Katherine Anne Porter has an established reputation in contemporary literature despite the rather small volume of her work. Apart from being popular, she has had considerable influence on many serious younger writers. This is undoubtedly because she has written about matters which touch the modern consciousness, and done so with a very adequate mastery of technique. She has achieved a style distinctly and strictly her own which has been unanimously praised for its transparent quality, laconic irony, powerful language and objectivity. Her fiction is marked by the careful selection and combination of characters, situation and action and the resulting story is a self-sustainingartifact, capable of evoking reaction and response without explanation and comment from the author.
Her stories are generally regarded 'faultless' stories by many critics. The most outstanding feature of her art is that her writing is organically related to its subject matter. At the same time her works reveal the consistently high level of style generally unsurpassed by any writer of the time. Her stories are studies in concrete and specific instances of human behaviour. They explore the reason for the failure of man and his painful predicament in personal and social life. In her collection of critical essays and reviews, *The Days Before*, she has indicated in several passages that "she represents the kind of writer who has something to say rather than the writer who consciously strives for perfection of style and form". Her writing springs obviously from the desire to convey a personal vision of life, but it is equally obvious that she has been concerned to find a form and a style that would enable her to do so effectively.

This dissertation is primarily concerned with the themes and technique in the short stories and
the single novel of Katherine Anne Porter so as
generally to appreciate and evaluate her fictional
imitations of life and, in particular to trace the
dominant and recurrent theme of isolation and
alienation in her work.

This study has been divided into seven
chapters. The first chapter gives an account of
the author's childhood and the impact of her early
years on her work since, from the evidence as well
as her own admission, her work has been profoundly
influenced by the experiences of her life. In fact
in her case, her life and her work form a coherent
pattern. Apart from her fictionalized autobiography
'Miranda Stories', the characters in her stories too
exhibit qualities and undergo experiences which have
some points of similarity with her own. The second
chapter deals with the sense of alienation, the most
dominant theme of her fiction.

The two succeeding chapters (III & IV) present
an analysis of the themes and the thematic motifs in
her stories. In the study of the stories the order followed has usually been that of the publication of the volumes and the arrangement of the stories in theme. The only important exception to this has been the grouping together of all 'Miranda Stories' which have been arranged according to the thematic pattern. The stories, often written at different times, explore similar themes, and show Miss Porter's life-long concern and preoccupation with them. The Fifth chapter deals with the technique, the means by which the themes have been presented in her stories mainly in terms of situation, event, type of characters, art of characterization and style of narrative adapted. In

The sixth chapter, Ship of Fools, is discussed separately since it is her only novel to date, and since it presents ably the author's preoccupation with the problem of order in individual and social life. The seventh chapter concludes with a brief evaluation of Miss Porter's work based on the features noticed earlier in dissertation.
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