

PAPER DETAILS

TITLE: An Ecocritical Exploration of Bakhtin's Major Concepts in Solar Storms

AUTHORS: Ayse Sensoy,Meryem Ayan

PAGES: 81-102

ORIGINAL PDF URL: <https://dergipark.org.tr/tr/download/article-file/3555611>



AN ECOCRITICAL EXPLORATION OF BAKHTIN'S MAJOR CONCEPTS IN *SOLAR STORMS*

Güneş Fırtınaları Romanında Bakhtin'in Temel Kavramlarının Ekoeleştirel Bir İncelemesi

Ayşe ŞENSOY*
Meryem AYAN*

ABSTRACT

Mikhail Bakhtin is a Russian scholar who has been studied internationally in fields of literature and the humanities. Basing his theory on the principle of communication, Bakhtin formed a significant path in literary and cultural studies. Some scholars like Michael Gardiner (1993), Michael M. Bell (1994), Michael J. McDowell (1996), Timo Müller (2010) and Patrick D. Murphy (2013) propose that Bakhtin's concepts can be appropriated to ecocriticism to make more powerful analyses of literary texts since both Bakhtinian literary criticism and ecocriticism highlight diversity, heterogeneity, agency, and interaction. In this way, Bakhtinian ecocritical theory suggests a new definition of the human subject in its relation to the physical environment and non-human beings. Revealing the viability of Bakhtinian critical theory with ecological concerns, this article aims to study the novel *Solar Storms* by Linda Hogan, a Native American female writer, through an "eco-Bakhtinian" approach to explore how nature is represented in Native American context, how the relationship between human and nonhuman worlds is depicted, how both worlds function in one another, how and why the perception of nature differs in cultural aspects, and how the concept of nature has changed over time. In doing so, this article attempts to show the interaction between culture-nature, human-nonhuman, earth-body, body-mind, traditional-modern, native-non-native, fact-fiction, story-history, self-other, individual-society, and text-reader.

Keywords: Linda Hogan, *Solar Storms*, native American, Mikhail Bakhtin, ecocriticism.

* Asst. Prof. Dr., Osmaniye Korkut Ata University, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Department of English Language and Literature, Osmaniye/Türkiye. E-mail: ayse.ciftcibasi@gmail.com ORCID: 0000-0002-1792-2381.

* Prof. Dr., Manisa Celal Bayar University, Faculty of Science and Letters, Department of English Language and Literature, Manisa/Türkiye. E-mail: meryem.ayan@cbu.edu.tr. ORCID: 0000-0003-3138-1523.

Öz

Mihail Bahtin, edebiyat ve beşerî bilimler alanlarında uluslararası ölçekte çalışılan bir Rus düşünür ve kuramcıdır. Kuramını iletişim ilkesine dayandıran Bahtin, edebiyat ve kültür çalışmalarında önemli bir yol çizmiştir. Bahtin'in fikirleri son yıllarda edebiyat ve kültür kuramlarının en verimli eleştirel temaları arasında yer almıştır. Michael Gardiner (1993), Michael M. Bell (1994), Michael J. McDowell (1996), Timo Müller (2010) ve Patrick D. Murphy (2013) gibi yazar ve akademisyenler, hem Bahtinci hem de ekoeleştirel kuramların çeşitliliği, heterojenliği, eyleyciliği ve etkileşimi vurgulamasından dolayı Bahtin'in kavramlarının edebî metinlerin daha güçlü çözümlemelerini yapmak için ekoeleştiriye uygulanabileceğini öne sürmüşlerdir. Böylece Bahtinci ekoeleştiri, fiziksel çevre ve insan olmayan canlılar ile ilişkisinde insan öznesinin yeni bir tanımını ortaya koymaktadır. Bahtin'in eleştirel kuramının ekolojik konulara uygulanabilirliğini gösteren bu makale, yerli Amerikan bağlamında doğanın nasıl tasvir edildiğini, insan ve insan olmayan dünyalar arasındaki ilişkinin nasıl betimlendiğini, her iki dünyanın birbiri içinde nasıl işlediğini, doğa algısının kültürel açıdan nasıl ve neden farklılaştığını, ve doğa kavramının zaman içinde nasıl değiştiğini ortaya çıkarmak için yerli Amerikan kadın yazar Linda Hogan'ın Güneş Fırtınaları romanını "eko-Bahtinci" bir yaklaşımla incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Bunu yaparken bu makale, kültür/ doğa, insan/ insan olmayan, yeryüzü-beden, beden-zihin, geleneksel-modern, yerli-yerli olmayan, gerçek-kurgu, hikâye-tarih, birey-toplum, benlik-öteki ve metin-okur arasındaki etkileşimi göstermeye çalışmaktadır.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Linda Hogan, Güneş Fırtınaları, yerli Amerikan, Mihail Bahtin, ekoeleştiri.

Introduction

Mikhail Bakhtin is a Russian scholar who has been studied internationally in fields of literature and the humanities. Basing his theory on the principle of communication, Bakhtin formed a significant path in literary and cultural studies with the terms carnivalesque, grotesque, dialogism, polyphony, and chronotope. There can be no doubt that Bakhtin's ideas have been among the most productive critical themes in literary and cultural theories in recent years, with a great number of books, articles and dissertations providing far-reaching and practical insights into the humanities. Bakhtin's terms all handle similar problems in different aspects. Obviously, it is not possible to examine any one of them separately without referring to one another.

Some scholars like Michael Gardiner (1993), Michael M. Bell (1994), Michael J. McDowell (1996), Timo Müller (2010) and Patrick D. Murphy (2013) propose that Bakhtin's concepts can be appropriated to ecocriticism since

both Bakhtinian literary criticism and ecocriticism highlight diversity, heterogeneity, agency, and interaction. In his essay entitled “Toward a Methodology for the Human Sciences” (1986), Bakhtin distinguishes the exact sciences from the human sciences on the grounds that the exact sciences are monologic for their concern with the object of knowledge whereas the human sciences are dialogic for their concern with other subjects. Accordingly, the science of ecology belongs to the categories of both the exact sciences and the human sciences as a source of knowledge and for the relation of human beings to the nonhuman. As McDowell states, “Bakhtin’s theories might be seen as the literary equivalent of ecology, the science of relationships” (1996: 372). In this way, Bakhtinian ecocritical theory, which we call “eco-Bakhtinian” theory in this article, suggests a new definition of the human subject in its relation to the physical environment and nonhuman beings.

Ecocriticism is an interdisciplinary theory of literary criticism that is concerned with both textual and cultural practices in terms of environmental themes, including the present ideologies, systems, and power structures in a socio-cultural and historical network. Ecocriticism regards literary works as actions which spring from a developed and refined ecological conscience and consciousness. Ecocriticism also searches for a way to save literature from absolute theoretical restrictions and hierarchical understanding led by structuralism (Buell, 2005: 6). It is at this point that ecocriticism and Bakhtin’s ideas converge in literary texts, which leads to the removal of the boundaries and hierarchies of all kinds. Just as all the characters in novels have voice in Bakhtinian sense, “all entities in the great web of nature deserve recognition and a voice” in ecocritical sense (McDowell, 1996: 372). Application of Bakhtinian concepts to ecocritical studies allows the reader and literary critics “to enter the private worlds of different entities” in nature (372). Bakhtinian concepts also support one of the characteristics of ecocriticism that nature be united and in harmony with human existence, not necessarily be in isolation from human conduct. That is, wherever there is a human voice, there is evidence of nonhuman voices as well because everything is an effect of (an)other’s causes.

Patrick D. Murphy (2013) is the academician who establishes a systematic theoretical connection between Bakhtin’s ideas and ecocriticism in literary studies. He expresses that Bakhtinian theories provide new ways of ecocritical analyses and new methods of studying literary works and their interrelation with the material world. In “transversal ecocritical praxis”,

which Murphy calls (2013: 1), both human and nonhuman bodies occupy simultaneous yet distinct space engaging in a dialogue in the physical environment to create holistic and ecological meanings. Revealing the viability of Bakhtinian critical theory with ecological concerns, this article aims to study the novel *Solar Storms* by Linda Hogan, a Native American female writer, through an ‘eco-Bakhtinian’ approach to explore how nature is represented in Native American context, how the relationship between human and nonhuman worlds is depicted, how both worlds function in one another, how and why the perception of nature differs in cultural aspects, and how the concept of nature has changed over time. In doing so, this article attempts to show the interaction between culture-nature, human-nonhuman, earth-body, body-mind, fact-fiction, native-non-native, traditional-modern, story-history, self-other, individual-society, and text reader. To achieve this aim, Bakhtin’s terms and ecocriticism will be applied to Linda Hogan’s *Solar Storms*.

Entanglement of Bakhtinian Concepts and Ecocriticism

Patrick D. Murphy in his dialogical book *Transversal Ecocritical Praxis* (2013) proposes that ecocritical theory needs to be developed by an interdisciplinary cooperation of multiple literary theories rather than a pure ecological literary criticism. Combining ecocriticism and ecofeminism with Bakhtinian theories at few points to explore the ecological aspects of literature and culture and to manifest the human responsibility for the more-than-human, Murphy calls his dialogical ecological foundation as “transversal ecocritical praxis” (2013: 1). Murphy’s transversal ecocritical practice rejects “monological decrees and absolute dictates” in literary criticism because a single literary theory is not enough to examine a literary text in a comprehensive manner (2). Transversality, in this sense, suggests “convergence without coincidence, conjuncture without concordance ... within the context of differences”, as the philosopher Calvin Schrag writes (1997: 148), which thus encourages orientation towards “global heterogeneous and heterarchical ecocriticism” (Murphy, 2013: 2). Transversality becomes “an achievement or communication as it visits a multiplicity of viewpoints, perspectives, belief systems, and regions of concern” (Schrag, 1997: 133). In this respect, for Murphy, the transversal praxis corresponds to a dialogical interaction “between the abstract and the concrete, the theory and the practice, the concept and the application” (2013: 4). The transversal praxis is not finished as in Bakhtin’s focus on unfinalizability and always embraces revision and correction of terms and methods. In this way, the

transversal ecocritical praxis fuses the text, theory, criticism, human society, and nonhuman community together in dynamic and multifarious dimensions. Therefore, it provides an ethical practice for ecological literary studies to achieve its complete academic development (Murphy, 2013: 6; emphasis in original).

Murphy puts forth that Bakhtin's critical theory allows for useful ways for ecocritical examination of literary texts since Bakhtinian concepts explore linguistic, historical, social, and environmental contexts of literary works. In line with Bakhtin and Murphy, Lawrence Buell also argues that texts can be considered as ecosystems: "an individual text must be thought of as environmentally embedded at every stage from its germination to its reception" (2005: 44). In this sense, the text not only "represents the world" but also "positions [humankind] in relation to the rest of the world" (Brown and Herndl, 1996: 215). Besides, languages, which construct texts, depend on a sort of ecological support for their survival because they are the instruments by means of which human beings gain knowledge about the environment and adopt, maintain, or change their attitudes towards the environment (Harré et al., 1999: 172-173). Before going on further to argue the affinities between Bakhtinian literary criticism and ecocriticism, it is better to explain Bakhtinian terms which provide transversality for ecocriticism.

Bakhtin defines the carnivalesque as the celebration of "liberation from the prevailing truth and from the established order", which "marked the suspension of all hierarchical rank, privileges, norms, and prohibitions" (1984b: 10). Bakhtin's carnival challenges "the serious official, ecclesiastical, feudal, and political cult forms and ceremonials" (1984b: 5). Accordingly, Bakhtin rejects dogmatism, authoritarianism, intolerance, hostility, and finalisability for the sake of "nonofficial, extraecclesiastical and extrapolitical aspect of the world, of man, and of human relations", which consequently creates "a second world and a second life outside officialdom" (6) governed by "a special type of relationship, a free, familiar, marketplace relationship" (154). The second world debunks the official and grave atmosphere through "a continual shifting from top to bottom, from front to rear, numerous parodies and travesties, humiliations, profanations, comic crownings and uncrownings" (11). The second world also offers a "utopian realm of community, freedom, equality, and abundance" (9). This utopian realm indicates an escape from the officialdom and authority that impose certain ideological worldviews and reinforce the unalterable hierarchy. It allows for a space in which various voices are heard and interact. In

this regard, the carnival spirit “offers the chance to have a new outlook on the world, to realize the relative nature of all that exists, and to enter a completely new order of things” (34). Welcoming people from all ranks, ages and spheres, the carnival essentially “has a universal spirit”, and it becomes “a special condition of the entire world, of the world’s revival and renewal, in which all take part” to live in it rather than seeing it as a spectacle (7). That is why Bakhtin’s carnival is neither imagination nor an abstract idea, rather it is experienced. It unveils the simple truth beneath the surface of false consciousness and arbitrary orders, reinscribing sociopolitical laws by suggesting freer, more egalitarian, and more diverse lives.

Bakhtin provides one of the most significant aspects of the carnivalesque, which is grotesque realism, or material bodily principle. For him, “[t]he essential principle of grotesque realism is degradation”, which means “the lowering of all that is high, spiritual, ideal, abstract; it is a transfer to the material level, to the sphere of earth and body in their indissoluble unity” (1984b: 19). The earth and body are organically interconnected in grotesque realism. Debunking anthropocentrism, grotesque realism enables transition from human corporeality to transcorporeal existence of animals, plants, natural elements, and other nonhuman entities in nature. In this way, the carnival brings humankind closer to the nonhuman world and “establishe[s] a link through the body and bodily life, in contrast to the abstract and spiritual mastery sought by Romanticism”—a link which provides affinity with ecocritical practice (39). Thus, it provides “a new mode of interrelationship” between human and nonhuman beings (Bakhtin, 1984a: 123; emphasis in original). In ecocritical sense, it removes the hierarchies and barriers between the human/nonhuman, culture/nature, and body/earth for a more interconnected, egalitarian, boundless, diverse, complex, and ecological lifestyle. Carnivalization, however, does not prompt nihilistic delusion, violence or anarchy because of its assertions of liberation, degradation and parody since the carnival spirit encourages continuous becoming, development and renewal through some actions of excess and exhibition of grotesqueness. It rather enables human beings to imagine nonhuman beings by providing “a pluralistic, diverse and hence potentially more accurate representation of a natural landscape” owing to its tendency of “an interplay or collision of voices from differing socio-linguistic points of view” (McDowell, 1996: 380). In this way, Bakhtin’s carnivalesque starts dialogues among diverse bodies and voices.

Multiple voices and various points of view interact in Bakhtin's dialogism. Dialogue is so significant for Bakhtin that everything ends if dialogue ends (1981: 252). To him, dialogue is a reality and the ultimate truth while monologue is an illusion and false consciousness as the latter is not questioned and is accepted without any criticism (Holquist, 2002: 57). Bakhtin's dialogic interaction can be expanded to include the entire universe and its elements because dialogue "is present in exchanges at all levels – between words in language, people in society, organisms in ecosystems, and even between processes in the natural world" (Holquist, 2002: 40). In this respect, dialogism covers dialogues among animals, plants, rocks, oceans, earth, and air which all bear their own intrinsic values in ecocritical sense. Just as human beings exist through dialogue in their social world, merging with other humans' voices, they also exist through the same dialogue with all organic and inorganic beings in the natural world. Beatrix Busse likewise explicates that "dialogue is interaction and therefore inherently ecological" because "the subject-object relation is re-defined" through dialogues (2006: 132-133).

Once nonhuman beings and elements are incorporated into the literary text, then they each have their own voice and point of view. The presence of the nonhuman world in literature indicates its capability of utterance, which signifies that nature has a word to say in its interaction with humankind. Dialogical examination of literary texts enables the reader to hear nonhuman characters that have been muted by authoritative monologic discourse. Bakhtin's dialogism appears germane to ecocriticism in the sense that human beings stop being the only speaking subject. Nonhuman beings and elements are also speaking subjects bringing with them their own voice, discourse, and language.

Together with the carnivalesque, dialogism allows for the contradictions and dualities to come together, absorb each other, and understand one another. To carnivalize the world means to dialogize it to get rid of the "monological 'misrule' of officialdom" (Jung, 1998: 105). That is why the carnival spirit restores the unity of nature and culture, human and nonhuman, mind and body, body and earth, and the self and other, debunking Cartesian dualism and anthropocentric tendencies through dialogical paradigm. In this way, humankind becomes a cosmic subject "[i]nsofar as mind, body and nature are not separate but overlapping and intertwined" (Merleau-Ponty, 1962: 441). Humans affect the ecology of the world they inhabit. For this reason, they are answerable to nonhuman entities. Answer-

ability in dialogical ecocriticism refers more to human's ethical responsiveness to the nonhuman in anthropogenic phenomena than the simple act of talking back. Eco-dialogical interactions between the human and nonhuman lead to "a polyphony of interacting voices" (McDowell, 1996: 375). Bakhtin's concept of polyphony reveals the interaction of distinct perspectives and viewpoints transmitted simultaneously by different characters in a text, which corresponds to a kind of dissolution of anthropocentrism for the perception and recognition of the world of nature in an ecocritical sense. Therefore, polyphony in ecocriticism suggests "a plurality of consciousness with equal rights and each with its own world" (Bakhtin, 1984a: 6).

Bakhtin's concept of chronotope suggests the exploration of how landscape and geography are linked to the narrative in literature. He defines chronotope as "the intrinsic connectedness of temporal and spatial relationships that are artistically expressed in literature" (1981: 84). Chronotope, in ecocritical sense, provides an understanding of the relationship of the human to the nonhuman in the physical environment. It helps the reader to realise how nature has been perceived historically, how the natural environment is affected by human activities in spatio-temporal process, and how human characters are affected by the changes in nature. Chronotope exposes the historical change of human perception about nature – from nature as "a living participant in the events of life" to a mere object serving for human pleasure, from idyllic chronotope to bourgeois one, from a sacred entity to a commodity (Bakhtin, 1981: 217-234). In addition, chronotope manifests that the nonhuman environment has a role as significant as the roles of the human narrator and characters in a literary text.

Eco-Bakhtinian Reading of Linda Hogan's *Solar Storms*

In *Solar Storms*, Linda Hogan offers a vivid description of societal restrictions, Euro-American hegemony, and tribal and environmental degradation in multiple contexts, leading the reader into questioning monologic and authoritative discourses of anthropocentrism and ethnocentrism. In the novel, Hogan deals with the binary constructions of self-other, story-history, human-nonhuman, nature-culture, body-earth, native-non-native, material-spiritual, mapping-unmapping, dream-reality, and peace-violence. In this way, the author gives voice to the lost, forgotten, marginalised and the oppressed, including indigenous people and nonhuman entities, by decrowning authoritarian power relations and societal discrimination to help one find their true self and identity. This article brings *Solar Storms* into

new dialogue with eco-Bakhtinian study about complex relations and diverse speeches between human/nonhuman and native/non-native bodies, material/spiritual selves, tribal/urban lives, forgetting/remembering and mother/daughter. The novel focuses on conveying environmental messages and recovering environmental justice, with its satiric, dreamy and polyphonic voice as well as carnivalesque, dialogic and chronotopic tendency, by narrating the events during the 1970s and 1990s when political, social and environmental conflicts of the James Bay Project in northwestern Quebec, Canada, are told through the perspectives of indigenous women Dora-Rouge, Agnes, Bush, and Angel.

Drawing on the real event of the James Bay Project in northwestern Quebec, Canada, which is a dam project constructed by the diversion of neighbouring rivers into La Grande River, Hogan rewrites native people's history by narrating alternative stories that leap from one reality to another and from one view to another. Focusing on the interconnection between human and nonhuman histories, she degrades the highlights of human history, which lack the "power to deeply affect", to "do something stronger than history" that would reach the emotions of readers (Hogan, 1994: 116). That is why she states that humans "need new stories, new terms and conditions that are relevant to the love of land" and love of the nonhuman – "a new narrative that would imagine another way to learn the infinite movement and work in this world" (1995: 94).

The novel covers the history of five generations of Native American women. It consists of one prologue that presents Agnes's storytelling about Bush's feast, and twenty-one chapters that narrate Angel's transformation and native people's stories behind the development of Euro-American dam project. Time flows backwards and forwards through memories and stories of the characters, and several genres including history, oral stories, and a few plant drawings intervene in the novel. There are multiple narrators and insert narratives, which form a kind of chain in the novel. Angel's relatives narrate the origins of her trauma and environmental injustice, which she then passes along to readers. Set in the period between 1970s and 1990s, the novel deals with the history of nature and native lands, and nature of native people with a focus on the relation of fact to fiction and vice versa. Although the novel has mostly been studied in aspects of ethnicity, theories of memory and trauma, and mere ecocriticism, this article seeks to explore the novel through an eco-Bakhtinian approach.

Solar Storms narrates the story of Angel, a mixed-blood Cree-Inuit young girl, who comes back to her tribal home in Adam's Rib in search for her mother and true identity after growing up in a number of foster homes in Oklahoma away from her traditional heritage. She meets her matrilineage—her great-great-grandmother Dora-Rouge, her great-grandmother Agnes, her grandmother Loretta, her step-grandmother Bush and her mother Hannah, and shares their collaborative struggles for social and environmental justice. The novel begins with a remembered feast of mourning, which is titled “Prologue”. Agnes tells Angel that Bush holds a feast of mourning, which brings all the members of the tribal community together in preparation and participation, and during which mourners share their food with the dead. The novel then continues in chapters with Angel's transformation from Angela Jensen to Angel Wing. Left and scarred on the face by her mother, Angel is depicted as a white-imaged victimised young girl who has a lost soul wandering around the world. After Angel arrives in her tribal hometown, she embarks on a journey together with Dora-Rouge, Agnes and Bush to their Canadian homeland, father north into the Triage region, to reconnect with their ancestors, the Beautiful People. Journeys in the novel cover Angel's journey to find her true self, her roots and her mother, Dora-Rouge's journey back home, Agnes's journey towards death, and Bush's journey towards environmental justice. These journeys indicate transgression of anthropocentric boundaries between self/other, space/time, matter/spirit, dream/reality, nature/culture, and human/nonhuman, and enable women to achieve healing and re-immersion in their heritage.

Having a mixed-blood heritage—Chickasaw and Anglo—which allows her to write from a “cultural ecotone”, Hogan writes at the junction between environmental injustice and mistreatment of native people by white American people (Cook, 2003: 1). Her novel, which emphasises the concept of land as body and body as land, is concerned with the “traditional, indigenous perspective of the land and human relationship with the land” (Johnson, 1998: n.p.). In the novel, Hogan reflects “different histories of ways of thinking and being in the world” (1995: 12). She creates a carnivalesque space in which both nature and culture, human and nonhuman, the Native American and Euro-American, and the tribal and modern dialogically come together. Juxtaposing the ecological Native with the anthropocentric and ethnocentric European, Hogan provides a carnivalesque mode of interrelationship between individuals, communities, and cultures “counter-posed to the all-powerful socio-hierarchical relationships of noncarnival life”

(Bakhtin, 1984a: 123). In this respect, Hogan seeks to unearth the origins of symbiotic and complex indigenous life that have been desecrated by Euro-American people's efforts to conform to the "urbanized, techno-industrial mega-society" (Naess, 1989: 24). Thus, the novel is concerned with the material and spiritual consequences of a colonial encounter between the exploiter white Western culture and the exploited indigenous culture.

Bush's ceremonial mourning feast in the "Prologue" aims to bring the individual together "with his or her fellows, the community of people with that of the other kingdoms", and the one who participates in ceremony "sheds the isolated, individual personality and is restored to conscious harmony with the universe" (Allen, 1986: 62). All the people in the feast are participants of the carnival—the "merry hosts of the earth" who "know that death is pregnant with new life, because they are familiar with the gay image of becoming and of time" (Bakhtin, 1984b: 250). This carnivalesque awareness demands collective consciousness of earthly and historic eternity and of constant revival and growth as in the cycle in the natural world. Thus, such ceremonies "create and support the sense of community that is the bedrock of tribal life" (Allen, 1986: 63). Bush wants to hold Adam's Rib community together, to recover harmony with the tribal society, and to restore balance between the human and nonhuman. Her feast looks to the future for liberation, equality, abundance, tolerance, and change. It creates a carnivalesque world of revival and renewal, which can be associated with Bakhtin's banquet imagery. In Bush's feast, people taste the world just as the earth tastes dead bodies, introduce it into their bodies and are introduced into the world at the same time, being united as an integral whole.¹ In this sense, Bush's feast of mourning intends to reattain social and environmental justice as well as regenerative cycle in the entire ecosystem to celebrate revival and life over extinction and death.

Ceremonies and rituals in the novel are of great significance in that they function both as renewal of one's own health while restoring healthier connections with other human and nonhuman beings at the same time and as involvement of readers into a larger circle. By including readers in the

¹ Banquet is a collective feast open to the entire world, including human and nonhuman beings. Rabelais's novel, *Pantagruel* (c. 1532), is thoroughly filled with the scenes of eating and drinking. In the novel, Rabelais tells that the earth absorbed Abel's blood after his murder and became fruitful. Then people who ate boxthorn berries grown on this earth became dimensionally gigantic figures, which is one of the scenes exemplifying the image of the world as open mouth and the theme of swallowing (Bakhtin, 1984b: 279).

ceremonies, Hogan reminds these participants that all things in the universe are interconnected. She states that ceremonies include “not just [human] prayers and stories ... but also the unspoken records of history, the mythic past, and all the other lives connected to [humans’ lives], families, nations, and all other creatures” (Hogan, 1995: 37). Rituals are also important for Angel since they “transform someone or something from one condition or state to another” (Allen, 1986: 79). Rituals help Angel to heal and change from “an isolated (diseased) state to one of incorporation (health)” with the unification of “diverse elements into a community, a psychic and spiritual whole” (Allen, 1986: 80). The novel tells Angel’s re-initiation into an indigenous knowledge of a world where human and non-human beings are united in harmonious relations. During her ceremonial passage from a “rootless teenager” to a self-sufficient, strong, and eco-conscious young woman who is deeply embedded in her tribal community’s struggle for survival, Angel recognises that she must re-establish the connection between the human and nonhuman to revivify the peace and balance within herself, her family, her tribe and within the ecosphere (Hogan, 1997: 25).

Angel realizes that native people consider the land, animals, and plants as sacred. The indigenous people feel deep sympathy with all life forms. They lead eco-conscious lives, know their interrelation with a web of life, in which all elements of the system, including humans and the slightest nonhuman entities, are interwoven in complex relations and are inherently dependent on each other. Native people believe that each life form, whether organic or inorganic, has the “right to live and blossom”, which is a universal right that cannot be determined by the authoritative humankind (Naess, 1989: 166). While indigenous people see everything alive, connected and surrounded by love and respect, non-native people believe wilderness is “full of demons”, are afraid of “the voices of animals singing at night”, and destruct “all that could save them, the plants, the water” (Hogan, 1997: 86). Whereas native people take “steps to conserve so that earth’s harmonies are never imbalanced and resources never in doubt” (Krech III, 1999: 21), Euro-American people poison the foxes and wolves “to make more room for the European settlers and the pigs and cattle they’d brought” (Hogan, 1997: 24).

Angel is the most outstanding character of the carnivalesque in the novel, with her transformation from a lost, rootless, and troubled teenager into a recovered and conscious young woman. Angel has been left and dis-

figured partly on the face by her mother Hannah who has suffered trauma. She has been fostered to various families, forgetting her roots away from her native family and culture. During her stay in Adam's Rib and her journey to the Beautiful People, Angel recognises her connection to her forgotten history, to the land destroyed by Euro-American views and actions, and to the "fragments of stories" (Hogan, 1997: 85). She sees that she can achieve wholeness with her origins and nature by piecing together the fragments of her past. On her way to Self-realisation,² Angel listens to multiple stories that enable her to bring pieces together, to learn who she is, to resist anthropocentric, authoritative and hierarchical ideologies, and to gain an ecological understanding of the responsibilities humans have for nonhumans. Storytelling is a significant medium in native culture because traditional stories are told to honour the land, animals, plants and every slightest entity in nature, and to pass down indigenous customs and history. These traditional stories enable native people to find out their origin, identity, and their position in the natural world.

When Angel finds her true self, she also finds the self of her tribe because the sense of being in native culture is more tribal than individual. In this tradition, self is "transpersonal" and it "includes a society, a past, and a place. To be separated from that transpersonal time and space is to lose identity" (Bevis, 1993: 19). Thus, Angel restores her connection to Adam's Rib community, getting away from the isolation and loneliness in foster homes for many years. While Angela Jensen, as a scared teenager, hides her scarred face with "a curtain of dark red hair" in the beginning, Angel Wing reveals her face and finds it "beautiful" in the end (Hogan, 1997: 25, 350). Coming out of her scarred and traumatised skin, Angel finds out that "something wonderful lives inside" her (351). In her native land, she recognizes "the aesthetics of the monstrous" (Bakhtin, 1984b: 43). Her incomplete and "ugly, monstrous, hideous" face provides her with grotesque transgressive characteristic and integration into the rest of the world (26). In other words, all that is terrifying about her becomes pleasing in indigenous festivity.

After she finds out her true self and origin, Angel learns to be a plant dreamer, referring to the one who is responsible for finding healing herbs

² It is an ecological transformation from 'ego-realisation' to 'self-realisation', with lower case s, and thence to 'Self-realisation', with capital S (Naess, 1989: 85). Self-realisation denotes expansion of the limited ego from the human self to embrace all entities in the universe.

and plants, which enables her to develop new insights into human and nonhuman relations and to gain ecological consciousness of plants and animals. Having a joyful experience of sensitivity to natural elements, she develops “eco-dentity” by integrating her body into plants, herbs, rivers and the land (Murphy, 2013: 46; emphasis in original). She effaces borders between the human and nonhuman worlds, between her body and nature, between herself and her past. She realises that she is an intrinsic part of the same biological, historical and physical realms as other entities in the natural world, and that she is an inseparable part of a complex ecosystem, which is a web of life that is in an ever-changing and cyclical natural process that challenges anthropocentric and hierarchical notions of superiority, mastery and exceptionality.

Angel’s body becomes a carnival body when she learns to be a plant dreamer. She develops “gay and gracious” wholeness of the “cosmic, social, and bodily elements” (Bakhtin, 1984b: 19). Her ability of plant dreaming becomes her own ecophilosophy that enables her to feel at home. In this way, her body becomes both a source of knowledge and a site for communication with the nonhuman world. She understands that her body cannot be “separated from the world by clearly defined boundaries; it is blended with the world, with animals, with objects. It is cosmic, it represents the entire material bodily world in all its elements” (Bakhtin, 1984b: 27). Angel achieves integrity by accepting her intrinsic other, an ecocentric intention that emphasizes symbiosis, biodiversity and egalitarianism in Earth and respect for all organic and inorganic life forms. In this way, she challenges anthropocentric and ethnocentric dualisms of denaturalised and stereotyped identities.

Angel also represents a dialogic body bearing both the self and other within her as she experiences both native and non-native cultures. As a mixed-blood young woman, she can come to terms with multiple and altering identities, listen to multiple voices, respect multiple views if they do not give any harm to anything, and can bear multiple characteristics in herself. As Angel begins to heal, the indigenous community also begins to recover respect and integrity because the world is not a collection of isolated beings and objects but rather a network of interrelated and interdependent corporealities. In this sense, the novel tells the story of the struggle for survival of all inherent parts of the web of life, including Angel herself, native community, plants, animals, rivers and the land. The novel invites readers to engage in dialogue with all human and nonhuman characters in it and

encourages them to participate in Native American world to get rid of Western, non-native, anthropocentric, ethnocentric, and hierarchical attitudes since the natural world, as Naess expresses, is not “something to be dominated or conquered; it is something with which [humans] coexist” (Bodian, 1995: 26).

Hogan presents in the novel that the official monologic discourse does not “hold a thought for the life of water, or a regard for the land that sustained people from the beginning of time” as it does not “remember the sacred treaties between humans and animals” (Hogan, 1997: 279). For this reason, she calls for a dialogue between human beings and nonhuman entities like native people do since they “knew the languages of earth, water, and trees ... For tens of thousands of years [they] spoke with the animals and they spoke with [them]” (334). When Dora-Rouge, Bush, Agnes, and Angel see a river that does exist neither on their tribal maps nor in their memories or stories, they realize that the route of the river has been changed by some commercial companies. Dora-Rouge listens to the river roaring “so loud it sounded like earth breaking open and raging” and says that it is angry (192). Then she talks to “the churning river, the white and muddy foam of it, the hydrogen and oxygen of it” and asks for a safe passage (193). Dora-Rouge’s dialogue with the river reveals “genuine respect for the land, assumes [human] interconnectedness with organizing ecosystems, acknowledges [human] role in relation to other life-forms” (Cook, 2003: 29). While listening to the land is one of the important components of ecocritical theory, speaking with love and reverence for and with the non-human life is one of the important components of Bakhtinian critical theory. Dialogue between the human and nonhuman demonstrates humans’ responsibility for answerability, addressivity, and co-existence in the natural world.

Hogan does not idealise or romanticise nature, she rather seeks to show its agency and significance in human life. Knowledge of nature is significant in Hogan’s indigenous and ecological wisdom. She is convinced that nature is a living, conscious, active and intelligent agent having its own will and voice. Hogan’s female native characters are also convinced of this fact. The wind can speak (Hogan, 1997: 102), the ice can cry out or groan (115), the northern lights have their own sound (119), and an island can call out (169). The land can resist, and it can show “mischief and trickiness” and even “stubborn passion” (123). Water can be furious and it “would do what it wanted and in its own way” (224). Nature can be merciful, helpful, wel-

coming, embracing and warming on the one hand while it can be merciless, deadly, indifferent and cold on the other hand. How nature treats someone depends on the interaction and dialogue between the participant and nature because nature is an “unmediated flux, a stream of potential experiences that will happen differently for differently situated observers” (Hayles, 1995: 413). Unlike Western understanding of binary opposition which sees nature as a raw material or an object to be exploited for humankind, nature is conceived as a dialogical partner, or a life-time companion, in Native-American tradition.

Angel’s search for her identity and origin and her deep ecological journey to reach Self-realisation can be associated with Bakhtin’s chronotope of “the life course of one seeking true knowledge” (Bakhtin, 1981: 130). During her journey, her life is divided into some phases beginning with anthropocentric ignorance, moving through her sceptical self-criticism towards green experience and ultimately to Self-realisation (1989: 85). Angel is brought up with Western culture away from her native traditions, and feels uncomfortable at first in Bush’s house, in which the vines worm through the windows and grow along the walls, when Bush brings animal bones to rebuild them, but then she recognises that she is an inseparable part of the nonhuman world. She can relate herself to other living beings, ecosystems and to Earth since everything is interrelated. She acknowledges who she is, who she “can become and should become in the larger scheme of things” (Fox, 1986: 85). She realizes that all human and nonhuman entities enjoy their greater selves, contribute to each other’s wealth and health, and rejoice in their carnival and dialogic existences. In this way, she achieves to uncover her hidden side that has been covered by the distinctions of class, race, tradition, and place. She overcomes her “fear of the immeasurable, the infinitely powerful” forces of the vast nature, by absorbing the cosmic elements – water, earth, fire and air – within herself thanks to her being a plant dreamer (Bakhtin, 1984b: 335). Her renewed body becomes “the cosmos’ own flesh and blood, possessing the same elemental force but better organized” than before (341).

The concept of mapping is another chronotopic feature in the novel. The novel is based on the building of the James Bay-Great Whale hydroelectric project in Quebec, Canada. It is possibly set in the Boundary Waters between Minnesota and Canada though the author does not clearly identify the location (Cook, 2003: 43). The setting of the novel is a space not recognised by the authoritative culture and not mapped officially. It is a fluid and

transcending uncharted space that can be reached in native stories and tribal memories. Native people are against the use of Westerners' maps that spatially chart the area as these maps contain artificial and hierarchical boundaries, anthropocentric and official divisions, fixed and stable measurements, and monologic and authoritative labels that prevent dynamic relations in nature. Maps shape views, beliefs and spatial relations of human societies with nonhuman communities. That is why native people refuse to be shaped and defined by these charted boundaries just as "the land refuse[s] to be shaped by the makers of maps" (Hogan, 1997: 123). Natural elements and landscapes in native tradition should not be claimed, defined and confined by maps because water is broken apart by land and land is split open by water, land surrounds forests, and forests divide the territory. However, these separations are not barriers but "doorways into the mythical world" (Hogan, 1995: 19). In this respect, nature itself is a carnivalesque agent that effaces human communities' spatial boundaries through its fluidity since "earth has more than one dimension. The one we see is only the first layer" (Hogan, 1997: 123). Therefore, mapping is of great importance in native culture because "that whole notion of categorizing the land, and charting it, and naming it, and putting things in their place, is really significant in terms of how [humans] think about the world" (Harrison, 2011: 172). For Hogan, the land bears human and natural history as well as tribal stories. As she points out, "[t]o walk on this earth is to walk on a living past, on the open pages of history and geology" (1995: 79). Regarding the land as a living being that creates stories and possesses environmental knowledge decrowns two-dimensional maps of Western culture.

Time in the novel is also carnivalized both as part of the chronotope and narration, which is represented by the metaphor of snake. Such carnivalization challenges the official linearity of time and authoritative narration. It also produces an ecological form of narration and unfinalizability. As Donelle N. Dreese writes, "[d]ue to the snake's ability to coil itself in the form of spiralling circles, it echoes the circular life philosophy of continuity, reciprocation, and holistic living (nurturing spiritual, mental, physical, and emotional needs)" instead of "the Western linear construct, which leaves a loose end dangling into oblivion" (1999: 8). That time is circular also refers to timelessness and destruction of hierarchies. When the indigenous women arrive at the boundary waters, they leave behind the Western notion of time. They enter a kind of timelessness which Allen describes ceremonial time in which there is not any separation between human and nonhuman

environments (1986: 149-150). Just as Western perceptions of time are gone, Western binaries are gone as well.

Although the novel describes native people and nonhuman beings as casualties of anthropocentric and ethnocentric ideologies and depicts social and environmental injustices, irreversibly transformed landscapes and lamentation for an ecological past, it still encourages some positive changes in readers in narrow sense and in human beings in broader sense in their attitudes towards nature for the future of all entities:

[W]e had to believe, true or not, that our belated victory was the end of something. That one fracture was healed, one crack mended, one piece back in place. Yes, the pieces were infinite and worn as broken pots, and our human pain was deep, but we'd thrown an anchor into the future and followed the rope to the end of it, to where we would dream new dreams, new medicines, and one day, once again, remember the sacredness of every living thing (Hogan, 1997: 344).

With her ability of plant dreaming and her careful handling of human and nonhuman resources in her social and physical environments, Angel stands for a new generation of eco-conscious person who will take responsibility for the nonhuman world. Angel's plant dreaming signifies polyphonic and symbiotic relations, carnivalesque joy and dialogic and heterogenous interaction that encourage environmental justice, ecological wisdom, humans' environmental responsibility, and material and spiritual agency of the nonhuman. Such hope is described at the end of the novel when Angel, upon the touch of the wind through her hair, gets Dora-Rouge's message that "human is alive water, that creation is not yet over" (Hogan, 1997: 350). The novel ends with a direct address to the reader: "Something beautiful lives inside us. You will see. Just believe it. You will see" (351), which means denial of any kind of conclusions for the sake of new beginnings, becoming, growth and wider Self. The end of the novel suggests ongoing resistance and survival as well as some hope for a better future in social and ecological sense if those who struggle for the environment go on believing in themselves.

Conclusion

This article has sought to explain the relation between Bakhtinian critical theory, including Bakhtin's concepts of the carnivalesque, grotesque, dialogism, polyphony and chronotope, and ecocriticism. It has concentrat-

ed on the interactive viability of both theories in interdisciplinary literary studies to show the reader that human and nonhuman beings are inherently dependent on each other for their well-being and survival. It has discussed that Bakhtinian critical theory can be employed with ecocriticism in literary texts to reveal that nonhuman beings have the same subjectivity, voice and agency that human beings have. Hogan vehemently argues that fixed categories of culture/ nature, human/ nonhuman, material/ spiritual and mind/ body are unstable and constantly in flux. Hogan's *Solar Storms* carnivalizes dominant discourses of Euro-American culture, anthropocentrism and ethnocentrism, which all have deep impacts on the negative transformation of nature.

While the novel deals with Angel's transformation from a lost soul wandering around the universe into a Self-realised young woman aware of her position in the natural world, it also focuses on the recovery of the land, river and the entire life forms in the natural world from anthropocentric and ethnocentric ideologies and emphasizes the revival of native tradition. At the end of the novel, Angel stands for a carnivalesque symbiosis of native communality and Western individualism, a harmony of two different cultures that Hogan regards as the only possible way to end anthropocentrism, ethnocentrism and hierarchy. Such symbiosis is also reflected in Hogan's writing style in that she mixes indigenous oral tradition with her written text, inviting readers of both cultures to take part in her cross-cultural novel. In this way, Hogan tries to reveal the dialogic relationship between two spheres, two worldviews, two cultures and two writing styles, which celebrates multiplicity, reciprocity and regeneration over monology, exploitation and destruction. That is why Hogan's novel is polyphonic and dialogic in that it incorporates voices and dialogue of the human, nonhuman and the land; it is chronotopic and multitemporal in that it connects the past, present and future; and it is multiscalar in that it relates the personal, communal and global.

References

- Allen, Paula G. (1986). *The Sacred Hoop: Recovering the Feminine in American Indian Traditions*. Boston: Beacon Press.
- Bakhtin, Mikhail M. (1981). *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays by M. M. Bakhtin*. Trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist. Ed. Michael Holquist. Austin: University of Texas Press.

- Bakhtin, Mikhail M. (1984a). *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*. Trans. and ed. Caryl Emerson. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Bakhtin, Mikhail M. (1984b). *Rabelais and His World*. Trans. Helene Iswolsky. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Bakhtin, Mikhail M. (1986). "Toward a Methodology for the Human Sciences". Trans. Vern W. McGee. *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays*. Eds. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist. Austin: University of Texas Press, 159-172.
- Bell, Michael M. (1994). "Deep Fecology: Mikhail Bakhtin and the Call of Nature". *Capitalism Nature Socialism*, 5(4): 65-84.
- Bevis, William (1993). "Native American Novels: Homing In". *Critical Perspectives on Native American Fiction*. Ed. Richard F. Fleck. Washington: Three Continents, 15-45.
- Bodian, Stephan (1995). "Simple in Means, Rich in Ends: An Interview with Arne Naess". *Deep Ecology for the Twenty-First Century*. Ed. George Sessions. Boston: Shambala, 26-36.
- Brown, Robert L. and Herndl, Carl G. (1996). "Beyond the Realm of Reason: Understanding the Extreme Environmental Rhetoric of the John Birch Society". *Green Culture: Environmental Rhetoric in Contemporary America*. Eds. Carl G. Herndl and Stuart C. Brown. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 213-235.
- Buell, Lawrence (2005). *The Future of Environmental Criticism: Environmental Crisis and Literary Imagination*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.
- Busse, Beatrix (2006). "(Historical) Ecolinguistics and Literary Analysis". *Nature in Literary and Cultural Studies: Transatlantic Conversations on Ecocriticism*. Eds. Catrin Gersdorf and Sylvia Mayer. Amsterdam: Rodopi B.V., 131-154.
- Cook, Barbara J. (2003). "Introduction". *From the Center of Tradition: Critical Perspectives on Linda Hogan*. Ed. Barbara J. Cook. Colorado: University Press of Colorado, 1-10.
- Dreese, Donelle N. (1999). "The Terrestrial and Aquatic Intelligence of Linda Hogan". *SAIL: Studies in American Indian Literatures*, 11(4): 6-22.
- Fox, Warwick (1986). *Approaching Deep Ecology: A Response to Richard Sylvan's Critique of Deep Ecology*. Hobart: University of Tasmania Center for Environmental Studies.

- Gardiner, Michael (1993). "Ecology and Carnival: Traces of a 'Green' Social Theory in the Writings of M. M. Bakhtin". *Theory and Society*, 22(6): 765-812.
- Harré, Rom et al. (1999). *Greenspeak: A Study of Environmental Discourse*. London: Sage.
- Harrison, Summer (2011). "Sea Level: An Interview with Linda Hogan". *ISLE: Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature and Environment*, 18(1): 161-177.
- Hayles, N. Katherine (1995). "Simulated Nature and Natural Simulations: Rethinking the Relation between the Beholder and the World". *Uncommon Ground: Toward Reinventing Nature*. Ed. William Cronon. New York: W. W. Norton, 409-545.
- Hogan, Linda (1994). "An Interview with Linda Hogan". *The Missouri Review*, 17(2): 109-134.
- Hogan, Linda (1995). *Dwellings: A Spiritual History of the Living World*. New York: W. W. Norton.
- Hogan, Linda (1997). *Solar Storms*. New York: Scribner.
- Hogan, Linda (1998). "First People". *Intimate Nature: The Bond Between Women and Animals*. Eds. Linda Hogan, Deena Metzger and Brenda Peterson. New York: The Ballantine Publishing Group, 6-19.
- Holquist, Michael (2002). *Dialogism: Bakhtin and His World*. New York: Routledge.
- Johnson, Brad (1998). "Western Voices Interview with Linda Hogan". *Center of the American West*. Retrieved from www.centerwest.org/voices/Hogan-interview.htm.
- Jung, Hwa Y. (1998). "Bakhtin's Dialogical Body Politics". *Bakhtin and the Human Sciences: No Last Words*. Eds. Michael M. Bell and Michael Gardiner. London: Sage, 95-111.
- Krech III, Sheppard (1999). *The Ecological Indian: Myth and History*. New York: W. W. Norton.
- McDowell, Michael J. (1996). "The Bakhtinian Road to Ecological Insight". *The Ecocriticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology*. Eds. Cheryll Glotfelty and Harold Fromm. Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 371-391.
- Merleau-Ponty, Maurice (1962). *Phenomenology of Perception*. Trans. Colin Smith. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

- Müller, Timo (2010). “Notes toward an Ecological Conception of Bakhtin’s ‘Chronotope’”. *Ecozona*, 1(1): 98-102.
- Murphy, Patrick D. (2013). *Transversal Ecocritical Praxis: Theoretical Arguments, Literary Analysis, and Cultural Critique*. Lanham: Lexington Books.
- Naess, Arne (1989). *Ecology, Community and Lifestyle: Outline of an Ecosophy*. Trans. David Rothenberg. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Schrag, Calvin O. (1997). *The Self After Postmodernity*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

The following statements are made in the framework of “COPE-Code of Conduct and Best Practices Guidelines for Journal Editors”:

Authors’ Note: This article is produced from a part of Chapter One and Chapter Three of Şensoy’s unpublished doctoral dissertation entitled “Eco-Bakhtinian Explorations in Anglo-Native Selected Novels”, and it includes the theoretical and literary analyses explored within the scope of her doctoral study.

Ethics Committee Approval: Ethics committee approval is not required for this study.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests: The authors have no potential conflict of interest regarding research, authorship or publication of this article.

Author-Contributions Statement: The authors contributed equally to the article.