



An Analysis on Eco-related Traditions of North American Indians in *Animal Dreams*

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Abstract: North American Indians have their long and unique ecological culture, many of eco-related traditional features are reflected in *Animal Dreams*, based on detailed text reading and appreciation, this paper concludes seven Eco-related traditions of North American Indians, which are all related to the issue of environmental protection: story-telling, handicrafts, rock engraving, chicken scratch music, ritual dances, fertility worship and relationship inside family and community. The aim of the paper is not only to help readers have a good understanding of the novel *Animal Dreams*. At the same time, through the analysis of seven Eco-related traditions of North American Indians, this paper evaluates highly on the writer Barbara Kingsolver's ecological views on the balance between human and nature, this is still of great significance to today's society and invoke human's reflection on present ecology hopefully. Due to the limitations of time and the lack of depth of my understanding of the text, the research results of this paper still have some improving space. Therefore, in the future study, the author will further explore the other ecological themes of the work.

Keywords: Keywords: North American Indian; Eco-related tradition; *Animal Dreams*

Introduction

North American Indians have their long and unique culture. Many traditional cultural features are reflected in *Animal Dreams*. The Eco-related traits of North American Indians discussed in this paper are all related to the issue of environmental protection from human world, just like Glotfelty said "despite the broad scope of inquiry and disparate levels of sophistication, all ecological criticism shares the fundamental premise that human culture is connected to the physical world, affecting it and affected by it." [1]

In *Animal Dreams*, Barbara Kingsolver set one of the themes in the novel as the notion of a culture clash between two different cultures, white and North American Indian. The focus for this is environmental degradation. The author's ecological perspectives are frequently reflected with the examples of Eco-related traditions in the novel, 7 Eco-related traditions are to

be analyzed as the follows. *Animal Dreams* is a novel which contains description of nature beauty, ecological

thoughts of North American Indians, harmonious relationship between people and nature, which is highly praised in North American Indian's ecosophy. By considering the present environmental crisis and frequent natural disasters, the author uses a real place named Grace in Arizona as an illustration. It is mainly because the struggle and effort of Grace women are not wasted, and their home was saved from destructions. Barbara Kingsolver tries to remind us that the humans should never forget that they are not a master and controller of nature, but a part of nature. We are merely guests of nature, and we should behave well. Nature is not human properties and it has its own dignity, so cherishing nature is to cherish the human beings. What we can learn from *Animal Dreams* is that people should keep a close and harmonious relation to nature, be polite to nature, although most people live in cities now. Actually, cities are part of nature, too.

Apart from love of nature, readers can learn about some other eco-related cultural traditions in *Animal Dreams*, such as storytelling, handicrafts, rock engravings, music, ritual dances, fertility worship and

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relationship inside family and community. Those traditions should be respected, protected, and even made to flourish in world's cultural heritage. To protect the rare existing traditional culture is important for the whole American nation, and even the entire world history.

After reading this thesis, firstly, I hope readers will realize the importance of research into the subject of industrial pollution in the United States and the methods that different communities and environmental groups have used to combat it. What methods are people using today? What is most effective? What is being done to cut down on industrial pollution currently? Secondly, the current society is developing very quickly, every kind traditional culture is unique and precious for the development of humanity. To know them can preserve American history. Especially by knowing the North American Indians traditions, people can not only learn a lot of useful wisdom to solve modern problems, but will also try to save the precious tradition, even flourish it.

Literature Review

The current paper is an attempt to study *Animal Dreams* from the perspective of a brief literary analysis on Eco-related traditions of North American Indians. There is a great amount of publication related to ecological criticism. In Chinese journals, magazines and the pool of excellent MA theses, we can find many critical essays evaluating literary works from the angle of ecological criticism. The literary works under examination include "Rime of the Ancient Mariner", *The Return of the Native*, *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* and *Pride and Prejudice* from English literature and Dickinson's poems, *The Old Man and the Sea*, *The Rainbow*, *The Catcher in the Rye*, *Go Down Moses*, *The Call of the Wild* and *Lord of the Flies* and so on. In American literature, however, I haven't found one on Barbara Kingsolver's *Animal Dreams*. Therefore, I think a study of *Animal Dreams* will certainly deepen our understanding of both the novel and the author of it.

When first published in 1990, *Animal Dreams* received a highly positive response from reviewers. As Barbara Kingsolver is mainly viewed as a writer on women issues, recent critiques of her novels have mainly focused on the Eco-feminist perspective of interpretation in the United States. To avoid overlapping with what other critics have already said, I

choose a different approach. Instead of studying the novel from the feminist point of view, I decide to analyze it on Eco-related traditions.

I. Storytelling

In the days prior to the intrusion of European colonists, there existed hundreds of North American Indian tribes on the land of America, and each tribe defined itself specifically through a heritage passed on from generation to generation in their tribal myths, legend, folklores, rituals and so on. However, there are no systematic descriptions of these traditions since North American Indian tribes maintain their cultural and spiritual traditions by way of storytelling, which preserves Indian culture from generation to generation. Partly because of this, these traditions survive more than 500 years of acculturation and genocidal suppression by white mainstream culture and at the beginning of the 21st century, American Indian good shape, underlying not only the lifestyles of North American Indian literature written in English.

The North American Indians depend on the storytelling tradition to preserve the culture and ensure their identities. Whatever happens, the Laguna Pueblo people instinctively sort events and details into a loose narrative structure, and in so doing, everything becomes a story. Oral stories thus become the medium through which the complex of Laguna knowledge and culture is preserved. Everyone, from the youngest child to the oldest person, is expected to listen to and recall or tell a portion of a story. The remembering and the retelling are a communal process because the transmission of stories through storytelling is a collective project in which all members of the tribe participate. Every tribe member learns portions of the traditional oral stories for recitation and transmission, and learns to view his or her own history as a strand within the web of traditional, family, and personal stories binding the tribe into a cultural community. So the listeners will become tellers because they must tell the stories which they have heard in an attempt to complete their duty of passing on the native culture. In such case, should a key figure who knows much more than others die unexpectedly, this system would remain intact. In other words, it is storytelling that preserves the native history and culture ever since human beings' emergence.

There are lots of stories about the North American Indians reflected in *Animal Dreams*. The stories also bind the tribe into the context of the larger natural

world. In pueblo religious tradition the natural world was created, and is continuously recreated, through the stories (or thoughts) of Thought Woman, the primordial creation deity also known as Spider Woman, the weaver who spins the world out herself. Thought Woman's stories bring the world into being and weave the people into the natural world.

First, the spider woman and Spider grandmother are shown in *Animal Dreams*. When Loyd explained to Codi, why the rock they saw is called Spider Rock, he said: "it's named for Spider Woman. She lived up there a long time ago. One day she lassoed two Navajo ladies with her web and pulled them up there and taught them how to weave rugs." [2](216-217) When Codi had the doubt that whether this Spider Woman and the Spider Grandmother who raised the twins, Loyd said: "that's a Pueblo story and this is a Navajo story, but it's the same Spider Woman. Everybody kind of agrees on the important stuff." (217) Loyd has a twin brother who died by accident. When Codi asked whether they looked the same, he told another story.

"...in the pueblo, when twins are born people say there'll be a poor rainy seasons or grasshoppers or some darn things. In the old days you had to let twins die." In the different tribes their stories have something in common. "There's a Tewa story about a mother sneaking her twins out of the pueblo and leaving them with Spider Grandmother to raise." (213) Readers can see easily the Spider Mother's important position in North American Indians' mind.

Second, Pueblo is one of the biggest tribe of North American Indians. Some stories are the good books for children to learn from. To understand better the position of human in whole nature can teach them how to coexist with all other creatures in nature. "The Pueblo story is that everybody started out underground. People and animals, everything. And then the badger dug a hole and let everybody out. They climbed out the hole and from then on they lived on top of the ground. When they die they go back under." (315)

Besides, when North American Indians are holding their religious ceremonies, many gods from the myths appeared. "Koshari," he said. "A kachina. He has to do with fertility. His home's in the East." (244) All the kachinas have whole histories and families and live one of the important places. This god can help them to keep fertility, he is the God of rain.

Third, the following are two examples to the history of Grace. This is a place full of color of myth. The North American Indians are good at telling stories. Everybody in Grace knows their stories very well.

"There was a local legend, supposedly true, about how they got here a hundred years ago: the nine blue-eyed Gracela sisters came over from Spain to marry nine lucky miners in the gold camp, sight unseen. Back then these hills were run through with gold veins and drew a crowd of men 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 Cracela Canyon was a population of blue-eyed, dark-haired descendants and a thousand wild peacocks. Their father stayed behind and got rich by proxy, for he'd literally sold his girls for a gold mine." (14)

Even for a very common woman in Grace, she can tell the story of her own home like reading a very familiar book, even though she is not a talkative person in daily life. "'hace cien anos,' she began. 'more than one hundred years ago, my mother and her eight sisters came to this valley from Spain to bring light and happiness to the poor miners, who had no wives. They were the nine Gracela sisters: Althea, Renata, Hilaria, Carina, Julietta, Ursolina, Violetta, Camila, and Estrella.'" (273) They were the names of fairy princesses, but the story, in her sight, sustained voice, was Biblical. It was the Genesis of Grace. The traditional North American Indian literature contains those mythologies and folklores that are never attributed to the effort of one individual person. They are passed down generation by generation. Each storyteller contributes his part in these literary legacies.

Story-telling is a way of handing down their tradition of harmonious co-existence with nature. By storytelling, North American Indians wish to perpetuate their peaceful life among animals in forests, on wildernesses or tundra. And by story telling the younger generations learn what is right and what is wrong and how to build a friendly relationship with their environment.

II. Handicrafts

Many North American Indians are good at making things with their own hands, especially the women.

"What we know how to do is make nice things out of paper, flowers, piñatas as, cascarones. And we sew things. That's what we ladies here do.[1] For

Christmas, Loyd had given Codi an Apache burden basket. In last chapter, we have mentioned that Loyd is a typical North American Indian young man, his gift shoes that he is good at doing handicrafts. “It was exquisitely woven, striped with the colors of dried grass, and around its open mouth hung tin bells on leather thongs that made whispery, tinkling sounds. It wasn’t much bigger than a teacup” [1].

From the last chapter of the novel, we know that peacock is the animal North American Indians love very much. Peacock feather is the good material for them to making something with hands. In the struggle to protect their home, the women in Grace make full use of their handicraft skill, they made peacock piñatas, which are with genuine peacock tail feathers.

Peacocks living in a good state together with Grace people. They could pick up half a dozen peacock feathers on any given day, in the orchards, as you went about your business. When the vase was full, you took them to one of the old women who made real-feather piñatas, and then you went about your business. “In a corner near the window was a beehive fireplace, and next to it, a clay vase of peacock feathers. Every home in Grace had one of those; it was a local feature.” The tradition of ceramic is mentioned by Kingsolver in *Animal Dreams*. In an ancient dwelling, Loyd said: “I found a whole clay pot in here one time.” (273) The ancient dwellings are the best example which could prove North American Indians have the old tradition of making ceramic. At the same time, the North American Indian people who live in reservations also take some ceramic made by themselves as house decorations. “Loyd’s mother’s house had a green door. The front window was crowded with artificial flowers and ceramic animals” (267).

Whether peacock feathers or ceramics, Amerindians took their raw materials from nature without doing any harm to it. They decorate daily life with what nature readily offers them and remain happy with whatever it is. They didn’t aspire to something too ambitious to be tolerated by nature. So this is an admirable aesthetic tradition.

III. Rock engravings

North American Indians are also famous for their rock engravings. They express themselves by carving on natural rocks. A long time ago, North American Indians had few ways to write and express what they were thinking and the state of their living, so they had

to use stone-carving to record their life experiences. This art is now very rare in modern society. The following excerpt from the novel shows what a wealth of art in rocks the Amerindians have left behind.

Several times Loyd stopped to point out ancient pictures cut in the rock. They tended to be in clusters, as if seeking refuge from the loneliness in that great mineral expanse. There were antelope, snakes, and ducks in a line like a carnival shooting gallery. And humans: oddly turtle-shaped, with their arms out and fingers splayed as if in surrender or utter surprise. The petroglyphs added in recent centuries showed more svelte, self-assured men riding horses. The march of human progress seemed mainly a matter of getting over that initial shock of being here .

This form of art is typical of people who live as an integral part of nature. When they want ego-assertion, they leave their mark in rocks of mountains so that future generations will be able to see it. They didn’t try to tear open the earth or make an explosive impact. This is the very lesson rock engravings teach us try to beautify nature instead of twisting it.

IV. Chicken scratch music

During the long time of North American Indian’s traditional culture, they have established their own music system have their own characteristics. This is also reflected in *Animal Dreams*. When Codi and Emelina go to hear Chicken Scratch music at the outdoor restaurant, she described the music. “The younger people moved aside when the Papago women moved in a loose line, slightly bent over, shuffling over the gravel and sounding — if not looking — exactly like the scratching hens that give the music its name.” This type of music of North American Indians gets its name directly from the moving and action in the music. Barbara Kingsolver also introduces the sources of the music for her readers. “Chicken Scratch music is Mexican-spiced North American Indian polka. It sounds like a wild, very happy, and slightly drunken wedding party, and it moves you up and down; you can’t keep still” (116). For the characteristics of the music, one of them is the loud voice. “The music was so buoyant. One of the Althea sisters actually cracked a smile” (118).

The North American Indians got their music through imitation of natural sounds. By mimicking animals or birds, they put themselves on an equal footing with all creatures on earth. They didn’t take an overbearing

attitude toward their fellow creatures. This attitude is natural because it comes out of a broad-minded love.

V. Ritual dances

The Christmas Dance party is introduced in *Animal Dreams*, this can reflect another traditional culture of North American Indians. All dances are related with prayer, which is based on the traditional living style of old North American Indian. Every dance is a prayer. The human want to make the spirits know their wish by plants and animals.

First, when readers are reading the part of North American Indian's dances, they are easily attracted by one thing: the clothing of the dancers, which has North American Indians' own features. Even for the audience from the other reservations, they wear the most traditional clothing to show their special feature.

"She wore a large dress composed of about six different cotton fabrics, florals and plaids, somehow colorfully harmonic... her gray hair was trimmed in bangs and a pageboy over her ears, but long in back, twisted into a heavy, complicated coil and tied with red cloth. Her hands were noticeably large" (249). This woman best represents the typical North American Indian image. The following is a young girl dancer's description:

In the center of the white square stood a tall young woman in black dress that hung from one shoulder. Her other shoulder was bare. Her waist, her upper arms and wrists, and her buckskin moccasins were all decorated with garlands of colored yarn, fur, and sleigh bells; at the crest of her head was a tuft of white eagle down. The sun shone purposefully on her hair. It hung loose to her waist, swaying as she moved slightly from one leg to the other, her feet barely leaving the ground. She looked graceful and cold.

Second, the corn dance and eagle dance are described in the novel. For these two dances, people can easily guess and imagine what is prayed for just by hearing their names. Yes, North American Indians are frank; the purpose of the dances is to pray for land fertility and rain. For a living, they depend on land, which needs rain to make crops grow.

The corn dancers had remarkable stamina. Sometimes they danced in two facing lines, their whole axis rotating around the plaza like a wheel. At other times the women's line moved into and through the men's and then they broke into pairs, the men leading, practically prancing, while the women held their eyes

on the ground with such concentration as to render it fertile. I would have believed a thunderclap just then, and a summer rainstorm. They danced on and on. They did it, and did it, and did it until early after noon.

Another dance, eagle dance are presented by a group of children. It seemed slightly less reverent than the previous dances, more akin to the childhood phenomenon of the dance recital, but this is also a prayer. Every dance is a prayer. The eagle carries people's thoughts to the spirits in the sky. Animal messengers are for the small, human hope. "As they danced, the children's lips moved constantly in silent recitation" (250).

The corn dance was followed by an eagle dance, which seemed to involve all the young children in the village and a few older, more skillful dancers. Each one was dressed in a dark shirt and leggings, a white embroidered kilt, and a hood of white eagle down, complete with eyes and a hooked beak.

It is obvious that the dance is a ritual with which the Amerindians beg for rain and bumper harvest from nature. To them all their resources and means of livelihood come from nature. So they are grateful for the generous endowment of nature. They don't take their provisions for granted or as a proof of their own ability. Therefore they view man's place in nature in the right way.

VI. Fertility worship

By connecting fertility to her other political concerns, Kingsolver both reduces some of the polemical elements of *Animal Dreams* and draws all readers toward agreement with her point of view. An attention to fertility in all of its myriad forms allows Kingsolver to direct an interest in fertility, besides to questions of ecology and gender relations.

First, Women are responsible for bearing children and keeping fertile. They are respected highly and ranked firstly. Women can be in charge of her whole family. Women are respected and the master of the whole family. "The women are kind of the center of things up here. The man goes to the wife's place." "Pueblo men have to marry out of the clan, and sometimes they go off the pueblo. The land down here stays with the women. So my uncle came here... Maxine Shorty's farm, which she inherited from her mother and would pass on to her daughters, was a triangle bordered by the river and the walls of a short side canyon." (240)

On navel mother, Loyd explained, “She’ s like a special aunt. She’ s the one that cuts the cord when you’ re born, and helps your mother get up out of bed when she’ s ready. They count that as your birthdays—the day your mother gets up” . They do not consider the day child was born as the birthday but counting the mother getting better as all part of the birth. That can also show the love for women and position of women in North American Indians’ eyes.

Second, Kingsolver also introduces the North American Indian’ s tradition for the way to deal with the dead children. In the novel, Codi finds that the walls of prehistoric candos are thick, Loyd explains to her: “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.” (220) North American Indian view the family and keeping fertile as very important thing for their nation’ s lasting flourish, they do so because they do not want their children leave them. From another point view, they believe the dead children have soul which can have a communication with them.

At Last, let us look at the themes in *Animal Dreams* related with fertility. Although women bear the most visible signs of fertility and are often the most involved in its preservation, men are also essential to the process. Most of the activity surrounding childbearing and agriculture in the novel is conducted by women. In each case, however, one key man contributes to the process.

Most literally, fertility is the capacity to bear children. Thus fertility is signaled as a key theme when the novel opens with an emphasis on Codi's double loss of motherhood. Childbearing is essential for the regeneration of a community and for the continuity of its past into the future. The issue of fertility is not however simply a medical capacity to produce offspring. In order to be fertile, one must also know how to preserve life. Fertility can therefore be the effect of raising children but not bearing them, or of raising not children but animals. Where a community or a family is threatened with extinction, fertility becomes a key concern.

As the novel indicated in varied ways, the value of fertility reaches far beyond a woman's womb. Grace became famous as a mining town. Mines are established where the earth itself is fertile and produces precious metals. Such a vision of the earth corresponds

with the North American Indian characterization of Mother Earth, fertilized by Father Sun. However, in reaping the benefits of one type of fertility, the owners of the mine caused another type of infertility. Although it is in arid Arizona, Grace sits in a fertile valley. The water and soil combine to allow great pecan and fruit orchards to thrive. Literally, the nuts and fruits born by trees carry their seeds and help to plant them in the ground where they can sprout new trees. Fruit and nut production is part of the trees' reproductive cycle. Metaphorically, the bearing of fruit represents fertility in a plant. The use of the same word, to bear, for fruit and for children underlines the connection between the two processes.

The North American Indians stand in the novel as the paragons of fertility, able to cultivate in the same valley over hundreds of years and even worshipping Koshari, the kachina or god of fertility, as a key deity. Industry, on the other hand, is regarded as the principal threat to fertility, in the form of Black Mountain Mine. The revolutionary regime in Nicaragua also stands as a symbol of fertility. Its primary representative in the novel is not a president but the Minister of Agriculture.

VII. Relationship inside family and community

Since almost everyone in Grace is related, in *Animal Dreams* family is an integral part of the community. It is one of the most important lessons that Codi learns. It is as she learns the history of her family that she grows to understand her place in her community. Having a place in a family and in a community are essential to feeling a sense of belonging and purpose in the world. Like most other elements of the novel, women stand at the center of families. This becomes clearest in Loyd's description of the matrilineal pueblo and Navajo systems, where property is passed from mothers to daughters. Although she shows the ways in which Anglo culture encroaches on Native traditions, Kingsolver also uses North American Indian traditions as the model for much of her utopic portrayal of Grace. The community of Grace is also named after a group of women, and the family lines are traced back to their women founders. Although some men, such as Doc Homer, are able to carry on a family, this is done with great difficulty. The difficulties of a father communicating with his daughters in the absence of a mother, allowed the Online family to become separated from each other and from the rest of the community. A close examination of three characters will reveal the social relationship of the community in Grace.

1. Codi

In *Animal Dreams*, the main character Codi wants desperately to fit in somewhere and to find a meaning for her life. Her struggle is common to young people of her generation, who often leave the rural town they grow up in for the opportunities offered by larger cities, but must contend with how leaving affects their sense of belonging. Codi's struggle also mirrors Doc Homer's and that of anyone born into a disfavored, or black sheep, family. As a woman, Codi repeatedly looks to men to give her a sense of belonging. However, Kingsolver's feminism becomes obvious as Codi repeatedly demonstrates that these men cannot provide her with a purpose in life. It is not until Codi understands her own relationship to her community, and finds a profession that she enjoys on her own, that she can build on that sense of belonging and purpose with Loyd.

Codi's past is shrouded in a number of mysteries, all of which are linked to childbirth. Her mother died from complications with her pregnancy. In high school Codi accidentally became pregnant, and then out of failure or an inability to care for her own body, she lost the child. Codi's failure to become a doctor hinges on her poor ability to assist a difficult delivery during her residency. Pregnancy for Codi is linked not to the creation, but to the destruction of life. Fertility relates not only to the capacity to bear children, but also to the ability to carry forward a family history. Codi has a great deal of difficulty in connection with past as well as future generations. Although she comes home to Grace to assist her father, she does not move into his home. While as a child Codi tried to establish herself as being connected to older generations by calling a woman *abuelita* (grandmother), that very same woman insisted on Codi's separation from any family history, with the designation "orphan."

Codi is the modern prodigal child who leaves home, goes through a great number of professions in a great number of cities, and returns home to care for her dying father and to learn how to apply her knowledge. In returning to her hometown, Codi must face her past, and as she recovers the memory of her childhood she finds that she has always belonged in Grace and that she is an integral part of the community not only because she comes from there, but also because she has a great deal to offer it in the present. Codi's journey into the past to create a future mirror the path of her town.

2. Doc Homer

Doc Homer shows many signs of being completely disconnected from his community. However, he is the town doctor. He is well known to the townspeople and is surreptitiously cared for by the older women. In addition, his article on its genetics demonstrates a deep interest in the community. While Doc Homer's relationship to those around him may take place in the form of doctor-patient relations and scientific research, the connection to the community is nonetheless still present.

3. Loyd

Loyd serves as the vehicle through which *Animal Dreams* addresses the concerns and the practices of North American Indian culture. Codi once comments that Loyd's view of North American Indian culture is idealized.

Loyd is an expert in cockfighting and owns a number of fighting birds. He takes Codi to a cockfight but agrees to give up the sport when Codi and his mother ask him to. Loyd is well grounded in North American Indian myth and culture. He takes Codi to North American Indian sacred places and explains their significance to her. It is Loyd who is instrumental in giving Codi a sense of the importance of community and an identity rooted in traditional values and cultural heritage.

Loyd is a symbol of fertility, which in large part is connected with his status as a North American Indian. Thanks to his understanding of North American Indian cosmology and to his being raised on the reservation, Loyd has a profound understanding of how to carefully cultivate the fertile land. The land, as it is often called *mother earth*, is a metaphor for the mother. People who know how to cultivate the earth, then, metaphorically know how to bear and raise children.

Loyd has a loving extended family, including his mother, sisters, aunt and a niece, and he is secure in the beliefs and traditions of his North American Indian culture. This gives him an emotional balance that Codi lacks.

In the world of *Animal Dreams*, the families and community are organized around the purpose of reproduction for the perpetuation of the culture rather than for individual material interest. Therefore human relationship is marked by commercialism rather than rivalry. In the story as a whole, the relationship between individuals and family and that between families and the community analogizes the relationship

between human beings and nature in the Amerindian convention. There isn't such a sharp conflict as seen in industrialized cities between deviation and conformity, although there are people not fully integrated. Perhaps this is because the world is one in which all beings, humans, animals and plants, find their proper places. An egalitarian coexistence prevails here and everything is embraced in an ever expanding generous love.

Conclusion

With no doubt, human society is facing an ecological crisis which is more urgent and dangerous than any turning point human has ever faced. The prosperity and wealth brought by progressing science and technology is accompanied with environmental pollution and exhaustion of natural resources. In Barbara Kingsolver's *Animal Dreams*, the readers can not only appreciate the beauty of nature, but also notice human damage done towards nature. In contrast to richness and generosity of great nature, human's behaviors are shameless and ruthless.

We can consider Barbara Kingsolver as an admirer of North American Indians traditional culture, who interweaves North American Indians ecological tradition with today's social development. People today should learn from the nature to find out the mysterious way how this world exists as North American Indians did before. Similarly, Kingsolver agrees that human society needs to develop, but human's expansion must be restricted within the limitation of affordability of nature system. Aimless and limitless exploitation of natural resources must be absolutely banned. What modern people should do Kingsolver suggests is to learn to respect and revere mother nature, to share equal rights of development and blossom with each existing being in nature as North American Indians do and finally immerse themselves into nature.

The ecological wisdom of Barbara Kingsolver is a lighthouse in present human society which is severely polluted by industrial development. One purpose of this paper is to find some solutions to today's environmental damage by analyzing Barbara Kingsolver's works. No matter which historical period human beings live in, the relationship between social development and nature prosperity is the eternal contradictions. Human beings need to balance the

conflict between human's living material and natural resources. The evolution of human society requires making use of natural resources, but after a long-period experiment and failure, anthropocentrism has been proved false and improper. At present, the civilization of human beings is advanced highly, so people begin to seeking more comfortable living environment. For example, noisy cities are no longer the best choice for men. Men spend holidays in countryside, in order to be close to fresh air and peacefulness. It seems that human being's attitude towards nature has changed, but most people do not notice the reality that those resort areas are set up by destroying original natural sceneries, just like the last solution to Grace's pollution in *Animal Dreams*. But Grace is lucky enough that it can recover to the best condition, the struggles to save the town is in time, is not delayed. To some degree, material civilization is developed on the basis of nature's sacrifice. Our human should be reasonable enough to make good use of natural resources, and reject damage to nature made by human exploitation in time, such as planting more pants in rural areas while building ore houses in cities. Human's main mission is to protect the environment around us. For the purpose of achieving ecological civilization, human should expand financial investment of ecological supervision, control on environmental pollution and environmental protection, instead of remolding nature by human's eager.[3]

To make sure that policies of the protection of environment and cultural heritage are not only oral slogans and works on paper. The public also should give great assistance on this issue, so to arouse the public's conscience of saving natural resources voluntarily, which is the foundation of accomplishing harmony between human's society and nature. Following the instructions of scientific outlook on development to create an energy-efficient, environment-friendly society and to oppose extravagance will make positive effect on ameliorating natural environment and extenuating the negative impact of environmental crisis and lost on cultural heritage.

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