CHAPTER-I
INTRODUCTION
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

SECTION-1

WILLA CATHER AND THE TRADITION:

More than most thoughtful Americans, perhaps, Willa Cather was personally sensitive to devalued conduct and customs. Because she had consciously built her life upon a structure of traditions, and because she had preferred the solid virtues of an inspiring past to the mercurial shifts of practical reality, she suspiciously resisted change. From time to time; she protested against the violation of durable truths, although rarely in the clamorous voice used by many contemporary writers. Looking backward to the fixed values of a satisfying past, she reaffirmed the moral standards she cherished, thus ultimately denying they could be destroyed by temporary upheavals. In so doing she committed herself to a pattern of continuity and became part of an exclusive but nevertheless great tradition of American writing.

Given fullest expression in the Nineteenth century, the tradition is synthesized in the fiction of Cooper, Hawthorne, Melville and James. Although they differed in their reactions to the convulsions afflicting an America in flux, they are connected by certain connections of personal responsibility. In the opinion
of Marius Bevely (The Complex Fate, New York, 1954, PP. 3-4), these authors "form a line in American writing based on a finely critical consciousness of the National society". Although all of them drew upon America as the source of their creative purpose, they resembled each other in their awareness of National exigencies rather than in any superficial resort to a common region or even set of circumstances.

Admiring the potential greatness of their country, they at the same time recognized certain shortcomings and imperfections, which menaced that greatness. Their art, which makes their union in a tradition relevant, was derived from a conflict between apprehension and conviction. Their tradition was compounded of earnest, mutual concern for the realization of an American destiny. Because they identified their fears with their hopes, they felt obliged to acknowledge that the positive advances of which their nation was capable were too frequently accompanied by attrition. In order to nullify, or at least retard, negative developments, they often spoke out against them in sharply critical fashion. Constructive criticism became one of their means of asserting optimistic conclusions².

In every essential detail, Willa Cather aspired towards the ethical and creative goals of the great tradition, consequently becoming the twentieth century successor of these four nineteen century novelists. Miss Cather has represented the tensions of
American existence in the late nineteen and early twentieth century. Like her predecessors - especially the last three - she is commentator on the prevailing American condition. Some times urgent in fears but always ardent in her faith, she constantly held before herself the vision of realizable ideals. Out of inspired singleness of conviction grew a distinguished art. To a greater degree than any of the four traditionalists except James, Willa Cather was absorbed in the total identification of an esthetic with moral purpose. Great achievement in the fusion of two inalienable ideals set her apart from her own contemporaries and fixed her in a continuity of distinguished American writing whose practitioners are few.

In a period so marked by devotional estheticism in writing, and one when it was easy to slip into the ornamental fancywork like Cabell and Hergesheimer, Willa Cather and Ellen Glasgow stood out as examples of serious craftsmanship. Yet their art had no gestures, no tricks, and - this is less true of Ellen Glasgow - no glitter. They were almost to serenely good; it was always so easy to put them into their placid niches. Yet if they seemed to be off on their own, it was largely because the experience that became the substance of their books now seemed distant and the hold of the past on them so magnetic. Willa Cather soon became a conscious traditionalist as Ellen Glasgow satirized traditionalism, but what isolated them both
was the fact that they brought the resources of the modern novel in America - and frequently not a little of the bitterness of the post war spirit - to the persistent exploration and evocation of the past. Unlike so many of their post war contemporaries, they used modernism as a tool; they did not make it their substance.

Sharing in the self-consciousness and freedom of the new literature, their mind persistently ranged below and beyond it. Yet unlike writers like Irwing Babbitt and Paul Elmer More, who went directly against the current of the new literature, they were wholly a part of it. Indeed they testified by their very presence, as writers so diverse as F. Scott Fitzgerald and Anderson, Mencken and Van Wyck Brooks, Hemingway and Cabell, had already testified, to the variety and freedom of the new American literature⁴.

The frontier, which Cooper writes about in the first half of the nineteenth century is obviously different from that with which Willa Cather concerns herself in the twentieth. The Calvinistic or Puritanical assumptions of sin, which beset Hawthorne and Melville, have a theological basis, which is not directly germane to the esthetically controlled questions of Miss Cather. Yet she is no less engaged by the meaning of the frontier than Cooper, nor any more casual about human salvation or destiny than are Hawthorne and Melville.
At first glance Miss Cather would appear by virtue of her frequently used frontier subjects to be closest to Cooper. In fact, however, the frontier provides only a superficial resemblance, and Cooper was the writer most distant from her in temperament even as he was in time. That they were alike at all in aim is the result of the fact that they were deeply engrossed in the solution of American crises, each in his own way. Yvor Winters (Maule's curse, Norfolk, Conn, 1938, P.29) has said of Cooper that his "concern was primarily for public morality; it was the concern of the statesman, of the historian first, and of the artist but secondarily." This statement of Cooper's literary interests; acutely defensible, it appears to us, shows the polarity between him and Willa Cather. National morality was, to be sure, intensely part of her fiction of the frontier. But in Cooper's intention we find a reversed image of Miss Cather, She was the artist, and - more significantly- the moral artist, first.

Sharing with Hawthorne and Melville a moral prosperity that is unusual in the twentieth century, Miss Cather built her novels along allegorical lines° ["Regarded in their totality, Miss Cather's novels of the frontier comprise an allegory of Quest- the individual seeking and finding America direction of life."]

This thesis on Miss Cather's novels reveals a concern, which differs mainly in degree and intention. In her tendency to
allegorize her moral searching, she like Hawthorne never lost sight of her function as a creative artist. Indeed, she devoted herself to the notion that only through the highest expression of art could she give worthy representation to her inner desire. More specifically than Hawthorne, she cherished people as people and incidents as incidents. She softened the lines of her figures and actions, but she never clothed them in such abstraction that they lost verisimilitude. She respected the varieties of human emotions and meant them to be credible aspects of daily familiar experience.

She was acutely conscious of artistic techniques, giving her search for esthetic perfection equality with her yearning for inner meaning. With regard to artistic credibility, she was closer to Melville than to Hawthorne, for like the former she sought a more immediate equation between physical reality and spiritual significance. As is true of Melville, she portrayed phenomenal reality and human beings in readily identifiable proportions. She made them agents of an ultimate truth but always invested them with properties, which could be accounted for immediately at the conscious level of perception as well as at the somewhat mystic level of moral insight. If she was less visionary than Hawthorne and Melville, and less profound in her moral intensity, she was the more accomplished technician and consequently the more readable novelist.
But among the major writers in the tradition, Henry James undoubtedly bears the closest creative resemblance to Miss Cather. Both as an artist and as a moral realist he was the literary personality who figured most prominently among the influences shaping her artistic development. Greatly respectful of his esthetic achievements, she was attracted to his singularity of purpose, to the manner in which he made an art form cohesive with serious thematic details.

Both Henry James and Willa Cather believed that without appropriately conceived shape the novel fails to represent in true essence the inner experience, which is the only justifiable substance of fiction⁷. James and Willa Cather progressed beyond the earlier writers. In their fusion of moral idea and physical reality, they acknowledge to a remarkable degree the demands of their art, and then went on to fulfill the obligations to which they had committed themselves. Willa Cather focused her frontier novels on divisions existing among native cultural forms. She may be said to have narrowed her view intensively, looking to the frontier first as a reaffirmation of traditional American values, and then to its development as a corruption of those values.

As a traditionalist in an age which had no reverence for tradition, Miss Cather was a lonely figure. Like Thoreau she challenged her own society, and like him she demanded a return
to good purpose. Her attitude has implicitly the same insistence upon values which Irvking Babbitt and Paul Elmer more enunciated in their doctrine neo-humanism. They preached moderation abhorring the excesses of both naturalism and asceticism. While they sought a mean between a moral action promoted by animal instinct and the profound introspection often attendant upon organized religion, they optimistically looked for a balance point in existence. Miss Cathers fiction is ample evidence of her privately and esthetically derived humanism. She was consistently moderate, but she never doubted that within the cares of real human problems individuals could and should work toward positive values.

Although she considered certain American writers of the 1930's—notably, Hemingway, wilder, Fitzgerald and Lewis—to be genuine artists. She thought the fiction of that period was largely without purpose. Even in the primitive, naturalistic concept the stringent sense of determination - handed down from Crane, Norris, London and Dreiser- does not totally conceal hope. Steinbeck, for instance, is thematically close to Miss Cather because he shows us that despite economic disaster it is still possible for men to retain at least vestiges of their traditions to seek a social and even spiritual well-being, and to have respect for the inherent dignity of a man. And Faulkner, likewise—especially in the later phases of his career- appears to conclude
that man is worthy; that he is capable of dignified and even noble action; that in short, he will endure and prevail. Wolfe bears another kind of resemblance to Miss Cather because of his profound respect for the artistic temperament⁹.

Because of her morally sentimental attachment to the traditional past, however, Willa Cather was less adaptable to the present than most of her contemporaries. Because the note of protest is less frequent in her writings than in those of other novelists, when it occurs its contrast with her customary tranquility makes it all the more pronounced. One of her protests is directed against science and scientific materialism, and its major occurrence is in THE PROFESSOR'S HOUSE and ONE OF OURS¹⁰.

Throughout her novels, then, Miss Cather is in the curiously ambivalent position of standing apart from her contemporaries and yet at the same time of sharing many of the immediate moral problems- which they had made their responsibility. Although she directed her vision to a traditional past, as they did not, she was nonetheless able to assess the dilemma of modern times through a conjunction of tradition with present reality. The important thing for her, of course, was that values may never be divorced from art. But it must also be acknowledged that for most serious writers of modern times moral or social responsibility must coincide with esthetic
awareness. Willa Cather addresses herself most memorably to a tradition of conscience and hope; in this respect she is in the main stream of great American literary achievement. But she also addresses herself trenchantly, if in a minor key, to affairs of material reality. Elocuently joining past and present, affirmation and censure, she was memorialized herself as an American Classic.

Influence of French writers: Willa Cather seems to have admired almost all the French writers of the nineteenth century, from the romantics Hugo and Dumas to Zola, the father of literary naturalism. But only a small group can be said to have influenced her technically. Merimee had a powerful and lasting influence on Willa Cather. His aesthetic ideals of organic unity, restraint, and apparent simplicity are those which informs Cather's writings at its best. Apparent simplicity and inevitability were artistic goals Cather shared with Merimee, and both achieved those goals through restraint. Like Cather, Merimee took every precaution to keep the prying gaze of the public away from his emotions and private life.

Cather admired Flaubert from her university days onward. Cather like Flaubert took great pains to hide herself from the reader and using male point of view in *MY ANTONIA* and *A LOST LADY* was one such strategy. Flauberts discipline Cuy de Maupassant was included by Cather with great French
writers. Cather probably learned much about formal structure from Merimee and about image and scene from Flaubert; but her special technique of suggestion would have had its roots in those large movements in the arts in the late nineteen century impressionism and symbolism\textsuperscript{14}.

Impressionism was most completely translated from painting to prose in the writings of Joseph Conrad (1857-1924) and Ford Madox Ford (1873-1939). Conrad and Ford jointly held that "the general effect of a novel must be the general effect that life makes on mankind." Life, they argued, does not narrate, but makes impressing on the brain and the novel should duplicate this process. They sought a "progression d' effect" - a gradual revelation of character, of the conflict to be narrated, of its symbolic meaning. As 'progression d' effect structures, both Cathers \textit{MY ANTONIA} and \textit{A LOST LADY}, each telling the story of a woman who has made a powerful and lasting impression on a young boy growing up in the pioneer Midwest, are clear examples of the impressionist novel\textsuperscript{15}. Both Conrad and Ford, in response to the naturalist writers, urged that the artist is goal was not to seek out the laws of nature and society, like the scientist, but to appreciate life itself.

These are the assumptions of Willa Cather's art the contempt for verisimilitude, the concern for, "the verbal mood the emotional aura of the fact or the thing or the deed\textsuperscript{16}. But the
writer who David Stock believe had a more direct influence on Cather in the area of sensory appeal is the Provencal author Alphonse Daudet (1840-97). His deep and lasting affection for Province would have recommended Daudet’s work to Cather, who continually returned in her own fiction to the part of the country where she grew up. Pleasure in the physical properties of the landscapes and its people in the real essence of Daudet’s Letters, love of the hot Southern Sun, the vine yard and olive trees, the dusty roads, the cicadas, the mistral, the shepherds and the farmers. What would have influences Cather is the structure of Daudet’s book, for it became a formal model that she used herself when she wrote DEATH COMES FOR THE ARCHBISHOP and SHADOWS ON THE ROCK17.

Willa Cather and Nebraska grew up together. Born in Virginia, she was taken at eight to a country moving in the first great floodtide of western migration in the eighties. Within a single decade half a million people - Yankee settlers, Sodhouse pioneers out of the Lincoln country, Danes, Norwegians, Germans, Bohemians, Poles- pulled up stakes or emigrated from the farms of northern and eastern Europe to settle on the plains of the region that had been "a state before there were people in it." Nebraska was the first of the great settlement beyond the Mississippi after the civil war, and the pace of its settlement and the polybet character of its people were such
that they seemed to mark a whole new society in flower. The successive stages of economic and social development were leaped quickly, but not too quickly; as late as 1885 the state was mostly raw prairie, and for the children of the first pioneers history began with the railroad age roaring in from the East. Nebraska was a bristling new society, proud of its progress and of values and a morality consciously its own. The Prairie aristocracy that was to play as triumphant and even didactic a role in Willa Cather’s novels as the colonial aristocracy had played in Edith Wharton’s may have been composed out of the welter of emigration; but it was a founding class, and Willa Cather never forgot it.

CATHERR’S CLASSICAL BACKGROUND:

Willa Cather was introduced to classical studies at an early age through the tutelage of her grandmothers and that her interest in the ancient world continued to grow throughout her school-age years. Cather’s preschool education lay largely in the hands of her grandmother Boak who read to her from the Bible, Pilgrims progress, and Peter Parleys universal History. This latter work was a favorite of Willa Cather and was probably one of first sources from which she learned of the exploits of heroes like Jason and Monelaus and heard the names of the great Greek poets - Anarcreion, Pindar, Theocritus, and
Homer\textsuperscript{19}.

Life on the prairie soon took an epic dimensions for Cather as she and her brothers explored the country who's red grass was the color of wine stains- Nor did the move into Red cloud in September, 1884 put an end to Cather's love affair with the ancient world.

The family library also provided ample sources for reading classical subjects. Among the other collection were a few translations of Latin authors, ranging from Caesar's commentaries to satires by Juvenal and the letters of Pliny and works by British writers. Her perception of the ancient world was filtered through her reading of the Victorian and Romantic writers, who often drew heavily upon classical subjects. Among these was Tennyson, whose words appear in various editions in the Cather collection, including copy of the complete works, endorsed in 1881 by Jennie B. Cather. Cather's childhood exposure to the English classics was extensive, ranging from the poetry of Thomas Campbell and Lord Byron, the novels of Charles Dickens and William Thackeray, to the essays of John Ruskin and Thomas Carlyle. Among American authors whose works were in the Cather family library were three of Willa's favorites - Poe, Hawthorne and Emerson\textsuperscript{20}.

What she could not find at home she eagerly searched out in the neighboring Wiener home (the Rosens of
OLD MRS. HARRIS). The Wiener household offered an old world perspective, a sense of timelessness in which the historical past and myth became one. Here Cather absorbed a sense of European tradition that Red cloud could offer. Willa Cather also began studying Latin and Greek with Mr. William Ducker, an Englishman whose passion for learning made him an unlikely prospect for success as a storekeeper in a small Nebraska town.

With Ducker, Cather read portions of the Iliad and the Aeneid, the Odes of Anacreon and Ovid, although, as Mildred Bennett has pointed out, her interest in Latin was more "as a gateway to the classical world than as a study in itself". In the Red Cloud schools Cather continued to study Latin, and by the time of her high school commencement, she had developed "a pure and classical literary taste." Entering in the "second prep" for the study of elementary Greek as a prerequisite to the university program in "Literary, English, Philosophical" studies, Cather's interest was peaked and she subsequently studied the language for three years. She worked equally hard at her two years of Latin and found herself first in a class of fifty-three students.

The summer vacations of her college years Willa Cather spent in Red Cloud reading Virgil with her brother Roscoe, but, following her graduation in 1895, she saw little
future in her hometown where artistic and intellectual stimulation was basically limited to the Sunday sermon, travelling opera companies and Courier allowed Cather to keep attuned to the artistic world which had captured her imagination and had provided a forum for voicing her critical opinions. These early journalistic writings show Cather skill at blending mythical allusions and allegorical language in her criticism. Cather seemed not only eager to use her learning to bolster her work but also anxious to establish an identity for herself and her contemporaries which would place them within What Thea Kronborg would call a "continuity of life that reached back into the old time".

Miss Willa Cather, began to do newspaper work on the Nebraska State Journal while she was still an undergraduate in the University at Lincoln. From Lincoln Miss Cather came East as far as Pittsburgh, to go on the regular staff of the Daily Leader. Leaving the newspaper life, while still very young, Miss Cather then accepted a position to teach First Latin and afterward English, in the Pittsburgh High School. It was during this time that she wrote the verse and short stories, which secured her the post of 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. She inherited neither money nor place, and any indulgences she allowed herself were the reward of total commitment. Her journeys to Europe were adventures. For her the old world was just that, the source of an abiding tradition, a place where creative talent was admired and encouraged to find expression.

Cather deemed herself conservative, certainly in her political allegiance and also in her realistic, often hard-bitten sense of the past. She rejected Post war American culture, scorning its manners, its morality and its art. Miss Catcher's world broke in two, she confessed, in 1922. When she said three years later that she preferred horses to automobiles, she symbolically turned her back on the present. She saw in the war's aftermath the ultimate triumph of a materialistic non-civilization over the values of continuity, poise, and "a kind of large enlightenment"\textsuperscript{25}.

**WILLA CATHER'S ART:**

In Willa Cather's words, it was during the six years when I was editor of McClure's magazine that I came to have a definite idea about writing." Out of her experience with complex people and complex things had come a great work of literature about simple people and simple things. She once said:
I write only of the Midwestern American life that I know thoroughly, and I must be here, where the stream of that life flowing over me touches springs that release early caught and assimilated impressions. I cannot create my kind of things without American speech around me and incidents that cause memories to rise from the subconscious.

Miss Willa Cather, began her literary career, like many authors, at an early age. When eight or nine years old, according to a man who knew her as a child in Virginia, she not only wrote a play, but arranged and supervised its performance with remarkable effect. Cather's themes 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. Diverse peoples settle in Cather country, where there are no boundaries, walls or curtains, and where the national talents of each one are nurtured and developed to sing the song of all humanity. In Willa Cathers America, and ethnic no matter of what origin, is first a human being.

In several of her frontier novels Cather set up a contrast between the old visionaries - the pioneers and the generation that followed behind them. Their antagonism within the novel was developed contrapuntally. The dreamers who
had tamed the wild land and settled the west had been gracious but impractical speculators in the best sense of the word. They were "a courteous brotherhood" and courteous is figuratively underscored - "strong in attack but weak in defense, who could conquer but could not hold". Supplanting them were men like Ivy Peters "who had never dared anything, never risked anything. They would drink up the mirage, dispel the morning freshness, and root out the great brooding spirit of freedom, the generous easy life of the great land holders." Ivy, and his kind would mangle the vastness and glory of the frontier world, destroying and cutting up the land " into profitable bits, as the match factory splinters the primeval forest."

Willa Cather, wrote of "natural" manners prominent among any people who are breaking away from one place and culture to create a new Troy. In her fiction, then, she focused upon the behavior of persons- whether in the seventeenth or nineteenth centuries, in Quebec, in Nebraska or in the territory of New Mexico - who drew apart from an old world to establish one that was fresh and free. In time, however, a spontaneous give - and - take crystallized into artificial patterns of behavior. The natural manners of the frontiersmen became the acquired manners of their descendants far from depressed by this movement, although often made angry by it Cather recognized that whatever was subject to decay was more importantly
subject to infinite renewal. In such cyclical moment lies her hope\textsuperscript{30}.

Throughout her works we come upon such phrases, as "the passionate struggle of a tenacious will," and the loyalty of young hearts to some exalted ideal and the passion with which they strive." The passion was in the striving. Ultimately she was to say that "Success is never so interesting as struggle - not even to the successful"\textsuperscript{31}.

Fascination for art, and the art world, on the part of Miss Cather's heroes and heroines, was a fascination essentially with success, the energy represented is not aesthetic, it is that of conquest, of overcoming nature and competition and standing firm and free among the Philistines and resisting their inevitable demand that talent become as mediocre as themselves.

Miss Cather's central theme is that of people who pull themselves up by their foot straps. What is interesting for us in a novel such as \textsc{The Song of the Lark} is that once would be opera star, Thea, arrives at her goal, the story has nowhere to go. The love affair Miss Cather created in the novel is artificial, it has had little meaning beside the main impulse, which was Thea's, to be a great singer and a great star. And when the characters meet sometimes\textsuperscript{32} afterwards, I think in Denver, on a crisp starry night, all they can do is to be very
smug about all that they have accomplished. They discover, perhaps, what Henry James meant when he remarked that success was like having a good dinner. All that you can say is that you have had it.

The inner voice of the early novels of Willa Cather suggests this fascination with, and need to describe, various forms of success- but also certain forms of failure. The drive to power in these books is overriding, with the result that the novels contain no complicated plots, no complexity of human relationships, and no love affairs that we can take seriously. Her heroines, those women with feminized masculine names, Alexandra, Antonia-and the name Alexander itself reminds us of one of history's greatest conquerors-have tenacious will and an extraordinary capacity for struggle. Already in OPIONEERS, and in the finest of the prairie novels, MY ANTONIA, the younger rebel in Willa Cather is making her peace with the Nebraska she had fled and is discovering a deep love for the place and the people she had known.33

When a writer turns to thins as they were, and conveys them with an ache as powerful and poignant as Willa Catcher's, we can wonder whether this may not express a profound uneasiness with things as they are. There is always a certain ache, inevitably, for old days and bygone experiences which we cherished, the question is the degree to which that ache
prevails in the midst of the here and now. Miss Cather's novels, those she wrote in her second phase, leave no doubt that for her the here and the now was deeply depressing. This is what the inner voice says in the four novels Miss Cather wrote during the early 1920's. In ONE OF OURS, the hero makes an unhappy marriage and escapes from it and the prairie by going overseas during the First World War; he escapes also from the new machines and the new man who are betraying the promise of the Pioneers. Death in battle comes to him as a happy release. The title of the next volume expresses a further stage in this mood of despair, decay death. A LOST LADY expresses the nostalgia for a lost aristocratic order on the frontier. The short novel, which achieved extraordinary popularity during the 1920's, paints with wildness and economy a heroine who cannot yield the old for the new, but who in her love of pleasure is prepared to accept shallow compromises. The story conveys to us a kind of lonely ache for the swagger of the railroad pioneers and the early tycoons. THE PROFESSOR'S HOUSE, which followed, tells us much more. If the lost lady is lost indeed, the professor has everything to live for: he is a prize-winning historian, his work is recognized, and he is about to become a grandfather. There is a forward movement in the life around him, but also within it a decline in old high values; and his reaction to this decline is to decline himself into apathy and
bitter premature old age. Indeed, he all but commits suicide. My Mortal Enemy, the last novel in this group, ends in the death of the heroine, and in it Willa Cather seems to offer herself a kind of ambiguous resignation and the possible solace of religion. But the novel is of a piece with its immediate predecessors and the view of life in it is dark and ominous.34

Cather is one of the most private of American novelists but she was a harsh critic of herself and rarely reticent about a novel which she judged deficient35. The burning drive of the young, the desire to live, to do, to make, to achieve, no matter what the sacrifice, is the feeling most surpassingly alive to the author, most moving to us. Life as made her terribly certain that being young in the world is not easy. "If youth did not matter so much to it self, it would never have the heart to go on," she says, as Thea starts from home. And Doctor Archie, Old friend and traveling companion, "knew that the splendid thing of life are few, after all, and so very easy to miss." In O PIONEERS! we read that "There is often a good deal of the child left in people who have had to grow up too soon" Miss Cather has a number of ways to tell us that life is most passionate in the promise, not in the fulfillment.

A strenuous physical life is lived throughout every novel, whether it is the struggle for survival or the keen experience of joy in simple physical well-being, it may reach in
some characters the point of total identification with the living world around. It is affection that warms the life in her stories and hates that chills it. There is reconcilement, and there is pity. There is 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.

For this novelist, art, as she saw it and perfected it, always kept the proportions of the great world and the undesirability of the world, and it lived for her as certainly as this world lived. And the strongest felt relationship, a reader may come to believe, might not be any of those between the characters but the one their creator feels for them, for their developing, passionate lives.

In the long run, love of art- which is love accomplished without help are need of help from another- is what is deepest and realest in her work. She lacked self-righteousness, and she just as wholly lacked bitterness. It is impossible to think of diminishment in anything she thought or wrote. She conceived of characters along heroic lines. For her, the heroic life is the artists as it is the Pioneers. She equated the two.
In the Cather's novels; there is a setting apart of the artist in value, a setting apart of his life from that of other people. Artist, in her considered and lifelong view, are perhaps greater and more deserving to be made way for than other human beings.  

**HER STYLE:**

Critics have agreed wholeheartedly that Ms Cather's style could easily be termed fine, artistic, beautiful and even classical. It is economical, controlled, and disciplined, refined and fastidious, clear and sharp. Her style is never an end in itself, but always a fitting implement. She has a characteristic manner of expression, which we can recognize as clear, beautiful, and simple, and also achieves originality and excellence in her literary expression, these qualities we can catalog. As William Curtin reminds us, however, "Like most of the writers who gained fame during the twenties as Willa Cather was marked by one outstanding characteristic her individualism." This individualism gave rise to the inexplicable, particular timbre of her style.

Willa Cather art arises from her experience of life; her techniques are the result of substantial experimentation through which she discovered the way to order her memories of that experience. Ultimately, then, her style is what she made
of her life. Cather always believed that the pioneer woman on
the Divide possessed many of the traits of the artist the drive,
the perception, the energy, the creative force. They had created
a new country out of an idea, just as Fremsted created the
roles of Elsa, Seiglinde, bruhilde or kandry out of her mind and
throat.

Drive, perception, energy, and creative force are the
traits of the artist that cather perceived and it is as an artist that
she wished to perceive herself. Our understanding of what
Cather has done with style must therefore be inextricably tied
to her concept of artist our discussion of her techniques hinges
on the artistic effects they produce.

Willa Cather viewed herself as an American writer
and perhaps felt the need to develop something like this "
Constantly refined tradition" in American letters. If so, then the
constant refinement of style that occupies her in her middle
years is a legacy and tribute to the hard work, struggle, good
sense, discrimination, and an eagerness for beauty that she
demanded of herself as well as from others.

Mildred Bennet explains to new student of Cather in
his article, The Mastery of Technique: Willa Cather's fusion of
craftsmanship and vision (1873) that her style is derived from
her use of colour, figurative language, and economy --- all
elements of technique. Bennett says:
Cather's method was to write fully, then strip every sentence to its unadorned simplicity. To accomplish this, eliminated many adverbs, used strong verbs, and many figures of speech. And whenever she felt great emotion, she used colour.43

Cather actively tried a new approach with each book, and each book dictated its own experiment, O PIONEERS! is an experiment in subject matter and form; THE SONG OF THE LARK is the experiment in the "full blooded method" and the transformation of biography to art. With MY ANTONIA Cather begins the series of experiments with point of view. A LOST LADY and ONE OF OURS are also technical masterpieces that resolve the issue of point of view. Indeed Cather's experiments with point of view are one aspect of her work that ties her so closely to the twentieth century modernists.44

Cather took the path of simplicity rather than that of obscurity. Cather's technical skills are so refined that the works appear to easily read, indeed simplification may be the key to understanding just what Catcher has done to the novel form.45
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42. Ibid, p.30.
43. Ibid, p.32.
44. Ibid, p.41.
45. Ibid, p.43, 44.
CHAPTER-I

AN ELABORATE SURVEY OF
WILLA CATHER'S NOVELS
AN ELABORATE SURVEY OF MISS WILLA CATHER’S NOVELS

SECTION II

*OPIONEERS!, opens on a January day in 1883 with a description of the Embryonic of Hanover, Nebraska, five-year-old Emil cries for his kitten and is given sweets by seven-year-old Marie. Carl Linstrum comes to the aid of Alexander, four years his senior, already matronly and capable of Amazonian fierceness. While Marie flirts with Emil and her uncle’s cronies, Alexandra and Carl share their loneliness and sustain each other. The first chapter concludes with Alexandra burdened with the sad knowledge that her father will soon die.

'Part I, THE WILD LAND, Which deals with Pioneer experience, stresses the importance of the relationship of man to the land. Bergson exemplifies one possible relationship to the land—that of impersonal ownership which is shown, by its results, to be inadequate. Other characters in this section embody other possible attitudes. Six months later after the death of his father, and her good friend Carl Linstrum go to visit Crazy Ivar, a queer old Norwegian who lives close to nature with the simplicity of a wild creature.

*Willa Cather, O PIONEERS!, Boston Houghton Mifflin, 1913-1941. All subsequent references to the text are to this edition.
his Bible seemed truer to him there". If one stood in the doorway of his Cave, and looked off at the rough land, the smiling sky, its curly grass white in the hot sunlight; if one listened to the rapturous song of the Lark, the drumming of the quail, the burr of the locust against that vast silence, one understood what Ivar meant. (p. 156)

The ideal of man's creative relationship to the land is personified in Alexandra. This is dramatized three years later, when drought and crop failure threatens to drive the settlers out. Carl Linstrum and his family leave. Thus Alexandra is deprived of her closest friend. The only person, who really understands her Oscar and Lou, too, want to sell out, and they angrily oppose Alexandra, whose deep faith in the future of the land convinces her that this is the time to buy all the land they can. She decides to take the wagon and travel with her youngest brother, eight-year-old Emil, to the farms to the South, along the river, to see how things are going there. On her return she renews her faith that the Divide, the high plateau country, will yield to being cultivated and become rich farmland, and she fortifies her determination to remain:

When the road began to climb the first long swells of the Divide, Alexandra hummed an old Swedish hymn, and Emil wondered why his sister looked so happy. Her face was so radiant that he felt shy about asking her for the first time, perhaps, since that land emerged from the water of geologic ages,
a human face was set towards it with love and yearning. It seemed beautiful to her, rich and strong and glorious. Her eyes drank in the breadth of it, until her tears blinded her. Then the genius of the Divide, the great, free spirit which breathes across it, must have bent lower than it ever bent to a human will before. The history of every country begins in the heart of a man or a woman. (p.170)

Though, many have attempted to subdue the land, its submission to the hand of man is dependent on love rather than force. Thus Alexandra's relationship to the land not only brings the land under submission to the plow and makes fruitful; it also brings into being, in Alexandra's household a human community which is ordered and harmonious and whose harmoniousness depends on the continuance of right relationships among its members⁴.

A Pioneer should have imagination, should be able to enjoy the idea of things more than the things themselves. Alexandra possesses this pioneer imagination and after convincing her brothers not to leave with the others, enabling her to persuade her brothers to invest in more land and fulfill their father's dreams. Her face is radiant and turned toward that land "with love and yearning"⁵.

Her (Alexandra's) constant creed throughout THE WILD LAND is not that she would abandon herself to something
greater but that she would "held on" to what she already has - (p.166)

Part-II "Neighboring field", shifts the focus from man's relationship to the land to the human community, set thirteen years later, Alexandra's brother Emil, now a young man of twenty one, is scything the grass in graveyard where his father and mother are buried. Marie Shabata drives by in her carriage and offers Emil a ride home to Alexandra's farm, which is one of the richest on the Divide: Lou and Oscar, now married and on farms of their own, still criticize her forward-looking ways of farming, and grumble that Ivar is dangerous and should be put in an asylum. Alexandra's openness to the things of value in both the old and the new her sympathy and understanding of the needs of Ivar and of the old fashioned Mrs. Lee, Lou's mother-in-law, and her willingness to try or a silo. When none of her neighbor's would hear of such a thing - are implicitly contrasted with her brother's. Slavery to conventional ways of behavior and their concerns over what people might say.

Carl Linstrum unexpectedly returns, stopping for a visit on route to Alaska, Oscar and Low despise him because they believe he has never amounted to much. Carl out for an early morning walk to visit his old farm, now owned by the irascible, jealous Frank Shabata and his pretty wife, Marie, unintentionally observes Marie and Emil looking for ducks on
the pond. The love stories within the human community are thematically parallel to Alexandra's loving response to the Divide, for both reflect the reaching out of the human heart towards beauty and the fullness of life. But the love between Emil and Marie, however powerful and alluring, is at variance with the order of the community, and the results of their love, from the very beginning, are disruptive for Marie is another man's wife. The contrast between this frustrated love, which makes Emil harsh and quarrelsome, and the delight of harmonious love is emphasized between Emil best friend, Amedee, and his bride, Angelique. While Emil's love threatens right relationship within the community, the emerging and appropriate love between Carl and Alexandra's self-seeking brother. Oscar and Lou fear that Carl will get her property, which they feel by right, if not by law, to be theirs. The section closes on a note of discard: Emil, determined to go away to Mexico, is blind to Alexandra's distress about Carl, and the formerly close relationship between brother and sister is at least temporarily broken.

Alexandra has settled back into her old routine. She received weekly letters from Emil and had not seen Lou and Oscar since Carl went away. "When Mrs. Lee had been with Alexandra for a week, Marie Shabata telephoned one morning to say that frank had gone to town for the day, and she would
like them to come over for coffee in the afternoon." (P.230)

When Marie enquired Alexandra about Carl, Alexandra told her that, "Before he left California he sent me a box of orange flowers, but they didn't keep very well." (p.231).

She gave Marie a bunch of Emil's letters:

They were the kind of letters a young man writes to a woman when he wishes himself and his life to seem interesting to her, when he wishes to enlist her imagination (p.235). Marie often ran in to see her nearest neighbor, old Mrs. Hiller, who was crippled with rheumatism and had only her son, the lame shoemaker, to take care of her; and she went to the French church, whatever the weather. She prayed for herself and for frank, and for Emil, among the temptations of that gay, corrupt old city. She found more comfort in the church that winter than ever before (p.236).

First chapter of the Part III closes with the following lines. "And yet, down under the frozen crusts, at the roots of the trees, the secret of life was still safe, warm as the blood in one's heart; and the spring would come again! Oh, it would come again! In the next episode we see that Alexandra had been so trained, so as to be proficient in the task she has undertaken to do. "Her personal life, her own realization of herself, was almost a subconscious existence; like an underground river that came to the surface only here and there,
at intervals months apart, and then sank again to flow on under her own fields (p.237).

There was one fancy indeed, which persisted through her girlhood. It most often came to her on Sunday mornings, the one day in the week when she lay late abed listening to the familiar morning sounds; the windmill singing in the brisk breeze, Emil whistling as he blacked his boots down by the kitchen door. Sometimes as she lay thus luxuriously idle, her eyes closed, she used to have an illusion of being lifted by someone very strong. It was a man, certainly, who carried her, but he was like no man she knew; he was much larger and stronger and swifter, and he carried her as easily as if she were a sheaf or wheat. She never saw him, but, with eyes closed, she could feel that he was yellow like the sunlight, and there was smell of ripe cornfields about him. She would feel him approach, bend over her and lift her, and then she could feel herself being carried swiftly off across the fields" (p 238).

When Emil returns to the Divide after a year in Mexico and is fatefuly thrown together with Marie at a Church festival. They are both miserable at the impossibility of their relationship, and Marie begs Emil to go away again. Before he can depart his best friend Amedee, is stricken with appendicitis and dies. The next day, Emil rides back to Marie to tell her goodbye.
Several hours later, her rash and jealous husband returns and finds Emil's horse in the stable and the house dark. More to increase his sense of injury and self-importance than out of intention to kill anyone, he takes his gun and goes out searching for them. When he hears them behind the orchard hedge he blindly fires at them and then flees terror stricken at what he has done. He leaves Emil dead and Marie dying.\(^9\)

As the last section opens, Alexandra undergoes the experience of death. Alexandra is caught in a rainstorm at the graveyard. There, cold and soaking wet, she feels that the rain falling on her, takes her back into the dark, before she was born. Brought home and put to bed, she feels tired of life, tires of her own aching body, and longs to be free. Then she experiences "the cold illusion of her girlhood, of being lifted and carried lightly by someone very strong." Perhaps it would be more accurate to see this someone as a symbol of the life force itself, life that contains both fertility and death. Significantly, it is in her total acceptance of him symbolically, her acceptance of death and life - that Alexandra finds peace. Strengthened by this experience, sometimes to go to the state penitentiary to visit frank Shabata.

The visit to frank is a kind of descent into hell, and never has Alexandra seemed less armed with\(^10\) power, more
tired and worn, than she appears in the prison. She enters into the depth of negotiation and despair with Frank, herself taking on the burden of his disgust with life in order to try to set him free. Only then, when she has reached the bottom, does she receive a telegram saying that Carl is returning, and life begins to flow into her again.

Alexandra's ascent from depth is facilitated through the love of Carl, who the moment he learned of Alexandra's misfortune, had left his prospecting business in Alaska and rushed to her as fast as trains and boats could carry him. His earlier timidity in the face of her brother's disapproval vanishes in the awareness of her need for him, and her grief has opened in her a greater awareness of that need and lives together hence afterward.

*THE SONG OF THE LARK:* is a story of the development of an artist, the singer Thea Kronborg, from her childhood in a little Colorado town to the pinnacle of her success in singing Wagnerian roles at the metropolitan Opera. In this novel Cather explores Thea's imaginative life. The novel begins with the birth of a child to the Kronborg family, simultaneously, an older child, Thea, has Pneumonia and struggles to survive.

In the early scenes the child Thea outwardly conforms to the public roles dictated by her family and community, but inwardly carries about a secret or second self, which she nourishes by drinking in sensation\textsuperscript{12}: seeing the sand hills glittering in the distance as she walks to the Kohlers house for her music lessons, smelling the linden bloom in the Kohler's garden, hearing Ray Kennedy's stories of adventure, watching rabbits in the moonlight. Unlike Ray Kennedy, who believed expression was obligatory and laboriously recorded his impressions in a notebook, only to admit "the material you were so full of vanished mysteriously under your striving hand" (p.146). Thea instinctively refuses to explain her feelings, for "it spoils things to ask questions" (p. 98). When it comes, knowledge will occur not by reasoning but in a flash of insight.

Thea's education is a combination of associationism and divine insight. She records experiences as fragments until she has a revelation - the epiphany of creative imagination - that enables her to put them together. As her teachers realize, Thea is talented but not quick. "She could not think a thing out in passages. Until she saw it as a whole, she wandered like a blind man surrounded by torments. After she once had her 'revelation', after she got the idea that to her --- explained everything, then she went forward rapidly" (p.441). But Thea is
the superior individual to whom such knowledge will come: "She herself is aware of special destiny, as are those closest to her - her mother, Dr. Archie, Professor Wunsch, Ray Kennedy\textsuperscript{13}.

Thea's closest Moonstone friend is Howard Archie, a physician, who is too timid to call a halt to an unsuccessful marriage and to leave a town he finds limiting. He cares for her from cradle to artistic coronation. The intellectual of the town, Archie is able to answer questions of religion, personal responsibility, and human destiny, which puzzle Thea. He makes no concessions to her young mind; he speaks maturely. The nasty death of a tramp, who spites the town's meanness by drowning himself in the standpipe and contaminating the water supply, for example, shocks Thea, and Archie does not sentimentalize experience to lesson the shock. The indifference of everyone to the tramp's needs strikes the girl as a mockery of the Christian principles. Society asserts. A man's falling desperately for out of good fortune also disturbs her. Perplexities of these kinds will, Archie assures her always arise, and her bookish notions of religion will not solve them. He offers in place of commentionalized restriction a doctrine of pleasure: the important duty is to live --; to do all we can and enjoy all we can" (p.175). That she does overcome the inevitable, momentary reverses of desire and circumstance demonstrates
an ability to brush ugliness and misfortune aside in favor of searching out the best things of this world (p.175).

A Piano teacher, psychically lame like the other three Moonstone friends, has the most to do with Thea's artistic preparation. Professors Wunsch gives a bit for a normal child, but not enough for one intending to study the piano seriously. As desire outweighs discipline in his personality so his teaching emphasizes emotion and ignores, except in a wayward fashion, the literature of the piano, music is Wunsch's life and have; because it was not submitted to discipline in his personality, so his teaching emphasis emotion and ignores, except in a wayward fashion the literature of the Piano. Music is Wunsch's life and love; because it has not submitted to discipline of any kind, it has become an inadequate source of livelihood and an emotional frustration. The imbalance of his musicianship is not without a compensatory benefits however, his name states what Thea receives from him - desire\textsuperscript{14}.

The marriage between life and art is brought about through the sublimation of life into art. Art for Thea Kronberg solves the crisis of life by absorbing it. When Archie expresses concern about the singer's lack of personal life, she replies\textsuperscript{15}: "My dear doctor, I don't have any. Your work becomes your personal life. You are not much good until it does. It takes you up, and uses you, and spins you out; and that is your life" (p.546).
With Spanish Johnny, the unreliable alcoholic, Thea comes nearest to the elemental impulse of the earth as it is echoed in man. The music Johnny makes on a mandolin is frenzied and exceptionally skillful, but its strength and beauty reside in the racial consciousness, which is at the heart of his songs. When Ray Kennedy—who had hoped to marry Thea when she was old enough—is killed in a railroad accident, Thea finds herself, the beneficiary of his life insurance and with this money is enabled to go to Chicago to study music.

In Part II, **THE SONG OF THE LARK**, Thea is alone in Chicago studying music; here she becomes more fully aware of her nature as an artist. In Chicago she realizes that her art is a process of self-discovery. Her voice, more than any other part of her, had to do with that confidence, the sense of Wholeness and inner well-being that she had felt at moments ever since she could remember — she took it for granted that some day, when she was older, she would know a great deal more about it. It was as if she had an appointment to meet the rest of herself sometime, somewhere. It was moving to meet her and she was moving to meet it (p.272).

Thea's awakening to herself as an artist is revealed in the Jules Breton painting 'The Song of the Lark', in which a peasant girl, on her way to work at dawn, stops to
listen to a lark singing over the fields. Thea's intelligent and sympathetic piano teacher, And Harsanyi, also directs her towards self discovery as an artist when he urges her to study voice instead of piano. But Thea's first great experience of art comes when she hears Dvorak's New World Symphony performed. The two different moods of the symphony look forward to the two sources of inspiration in Thea's music: the heroic quest for ideal beauty, personal memories from the past. The excitement she feels at the concert brings her to a decisive moment of commitment. "As long as she lived that ecstasy was going to be hers. She would live for it, die for it, but she was going to have it, time after, height after height" (p. 254).

As Thea's desire to be an artist grows sharper and more defined, she feels an exuberance of physical energy. Harsanyi tells Thea that great art has nothing to do with what is little but with beauty and power (p. 267). Thea's determination and drive stand in relief against the defeat and purposelessness of the people around her. But as Thea's sense of heroic purpose grows stronger the gap for her widens between the claims of ordinary life and the desire to be an artist. Throughout Part II we are reminded of the necessary and often sordid details of everyday existence, which harass and impede the striving artist. When Thea returns home to Moonstone for the summer, she is severely criticized for going to a dance in the Mexican Town,
and again feels a conspiracy in the world against her. Again Thea takes a journey out of Moonstone into the brightly - colored sand hills to a special place (an "adohe dance hall") Where there is music, dancing and singing. When she sings for the music having Mexicans the completeness and intensity of their response is so overwhelming that she feels as if they have surrendered their very being to her. Thea momentarily has become their artist - priestess, and Spanish Johnny follows her performance with a teasing song, which is a comic variation on that idea.

But next morning when she is criticized by her older brothers and sister for associating with Mexicans she feels alienated from her family and betrayed by them, alone save for that secret companion inside herself. Taking refuge in her room, "she frowned at herself for a while in the looking-glass. Yes, she and it must fight it out together."

Thea, after an exhausting and depressing second winter in Chicago, takes Fred Ottenburg's advice and with his help withdraws to the desert in the Southwest to be completely alone but in the presence of the ancient pottery and the cliff houses she feels her art no longer alienates her from other men, but connects her vitally to a tradition of human aspiration. The stream, too, is no longer "the stream of meaningless and undirected effort," but is the very stuff out of which art is made.
A little later, as in her memory of the vision at Laramiee, Thea sees an eagle fly over the Canyon, and it again becomes a symbol of her continuity of human desire and the striving of art. Thea's dedication to art is no longer conceived of as a selfish quest for power and recognition, nor as a means of revenge on a critical world, but as the fulfillment of a sacred obligation to both man's ancestors and his descendants.

Thea's re-entry into the mainstream of life comes when Fred Ottenburg joins her Arizona and persuades her to run off to Mexico with him. Eventually she discovers that Ottenburg is already married; and she borrows money from her old Moonstone friend to leave America and study alone in Germany. After Thea has broken off their affair, Ottenburg tells her that by going to Mexico with him she was simply driving ahead: "'And you'll always drive ahead ------ It's your way' " (P.444) Thea loves Fred Ottenburg but her desire to be a great artist is still strong. Their love has enriched her experience of life, and the fact that he is already married leaves her free to continue with her music and mesh that experience with her art. On the eve of Thea's departure for Germany he notices that her excitement, her eagerness "to get at it", is no longer colored by memories and personal struggle, but is now "unconscious", something selfless and instinctive.
When Doctor Archie first sees Thea again after a performance at the metropolitan, she is tired and awkward behind her make up and has lost much of the spontaneity and energy she once exuded. In later visits he cannot help but notice that she has grown hardened and impatient with those around her. Fred Ottenburg, still her admirer, realizes that only the challenge of her art brings back her vitality and zest for life. In a sense Thea has died to life; on stage she looks to Doctor Archie like someone in the "next world": her face (as her name suggests) is "shining with the light of a new understanding" (P.500), and that "new understanding has been the goal towards which Thea has been moving all her life".

Thea no longer has a life apart from the Opera (she can talk only of herself and her work), but in her career art and life are still one because as Harsanyi suggests, her special gift is her passion. One of the final questions considered in the novel is the relationship of the artist to the people in his past. Doctor Archie always regretted that Thea did not get home when her mother was dying. Her failure to return appears callous and neglectful; and yet Oliver Landry, Thea's friend, tells Fred Ottenburg that the special power in Thea's interpretation of Elizabeth in Tannhauser derives from the anxiety and grief she felt over her mother's death. "The last act is heart breaking. It's as homely as a country prayer - meeting might be any lonely
woman getting ready to die. It's full of the thing every plain creature finds out for himself, but that never gets written down" (P.540). Among other things we are reminded of those humble faces at the mournful prayer meetings, which for Thea, were so tedious, but promised to mean something someday. Through the "new understanding" of her art Thea appreciates those faces as she could not before; they are part of that passion, that vita enrichment in her art.

There is a large side to this relationship, between the artist and her past; not only her mother but also many of the people she once knew are now dead and cannot known that they have contributed to the growth of a great singer. But in this novel Willa Cather chooses to dwell on the positive aspect of that relationship and to show us how Thea's success fills the dreams of her childhood friends from Moonstone. After performance which marks perhaps the pinnacle of her career, several of her old friends are present: her Piano teacher, Harsanyi, who with his symbolic one eye has shared her singleness of vision and purpose; Fred Ottenburg, whom she will eventually marry; Doctor Archie; and by a rare accident of fate, Spanish Johnny, now an itinerant circus performer. Each reaps his own spiritual regard for the part he played in the development of Thea's voice. The triumph of art in life is presented (again embodying the image of the stream) in the
figure of Spanish Johnny filled with happiness after Thea's performance.

*MY ANTONIA*

"The novel opens with the motif of journey, which is most broadly given expression in the pioneers' journey from an old established culture to a raw new land. Part I, "The Shimerdas", tells of a child's awakening to nature. When he came to Nebraska as a ten-year-old orphan, Jim Burden felt he had entered a prairie. The next morning, Jim found himself in the beginning of a new world. It was a pastoral, Edenic world. There Jim was warmed by the earth, nourished by fruit within arm's reach, his was the unconscious sensation of something that lay under the sun and felt it, like the pumpkins, .... [he] did not want to be anything more". As if one with the mother who holds him within her body, he feels the happiness of being "dissolved into something complete and great (p. 724)

The movement of the novel is from this childhood revelation of the sacred, into the complexities of adult social life embodied for him in the luminous figure of Antonia, who was full of energy and life.

* Willa Cather, MY ANTONIA, Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1918-1954. All subsequent page references are to this edition.
Most of the Part I is focused on Jim Burden's experience with Antonia's family. They are in externals at least, a sorry sight. And the conditions within the family are far from harmonious; the mother is grasping and mean and has centered all her ambitions on her surly son Ambrosch. The father whose major concern is for his beloved Antonia, is a gentle man of culture and sensitivity, demoralized by his wife and suffering terribly the hardships of prairie life. Antonia herself, at fourteen, is eager, cheerful, full of life, she is already beginning to become, for Jim, the personification of life itself.

Christmas comes, and Mr. Shimerda visits the Burdens to thank them for their kindness to his family. As he leaves, the old man blesses Jim with the sign of the cross. In January news comes that Mr. Shimerda has killed himself. The episode of Mr. Shirmeda's suicide and burial is of deep importance to Jim, as is suggested in his later reflection on Mr. Shimerda's grave: "I never came upon the place without emotion and in all that country it was the spot most dear to me" (p.789).

Book II, "The Hired Girls", opens three years later in the town of Black Hawk where Jim's grandparents have moved. When Jim's grandmother arranges for her to come to work as a hired girl for their next-door neighbors, the Harlings. Life on
the prairie was hard physically, but life in town is hard in more subtle ways. Though the town offers the pleasures of social life, Jim soon becomes aware of the class distinctions that are a part of town. The young boys of Black Hawk's American families - including Jim - are naturally drawn to the vigor and attractiveness of immigrants daughters like Antonia and the pretty Norwegian Lena Lingard. But the social consciousness of the town has decreed that Black Hawk boys should marry Black Hawk girls, which, after some longing glances at the hired girls they do. When a dancing pavilion opens, however, the town boys and the country girls can meet on neutral ground, and the girls are seen more than ever as a "Menace to the social order" (p.842).

For Antonia the dancing pavilion becomes irresistible, and her success there brings a stream of admirers to the Harlings back door. Upon hearing the music, Antonia would hurry with her work at the Harlings, dropping and breaking dishes in her excitement, and "if she had not time to dress, she merely flung off her apron and shut out of the kitchen door... the moment the lighted tent came into view she would break into a run, like a boy" (p.842). The iceman, delivery boys, young farmers, all come tramping through the Harling's yard, and "a crisis was inevitable" (p.842). When Antonia was told to cease
attending the dances or to leave the Harling's employ, she prefers to leave the Harlings and moves into the household of the notoriously dissolute wick cutter31.

Two concluding episodes present two aspects. In the first, Jim and the hired girls return to the prairie for a picnic. They play a game, then sit talking; it is one of the few scenes in this section in which they are physically still, at wick Cutter's, Antonia is in danger; and sleeping in her place, Jim is attacked. Having followed physically to its darkest extreme, Jim turns away from it altogether. He moves from Black Hawk to Lincoln, where, at the university, he awakens ideas.

Part III, "Lena Lingard", is complementary to Part I, "The Shimerdas": the two sections present two awakenings to two worlds, one of nature the other of ideas. In this second awakening Jim again feels happiness so complete that at momentarily erases has past, for "When one first end that world [of ideas] everything else fades for a time, and all that went before is as if it had not been" (p.872). Indeed, Jim jealously protects his new life from his former one, shutting his window when the prairie wind blows through it and begrudging "the room that Jake and Otto and Russian Peter took up in any memory, which I wanted to crowd with other things" (p. 875). Not only Antonia but nature itself seems remote; this is a time of interiors, and appropriately, it is set within Jim's rooms, Lena Lingard's workrooms, the theater 32.
Yet memories are there. So "Whenever my consciousness was quickened, all those early friends were quickened with it, and in some strange way they accompanied me through all my new experiences" (p. 875). When Lina Lingard quietly but inevitably reenters Jim's life, she seems the physical form of the early memories accompanying him. And drawing upon those memories, Jim grasps the idea that great art arises from particulars "If there were no girls like them in the world, there would be no poetry" (p. 880).

During this period however, Jim is far detached from those particulars in his own life. Because Jim is totally absorbed in the mental world opening to him, his early friends are real only as ideas he holds within himself, "so much alive" in him that he "scarcely stopped to wonder whether they were alive anywhere else" (p. 875). As Antonia and Jim had once played in nature, so now Lena and Jim play with ideas. When they attend, Camille, they are as innocent as "a couple of jack rabbits, run in off the prairie" of what awaits them (p. 881). And they are open to experience as only children can be.

When the school year comes to an end, Gaston Cleric is offered a position at Harvard, and he proposes that Jim follow him in the fall. The return is comically abrupt. Jim goes to Lena with the rather self-serving but noble resolution that he has been standing in her way, "That of she had not me to play
with, she would probably marry and secure her future" (p.891). Jim comes to know that Lena has no intention of marrying him or have given the thought of marrying somebody.

Thus closes Jim's chapter with Lena. The courtship of Lena is conducted languidly devoid of animal vitality, by old men and boys to whom she appeals because she knows they are only playing at love. Nobody needed to have worried about Ole Bensen, she recognized, because he simply liked to sit and look at her similarly, she allows the old men of Lincoln to court her, for "it makes them feel important to think they are in love with somebody" (p.891). Implicitly she has a similar bemused affection for the schoolboy Jim Burden. Even while Jim is most detached from Antonia, however, the memory of her remains, awaiting a return.

Part IV "The Pioneer woman's Story", tells of beginning that return. Antonia has continued to live her life, following Larry Donovan to Denver, becoming pregnant, and returning alone and unmarried to give birth to a daughter. Bitterly disappointed in her, Jim has tried to shut her out of his mind until, seeing a crayon enlargement of her daughter displayed prominently in a Black Hawk Photographer's window, he feels he must see her again. He goes first to the widow Steawens, the Shimerda's neighbor who assisted Antonia in the preparations for her marriage and in the delivery of her baby;
from her, Jim learns Antonia's story. Only then does he go to the Shimerdas homestead, where he sees Antonia. Their brief meeting builds to Jims declaration of faith:

Do you know, since I have been away, I think of you more often than anyone else in this part of the world. I'd have liked to have you for a sweetheart, or a wife, or my mother or my sister - anything that a woman can be to a man. The idea of you is a part of my mind; you influence my likes and dislikes all my tastes, hundreds of times when I don't realize it. You, really are a part of me (p. 910).

Jim here affirms his idea of Antonia as archetypal woman - that much is clear; he sees her face "under all the shadows of woman's faces, at the very bottom of my memory" (p. 911). But this is his idea only, and when he imagines linking, that idea to the real world, he rather indiscriminately wishes she could be whatever a woman can be to a man - sweetheart wife, mother, sister - apparently it does not matter. There is strikingly little of Antonia in this meeting: the scene, is almost wholly centered upon Jim, with only perfunctory references to Antonia's life or child because he has not yet grasped her particularity, he is as yet unable to conceive of Antonia as a part from him.

Part V, "Cuzak's Boys" is the closing of the circle. Allegiance to his idea has kept Jim away, from Antonia for twenty
years, for he has heard that she had married an unsuccessful man and lived a hard life. Perhaps it was cowardice, he recalled, but:

I did not want to find her aged and broken; I really dreaded it. In the course of twenty crowded years one parts with many illusions. I did not wish to lose the early ones. Some memories are realities and are better than anything that can ever happen to one again (p 912).

Again, Lena Lengard acts as an intermediary. As she had appeared in Jim's student rooms and brought with her memories of his past, so years later she gives Jim a cheerful account of Antonia and urges him to see her.

When the middle-aged Jim returns to the scenes of his, childhood, first Jim sees Antonia in all her physical reality, an aging woman with grizzled hair, missing teeth, and hands hardened from work; then he realizes the timeless truth that resides within that reality for the first time it is her identity rather than his idea of her that he affirms. Antonia he finds "battered but not diminished", (p.914). She is surrounded by a dozen loving and lively children, who show Jim the new cave for storing preserves and then come pouring out of the darkness of the cave like "a veritable explosion of life" (p.918). Reflecting on the pictures of Antonia in his
memory, Jim concludes that he was not mistaken, they are not illusions:

She was a battered woman now, not a lovely girl; but she still had that something which fires the imagination, could still stop one's breath for a moment by a look or gesture that somehow revealed the meaning in common things (p.926).

This image of Antonia is so clear and so evocative that it scarcely needs comment in her ability to give herself so completely to the task of life.

For Jim, Antonia is the gateway back to his childhood. When walking over the traces of the old road on which he was driven to his grand parent's farm that first night many years ago, he has the "sense of coming home to myself, and of [finding] out what a little circle man's experienced is " (p 937). It is, of course, a literal homecoming and completing of the circle and ending as it began in the autumn of the year. But more important is Jim's sense of returning to an awareness of the deep sources of his life, as symbolizing in his childhood, in the land, and in Antonia.

*ONE OF Ours* (1922) is very carefully constructed, with every major character representing a way of life or a point

*Willa Cather, ONE OF OURS*: New York, Alfred A. Knoph, 1922. Third Printing. All subsequent page references are to this edition.
of view Claude's father is a hard, jocular man who has the pioneer's energy and force but who turns that strength, toward a variety of activities of no enduring value. Even his potentially finest quality—his vast enjoyment of life—is expressed in some times cruel harassment of what he consider weakness and false pride in his wife and in Claude—Claude's elder brother, Bayliss is an undersized young man with a mean, dyspeptic temperament and a penchant for making money. While his father is morally neutral figure whose abundant energy is given to meaningful direction, Bayliss possessed a narrow stream of energy consciously directed at purely selfish and materialistic ends. Claudes mother, a former schoolteacher and a women of some culture, is gentle and sensitive but weak. A pious woman, she has made adjustment to life by clinging to a faith represented by "smooth talking preachers" and can only hope, that Claude will "find her saviour and thereby cease finding life so difficult.

There is one person in Claude's farm environment who has something of his own vitality and sensibility the schoolteacher, and musician, Gladys farmer. The generosity and fullness of her nature are expressed in what the town folk criticize as her extravagance. Though barely able to support herself and her mother on her salary, she is willing to spend what little she has for things of beauty. But she seems to be
accepting the attentions of Bayliss, and Claude turns away from her bitterly disappointed, thinking that she is willing to pocket her fine feelings in exchange for the security of being rich mans wife⁴⁰. Gladys farmer and Claude Wheeler are of the same fated disposition. They expect more of life than they ever will receive. Where they differ is in their capacity to accept frustration. Gladys makes her separate peace through resignation. She desires art and love but can live without them because she believes them ultimately unattainable.

She had worked out a misty philosophy for herself, full of strong convictions and confused figures. She believed that all things, which might make the world beautiful - love and kindness leisure and art - were shut up in prison and that successful man like Bayliss Wheeler held the keys. The generous ones, who would let these things out to make people happy⁴¹ were somehow weak, and could not break the bars. Even her own little life was squeezed into an unnatural shape by the domination of people like Bayliss. She had not dared, for instance, to go to Omaha that spring for the three performances of the Chicago Opera Company. Such an extravagance would have aroused a corrective spirit in all her friends, the school board as well... (p.1063).

Claude’s separation from Gladys is a failure of love. Willa Cather represents spiritual aridity in one hard symbol -
the machine. Mechanization in one of ours amounts to dehumanization. The more man involves himself with mechanical devices, the further he is removed from essential realities from love and kindness, leisure and art. The whole Frankfort landscape is strewn with mechanical litter. Broken devices, clutter the wheeler basement and mark the rural prospect. The"belching black engine" (p.1067) constitutes the dead center for its human worshipers, the little machines "with the springs broken inside"(p.1063)

Claude is introduced to a life of amenity through his visits to the Erlich home. These cordial and civilized people represent everything his homeowner's lack. In Frankfort, people are closed and suspicious. At the Erlich, they are warm and open, qualities which training stamped out of Claude, "He had never heard a family talks so much, or with anything like so much zest"(p.975). They live their life, which Gladys Farmer thinks upon only to rich people. But the Erlich are poor:

The father was dead, and all the boys had to work, even those who were still in school. They merely knew how to live, [Claude] discovered, and spent their money on themselves, instead of on machines to do the work and machines to entertain people (p.976).
Diversions range from informal discussion (so scarce in Frankfort) to formal musicals and concerts (nonexistent in Frankfort). Each member of the Erlich circle positively contributes to a civilized life, and it is noteworthy that many of the contributions are musical. The boys play the guitar and the piano; Mrs. Erlich sings old German songs. Indeed, the family's musical connections extend into the professional artistic world, for Mrs. Erlich's cousin, Madame Schroeder - Schatz, is a member of the Chicago Opera company, and comes to Lincoln as soloist for the May festival.

Regrettably, Claude cannot free himself from restraint and become part of the Erlich's world. When he lived at home he "had come to believe that the things and people he most disliked were the ones that were to shape his destiny"(p.967), and life in a world of things and people he prizes does not alter that fatal shape, exposure is not assimilation. Having the taste for fineness does not necessarily imply the ability to savor it. Actually, he meets the Erlichs too late and for too, short a time for the encounter to correct his deficiencies. When Madame Schroeder - Schatz asks Claude to turn the pages for her while she sings the youth apologizes, "I'm sorry I'm so stupid but I don't know one note from another" (p.991). The admission is not damaging (The Erlichs are fond of him far more important virtues), but it is indicative of Claude's detachment from the
cultural world for which he has an affinity but for which he lacks training. Once again he stands apart from human community. This particular separation is all the more painful because Lincoln offers affection and the opportunity for identification.

But fate takes him from College; he is needed to run the family farm. As a result of an injury his team is frightened by a noisy "gasoline motor truck" (p. 1049) - Claude gets erysipelas; and his one visitor - fates personal choice - Enid Royce, becomes his wife. The marriage had been in the offing, but Enid's daily visits precipitate it. His decision to marry her could not have been more foolish. The marriage inevitably fails. Claude is to blame for idealizing her qualities - the major one seems to be condescension - but the larger blame rests with Enid herself. There is little to be said in her defense and almost too much that could be said against her. Some of her attitudes are silly and fussy; most of them are irritating and her religious mania heightens the constriction we feel when confronted with her bloodless world. She takes her prohibition work so seriously that she prohibits her spouse from being her husband. Physical contact is abhorrent to her - as are cigars, dancing meat. Her one kindness to Claude - leaving him - comes from her self-indulgent resolve to go to China to take care of her sick missionary sister. To have a cause and a calling to be of service - this makes her happy. So pleased is Enid about the China
jaunt that she is heard singing (the only time) while she works about the house\(^45\): "Enid was singing in the kitchen in a subdued, rather lonely voice"(p.1111). It is the only music Claude has heard since he married. Claude himself expresses the individual's flight in a divided world "I have a way.... of beginning things and not getting very far with them" (p.1124). His final acceptance of defeat in Nebraska is more anguished:

His life was choking him and he hadn't the courage to break with it.... What a hideous world to be born into! or was it hideous only for him? Everything he touched went wrong under his hand always had (p.1111). The conditions worsen, as the novel progressed. Mechanization and materialism are shown to be related to an even harsher force at large in the world - the Great War. "On the twenty third came the news of the fall of the forts at Namur; again giving warning that an unprecedented power of destruction had broken loose in the world" (p.1071)

For Claude war is doubly significant. It releases him from Nebraska and provides a test for his idealism. He enlists to put order back into a disordered world. For the first time he has a sense of purpose\(^46\). "He believed that he was going abroad with an expeditionary force that would make war without rage, with uncompromising generosity and Chivalry"(p.1134).
"The Voyage of the Anchises", as the fourth book is entitled recounts his crossing. In the main Willa Cather does two things in this book. She romantically celebrates Claude's military journey, and she shows him exposed to the unexpected minor crises, which attend warfare⁴⁷.

It is a rugged, almost endlessly trying journey for the men. Military services may seem noble in the abstract but the doughboys themselves can be cynical, bitter and timid. Claude discovers that not everyone is going to fight Germany for his or any exalted motive. Some are fleeing responsibility. Some are just going. Also, there is severe epidemic of influenza on the ship, during which Claude learns the paradox of military life, that robustness does not insure well-being and that a soldier's routine demands tenderness as well as valor⁴⁸.

They were merely waste in a great enterprise, thrown overboard like rotten ropes. For them this kind release - trees and still shore and quiet water, was never, never to be. How long their bodies toss, he wondered, in that inhuman kingdom of darkness and unrest? (p.1187-88).

In "'Bidding the Eagles of the west fly on' ", Claude Wheeler gradually comes to know, something of himself and the world. His psychological ascent is not, as one might expect, a movement from aspiration to achievement or from unawareness to illumination. Such a progress is heroic. Claude
rather, goes from ambiguous faith to false belief, from
disappointment to illusion.49

The wreckage of a rare violin symbolizes the great
irreplaceable loss of values in modern life faint stirrings of music
in the earth, victory dances, and national songs utter a promise
of cultural renewal. Willa Cather makes her plea for the human
spirit by means of finely discriminated music references. Cather
adds to the war scene mechanical junk, "bodies of wrecked
motor trucks and automobiles lying along the road, and
everywhere endless straggling lines of rusty barbed
were..."(p.1217).

With the arrival of the American troops in a French
town comes a moment of freedom, and with freedom comes
musical expression. Lieutenant David Gerhardt, a violinist of
international acclaim who gave up a promising musical career
when he was called to the colors.51

The music becomes "part of (Claude's) own
confused emotions" Torn between admiration and envy, he
wonders what it would he like to be able to do anything to well
" to change a hand capably of delicacy and precision and
power"(P.1264). War, he thinks further, is the first and true test,
of his ideals. David has his dream, and Claude, his. If Claude
dies for something larger than himself, he too shall achieve
something. So runs his rationalization after hearing the concerto:

Ideals were not archaic things, beautiful and impotent they were the real resources of power among men. As long as that was true, and now he knew it was true— he had come all this way to find out - he had no quarrel with destiny. Nor did he envy David. He would give his own adventure for no man's (p. 1266).

Claude's respond to the sound of war supports his homage to ideals,"The sound of the guns had from the first been pleasant to him, had given him a feeling of confidence and safety —" (p.1266) War elicits high purpose by bringing great issues into the life of the common man. "Well History had condescended to such as he; this whole brilliant adventure had become the day's work"(p. 118). Living by desire gains for Claude in France the youth denied him in America. He sees his life as fulfilled. Claude Wheelers final salute to idealism like all gestures of a visionary converts dream into achievement. Also the events of the novel undermine his trust in the power of ideals. Music the emblem of the ideal has stopped. Claude must be satisfied with the idea of beautiful things because the living forms are gone. David plays brilliantly but his music is brief. We are left in silence with only a recollection of his bitter melody. Claude turns recollection cut hope. Fortunately this hope is not
submitted to a test. Claude wheeler is shot in the heart. Just before Claude is shot, David Gerhardt, like his rare Stradivarius, is blown to pieces.

For the man of feeling, dying for an ideal is preferable to living without one. After Claude's death, however, Willa Cather raises the disquieting question of whether idealism can, after all, survive in the modern world. Rereading his letters, Claudes mother muses that he

"died believing his own country better than it is, and France better than any country can ever be. And those were beautiful beliefs to die with. Perhaps it was as well to see that vision and then to see no more (P.1296).

*A LOST LADY (1923)*: The setting of this novel is a little Nebraska town called Sweet water. The story opens at the end of the last century with a view of the heroine's house on a hill comparable to the gratifying impression a nineteenth century traveler would have had on arriving into Sweet water by train. The perspective narrows to that of Niel Herbert, nephew of judge Pommeroy, who is twelve when the story opens. Marian Ormshy Forrester, the Central character, is the wife of the towns "great man" (p.12) Captain Daniel Forrester, "a railroad man, a

*Willa Cather, A LOST LADY, New York, Alfred A Knopf, 1925-1990. All subsequent references to the next are to this edition.
contractor, who had built hundreds of miles of road for the Burlington over the sage brush and cattle country, and on up into the Black Hills" (p. 3). Twenty-five years younger than the Captain and his wife Mrs. Forrester arrives in Sweet water from California as a vivacious bride departs a lost lady.

As a boy of twelve, While picnicking in the Forsters grove Niel breaks his arm falling out of a tree in an attempt to rescue a bird that an older boy, Ivy Peters, has cruelly wounded. Carried into Mrs. Forrester’s bedroom to await the arrival of the doctor, Niel absorbs the quiet elegance of the room and thinks, "he would probably never be in so nice a place again" (P.14).

In addition to evoking Mrs. Forrester’s winning charm and the beauty of the Forrester house and land, this initial episode suggests the assumptions that underlie the Forrester’s life. Mrs. Forrester is friendly to all of the boys, but she is aware of the social distinctions between Niel, who is the nephew of her husband’s friend Judge Pommeroy, and the town boys, "Sons of local grocers and tailors. The boys themselves recognize that she is "a very special kind of person" (p. 9) and feel that the privileged class to which she belongs is "an axiomatic fact in the social order"(p.9). Their admiration and instinctive respect for her is contrasted to the insolence of Ivy Peters - insolence that Mrs. Forrester deals with courteously
but firmly. His presence also suggests a threat to the social equilibrium that the other boys accept and take for granted. In the third chapter Niel is nineteen and more sensitive to what makes Mrs. Forrester special. He becomes acquainted with the Forrester's because they are forced to spend the winter in Sweet water after the Captains fall with his horse, the accident that ended his railroad career, with each encounter he finds Marian Forrester more remarkable and more admirable. Her dinner parties are conducted with the easy formality of an accomplished hostess. Then as Niel comes to know Captain Forrester and other railroad builders better Mrs. Forrester is more romantically linked to history, which fascinates him. He finds, to, a brilliant sense of life. "The charm of her conversation was not so much in what she said, though she was often witty, but on the quick recognition of her eyes, in the living quality of her voice itself" (p. 38). Around Niel in Sweet water is decline, and he cannot help but be drawn to the lady who fights the common sense of defeat with a sense of triumph, or whose spirit at least is undaunted by it all. She is known through joy. You "felt you were getting on with her"(p. 39), when she laughed Sadness is alien to Mrs. Forrester's disposition. When Niel prepared a bouquet of roses for "a lovely lady"(p. 47), his offering to Mrs. Forrester who has grown into an aesthetic ideal (p.48).
One summer morning he gather a bouquet, intending
to leave it outside her bedroom window, and at the moment
when he is in effect, leaving an offering on the altar, Niel hears
two laugh, that tell him Mrs. Forrester has a lover Frank Ellinger,
a guest of the Forresters from Denver. Niel discovers Mrs.
Forresters infidelity in June; in August he leaves Sweet water
for college. He defers bidding farewell to the Forresters until
the day before departing for Boston. "'Happy days!'" (p. 56) As
on similar occasions, the glasses are filled with ceremony. The
Forresters personal interest in his career is flattering, but Niel
is disquieted by his awareness that circumstances have
domesticated these two admired friends into an old country
couple. The captain has suffered a stroke and has lost his
fortune in the failure of a bank of which he was an officer. And
there remains the painful knowledge of Ellinger's involvement
with the captain's wife. He is descending the hill, and the
downward direction underlies the still greater change in fortune
that is forthcoming

Part II opens with Niels return to Sweet water after
two years at college. The first person he meets is Ivy Peters,
now a shyster lawyer, who tells him that he has rented and
drained the Forrester Marsh and planted it in Wheat. Niel feels
that Ivy drained the marsh "quiet as much to spite him and Mrs.
Forrester as to reclaim the land "(p.58). The old world, with its
beauty and graciousness, suggested by the opening pages of Part I, is past and is being supplanted by a new age of men like Ivy peter -mean- souled, materialistic, destructive of beauty. Ivy makes it his business to be at the Forrester place frequently and treats Mrs. Forrester in a presumptuous and familiar way when Niel takes her to task for putting up with Ivy, she replies with real anxiety that they simply have to get along with him, she is referring to their financial dependence on his rent and on some questionable investments he has made for her. But she also seems instinctively to realize that Ivy represents the direction in which the world is going to which she believes she must accommodate herself in order to survive\textsuperscript{59}.

When the captain suffers another stroke, Mrs. Forrester goes completely to pieces. She loses, her old ability to keep people courteously in their place; her house is overrun by the malignantly curious and gossipy towns women who come on the pretext of bringing soups for the invalid and leave to discuss Mrs. Forrester's state and the condition of her linens. Niel decides to stay out of school for a year and take care of the Forresters. He drives away the gossips and takes a deep satisfaction in bringing quiet back to the house again; when the Forrester's are sleeping he keeps vigil with\textsuperscript{60} "the old things that had seemed so beautiful to him in his childhood" (p.79).
Captain Forrester dies in December, and shortly afterward Mrs. Forrester transfers her legal affairs from judge Pommeroy to Ivy Peters, who is more and more in evidence at the Forrester’s house. Niel finds “that Mrs. Forrester far from living freed of a burden by the death of her husband and thus enabled to be her former, lighthearted, charming self, has changed for the worse; she is flighty and perverse, like a ship without ballast, driven hither and thither by every wind” (p.86). Niel is bitterly disappointed at the change in her, and when he happens to see Ivy casually embracing her, in her kitchen, he is filled with such disgust that he goes back to college without even bidding her goodbye. He reflects that all those years, he had thought:

it was Mrs. Forrester who made that house so different from any other. But ever since the captains death it was a house where old friends, like his uncle were betrayed and cast off, where common fellows behaved after their kind and knew a common woman when they saw her (p.96).

Some years later Niel hears that Mrs. Forrester has at last sold her house and left sweet water. With the passage of time he forgets his chagrin and remembers her as she had been in her best days. When her eyes seemed to promise something no one else had ever found.
Niel hears once more of his "long lost lady" when a boyhood friend tells him that he met her by chance in South America; she had married a rich old Englishman who, though reputedly stingy, treated her well and provided her with the kind of life she needed as long as she lived. After she left Sweet water, wherever she was, she always sent a cheque to the Grand Army Post every year to have flowers put on Captain Forresters grave for Decoration Day. Three years ago the post got a letter from the old English man, with a draft for the future care of Captain Forrester's grave "in memory of my late wife, Marian Forrester Collins". "So we may feel sure that she was well cared for, to the very end" (p.98).

*THE PROFESSOR'S HOUSE (1925). The Professor's House is the story of a Professor in a Midwestern University who had achieved success but derived no particular pleasure from it. The novel is a record of his mental depression.

The Professor's new house becomes his wife's sole interest; the family dinners are occasions for money-talk; Rosamond offers to build the Professor a new study; Scott brags

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about hack poems and "up-lift" editorials which he knocks off and which sells so well; and Lillian's attention shrinks to things of showiness and society:

In the new house, the house of success, St Peter is increasingly uncomfortable. "I see we shall have some difficulty in separating our life work, Augusta, we have kept our paper together a long while now". Well, well, we mustn't think mournfully of it, Augusta. Life does not turn out for any of us as we plan (p. 110).

St. Peter Consoles Augusta with these words. When she says "When I first came to sew for Mrs. St. Peter, I never thought I should grow in her service" He had only one student in all the years of his teaching, for whom he could feel affection. "By eliminations and combinations so many and subtle that it now made his head ache to think of them, he had done full justice to his University Lectures and at the same time carried on an engrossing piece of creative work. A man can do anything if he wishes to enough, St. Peter believed:

Desire is creation, is the magical element in that process. If there were an instrument by which to measure desire, one could foretell achievement. He had been able to measure it, roughly, just once in his student Tom Outland, -and he had foretold (p. 114).
The new house was built by St. Peter to please his wife and daughter. With the money received from a prize he has won for a monumental historical work\textsuperscript{65}.

Once when enquired by his wife:

Is there something you would rather have doing with that money than to have built a house with it? Nothing, my dear, nothing. If with that cheque I could have brought back the fun I had writing my history, you did never have got your house. But one could not get that for twenty thousand dollars. The great pleasures do not come so cheap (p.116).

The picture that emerges is in one sense very, ordinary; a handful of petty rivalries and ambitions that seems counterbalanced by the genuine affection within each marital relationship, even that of St. Peter and Lillian\textsuperscript{66}:

First (in IX), the destructive power of money shows itself in speculation. Augusta the family maid loses $500 in copper stock; and though the amount is small, we know from St Peters sense of obligation to make up the loss that the set back imposes a hardship on her. Just before the end of Book I Marselluses takes the Professor along to Chicago and indulge in another orgy of acquisition. The family now goes about preparing for a summer in Europe. Once they cross the ocean and St. Peter is alone with his thoughts, any reminder of showiness and jingle of change vanish.
There is not a direct reference to Tom Outland whose life embodied the ideal. Instead, the ideal comes in the Professor's recollection of his own youth and his Pursuit of the ideal.

The tenth part recalls Tom's arrival at Hamilton College and the growth of his acquaintanceship with Professor St. Peter. Remembrances of days past relate Tom's vigor and Tom's dream to the family's lost happiness and finally, the past painfully reminds the Professor of the unhappy present.

When the Marselluses have departed for Europe with Mrs. St. Peter and the Professor is alone. He muses peacefully about Tom's last years at Hamilton and settles down to edit Tom's diary, a testament of her dream, of self-sacrifice, and of heroic defeat.

The second part of the book is called "Tom Outland's story". It describes a crucial episode in the young man's life. In this section the author gives us an autobiographical fragment written by Tom Outland and confided to Professor St. Peter. Having given us the interior of the Professor's family life, she directs our attention to the one important window in it—the one that looks out upon Tom Outland's adventure.

His discovery of a Cliff Dwellers, village trucked into a wall of rock high in a New Mexico Canyon. The Cliff dwellers with the houses in the Professor's town invite contrast. In the
modern town the emphasis, is on the individual buildings. In the ancient village it is on the architectural as well as the social unity.69

Tom has made his discovery with the air of a fellow cowpuncher, Roddy. Living in rows of apartments as if in waffens and their careerism and arrogance blot out all his hopes. He turns his back on Washington disillusioned, he feels he has done the proper thing as a citizen, but the petty officials do not share his interest in his country's distant past. However a still greater disappointment awaits him. Roddy, during Tom's prolonged absence, has profited by selling the entire contents of the Cliff town. The ancient relics have been packed and shipped and deposited the money for Tom, in a bank. Tom in anger breaks with Roddy and then returns to the cliff town. Then, descending again, he withdraws the money from the bank and uses it to go to college there meeting the Professor who becomes his guide and mentor.70

We see the Professor as a mere sketch. It returns to the dilemma of St. Peter's isolation in his attic. What disturbs his peace now is an existential sense of life's meaninglessness. His mood is bitter at the beginning and then eases into impassive resignation. After he met Lillian Ormsby, St. Peter forgot the young St. Peter who went to France to try his luck, who had a
more active mind than the twin he left behind in the Solomon Valley:

The Professor felt that life with their Kansas boy little as there had been of it, was the realist of his lives, and that all the years between had been accidental and ordered from the outside. His career his wife his family, were not his life at all but a chain of events, which had happened to him. All these things had nothing to do with the person he was in the beginning (p.259).

The Professor knew "that adolescence grafted a new creature into the original one and that the complexion of a man's life was largely determined by how well or ill his original self and his nature has modified by sex rubbed on together."

Concurrently with the emergence of his boyhood self, St. Peter comes to feel that he is near the end of his life:

In great misfortunes he told himself People want to be alone. They have a right to be. And the misfortunes that occur within one are the greatest. Surely the saddest thing in the world is falling out of love - if once one has ever fallen in (p. 266).

Learning that Lillian and the Marselluses are already en route for home on the Berengaria, St. Peter falls into a panic at the prospect of having to live with his family, again. He feels he must be alone and he subconsciously courts the "accident" that his faulty gas stove has long threatened.
When the wind, always bringing a fresh release from drudgery, accidentally shuts the window and blows out the stove, he largely surrenders to the possibility of death. But Augusta, the maid a mediator between life and death, revives him. The novel concludes with St. Peter’s bitter resignation to a life without happiness.

*MY MORTAL ENEMY (1926):* It is, certainly a difficult and intransient book, and Myra Henshawe is a difficult and contradictory character. To the young narrator, Nellie Birdseye, Myra is an almost legendary figure:

I first met Myra Henshawe when I was fifteen, but I had known about her ever since I could remember anything at all. She and her runaway marriage were the theme of the most interesting, indeed, the only interesting, stories that were told in our family (p. 9).

In the first part of the novel we see Myra's visit to Aunt Lydia around the turn of the century, some twenty five years after her wedding where Nellie meet Myra for the first time. Aunt Lydia tells Nellie Myra's run away marriage story, the niece and heiress of John Driscoll, fell in love with Oswald Henshawe, against whose family her uncle harbored an old

*Willa Cather, MY MORTAL ENEMY, New York, Alfred A. Knop 1926. All subsequent page references are to this edition.*
grudge. She ran away to marry him in the face of her uncle's warning that he would disinherit her, as he did, leaving his money to the Catholic Church and to charity. But when Nellie asks if the Henshawe, have been happy, Aunt Lydia only surmises that they have been as happy as most people. To Nellie, "that answer was disheartening, the very point of their story was that they should be much happier than other people"(p.25). After a brief meeting with the Henshawes in Parthia, Nellie and Aunt Lydia are invited to visit them in New York at Christmas time:

In the third chapter Nellie and her aunt Lydia are arrived at the Jersey City station at the Henshawe beautifully appointed apartment to their theatrical and literary friends feels her with wonder and admiration. The visit ends on a discordant note, however. Nellie comes across the Henshawes quarrelling, and feels that she can never care for Myra so much again. On Monday Nellie and Aunt Lydia started for home, before their train started, they then heard an amused laugh and there was Myra Henshawe, coming into the car76. "I didn't plot anything so meet as this Liddy"(p 67).

All day Mrs. Myra was jolly and agreeable since Myra and Oswald had some disagreement, Myra left him for Pittsburgh. After ten years we see that Nellie's liking for Myra revives at their meeting on the west coast. Down on her luck,
Nellie is living in a shabby residential hotel on the west coast and discovers among her neighbors Oswald, now white haired and stoo-p-shouldered, and Myra, incurably ill. To Nellie's distress, when Myra as overwrought she takes her feelings out on the devoted Oswald saying that they have destroyed each other and that she ought never to have married him.

In the third chapter we see Henshawe breakfasting in the restaurant against his custom. Nellie was glad to find him talking, with evident pleasure, to a young girl - "She was always on the watch to catch a moment with Oswald -- (94)"
And on one Monday afternoon Myra invited Nellie to spend some nice time with her. While remembering, her uncle Myra remarked "I can feel his savagery strengthen in me.

In the IV chapter Myra asked Nellie to do her a very special favour, "will you go to St. Joseph's church and enquire for Father Fay; tell him you are from me and ask him to celebrate a mass tomorrow for the repose of the soul of Helena Modjeska, Countess Bozenta-Chalapowska" (p.101). They went again and again to Gloucester's cliff it gave Myra much pleasure. But the third time she declared she was not equal to it and was trying to write to an old friend whose son, young actor, had shot himself:
To throw his youth away like that, and shoot himself at twenty three! People are always talking about the joy's of youth- but, oh, how youth can suffer! I have not forgotten; those hot southern Illinois night, When Oswald was in New York, and I had no word from him except through Liddy, and I use to lie on the floor all night and listen to the express trains go by... (p. 103-104).

Since her marriage took away her chance of well, Myra blames Oswald for her unhappiness. " In a age we loose everything even the power to love" (p 104-105).

In the V chapter Nellie saw Oswald every night, at dinner in the restaurant, and reported Myra's condition to her. After she enters the terminal stage of her illness, Myra talks very little, one night Myra murmurs "Why must I die like this, alone with my mortal enemy?" (p.113). After an initial reaction of shock, Nellie thinks that she begins to understand "a little what she meant, to sense how it was with her. Violent natures like hers sometimes turn against themselves and all their idolatries". The following night, left alone briefly, Myra disappears, leaving a note to Oswald that she has gone off to die alone. The novel ends with the line, "why must I die like this, alone with my mortal enemy! " (p.122). And Oswald requests Nellie to remember Myra as when she was in her best days.
DEATH COMES FOR THE ARCHBISHOP (1927):

In the prologue, set in Rome in 1848, three Cardinals and a bishop discuss the founding in the territory of New Mexico, which the United States has recently acquired. The task of the new bishop of New Mexico will be a heroic one. The few Priests are lax in religious observance, and some of them live in open concubinage. The French and Italian Cardinals are of the opinion that the French Missionaries are the best missionaries. It is supposed that the new vicar Apostolic will be called upon for every sacrifice, quite possibly for martyrdom: The new vicar is a Parish Priest, on the shores of Lake Ontario. His name is Jean Marie Latour and is only thirty-five years old. Since the Bishop's return to Santa Fe his official correspondence had been heavy.

After his return to Santa Fe through the sunny days of early winter, he found amity awaiting him. Father Joseph and Bishop Latour had their dinner together, and were speaking in their tongue, as this was a Christmas Day:

The very little priest whose life was to be a succession of mountain ranges, pathless deserts, yawning canyons and swollen rivers, who was to carry the cross into territories yet unknown and unnamed, who

would wear down mules and horses and scouts and stage-drivers to night looked apprehensively at his superior.. (p 41)

Chapter fourth A Bell And A Miracle concludes with a clear irruption of the transcendent into the human world in the story of the apparition of the virgin at Guadalupe in 1531. Thus, the devout priest who has just made a pilgrimage to Guadalupe has symbolically experienced the apparition himself and returns, "Full that nothing else interested him" (p 46). The miracle is a tangible experience of the sacred. Even more, as Father Latour expresses it, "an apparition is human vision corrected by divine love" (p.50); The Bishop concludes:

The miracle of the church seems to me to rest not so much upon faces or voices or healing power coming suddenly near to us from a far off, but upon our perceptions being made finer, so that for a moment our eyes can see and ears hear what is there about us always (p.50).

In his Missionary Journeys Father Vaillant stopped at the rancho of a rich Mexican, Manuel Lujon, to marry his men and maid servants⁸⁰. On the way they came across a wretched adobe house, and thought of spending the night in it. The man in that adobe was subhuman creature called Buck Scales, who murders travelers who stop at his shack. On the lonely road to Mora, the priest escape, warned by Scales terrified
wife, and their encounter with him leads indirectly to the outlaws
capture and execution. Later Buck Scales was hanged after
a short trial.

The Mass at Acoma, Bishop reached Santa Fe late
in September so far, Bishop Latour had been employed on
business that took him far away from his Vicarate. In October
with a young Indian, Jacinto, as a guide, the Bishop set off to
visit the Indian missions in the west.

Father Latour and his guide rode all day through the
dry desert plain west of Albuquerque. About the middle of that
afternoon Jacinto pointed out Laguna in the distance. In chapter
III Father Latour and his guide rode off across the low plain that
lies between Laguna and Acoma coming along the Santa Fe
trail, in the vast plains of Kansas, Father Latour had found the
sky more a desert than the land; a hard, empty blue, very
monotonous to the eyes of Frenchman.

Baltazar Montoya was priest at Acoma. He was one
of the most ambitious and exacting. The Frair at Acoma lived
more after the flesh than after the spirit. One summer Frair sent
his runner to Zuni, Laguna, Isleta, and lade the padres a feast,
with the dinner, Baltazar had taken extravagant pains. Certainly
the visiting missionaries were rejoined with the food. The serving
boy accidentally spilled a stream of rich brown gravy over
Baltazar head and shoulders. Baltazar was quick tempered ...
He caught up the empty pewter mug at his right and threw it at the clumsy lad with a malediction. The boy fell down and died. Baltazar was left alone with the consequences of his haste.

When the genial father Gallegos was formally suspended, and father Vaillant himself took charge of the Parish. One morning at daybreak a very sick Indian boy brought bad news, that the Padre has fallen ill. The Bishop rode out of Santa Fe after two hours. On his way he had his supper at Jacinto’s house.

When they reached Father Vaillant, he was setting up in a bed, his fever broken, already on the way to recovery, Kit Carson, another good friend had reached him before the Bishop, Carson and the Bishop took father Vaillant to Santa Fe, as soon as he could sit with saddle.

Father Latour, on one of his missionary journeys, made a paint of stopping a night with the trader Orchard, in order to question him about the Pecos customs and ceremonies.

"Orchard said that the legend about the undying fire was unquestionably true but it was kept burning not in the mountain, but in their own Pueblo" (134). About the snake stories he was not certain.

Veneration for old customs was a quality he liked in the Indians, and that is played a great part in his own religion, was remarked by father Latour.
Padre Martinez, along with Indian and Mexicans came to welcome their new Bishop. One day Martinez advised Latour to study their native traditions before he begins his reforms. Soon after supper Father Latour went to his room. High mass was at eleven the next morning, the parish priest officiating and the Bishop in the Episcopal chair. After the confirmation services, Father Martinez took the Bishop out to see his farms and livestock. At Santa Fe the Bishop found Father Vaillant awaiting him, they had not seen each other since Easter, and there were many things to be discussed.

Part two The Miser begins with Bishop Latour Santa Fe trail with Rome as his objective. Father Taladrid, who was found in Rome was at once sent to Taos. Padre Martinez formally resigned his Parish. But soon he and Father Taladrid were at open war. Father Martinez and his friend Father Lucero, of Arroyo Honda, Mutinied, and organized a Church of their own.

Old Marino Lucero had not one trait on Common with Martinez, except the love of authority. He had been a miser from his youth. Father Martinez continued at the head of his Schismatic Church until, after a short illness, he died and was buried in schism, by father Lucero. Soon after this Lucero himself fell into a decline. Padre Lucero died repentant, and
Father Vaillant who had pronounced his excommunication, was the one to reconcile him to the Church.

Antonia Olivares most prosperous and intelligent member of a large family was deeply interested in the Bishop's dream of a Cathedral. The supper party of the Olivares was memorable, because it marked a parting of old friends. Father Vaillant was on a long missionary journey to the south, and reached home when Madam Olivares had been widow for some weeks. He was called into Father Latour's study to see her lawyer, young Irish Catholic, Boyd O'Reilly. He explained Father Vaillant that the Olivares brothers were contesting the will. Father Vaillant saw at once that it was their plain duty to protect the two women and at the same time, secure the rights of the propaganda.

When they went to meet Dona Isabella at her house, the young lawyer explained her the difficulties that confronted them, and what they must do to defeat the action of the Olivares family Boyd O'Reilly defeated the Olivares Brothers and won his case. As Bishop Latour's original Diocese is expanded to include the vast territories to the south acquired by the United States in the Gadsden Purchase. The diocese itself - the territory for which the Bishop is responsible. Once Father Vaillant, musing in the Bishop's garden on how the most important events in his own life had occurred in May, remembers the critical
incident of his youth when he had been unable to bring himself to part from his family in order to embark of his life as a missionary\textsuperscript{83}: "That time came back upon Father Vaillant so keenly that he wiped the little moisture from his eye's" (p. 205).

Father Vaillant had been absent in Arizona since mid summer, and it was now December Bishop Latour had been going through one of those periods of coldness and doubt. Father Vaillant was away in Arizona all winter. Since Father Vaillant went away the Bishop's burdens had grown heavier and heavier. Although Jean Marie Latour and Joseph Vaillant were born in neighbouring parishes in the Puy-do-Dome, as children they had not known each other. While talking about Father Joseph Father Vaillant explained, the man was much greater than the sum of his qualities. He added a glow to whatever kind of human society he was dropped down into. Bishop Latour found his Navajo house favourable for reflection, for recalling the past and planning the future.

One morning Fructosa came into the garden to tell father Vaillant that lunch would be earlier than usual, as the Bishop was going to ride somewhere that afternoon. The Bishop was already at his place when father Joseph entered. The two priest left Santa Fe a little after midday:
The Bishop sat down on a boulder, still looking up at the cliff. It is the stone I have always wanted, and I found it quite by chance. I was coming back from Isleta. I had been to see old Padre Jesus when he was dying. I had never come by this trail, but when I reached Santa Domingo I found the road so washed by a heavy rains that I turned out and decided to try this way home. I rode up here from the west in the late afternoon, this hill confronted me as it confronts us now, and I knew instantly that it was my Cathedral (p. 242).

The day after the Bishop and his vicar rode, to yellow rock the weekly post arrived at Santa Fe. It brought the Bishop many letters. The Bishop of Leavenworth wrote Father Latour and begged the Bishop to send a priest there as soon as possible.

At sunrise Father Vaillant, set out, Sabino driving the wagon, his oldest boy riding Angelica, and father Joseph himself riding Contento:

Father Vaillant never returned to share his work in New Mexico. He came back to Santa Fe to recuperate from the illness and accidents which consistently punctuated his way; came with the papal Emissary when Bishop Latour was made Archbishop, but his working life was spent among bleak mountains and comfort less mining camps, looking after lost sheep (p. 257).
Father Vaillant was twice caught in an accident. From the first accident he escaped nothing worse than a sprain. The second time his thighbone was broken just below the joint. It knitted in time, but he was lame for life, and could never ride horseback again.

When a news arrived into Santa Fe' announcing Bishop Vaillant's death, Father Latour at once took the new railroad for Denver. Curiously, Father Latour could never feel that he had actually been present at Father Joseph's funeral, when Bishop Vaillant was carried away to his tomb, Father Revardy, the French priest who had gone from Santa Fe to Colorado with Father Vaillant was taken to the hospital, where he died a few days later.

During those last weeks of the Bishops life he thought very little about death; it was the past he was leaving. The future would take care of itself. One morning, Eusabio the Navajo, the Indian came to Santa Fe. After hearing that the Archbishop was failing. Eusabio did not stay long, but he said he would come again. After he was gone, the Bishop turned to Bernard. "My son, I have lived to see two great wrongs righted. I have seen the end of black slavery, and I have seen the Navajo's restored it their own country." (p. 292)

On the last day of his life his condition was pretty generally known. There was little to do but to watch and pray,
so peaceful and rainless was his repose. Sometimes it was sleep, they knew from his relaxed features; then his face would assume personality, consciousness even though his eyes did not open" (p. 298). Towards the close of day, in the short twilight after the candles were lighted, the Bishop was not there at all.

*OBSCURE DESTINIES (short stories) - Neighbour Rosicky, is among finest of Willa Cathers work, celebrating human relationships rather than success and accomplishments, it presents a picture of life lived fully and without regrets. It begins with Rosicky learning from his doctor that he has a bad heart and must take it easy for the rest of his life. This presents no problem because his five sons are old enough and willing to take over management of the farm. Rosicky has a horror of city life. His son Rudolph, however, has married a town girl of native stock who is dissatisfied with farm life84.

Rosicky cannot stop the drought that is making farming hard for the young couple, nor can he give to them material goods, for he is not wealthy man, what he has is a special gift for loving people " (p. 666) Offered in quiet, unobtrusive ways85. Rosicky ask his four boys if they would be willing to forego driving into town Saturday night. He wants to take the Ford over to Rudolph and Polly so that they can go to

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*Willa Cather, OBSCURE DESTINIES, New York : (Alfred A. Knopf) 1930-1960. All subsequent page references are to this edition.
the movies alone. "Polly ain't, looking so good I don't like to see nobody looking so sad. An American girl don't git used to our ways all at once (p. 34). He takes the car to Rudolph's nearby farm, insists that Polly leave washing the dishes to him while she gets fixed up for town. After cleaning up at Rudolph's and Polly's Rosicky walked home and stopped by the windmill to look up at the frosty winter stars and draws a long breath before he went inside. That kitchen with the shining windows was dear to him; but the sleeping fields and bright stars and the noble darkness were dearer still (p 41).

Later Rudolph, Polly and the rest of the family are together at Christmas. They discuss the outlook for crops the next summer. The last year was dry, and it looks as if the next one will be equally dry. The prospect is dismal, and Rudolph talks about getting a job in the City. At that point Mary tells about hard times when the children were little. He killed two chickens to fry and Mary prepared their supper. When all the neighbours were so discouraged they could not look you in the face. 'An' we enjoyed ourselves that year, poor as we was, an' our neighbours wasn't a bit better off for bein' miserable" (p.49). Following Mary's story, Rosicky tells of hard times when he was a young man. After hearing this affecting story, Polly decides to invite all the Rosickys to her house for New Year's Eve.
The weather continues dry, but nonetheless Rudolph's alfalfa field comes up beautifully green in the spring. Rosicky worries that the Russian thistles blown in during the winter will take root and ruin the alfalfa, because Rudolph is too busy to sake out the thistles, Rosicky does it without telling anyone, the work is too strenuous for him and he has a heart attack. Polly finds him leaning against the windmill, gets him into the house, ministers to him, and the attack passes, she tells him before any one else that she is pregnant, and as Polly sits beside him, she thinks. "Nobody in the world, not her mother, not Rudolph or anyone really loved her as much as old Rosicky did."(p.66) Shortly thereafter Rosicky has his fatal attack. The doctor is out of town when Rosicky dies. Rosicky's life seemed to doctor "complete and beautiful" (p 71).

"Old Mrs. Harris" is the best story Cather ever wrote. The story begins when Mrs. Rosen, visit to the Templeton to see the old women alone. She admires Mrs. Harris a great deal and feels that her daughter and grandchildren take her too much for granted. A fine dramatic scene follows in which a great deal is revealed about the Templeton family and the grandmother. The next scene, introduces Vickie the other children and Mandy. Before grandma, goes to bed, Mandy, offers to rub her feet and legs. In the following episode, Vickie who goes to the Rosens
to borrow a book from their well stocked library. Vickie, is in her last year of high school, is a bright, attractive, self-centered youngster, eager for knowledge.

Vickie desperately wants to go to college, but her parents cannot afford to send her. Encouraged by the Rosens, she studies hard and wins a special scholarship to the University of Michigan. But the award is not enough to pay all her expenses, and she is bitterly disappointed. Templeton’s have no particular respect for education Grandma Harris, however, knows what an education means to Vickie and surreptitiously asks the Rosens to lend her enough so that she can accept the scholarship. They do so, and Vickie prepares to leave for Ann Arbor³⁰.

The story develops through a succession of small incidents. The Rosens attend a Methodist lawn party in June, Where they observe the generous side of Victoria’s character. They are pleased at the conduct towards the poor children of their laundress, who hang longingly over the fence. She invites them to the party, gives each a dine, and instructs Vickie to see that they get plenty of ice-cream and cake.

The next scene Blue Boy, the cat that gets distemper dies. After the death of Blue Boy, the children have a backyard circus, Vickie wins the scholarship, and Victoria discovers she
is pregnant once more. This is traumatic for her. She feels abused and put upon:

The second strand of plot with the death of old Mrs. Harris as Vickie is getting ready to leave for College "Then there was a great steer and bustle; Victoria and even Vickie, were started out of their intense self absorption. "Wasn't it just like them all to go and get sick, when she had now only two weeks to get ready for school, and no trunk and no clothes or anything? (p.185). The self-effacing grandmother dies, as she has loved, quietly and unobtrusively.

TWO FRIENDS, tells us of such a retreat that was lost, a picture that was distorted.

"Long ago .... there lived two friends(p.194), in a time at distant as youth is to the adult. Their friendship was exactly contemporary with the narrators, childhood, it began the year she was born, she knew the two man from the time she was ten. She saw them separate when she was thirteen, on the threshold of becoming an adult. R.E. Dillon was the biggest banker of the community and the proprietor of its large general store; he owned forms up in the grass country. J.H. Truman was a big cattleman (p.195), with a high sense of honour (p.196) who was large about money matters (p.201). Together they travelled to big cities (p.194) in the wide world beyond their
community, and together they represented an absence of anything mean or small (p.196).

Largeness was, it seemed, the one thing the men had in common. They were opposites in almost everything else. Dillon was Irish, Trueman American, Dillon's face was bony and his body wiry, Truman's face solid and his body heavy, Dillon was a banker and Truman a cattleman, Dillon lived a regular life, Trueman an irregular one; Dillon talked well, Trueman was usually silent; Dillon was a Democrat, Truman a Republican. Such differences were unimportant, however, so long as the two men were alike in essentials, both "successful, large-minded men who had made their way in the world when business was still a personal adventure".

To the child who knew them, the friends seemed as constant as nature itself. "Every evening they were both to be found at Dillon store (p.198), in cold weather inside playing checkers, in spring and summer outside in the armchairs Gestures, and rhythms catch their constancy - the poised and resting hands of each man, the cigar that seemed to belong in Mr. Trueman's hand "iike a thumb or finger (p.204)" the relaxed rhythms of their good talk and the comfortable silence of their friendship.

Details such as these contribute to the picture at the heart of the story: On moonlight summer nights two friends sit
outside Dillon's store, "largely and positively themselves (p.210)". To the child they seemed celestial bodies in space, catching the write light of the moon and casting dark shadows upon earth\textsuperscript{92}:

Friendship between the two men ended, however, when Mr. Dillon returned from a Democratic convention afire with the populism of William Jennings Bryan, so simplistically held that a child could grasp at immediately:

that gold had been responsible for most of the miseries and inequalities of the world; that it had always been the club, the rich, and cunning held over the poor, and that "the free and unlimited coinage of silver" would remedy all this (p.222).

History, politics, religion - all combined in arousing emotions about false ideal, based on nothing at all "Dillon declared that young Mr. Bryan had looked like the patriots of old when he faced and challenged high finance with "you shall not press this crown of thorns upon the brow of labour; you shall not crucify mankind upon a cross of gold" (p. 222). High sounding phrases that, when examined, are nonsensical. Dillon's populism is as comically naive as that of Low Bergson, another, follower of William Jennings Bryan, who argued that populist responsibilities included blowing up Wall Street.
When Dillon became a man obsessed with ideas Trueman held in contempt, their friendship was doomed. Truman withdraw his money from Dillon's Bank, and the rupture was complete without the other, each man lost the balance that had made him seem larger than the ordinary Dillon's talk became shrilly sarcastic; Truman silence, heavily grim. Each seemed to become smaller, and then each disappeared. Dillon unexpectedly died. Trueman silently left town. From San Francisco came another picture of Mr. Truman, a sad parody of the largeness and harmony of his former friendship with Dillon. Trueman had taken:

an office in a high building at the top of what is now Powell street", and there he "used to sit tilted back in his desk chair, a half-consumed cigar in his mouth, morning after morning, apparently doing nothing watching the Bay and the ferry boats, across a line of wind - racked eucalyptus trees (p.229).

What was lost for the narrator was a picture of equilibrium, a memory of harmony. She is left with the uneasiness of seeking a retreat that no longer exists:

The breaking up of that friendship between two men who scarcely noticed my existence was a real loss to me, and has ever since been a regret. More than once, in Southern countries where there is a smell of dust and dryness in the air and the nights are intense, I have come upon a stretch of dusty whets,
road drinking up the moonlight beside a blind wall and have felt a sudden sadness. Perhaps it was not until the next morning that I knew why and then only because I had dreamed of Mr. Dillon or Mr. Trueman in my sleep. When that old scar is occasionally touched by chance, it rouses the old uneasiness, the feeling of something broken that could so easily have been mended, of something delightful that was senselessly wasted, afar truth that was accidentally distorted - one of the truths we want to keep (pp229-230).

*LUCKY GAYHEART (1935) is most complex novel of Willa Cather which reflects on art and human relationship - above all, on human condition or defined by mortality. The brief introductory chapter is a collage of remembered scenes from Lucy's life in Haverford, and we are told that the towns people "still see her as a slight figure always in motion; dancing or skating, or walking swiftly with intense direction, like a bird flying home" (p.645). On the last afternoon of the Christmas holidays Lucy is out with a party of young people skating on the river. In the next scene, sleighs and wagon are driving from all directions to the Railway station. The platform is crowded with "restless" young people watching for the train. Fairy Blair, the town extrovert and tease, jumps out of the carriage and throwing her

*Willa Cather, LUCY GAYHEART, New York (Alfred A. Knopf), 1935-1990. All subsequent page references are to this edition.
out in the air for the boys to catch, runs down the length of the station platform. When it is announced that the train will be twenty minutes late, she grabs two boys by the elbows and dashed into the stored" doing an occasional shuffle with her feet". Soon she leads the whole group in a Crazy chase." She wouldn't push the boys far enough; suddenly she sprang from between the two rigid figures as if she had been snapped out of a sling-shot and ran up the street with the whole troops at her heels. They were all a little crazy, but as she was the Craziest, they followed her. They served a side to let the town bus pass (p.651). The Gayhearts a light from the bus and Harry Gordon drives up in his sleigh; then "a long line of swaying lights" (p. 652) move across the countryside and the young people are soon on the train - "headed toward something" (p.656). When she is alone, Lucy gives herself up to the train's rhythm, which spells far her "escape, change, channels life hurrying forward" (p. 657). Lucy goes to Chicago to learn music.

In the next episode we see Lucy in Chicago, unpacking her things. This morning Lucy was very happy to be back with her own things and own will. Since she was going to Sebastian's recital to night Lucy had her dinner early, in the restaurant below. When Lucy first hears him sing in Chicago, she is struck by sadness in the song. Sebastian's singing is
filled with the tragic conviction that all human effort is doomed to oblivion that all desire must eventually return to in death to a nonhuman void. "As she sat listening to this man the outside world seemed to her dark and terrifying, full of fears and dangers that had never come close to her until now" (p. 661).

In such a world all values are human and individual, but subject to time and change, they are fragile and fleeting. This is underscored in the encore, when we two parted, which Sebastian sings. Lucy is profoundly moved by what she glimpses in Sebastian's singing, and she goes home that night "tired and frightened, with a feeling that some protecting barrier was gone - a window had been broken that let in the cold and darkness of the night" (p. 661).

Lucy had felt an omen for herself in the Bryan song, some peoples lives are affected by what happens to their person or their property; but far others fate is what happens to their feelings and their thoughts - that and melting more"(p. 662) The Schubert song cycle presents a rejected lover who is psychically resurrected in winter to experience again and express the anguish of his loss. The emotional distance Sebastian establishes between himself and the youth of the songs defines his relationship to Lucy: she revives in him a memory of his youth, but romantic love is no longer a dramatic reality far him - has thought and emotions are preoccupied with
much grimmer facts of life. In his studio Sebastian is always kind and courteous, but when Lucy, by chance, catches a glimpse of him walking alone in the street, she sees a man whose face is filled with a profound and forbidding melancholy his other self. Lucy ponders on Sebastian's relationship with his estranged wife and wonders if she is not the source of his unhappiness. But Sebastian is not a lover grieving over failure with a woman; rather, he is a man coming to terms with the knowledge that he must some day die. Lucy comes closest to understanding this when unnoticed, she attends the funeral service for one of Sebastian's friends - a French, singer who died suddenly while on tour in America.

As the coffin as carried to the altar of the Church, Sebastian follows it with a look of anguish and despair that strikes a chill in Lucy's heart. In the next episode Sebastian tells Lucy:

You know, I like it see this little red feather coming down the street. I watch for it, and should be terribly disappointed if it did not come. You seem to find walking in the cold the most delightful thing imaginable. Montaigne says somewhere that in early youth the joy of life lies in the feet. You recall that passage to me, Lucy; I had forgotten it (p 672).

The action of Book I can be seen as a struggle between Life, and Death for the possession of Sebastian's soul.
At first the singer is simply courteous to Lucy, for he is completely absorbed by a sense of life, futility, but gradually, he begins to respond to the freshness and spontaneously of Lucy presents in his studio. As she would make her way along the lake front, the sharper off the water brought up all the fire of life in her (p. 670), and she would take into the studio "the freshness of the morning weather" (p. 670). Sebastian watches for her from the window and delights in seeing her tripping along the street in the cold mind. At the point when Sebastian and Mockford are about to leave Chicago for a series of concerts in Minnesota, Lucy accidentally comes upon Mockford alone in the studio. Her antagonist makes her feel how completely he has control over Sebastian.

When he come back after ten days with Mockford, Sebastian is filled with morose thoughts to which he gives utterance in out bursts of sardonic humor. When Lucy admires a vase of flowers he says, to her ""Yes, they are nice, aren't they? Very suggestive youth, love hope all the things that pass"" (p. 683). Lucy asks him if he never got any pleasure from being in love, and he answers, ""N-n-no., not much. "News of an old companion's death ("it was like reading his own death notice") makes him reflect on all of life as a hopeless failure. But Lucy's eager sympathy revives his spirits, and he leaves her looking forward to the morning again. The following day he tells Lucy
that he loves her and although he confesses he has "renounced life" and will never share it with anyone again, he still believes in "the old and lovely dreams of man", which he will teach her and share with her. Sebastian is, in fact, falling in love with life again, with its movement and its order as embodied in Lucy. When Harry Gordon comes to Chicago to pursue his courtship of Lucy, but Lucy has "caught step" with Sebastian and when she lies to Harry and tells him that she has "gone all the way" with the singer that there is no going back, she unwittingly speak a prophetic truth.

Sebastian and Lucy are together briefly before his departure, and though he tells her that he plans to get rid of Macford and feels a revival of interest in his heart the foreboding of the song "When we two parted: weighs heavily on Lucy - "Surely that hour foretold sorrow to this" after he leaves Lucy. While he is on tour in the summer he keeps Lucy informed only of his itinerary (a stark mage of movement), then in September comes the news of the fatal accident on the lake, with Mackford, the foreordained instrument of death, dragging Sebastian down into the cold waters.

Lucy's story change to love's external frustration. When she goes back to Haverford she must discover not only a way of continuing to live, but also a way of being able to love again.
It is Mrs. Ramsay who suggests to Lucy a way of finding happiness again. She says to her, "Life is short, gather roses while you may --- Make it as many as you can, Lucy, Nothing really matters but living. Get all you can out of it. I'm an old woman and I know" (p. 737). Willa Cather does not reject art itself but laments the lovely road the great artist must follow to achieve excellence.

Surprisingly, it is a concert at the towns opera house which renews Lucy's desire to live. The fact that life must end in death does not matter to Lucy, when she feels the renewed desire to go back into the world, her mind is filled with pictures of people in movement, "She could think of nothing but crowded streets with life streaming up and down, windows full of roses and Gardenias and Violets" (p.748). The words from Mendelssohn's Elijah that Sebastian sang for her in the beginning - If with all your heart you truly seek Him, you shall ever surely find Him - acquire their full value for Lucy as a description of living, not as a revelation after death; for seeking is finding. Next suddenly something flashed into her mind, "What if - what if life itself were the sweet heart? On Christmas Day Lucy wrote to Paul Averbach to wish him a happy New Year, She wrote, "The only way for me, is to do the things I used to do and to do them harder"(p. 749). Lucy decided to study again, so she tried
going to her fathers shop everyday and working on the sample piano:

Lucy did what she could on the shop piano in the morning, and every afternoon she walked; through the town, and out the road to the north, where the land lay high and she could look down over the Platte Valley. She began to notice things about the country that she had never taken much heed of before (p.750).

Lucy began to feel trapped, shut up in a little town in winter. Now the hard facts of country life were upon her. "There must be ways of making money in this world; she had never seriously tried, but now she would (p.752). One day after a quarrel with her sister, she rushes out of the house with her skates to the old skating place on the river. Other road she meets Harry Gordon coming along in a sleigh and asks him for a ride. He refuses, saying he is late for an appointment and she will take him out of his way. Blinded with anger and pain, Lucy strides furiously to the river and launches out on the ice not knowing that skating there is no longer safe since the river changed its course the preceding spring. The ice breaks the water is deep, and Lucy drowns\textsuperscript{93}.

The last part of the book is narrated from Gordon's viewpoint, twenty-five years after the heroine's death. Gordon had loved Lucy Gayheart, but he had not understood her and
after her declaration of love for Sebastian his only thoughts were of revenging himself of punishing Lucy. Harry Gordon, now fifty-five reflects on the years since Lucy’s death, and at last admits to himself his guilt. He had done everything possible to make Lucy suffer. Just as Lucy was forced to redirect, her love from an individual. Gordon love for Lucy finds expression in his solicitude for her father though Harry Gordon does not die in the novel; we know that, driving restlessly over the countryside in his automobile, he, too, has caught stop with the three footprints in the sidewalk running away.

*SAPPHIRA AND THE SLAVE GIRL: Except for the epilogue, the novel takes place in the Back Creek Valley, Virginia, in 1856 during the final years of slavery. Sapphira Dodderidge Colbert is an imperious old woman, semi invalid, who originally came from Loudoun country, Virgina, on the Potamac river father east. She had inexplicably married Henry Colbert, a miller, and taken her husband and twenty slaves to live in the Shenandoah Valley on property that she had inherited. Her widow daughter Rachel Blake lives in the village with her children, the story opens with a breakfast table scene between Sapphira and the miller:

*Willa Cather, SAPPHIRA AND THE SLAVE GIRL, New York, (Alfred A. Knopf), 1940 - 1990. All subsequent references to the text are to this edition.
"A poor one at that, we must own" said his wife with an indulgent chuckle. "And speaking of nigger, Major Grimwood tells me, his wife is in need of a handy girl just now. He knows my servants are well trained, he would like to have one of them". To this Major Grimwood answers his wife "he must know you train your servants for your own use". "There is my Nancy, now I could spare her quite well to oblige Mrs. Grimwood and she could hardly find a better place. It would be a fine opportunity for her". (p. 781)

The marriage of Sapphira and Henry has been one mainly of convenience with Sapphira managing the farm and Henry running the mill. He lives at the mill but take his meals at the mill house, the mill house, despite the "air of settled comfort and stability" (p. 801) of its parlour, has the qualities of a crypt. It is situated deep in a wooded valley, as though under the ground; around it the earth rises like the feeling of being "buried" (p. 818). An atmosphere of death and decay hangs about it, in the cold and damp that permeate it and in the rains that seem incessant, making roads impassable and further isolating its inhabitants. Unless fires are lighted to keep their invasion at bay, disfiguring spots appears on the walls, reminder of the disillusions that threatens constantly.

Within the mill house is entombed a vanishing society that remains in signs no longer have meaning — Linen and silver
for parties not given and manners that "had little chance here" (p. 816). It contains also Sapphira, a vestige of her formal self, now confined to the wheel chair constructed for her by the coffin maker and attended by mournful Till, old Washington and Jeff in such a house Nancy is an anomaly, Sapphira resents Nancy's innocence as age resents youth.

Supphira carries out her plans against Nancy by inviting her husband's nephew Martin to come for a protracted visit. She plans to give him every opportunity to rape Nancy. For this purpose she has been brought to manor house, where Martin is "after (her) night an, day" (p. 897). She is especially afraid when, lying in her sleeveless chemise on her straw pallet at night, she can hear the creak of his stealthy barefoot steps on the stairs and passageways of the drafty manor. She knows that if she falls asleep, the villain will slip into her bed. She has only her wit to rely upon, for the servants of the manor are under the control of their master. Although she has been able to employ ruses to escape the rake's clutches her eventual ruin seems inevitable. As she realizes the gravity of her situation, her desperation mounts until she looks on suicide as the only way she can protect her virtue. Fortunately, however, a rescuer intervenes, who under the cover of the dark of the moon helps her escape to safety.
When Henry learns of Martin's designs against Nancy he declares, "I will look after her" (p.884), then "Shrank from seeing her at all" (p. 885), his daughter Rachel questions him, "Why don't you do something to save her ?" (p.902). Shows Henry's helplessness. When the situation becomes intolerable to Rachel and her father Henry. Rachel plans a midnight escape; Nancy is driven in a wagon of death, containing a coffin past a tavern filled with drunken miscreants – figures of social disorder and misrule – then transported by a silent ferry – man over a roaring river to the opposite shore, where she is met by a freed black preacher who speaks to her with "the voice of prophecy" (p.911) and welcomes her into a community of friends and telling her "Dey ain't strangers where you are goin?, honey" (p.911).And this way Nancy passes out of Back Creek valley, leaving behind Rachel calling farewell to the departing chaise.

Till, Nancy's mother, appears to us as a highly competent housekeeper, a figure of calm and order; only later we come to know that in early childhood she saw her mother burn to death. Jezebel first appears as a venerable matriarch, figure of wisdom and justice, and only later do we realise that she "saw her father brained and her four brothers cut down" (p.828) by the slave traders who captured her and brought her to America under the most brutal condition.
At the time of Nancy's escape we see, Till, "shut her eyes to what was going on" (p.899) ineffectual or unsympathetic (the cook Lizzie and her shiftless daughter, Bluebell are vindictive against Nancy because of her earlier favouritism from Sapphira). Even reverend Fairhead, a man of God, is unable to hold his own against Sapphira and is banished from the mill house, albeit under the polite guise of not being invited back.

The one thing Sapphira never had counted on was that her own daughter even though she had yankee idea about slavery, would steal her property with the connivance of her own husband. Henry's part in the escape, however, is passive, for he is too much a southerner to aid his daughter openly. He puts money in his coat and hangs it by an open window on the night the escape is planned.

The final section of the novel takes place after Nancy's escape to Canada. Sapphira brakes with her daughter, forbids her to visit the mill house anymore. After a fine autumn; winter comes and with it the usual Diptheria Epidemic. Sapphira's grand daughters contract the disease, and when one of them dies Rachel and her mother are reconciled. Sapphira invites Rachel and her surviving daughter to come and live at the mill house, and the story ends on a note on harmony, as Sapphira tells her husband; "we would all do better if we have our lives to live over again". (p.926) and we learn from the epilogue that
Sapphira’s health rapidly declined and she died a few months later.

*THE OLD BEAUTY AND OTHERS*: One of the stories from the collection of the stories "The Old Beauty and Others". It is about a woman who yearns for an era which has passed and who withdraws in horror from the present. The story begins in a September morning in 1922 Mr. Henry Seabury aged fifty-five, stepped hurriedly out of the Hotel Splendide at Aix-Les-Bains and stood uncertainly at the edge of the driveway.

"His evident nervousness was due to a shock; an old acquaintance, who had been one of the brilliant figures in the world of the 1890’s, had died a few hours ago in the hotel (p.4). Henry Seabury, and Anglo-American who has just returned from a long business career in China was disappointed to find how the western world has changed in his absence. Aix-Les-Bain, however is still "more or less as it used to be" (p.7). Here he meets an old woman who he had known in his yout as Gabriella Longstreet. Her name recalls for those who remember it "a society whose manners, dress, conventions, loyalties, codes of honour, were different from anything existing in the world

today" (p.5). Now her beauty is gone her health is poor, and she is living in seclusion and anonymity with a companion, the former music-hall comedienne Cherry Beamish. She cherishes the memories and photographs of the great men who were her friends in her youth and whose true greatness she has only been able to recognise now that they are gone and there are no others like them.

On renewing his friendship with Gabriella Longstreet, now madam Decoucy, widowed and living quietly in France, Seabury finds that her recollections of her London years are mixed with regrets. In her youth she had been surrounded by admirers, they were men of achievement, but she had simply taken them for granted. Now in her old age she has come to recognise their greatness and as saddened to think that she once held them so lightly. She says to Seabury:

My friends mean more to me now than when they were alive. I was too ignorant then to realise what remarkable men they were I supposed the world was always full of great men" (p.32).

She sees her youthful self as not simply ignorant but selfish as well, and it is this which fills her with regrets; "you may remember that I was rather ungrateful young woman. I took what came. A great man's time, his consideration, his affection, were mine in the natural course of things, I supposed"
" (p.33). Now bows to them in admiration and her chief pleasure is to read what those men wrote and what has been written about than. Cherry Beamish, gives Seabury a similar account of her friend, " "Yes, ... she gets very low at times. She suffers from strange regrets. She broods on the things she might have done for her friends and don't, – thinks she was cold to them:" " (p.43). Even for Seabury the past has its disagreeable aspect. Gabriella recalls to him that the last time they met, he had rescued her from the embraces of a vulgar American business. For Seabury as well as for Gabriella it had been "something quite terrible" (p.52). Shortly after Seabury had gone to China98 and there paths has not crossed again until the encounter at Ais-les-bains.

Seeing young couples tangoing in the hotel tea room, she says, " 'they look to me like lizards dancing – as reptiles coupling' " (p.58). Seabury is grateful to have survived the holocaust of the war, to be setting in a comfortable hotel " 'in a France still undestroyed' '. But the old beauty replies, " 'Are you grateful? I am not. I think one should go out with one's time' " (p.46).

Next she thanks him for his tact and gentleness towards her one hideous evening long ago, in her own house in New York. From then onwards two women took great pleasure in his company.
If a man is generous in his contribution to good causes, and is useful on committees and commissions, he is asked to the house of the people who have these good causes at heart" (p.50).

Gabriella wished to go for a drive to the Grande-Chartreuse. Accordingly they left the hotel at eleven O'clock with Seabury's trusty young Savoyard driver. "As the road wound higher and higher toward the heights, "one had the feeling that life would go on thus forever in high places, among naked peaks cut sharp against a stainless sky".

After nearly two hours at the monastery they started homeward. Before they reached the hotel, Seabury wished to see the last light on the mountains and so he advised the driver to regulate his speed.

The return trip was ill-started: they narrowly escaped a serious accident with a small car driver by two young American women. The women are "bobbed, hatless, clad in dirty white knickers and sweaters"; they light cigarettes, swagger about giving orders to Seabury's driver, and call each other "Marge" and "Jim". Gabriella is stricken by this encounter and the next morning before dawn she dies in her hotel room.99

Seabury, viewing her body, observes that her face "had no longer need to muffle itself in furs, to shrink away curious eyes, or harden itself into scorn", but lay on the pillow victorious - "like an open confession" (p.70).
THE BEST YEARS: the second story in the collection grew out of Willa Cather's childhood memories of her family. The story begins on a September morning in the year 1899. Miss Evangeline Knightly was driving through beautiful Nebraska land. Miss Knightly was a charming person to meet. She was an intelligent young woman, but plain. She was thoughtful and very observing. This morning miss Knightly was abroad to visit country schools. When she reached the school. She enquired the teacher, "everything going well, Lesley?" (p.81). The teacher replied happily that it is so much easier than it was last year. When Lesley asked Miss Knightly did she saw any of her boys (brother's) because her mother is to busy to write to her often.

Miss Knightly said last week she saw Hectar, he seemed well and happy. As Miss Lesley was homesick and she missed her brother very much miss Knightly took her to Macalpin "depot settlement" where the Fergussons lived. "Mrs. Fergusson was not a person who could be overlooked ..... She was a fine figure of a woman". It was mighty clever of Miss Knightly, to bring their daughter to visit them said Mrs. Fergusson. When Miss Lesley was having her supper Mrs. Fergusson warned the boys to let their sister eat in peace.
After supper they all went into the parlour to talk:

Of course the room was pleasant because of the feeling the children had for one another; and because in Mrs. Fergusson there was authority and organization. Here the family sat and talked until father came home" (p.100).

The father is recognizable as a failure in practical terms, but there is no sense of his dreamy nature being a source of real conflict "wide awake farm", where Mr. Fergusson takes his regular afternoon siesta, is a purely comic rendering.

"The Fergusson children believed that their father was misunderstood by people of inferior intelligence, and that conviction gave them a "cause" which bound them together. They must do better than other children; better in school, and better on the playground. They must turn in a quarter of a dollar to help their mother out whenever they could. Experimental farming wasn't immediately remunerative. To their sister "the boys were much the dearest things in the world to her:

To love them so much was just... happiness. To think about them was the most perfect form of happiness. Had they been actually present, swinging on the two trapezes, turning on the bar, she would have been too much excited, too actively happy to be perfectly happy" (p.113).
Mrs. Fergusson was generally spoken of as a very practical woman. Customarily Miss Knightly started on her long drive at nine O'clock. But she had to call for Miss Lesley at six-thirty and had to given an extra half dollar to the man who came to carry and harness his mule. For breakfast she got a cold sandwich and a cup of coffee. Most serious of all, she has to land her passenger at the Wild Rose School House at nine O'clock. "Such small in conveniences do not sum up to an imposing total but we assume them only for persons we really care for" (p.116).

When Miss Knightly was in Lincoln, attending a convention of superintendents of Public Instruction, along-to-be remembered blizzard swept down over the prairie State. It was more worse in Macalpin. That night Mrs. Robertson cooked nearly everything in the house for their supper. The children ate like wolves. Since she had a headache, Lesley didn't eat much. Next morning she was pretty sick. Doctor said, it was pneumonia, and there wasn't much he could do. She was mostly unconscious for three days and died.

In the last sequence of the story, we see Miss Knightly (now Mrs. Thorndike) makes a visit to Mrs. Fergusson. The boys are grown and gone on their work, and Mr. and Mrs. Fergusson now have a new and spacious house. But their new Prosperity does not compare, in Mrs. Fergusson mind,
with all the happiness they had in the old house, when the family was together and completely absorbed in the day to day attempts to make ends meet:

Well, this I know our best years are when we are working hardest and going right ahead when we can hardly see our way out" (p.136).

BEFORE BREAKFAST: Is the last story in the Old Beauty and Others. The story begins in the morning. "Henry Grenfell, of Grenfell and Saunders, got resentfully out of bed after bad night" (p.141). Henry Grenfell, a selfmade man who had worked his way up from a messenger boy with Western Union to a senior partner of a powerful corporation. Now as an old man, he looks back on his remarkably successful life not with satisfaction, but with grave misgivings. What was it all for, he asked himself. His three son's have turned out well, two of them brilliantly, but he admits to himself despairingly that they are "as cold as ice". His best companions are old authors like Scott, Dickens, Fielding, and especially Shakespeare because, as he pointedly says to his son, " 'they are mighty human' " (p.153). A vision of the world as nonhuman, as physical matter accounted for by science, and the nearness of his own extinction create have in Grenfell's soul. In the past he has always found solace from his cares on his island retreat in the North Atlantic, but this year a geology professor (two of Grenfell's "cold" sons
are also professors) has spoiled the island for him by coming to study its formation and by drawing Grenfell's attention to its prehistoric age. The brevity and insignificance of human life strikes, Grenfell at every turn thereafter. As he stands by the window, about to put in his eye drops, he see the morning star on the horizon in all its ageless and impersonal splendor, and thinks to himself, why patch up? What was the use... of anything" (p.148).

The geologists presence on the island forces the crises in Grenfell's soul; however, he does not rest the blame for his sense of failure and despair on forces external to himself, "the bitter truth was that his worst enemy was closer even than the wife of his bosom – was his bosom itself" (p.156). Grenfell devoted his life to a personal universe around him which will claim him in death. He reflects to himself that he had got ahead in the world – but on the wrong road. In the last part of the story he takes a very different road – a walk through the woods to another part of the island – and on his way he sheds his intensely personal response to every-thing for something akin to a transcendental feeling for life. The sight of the geologists daughter out swimming in the Atlantic precipitates his reaffirmation of living. Her pink-skinned fragility in the "death-chill" water, coupled at once with her vitality, proclaims to him
that life will continue to renew itself on the prehistoric rocks of the world. His acceptance of the human condition (his own rebirth to life) is evidenced in his awakened physical appetite and in his final reflection which good - humouredly turns on an image of evolutionary science over which he has despaired:

Anyhow, when that first amphibious frog-toad found his water-hole dried up behind him, and jumped out to hop along till he could find another - well, he started on a long hop (p.166).
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CHAPTER-I

A BRIEF SURVEY OF
AVAILABLE CRITICAL WORK
ON MISS CATHER'S WORK
A BRIEF SURVEY OF AVAILABLE CRITICAL WORK ON MISS CATHHER'S WORK

SECTION-III

Miss Willa Cather, had began her literary career, at an early age of eight or nine years old. As a child in Virginia she not only wrote a play, but arranged and supervised its performance with remarkable effect. The publication of "April Twilights", in the year 1903 gave her a national notice for the first time. Her first volume of short stories. The Troll Garden, was published in the year 1905¹. By the year 1918 she had published six books but the bulk of criticism began appearing only around 1920. Her fiction had a variety of content, craft and tone. The Pioneer immigrant about which she wrote before 1918 was praised the most. The new subject brought her praise but later on she was attacked for not writing about social movements and the rise of the masses. Her novels looked too simple and clear to inspire serious critical attempt at their evaluation. The general view was that she won and escapist, romanticizing a vanished past – the pioneer period. There was a feeling of dissatisfaction with the unconventional structure of her novels like MY ANTONIA, THE PROFESSOR'S HOUSE, MY MORTAL ENEMY and DEATH COMES FOR THE ARCHBISHOP². HW. Boynton recognised her prairie novels
having definite form in American fiction. He felt her work was rooted in the soil. Not merely in local colour sense but distinguished American writing with the fusion of real and ideal. Willa Cather and her critics (1967) is a volume of good essays on Willa Cather as well as representative criticism. An excellent effort is made by James Schroeter for a detailed and exact record of the growth of Cather's critical reputation. Following are some of the (essays) critical statement from this volume. H.L. Mencken saw the depiction of the picture of the prairie struggle as symbolic and felt that Will Cather had mastered the delicate and difficult art of evoking the feelings in her works.

Carl Van Doren noted that less than the action the mood of the pioneer novels have the epic quality as well as the artists. He said that her theme was the struggle of an individual to overcome the restrictions laid upon him – or more frequently her by numbing circumstances. T.K. Whipple described her achievement as a triumph of mind over Nebraska, and the tendency for a good. Rebecca West noted her sensuousness and her perfection in conveying the difference between the things seen and things remembered. Lionel Trilling felt that her career was of the heroic, though fallen pioneer – distinctive American theme of the unavailing struggle.

Leon Edel saw her work through her biography. He discussed the pattern of success and failure in her works. He
felt that her subject were conquest and death\textsuperscript{10}. Dorothy Van Ghent stressed her extraordinary energy in giving up conventional literary methods, she was able to speak in a way that often reveals to the reader something extraordinarily valuable that seems to have been in the subconscious\textsuperscript{12}. Elizabeth Shepley Sergeant reviews her life and shows her as an independent artist in her book Willa Cather's : A memoir, she further reveals that Willa Cather carried with her a creative force of which she was aware but was uninformed. As an artist she was robust and intense\textsuperscript{11}.

Bernice Slote gave more information about her days at the university of Nebraska and Cather's Lincoln years as a journalist\textsuperscript{13}. Bernice Slote and Virginia Faulkner's \textbf{THE ART OF WILLA CATHER (1973)} is the result of a gathering of eighty-five scholars from seven nations, representing forty-four institutions of higher learning. The gathering was an International seminar (October 25-28, 1973), the subject of the seminar was "The Art of Willa Cather". It was part of the year long celebrations of the century of Willa Cather at Lincoln. The volume contains articles by Eudora Welty, Marcus, Cunliffe, James Woodress, Michael Gerwood, Hirako Sato, Aldo Gelli, James E. Miller Jr., Donald Sutherland in addition to recollections by Leon Edel and A Knopf. It is a significant collection of critical
writing representing diverse points of view regarding Cather's art\textsuperscript{14}.

Dorothy Tuck McFarland has written a short biographical—Critical Summary on Willa Cather (1972). Nothing new is added in this book but the interpretations are sound\textsuperscript{15}. E.K. Brown Leon Edel, A Critical Biography (1953) was important both as criticism and biography. Edith Lewis's. Willa Cather Living, also appeared in the same year, both the books reviewed Cather's life and show her as an independent artist, robust and intense\textsuperscript{16}.

James Woodres's Willa Cather: A Literary Life (1987), (a biography), is the best introduction to Willa Cather as it makes a judicious use of the additional material which was not available to Brown and Edel\textsuperscript{17}. Mildred R. Bennet's, The World of Willa Cather (1961-62), brought to life her Red Cloud years and fixed her correct date of birth – 1873 instead of 1876. It served as base for later biographical studies, regarding the Nebraska background of Cather\textsuperscript{18}. David Daiches's, Willa Cather: A Critical Introduction (1951) is the first critical book length study and the best brief introduction. He found her novels civilized in the broadest sense of the term. David Daiches emphasized the subtilizing of courage by vision and discrimination and the search for a culture that combines all three qualities in her fiction\textsuperscript{19}. 
L. Brent Bohlke's, *Willa Cather In Person* (1986), is a book in which he has published her selected interviews, speeches, and letters for the first time. What he discovered about her was more openness, she did not hide from public notice, instead, she continued to court it, only more judiciously\(^\text{20}\).

In her book *The Voyage Perilous*, Willa Cather's Romanticism we observe in her early writing (1986) Cather explored the terms of imaginative thought and celebrated creativity. She also explored a theme that runs through modern literature, the development of a personal self to serve as a source of value in an otherwise common world, and she made her the terms of the romantics, with their separation of self and world, private and public is discussed in this book by Susan J. Rosowski\(^\text{21}\).

Willa Cather Writing at the Frontier (1988-90), in this book Jamie Ambrose says that Willa Cather's writing can be seen as an embodiment, a mirror of the artists 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. Like 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\(^\text{22}\).
William J. Stafford and Willam J. Stacky have edited a special volume of modern fictions studies in the year 1990. The essays in this special issue eschew traditional labels and examined Cather's work from a more sceptical vantage point. Cather reacted against the hardships and cultural deprivations of frontier life, moving east, first to Pittsburgh and, later to New York. Her obsession with art and beauty and there role in shaping her moral sense and imagination is fundamental, as is the more comprehensive question, under which all the others may to some extant be subsumed: the nature of Cather's peculiar values.

Marilyn Arnold's Willa Cather's Short Fiction (1935), is an introduction to all of Willa Cather's short stories. Some stories that have received little critical attention in the past are given full discussion and the more familiar stories are given generous emphasis less important stories received only brief comment. She kept the Nebraska experience visible through the short stories.

John H. Randall's, Landscape and Looking Glass (1960), is a fairly comprehensive work on Willa Cather. The author's search for a unifying factor in Willa Cather's work led him to conclude that Willa Cather herself was engaged in a search, a life long quest for value: and the books was called Landscape and the Looking Glass because those were the two
places were Willa Cather sought her values. The picture finally formed by the author of Willa Cather's work is that the defining characteristics of her is that it is deep but not broad. She does emerge as believably human from this study. The search made by her is the search we all make. 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 and was has relevance to the aspirations and travails of all of us.\textsuperscript{25}

Loretta Wasserman’s, Willa Cather: A study of Short Fiction was published in the year 1913-1925. In this book the author focuses on the early part of Cather's writing career.\textsuperscript{26} Richard Giannone's, Music and Willa Cather's Fiction (1968) elaborately discusses the various uses of music in Willa Cather's fiction. The author here realised that music is a distinctive quality of Willa Cather's mind and creation, and it is a univocal to her loyalties. According to the author's opinion, music for Willa Cather was an emotional experience that had a potent influences on her own imaginative processes – quickening the flow of ideas suggesting new forms and associations, translating itself into parallel movements of thought and feeling.\textsuperscript{27}

Margaret Anne O'Conner's, Women studies : An Interdisciplinary Journal (1984) is the first collection of essays to focus on Willa Cather, the woman artist. All the essays reflect a consciousness of the femaleness of the novelist and the
effects of this femaleness on the images, landscapes, characters, mythic and narrative structures and even critical reception of her work. Murphy John J., Critical Essays on Willa Cather. David Stouk, James Woodress, and Paul Comeau wrote original essays for this collection.

Jo Ann Middleton's, Willa Cather's Modernism (1973) is a book on style and technique of Willa Cather's art. Here the author argues that A LOST LADY, THE PROFESSOR'S HOUSE and MY MORTAL ENEMY, the most demeuble of Cather's book ultimately freed Cather for further experimentation in her work. The techniques she perfected in these three novels became as integral a part of that celebrated simple and clear style as her use of colour, adverbs, and figures of speech – a style to be felt by the sensitive reader as an emotional experience and recalled with pleasure again and again.

Robert J. Nelson's, Willa Cather and France (1973) is a fascinating study of Cather's art and her love of languages. Willa Cather was drawn to other languages and their cultures, particularly French, as a way to express her cosmopolitan outlook. Throughout her cannon Cather chose French culture as a prism through which she refracted her celebrated themes of love of the land, human caring, patriotism, the pioneer outlook, faith in God and in the human spirit, and the "Kingdom of art". While it is grounded in French critical and psychoanalytical
theory, Nelson's illuminating analysis of the "French mark" in Cather's work is thoroughly accessible and clearly written\(^{31}\).

Philip L. Gerber's, Willa Cather (1975) is a competent study of Cather's art. Here the author has approach the novels thematically, finding in them a singleness of thought always connected intimately with author's own life and efforts and expressing in two, one turns inward upon the individual spirit; the other outward with a concern for the American Nation. It also provides a helpful discussion of Cather the literary theorist\(^{32}\).

Sally Peltier Harvey's, Redefining the American Dream. The novels of Willa Cather (1948) examines Cather's interest throughout her life in the version (s) of success that pervaded American culture and were (and often still are) identified as the American dream. He studies the forces in America that shaped Cather's attitude about success, Cather was growing up and the forces that reshaped her attitudes during the year. That Cather wrote her novels causing her to reassess the relationship between material success, personal fulfilment, individual autonomy and commitment to community. Harvey traces Cather's shifting views and her struggle to redefine the American dream\(^{33}\).

Following are some of the essays discussed from the above volume. E.K. Brown, **THE PROFESSOR'S HOUSE** – It discusses Willa Cather's attempt to preserve the conventional elements. As she grew older the large background of emotion claimed more and more of her attention and as a result of this the structure of her novels underwent very interesting and beautiful change. It may be said that into the light house the arrangement of the themes, and their interweaving are conventional according to Sonato form, but that the arrangement and interweaving in the Professor's house, with the shock, the revelation in the final part, are highly and stirringly experimental.\(^{34}\)

David Daiches's, *The Claims of History* is focused on the novel *A Lost Lady* having something of the western background. Since it is focused throughout on a single character Lucy it has limited scope. In *The Professor's House* the scope is similarly restricted. It shows Miss Cather moving towards a more delicate kind of art.\(^{35}\)

Morton D. Zable's, *Willa Cather: The Tone of Time* Observes that backwardness was with not only a matter of her material and temperament, it was the condition of her existence as an artist. She was, a pioneer in the twentieth century and she spared no scorn in describing the provincial spirit. **A LOST LADY, MARIAN FORRESTER, LUCY**
**GAYHEART** are the most persuasive of Miss Cather's creations, her nearest claims to skill in a field where she was admittedly and obviously incompetent – complex and credible psychology. But somehow she could never bring opposite into full play in a novel. They remained hostile, morally and socially incapable of true complexity. Willa Cather's art was an art of simplification and didactic idealisation. Though provincial Spirit is seen in her novels, at the same we see in her later novels like **A LOST LADY**, and **LUCY GAYHEART** her skill as an artist in creating complex and credible psychology of the character like Marrian Forrester and Lucy.

James E Miller's, **MY ANTONIA**: A Frontier Drama argues that the novel is defective in structure. Disappearance of Antonia in the closing book is felt by Rene Rapin, David Daiche, and E.K. Brown is also disturbed but says in the novels defence, "Everything in the book is there to convey a feeling, not to establish a social philosophy, not to tell a story, not even to animate a group of characters. It is a fine creative achievement". He concludes his essay believing My Antonia is ultimately about time. Intensely felt awareness of the past as past is the emotional heart of the novel.

Lionell Trilling says, that the essay written by Willa Cather in 1922 called "The Novel Demeuble" was the rational of the method which Miss Cather had partly anticipated in her
early novels and had fully developed a decade later, which indicates a subtle failure of her admirable talent to many of her readers. He concludes the characters in Cather's novels are unattached to anything save 'their dreams'. The novel is demeuble indeed but life without its furniture is bare indeed. In Kazin's Elegy: Willa Cather, the two poles of Cather's world as seen by Alfred Kazin are the struggle between grandeur and meanness which ultimately became the great theme of her novels. She did not celebrates the Pioneer as such, but sought his image in all creative spirits — explores an artists, lovers and saints, who seemed to live by a purity of aspiration an integrity or passion or skill, that represented everything that gone out of life or had to fight a losing battle for survival in it.

His view on Cather's essay, on fiction "The Novel Demeuble" is, she defined her rejection of modern industrial culture explicitly and asked for a pure novel that would throw the "Social furniture" out of fiction.

John H. Randall's; The essay; Protestant Past. Sapphira and the Slave Girl, remark that Cather's later view of life, had definitely interfered with the handling of the novel and by undercutting its moral realism, reduced its artistic worth.

Miss Elizabeth Sergeant remark on SAPPHIRA AND THE SLAVE GIRL, that in this book more than in any other the
conflict between value systems destroys her vision of reality and makes a hash of her art\textsuperscript{43}.

Willa Cather: \textbf{THE CLASSIC VOICE}, an essay by Donald Sutherland recognizes Willa Cather's style as of many qualities of style and mind. Willa Cather may quite well be as "steeped in the classics and as virgilian, specifically, as she has been said to be\textsuperscript{44}.

Lillian D. Bloom, in her review essay "On daring to look back with Wharton and Cather" has given full length sketch on both the author's life. It is a comparative study considering all the aspects of their literary career and their life\textsuperscript{45}.

James Seaton in his article "The Prosaic Willa Cather comments that in Cather's own art the prosaic outlook allows one to glimpse the hidden connections between grand moral principles and seemingly trivial choices in the end included Willa Cather's own art\textsuperscript{46}.

Bennott Mildred R in his article on Myra's Marriage has given an analysis on Myra's Marriage braking the confusion between falling in love and standing in love. Jean Tsien wrote on the fascination complexity of \textbf{MY MORTAL ENEMY} and quoted Myra as a realistic and complex character\textsuperscript{47}.

Merrill Maguire Skaggs has shown in his article Death Comes for the Archbishop: Cather's Mystery and Manners, how to see essential of Cather's mind in her work. This essay
is a full length study of the novel Death Comes on the Archbishop. And is concluded as, "This book - built as carefully as a cathedral, presents the lives of two dedicated men in a reverent and therefore artistically and religiously satisfying way. The book is called as an ultimate miracle which one can hold in our hands and love. The novel exists with a purpose as strong as action and witnesses that Cather's spirit has risen to new life through faith\textsuperscript{48}.

Ann Moseley in her essay on the Dual Nature of Art in \textbf{THE SONG OF THE LARK} considers the novel as an intelligent and well developed theory of art projects her views on the Dual Nature of Art in the novel. Passion with control over it and order with emotion are the essential nature of Thea as an artist and the author as well this nature itself is essential to the full beauty and meaning of her art\textsuperscript{49}.

Willa Cather's uncommon art is a nice piece of article written by Bawer-Bruce, which throws light on Willa Cather's art and assert her as distinctive in her theme of old and new world values. She tried to capture in her art the traditional notions of civilization and culture\textsuperscript{50}. 
REFERENCES

CHAPTER – I (SECTION – III) :

5. Ibid, p.10
10. Ibid, p.249.
12. Dorothy Van Ghent, Willa Cather, New York : 197, p.44.


35. Ibid p.31, 39

36. Ibid p.39, 44.


40. Ibid p.23.

41. Ibid p.68.

42. Ibid p.68.

43. Ibid p.124.


47. Ibid p.24,25.

