

HEALING PLACE AND SELF: THE RENEWED ECOLOGICAL PERCEPTION AND THE INVISIBLE LANDSCAPE IN BARBARA KINGSOLVER'S *ANIMAL DREAMS*¹

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บทความนี้มุ่งศึกษาการรับรู้ของบุคคลที่มีต่อสิ่งแวดล้อมที่ไม่เพียงแต่ส่งผลต่อการปฏิบัติต่อผืนแผ่นดิน แต่ยังมีความสำคัญในการเยียวยา รักษาตัวตนและสร้างความเป็นส่วนหนึ่งกับชุมชนมนุษย์ ในนวนิยายของบาร์บารา คิงส์ลัฟเวอร์ บทความนี้ได้ใช้ทฤษฎีพื้นที่และสถานที่ของฮิวจ์ตัน และ เคนท์ ซีไรเดน ในหนังสือชื่อ *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience* (1977) ฮิวจ์ตัน แนะนำเสนอว่าพื้นที่ (space) กลายเป็นสถานที่ (place) เมื่อได้รับคุณค่าและความหมาย ไรเดนที่สานต่อแนวคิดของตวนในหนังสือ *Mapping the invisible Landscape: Folklore, Writing, and the Sense of Place* (1993) โดยเขาได้นำเสนอว่าประสบการณ์ของมนุษย์ที่เปี่ยมไปด้วยความหมายเป็นตัวก่อสร้างสิ่งที่เขานิยามว่า “ภูมิทัศน์ล่องหน” (invisible landscape) ซึ่งเป็นมิติอัน

หลากหลายของสถานที่นอกเหนือจากลักษณะทางกายภาพ ด้วยบทความเน้นการศึกษาพัฒนาการการรับรู้ของตัวละครเอกที่มีต่อบ้านเกิดด้วยความรู้สึกละเลียดแยกจนไปถึงความรู้สึกผูกพันในนวนิยายเรื่อง *Animal Dreams* (1977) เนื่องจากบ้านเกิดของเธอกำลังเผชิญหน้ากับการปนเปื้อนที่อาจนำไปสู่หายนะของแม่น้ำโดยกลุ่มบริษัทเหมืองแร่ ผู้วิจัยนำเสนอว่ากิจกรรมการรณรงค์รักษาสีงแวดล้อมเป็นก้าวแรกที่ทำให้การรับรู้ลุ่มลึกขึ้น ดังนั้นการเข้าร่วมในการรณรงค์ครั้งนี้จึงเป็นบันไดขั้นแรกไปสู่การรับรู้ “ภูมิทัศน์ล่องหน” และกระบวนการเยียวยา รักษาของเธอก็คือกิจกรรมทางสิ่งแวดล้อมปกป้องทั้งโลกธรรมชาติและอัตลักษณ์ทางวัฒนธรรมของชุมชน รวมถึงความสัมพันธ์ที่เพิ่มขึ้นกับผู้คน อีกทั้งการรณรงค์ครั้งนี้ยังเป็นการเปิดโลกของเธอสู่มิติทางประวัติศาสตร์ วัฒนธรรม และ จิตวิญญาณที่ฝังอยู่ในผืนแผ่นดิน ยิ่งไปกว่านั้นการรับรู้ใหม่นี้ยังนำไปสู่การใช้ชีวิตอย่างอ่อนน้อมต่อสถานที่และการค้นพบบ้านที่แท้จริงซึ่งช่วยให้เธอเยียวยา รักษาตัวตนที่แตกร้าวจากประสบการณ์ฝังใจและความรู้สึกแปลกแยกที่เกิดจากการสูญเสียแม่ของเธอในวัยเด็กและลูกในท้องของเธอในวัยรุ่น นอกจากนี้การรับรู้ใหม่นี้ยังนำไปสู่ตัวตนใหม่ที่ผูกเข้ากับผืนแผ่นดินและผู้คนไม่ว่าจะเป็นมนุษย์หรือไม่ก็ตาม สุดท้ายตัวตนใหม่ของเธอรวมสิ่งแวดล้อมเข้าเป็นส่วนหนึ่งยังทำให้เธอเข้ากับชุมชนและบ้านเกิดของเธอได้อีกครั้ง

¹ การเยียวยาสถานที่และตัวตน : การรับรู้ใหม่เชิงนิเวศและภูมิทัศน์แห่งความผูกพันในนวนิยายเรื่อง *Animal Dreams* ของ Barbara Kingsolver

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Abstract

*This paper examines how an individual's perception of the environment not only affects her treatment of the land but also plays an important role in healing her wounded self and fostering her sense of belonging to the human community in Barbara Kingsolver's *Animal Dreams* (1991). It will draw upon Yi-fu Tuan's notion of place and space in *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience* (1977) and Kent C. Ryden's notion of "the invisible landscape" in *Mapping the Invisible Landscape: Folklore, Writing, and the Sense of Place* (1993). Tuan postulates that space becomes place when it is endowed with value and meaning and Ryden develops Tuan's notion by arguing that meaningful human experience in a place constitutes what he calls "the invisible landscape" which refers to various other dimensions of the land apart from its physicality. Focusing on the development of the protagonist's perception of her hometown from a sense of alienation to a more intimate relationship in *Animal Dreams*, this paper will specifically argue that, because her hometown faces a disastrous contamination of the river caused by the mining company, the environmental activism in which the protagonist engages significantly deepens her understanding of the place. Thus, her participation in the environmental campaign serves as a first step towards her discernment of the "invisible landscape" and also her process of healing. The environmental activity which protects both the environment and the community's cultural identity and also the protagonist's developing bonds with people in the community expose her to the historical, cultural and spiritual dimensions*

of the land. Furthermore, this renewed perception leads to the protagonist's inhabitation of the place and her discovery of a sense of home which helps to restore her shattered self from the traumatic experience and the feeling of displacement caused by the loss of her mother and her baby during her younger years; it also induces her to reappraise her sense of selfhood as being inseparable from both the land and its inhabitants, either human or non-human. Ultimately, her clear appreciation of this more inclusive sense of self and the environment enables her to reintegrate herself into the community of her hometown.

If I were to now visit another country, I would ask my local companion [...] to walk me in the country of his or her youth, to tell me the names of things and how, traditionally, they have been fitted together in a community. I would ask for the stories, the voice of memory over the land [...] I would ask about the history of storms there, the age of the trees, the winter color of the hills. Only then would I ask to see the museums. I would want first the sense of a real place [...] I would want to know the lay of the land first, the real geography, and take some measure of the love of it in my companion before I stood before the paintings or read works of scholarship. (Lopez 1989:60-61)

In this passage taken from "The American Geographies", Barry Lopez, a famous American essayist and novelist whose works express his environmental concerns, points

out the significance of the subjective knowledge of place. It is a knowledge created by people's experience in, and bond with, the place in the form of the stories and how these stories are tied to the land. The phrase "the voice of memory over the land" suggests that the place has a history known only by the "local companion" who has inhabited the place. These local people have lived in the place long enough to tell Lopez every tiny detail of the place, such as "the name of things," "the history of storms," and "the age of trees." These aspects of the place reflect the people's bond with the land as this shared memory is told and passed on to the next generation. Lopez obtains the knowledge by learning from the people who inhabit the place through their "love of it". In this sense, Lopez privileges this kind of knowledge over the physical dimension of the place which can be easily captured and exhibited in museums where artifacts and objects are obtained by the use of objective knowledge.

Lopez's idea of the subjective knowledge of the place to which only those with an intimate relationship with it can get access, can be elaborated on by Yi-fu Tuan's notion of place and space and Kent C. Ryden's notion of the invisible landscape. In his book *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience*, Yi-fu Tuan, a humanistic geographer whose works have made contributions to the phenomenological study of place, differentiates the meaning of place and space. At the same time, Tuan argues that the concepts of place and space are inextricable as he puts it, "[t]he ideas 'space' and 'place' require each other for definition" (1977:6). Moreover, he associates "space" with "movement" and "place" with "pause":

"[I]f we think of space as that which allows movement, then place is pause; each pause in movement makes it possible for location to be transformed into place" (6). Humans, then, can transform "space" into "place" by inhabiting it and giving value and meaning to it.

Kent C. Ryden further develops Tuan's notion of place and space. In his book, *Mapping the Invisible Landscape: Folklore, Writing, and the Sense of Place*, Ryden posits that space represents only its physical side as he puts it: "Space is primarily two-dimensional, a pattern of locations, a system in which the places of human experience have significance primarily as geometrical coordinates or identical dots on a map" (1993:37). In this statement, Ryden develops his idea from Tuan's notion of place and space. That is, space only does not suffice because it is devoid of meanings or values within it. Ryden suggests that a place without depth is a place without human experience as he says, "When space takes on three dimensions, when it acquires depth, it becomes place" (38). In this sense, the invisible landscape is the depth created by human experience and constitutes various layers as Ryden posits, "For those who have developed a sense of place, then, it is as though there is an unseen layer of usage, memory, and significance—an invisible landscape, if you will, of imaginative landmarks superimposed upon the geographical surface and the two-dimensional map" (40). Place, thus, can be seen as an amalgam of different layers, which includes both visible and invisible landscape.

Drawing upon Lopez's idea of the subjective knowledge of the place and Ryden's notion of "the invisible landscape", this article will analyze human subjective experience with the place in Barbara Kingsolver's *Animal Dreams*. In the novel, Codi, the protagonist, left her hometown, Grace, and has been away for fifteen years to deny her traumatic experience of the loss of her mother and her baby. Codi attends a medical school but, eventually she fails to receive a medical degree. At the same time, her father is suffering from Alzheimer's. With these experiences of loss and disappointment in her life, she has come back to her hometown with a feeling of displacement and alienation in order to take care of her sick father. Although her homecoming might trigger her painful memories, her inhabitation of the place and her newly developed ability to perceive its "invisible landscape" gradually help establish new relationships with the place and heal her shattered self. This article argues that the protagonist's ability to discern the different layers, such as the physical, historical, cultural, and spiritual aspects as well as memories embedded in the land, induces the protagonist to realize the significance of the place in her life and extends her sense of self to include both the place and its people.

Codi's Alienation and Her Perception of Place

Codi's alienation from her hometown is reflected in her perception of the landscape. Her sense of superiority over the natural world is manifested in the scene in which she views the landscape from a bus when she first returns to her hometown. She "[passed] through the land like some rajah

on an elephant looking down on [her] kingdom" (8). The phrase "rajah on an elephant" signifies the sense of her superiority to the landscape as she is riding "on an elephant," which symbolizes the natural world. The quotation also demonstrates Codi's estrangement and distance from the landscape because she "[looks] down" on her place. Moreover, her view of the landscape is similar to how she sees her life when she says, "[my view of the landscape] wasn't all that different from my usual view of life" (8). The way she sees the exterior landscape mirrors her view of her interior life as alienated from the land. In this sense, Codi sees the landscape as meaningless space since she is able to see only the physical side but is unable to perceive its invisible aspects. For instance, Codi thinks that, "Grace looked like a language [she] didn't speak" (12). Although it is her hometown, Grace renders her disoriented.

Although Codi feels estranged from her hometown, Grace also evokes the painful memory of how she lost her mother and her baby. In her article "Trauma and Memory in Kingsolver's *Animal Dreams*", Sheryl Stevenson argues that Codi uses an "unstable discourse that resembles that of traumatized people, pulled by conflicting impulses, controlled by the need for safety" (2001:328). Codi is unstable because she is a traumatized patient and is aware of her trauma which is tied to the place. For example, in the scene where she reflects her past experience in her hometown, she states, "Even the people who knew me well didn't know my years in Grace were peculiarly bracketed by death: I'd lost a mother and I'd lost a child" (50). The memory Codi has of

her hometown embodies death itself. She knows that her memory of the place and her traumatic experience are inextricably bound together. Furthermore, she also experiences the feeling of loss in the landscape when she perceives death in the natural world. Her traumatic experience resurfaces in the mind in the scene in which Codi walks through an orchard. She states, “[the orchard] presents you with an optical illusion. You move through what looks like a hodgepodge thicket of trees,” and she “[remembers] it over and thinking it was an orchard of graves” (13). The landscape signifies two levels of meaning. First, in its physicality, it is comprised of trees which overwhelm her with a sense of chaos and confusion. The phrase “a hodgepodge thicket” indicates how Codi feels discomforted when she is surrounded by these trees. Secondly, her personal memory is embedded in this landscape as these trees remind her of “graves”, symbolizing death. She associates death with her perception of the place, suggesting the memory aspect of Grace she wants to forget. In this respect, Codi’s repressed memory is mirrored in the scene in which Codi loses her way back to her own house. She says:

I wanted to find the road that led up the canyon to Doc Homer's. I wasn't ready to go there yet, but I had to make sure I knew the way [...]. I didn't want her to know how badly dislocated I was. I'd always had trouble recalling certain specifics of childhood, but I didn't realize until now that I couldn't even recognize them at point-blank range. (47)

Codi’s forgetfulness suggests the intensity of

her trauma which leads to her repression and detachment from her hometown. Simultaneously, the place also causes Codi’s memory to resurface, thereby prompting her to re-encounter the past.

It is not only Codi’s traumatic experience which alienates her from Grace but also the way in which her father, Homer, raises her. He tries to exclude his children from the community as Codi states, “Doc Homer drilled us relentlessly on how we differed from our peers: in ambition, native ability, even physical constitution” (46). The quotation suggests that Homer tries to instill in his daughters the idea that they differ from others in physical, cultural, and intellectual terms. He also inculcates in them the idea of how his daughters are superior to other people in the community. Codi has grown up with this awareness of her differences from other people. Because he is a doctor, Homer also forbids his children to participate in traditional activities in Grace because of his scientific knowledge and for hygienic reasons. For example, he does not allow his children to collect peacock feathers because, as Codi says, “The practice had not been allowed in our house because Doc Homer said the feathers were crawling with bird mites; he dreaded to think what those old women’s houses were harboring in the way of microorganisms” (27). He uses his knowledge of science and reasons of hygiene to differentiate his family from “those old women’s houses,” representing the whole community. While the passage demonstrates the collision of two belief systems since most people perceive the practice as a communal activity whereas Homer perceives it from his scientific background, it also points to Homer’s sense

of superiority over other people.

Apart from Homer's scientific background, the reason he has to raise his children in such a way is also rooted in the loss of his wife and its profound and long-lasting impact upon his mind. In his view of the children, Homer says, "For their whole lives, since Alice died, they've been too far away to touch. It's as if she pulled them with her through a knotwhole halfway into the other world, and then at the last minute left behind, two babes, stranded together in this stone cold canyon" (141). The quotation illustrates how Alice's death creates Homer's trauma since he sees her in the form of his two daughters because they signify the haunting memory of his wife. Because of this trauma, Homer raises his daughters with excessive love as he sees them as inseparable from his wife. For example, he "decides this will be their last year for the cemetery and the Days of All Souls" (4). The statement reflects Homer's deep care for his children and his tendency to repress his grief because he does not want his children to experience the atmosphere of death at the graveyard. His decision, however, also separates them from the community because "the Days of All Souls" are considered to be one of the occasions where people in the community recall the memories of their loved ones. In addition, his concealment of the truth of his wife's death confuses Codi's memory of herself and her mother and reflects his denial of reality. He does not want Codi to know the truth in order to protect her from sorrow. For instance, Codi was sure she saw her mother lifted by the helicopter, but "[she is told] [she] couldn't possibly remember it because [she] wasn't there" (48). Codi is confused between what actually happened in

reality and what she remembers as happening, which her father condemns as the product of her imagination. Homer's distortion of reality, thus, affects Codi and she says, "It made sense to me. I had no visual memory of a mother, and could not recall any events that included her, outside of the helicopter trip she declined to take. But I could remember a sense of her that was strong and ferociously loving. Almost a violence of love" (49). The quotation suggests that Codi questions her own memory, and she is afraid that "a sense of [her mother]" could be false. Therefore, Codi grows up with the repression of the memory about her mother as she does not seem to remember anything about her mother and also the land because of her upbringing and, at the same time, she has no bond with the community and the land which gradually reinforces her estrangement from it.

In addition to Homer's loss of his wife which affects the way in which he raises his children, the disgrace he feels toward the history of his lineage also alienates him from Grace. According to Grace's local legend, there were nine Gracela sisters who produced, "a population of blue-eyed, dark-haired descendants and a thousand wild peacocks" (14). People in Grace are descended from these nine Gracela sisters. Codi later finds out "the red-haired Gracela sister with the temper, who married Conrado Nolina and produced a legacy of trash—that was my father's family" (260). The phrase "legacy of trash" suggests that her father's family was not accepted in the past. The hostility has been passed down to Homer's generation. He also upsets the community due to his marriage to his own cousin, Alice,

or as Codi puts it, “[Homer] married his second cousin for mad love” (292). This fact renders him insecure as he is aware that other people do not accept the marriage. Homer, therefore, tries to recreate himself and rewrites his own story by burying the past and denying that his family is one of the descendants of the Gracela sisters. However, he suffers from a lack of self-esteem and his self-perception as a rootless, displaced man. As he says, “I became a man with no history. No guardian angels. I turned out to be a brute beast after all. I didn’t redeem my family, I buried it and then I built my grand house on top of the grave. I changed my name” (287). Because of this, Codi inherits from her father the feeling of insecurity and the lack of a sense of belonging. She does not have any idea of where her family come from because her father tells her that they came from Illinois as she puts it, “My mother came from some place in Illinois, and Doc Homer won’t own up to being from anywhere” (213). Codi’s lack of knowledge of her roots prevents her from bonding with the place and the people. It is also possible to see that Homer’s traces of alienation are manifested in Codi since both undergo the same loss and estrangement.

Both characters’ alienation from their hometown deprives them of the opportunity to inhabit the land. In the light of this article’s analysis, it is worth noting that the characters’ problems highlight the significance of subjective knowledge. One can become engaged with a place by gaining subjective knowledge from the people through their inhabitation in the place. One must also learn the history, culture, and memory of the place in order to inhabit it. However, Codi and Homer lack this

knowledge. Homer acts as if he were an outsider and Codi knows nothing about the place and the history of her own roots. She cannot even remember the way back to her home. For this reason, they cannot create their bond with the place. Moreover, Codi’s deprivation of the memory of her mother and her history prompts her to detach herself from the community. Codi’s return, at first, seemed to be devoid of the memory embedded in Grace, but paradoxically, it is full of memory as Codi describes it as a “memory minefield” (46) which brings her repressed sorrow back to the surface. As the next section will discuss, while Homer refuses to mingle with the community, Codi gradually becomes at one with the place and retrieves the subjective knowledge in spite of their similar traumatic experience through her perception of the environmental problem in Grace which prompts her to participate in the community’s environmental activism, the beginning of her healing process.

The Invisible Landscape That Heals

Codi’s healing process starts from her observation of Grace’s physicality. Her feeling of sympathy with the place is triggered by the environmental catastrophe of the river’s contamination caused by the Black Mountain Mining Company. The environmental problem prompts Codi, who is working as a science teacher in a local high school, to conduct a thorough scientific examination of the river. This study is the first step towards her bonding with the townspeople through her students. Moreover, her knowledge of science enables her to make a contribution to the environmental protection activities of the community led by the ladies in the Stitch and Bitch club.

Simultaneously, she gains a better understanding of Grace's history through the strategy the club employs to campaign against the mining company. With her participation in environmental activism, Codi gains more self-esteem and a sense of belonging to the community.

Codi's concern about Grace's physical environment is the first step towards her exposure to the deeper layers of the place and their significance to her life. She sympathizes with Grace when she learns about the approaching environmental disaster. Accidentally she overhears the problem in a conversation among townspeople as they discuss the contamination of the river: "They're getting gold and moly out of them tailing piles. If they wasn't, they wouldn't keep running the acid through them. You boys know that damn company. They're not going to stop no leaching operation on account of our pecan trees" (64). Codi's realization of the problem and its catastrophic effects suggests her sympathy for the townspeople as she reflects upon the situation: "The party seemed like something underwater, a lost continent, and I felt profoundly sad though it wasn't my continent" (64). Even though the quotation points to her sense of alienation and displacement from her hometown, it also reveals that this environmental disaster evokes in her a feeling of profound sorrow. Her concern about the place's environmental problem and its devastating effects upon people in her hometown also prompts her to examine the contamination more thoroughly through the use of her knowledge of science. Codi asks her students to measure the pH of the water in order to find organisms in it. She discusses the purpose of the experiment:

"our putative goal was to get some samples of water to examine under the microscope" (108). The result of the pH testing alerts Codi to the destructive effects of the contamination because she sees no sign of life in the water. As she puts it, this discovery "gave [her] a strange panic to see that stillness under powerful magnification" (110). Codi's probing of the cause of the polluted river also suggests her need to do something to protect the place.

Codi's examination of the contaminated river leads her to her participation in the community's environmental activism when she is invited to give lectures to explain the problem to the ladies of the Stitch and Bitch club. The club itself represents female empowerment as Henry Aay points out in "Environmental Themes in Ecofiction: In *The Center of the Nation* and *Animal Dreams*", "While Grace's mayor is a man, the real power lies with the Stitch and Bitch Club" (1994:75). Kingsolver depicts the women's strong sense of community in the novel to highlight their more delicate sensitivity toward the natural world compared with men. When Codi is at the meeting to discuss the solution of the problem, a woman remarks that "These men don't see how we got to do something *right now*. They think the trees can die and we can just go somewhere else [...] that it would be home" (179). This woman's comment reflects the women's view of Grace as irreplaceable. They need to protect this place, for they cannot find a place like Grace anywhere else. Their eagerness to protect Grace points to their strong ties with the place and their realization of its significance to their lives. Furthermore, Codi's participation with the club gradually bonds

her to the community. She contemplates a strong sense of female community: “I was beginning to learn my way around the matriarchy of Grace, a force unknown to me in childhood” (159). Codi’s ability to feel this female bonding illustrates her developing bond with the community.

It is important to note that her engagement with the female community and environmental activism opens her eyes to the historical dimension of Grace. The club’s strategy of campaigning for the protection of Grace’s environment highlights the significant role of Grace’s history in binding people together. The members decide to take action by making peacock piñatas with an “epic broadside” (195) that presents a brief history of Grace, attached to them. Codi is assigned the important responsibility of researching and writing about Grace’s history. In so doing, Codi starts learning about Grace’s legendary history:

There was a local legend, supposedly true, about how they got here a hundred years ago: the nine lucky miners in the gold camp, sight unseen. Back then, these hills were run through with gold veins and drew a crowd of them who had too much money and too little love. The sisters were just children, and only agreed to come if they could bring their birds with them in the hold of the ship. Their legacy in Gracela Canyon was a population of blue-eyed, dark-haired descendants and a thousand wild peacocks. (14)

This quotation points to the story of the

Gracela sisters as the ancestors of Grace’s townspeople. The legend also accounts for the genetic trace of their descendants who possess dark hair and blue eyes. In addition, that the sisters brought with them numerous peacocks not only explains why wild peacocks abound in Grace but also connects with the significance of these animals in the townspeople’s lives.

What Codi learns about Grace’s history gradually makes her understand the deeper meaning of her hometown. Its history is made up of various stories which are meaningful to its inhabitants. Codi’s reflection upon what makes Grace rich with its history points to her thorough understanding of its historical significance.

I tried to include all the things that made Grace what it was: the sisters coming over with their peacocks: their blue-eyed descendants planting an Eden of orchards in the idyllic days before Black Mountain: the confetti-colored houses and stairstep streets—everything that would be lost to a poisoned river. I was respected as an expert on city people. So my modest History of Grace was rolled, bound in ribbon like a diploma, and inserted into each peacock’s beak. (206)

Moreover, Codi has come to the realization that, from the legend, Grace townspeople are connected with one another and thus belong to the same family. She also understands that the club’s use of the peacock piñatas to protest against the mining company suggests the people’s understanding of the history of the place as a place and history that are part

of their sense of self. The identity of each person in this community is derived from the history of the Gracela sisters and their relationship with the locale and that of the advent of the peacocks to the land. In other words, Grace is connected with the Gracela sisters through peacocks rendering humans, animals, and the environment inextricably interwoven. Therefore, if the company destroys the land, it will uproot both the physical environment and the people's sense of self which is tied to the land through their shared history.

In addition to deepening her perception of Grace, Codi's engagement in environmental activism increases her bond with the community. Codi feels useful and recognized because she uses her scientific knowledge and writing skills. More importantly, the experience of the environmental campaign provides Codi with a valuable lesson that changes her self-perception as Codi remarks, "My life is a pitiful mechanical thing without a past, like a little wind-up car, ready to run in any direction somebody points me. Today I thought I was a hero" (200). The way in which she sees herself as "a hero" indicates her increasing self-esteem. She also contrasts her self without history in the past with herself in the present having learnt the impact of history, making her long to be part of the community even more.

Another important factor that enables Codi to delve more deeply into the historical layer of Grace is her participation in the rituals on the Days of the Dead. When she attends this traditional ritual, she discovers the true meaning of the Days of the Dead which she calls "[a] festival of women and children and

old people and dead ancestors" (160). People gather on this day to visit their ancestors' graves in order to remember them. The fact that people in Grace joyfully celebrate the Days of the Dead suggests that they neither deny nor suppress their grief. In addition, it demonstrates their ability to accept death and discern that life and death are inevitably intertwined. Furthermore, Codi is impressed with the long-lasting love that each family extends to its ancestors and bequeaths to younger generations. She has come to realize that, "The unifying principle was that the simplest thing was done with the greatest care. It was a comfort to see this attention lavished on the dead. In these families you would never stop being loved" (163). Her experience teaches Codi that the deceased are still loved and not abandoned. She feels comfort even though the issue of death is something she used to avoid and suppress. This new attitude is contrasted with Codi's previous opinion of death as something horrifying.

Codi's better comprehension of the coexistence of life and death is also manifested in the way in which she perceives the landscape. The scene in which she gives details of her hometown indicates the influence of what she has learnt from the rituals. For instance, the depiction of the landscape exhibits Codi's deepened recognition of the place. She says, "From where we stood, we could look down on the whole of Grace plus the many small settlements that lay a little apart from the town, strung out along the length of Gracela Canyon and its tributaries, often inhabited by just a few families, some with their own tiny graveyards" (161). The fact that graveyards are placed beside the houses

illustrates the locals' ability to see death as an ordinary part of life. The passage also conveys the oneness between the physical environment and its inhabitants because the settlements lie beautifully along the canyon. Moreover, her careful observation of the graveyard also illustrates her new attitude toward death as inseparably integrated into life. For example, in the scene where she carefully examines the graveyard, she records:

I wanted to see what else there was in the line of beautified graves. [...] Some were devotees of color or form, while others went for bulk. One grave, of a boy who'd died young, was decorated with the better part of a Chevrolet. There were hundreds of holes drilled into the fishtail fenders, to hold flowers. It was beautiful, like a float in a parade. (163)

Codi now sees graves, the symbol of death, as works of art. Her vision of the beautified graves connotes her better understanding of life and death. In addition, her new way of seeing the graveyard changes its atmosphere since it is now paradoxically endowed with joy. With such beautiful scenery, Codi feels the changing atmosphere of the place. She describes what she sees: "Golden children ran wild over a field of dead great-grand mothers and great-grand fathers, and the bones must have wanted to rise up and knock together and rattle with joy. I have never seen a town that gave so much—so much of what counts—to its children" (165). The passage demonstrates a strong sense of community between the living and the deceased.

The knowledge Codi gains from the historical aspect of the place inspires her to trace the roots of her family. Her urge to learn about her family's history first begins with her memory of her dreams of the peacocks: "[I] remembered being on the ship with the nine Gracela sisters and their peacocks" (48). Her dream can be seen as originating from her unconscious self trying to connect with the place through the community's history in order to make sense of her present self. Codi also discovers the fact that her family is actually rooted in Grace from Viola, a woman in Grace. At the graveyard, Viola provides Codi with the knowledge of Codi's family: "The Nolinas had dug up what they could of the family graveyard and carried the bones a few miles to bury them up here" (164). Viola's comment allows Codi to realize that she is related to one of the Grace's founding mothers. This new understanding is contrasted with what her father has told her. Moreover, Codi also learns that the history of her lineage is the cause of her family's alienation. For instance, Viola points out that, "[the Nolinas] weren't real accepted. They were kind of different all the way back. There was one of the Gracela sisters had auburn hair and a bad temper, and she married Conrado Nolina" (165). Her family's estrangement results from one of the Gracela sisters' marriage to her ancestor.

The discovery of Codi's roots in Grace induces her to rethink how she sees herself. Codi's reflection after her participation in the ritual demonstrates her desire to be part of the place:

More than anything else I wished I belonged to one of these living,

celebrated families, lush as plants, with bones in the ground for roots. I wanted pollen on my cheeks and one of those calcium ancestors to decorate as my own. Before we left at sunset I borrowed a marigold from Emelina's great-aunt Pocha, who wouldn't miss it. I ran back to lay it on Homer Nolina, just in case. (165)

This scene is a glaring contrast to the beginning of the novel when Codi returned to Grace. Back then, she had no grasp of the importance of Grace's history and her roots. Now, the vivid portrayal of the way in which Codi sees herself points to her intense desire to be part of the community. The image of "these living, celebrated families" as "bones in the ground" suggests not only that her sense of belonging to this community supplies her with rootedness but also that the lives of the natural world in Grace are akin to those of her ancestors and, by extension, to her own life as well. Furthermore, Codi symbolically identifies herself with the community through the act of laying a flower on her ancestor's grave. It is worth noting that Codi's sense of self and her history are now inseparable.

Memory

Once the historical dimension of the place has come to play a significant role in fostering the townspeople's sense of self and community, the shared memory and legends, in this sense, also represent their collective memory. Nevertheless, Grace is not only a site of collective memory but also a site of personal memory since part of Codi's memory is embedded in the place as well as

its people. Her traumatic experience of loss results in her distorted memory of herself and her family.

However, through her attentiveness to the place and its people, she is gradually able to restore her personal memory.

It is worth noting that the problems relating to Codi's memory are likely to concern the following issues: they are caused by her lack of self-esteem, they reveal her confusion between what has actually happened and what is the product of her imagination, they result from her misunderstanding of her relationship with her father, and they also demonstrate her amnesia. Firstly, the traumatic loss of her mother distorts Codi's self-conception. It deprives her of a maternal figure, making her lack self-esteem. Therefore, she has to assign the role of surrogate mother to her sister, Hallie, in order to cope with the loss. With this replacement, Codi imagines that her sister to be superior to herself. Her excessive attachment to, and dependence on, her sister shape Codi's view of her relationship with her: "Hallie and I were so attached, like keenly mismatched Siamese twins conjoined at the back of my mind" (8). Codi's identification with her sister insinuates itself into her intensified feeling of lack. The term "Siamese twins" also implies that Codi cannot survive without her sister/mother.

Secondly, Codi tends to confuse what actually has happened and what is in her imagination. In her article, "Family Matters: Fictions's Contribution to the Memory Wars", Carol Osborne posits that "Kingsolver at first appears to suggest that memory can be a product of her imagination, influenced by stories an individual has been

told and manipulated by his or her desires and expectations” (2003:1331). Codi’s memory can be seen as the product of her imagination which is in contrast with reality. Codi herself is aware of this confusion. As she puts it, “This is my problem—I clearly remember things I haven’t seen, sometimes things that never happened” (48). Confusion in her memory emerges as her two sets of memory collide. For example, in the scene where Codi visits the grocery store, she ponders, “I was an outsider to this nurturing” (46). At the beginning of her return to Grace, her memory points to her alienation from the community. However, as she will later discover, what happened in reality was that actually Codi was raised and surrounded by those who love her. In addition, Codi is confused between her imagination and what her father tells her. For example, in the scene in which Codi discusses with her father her dream of “the ship with the nine Gracela sisters and their peacocks” (48), her father disapproves of her dream, considering it to be mere fantasy. It is possible that her dream is derived from her imagination and her yearning to be part of this community. Simultaneously, this dream may have been disinterred from her collective memory. It suggests that Codi is a descendant from one of the Gracela sisters, however, her father denies its actual existence. His action reinforces Codi’s estrangement from her history and the community.

Thirdly, due to the way in which her father raises her, Codi has misconstrued that he does not love her. Codi’s misapprehension of her father results in her distant relationship with him. For example, upon Codi’s arrival in Grace, she ruminates about

her father, “My relationship with Doc Homer had always improved with distance, which is to say that mail was okay and short, badly connected phone calls were best” (10). That she avoids contacting him as much as possible demonstrates her alienation from her father. Furthermore, she misjudges her father as being devoid of love for her. For instance, in the scene in which she ponders on how her father has raised her, Codi thinks, “children robbed of love will dwell on magic” (50). This reflection illustrates her misunderstanding—which is engraved in her childhood memory—that her father does not love her. Moreover, her father’s attempt to differentiate his two daughters from the rest of Grace’s townspeople induces Codi to think that she is bereft of the love not only from her father but also from her community. As she puts it, “Doc Homer drilled us relentlessly on how we differed from our peers: in ambition, native ability, even physical constitution” (46). With her father’s insistence on Codi’s superiority to the townspeople, Codi also misperceives herself as isolated from the community.

Finally, the last problem regarding Codi’s memory is her amnesia concerning important events during her childhood, as well as places and people in Grace. This forgetfulness points to Codi’s painful experience and the loss of her secure self during childhood. For instance, Codi forgets that she tried to save the coyote pups from drowning although she herself was almost drowned. In the conversation between Codi and her friend, Emelina, Codi says, “I don’t have any idea what you’re talking about” (77). The amnesia about this event hints at the loss of Codi’s old self which was full of sensitivity toward non-human beings. In

addition, she also forgets places in her hometown. For example, when she returns to Grace, she has difficulty recollecting her memory of familiar places: "I tried to place myself inside these stores; I knew I'd been there. [...] But I couldn't see it. Those things didn't seem so much like actual memories as like things I remember from a book I'd read more than once" (12). Codi's inability to recall her memory of the place demonstrates her repression of the painful memory in order to cope with her trauma. She cannot, thus, form a bond with a place of which she has no memory. Apart from public places in Grace, Codi even forgets the way to her home. This intensity of her trauma is evident in the scene where Codi tries to remember the right path to her house. Codi thinks, "I couldn't ask Emelina for directions to my own childhood home" (47). Codi's memory of home is contaminated by distressing experiences, resulting in her lapse of memory. Her inability to recognize her own home also renders her rootless. Furthermore, her amnesia also affects her memory of people in Grace. For instance, after her homecoming, Codi ponders, "why did I not know Mrs. Campbell in the grocery? Or Lydia Galvez, who rode our school bus?" (47). Each person Codi forgets shares part of her personal memory, and each is part of the place. Her amnesia, therefore, wipes out the memory of not only herself but also the place and the people. In other words, the loss of each piece of Codi's memory undermines, or even destroys, her sense of self and her bond with the place and its people.

The turmoil within Codi's memory caused by her alienation from Grace's environment is gradually resolved by her contact with the

place itself. In her case, both the place's physicality and the meanings assigned to it by its inhabitants play an important role in bringing her memory back. In this respect, it is worth noting that Codi's personal memory is also part of the place and people who inhabit it. Her attentiveness to the place gradually enables her to restore her lost memory embedded in it. To be specific, Codi's observation of the place is represented through her sensory experience in each place, allowing her to extract the memory from it. For instance, part of Codi's personal memory is hidden in Emelina's house. Codi describes the place: "A little collection of potted plants stood in a row on the windowsill. Prayer plants. I was struck with a sudden forceful memory of Emelina grandmother's house [...] the house had a stale, old-lady smell, but we loved her boxes of 'pretties'" (43). With her keen focus on the prayer plants, Codi is suddenly immersed in a layer of the place. Her olfactory experience of the place also strikes her with its association with Emelina's grandmother. Codi's competence in recognizing the smell points to her intensified sensitivity to the place's layer of memory because she remembers both the place's significance and the smell of the person with whom she was intimate.

Codi's memory is rooted both in the domestic sphere of its inhabitants' houses and outside the houses in natural surroundings. For example, Codi's memory of her mother resurfaces while she is walking back to her house. During this walk, the auditory image of the river plays an important role in evoking Codi's memory of her mother as when she says, "I was on a road that looked promising, anyway. I could

hear the river. [...] I had my mother's death on my mind. One of my few plain childhood memories was of that day" (48). Codi's sensory experience allows her to dig up her recollection of the day when she lost her mother and to vividly delineate the scene when her mother was lifted up by the helicopter. As she puts it, "two men in white pants handling the stretcher like a fragile, important package. The helicopter blade beating, sending out currents of air across the alfalfa field behind the hospital. [...] The field became the ocean I'd seen in storybooks" (48). The lucid depiction of this significant event is strikingly emphasized by Codi's feeling of the air from the helicopter's blades. With her stronger grasp of her lost memory, Codi can also recall the intensity of her mother's love as she puts it, "But I could remember *a sense* of her that was strong and ferociously loving. Almost a violence of love" (49). Her mother's love is part of the place and brought to the surface by Codi's restoration of the memory of her mother.

In addition, Codi's own home is a site of her memory. Codi's imagination of, and attentiveness to, the place, reflected in her olfactory sense, induce her to gain access to the memory aspect of the place. For example, in the scene where Codi revisits the attic at her house, she comments:

The attic was pleasantly chilly and smelled of pine. Decades of summer heat had forced droplets of resin out of the rough floorboards [...]. The afternoon is fixed in my memory with the sharp smell of resin and that particular amber rattle, like the sound of ball bearings rolling around in a

box. It's surprising how much of memory is built around things unnoticed at the time. (280)

The attic is usually represented as the storehouse of the unconscious. Codi has metaphorically entered the realm of her repressed memory. The significant factor which brings about the restoration of her memory is the aroma of the pine. The passage also emphasizes the sense of time because this place has existed through the history of this family long enough to absorb its inhabitants' memories. The vivid image, along with Codi's sensory experience of sound and smell, prompts her to access the memory aspect of the place. With regard to Codi's ability to retrieve her memory through the place, she can see that the attic is the place where "material evidences of [Codi's] family past" (281) are kept. One of the important objects, which allows Codi to gain more understanding of her family, is the artwork, which Codi did when she was a child, labelled by her father as "ARTWORK, C" (283). The artwork includes the portraits of Codi's family; "it was full of family portraits. Big sister, little sister, father, mother, a cockeyed roof over our heads and above that an omnipresent yellow sun" (283). The artwork testifies to the fact that Codi's childhood was nurtured by the love of her family members. The artwork also provides Codi with the vivid image of her mother. While she believes that she "had no visual memory of a mother," (49), the artwork rectifies her distorted memory of childhood and her misunderstanding about the lack of the mother figure in her life. Codi's acknowledgement of this revised memory is demonstrated in the statement, "[The artwork] didn't resemble anyone's reality

but mine” (283).

Codi retrieves her personal memory not only through the place’s physicality but also its people who inhabit the place long enough and also share memory with Codi. To her own surprise, Codi even admits that “my childhood was everyone’s property but my own” (77). Codi becomes aware that the townspeople also hold a key to her lost and distorted memory. For example, Emelina, who has been Codi’s friend since childhood, corrects Codi’s misconception of her sister, and she also prompts Codi to remember her sensitivity towards non-human beings. While Codi used to think of herself as inferior to her sister, Emelina reminds her that she was actually a very self-confident young girl who served as a role model for her sister. She states, “she copied you like a picture” (31). Emelina’s version of the story sheds new light on Codi’s conception of herself and her sister. Emelina also gives rise to Codi’s awareness of her sensitivity towards animals when she discusses Codi’s rescue of the coyote pups. She tells Codi, “Everybody knew about that. It was a famous incident. You hid down in a coyote burrow and wouldn’t come out and Eddie Dell found you and dragged you out” (77). Emelina’s narrative about Codi’s attempt to help save the coyote pups reveals Codi’s ability to extend herself to other beings. Although Codi does not fully remember the event, she still gets a glimpse of what happened on that day. Moreover, Codi is able to retrieve all the pieces of her memory about this event through her witnessing of the brutal cockfighting. In the scene in which Codi is in the truck with Loyd, who has taken Codi to see the cockfighting, she considers, “As plainly as anything then, I

remembered trying to save the coyotes from the flood. My ears filled with the roar of the flooded river and my nose with the strong stench of mud. I gripped the armrest of Loyd’s truck to keep the memory from drowning my senses” (191). This train of turbulent thoughts and sensations signifies the disinterment of her traumatic memory and also the retrieval of her lost self. With Emelina’s shared memory and Codi’s exposure to the cruelty of the cockfighting, Codi is able to regain her lost memory and sensitivity to the natural world.

While she retrieves her intimacy with the natural world, she also reconsiders her relationship with her father. The presence of Uda Dell, who raised Codi when she was a child, along with the layer of memory in the attic, makes Codi realize the truth about her father’s love for his two children. For instance, in the scene in which Uda accompanies Codi up into the attic, she shares with her a story of her as a joyful child, “You’d come up after school and we’d play Old Maid or you’d play swinging statues out in the yard” (282). Uda’s story which shows that she treated Codi as if she were her own daughter assures Codi again that her life during childhood was filled with love and care from the people around her. Since the attic is made of pine wood, the story and the smell of pine enable Codi to restore her precious memory with Uda. In the same scene, Codi reflects, “I remembered [Uda’s] arms when they were thinner; a younger Uda. [...] I was experiencing a flash flood of memories. I feared I might drown in them” (282). These statements suggest that the memories of her childhood are being disinterred and that they are inundating her mind to the point where

she feels overwhelmed. Moreover, Uda's narrative discloses another view of Doc Homer—of which Codi has never been aware. As she puts it, "He just wanted awful bad for you kids to be good girls. [...] It's hard for a man by himself, honey. You don't know how hard. He worried himself to death. A lot of people, you know, would just let their kids run ever which way" (281). This remark awakens Codi to the reality that her father struggled a great deal to function as best as he could as both father and mother to her and Hallie.

Cultural and Spiritual Dimensions of Place

In addition to the understanding of the place's layers of history and memory, Codi comes to learn about its cultural and spiritual aspects. Loyd, a native American who possesses the ability to see the invisible landscape, plays a significant role in helping Codi appreciate the deeper meanings of the place. His complex interaction with the animals and the land becomes a foundation for Codi's perception of the place's cultural aspect. After she has a firm grasp of the indigenous cultural belief about the bond between the human and non-human worlds, Codi gradually grasps the place's spiritual dimension and realizes her place among other beings.

Loyd's complex relationship with the animals and the land serves as a basis for Codi's insight into the place's cultural dimension. Firstly, Loyd's intimacy with animals makes Codi rethink her relationship with non-human beings. Codi witnesses Loyd's compassion for his dog, Jack. For example, in the scene where Loyd

introduces his dog to Codi, Loyd says, "He's in love, is what he is, if you gave him a piece of that goat" (90). Codi also admires Loyd's ability to understand Jack's needs by simply looking into his eyes. His interaction with the dog triggers Codi's feeling of wonder for the intimate relationship between the dog and its owner. Their mutual love shapes the way Codi sees the dog. In the same scene, Codi gazes into Jack's eyes and says, "Sometimes when you look into an animal's eyes you see nothing, no sign of connection, just the flat stare of a wild creature. But Jack's eyes spoke worlds" (90). Codi's ability to communicate with the dog points to her heightened sensitivity toward the animal.

Secondly, Loyd's interaction with the rooster raises Codi's awareness of the blurred boundary between the human and the non-human other. In the cockfighting scene where she observes Loyd's participation in this violent activity, Codi ponders upon Loyd's interaction with his rooster:

In this unapologetically brutal sport there was a vast tenderness between the handler and his bird. Loyd cradled his rooster in arms, stroking and talking to it in a low, steady voice. At each handling call he caressed the bird's wings back into place, stroked its back, and licked the blood from its eyes. At the end, he blew his own breath into its mouth to inflate a punctured lung. He did this when the bird was nigh unto death and clearly unable to win. The physical relationship between Loyd and his rooster transcended winning or losing. (189)

In this passage, Codi highlights Loyd's tenderness toward the rooster. He treats it with love and care although the rooster is going to die. He even tries his best to save it. The gentle ways in which he treats the rooster demonstrates the obscure boundary between human and non-human beings because he treats the rooster as if it were a fellow human being. From what Codi sees, the result of the match is not as important as the fact that Loyd truly loves his rooster. Loyd's bond with the animal deeply touches her and triggers her sympathy for animals.

Even though Loyd plays an important role in triggering Codi's sensitivity to animals, he hurts them through his participation in the cockfighting. Codi is not the only one whose attitude toward the non-human world changes. Loyd's view of the animal also changes because of Codi. In the scene in which Codi expresses her thoughts about such a cruel sport: "What I believe is that humans should have more heart than that. I can't feel good about people making a spectator sport of puncture wounds and internal hemorrhage" (191). Codi expresses her sympathy for the non-human being because she sees the animal as no different from a human. Following her remark, Loyd decides to quit this sport because his brother has also died from the same cause as the rooster.

Apart from Loyd's attentiveness to the animals, his heedful interaction with the land also enables Codi to realize the interconnectedness between the land and its human inhabitants. When he takes Codi to his mother's place on the Indian reservation, Loyd reveals his in-depth knowledge of the land. For example, in the scene in which

Loyd examines his land, he says, "Those little weedy cottonwoods have grown up along the stream. And there's a big boulder on that slope, you see the one with dark stripes? That used to be up there" (214). Loyd has inhabited the place with such attentive stewardship that he is familiar with every single detail of the land and able to detect every change in the natural surroundings. Codi is intrigued by his thorough knowledge of the place and reflects upon Loyd's keen observation of the place, "Most men, I thought, aren't this familiar with the furniture in their homes" (214). This statement suggests that she sees that Loyd treats the land as his home. Her understanding of how a person embraces the land as his home also opens her eyes to another aspect of the sense of belonging that is derived from one's relationship with the land.

Furthermore, Codi realizes that Loyd treats the land as part of his family. For Loyd, the land is inseparable from himself. For instance, in the scene in which he describes the environment, he makes the very careful observation: "[Peach trees]'re older than my aunt. The peach trees go way back. They were planting orchards down her three hundred years ago" (214). Loyd's comparison of the peach trees to his aunt implies that he sees both beings as equal in terms of their significance. His inclusive attitude toward the non-human world enables Codi to come to understand the environment as an integral part of Loyd's family. For example, in the scene in which Codi observes Loyd's interaction with the place, she reflects, "It seemed like a family business. On this land Loyd seemed like a family man" (215).

As Loyd's complex relationship with the animals and the place gradually heightens Codi's attentiveness to the place and its non-human inhabitants, she gradually sees the cultural dimension of the place. With this new awareness of the place, Codi is able to use her sensory perception together with her imagination to deepen her understanding of the place, especially its cultural dimension which entails a way of life and how one should live. For example, Codi's observation of the prehistoric condo allows her to become aware of a sense of the community represented through the architecture. The scene in which Codi visits the prehistoric condo reveals the significance of Loyd's guidance as well as her sensory and imaginative perception of the place:

It was a maze. Loyd said there were more than two hundred rooms—a village under one roof. The air smelled cold. I tried to imagine the place populated: stepping from room to room over sleeping couples, listening through all the noises of cooking and scolding and washing up for the sound of your own kids, who would know secret shortcuts to their friends' apartment. (128)

Codi's attentiveness to the place is manifested through her olfactory sense which triggers her imagination to comprehend the cultural implication of the place's structure. Codi's vivid imagination of how people used to live here helps her gain access to the structure's meaning. With the image in her mind, Codi can visualize that there are two hundred rooms and each room is interconnected because they are under the same "one roof", reflecting

interdependence within the community. The sound of each room is interpenetrated with every other in this piece of architecture, thereby demonstrating the concept of its inhabitants' unity. Her sensory sense, along with her imagination, prompts Codi to feel the intimacy these inhabitants share with each other. In short, Codi can comprehend that the architecture itself is evidence of the place's cultural layer because it reveals its inhabitants' way of life.

Moreover, Codi gains more understanding of the place's cultural aspect through her tactile perception of the wall. At the prehistoric condo, Codi thinks "The walls are thick" (128). Codi's ability to detect the thickness of the wall reveals that she has examined the place more carefully. Simultaneously, Loyd's knowledge gives further depth to Codi's understanding. Loyd adds his cultural belief to Codi's observation of the place by telling her about the material of the walls. In the same scene, he says, "The walls are graveyards. When a baby died, they'd mortar its bones right into the wall. Or under the floor. [...] So it would still be near the family" (128). With Loyd's guidance, Codi is able to discern the indigenous belief that the deceased which are represented by the bones are still present to the living. Loyd's explanation also points to the harmonious blending of the deceased and the living since both exist in the same place. It is important to note that this cultural belief about the interweaving of life and death can be also considered to be spiritual because the belief suggests a new way of looking at death. However, in this scene, Codi is able to be aware of only the cultural aspect and because her sensitivity to the place undergoes a gradual process of

development, Codi is yet to discern its spiritual dimension.

In addition, Codi learns from Loyd about the native American idea of how to create a home. In so doing, she gradually reshapes her misconception of home. For example, in the scene where Codi looks at the houses around the edge of the cliff, she asks Loyd, Why “doesn’t somebody fix [those old houses] up?” (235). The act of “fixing” reflects Codi’s understanding of home as something materially permanent. On the other hand, Loyd’s answer suggests to Codi a new way of thinking about home. He responds to Codi’s question: “Sometimes. Someday you’ll get old and fall down. [...] The greatest honor you can give to a house is to let it fall back down into the ground. [...] That’s where everything comes down in the first place” (235). Firmly couched within his bond with the place, Loyd is able to put aside the physical aspect of the home because he believes that it will be natural for both the place and the people to collapse someday. Everything will eventually disintegrate into the ground from whence every being originates. In other words, the existence of both the living and the deceased lie together in the same ground, reaffirming the indigenous notion of the oneness of life and death. It is also worth noting that Loyd’s sense of the community is no different from that of the townspeople. In Grace, both the indigenous people and the townspeople open Codi’s eyes to the reality that the dead coexist with the living without being forgotten. In addition, Loyd suggests that the physical environment alone does not suffice when creating home. He further discusses this idea when he says:

The important thing isn’t the house. It’s the ability to make it. You carry that in your brain and your hands, wherever you go. Anglos are like turtles, if they go someplace they have to carry the whole house along in their damn Winnesota. [...] We’re like Coyote. [...] Get to a good place, turn around three times in the grass, and you’re home. Once you know how, you can always do that, no matter what. You wouldn’t forget. (235)

In this passage, Loyd suggests that the material aspect is not all that matters. He can carry the whole house within his mind during his journey. What is important is the ability to endow a place with value and meaning. To put it differently, people can transform any “space” into “place” by their experience in it. Loyd’s insight into the place induces Codi to realize that she too can create home if she opens up her mind to inhabit the place.

Furthermore, Codi intuitively apprehends the profound meaning of the indigenous reservation. For instance, in the scene after Codi’s visit to the prehistoric condo, she goes out into the courtyard and carefully observes the place: “[The courtyard] was completely hidden from the outside—a little haven with a carpet of fine grass and an ancient ash tree. A treasure island. I was drawn to the shade” (128). The quotation emphasizes Codi’s ability to appreciate the richness of culture. In this place, she feels comfort because of the influence of the place. Her view of the place as a “haven” indicates her feeling of security. Her scrutiny of the place gradually prompts her to discover the courtyard’s importance. To elucidate, her

description of the tree as “ancient” signifies that this place existed long before its inhabitants created a cultural dimension for it. Thus, Codi is able to conceive of the courtyard as “a treasure” of culture by herself. Her ability to grasp the place’s deeper meaning on her own—without Loyd’s help—also indicates her developing perception.

Following her receptivity to the cultural aspect of the place, Codi’s reconception of life and death and the idea of home allows her to become cognizant of the spiritual dimension of the place. In his book *Keywords in Religious Studies* (2006:98), Ron Geaves posits the meaning of spirituality: “an intense relationship with the sacred involving deep emotive experiences of unity, joy, loss, gratitude and states of consciousness achieved through prayer, meditation, reflection or remembrance” (qtd. in Pradittatsanee 60). In other words, the spiritual aspect enables a person to connect with “the sacred”, something larger than oneself. Codi experiences a spiritual epiphany when she is surrounded by the natural construction of the canyon walls at the Indian reservation. Her delineation of the place demonstrates that she is in awe: “The canyon walls rose straight up on either side of us, ranging from sunset orange to deep rust, mottled with purple. The sandstone had been carved by ice ages and polished by deserts eons of sandpaper winds. The place did not so much inspire religion as it seemed to be religion itself” (210). Codi’s view of the place as sacred suggests her awareness of the spirituality of the place. The canyon walls have been constructed and reconstructed for ages by nature, revealing a sense of time. The grandeur of the canyon

walls not only makes Codi feel minute but also comforts her as if they were protecting and embracing her. For Codi, the place is thus no different from religion as she feels her egocentric existence being diminished by the vastness of nature.

Furthermore, Codi’s religious participation in the indigenous ceremony makes her understand the interdependence between the human and non-human worlds. In the scene in which Loyd takes Codi to witness the indigenous ritual, where people dress like animals and dance to ask for the rain, in worship of the god of fertility, Codi’s keen observation of the ceremony exhibits her realization of her expanded self. Codi reflects upon the ritual, “Their human features disappeared behind a horizontal band of the black paint across the eyes. They moved like deer. [...] They *became* deer. They looked exactly as deer would look” (237). The quotation illustrates Codi’s spiritual moment when she sees the performers transform into deer. The blurred image between the human and the non-human other that Codi perceives suggests that the humans’ anthropocentrism is lessened to the point where they are able to blend their sense of self with, and become part of, the world of the non-human other. This experience can be seen as founded upon the native Americans’ humble attitude toward nature and their realization of the interdependence between humans and nature. With regard to Codi’s taking part in the indigenous ritual, the spiritual dimension of the place reshapes her view of religion. For example, in the scene in which Codi contemplates the spiritual meaning of the religious ceremony, she says, “‘It’s a good idea,’ [...] ‘Especially since we’re still here

sleeping on God's couch. We're permanent houseguests' [...] 'It was a new angle on religion, for me' (240). Codi's perception of "God" in the land hints at her awakening to the sacredness of nature. Her new apprehension of the land becomes Codi's new religion as she identifies herself as "sleeping on God's couch", demonstrating her humble dependence upon God's natural world. More importantly, Codi also gains new perspective on how the white's religion endorses sense of anthropocentrism. With Loyd's anthropomorphic religion of the land, Codi is able to realize the sense of arrogance toward the natural world her former religion perpetuates as she states, "The way they tell it to us Anglos, God put the earth here for us to use, westward-ho. Like a special playground" (240). The quotation puts an emphasis on the notion of the earth as natural resources because God creates the world to solely serve human beings.

Codi's exposure to the invisible landscape, which entails layers of memory, history, culture, and spirituality, leads Codi to her discernment of the meanings hidden in the place. At the same time, her renewed perception of the place also brings about the changed view of herself. Different aspects of the place provide Codi with a renewed self-perception. Firstly, her discernment of the place's historical aspect prompts her to identify herself as being related to Grace's ancestors. For example, in the scene in which Codi listens to Dona Althea's interview about the ancestors of Grace, Codi reflects upon Dona's speech, "She pronounced the names musically and slowly, [...]. It was the Genesis of Grace. And of Hallie and me. Our father's own grandmother—mother of Homero Nolina up

in the graveyard—was one of those princesses: the red-haired, feisty one" (267). Codi's appreciation of her genealogy points to her utmost satisfaction in belonging to her ancestors. She has exhibited her precise knowledge of her family history as descendants from one of the Gracela's sisters. In other words, Codi has become reconnected with her ancestors' history.

Also, Codi's grasp of the cultural and spiritual aspects of the place provides her with a new attitude towards life and death, thereby inducing her to make peace with her loss. In the scene in which Codi discusses her sister's death with her father, Codi says, "That's true. We got punctured pretty bad. But we still gave the world a lot, Pop. We gave it Hallie" (333). In this conversation, Codi's answer reflects her understanding of the Native American cultural attitude toward life and death. Codi's view of her sister's death is based on the idea that everything originates from, and goes back into, the ground after death. Codi now believes that her sister is part of the earth from which the whole community of lives emerges. With this firm belief, Codi can come to terms with her loss.

Due to her comprehensive experience of the land, Codi is able to expand her self to include both the human and non-human worlds. For instance, her discernment of the anthropomorphized landscape demonstrates her extended self which includes the physical environment. She describes the place:

As we slipped down over the city every building and back lot was beautifully distinct. [...] The land

stretched out under me the way a lover would, hiding nothing, offering up every endearing southwestern cliché, and I wanted to get down there and kiss the dirt. I made a bargain with my mother. If I got to the ground in one piece, I wasn't leaving again. (321)

Codi recognizes the place as "beautifully distinct". The beautified landscape mirrors her changing perception of the place. The land is not depicted only as a backdrop but is "stretched out" like "a lover". This anthropomorphized environment metaphorically embraces Codi and receives her as part of its existence. The personification of the land as a lover also symbolizes the unified self of Codi and the land. She also expresses her act of bonding with the place through the proposed act of "kissing the dirt".

Moreover, Codi's more inclusive self renders her traumatic experience of loss bearable. In the scene where the townspeople gather at Hallie's funeral, Codi reflects upon the place and the people, "I believe it was the physical manifestation of unbearable grief. But you learn in these situations that all grieves are bearable. Loyd was standing on one side of me, and Emelina on the other, and whenever I thought I might fall or just cease to exist, the pressure of their shoulders held me there" (327). The way in which Codi sees Loyd, Emelina, and the townspeople illustrates her extension of self. She will not "cease to exist" because Codi has come to the realization that her existence is also tied to other people and the place. In other words, Codi has completely identified herself with both the community and the place. It can be

seen that her shattered self is eventually healed and that she is able to reintegrate herself into the community.

Codi's exposure to the place's invisible landscape provides her with her new self-perception. That is, Codi's identity now hinges upon the place with which she has bonded. For example, in the scene in which she visits the cave, the place's darkness awakens Codi to her realization of the significance of the place in her life:

The darkness was absolute [...] I breathed slowly and tried to visualize the size of the room, the distance between myself and the roof that I knew was there. Instead I saw random images that didn't help: Emelina collecting the little fast-food cars for her boys; the man in the café who'd suggested I marry him. And then while we all still waited I understood that the terror of my recurring dream was not about losing just vision, but the whole of myself, whatever that was. What you lose in blindness is the space around you, the place where you are, and without that you might not exist. You could be no where at all. (204)

The darkness in the cave makes Codi lose the vision of it. Without her connectedness with the place in which she stands, she loses touch with whom she really is. She has come fully to realize that her identity is derived from the place and that without the place, her sense of self could disintegrate.

Furthermore, with Codi's discernment of the invisible landscape, she has become a better

teacher because she intends to pass on her subjective knowledge of the place to the next generation. She tries to inculcate environmental awareness in her students. In the scene where Codi teaches her students, she says, "People can forget, and forget, and forget, but the land has a memory. The lakes and the rivers are still hanging on DDT and every other insult" (255). The quotation demonstrates Codi's more sensitive concern for the non-human world. She tries to advance the idea that DDT destroys not only the rivers but also the cultural identity of people tied to the land. Moreover, her criticism of American consumerist society points to her deeper understanding of the interrelationship between the well-being of the land and the people. This point is evident in the scene where Codi further discusses the idea with her students. As she puts it, "They wash [these jeans] in a big machine with this special kind of gravel they get out of volcanic mountains. [...] all us lucky Americans can wear jeans that look like somebody throw them in the garbage before we got them" (254). The depletion of natural resources will bring about long-term environmental degradation as the consumerist aspect of American society, represented by denim jeans, continues. Here the scope of her concern moves from the regional to the national. Codi's criticism of a larger scale of environmental problems highlights her holistic view of the earth and its human inhabitants.

Ultimately, Codi also instills into her students the idea of cultural memory, which is the invisible landscape itself constituting the community's experience embedded in the land. She emphasizes that the land is also packed with values and meanings derived

from people's experience in the place. In this sense, she wants her students to be the ones who protect the land and its invisible landscape. As she puts it, "I want them to be custodians of the earth" (331). Now, Codi does not simply teach biology or science but also the subjective knowledge of the place so that her students will live their lives in harmony with the natural world.

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