CONCLUSION
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In a period which was marked by devotional aestheticism in writing Miss. Cather emerged as a traditionalist. Unlike her contemporaries she used modernism as a tool and not as a substance Cather was similar to Cooper in aim as both of them were engrossed in the solution of American crisis. Cather felt that only through art she can express her inner desire. She respected the varieties of human emotions and meant them to be credible aspects of daily familiar experience. She was the more accomplished technician and therefore the more readable novelist. Cather was more close to Henry James and had a great respect for his aesthetic achievement. She was similar to Thoreau in challenging her own society, and demanding a return to good purpose like him.

Throughout her work, Miss. Cather is in the curiously ambivalent position of standing apart from her contemporaries and yet at the same time sharing many of the immediate moral problems which they had made their responsibility. The important thing for her was that values may never be divorced from art. The provincial author Alphonse Daudet had more direct influence on Cather in the area of sensory appeal Cather was born in Virginia. Throughout her school-age years her interest in the ancient world continued to grow. Her preschool
education lay largely in the hands of her grandmother Boak. The family library provided ample sources for reading on classical subjects. By the time of her high school commencement, she had developed "a pure and classical literary taste."

In summer vacation of her college years she read Virgil with her brother at Red Cloud. Miss Cather began to do newspaper work on the Nebraska State Journal, while she was still an undergraduate in the university at Lincoln. Later on she accepted a position to teach in Pittsburg High School, first Latin and afterward English. It was during this time she wrote verse and short stories which gave her the post, associate editor of McClure's Magazine and took her finally to New York. For several years Cather worked for McClure's and when she felt that the magazine constricted her literary ambitions she simply removed herself to work as a self supporting novelist.

The themes in the novels essentially are family obligation; commitment to land, struggle and sacrifice, strong will and resolute determination, love, loss, grief and reconciliation. In these matters she seems to believe that all human beings are alike. In her novels she focused on the behaviour of persons. The characters in Miss. Cather's novels
were fascinated with art and art world which was essentially a fascination for success.

The character's in Cathers novels strive for something impossible and in the process they have to sacrifice a lot. She also stresses on the fate and blind chance, it is one of the values of life. Cather's heroines are strong willed and has extra-ordinary capacity for struggle. Strenuous physical life is lived throughout every world. Her style was fine, artistic, beautiful and classical. It is economical, controlled and disciplined, refined and fastidious, clear and sharp. Cather had tried a new approach with each book and the book itself is the proof of its experiment. One theme, however which persists throughout Willa Cathers fiction is the dilemma of the artist caught between his commitment to art on hand and to life on the other.

As an artist she firmly believed that marriage and art are rarely compatible and that art demands total commitment and sacrifice. The general view about Cather among the critics was that she was an escapist, romanticising a vanished past - the pioneer period. Her subject were conquest and death as an artist she was robust and intense. In broadest sense of the term her novels were civilized. From the speeches, interviews and letters she is discovered as more open, she did not hide
from public notice, instead, she continued to court it, only more judiciously. Her writing can be seen as an embodiment, a mirror of the artist's life. Her life and art were so interwined, indeed, that at times not even she could tell them apart. She never clung to one method of writing for the sake of satisfying her public life, in her best heroines Cather was always searching for something higher, she experimented constantly refined, simplified - a process that inspired awe among her admirers but exasperated her critics.

She kept the Nebraska experience visible through her short stories. If the defects of her life were matched by defects in what she sincerely hoped was better than her life – her art – it merely shows that what she wrote has immense relevance to the aspirations and travails of all of us. Music, for Willa Cather was an emotional experience that had a potent influence on her own imaginative processes. Her style of writing was such that – a style to be felt by the sensitive reader as an emotional experience and recalled with pleasure again and again.

Willa Cather was drawn to other languages and their cultures particularly French, as a way to express her cosmopolitan outlook. The singleness of thought in her novels was always connected intimately with her own life and effort
and she expressed than in two, one was her individual spirit and the other concern for her American Nation. Somehow she was not successful in portraying the male protagonist in her novels. They remained hostile, morally and socially incapable of true complexity.

While studying her work of art we observe that the values which Cather has idealised are pioneer values. She has cherished spiritual and moral strength in her characters. In her early novels we see that the exceptional individuals reach their destinations by raising above common lot. In her former novels she also stresses the importance of community to the individual. She further suggests that a healthy community provides, the security, the sense of belonging, and the sense of ordered growth that human need. Good judgement and resourcefulness are the qualities which Cather admired in her characters to be successful in life. She strongly feels that success is achieved by sacrificing personal needs. In her work Cather had appreciated unselfish desired to achieve great height in life as well as in art. We see through out her early writings that strength, power and passion are the primary elements of greatness. For her action and energy were life qualities. She believe that there is no life to match the life of the soil. Cather rarely mentioned but deeply held the conviction that money is absolutely
necessary if life is to be at all worth while. She deplored the
rage for newness and conventionality and prevalence superficial
culture. She felt making something well is the principle end of
education.

One of Cather's concepts of life is that it is life that
grows from the loss of art. She devoted herself to the spirit of
strong curiosity, talent and a desire to learn. For Cather
preparation of food is one of the most important things in life.
Miss Cather has number of ways to tell us that life is most
passionate in the promise, not in the fulfilment. It is affection
that warms the lives in her stories and hate that chills it. Marriage
in her novels are milestone, hardly destinations, they are inclined
to be unavailing. For her the heroic life is the artist as it is the
pioneers, she equated the two. Though she remains single all
her life, she was not against marriage. She believe love and
marriage as basic realities of life. In her later years she wrote of
accepting life as it is complete and beautiful. The vision which
underlies her last four volumes is one which questions the old
urge to expression through art. The author came to feel in her
later years that life mattered most. In her work we see that life
is governed by chance and fate.

In the novel *O PIONEERS!* we see the pioneer values
of life of making the wild prairie fruitful. It also suggests the
importance of community, love and marriage. Alexandra has all the qualities of a true pioneer - strength, determination, and a quest to achieve impossible in life. In *MY ANTONIA* old world values are contrasted with the modern world. The protagonist of the novel Antonia is herself the personification of life itself. Love for the soil. At the end of the novel we see Antonia in harmony and peace with what life has presented her. In *THE SONG OF THE LARK*, artistic life is glorified and we see in Thea the strength, determination of a sort to achieve her destinations. She sacrifices her personal needs and is thoroughly committed to her art. Even marriage is not Thea's destination, it is simply one of the realities of the existence.

In *ONE OF OURS* Claude Wheeler the male protagonist of the novel is the true pioneer – strong and gifted with an idealistic nature. He finds himself misfit in his environment, where values are placed on material goods and men work hard for money and without love. He dies for his ideals and had no quarrel with destiny. In *A LOST LADY* too Cather has depicted social values of class distinctions, importance of money, love and understanding between the couple. Living life at any cost is the instinct of Marian Forrester.

In *THE PROFESSOR'S HOUSE*, pioneer values are predominant. Here struggle is more valued than success. How
the differences of values between a couple create a hollowness in their relationship. The professor feels himself alien in his own house. Love, care and understanding is held in this novel more important than material things. But in a novel like *MY MORTAL ENEMY* money is valued more than love. The heroin is not happy with her own life. And regrets her decision of leaving her fortune and status for marrying her not so successful lover. Ms. Cather also shows children are important in once life and how a childless woman feels lonely, unhappy and frustrated.

**DEATH COMES FOR THE ARCHBISHOP** triumphantly celebrates hierarchy, traditions, ritual and order. These to Cather's are the basis for the whole and meaningful life. The values which she held in her youth are represented by father Vaillant. In her youth Cather was of the opinion that the artist's life is preferable to any other vocation. The Archbishop represent life values which she held in her old age i.e. she refused to admit in her older days that any conflict between art and life exists. Faith is the main aspect of this novel. Faith in God and respect for all religion is the essence of the life, of two dedicated men in this novel. The Bishop had to make every possible sacrifices for martyrdom and this theme recurs throughout the novel.
The three short stories collected in OBSCURE DESTINIES celebrate human relationship rather than success and accomplishment, Neighbour Rosicky, the first of the three short stories, presents the picture of life lived fully and without regrets. All primary values of life are seen in these stories – love, compassion, understanding, caring, birth and death.

In OLD MRS. HARRIS, Cather inform us that youth in its self absorption is so frequently cruel and indifferent. In "Two Friends" Cather suggest the value of friendship. In LUCY GAYHEART, Cather suggest that rather than an individual life should be loved and treated as noble. Lucy is an artist, who prefers life enriched with the arts.

In SAPPHIRA AND THE SLAVE GIRL, Willa Cather wanted to show, the social system which promotes slavery is unjust. Values are totally confused in this novel. The tension between the slavery values and the values of freedom is the tension which lies in life itself. In the short stories THE OLD BEAUTY AND OTHERS, Cather laments for the past, and hated the present. In the first story Cather tries to suggest that the nature of human life depends on ones attitude towards life and how one takes life. In the second story "THE BEST YEARS", we see family values of love, care, understanding and harmony. In this story Cather values life over
material accomplishment. In the last story of this group Cather emphasises the value of life.

Henry Grenfell regrets his achievement in his life. And at the end of the story he believes in the continuity of life. We observe throughout her work the values which she had cherished are not rigid. They are changing with the changing time and as the author ages.

Art for Willa Cather is a whole lot more than talent. Art requires a vast amount of character. It means to her great good sense, as well as the gift of expression. The first rate things for Cather are – good cookery, cottages that are homes, not play things; gardens and repose. Out of these things art is made. She feels art springs out of the fullness and richness of life. Art needs freedom and patience. There is no shortcut in art. Hunger for beauty is expressed in both art as well as in religion, for tremendous output and reserve is the secrete of any vocation.

As observed by Eva Mahoney, sincerity and simplicity are fundamental characteristics of Willa Cather's art as well as the art of literature. Art is an expression it needs devotion and total commitment. From the beginning Willa Cather equated art and religion. A primary belief was that man's creation shares in some divine power. God in creating the world was a "Divine
Artist", the human artist serves and worships, becoming both the priest and the translator of God.

Her views on art in the initial years were both aristocratic as well as common, but with a certain qualification. She was quite certain about the fact that the world of art was complex and varied. Her theme throughout her early writing is that strength, power and passion are the primary elements of greatness. Her principle of art was to defend that which was done well and seriously, no matter what the subject. Even wickedness must be made interesting. To feel deeply before expressing it in art is the value which admired in an artist, otherwise she says the work of an artist will not be worthwhile.

Cather thinks that older and more established civilization is the better subject for art. Cather was quite convinced that "desire", is the great thing in any art. In her more lasting accomplishment — "THE SONG OF THE LARK and LUCY GAYHEART", she devoted herself exclusively to the thematic development of an artist as an individual. Cather saw mutual connection between the process of art and everyday living between art and life. In THE SONG OF THE LARK, Cather values art and rejects human relations for the sake of art. In LUCY GAYHEART, Cather has held art as second to living. As Lucy prefers life enriched with art. Thus we see that in her later
years Cather valued life more than art. In her early reviews Cather tries to answer whether a woman can be an artist and also lead the role of an ordinary woman, playing different roles in the family – mother, wife, daughter-in-law, sister-in-law, daughter, sister etc. "Married Nightingales Seldom Sing", is one such piece that suggests that it requires a great woman to give up her successful career. When she was talks about Mary Anderson, the Actress, who gets married and gives up her career for the sake of marriage is an example of a woman who has not matured as an artist beyond the "Girl's Aspiration" – or she would not have given up her career for marriage.

Cather also feels that, if the woman wants that her art must not suffer, she could give importance to herself as a woman and live a full life as a woman. In fact she feels that a woman has only one gift "the power of loving". These emotions could be easily diverted for art. Her companion Edith Lewis asserts, Cather herself was a very emotional person who was unable to separate life and art into dual streams. The artist heroines that Cather has elaborately developed in her novels like THE SONG OF THE LARK and LUCY GAYHEART searched for a companionship of mutual understanding but they failed to get one, obviously because they fail as women and consequently fail as artists too.
Later in an interview by Eleanor Hinman, when enquired, how she think of the movement of woman into business and the arts, she replied, "It cannot help but be good", and added that "It atleast keeps the woman interested in something real". In her later years Cather was of the opinion that family life does not hinder art but is of a great help. As she carried the luggage of successful and well-to-do woman in her consciousness, she understood the possibilities and the limitations of woman artists. If a woman possesses only a quarter of the qualities of her prototype, she can fulfil the claims of both family life as well as art. If one has an enduring spirit in oneself, one can go along without intimacy even if it is needed. In the difference between O PIONEERS! and A LOST LADY we see the difference in Cather's journey from a young woman artist to a mature one. In O PIONEERS! Alexandra fought a lonely battle where as Marian Forrester in A LOST LADY, is strong enough to go her own way, in full possession of her spirit and vitality.

The outstanding woman in Ms. Cather's novels have achieved success in unfavourable circumstances, by proving themselves equal to the challenge. They have made a place for themselves in familiar surroundings or in a new place. Alexandra Bergson as overseer of the farm, Thea Kronborg as Opera Star, Antonia Shimerda as quintessential wife and
mother. Of course there are other women characters in her work, who do not achieve success but they do achieve immortality because of their attempt or desire to make uncommon lives for themselves – Marian Forrester, who lives life as she desires for herself till the end. Lucy Gayheart, who loves not wisely but so well. Myra Henshawe, who shows what happens when a bitter spirit distorts one’s strength. Sapphira Colbert settles in a remote area, where she makes a place for herself even being a stranger there. Rachel Blake daughter of Sapphira is a sort of pioneer woman, acting without a husband’s support, acting against her mother and local custom, but acting rightly to defy the abuses which slavery permitted.

While analysing her work we observe that the woman characters throughout her work gain respect of the reader, they all have something in them which fires the imagination. Even though they have gone through so much trauma and hardship throughout their life there is very little change in their physical appearance. They are the personification of life itself. Actually the whole work of Willa Cather could be seen as an embodiment of one great thing i.e. passion. A strenuous physical life is lived throughout every novel, whether it is the struggle for survival or the keen experience of joy in simple identification with the living world around. It is a form of the passion that is seen all through
Willa Cather work, her work is written out of it. We see it in many modulations—desire often exalted as ambition; devotion; loyalty; fidelity; physical nearness and kindness and comfort when it lives at rest. Love? There is reconcilement, and there is pity. There is a obsession here too, and so is the hunger for something impossible; all of these are forms of love. And there is marriage, though the marriages that occur along the way of the novels are milestones, hardly destinations; as required in the careful building of her plots, they are inclined to be unavailing.

As felt by Eudor Welty "along with her other superior gifts Willa Cather had a rare sureness as to her subject, the knowledge of just what to touch and what not to touch in the best interests of her story". In the new century Cather had blamed ambition, cruelty and desire for the decline of civilization. She never was able to effect any permanent synthesis, either in her art or her life. Ned Ryerson has rightly observed that for Cather, the search for intimacy was some part of necessary struggle to confront whatever dark knowledge she had of life, and to sustained her idealism inspite of betrayals and violations.

Willa Cather was quite conscious that, the past she remembered no longer existed, she was determined to find the inner spirit of a known or imagined person. She tried to see
beyond materialism, beyond brutality, beyond the bitterness of what she considered to be the loss of idealism. In their loneliness Cather's women find the sources of an enduring struggle. In her more accomplish works like *O Pioneers!*, *My Antonia*, *A Lost Lady* and other novels of Willa Cather are novels about a past that lead us out of some of the uncertainties of the present, but it certainly does not lead us away from intimacy, however, or away from a consciousness of death or the loneliness that lies within us when we face both intimacy and death. What matters is to find the endurance in others to meet that loneliness. It is an endurance that Cather sought to discover in all of her best work.

Like her best heroines Cather was always searching for something higher. She believed that strong character is the character who knows what to retain of the past and at the same time how to adopt it to the present and the future. That, Miss Cather seems to be saying, is the true pattern of American achievement. As a matter of fact Cather's women strike a fine balance between acts of living and acts of creation. They are women who retain their essential vitality while still finding enough resources to persue their career as artists. The artist woman in Cather finds to synthesize the energies in such a way that very often the values of life and art seem to overlap. Art derives its
Art derives its energies from the life experience itself, and art in turn gives to one's life sense of purpose and design. Art serves to enhance and enrich human life, but it requires that the artist sacrifice much in his own personal life to achieve its highest ends. From the very beginning Cather was aware of the deep split between the claims of art and life. Frequently during her career Willa Cather felt that loneliness was the inevitable fate of the artist and that great art could be achieved only if the artist sacrificed all other forms of personal satisfaction to that one end.