have affected the protagonists and indigenous communities in the literary works and how these destructive forces are countered by the Native American characters. Furthermore, I argue that through a recentering on traditional woman-centered ways and on the feminine principle of their cultures, the balance of the Native American communities in the books is restored.

In order to lay the groundwork for the analysis of the two literary works, the first part of this thesis centers on the theoretical background that is needed to employ a Native American feminist perspective. Hence the concepts of settler colonialism and heteropatriarchy will be elaborated in detail and an insight into intersectional feminist theories and the history of indigenous feminisms will be given before the section concludes with a short discussion of principles that need to be considered in an analysis of Native American literature.

The main part of the thesis then focuses on the critical and thorough examination of Linda Hogan's *Solar Storms* and Leslie Marmon Silko's *Ceremony* from a Native American feminist angle. As a first step, it will be pointed out in what ways settler colonial and heteropatriarchal structures become apparent in the works and what impact these systems have on the indigenous population in the novels, before as a second step it will be expounded on the Native American communities' resistance to these structures and their path to a restoration of balance.

At the end of this thesis the main results and arguments of the analyses of the two fictional works are then compared and discussed and an overall conclusion is drawn.

2. Theoretical background

2.1 Settler colonialism

In order to achieve a thorough comprehension of the manifold, multilayered ways of oppression and marginalization Native American women are confronted with, a careful examination of the colonial past and its repercussions is necessary. A closer look at the field of settler colonial studies and thus a discussion of the mechanisms of the American colonialization with its wide-ranging consequences for the indigenous population will also contribute to a deeper understanding of the views and objectives of Native American feminisms¹, which will be treated later in this thesis.

First of all, an engagement with the impact of colonialism on the Native American population and especially on Native American women requires caution and rigor regarding the description of and terminology used for the colonial process. It is important to note that when it comes to colonization, a crucial distinction between “colonies of occupation” (Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin 193) or what is often just referred to as “colonialism” (Veracini 1), and so-called “settler colonies” must be drawn. As Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin point out, there are

two types of European colonies: settler (or settler-invader) colonies and colonies of occupation. Nigeria and India are examples of colonies of occupation, where indigenous people remained in the majority but were administered by a foreign power. Examples of settler colonies where, over time, the invading Europeans (or their descendants) annihilated, displaced and/or marginalized the indigenes to become a majority non-indigenous population, include Argentina, Australia, Canada and the United States. (193)

In settler colonies, thus, the settlers, who are being distinguished from the ‘colonizers’, i.e. the colonial power, seek to stay, appropriate the land and resources, and impose their own values and legislations on the indigenous population (see Tuck and Reollet 17). Therefore, even though “both colonisers and settler colonisers move across space, and both establish their ascendancy in specific locales” (Veracini 1), their intentions as well as their conduct vary significantly. While colonialism is targeted at a utilization of commodities and workforce from the colonized countries mostly from abroad, and essentially *needs* the colonized in order to maintain the exploitative relations (see Veracini 5–8), settler colonialism pursues the same purpose of exploiting the land, but “[i]n order

¹ Following Tuck and Reollet (17), I choose to refer to indigenous feminisms in the plural form, as there is not only one Native feminist theory, but different approaches with distinctions as well as similarities exist. For a more detailed discussion of various terms and approaches existent in Native feminist theories, see section 2.3.

for settlers to usurp the land and extract its value, Indigenous peoples must be destroyed, removed, and made into ghosts” (Arvin, Tuck, and Morrill 12). In the case of the settler colonialization of North America this desired erasure of Native peoples was effected “through genocide but also through forced removal, residential schooling, blood quantum policies, and other policies designed to diminish Indigenous peoples’ claims to land” (Tuck and Recollet 17), among them for instance coerced and involuntary sterilizations of thousands of Native American women in the 1970s (see Torpy 1).

The settlers’ role in this process of colonialization is often characterized as being conflicting, since on the one hand they exert oppression of the Native population and consider themselves to be superior, while on the other hand they find themselves in a hierarchically inferior position in relation to the ones in power in their country of origin (see Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin 194). Torn between two worlds in both of which they are viewed in terms of their otherness, yet in which they both exercise and experience domination, settlers are, according to Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin, “simultaneously both colonized and colonizer” (194). This view of settlers as outcast newcomers to the new world who are lacking identity, however, may invoke victimization and seems to downplay the violent repression of the indigenous population by the settlers. In addition, settlers in settler colonies – also labeled “settler-invaders” by Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin (193), which can serve as a more critical term in the context of colonialism – tend to often become agents of cultural appropriation by utilizing “icons of the ‘native’ to their own self-representation” (Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin 194), which might be regarded as yet another facet of white domination over indigenous peoples (see Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin 194).

Furthermore, it is of pivotal importance to note that settler colonialism “is a structure not an event” (Wolfe 388). While it can be argued that the genocide of Native Americans might be considered as a gory event in the past, the other abovementioned manifold attempts of an elimination of the indigenous population of America still continue to be employed and to affect Native Americans up until today. “Officially encouraged miscegenation, [...] child abduction, religious conversion, resocialization in total institutions such as missions or boarding schools” (Wolfe 388) as well as alienation of land are only some measures that have been adopted by the white settler colonial society in North America to decrease the number and power of indigenous peoples.

The structural nature of settler colonialism as it is described by Wolfe, however, also impacts a potential exit from the settler colonial status quo. As Veracini argues, settler colonialism “is characterized by a persistent drive to ultimately supersede the conditions of its operation” (3), meaning that it aims at eventually reaching all objectives of settler colonialism, such as the appropriation of land and resources as well as the domination and erasure of Native otherness. Once these goals are achieved, the settler-invaders “claim to be no longer settler colonial (they are putatively ‘settled’ and ‘postcolonial’ [...])” and “[s]ettler colonialism thus covers its tracks and operates towards its self-supersession” (Veracini 3). In other words, settler colonialism is a long-running process in which the settler-invaders seek to repress any indigenous traces until they have successfully disseminated the notion that the Native population solely belongs to the historical past rather than the present, and that they, the settlers, have now become the rightful proprietors and ‘natives’ of a land (see Tuck and Reollet 17; Arvin, Tuck, and Morrill 13). Thus, an oppressive normality is created, in which still existing settler colonial structures are denied and indigenous presences are historicized. This, according to Veracini, is often falsely claimed to be ‘postcolonial’, while in reality a genuine termination of settler colonialist structures can only be achieved by “an indigenous ultimate permanence” (7) in the form of “resistance and survival” (8). Yet Veracini notes that, even though sustained and persistent Native presence is a means to defy settler colonialism, eventually the struggle for “resistance and survival” (8) should no longer be needed because ideally, an elimination of the Native population would simply not be sought after anymore and Native peoples would stop “being understood as inherently vulnerable and endangered” (9).

Settler colonialism in North America is therefore not a historical event but a still existing structure that has affected, marginalized, and threatened – and continues to do so – the Native peoples of the continent tremendously. As Arvin, Tuck, and Morrill point out, however, settler colonial structures, as persistent in the U.S., are “a gendered process” (8) and strongly entangled with the concept of heteropatriarchy. It is one of the main objectives of Native feminist studies to examine and reveal the ramifications these two inextricably interwoven concepts of settler colonialism and heteropatriarchy have had on indigenous societies and especially on indigenous women in the past, as well as still have today (see Tuck and Reollet 17). In order to set the ground for a more in-depth discussion of Native feminist theories in section 2.3, the term heteropatriarchy and its implications will briefly be elaborated in the following.

2.2 Heteropatriarchy, intersectionality, and a ‘gendered nation’

Heteropatriarchy can be defined as a form of societal structure that promotes the concepts of heterosexuality and patriarchy as the only logical and “natural” ways and establishes them as a norm (see Arvin, Tuck, and Morrill 13).

The structural principles of heteropatriarchy are based on the assumption that there is a natural distinction between and “division” (Yep 32) of two genders, male and female, that are frequently claimed to be “biological” (Tuck and Reollet 17), but in fact are to a large extent merely “culturally constructed” (17)². This “naturalized polarity” (Yep 32) of the two (predominately constructed) genders male and female, which Wilton calls “heteropolarity” (qtd. in Yep 32), is necessary for the establishment of heterosexuality and, in consequence, patriarchy as a norm.

Following the common assumption that men and women are biologically complementary to each other and “opposite sex[es]” (Yep 32) whose sexual engagement is ‘anatomically designated’, heterosexuality is considered as “normal and natural” (Arvin, Tuck, and Morrill 13) in most Western societies, while any deviation from that norm is regarded as anomalous or even repulsive. The concept of heterosexuality permeates all aspects of modern Western society as a “naturalized” (Ingraham 315) norm, for which the term “heteronormativity” (Warner xxi; Ingraham 315) is frequently employed, and serves “as the very model of inter-gender relations, as the indivisible basis of all community” (xxi), as Warner puts it. This perception of heterosexuality as the ‘natural’ form of sexual orientation in turn also affects the expectations a heteronormative society has of its members in terms of gender roles, as they are only accepted as “‘real’ women” (Yep 32) or “‘real’ men” (Yep 32) when conforming to the heterosexual standard. “From this perspective”, as Yep states referring to Wilton, “lesbians are not proper women and gay men are failed men” (32).

What Wilton terms “heteropolarity”, i.e. the strict distinction and binary relationship of two largely constructed genders, furthermore also enables the concept of patriarchy, as he argues:

² The constructedness of gender and the distinction between sex and gender has been a central, but also debated concept in Gender and Feminist studies of the last decades. One of the earliest elaborations on this topic was published in book *The Second Sex* by Simone de Beauvoir, in which she states that “[o]ne is not born, but rather becomes, a woman” (qtd. in Pilcher and Whelehan 56). As Pilcher and Whelehan note, “[t]he purpose of affirming a sex/gender distinction was to argue that the actual physical or mental effects of biological difference had been exaggerated to maintain a patriarchal system of power and to create a consciousness among women that they were naturally better suited to ‘domestic’ roles” (56). For more information on the sex vs. gender debate, see for instance Pilcher and Whelehan (56–59).

“[H]eteropolarity is necessary for patriarchy, for it must be possible to distinguish men from women in order to institute and reproduce a power differential that is (precisely) predicated upon that difference” (qtd. in Yep 32). While in its literal sense, patriarchy denotes the domination of “a male head of a social unit [...] over other (especially younger) men, all women and children” (Pilcher and Whelehan 93), it has come to describe a hierarchical structure that is constituted “by male domination and female submission” (Yep 32) in most of feminist scholarly discourse of the last decades. Arvin, Tuck, and Morrill additionally speak of “heteropaternalism” (13), which they define as “the presumption that heteropatriarchal nuclear-domestic arrangements, in which the father is both center and leader/boss, [and which] should serve as the model for social arrangements of the state and its institutions” (13).

Historically, the social hierarchy of patriarchy has been internalized in Western society since Aristotle’s claim “that woman’s place in man’s world derives both from her essential biological, reproductive function [...], and the inferiority of her reason to man’s” (Code 378), which for him led to the conclusion that “men are to rule over women” (Code 378). Similar notions about the ‘natural’ roles of men and women as well as internalized, often unconscious suppositions of a hierarchy between the socially accepted genders male and female have thus prevailed since ancient Greece and are still existent in modern Western societies as something that has come to be perceived as commonplace. This becomes evident not only in public matters such as reproductive rights or childcare policies, but also in still persisting patriarchal ideas such as the assumptions “that women are incapable (physically, intellectually, or emotionally) of certain kinds of work, or that placing children in day care violates a mother’s *natural* duties” (378), as Code points out.

Rigid assumptions about certain naturalized gender roles and a hierarchy between the genders has subsequently lead to societal structures that “privileg[e]” (Sellers 83) men and subjugate women in certain ways in almost every aspect of life. As Sellers stresses, this “centralization of men [...] [and] simultaneous subjugation of women [is upheld] in order for the men to maintain that privilege for themselves and all subsequent male generations” (84). She furthermore adds that, although only a limited number of men have access to the full economic advantages of patriarchy, every man in fact profits from this social hierarchy regardless of his socioeconomic status due to “the inherent privilege of men” (84). From this perspective, it could thus be stated that patriarchy is a naturalized

social hierarchy that overarches various spheres of social coexistence and is a dominating privilege for all males.

In gender and women studies, patriarchy has, although a central concept, not only been defined differently and from various perspectives by feminist scholars, but its definitions and interpretations also remain to be contested to some extent. Despite the overall agreement on patriarchy as a structure with profound effects on the situation of women, various branches of gender studies such as radical feminism or Marxist feminism – just to name two of them – take different approaches to the concept (see Pilcher and Whelehan 93). According to the theory of radical feminism, for instance, it is due to male supremacy in the household and “men’s control of women’s bodies” (Pilcher and Whelehan 6) that patriarchy is established and that it creates social imbalances. For Marxist feminist theories, on the contrary, it is capitalism and the resulting “[c]lass inequality” (Pilcher and Whelehan 94) that enables patriarchy, as it encourages female housemakers who stay at home. One approach to gender and women studies that sought to reconcile the two branches of Marxist feminism and radical feminism is the so-called “dual systems theory” (Cook 146). In this theory, patriarchy as seen by radical feminist scholars and capitalism are both made responsible for the way in which society is organized and are either regarded as being two interconnected or already merged “systems of gender oppression” (Cook 146).

Referring to the abovementioned approaches, Walby has taken the discussion about patriarchy further by arguing that patriarchy is “a system of social structures and practices in which men dominate, oppress and exploit women” (20). According to her, this system contains six different structures: “patriarchal production relations in the household” (21), “patriarchal relations in paid work, patriarchal relations in the state, male violence, patriarchal relations in sexuality, and patriarchal relations in cultural institutions” (20). In Walby’s theory of patriarchy, the six structures are independent to a great extent, yet they are also interconnected and affecting each other oftentimes. Most importantly, Walby stresses that, although specifically speaking of Britain, patriarchy can change “in both the degree and form” (23) over time. She argues that in Britain patriarchy has shifted its dominant focus from the private sphere, which predominately concerns gender relations in the household, to the public sphere, which mostly concerns the structures of patriarchal relations in paid work as well as in the state, manifesting for instance in unequal wages and limited access to certain professions or positions for women (see Walby 21–24). This

observation which Walby made for Britain, however, probably is equally applicable for other modern Western societies.

Walby's theory of patriarchy, which aims to include various different spheres in which male domination is exercised, of course is only one of several concepts to explain patriarchal structures and has been under some scholarly debate, just as the theory of patriarchy as a means to explain social inequalities in general. Following the assumption that gender is a socially constructed concept, theories of patriarchy have been critiqued for reducing the interpretation of gender relations to the binary system of 'male' and 'female' and omitting other, non-binary gender identities (see Pilcher and Whelehan 94). Apart from that, the strong Euro-, Anglo- or Western-centric viewpoint immanent in most theories and the neglect of cultural diversity when it comes to gender relations and social hierarchies has been subject of substantial criticism (see Pilcher and Whelehan 94). Especially considering that not all societies across the globe have traditionally been structured in a patriarchal way – among them many Native American tribes, as will be discussed in more detail later in this thesis– this seems to be a highly valid point. As Code notes, however, it is “the occurrence of matriarchies [that] attests to the ‘artefactual’ character of patriarchy, to its susceptibility to challenge and modification” (378) – thus, the existence of alternative forms of societal organization once again reveals the wrongful naturalization of patriarchal structures.

One of the most fundamental points of criticism, however, concerns the failure of most earlier publications on patriarchy to recognize the impact layers of identity other than gender – such as class, race, nationality, and so forth – have on the social situation of women (see Pilcher and Whelehan 94-96; DiPalma and Ferguson 134; Lykke 49–50). Emphasizing this necessity to take multiple different factors that can contribute to women's oppression into account, the Black feminist Kimberlé Crenshaw employed the metaphor of a traffic intersection for the discrimination of Black women in her 1989 article, through which she consequently established the concept of “intersectionality” in gender and women studies:

The point is that Black women can experience discrimination in any number of ways and that the contradiction arises from our assumptions that their claims of exclusion must be unidirectional. Consider an analogy to traffic in an intersection, coming and going in all four directions. Discrimination, like traffic through an intersection, may flow in one direction, and it may flow in another. If an accident happens in an intersection, it can be caused by cars traveling from any number of directions and, sometimes, from all of them.

Similarly, if a Black woman is harmed because she is in the intersection, her injury could result from sex discrimination or race discrimination. (149)

More specifically, Crenshaw argues that the intersectional discrimination Black women suffer from often cannot merely be considered as “the sum of racism and sexism” (140), but has to be seen as a unique form of discrimination, which thus requires a new analytical procedure to comprehend the diverse experiences of oppression made by women of color. Crenshaw’s plea for a feminist approach that takes the diverse and manifold forms of disadvantages many women (of color) face into account has been received with great interest by other scholars, and the concept of intersectionality has since then been widely discussed in the field of gender and women studies (see Lutz, Herrera Vivar, and Supik 4–8). Although some strands of feminist theory had already partly included other factors than gender in their analyses of social inequalities of women at the time of Crenshaw’s publication, as for instance Marxist feminism, the awareness that women are not a homogeneous group who face the same forms and degrees of oppression has particularly increased since then (see Lutz, Herrera Vivar, and Supik 4–8). As Lykke states, it is now “a majority of present-day feminist theorists” (49–50) who stress that approaches on gender “must be understood as *intersectional*” (50). Thus, approaches on gender “should always be considered in relation to its intersections with constructions of other sociocultural categories such as race, ethnicity, class, sexuality, age, dis/ability, nationality and so on” (Lykke 50). Consequently, this premise of an intersectional approach to interpretations of social inequalities also applies to concerns experienced by Native American women, where it is indispensable to consider the multiple kinds of discrimination these women are frequently subjected to.

In order to achieve a thorough understanding of the system responsible for the oppression of indigenous women, and of the field on Native American feminist studies, however, it is necessary to recur to the already introduced topics of settler colonialism and heteropatriarchy, and to have a look at how these two concepts are interwoven and impact Indian American women. As was already elaborated earlier, “[s]ettler colonialism is a persistent social and political formation in which newcomers/colonizers/settlers come to a place, claim it as their own, and do whatever it takes to disappear the Indigenous peoples that are there” (Arvin, Tuck, and Morrill 12). Similarly to settler colonialism, heteropatriarchy too has to be regarded as an ongoing structure that is still existent in modern America and in which the “social hierarchy” (Smith, “Queer” 60) that views women as subordinate to men, heterosexuality, as well as a strict distinction of the genders male

and female are perceived as the norm and are “naturalized” (Smith, “Queer” 60). The connections of these two structures of settler colonialism and heteropatriarchy, which have had a fundamental effect on Native women in the past as well as today, are manifold and will be outlined in the following as well as in section 2.3 of this thesis.

First of all, it is of importance to note that, according to Smith, “[h]eteropatriarchy is the building block of US empire [and] [i]n fact, [...] the building block of the nation-state form of governance” (“Heteropatriarchy” 68). Smith argues that it is due to the fact that the concept of heteropatriarchy and thus the existence of social hierarchy in a community are so firmly entrenched in Western minds as something “natural and inevitable” (“American” 312), that the hierarchical structures of a “nation-state” (312) are legitimized. In other words, the hierarchy that is experienced through the prevalence of heteropatriarchy in a society is perceived as something inherently normal and thereby enables the implementation of another form of social hierarchy, namely that of a “nation-state form of governance” (Smith, “Heteropatriarchy” 68). The mechanics of heteropatriarchy and state leadership are therefore comparable: “Just as the patriarchs rule the family, the elites of the nation-state rule their citizens” (“American” 312), Smith states.

Unlike the European settlers, however, most Native American societies traditionally were not structured in a hierarchical, patriarchal manner at the time the settler colonialization of North America commenced (see for instance Allen, *Sacred Hoop* 2). From this emerges that the invaders felt the need to forcibly implement patriarchal structures in Native American nations³, since “they realized that indigenous peoples would not accept colonial domination if their own indigenous societies were not structured on the basis of social hierarchy” (Smith, “Queer” 61). By forcing heteropatriarchal structures upon the indigenous population, the settler invaders have aimed at establishing societal structures that are heteropaternal, i.e. organized into male dominated “nuclear families” (Arvin, Tuck, and Morrill 14). Additionally, a confinement and oppression of the often more fluid and open concepts of gender and sexuality of Native Americans has been sought after by the settler invaders, since the logics of patriarchy, which they have wanted to implement, are dependent on heteropolarity (see Tuck and Recollet 17; Yep 32). Only after the imposition of

³ Here it has to be noted that, by referring to Native American societies as Native ‘nations’ in this thesis, the term ‘nation’ is *not* meant in the Western sense of a hierarchical “nation-state” (see Smith, “Heteropatriarchy” or “American”), but is employed to emphasize the heterogeneity and sovereignty of Native American peoples. Additionally, it is used to avoid the rather problematic term ‘tribe’, which has evoked connotations of Native Americans as ‘savage’ or ‘primitive’ in the past, and which therefore will not be used in this thesis.

heteropatriarchal structures on the Native population, which has aimed at the disappearance of gender diversity and “Indigenous people’s complex structures of government and kinship” (Arvin, Tuck, and Morrill 14) in favor of the establishment of heteropaternal families and binary gender roles, the colonial process of the invaders could successfully proceed. This was for instance achieved through measures such as the Canadian Indian Act of 1876, which declared patrilineality as a means to determine Indian status and, consequently, the entitlement to land and political rights, even though the majority of the Native nations have traditionally been structured matrilineally⁴ (see Arvin, Tuck, and Morrill 15). Moreover, “resocialization in total institutions such as missions or boarding schools” (Wolfe 388) was used to alienate indigenous children from their homes and traditions, and pressure them into “Western gender roles [...] often also subject[ing] them to sexual violence” (Arvin, Tuck and Morrill 15). As Smith concludes, it has thus not only been the main objective of settler colonialist forces to erase the indigenous population, “but to destroy their sense of being people” (“American” 312), which the settler invaders tried to achieve through the imposition of heteronormativity and heteropatriarchy (see Smith, “Heteropatriarchy” 69–70).

Salles connects settler colonialism and heteropatriarchy in another interesting way, namely through an interpretation of the colonial process as such as “gendered” (120). She refers to Stuart Hall’s description of a famous engraved visualization of Amerigo Vespucci’s arrival in America by Theodor Galle, in which a peremptory male character depicting Vespucci is “surrounded by the insignia of power, science, knowledge and religion” (Hall 5, qtd. in Salles 120), symbolizing the colonial force of Europe, while he encounters “a woman, naked, in a hammock, surrounded by the emblems of an – as yet unviolated – exotic landscape” (Hall 5, qtd. in Salles 120) embodying the ‘savage’ yet desirable continent America (see SUNY Oneonta Art Department, *Ideology of Discovery*). Quoting Sugars and Moss, Salles argues that presenting the newly discovered continent and with it the indigenous population as female suggests “that the land is a ‘virginal’ space, ready to be tamed, controlled, and overtaken [...] mak[ing] it easier to justify conquest in a patriarchal system such as the European one of the time” (Sugars and Moss 29–30, qtd. in Salles 120). Furthermore, Sugars and Moss claim that “[t]he female body of America becomes the object of male desire in commercial gaze, and thus becomes an obvious metaphor for desired colonial domination” (qtd. in Salles 120). Heteropatriarchy thus can not only be regarded as a gendered

⁴ For a definition of the terms “patrilineal” and “matrilineal” see section 2.3. For more information on the Indian Act of 1868 and its ramifications for Native women see Barker 2008.

social hierarchy that is imposed on the indigenous population in order to become a ‘natural’ logic, enabling settler colonialization and consequently the establishment of a nation state; it can also be argued that the agents of the colonial process and the colonialized space as such were being gendered in order to convey certain connotations and conform to a heteropatriarchal ideology (see Salles 120). Allegorizing the continent of America and its Native peoples as female seems to evoke the image of the continent as vulnerable and desirable at the same time, at least from a patriarchal perspective. This not only perpetuates the wish for an appropriation of the land, but, stemming from the logics of patriarchy, also objectifies and belittles the indigenous population. In addition, depicting America and its Natives as exotic, and thus as ‘savage’ and “uncivilized” (Salles 120), serves as a justification to rule and ‘educate’ the Native people, and replace their culture with the apparently ‘civilized’ European way of life that comprises the structure of heteropatriarchy, as Salles argues (see 120).

Moreover, Boehmer adds – yet referring to the situation in postcolonial nations and not to settler colonialism – that “[n]ationalism [...] bears a clear mark for gender” (22) and that there is a “strong patriarchal presence built into nationalist ideologies and the nation-state” (34). Furthermore, she explains that – concerning the emergence of new nations – “the new nation-state secured a controlling metaphor for its existence in the unitary and hierarchical structure of the patriarchal family. The family became at one and the same time an important vehicle of social organisation and a primary carrier of the gendered ideology of the middle class” (Boehmer 32). It is thus once again stressed that the hierarchies of a patriarchally structured family and of a nation state show striking similarities and are interdependent.

This process of settler colonialism, with its building of a nation state and the imposition of heteropatriarchy upon the Native American population, has had especially adverse repercussions for indigenous women (and certainly also for indigenous people who identify as non-binary, transgender, and/or homo- or bisexual). With their social status diminished by their identity as both ‘undesirable Natives’ and as women, female indigenous people have faced a tremendous devaluation. As Jaimes*Guerrero states, “this has meant a double burden because they must deal with both racist and sexist attitudes, and with the discrimination that results from such prejudices” (65). The discrimination against Native American women thus has to be considered intersectional and has manifold roots as well as manifestations.

The oppression these women are confronted with, however, cannot exclusively be located within the white majority society, but is also found on reservations, exercised by Native American men, as Allen points out (see *Sacred Hoop* 191–192). Allen regards this increasing misogyny by Native men, which includes an alarming number of rapes and other violent and abusive actions, as being rooted not only in “various sociological factors such as oppression, racism, poverty, hopelessness, emasculation of men” (*Sacred Hoop* 192) and others, but also in the ways indigenous men are portrayed in “American popular media” (*Sacred Hoop* 192). The representation of Native men as “bloodthirsty savages devoted to treating women cruelly” (Allen, *Sacred Hoop* 192) and an internalization of patriarchal behavior and structures has, as Allen sees it, contributed to a growing devaluation of Native women by their own people – which can be considered as yet another facet of the mechanics of heteropatriarchy and settler colonialism.

To sum up, it can be said that the concepts of settler colonialism and a “nation-state form of governance” (Smith, “Heteropatriarchy” 68) are strongly entangled with the logics of heteropatriarchy in various ways, bringing about several consequences for Native peoples: firstly, it is through heteropatriarchy that social hierarchy has been naturalized and that settler colonial structures have consequently been enabled (see Smith, “American” 312). Secondly, the ideology of heteropatriarchy that had been imposed on the Native American population eventually has led to a repression of indigenous ways of societal organization, which were often women-centered, and the often diverse forms of gender identity and sexuality (see Arvin, Tuck, and Morrill 15). Thirdly, the process of settler colonialization as such can be regarded as a “gendered process” (Arvin, Tuck, and Morrill 8) in which the colonial agents as well as the colonized land and people as such were frequently portrayed in a way that reinforces heteropatriarchal ideology. Most importantly, however, it can be stated that this intersection of settler colonialism and heteropatriarchy has had profound effects on the situation of Native American women, including discrimination and misogynist acts of violence and abuse. Native feminist theories have attended to these specific matters since the second half of the twentieth century, critiquing these structures of oppression, and partly also emphasizing the impact literature by Native women can have on female indigenous struggle for resistance and survival.

In the following subsection, an overview of the scholarly field of Native American feminist studies will be given, with a brief discussion of the most prominent viewpoints of Native American

feminisms. Additionally, the role of literature for Native American women will be briefly addressed, as well as some precautions that need to be considered when analyzing Native American literature from a white Western perspective.

2.3 “Red Roots”: Native American feminisms

Just as many other terms in scholarly discourse, the concept of ‘Native American feminism’ and its definition and scope have been a highly contested issue since the emergence of this academic field in the 1960s (see Ross 40).

First of all, it is of prime importance to note that there is not only one universally accepted theory of Native feminism, but a variety of approaches to the topic that differ to a greater or lesser extent – just as there is not one single way in which Native American women identify themselves (see Mihesuah, “A Few Cautions” 1249). In addition to the diverse conceptualizations of feminism for and by Native American women, several different terms are employed for the concept, ranging from “tribal-feminism or feminist-tribalism” (Allen 222), “Native feminisms” (Goeman and Denetdale 9; Smith, “Native” 241), and “Native American feminist theories” (Arvin, Tuck, and Morrill 11), to “transnational feminism” (Ross 48), “indigenous/feminism” (Ross 48), “Indigenous feminism” (Huhndorf and Suzack 2), or “Native Womanism” (Jaimes-Guerrero 67). Although some of these terms and the specific scholarly perspectives behind them will be discussed in more detail in the course of this subsection, I will henceforth refer to this academic field in general as Native American feminisms, Indigenous feminisms, Indigenous feminist theories, or Native American feminist theories for the sake of clarity.

The theories behind the abovementioned terms partly focus on differing aspects, yet they share their primary purpose of dismantling the ways in which patriarchal and settler colonial structures have affected the lives of Native American women in the past as well as today. Furthermore, they envisage ways for indigenous women to regain the power and status they once had, and make their voices, which have not been listened to for too long, be heard again (see Goeman and Denetdale 10). According to most indigenous feminist theories, a progress towards decolonization furthermore can only be made through an “eradication of *both* heteropatriarchy and settler

colonialism” (Arvin, Tuck, and Morrill 16–17), which can thus be regarded as one of the prime objectives of Native American feminisms.

Arvin, Tuck, and Morrill (see 16), as well as Smith, additionally stress the need to overcome the “normative notions of nations and nation-states” (Smith, “American” 311) in order to establish an awareness of the constructedness of this form of social coexistence that is often perceived as natural, and to emphasize differing ways of governance. Smith notes on that matter:

When we do not presume that the United States should or will always continue to exist, we create the space to reflect on what might be more just forms of governance [...] Whereas nation-states are governed through domination and coercion, indigenous sovereignty and nationhood are predicated on interrelatedness and responsibility. In opposition to nation-states, which are based on control over territory, these visions of indigenous nationhood are based on care and responsibility for land that all can share [and] [...] are not based on a narrow definition of nation that would entail a closely bounded community and ethnic cleansing. So these articulations pose an alternative to theories that assume that the endpoint to a national struggle is a nation-state and that assume the givenness of the nation-state system (Smith, “American” 311–312)

These efforts to reimagine forms of societal organization and to deconstruct the concept of a nation can thus contribute to the process of decolonization and consequently challenges one of the structures that affect Native women considerably (see Smith, “American” 311).

Looking at the historical development of Native American feminist discourse, however, an extensive discussion of various ways of indigenous women’s empowerment and a variety of differing viewpoints can be observed.

One of the first scholars to deal with the specific reality of Native American women was Beatrice Medicine, who started to devote her academic research to the identities and experiences of indigenous women as early as in the 1960s (see Ross 40). As an anthropologist, however, Medicine did not claim to operate from the perspective of Native American *feminism*, but nonetheless contributed highly important publications to the field, in which she critically discusses gender roles in different Native American nations⁵ (see Ross 40).

⁵ Some of Medicine’s works are *The Native American Woman: A Perspective* (1978), “Warrior Women – Sex Role Alternatives for Plain Indian Women” (1983), or *The Hidden Half: Indian Women on the Plains* (1983), an edition she published together with Patricia Albers.

Soon thereafter, Kate Shanley, who grew up “on the Fort Peck Indian Reservation in Montana” (Ross 40) and is now a professor for Native American Studies at the University of Montana (see Native American and Indigenous Studies Association 2017), emphasized the importance of establishing a feminist discourse specifically treating the experiences of Native American women in her essay “Thoughts on Indian Feminism” (1984). She argues that this need emerges out of the fact that – although some struggles are certainly faced by both Native and non-Native women – indigenous women are, in addition to other hardships, concerned with the fight for survival and sovereignty of their peoples (see Shanley 215, qtd. in Ramirez 24). For Shanley, indigenous sovereignty and feminism are therefore not mutually exclusive, but in fact naturally interconnected, as she explains as follows: “The word ‘feminism’ has special meanings to Indian women, including the idea of promoting the continuity of tradition, and consequently, pursuing the recognition of tribal sovereignty” (Shanley 215, qtd. in Ramirez 24). According to Shanley, it is thus one of the many concerns of Native American feminism to raise awareness of indigenous cultures and advocate the survival and resistance of Native communities.

By endorsing an Indian American feminist approach, Shanley also reacted to an at that time already existing controversy that has been heatedly debated in the field of Native American studies for decades: the question whether feminism – traditionally critiqued for being “a white woman’s movement” (Ross 40) of the middle-class and ignorant of the situations of non-white women – can or cannot cater for the needs of Native American women. Especially in the earlier days of the academic discourse about Native American women, i.e. before the turn of the millennium, but also in more recent publications, a number of female indigenous scholars and authors have opposed the concept of a Native American feminism vigorously.

Among them was Annette Jaimes, who criticized the idea of indigenous feminism in an article published with Theresa Halsey in 1992 – although she later on altered her viewpoint and has acknowledged the interconnectedness of colonialism and patriarchy, and thus the need for a Native feminist movement (see Jaimes*Guerrero 65–6). In their widely received article, Jaimes and Halsey state that an involvement with feminism can be regarded as something that only Native women who are “more assimilated” (330) and who are ‘just’ engaged in the struggle for “‘civil rights’” (331), and not for true a sovereignty of the Native peoples, are interested in. The concept of Native American feminism is thus firmly rejected in Jaimes and Halsey’s early work, for being

“an imperial project” (Smith, “Native” 241) that has emerged from the white Western world and which therefore can never be conducive to the needs of indigenous women.

As already mentioned above, however, Jaimes has changed her perspective since the publication of her article with Halsey in 1992. In her elaboration on “‘Patriarchal Colonialism’ and Indigenism: Implications for Native Feminist Spirituality and Native Womanism”, for instance, she emphasizes – although once more articulating harsh critique of the white-and-middle-class-centeredness of early feminisms – the importance of “Native Feminist and Native Womanist movements” as a means to resist and (re-)gain Native American sovereignty (see Jaimes*Guerrero 66). Jaimes*Guerrero points out, and thereby agrees with other scholars (see e.g. Smith; Allen; Arvin, Tuck, and Morrill), that indigenous women have experienced profound degradation through what she labels “patriarchal colonialism” (65). Following the tenor of the scholarly majority in Native American women studies, she argues that women were traditionally highly respected in Native communities and held roles that were equal to those of men, but were deprived of their valued status through the repercussions of colonialism and patriarchy (see Jaimes*Guerrero 63; 67).

Furthermore, Jaimes*Guerrero stresses the interconnectedness and importance of nature and spirituality for Native American peoples, in particular for Native American women and their activism. She uses the term “*indigenism*” (66) to refer to something that can be described as an “indigenous homeland” (66), where indigenous communities “live in relationship with the place where one is born” (66). Jaimes*Guerrero explains this in more detail:

In this cultural context, an indigenous member has the responsibility to practice kinship roles in reciprocal relationship with his or her bioregional habitat, and this is manifested through cultural beliefs, rituals, and ceremonies that cherish biodiversity (that is human culture in relationship to bioregion): this is the context of a Native Land Ethic and Native Spirituality. If one moves or migrates, as an individual or as part of a group, one is expected to practice this bioethics in a new environment respectful of the bioregion in its biodiversity. This is also manifested in the sacred images of what I refer to as the “feminine organic archetypes” found in *all* Native creation stories and geomythology. Examples of such figures include the Corn Mother and Daughter, Spider Woman, and Changing Woman of Southwest Pueblo cultural lore. (66–67)

Traditionally, Native American peoples hence have a strong bond with their natural surroundings, which also becomes evident through spiritual customs that reflect this inextricable connectedness with nature. These spiritual figures and narratives that are located in and interwoven with the

natural world moreover are often presented as female or ‘feminine’ power or presence (see Jaimes*Guerrero 66–67). For Jaimes*Guerrero, the devaluation and destruction of nature is consequently linked with the devaluation and oppression of Native American women, since the “*feminized* subordination of nature, Natives, and women is a manifestation of the denigration of the *female principle*” (68). As a result of this indivisible entanglement of Native American spirituality with the natural world and with what could be called a ‘feminine power’, Jaimes*Guerrero proposes the establishment of “Native Womanism” (68) as a concept that also takes this indigenous spirituality and connection with nature into account when it comes to the re-empowerment of Native American women. For her, this “Native Womanism” (68) aims at an “historical agency” (67), in the sense of a reversion to the status and roles indigenous women had before patriarchal colonialist times, and at an emphasis on the conservation of their connectedness with the natural and spiritual world (see Jaimes*Guerrero 67–68).

Similar to Jaimes*Guerrero, Paula Gunn Allen has emphasized the traditionally high valuation and centrality of women in Native American communities, and has condemned colonialism and patriarchy for being the prime source of indigenous women’s diminution of status and oppression (see *Sacred Hoop* 214). In her work *The Sacred Hoop: Recovering the Feminine in American Indian Traditions* (1986), which is considered as one of the milestones of early Native American feminism, Allen argues that “the roots of American [white] feminism” (213) in fact can be found in the ways in which Native American societies have traditionally respected, esteemed, and worshipped women and ‘femaleness’ in general. However, ‘mainstream feminism’, which, as Allen admits, is often rejected by indigenous women and denounced for its white-centeredness and its assumed indifference to the specific struggles of Native women, thereby fails to recognize that their ideal state of “empowered women” (*Sacred Hoop* 213) has always existed in Native societies, as Allen cynically adds (see *Sacred Hoop* 213–4; 224). Although she herself sharply criticizes mainstream feminism, as well as the U.S. American population in general, for being blatantly ignorant about traditional tribal ways of life and the “[r]ed [r]oots” (Allen, *Sacred Hoop* 209) of feminism, Allen also is emphatic about the need for a “secure and determined feminism” (*Sacred Hoop* 224) for and by Native American women.

As part of such a Native feminist approach, Allen also calls for a feminist reading of Native American literature (see *Sacred Hoop* 224). More specifically, she states that

[a] feminist approach to the study and teaching of American Indian life and thought is essential because the area has been dominated by paternalistic, male-dominant modes of consciousness since the first writings about American Indians in the fifteenth century. This male bias has seriously skewed our understanding of tribal life and philosophy, distorting it in ways that are sometimes obvious but are most often invisible. (*Sacred Hoop* 222)

In order to avoid such wrongful interpretations of Native American literature, which, according to Allen, often are the case when indigenous texts are read from a perspective of patriarchy that is existent in Western thought, a feminist reading is necessary (see *Sacred Hoop* 223).

As the method of choice Allen thereby suggests a “tribal-feminism or feminist-tribalism” (*Sacred Hoop* 222) – hence a merging of Native American studies and feminist studies. By applying such a “tribal-feminist” (see *Sacred Hoop* 222) angle to the analysis of Native American cultural production, Allen hopes to detect hierarchical structures of domination and subjugation exercised on indigenous women by both the Western nation-state and members of their own Native communities. Baring the roots of these forms of discrimination, tribal-feminism seeks to find ways to tackle them and to improve the situation for Native American women through a return to traditional tribal values as they were before the imposition of “patriarchal colonialism” (Allen, *Sacred Hoop* 223).

Allen bases this tribal-feminist approach, as well as other theories that she elaborates on, on several fundamental propositions about the social and cultural life of Native American nations and indigenous women in particular. One of the most central statements of these propositions is that, according to her, the vast majority of all Native American communities are organized in a “woman-centered” (*Sacred Hoop* 2) way that values women and ‘the feminine’ highly, both in social coexistence and spiritual thinking (see *Sacred Hoop* 2). More specifically, Allen argues that “[t]raditional tribal lifestyles are more often gynocratic than not, and [that] they are never patriarchal” (*Sacred Hoop* 2). The term “gynocratic” or “gynocracy”, consisting of the morphemes *gyno*, Greek for ‘woman’, and *cratic* or *cracy*, for “government or type of government rule” (Sellers 70), denotes “a woman-centered governing system” (Sellers 70), which, as Sellers points out, however, “does not disenfranchise men, the earth’s resources, or any group’s autonomy” (70). Other features of a gynocratically organized society are, according to Allen, an acceptance of diverse forms of sexuality and gender, “social responsibility” (*Sacred Hoop* 3) and egalitarianism, an “even distribution of goods among all members of the society” (*Sacred Hoop* 3), a responsible

and respectful approach to “all life forms” (*Sacred Hoop* 3) and the environment, as well as “the absence of punitiveness as a means of social control” (*Sacred Hoop* 3).

Additionally, gynocratic societies are often structured matrilineally and matrilocally. In contrast to patrilineal and/or patrilocal societies, in which the husband in a marriage or a father’s descent is determinant for legal or social matters, matrilineally and/or matrilocally organized communities regard the woman in a partnership or the mother of a child as fundamental for the ways in which social cohabitation is structured (see Sellers 72). As Mihesuah notes, it was a “mother’s clan and [...] lineage” (*Indigenous* chapter 6) in indigenous communities that determined the identity of her offspring, which can be described as matrilineality (i.e. concerning female lineage). With respect to marriage, in so called matrilocal (i.e. concerning cohabitation) (see Mihesuah, *Indigenous* Notes section 6.) Native societies, a newly wed husband is supposed “to live with his wife’s clan, and if there is a divorce, the man returns to his mother’s home” (Sellers 72). Children, however, are hardly ever sent to live solely with their fathers in case of a separation of the parents, but usually remain to be cared for by their mothers (see Sellers 72). The goods and possessions of the formerly married couple were usually allocated to the wife after the dissolution of a joint household in a Native matrilocal and matrilineal society (see Mihesuah, *Indigenous* chapter 6).

Although Allen has been subjected to some criticism for generalizing statements about gender roles and sexuality in Native nations (see e.g. Mihesuah, *Indigenous* chapter 6), her assumption that Native American societies traditionally valued women and the ‘feminine’ highly, and were tendentially woman-centered, is in fact shared by most Native American feminist scholars (see Smith; Arvin, Tuck, and Morrill; Tuck and Reollet; Medicine; Shanley; Ramirez; Salles; Sellers; and others). As it has been stressed by many, the majority of Native American nations thus did not only regard females as central, but indigenous women also held “religious, political, and economic power – not more than the men, but at least equal to men’s” (Mihesuah, *Indigenous* chapter 6). Nonetheless, it certainly has to be kept in mind that the status and roles Native women have traditionally occupied differs greatly between the various indigenous communities of North America, and some Native nations are in fact reported to have traditionally exhibited patriarchal traits to a greater or lesser extent (see Mihesuah, *Indigenous* chapter 6). Yet it can be stated, as Allen (see *Sacred Hoop* 32) or Mihesuah (see *Indigenous* chapter 6) point out, that historical accounts on women in various Native societies were predominately given from the patriarchal,

colonial perspective of white European males, and are hence to be treated extremely carefully. However, despite the diverse roles females traditionally had in different Native nations and the unreliability of the sources that described the women's status, it remains undisputed in the scholarly discourse that the esteem and power of Native American women has considerably decreased since the beginning of America's settler colonialism.

As most Native feminist scholars, Allen traces this loss of status of Native American women back to the colonial process and the structure of patriarchy that was imposed on the indigenous peoples of North America. According to her, however, the erasure of Native communities that has been striven for by the settler colonial forces was and still is inextricably linked with the roles indigenous women held in their societies. More specifically, Allen argues that "[t]he physical and cultural genocide of American Indian tribes is and was mostly about patriarchal fear of gynocracy" (*Sacred Hoop* 3). She expounds that

[t]he Puritans particularly, but also the Catholic, Quaker, and other Christian missionaries, like the secular counterparts, could not tolerate peoples who allowed women to occupy prominent positions and decision-making capacity at every level of society [...] The colonizers saw (and rightly) that as long as women held unquestioned power of such magnitude, attempts at total conquest of the continents were bound to fail. (*Sacred Hoop* 3)

In order to achieve their goal of an elimination of gynocratic Native societies and an implementation of patriarchy, several steps need to be taken by the white Western society, as Allen explains (see *Sacred Hoop* 41). First of all, the female creatresses that are central in the majority of indigenous spiritual beliefs are supplanted by "male-gendered creators [...] [and secondly,] tribal governing institutions and the philosophies that are their foundation are destroyed" (Allen, *Sacred Hoop* 41). This has for instance occurred through the enforcement of a 'democratic' system on Native nations, which resulted in the election of "powerful officials [that] were inevitably male and were elected mainly by nontraditionals" (Allen, *Sacred Hoop* 41), since many Native community members refused to engage in a system that was "imposed on them by right of conquest" (*Sacred Hoop* 41), as Allen points out. Furthermore, traditionally women-centered Native societies have been expelled from their geographical, spiritual, and ancestral homes and consequently have been coerced into patriarchal systems of "white institutions" (Allen, *Sacred Hoop* 42) on reservations. Lastly, traditional tribal ways of social organization, e.g. "clan

structure[s]” Allen, *Sacred Hoop* 42), have been superseded “by the nuclear family [and] [...] the women clan heads [have been] replaced by elected male officials” (Allen, *Sacred Hoop* 42).

Importantly, Allen stresses that this worrying process of “degynocraticization” (*Sacred Hoop* 42) can be opposed through “the contemporary prose and poetry of American Indian writers, particularly of woman-centered writers” (*Sacred Hoop* 42). Following Allen, it can be argued more specifically that Native American literature, particularly works that are composed by Native women, are conducive to the “resistance to cultural and spiritual genocide” (*Sacred Hoop* 42) as well as to an opposition to patriarchy in two different ways. First of all, literature enables indigenous peoples, and especially indigenous women, to (re-)claim their voices and to “deconstruct the stereotypical images of them created by Europeans” (Salles 121) after centuries in which the writings of white patriarchal settlers and colonial forces have construed a biased picture of Native communities. Apart from that, Native American women’s literature is of utmost importance as a reminder of traditional women-centered, conscious, and spiritual ways of Native life, and serves as a tool to address the manifold hardships indigenous women have faced in the past as well as still face to today.

Yet, especially when reading and interpreting Native American literature from a Western vantage point, it is necessary to consider the particularities of Native writing that distinguish it from Western literature and therefore call for a cautious approach. A brief discussion of the specifics of Native American literature and the implications for its interpretation will therefore be given in the subsequent section, section 2.4 of this thesis.

To sum up, it has to be noted once more that there is certainly not one single approach of Native American feminism, but a variety of different perspectives as well as Native American women who reject the term “feminism” altogether. This polarization probably originates in the fact that on the one hand there are, naturally, numerous ways in which female Native Americans identify themselves, ranging from “traditional” (Mihesuah, “A Few Cautions” 1249) women, who feel deeply connected to their tribal roots and indigenous culture, to women who consider themselves not primarily as ‘tribal’ or may be torn between their indigenous and Western selves. On the other hand, it likely is due to the term ‘feminism’ as such and its rootedness in white middle-class academia that many Native women understandably refuse to make use of it and criticize the majority

of its agendas for being ivory tower discussions. In the light of the alarming discrimination and oppression Native American women experience from both members of their own communities as well as from the white society, however, the adoption of a determined Indigenous feminism that caters for the needs of Native women seems to be indispensable.

While a more detailed discussion of the various viewpoints of different Native feminist scholars would have undoubtedly been of great interest and importance, it unfortunately exceeds the scope of this overview of Native American feminist theories, which aim it is to set the ground for the analysis in the main part of the thesis. Nonetheless, despite the in some points differing perspectives within Native American feminist studies, a few underlying general assumptions can be concluded from the preceding discussion. First of all, there is broad agreement in the fields' discourse that most Native American peoples have traditionally considered women to be at least equal in their rights to men, but have frequently been in fact structured matrilineally and/or matrilocally, with females taking important roles in the governing system as well as in spiritual beliefs (see Allen, *Sacred Hoop*; Sellers; Mihesuah, *Indigenous*; Arvin, Tuck, and Morrill; Barker; Salles; and others). Furthermore, the majority of Native American feminist scholars stress the interconnectedness of heteropatriarchy and settler colonialism, as well as the impact these two structures have on Native American women. More specifically, the colonial process and with it the imposition of heteropatriarchy are held responsible for the stark decline of status, and consequently the increase of discrimination and violence, that Native women have experienced (see Smith; Arvin, Tuck, and Morrill; Huhndorf and Suzack; and others). As a way out of this oppressive interplay of hierarchical structures, many Native feminist scholars propose alternative ways to conceptualize seemingly natural organizational principles and remind of the traditionally women-centered, egalitarian communities of most Native American peoples. The importance of Indigenous American literature in this movement towards a re-centering on tribal values that have esteemed women and the 'feminine' highly is emphasized, and writings by indigenous women are considered as a significant contribution to resistance and cultural survival (see Allen, *Sacred Hoop*; Jaimes*Guerrero; Salles; Sellers; and others). As Arvin, Tuck, and Morrill importantly note, however, this re-focusing on traditional tribal conceptualizations of women's roles and the 'feminine' is not necessarily intended as a sentimental revitalization of "'authentic' Indigenous traditions out of a distant past" (21), but aims at an acknowledgement of alternative, indigenous perspectives.

2.4 Reading Native American Literature

As was already mentioned above, the writings of female Native American authors can be considered as a highly important means through which normalized structures of settler colonialism and patriarchy can be deconstructed, and alternative, traditional Native forms of societal organization are proposed and reminded.

However, as it was also briefly touched upon in the preceding chapter, a reception and interpretation of literature by indigenous women from a white, Western perspective poses certain risks and calls for considerable caution. Some of these risks are pointed out by Mihesuah, who – although referring to an analysis of “Native life” by whites in general and not specifically to the interpretation of literature – notes that (white) feminists tend to apply their “Eurocentric standards of interpretation” (“A Few Cautions” 1247) to their research and neglect “Natives' own versions of their cultures and histories” (1247). As it is also stressed by Mihesuah, it is of pivotal importance for non-Native feminists, including myself, to keep in mind that, when interpreting works by and about Native American women, we are “formulating ideas about ‘others’” (“A Few Cautions” 1247). This can indeed be highly problematic, especially considering that in this case, white and therefore privileged scholars are choosing literature by and about women who are frequently marginalized by white supremacy and heteropatriarchy as their subject of research. Certainly, the study of literary fictional works and their characters seems to be not as prone to a wrongful ‘othering’ as for instance anthropological or sociological research, simply because not ‘real’, but only fictitious people are being written about; yet an overgeneralization, simplification, or misinterpretation is still likely to be made and needs to be avoided.

With regard to this problem, Allen states in *The Sacred Hoop* that “[t]he study of non-Western literature poses a problem for Western readers, who naturally tend to see alien literature in terms that are familiar to them, however irrelevant those terms may be to the literature under consideration” (54). According to her, it is due to fundamental differences between world views or certain concepts of Native and non-Native readers that a Western reception of indigenous literature is frequently hindered and likely leads to false assumptions, which may even belittle Native American works (see *Sacred Hoop* 54–5). As an example for these differing conceptualizations and mindsets, Allen names the coexistence of humans, animals, and nature (see *Sacred Hoop* 59).

While non-Native, Western societies allegedly perceive this coexistence as “a great hierarchical ladder of being [...] on which ground and trees occupy a very low rung, animals a slightly higher one, and man (never woman) – especially ‘civilized’ man – a very high one” (Allen, *Sacred Hoop* 59), Native Americans regard “all creatures as relatives [...] and as necessary parts of an ordered, balanced, and living whole” (59), Allen notes. Furthermore, she adds that, in contrast to common Western views which assume a distinction between “the natural and the supernatural” (*Sacred Hoop* 60), Native belief has “no such dualistic division, nor does it draw a hard and fast line between what is material and what is spiritual” (60). These are just two examples with which Allen aims to illustrate the often elemental differences between what she subsumes as “American Indian thought” (60) and a Western, non-Native mindset. Naturally, these cultural differences may cause serious misinterpretations and thus need to be considered in an analysis of Native American literature from a Western perspective.

After a detailed elaboration on Native American feminist theories and the interconnectedness of the structures of settler colonialism and heteropatriarchy, these theories will now be applied in the main part of this thesis. For that, two fictional works by renowned Native American women writers, Linda Hogan’s *Solar Storms* (1995) and Leslie Marmon Silko’s *Ceremony* (1977), will be analyzed from a Native American feminist perspective. Prior to the analysis of each of the two novels, information on the author as well as a short plot summary will be given. Thereupon, it will be discussed in how far settler colonialist and heteropatriarchal structures can be detected in the texts, and in what ways they affect the novels’ indigenous characters. Furthermore, it will also be investigated in what ways these structures are opposed by the Native communities in the books and how this resistance can be analyzed from the perspective of Native American feminisms.

3. *Solar Storms* (1995)

3.1 The author: Linda Hogan

Linda Hogan, an author of several award-winning novels, essays, collections of poems, and plays, was born on July 17, 1947, in Denver, Colorado, and is of a mixed-blood Chickasaw heritage (see McNally 1). Being the daughter of a white Nebraskan mother and a Chickasaw father who served in the military, Hogan did not spend her childhood in a tribal surrounding, but in several varying places due to her father's frequent job-related transfers (see Twagilimana 167). In her memoir, the novelist describes her early years as being marked by the absence of her father, which was, according to her, often the case for children of her generation: "It was a time when children did not know their fathers. Like the families around us, we were a family of females. My father, a soldier, was absent as were most of the men of those days" (Hogan, *Native Memoir* 92). Despite having been raised predominantly by her mother, a quiet woman from whom Hogan claims to have been passed on her own sensitivity and "inability to speak" as a young girl (*Native Memoir* 101), her father's roots seem to have had a profound impact on the novelist. She calls Oklahoma, the place where her father's ancestors are situated, where she partly grew up, and where Hogan also resides at the time, her home, as "[t]his is the place where I originate, it's the place of my family", as she explains it (Harrison 162).

Thus – even though her mixed-blood background certainly shaped Hogan's identity and "created a natural tension that surfaces in my work and strengthens it" (Coltelli 71), as she claims – the Chickasaw origins of her father and therefore her own identity as a Native American woman have heavily influenced her. It is the stories that have been told to her by the paternal, tribal part of her family that, apart from the natural world around her, Hogan considers to be a major source of inspiration for her work, which she herself deems "traditionally centered" (Cook, Introduction 1; see Coltelli 71, 82).

As a young woman who had only recently discovered the perception of poems for herself, Hogan started writing poetry during her lunch breaks when she was working in childcare and soon published her debut collection of poetry, *Calling Myself Home* in 1978, which was informed by her memories of her Oklahoma home and Chickasaw oral literature. After graduating with a master's degree in English and Creative Writing from the University of Colorado at Boulder, at

which she later taught as a professor, Hogan published two other collections of poetry, *Daughters, I Love You* (1981) and *Eclipse* (1983) (see McNally 2). These two collections, in which she draws upon her relationship with her two adopted daughters and connects her maternal love with a plea for environmental protection, were then followed by several other poems for which Hogan was honored with a number of fellowships and several awards (see McNally 2).

From her accomplishments as a poet, the author evolved to writing fiction with her debut novel *Mean Spirit* (1990), dealing with the Oklahoma oil boom in the 1920s that led white people to oppress, exploit, and kill Native Americans purely out of economic greed (see Ruppert 183). Similar to her first book, Hogan's three other fictional novels that have been published up to now, *Solar Storms* (1995), *Power* (1998), and *People of the Whale* (2008), address environmental destruction and exploitation as well as the delicate interconnectedness of nature, spirituality, and indigenous peoples. Apart from her fictional work, which, as her poetry collections, were recognized with prestigious awards and nominations, Linda Hogan's latest publications comprise her memoir *The Woman Who Watches Over the World – A Native Memoir* (2001), a co-authored collection of essays with the title *Sightings: The Gray Whale's Mysterious Journey* (2003), and an anthology of poems called *Rounding the Human Corners* (2008) (see Harrison 161–62; Twagilimana 167).

The preservation of nature is, for Hogan, a fundamental part of the persistence of Native American people, as Paula Gunn Allen (see *Sacred Hoop* 168) notes, and one of her main incentives for her activism and writing. Hogan condemns the desolation and exploitation of nature, deploring that in mining for instance “[the people are] taking a power out of the earth that belongs to the earth. They’re taking the heart and the soul of the earth” (Allen, *Sacred Hoop* 169). Her work reflects an awareness “of the real nature of spirit presence in the world” (*Sacred Hoop* 168) as Allen remarks, placing importance on spirituality, tribal traditions, and a sense of interconnectedness.

While Hogan is primarily noted for unapologetically treating the topics of environmental destruction, Native oppression by white people, as well as indigenous culture and identity in her works, she is also frequently termed an “eco-feminist” due to her emphasis on strong female characters and feminine power in her books (see Twagilimana 167; McNally 4). The author is acutely aware of the manifold hardships and discrimination Native American women have faced in the past as well as face today and has denounced the often institutionalized racism and sexism

against indigenous women not only in her literary works, but also in her position as a scholar. In her essay “Native American Women: Our Voice, the Air”, published in 1981 in the scholarly journal *Frontiers*, for instance, she argues that “Indian women are aware of the difficult position of being female and minority” (1) and addresses the issues of indigence, the frequent detachment of Native American children from their homes, as well as illegal and coerced sterilizations of Native women⁶. Insisting that “[t]he literature contemporary Indian women write is a necessity” (Hogan, “Native Women” 3) and that raising the voice is indispensable for strengthening the position of Native women, Hogan is an advocate for female Native American empowerment; yet her position on feminism is ambivalent. In the above-mentioned article Hogan states:

Feminism is a complicated issue for Indian women because what affects the women also affects the entire community. As individual nations, we have allegiances to the members of our tribes that seldom exist for non-Indian American women. Political and economic injustices are practiced against entire tribes, and are not limited to just the women. [...] While it is necessary and important that we worry about the status of Indian women in tribal communities and urban centers, the other issues are matters of survival and often take precedence over concerns about gender roles. Because of this, Indian women are often more active on the level of national political issues than in women’s organizations. (*Native Women* 1–2)

Although she acknowledges the need for action when it comes to the situation of Native American women, Hogan thus stresses that Indian women’s matters cannot be treated isolated from the matters and struggles of their whole communities, since Native people are discriminated regardless of their sex or gender.

However, asked about her own remarks in her *Frontiers* essay and whether she would identify as “an ecofeminist” (Cook, *An Interview* 13) more than twenty years later, Hogan responded in an interview:

There was a lot of conflict in those days, [...] we were in despair, poverty, and with little recognition as people. [...] When feminists went to the reservation and took off their shirts for equal rights or invaded the Yaqui reservation looking for Don Juan, it just didn’t go over very well. Our struggles were separate from theirs. And the right to not wear a shirt was

⁶ A little-known facet of racist oppression and violence against Native American people is the systematic, illegal, and forced sterilization of numerous Native women (but also of impoverished women as well as of women of color) in the 1970s. While a “study, involving Albuquerque, Phoenix, Oklahoma City, and Aberdeen, South Dakota” (Torpy 1) revealed that from 1973 to 1976 3,406 females of Native American heritage were involuntarily sterilized in Indian Health Service (IHS) establishments, the actual number of Native women affected is estimated to be much higher. For more information see Torpy (2000).

hardly an issue at all when we were watching enforced sterilization of our women, all children born in one time frame given up for adoption, hunger, etc. [...] However, much has changed in the many years intervening, and I more of a feminist mind now. I especially think of it in terms of economics, work, and the ever-increasing number of violent crimes. (Cook, *An Interview* 13–14)

Hogan therefore seems to have reconciled with the notion of feminism to some extent, although she still emphasizes the conflicting priorities of white or ‘mainstream’ feminists and Native American women.

As the questions whether (white) feminism can cater for the needs of indigenous women and whether there should be a Native feminist movement apart from the fight for Native sovereignty in general are contested and complex, this controversy will be dealt with in more detail in section 2 of this thesis.

3.2 Plot

Set in the wilderness of the Boundary Waters between the USA and Canada, the story of Linda Hogan’s novel *Solar Storms* opens with the protagonist and narrator Angela “Angel” Jensen’s retrospective account of her return to her Native American relatives in September of 1972, after she had spent her childhood and teenage years in several different foster families. Unsure what to expect, the then seventeen-year-old girl sets foot in Adam’s Rib, a small town that is populated mostly by women of mixed Native background, a group of very old people living along the so-called “Hundred-Year-Old-Road”, and a handful of indigenous men. There, Angela comes to live with her great-grandmother Agnes, her great-great-grandmother Dora-Rouge, and Agnes’ caring partner Husk.

Through stories narrated by Dora-Rouge and Agnes, Angel learns that, after her abusive mother Hannah had abandoned her, she was cared for by her step-grandmother Bush, but was taken as an infant by government agents and put into foster families. Her face heavily scarred by her own violent mother and having gone through a rough time in foster care, Angel for the first time feels a sense of belonging at Adam’s Rib and soon grows fond of Agnes, and especially of her kind and cheerful great-great-grandmother Dora-Rouge, whom she admires and whose caretaker she becomes. Embedded in this community of strong women and considerate men, she is being shaped

by the storytelling of Dora-Rouge and Agnes, and starts to develop a deep connection to her female relatives, her tribal roots, and the natural world around her.

Despite the strong bond with these two women of her family and the sense of homecoming she experiences, however, Angel is still driven by the urge to know more about her mother and thereby her own past. The story of her and her mother unravels only slowly as she is told about her grandmother Loretta – the second wife of Agnes’ son Harold –, who was said to be haunted by the gruesome fate of her tribe. Originating from the people of Elk Island, Loretta was one of the only ones of her community who survived a time when people “became so hungry they ate the poisoned carcasses of deer the settlers left out for the wolves” (Hogan, *Solar Storms* 38), still carrying the almond scent of the deadly cyanide with her. Some time after the cold-hearted Loretta had left Adam’s Rib together with Harold – Angel’s grandfather –, their daughter Hannah returned to the place as a young girl and stumbled out of the lake one stormy day. Bush – Harold’s first wife – found the disturbed and strange Hannah, who, too, smelled of bitter almonds, and took her in. Hannah’s body, as Angel only learns later, showed signs of extreme torture and abuse, and, claiming that she was possessed and haunted by ghosts, Hannah was soon dreaded by everyone due to her bizarre and violent behavior, until she eventually left Adam’s Rib. Pregnant with Angel, Hannah then shortly returned to Adam’s Rib, only to disappear again after having given birth and to leave Angel in the care of Bush.

On a warm fall day, not long after Angel’s return as a teenager, the people of Adam’s Rib are then visited by two young men in a canoe. Coming from the tribe of the so-called “Fat-Eaters” (35) in the north – the people Dora-Rouge and therefore also Agnes and Angel originate from –, they report of a planned project by the government and an electric company to build dams, redirect rivers, and flood wide areas of indigenous land. In order to resist the government’s plans, which deny the Native population any right to their land, the two men are trying to acquire allies from the surrounding indigenous communities who are willing to support them in a protest at the construction site.

Soon thereafter, Angel is sent to move in with her step-grandmother Bush, who had taken in her mother Hannah before, as well as Angela when she was baby. On a small and isolated island, “Fur Island” (64), in the lake adjacent to Adam’s Rib, the protagonist comes to live with the self-sufficient Bush and initially feels uncomfortable in the silence of the remote island and her taciturn

grandmother. With time, however, Angel begins to admire Bush's passionate reverence for the natural world as well as her skillfulness, and she starts to develop a deeper understanding of the quiet and compassionate woman. It is also Bush who tells Angela more and more stories about her mother Hannah.

During her stay on Fur Island as well as during occasional visits to Adam's Rib, Angel also gets to know other members of the community, such as the young, but mature Tommy, with whom she then falls in love, and the Vietnam veteran and taxidermist LaRue Marks Time, who is despised by Angel for his heedless approach to nature and animals.

In the course of the winter, the protagonist then starts to regard Fur Island as her home and initiates a small sewing business together with Bush, who had until then been assembling bones for the taxidermist LaRue. With the two visitors' reports of the dam project still in her head, Bush eventually decides to travel to the Fat-Eaters and to support them in their protest against the ecological destruction of the area. Since the roads and other passages are already blocked, she is determined to embark on the journey by canoe and meticulously studies old maps to find a suitable route. Throughout the planning process of the trip to the north it is decided that Bush will be joined by Angel and the other two women, Agnes and Dora-Rouge – with each of them having a different motive for the journey: Angel wants to find her mother, who is said to live in a northern town, the old woman Dora-Rouge is longing to die in her ancestral homeland, and Agnes won't let her mother go without her.

At the dawn of spring, the four women eventually commence their journey to the north through the waterways of the Boundary Waters. On their way, they lose track of time and fully immerse in the natural world around them, with all the islands they pass and the stories that are told about them. Angel starts to dream of special healing plants, which she describes to Dora-Rouge, grows stronger both physically and mentally, and is beginning to feel even more connected to her grandmothers, as she calls them. During their journey, however, the women are also confronted with the first visible effects of the ecological devastation that is already happening in the north, and, shortly after their first longer stop at the old fur post north House, Agnes becomes alarmingly weak and eventually passes away. Although devastated by her beloved family member's death, the three women are forced to resume their voyage and leave Agnes' body, according to her wish, behind.

Exhausted and still in a state of shock over Agnes' passing, they then eventually reach their destination and arrive at the Two-Town post – a store, post office, and center for the small town of the Fat-Eaters on the one side of it, and a settlement called Holy String Town on the other side of the post. There, the women are immediately confronted with the visible damage the construction of roads and the desperation the resettlement of the people had brought about. After being thrown out of their previous accommodation at a white woman's room letting, they move in with Tulik, the cousin of Dora-Rouge's mother, his daughter Auntie, his grandson Grandson, and his dog Mika. The kind and wise Tulik is soon loved by all of them and becomes a grandfatherly figure for Angel and a caring partner for Dora-Rouge.

Within the first week since their arrival, Angel is already visited by her mother Hannah. She recognizes herself in her mother's features, but is bitterly disappointed by Hannah's cold behavior and by the short encounter, in which her mother is only making a short remark about her daughter's appearance and claims that she "never laid a hand on [her]" (Hogan, *Solar Storms* 231). Two weeks later, without having met her mother ever since, Angel finally sees Hannah again on her deathbed. She learns that her haunted and violent mother was stabbed by her lover out of fear, and, to her shock, Angel is also told that her own mother scarred her face as a baby by biting her "like a dog" (246). Left alone with her dying mother, Angel finds her baby half-sister in a small crib outside of Hannah's house, who is later dubbed Aurora and cared for by Angel and her loving relatives. As her mother eventually dies, the protagonist is finally able to find peace and is determined to look forward and to react to the sad past of her and her mother with love.

Soon thereafter, the area is increasingly invaded by machines and construction workers, leading Angel and the rest of the Native population to block roads and railroad tracks in order to impede further destruction. Although government officials summon a meeting with the local population, they disregard every single objection that is advanced by the indigenous people. The conflict then grows more serious soon, with Tulik's house being burned down, an incremental division among the Native American resistance, and the government deploying bulldozers, tear-gas, and heavily armed forces to protect the workers.

As one day Aurora is harmed by the tear gas deployed against the protestors, Angel and Bush take her and leave the chaos at the Fat-Eaters to find a hospital for the infant and to eventually return to Adam's Rib. Back at Adam's Rib, where most of the town is already flooded, Angel is reunited

with Tommy, and together with Bush she moves to the Hundred-Year-Old Road, the only place that has not been affected by the flood.

After almost one year, the protagonist sees Tulik again as they testify at a trial that negotiates the dam project. The construction is eventually stopped another year later, yet an extensive damage has already been done and Tulik had passed away before the decision was made. Angel once again returns to the town of the Fat-Eaters to say goodbye to her dying great-great-grandmother Dora-Rouge. At the end of the novel, the narrator and protagonist ends her retrospective account on the story with a positive outlook, describing the love she feels for Tommy and for life in general.

3.3 'Windigo forces': settler colonialism and heteropatriarchy in *Solar Storms*

While *Solar Storms* can certainly be classified as a coming-of-age-story that centers around the quest for identity of a young woman, the destructive mechanisms Angela and her people have encountered in the story, as well as their implications for both humans and nature, call for a closer discussion and lend themselves to an analysis from a Native American feminist perspective.

The negative force that appears to have affected the protagonist Angel most directly is her “abused and abusive mother” (Jespersen 282) Hannah. During the time she spends at Adam’s Rib, Hannah, who is described as “icy cold” (Hogan, *Solar Storms* 34), “dangerous” (13), and as having “empty eyes” (40), is feared by everyone, even by her relatives. When Hannah is about to give birth to Angela, Bush and the midwife Ruby Shawl are well aware of the immanent danger for the newborn baby coming from its mother, and Ruby tries to protect the child, “avoid[ing] sleep the first days of [Angel’s] life, listening to the trees creak with the weight of snow, guarding [the baby], fearing to let dreams take her away from the dark, cold room and the fiercely awake woman who gave birth to [the child]” (110). Despite the midwife’s efforts, however, Hannah succeeds to lock Ruby out of her cabin while she is shoveling snow off the roof, giving her enough time to substantially harm her own baby. After Ruby Shawl finally got into the house again with the help of Bush, the two women frantically search the small room for the infant who is later named Angela, only to ultimately find her outside, “tucked into the branches of a birch tree” (112) in the middle of the deepest, coldest winter, with her face wounded by her own mother’s teeth, as the protagonist learns

later. Hannah's cruel deeds and mysterious behavior, though, do not end until she eventually dies in her hut in the north almost two decades later. As Angel visits her mother at her deathbed, one of the two women who came to see her tells her that Hannah –according to Eron, her last lover who ended up killing her out of fear– “one day [...] carried a basket from the water. In it, clear as day, there was a dead child” (246). Hannah thus seems to have followed through the murder she had once plotted to commit of Angel with another child of hers.

From the beginning of the novel, however, it becomes clear that these cruelties cannot be attributed to Hannah herself, but to something or someone that haunts her. In the prologue of the book, Angel recalls a story told to her by her great-grandmother Agnes, in which she says about Hannah: “What was wrong with her we couldn't name and we distrusted such things as had no name [...] Whatever your mother was in that dream, whatever she is now, it wasn't human” (12). Bush, upon seeing Hannah's tortured body with its “garment of scars [and] burns and incisions” (99) for the first time, is immediately inundated with compassion and senses that the roots for her step-daughter's traumatized and violent soul lies in injuries even deeper and “farther in” (99) than the visible marks she carries. Hannah herself, as a young girl taken in by Bush, is sleepless and tells her step-mother about voices she hears and about “a hand [that] live[s] inside her” (100) and tries to abuse her.

The origins of Hannah's terror seem to be found in her own history as well as in the past of her people. Referring to the horrible story of Hannah's mother Loretta and the gruesome death of the people from Elk Island, Dora-Rouge regards the “memory” (100) of these horrors as responsible for her great-granddaughter's misery. As Schultermandl notes, “[l]ike her own mother's, Hannah's skin bears reminiscences of the cyanide odor of rotten carcasses” (74). This scent of “bitter almonds” (Hogan, *Solar Storms* 40) – an odor that “never came off that poor girl. It was deeper than skin. It was blood-deep. It was history-deep” (40) – thus becomes a marker of the trauma Loretta, but also Hannah have sustained as members of the people from Elk Island (see Hans 99).

Importantly, however, Hans (see 99–100) as well as Schultermandl (see 73–74) add that the roots of the women's traumata can be found in the mechanisms of patriarchal colonialism. For Schultermandl, Hannah's mother Loretta is “the personification of the settler's exploitation both of the land and its people” (73). In order to establish new settlements with domesticated animals, white settlers tried to exterminate the wolves on Elk Island by laying out carcasses of deer they had killed before and which they prepped with cyanide. As Hans notes, the mindset behind these actions

is typical of the “Euro-American worldview” (99), namely that “the needs of men always supersede any other’s, and animals – whether wild or domesticated – are not considered to be on the same level of creation as man” (99). This has also been stated by Paula Gunn Allen, who pointed out that this conception of a “great hierarchical ladder of being” (*Sacred Hoop* 59) that is prevalent in most Western, non-Native societies, is “antithetical to tribal thought” (59), in which all forms of life are considered to be equal and expected to live in harmony with nature. In addition to the settlers’ violation of this “delicate balance of nature” (Hans 99), they left the indigenous Elk Islanders, who were desperate of hunger, no other choice then to eat the wolves’ deadly bait. The atrociousness of this story highlights how the settler colonial powers, who, as Hans trenchantly adds, “were not driven by survival but greed” (99), have not only lacked respect for the natural world, but have also disregarded the lives of the indigenous peoples (see Hans 99). Loretta, being one of the few survivors of the people from Elk Island, had to witness the catastrophe and in consequence developed an irreversible trauma. Furthermore, both she and her daughter Hannah have suffered psychological, physical, and sexual violence at the hands of white settlers, “who have already done unspeakable damage to them with their poison” (Hans 100). In the case of Loretta, we know that “she’d been taken and used by men who fed her and beat her and forced her” (Hogan, *Solar Storms* 39), and her daughter Hannah’s tortured body speaks volumes. Just as her mother Loretta, Hannah with her maltreated body and soul thus has become a tragic testament “of colonial, male abuse of indigenous women” (Kella 109). Hogan therefore seems to accuse the ecological destruction, genocide, and misogyny of settler colonialism of having broken Loretta’s and Hannah’s souls, with her other characters well aware that “Loretta wasn’t the original sin” (39), as Agnes compassionately acknowledges.

Throughout the text, it is also frequently suggested that Hannah is not only traumatized, but that she embodies something or someone supernatural and mythical. When brought to Old Man, one of the elders at the Hundred-Year-Old Road, Hannah is described by him as “an innocent body” (101) that is plagued by “spirits” (101), and he claims that “there was a word for what was wrong with her [...] but no one would say it. They were afraid it would hear its name and come to them” (101). As Hannah dies, Angel feels that her mother is now freed from something within her: “What possessed her was now gone. It was now ordinary as air in a room, no more than dust, and with quiet footsteps. Perhaps what stole inside a person disguised itself, themselves, as everyday things, daylight, ordinary words and common rooms. Now she was humble, her body without its person”

(250). The idea that Hannah is ridden by a supernatural being as a result of her trauma is therefore repeatedly reinforced in the text, yet without any specific labeling to what or who this being is.

Hans (97) and Castor (169) consider Hannah as the personification of the mythical figure ‘windigo’. As Smallman explains, “in Northern Algonquian traditions, the windigo was the spirit of winter, which could transform a man, woman, or child into a cannibalistic being with a heart of ice” (21). Windigo narratives have existed for centuries and were common in the oral tradition of most “Algonquian peoples[, which] represent the largest culture group in North America” (22), including the Cree and the Ojibwa – the Native American peoples to which most of the women in *Solar Storms* belong. While the imagined manifestations of a windigo differ among these various peoples and reach from “a terrifying giant” (Hans 95) to “a skeleton made of ice” (Landes 25), their centeredness around winter and ice seems to be universal. This can be traced back to the danger winter with its scarce food sources posed to the population, and to the existential fear of the people thence resulting (see Landes 25; Hans 96; Smallman 37). In the numerous windigo stories that have been passed down and at times were being modified from generation to generation, death of hunger was – next to “freezing to death, a shaman’s curse, spiritual corruption, or bad dreams” (Smallman 24) – the main reason for a person to become an evil cannibalistic ice spirit. It was also due to the harsh conditions of winter, that mainly people of one’s immediate social circle were dreaded to transform into a windigo, as Hans notes: “Since the frozen land of winter did not support larger groups, the danger came from within one’s own family. Anyone, whether male or female, could turn against the family” (96). Once in the grip of the windigo spirit, people were said to fantasize of cannibalism and to become impassive as well as restless and sleepless, before eventually turning violent in blindly following their tormentor’s orders (see Landes 25). In order to free a person from the evil ice spirit, it was, according to traditional windigo stories, necessary to induce the death of the possessed person, and “to melt the frozen heart” (Castor 169) with hot liquid (see Bierhorst 219, qtd. Castor 169)⁷.

As Hans argues, Hannah is undoubtedly presented as a windigo in *Solar Storms*, even though the word “windigo” itself is not even employed once by Hogan (see 97). However, Hans further expounds that the story of the “Woman Who Married Winter” (97), which Angel is told by Dora-

⁷ For further information on windigo myths and narratives, see Smallman’s recent work *Dangerous Spirits. The Windigo in Myth and History* (2014).

Rouge right after her mother's death, bears a striking resemblance to typical windigo narratives. In the story that is set during the harsh winter of 1936, "the starvation year" (Hogan, *Solar Storms* 248), a woman desperate of hunger eventually devours parts of her already deceased relatives, through which she turns crazy and "become[s] winter's mistress" (248), "roll[ing] naked in snowdrifts like a woman gone mad" (248). As "two hunters" (248) arrive at her hut, they soon know "what she was" (248); that "[t]his woman had slept with winter" (248), is a cannibal, and that "[h]er heart loved ice" (248). Her true identity revealed, the woman admits that she is possessed: "Now that she was found out, she began to cry. 'I'm a spirit,' she said. But there was another voice, a small human voice left inside her. It was this little voice, almost gone, that said to the men, 'You have to kill me. There's no other way.'" (248). Before she is able to attack and eat them, the two men kill her and "pour[...] boiling-hot water into her open mouth and her wounds in order to melt her frozen heart" (248). In the end, the men are convicted of murder by the white American legal system, which, as Dora-Rouge explains, of course is unaware of the threat the windigo women constituted for the people. The two hunters, however, are "satisfied, even to be locked up, knowing that they had returned the world to a kind of balance: they had made the world right for their people, for seasons and thaws" (249).

Although Hannah was not transformed into a windigo as a result of cannibalism, but because she had to experience the horrors of colonialism instead, her story is nonetheless inextricably linked with that of the woman who became winter's lover, making herself the embodiment of a windigo. Similar to the woman in the story, Hannah pleaded Eron to stab her with the words "'Kill me then [...] It's the only way'" (247), knowing that death is the only option for her to be freed of the windigo spirit (see Hans 102). In addition, it is repeatedly emphasized throughout the novel that Hannah is "icy cold" (Hogan, *Solar Storms* 34), like "the winter wind" (76), or "filled with ice" (94), suggesting that she is in the grip of the winter spirit windigo (see Hans 98). As Hans furthermore notes, in Hannah's actions against her daughter Angela, she "become[s] a windigo in the traditional sense" (100): by burying her teeth into her daughter's face she indeed becomes a cannibal, and, in harming Angel in this and in other ways, she targets her closest relatives, just as windigos are said to do (see Hans 100).

Keeping in mind that it were the cruel and devastating effects of patriarchal colonialism that made Hannah transform into a windigo (see Hans 102), however, it could be argued that these oppressive

systems themselves can be considered as evil and ruthless ‘windigo forces’. Castor points out that the group of people in the novel that probably stands for colonial exploitation most directly, namely “the builders of the dams” (172), are pictured as windigos by Hogan:

Those with the money, the investments, the city power, had no understanding of the destruction their decisions and wants and desires brought to the world. If they’d known what their decisions meant to our people, and if they continued with this building in spite of that knowing, then they were evil. They were cannibals who consumed human flesh, set fire to worlds the gods had loved and asked the humans to care for. (*Solar Storms* 343)

While the narrator Angela optimistically leaves the unlikely option open that the people in power are simply not aware of the scale and repercussions of their actions, it seems to be implied in these words that, in fact, Angel already knows that they *are* conscious of them very well, especially considering that this quote can be found at the very end of the book. As it is suggested by Castor, however, this makes them figuratively “cannibals who consume[...] human flesh” (Hogan, *Solar Storms* 343) just as the evil winter spirits, which is why they could be regarded as windigos themselves, who deliberately destroy nature, and with it the future of the Native peoples, just in order to satisfy their never-ending greed for power and money (see 173).

To pursue Castor’s argument further, not only the people responsible for the construction of the dam can be regarded as windigo forces in *Solar Storms*, but the destructive systems of settler colonialism and heteropatriarchy with which Angela and the indigenous population are confronted in general.

The already mentioned tragedy of Loretta’s and Hannah’s people, however, can be viewed as only one exemplar of the manifold ways in which settler colonialism with its attempted erasure of the indigenous population affects the Native American communities in the book. As it was already discussed in section 2.1 of this thesis, it has been the prime goal of settler colonialism to expand its territory and to commodify the land in doing so – to enable these aims, however, the Native population of this land needs to be obliterated and made invisible (see Arvin, Tuck, and Morrill 12). This has been tried to be achieved through various measures such as missionary attempts, coerced dislocations, re-education in boarding schools, and even genocide (see Tuck and Recollet 17; Wolfe 388).

Several different attempts of an elimination of indigenous lives and cultures are also addressed in the novel. Apart from the story of the Elk Islanders, in which white settlers let Natives deliberately starve until they chose to poison themselves, the genocide against the Native peoples is touched upon several times throughout the book. The tragic history of the genocidal actions against the Native American population seems to be reminded of in subtle ways, yet repeatedly. The old people living at the Hundred—Year-Old Road, for instance, are said to have “been alive at the time of the massacre of Indians at Wounded Knee. They remembered, and they wanted nothing to do with the new world” (Hogan, *Solar Storms* 29). Bush, for example, tells Angela about her mother, that “her life [was] going 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” (101). The interconnectedness of the past and the present is thus emphasized, and, by reminding of the cruel events that took place in history, it is ensured that the genocide is never forgotten.

Furthermore, the attempted re-education of Native American children in boarding schools is addressed by Hogan. Dora-Rouge’s touching story of when she was sent to boarding school, taken by government officials from her family and little sister, delineates the problematic nature of a “resocialization in total institutions such as missions or boarding schools” (Wolfe 388):

The agents from the school caught me, but I managed to escape from their big, pale hands, the way a fish would; I slipped out. They scared me to death. Their eyes were so blue, I thought they were evil spirits. They were tall, too, more than any men I’d ever seen. I escaped. I ran. [...] The next year, when they came again to round up children for school, I was slower. They caught me. I held to my little sister tight and wouldn’t let go. The men hit us to get us apart. It was so sad. When they carried me away my little sister held out her arms, her nose bleeding, her eyes streaming tears. “Ena,” she said, “Ena, don’t leave me. Somebody help us, please!” I can hear her and see her. [...] She held her arms out to me. It still breaks my heart to remember. It was just a few years later when little sister, taken to another school, walked into the snow, lay down on it, and froze to death. I wouldn’t have even known except some boys came by the school and told me. I went home. Thirty-two miles, too, and it was winter. [...] By the time I got home, my fingers were frostbitten. But it was a small pain next to that memory of having seen my sister cry and call out my name, begging the righteous men to let me go. (Hogan, *Solar Storms* 167–8)

Dora-Rouge thus recalls her own forced attendance of a faraway boarding school as a traumatizing act in which she was violently torn away from her little sister, the rest of her family, and her home. While she herself eventually managed to endure some years in separation from her family, her sister apparently could not stand the coerced disengagement from her home and cultural roots, and ended up killing herself out of despair. According to Arvin, Tuck, and Morrill, it was “to both sever

their ties with their families and home communities and to destroy the transfer of Indigenous identity, politics, and culture to the next generations” (15) that indigenous children were forcibly taken from their homes and put into boarding schools. The compulsory attendance of faraway boarding schools run by the state, which, as Arvin, Tuck, and Morrill importantly add, also “attempted to mold Native children into Western gender roles, and often also subjected them to sexual violence” (15), thus can be seen as another attempt to eradicate indigenous ways of lives and to enforce a heteropatriarchal worldview (see Allen, *Sacred Hoop* 195; Wolfe 388). This is also known to the women in *Solar Storms*, who are painfully aware that these “crying children [who] were taken away from their mothers” (Hogan, *Sacred Hoop* 40) were as “[i]t might have started” (40), as Agnes puts it, and are one step of many to undermine Native traditions and indigenous sovereignty.

Another way in which the existence of the indigenous population in *Solar Storms* is disavowed and their rights are restricted is through the imposition of the settlers’ values and legislation on them (see Tuck and Reollet 17). In dealing with the white authorities and officials, Angel and her people have to experience that there is unarguably a hierarchy, in which the laws and opinions of the white settlers are considered to be clearly standing above their own views, or rather in which the Natives’ values are completely discounted. After the meeting held between the officials of the dam project and the indigenous people, Auntie, Tulik, and the others are bitterly disappointed by the white officials’ blatant disregard of the repercussions their project has for the natural world and the Native population. Frustrated, Bush remarks: “Why are only white laws followed? This will kill the world. What is the law if not the earth’s?” (Hogan, *Solar Storms* 283). Bush thereby seems to be critically aware of the constructedness of the white American legal system that is considered as a norm and is expected to be followed nationwide, and criticizes its blatant anthropocentrism. For her, these “white laws” (283) are by no means rightful and stand in a stark contrast to what the natural world needs. “[L]aw” (283) is regarded not as something that is supposed to be man-made by Bush, but rather as the delicate interconnectedness of the world and the “ancient pact[s]” (22) that had been made between humans and the non-human world. In contrast to Bush’s indigenous perspective on laws, however, the government centers its legislation on humans’, and more specifically on non-Natives’, needs. As Arvin, Tuck, and Morrill remind, these “laws have been constructed to enable white settlers to make claims of indigeneity” (12). While it could be argued that the legal system of the United States is nonetheless based on democracy and the constitution, it needs to be kept in

mind that the nation-state behind this democratic system is in fact “founding itself on the past and current genocide of Native peoples” (“American” 311), as Smith states. Without the genocide⁸ of the indigenous population, which is often claimed to have happened solely in the distant past, the Native peoples could not have been labeled as having ‘vanished’, which in turn would not have allowed the “non-Native peoples [to] then become the rightful inheritors of all that was indigenous land, resources, indigenous spirituality, or culture” (Smith, “Heteropatriarchy” 63), and, consequently, to establish a nation-state with a legal system that suited their needs. The nation-states that are known as the USA and Canada are thus grounded on the claim of a land that was taken through genocidal actions, and on the false idea that now, that the indigenous population has been successfully erased and made history, the white settlers are the legitimate power and can preside over ‘their’ territory as they wish. For the white officials in *Solar Storms*, it is therefore solely their own value system and legislation that they regard as relevant and right, since they also wrongfully assume to be the legitimate proprietors of the land and the only relevant inhabitants of the North American continent.

This becomes also evident in the way the white officials try to historicize the Native peoples in *Solar Storms*. At the meeting between the representatives of the dam project and the indigenous population of the region of the Fat-Eaters, Angel and her relatives painfully realize that, for the white men, they belong to a faraway history: “[...] the man called us remnants of the past and said that he wanted to bring us into the twentieth century. My stomach turned at his words, a sick feeling inside me. He, like the others, believed that we were ignorant” (Hogan, *Solar Storms* 280). For the white officials, who are part of the settler colonial majority society, the Fat-Eaters, and thus the Native population in general, are hence undesirable “remnants” (280) of the American history, unless they are willing to assimilate to the ‘modern’ Western way of life and give up their own traditions (see Tuck and Reollet 17). The officials thereby ironically seem to see themselves as ‘white saviors’ who are going to help the ‘backward’ and ‘underdeveloped’ Natives to eventually live with the same economic and technological advancements as the white population. Angel aptly observes: “To the white men who were new here, we were people who had no history, who lived

⁸ Although I concur with scholars such as Smith or Arvin, Tuck, and Morrill in the usage of the term, it still remains to be debated whether or not it can be spoken of genocide when referring to the violent settler colonialism the Native peoples of North America have been subjected to. While a discussion of this controversy would exceed the scope of this thesis, more information on this matter can be found e.g. in Ostler’s work “Genocide and American Indian History” (2015).

surrounded by what they saw as nothingness. Their history had been emptied of us, and along with us, of truth” (Hogan, *Solar Storms* 280). In the minds of these white men, indigenous people like Angel and her family have vanished in a distant past, apparently such a long time ago, that they do not even consider Native peoples as part of their history and that they have forgotten how their nation-state was founded on the genocide and violent expropriation of Native Americans (see Smith, “American” 311). Together with the Native peoples, also the wilderness in which they live seems to be worthless, “dangerous” (Hogan, *Solar Storms* 180), and “in need of civilizing” (Castor 164) for these non-Native men, as Castor puts it. Veracini points out that this attitude is typical of settler colonialism, which seeks to “tame a variety of wildernesses, end up establishing independent nations, effectively repress, co-opt, and extinguish indigenous alterities, and productively manage ethnic diversity” (3). By repressing the people and the wilderness, and, as Angel ponders, by clearing the “spirit from everything, from animals, trees, fishhooks, and hammers, all things the Indians had as allies” (Hogan, *Solar Storms* 180), the settler colonial powers thus try to erase indigenous ways of life and normalize the white Western Euro-American lifestyle. Elsewhere in the book, at the very end, as Angel reflects on what she has experienced in the trial, she remarks:

To others, we were such insignificant people. In their minds we were only a remnant of a past. They romanticized this past in fantasy, sometimes even wanted to bring it back for themselves, but they despised our real human presence. Their men, even their children, had entered forests, pretended to be us, imagined our lives, but now we were present, alive, a force to be reckoned with. (343)

This quotation once again highlights how Native peoples are only existent as something ‘historical’ for many white Americans. While the white population loves to “‘play’ Indian” (Arvin, Tuck, and Morrill 19) and appropriate elements of indigenous cultures, or at least how they imagine indigenous culture to be, – which, as Arvin, Tuck, and Morrill point out, is an essential part of settler colonialism (see 19) –, they disregard the existence and concerns of present-day Native peoples.

In addition, the governmental abduction of Angel from the care of Bush can also be regarded as one way in which not only the white jurisdiction, but with it also Western, non-Native values are forced upon the indigenous protagonists of the novel. As Hans points out, “Bush, who was the first wife of Hannah’s father and Hannah’s adoptive mother, has no legal standing whatsoever, at least

according to the case workers” (101). For the “Euro-American legal system” (Hans 101) Angel is thus to be cared for by her mother, or, since her abusive mother is no suitable choice, to be put into the hands of foster families chosen by governmental institutions. These laws regulating the care of foster children as well as social cohabitation in general tend to be based on the Western conceptualization of ‘family’ in strictly biological terms on the one hand, and on the assumption that the nuclear family constitutes the norm and ‘natural’ form of coexistence on the other hand, which is why Bush is not considered to be a suitable legal guardian for Angela. This decision made by the white American legal system, however, disregards what Allen describes as the traditional ways of social coexistence in most Native American societies:

“Family” did not mean what is usually meant by that term in the modern western world. One’s family might have been defined in biological terms as those to whom one was blood kin. More often it was defined by other considerations: spiritual kinship was at least as important a factor as “blood”. Membership in a certain clan related one to many people in very close ways, though the biological connection might be so distant as to be practically nonexistent. (*Sacred Hoop* 251)

From a traditional tribal perspective – at least according to Allen’s definition –, Bush, although not biologically related to Angela, would have been the ideal care for Angel, since she had already raised her mother Hannah and could practically be regarded as her grandmother. As Arvin, Tuck, and Morrill point out, however, “[t]he heteropaternal organization of citizens into nuclear families” (14) is highly esteemed in settler colonial states, since this not only guarantees a steady population growth, but, more importantly, ensures the reinforcement of heteropatriarchy in the people’s mind and, through that, “naturalize[s] hierarchy” (Smith, “Heteropatriarchy” 69) both between the genders and in a nation (see Arvin, Tuck, and Morrill 14). Therefore, Arvin, Tuck, and Morrill add, “as settler nations sought to disappear Indigenous peoples’ complex structures and kinship, the management of Indigenous people’s gender roles and sexuality was also key in remaking Indigenous peoples into settler state citizens” (14–15). It could thus be argued that the government officials in *Solar Storms* did not want Angela to be raised within the gynocracy of her “matrilineal ancestors” (Schultermandl 70), but preferred to assign her to nuclear foster families where she could grow up in the heteropatriarchal surrounding of the settler society. During her childhood and teenage years in these various foster families, Angel was never told anything about her past or her kindred, which was, as Dennis notes, common “social work practice” (“Narratives of healing” 85)

in the 1950s and 60s⁹. Returning as “a rootless teenager” (Hogan, *Solar Storms* 25) to Adam’s Rib, the protagonist describes her hurtful past: “All I had was a life on paper stored in file cabinets, a series of foster homes. I’d been lost from my own people, taken from my mother” (26). From a Native American feminist perspective, it could be stated that this conduct of withholding Angel her indigenous roots and traditions once again aims at an erasure of any Native traits. Angel’s abduction from her relatives and her home can therefore not only be regarded as an imposition of white settler colonial laws and values on her and her Native relatives, as well as a disregard of tribal family structures, but has also denied Angel her true identity.

Apart from the settler colonial structures that can be detected in *Solar Storms*, Angel and the other indigenous people are also confronted with the influence of another ‘windigo’ force affecting their lives, namely that of heteropatriarchy. The dynamics of heteropatriarchy, as was already elaborated in detail in sections 2.2 and 2.3 of this thesis, promote “heterosexuality and patriarchy [...] as normal and natural” (Arvin, Tuck, and Morrill 13), and are based on the assumption that there are two strictly dividable genders male and female, which are usually assigned stereotypical character traits and gender roles (see Yep 32). As aforementioned, heteropatriarchy is inextricably linked with settler colonialism, in the sense that it not only “naturalizes social hierarchy” (Smith and Kauanui 241) and that the two systems influence each other, but also because “settler colonial governments require Indigenous communities to engage in heteropatriarchal systems to cope with and survive colonial occupation” (Tuck and Reollet 17). Barker importantly points out that “Native sovereignty struggles are gendered” (264), meaning that both the systems of heteropatriarchy and settler colonialism have affected indigenous people as well as their fight against a white domination and still continue to do so, which is why a Native American feminist analysis needs to take both heteropatriarchal and settler colonial structures into account.

In *Solar Storms*, Loretta and her daughter Hannah are probably most directly and violently affected by the repercussions of not only settler colonialism, but also of the heteropatriarchal ideology

⁹ The abduction of indigenous children by the government and their consequential adoption by predominately white homes was very common in the United States between the 1950s and the 1970s (see Kella 107). The Native children in foster care were frequently alienated from their “families of origin [...] their tribal localities, and [...] their culture” (Kella 107). “Until the passage of the Indian Child Welfare Act in 1978” (Kella 107), which improved the situation slightly, approximately “25% to 35% of all Native children were taken from their families” (Kella 107). For more information on Native American child adoption and the Indian Child Welfare Act, see Halverson, Puig, and Byers (2002).

behind it. The two women, whose people had become tragic victims of the settlers' greed for expansion and domination, have both suffered psychological, physical, and sexual abuse by white males. Loretta, already broken from having witnessed the horrors that occurred to her people, was being traumatized even more at the hands of white settlers:

But after that, when she was still a girl, she'd 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 hurt others. It was passed down. I could almost hear their voices when she talked, babbling behind hers, men's voices speaking English. Something scary lived behind her voice. (Hogan, *Solar Storms* 39).

Through their language use but also through the description of previous crimes the white settlers committed, Loretta's perpetrators can be identified as being non-Native settlers, who, after having usurped the land, now also feel entitled to lay a claim on the indigenous women they had ousted from their homelands before. As Schultermandl (see 73-74) and Jespersen (see 282) note from an ecofeminist perspective, this shows that for these male members of the white settler colonial society, women – and especially Native women – are, next to nature, merely objects that can be utilized and oppressed. According to ecofeminist theories, the domination of women and indigenous peoples and the destruction of nature are strongly connected, as all of them are being objectified by “the same hierarchical structures within society” (Schultermandl 70), such as patriarchy and colonialism (see Sellers 55–56). This is also pointed out by Jaimes*Guerrero, who emphasizes that “Native Womanism” (67), a term she proposes instead of Native feminism, “also has an ecological perspective” (67). Jaimes*Guerrero speaks of a “*feminized* subordination of nature, Natives, and women[, which] is a manifestation of the denigration of the *female principle*” (68) that is rooted in patriarchy and settler colonialism. In *Solar Storms*, this “*female principle*” (68) Jaimes*Guerrero is referring to thus seems to be violated in several ways.

Loretta's daughter Hannah's body too shows “[t]he signatures of torturers” (99), with Bush being sure that “there were violations and invasions of other kinds” (99) as well. Haunted by what had happened to her, Hannah is tormented by the abuse of what she describes to Bush as a male ghost: “‘Last night a man hurt me,’ your mother said one day. [...] ‘He came in here,’ she said. ‘See, my pants are all stretched out.’ [...] Another day she said, ‘A ghost unbuttoned my dress.’ It was true. Her dress was open, and she, Hannah, had a look of terror on her face” (103). Stories like these clearly suggest that, like her mother Loretta, Hannah has become the victim of what Schultermaml

describes as “a phallocentric culture dominating women, ethnic minorities, and nonhuman nature” (74), and that the unspeakable violence experienced by her eventually has led to “the breaking of her [...] spirit and her consequential inability to mother” (74). The abusive actions against Loretta and Hannah can thus be traced back to the male-dominated, heteropatriarchal ideology that is firmly rooted in most Western societies, and therefore also in the settler colonial USA. As Hoagland accurately notes, “[h]eteropatriarchy ensures male right of access to women” (205) – in the case of Hannah and Loretta, however, it has to be considered that, as Native women, they carry “a double burden” (65), as Jaimes*Guerrero calls it, as they are not ‘only’ oppressed for being women, but also for being Native Americans. The violence and abuse the two female characters experience can therefore be described as being intersectional (see Lykke 50), since they are subjected to the subjugating dynamics and the interplay of both settler colonialism and heteropatriarchy.

Furthermore, the extent to which heteropatriarchy has or has not been internalized by both the Native and non-Native characters in *Solar Storms* can also be observed through the roles they take in their communities as well as in the way they behave. Looking at the male figures, a striking difference between most of the indigenous and the white men can be discerned.

Generally speaking, the Native men that Angel and her grandmothers encounter throughout the story are portrayed as being gentle, kind, caring, and empathic, and as having a great reverence for the natural world. An example of this prototype of a gentle indigenous man that is frequently employed in the novel is John Husk, Agnes’ partner who lives with her and Dora-Rouge in their small house, and the first man that Angela gets to meet upon her arrival at the women-centered Adam’s Rib. Angel immediately grows fond of the sensitive Husk, who she describes as being scientifically interested and deeply concerned about the flora and fauna:

Husk fished and delivered groceries to people who lived out on islands, and he loved science. He kept stacks of magazines and books that divulged the secret worlds of atoms and galaxies, of particles and quarks. He’d read about the way bees communicate by dancing. His main desire in life was to prove that the world was alive and that animals felt pain, as if he could make up for being part of the broken contract with animals. (Hogan, *Solar Storms* 35)

The elder man, “dashing, handsome, [...] [and] one for whom cleanliness was next to godliness” (36), is valued by Angel for his wisdom, compassion, and great respect for nature. He, in addition

to Angela's three 'grandmothers', teaches her about the interconnectedness of everything in the natural world, and about the dangers of anthropocentrism: "One of the faults of men, Husk always said, was that they believed they were smarter than they were" (63). Unlike many Euro-American men, who frequently tend to consider themselves to be on top of "a great hierarchical ladder of being" (Allen, *Sacred Hoop* 59) and therefore to be superior to nature, animals, as well as other peoples and genders, Husk seems to believe that all living and non-living beings are equally important and valuable.

Similarly to Husk, Tulik, the cousin of Dora-Rouge's mother with whom the women get to live in the town of the Fat-Eaters, is portrayed as both caring and inquisitive. Although Angel is very fond of Husk, her relationship with Tulik, with his "mighty energy" (232), "happy eyes" (227), and "his no-problem smile" (234), seems to be even more special, as it is suggested: "And I grew to love Tulik. We were close, he and I. When I woke in the intimate space of morning, Tulik was already awake. [...] After he went outside, [...] I'd get up [...] and go join him outdoors [...] Together we were quiet as we prepared for the day, him praying, me being silent, looking toward the marshes to the east" (235). Through Tulik's storytelling Angel develops an even deeper connection to the land and her people, and it is Tulik who teaches her to gather the plants she sees in her dreams, and to worship them with songs (see 260–3). Like Husk, Tulik, who is also described as "neat and orderly" (233), both preserves tribal traditions and values, but is also interested in the things happening around the world: "A small globe of the world sat in one of the windows. Tulik used it when he read the news, which he did daily, and when earthquakes occurred, he looked always at the other side of the world to determine where aftershocks might strike. Always there was balance, he said" (233). Being "a good hunter" (233) and "a tribal judge" (233), whose "appraisal of people was almost always on the mark" (237), he is highly esteemed in the community. Apart from his wit and valuable skills, however, Tulik is portrayed as a highly sensitive, gentle, and caring man. Being surrounded by strong and intelligent women, Tulik treats them with great respect and love – especially Dora-Rouge, in whom he finds a partner:

Tulik smiled at her, his eyes lingering on hers. He liked me and he liked Bush, too, but he and Dora-Rouge had a special kind of kinship [...] He was a kind man, tender and masculine with still-powerful arms in spite of his smallness. He went over and touched Dora-Rouge lightly on the shoulder. I think he was proud of her. He thought she was singularly strong, and she was [...] (275)

Despite being physically strong and muscular, Tulik is thus repeatedly described as being “kind” (275), having a “soft voice” (297), speaking and laughing “softly” (292), and as having “such great tenderness” (298). He lovingly cares for the powerful women in his family and supports them in every possible way but also looks after everybody else in the community, “always feeding other people” (327) and “comforting” (297) them during their nerve-wrecking protest against the dam builders. As Angel wants to visit her dying mother but all the roads are blocked, Tulik uses almost all of his money to organize “a drop-off with the mail carrier [plane]” (240) for Angela: “I hustled around. ‘I’ll pay you back. I promise.’ But he only laughed in that deep way of his, soft at the same time his manliness would never be in doubt, even at his age” (240). Embodying character traits such as softness, compassion, tenderness, and sensitivity, which, from a heteropatriarchal and heteronormative perspective, are stereotypically regarded as ‘feminine’, Tulik appears to have not internalized the heteropatriarchal gender roles of the settler society but follows an egalitarian tribal philosophy that respects women, men, and the non-human world equally. Tulik’s ‘softer’ qualities, however, do not seem to diminish his masculinity in the eyes of the Native community, but rather to complete it. As Allen notes, it was relatively common for men in traditionally “women-centered social system[s]” (*Sacred Hoop* 2) and gynocratic indigenous societies to be “nurturing, pacifist, and passive” (2). This certainly stands in a stark contrast to character traits that are stereotypically expected of males in the heteropatriarchal white Euro-American society, as for instance to be “aggressive/assertive[,] logical/analytical[,] [...] self-oriented[,] emotionally unexpressive[,] in control[,] authoritative[,] invulnerable[,] [as well as] sexually aggressive” (Launius and Hassel 43).

The disparity between the rigid Western, heteropatriarchal conception of how men are expected to behave and Tulik’s character becomes particularly evident at the meeting between officials of the dam building project and the indigenous population. To begin with, the white officials choose to predominately speak with Tulik “[a]s the oldest man there, and as judge” (279), although several women who lead and support the protest are present, including Auntie, Bush, and the wise Dora-Rouge. This reflects the hierarchy that is existent in the minds of the white men: First of all, for them, “Indian people [...] [have] no say in this matter” (279) anyway; in this ‘alibi-meeting’ with the indigenous protestors, however, they consider only Tulik as the eldest male of the community to be addressable, since for these white men women are clearly not to be found in powerful positions. As one of the officials takes hold of the petition Auntie has started and refuses to return it to her, he blatantly ignores her words: “‘You can’t keep that petition,’ Auntie said to the man.

He pretended not to hear her” (281). Although Tulik is the one who is initially valued the most by the white officials, their respect for him dwindles as his gentle and caring character is revealed to them:

Hearing Tulik speak, Aurora began to make a fuss and Tulik lifted her from Dora-Rouge’s arms. As always when he held her, she became quiet. But I could see right away that this lost him points in the white men’s book. Tenderness was not a quality of strength to them. It was unmanly, an act they considered soft and unworthy. From that moment on they seemed not to consider Tulik to be a leader of his people. After that, they addressed all the men at the same time. (281–2)

For the officials as members of a heteropatriarchal, settler colonial society, who apparently solely accept who they consider as a ‘real man’, gentleness is a character trait they despise in males. According to their view, which seemingly follows the heteropatriarchal conception that only allows for the two strictly divided genders male and female and dictates rigid gender roles (see Yep 32), Tulik’s qualities are regarded as ‘feminine’ and therefore degrade him in their social hierarchy.

Just as the white officials at the meeting, the majority of all Euro-American males in the story are portrayed as being inconsiderate and dismissive towards nature and the indigenous peoples, especially indigenous women. Apart from the white settlers who, as has been already discussed, almost eradicated the Elk islanders and brutally abused Loretta and Hannah, both the trappers who had caught and made profit of the “last glacier bear” (Hogan, *Solar Storms* 45) – which later became Agnes’ coat – and the white workers in the north consider themselves to be on top of the “hierarchical ladder of being” (*Sacred Hoop* 59), as Allen describes this mindset existent in many Western people. The white men working for the dam project seem to have created their own world in Holy String Town, where, during the day, they are quarrying and exploiting the earth before the land is eventually flooded, and at nighttime spend their time brawling, or with alcohol and “[p]rostitutes” (Hogan, *Solar Storms* 219). Females, except for sex workers, are clearly not tolerated in this male-dominated sphere, and indigenous women are disrespected even more than their men. Upon their arrival, Angela, Bush, and Dora-Rouge have to experience that male landlords “don’t rent to women” (219), Native women are disregarded, like Auntie at the meeting, and, as Tulik’s house is one day surrounded by machines and Angel tries to escape with Aurora, she is condescendingly taunted by a young white worker, “who thought it all belonged to him” (288). Moreover, unlike the indigenous men at North House, who are described as “thoughtful” (199), “kind” (200), and respectful towards Angel and her ‘grandmothers’, even bringing gifts to

Dora-Rouge (see 199), the white “silver chasers” (199) and trappers seem to care only for their desired prosperity. With Mr. Orensen, the white proprietor of the Two-Town Post who changes throughout the story and eventually supports the indigenous protestors (see 302), however, it is shown that not all Euro-American characters in the novel are ruthless and misogynist, just as not all Native men are portrayed as tender and considerate. Nonetheless, it can be stated that the majority of the white Western men in *Solar Storms* are pictured as aggressive patriarchs with no respect for women, indigenous peoples, and nature.

Returning to the indigenous men in the novel, it can be observed that apart from Husk and Tulik, Tommy Grove, with whom Angel falls in love, can also be described as not having internalized heteropatriarchal qualities, but as embodying an alternative, traditionally ‘tribal’ masculinity. Angela adores Tommy for being “graceful” (29), humble, and “a provider already [who] [...] hunted and fished, both with painstaking compassion and respect for the animals, the way it was supposed to be done” (126). Unlike other young and presumably white men Angel had encountered before she came to Adam’s Rib (see 126), and unlike the young white workers at the town of the Fat-Eaters, who are described as “shortsighted” (289) and seem to be keen on oppressing nature and the indigenous people, Tommy is portrayed as being considerate and extraordinarily mature for his age. Just as Husk and Tulik, Tommy is pictured as sensitive, gentle, and as having great respect for both women and the natural world.

While the Native men in Hogan’s *Solar Storms* are predominately depicted as tender and caring, there are, as it was mentioned above, characters that break this pattern. LaRue Marks Time, a taxidermist living in a small settlement near Adam’s Rib, for instance, stands out from the other men of his community and is disdained by Angel:

Rue, as we called him, was a taxidermist and a dealer in bones, pinned butterflies, hides, traps, and firearms. A man my heart would not like. He was a mixed-blood from the south, a Dakota, I think, and had only recently returned from Vietnam. He’d come in search of a refuge away from crowded towns or places that minded the business of strangers. What men were capable of, he hated, and his hatred included himself. (29)

As LaRue takes Angel fishing one day, he tries to lecture her about what he considers as the best fishing techniques, but in fact only leaves Angel shocked about the ruthless way he treats the fish (see 83). In addition to his occupation, this incident reveals LaRue’s lack of respect for the natural world, which, according to Angela, makes him “a poor excuse for an Indian” (83). Furthermore,

LaRue desperately tries to impress Bush – she, however, like her step granddaughter Angela, is appalled by his behavior, and rejects his advances: “‘There are proper ways of approaching animals and fish,’ Bush said. ‘Just as there are proper ways to approach a woman.’” (84). LaRue is therefore not only “associate[d] [...] with the trappers and their disregard for the land” (277) as Jespersen notes, and thus linked to the settler colonial society, but seems to have internalized some aspects of a patriarchal conduct as well. This becomes also evident when LaRue joins the protest in the north: arriving adorned with “medals on his chest” (317), he presents himself as “a soldier” (317), and, with “his aggressive manner, the very thing Bush hated about him” (317), he is admired by the young Native protestors (see Jespersen 286). LaRue thus seems to have adopted a concept of ‘masculinity’ that is defined by power, “aggression, and hierarchy” (see Jespersen 286), and that is profoundly different from the considerate, peaceful behavior of other Native men such as Tulik, and of the women of the community. The roots for LaRue’s character may be found in his identity as a Vietnam War veteran and in his collaboration with white trappers. Jespersen suggests, referring to Hogan and her article “Department of the Interior” (qtd. in Jespersen 287), that LaRue, just as the young Native American protestors of “uncertain identity” (Hogan, *Solar Storms* 316) who look up to him, has become alienated from his Native American roots and tribal ways of life, and, as a consequence, has taken on “Euro-American definitions of masculinity” (Jespersen 287) and “resort[s] to violence” (287). Some of the young indigenous protestors – the “city Indians” (Hogan, *Solar Storms* 305), who invent “names and labels for themselves” (305) and are quickly identified as having lost their true indigenous roots – as well as LaRue can therefore be considered as a heteropatriarchally influenced counterpart to the sensitive masculinity Tulik, Husk, and other indigenous men embody.

Jespersen importantly adds, however, that LaRue changes and softens throughout the story and eventually (re-)discovers respect for the natural world and empathy within himself (see 292). Upon his return to Adam’s Rib at the end of the book, LaRue, who had been carried off by a river which he says “scared [him] shitless” (349), seems to have shed his macho-behavior and, for the first time, appears to be vulnerable and compassionate. As Angel pays him a visit, she discovers that LaRue has been brought to tears by a dead animal that was delivered to him and was “the last of its kind” (Jespersen 292). This incident, among others, seems to have sparked awareness in LaRue of the extent to which the natural world and his people are truly affected by the white settler society: “He cried for the animal, for us, our lives, and for the war he’d endured and never told about”

(340). LaRue has thus developed from a ruthless indigenous macho, who had internalized heteropatriarchal conceptions of masculinity and showed no respect for nature, to a compassionate and sensitive person, who begins to regard the natural world highly, and has rediscovered his tribal identity. As Jespersen pointedly concludes, “LaRue’s transformation into a man more like the other male characters of the novel offers a form of masculinity better than its Euro-American counterpart. The novel celebrates men such as Tulik, Arlie, Husk, and Tommy because they demonstrate a capacity for love and caretaking that is denigrated by mainstream society” (293). LaRue’s change could even be seen as “a powerful indicator of resistance” (292), as Jespersen suggests, since his recentering on traditional values that respect women and men, as well as human and non-human nature equally also contributes greatly to the community and their common goals.

To sum up, it can be stated that Angel and her people are confronted with manifold ‘windigo forces’ that are rooted in heteropatriarchal settler colonialism. Not only have Angel’s relatives had to experience brutal genocide and an attempted erasure of their people, but they have also been subjected to psychological, physical, and sexual abuse. However, the effects of the heteropatriarchal and anthropocentric ideology that is existent in the American settler colonial society become not only evident through the violence Angel’s mother and grandmother have been subjected to but also through the misogynist, aggressive conduct of most of the white men in the story, and their disrespect of the environment. A comparison with the male Native American characters in *Solar Storms*, who mostly hold women and nature in high regard and are portrayed as considerate and sensitive, reveals the internalized patriarchal gender roles of the white men even more. While one of the indigenous men, LaRue Marks Time, is initially pictured as being alienated from his tribal identity as well as from nature, and as being heavily influenced by a Euro-American idea of masculinity, he eventually changes at the end of the novel and rediscovers his Native American self.

3.4 Mighty women and caring men: restoring the balance

As already noted, the majority of the Native American men in *Solar Storms* can be described as living and behaving according to the “female principles” (Jaimes*Guerrero 68) of traditional indigenous gynocratic societies, in the sense that they have not internalized stereotypical

patriarchal qualities, but refuse social hierarchies and respect women as well as the natural world highly (see Allen, *Sacred Hoop* 2–3; Jaimes*Guerrero 68).

In doing so, it can be argued that they not only empower the women in their community but thereby also contribute greatly to the resistance against the settler colonial and heteropatriarchal powers their people are confronted with (see Jespersen 292). First of all, it is important to note that a successful liberation from colonialist oppression is only possible through an elimination “of *both* heteropatriarchy and settler colonialism or else it will do little to achieve decolonization for either Indigenous women or men” (16–7), as Arvin, Tuck, and Morrill stress. This is because it has been one of the main objectives of settler colonialism to eliminate the women-centered social structures of many Native societies and impose heteropatriarchal ideologies on the indigenous population, since a settler colonial domination of the land and its Native peoples requires the implementation of social hierarchies (see for instance Allen *Sacred Hoop* 3, Arnold 98, or Smith and Kauanui 241). From a Native American feminist perspective, an opposition to both of these destructive systems is therefore not only conducive to indigenous women, but also to indigenous men or people of other gender identity. By refusing to adopt patriarchal character traits and behavior, and by living in a way that values all genders equally and allows for empowered, strong, and independent women, the Native men in *Solar Storms* therefore counter the ‘windigo forces’ of patriarchal colonialism – the very forces that are responsible for the collective traumata of their people and the depletion of their land.

Apart from the men of the indigenous community in the novel, however, it is mostly due to the “mighty women” (29) in Hogan’s gynocratic society that *Solar Storms* can be described as a story of an individual and collective healing, and of a strong resistance to white and male-dominated destruction and oppression.

To begin with, it can be argued that the female character most significantly affected by the matriarchal surroundings of Adam’s Rib and the tribal wisdoms of its women is the protagonist Angela. Having spent her childhood and teenage years in white foster families, which could be seen as an epitome of the heteropatriarchal settler colonial government that felt the need to take her from the care of Bush, Angela is lost, insecure, and estranged from her cultural roots as she arrives at Adam’s Rib (see Vernon 43–4). After her arrival, she hides her heavily scarred face – wounds that she believes had been inflicted by her own mother and that “had shaped [her] [...] life” (Hogan,

Solar Storms 25) – under her hair and heavy make-up, suffers from insomnia, and, once asked about the origin of her scars by Frenchie, has an emotional breakdown. In lack of knowledge about her own past, the young woman is driven by the desire to reconnect with her family and learn about her biological mother – so much that she has even invented her own story and the phantasy of a loving mother to comfort herself (see 74), which, as Dennis notes, is rather common for “fostered children” (86) who are denied any knowledge of their history. Angel is thus “rootless” (25) and lonely as she begins this new chapter in her life, but she carries hope that her “blood kin” (27) will eventually be her “salvation” (27) and aid her in discovering her identity.

Moving to Adam’s Rib, Angela then becomes embedded into a loving community full of strong and “mighty women” (29). As Farca points out, Adam’s Rib is a place in which women of various origins have emancipated from their dependence on white settlers and have established a community with tight bonds and mutual support (see 43-44). The history of these tough women and of their ancestors shows that, similar to Loretta and Hannah, they too had been regarded merely as commodities by the settlers:

The first women at Adam’s Rib had called themselves the Abandoned Ones [...] [They had] traveled down with French fur trappers who were seeking their fortunes from the land. When the land was worn out, the beaver and wolf gone, mostly dead, the men moved on to what hadn’t been destroyed, leaving their women and children behind, as if they too were used-up animals (28)

These women, however, did not surrender to their fate as abandoned wives but chose to lead self-determined lives and “created a flourishing community and culture that reflected their own struggles and aspirations” (44), as Farca puts it. Together with the predominately considerate and emphatic men in Adam’s Rib, these females and their ancestors have lived in a way that respects and values every community member equally, and that is constituted by solidarity, companionship, and a reverence for the non-human world (see Schultermandl 76). The town of Adam’s Rib could therefore be categorized as a “gynocratic” (*Grandmothers* xiv) society, following Allen’s definition (see *Sacred Hoop* 2-3; *Grandmothers* xiv). Angela thus becomes part of a community that is considerably different to what she had experienced in the heteropatriarchal non-Native surrounding of her white foster families, and that provides her with a sense of belonging and self-worth as a Native American woman.

Living with her matrilineal relatives Agnes, Dora-Rouge, and Bush, Angel then changes profoundly, learns about tribal ways and the interconnectedness of humans and nature, and grows confidence in her abilities as an indigenous woman. By helping to take care of her great-great-grandmother Dora-Rouge, and later through the manual work that is required to survive on the isolated Fur Island, she finds a purpose and grows both physically and mentally strong. Under the influence of her self-sufficient grandmothers, the protagonist transforms from a girl who “cared only about what [she] [...] looked like” (147) to a vigorous woman who is able to fish, paddle, chop wood, sew, and to accomplish other chores necessary in the wilderness of the Boundary Waters. It could thus be argued that Angel has shed her internalized heteropatriarchal conception of a woman as somebody who, most importantly, is supposed to be attractive and pleasant looking, and has found her own identity as a strong indigenous female with multiple skills and abilities.

In addition, Angela, guided by her grandmothers and men like Husk and Tommy, develops a deep connection with the natural world around her and begins to comprehend that humans and nature are inextricably linked. As she eventually learns to swim, Angel describes swimming as an experience or state in which she becomes one with nature: “I gasped for air. I thought turtle [...] Suddenly I was clear, old and strong, a turtle, like the one on the island, moving through sea” (92), or: “I forgot to breathe, swimming as if once again, as before birth, I had a gill slit. In that moment, I remembered being fish. I remembered being oxygen and hydrogen, bird and wolverine. It was all there. I felt it in my heart” (179). Through the mentoring by her matrilineal kinship, Angel therefore internalizes a reverence for the natural world and realizes that this relationship with nature is vital for the spiritual and physical wellbeing of her people.

Moreover, Angel starts to occasionally dream of various special plants, that she is able to locate with the help of Dora-Rouge or Tulik later in the book. This newly discovered skill of Angel, that “has been passed on to her from her great-great grandmother, Ek” (Kella 111), is one of many abilities that, in “[t]raditional American Indian systems” (Allen, *Sacred Hoop* 206), were found in women and that, according to Allen, can be ascribed to a special “feminine [...] power” inherent in indigenous women (*Sacred Hoop* 207). The emergence of Angel’s plant dreaming therefore may be seen not only as a manifestation of her rediscovered tribal roots and her deep connection with both her matrilineal ancestors and nature (see Kella 111) but also as an instance through which the power that in many indigenous societies is traditionally accredited to the female is brought to

contemporary times by Hogan. Later, as she dreams a healing plant during their journey to the north, Angel herself admits: “My life, before Adam’s Rib, had been limited in ways I hadn’t even known. I’d never thought there might be people who found their ways by dreaming. What was real in those land-broken waters, real even to me, were things others might call the superstitions of primitive people” (189). This indicates the transformation she has undergone since returning to her Native American relatives, and the impact the gynocratic community and the wilderness of the Boundary Waters have had on her.

In addition, the women’s remarkable trip north, during which Angel’s plant dreaming becomes particularly intense, once again highlights the strength and courage of the female characters in Hogan’s novel. Driven by different motives — Angel longs to find her mother, Bush is determined to join the resistance against the dam project, Dora-Rouge aims to collect ancient plants of great importance and wants to die in her ancestral home, and Agnes refuses to let her mother go alone — , the four women embark on a journey so strenuous “most men would not want to endure” (Hogan, *Solar Storms* 154). On their way through the countless waterways to the north, the women lose track of time and enhance their connection to each other, to nature, and to tribal spirituality:

We were full and powerful, wearing the face of the world, floating in silence [...] The four of us became like one animal. We heard inside each other in a tribal way. I understood this at once and was easy with it. With my grandmothers, there was no such thing as loneliness. Before, my life had been without all its ears, eyes, without all its knowings. Now we, the four of us, all had the same eyes, and when Dora-Rouge pointed a bony finger and said, “This way,” we instinctively followed that crooked finger. (177)

For Angel, this trip to the north in which she tightens the bond with her female kin and increases her spiritual connection with the environment, therefore “becomes a ceremony of healing and restoration” (Kella 11) that contributes greatly to her identity formation.

As Farca importantly notes, however, Angel and her grandmothers are also confronted with the brutal reality of the progressing environmental destruction during their journey (see 52). They are forced to change their route, become witnesses of a moose dying a wretched death as it is sinking into a mudflat where once used to be a lake, and they have to discover that another river had “been diverted into the Se Nay [River]” (Hogan, *Solar Storms* 191), which they had planned to paddle down, but now “was all rapids” (191). In order to make a passage possible for the women, Dora-Rouge mysteriously negotiates with the river, and reaches a deal which, as Dora-Rouge blames

herself, later apparently costs Agnes' life. Throughout their transformative journey, the women are therefore repeatedly reminded of the 'windigo' force of colonialism that has already devastated wide areas of the land and threaten to destroy even more.

Nonetheless, it could be argued that the women's journey constitutes a symbolic as well as literal celebration of tribal traditions in which the power of the feminine (see Allen, for instance *Sacred Hoop* 2–3, 206–8, 247–261) is emphasized, and a resistance against patriarchal colonialism at the same time. This becomes evident not only through Angel's plant dreaming, which, as it was already discussed, is said to be a traditionally female spiritual skill (see Allen, *Sacred Hoop* 207), but also in the way Angel admires and appreciates the power and wisdom radiating from her grandmothers:

With tenderness I looked at Dora-Rouge, her white hair, her face with light coming from it. Never, I thought, was life so good, were women more wonderful. At times I saw something shining in the depths of Bush [...] She was the closest thing I had to a mother. And if she was the closest thing to a mother, Dora-Rouge [...] was the closest thing to God. (182)

The protagonist seems to be in awe and inspired by the manifold abilities and skills of her female mentors: Bush's physical strength and her ease when moving in water, Agnes' "singing [...] [and] talking [of] the old language" (177), and Dora-Rouge's storytelling, knowledge of plants, and negotiating with the river. Despite Agnes' tragic death, the trip to the north thus proves to Angel what indigenous women like her grandmothers and herself are capable of, and contributes to her transformation into a confident young woman. Symbolically, the women's journey could therefore be seen as a counterproposal to heteropatriarchal ideas that try to limit the roles of females and position women as weak and dependent on men. While this alone can be regarded as a resistance to patriarchal colonialism, the four women furthermore are literally on their way to join a protest against forces that are trying to dominate them, their people, and the natural world.

It is through the stories of her grandmothers that Angela learns to understand how patriarchal settler colonialism has affected her people, including her mother and grandmother, and the environment simultaneously. The protagonist is told about "the ancient pact [and] agreement" (Hogan, *Solar Storms* 22) between humans and nature that was supposed to maintain a balance, and she realizes how this pact has been treated with contempt by the white settler society in the past as well as today (see Schultermandl 72). She understands that the exploitation and devastation of the earth at the hands of the "phallogentric, patriarchic dominant society" (72), as Schultermandl calls it, and the

oppressive violence against her people are connected, and that both are rooted in the same “hierarchical structures” (71). This awareness, gained through the storytelling of the women in her life, helps Angela to reconcile with her past and forgive her abusive mother. Knowing about the true culprits of Hannah’s and Loretta’s fate and having been directly confronted with the cold manner of her windigo mother in the north, the protagonist is eventually able to compassionately understand “that her mother, like the entire tribe and their lands, are victims of an oppressive dominant culture” (Schultermandl 77). At Hannah’s deathbed, the “small and vulnerable” (Hogan, *Solar Storms* 250) girl Angel’s mother “might have been once [...] before she was tortured into this poor shape” (250) becomes visible, and makes Angela realize even more, that, despite all the cruel things Hannah has done, she is ultimately an innocent casualty of the brutal and ruthless patriarchal colonialism. This insight into the systems responsible for her own painful past as well as her forgiveness of her mother mark the protagonist’s transition into “maturity” (77), as Schultermandl notes, and constitute an endpoint of her healing (see Farca 48–9):

It was death, finally, that allowed me to know my mother, her body, the house of lament and sacrifice that it was. I was no longer a girl. I was a woman, full and alive. After that, I made up my mind to love in whatever ways I could. I would find it in myself to love the woman who had given life to me, the woman a priest had called a miracle in reverse [...]. (Hogan, *Solar Storms* 250–1)

The protagonist thus seems to have eventually managed to come to terms with her past, and through the support of her grandmotherly mentors who have shaped and guided her, she has rediscovered her identity and is able to look into the future as a powerful indigenous woman.

Angel’s reconciliation with her past enables her to engage even more fiercely in a resistance against the very forces that have harmed her people for generations. As Schultermandl argues, this implies both Angela’s participation in the protest against the dam project, and her dedicated care for her baby half-sister Aurora, through which she “assumes the responsibility of keeping her tribe alive” (78). The entire indigenous community around Angel, Bush, Dora-Rouge, Auntie, and Tulik that leads this non-violent protest, however, could be regarded as an opposition to the oppressive and destructive white settler society in two ways: For one thing, they resist the destructive plans of the ‘windigo’ settler society in the most direct sense of their protest, through which they initially are at least able to delay the construction with blockades and other measures. After more than two years of protest and a court case, the indigenous protestors eventually achieve a stop of the

construction of the dam. Yet considering that wide areas of land have already been flooded or otherwise devastated, countless animals have died, and that numerous people have been forced to dislocate with their souls broken from the destruction they have already witnessed, it can be argued that this victory is in fact only a small one. As Castor aptly remarks, however, other than “[i]n traditional stories, [where] balance would be restored when the *windigo* was killed[,] [i]n the contemporary world, a ‘cure’ is less measurable” (173). An opposition against the ‘windigo’ forces of settler colonialism and heteropatriarchy can thus not only be found in the protestor’s achievement to stop “the building of the dams” (Hogan, *Solar Storms* 344), but can also be detected in a less visible form, namely as the Native communities themselves. On the one hand, it can be argued that the indigenous societies in *Solar Storms* inherently contribute to a resistance against these forces through their gynocratic structure and their powerful women and considerate men, who reject heteropatriarchal concepts of femininity and masculinity. Furthermore, however, it is through the Native American people’s determination to survive and stand their ground that patriarchal settler colonialism is opposed in Hogan’s novel. Veracini points out that in the light of the ultimate goal of settler colonialism to eliminate any Native traces, “[r]esistance and survival are [...] the weapons of the colonised and the settler colonised; it is resistance and survival that make certain that colonialism and settler colonialism are never ultimately triumphant” (3-4). The survival of the gynocratic indigenous community around Angel is personified by her baby half-sister Aurora (see Schultermandl 79), who is cared for by the entire “tribe” (Hogan, *Solar Storms* 262), as Angela calls her extended family. As Schultermandl notes, Aurora’s name can be seen as a “reference to the aurora borealis over the lands they originate from” (79), which, according to Angel, is the “celestial phenomenon reflecting the chain of matrilineage Angel and Aurora belong to” (80). Also referred to as “Our Future” (318), just as Dora-Rouge had dubbed her great-great-granddaughter Angel, Aurora “[holds] a fullness [the community] longed for” (318) and thus can be considered as a character signifying hopefulness and optimism. The community around Aurora, and especially Angel, is eager to protect the baby from both the immediate physical danger of the attacks by the white workers and soldiers, and the underlying mindset of patriarchal colonialism (see Schultermandl 80–81). At the end of the novel, Angel’s “attempt to reconstruct a strong matrilineal society” (Schultermandl 80) seems to have been successful: the protagonist recalls her tribal marriage with Tommy, during which they “held Aurora up at the traditional dances, in our hands, raised her above Tommy’s head and showed her off to the people” (Hogan, *Solar Storms*

350), and tells Bush that “[s]omething wonderful lives inside [her]” (351), suggesting that she carries a child that, together with young Aurora, will sustain their gynocratic community in the future.

The Native characters in Linda Hogan’s *Solar Storms* and their ancestors have thus been confronted with the ‘windigo’ forces of heteropatriarchy and settler colonialism in manifold ways. Reaching from genocide, governmental child abduction, the destruction of their homelands, and physical as well as sexual abuse, to the imposition of white laws, values, and gender roles, their lives have been affected tremendously by these structures that are also responsible for Angel’s trauma and her mother’s and grandmother’s broken souls. The gynocratical community of her ancestral homeland with caring men like Husk, Tommy, and Tulik, and particularly the influence of the powerful women in her life, however, allow Angela to discover her identity as a strong indigenous woman. She is able to reconcile with her past and heal her emotional wounds, understanding that the true culprits responsible for her fate can be found in the white heteropatriarchal settler society. Through a fierce, but non-violent protest against a planned project to build a dam, and through their survival as a proud gynocratic society, the indigenous community in *Solar Storms* can eventually heal collectively and opposes the ‘windigo’ forces of heteropatriarchy and settler colonialism.

4. *Ceremony* (1977)

4.1 The author: Leslie Marmon Silko

One of the most prominent and widely received Native American authors, Leslie Marmon Silko, was born on March 5, 1948, in Albuquerque, New Mexico, into a family of mixed descent. Having Mexican, Laguna, as well as white roots, Silko once noted that “the attempt to identify what it is to be a half-breed or mixed blooded person; what it is to grow up neither white nor fully traditional Indian” (qtd. in Owens 167¹⁰) is central to her work, yet she feels strongly connected to her Native American heritage and the Laguna Pueblo in New Mexico, where she also spent her childhood (see Weaver 213). According to Silko, she owes the deep bond with her Native ancestry and the Laguna culture to a great extent to the elder women in her family. Her grandmother Lillie Stagner Marmon and her great-grandmother Marie Anaya Marmon, also called Grandma A’mooh “for her gentle ways with children and for educating them with stories told in the Laguna language” (Snodgrass 7), contributed, in addition to Silko’s great-aunt Susie, substantially to the author’s upbringing, “passing down to her ‘an entire culture by word of mouth’” (Coltelli 135) and introducing her to the art of storytelling (see Nelson 16–7).

As a student of the fifth grade at a Catholic school in Albuquerque, Silko first discovered her passion for writing after having been enthusiastic about reading and books from a very young age (see Coltelli 145). When she later graduated with great honors from the University of New Mexico with a bachelor’s degree in English in 1969, Silko, already divorced from her first marriage and mother of her first son, published her literary debut apart from a publication in student magazine earlier the same year, a short story with the title “The Man to Send Rain Clouds” (McNeil and Jeselnik 320).

Following her graduation, she began with legal studies at the University of New Mexico, in order “to seek justice for the Laguna” (Snodgrass 15). Soon disillusioned by the “injustice [that] was part of the Anglo legal system” (McNeil and Jeselnik 320), Silko quit her law studies, determined to fully dedicate her professional life to writing, arguing that “the most effective political statement I

¹⁰ The original quotation of Silko can be found in Bruchac, Joseph. *The Next World: Poems by Third World Americans*. Trumansburg, NY: Crossing P, 1978. 1730.

could make is in my art work”, as she stated in an interview (Coltelli 147). While spending a short period of time as a teacher at Navajo Community College in Arizona, Silko consequently started to work on her first collection of poetry, *Laguna Women*, which she then published in 1974, and which was followed by her first contribution to an anthology of short stories named *The Man to Send Rain Clouds* (1974) (see Nelson 18). This collection of short stories by Native American authors edited by Kenneth Rosen featured seven stories by Silko, among them “Yellow Woman”, one of her most famous works, in which a young Laguna woman suddenly finds herself entangled with the ancient story of the Keres pueblo goddess Yellow Woman/Kochininako (see McNeil and Jeselnik 320).

Critically acclaimed for her publications, Silko, who had already married her second husband John Silko and had given birth to her second son at that time, then received two grants and temporarily moved to Ketchikan, Alaska, where she worked on her novel *Ceremony* (see Snodgrass 15–7). In a correspondence with the writer James Wright she later described that this geographical separation from her homeland encouraged her even more to set the plot of *Ceremony* in Laguna: “When I was writing *Ceremony*, I was so terribly devastated by being away from Laguna country that the writing was my way of re-making that place, the Laguna country, for myself” (Wright 27–8). After its publication in 1977, Silko’s first novel *Ceremony*, in which she incorporated elements of storytelling and ancient myths, was then critically celebrated as a milestone of Native American literature and remains one of the most well-known and acclaimed novels of the Native literary sphere until today (see Snodgrass 18; 71). Silko’s subsequent major works include the novels *Storyteller* (1981), for which she wove already existing poetry and narratives by her into the story and assembled them with family photos, *Almanac of the Dead* (1991), a story set in modern-day Laguna in which the destructive colonialist forces are juxtaposed with Native American tradition, as well as *Gardens in the Dunes* (1999), a historical novel (see Nelson 19–20; McNeil and Jeselnik 321; Droberg, Huiras, and Zavialova 3). The author, who has received several awards, fellowships, and prizes over the years, now lives divorced from her second husband in Tucson, Arizona, has published her memoir *The Turquoise Ledge: A Memoir* in 2010 (see Snodgrass 33).

4.2 Plot

Leslie Marmon Silko's novel *Ceremony* centers on the story of the protagonist Tayo, a young World War II veteran of mixed Pueblo and white ancestry, who has returned to his home on the Laguna reservation in New Mexico. Traumatized by the atrocities he had seen during war and the loss of his beloved cousin Rocky and his uncle Josiah, Tayo has been struggling with gruesome flashbacks, nausea, and insomnia since his time served as a soldier in the U.S. Army. Although he had been hospitalized and treated with sedating drugs for a long time after the war, he arrives in a still miserable condition at the house of his aunt "Auntie" (38) – who had reluctantly taken him in as a child when his alcoholic mother Laura or "Little Sister" (68) was not able to care for him any longer – and spends most of his time crying and vomiting in bed.

While Auntie and Tayo's uncle Robert are unsure of how to treat their agonized nephew, it becomes increasingly clear to the veteran's grandmother "old Grandma" (38) what was already suggested by an unknown storyteller at the beginning of the novel: "[t]he only cure [for Tayo] [...] is a good ceremony" (3). After Tayo has spent some time back home in Laguna without any signs of recovery, his grandmother eventually summons the Laguna medicine man old Ku'oosh, hoping that he might be able to help her grandson. Although old Ku'oosh is painfully aware that "since the white people came" (38) his healing power has been restricted, he nonetheless performs a ceremony on the traumatized veteran and, importantly, teaches him about the "fragility and intricacy" (35) of the world. Provided with "blue cornmeal" (38) and "Indian tea" (38) by the medicine man, Tayo is then also able to at least cure his nausea and regain physical strength – his psychological and spiritual trauma, however, remain.

In addition to the grief over the death of his cousin Rocky – with whom he grew up and who was like a brother to him – in war, and the passing of his beloved uncle Josiah, Tayo is tormented by the thought that he might be responsible for the ongoing drought in the area, since he had "damned the rain" (12) out of exhausted desperation when he was marching through the muddy and wet Philippine jungle during war time. Moreover, he is haunted by the face of his uncle Josiah, which he believes to have seen in a Japanese soldier, and is troubled by the fact that the "spotted cattle" (188), which Josiah had bought with great hopes before the war and with which Tayo had promised to help his uncle, has been missing for quite some time. A determining influence on Josiah's decision to purchase the special breed of Mexican cattle had been the Mexican and semi-

mythological woman Night Swan, who was having an affair with Josiah, and later sexually initiated the young Tayo.

Being able to eat and sleep again for the most part, the protagonist often spends his time drinking with the fellow World War II veterans Harley, Leroy, Pinkie, and Emo at “the bars on the other side of the reservation boundary line” (24), where they drown their war-induced traumas in beer and whiskey. Unlike Tayo, who does not hide his mental hardship, the others, however, claim to be fine, but in fact have turned callous and insensitive. One day, as Emo, who has always despised Tayo for being a “half-breed” (56), brags about the numerous Japanese people he tortured and killed during his time as a soldier, the protagonist loses his temper and attacks him with a broken beer bottle.

Some time after this incident, Tayo is sent to the Navajo medicine man Betonie as a last hope for his healing. At Betonie’s hogan in the hills over the town of Gallup the protagonist learns that “[h]is sickness was only part of something larger, and his cure would be found only in something great and inclusive of everything” (125–6). He undergoes a “Scalp Ceremony” (169) that involves sand paintings, prayer sticks, and white rose hoops – as Betonie notes, however, Tayo’s healing ceremony is not yet complete with this ritual, but requires to be finished by the young man himself. In order to accomplish this mission, Tayo is told to remember a specific pattern of stars which Betonie had seen in a vision, together with “the spotted cattle [,] [...] a mountain lion[,] and [...] a woman” (152).

One day, as the young veteran is already back home from his stay at Betonie’s, this special pattern of stars appears on the northern sky and Tayo sets out to find the missing cattle of his dead uncle. On his way, he encounters a young woman with “ocher eyes” (177) called Ts’eh, as Tayo learns later, and is invited in her dwelling and offered food. Looking at the clear night sky after dinner, Tayo discovers that the meaningful celestial formation he had been following is right above him. He spends the night with partly mythical figure Ts’eh, and, after their love-making, dreams about his uncle’s cattle, which urges him to continue his search the next day.

Confident of eventually finding them after “the stars and the woman” (186) of Betonie’s vision had already manifested, Tayo reaches a mountain in an area that used to belong to the hunting grounds of the Laguna, but was then largely usurped by the state. There, he detects the cattle fenced in on

white farmland and, at nightfall, cuts a hole into the wire to be able to retrieve the animals. Things turn out differently than he had planned, however, and, after an encounter with a mountain lion and an accident while trying to escape two white cowboys, Tayo ends up lying on the bare ground with the clouds of a winter storm gathering in the sky. On his way down the mountain he runs into a Native American hunter who offers him shelter in what turns out to be the already familiar home of Ts'eh. There, the protagonist meets the young woman again, discovering that Ts'eh had mustered Josiah's spotted cattle into her corral. Without having the chance to spend some more time together, Tayo departs for Laguna, promising to return and collect the cattle from Ts'eh soon. When he does so a couple of weeks later, however, he discovers Ts'eh's dwelling mysteriously abandoned, yet the cattle well cared for and safe in the enclosure.

With the livestock retrieved, still strengthened by Betonie's ceremony, and – despite her absence – deeply in love with the mysterious mountain woman Ts'eh, the protagonist starts to feel significantly better and settles back in his life at Laguna, dreaming of Ts'eh during the night and helping his uncle Robert with farm work during the day. The lengthy drought comes to an end and heavy spring rain transforms the red, dusty ground into a fertile and green landscape.

Not long after Tayo decided to spend some time alone on the family's ranch, he encounters Ts'eh on a stroll through the surrounding hills and arroyos. Reunited with the mythological female character, he spends the summer with her in the wild, “learn[ing] about [...] roots and plants” (226) and listening to her wise words. It is also her who, on a day in early fall, warns Tayo of white doctors, police men, the other young veterans, and “[s]ome of the old men from Laguna” (232) who head to the canyon to tranquilize him and send him back to the hospital. They had been incited by Emo, who was spreading the rumor that Tayo had lost his mind and was staying alone at a cave.

There, in the canyons near the Acoma valley, the story and at the same time Tayo's ceremony then culminates. While the young protagonist manages to hide from the white officials, he encounters the two drunk fellow veterans Harley and Leroy driving around in their truck and initially trusts them, only to realize later that they, incited by Emo, were in fact looking for him to deliver him to the mental hospital. Upon this realization he flees from his traitors, running for hours until he reaches strands of barbed from the disused Jackpile uranium mine. As Tayo remembers that his grandma once told him about the testing of the first atomic bomb which had taken place during the war only three hundred miles away, he suddenly comprehends “the way all the stories fit together”

(246): some years ago, the U.S. government had started to mine uranium on land that belonged to the Laguna Pueblo reservation, using it for the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in World War II, in which Tayo had served and from which he has returned traumatized. At the grounds of the old mine, with the constellation of Betonie's ceremony in the night sky of the autumnal equinox, the protagonist thus realizes that "he had never been crazy" (246), but that everything was truly interconnected and that "the pattern of the ceremony was completed there" (246). He manages to remain undiscovered by Emo, Pinkie, and Leroy, who had followed the protagonist to the disused mine, and stays in his hide-out even when the other veterans start to torture Harley in order to prompt an intervention by Tayo. After they are gone, the utterly exhausted Tayo returns to Laguna, relieved that the "witchery" (253) had been defeated and his ceremony has come to an end. Tayo is summoned in a kiva by the old Ku'oosh and the elders of Laguna to tell his story and learns that Harley and Leroy died in a car accident on their way back. Pinkie is later stabbed by Emo, who consequently leaves for California and never returns.

4.3 'Witchery' at work: settler colonialism and heteropatriarchy in *Ceremony*

Being one of the most widely received works by a Native American author, *Ceremony* has been subject of numerous analyses from different theoretical angles since its publication in 1977. While the protagonist's experiences as a mixed-blood and traumatized World War II veteran and his development have already been discussed by several scholars, a thorough examination of the text from the perspective of current Native American feminist theories – taking the manifold ways in which settler colonial and heteropatriarchal structures have affected the Native characters in the novel into account – has yet to be undertaken. Despite the fact that the main protagonist in *Ceremony* is male – or rather precisely because of it —, however, a critical investigation of these forces seems pivotal in order to dismantle normalized oppression and will therefore be the subject of this section.

First all, it can be observed that the topic of 'Whiteness', or rather the implications of being part of the white Western society has in contrast to being a Native American on a reservation, can be found repeatedly throughout the course of the story. While Tayo, a "half-breed" (56), as Emo contemptuously calls him, who is neither fully accepted by the white world nor by some members

of the indigenous community, feels connected to his Native origins, it can be observed that other people in his surrounding frantically strive to become a part of the White Western society. Rocky, for instance, Tayo's beloved cousin who is killed in the war, was determined "to win in the white outside world" (51), working hard to be "an A-student" (51) in his Albuquerque college and was ambitiously training "for his football career" (28). As it is also noted by Muzaffar (see 640), Rocky knew he had to cut himself off from indigenous traditions and the Native community in order to succeed in the white world – an endeavor that was supported by his mother Auntie, who is well aware of "what white people want[...] in an Indian" (51). To be accepted by the white society and to be able to live the life of white men is also something Tayo's fellow Native veterans returning from war – Leroy, Harley, Pinkie, and Emo – are longing for. They keep telling themselves of times when they were still wearing "that uniform" (40), "old white ladies on the street smiled at them" (40), and when they were having affairs with white women. Although Tayo's mixed descent is looked down upon by Emo and Auntie, they, together with Rocky and the other young men, nonetheless glorify the white world and strive to become a part of it.

This aggrandizement of the white society and the simultaneous rejection of their own Native culture and the "old-time ways" (51), however, lies rooted in an internalization of settler colonial worldviews that have been forced upon the indigenous community since the arrival of the colonizers in North America. As Tuck and Reollet note, the imposition of the settlers' mindset on the Native population is one of the characteristics of settler colonialism (17) and seeks to "naturalize hierarch[ies]" (Smith, "Heteropatriarchy" 69), which in turn facilitates and enables a colonial domination. This "resocialization" (388), as Wolfe calls it, has mostly been carried out "in total institutions such as missions or boarding schools" (388), with the effect that Native Americans frequently devalue their own indigenous ways of life after having been taught to do so for years (see Sellers 8).

In *Ceremony*, Tayo and his cousin Rocky have been subjected to such a settler colonial brainwashing from an early age. When they were still children, they were already told "at Indian school" (19) that the traditional stories they have been listening to at home are "'nonsense'" (19). On his way to find the spotted cattle and complete Betonie's ceremony, Tayo recalls the time when "the teachers at Indian school" (194) advised them to stay away from the "old-time superstition" (194) of their community, or when an educator called "those old beliefs [...] stupid" (194). Already

at the “boarding school in Albuquerque” (51), Rocky internalized even more what “his teachers [...] [and] his textbooks” (51) had taught him, and consequently started to disown the indigenous traditions of his community for being “superstition” (51) himself. As his father Josiah one day reads up on “[s]cientific cattle breeding” (75) but discounts the information he finds for not being applicable to the circumstances of the dry and extreme climate in Laguna, Rocky remarks unsympathetically: “Those books are written by scientists. They know everything there is to know about beef cattle. That’s the trouble with the way the people around here have always done things – they never knew what they were doing” (76). He thus denigrates his community for being unqualified and incompetent, and chooses to accord his credibility only to white scientists. Native Americans in *Ceremony*, just as Tayo and Rocky, are therefore indoctrinated with settler colonial viewpoints from an early age, and have thereby often internalized a viewpoint that considers their own people and indigenous ways of life as deplorable and inferior to the white Western society. As a consequence of this constant attack on their identity as Native Americans, their self-esteem is diminished and Rocky as well as the other boys strive to succeed in the white world by shedding their Native American selves.

The young men’s desperate attempts to become a part of and to be accepted by the white community in order to heighten their self-worth then culminate in their participation in World War II. After having been devalued for their identity as Native Americans since their birth and having constantly been given the feeling that they are inferior and do not belong to the highly praised United States of America, the army officer at the recruitment offers them the chance to fight for ‘their’ land and ‘prove their patriotism’: “‘Anyone can fight for America’, he began, giving special emphasis to ‘America’, ‘even you boys. In a time of need, anyone can fight for her.’ [...] ‘Now I know you boys love America as much as we do, but this is your big chance to *show* it!’” (64). In order to reveal the irony of these words, it has to be kept in mind that the nation-state U.S.A. is “founding itself on the past and current genocide of Native peoples” (“America” 311), as Smith stresses. Only through the continuous settler colonial efforts to – metaphorically and factually – erase the indigenous population up until today, it has been possible for the white settler society to legitimize the building of their nation-state and to appropriate land which belongs to the Native peoples of the continent (see Smith, “Heteropatriarchy” 63–4). Tayo, Rocky, and many other Native Americans are therefore encouraged to fight for a nation founded by people who have usurped their land and have always wanted to see them disappear and annihilated, using measures

such as coerced sterilization (see Torpy 1), “child abduction[, or] resocialization” (Wolfe 388). Furthermore, through the indigenous men’s participation in a war that claims numerous lives, one of the main aims of settler colonialism, namely to extinguish Native alterities, is also served.

Through their engagement as soldiers of the U.S. Army in World War II, however, the young men finally feel a certain sense of “belong[ing] to America” (43) and to the privileged white Western society. In their uniforms, they are suddenly able to spend their time drinking with white army “buddies” (43), flirting with white women, and having “good times” (43). As it is pointed out by Muzaffar, however, this feeling turns out to be only an “illusion” (641) and its effects are of very limited time. In fact, the young Native men have never really been accepted or considered to be a part of the settler colonial nation-state, but were only “being used to fight the white man’s war” (641), and, the moment they have doffed their army clothing, they are being treated with the same disdain as before. The white settler colonial society has therefore continuously sought to erode and degrade Native American identities, only to later utilize the wrecked self-worth of the indigenous men by encouraging them to fight for a nation-state that is founded on genocidal actions against their people, giving them an illusionary sense of belonging as a reward. As a result, young men such as Tayo, Emo, Leroy, or Harley, return traumatized or jaded from the war, drowning their distress and frustration of being yet again rejected and devalued by the white people in alcohol. While Emo, Pinkie, Leroy, and Harley “blame[...] themselves” (43) for this rejection and contempt they again experience by the white society after their return from the war and desperately try to revive the “good times” (43), drunkenly telling each other the same stories over and over again, Tayo is well aware of the truth and that “the white people” (43) are responsible for this pain:

See these dumb Indians thought these good times would last. They didn’t ever want to give up the cold beer and the blond cunt. Hell no! [...] The war was over, uniform was gone. All of a sudden that man at the store waits on you last, makes you wait until all the white people bought what they wanted. And the white lady at the bus depot, she’s real careful not to touch your hand when she counts out your change. (42)

Other than Rocky and the fellow veterans, the protagonist had never wanted to become part of the white Western society but had only entered the Army because of his cousin, a fact which consequently makes it easier for him to recognize the harsh reality (see Muzaffar 640–1) – this, however, still does not alleviate his trauma and pain.

Yet as Tayo later visits the Navajo medicine man Betonie, he learns that, according to the old man, the real origin of all the harm done by the white people is “witchery” (133). Betonie tells him of the time when “witch people” (133) invented white people, for whom “[t]he world is a dead thing[,] [...] the trees and rivers are not alive” (133) and who

[k]ill the things they fear
all the animals
the people will starve.
They will poison the water
they will spin the water away
and there will be drought
the people will starve.
They will fear what they find
They will fear the people
They kill what they fear.
Entire villages will be wiped out
They will slaughter whole tribes [...]
And those they do not kill
will die anyway
at the destruction they see
at the loss
at the loss of the children
the loss will destroy the rest.
Stolen rivers and mountains
the stolen land will eat their hearts
and jerk their mouths from the Mother.
The people will starve. (136)

For Betonie, it is therefore “Indian witchery” (132) that is responsible for the creation of white people and in consequence for the destruction and misery white people have caused, including the genocide of the Native population and the appropriation and destruction of indigenous land that is addressed in his storytelling. As Allen notes, this “mechanistic death force of the witchery” (*Sacred Hoop* 119) can be regarded as the negative counterpart to “the feminine life force” (119) that is essential in Laguna belief and in traditional tribal ways of life. Following this explanation it could be argued that in *Ceremony*, the structures of settler colonialism and heteropatriarchy as such were conceived by “witchcraft” (15) and thus are evil forces that had been set to work by “the witch people” (133).

Furthermore, just as Tayo and Rocky experienced white Western values being forced upon them in school, their mothers Laura, or “Little Sister” (68), and Auntie were subjected to similar

brainwashing in Christian missionary schools when they were growing up. It presumably was this constant devaluation of everything that can be attributed to her Native American identity which has led to Little Sister's tragic alcoholic existence in the misery of Gallup:

[She had been] [s]hamed by what they taught her in school about the deplorable ways of the Indian people; holy missionary white people who wanted only good for the Indians, white people who dedicated their lives to helping the Indians, these people urged her to break away from her home. (68)

The young girl and many others were thus continuously indoctrinated by white Christian people, who, ironically, were even positioning themselves as 'saviors' of the 'sinful' and 'primitive' indigenous people that needed to be helped to escape their disgraceful lives and community. As a consequence, Native American women like Laura started to despise their own tribal identity while aiming to belong to the white world. This has, according to Arvin, Tuck, and Morrill, been one of the main objectives of residential schools and missions, which have aspired "to both sever their ties with their families and home communities and destroy the transfer of Indigenous identity, politics, and culture to the next generations" (15). As a result, Little Sister distanced herself from her Native origins and the indigenous community by dressing herself "exactly like the white girls" (68) and spending her time with white men, because – after having been shamed for her real identity for so long – this was presumably the only way for her to increase her damaged self-worth. Deep inside, however, "she could feel the truth" (68), namely that she would never be fully accepted by the white world, and, at the same time, the "pain at what she was doing with her life" (68) that her family was feeling. This inner fragmentation caused by the settler colonial efforts to degrade and erase indigenous ways of life in order to establish a domination of white Western values has then likely led Little Sister to drown her emotional distress in alcohol and to end up in the squalor of Gallup.

Unlike her sister Laura, Auntie has not turned to wine and liquor after what had been taught to them in the missionary school but has chosen a different path. She has deeply internalized what the priest was telling her, adopting "Christian ethics and styles of conduct" (Swan 312), and has developed into "a Christian woman" (Silko, *Ceremony* 30) and regular church-goer. Swan (312) and Bird (99), however, note that this has resulted in an inner dispute regarding Tayo for Auntie. In order to understand this conflict, it is important to remember what Allen states about the concept of 'family' in an indigenous context, namely that it must not necessarily be understood as being

solely “defined in biological terms [...], [but that it is also] a matter of clan membership” (Allen 251), and that the Laguna Pueblo have traditionally been a matrilineal nation (see Swan 311). Through Christianization, this traditional concept of Native American cohabitation was then largely superseded “by the nuclear family” (Allen 42), and, as the narrator in *Ceremony* comments, it was “Christianity [that] separated the people from themselves; it tried to crush the single clan name, encouraging each person to stand alone, because Jesus Christ would save only the individual soul; Jesus Christ was not like the Mother who loved and cared for them as her children, as her family” (68). As Swan points out, Auntie has therefore been torn between the traditional matrilineality of the Laguna which demanded her care for Tayo as his new ‘mother’, and the option of saving her and her family’s reputation by not housing the mixed-blood boy stemming from a shameful intercourse and therefore adhering to the Christian ideal of sinlessness and the nuclear family (see 312).

Another way in which the internalization of values that have been forced upon the indigenous population becomes evident in Auntie is through her belittlement of Native American healing methods. When the traumatized Tayo does not show any signs of recovery after his return to Laguna and his grandma wants to send for the medicine man old Ku’oosh, Auntie, always concerned to become the subject of gossip, discourages this: “You know what the Army doctor said: ‘No Indian medicine’. Old Ku’oosh will bring his bag of weeds and dust. The doctor won’t like it” (34). Already anticipating that “something [might go] wrong” (34) and worrying about “what the people will say if [they] ask for a medicine man to help” (34), Auntie thus seems to have adopted the white doctors’ opinion that Native American healing is not to be taken seriously. In contrast to her sister Laura, who could not bear her inner fragmentation after having been continuously scorned by both the white and the indigenous community, Auntie is thus presumably trying to enhance her self-worth by living according to white Christian ideals, which, however, stand in conflict with Laguna traditions.

This examination of some of the characters in *Ceremony* thus reveals the wide-ranging impact settler colonial measures have had on the indigenous population in the novel, leading a significant number of them to turn to alcoholism as a temporary escape out of their misery and trauma. The town of Gallup as it is portrayed by Silko can thereby be regarded as an epitome of the destructive forces of settler colonialism that try to erase Native peoples. Indigenous men and women –

“Navajos, but [...] Zunis and Lagunas and Hopis [...] too” (115) –, desperate to leave their reservations, have been coming to the notorious town with the hope to start a better life, only to very likely end up sleeping in squalid shacks built out “of old tin, cardboard, and scrap wood” (108) in the riverbed running through Gallup. Tayo himself was born in this destitute river camp, where the adults – often women like Tayo’s mother Laura – spend their time drinking and trying to make some money through prostitution or begging. Their children, frequently born out of their mothers’ involvement with white men, like Tayo, are used to stay on their own for longer periods of time while the adults are away, and occupy themselves with searching the waste or the local bars’ floors for food or items to play with (see 108). Native Americans, who – after having been shamed for their indigenous identity and community since their earliest childhood – could not endure their lives on the reservations anymore, therefore try to improve their situation by moving to Gallup, where they are “the first ones to get laid off because white people in Gallup already knew they wouldn’t ask questions or get angry; they just walked away” (115). Without any job and being too accustomed to daily discrimination to protest against possibly unjust dismissals, the indigenous people in Gallup are soon forced to sleep in the miserable camp in the arroyo and find themselves in an even more desperate situation than before.

As it is remarked in the novel, the town is almost exclusively populated by people of color – most of them Native Americans –, and it is avoided by whites for most of the time: “[T]he only white people [in the town] were Slav shopkeepers. They came at Gallup Ceremonial time to clean up before the tourists came to town. They talked about sanitation and safety as they dragged the people to the paddy wagons” (108). Members of the white Western society, which, through the settler colonialism of North America with all its violent and oppressive actions is responsible for the pain and lack of perspectives of the Native population, thus only set foot in the town in order to literally erase the indigenous people from the cityscape for the sake of a bigger profit gained from tourism. As Veracini notes, it is one of the main goals of settler colonialism to “effectively repress, co-opt, and extinguish indigenous alterities” (3). Applied to the situation described in *Ceremony*, it can be observed that the white society deliberately neglects the squalor in which the Native people in Gallup find themselves and which can be directly attributed to the settler colonial nation-state and its effects. Instead of taking measures to counteract discrimination and improve the lives of the indigenous men, women, and children, white officials including “the police and the welfare people” (108) are “arresting [them] for vagrancy and being drunk in public, and taking the children away

to the Home” (108). This practice of a governmental abduction of indigenous children is in fact listed as one of the common actions with which the settler colonial state has sought to resocialize the indigenous population (see Wolfe 388; Kella 107). It can thus be argued that, in the case of Gallup, the white settler colonial society is trying to obliterate Native Americans in several ways: Firstly, by driving them into abject misery, provoking their or their children’s death through alcohol, illness, or violence; secondly, by locking them up in prison; and thirdly, by the withdrawal of their offspring instead of attempting to enhance the living conditions of their mothers and fathers.

Additionally, the Gallup Ceremonial as such, taking place every year and attracting a great number of tourists, can be dismantled as a practice that incorporates settler colonial structures. As an “event [...] organized by the white men there” (116), the Ceremonial appears to be a festival where Native Americans and ‘indigenous culture’ are nicely presented to tourists who

[I]iked to see Indians and Indian dances; they wanted a chance to buy Indian jewelry and Navajo rugs[.] [...] The tourists got to see what they wanted; from the grandstand at the Ceremonial grounds they watched the dancers perform, and they watched Indian cowboys ride bucking horses and Brahma bulls. There were wagon races, and the ladies’ wood-chopping contest and fry-bread-making race. (116)

While the sovereign identity of the indigenous peoples of North America is being disavowed and denigrated, and their daily discrimination and oppression is neglected by the settler colonial nation-state, they are at the same time utilized to satisfy the white tourists’ desire to experience ‘Indians’ ‘live’ and not only in Hollywood movies. However, it is not the diverse and often difficult everyday lives of modern Native peoples they are interested in but a stereotypical representation of the ‘Native Other’, which they in fact consider to be “part of US history” (19), as Tuck and ReCollet note. The Gallup Ceremonial therefore stereotypically ‘displays’ or rather “co-opt[s]” (Veracini 3) successfully historicized Native Americans to a white spectatorship, which belongs to the settler colonial society and appreciates show dances and Native crafts but not the existence of sovereign and proud indigenous nations.

Another way in which the Native American population in *Ceremony* has been deeply affected by settler colonialism is through the appropriation of their land by white settlers and the settlers’ destructive handling of the natural world. The loss of indigenous ground through violent usurpation has thereby caused a collective trauma that is perceived as an everlasting and all-encompassing pain for the Native people, as Betonie describes it: “Indians wake up every morning of their lives

to see the land which was stolen, still there, within reach, its theft being flaunted. And the desire is strong to make things right, to take back what was stolen, and to stop them from destroying what they have taken” (127-8). After his stay at the medicine man’s dwelling in the hills over Gallup, Tayo, too, realizes that not only he himself is in need of a healing ceremony but that the whole world around him has been in a state of imbalance for a long time, and that one factor that has created this imbalance has to do with the loss of the land and the white people’s destruction of it:

They were never the same after that: they had seen what the white people had made from the stolen land [...] Every day they had to look at the land, from horizon to horizon, and every day the loss was with them; it was the dead unburied, and the mourning of the lost going on forever. So they tried to sink the loss in booze, and silence their grief with war stories about their courage, defending the land they had already lost. (169)

This alienation of Native American land by the white settler colonial society has therefore had not only far-reaching effects concerning the sovereignty of Native peoples and their entitlement to land, but also tremendous emotional and spiritual consequences for the indigenous population. In the case of the “Ka’t’sina” (182) – the mountain on which Tayo encounters the mystical mountain lion during his search for the missing cattle –, for instance, the usurpation of “[a]ll but a small part of the mountain” (185) by the white government has resulted in a significant destruction of the flora and fauna. Until its appropriation by white people, the mountain had been one of the hunting grounds of the Laguna, who had treated animals and the environment with great respect. After the loss of their land to the white officials, however, it was being “sold [...] to white ranchers” (184), who “cut clearings on the plateau slopes [and] [...] shot the bears and mountain lions for sport” (186), and, to secure what they had usurped, erected a “fence [...] to keep Indians and Mexicans out” (188). The pain perceived by the indigenous population is thereby not only caused by the usurpation as such, but also by the wide-reaching devastation of the natural world through the reckless actions of the white society, who, as if to highlight their view of Native Americans as inferior, choose to fend them off just like “wolves” (188), for which they claim the fence has been built for. It is thereby important to note, that “[t]erritoriality” (388), as Wolfe calls the land claims of the white settler society, is the most fundamental motivation of settler colonialism and the main goal for which this structure has implemented its oppressive and violent measures (see 388). The alienation and destruction of indigenous land that the Native population in *Ceremony* has experienced can therefore clearly be regarded as a settler colonial action, causing an imbalance and trauma in the Native community, as Betonie and Tayo know.

The usurpation of Native American land for the establishment of the Jackpile uranium mine in *Ceremony*, however, can be considered as a particularly drastic example of settler colonial “[t]erritoriality” (Wolfe 388) and the impact it can have. Arriving at the disused mine after running for hours to escape his betrayers, Tayo suddenly realizes that

[t]here was no end to it; it knew no boundaries; and he had arrived at the point of convergence where the fate of all living things, an even the earth, had been laid. From the jungles to his dreaming he recognized why the Japanese voices had merged with the Laguna voices, with Josiah’s voice and Rocky’s voice [...] From that time on, human beings were one clan again, [...] united by a circle of death that devoured people in cities twelve thousand miles away, victims who had never known these mesas. (246)

In this uranium mine, which had been constructed on land of the Laguna Pueblo by the U.S. Government, uranium that was being used to build the atomic bombs deployed in World War II was drilled. Tayo thus rightly understands that the alienation and exploitation of indigenous land by white officials has in this case not only greatly impacted the natural world and people of Laguna, but also had a devastating and catastrophic effect on the Japanese population and environment. With this settler colonial endeavor, the government of the U.S. has therefore not only expropriated land of a Native American people and extensively destructed the natural world with their mining, but in addition has used the extracted uranium most horribly in a war in which indigenous men had been encouraged to fight for an oppressive settler colonial nation-state.

The Native American population in *Ceremony* has therefore been affected by settler colonial structures and actions in manifold ways, and many of the main characters of the novel find themselves in a state of inner fragmentation, trauma, or deep emotional pain because of that. In the discussion of settler colonialism, however, it is important to remember that this structure is inextricably linked with the likewise oppressive force of heteropatriarchy. As it was already elaborated in the theoretical background of this thesis, this is because a “social hierarchy” (Smith and Kauanui 241) in the form of heteropatriarchy has to be instituted in and internalized by a society in order to enable a settler colonial domination of the people and ground. In addition, “settler colonial governments require Indigenous communities to engage in heteropatriarchal systems to cope with and survive colonial occupation” (17), as Tuck and Reollet note, which is why these two structures are strongly interconnected and thus both the subject of indigenous feminisms. A Native American feminist reading of *Ceremony* therefore requires not only a discussion of the

settler colonial structures in the text, but also a close examination of how heteropatriarchy has affected the characters of the novel.

First of all, it can be observed that both the female and the male characters in *Ceremony* could be roughly assigned to two different categories. While Allen, too, has undertaken such a categorization, dividing the women and men in the novel into either pertaining “to the earth spirit and [to] live in harmony with her” (*Sacred Hoop* 118), or to be “not of the earth but of human mechanism[,] [...] liv[ing] to destroy that spirit” (118), a distinction can also be drawn between characters that have internalized Western, heteropatriarchal gender roles and behavior, and those who have not and can rather be described as acting according to traditional tribal gender concepts.

Examining the male characters of the novel, it can be stated that the young and traumatized protagonist of the novel, Tayo, has – together with his uncles Josiah and Robert — not adopted the heteropatriarchal mindset that the white society has tried to impose on the Native peoples. These characters are what Herzog describes as “‘feeling’ men” (29), namely male figures who do not embody character traits that are associated with a stereotypical Western and heteropatriarchal concept of masculinity, but are rather portrayed as sensitive, compassionate, tender, and sagacious.

Tayo, for instance, is portrayed as sensitive, calm, and as having a deep bond with and reverence for the natural world. Just as all of these character traits, his intense connection with nature can be considered as a value that is strongly embedded in a traditional Native American mindset and stands in a stark contrast to the anthropocentric mentality many members of the white Euro-American society have (see Allen, *Sacred Hoop* 59). The protagonist critically observes and despises his comrades’ or white people’s disrespectful attitude towards nature and animals, for example as Harley callously laughs recounting the incident when a dog and more than two dozen sheep were killed because he had left them alone (see Silko, *Ceremony* 22-23), or when Tayo thinks about “Texas roping[,] [...] the sport of aging cowboys” (212) and white “loggers sho[oting] the bears and mountain lions for sport” (186). In contrast to them, Tayo would never deliberately and unnecessarily harm the natural world and deferentially participates in “the ritual of the deer” (52) as he joins his uncles on a hunt after which they “show their love and respect, their appreciation” (51) for the killed animal. The sensitive and tender young man is deeply connected with natural world around him, feeling “humbled by the size of the full moon” (52), “gather[ing] yellow pollen gently[,] imitat[ing] the gentleness of the bees” (220), and, as Herzog notes, experiences pure bliss

in nature (see 28): “He [...] looked at the morning stars in the west. He breathed deeply, and each breath had a distinct smell of snow from the north, of ponderosa pine on the rimrock above; finally he smelled horses from the direction of the corral, and he smiled. Being alive was all right then.” (181). Tayo is a male character who generally experiences highly intense emotions throughout the story, ranging from tears out of deep despair and grief, to the feeling of being “overcome with all the love there was” (32). As a gentle, emotional, and “shy and often silent” (Herzog 29) young man with a great reverence for the natural world, Tayo thus embodies an indigenous manliness unaffected by heteropatriarchal concepts of the male gender, even when he is in a severely traumatized condition.

This can also be said of Tayo’s uncles Josiah and Robert, who have both strongly influenced the young protagonist. It also them who have imparted the significance of the natural world around them and the need for a respectful treatment of the flora and fauna to Tayo, setting an example as they deferentially carry out “the ritual of the deer” (52) in front of him and Rocky. Auntie’s husband Robert is described as a “quiet[,] [...] calm” (32) man, who lovingly cares about his traumatized nephew as he returns from war and is “gentl[e] [and] soft[...]” (118) in his demeanor. Just like Robert, Tayo’s other uncle Josiah is a tender, but also wise character, who treasures the indigenous traditions and stories of his people and greatly influences his nephew. While the other young veterans frequently cuss the often barren land of the Laguna, Tayo remembers what Josiah had told him:

“You see,” Josiah had said, [...] “there are some things worth more than money.” He pointed his chin at the springs and around at the narrow canyon. “This is where we come from, see. This sand, this stone, these trees, the vines, all the wildflowers. This earth keeps us going. [...] These dry years you hear some people complaining, you know, about the dust and the wind, and how dry it is. But the wind the wind and the dust, they are part of life too, like the sun and the sky. You don’t swear at them. It’s people, see. They’re the ones. The old people used to say that droughts happen when people forget, when people misbehave.” (45–6)

One another occasion, when the protagonist was still a child, Tayo was taught by his uncle Josiah to never harm flies, since they play a vital role in traditional Laguna stories and are therefore to be cherished by the people at all times (see 101). Josiah, who has contributed greatly and lovingly to Tayo’s upbringing and has equipped his nephew with the principle that “violence is senseless” (Herzog 29), as well as his gentle uncle Robert, can therefore also be described as men who have

not internalized a patriarchal macho behavior, but are nonetheless portrayed as strong and powerful, exhibiting typically male character traits in gynocracies such as the Laguna, as tenderness, peacefulness, and thoughtfulness (see Allen, *Sacred Hoop* 2).

While Tayo, Robert, and Josiah are thus clearly what Herzog calls “‘feeling’ men” (29), there are several male characters in *Ceremony* who have been strongly influenced by heteropatriarchal concepts of masculinity, leading to problematic behavior affecting themselves or others. Since heteropatriarchy has been most firmly entrenched in white Euro-American societies, attitudes and patterns typical for the rigid gender roles of this structure are of course also detectable in the few incidents in which white characters are portrayed in the novel, and becomes particularly apparent in their reckless and exploitative handling of the natural world. As it was already mentioned, Allen stresses that such an anthropocentric conduct in which white Euro-American men regard themselves as the peak of “a great hierarchical ladder of being” (*Sacred Hoop* 59) – subordinating women, other genders, animals, and nature – stands in a marked opposition to a traditional indigenous mindset. This ‘androcentric’ demeanor, however, tends to be closely linked with heteropatriarchy and thus misogyny, as it is pointed out by Jaimes*Guerrero (see 67–8), who detects a “manifestation of the denigration of the *female principle*” (68) in it. The environmental destruction and lack of respect for the natural world by white men in the novel can therefore not only be dismantled as settler colonial, but also as heteropatriarchal actions.

Heteropatriarchal structures, however, can not only be exposed in the behavior of the white male characters in *Ceremony*, but are also evident in the some of the Native American men in the book. As it was already briefly discussed above, Tayo’s war comrades Emo, Pinkie, Leroy, and Harley, too, display a striking irreverence for the natural world around them and seem to have become increasingly insensitive and callous. Harley, for instance, is completely unaffected by numerous sheep’s and a dog’s death he had caused due to his neglect (see 23), and Emo frequently curses the surrounding land, calling it an “[o]ld dried-up thing” (25). Just as the white men depicted in the novel, Tayo’s fellow veterans therefore also consider themselves superior to the natural environment and other living creatures, thus disregarding what Jaimes*Guerrero calls “the *female principle*” (68).

This devaluation of ‘the feminine’ becomes even more apparent through their macho demeanor, which manifests particularly clearly when they are drunkenly telling each other crude war stories.

Tayo's foe Emo, for instance, presents himself as a cold-blooded, jaded, deadly ex-soldier as he brags about the brutal torture and killing methods he used during the war, rattling with a bag of human teeth in front of the others:

They were his war souvenirs, the teeth he had knocked out of the corpse of a Japanese soldier. [...] "We were the best. U.S. Army. We butchered every Jap we found. No Jap bastard was fit to take prisoner. We had all kinds of ways to get information out of them before they died. Cut off this, cut off these." Emo was grinning and hunched over, staring at the teeth. "Make them talk fast, die slow." He laughed. Pinkie and Harley laughed with him, at his joke. (60–61)

The aggressiveness and insensitivity with which Emo presumably seeks to prove his strength and power as a soldier, are character traits that are stereotypically associated with masculinity in a heteropatriarchal Euro-American society (see Launius and Hassel 43), giving Emo the chance to be perceived as dominant and strong by his comrades, who, with their response to the brutal comment, equally try to fulfill heteropatriarchal concepts of manhood. In their desperate attempt to be accepted by the white world and valued as indigenous men, Emo and the others have therefore internalized forms of behavior that comply with the strict binary gender roles of the heteropatriarchal settler colonial society.

The effects their internalization of heteropatriarchal gender norms has can also be observed in their blatant objectification as well as degradation of women. Having been confronted with a mindset that is characterized "by male domination and female submission" (Yep 32) from an early age, Emo, Leroy, Pinkie, and Harley have – other than Tayo – adopted this mode of thinking, which reflects in their interactions with both white and indigenous women. For them, women are objects who can be used for their entertainment and who are there to please them both with their appearance as well as sexually. While their skewed perception of females becomes already strikingly apparent in their interaction with the Native woman Helen Jean, whom they "found [...] in Gallup last night" (156) just like a desired item can be found, and who "[they]'ve got [...] here to watch" (156), the way they talk about white women is even more perverted. Apart from the crude war anecdotes they tell each other, stories of the "good times" (40) when they were still "fuck[ing] white women" (41) belong to their routine when they spend their days drinking at a bar. In their view – influenced by heteropatriarchy and their ambivalent relationship to the white settler colonial society – they are 'entitled' to white females: "'They took our land, they took everything! So let's get our hands on white women!' They cheered. Harley and Leroy were grinning and slapping each other on the

back.” (55). As Flores aptly remarks, the veterans’ regard “white women [...] not [as] people but symbols of power, the jewels in the white scepter” (54). With both a heteropatriarchal and a settler colonial mindset deeply internalized, Emo, Leroy, Harley, and Pinkie therefore picture white women as a prestigious prey and superior to indigenous women, yet, from their point of view, of course still inferior to men. While women of the white settler colonial society are objectified as sexual objects, but at the same time glorified, indigenous women are discriminated, objectified, and degraded in a twofold manner for being women and Native American.

This manifold oppression of indigenous women becomes also evident in the disparity in which interactions between Native women and white men, and those between white women and Native men are viewed by the characters in *Ceremony*. Tayo, due to his own history well aware of these glaring double standards, understands “what it was about white men and Indian women: the disgrace of Indian women who went with them. And during the war Tayo learned about white women and Indian men” (57). Unlike the affairs of white women with Native American men, in which the privileged women are idealized as prestigious sexual objects by many of the indigenous community and the men are celebrated for their ‘pickups’, sexual relationships of Native women with white men are treated with great disdain by the same community. Notably, however, it is not the white men that are “the disgrace” (57) in this type of relationship, but the indigenous women. In fact, Native women are denigrated and considered as “the ultimate objects of conquest” (54) by these male members of the white settler colonial society, as Flores trenchantly puts it, and at the same time shamed by their own people for interacting with Non-Native men. They are thus being objectified and dominated by white males for being both female and indigenous, and therefore find themselves confronted with oppression and denigration in manifold ways, which makes their discrimination intersectional. This disparity of the experiences of white women and indigenous women in *Ceremony* thus once more highlights the necessity to adopt a feminist stance that is intersectional (see Lykke 50).

In addition to “the obscene preying of white men on Indian women” (Flores 54), the Native women in *Ceremony* are also devalued and oppressed by indigenous men who have adopted heteropatriarchal traits. Helen Jean, for instance, is verbally and physically abused by an Isleta Pueblo when she tries to escape his sexual advances: “The Isleta turned to her; his eyes were pinched with rage. ‘You bitch! You think you’re better than a white woman?’ He slapped her across

the face” (165). As it is stated by Allen, violent actions against Native women at the hands of indigenous men, including sexual abuse, have dramatically increased “since contact” (*Sacred Hoop* 191) and are predominately rooted in the internalization of the settler society’s patriarchal mindset (see 203). Indigenous women in the novel, such as Laura and Helen Jean, are thus objectified and devalued by both white and indigenous men and become subjects of abuse.

In order to survive in this oppressive world around her, Tayo’s mother Laura desperately tries to fit into the white society and thereby also adopts its heteropatriarchal gender roles herself. Shaped by the constant devaluation of her as a Native American woman she had experienced in missionary school, Laura attempts to draw self-worth from the seeming appreciation by white men:

She was excited to see that despite the fact she was an Indian, the white men smiled at her from their cars as she walked from the bus stop in Albuquerque back to the Indian School. She smiled and waved; she looked at her own reflection in windows of houses she passed; her dress, her lipstick, her hair – it was all done perfectly, the way the home-ec teacher taught them, exactly like the white girls. (68–9)

Little Sister was therefore taught by the teachers in her Christian school that it is the role of girls and women in society to please men with their appearance, and, as the subject “home-ec” (69) suggests, to be an excellent housekeeper. She learns that the only way through which a young indigenous woman might be perceived as attractive and pleasantly looking by white males is through an imitation of white girls and their style, and, in lack of alternative perspectives and in order to eventually be accepted, she conforms to these sexist and racist standards. It can thus be stated that in *Ceremony*, heteropatriarchal gender roles have not only been internalized by Native American men like Emo, Harley, Pinkie, and Leroy, but also by indigenous women such as Tayo’s mother in an attempt to ultimately belong to the dominant white society.

The structures of settler colonialism and heteropatriarchy have therefore strongly affected as well as influenced the indigenous people in Silko’s novel, and have caused great physical and emotional harm to their Laguna community. As a gynocratic society belonging to the Keres pueblo, who are “reputed to be the last extreme mother-right people on earth” (Allen, *Sacred Hoop* 48), the Laguna have traditionally been structured matrilineally and matrilocally (see Swan 309–12) and are described as a people that accepts various different forms of sexuality and gender identities in its community (see Allen, *Sacred Hoop* 2). With the powerful female figure “Thinking Women, [...] Ts’its’naku, [...] Spider Woman[,] or Grandmother Spider” (Allen, *Grandmothers* 27) as their

creatix and one of their many goddesses, women and ‘the feminine’ are valued highly by the Laguna, and their ideals of “nurturing, pacifist, and passive males [...] and self-defining, assertive, decisive women” (*Sacred Hoop* 2) contrast strongly with gender roles dictated by heteropatriarchy. As Flores points out, this strongly embedded “female principle” (54) of the Laguna Pueblo has thus been forcefully displaced with the “patriarchal culture” (54) of the white society in *Ceremony*. Heteropatriarchy and the inextricably linked structure of settler colonialism have therefore not only created a destructive imbalance in the individual characters of Silko’s novel, but have also greatly damaged their community and their relation to the natural world.

Tayo’s trauma and illness itself can be seen as rooted in these disruptive structures that have attempted to eliminate the traditional gynocratical Laguna society in the book. Just as his comrades and his cousin Rocky, Tayo participates in a brutal war that is led by the patriarchal settler colonial nation-state U.S.A. and thereby engages in and indirectly supports these structures himself. Fighting for the nation that has sought to annihilate his people, Tayo is not only traumatized by the cruelties he witnesses during the war but, as Herzog argues, additionally has “[h]is true manhood [...] violated when he [is] [...] supposed to kill people” (28). As a member of a gynocratic Native American community in which men are traditionally “pacifist” (Allen, *Sacred Hoop* 2), the protagonist in *Ceremony* thus finds himself in a position that expects him to harm other people in order to support a settler colonial system (see Allen, *Sacred Hoop* 123). Tayo therefore not only partakes in a brutal war for the settler colonial United States of America but is also forced to disregard his Laguna origins and comply with the heteropatriarchal view of an aggressive male. As a result, his connection with his indigenous origins is disrupted, leading to an aggravation of his emotional distress and trauma (see Allen, *Sacred Hoop* 123). Heteropatriarchy and settler colonialism have therefore not only drastically affected the Laguna as a people, their land, and the everyday lives of the indigenous characters in *Ceremony*, but have also resulted in Tayo’s traumatization.

4.4 (Re-)centering on “feminine principles”: healing and resistance

Since the destructive forces of settler colonialism and heteropatriarchy have not only caused Tayo’s trauma but have also resulted in a wide-reaching emotional and spiritual damage of the Laguna community, the protagonist’s path of healing and renewal can be regarded as an all-encompassing attempt to restore the balance of the gynocratical indigenous society. In a world affected and perverted by the oppressive hierarchical forces of settler colonialism and heteropatriarchy, this healing can only be achieved through a return to “the female principle” (Flores 55), and it is through the influence and guidance of sensitive tribal men and of the powerful, wise women in *Ceremony* that Tayo is able to reinvigorate this “feminine life force” (Allen, *Sacred Hoop* 119) through which the disruptive structures of patriarchal settler colonialism are resisted (see Keyes 120).

The first step in this path towards healing and resistance lies in the care and guidance of Tayo’s grandmother. As the storyteller and wise elder of the matrilineal family, old Grandma can be seen as the personification of “the traditional Laguna ethos” (Swan 313) and as a counterpart to members of her family like Auntie or Rocky, who have been heavily influenced by the white Western world. Having a close, loving bond with her grandson Tayo as it is typical of gynocratical communities (see Swan 312–13), Grandma has substantially shaped the protagonist with her storytelling and adherence to Keresan traditions:

But old Grandma always used to say, “Back in time immemorial, things were different, the animals could talk to human beings and many magical things still happened.” He never lost the feeling he had in his chest when she spoke those words, as she did each time when she told them stories; and he still felt it was true, despite all they had taught him in school. (94–5)

She is also the one who has taught Tayo about the female goddesses of their Laguna belief, such as Spider Woman and Yellow Woman, and about their significance for the creation and history of their people (see 94). As the young veteran arrives back home and shows no signs of recovery, Grandma insists on calling the medicine man old Ku’oosh and thereby sets Tayo’s healing in motion (see 33). She can therefore not only be regarded as the initiator of this path towards recovery but also as influential female figure in Tayo’s life, who has imparted tribal traditions and their inherent importance of the feminine to her grandson. Her own adherence to indigenous traditions and her firm belief in the Laguna’s female deities thus make old Grandma an important contributor

to the restoration of the feminine principle in her people and to the resistance to patriarchal settler colonialism.

The medicine men old Ku'oosh and Betonie can both be considered as other momentous characters on Tayo's quest to heal himself as well as to restore the balance in his indigenous community. With their considerate and sensitive guidance of Tayo and their tribal wisdom, they are both what Herzog calls "'feeling' men" (29) and represent traditional indigenous concepts of masculinity that seem to be unaffected by heteropatriarchal norms. While this alone could be seen as an active preservation of gynocratical principles and thus as an act of resistance, the two men also help Tayo to understand the all-encompassing nature and roots of his trauma. Through old Ku'oosh's ceremony and counseling, the protagonist becomes painfully aware that the "fragile" (35) and "delicate" (38) world has been disturbed and brought out of balance. In the hills over Gallup, listening to the wise words of the Navajo medicine man Betonie, Tayo then realizes something elemental, namely that "[h]is sickness was only part of something larger, and his cure would be found only in something great and inclusive of everything" (125–6). Betonie tells him that "after the white people came, elements in this world began to shift; and it became necessary to create new ceremonies" (126), and, after having performed the "Scalp Ceremony" (169) on the young veteran, the medicine man's vision of "the spotted cattle[,] a mountain and [...] a woman" (152) leads Tayo literally to 'the feminine', namely to the formative character Ts'eh. Through their embodiment of a sensitive, considerate Native American masculinity, their understanding of the disruptive structures affecting their world, and their guidance of Tayo towards 'the feminine', the two medicine men in *Ceremony* therefore substantially contribute to Tayo's and the indigenous community's healing and their resistance to heteropatriarchal and settler colonialist structures.

During his stay at the Navajo medicine man Betonie Tayo is reminded of his encounter with the mystical Mexican dancer Night Swan, who can be regarded as a harbinger of the ceremony Tayo is about to undergo and of the feminine power he is going to re-discover during this process (see Swan 318; Allen, *Sacred Hoop* 121). The sensual Mexican woman who sexually initiates the young Tayo is strongly "connected with life-bringing rain and damp earth" (Herzog 31), evoking associations of fertility and a fresh new beginning for the drought-ridden land, and therefore seems to embody the "feminine life force" (Allen, *Sacred Hoop* 120) that is urgently needed by the

Laguna. Tayo senses that Night Swan is no ordinary woman and is overwhelmed with emotions during his time spent with her:

He watched her read the note and wondered what she kept behind the curtains. He could feel something back there, something of her life which he could not explain. The room pulsed with feeling, feeling flowing with the music and the breeze from the curtains, feeling colored by the blue flowers painted in a border around the walls. He could feel it everywhere, even in the blue sheets that were stretched tightly across the bed [...] She moved under him, her rhythm merging into the sound of the wind shaking the rafters and the sound of the rain in the tree. And he was lost somewhere, deep beneath the surface of his own body and consciousness, swimming away from all his life before that hour (98)

The Mexican woman – presumably having a “mysterious power” (Allen, *Sacred Hoop* 121) – is thus associated with sensuality and intense emotions, “initiating Tayo into the restorative pathway of feeling” (318), as Swan argues. Most importantly, however, she seems to be connected with Tayo’s forthcoming ceremony and the character Ts’eh, as it is suggested by her “hazel eyes” (86) that resemble Ts’eh’s, “her implication in the matter of the spotted (half-breed) cattle, Auntie’s dislike of her, and her mysterious words to Tayo when he leaves her” (Allen, *Sacred Hoop* 121). Tayo’s encounter with the female character Night Swan could therefore be seen as the initiation of a process that leads him to rediscover the importance of ‘the feminine’ in his culture and as a “preface[...]" (Snodgrass 219) of his momentous relationship with Ts’eh.

Tayo’s ceremony and his quest to heal both himself and his community are then completed through his formative encounter with the powerful mountain woman Ts’eh Montaña. The mysterious young woman with “ocher eyes” (177) has collared the missing cattle Tayo had been looking for and has thereby helped to retrieve what – like herself – had been part of Betonie’s vision. More importantly, however, Ts’eh reconnects Tayo with his tribal origins and “the feminine principle” (Keyes 120) of his culture, and encourages him to actively engage in “the old-time ways” (Silko, *Ceremony* 51). She teaches him “about the roots and plants she had gathered” (224) and, through Ts’eh’s influence, Tayo becomes confident enough to sing indigenous prayers and to thereby express his ever-increasing reverence for the natural world (see 182). Furthermore, being surrounded by the color yellow, as through her “yellow skirt” (177), “an apricot tree” (176), “yellow petals” (220), or “yellow pollen” (220), Ts’eh Montaña can be regarded as a semi-mythological embodiment of the Laguna goddess Yellow Woman (see Barnett 25). As it is also mentioned by Keyes (see 124), “Kochinnenako, Yellow Woman, is in some sense a name that means Woman-Woman because

among the Keres, yellow is the color for women” (Allen, *Sacred Hoop* 226). It could thus be argued that through the deep love Tayo feels for Ts’eh, he becomes literally reunited with the feminine power that is needed for his own and for his community’s healing, and, through Ts’eh’s reciprocated affection, the protagonist experiences “a gentle wafting from white androcentric culture back to native matriarchy” (219), as Snodgrass pointedly remarks. It is also Ts’eh who foresees the dangerous culmination of Tayo’s ceremony in the form of his encounter with Emo, Leroy, Pinkie, and Harley:

“The end of the story. They want to change it. They want it to end here, the way all their stories end, encircling slowly to choke the life away. The violence of the struggle excites them, and the killing soothes them. They have their stories about us – Indian people who are only marking time and waiting for the end. And they would end this story here, with you fighting to your death alone in these hills.” (232)

Through her warning and the reminder to “[r]emember, [...] remember everything” (235), the mountain woman Ts’eh therefore also aids Tayo in the completion of his ceremony and saves him from his treacherous comrades, who seem to embody the destructive forces of settler colonialism and heteropatriarchy in their final confrontation on the grounds of the old Uranium mine. As an epitome of tribal feminine power and wisdom, the mystical woman Ts’eh Montaña thus not only helps Tayo to successfully finish his ceremony but, most importantly, redirects him to the gynocratical principles and indigenous traditions of his people, therefore having a profound and lasting impact on the protagonist and the reestablishment of balance in the indigenous community.

Guided by the counseling of the medicine men old Ku’oosh and Betonie and shaped by wise and powerful women like Grandma, Night Swan, and Ts’eh, the protagonist is thus equipped to successfully complete his ceremony and to reinvigorate the feminine principle in his community and in himself (see Flores 55). Reconnected with his indigenous self and the tribal concept of a peaceful, considerate masculinity, Tayo is able to resist attacking Emo in this defining moment of his quest and to end “the story” (232) in a way that respects the principle of his indigenous community. Returning to Laguna “at sunrise” (255), he is reassured that “[t]hey had always been loved. He thought of her then; she had always loved him, she had never left him; she had always been there” (255). His path has therefore reaffirmed his belief in the female creatrix Spider Woman and other goddesses of the Laguna, and, through his spiritual certainty of their love for his people (see Swan 34), his traumatized soul is healed. Having “reestablishe[d] the female principle in

himself” (Flores 55), Tayo then becomes the storyteller himself and shares his story and formative encounter with Ts’eh or Yellow Woman in the community’s kiva (see Silko, *Ceremony* 256). Through this significant act, Native American traditions that are grounded on a “feminine life force” (Allen, *Sacred Hoop* 119) and that cherish and respect ‘the feminine’ are continued and preserved. The survival of this feminine principle in the Laguna community and especially in characters like Grandma, Robert, Tayo, and Ts’eh, as well as the adherence to tribal traditions thereby actively counters the oppressive forces of settler colonialism and heteropatriarchy, and restores the balance in *Ceremony*.

5. Conclusion

Reflecting on the two literary works that had been the subject of the analysis of this thesis, it can be stated that – despite the geographical distance of the novel’s setting and the eighteen year long time span between their dates of publication – Linda Hogan’s *Solar Storms* and Leslie Marmon Silko’s *Ceremony* show certain similarities. Being both stories of a homecoming and path to recovery, they center on their protagonists’ returns to their ancestral homelands and their journeys towards a healing of their distressed minds. The reasons for the characters’ initial separation from their home and their emotional pain, however, seem to be diverse at the first glance: while Hogan’s female protagonist Angela had been abducted by the U.S. government as a child and had to grow up in several different white foster families, leaving her uprooted and lost, Silko’s Tayo had voluntarily left his indigenous community to participate in World War II, during which he is deeply traumatized.

Yet the discussion of the two novels has illustrated that the causes for Angel’s and Tayo’s emotional suffering are more complex and must be viewed as part of a greater, wide-reaching harm that had been done to their whole communities and land by the settler colonization of the North American continent and the settler society’s heteropatriarchal mindset. As it was pointed out in the theoretical background of this thesis, settler colonialism has sought to erase the Native American population in order to legitimize the European settlers’ appropriation of their land and the establishment of the nation-states of the U.S.A. and Canada, and still continues its attempt to annihilate indigenous alterities up until today. To be able to enforce this oppressive system in indigenous societies that had for the most part been traditionally woman-centered and egalitarian before contact, however, it was necessary for the settler society to “naturalize[...] social hierarchy” (Smith and Kauanui 241) in the form of heteropatriarchy. Through the imposition of heteropatriarchal views on the indigenous peoples of North America, their traditional ways of societal organization and conceptualizations of gender roles were repressed and the status of women in indigenous communities has dramatically declined, which in turn means that for most Native American nations fundamental parts of their identity and the unity of their community has been eroded.

As the investigation of *Solar Storms* and *Ceremony* has shown, these destructive and interconnected systems of settler colonialism and heteropatriarchy can be detected in both texts and become apparent in various ways that have profoundly impacted the indigenous characters and communities in the books. The most drastic form of the settler colonial attempts to obliterate the Native American population, namely the “physical genocide” (Allen, *Sacred Hoop* 3), is thereby touched upon in both works and reminded of through storytelling of Bush and Betonie. Furthermore, there are plenty of other ways in which an annihilation of the indigenous population has been tried to be achieved in the books and which have affected the people around the protagonists Angela and Tayo. The appropriation and destruction of indigenous land by the white settler society for instance turn out to have particularly wide-reaching consequences for the Native communities in the novels. These actions can not only be considered as an epitome of the restriction and limitation of the indigenous peoples’ rights as a people and as a violation of their traditionally close and reverential connection with nature but also as a direct threat to their existence and wellbeing through floodings and the mining of Uranium, and as an indication of what Jaimes*Guerrero calls the degradation of “the *female principle*” (68). In addition, the common practice of governmental child abduction is addressed in both texts – in *Solar Storms* in the context of Angel’s own past in white foster care and in *Ceremony* as the government’s solution for the children living in Gallup’s misery. Another way in which settler colonial structures become evident is through the white society’s blatant disregard of the existence of Native Americans as proud peoples in present times and their historization of the indigenous population, as it is shown in the way white officials speak address the Fat-Eaters, or rather “Beautiful People” (325), in Hogan’s *Solar Storms*, and in the bizarre spectatorship of white tourists at the Gallup Ceremonial in *Ceremony*. Moreover, some of the Native American characters in the two novels are greatly impacted by the attempted resocialization of the indigenous population in schools and missionaries. The imposition of racist ideas and heteropatriarchal viewpoints in these institutions then results in the characters’ disparagement of their own indigenous culture and, in the case of Dora Rouge’s sister and Tayo’s mother Laura, leads to an inner fragmentation and an utter despair and emotional pain.

While the heteropatriarchal mindset of the settler society is only displayed by white people in *Solar Storms* – with the exception of LaRue, who, however, changes in the end –, some of the indigenous figures in *Ceremony* have deeply internalized these views. Characters such as Emo, Pinkie, Leroy,

and Harley, for instance, strive after an acceptance by the white society and display the same aggressive, misogynist heteropatriarchal behavior and disrespect for indigenous traditions and the natural world as the white men in *Solar Storms*. As the discussion of the two novels has shown, this racist and sexist demeanor of most of the white males and some of the indigenous men has severe impacts on the Native American women in the texts. In Hogan's *Solar Storms*, both Loretta and her daughter Hannah had become victims of psychological, physical, and sexual abuse at the hands of white men, which lead to a deep traumatization of the two women. Female indigenous characters in Silko's *Ceremony* like Helen Jean, however, are not only objectified and possibly abused by white men but are also subjected to violence and degraded by Native American men who have internalized the heteropatriarchal mindset of the white society. They thus have to experience an intersectional oppression for being women and Native American, that is not only exerted by white, but also by indigenous males.

The destructive structures of settler colonialism and heteropatriarchy have therefore greatly affected the indigenous characters in both *Solar Storms* and *Ceremony*, and, as it was already suggested, are also responsible for Angel's and Tayo's emotional pain. Hogan's character Angela was not only forcibly removed from the care of her indigenous extended family by the white government and put into white foster families but is also metaphorically and physically marked by the devastating effects the 'windigo forces' of settler colonialism and heteropatriarchy had on her mother and grandmother. Silko's Tayo, on the other hand, had been encouraged to join the U.S. Army to prove his love for America and participated in a brutal war, supporting the same nation-state that has continuously sought to annihilate the indigenous population and that had forcefully appropriated indigenous land. His experiences during this war and the painful awareness that the balance in the gynocratic community of his people has been deranged by the white society then lead to his traumatization and distress, which can hence also be traced back to the structures of settler colonialism and heteropatriarchy.

Just as the indigenous protagonists and other characters in *Solar Storms* and *Ceremony* have been affected by destructive forces in similar ways, they are also able to counter these systems and to restore the balance of their gynocratic Native American societies very similarly. Both Angel and Tayo undergo a journey towards their own and their people's healing in a spiritual but also factual sense. Linda Hogan's protagonist Angela returns to her indigenous birthplace where she reconnects

with her tribal traditions and the strong and loving women of her extended family, before they together embark on a strenuous canoe trip to reunite with the tribe of their maternal ancestors and assist them in their resistance against the dam project. During this journey and her stay at the Fat-Eaters, Angel develops an even closer bond with her tribal community as well as a great reverence for the natural world, and she is reassured in her indigenous identity. Tayo, on the other hand, is sent on his path to recovery by his wise and caring grandmother and the elders of his community, and commences his formative journey with his visit at the medicine man Betonie. With the mission to complete his ceremony by finding Betonie's pattern of stars, the missing cattle, and the woman of Betonie's vision in his mind, the protagonist develops a greater understanding of the forces that have caused his and his community's pain, and reinforces his belief in indigenous traditions and stories as well as his spiritual connection with the natural world. With the influence and guidance of caring, considerate men and powerful, wise women, the two protagonists are then eventually able to reestablish the feminine principle in their communities and to resist the settler colonial and heteropatriarchal forces through their survival and active celebration of their tribal traditions and woman-centered ways of life.

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8. English abstract

While most Native American nations have traditionally been woman-centered societies that have valued 'the feminine' highly, the ongoing settler colonialism of the North American continent and with it the imposition of heteropatriarchy have led to a drastic deterioration of the status of indigenous women, as it is stressed by Native American feminist theories. Investigating in what ways these strongly interconnected structures of settler colonialism and heteropatriarchy have affected the indigenous population and particularly the indigenous women in Linda Hogan's *Solar Storms* and Leslie Marmon Silko's *Ceremony*, this thesis therefore analyzes the two widely-received novels from a Native American feminist perspective, and discusses how a resistance to these destructive forces is achieved and the balance in the traditionally matriarchal communities restored. In both works, the indigenous communities are greatly impacted by settler colonial attempts to erase the Native population of America, which include a resocialization in schools and missionaries, governmental child abduction, the appropriation and destruction of indigenous land, or a historization of the Native peoples. Whereas the indigenous characters in *Solar Storms* predominantly adhere to Native American concepts of femininity and masculinity and a heteropatriarchal mindset is mostly displayed by the white people in Hogan's novel, a great number of the Native American characters in *Ceremony* have thoroughly internalized heteropatriarchal gender roles and behavior. Yet through a recentering on Native American ways of life and the feminine principle of their people, the indigenous protagonists and their communities in both novels are then able to heal their traumata and to counter these oppressive structures.

9. German abstract

Wie *Native American feminist theories* betonen, waren die meisten indigenen Völkern Nordamerikas matriarchal strukturiert und von einer großen Wertschätzung des Weiblichen geprägt. Durch den immer noch andauernden Siedlerkolonialismus von Nordamerika und der damit einhergehenden Vorherrschaft des Heteropatriarchats wurde jedoch der Status von indigenen Frauen drastisch vermindert. Die vorliegende Arbeit untersucht dabei aus dem Blickwinkel des *Native American feminism* auf welche Art und Weisen die indigenen Charaktere in Linda Hogans *Solar Storms* und Leslie Marmon Silkos *Ceremony* von diesen beiden stark miteinander in

Verbindung stehenden Strukturen betroffen sind, und diskutiert, wie ein Widerstand gegen diese unterdrückenden Systeme gelingt und dadurch die Balance in den traditionell matriarchalen Gemeinschaften wiederhergestellt wird. Es lässt sich dabei feststellen, dass die indigenen Gesellschaften in beiden Werken fundamental von den siedlerkolonialen Versuchen, die Ureinwohner*Innen auszulöschen, getroffen wird, etwa durch Resozialisierungsmaßnahmen, Kindesentziehung durch den Staat, die Inbesitznahme und Zerstörung von Land, oder eine Historisierung der *Native Americans*. Während sich in *Solar Storms* der Großteil der indigenen Charaktere an traditionellen Konzepten von Weiblichkeit und Männlichkeit orientiert und die weiße Bevölkerung heteropatriarchale Verhaltensmuster zeigt, haben in *Ceremony* auch viele der indigenen Personen heteropatriarchale Denkweisen stark verinnerlicht. Durch eine Rückbesinnung auf indigene Lebensweisen und das Prinzip der Weiblichkeit in ihrer Kultur, gelingt es den indigenen Protagonisten und Gemeinschaften beider Werke ihre Traumata zu überwinden und sich den schädlichen Strukturen des Siedlerkolonialismus und des Heteropatriarchats zu widersetzen.