

**The sense of Belonging in Animal Dreams
by Barbara Kingsolver**

التعوير بالانتماء في أحلام الحيوانات بقلم باربرا كينجسولفر

إعداد

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Abstract:

In *Animal Dreams* (1990), as one of her initial writings, Barbara Kingsolver drew on profound recollections from her childhood in rural Kentucky, which reflects the novelist's strong sense of place in creating a sense of belonging, communal bonding, a strong view of the natural surroundings, and a love for nature in her literary works. The sense of belonging is created by interest, knowledge, and individual experiences related to the place and based on different characteristics. Kingsolver focuses on nature as the source of man's sense of belonging, and in a sense, enhances the readers' understanding of interrelatedness with the surrounding environment. In General, belonging to a place is defined as an affective bond or link between people and specific places. *Animal Dreams* (1990), which won numerous awards, including the Edward Abbey Award for Eco-fiction in 1991, is one of Kingsolver's earlier novels that has become a popular and critical success. Thanks to the success of this novel, Kingsolver became a well-known author among the Southern writers in the United States.

Key words: Sense of place, Sense of belonging, Natural surroundings, Barbara Kingsolver, *Animal Dreams*.

المخلص:

في أحلام الحيوان (١٩٩٠)، كواحدة من كتاباتها الأولية، اعتمدت باربارا كينغسولفر على ذكريات عميقة من طفولتها في ريف كنتاكي، مما يعكس إحساس الروائية القوي بالمكان في خلق شعور بالانتماء، والترابط الجماعي، ورؤية قوية للمحيط الطبيعي وحب الطبيعة في أعمالها الأدبية. يؤدي هذا الإحساس إلى ارتباط الشخص بالمكان، حيث يعتبر الإنسان نفسه جزءاً من المكان واستناداً إلى تجاربه في العلامات والمعاني والأفعال والشخصيات، يلعب دوراً في المكان في العقل ويصبح المكان محترماً بالنسبة له. الشعور بالانتماء يخلقه الاهتمام والمعرفة والتجارب الفردية المتعلقة بالمكان والقائمة على خصائص مختلفة. تركز كينغسولفر على الطبيعة كمصدر لإحساس الإنسان بالانتماء، ويعزز إلى حد ما فهم القراء للترابط مع البيئة المحيطة. بشكل عام، يُعرّف الانتماء إلى مكان ما بأنه رابطة عاطفية أو صلة بين البشر وأماكن معينة. أحلام الحيوانات (١٩٩٠)، التي فازت بالعديد من الجوائز، بما في ذلك جائزة إدوارد أبي للخيال البيئي في عام ١٩٩١، هي واحدة من روايات كينغسولفر السابقة التي أصبحت نجاحاً شائعاً ونقدياً. بفضل نجاح هذه الرواية، أصبحت كينغسولفر مؤلفة معروفة بين الكتاب الجنوبيين في الولايات المتحدة.

الكلمات الرئيسية: الإحساس بالمكان، الشعور بالانتماء، المحيط الطبيعي، باربارا كينجسولفر، أحلام الحيوان.

Introduction:

Kingsolver concerns herself with the relationships between humans and place and shows powerful experiences of place inform and transform one's relationships with the surrounding environment. Kingsolver's sense of place is connected with the second wave of eco-criticism which focuses, in its turn, on representing, according to Buell, Heise and Thornber, "the commitment to preservationist environmentalism, an eco-centric environmental ethics, [and] an emphasis on place-attachment" (433). Eco-critics use these elements as a context for analyzing the principles and customs of society concerning the physical environment. A sense of place makes people connect with their surroundings, and makes them establish a knowledge of and appreciation for the location.

This, in turn, nurtures the development of empathy for the place and a deep sense of belonging leading to greater stewardship. According to Martin: "a place means the recognition of locale and a person's development in, and through, it becomes a primary means of growing, of coming to understanding, both as an individual and as a community member (43). Thus, a sense of place is more than just locations on a map. It is the human attachment and the cultural stories linked to places that make them special and unique enhancing thus one's feeling of belonging.

In short, the sense of place consists of multiple concepts and leads eco-critics to study the relationship between the concepts and to find what brings human beings to have a different relation to the natural world. Therefore, "the strongest place connectedness comes from knowing many places as it gives one point of reference for comparison which leads to an awareness and connectedness" (Bell 66). In *Animal Dreams*, the acquisition of a sense of place is another perspective that Codi the protagonist is interested in. Roberta Rubenstein asserts that, "Codi's longing for belonging can be illustrated in two ways, namely, "the longing for... her association with the lost home/land and the longing for connection to a collective cultural history of community" (38).

This article focuses on the connection between humans and nature and supports the concept of a “sense of place”. Kingsolver mainly focuses on environmental concerns. She encourages preserving and protecting nature, as well as respecting place, in her literary studies to spread her message of ecological awareness. Being a biologist, her writings portray her knowledge of biology and ecology to express her feelings through her characters, specifically Codi, who resembles Kingsolver at a young age. Her initial writings drew profound influences from her childhood in rural Kentucky, which later infused a strong sense of place by creating a sense of belonging, communal bonding, a strong view of the natural surroundings, and a love for nature in her literary works. Kingsolver emphasizes nature as the source of everything from surroundings to a human sense of belonging as a way to encourage readers’ sense of interrelatedness with the environment.

To achieve environmental harmony, man finds himself forced to look for different ecological concerns in the physical world. Therefore, man’s sense of belonging and meaningful human communication can be attained through “discovering and reclaiming one’s natural role” (Ramadan 283). Her deep knowledge and concern for environmental issues and human life’s relationship with the natural world can be found in her novels. Kingsolver says in one of her interviews: “I grew up in a natural setting, in that interface between farms and wilderness. That’s where I learned to love life” (S and Selvaraj 1346). She represents nature in her novels with a deep ecological awareness because of her training skills. Codi, the protagonist of *Animal Dreams* reflects both Kingsolver’s training as a biologist and her appreciation for a Native American culture, as she explained in an interview:

I think biology is my religion. Understanding the processes of the natural world and how all living things are related is the way that I answer those questions that are the basis of religion...The Christian creation myth, which says the world, was put here as a little garden for us to use, goes a long way in

explaining how we've devastated that garden. (Perry 147)

In *Animal Dreams* the protagonist Cosima (Codi) Noline and her sister Halimeda (Haille) Noline, who have lived in Tucson, Arizona for 14 years run from their past, returning to their rural hometown of Grace, Arizona. Codi returns to this hated place of her rough childhood to be close to her father Homero (Homer) Noline, the aging doctor of the town, who is suffering from Alzheimer's disease, and to teach high school science. Codi's homecoming can be seen as the final step down in her career and personal life. She thought she had been done with the place, so she promised herself to leave within the year. She has spent her whole life drifting along, seeking a place to belong. She finished medical school, but becomes engraved with the sense of alienation, not belonging to anyone or anywhere with an incapacity of being self-reliant. Meanwhile, Haille also departs for Nicaragua to work with Nicaraguans to defend their land against toxic agricultural chemicals. Codi becomes proud of the selflessness of her sister; Haille however, is kidnapped and killed in Nicaragua. Haille's death adds to Codi's sense of alienation and loneliness without a family. Thus, it is not a happy homecoming for Codi as she has never felt that she belongs to the community of Grace: there she lost her unborn child when she was just fifteen; her mother died when she was only three and her father isolates them from the rest of the community.

Consequently, the two sisters grow weary of a loveless life. Codi reunites with her high school lover Loyd Peregrina, a railroad man, with whom she has a past. She becomes closer to him with the realization of her hometown culture representing a world view that can provide meaning as well as stability for Codi. Knowing more about Grace, Codi finds peace, with the importance of a community coming together for a common cause, self-perception, fitting in and finding your family and your people.

A sense of belonging helps to form groups, communities and societies. With love and belongingness people can rid themselves

of a sense of loneliness and alienation. This process includes the actions of loving others and being loved by them. Thus humans' need of a profound sense belonging is an important reason for survival, and for the desire of closeness. Bonding between people and specific places is expressed through the interplay of effects, emotions, knowledge, beliefs, behaviors and actions. In other words, a sense of belonging involves more than simply being acquainted with other people. It is centered on gaining acceptance, attention, and support from members of the surrounding group of people as well as providing the same attention to them. Fullilove conceptualizes place belonging "as a mutual relationship between a person and a beloved place" (1516). Thus, belonging is the experience of personal involvement in an environment so that any person feels an as integral part of the environment through emotions and basic needs that humans long for respect and love.

Kingsolver began to see how "important a writer's work could become in the whole scheme of human life" (Martin 59). In *Animal Dreams*, Kingsolver portrays the sense of belonging through the effects of fractured familial bonds that distance a person from one's homeland. In the sense of spatial experience, belonging is a concept that frames how we can view interaction with and habitation of place through nature environment. Therefore, the need to belong is "the need to give and receive attention to and from others. Belonging is a strong and inevitable feeling that exists in human nature" (Reyes 3). Kingsolver as a perceptive writer appeals to portray her ability to blend all parts of the literary works to show the importance of belonging, "the results create new images, overlapping, demanding an inquiry into the idea of possession, position, the habitation of a place, flashbacks and a language" (Martin 82).

As a result, belonging to a place is the most important concept in the sense of place. This concept is meaningful along with "a positive sense of place which leads to the memory of a place beyond emotional experiences and it includes cultural beliefs and activities that make a contact between humans and the environment" (Yazdanfar, et al. 122).

Such effects can be obvious when Codi enters Grace after a long time to visit her sick father. She finds out that Grace has not been changed since she left the town. For example, “Grace still had iron hoops attached to walls to tie horses and clearly, the town has not entered into the era of parking meters” (11). As a result, the returning journey of Codi’s asserts her sense of belonging helping her to show attachment through the sense of belonging anyway to a new beginning. To acquire a place belonging to her hometown, “Codi needs to walk out of the shadow, not by changing her appearance, but by changing her attitude toward her body through her interaction with others and with nature” (Tang 35). She feels stranger to her hometown, not only feels stranger to people, but to the nature of her hometown as well. Throughout the novel, Codi tries to regain her sense of belonging. Eventually, engaging herself in the activities of the community, Codi succeeds in becoming an insider who knows where her roots are.

In addition to Codi's quest for belongingness in Grace’s community, Kingsolver portrays the same sense of belonging through different characters that greatly influenced Codi’s life. When Codi comes back to Grace, she sees herself as an outsider, someone who could never belong or fit in grace’s environment, but as time passes and as she comes to feel more accepted into the community, she begins to associate Grace with her sister Hallie and with the concept of family. However, Codi is unable to remain in Grace after she learns about her sister’s death and the fragmentation of her family unit. For Codi, Grace will always represent family and staying there only reminds her that she has no real family.

Halimeda, or generally known as Hallie, can be seen as a central figure in Codi's life, “I love her for feeling so strongly about things” (36). Hallie grandly wanted to change the world. She has appeared through her idealistic letters to Codi from Nicaragua in which Hallie reports about her experiences abroad. Hallie’s letters are a source of advice aimed at Codi to realize her value and worth to others. Before Hallie traveled to Nicaragua to participate

in a revolution, she and Codi were living together. Codi has a strong connection with her sister, who has formulated Codi's outlook on life. Thus, the connection between the two sisters is so strong that even their father can't break it: "we grew up knowing the simple arithmetic of security: A sister is more precious than an eye" (46). Codi also describes her relationship with her younger sister Hallie through her excessive attachment to, and her dependence on her shaping Codi's views: "Hallie and I were so attached, like keenly mismatched Siamese twins conjoined at the back of the mind" (8).

Haille is a strong and brave character that ready to sacrifice and risk her life to preserve the environment and to educate people about the danger of abusing nature. Kingsolver states that: "she invested two sisters with apparently opposite personalities, and then she invested them with a family and began to work backward to find the point in their shared history that would have pushed them into opposite direction" (Fleischner 14). Hallie travels to Nicaragua aiming to develop agriculture there and to support poor farmers with more efficient farming, which seems to be more important than where she goes "the tragedy for Hallie was that there might never be a cause worth risking everything for in our lifetime" (36). She begins to realize that she has found a place where she can belong, be loved and valued.

She is grateful that there is a place where her knowledge of plants can make a real difference to people because she does not take into her consideration the fact that she is risking her life, rather, she wants to change the world to a better place against imported toxic agricultural chemicals. She is passionately connected with the land on which she lives and to which she belongs. Hallie is energized by life, and lives it to the fullest. Codi, however, feels even more adrift due to the physical distance between herself and her sister. Codi had often regarded her sister as much better than herself because she was able and willing to put her ideals into action in a needy area of the world.

Unlike Codi, Hallie is more comfortable anywhere she goes, therefore, she thinks that if she can't make a connection with her hometown, she'll find a place in this world. Hallie says that "she belongs to a nation that is in love with forgetfulness Codi retraces the irony and asserts that is the nature of the entire human society not to think about the lives of the innocent and poor" (98). She knows that quick action is needed as land will not wait forever. She plans to educate people on sustainable agricultural practices. She forsakes her comfort when she moves to Nicaragua. In this way Haille is a counterpart to Codi's narration and helps the reader to complete the image of Codi and her characteristics and to know the importance to have a place in your own country because she is hardly objective but strongly driven by her emotions. Hallie's life has brought Codi finally to the understanding that it's how you live your life that determines your place in the world. Hallie said, "The very least you can do in your life is to figure out what you hope for. And the most you can do is to live inside that hope, or rather to belong to that hope (77).

Loyd Peregrina, Codi's boyfriend and the father of their lost child enhances Codi's sense of belonging and helps her back into the community of Grace. Codi accepts the loss of her child and her sister and becomes active in making decisions on her own. Codi adds: "it occurred to me that I'd never drawn a breath here without Haille" (45). He helps her understand a key concept in her life and helps Codi in the right direction by recovering her sense of belonging: "Codi, for everybody that's gone away, there's somebody that's come to you" (297). Loyd's statement is correct, as Codi loses her one true connection in life; namely her sister who provides her with a sense of comfort. In this way, she is able to let go of her past of failure and detachment and find a sense of belonging and purpose with another character namely Loyd.

Although he has also suffered an acute emotional loss from those close to him: his twin brother died at about the same time that Codi lost her baby and, later, his marriage ended when his wife ran out on him. He says: "I wasn't keeping to any road, I was

running, forgetting what lay behind and always looking ahead for the perfect home...where no one you loved ever died” (236). Loyd is deeply rooted in and closely connected with his family and his Native tradition. He is connected both to people and to the land; thus he has an access to a deeper understanding of the sense of belonging. This idea appeared when Codi asked him: “Is there anything you know of that you’d die for? Loyd responded [to] the land” (122). Consequently, Kingsolver uses this character to illustrate the influence of culture, because much of Loyd’s “wisdom accrues from the native culture that is his background and his blood” (Martin 58). Codi’s conversations and trips with Loyd, furthermore, contribute to “Codi’s healing process” (Kusebauch 66). Codi grows more attracted to Loyd and they start a love affair. Loyd is closely connected with his native people on the nearby reservation and through him, she learns about the deep respect that the native culture holds for the earth. Thence, Loyd is associated with and belongs to both wild nature and domesticity (Magee 5).

Loyd’s appearance is helpful for Codi who has lost her one true connection in life; her sister suffering from alienation and lack of guidance. Codi is then able to let go of her past of failure and find a sense of belonging and purpose with Loyd. By finding true roots within her hometown: a community, a job, and love, Codi finds for the first time in her life a place where she can intimately belong. She decides to stay in Grace permanently. For Loyd “the benefits of place attachment directly correlate with the physical and psychological well-being of any population that retains strong social relationships and active cultural associations with their traditional lands and resources” (Marques, et al. 2).

Loyd has the ability to see the invisible landscape, which play a significant role in helping Codi appreciate the deeper meanings of place: “His complex interaction with the land becomes a foundation for Codi’s perception of the place’s cultural aspect” (Painark 84). For instance, in Grace “every house had a bunch of peacock feathers that are stored in a vase, a local feature that

signifies their indigenouslyness” (27). Another feature of Grace is that everybody is related one way or another to each other. While exploring the lands of Grace, Codi assumes herself as a new lover because the place held attributes she had yet to discover (27). Codi realizes that Loyd treats the land as part of his family for gaining a sense of belonging. Therefore, Loyd’s inclusive attitude towards his hometown world helps Codi understand the environment as an integral part of Loyd’s family. Loyd also explains the Native American’s idea of building such homes to restore the buildings to the earth from “where everything comes from in the first place” (242). Codi feels as if her body has been “renewed, like a patch of dry ground that had been rained on” (130). Loyd expresses to her his conception of the importance to understand the interrelationship between the survival of the natural environment and the survival of the community. He states that, “the greatest honor you can give a house is to let it fall back down into the ground...That’s where everything comes from in the first place. 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” (235).

For Loyd, the land offers a sense of belonging, as the land does not refer to the reductionist understanding of his reservation or the property he owns. It is a broader concept concerning the positive interactions between people and the land. “If one reaches beyond his/her dwelling place, he/she is also moving free from the reductionist understanding of a fixed, unchanging place, and extends the caring responsibilities for all places” (Tang 45). He believes that home is often a much broader sharing a concept in the whole life. As a result, Codi has completely identified herself with both the community and the people. It can be seen that she can reintegrate herself into the Grace community and learns that “all griefs are bearable” (327).

Codi, the central character in the *Animal Dreams*, changes her attitude towards her relationship with her hometown and this helps her to know the place where she was born and accounts for her engagement to improve her relationship with her hometown. Suffering from an acute sense of disorientation, Codi asserts that:

“I’d sell my soul and all of my traveling shoes to belong someplace” (30). However, Codi sees that to find this sense of belonging, she must face her terrible past and must accept her relationship to her community. In Grace, she finds a profession that she enjoys; a job that is based on her wants not on her lover’s. Then she finally builds on a sense of belonging and purpose with another person.

She considers herself a person who does not belong to the “lost continent, and [she] felt profoundly sad though it wasn’t [her] continent” (64). Codi’s strong attachment to her hometown and her childhood memories is due to the human beings’ inborn need for belonging in order to evade the sense of alienation and loneliness. Codi says: “I was a stranger to Grace. I’d stayed away fourteen years and in my gut, I believe I was hoping that had changed: I would step off the bus and land smack in the middle of a sense of belonging...home at last” (12). In this context, the sense of belonging is distinguished by the need to establish a sense of security, care, and affection.

Consequently, Kingsolver as a perceptive writer tends to portray a sense of how Codi gets a sense of place and points out that the assertion of community and the physical world can contribute to a sense of belonging for the protagonist. Swartz comments: “Kingsolver weaves her characters’ commitment into their lives and dreams, examining both past and present and how they, too, are interrelated to make up the whole of being” (68). Throughout Kingsolver’s novel *Animal Dreams*, Codi’s actions and motivations transfigure as she sets out to finally understand her life’s difficult journey to find herself in a place of belonging and acceptance.

Kingsolver highlights the need for a sense of belonging through the community in Grace, “by challenging the power that the community insider has over the outsider and providing an avenue for the outsider to become integrated into the community” (Magee 19). It is not a happy return for Codi as she has never felt she belonged to the community that lives in Grace. She says “I was a

stranger to Grace” (12). Arriving at her hometown, memories of her childhood return bringing back her painful memories, she states that “I’d spent my whole childhood as an outsider to Grace” (30). Because of her mother’s death, “her father had felt his daughter’s had been too far away to touch making him unable to emotionally connect, therefore not being able to care for Codi and her sister Hallie the way they needed together in this stone cold canyon” (141). Codi blames her father for her being an outcast and believes that he had also been rejected in the community and his family was considered a “trash” (260). They had been outsiders even before their birth “as they came from a family seen as “black sheep in their hometown” (Sander 2).

For this reason, Homer was emotionally distant and became remote from them. Growing up both girls felt like outsiders in Grace because of their intellect and height. Their father was constantly pushing them to demonstrate their superiority over their peers. Homer is driven to this by his belief that his family was never accepted by the locals; so he claims having relocated to Grace from Illinois. Doc Homer had always intimated that the lack of acceptance of the family was because they were seen as outsiders from another state. Yet, Codi contemplates a strong sense of community as she says: “I was beginning to learn my way around the matriarchy of Grace, a force unknown to me in childhood” (159). Therefore, Codi’s ability to feel and appreciate this bonding illustrates her developing a deep sense of belonging and bonding with the community (Painark 76). 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” (199). She sees herself as a hero indicating her increasing sense of community through Grace. In this context, she wants Grace People to show their eagerness to protect Grace pointing to their strong ties with the place and their realization of its significance to their lives.

Consequently, Reyes states that: “Shared feelings of belonging and attachment held by people concerning the place they live ... should be taken into account when seeking to understand the

configuration and operation of the natural environment” (1). Codi as soon as she reaches Grace begins to realize that, her protracted mourning events and longing to belong, through her discovery of a true community, “fifty mothers who’d have been standing at the edges of my childhood, ready to make whatever contribution was needed at the time” (328). Codi can come to terms with Grace when she finds out that her distant father had hidden their family’s truth from her: that the Nolines did truly belong in that town and had several past generations that belonged in Grace, Arizona: “We were two babies not of this world. Just like every other one in the stack of photos; two more babies of Grace... proving we belonged here” (284).

This revelation of her ancestry enables Codi to realize that “her father is doing exactly the opposite of setting himself apart, [and he is proving that] we belonged here, were as pure as anybody in Grace” (284). In this way, Kingsolver depicts Codi’s strong sense of community in the novel to highlight her sense of place, sensitivity toward the natural world compared with other people in Grace. Thence, “what gives Codi a sense of harmony and return her originality is the interweaving of Western and Native American mythologies of the land, and her fresh embodiment of her town legend of sterility and regeneration” (Rubenstein 42).

Deepening her perception of Grace, Codi’s engagement in environmental activism increases her bond with the community. For example, she joins the community club gradually bonding with her community. She also works as a biology teacher, helping Grace people to raise money to save the town from an environmental crisis. Codi’s examination of the polluted 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 people of the Stitch and Bitch club” (75). Thus, she also compares herself without history in the past with herself in the present having learned the impact of history, thus enhancing her deep sense of longing to be part of the community (Painark77). Eventually, by engaging herself in the activities of the community, Codi succeeds in becoming an insider who knows where her roots are and who knows how she is deeply attached to her hometown.

As a result, Codi fully realizes the significance of the place in her life and extends her sense of belonging to include both the place and its people. So, "Through the club's optimism and resourcefulness, the town is saved by its own collective customs" (Jacobs 9). The acceptance of her community makes Codi feel part of the community for the first time. In this regard, all these events help her to be stronger and more aware of her surroundings: "she has become tightly bound for Grace[where]she was born and raised, and where her father still lived and was said to be losing his mind" (8). Her sense of community within Grace also broadens as her first year of teaching results in having the students love her. This occurs as the students appreciate Codi's passion for saving the river within Grace, as Grace is destroyed by the pollution and the impending damming of its river. She finds out that the entire school truly does appreciate her and wants her to come back, the thing which gives her a sense of belonging; what it is like to be wanted and appreciated somewhere.

More than that, it is important to note that Codi's engagement with her home community opens her eyes to know more about Grace as well as her origin. When Codi returns to her childhood home in Grace, she discovers that she does have a past, contrary to what Homero told her, her original family was from Grace, and her roots were there. Consequently, Codi is assigned the important responsibility of researching and writing about Grace's history. Codi and Hallie were told by their father that, because of the discrimination he had suffered, the family had moved to Grace from the Midwest (Swartz 69). In so doing, Codi starts learning about Grace's history: "There was a local legend, supposedly true, about how they got here a hundred years ago: the nine blue-eyed Graciela sisters came over from Spain to marry nine lucky miners in the gold camp, sight unseen" (14).

Codi's strong attachment to her hometown is due to the human need for psychological tranquility, surroundings of love and a sense of belonging evading thus, the sense of alienation and loneliness. Therefore, in this context, Codi tries to rediscover her past; finding out that she was not estranged as she thought, and

that her lineage can be traced back to the founding mothers of Grace. Her father Homero has changed his original name, “his name is gone. He understands that this is his fault. He took a pen to paper and changed it, canceled his ancestors” (137). In this way, Homero has led his daughters to believe that they do not belong to the people of Grace.

The motivation for changing his name comes from the fearful memories of his wife’s death. Consequently, he understands that it is his fault, and finds that he changed his name to Noline to escape his family history and it is unsurprising that Codi is uncertain about the Noline name. Additionally, Codi believes that her surname helps her get the teaching job, claiming that “Nothing else I put down in my wobbly writing on that application could have impressed anyone too much” (55). Thence, Codi’s personality and mentality of being an outsider lead her to even worse situations in life, as her actions are permanently affected by that idea.

Moreover, Codi discovers the fact that her family is rooted in Grace from Viola, a woman at the ceremony in Grace, Viola tells Codi about her family: “The Nolinias had dug up what they could of the family graveyard and carried the bones a few miles to bury them up here” (164). In this way, Viola helps Codi to know that she is one of 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 reason for her family’s alienation. Because of this, Codi learns 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 comes from because her father tells her that they came out from Illinois, as she puts it, “My mother came from someplace in Illinois, and Doc Homer won’t own up to being from anywhere” (213). Codi’s lack of knowledge of her roots previously prevents her from bonding with the place and the people. Her father acts as if they were outsiders and Codi knows nothing about the place and the history of her roots.

Thus, Codi knows about Grace, her origin, gradually making her understand the deeper meaning of belonging to her hometown: “Codi’s reflection upon what makes Grace Rich with its history points to her thorough understanding of its historical significance” (Painark 76). As a result, Kingsolver presents Grace as a place that still has the touch of its liveliness environment. Codi had always felt in the past alienated from Grace. However, when she starts to know more about her surroundings, she finds out her place in the community. Having family ties and community links is essential for society to develop and prosper. She also begins to feel like a member of the community of Grace, which shows “the relationship between place and identity and how a place can reclaim memory and create new perspectives on identity” (Strickler 125). Therefore, Codi’s reengagement in the present with the people of Grace and her connection with her ancestry has provided her with a sense of security because she now belongs somewhere.

As a result, Codi resolves her conflict with her townspeople. Kingsolver explains this event in Codi’s life and her reactions to this feeling of acceptance: “I was going to be named something like a teacher of the year. Teachers and kids all voted, secret ballot...It doesn’t mean anything, I said. It does mean something. It means they want you... I guess you’re right, I said. I don’t think anybody ever told me that before” (290-292). In this way, Codi is not an outsider but is returning to and discovering her roots. By the end of *Animal Dreams*, Codi has realized that she must take the responsibility for reclaiming her hometown, Grace and fighting for the preservation of her home's environment.

Conclusion:

To conclude, Codi has realized that she must take the responsibility for reclaiming her hometown and fighting for the preservation of her home's environment. In this regard, Codi finds closure and a warm intimate milieu in the Grace community. Kingsolver explores this idea through Codi's life-long journey to find her personality and how she develops from the one who turns one's back on the world, to the one who engages in it. As a result, the sense of belonging to a place grows when human beings begin to define themselves by having a place, a family and a community. This is essential for maintaining a sense of purpose in life. Searching for belonging can make human beings more aware of and sensitive to the environment and the society in which humans live. Therefore, a sense of belonging involves interactions with others, and it is the product of the interaction of the concerned individuals.

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