

## AN ECOFEMINIST APPROACH TO LINDA HOGAN'S POWER

**Balasaheb Sagade**

Department of English  
New Arts, Commerce and Science College  
Ahmednagar

Linda Hogan is an American novelist, poet, playwright, environmentalist and writer of short stories .She is a Chickasaw .The Chickasaw are an indigenous people of the south eastern woodlands. Their traditional territory was in the south eastern United States of Mississippi, Alabama, and Tennessee. They are of the Muskogean language family and are federally recognized as the Chickasaw nation. Linda Hogan's novels Mean Spirit, Solar storms (1995), Power (1998) reflects the theory of Ecofeminism.

The term ecofeminism is derived literally as well as ideologically from an integration of ecology and feminism. The term was first coined by French writer Francoise d'Eaubonne in 1974 in her book *Le Feminisme ou La Mort* .In this book she addressed the women to lead an ecological revolution to save our planet. After this so many women activists made it as a social movement. Ecofeminism regards the oppression of women and nature as interconnected. Ecofeminism considers that patriarchical system is responsible for any kind of oppression on the earth. It eradicates gender discrimination, race discrimination and class discrimination. It also resists speciesism, heterosexism and ageism. It also comes forward to protect animals and marginalized people on the earth. The theory of ecofeminism is based on deep ecology and environmental justice movement which motivate to fight against all social inequalities. Ecofeminism has also suggested some proposals to solve the environmental problems.

Linda Hogan's female characters are connected to nature. They struggle for preservation of life. Hogan also integrates bioregionalist thought into her novels. All her novels create ecological awareness among the readers. The novels insist the readers to adapt with the community where they live. In this regard Joanna T. Hurley says:

Hogan's novels contain a vision of cooperation and adaptation to place. She does not ask us to relinquish technological advances ,but her novels do seem to suggest that we should give our actions more thought while at the same time being concerned with our connections with nature.(1)

Hogan uses a language that expresses a care for the land and its creatures. In *Power* female characters are connected with nature .They love nature ,they also love to the different forms of life. They also love the non-human world. Ama and Omishto are the two main characters of the novel. Ama represents the ecological Indian. Her habits and life style related to the nature. Ama loves animals. During the storm ,snakes try to enter her house but Ama doesn't refuse the snakes to come in .Ama explains that the snakes also need shelter from the rain. Ama gives respect to the animals. She treats them equally as if they are just as important as another life. Ama is the central of society .She is mother in the sense that she strengthens tribal people's reciprocal relationship to the land. Ama and Omishto are worried about the panthers. Omishto says that ,” Panther is our elder ,and this is why respect it so,”(Power 15).At the beginning of the

story Ama and Omishto stop the young boys from harassing the panther. Ama and Omishto love the panther .It grieves Ama and Omishto because they are going to be extinct in few days.

The other women characters such as Janie Soto, Annie Hide are also in touch with the nature. Janie Soto is the head of the panther clan. She keeps the balance of Taigas with nature. Annie Hide is an old woman from Taiga community. She is a helping woman in the tribe .She tells the old stories to Omishto. She also knows how to use natural resources properly. In *Power* women characters have practiced non exploitative use of natural resources and they are equal partners with men in the construction and maintenance of harmonious relationships among people, soil, animals, trees ,water and plants. It shows that Native American women know how to use the natural resources properly. They take care of the land .They have the very valuable information about environment. That can be used to protect the environment from the various emerging dangers.

Power also explores how the nature, women, animals and indigenous people are oppressed by the patriarchal society. The dominant people see nature as a hunting .They also kill the birds as a part of their sport. Modern industrial development has made bad effects on the lives of native people. Due to industrial development some tribes are banished from the newly built industrial area. In the town people have cut down the trees for the new highways .The town is changed by the arrival of the European people. This change is observed by Omishto .When she returns home after the storm ,she takes particular notice to the difference in the modern city as compared with Taiga communities:

We go past where the land has been cleared and drained .It's only a few miles from Ama's house, I can run it in a short time, but there's a world of difference. The Indian land is still wet and fertile .But all the other land is poison now ,like the pestilence of Mama's Bible that entered the houses as if to claim the first born sons.(Power 89,90)

Omishto and Ama sees the destruction of nature by the dominant society. They become very sad when they see the animals in critical situation. They understand that other species are also going to extinct very soon. They predict that due to this natural destruction there is a threat to the human life also. All the living and non living entities are connected with each other. Their life is interdependent on each other. Animals are the part of this ecosystem .If the animals are destroyed, the whole ecosystem will come in trouble. Linda Hogan gives the message to the readers that they must think to protect women, nature and animals in order to save the earth from the bad effects of globalization.

Along with nature and animals, women are also oppressed by the patriarchal society. Hogan shows that dominant American culture is against the women. Women are not safe in this world. The female characters such as Ama and Omishto are also psychologically and sexually harassed by the patriarchal society. Ama receives very insulting comment in the court. The white people directly consider her inferior to them. They give her very bad treatment and even judges also discriminate her due to her indigenous and racial background. The court scene reveals gender as well as racial discrimination. Omishto is sexually abused by her own father .She doesn't like her mother's house but likes to stay at Ama's house. Omishto's pain is clearly both physical and spiritual. Omishto's stepfather treats women only for sexual pleasure. Omishto's expression about her physical violence is very heart touching to the readers.

The degradation of women, animals and nature is the central theme of ecofeminism and environmental justice theory. Woman and nature are considered as inferior while as man and

culture as a superior. The aspects of cultural ecofeminism are observed in *Power*. Women are closely connected with nature. Women and nature are devalued by the same patriarchal society. Linda Hogan has proved that women have a great power in themselves and this power can be used to save the earth. They always come forward to save the planet from the clutches of dangers to the environment. Hogan has presented an ideal Taiga culture and explored the problems of indigenous people through ecofeministic perspective.

### **Work Cited**

- Abram, David. *The Spell of the Sensuous*, New York: Vintage Books, 1996.
- Adams, Carol J (Ed). *Ecofeminism and the Sacred*, New York: Continuum Publishing Company, 1993.
- Allen, Paula Gunn. *The Sacred Hoop : Recovering the Feminine in American Indian Traditions*, Boston: Beacon Press, 1986.
- Carty, Brian *Environmental Culture : The Ecological Crisis of Reason*, London: Routledge, 2002.
- Eaton, Heather and Lorentzen Ann. *Ecofeminism and Globalization*, U.S.A: Rowman and Littlefield, 2003.
- Gaard, Geeta. *Ecofeminism*, Philadelphia : Temple University Press, 1993
- Griffin, Susan. *Woman and Nature*, San Francisco: Sierra Club Books, 1978.
- Harley, Joanna. "A Dark Vision of Hope," *The Bloomsbury Review* 11.1 (1991)
- Hogan, Linda. *Power*, New York: W.W Norton & Company, 1998.
- Mazel, David. *A Century of Early Ecocriticism*, Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 2001.
- Mellor, Merry. *Feminism and Ecology*, New York: New York University Press, 1997
- Plumwood, Val. *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature*, New York : Routledge, 1993.
- Stone, Merlin. *When God was a Woman*, New York: Dial Press, 1976.