CHAPTER - II

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"Love is responsibility of an 'I' for a 'Thou', Love is between 'I' and 'Thou' in any communication between person and person. Man dwells in his Love".¹ No doubt, the above sentences appear to be too metaphysical but it is of importance to know that Miss Porter has arrived at similar conclusions in her own way.

Love is a noble passion, if, the lover and the beloved understand and appreciate the personality of each other. Willingness to sacrifice for each other’s happiness is the strong foundation of true love. In an essay on E.M. Forster, Miss Porter has stated that her admiration for Forster was mainly because of Forster’s faith in the importance of love between one person and another. True love is a divine blessing; but lustful, unrefined passion between man and woman though may pass for love for sometime, will only make the world unhappy. Miss Porter has shown us her approach to love even in her very first mature story 'Maria Concepcion'. "From the first scene, Porter introduces the reader to the chronic distance between things as they are and as they should be, between truth and

¹ Self, Society, Existence, p. 155.
fiction, between expectation and fulfilment, between life and art². Peering through the cactus hedge, Maria Concepcion can hear Maria Rosa's laughter. She smiles to think of Maria Rosa having a man; but when the man appears it is her own man. At first Maria wants to die, but not until she has cut the throats of the lovers, kissing and laughing under the cornstalks. Maria Rosa, she thinks is her enemy, a whore with no right to live.

Though the actual murder is not described she avenges hereself on Maria Rosa and takes for her the newborn baby. "Porter introduces in the story a series opposites! .... light versus dark, christianity versus paganism, love versus duty³". Though the story is about the primitive Mexican Indians Miss Porter tells the so called civilized world about the intensity of the feeling of love and certain terrible consequences if there is any attempt at betrayal. "Constantly shifting from one opposite to another, Porter plunges the reader into the amoral-moral world of the Indian, and by extension plumbs the basis of all human existence."⁴

In her "Miranda stories" and also in Ship of Fools she has made this point of view of hers clear. Miranda in Pale Horse, Pale Rider is a grown-up woman. At a very young age she becomes a divorcee. As a child, In Old Mortality she

² Willene Hendrick and George Hendrick, Kartherine Anne Porter, p.16
³ Willene Hendrick and George Hendrick, Katherine Anne Porter, p.20.
⁴ Ibid., p.20.
very curiously listens to the love story of Aunt Amy and Uncle Gabriel. At that age she is too young to understand the complications of love. When her father takes her and her sister to the house of Gabriel who married another lady after his short married life with Amy, she can get only glimpses of the passion called love. As is true of many of Porter’s Stories Old Mortality too ends in isolation and desolation. It concludes with a statement bringing together the incidents and making clear the symbols of isolation.

Similary in ‘Virgin Violeta’ the teenaged girl who is rigorously trained by the parents and the nuns in the school becomes ill at ease when Carlos places his lips on hers. She becomes emotionally restless and a feeling of guilt sets in her. At the same time in her sub-conscious she enjoys its thrill. The lines, "This torment of love which is in my heart : / I know that I suffer it, but I do not know why",\(^5\) seems to enthral Violeta as they echo her own emotions. She is tormented for love of Carlos. Like most other Porter heroines she can never love a man and yet retain her virtue. "Love is the attitude of the soul which is seeing and hearing and knows that it must help".\(^6\)

\(^5\) Willne Hendrick and George Hendrick, *Katherine Anne Porter*, p.22

\(^6\) *Self, Society, Existence*, p.168.
In 'The Martyr' the love between a famous artist, Ruben and a beautiful model Isabella is dealt with. It becomes a triangular love affair when another less important artist comes to the scene. Isabella is bored with Ruben and hence frequently quarrels with him. This state of affairs comes to an end when Isabella runs away with the lesser artist. It is clear that Isabella is not interested in the paintings but in the personality of the person with whom she elopes. Ruben the artist may be invaluable but Ruben the man is worthless as far as she is concerned. After the elopement Ruben the artist is replaced by Ruben the man who spends much of his time gazing at the drawing he has made of Isabella. He has no spirit, even to revenge, and becomes a victim of gluttony. His friends try to prevail upon him to resume his artistic pursuits but to no purpose. Ruben develops a death wish and finally he dies of a seizure at the "Little Monkeys" restaurant where he is dining. Though Ruben is a miserable failure in love he has a number of loving friends. The owner of the restaurant confides to Ramon another artist Ruben's last words, "Tell them I am a Martyr to love. I perish in a cause worth the sacrifice. I die of a broken heart!.... Isabelita my executionor!"7

They plan to build a myth around him. Ruben the artist will have his memory perpetuated not only through his paintings but also through a biography. The biographer Ramon will ensure that "The Little Monkeys" becomes a shrine for artists. In this story Miss Porter is introducing us to the meaninglessness of

7 Willene Hendrick and George Hendrick, Katherine Anne Porter, p.21.
some eccentric love affairs. Such triangular love exists because of the absence of sincerity, devotion and a willingness to sacrifice. It passes for love but in the real sense it is no love at all.

When we look at some of her "Miranda stories" we will be convinced that it is this idea of purposeless love that she wants to project to us. In Old Mortality Aunt Amy and Gabriel make a very strange pair. The more Gabriel wants to exhibit his love to Amy the more she wants to pretend that she is indifferent. But in this case at the end love fructifies and culminates in marriage. Child Miranda could not understand the complications involved in her aunt’s affairs but she loved Gabriel and respected him for his patience and never-failing love. But tragedy struck Miranda’s own life. When she grew up she loved and married the same man yet their marriage ended up as a failure. This failure so totally changed her psychological make up that she started hating the ways of the old generation.

In Pale Horse, Pale Rider Miranda is working with a news magazine. It is war time, and there is a healthy young soldier by name Adam towards whom she develops real love. In this case, her love is well reciprocated. She falls sick and is admitted to a hospital. She recovers but the irony of life is such that her beloved lover Adam dies of influenza in the Camp Hospital. Before his death, through a friend he writes a letter to Miranda. She imagines that Adam is beside her and she utters the words "I Love You". Finally we see her resolved to face all the tough realities of life. There is an opinion among critics like Hardy that she was
specializing only in the darker side of life. But in *Pale Horse, Pale Rider* there are rays of hope and salvation. "Left to mourn the lover taken away by the Pale rider, Miranda at first tries but fails to call into her presence the ghost of Adam. Her conscious fears are put aside as she accepts a world without a war, houses without noise, streets without people and "the dead cold light of tomorrow". She knows as one initiated into both heaven and hell, life and death that there would be time for everything.

In ‘Flowering Judas’ the case is a little different. The highly religious American teacher working in Mexico among the revolutionaries is a type by herself. Laura the teacher is often compared to Miss Porter herself. People do not understand why Laura is in Mexico. "The idea of sexual purity is the basis of all other idealism", is a maxim taught to her right from her childhood. At the same time she is a sympathiser of the revolution and braves many dangers for its sake. She is not afraid to knock on any door in any street after midnight. During her leisure she goes to union meetings and listens to their arguments. But she is not able to reconcile the demands that religion and revolution make upon her. She fears that she is betraying revolution by going to church now and then. She also fears that she is betraying religion by serving the cause of revolution.

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She has a number of suitors, and a young man of nineteen tries to court her by singing her serenades. Her Indian servant Lupe advises her to throw a flower to the suitor as she wants to help the young man marry Laura. Laura has no inkling of this ulterior motive. Therefore she follows the advice not knowing that an offer of flower is approval of courtship. She hopes that the young man will grow weary of pursuing a stoic who looks upon marriage as a disaster.

As in ‘Martyr’ a triangle episode runs through this story though in a different way. A young Captain is bewitched by Laura’s grey eyes and soft, round underlip. One day he goes riding with her. He alights and then tries to draw her from her horse into his arms. He does it very gently and this gentleness defeats him. She spurs the horse and goes beyond his reach. He concludes that he should have first expressed his love and then drawn her which would not have made her shy away from him. But to the reader it is clear that he has not understood her.

Her androgynous interests are mistaken and misunderstood. All these instances go to show that women in general and young women in particular are insecure if they are involvd in revolutionary movements and that love will be a casualty. In this story we have to look at Braggioni the young suitor with observant eyes. He felt the stirrings of love for the first time at the age of fifteen. A precautious lover, he is not daunted by rejection or by the failure. He overcomes the limitations of poverty and becomes a leader of men and darling of dames. His attitude is that one woman is really as good as another for him in the
dark. He asks her if she loves some one or if someone loves her. She says "no" to both the questions. Laura knows that Braggioni is already married and she is determined to keep him at arm's length.

In this story Miss Porter is driving home to us, some important ideas about love. Love is love only if there is an identification of minds and personalities but it is a very rare occurrence. Love should engender permanent happiness but what we see around is one-sided love, half-baked love or pretensions of love for the achievement of temporary sexual satisfaction. She can never accept that this is going to be of any help for the resurrection of humanity. Jane De Mouy has argued in Katherine Anne Porter's Women that Laura is her own worst enemy, a woman who, in an effort to protect her integrity, has controlled her emotions to the point of being unable to act according to her own values. M.G. Krishnamurthy also holds the same opinion. "It is also clear that she does not want to establish any kind of intimate human relationship with the persons who take an active part in the political movement or with the persons who offer her a non-political relationship". 9

As a shrewd observer of the psychology of men and women she developed an outstanding ability in assessing the intensity of the passion of love and to what extent it can affect the life of the betrayed if there is any jilting.

9 M.G. Krishnamurthy, Katherine Anne Porter : A Study (Mysore : Rao and Raghavan, 1971) p.94.
An omniscient observer reports the stream of consciousness of eighty-year-old Ellen Weatherall on the last day of her life, as she shifts back and forth from consciousness to semi-consciousness confusing the past and the present, recalling old dreams and fears and grudges. Active, strong-willed and self-sufficient, she had reared a large family after the death of a young husband; but for sixty years she had been fretting about her first fiancé, George, who had jilted her on the very day they were supposed to be married. She had later married John Weatherall and named their first son George.

In this story which has Jamesian echoes Miss Porter skilfully suggests the lasting psychological traumas of the victims of jilting. "Porter learned her lessons from James well. Her story has all the fineness, skill, and symbolism of the master himself; but, although there are Jamesian echoes, the story is uniquely her own". Unable to accept the ultimate affront Ellen Weatherall willed her own death.

As has been pointed out earlier Miss Porter has constantly dealt with the chaos of universe and forces within men and within society which have led to man's alienation. Her contention is that love, where two individuals of opposite sexes are involved fails, and fails miserably. The theme of 'Flowering Judas' is, that only in faith and love can man live. Laura is incapable of participating as a

10 Willene Hendrick and George Hendrick, Katherine Anne Porter, p.73.
divine lover in the Christian sense, as a professional lover like Braggioni or even as an erotic lover. "The only human relationship in her life is the still born one with Eugenio".\textsuperscript{11} This wasteland theme continues in ‘Hacienda’. It is a brilliantly executed story of disengagement of physical, spiritual, moral and psychological isolation — a short novel of the lost generation. Here "the narrator, like Hemingway’s Fredrick Henry, distrusts all the old shibboleths, and she seemingly does not attempt to get beneath the surface of the action. She is protecting herself by recording, not probing".\textsuperscript{12}

In December 1965 \textit{The Yale Review} published a special supplement on the work of Miss Porter, with particular emphasis on \textit{The Collected Stories}. There in an essay titled ‘The Eye of the Story’ Eudora Welty observes that Miss Porter had written moral stories about love. "\textit{H}ate is love’s twin, love’s imposter and \textit{e}nemy."\textit{R}ejection, betrayal, desertion, theft roam the pages of her stories as they roam the world".\textsuperscript{13}

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\textsuperscript{12} Willene Hendrick and George Hendrick \textit{Kartherine Anne Porter}, p.31.

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In some of these stories there may be some remote chances of salvation. But she realised on her voyage to Europe in 1931 that the tragedy of our times is not an accident but a total accident. It is probably owing to this realisation that whereas in the stories there is some light of hope, in *Ship of Fools* there are only rays of hope.

For a purposeful analysis of man-woman relationship in the novel, we can divide it into two main categories, a) Marital realationship, (b) Extra-Marital relationship. As Marital relationship forms the base of family it will be dealt with in the chapter on Family.

There are two types of extra-marital relationships described by the author in her novel. In the first type the individuals concerned really believe, at least for sometime, that they are in real love with one another. The second type is only with the aim of sex. The relationship between David and Jenny, the American painters can be summed up in one sentence; that man has an eye on this woman or this woman has an eye on that man. M.M. Liberman suggests:

The design of the work is the arrangement of a number of stories, some of greater magnitude than others, most of them touching upon the others, but all of them related if only slightly, if only by love and feelings, to the end that the reader is overcome by the work's insistence. *Ship of Fools* insists on the single fact that sentimentality, weakness, cruelty, and irresponsibility have flourished too long in the name of love.\(^\text{14}\)

Miss Porter's method is to dramatise the theme with a cast of contemporary types in a microsomic world — the ship. If a healthy family is the strong basis of happiness of the nation and human race and if the happiness of the family is the resultant of love mainly between man and woman, it is negated by these pseudo lovers — the fools in the ship.

A thorough observation of the incidents that take place on board the ship points to the fact that everyone thinks that he is in total isolation. The self-proclaimed lovers are the American painters David and Jenny. In the beginning of the voyage David takes out a book entitled Aspects of Sex as Mental Prophylaxis with the sub-heading A guide to true happiness in life. The book is not his but his cabinmate's. It is deliberately introduced by Miss Porter to give us a hint as to what is in store for the future. Some of their private musings throw, much light on the true nature of their relationship. The whole wild escapade to Europe was Jenny's idea; David had never intended to leave Mexico at all. She planned, taking his assent for granted, to go first to France. He at once decided, if he went anywhere it would be only to Spain. They had two or three violent quarrels about it and then compromised on Germany which neither of them wanted. This shows that in temperament they were poles apart and mutual understanding is conspicuous only by its absence.
There is always a contrast between the proper dress of David and the dress of Jenny, which is unconventional enough to draw the attention of even the waiter and the clerk of the ship. The author's comment "they stared at each other like enemies" indicates that under stress they would not be able to support each other. The way in which Jenny and David are presented in each other's company and in the company of others seems to be designed to draw the reader's attention to a more fundamental trait -- the absence of qualities which go to make satisfactory relationship.

Their oppressing mentality never subsides. In the first dining-room quarrel she tells him that she really does not know whether she is going to sit at that table with him throughout the whole voyage or not. He replies that he too feels the same. "The quarrel between them was a terrible tread mill they mounted together and tramped round and round until they were wearied out or in despair". In the end both of them promise to try not to spoil their first voyage together.

The more David tries to analyse his feelings towards Jenny, the more he is convinced that there is something in her whole nature that obstructs the working of his own. He cannot find any talent in her as a painter, though it was such a feeling that brought them together. If this is his attitude to his beloved, we have a few incidents which will reveal Jenny's way of thinking. After the burial of

Echegaray the wood carver, she had met David. To her horror and dismay she realised that "he was locked up in himself, in his own feelings he wanted to turn to stone if she touched him or uttered a word".¹⁶ She retreated at once, trying to turn her attention away from him. This is because there is nothing solid in their relationship.

David knows that Jenny has compulsive sociabilty. The ease with which Jenny can strike up acquaintance with strangers contrasts with the deliberate way in which David tries to keep off from people. He is a jealous lover and this sociable nature of Jenny adds to the misery of both. On the occasion of the Captain's dinner to the passengers, Jenny requests David to dance with her but he does not oblige her. Though Jenny is restless wanting to dance, David with a stout, obstinate face leaves her and goes to the bar.

A few minutes later he looked out and it was as he has expected. She was dancing with Freytag. He stays in the bar for sometime, then follows her and Freytag like a private detective to collect evidence of her immorality. Though Freytag sees it, he pretended not to notice. But David pushed in between them and seized her by the arm with a mean look on his face. Freytag's muscular aggressiveness was sufficient to inflame the jealousy of the usually timid David.

¹⁶ Ship of Fools, p.327.
During the voyage Jenny and Freytag come close to each other, almost as if to relieve the boredom of the voyage.

When David sees Jenny dancing with Freytag it occurs to him that Freytag is a born handler and trainer of women. This animal imagery is apt not only in the case of Freytag but also to describe his own nature. Corruption on instinctive levels of life as seen in the relationships between David and Jenny and Freytag is the result of total corruption prevailing in the upper strata of society. She enjoyed Freytag's good looks - he was a delight to her eyes. If a man was sufficiently good-looking she granted him all the desirable qualities. "Jenny's inability to accept life, for what it is, is at the back of her troubles, for her inability to accept life is not accompanied by the intelligence and will to try to make it better".\textsuperscript{17}

Certain other differences of their outlook also add to their unhappy love affair. David is convinced that there never was nor will be a great woman painter, but it was each other's interest in painting that brought them together. For Jenny, words like "soul" and "God" have some real significance. But for David they are just words signifying nothing in particular. Her aesthetic attitude to scenes and persons is also far removed from that of David.

\textsuperscript{17} M.G. Krishnamurthy, \textit{Katherine Anne Porter: A Study}, p.28.
After the dancing incident she tries to analyse her feelings towards him. A stabbing incident which she witnessed in the company of David appears in her vision. She sees David and herself attacking each other. "She was looking up into David's blood-streaming face and bloody stone in her hand and David's knife was raised against her pierced bleeding breast"\(^{18}\). This vision is the result of her suppressed hatred for David. Their relationship is a love-hate relationship and during the voyage hate gains the upper hand. For a year at least she had been certain that the bond was real and would last.

Now she feels again that he has developed a strange resistance to love. "We will go on for a while and it will be worse and worse and will say and do more and more outrageous things to each other and one day we will strike the final death-giving blow",\(^{19}\) she thought. This is a prophecy of doom, but the pointer is only to that inevitability. Though later in a serene mood she thinks that the bitterness she had developed is a shameful thing, even after landing in Bremerhaven, there is no promise of real love. There is only a temporary truce. "He was tired of trying to understand her"\(^{20}\). She too could not succeed in understanding her lover. This premarital relationship can be taken as a typical one which is intended to provoke the readers to thought.

\(^{18}\) *Ship of Fools*, p.145

\(^{19}\) Ibid., p.146.

\(^{20}\) Ibid., p.146.
The relationship between Dr. Schumann, the ship’s Doctor and La Condesa, the exiled revolutionary from Cuba, is extra-marital in nature. A clear analysis of that affair which is a short lived platonic affair leads us to unsavoury conclusions. Dr. Schumann is essentially a kind man and infact his sensitivity to human suffering exceeds the requirements of his professional duty. "If his acts of kindness are not always purely motivated they are never the less genuinely effective". In his professional capacity the Doctor has a right to come into contact with all the passengers on board the ship. But the emotional attitude he develops to the Condesa is not the doctor-patient relationship. To start with, it was the result of his essential kindness and sympathy to the suffering lady, but once he begins to visit her in her cabin regularly the pure motive undergoes an unwelcome change. La Condesa on her part thinks that the innocent romantic love she should have had in her girlhood has come to her so late, so strangely that she cannot understand it. The doctor feels guilty about it later. He is a married man, a good Catholic and a respectable doctor. During one of his visits he confesses: "[I] Have not loved you innoncently…. but guiltily and I have done you great wrong and I have ruined my life...". Inspite of this realisation his mind is wavering on many other occasions and he discovers with growing dismay that he loves her.


22 Ship of Fools, p.369.
He lacks the courage of his passion. After letting her go ashore at Santa Cruz without having fulfilled their mutual desire, he is overcome with self-condemnation. He feels that he had done her great harm, by misusing the doctor-patient relationship to his advantage. He had tormented her with guilty love. It gave no real human joy either to him or to her in the real sense of the term. He had let her go without any promise of future help. Of course, this honest self-condemnation gives him a temporary relief.

The ray of hope, in this relationship is Doctor Schumann's belief that there is some chance of redemption and he seriously sets out after it. He sends her a note ashore giving his office address, telephone number and the address of International Red Cross in Vienna. It is this genuine concern for a fellow human being that makes him more lovable than all the other fools in the ship. But he errs when he thinks that by this act he is converting his guilty passion into a blameless charity. His belief that the Condesa was to be watched and guided and saved from her suicidal romantic folly will appear to be a fine sentiment. But his secret decision that his wife need not know about it has an undertone of selfishness in it. John Edward Hardy compares the Doctor to the woman in 'Theft' who steals from herself. Like her in the end he leaves himself nothing. He has lost the Condesa, and he cannot recover the faith in himself and in the value of his religion and his profession by which he lived before he met her. According to Howard Moss Schumann the ship's doctor falling suddenly in love with the drug addicted and
possibly mad Condesa, risks his professional, spiritual and emotional identity. "Every face I saw was the face of some one who no longer regarded me as a human being,"²³ La Condesa used to lament. Dr. Schumann is not like them.

David and Jenny started the voyage under the illusion that they were in real love with each other, but before the voyage was over they realised that their's was not love at all. At best, it was an unsatisfactory man-woman relationship which could bring happiness to neither of them. In the case of the doctor he never thought in the beginning that his feeling to La Condesa was anything more than that of a doctor to a patient. Later, after a self-analysis, he realised the truth, that he was guilty of loving her. The relationship between the doctor and La Condesa also turns out to be very unsatisfactory. In none of the relationships we find in Ship of Fools is there any element of true love. They are all relationships based on sex. Most of the individuals concerned do not utter the word 'love' even to entice the other party concerned. They want or are desirous of the company of the opposite sex only for satisfying their sexual urge.

Herr Siegfried Rieber is a publisher of a ladies' garment trade magazine. Lizzi Spockenkieker is in the ladies' garment business and is from Hanover. After the Cuban contingent's entry into the ship, Miss Porter very suggestively introduces a scene where both Herr Rieber and Lizzi are present. They are playing

²³ Ship of Fools, p.119.
Ping-Pong and when Lizzi loses a game to Rieber, in pretended anger, she tells him, "I am not used to losing at this game". Herr Rieber twinkles with "immense meaning" and asks her "at what game then do you lose?" Lizzi shakes his elbow violently and answers "If you talk like that I shall leave" tossing "her head like an unmanageable mare".24

The expression "with immense meaning" and the animal image "like a mare" denote the perverted sex instinct in them. They are public figures of fun on the ship as they fail even to keep away their amorous advances from public view. Ric and Rac the unmanageable children of Lola after witnessing a love-making scene in progress blackmail them by demanding money not to make it public immediately. Rieber’s interest in Lizzi is not motivated by any true love. He does not want to offer to marry her. She too is not interested in marrying him. She wants to marry wealth. "For permanent settlement, and she had resolved, that her next settlement should be permanent, wedlock, locked and double locked secured with the iron balls of premarital financial contracts.25 They have interest in each other only for reasons other than love. Lust is the binding factor and both are selfish to the very core. He wants sex for a cheap price and she wants more as her share.

24 *Ship of Fools*, p.117.

25 Ibid., p.417.
Herr Rieber is natural enough, but variety of nature that most distinguished him is to be seen reflected in the face not of a man but of a pig. It is as such that he is made to be seen by the reader. The point is that the author of naturalistic novel presents the swinishness of the people as typically human: the author of apologue represents the conduct of humans as typically swinish.²⁶

Johann, who escorts his ailing uncle Herr Graf clearly reveals Miss Porter’s mastery in selecting characters to suit her purpose. As a human being Johann deserves our sympathy but it remains a fact that his connection with Concha is only on a physical plane. Johann has to look after his ailing uncle, Herr Graf, a religious zealot, who he really does not care about much. Johann is denied normal relationship with the outside world, as his uncle is highly demanding and Concha, a young prostitute tries to capitalize the situation. Johann also is ready to please her with money for sexual satisfaction.

The relief he gets from her is at best temporary because it is an affair where there is no deep emotional involvement. After leaving his uncle, Johann races to the deck and sees Concha.

²⁶ Liberman, p.27.
"He did not move, and with his hot, fixed eyes he resembled uncommonly a famished tiger regarding his prey, lips drawn back, teeth paired. Concha has seen this look often and never had been dismayed by it. On the contrary it exhilarated her, lightened for her often her rather dull occupation, to find a young man full of fire and awkward eagerness".  

Miss Porter’s comparing him to the hungry tiger is pertinent. In all similar situations she is fond of using animal imagery. Johann’s hunger is for sex and a professional prostitute like Concha can appreciate well the fire of the young man. Concha’s attitude to him—though she does not agree to share his bed without money, though she instigates him to kill his uncle and become rich himself — on these occasions comes out openly. But uncontrolled passion does not contribute to any lasting relationship.

During a conversation with Roy Newquist in 1965 Miss Porter reminisced:

Today’s youngsters know too much about sex far too early, and it has destroyed something that was rather nice. But when I was a girl, a girl and a boy together at a party didn’t take their minds off each other for one split second, yet all we could do was to look at each other. But oh, what a lot we got from those books. But they have destroyed something that ought to exist in sex. God knows it is an animal instinct; but we are not four-footed creatures, and when it’s debased, we’re destroying something profound in human nature.

27 *Ship of Fools*, p.186.

Apart from this, there is an element of criminality in Johann-Concha relationship. It is worthy to remember that even in the relationship between Rieber and Lizzi, however unrefined and unacceptable it may be, this terrible danger does not lurk. Johann longs to be a man and as he is denied the normal privileges of a healthy young man, the readers are likely to develop some sympathy for him. The fact that he does not fall a victim to the vicious plans of Concha puts him in a better light too. Concha’s appreciation of his masculinity (and it is sincere) is a genuine one flowing from a young woman to a young man. So it is a natural response. But this relationship is most unsatisfactory as sex is combined with a motive of crime. According to M.G.Krishnamurthy, "his uncle’s body disgusts him, and on one level his responses to Concha’s body are normal, but the animal imagery, the previous identification of sex, violence and death and the fact that Concha is tempting Johann to murder his uncle to get money brings sex and criminality together in this case".  

Most of the incidents connected with Denny’s amorous adventures in the novel are narrated in such a way as to bring to focus the undersirability of his attitude to women and sex. Denny is another grotesque in the novel. He is talking to the American divorcée, Mrs. Treadwell about Communists. Suddenly he inspects her as if she were a horse he was thinking of buying. "His gaze ran like a hand to her ears, neck, over her breasts, down her thighs and his mouth was

29 M.G. Krishnamurthy, Katherine Anne Porter : A study, p.161.
bitter as if he did not like what he saw but could not control roving of his eyes".30 His eyes never for a moment rested on her beautiful face. He is a sex crazy drunkard. "Denny’s preoccupation with sex and the comment that" he looked at her as if she were a horse" he was thinking of buying indicates that she resents his ignoring her culture and sophistication and appreciating her strictly in terms of sexual attraction".31

The animal image is used by Miss Porter to indicate that there is only baseness in Denny’s nature. The unresolved tension that exists in both Denny and Mrs Treadwell arises from the absence of genuine human sentiments. Her beating up of Denny for whom she developed an aversion at their very first meeting and the pleasure she feels in beating him are obviously connected with her recognition of something sinister in the depth of her character. Sex and violence are combined in this case also.

Denny is absolutely unscrupulous and tries to instigate David against Jenny for walking in the company of Freytag. "I never mix in any body’s business, understand but if that bitch belongs to me, I would break every bone in her. Not

30 Ship of Fools, p.61.

31 M.G.Krishnamurthy, Katherine Anne Porter : A study, p.194.
that it is any of my business but believe me you’re getting a raw deal." 32 In his line of thinking sex and violence are inseparable.

Denny’s temporary liking for Pastora, a young prostitute in the Zarzuela company is only to avail enjoyment at a very cheap rate. She has extracted more money from him than she deserved. He is determined to punish her for her ingratitude. Fully drunk he by mistake, knocks at the door of Mrs Treadwell’s cabin and she settles her score with him by beating him mercilessly with her shoe.

George Hendrick believes that some autobiographical materials have been utilised in the characterisation of Denny. Hart Crane, the famous American Writer was a close friend of Miss Porter. He was a hopeless drunkard. One day he had abused Miss Porter at her gate and they fell out once and for all. Denny’s temporary liking for Pastora was only out of his craze for sex. All pre-marital and extra-marital relationships are miserable failures in Ship of Fools. This is true of all her stories and short novels also.

Eudora Welty asserts: "Katherine Anne Porter’s deep sense of fairness and justice and ardent conviction that we need to give and address the mind, they draw their eloquence from a passionate heart". 33

32 Ship of Fools, p.21.

There is a general complaint that even about noble passions like love she was always highly skeptical and ironical. If her work wears an air of detachment and contemplation, it is not without reason. She sees things as they are and she does not see an ideal condition or a condition which at least holds a true promise for the future. As she has no illusions and sticks to the truth she does not exhibit much optimism in her treatment of love. At the same time we cannot totally ignore the fact that she has not forgotten to highlight the rays of hope visible in the dark clouds.