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Faith in Place: Theologies of Implacement in Charles Frazier's *Cold Mountain*, Lee Smith's *Saving Grace*, and Wendell Berry's *Jayber Crow*

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Faith in Place:
Theologies of Implacement in
Charles Frazier's *Cold Mountain*,
Lee Smith's *Saving Grace*, and
Wendell Berry's *Jayber Crow*

A Thesis Presented for the
Master of Arts
Degree
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Laura Ruth Hicks
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ABSTRACT

Appalachian author and critic Jim Wayne Miller has cited the literature of Appalachia as being, above all, earthly. While often referencing ties to a “spiritual” world, this world is strictly separate from the earthly. This causes Appalachian literature, in Miller’s estimation, to be “rooted” in the world. However, by looking at three novelists in and around the Appalachian region—Charles Frazier, Lee Smith, and Wendell Berry—we can see where Miller’s assertions fall short in relation to contemporary fiction. While the works of these novelists might fit Miller’s description of “rootedness,” it is their rootedness which causes the novels and the characters within them to interact with and explore the spiritual. Through their works, all three authors highlight the complex relationship between the “worldly” and the “otherworldly.” In so doing, the two are brought into relation, and literature, instead, becomes a meeting ground for investigating the ways in which these distinct spheres relate and interconnect.

In *Cold Mountain*, *Saving Grace*, and *Jayber Crow*, Frazier, Smith, and Berry explore the tensions between the spiritual and the physical through their concerns with place. Focusing on Edward Casey’s critical work on place and its intersection with the work of several Christian theologians, we can see the differing ways in which these authors navigate and come to terms with the relationship between the “worldly” and the “otherworldly.” Through their novels, these three authors also explore the various dimensions of place as the site of interaction and reconciliation for these two divided concepts. These various dimensions, however, are united through the stressed role of human interaction in relation to place: interaction with landscape, homeplace, community, and the natural world.

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INTRODUCTION: RECONCILING RELIGION, REGION, AND PLACE THROUGH LITERATURE

In his essay “Appalachian Literature at Home in This World,” Jim Wayne Miller argues that while the traditional religion of the Appalachia is surprisingly “otherworldly” in its concerns, the literature is “decidedly worldly, secular, and profane” (13), relying on a strict separation of the worldly and the otherworldly, the spiritual and the physical (or profane). Miller speculates that perhaps “literature in Appalachia had no choice but to persist in a worldly, secular tradition, since fundamentalist Protestantism had no place” for its “worldly” concerns (13). Referencing James Still’s *River of Earth*, Miller demonstrates how this literature serves to “root people in this world no less than trees” (21). While Miller’s essay brings to light many of the tensions between the physical and the spiritual, the religious and the profane, that are found in the literature in and around Appalachia, one wonders if the divide he articulates is quite as clearly defined as he seems to believe. While Miller does state that the literature of Appalachia is not devoid of religious concerns, “both views are present,” they are “strictly separated” (15).

As someone who grew up as a Christian in what Miller would define as Appalachia, I find Miller’s concerns to be both familiar and troubling. The divide between the worldly and the otherworldly that Miller identifies does, many times, permeate the rhetoric of the region. Within a practice of Protestant Christianity likely similar to the one Miller has in mind, I grew up listening to countless sermons on denying the world, singing countless hymns on the hope of escaping to heaven one day. However, as someone who continues to embrace commitments to Christianity alongside concerns

with place and Appalachia, Miller's statement also reduces and simplifies these relationships. He relies on a strict dualism, in which the both the worldly and the otherworldly, the spiritual and the physical, must remain completely isolated. In it, literature simply fills the place of the worldly because no room remains for it in the spirituality of Protestant Christianity. Miller's dualistic simplification not only of the literature of a particular geographic region but also of the relationship between literature and Christianity leaves little room for the more specific relations at stake. With this in mind, what are the possibilities for a more integrative view of literature, one that is born and speaks from a particular place and community? While the Gnostic divide Miller relies on is, as theologian John Inge states, many times our experience of the world, do alternatives exist for the assertion of a different view? Can these be found literature?

Because so much of Miller's assertion rests on particular authors' presentation of place, I will focus on three contemporary novelists concerned with place—Charles Frazier, Lee Smith, and Wendell Berry—to demonstrate the ways in which they complicate this dichotomy. I see these three authors as being connected not only through their commitments to place but also their integrated, though many times divergent, views of spirituality and religion. To show the ways in which place works to foster this integration, I will focus on their overlap with alternative views of Christianity, beyond the definition that Miller stresses. Additionally, in view of Miller's concerns, all three of these authors express, in varying degrees, commitments and ties to Appalachia and the surrounding region, writing from North Carolina and Kentucky. By looking at Frazier's *Cold Mountain*, Smith's *Saving Grace*, and Berry's *Jayber Crow*, an alternate view emerges. All discover and present more integrative relationships within their works, in

many cases presenting the physical as related to the spiritual in ways that complicate Miller's simple dichotomy. Through these authors, we see that the relationship between the worldly and the otherworldly, religion and literature, is not as simple as Miller claims. Instead, their novels show the possibility of reconciliation through a literature of place.

This occurs through many of Frazier, Smith, and Berry's characters' exploration of less dualistic view of physicality and spirituality, immanence and transcendence. Though many of these characters explicitly comment upon and struggle with this duality, they also search for moments of reconciliation and express a struggle bring the two in relation. In their attempts to do so, both characters and authors see concern with place as integral. In these novels, place, many times, serves as a site of reconciliation between these divided terms. It becomes, even if briefly, a means through which characters grapple with the important relationships that exist between the physical and the spiritual. While Miller associates a particular literature's "rootedness" with the perpetuation of this divide, these authors, through their novels, demonstrate that "rootedness" does not necessarily exclude a spiritual significance. In fact, through place, this "rootedness" can be seen as a way to provide a more integrated view of the two. Through place, a view emerges that is strikingly different from the one Miller asserts of Protestant Christianity: a view that, as theologian N.T. Wright states, "God is transcendent over the universe but also imminent within it" (223). To further reveal this connection, I will look at these works in relation to some of the concerns raised by disciplines as diverse as cultural geography and Christian theology. In these, the type of inhabited place presented by Frazier, Smith, and Berry is seen to hold the potential for reconciliation, not in the

conjoining of the “worldly and otherworldly,” but instead in their positive relationship and integrated interaction.

The Importance of Place and Implacement

Though he does not specifically address the spiritual aspects of place and emplacement, the work of philosopher and cultural geographer Edward Casey is foundational to discussions of human interaction with place. In his work *Getting Back Into Place*, Casey expounds on previous philosophical work concerning the importance of place, producing an extensive phenomenological study of the concept of place. This is important for Casey because, he states, “philosophers have acted as if...place were a mere annex of space or something subordinate to time or history. Though sometimes touching on aspects of place,” he continues, “philosophers have not acknowledged its full scope and significance” (xxi) in discussions of space and time. Casey defines “place” as “the immediate ambience of my lived body and its history, including the whole sedimented history of cultural and social influences and personal interests that compose my life-history” (“Body” 404). This being the case, Casey explores the relationship between place and self, arguing that the two are dependent on each other, are mutually constitutive. Particular places humans find themselves occupying “have everything to do with what and who we are (and finally, *that* we are)” (*Getting* xxi). In light of this, Casey proposes a term through which he can more accurately explore the relationship between self and place: *implacement*. Expounding on this term, Casey explains his use “im-” at

the beginning of this word to stress “the action of getting in or into, and it carries connotations of *immanence* that are appropriate to the inhabitation of places” (367).¹

Casey’s articulation of what he terms the “place-world” depends on the notion that place is not an isolated geographical concept but is rather dependent on the self and bodily interaction. In his essay “Body, Self, and Landscape: A Geophilosophical Inquiry into the Place-World,” Casey adopts Pierre Bourdieu’s term “habitus” to reveal the “co-constitutive” elements of place and self, while also including his own concerns with the “lived experience” of place. For Casey, habitus (a term he frequently uses in *Getting Back into Place* as well) encompasses the relationship between the two without conflating them; it, in his words, acts as a mediator, much as it does for Bourdieu, as “the mediatrix between place and self” (409). However, while Bourdieu’s concept of habitus is, for the most part, an unconscious inaction, Casey sees an “actional dimension” involving bodily behaviors as necessary to his idea of habitus. “Whatever its antecedent history and subsequent fate,” Casey argues, “a habitus is something that we continually *put into action*; and we do so, moreover, by means of concrete bodily behaviors” (412). These behaviors reveal important factors in the relationship between place and self in Casey’s use of this term: “Even if it is the internalization of social practices by way of origin, in its actual performance a given habitus is reaching out to place” (412). Instead of being abstracted from the bodies that inhabit and move within it, habitus is concretized through *habitation*, “concerted bodily movements that are the embodiment of habitual schemes, their explicitation and exfoliation in the inhabited place-world” (412). Through

¹ In this, Casey differentiates his term from the normal spelling of emplacement to highlight its association with immanence. With my own concerns in mind, I will be making use of Casey’s term and definition throughout.

this, the place-world is “not only perceived or conceived but actively *lived*” (413).

Through his reworking of Bourdieu’s concept, Casey presents a definition of habitus as dependent on the body, on physicality and physical interaction.

Connecting Place, Christianity, and Ecology

To explore the spiritual component of implacement in literature, essential when addressing Miller’s concerns, I will look at Craig Bartholomew’s *Where Mortals Dwell*, which discusses the treatment of place in the realm of Christian theology. In it Bartholomew calls for a renewed understanding of the significance of place in Biblical and theological studies. Stressing that the Judeo-Christian creation story isn’t just a story of humans or a story of the natural world, Bartholomew reveals this story as a one of relationship between the two, a relationship that works itself out in *place*. This interrelationship “cuts through the Platonism and Neoplatonism that have so infected Christian theology through the centuries, hindering us from finding God *where* we are” (15). Significantly, Bartholomew’s work not only brings Casey’s concept of habitus into the realm of theology, providing a space for placial concerns within Christianity, but it also demonstrates how a knowledge of place is essential in breaking down divisions such as those on which Miller bases his argument. Instead, “God is encountered by humankind in *this place* in which he has implaced us” (17). Therefore “place is never fully place without God as a co-inhabitant” (29). With this inclusion of God in addition to self in the conception of place, Bartholomew reveals not only the embodied nature of place but also the sacramental nature of place. Place, according to Bartholomew, becomes the site of “meeting and encounter” (17).

A Sacramental View of Place

With Bartholomew's statement in mind, though, what is it that is encountered? In order to present a clearer relationship between the spiritual and the material without condensing the two into one, John Inge makes use of the concept of "sacramental encounter." In his work *A Christian Theology of Place*, Inge introduces this term as an aid in considering the precise relationship between humans and the natural world. He calls for the adoption of a "sacramental view of the universe," in which place functions as sacrament. This notion of sacrament, originating in both Catholic and Eastern Christian traditions, Inge argues, extended to many Protestant practices, despite an association with stressing "the wickedness of the world in its determination to concentrate upon the salvific work of Christ in the atonement" (62). In this assertion, he cites Anglican theologian William Temple, who speaks of Christianity as the "most materialist of the great religions" (64), which, through its foundation in the incarnation, "regards matter as destined to be the vehicle and instrument of the spirit, and the spirit as fully actual" to us in the material (qtd. 64).

In this way, Inge reveals, place also becomes a key component in relating a sacramental view of the universe. Important in Inge's definition is not necessarily the acknowledgement that all places are sacramental at all times, but that they can be revealed as sacramental when they become "events" or "encounters." In other words, when they become "the seat of relations and of meeting and activity between God and the world" (68). In this way, sacramentality focuses not so much on inherent qualities of the universe but on activity that occurs in "particular" places, as Inge states, in which this sacramental nature is revealed. A theology of place, then, according to Inge, would stress

that “Sacramentality is not simply an affirmation of the world as it is, but of the fact that Christ is in the world to unite the broken fragments of life, making the material a vehicle for the spiritual” (76). However, Inge goes on to state—an important fact in light of Miller’s assertions—this is not tantamount a “dualistic approach: our experience may sometimes suggest such a duality, but religious experience, understood sacramentally links the dualities under which the one world keeps appearing” (76).

Working from a similar notion of sacramentality, though one associated with the natural world, Alister McGrath asserts the “theological affirmation that “nature is a sign—that it points to” and contains “something greater” and something of this “may be known through the natural world” (141). In this, McGrath introduces an ecological component to a view of the “place- world,” one that will be especially significant in relation to Frazier and Berry. His work *The Reenchantment of Nature: The Denial of Religion and the Ecological Crisis* echoes many of Bartholomew’s concerns with place, though in a more ecologically focused exploration of the relationship between humans the natural world (which, notably, should be distinguished from Casey’s view of place and habitus). Through the natural world, McGrath argues, God actively participates with humanity. To use Casey’s term, the natural world points to the shared habitus of God and humankind. In returning to Miller’s contentions, then, we can see that an attention to place within literature does not necessarily exclude the possibility of “otherworldly” concerns, but instead locates and situates them.

However, Miller also attributes this disconnect between the “worldly” and the “otherworldly” as having roots in a Protestant Christian conception of life after death dominant in the region. However, keeping in mind that these authors attempt to present

both sides of this duality as opposed to merely focusing on the “worldly,” what possibilities do they present for a different vision of life after death? With Miller’s concerns in mind, discovering an eschatology that reflects a sacramental relationship and maintains commitments to place becomes especially important. If place functions sacramentally, then is what is the eschatological fate of place? To help elaborate on this issue, I turn to the work of Anglican theologian N.T. Wright, specifically *Surprised By Hope*. In this work Wright sets out to reveal contemporary views of life after death and their true roots. In so doing, he presents a view of life after death more in keeping with many of the concerns of theologians of place, which confronts the damaging dualities that are revealed through dependent on a separation of “this world” from “another world.” In this, the “otherworldly” does not remain strictly separate from the present, having no bearing on it (as Miller’s view of the literature of Appalachia).

Focusing on a Christian conception of bodily resurrection, Wright criticizes the type of spirituality that isolates concerns with life after death from present concerns, an isolation often described as the complete division of the spiritual and the physical. By concentrating on the role of the body in a Christian conception of resurrection, Wright breaks down this divide, revealing that “Heaven, in the Bible, is not a future destiny but the other, hidden dimension of our ordinary life” (19). As a result of this, Wright, in his introduction, considers his book not only a work about life after death but, inescapably, a book “about the discovery of hope within the present world” (xi). In this view, creation is not simply synonymous with Creator or spirituality, but the two are intricately related and connected. This is the ultimate alternative for “all types of Gnosticism, of every worldview that sees the final goal as the separation of the world from God, of the

physical from the spiritual, of the earth from heaven” (105). These assertions, side by side with those of other theologians, present a more complex consideration of the connections between the physical and the spiritual, place and spirituality than the simple dichotomy in Miller’s argument. These also reveal the need for an alternative view of the relationships between literature, place, and religion than the one that Miller presents.

To help reveal these, I argue in the first chapter, Charles Frazier’s novel *Cold Mountain* serves as an alternative to the type of literature that Jim Wayne Miller associates with the Appalachian region, a literature completely focused on “worldly” concerns. Through the characters of Ada, Inman, and Ruby, Frazier presents a relationship between self, place, and spirituality in which all three intricately interact. In this chapter, my focus on place will be concerned mostly with the landscape: the landscape of Cold Mountain itself and the surrounding landscape through which Inman must travel to arrival at Cold Mountain. This reading also highlights many of Frazier’s ecological concerns, revealing how an awareness of the relationship between place and self, overlaps with and is essential to an ecological ethic as well.

In a related claim about Smith’s *Saving Grace*, I also challenge Miller’s assertion that Protestant Christianity has forced Appalachian literature to inhabit the space of the “worldly” to the exclusion of other concerns. Through this, I express the importance of what Casey terms “re-implacement” in Grace’s narrative, revealing the importance of physical action and bodily memory in the return to her old home at the novel’s end. This moment of return is significant for Grace both physically and spiritually, in a way that reveals the interconnection of the two. In this chapter, I will focus on the connection between place and inhabiting, paying particular attention to places associated with homes

or buildings and their connection to memory. However, as I note, Smith's novel intentionally leaves the reader with many unanswered questions, hesitant to present a complete view of Grace's transformation and return to place.

For this more complete view, then, I finally turn to Wendell Berry's *Jayber Crow*. In this novel, I argue, Jayber reconciles the dualities surrounding him through an adoption of what Inge terms the "sacramental view" of place. Important in this reconciliation for Jayber is also a recovery of an eschatological imagination similar to the one which Wright articulates. Berry's presentation of "life after death," through the narration of Jayber Crow, is one in which a conception of heaven is intricately connected to and felt in the present world, affecting and shaping past, present, and future. In this chapter I will stress not only landscape and inhabitation (or re-implacement) but also the role of the community in the relation of self to place and in the type of sacramental vision that Jayber adopts.

Through this, I see Berry, if not correcting, at least expounding upon areas in which the other two lack. In many ways, Berry's concerns "pick up" where the others leave off, attempting to demonstrate what a sustained implacement or place-commitment might look like. In looking at this novel, I also argue that Berry articulates a clearer vision of the precise relationship between the physical and the spiritual, place and self, the worldly and the otherworldly. In echoing concerns similar to Wright's, Berry also reveals the ways in which enacted and physical hope within particular place commitments is an essential element of the reconciliatory nature of place.

Through the discussion of these authors, I will complicate some of Jim Wayne Miller's claims and the assumptions upon which they are based. In opposition to a view

in which Protestant Christianity only serves to create a literature “situated squarely in the secular realm,” (14), I will show how this literature, in its concerns with place, relates the secular and spiritual in more complex ways. Additionally, in choosing authors with ties to the Appalachian region, I question the Miller’s view that the most “vigorous” literature of a region, “the writing which is an expression *of* the region and not a report *on* it” (15) keeps the spiritual and the secular distinctly separate, with literature falling strictly in line with the secular. In this, Larry McGhee’s description of the relationship between religion and land in Appalachia is apt: in his essay “Religion in the ‘Sense of Place’ in Appalachia,” McGhee states that the land helps to give “religion its importance in Appalachia;” through it the material helps give shape to the immaterial (127), to locate it and reveal its immanence.

In this process, literature plays a significant role, by constructing creates narratives that help present these complex relations. While all of these authors do not always locate this within a particularly Christian tradition, my use of Christian theologians will shed light on alternative influences of Protestant Christianity. They show that literature, as well as place, can act as a site of reconciliation. While Miller claims that its rootedness in place as a reaction to a spiritualized Christianity keep the literature firmly in the secular realm, I argue that this divide simplifies relations. In fact, a literature’s “rootedness in this world” is what allows it to retain its connection to complex spirituality as well. Through these works, place and the voices coming from it, seeks to reconcile rather than divide, to bring into relation rather than divorce.

CHAPTER I
SHAPING TO “THE MAZE OF ACTUAL LANDSCAPE”:
SPIRITUALITY AND INHABITED PLACE IN CHARLES FRAZIER’S
COLD MOUNTAIN

Just past the front cover of Charles Frazier’s *Cold Mountain*, the reader is confronted with a standard map of the southern Blue Ridge Mountains, in which the work’s namesake is located. As the map covers such an expansive area, the details of Cold Mountain itself are not easily discernable, highlighted only by a small box imposed around the area. In this representation, Cold Mountain is shaded, hardly distinguishable from the surrounding topography. It looks, ultimately, obscured by surrounding landscape and alternate places. However, this map serves as the first of several maps referenced later in Frazier’s narrative. As the novel progresses, Frazier describes two alternative maps to augment this initial one. One is drawn by a slave Inman encounters, and it helps him navigate his way back to Cold Mountain. The other is a map that Ruby draws for Ada of Black Cove and her vision for it. Frazier uses his descriptions of these maps as a means of exploring humans’ navigation of and relation to place. Through these alternative maps Frazier suggests a relationship to landscape and the wider world that is what Edward Casey would describe as “placial” rather than “spatial.” This attention to place also contains an element of what Alister McGrath might term “resacralization.” In his emphasis on embodied and localized place, Frazier rejects dualistic conceptions of the relationship between the physical and the spiritual, presenting, instead, a view of place, body, spirit, and landscape that is what Casey would call “constitutive co-ingredience” (*Body* 406).

Place, Space, and Spirituality in Modern Context

In *Getting Back Into Place*, Casey voices a contention held by many place theorists and cultural geographers: our notions of place have suffered from the lack of critical attention and thought given to place in modern theory. Instead, because place has been treated as a “mere annex of space” (xxi), places have come to be viewed as mere geographical sites, compartments of space. In differentiating between these two terms, the definitions of Yi-Fu Tuan, pioneer in place and space studies and influence on Casey, are beneficial:

In experience, the meaning of space often merges with that of place.

“Space” is more abstract than “place.” What begins as undifferentiated space becomes place as we get to know it better and endow it with value.

Architects talk about the spatial qualities of place; they can equally well speak of the locational (place) qualities of space...Furthermore, if 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)

Or, in other words, if place is associated with the particular and concrete, then space is associated with “objectivity and (in)difference” (*Getting* 38).

From the early modern period onward, Casey argues, more possibilities for mobility have caused places to be relegated to “arbitrary positions” (xxi) in space. Philosophically, for Casey, this stems from a Newtonian view of infinite space and a Cartesian conflation of matter and space. He argues that once these concepts have been accepted, the standing of place “is either purely conceptual in character...or else it is

simply identified with empty space” (*Fate* 156). “In the end,” he states, “there is no such thing as ‘place,’ while there is preeminently a single universal ‘space’” (*Fate* 161). This privileging view of space discounts the more significant, and perhaps primary, stakes that places have in terms of identity formation, social and cultural relations, and lived experience (xiii). The distinctively modern preoccupation with space over place, for Casey, comes from a modern obsession with time. With modernity, he states, “The uniformity of space and the equability of time have replaced, or more exactly displaced, the priority of place” (*Getting* 38). For Casey, then, the state of humanity in a modern context is predominantly one of displacement. With an overemphasis on the compression of time and space through speed, humans, in essence, become displaced.

Because of this, Casey expresses a profound need for structures and ways of thinking that stress emplacement. To articulate his vision of these structures Casey, in his work “Body, Self, and Landscape,” uses his extended definition of Bourdieu’s concept of habitus, as the “mediatrix of place and self,” and the embodiment of self within place (409). Casey notes that habitus is not simply defined as the “the sheerly habitual,” but expands to include “open-ended habitual action within placial constraints” (410). Habitus, within Casey’s definition, stresses the natural limits within which action occurs. He also emphasizes the performative aspect of habitus, as *action* “reaching out to place” (412), causes its ultimate realization to rest in *habitation*. In defining habitation, Casey notes that “the self relates to the place of habitation by means of concerted bodily movements that are the embodiment of habitual schemes, their explication and exfoliation in the inhabited place-world” (412).

Though not reduced to this, an important part of habitation and habitual movements within place is also dependent on an awareness of interaction with the natural world. Importantly, hand in hand with a lack of concern with place in a post-Enlightenment period, also comes what theologian Alister McGrath calls a “desacralization” of the natural world, in which a scientific view of the natural world stresses use value or explanation over a fuller view of human interaction with the natural world. Not only does “the influence of the Enlightenment” lead to “reductionist models of inquiry which...encourage mastery and marginalize the richness of the lived experience of place in favor of abstract space” (Bartholomew 17), but it also limits the possibility of natural world as a site of spiritual engagement for humans. The model of nature that has been implicated in this process of disenchantment,” writes McGrath, “is that of the universe as a mechanism—as a machine, devoid of purpose or goals” (101). This treatment of the natural world then, in McGrath’s view, causes a “desacralization” that brings with it disorienting effects in regards to place. It makes the interpretation of any sort of purpose not only difficult but, at times, unnecessary or impossible, relegating nature to the status of machine to be used by humans, making it impossible to account for the particularity of place.

Displacement in Cold Mountain

It is this sense of displacement brought on by the forces of modernization that Charles Frazier presents through the character of Inman in *Cold Mountain*. The narrative begins with Inman escaping from a Civil War hospital and beginning his journey home. At this point in the novel, Inman expresses a disorientation stemming from exposure to

the war and its technologies. Not only do the scenes of violence and trauma that Inman has experienced disorient him, but the movement necessary in the war itself also physically displaces him. He is in an unknown place, located in what could simply be described as the landscape of war, and is seeking to geographically locate himself as a means of coping with the displacing effects of war. In the war hospital Inman finds himself trying to recover a sense of what Casey might term his “primal place.” His time in the hospital is spent trying to recover from the lack of physically being present in this place, “forming the topography of home in his head” (16). Therefore, for Frazier, the effect of war is expressed as displacement—both physical and spiritual, manifesting itself in Inman’s desire to return to his “primal place.” As Casey observes, “To lack a primal place is to be ‘homeless’ indeed, not only in the literal sense of having no permanently sheltering structure but also as being without any effective means of orientation in a complex and confusing world” (*Getting* xv). Throughout the beginning of his journey, Frazier describes both Inman’s physical and spiritual displacement as an alienation from and inability to access his “place.”

It is the ensuing displacement that Inman, though he may be unable to name it, perceives: the threat of place being lost or destroyed through war and the modern, destructive technologies that travel with it. Near the beginning of his journey, Inman remembers a conversation with a young soldier from Tennessee after the battle of Fredericksburg. Though Inman had dismissed the conversation at the time of its occurrence, he returns to it, finding the words hauntingly accurate in relation to the displacement that he feels and fears. As the two look across Fredericksburg, the boy observes, “Right there is what comes of knowledge” and “tip[s] his chin out at the broken

land” (117). In this comment he labels and critiques the place-destroying potentialities of war, especially a modern war capable of producing such massive alterations of landscape.

Inman’s physical displacement also directly coincides with a type of spiritual displacement connected both to his distance from Cold Mountain and, more broadly, to his experience of encroaching modernity and war. In a telling statement at the beginning of the novel, Inman articulates the connection he sees between modernity and spirituality, saying that the “mere existence of the Henry repeating rifle or the eprouvette mortar made all talk of spirit immediately sound antique” (22). Throughout the novel, in his frustrated attempts to find meaning in his surroundings and situations, Inman references the “metal face of the age” and its advancements and its ability to make Inman become “lonesome and estranged from all around him” (22). These descriptions reflect many of the concerns raised by Casey and McGrath concerning the effect of modernization and enlightenment thinking on spirituality and place. Frazier’s notable description of the age as having a “metal face” recalls the mechanical metaphors of which McGrath is so wary. It resembles Enlightenment presentations of the world as a clock or an assembly of parts, cold and industrialized. Additionally, in his use of the word “antique” Frazier also implies that, in Inman’s mind at least, spirituality has become a relic. It is not necessarily completely discarded for him, but it no longer holds a place of necessity and practical use, still present in the “metal” age in which he finds himself, but not belonging to that age.

As a result of this, Frazier writes, “That summer, Inman had viewed the world as if it were a picture framed by the molding around the window... Those pieces together seemed to offer some meaning, though he did not know what and suspected he never

would” (7). Underlying this statement is the fear that Inman articulates more directly later in the novel: the fear that his life will be one which is “unredeemed.” Inman fears that because of his experiences, his life will be “marked down a dark mistake” (311). In this description, Frazier’s conception of redemption exists alongside and is associated with Inman’s attempts to make meaning of his experiences. Frazier also connects Inman’s hope of redemption, at least in part, to his reconciliation with his surroundings. If he is unable to be connected to and perceive coherence in the physical world that surrounds him, from which he feels isolated, Inman risks living a life that he terms as “unredeemed.” However, this redemption is ultimately one that Inman cannot create for himself. The journey he undergoes, then, is not simply a search for Cold Mountain, but is also a search for what Frazier calls his “redemption.”

Similarly, Ada’s initial lack of embodied emplacement comes from a distance from the land made possible, in part, by more modern forces of urbanization and capitalist economy. Before moving to Cold Mountain, Ada and her father had lived in Charleston, and Ada recalls being skeptical of the move from Charleston because “All of their Charleston friends had expressed the opinion that the mountain region was a heathenish part of creation, outlandish in its many affronts to sensibility, a place of wilderness and gloom and rain...” (55). In this statement, Ada’s friends disconnect culture from nature in a way that makes Ada initially hesitant or unable to interact with her new place. Despite her initial skepticism, though, Ada realizes that her relations in Charleston, while containing their own placial commitments, helped to foster an abstraction from the natural world. They were unable to present the fuller picture of relations that Ada needs at the time. A key component of this is found in Ada’s

discussion of her economic relations in Charleston, in which a money economy helped abstract her from many of the sources of her “living.” After struggling to provide food and clothing for herself, Ada notes that “When Monroe was alive, living was little more laborious than drawing on bank accounts, abstract and distant” (104). After the death of Monroe she realizes “a measure of applied knowledge in the area of food production and preparation would stand her in better stead at that particular time” than any of the knowledge that she had acquired in Charleston (31).

While an answer to the disconnection between spirituality and place may initially be thought to exist in many of the philosophies of her time, these prove to be another displacing force for Ada. Ada is introduced to the writings of Ralph Waldo Emerson through her father, Monroe. In his move to the more rural area of Cold Mountain, Ada’s father seems to fashion himself as the “powerful mind” of which Emerson speaks in *Nature*, making use of what Emerson describes as the “advantage which the country-life possesses...over the artificial and curtailed life of the cities” (1591). Through this reference to Emerson and *Nature* in particular, Frazier reveals a notable distinction between the different views of nature, place, and spirituality. While Emerson imbues nature with the sense of sacredness, perhaps akin to that for which McGrath calls, aligning nature with the concerns of the “spirit” (1583), this view of the sacred element of nature is much different from that presented by Bartholomew and, arguably, Frazier. Emerson’s view relies on a sharp distinction between the physical, or bodily, and the spiritual. In his opening remarks in *Nature*, Emerson stresses this delineation between spirit and body; he includes “my own body” in a list of terms that he describes as “NOT ME” (1582). In this view, importantly, human actions are inconsequential to place and

can also have no lasting effect on the natural world: human “operations taken together are so insignificant...that in an impression so grand as that of the world on the human mind, they do not vary the result” (1583).

Consequently, Monroe’s reading of “Nature,” in many ways, fosters an abstract view of nature and the “spirit.” This can be seen through his view of the farm on which he and Ada live. Ada observes that her father had run their farm “rather as an idea than a livelihood” (31). When purchasing sheep for the farm, Monroe insists that he does not want them for the “wool” or the “meat” but “for the atmosphere” (32). In this, her father enacts many of the philosophies of nature presented in Emerson’s work that stress the aesthetic component of humankind’s interaction with nature over the physical. As Emerson states, “nature” and “the world” exist “to satisfy the desire of beauty” (1589). However, pursuing this aesthetic view as an end in itself causes an abstracted spirituality that changes Ada’s relationship to the natural world. She experiences an alienating distance between herself and her place from an aesthetic view of nature and human interaction that deemphasizes any physical component.

In demonstrating some of the failures of Monroe’s view and Ada’s ensuing displacement, Frazier calls for a different view of the relationship between place, spirit, and body. He offers an alternative that Bartholomew might call an “implaced” notion of “sacralized” nature. Frazier searches instead for a view that serves as a placially grounding force, providing a connection between the spiritual and the physical. After experiencing some of the failures of Emersonian philosophy, Ada requires a view of these relationships that will enable her to enact what Casey refers to as the placial aspect of “lived experience.” Notably, in Emerson’s view of nature, which can only be assumed

to apply to more particular and specific places as well, the role of the body is that of mere observer. To counter this more abstract spirituality, Fraizer presents an implaced spirituality in which one bodily “experiences” or interacts with place.

Mapping and Inman’s (Re)Implacement

“Place is what takes place between body and landscape.” (Getting 29)

When faced with both the physically and spiritually displacing forces that surround them, both Inman and Ada search for ways to implace themselves, or as Batholomew would say, “reimplace” themselves. If, as Casey asserts, place is “what takes place between body and landscape” (*Getting 29*), then the ways that both Inman and Ada relate to the landscapes surrounding them is an essential component of this. Not only do both become aware of their “lived experience” of landscape, but they also seek out ways to particularize their more abstracted views of landscape.

To explore the dynamics between place and self, Frazier describes several different types of maps throughout the narrative that highlight the placial over the spatial. Casey’s presentations of different types of navigation are beneficial to seeing how Frazier works this out through his characters. In *Getting Back Into Place*, Casey distinguishes between two different ways of relating to and navigating landscape, one more in line with a placial view of land and the other a more spatial: through maps and through guides. He identifies each as aligning with two different types of knowledge, the systematic and the local, respectively. Systematic knowledge, according to Casey, is based on “long-term systematic surveys...where everything is ‘labeled and arranged’” and usually takes the form of mapping in its relation to place (252). Local knowledge, however, is based in

“the moment,” and is often dependent on a guide. Casey describes this “native guide” as one who “guides from a local knowledge that stems from sensing the landscape close up” (252). Thus the knowledge of the landscape that the local guide exhibits derives, importantly, from a sensory *experience* of the landscape rather than the more objective perception of the systematic map. In this knowledge, the local guide is able to present a way of “know[ing] where one is” that is based on “where one is located in relation to the local landscape, on its terms and in its way” (252). It is a relationship rooted in an intimate connection to and attentive knowledge of the particularities of a place, as opposed to the more abstract relationship of the spatial map.

It is this final type of knowledge that is key for Frazier in navigating landscape and making meaning in the world. This is exemplified, in part, in his presentation of an alternative to the systematic map at the novel’s beginning: the local map Inman receives from the slave. After Inman has been shot, mistakenly assumed to be dead, and buried, he continues his journey with little knowledge of where he is in relation to where he is going; he is at the point where, Frazier says, he has “only sense to rule out the way he had come” (230). As he searches for signs and auguries to reveal the way to Cold Mountain, Inman meets with a “yellow slave” who provides him with a rough map to his destination (231). Frazier’s description of this map significantly lacks reliance on a systematic or schematic presentation of the landscape:

All detailed with little houses and odd-shaped barns and crooked trees with faces in their trunks and limbs like arms and hair. A fancy compass rose in one corner. And there were notes in a precise script to say who could be trusted and who could not. Gradually things got vague and far

apart until in the west all was white but for the interlinked arcs the man had drawn to suggest the shapes of mountains. (233)

Because this map, created by a “local guide,” presents a more particular perception of the landscape, it aids Inman in ways a more schematic map could not. In his drawings of trees and houses, the slave presents a ground-level view of the place, as opposed to the aerial view of traditional maps.² He is able to provide Inman with local information, such as who can and cannot be trusted because his knowledge comes from “sensing the landscape close up” (*Getting* 52).

In providing maps that spring out of a local, lived knowledge of place rather than ones more concerned with “abstract” space, Frazier, with Casey, emphasizes that the importance of place comes from “its power to direct and stabilize us, to memorialize and identify us, to tell us who and what we are in terms of *where we are* (as well as where we are *not*)” (xv). This intimate connection between self-knowledge and place also points to the extent to which the slave’s map addresses so many of the Inman’s concerns about his own disorientation and displacement as he tries to move toward Cold Mountain. Because Inman’s structures of meaning are tied so specifically to the particular place of Cold Mountain, he feels destabilized in his existence and surroundings, unable to navigate or produce his own “local map” as the slave can. From the beginning of the narrative the meaninglessness that is tied to Inman’s experience of war and modern technologies stems as much from his interaction with and perception of place as it does to the war. However,

² In his essay “To Rise and Bloom Again”: Resurrection, Race, and Rationalism in Charles Frazier’s *Cold Mountain*, Cedric Gael Bryant notes the political and social implications of this map as well. Through this map Frazier “challenges these nineteenth century, Jeffersonian views of black bodies by making the “yellow slave” the agent of grace who provides Inman with food and shelter and acts as counselor and guide by creating the wondrous ‘map in ink’ (593).

this lack of meaning can be extended from his isolation from Cold Mountain to his isolation from any particular place at all. Because he is constantly moving, he is unable to experience the potentially directing and stabilizing force of place.

Just as the Inman struggles for discernable meaning in his memory and experiences when he is not connected to a specific place, so the slave's map becomes vague the more it strays from place. Though the map has no clearly delineated boundaries, this vagueness spreads from a central clarity until "in the west all was white" (233). The less it is placed, the more the map travels into what Casey describes as the abstractness of space. In the same way, only when the "white" space that is Cold Mountain becomes embodied place to Inman can he feel more than a "travelling shade" (262). His perceptions of Cold Mountain until this time become increasingly abstracted and often romanticized through his constant reliance on an acquired copy of *Bartram's Travels* to interpret the landscape. He continually reads descriptions of the area surrounding Cold Mountain throughout his journey, in an attempt to fill in the "white space," in which Cold Mountain is located.

The slave's map of localized, lived knowledge of the landscape is also important in stressing the role that place has in relation to the spiritual aspect of Inman's disorientation. Inman believes that a return to Cold Mountain holds the necessary key to not feeling spiritually "cored out." In this he expresses a desire for Bartholomew's concept of "reimplacement." Cold Mountain exists as a type of sacred site for Inman, as he draws on many of the Cherokee myths surrounding the place in his imagining of it. In his desire to return to Cold Mountain, Inman searches for a place in which the spiritual might become manifest in the physical and therefore provide the type of redemption he

seeks. “But he could not abide by a universe composed only of what he could see,” Frazier writes, “especially when it was so frequent and foul. So he held to the idea of another world, a better place, and he figured he might as well consider Cold Mountain to be the location of it as anywhere” (23).

In this, Inman does not dismiss the idea of a better world, associated with traditional conception of heaven or an afterlife, but locates its enactment within the present world, and within a particular inhabited location in the present world. Only when he becomes “placed” is it possible for Inman to believe that “he might not always feel cored out” (355). Frazier presents Cold Mountain as place that holds a redemptive force (such as Bartholomew stresses) that is often limited to an abstract and purely “spiritual” view of heaven. However, Inman’s attempt to invest Cold Mountain with the redemptive force of a better world, notably, is born in his distance from Cold Mountain. In it, Cold Mountain becomes completely associated with the spiritual and loses much of its connection to the material. It contains a mythical significance for Inman that, at times, obscures the place itself.

Embodiment and Naming: Approaching the ‘Thou’ of Place

In articulating a more redemptive relationship with place, theologians Alister McGrath and Craig Bartholomew both make use of the work of Jewish philosopher Martin Buber. Buber’s concept of *I-Thou* relations, for both of them, extends to a view of place, and is an important part of recovering an awareness of the sacramental element of the natural world and place. Bartholomew sees Buber’s conception of an *I-it* relationship falling in line with the scientific, objective view of the world which both Bartholomew and McGrath criticize. Both argue instead for an *I-Thou* relation that evokes “meeting

and encounter” (Bartholomew 17). Though Buber’s concepts have predominantly been applied to human interactions, they can, and should be extended to other elements of place as well. In his work, Buber uses a tree to propose the possibility of this type of interaction. While a subject-subject interaction with a tree is possible, viewing it only in terms of its relation to human perception leads to a subject-object relation. Buber warns against this possibility, saying:

...once the sentence “I see the tree” has been pronounced in such a way that it no longer relates a relation between a human I and a tree You but the perception of the tree object by the human consciousness, it has erected the crucial barrier between subject and object; the basic word I-It, the word of separation has been spoken. (75)

However, it is also the case, remarks Buber, “if will and grace are joined, that as I contemplate the tree I am drawn into a relation, and the tree ceases to be an It. The power of exclusiveness has seized me” (58).

Much like the bodily enacted conception of place that Casey sets forth, Buber’s model for *I-Thou* relation involves a bodily element. “[T]he It-humanity that some imagine, postulate, and advertise,” Buber writes, “has nothing in common with the bodily humanity to which a human being can truly say *You*” (65). Important to *I-Thou* relations is an awareness of the physical presence of the *Thou* (or “*You*”). “The tree is no impression, no play of my imagination, no aspect of a mood;” Buber writes, “it confronts me bodily and has to deal with me as I must deal with it—only differently” (58). The embodied presence also includes a placial dimension and is reflective of Casey’s concept of “implacement.” As Buber states: “I do not find the human being to whom I say *You* in

any Sometime and Somewhere. I can place him there, and have to do this again and again” (59). In this way, Buber presents a possibility of relations that stem from implaced interactions, occurring in a particular “where.” He also presents an alternative to human interactions with place that counter those found in a more “metal” or mechanical view.

A turn to Casey’s conception of the body and place further reveals the different bodily elements of placial interactions. Casey expounds upon the importance of this embodied place in his chapter “The Body in Space.” In this, Casey notes the near absence of any “theorizing in the West concerning the active and supple body in space. The virtual disappearance of this body in favor of the rigid material body goes hand in hand with an abating of interest in place as distinct from space” (45). After again asserting the primacy of place over space, Casey goes on to state, “the directionality inherent in the lived body in place precedes the dimensionality of inert matter in space” (50). In this way, Casey reworks many assumptions about space, place, and movement, stressing that place contains a primary, dynamic character as opposed to “inert matter” of space. The presence of an active body, according to Casey, implies place and vice versa. For Casey, any conception of place must automatically account for the bodily experience of it. If the body is always in what Casey terms a “here” then “the fate of the here is tied entirely and exclusively to that of the body” (50) and the fate of the body tied to the fate of the “here.”

In first looking at Casey’s idea of embodied implacement, we can then see how the characters of *Cold Mountain* also seek to create alternate, *Thou* relationships within place. While Inman mostly suffers from displacement throughout the novel, his physical movements through his surroundings are a significant feature of his attempts to “relocate”

himself. In his journey to Cold Mountain, it is important not only that the place stands for him as a type of “better world,” not simply in his mind, but physically as well. This world is one towards which he is bodily moving; the full experience of “his place” is dependent on his bodily presence within it. Additionally, this embodiment, for Inman, is one that cannot be contained in a reductionist Newtonian, scientific view of the world. Frazier writes of Inman that

He had learned enough of books to think that gravity in its ideal form was supposed to work in straight lines of force. But looking on the creek as it made its snaky way down the hill, he saw such notions to be just airy thoughts. The creek’s turnings marked how all that moves must shape itself to the maze of actual landscape, no matter what its preferences might be. (156)

More real for Inman than the explanation of the creek’s movement through scientific terms is a description of its relation to the land. In the same way, this serves as a reflection for Inman’s embodied movement towards *Cold Mountain*. In the same way that abstract maps might be an aid in navigating, in the end he must learn to shape himself “to the maze of actual landscape” in his bodily movement towards Cold Mountain.

Perhaps even more demonstrative of this embodied aspect of place than Inman’s quest is Ada’s, especially in her relationship with Ruby. Toward the end of the narrative, after Inman and Ada have been reunited, Frazier presents his readers with a final map that illustrates many of these concerns. “Ruby took up a stick and drew out a map in the dirt, Black Cove,” Frazier states. He further describes the map, saying, “She put in the road and the house and the barn, scratched up areas to show current fields, woodlots, the

orchard. Then she talked, and her vision was one of plenty and how to get there” (427). In this map, through Ruby’s representation of the landscape, Frazier presents the possibility for localized, embodied placeness. The active, embodied aspect of Casey’s place-relations can clearly be seen in the agrarian lifestyle Ruby teaches Ada. Not only does Ruby set out a particular view of the landscape in this map, but it is also one that calls for and is dependent on a particular type of embodied action within this place. Frazier states that “All during the cooking and the eating, Ruby would talk seamlessly, drawing up hard plans for the coming day that struck Ada as incongruent with its soft vagueness out the window” (104). In teaching her an agricultural way of life that embodies place, Ruby serves as Ada’s local guide to the interpretation of a landscape that would otherwise remain “vague” from Ada’s “displacing” experiences and philosophies. Ruby guides Ada into a more implaced relationship with her surroundings.

Because Ruby’s relationship to place is so connected to her work in and movement through that place, she, of all the characters, is most attuned to the significance of her connection to this place, enacting it in ways that are so intimate they often seem strange to Ada. In attempting to create an embodied connection to her place, Ada watches Ruby as “her principal text” (137). While observing Ruby, Ada is startled that her knowledge

included many impracticalities beyond the raising of crops. The names of useless beings—both animal and vegetable—and the custom of their lives apparently occupied much of Ruby’s thinking...Every little gesture nature made to suggest a mind marking its life as its own caught Ruby’s interest. (137).

These “impracticalities,” though, are part of Ruby’s *habitus* and are essential, Ada learns, in the navigation of the landscape and events.

The perception of “vagueness” Ada describes is partially remedied not only by reading the local map of the land, but also by promoting a type of *I-Thou* relationship between Ada and the land that serves to counter the abstracted views described earlier. One of Ada’s earliest inactions of these comes when he is able to name a plant she encounters: “Snapweed, she said aloud,” Frazier relates, as Ada watches the flower “snap apart” (37). Frazier describes Ada as being “happy that there was something she could put a name to, even if it was one of her own devising” (37). This interaction is furthered under Ruby’s instruction: Ruby teaches Ada the “names of useless beings” and the “signs” present in nature (137). As she learns from Ruby, Ada acquires this knowledge as well, transforming a journal previously devoted to her “sentiments” and “bits of poetry” (92) into one full of the names and tasks that surround her.

Though an *I-Thou* relationship is not completely enacted simply through the naming of these elements, this naming serves as an entrance into this type of relationship with the elements of place. Through it, Ada begins to break down the “crucial barrier between subject and object” that has been erected through her previous ways of viewing the world, and begins to enact a subject-subject relationship with them. She takes the first step of realizing and identifying a particular relationship that exists between herself and her surroundings, providing a more specific, knowledgeable name. The elements of place more fully emerge from a realm of abstraction and objectification into one of relationship with Ruby and Ada. They help produce the “living sense of a confrontation” so essential to Buber’s presentation of these relationships.

Additionally, Ruby brings Ada into this new type of relationship with her surroundings through her constant reference to the “signs.” In her embodied movement through the landscape surrounding the farm, Ruby “reads” the natural world in order to interpret ways to move through this landscape. “In Ruby’s mind,” Frazier writes, “everything—setting fence posts, making sauerkraut, killing hogs—fell under the rule of the heavens” (134). This view suggests a relationship similar to the one that Buber proposes, in which a type of communication between subject and subject is established. Ada observes that “Ruby assumed the twitter of birds to be utterance as laden with meaning as human talk...” (175). Interpreting the “signs” and reading their surroundings is a way for Ruby to deal with in a manner that accounts for the knowledge that their surroundings must relate to them. It establishes a relationship of meeting and encounter. It also endows them with what McGrath might call a more “sacramental” quality, as the elements of the natural world become signs of an embodied truth.

Though Ada, at times, seems skeptical of Ruby’s methods, she learns to appreciate them for the relationships with place that they create. Ada comes to view Ruby’s attention to the land and the signs as “an expression of stewardship, a means of taking care, a discipline” (134). Ada’s observation is reminiscent of what Bartholomew states that an *I-Thou* placial relationship (posed through the Old Testament creation story) leads to: “localize[d] caring” (27). In this way, Ada is able to embrace an image of these relationships with “a picture held in the mind of the land one occupied” (388). This picture, or map, is framed by the elements of the landscapes but is more inclusive:

You learned them and where they stood in relation to each other, and then you filled in the details working from those known marks. General to

particular. Everything had a name. To live fully in a place all your life, you kept aiming smaller and smaller in attention to detail. (388)

Through Ruby, Ada learns to place herself more fully, in more and more localized ways. As Casey describes it: “Local knowledge is at one with lived experience if it is indeed true that this knowledge is of the localities in which the knowing subject lives. To live is to live locally, and to know is first of all to know the places one is in” (Casey 321). Ruby’s methods also make possible an ethic of care that Bartholomew relates to a resacralized view of place, a care that springs out of an *I-Thou* relationship with the elements of place that surround them. Through this, Frazier stresses not only the active nature of embodied place, but also the possibility of its resacralization.

Cold Mountain is also the site in which this possibility of resacralization exists for Inman. There, Inman also hopes to be able to name what he sees, an important aspect of approaching place as “Thou.” Throughout the novel he is propelled forward by his remembrance and recitation of the names of the places in Cold Mountain. When he is perhaps farthest away from Cold Mountain, after the battle of Fredericksburg, he takes comfort in the fact that he can “put a name to the brightest star in Orion” (116). In this gesture, occurring after one of the most “displacing” battles Inman experiences, he struggles to find a connection to his surroundings that is reflective of one he experienced in Cold Mountain, that is “familiar.” Through Inman’s displacement, however, this connection falls short in its treatment of a natural object only in the terms of human perception, Inman’s. Through the war Inman’s desire for relation finds its only outlet in the objectifying and abstracted perception of the stars. However, this naming at least reveals Inman’s desire for a more knowledgeable relationship with his surroundings.

With this in mind, though, Inman's relation to Cold Mountain increasingly mirrors his relation to the stars he tries to name. In his journey, Inman needs the help of *Bartram's Travels* in order to name and imagine Cold Mountain. In his distance from it and reliance on Bartram's account "to Inman's mind the land stood not as he'd seen it and known it for all his life, but as Bartram had summed it up" (349). This naming of the place relies on his distance from it and the mediation of Bartram's descriptions. This causes it to be slightly distorted—"the peaks now stood higher, the vales deeper than they did in truth"—containing also a distorted spiritual and mythical significance. When he finally arrives at Cold Mountain, though, Frazier alludes to the possibility of more *I-Thou* relationships for Inman. Frazier narrates, "Not a watercourse lacked denomination. Not bird or bush anonymous. His place" (355); Inman then lists the particular names of the places he sees. Through this Frazier hints that Inman, like Ada and Ruby, might come to a relationship with his surroundings that promotes "meeting" and "encounter."

Through some of the final moments in Frazier's narrative, we can see how many of these concerns and dynamics—place, self, spirituality—come together and interact. In one of the final scenes, Inman, after returning to Cold Mountain, faces the "boy" that has been ordered to kill him for deserting. However, Inman responds to him in a way that is counter to the violence he has enacted in many other scenes throughout the novel. Inman refuses to shoot the boy, stating, "I'm looking for a way not to kill you. We can do this so that twenty years on, we might run into one another in town and take a drink together and remember this dark time and shake our heads over it" (443). However, the boy does not respond to Inman's gesture, and his gun moves "quicker than you can see" (444). After shooting Inman, the boy looks at the pistol, astonished, "as if he had not reckoned at all

on it functioning as it had” (444). In this final scene, Frazier reveals two important elements of Inman’s re-implication and its effects, one relating to his acts before his death and another relating to his death itself.

In speaking of this final scene, Cedric Gael Bryant, in “To Rise and Bloom Again,” states that “It is the hope in a Platonic ‘reality of things unseen,’ or rarely seen on his journey - such as love, tolerance, and brotherhood - and Inman's struggle to believe in an enlightened rationalism...that cause him to err tragically at the end” (602). However, his argument presupposes that Inman’s death is simply tragic, containing no redemptive element or mark of change and progression in Inman. Instead, in light of the issues raised by Casey, Bartholomew, and McGrath, Inman’s final gesture can be viewed as a redemptive act of an embodied self in “his” place. By offering this moment of reconciliation to the boy, Inman’s action is strikingly different from his previous treatment of those trying to prevent his return. Through his return, Inman, though briefly, has experienced an “implication” that keeps him from acting as a “disembodied occupant of the cosmos” (416). It is this reimplication that allows him to make the connective act that was viewed by Bryant as a “tragic” fault. Though the boy refuses Inman’s gesture and shoots him, Inman’s death, in this final act, may contain more than the reductive label of “tragedy” accounts for.

Following Bartholomew’s model of redemption as *implication-displacement-(re)implication*, Inman’s reimplication at the end of the novel allow him to extend this gracious and redemptive act towards the boy who is trying to kill him. It provides him the placed meaning he lacked in his wanderings and allows him to attempt to establish subjective relationships with all that surrounds him. Additionally, in describing Inman’s

death, Frazier writes that Inman “drifted in and out and dreamed a bright dream of home...In his dream the year seemed to be happening all at one time, all the seasons blending together” (445). In this vision, Inman has escaped from the placeless “season” of war (276), which he dreaded earlier, and has entered the seasons of his placed landscape. In reference to this cyclical, seasonal time, the redemptive qualities of Inman’s final gesture and death can be seen. Far from being his “downfall,” it is his final act of habitation and redemption, causing him to avoid the “unredeemed” existence he earlier fears.

However, alongside of this lies the actual fact of Inman’s death, which serves to stress a different aspect of Inman’s return to Cold Mountain. The boy’s actions and Inman’s subsequent death also point to the failure of Inman’s vision, the failure of imbuing the place of Cold Mountain *exclusively* with the spiritual significance of a “better world.” Though Inman’s actions express a significant change in his relationships—he no longer feels the need to kill that has marked so many of his interactions before arriving at Cold Mountain—they are also not attitudes and actions that are inherent in the place itself. Far from being the site of escape from the war and its effects, Cold Mountain is still affected by the war and people with those living within the “season of war.” In completely equating the physical site of Cold Mountain with the “Shining Rocks,” or a view of heaven divorced from the material world, Inman disconnects it from the realities of the world in which it exists, the realities of time and particular place. Through this, we see an alternative view of Inman’s return to Cold Mountain: it is a site that can possess redemptive qualities but is not necessarily redemptive in itself. Through this, Frazier

stresses that Cold Mountain is not, in fact, the heaven Inman believes it is. However, it can, perhaps have a relation to it or possess a spiritual dimension.

Through the implacements, or replacements, of both Inman and Ada, Frazier also presents a highly complex vision of the relationship between the physical and the spiritual, or the “earthly” and “nonearthly,” as Jim Wayne Miller terms them. Notably, Frazier does not necessarily connect this recovery to a particular religious practice. The Cherokee mythology Inman partially embraces is, though present, is often as ineffectual as the folk practices he also encounters. The two Christian preachers in the novel fall on either side of the spectrum Miller articulates, with Munroe embracing a spiritualized view to a fault and Veasey embracing the physical side in a hypocritical manner. Though all of these serve to aid Inman at various points, none of them provide him with the type of meaning for which both he and Ada search. Through this, though, Frazier does not exclude the possibility of a spiritual or religious aspect to this meaning, though he is unclear as to its parameters. Ruby’s actions are described as a “concern for the patterns and tendencies of the material world where it might be seen to intersect with some other world” (134). Ada, though she rejects her father’s Emersonian view of nature, admits that the landscape does not “rule out its own denomination of sharp yearning, though Ada could not entirely set a name to its direction” (145).

Through these descriptions, along with the novel’s final scene, Frazier presents a mysterious view of the relationship between the physical and spiritual. While the two are related, it is uncertain, at the novel’s end, the extent of this relation, its boundaries and its convergences. In his lack of articulation of these precise relationships, Frazier, at times, comes close to proving Miller’s view, in which the two sides become so unified that it is

difficult to distinguish their relationship. Despite this, we can also see, through *Cold Mountain*'s intersection with the work of theologians such as Batholomew and McGrath, that alternative relationships to the ones Miller lists as a result are possible. Frazier's novel presents a view of spirituality and physicality in which place acts as the meeting ground for these two often divided concepts.

CHAPTER II

ARRIVING WHERE WE STARTED: LEE SMITH'S *SAVING GRACE* AND THE RE-IMPLACING ACTION OF HOMECOMING

In the opening line of Lee Smith's novel *Saving Grace*, the novel's narrator states, "My name is Florida Grace Shepherd, Florida for the state I was born in, Grace for the grace of God" (3). In this statement, delivered in the characteristic straightforwardness and unapologetic tone the reader comes to expect from the narration, Grace immediately foregrounds two issues that retain profound importance throughout the rest of her narrative: her relationships to place and religion. These two relationships help to move and shape the story that Grace tells, interacting and intersecting in significant and complex ways. Throughout the narrative, place plays a key role not only in the title characters physical arrivals, but also her spiritual ones, serving to integrate the two in many cases. Through this, Smith reveals a definition of place that highlights Casey's concept of "homecoming," a concept related to emplacement but which also includes a temporal element. In Grace's return to Scrabble Creek, she undergoes a bodily re-emplacement from which she begins her narration; a narration that stresses what Casey calls the "renewing" and "redemptive" character of re-implacing actions.

Homecoming and Re-Implacement in Casey

In looking at Smith's treatment of place, Casey's conception of homecoming and re-emplacement are important. In the final chapter of *Getting Back Into Place*, "Homeward Bound," Casey introduces the idea of homecoming, focusing on a return to place, rather than original emplacement of which he earlier speaks. To speak of

homecoming, though, Casey reveals, requires a conception of the interrelated nature of space and time, as homecoming implies that one is returning to a particular place at a particular time. In this he alludes to Mikhail Bakhtin's notion of the chronotope, originally used to refer to space and time in narratives, which stresses that the two are inseparable; space and time in narratives fuse to form a particular chronotope (Bakhtin 84).³ In homecoming, Casey speaks, we find the "intricate dialectic of space and time" (283) which merge in the "event of place" (287).

To arrive at the "event of place" found in homecoming, though, one first must undergo what Casey terms "journey," the movement between places and sites that precedes arrival. Casey's conception of "journey," then, is one in which this "ostensibly temporal idea...harbors a commitment to place," in that all journeys not only embark from place but also have place as their destination (273-4). In this way, homecoming contains a chronotopic aspect, in which its temporality is "inseparable from [its] placiality" (292), in which space, time, and place are all interwoven. Additionally, for Casey, the concept of journey reveals the inevitable "plasticity" of place. "In fact," he notes, "when we journey back to the same place, the place itself need not be [and, I might add, could never be] strictly the same" (274). Its situatedness in time, then, allows for a more dynamic view of place, in which place and placial relations are constantly affected by temporal relations.

Despite this, "re-implacement and co-habitancy," Casey states, "are on the agenda at the ends of journeys" (291). No matter the destination of the journey, re-implacement

³ It is important to note here that Casey distinguishes between the idea of space and time merging in a narrative chronotope and the primacy of "Space and Time" in modern Western thinking, of which Casey is so critical.

takes place in the form of either *homesteading* or *homecoming*. In the act of homecoming, Casey states, duration is separate (and, in his estimation, secondary) to the “fact of return to *the same place*” (290).⁴ This return involves “a series of special alliances,” Casey states, “with those who remain there; with those who were once there but are not dead or departed; with my own memories; with my own current self...and above all with the home-place I once left” (291). Once again, the temporal aspect of this relationship plays an important role in homecoming, not simply in that homecoming is a view of the same place though in different times. Homecoming also involves an interaction of the present with the past through memory, or remembered bodily implacement. In homecoming, one interacts with “a known place and a past remembered in that place, as well as a past *of that place* in the present” (291).

Casey further elaborates aspects of re-implacement in his discussion of the term. He describes the “re” of “re-implacement” as being one of repetition and return. This return, though is “less a unique event or thing or place than a new start, a second chance, a moment of renewal” (296). Further, the “im” of “re-implacement” does not simply connote the “containment” or locational aspects of “in.” Instead, it is “immanent” and “immersed” and “aims not merely to find a place in which to subsist but to make living there intrinsically valuable and memorable” (297). In this way, as is involved in Casey’s description of implacement, re-implacement also includes a bodily dimension: bodily movements “include powers of orientation that help to direct us...along with habitual body memories that allow us to return to the same place” (293). He further describes the

⁴ While Casey stresses the primary importance of return, he also stresses that in *homesteading* (which may overlap with homecoming) that is “ecologically sensitive” involves an ongoing “co-habitancy” (291).

re-implacing actions of homecoming as “matters of memory, and of body memory in particular” (297). “For it is the remembering body that,” he continues, “concluding a time-consuming but timely and well-timed journey, brings us back into place” (297). All of these elements are important aspects of getting us “back into place in a nonbackward way,” as Casey states, in a way that looks both forward and back, is physical and moving, involving both the temporal “re” and the placial “im.”

Journeying Through Place Saving Grace

In Lee Smith’s *Saving Grace* this type of re-implacement occurs, at the end of the narrative, through Grace’s return to her first home at Scrabble Creek. However, to view Grace’s story as one of homecoming and re-implacement implies that it first be viewed as a journey, in Casey’s sense of the word. For Casey, journey is composed of travelling between places, in which humans are actively and bodily engaged, not simply “sites,” which are classified by their “rigidity,” corresponding more to particular locations on a standard map (306). Grace’s “time-consuming” journey that leads to her return to Scrabble Creek takes two forms: her travels with her father and the journey she makes through her own choices after her father leaves. Though Grace’s interaction with particular places varies with each journey, her movement throughout the narrative can be seen as the circular journey of homecoming, beginning at her home in Scrabble Creek and arriving there in the end as well.

To evoke the sense of journey, Smith relies on and reworks traditional conceptions of Christian allegory. Grace’s journey begins under the direction of her father, Virgil, alluding to Dante’s guide through hell in the *Inferno*. Like traditional

allegories, such as *Pilgrim's Progress* many of the names of places and people reflect their role in Grace's life or, in many cases, serve as ironic opposites of their role in Grace's experience. The Duty's are characterized by their steadfast commitment to place and to Grace; Travis Word is identified by his commitment to the "Word of God," and at times, the letter of the law. Furthering the comparison with Dante, Grace's narrative even begins in a "dark wood," which she enters to discover "what has happened to me, so I can understand what is happening to me now, and what is going to happen to me next" (4). However, just as Virgil can only lead Dante so far on his journey, so too must Grace leave her father to experience the type of arrival, physically and spiritually, to which she comes at the end.

Grace's need for re-implacement at the end of the novel comes, in part from the displacement she feels in her travels with her father, Virgil. Grace's journey with her father is one that, for Grace, involves little interaction with place. Navigating their travels at the beginning, Grace acts as "an instrument of Daddy" as he takes them from site to site, rarely stopping at some, actively being rejected at others. After Virgil tells Grace that they will travel without the map, she attempts to locate herself, to name the place in which they find themselves. Her father tells Grace "It don't matter...Everyplace is the same in the sight of God" (127). However, this disorients Grace, as the map is her only connection to potential places: "I needed to know where we were on the map," Grace states (127). Similarly, Grace's travels with her father leave her unable to fully interact with the places in which she finds herself. "We stayed with different people in every town," she states. "Sometimes I'd forget the name of the people I was staying with and have to ask them again in the morning" (130). This causes a type of isolation for Grace,

from both place and people. Grace describes this feeling, saying, “I felt so lonesome, like about a hundred people were missing” (121).

This isolation is the result not only of her father’s view of journey but also his view of arrival. In speaking of their travels, Virgil constantly declares a very particular and precise ending and arrival: heaven. However, Virgil’s conception of heaven is, notably, one which has little bearing on his physical, material surroundings and is described in such spiritualized terms that it remains as abstract as Grace’s unknown destination. Speaking to the Duty family when they first meet near what will be their home at Scrabble Creek, Virgil states, “These children may not have new clothes on their back nor new shoes on their feet, but they are going to Heaven with me. These children are on the road to salvation” (9). This destination, then, becomes a type of arrival that corresponds with and justifies Virgil’s constant movement. In this initial scene of their meeting, Carlton Duty subtly criticizes him for this, saying, “Do you mean to tell me, sir... That you did not have no more definite destination in mind than heaven?” (9).

Notably, Virgil’s view of journey and arrival often conflict with those of Grace’s “Mama.” Grace’s movements begin after her Mama commits suicide as a result, in part, of Virgil’s infidelity. Grace and her father’s ensuing movements are caused not only by her father’s attempt to escape the place that holds the memory of her mother’s suicide, and presumably, his guilt. Their movements also show the implacing power that Grace’s mother had in the family. In contrast to her father’s constant desire for movement in “following the plan of God” (8), the mother keeps the family rooted and implaced within Scrabble Creek, which Grace describes as “the only real house we would ever have” (12). It is also one of the few places Grace can form relationships with both place and people.

With Grace's mother's death, a constant state of wandering ensues for Grace through her father's decisions.

However, throughout the narrative, one wonders if this constant wandering will be Grace's fate, as opposed to a journey based in the hope of some type of arrival. From the beginning of the novel, the destination of Grace's journey is in question. In recollecting her childhood, Grace states, "it appears to me now as a wild mountainside where I was lost...I never know where I'm going, and I never get there" (4). While this statement reveals Grace's perception of her life as journey, it also complicates the definition, revealing a lack of direction. In many of Grace's descriptions, any form of arrival remains possible but always hidden or inaccessible.

After stopping for a brief time in Piney Ridge, TN, Virgil abandons Grace through his relationship with another woman, leaving Grace to begin a different type of journey. The type of journey that Grace begins after her father leaves is one involving little movement initially. In a section of the novel entitled "I Settle Down," Grace marries Travis Word, the minister of the church in Piney Ridge. However, in "settling down" with Travis, Grace inhabits a place that is not her own, but that belongs to Travis's sisters. Her movements through this place are regulated through what Travis's sisters will allow, and Grace contemplates whether she would have stayed if she had been involved in "the day-to-day life of" the place (190). However, Grace eventually leaves, escaping in her affair with Randy Newhouse, which, in turn, provokes other movements.

The Re-Placement of Homecoming in Grace's Journey

After all of her movements throughout the novel, the description given to Grace's re-implacement in Scrabble Creek at the end of her journeys comprises only about ten

pages of the story that Florida Grace tells. However, this ending is, in many ways, key to interpreting the rest of the work, or at least key to interpreting the nature of Grace's re-implacement and its implications. With the importance Smith places on her return to Scrabble Creek, we can view the rest of Grace's story as the type journey ending in the re-implacement of which Casey speaks. While in this Grace's spiritual and physical journeys clearly coincide, their combined significance becomes clear through an awareness of the parameters of Grace's homecoming and re-implacement at Scrabble Creek. Because Grace's narrative mirrors the trajectory of the journey that she takes, her return to Scrabble Creek serves as an arrival in a narrative, physical, and spiritual sense. In Grace's physical homecoming, these other elements coincide as well, revealing the interrelated nature of the three in her connection to place.

After travelling with her father and experiencing two failed marriages of her own, one in which she has two children, Grace returns to her family's house on Scrabble Creek. Upon arriving, Grace comments on the changes in the town, revealing the temporal dimensions of homecoming. "There sat a huge Food Lion Supermarket, right where the Duty's grocery store used to be," Grace narrates. "An enormous paved parking lot full of cars completely covered the place where we'd held the Homecoming, the where I'd had my vision, the place where Daddy's church had stood" (254). In regards to her home at Scrabble Creek, Grace experiences this same temporal aspect of place, not through the changed space, which has remained relatively similar, but through her changed self, which has changed not only physically but also through her experiences. Because of this, her interactions with Scrabble Creek and her old home are changed as well, reflecting the temporal dimension of the place. If, as Casey states, place and self

have a relationship of “co-ingredient,” then a change in self may also result in a change in place, if not simply the perception of it.

Through her physical return to Scrabble Creek, Grace enacts Casey’s description of homecoming. Homecoming, Casey states involves confrontation and interaction “with those who remain there; with those who were once there but are not dead or departed; with my own memories; with my own current self...and above all with the home-place I once left” (297). Grace encounters all of these elements through her physical implacement in Scrabble Creek through what Casey terms her “remembering body,” which intricately connects memory with place. Grace remembers through her re-implacing actions at Scrabble Creek, going through drawers and closets as she needs to: she wears her sister’s sunglasses, which she found “in a dresser drawer along with her old movie magazines” (267). Grace also brings the stove back to its original use, warming the house while she stays there: “I shovel in more coal and leave the stove door open pulling the old rocker up to it,” Grace narrates (269).

The actions of Grace’s “remembering body” through place also initiate the narrative Grace has been telling. In many ways, through her return Grace does not simply remember the place, but the place remembers Grace’s past—through the place, Grace can access the memories of which her narrative is composed. Casey’s citation of James Joyce’s statement that “places remember events” is apt in Grace’s case. Though Grace never states that she is narrating her story from Scrabble Creek, it can be inferred from her comments at the beginning of the narrative. She describes herself as “enter[ing] these dark woods yet again” in order to tell her story, most likely referring to the woods around Scrabble Creek. Her re-implacement in Scrabble Creek, then, remembers her original

implacement, allowing her to narrate her story, a story that gives shape and meaning not only to her past but also her future.

Grace's return to an original place, then, does not simply look backward but also looks forward. An essential part of homecoming and re-implacement is not simply memory, but also imagination. "Memory and imagination," Casey writes, "complicate and diversify the self-same place" (286). In the locus of a reinhabited place, then, the past and the future are united through the acts of remembering and imagining. Grace demonstrates this in her stated reasons for returning to Scrabble Creek, entering again the "dark woods": "for I've got to find out who I am and what has happened to me, so that I can understand what is happening to me now, and what is going to happen to me next" (4). Grace's return to Scrabble Creek enables her to make sense of her journey, to narrate it as a story in which there is "an order to everything, a pattern which would be vouchsafed to her" (261).

In her return, then, Grace's actions mirror an important aspect of re-implacement: that it is "less a unique event or thing or place than a new start, a second chance, a moment of renewal" (*Getting* 296). What "goes on" in re-implacement, Casey continues, is "a re-creation of the self who inhabits (or will re-inhabit) the place in question" (311). In returning to place, Grace is able to remember and imagine herself. She states, finally, "I know myself as the girl I was, who used to love stories so much" (272). Her return has not only caused a confrontation with her past self. This confrontation, in turn, has led to her telling of her "story," which helps her imagine her future. Grace words this confrontation in terms of "telling her secrets," a revelation of those events and memories she has concealed from others and, at times, herself. It, significantly, happens in Scrabble

Creek, the place that holds her “best memories” (5) and also her most troubling ones. It is the place where she experienced her most sustained childhood relationships, but it is also the place where she witnessed her mother’s suicide. In it, she can form a clearer picture of her past that encompasses all of these elements, offering her a “moment of renewal.”

Re-implacement, Re-creation, and Redemption

Grace’s process of telling her story is one that she describes throughout the novel as telling her “secrets,” reflecting a traditionally Christian conception of testimony or confession. However, in the final scene of the novel, Grace still withholds one secret. After her return to Scrabble Creek, Grace enacts a type of “conversion” which critics have interpreted in several different ways. After living a relatively ascetic existence at her old home in Scrabble Creek, Grace hears her mother’s voice: “*Come to me Gracie,* she says, *Oh come to Jesus honey. It is time now, it is never too late*” (269). Afterwards, Grace, who has described herself as “full of fear and doubt in a family of believers” (3) arrives at the conclusion, “I believe I will go to church today. I believe it is time” (270). Grace recounts her journey down Scrabble Creek, interjecting and interweaving events and people of her past as they come to her. “I am really coming Jesus” (273), Grace states as she drives down the hill, using the familiar language of the church she has grown up in, language she herself has not used until this point. Grace’s story ends with her driving, moving and journeying once again.

With Casey’s concerns in mind, Grace’s re-implacement in Scrabble Creek is not simply a matter of return but also of re-creation. However, critics and reviewers have disputed the exact nature of this re-creation in their discussions of the final scene. Is Grace’s re-creation simply to be viewed in terms of a return to the past? Is it physical?

Psychological? Spiritual? What can be agreed upon is that, in this scene, Grace has reached a type of arrival not only in her physical but also in her spiritual journey. While language of the fundamentalist Christian tradition from which she came is used in this scene, it is also difficult to believe that Grace is enacting a simple return to the religion of Virgil, especially after experiencing its detrimental effects on her life. As Jacqueline Doyle aptly describes, “Although her story takes shape within the traditions of Christian allegory, Christian autobiography, and the oral testimonies of the Southern church, she unsettles all of those genres in the indeterminacy of her perspective and irresolution of her conclusion” (274). Grace’s narrative will not fit neatly into traditional religious categories of “testimony” and “conversion” or “salvation.” Instead, in a description on which most critics could agree, Smith’s ending is “ambiguous, an open door to the unknown” (274).

In Linda Byrd Cook’s interpretation of this final scene, found in “Swimming free...in and out of undersea caverns”: Reconciliation with the Feminine Divine in *Saving Grace*,” she identifies Grace’s re-creation in the final scene as a type of “self-redemption,” a recognition of her “inner sacredness” (161). She supports this view through a reading of the final scene that focuses on Grace’s listening to her mother’s voice as the impetus for her re-creation. Basing her arguments on a simple equation of Christianity with patriarchy, the role of the mother’s voice proves that Grace is enacting a self-salvation through her reconnection to the feminine sacred, or goddess. “It is only through Grace’s reclamation of her sexuality, her inner sacredness and connection to nature, that she achieves salvation in the end, or rather saves herself” (171). Cook further

supports these conclusions, citing Lee Smith's comment that *Saving Grace* was a "reconciliation of her deep spiritual conflict with patriarchal Christianity" (161).

However, Cook's reading, in many ways, falls short of accounting for the real and complicated relationship with Christianity that Grace expresses at the end of the novel and deprives Grace of a tradition that she clearly sees as an intricate part of her identity. Instead, Cook offers rejection over reconciliation, through a reading that relies on simple gender binaries and equations: Christianity as male and self-salvation as female; nature as female; culture as male. While these binaries are understandable in light of some of the presentations of Grace's relationships with males, through it Grace's relationship to her past and the significant role of her homecoming are partially obscured. Strictly feminist readings of this ending are right to focus on the significance of Grace's reconnection to her mother, especially in light of the damaging male relationships presented throughout the novel. However, at times they risk simplifying and demystifying an ending that appears, perhaps intentionally, a bit more open.

While her mother's is the guiding voice in the final scene—"Come to me, Gracie, she says. *Oh come to Jesus honey*" (269)—several other voices co-mingle with this one in Grace's recollection of her past. In addition to the voice of herself "as the girl [she] was," her homecoming to Scrabble Creek also includes and contains the voices of those who inhabited the place in the past: "me and Billie and Evelyn and Joe Allen and Mama and Daddy and Troy Lee" (271). She is presented with pictures of Billie and Evelyn from Ruth Duty (256); she remembers Joe Allen, seeing "that one piece of straight brown hair falling down his forehead" and states, "Joe Allen was the best of us all" (271). These voices from the past also affect Grace in the present and the future towards which she

moves when she leaves Scrabble Creek, and they also complicate an ending entirely based on the acceptance of goddess spirituality through her mother's voice.

This is especially the case in the complicated presence of her father, who, though the reader might not be as comfortable with this, is still a part of the narrative that Grace tells of her life. While the mother's voice is definitely the most influential for Grace, she is also aware of her father's: "Daddy always said he liked the water up here," she narrates, as she drinks from Scrabble Creek, "that the water up here is better than anyplace else" (267). Additionally, Grace adopts, in a somewhat troubling way, the extreme a view of the "fruits of the spirit" being counter to "the things of this world" (268). With this in mind, the role that Grace's father plays is much more complex than the stand-in patriarchal figure that Cook sees him to be. If he is to play the role of Virgil to Grace's Dante, then it must be assumed that he has had some hand in leading her to her place of spiritual arrival. However, that being said, he also does not play the traditional role of leading Grace out of the "dark woods" in which she finds herself at the beginning of the narrative.

Alongside the other voices, also exists the voice of the place—place here referring to the event of the combination of space and time to which Casey refers. The location of Scrabble Creek does not simply point to the self-identifying power of place—as Casey states, "we tend to identify ourselves by...the places in which we reside" (120). In many ways, the voice of the place here also coincides with the voice of Grace's memory, of her recollection of these people and events. In several descriptions of her childhood home throughout the novel, Grace references it as the "happy sound of Scrabble Creek," a voice that she remembers during her journeys (12). She returns to this at the end, declaring,

“The sweetest sound I ever heard, it has stayed in my head all these years” (272).

However, her recollection of the sound of the Creek, its “voice,” is not simply tied to the body of water, but is associated with the other voices as well; it is never mentioned in isolation to the house nearby, in which she dwelt. Through this, the acknowledgment that Grace’s re-creation itself is connected to a home, rather than “nature” also complicates Cook’s simple association of Grace with “nature.” Instead, the dwelling place, acts as a place of reconciliation of the several voices from Grace’s past that shape her present. In this, as Casey states, “The home-place fosters dialogue as well as nonverbal exchanges of many kinds, and thus nurtures interpersonal reciprocity” (303).

While Casey echoes a feminist concern of houses being possible sites for confinement, he also invests them with a different type of power in his definition, one that is applicable for Grace’s experience. “The domestic scene may indeed be tyrannous in certain ways,” he states, “but it can also be the place of most effective and lasting resistance to the tyranny of sites” (303). In her return to Scrabble Creek, then, Grace is able to resist a “tyranny of sites,” of the un-implaced movements she experienced with her father, revealing the self-defining power of place. While other houses in the narrative have served to stifle or confine Grace, this one, in which she becomes reconciled to her past and is able to imagine a future, serves the opposite purpose. For, in returning to place, “our very identity is at stake” (120), according to Casey, This identity is not just connected to Scrabble Creek but to the events that it “remembers.” Though her family no longer physically inhabits the house, their voices, in Grace’s recollection of them, undergo this interpersonal reciprocity, helping Grace also reconcile her past and her future. Therefore, Scrabble Creek serves as stabilizing location for Grace, in which she

can work out “where she has been” and “where she is going,” as opposed to the many places through which she travels throughout the narrative.

In this view then, it can be seen that Grace is not simply undergoing self-recreation, but a type of re-creation that involves several forces and that ultimately, she reveals, comes from outside of herself or any other human being. Instead of being a rejection of her tradition, Grace’s narrative serves to rework it in a way in which her experience can exist alongside traditional Christian allegories, mostly male, such as Dante’s. In seeing how this plays out, Cook’s description of Grace’s previous relationships is apt and revealing. Through the telling of her story, Cook remarks, Grace has realized that “neither her father, nor Travis Word, nor Randy Newhouse can lead her to salvation” (162). Cook further reveals Grace previous tendency to do this through the religious language with which she describes these men. After her first encounter with Randy Newhouse, as Cook mentions, she shouts, “Glory hallelujah!” and then, “I thought I had been born again” (225). While Cook interprets this as Grace’s desire to find a type of salvation that can only be found in the self-redemption connected to goddess spirituality, other interpretations of this moment can make more sense of Grace’s experiences towards the end of the novel. The final voice that Grace hears in the novel is the voice of the “baby...outside crying in the dirty snow” (272), a reference to Grace’s significant, though slightly eccentric encounter with the Christ child in the kitschy mini-golf course in Gatlinburg. “I am coming now, I am really coming” (272), she states.

In interpreting this final scene, it is important to realize the nature of Grace’s narrative as one that moves from doubt to faith. While it is clear that Grace will not simply relive the exact form of religion as her mother and father, Smith also tries to offer

a way in which she does not simply reject those voices and their influence in her life. The question that Grace faces, though she might word it differently, is not: *do I abandon my religious heritage?* But, *how do I retain ties to a religious tradition while still moving forward, knowing the effects it has had on my experience?* This requires a re-implacing relationship to religion that mirrors her re-implacement at Scrabble Creek: it contains both memory (the tradition in which she grew up) and imagination. In this way, Smith's epigraph from T.S. Eliot's *Four Quartets* has significance in relation to both Scrabble Creek and Grace's religion:

We shall not cease from exploration
And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time

Grace's return to the religion of her father and mother also involves a reimagining of it that accounts for her experiences and incorporates the narrative of her past.

The role of place, especially the particular place of Scrabble Creek is essential for Grace's experience of this process. In it, place, in part, takes on the type of sacramental function John Inge attributes to it. Inge describes the sacramental role of place not as something that is inherent within particular places and not in others but instead describes it in terms of encounter and interaction: "*encounters* in which the material becomes a vehicle for God's self-communication" (91). "In such events," Inge describes, "the role of place is essential" (91). It becomes the location for and an important part of the material vehicle of "God's self-communication." Inge describes the possibility for a sacramental encounter of place as based in action *and* in relationship. In this view, then, a

sacramental view of place requires not only that God “reveal[s] himself” but that humans have the “grace to perceive him” (81). In this view, then, Grace’s re-implacement is a part of her “perception” of God at the end. Place has helped to bring her, through memory and return to the possibility of perception and response.

However, as has been noted by many before, Smith’s ending is still full of complication and mystery, raising as many questions as it answers. Does this sacramental encounter adequately define what has taken place? To what is Grace actually returning at the end of the novel? We are still left to question how Grace will actually enact this type of re-imagined salvation because as reader’s, we are aware of Grace’s potential to follow the same trajectory as her mother. In this ending then, Smith presents a *possibility* as opposed to a clear answer. Smith’s use of this ambiguous ending serves to prompt the reader’s own faith: what will we believe about Grace’s actions and why? Has her act of “testimony” truly enacted a change in her?

In this way, Smith’s ending also serves as a type of departure, aptly reflecting Grace’s circular narrative. In perhaps another reference to Eliot’s *Four Quartets*, in Grace’s narrative’s end is also its beginning, not simply in the sense of an arrival in an original place but also the beginning of a departure. Through the locus of place in and from which this arrival and departure occur, the physical and the spiritual are intricately related, rather than separated. Denis Covington points to this in his review of *Saving Grace*, published in the same year as the novel. In his description of the final scene of the novel, Covington states, “They’re alone at the place where they first started, just the two of them: Grace and the Spirit of God.” Through this, Covington states, the novel achieves its “grand and singular purpose, to clothe the spirit with flesh” (13).

CHAPTER III

“NOW AND FOREVER HERE”: WENDELL BERRY’S *JAYBER CROW* AND THE ESCHATOLOGICAL AND SACRAMENTAL MEMBERSHIP OF PLACE

In the Introduction to his collection *Wendell Berry: Life and Work*, editor Jason Peters introduces Wendell Berry and his work through a lengthy comparison of Berry to Henry David Thoreau, stating that the main difference between the two is “contextual: in Thoreau’s time the ‘mass of men lead lives of quiet’—in Berry’s they lead lives of noisy—desperation” (3). Peter’s statement is not the first comparison of Berry to Thoreau. When his work *Recollected Essays* was published, many reviewers compared it to Thoreau’s *Walden* in its critiques of society and warnings against the dangers to the individual and the environment possible through industrialization. Charles Hudson, reviewing the work in *The Georgia Review*, extends the comparison to the authors’ lives as well, stating that “like Thoreau, in his quest for principles Berry has chosen to simplify his life, and much of what he writes about is what has attended this simplification, as well as a criticism of modern society from the standpoint of this simplicity” (6).

While these connections between Berry and Thoreau are significant, especially in regards to Berry’s nonfiction, recognizing the ways in which Berry’s work departs from Thoreau’s reveals much about Berry’s particular notion of place. Extending beyond his nonfiction and into his works of fiction shows these important divergences in his connection to as well. This is especially clear in Berry’s work *Jayber Crow*, which, through the fictional character of Jayber Crow, enacts a view of place relations strikingly different from that of Thoreau’s brief and solitary stay at Walden Pond. This divergence

occurs in, but is not limited to, two main areas: community and spirituality. Briefly articulating and working from these two divergences, this chapter will reveal a view of place relations in *Jayber Crow* that is necessarily intensely communal and dependent on sustained commitments to place. This view also works beyond a traditional divide of the bodily and the spiritual to reveal what Christian theologian N.T. Wright describes as the complex co-existence and interaction of the “earthly” and the “heavenly.”

The first of these two divergences is found in both authors’ treatments of communal relations in regards to place. For Thoreau, in his relationship to Walden Pond, community is, in many points, irrelevant to, if not a hindrance to his entire project. While Thoreau acknowledges the help he receives from his neighbors in setting up his home (39), he also makes clear that most of his project is for “self-emancipation” (11). In many cases, community, for Thoreau, comes too close to society, which is antithetical to his placement at Walden. Conversely, while Berry expresses similar critiques of society at large, the picture of emplacement in *Jayber Crow* is many times communal; it instead reflects Casey’s assertion that emplacement happens “together” (24). Additionally, Berry’s vision of this community is rooted in a more specifically Christian conception of the relationship between the physical and the spiritual, as opposed to Thoreau’s transcendentalist one. By looking at these divergences, we see the specificity of Berry’s view of place, elements of which become clouded in too strong a focus on his connection to Thoreau. Instead, we can see that Berry’s view of place, materiality, and spirituality fall more in line with what theologian John Inge terms a “sacramental approach” to place, in which “places are the seat of relations and of meeting and activity between God and the world” (68).

The Communal Nature of Place

While much of Casey's articulation of place relations is focused on place and self, he also does not limit place relations to the individual. In "Body, Self, and Landscape," Casey defines the relationship between place and self as not simply limited to "reciprocal influence," but also including—"more radically," he states—"constitutive co-ingredient: each is essential to the being of the other." Without blurring the distinctions between place and self, he arrives at his conclusion that "there is *no place without self; and no self without place*" (406). This being said, Casey also acknowledges that every place is made up of multiple, interacting selves: "implacement is as social as it is personal," Casey states (23). Though he does not spend much space unpacking this point, Casey first mentions this extra element of place relations in *Getting Back into Place*. It initially appears in his definition of the term "idiolocal," a term used to express the simple Aristotelian truth that "things that exist are somewhere" (qtd. in 23), but that also alludes to the complex "co-ingredient" nature of place and identity. Casey states that the "idiolocal, is not merely idiosyncratic or individual; it is also collective in character" (23).

In this definition, Casey asserts that groups of people create places and that places, in turn, help shape the nature of human relationships within "collectives." For Casey, while the scale of place in this case ranges from the intimate place of a room to a large place-based communities and cities, implacement within them contains this shared element. Casey expands his definition of implacement, calling it a "social, even a communal act" (23). He continues, "For the most part, we get into places together. We partake of places in common—and reshape them in common" (24). Additionally, as these

places are shaped communally, they also help shape the relationships of those involved in the place-shaping community. As Casey observes, not only does the power of place help determine “*where* I am in the limited sense of cartographic location but *how* I am together with others (i.e., how I commingle and communicate with them)” (23). As place shapes these relationships, it also allows for a communal connection formed by and based upon common relationship to a particular place. Place, according to Casey, establishes a “concrete situatedness in the common world” (23) Shared implacement can provide communities with a type of coherency and purpose, helping define “*who* we shall become together” (23).

Jayber Crow as a Narrative of Communal Implacement

In *Jayber Crow*, Berry presents this communal view of place and implacement through the barber’s account of Berry’s imagined community of Port William. Port William, the site of most of Berry’s fiction, is loosely based on Berry’s own community of Port Royal, Kentucky. In many of his short stories and novels, this community and its collective relationship to place is often expressed through first-person narrations of individuals and their own implacements within the community. Perhaps the most revealing of these stories is told from the perspective of one who considers himself, if not an “outsider,” then an “outskirter,” existing on the edges of the community. As a member of Port William who left the place when he was young and returned much later, Jayber Crow is, in many ways, more actively aware of his process of implacement than some of its life-long members. For Jayber, this process of “getting into place,” as Casey calls it, is not only restricted to his active relationships with his barbershop and the landscape

surrounding Port William, but is connected to his relationships with the people of Port William as well.

Jayber's awareness of the strength of his implacement in Port William appears in the earliest moments of the narrative. Jayber tells his story retrospectively, looking back on the events of his life and accounting for them. However, from beginning of the telling, the story and the life cannot be easily separated from the place in which they occurred. "I don't remember when I did not know Port William, the town and the neighborhood," Jayber narrates. "My relation to that place, my being in it and my absences from it, is the story of my life" (12). In this statement, Jayber does not merely stress the importance of place to his life, but more radically reveals that the story of his life is completely dependent on the place of Port William. Through this, Jayber points to a relationship between place and self that brings to mind Casey's term of "constitutive co-ingredience": Jayber is aware that the story he narrates would have taken on a completely different shape and would, in fact, be a completely different story about a completely different person had it not been located in Port William.

Jayber's definition of Port William, however, expands to include more than just geographical location and landscape, but also, as becomes clear through his narrative, includes human relationships as well. Before Jayber arrives in Port William, he describes himself as a "refugee," (81) placeless and wandering after leaving seminary, quitting his job, and being caught in a flood. Arriving in Port William shortly after the flood, Jayber's implacement within Port William begins through the effort of another member of the community "When I recognized Burley Coulter on the water that morning and told him who I was," Jayber narrates, "and he remembered me from that lost and gone and give-up

time and then introduced me...well, that changed me...I felt my life branching and forking out into the known world” (130).

After this initial meeting, Burley also provides Jayber with the means of implacement unavailable to him without Burley’s help. As Casey’s definition of implacement is dependent on a habitus including a means of habitation and bodily movement and work within a place, Burley becomes the source of these for Jayber. After Jayber first arrives in Port William, Burley takes Jayber to the barbershop, hinting, “Why, a single man with a place like this would be *fixed*. He’d have his dwelling place and his place of business right together” (99). He then takes Jayber to Mat Feltner in order to help him purchase the building. Through Jayber’s habitation of and movements within this building, Jayber is also able to enter into a larger implacement within Port William. His relationship to Burley, in these and several other moments throughout the novel, demonstrate the ways in which his arrival in and relationship to Port William is dependent on the “implacing” actions of someone other than himself.

The nature of Jayber’s implacement within the wider community of Port William is further revealed through Jayber’s discussion of his name. Throughout the beginning of Jayber’s story he is called by several names; his parents name him and his family refers to him as “Jonah.” After the death of his parents and aunt and uncle, he is simply referred to as “J” at The Good Shepherd boarding school (31). However, when he arrives in Port William and begins his work there, he comes to be named by the place and the community. “Once the customers took me to themselves, they called me Jaybird, and then Jayber,” he states, “Thus, I became, and have remained, a possession of Port William” (11). Through this naming, Jayber further enacts the “co-constitutive”

relationship between place and self and community: the place, through its community, identifies Jayber, and he is incorporated into Port William. He later describes this incorporation, saying, “The feeling was that I could not be extracted from Port William like a pit from a plum, and that it could not be extracted from me; even death could not set it and me apart” (205).

While individuals such as Burley aid Jayber in discovering the type of self-place relationship defined by Casey, the way Port William “gets into place together” also emphasizes the communal nature of place relationships to which Casey refers. While “Port William” refers, in many cases, to both the people and the place, Berry uses the term “membership” to further describe the nature of the community in its place. In fact, the full title of Berry’s novel is *The Life Story of Jayber Crow, Barber, of the Port William Membership, as Written by Himself*. Berry’s use of the word “membership,” as opposed to “town,” “community” or “village” is significant in its implications. In contrast to a more Thoreauvian view of place, mentioned earlier, place relations in Berry’s work are never simply expressed in terms of place and self. At several points in the novel, Jayber’s description of the membership expansively encompasses people—their relationships, histories, and habits—the land, the river, and the town.

The term “membership” also references the apostle Paul’s description of the church in his letters to the Corinthians and the Romans. In this use of the word “members,” Paul does not merely express that each person is part of the church, but also that each person is a member of the others: “As it is, there are many members, yet one body” (1 Cor. 12.20). In using this term to describe Port William, Berry expresses the mutuality of all of these elements of place: if each is a member of the others, then the

wholeness of the place comes from the connection of all of these elements in a sustained relationship. It also implies that relations within the membership are, like the parts of the body, working together towards this common goal of wholeness.

This membership that encompasses multiple elements of place is seen through the lives of many of the inhabitants of Port William. Throughout the novel, Jayber witnesses and describes lives of the older farmers, in and around Port William, many whose daily, bodily inaction of habitus through their occupation connects them to their place but also each other. Jayber describes the farmers of Port William as possessing a “communal self-confidence” in the necessity of the work that they do (276). Through this phrase, Berry reveals the ways in which the membership works together. While self-confidence, in Berry’s work and elsewhere, often carries negative connotations of a prideful type of self-reliance that excludes community, Berry reworks this to reveal the nature of relationships within the membership. Their “confidence” comes from their awareness of individual and particular relations within the community and the knowledge that the community is held together through their actions. However, these farmers are also aware of their connection to the land, knowing that the influx of industrial agribusinesses signals not just a change in their livelihoods but the land as well. Because they have an awareness of their individual lives as connecting to these larger areas of the membership, their worry extends beyond their individual lives and to their “place” (277); in many ways, they share the fate of each other and the land from which they work.

Eschatology and Place

While Berry differs from Thoreau in his emphasis on community and the communal aspect of place, acknowledging their divergences in discussions of religion

further reveals Berry's specific view. In the opening chapter of *Walden*, Thoreau criticizes his society, for losing "real" religion as a result of people's settled lifestyles. "We now no longer camp for a night," he states, comparing the lives of his contemporaries unfavorably to more nomadic lifestyles, "but have settled down on earth and forgotten heaven" (33). In Thoreau's conception, then, religion associated with a settled location on earth loses a transcendent quality, or an awareness of "heaven." Viewing this passage with Thoreau's transcendentalist commitments in mind, it is not simply the connection to "earth" that causes the loss of "true religion" as much as the "settledness" in a particular place. However, focusing on Thoreau's use of the term "heaven," we can see Berry's more specific commitments reading *Jayber Crow* with the concerns of theologian N.T. Wright in view. In Wright's work *Surprised By Hope*, he presents a Christian conception of heaven and its relation to earth and the physical world, that resonates with and helps articulate many of Berry's divergences with Thoreau on this matter. Through this reading, Berry's view of these issues is one in which place retains a sacramental function in the relationship between heaven and earth. As Inge states, "crucial" to a sacramental view of place "is the eschatological aspect" of "sacramental events" (76).

N.T. Wright begins his work *Surprised By Hope* by asserting the importance and relevance of one's view of life after death. "From Plato to Hegel and beyond," he writes, "some of the greatest philosophers declared that what you think about death, and life beyond it, is the key to thinking seriously about everything else" (6). With this in mind, though, Wright continues to unpack the problematic ways that contemporary society has come to view death. His criticisms, in many ways, are similar to the ones underlying Jim

Wayne Miller's criticism of the Christianity's effect on literature: the perpetuation of a divide between the spiritual and the physical. In this divide, both Wright and Miller agree, the spiritual has come to be limited to the "nonearthly." The soul is connected to a distant and spiritualized heaven, and the body is connected to the earth. However, in his introductory statement that "what you think about death, and life beyond it, is the key to thinking seriously about everything else," Wright immediately begins to show the complicated nature of these dynamics; he undercuts the idea that "heaven" is a "spiritual" dimension that is completely unconnected to the earth or the body.

Though Wright acknowledges the presence of this divide in Protestant Christianity, he, unlike Miller, does not see it as an inherent and inescapable effect of Protestant Christianity. Instead he, much like McGrath, argues that this divide has deeper roots in a residual Platonism that has affected all of Western thought and is not an actual tenet of Christian thought. Instead, Wright argues for an alternative view of these relationships rooted in the essentially Christian belief in the resurrection of the body, a belief that he sees as being either overlooked or lost in much Protestant Christianity due to the influence of Western Platonic thinking. A belief in the resurrection of the body, Wright argues, leads to a conception of heaven that is not reduced to a realm of the "immortal soul," separate from the body and ultimately destined for a place radically unconnected to the earth; instead its focus is "new creation." "Heaven, in the Bible," Wright offers, "is not a future destiny but the other, hidden dimension of our ordinary life—God's dimension, if you like. God made heaven and earth; at the last he will remake both and join them together forever" (19). In Wright's view, the relationship between earth and heaven, often conceived in terms of the spiritual and the physical, is

one of interaction and eventual union, instead of division, a striving towards “new creation.”

This significantly connects to Wright’s definition of redemption as well. Often limited to individual, disembodied “souls,” redemption, in this light, connects to larger elements of the physical world. It encompasses all of creation. “To put it bluntly,” Wright states, “creation is to be redeemed; that is, space is to be redeemed...” (211).

Redemption, then, includes place as well, opening up the possibility for places to create what Inge terms “sacramental encounters.” Inge states that “place is central to” experiences that “suggest...a momentary lifting of a veil between a seen and an unseen world, sudden moments of illumination which are gratuitous and unsought for, when things seem transfigured” (76). This view of place, based on the Christian doctrine of bodily resurrection and redemption of creation, implies significant changes in views of the connection between the spiritual and physical, the soul and the body. Wright and Inge both affirm a deep connection and convergence of the two without combining or conflating them. While the two retain their distinctiveness, they continually interact in ways that either lead toward or away from their “joining together.” Or, as Wright would say, earth and heaven, in a Christian view, are created “for each other,” not against each other; they are “made for union, not competition” (105).

Locating Heaven and Place in Jayber Crow

As Wright contends, this view of heaven that includes the eventual redemption of space and time, consequently, also includes specific place. Through the story of Jayber Crow, Berry presents us with the enacting of much of Wright’s theology, found his novel connected to and concerned with place. Through this story, Berry also reveals a view

that, unlike Thoreau's, reveals how sustained place commitments actually become an aid in, not a hindrance to, creating a different awareness of heaven.

This begins with Jayber's frustration (similar to McGrath's and Wright's) with a perceived division between body and soul present in much of the religion that surrounds him. He notes this early in his narrative, noting his time at the boarding house, The Good Shepherd, as his entrance into a "divided world" that praised the soul over the body. "Order was of the soul, whose claims the institution represented," Jayber narrates. "Disorder was of the body" (32). Jayber encounters this later in his seminary education at Pigeonville College, from which he eventually drops out. "In most of [the teachers and preachers] I saw the old division of body and soul..." he states. "Everything bad was laid on the body, and everything good was credited to the soul" (49). Significantly, in a brief statement echoing Wright's concerns, Jayber observes, "And yet these same people believed in the resurrection of the body" (49). Jayber's frustration stems from a belief similar to that which Wright presents: "Precisely because the resurrection has happened as an event *within our own world*, its implications and effects are to be felt within our own world, here and now" (191). While Jayber may echo Wright's contention, his frustration also comes from its lack of practice around him.

The division which has frustrated him and fosters this disconnect, follows Jayber to Port William, and he is especially critical when speaking of the travelling preachers and seminary students who come to Port William. Most of their sermons, Jayber observes, preach that "we must lay up treasures in Heaven and not be lured and seduced by this world's pretty and tasty things" (160). However, after finishing the sermons many would enjoy meals prepared by the people of Port William with "unconsecrated relish"

(161). Jayber points this out not simply to reveal the hypocrisy of the travelling preachers but to demonstrate his earlier statement that he disbelieved that anyone actually believed “this religion that scorned the beauty and goodness of the world” (161).

However, while perpetuating a divide between the body and the soul for Jayber, these sermons also reveal the damaging implications of this divide for relations to place and people. Significantly, the preaching of this divide comes from preachers who are constantly travelling and have little awareness of the placed community of Port William. Because of this, their view of the people of Port William is abstracted. “Most of the young preachers knew Port William only as it theoretically was (‘lost’) and as it theoretically might be (‘saved’),” Jayber narrates (161). In this statement, Jayber shows how their misplaced reliance on a sharp division between “Heaven” and “the world” is also connected to the abstract view they have of the people in Port William. Most of the preachers are only able to see the people of Port William as fitting into theoretical categories based on this distinction. Through this place is obscured and placed simply in the realm of theory as opposed to lived and present actuality.

Many of Jayber’s conclusions and questions in the middle of the narrative demonstrate how Jayber attempts to interact with the people and place in a manner not based on this divide. They reveal the ways in which Jayber adopts a view that is not only more in line with Wright’s articulations but that also grants more attention to particular place. “I could see that Hell existed and was daily among us,” Jayber states. “And yet I didn’t want to give up even on the ones in Hell” (250). The question this leads to for Jayber, then, is whether or not heaven “exist[s]” and is “daily among” the people of Port William. By the end of the novel, Jayber is only able to discover a type of answer to this

question by his relationship and movements within the particular place of Port William. In them, he discovers a view of heaven similar to Wright's description of it as a "hidden dimension of ordinary life."

This view also allows Jayber to experience a fuller vision of the people, their relationships to place, and their view of the world and heaven, which the travelling preachers cannot possess. He concludes that "some of the hymns bespoke the true religion of the place...they knew that the world would sooner or later deprive them of all it had given them, but still they liked it" (163). Through Jayber's occupation as the church janitor, he is able to observe the "true religion of the place," in which the people gathered to

acknowledge, just by coming, their losses and failures and sorrows...their faith always needing to be greater, their wish (in spite of all words and acts to the contrary) to love one another and to forgive and be forgiven, their hope (and experience) of love surpassing death, their gratitude. (163)

This acknowledgement comes directly before Jayber, after falling asleep while cleaning the church, awakes to a vision of the "gathered church." The description of this vision points to an awareness of heaven as a "hidden dimension" that is distinct from but still tied to the actual world: "I saw all the people gathered there who had ever been there...I saw them in all the times past and to come, all somehow there in their own time and in no time" (164). While this reflects a conception of heaven, beyond time, in which the living and the dead are present, Jayber's description is not one of an abstract place filled with bodiless souls. It occurs within the location of the Port William church building and is notably rooted in "earthly" particulars. The people perform bodily actions: the women are

“working and singing;” the children are “tucked into the pews beside their elders” (165). Jayber’s description also includes physical attributes and material details: “the creases crisscrossed on the backs of the men’s necks;” the Sunday dresses faded with washing” (165). In this description, Jayber begins to develop an awareness of heaven as “hidden” within and connected to daily life.

Jayber’s awareness is not only limited to the human members of Port William, though, but also extends to the natural world. Jayber’s interaction with the surrounding landscape of Port William further reveals a conception of heaven similar to the one Wright describes. Wright clearly states that heaven and salvation “can’t be confined to human beings” (199). In this, the natural world exhibits a sacramental character: it becomes a sign of new creation within the old. After Jayber moves from his barbershop in town to Burley’s cabin on the outskirts of town, he spends much of his time describing the river, a shaping force in the narrative of his life. Jayber describes the reflection on the water as holding “a perfectly silent image of the world that seems not to exist in this world” (327). While this vision of a separate world may initially fall short Wright’s description of heaven, Berry significantly uses the word “seems” to denote the complicated relationship between the two. The reflection of the “world that seems not to exist in this world,” is, significantly, found in this world. In the passage immediately following this one, Jayber again hints at the “hidden world” in his description of his surprise in discovering that “times here that I know have been laborious or worrisome or sad,” as result of his loneliness, fear that the community will be lost, and the natural world destroyed, were “never out of the presence of peace and beauty, for here I have been always in the world itself” (327). In this passage, Jayber locates the source of

“peace and beauty,” concepts he might associate as being part of that “other world,” as coming, importantly, from “in the world itself.” They do not completely negate or rid Jayber’s world of its sadness, but they do exist alongside it as the “hidden dimension” to which Wright refers.

With Wright’s assertions in mind, we can see what Jayber means when finally, aided by this implacement within Port William—its community and landscape—Jayber acknowledges, “this is a book about Heaven” (351). “I know it now.” He concludes,

It floats among us like a cloud and is the realest thing we know and the least to be captured, the least to be possessed by anybody for himself. It is like a grain of mustard seed, which you cannot see among the crumbs of the earth where it lies. It is like the reflection of the trees on the water.”

(351)

Through Jayber’s description, Berry demonstrates the complex but essential relationship between earth and heaven, as “two different *kinds* of what we call space” that interlock and intersect (Wright 115).

However, while, for Jayber, Heaven is the “realest thing we know,” Berry reveals that it is also not completely attainable. After this description, Jayber admits, “I must say too that it has been a close call. For I wondered sometimes if it would not finally turn out to be a book about Hell...where we destroy the things we need the most” (354). In this statement, Berry reveals what Wright calls the “tension” in living between the two realities of new creation happening within the old, of heaven and earth not completely being joined. Jayber alludes to this in his earlier statement that “the revelations of love are never complete and clear, not in this world” (208). Keeping the Christian definition of

heaven presented by Wright in mind, Jayber's story, as a book about heaven, must also be a book about its lack. Berry's work is still filled with fragmented relationships between people in their relations to the community and the landscape. Jayber describes this well in his "vision of the gathered community": "What I saw now was the community, imperfect and irresolute but held together by the frayed and always fraying, incomplete and yet ever-holding bonds of various sorts of affection" (205).

Inhabiting "New Creation": Embedded Hope and a Sacramental View of Place

Jayber's Epistemology of Love

In Jayber's statement that he "knows" that "this is a book about Heaven," Jayber's "knowing" derives from Wright's concept of the "epistemology of love." In *Surprised By Hope*, Wright states that one of the implications for this particular view of heaven, earth, and resurrection is "that love and not hate has the last word in the universe" (105). In this case, "love" is connected not simply to feeling but also to ways of knowing. Referencing Ludwig Wittgenstein's assertion that "It is *love* that believes in the resurrection," Wright states that belief in the bodily resurrection then leads to an "epistemology of love" (72). This epistemology extends beyond just a view of the resurrection to become "the necessary mode of knowing for those who live in the new public world" (74) or live with an awareness of heaven. Love, then, in Wright's belief becomes a uniting epistemology, creating community through those who strive towards this epistemology of love.

In this view, Jayber's knowledge is rooted in a practice of Wright's "epistemology of love." He "knows" heaven through his love of Port William. Jayber describes this love during his recounting of his vision of the timeless membership of Port

William: “I seemed to love them all with a love that was mine merely because it included me” (165). The source and possessor of this love, then, is not necessarily Jayber, but instead, it is that which contains him and through which he is connected to the people of Port William. Though it is not something that he has created—but has, rather, received—it becomes his way of knowing. Implaced within Port William, this love helps lead to a knowledge of heaven that cannot be seen “among the crumbs of the earth where it lies” (351).

Jayber also arrives at this epistemology of love through his other occupation as Port William’s gravedigger. In his care for the dead of Port William, Jayber admits that he is “as mystified as anybody about the transformation known as death” (157). However, he also states that “the Resurrection is more real to me than most I have not yet seen,” acknowledging a bodily view of the Resurrection. His working with the dead, continually walking among the places the rest and remembering their stories, leads him to “a compassion that seems to come from outside” (158). As Jayber watches the living members of the community walk among the dead, he states, “I wanted to make my heart as big as Heaven to include them all and love them and not be distracted. I couldn’t do it, of course, but I wanted to” (158). It is his love, or at least his desire to contain this love that drives and constitutes Jayber’s knowledge of heaven, a love and knowledge that is also connected to knowledge of bodily resurrection and a community of new creation.

Enacting Embedded Hope

This epistemology of love, a way of knowing that extends to his knowledge of the community of Port William and its inhabitants also leads to what Wright describes as

enacted hope. If Jayber's narrative is a story "about Heaven," which also encompasses its lack on earth, then at the same time Jayber's is also a story of a the tension between the two, of which Wright speaks. With this in mind, Jayber's implacement within Port William is also a physically enacted hope within an earthly place. With Jayber's dual awareness of heaven as "among us" but also not able to be "possessed," he lives in what Wright terms the "intermediate hope," the events that "happen in the present time" that anticipate the final joining of heaven and earth. In this hope, Wright expresses, humans are one of the "agents of transformation" (205), a "healing transformation of space, time, and matter" (199). Physical human actions are part of a view of heaven, or, more specifically, the "Kingdom of God." "The work that we do in the present," Wright states, "then, gains its *full* significance from the eventual design in which it is meant to belong" in which "creation is to be redeemed; that is, space is to be redeemed..." (211). In this, Wright expresses hope in terms of both action and epistemology, defining it as a "mode of knowing, a mode within which new things are possible, options are not shut down, new creation can happen" (72).

In his essay "Embedded Hopefulness," Philip A. Muntzel discusses Port William's inaction of this hope. While his work references Berry's poetry and nonfiction more than his fiction, Muntzel's description of "embedded hope" resonates with Jayber's interactions with Port William. For Muntzel, the term "embedded" refers to the use of "proximate, localized relationships" as the "critical arena for imagining and discussing" hope (191). He states that "[Berry] refuses to isolate our experience of hope in and for God"—and more through that, Wright might add, new creation—"from our more tangible experience of loving relationships" (193). Muntzel's use of the term "embedded"

reveals the physical and enacted dimension of what has often been seen as a “spiritual” and “heavenly” hope. This dimension is revealed in Jayber’s “tangible experience” with members of the community of Port William, in which “real and effective signs” of new creation are manifest in the present in a particular place (Wright 209).

The first of these places can be found in Jayber’s own attempts to practice this type of hope in his experience. He enacts another quality of “embedded” hope: that it is embedded not simply in the sense that it is connected to tangible places and relationships, but also in the sense that it is practice and habit, becomes a part of the actions and inclinations of an individual. While Jayber’s “bachelor marriage,” may initially seem fruitless at best, and a romantic abstraction at worst, in actuality, it reflects the hope to which Wright refers in his work. If the hope rooted in bodily resurrection is a “mode of knowing...in which new things are possible, options are not shut down, new creation can happen” (72), Jayber’s paradoxical “bachelor marriage” becomes a reflection of this. It is not only possible but also leads to a new mode of acting based in the future and present existence of “new creation,” of possibilities of faithfulness and hope.

In watching Mattie suffer in her marriage to Troy, the question that Jayber asks in regard to Mattie mirrors an earlier question. In speaking of the effect of “War” on the community of Port William, Jayber questions the possibility of Heaven within the presence of the “Hell” created by war. In observing Mattie’s failed marriage, Jayber states, “What I needed to know,” he states, “...was that Mattie Chatham did not, by the terms of life in this world, have to have an unfaithful husband—that, by the same terms in the same world, she might have had a faithful one” (241). Or, to use Jayber’s terms: If he sees the “Hell” in Mattie’s marriage, then he also has the ability to enact the “Heaven.”

Jayber can ultimately provide this answer through his own actions, his enacted hope, by making himself available in ways that are faithful not only to Mattie but also to her place. Jayber helps care for her father Athey, and is present for his death. He is available to loan Mattie money when her son is arrested in the town on Hargrave. Through his own enacted faithfulness to Mattie, Jayber arrives at a type of answer to his earlier question: through his actions, “a possibility—of faith, of faithfulness—that I could no longer live without had begun leaking into the world” (259)

Jayber’s enacted hope in his relationship to Mattie further solidifies his emplacement within Port William. His actions for her family allow him to enter in to place with them in a way in which Jayber, as someone on the “outskirts” of the community experiences directly with few other people. Unknowingly, Mattie brings Jayber further into the implaced life of the community. Because of this, Jayber later reveals, “My strange marriage (which not a soul on earth knew about but me) seemed to have placed me absolutely. I was where I was,” he continues, “in body and mind and heart too” (258).⁵

The Sacrament of Place: Hospitality and Creation

While the temptation for life lived in the intermediate hope is a “collusion with entropy, acquiescing...that things may be getting worse but there’s nothing much we can do about them,” the reality of the intermediate hope, states Wright, is full of “sign[s]” of the bodily

⁵ While Jayber’s “absolute” placement allows him the ability to practice this enacted hope, it is not confined to the interaction with the human members of the Port William community but extends to his relationship to the landscape as well. Jayber and Mattie’s relationship, in many ways, is implaced in the particular place of the Nest Egg. As a result of this faithfulness to Mattie and the Nest Egg, Jayber possesses a genuine care for the land, counter Troy’s exploitation of it.

resurrection and the final union of heaven and earth. Through this view, then, human actions within place take on a sacramental character and places themselves are “the seat of relations and of meeting and activity between God and the world” (Inge 68). This is, as Inge states, not “just in a general and undiscerning sense of ‘the heavens telling the glory of God,’ but in a particular sense *and in particular places*, too” (67). “But just as God can be encountered in the person of Jesus Christ, the scandal of particularity,” Inge writes, “so he chooses to make himself known to humanity in and through particular places” (86). In *Jayber Crow*, Berry manifests this both in Jayber’s experience of “embedded hope” through the particular place of Port William, in the community members’ hospitality towards him and his “sacramental experience” of the natural world.

Though Jayber was born near Port William and is aware of it, he also enters it as a stranger, unknown to many of the people. “I still belonged to it in a way,” Jayber describes upon arriving in Port William, “but it didn’t any longer belong to me” (89). In many ways, the acts of hospitality Jayber encounters then serve as sacramental actions, physical signs of “new creation,” forging communal relationships based on gift. In describing these actions, philosopher Richard Kearney’s term “sacramental hospitality” is helpful. This term refers to the welcoming of strangers as an active sign of relationships within “new creation” Quoting Jean Vanier, Kearney describes this hospitality as “giv[ing] life and help[ing] people discover who they are, so that they in turn can give life to others” (160). With this in mind, Burley’s initial actions, mentioned before as acts of implacement, are also acts of sacramental hospitality. They confuse Jayber initially, as he struggles to discover a motive behind Burley’s actions. “At the time I had no idea of his reason. Had he bought the shop himself from Barber Horsefield, and was wanting to

sell it at a profit?" Jayber wonders. However, as he comes to inhabit the place, Burley's actions are revealed as simple but sustaining acts of hospitality. They not only welcome Jayber in but also provide a lasting means through which he is incorporated into the "membership." Or, as Kearney states of this type of sacramental hospitality, Burley's actions help add to what Vanier terms the "gradual birth of a body" (160) through hospitality.

Jayber experiences this type of hospitality at several points in the narrative, many of which are connected to the very physical and bodily act of eating. After meeting Burley upon his arrival in Port William, Mrs. Coulter extends the same type of hospitality that her son will later show. Making a meal for the refugee Jayber, she states, "I don't remember your name...but you're welcome" (98). In these and other moments in which Jayber is offered meals, hospitality is enacted to bring him into the membership. They also connect to the community's awareness of the source of the food that they offer. In many ways, these meals reflect what Berry himself describes: "To live, we must daily break the body and shed the blood of Creation. When we do this knowingly, lovingly, skillfully, reverently, it is a sacrament. When we do it ignorantly, greedily, clumsily, destructively, it is a desecration" ("Gift" 281).

This sacramental hospitality extends, at moments, throughout Jayber's time in Port William, until the end of his narrative. After moving to a cabin on the outside of town (a cabin provided by Burley Coulter, in another act of hospitality), Jayber, though living alone, is far from isolated from the community. However, his interactions with his neighbors, the Branches, reveal a type of mutual hospitality that comes from being neighbors, from their corresponding implacements. Jayber and the Branches share meals,

haircuts, and homes. “Don’t try to make too much ‘sense’ of this,” Jayber warns. “It was gift-giving, it was manners, it was visiting. It was (last of all) economic” (317). This hospitality also serves a reflection of “new creation,” the economy of which is always gift-giving. As Wright and Inge reveal, new creation and the revelations of it, much like Jayber’s experience of love for Port William, always come as “gift”

Jayber’s relationship to the place of Port William, also opens up the possibility of the natural world as site for what Inge calls “sacramental encounter” for Jayber. Berry’s presentation of implaced and enacted hope through the narrative of Jayber Crow reiterates Inge’s statement that, “Places are the seat of relations or the places of meeting and activity in the interaction between God and the world” (238). Craig Bartholomew, in his work, further states that to speak of the sacramental relationship between God, place, and humans is to speak of the Holy Spirit, or “awareness of events which are wholly worldly, opaque and ordinary on the one hand and wholly divine, radiant and mysterious on the other...” (238). Jayber’s description of the flood that brings him to Port William captures this dynamic well:

And I knew that the Spirit that had gone forth to shape the world and made it live was still alive in it...The Spirit that made it was *in* it, shaping it and reshaping it, sometimes lying at rest, sometimes standing up and shaking itself, like a middy horse, and letting the pieces fly. (83)

Through this description of the Spirit as a middy horse, constantly moving through and in the world, Berry breaks down the barriers between the “spiritual” and the “earthly.” He also shows the dynamic nature of place-making, expressed in what Inge calls the “three-way relationship of God, person, and place” (81). Place, like Port William, is incredibly

particular, but it is also moving and being changed by both God and humans and their interactions. This sacramental view of place is one in which God not only actively “reveals himself” but humans also “have the grace to perceive him” (81). The “presence” of the place, Jayber describes, “was a sort of current, like an underground flow of water, except that the flowing was in all directions and yet did not flow away” (205).

In reading Berry’s novel with Wright’s and Inge’s concerns in mind, Berry’s presentation of place, through the specific location of Port William, is infused with the Spirit that moves through and with the enacted hopefulness of individuals. With this in mind, many of the dismissals of Berry’s Port William are based on simplified notions of his view of place. Many of Berry’s reviewers and critics describe the community of Port William as “idyllic” or simply “nostalgic” to a fault.

Nathan Schleuter addresses these criticisms in his essay “The Integral Imagination of Wendell Berry,” saying that Berry’s vision of Port William is not “idyllic” but “Edenic.” However, as he acknowledges, “both of these imagination rest in some sense on a state of things that is in some sense impossible given what we know of human beings” (229). For Schleuter, though, the Edenic reminds us of “our deeper, truer selves” (229). However, this term is problematic in that it poses that Berry’s vision is connected to a desire for a type of prelapsarian state. This vision is much different from Wright’s presentation of a present and enacted hope.

This chapter has suggested that Berry’s vision in *Jayber Crow* is neither strictly idyllic or Edenic but is an expression of what Wright refers to as the “state of the in-between,” of waiting but also complex and active hope. The “hidden dimension” of daily life in Port William is not confined to that of creation but *new* creation.

Jayber's story, and his implacement in the membership of Port William, then shatters easy separations of heaven and earth. Heaven is hidden within the daily lived experiences of the people of Port William. This also connects it to, though does not conflate it with, particular places, and particular places become sites for the interaction between the two. Wright's view of these relationships allows us to say of place what Jayber says of Port William. In considering the town on his last night of living within it as its barber, he comments, "Here once, forever gone" (301). After further considering this statement though, he revises it, looking at Port William and stating: "Now and forever here" (301).

CHAPTER IV CONCLUSION: THE GIFT, PROMISE, AND CHALLENGE OF IMPLACED LITERATURE

In his work *The Land* theologian Walter Brueggemann describes land as a gift, a promise, and a challenge. He also states that “it is likely that conventional Christianity has wanted always to talk of Yaweh and neglect the land. And conversely,” he adds, “secular humanism wants to talk only of land and never of Yaweh” (52). The plight Brueggemann articulates is a familiar one: it resembles that on which Jim Wayne Miller’s argument is founded; it is seen in the characters of *Cold Mountain*; in Grace’s discussions of her father’s religion; in Jayber’s criticisms of travelling preachers. Namely, the expressed frustration is that Protestant Christianity has abstracted religious concerns from “this world,” to use Miller’s term, locating them in an arena separate from “the land” or particular place. Because of this, Brueggemann continues, “most of us live in both worlds and settle for an uneasy schizophrenia, schizophrenia because we don’t know what else to do, uneasy, because we know better” (52). However, a contemporary rise of place studies and place-related concerns in several fields point to different alternatives to this schizophrenia. In the diverse fields of literature, literary criticism, theology, and cultural geography, this uneasiness is being articulated and dealt with in ways that seek to correct the negligence of both Christianity and secular humanism.

An important site for this is the literature of place. Through *Cold Mountain*, *Saving Grace*, and *Jayber Crow*, Frazier, Smith, and Berry all seem to acknowledge this schizophrenia, but also present options for healing and integration. They pose possibilities for moving beyond this “schizophrenic” attitude by the close attention to

place and human relations with place. However, an attention to place is, eventually, not enough in itself. As Brueggemann himself states, this much be accompanied by an appreciation of place as “gift.” In remembering that “land is not *from* us but is a gift *to* us,” a relationship between humans and land which is not based on power or exploitation is made possible. As McGrath, Bartholomew, Inge, and Wright all assert, a renewal of the sacramental nature of the physical world, of the natural world, is a necessary component of this.

Brueggemann’s view of land and place as gift also includes an ecological element. Alongside with the acknowledgement of land as gift rests the temptation for control, the inclination to view it as simply a tool or means. This temptation is the source of many of the accusations that have been leveled concerning Christianity’s relationship to ecological issues. In critiques resembling many of Miller’s discussions of the effects of Protestant Christianity, it has also often been accused of contributing to, if not being completely the source of, the contemporary environmental crisis. In an important and influential work on the ideological history behind the current environmental crisis, Lynn White, Jr. in “The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis” argues that the relationship that Christianity sets up between humans and nature is inescapably one of exploitation and anthropocentrism. White’s lecture, first delivered in 1966, has become the standard and unquestioned view of the relationship between Christianity and the environment. White’s argument that Christianity “insisted that it is God's will that man exploit nature for his proper ends” has seen little challenge, though it only addresses a very particular tradition or interpretation of Christianity. In recent decades, however, through their concerns with place, ecology, and environmental ethics, several contemporary Christian

theologians seek to correct both this view and also their own tradition's past abuses. They pose a fuller understanding of the Christian tradition and its relation to the natural world.

By looking at these authors through the work of these theologians, then, we can see the profound place commitments present in the religion that many of their characters or those around them embrace. While these are never presented in traditional terms, the relationship between these elements that is revealed is much more complex than Miller's arguments assume. Keeping White's accusation in mind, alongside Miller's own concerns, we can see that literature also acts as a site of reconciliation. Through stories committed to particular places, these authors reveal that ecological concerns are nearly inseparable from place concerns, which are also invested with and born out of a spiritual attachment, or a view of place in which its spiritual component is essential. This relationship can also be connected to a particular Christian articulation of "sacramental universe," complicating the relationship White sets up, in which Christianity is traced as the root of ecological damage.

These assertions are especially relevant in light of Jim Wayne Miller's conception of Appalachia or in other places intricately connected with Protestant Christianity and confronting the ecological issues of place. In such places, in which religion plays such an important role in the lives of communities and individuals—in the stories that they tell, in their worldviews—how do we recover the ecological aspects of religion in a way that respects not only the people but also the place? I suggest, in part, that this can be done through the implaced stories of the regions—novels and stories that grow from a particular community and are involved in the life of the community. In his essay "Writer and Region," Wendell Berry traces an outline of this in his assertion that the "real

habitat” of literature is the “household and the community” (84). Berry goes on to state that, as a result, literature “can and does affect, even in practical ways, the life of a place,” though he admits that “this may not be recognized by theorists and critics for awhile yet” (84). In paying attention to stories attuned to the intricate relationships between place and self, religion and place, and religion and self (or community), perhaps Berry’s situating literature within the context of the community is possible.

With Berry’s assessment in mind, then, these three novelists, with their commitments to place, sketch out possibilities for this type of literature, though in a variety of different ways. While Frazier’s work occurs in the very particular place and time of the Civil War South, he also raises concerns relevant to the context in which he is writing, especially in his treatment of the landscape and human relations to it. Smith, on the other hand, sets her story in a place and time near to the one in which she is writing, raising issues incredibly specific to it through her treatment of religious tradition, memory, and place. Focusing perhaps more specifically on the placial aspect, Berry’s narrative charts a relation to place through time, uniting issues of landscape, religion, and community. In their variety, though, all of these authors call us to reimagine simple relationships between literature and place, literature and religion, and place and religion. They cause us to reconsider Miller’s assertions, based on an idea that literature must fill a completely separate space than religion, with the two never meeting. By looking at these narratives, and their commitments to the reconciling nature of place, we can avoid such generalizations.

Additionally, through this, these authors seek to place us as readers as well. In the Introduction to his edited collection *The Spatial Turn*, which identifies the recent return

to matters of space and place across the disciplines, Denis Cosgrove accounts for this resurgence of interest in place by noting our situation in postmodernity. With increasing talk of globalization, increasing amount of time spent in cyberspace, and increasing ecological concerns, placial concerns are intricately connected to individual and communal identities. Many times we find ourselves in what Casey terms “thinned-out” places, places we pass through quickly, that we barely interact with bodily. However, as Casey states, “the more places are thinned-out, the *more*, not the less, may selves be led to seek out thick places in which their own personal enrichment can flourish” (408). Through their novels, these authors provide “thickly-lived places,” places not only of “personal enrichment” but places also of “meeting and encounter” in which humans are confronted with other elements of the natural world and also, distinctively, with God, through sacramental encounter.

By looking at these three authors, we can view the possibility of implaced literatures as gift, promise, and challenge (as Brueggemann says of land). They are challenging to readers in a contemporary context, who cannot help but experience and to an extent, inhabit these “thinly-lived” places. As such, they promise not only different ways of inhabiting, but also different relationships. Rooted in particularity, they promise relationships that are more inclusive than those Miller charts in relation to literature in Appalachia. They also serve as gift to us as readers, the writers enacting, perhaps, the type of sacramental hospitality which Jayber encounters. Through them, we experience the potential for our own implacements, allowing us to consider and seek out particular thickly-lived places in which sacramental encounter might be possible.

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