

WILLA CATHER

PIONEER MEMORIAL AND EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION
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413 North Webster Street
Red Cloud, Nebraska 68970

Red Cloud Opera House Dedicated



Opera House Dedication

-Clockwise from top left:
Restored Red Cloud
Opera House, Governor
Mike Johanns and Red
Cloud Elementary 4th
Grade Students cutting
the ribbon, Judson
Morhart and Judy
Morhart Hudson, Lucia
Woods Lindley, and the
large crowd at the dedi-
cation ceremony.

—Photos by Mike Offner

Willa Cather loved opera houses, especially the one located at 413 North Webster in Red Cloud, Nebraska. Here Cather found an entrance into a world beyond the small town in which she grew up. On May 3rd, 2003, the Governor of the State of Nebraska and Marcia Thompson's fourth grade students from Red Cloud Elementary School cut the ribbon to dedicate the renovated 1885 Red Cloud Opera House. This formal dedication was an immensely fitting tribute to Willa Cather and a gratifying experience for the estimated two hundred people who witnessed the ceremony.

Music was provided by the Hastings College Brass Choir, conducted by Marc LaChance and Dr. Dan Schmidt. WCPM President Mellanee Kvasnicka remarked to the audience that "the restoration of the Opera House puts into place another piece of the picture that helps us understand Cather's life." Cather scholars Bruce Baker, Ann Romines, and John Swift read a variety of passages from Cather's works.

Ron Hull, long-time member of the WCPM Board of Governors, presided over the ceremony and introduced a number of state and local dignitaries. The restoration of the Opera House, in the words of Governor Mike Johanns, is the beginning of a "beautiful legacy." Judy Morhart Hudson of Santa Rosa, California, and Judson Morhart of Los Alamos, New Mexico, expressed their thanks to everyone who made the re-opening of the Opera House possible and expressed pride in the building itself. Both are children of Frank Morhart, who donated the building to the WCPM in 1991.

Continued on page 2.

In This Issue...

- Willa Cather in Arizona by Paul J. Ferlazzo
- Beginning in the Heart by Laurie Smith Camp
- Christopher Sten on Professor's House and Dutch Paintings
- Cather and William James by Merrill Skaggs
- Bibliography (Part III) by JoAnn Middleton
- Annie Sadilek's grave

Betty Kort Assumes Position as Executive Director

In late March, Betty Kort assumed the position of Executive Director of the Willa Cather Pioneer Memorial and Educational Foundation. Betty has been a member of the WCPM Board of Governors since 1990, having served as president of the organization and as a long-time member of the Executive Board. She has been particularly active in the Renovation and Endowment Campaigns connected to the Red Cloud Opera House.

Betty retired this spring from twenty-five years as a secondary teacher. She was chair of the art department at Hastings Senior High School for several years before moving to the English department where she taught English and creative writing for the remainder of her career. In 1993 she was named Nebraska Teacher of the Year and also became a Disney Award teacher. She was later highlighted for her creative teaching in a video produced by Project Zero at Harvard University in conjunction with the Disney Learning Partnership. The video has been released nationally. She is a past recipient of the NEH Reader's Digest Teacher Scholar Award where she concentrated on Plains literature with an emphasis on the writings of Willa Cather. She was also a participant in an NEH Summer Seminar for Secondary Teachers, concentrating on William Faulkner. Her English classes were named to the list of National English Classrooms of Excellence by the National Council of Teachers of English, and she is a recipient of a Cooper Foundation Award for Excellence in Teaching. A Distinguished Alumni of the University of Nebraska-Kearney, Betty is also a member of the Gold Torch Society, a mentoring organization for senior college women who show exceptional promise.

Language and literature are deeply embedded in Betty's family. Her husband Ron is a high school English teacher and their two daughters both have degrees in English. Ron and Betty have two grandchildren.

OPERA HOUSE DEDICATED (Continued)

As part of the dedication ceremony, Bernadine Wherry of the NebraskaLand Foundation presented the Rising Star Award to the Red Cloud Opera House "in recognition and appreciation of significant efforts to 'make the Good Life Better' and for promoting tourism" in Nebraska.

Special guest Lucia Woods Lindley greeted the audience with warm words of praise for the completion of the Opera House. Lucia provided a generous gift at a critical time during the restoration process. The Opera House Auditorium is named in honor of members of her family. Afternoon and evening performances of *The Bohemian Girl*, which Cather would have witnessed in 1888, were presented in the Auditorium. The lively 2003 performances were produced by Ariel Bybee, artist in resident in the Voice Department of the University of Nebraska School of Music, and Jim Ford, an English professor at UNL.

The Opera House renovation required twelve years of hard work and commitment on the part of the WCPM staff, the Board of Governors, and hundreds of people on the local and national levels who gave of their time and resources to make this dream a reality. The building truly belongs to these contributors. Upon seeing the Auditorium stage for the first time, many guests found it to be a heart-warming, emotional experience. The restored 1885 Red Cloud Opera House has become a remarkable symbol of the dedication and perseverance of those who love Willa Cather and her work.

Scholarly Contributors to this Issue

Paul J. Ferlazzo is Professor of English at Northern Arizona University; he has also taught at Michigan State University, Montana State University, and in Italy, China, and Germany. He is the author of two books on Emily Dickinson and numerous articles on American writers and literary movements.

Jo Ann Middleton gives her third installment of her bibliography of Cather scholarship in 2000-01.

Merrill Maguire Skaggs is the author of *After the World Broke in Two: The Later Novels of Willa Cather* (1990) and the editor of *Willa Cather's New York: New Essays on Cather in the City* (2001). She has written many articles and essays on Willa Cather and edits the Winter Issue of the *Willa Cather Pioneer Memorial Newsletter and Review*.

Christopher Sten is the author of two books on Herman Melville and the editor of a third, *Savage Eye: Melville and the Visual Arts* (1991). He teaches American literature in the English Department at George Washington University and is currently completing a book to be titled *Washington D.C.: The Politics of American Writing*.

2003 CATHER CALENDAR

Past Times and Play Things

Coming in September

Willa Cather Birthday Celebration

December 7th

Evening Prayer Service, Grace Episcopal Church
Birthday Cake Reception Following

On Seeing Blue: Dutch Painting, Depression, & Generativity in *The Professor's House*

Christopher Sten, George Washington University

In a now well-known letter, which was eventually published in the College English Association newsletter for October 1940, Willa Cather said that when she wrote *The Professor's House* she “wished to try two experiments in form.” The first was “the device often used by the early French and Spanish novelists; that of inserting the *Novelle* into the *Roman*,” clearly a reference to her situating “Tom Outland’s Story” in the middle of the narrative of Godfrey St. Peter. The second experiment, which she described as “something a little more vague,” was akin to the musical form of the sonata, with its loosely related movements, but she then went on to explain that this idea was inspired by an art exhibit she had seen at a formative moment in her thinking:

... Just before I began the book I had seen, in Paris, an exhibition of old and modern Dutch paintings. In many of them, the scene presented was a living room warmly furnished, or a kitchen full of food and coppers. But in most of the interiors. . . there was a square window, open, through which one saw the masts of ships or a stretch of gray sea. The feeling of the sea that one got through those square windows was

remarkable and gave me a sense of the fleets of Dutch ships that ply quietly on all the waters of the globe . . .

In my book I tried to make Professor St.

Peter’s home rather overcrowded and stuffy with new things; American proprieties, clothes, furs, petty ambitions, quivering jealousies—until one got rather stifled. Then I wanted to open the square window and let in the fresh air that blew off the Blue Mesa, and the fine disregard of trivialities which was in Tom Outland’s face and in his behaviour. (*Stories, Poems, and Other Writings*, 974,75)

Cather does not specify which artists’ work she saw in Paris.

Polly Duryea, in her useful dissertation on Cather’s appropriation

of the visual arts, was not able to determine what Cather might have seen on her 1920 trip to Europe; and even the indefatigable James Woodress admitted, in an interview with Duryea, that, in twenty-five years of sleuthing, he had not been able to track down the “painting” Cather described in her letter, and thus concluded “she must have invented” it (Duryea 23).

Still, as Duryea points out, Cather “had already seen a multitude of Dutch genre . . . paintings before she wrote the novel” (Duryea 155-56) and, on a basic level, it hardly matters whether she had a particular painting or paintings in mind. There are hundreds of works in this genre—in various media, including prints—by a variety of artists, and they are all organized around much the same principle, presenting a detailed interior of an everyday domestic scene, a close-up of working-or middle-class life, with just a hint of a larger world of nature and commerce beyond a window or door at the painting’s edge. None of them, I believe, shows a closer stylistic approximation to the vivid color and surface simplicity of Cather’s own creations than the luminous interiors of Johannes Vermeer (or perhaps of his contemporary and kindred spirit, Pieter de Hooch, who painted some of the same generic figures). Vermeer’s sharply drawn, earnest figures reflect the same striking, timeless poses Cather spoke of so

admiringly in connection with Antonia Shimerda. And of course Vermeer’s work is as memorable as anything in the history of art; once seen, it sticks, as I believe it must have for Cather, possibly on several occasions during her career. However, more important than the question of whether Cather was inspired in particular by Vermeers is that fact that there were many other artists, before and after Vermeer, who composed similar versions of these figures in oil or watercolors or as engravings. In the comments that follow, I will be emphasizing the parallels between Cather’s principal characters in *The Professor's House* and several well-known portraits by Vermeer, but in each instance Cather might just as well have been operating from her memory of analogues by any of several artists working in the same tradition or genre of these works.



Fig. 1: Vermeer's *The Lacemaker*. — Reprinted by permission of the Louvre, Paris.

ON SEEING BLUE

(Continued)

Of the several Vermeers exhibited or otherwise in circulation early in the last century, we can be reasonably sure Cather saw "The Lace-Maker" (c. 1669-70) [fig. 1] on one or more of her trips to the Louvre, in 1902, 1920, or 1923. It is the one Vermeer owned by the Louvre during the period of Cather's visits to Paris.¹ To my mind, it is the model and inspiration for the curious figure of Augusta, the seamstress who shares St. Peter's garter for a period each year, making dresses for his daughters. Like Augusta, Vermeer's Lace-maker is a practical figure, intensely devoted to her task

and adept at it. But unlike the earlier lace-makers of Pieter Codde (c. 1635, oil on panel), Nicolaes Maes (1655, oil on panel), or Casper Netscher (1664, oil),

Vermeer's version is at the same time a figure of intense spirituality, as suggested by the golden sunshine that fills the room and is reflected off her bodice and forehead. In the warm

presence of this light, we see the painting's principal clue to the sense of purpose that guides the lace-maker and inspires her to apply herself with such devotion. It may not be that she works for the greater glory of God, as the pious Augusta can be said to do. (It is Augusta who explains to St. Peter the meaning of the *Magnificat*, the hymn of the Virgin Mary which begins, "My soul doth magnify the Lord," a statement which informs Augusta's whole character (83). But the intense presence of light in Vermeer's painting suggests that the Lace-maker works with a sense of connectedness to the community outside her room, and that her life is given meaning by this connection, as Augusta's is given meaning by her on-going connection to the families who employ her.

Whether Cather saw other Vermeers, it is hard to say. At the very least, as an avid museum-goer in Europe and the U.S., she must have seen parallel examples, by other artists, of some of the genre pieces Vermeer is known for. Several other key figures in *The Professor's House* bear haunting, uncanny resemblances to well-known Vermeers or to lesser-known analogues she is likely to have seen in Europe, or in New York or Pittsburgh: notably, St. Peter, who seems to me informed by, if not modeled after, Vermeer's "The Geographer" (1668-69); Tom Outland, who bears a strong resemblance to Vermeer's "The Astronomer" (1668), or to similar figures, themselves modeled after Vermeer, by Abraham Delfos (1794, a watercolor) and Louis Garreau (1792, an engraving); and Lillian, who evinces rather striking similarities to Vermeer's "Woman Holding a Balance" (c. 1664) or to similar genre figures by Gabriel Metsu ("The



Fig 2: Vermeer's *The Geographer*. —Reprinted by permission of Städtischen Kunstinstitut, Frankfurt/Main.

Goldweiger," c. before 1660, oil on panel) or Pieter de Hooch ("A Woman Weighing Gold," c. 1664, oil).

Like St. Peter, Vermeer's "The Geographer" [fig. 2] is an intensely scholarly figure, whose life is devoted to intellectual inquiry.² Surrounded by maps and charts, books and a globe, the geographer has a look of deep thought on his face, his left hand resting on a book and his right holding dividers, an instrument for making precise measurements. As a professional type, geographers flourished in the seventeenth century because it was an age of world exploration and discovery, an age, incidentally, in which the Dutch were major players. These geographers themselves were often explorers, or accompanied explorers, collecting information that could be used by later adventurers and the map makers who assisted with their travels.

Godfrey St. Peter is not a geographer, but he is a scholar, and as the author of a prize-winning, eight-volume study, *Spanish Adventurers in North America*, he is an ambitious historian of the men—explorers, traders, surveyors—who supplied the information used by the early geographers in their work. Though he looks to the past, unlike Vermeer's forward-looking geographer, St. Peter is otherwise in an analogous position: He labors in his study at his scholarly task, collecting information about the world outside and shaping it into intelligible, sense-making patterns. Like Vermeer's closeted figure he dreams of the world beyond, but at best he can experience it only second hand. We



Fig. 3: Vermeer's *The Astronomer*. —Reprinted by permission of the Louvre, Paris.

are told that "[w]hen St. Peter first began his work, he realized that his great drawback was the lack of early association, the fact that he had not spent his youth in the great dazzling Southwest country which was the scene of his explorers' adventures" (234). Though he tried to compensate for this lack by spending "two summers in the South-west on the trail of his adventurers, [and] another in

Old Mexico" (16), the experience came too late in life to be valuable.

Tom Outland, on the other hand, seems to be modeled after Vermeer's "The Astronomer" [fig. 3], or possibly that of one of Vermeer's followers. This figure, too, is a scholar, and like the Geographer, he works in a room with the accoutrements typical of his trade—a table and books, a globe of the heavens, a chart. But the object of his study is a separate and distant realm—celestial rather than terrestrial. Tom's pivotal experience is what happens to him up on the mesa, exploring the cliff dwellings and learning about his "ancestors" (219). However, it is what he does after his "defeat" there (155), after his break with Roddy Blake, that reveals "most about who he is and what he has become under the influence of Blue Mesa. Importantly, Tom comes to associate himself with the blue of the heavens and the energy of the sun, high in the mountains of the mesa. When it comes to

trying to interpret the lives of the Cliff Dwellers, it is the tower that most intrigues him, a construction that, as Father Duchene explains, was probably “used for astronomical observations.” Far from being strictly other-worldly, however, these early people seem to have been bent on using their knowledge to develop the “arts of peace” in the everyday world they inhabited (197). When Tom later makes his way to Hamilton to find the Professor, the implication is that he, too, wants to make “astronomical observations” yet learn to serve the arts of peace. This seems confirmed, obliquely, when he sets out to develop his aviation inventions.

What makes Vermeer’s “Geographer” and “Astronomer” especially intriguing as possible sources for Cather’s two central characters is that they were almost certainly created, not as discrete works, but as companion pieces. According to Arthur Wheelock, Jr., and Ben Broos, who composed the catalogue for the comprehensive 1995 Vermeer exhibition at the National Gallery, the two were sold at auction as pendants several times and otherwise “paired during most of the eighteenth century.” And as companion pieces, Wheelock and Broos explain, they were apparently intended to comment on one another:

It seems likely. . . that the pendant relationship is more complex than the mere depiction of related scientific disciplines. Studies of the heavens and the earth represent two realms of human thought that have quite different theological implications, the former concerned with the realm of the spirit and the latter with God’s plan for man’s passage through life. The charts and cartographic instruments in these paintings, thus, may have allegorical meaning as well as scientific application. While the astronomer, reaching for a celestial globe, allegorically searches for spiritual guidance, the geographer looks forward into the light, dividers in hand, with assurance that he has been given the tools to chart the proper course of his life. (172)

While Cather, who lived in more skeptical times than Vermeer, seems less assured that St. Peter, her example of the worldly scholar, has found the tools to chart his proper course in life, I think it is fair to say that Tom and the Professor stand for something very similar to the meanings embodied in these two Vermeers—the spiritual quester and the man of the world respectively—and that, as such, they continually complement and comment on one another. Seeming to confirm these allegorical readings of her central characters, Cather gives further definition to each of them by what he lacks, making each one long for the defining quality found in the other. Where Tom, in his bachelorhood, yearns for the love and domesticity, the everydayness of the family life he witnesses in the St. Peters’ home (106-07), Godfrey, despite his love for his family, yearns for a return to the freedom of his prelapsarian youth, when he could follow his dream without the competing urgencies of his own sexuality and the consequent need to hold a job or assume the duties of a husband and father.

In *The Professor’s House*, then, the representatives of these two realms—the earthly and the spiritual—are made to parallel the indoors and outdoors of Dutch painting. This split, in turn, in Cather’s hands, is given further definition by two sets of thematics centering on the color blue—indeed, by two kinds of blue. In *The Professor’s House*, one thematic centers on blue **feeling**, a

melancholy that comes from loss, frustration, or compromise, a loss of energy or a decline in life’s prospects as a result of error or circumstance, or as one’s life becomes circumscribed by work, duty, and age. The other, competing thematic centers on blue **seeing**. This latter is the product of serenity, of creative energy and emotional well-being, of sensual ripeness and youth, and is typically prompted by a natural connection to blue water, blue sky, and the out-of-doors, such as Cather herself reported feeling, quite unexpectedly, on a sidetrip she made in 1902 to the little fishing village of Lavandou, in the south of France.³

Almost every one of Cather’s characters experiences some form of depression or has a bout with the first kind of “blue” at one time or another. Godfrey St. Peter is the defining example, as we see from the very beginning, even in the small ways of his irritableness and fussiness and his resistance to moving to the new house he and his wife have built for themselves. An aging professor with a big lifetime project at last behind him, he suddenly finds his energies depleted and his sense of purpose gone flat. On the domestic side, moreover, his life has passed him by; his daughters are both married and have left the nest, while his wife now shops and preens, and flirts with their young sons-in-law. Events pile up, causing St. Peter more and more angst and disappointment, leading to a crisis of the soul that carries him to the brink of suicide. His daughters quarrel over money and Rosamond’s spendy ways. His colleague, Dr. Crane—sick and desperately needy—blames him for failing to look out for his interest in Tom’s estate, leading St. Peter at one point to feel that “everything around him, seemed insupportable, as the boat on which he is imprisoned seems to a sea-sick man” (131). After an “orgy of acquisition” in Chicago with his older daughter (135), he returns home exhausted and ready to withdraw from the world, like Euripides into his cave. When his wife chastizes him for growing “lonely and inhuman,” and adopting the “pose” of an old man, he responds that it is not just a matter of the “calendar.” “It’s the feeling that I’ve put a great deal behind me, where I can’t go back to it again,” meaning his book and the raising of their young daughters (141-42). He does not wish to go back, he says; and clearly he lacks the “desire” to move ahead (19). He lacks generativity. Having lost the capacity to *see* blue, with its promise of infinitude and future fulfillment, he *feels* blue.

Other characters, too—confined by circumstance, forced into petty compromises—experience depression. And while their dejection may not prove as serious as St. Peter’s, their examples help to inform Cather’s theory of generativity. Scott McGregor, Kathleen’s husband, is a young man with “a usual sort of mind” but a powerful desire to succeed and an earnest determination to be a good provider for his wife, whatever the cost to himself (53). Indeed, St. Peter sees in him a younger version of himself in that Scott, too, has had to compromise and perform a kind of work (writing a “good-cheer article” for a daily newspaper) that is a waste of “his life and his talents,” with the result that he experienced “seasons of desperate unhappiness” (59).

Lillian, Godfrey’s wife, also knows depression, has known it for years, a fact she finally reveals one night at the opera when, during an interlude, her voice suddenly shows deep emotion. “[I]t wasn’t the children who came between us,” she corrects St. Peter, when he starts to reminisce about how close they used to be as young lovers, and “there was something lonely and forgiving in her voice, something that spoke of an old wound, healed and hardened and hopeless.” Although she does not say what caused the wound, it is clear from the context it was her hus-

ON SEEING BLUE

(Continued)

band's work, his "writing histories" (78), and then, more recently, his relationship with Tom Outland, particularly when he began to invite Tom into his study to talk over his work, as he used to do with her.

Tom, too, becomes depressed, first when he ventures to that land of Oz known as Washington City and finds that no one there will help him to recover his findings at Mesa Verde or preserve them as a national treasure. When he does not get anywhere with the Washington bureaucracy, we are told that his letters back home to Roddy Blake became "pretty blue" (213). More than anything, Tom says, it used to "depress me to see all the hundreds of clerks come pouring out of that big [War Department] building at sunset in Washington" (209), people whose lives he imagines to be as dull and desperate as his young landlord's. And in the end, Tom becomes more seriously depressed, when he realizes how badly he has treated Roddy Blake, and Blake runs off, never to be heard from again.

Several of Cather's characters, mostly males, are allied with the other kind of blue as well—the blue of the imagination, the same blue hinted at outside the open windows of those early Dutch interiors. Dreamers and schemers, entrepreneurs and inventors, they imagine bringing into being something new, or linking their lives with something larger than themselves, something transcendent. To be sure, there is the young St. Peter who loved his study in the old house outside Chicago because it afforded a view of Lake Michigan—a "long, blue hazy smear" where he could refresh himself, simply by looking up and gazing at it off in the distance, or venturing there in person for an occasional sail or swim. For him, it was a constant source of inspiration, a well of desire, like youth itself. Its power derived from the fact that it returned St. Peter to his youth, to the primitive boy he left behind when he fell in love with Lillian. "When he remembered his childhood, he remembered blue water. . . . [T]he great fact in life, the always possible escape from dullness, was the lake. . . . [I]t was like an open door that nobody could shut. . . . You had only to look at the lake, and you knew you would soon be free" (20).

One evidence of the power of this mood-making color can be seen in the story we are told about the origin of St. Peter's book, the multi-volume study of *The Spanish Explorers*, when the entire design "unfolded in the air" above the young St. Peter while he sailed off the south coast of Spain, with the gleaming, snow-capped Sierra Nevadas in the distance (89). Another and even more important evidence can be seen in the profound effect Tom's sudden appearance had on the aging professor: it was positively regenerating, creating "a kind of second youth" for him (234). As he tells Kitty, Tom was "[a]lways very different from the other college boys. . . . Always had something in his voice, in his [blue!] eyes. . . . One seemed to catch glimpses of an unusual background behind his shoulders when he came into the room"—as big and confident as all out doors (112).

In line with the schema of the paintings of Dutch interiors, Tom Outland is the outside world—the world of nature and health, action and work—brought near, brought inside, for St. Peter and his family. But Tom is not simply associated with the blue of the natural world; he is capable of "seeing blue," of being inspired by it, and of remaining true to its inspiration. This

seems the larger point of the middle section of the novel, the "turquoise set in silver," where we learn of the young orphan's unexpected discovery of Blue Mesa and of his growing attachment to, indeed "reverence for," what Father Duchene calls this "sacred spot" (199). When Tom makes his way back to the mesa after his disheartening trip to Washington, he feels he has come "home":

Once again I had that glorious feeling—that I've never had anywhere else, the feeling of being *on the mesa*, in a world above the world. And the air, my God, what air!—Soft, tingling, gold, hot with an edge of chill on it, full of the smell of pinons—it was like breathing the sun, breathing the colour of the sky. (217)

Even after he discovers how Roddy has betrayed him, and Tom, in turn, has treated him shabbily and driven Roddy away, he says he comes to appreciate the mesa as never before, seeing it for the first time "whole." During those final days on the mesa he seems to be conversing directly with the gods and absorbing their energy in huge waves. "Something had happened in me that made it possible for me to **co-ordinate and simplify**, and that process, going on in my mind, brought with it great happiness. . . . For me the mesa was no longer an adventure, but a religious emotion" (226-27; emphasis mine).

A young man of preternatural talents, a "brilliant . . . scientist and inventor," who "discovered the principle of the Outland vacuum, [and] worked out the construction of the Outland engine" that revolutionized aviation on the eve of the First World War (30), Tom stumbles upon the kind of imaginative power St. Peter had known in his youth. However, unlike St. Peter, Tom manages to maintain it for the rest of his life, truncated as it is. Never knowing romantic love at an early age, never having to work to support a wife and family, he has never had to compromise his dream, or been deflected from his original path, once it became apparent at Blue Mesa what it was. He could remain an idealist, a romantic, a "primitive," at least until he is cut off by death, fighting in Flanders, a fact St. Peter underscores when he wonders "what would have happened to [Tom], once the trap of worldly success had been sprung on him. He couldn't see Tom building 'Outland,' or becoming a public-spirited citizen of Hamilton. What change would have come in his blue eye, in his fine long hand with the backspringing thumb, which had never handled things that were not the symbols of ideas?" (236).

This last line should be amended to read: the "fine long hand . . . which had never handled things **well** that were not the symbols of ideas," for it is to be noted that Tom is **not** a practical genius. His lab technique, we learn from Dr. Crane, was dreadful. "He would fail repeatedly in some perfectly sound experiment because of careless procedure" and impatience (126), and it would always require Crane's intervention to set it right. As becomes clear here, and in the example of Louie Marsellus as well, practical aptitude, practical genius is at least half the battle of life, half of what is required for success in any enterprise. There must be a revolutionary idea—Tom's idea for a new engine, a new "gas"—but there must also be the practical ability to develop it in the laboratory and marketplace—Crane's kind of ability: dextrous and painstaking; and Marsellus' kind: energetic, enterprising, and bold.

Indeed, for Cather, there would seem to be two sides of consciousness, something like what we have come to know as the

right and the left sides of the brain, a theory made popular in recent years by Betty Edwards' *Drawing on the Right Side of the Brain* (1979). According to this schema, the right side—the “dreamer” side—is productive of creative, spontaneous, symbolic, theoretical, non-linear thinking, while the left—the “practical” side—is responsible for thinking that is rational, concrete, and linear. Not surprisingly, these two sides parallel, even as they are imaged in, the “split” between the interior and exterior worlds of Dutch painting.

In *Tom and the Professor*, Cather seems to argue that the split within the self is finally tragic, that one side will always so dominate that it is impossible to bridge the gap or find a satisfying “balance” between the two. There is, however, one figure in Cather's narrative who clearly represents balance, and that is Godfrey's wife. Lillian is a quiet figure, and not always sympathetically drawn. When we think of her, we think of her as too avidly spending money and acting younger than her years (just the opposite of St. Peter), dressing up for her attractive sons-in-law and all but competing with her daughters for their affections. St. Peter himself refers to this tendency of Lillian's, rather coolly, as her “worldliness,” her “willingness to get the most out of occasions and people,” and notes it was something that “had developed so strongly in Lillian in the last few years.” But he also says it has always been a defining characteristic of hers, and that “as long as it resulted in mere fastidiousness, was not a means to an end, St. Peter had liked it. . . . He knew it was due to this worldliness . . . that she and his daughters had never been drab and a little pathetic, like some of the [other] faculty women” (140). Now, however, with the help of Louie's new wealth, Lillian has gone to an extreme—or so it seems from St. Peter's point of view, which is itself an extreme: he has become world-weary, jaded, abstemious. Earlier, in a quiet moment when they talk during the stage production of *Mignon*, St. Peter tells of his secret wish that they had been permanently, “picturesquely shipwrecked together when we were young”; and when Lillian enthusiastically agrees, he replies “in astonishment,” ““You? But you're so occupied with the future, you adapt yourself so readily.”” To this she responds simply, ““One must go on living, Godfrey””(78). Such is the principle of balance in action: one must go on living.

Despite Cather's claim about the importance of Dutch interior painting to the overall conception of *The Professor's House*, it is worth noting that Cather has incorporated just one moment in the novel that is the literary equivalent of such a painting. Chapter 6 begins with St. Peter coming home on a bright October afternoon and pausing outside the open French window of his house “to admire the scene within”:

In a corner, beside the steaming brass tea-kettle, sat Lillian and Louie, a little lacquer table between them, bending, it seemed, over a casket of jewels. Lillian held up lovingly in her fingers a green-gold necklace, evidently an old one, without stones. “Of course emeralds

would be beautiful, Louie, [she said, in a line which suggests how constant is her effort to strike a **balance**] but they seem a little out of **scale**—to belong to a different scheme of life than any you and Rosamond can live here.” (61-62; emphasis mine)

One of the most famous of Vermeer's paintings is “Woman Holding a Balance” [fig. 4], a work Cather might have seen when it was exhibited in New York in 1912. Although Lillian does not herself literally hold a balance here, it is a scene conceptually similar to the one in Vermeer's painting (and in comparable paintings by de Hooch and Metsu). She, in an intimate tete-a-tete with her rich son-in-law, is engaged in an act of “weighing,” the degree of ostentation signaled by the different jewels Rosamond might wear in a certain social setting. As in Vermeer's painting, which contains a replica of a painting of *The Last Judgment* in the background, jewels are at the center of this scene; yet they are meant to represent much more. Like the woman in the painting, Lillian must make a judgment; she must mediate, for the young couple, what is culturally appropriate regarding the display of their new affluence, and the expression of their excitement about their sudden good fortune. Like

Vermeer's woman, she acts on, indeed she embodies, the principle of judgment, of balance.

For Cather herself the effort to maintain such balance was a lifelong struggle, and involved the effort to transform Nature, the world outside, into Art, the world inside. She defines this dual process in the scene just mentioned, as St. Peter stops to study the view through the open window, here from the outside looking in:

The drawing-room was full of autumn flowers, dahlias and wild asters and goldenrod. The red-gold sunlight lay in bright puddles on the thick blue carpet, made hazy aureoles about the stuffed blue chairs. There was, in the room, as he looked through the window, a rich, intense effect of autumn, something that presented October much more sharply

and sweetly to him than the coloured maples and the aster-bordered paths by which he had come home. It struck him that the seasons sometimes gain by being brought into the house, just as they gain by being brought into painting, and into poetry. The hand, fastidious and bold, which selected and placed—it was that which made the difference. In Nature there is no selection. (61)

I believe here we find as clear a formulation of Cather's view of art and the artist as she ever made, one that captures the endless interaction between the outside and the inside worlds, and the inspiration and selection or intelligence—the judgement—that are their human equivalents. So, too, it captures the two sides of the self, the dreamer, “bold,” who sees blue, and the maker, “fastidious,” who labors to transform the dreamer's vision into something sturdy and fine.



Fig. 4: Vermeer's *Woman Holding a Balance*. — Reprinted with permission of The National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.

ON SEEING BLUE

(Continued)

Notes

²Two other possible sources are "La dentelliere," an etching and dry point after Vermeer's "Lace-Maker," by Achille Gilbert, which appeared in the 1883 edition of *La Gazette des beaux-arts*, and "La dentelliere," an etching after Vermeer's "Lace-Maker," by the Parisian artist, Charles-Bernard de Billy, which circulated in the 1884 edition of *L'art*. See Sanchez and Seydoux, *Les estampes de la Gazette des beaux-arts (1859-1933)*, 102, and Sanchez and Seydoux, *Les Estampes de L'Art (1875-1907)*, 121.

²There are also at least two etchings of the figure of the geographer—"d'apres J. Vermeer"—which Cather might have seen, since they circulated relatively widely, particularly in France: both are titled "Le Geographe" and both are by Ferdinand Leenhoff, the first appearing in the 1893 edition and the second in the 1905 edition of *L'art*. See *Les estampes de L'art (1875-1907)*, 152 and 169.

³"Out of every wandering in which people and places come and go in long successions, there is always one place remembered above the rest because the external or internal conditions were such that they most nearly produced happiness. I am sure that for me that one place will always be Lavandou. Nothing else in England or France has given anything like this sense of immeasurable possession

and immeasurable content. I am sure I do not know why a wretched little fishing village, with nothing but green pines and blue sea and a sky of porcelain, should mean more than a dozen places that I have wanted to see all my life. No books have ever been written about Lavandou, no music or pictures ever came from here, but I know well enough that I shall yearn for it long after I have forgotten London and Paris. One cannot divine nor forecast the conditions that will make happiness; one only stumbles upon them by chance, in a lucky hour, at the world's end somewhere, and holds fast to the days, as to fortune or fame" (*Willa Cather in Europe* 157-58).

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A Message from the President

One of my gratifying responsibilities as a teacher is the selection and preparation of the commencement speaker. Students at my school still see high school graduation as an important milestone in life's journey. The need for education has evolved to such a level that in many places and to many students high school commencement has become the expected, almost a cliché.

Over the years, I have listened to dozens of speeches. Almost all of those fall into two categories. Students either write tributes to high school years, including "remember-when" kinds of comments, or they design a speech using some meaningful metaphor. In recent years, Shakespeare, Harry Potter, and the Beatles have helped students fashion come kind of connection between high school and what lies ahead. They have compared their high school experiences to voyages, complete with smooth seas and dark storms. They have used friendship, loyalty, curiosity, and hope to focus their thoughts about the future. This year's speaker used the bonsai tree as her metaphor, suggesting that the bonsai, shaped and trimmed by its owner, has the capacity to soar beyond the confines of the pot in which it is planted. Like graduating seniors, shaped by friends and teachers, the bonsai possesses deep and sturdy roots and has the capacity to soar to great heights.

As the Red Cloud Opera House enjoyed its grand re-opening, I kept thinking of all these young people—and of one young woman especially. I could almost see the sixteen-year old Cather, standing on that stage, full of high ideals expressed in astonishing language. Cather's speech, called "Superstition vs. Investigation," argued for the right of science to investigate. Her speech was about the past and present, ignorance and education, despair and hope. And her speech was full of metaphor, beginning with her central statement: "All human history is a record of emigration, an exodus from barbarism to

civilization . . ." There were two others who graduated in her class. Both young men gave speeches as well, and the Red Cloud *Chief* predicted great success for the two young men. The newspaper expressed its "great surprise" for Cather's logic.

Even then, I think, Cather understood in some unspoken way the power of language. As a gifted writer, Cather would produce novels which enable all of us to see ourselves in her characters and to recognize our connections to the world. She found those universal metaphors, those prototypes of humanity which help us through the darkest times in our lives and convince that we are indeed all on that great and exciting journey. And that's why I so enjoy working with young people and their commencement speeches. They are, above all else, hopeful. The speeches always suggest their belief in possibility. Cather's work often does the same. Like the bonsai, Cather was shaped by her experiences with family, friends, and teachers. But she also took from all of those experiences the ability to go beyond. Her roots were deep, but Cather, like my student speakers—like all of us, I hope—saw life as full of what is possible, saw herself able to soar beyond the confines of what others expected, beyond the confines of her small town experience, to choose her own path.

I often find myself admonishing my student speakers to avoid clichés when they prepare their speeches. But then I remind myself that, for them, these ideas are not tired and trite. They are simply comparisons which express great truths. Cather reminds us that great truths and the old clichés are separated only by the skill of the writer. And in Cather's hands, even at age sixteen, that skill is achingly clear.

Mellanee Kvasnicka
President, WCPM

Willa Cather in Arizona

Paul J. Ferlazzo, Northern Arizona University

On Friday, April 19, 1912, Willa Cather stepped off the train in Winslow, Arizona, to visit her brother, Douglass, an employee of the Santa Fe Railroad. She was in her thirty-eighth year and unmarried, having turned down two proposals of marriage, one from a young doctor and one from a high school English teacher. Recently recovered from an extended illness, she was now enjoying good health and looked forward to vacationing with her brother.¹

She visited Arizona for many of the same reasons that millions of others have journeyed there—for rest, recreation, and revitalization. In Willa Cather's case a visit to a favored family member in Arizona allowed her an escape from the journalist's world of excessive work and high pressure. She came to see the sights—the desert, the canyons, the mountains and the forests. These sightseeing trips were as challenging as they were refreshing for she hiked and camped part of the time. Her visits with her brother's working class friends were as educational and stimulating for her as her visits to the Mexican community in Winslow, and her explorations of the ancient Native American culture of northern Arizona.

She left Arizona ready to embark fully upon the life of a creative writer. Up to this point her creative writing had been secondary to her editorial and journalistic work. From this point onward what lay ahead for her would be thirty-five years of artistic literary practice and reward—twelve novels, sixty-two short stories, numerous essays, critical statements, awards, medals, honorary degrees, and a Pulitzer Prize.

Although every biographer of Willa Cather agrees that her 1912 trip to Arizona had a transforming effect upon her, a complete study of her journey has never been done. It is the aim of this paper to help the reader see that portion of 1912 Arizona that Willa Cather saw and to suggest collateral connections to her writing. Although the major physical features of northern Arizona remain largely the same, those cultural, archeological, and environmental aspects which are different for the contemporary visitor will be pointed out. Reconstructing her outward journey may help the reader recreate Cather's inner journey from journalist to artist.²

1.

Although she loved the desert surrounding Winslow, the town itself Cather found unappealing.³ Like many other western towns, it grew up around the railroad station with small, "cracker box" style workers' houses hugging the tracks. The railroad, known as the Atlantic and Pacific, later the Santa Fe Railroad, got to Winslow in 1881 following a wagon road marked through

northern Arizona by Lieutenant Edward F. Beale. Using camels for transport in 1857, Beale had established a wagon road through Arizona along the 35th parallel. This same Beale Road would eventually become part of the famed automobile highway from Chicago to Los Angeles known as Route 66.⁴

Winslow was formally established in 1882 and named after General Edward Winslow, an executive with the railroad.⁵ Population figures at this time were unstable for this part of the country, but for 1910 the census for the entire county that surrounds Winslow, an area of approximately 10,000 square miles, was 11,500 persons. Another indication of the population for Winslow and the surrounding region is *The Winslow Mail* which boasted in 1912 a weekly readership of 5,000.

As is common in the spring, the season of Cather's visit, the winds blow steadily throughout northern Arizona, and the red

dust storms she complained of in a letter to Elizabeth Sergeant would be genuine terrors in a town without paved roads or walkways. The chief hotels in Winslow at the time along Front Street were the Hotel Wigwam, the Navajo and the Palace. Cather wrote about a good hotel in Winslow where train passengers took their meals. Early biographers mistakenly thought that the hotel Cather referred to was Fred Harvey's elegant and well-known La Posada Hotel. However, La Posada designed by Mary Jane Colter in the "hacienda style" was not built until 1930, long after Cather's

visit in 1912. The likeliest candidate for the hotel Cather refers to is the Palace Hotel. The Palace was the only hotel in town to boast of a recent remodeling which included hot and cold water in every room and electric lights throughout.

Having lived in the major eastern cities of Pittsburgh and New York for over a decade, the cultural life of Winslow would have seemed nonexistent to Cather. But Winslow had, like many western towns, what is called an Opera House built in 1899. During Cather's six-week visit there was a performance of classical music at the Winslow Opera House by Haroldi, billed as "the world's greatest violinist" from Poland, in company with the Bohemian pianist, Rudolph Polak. The week preceding Haroldi, Rex Beach's *The Barrier*, a play set in Alaska, "direct from its long run at the New Amsterdam Theatre, New York City," played at the Opera House. Cather, of course, was familiar with Beach's short stories having published several in *McClure's Magazine*. Other activities advertised for the Opera House around the same time included a performance of the Shubert Symphony Orchestra, a show by a troupe of Scotch Jugglers known as the Littlejohns, a concert by Professor A.M. Gilbert—the "Greatest Trick Violinist on the American Stage," and the annual ball hosted by the Ladies of the Maccabees of the



Winslow Street Scene, c. 1921 —Courtesy of Northern Arizona University (Photo #NAU.PH.658.704)

CATHER IN ARIZONA

(Continued)

World. While there is no way to comment upon the quality of this entertainment, it is clear that the Opera House excelled in offering a diversity of programs.

Winslow also had two motion picture theaters, The Pastime and The Electric. The Pastime advertised new pictures every night with a dance after the show on Wednesdays. The Electric advertised three pictures every night and a program of illustrated songs. Whether Cather saw any of these motion pictures, or went to any of the performances at the Opera House, we do not know.

Through her brother Willa Cather made the acquaintance of the local Catholic priest, Father Connolly, and records the opportunity she had of traveling with him on one occasion to his Indian missions. St. Joseph's Catholic Church was established in Winslow in 1891, but due to the shortage of priests available to serve such a widely scattered population as that found in northern Arizona at the time, Fr. Connolly had to travel regularly to conduct services for small Catholic communities outside of Winslow. The *Daily Mail* regularly published announcements regarding those Sundays when Fr. Connolly would be traveling and therefore unavailable for Sunday services in Winslow. It seems that Willa Cather accompanied Fr. Connolly on one of these excursions and witnessed his missionary services with the Native Americans. It is evident that later when she came to write *Death Comes for the Archbishop* she drew in part upon this early experience with Fr. Connolly to describe the story of Father Vaillant and Father Latour among the missions of New Mexico.

2.

In mid-May Willa Cather traveled alone to the Grand Canyon and arrived on Thursday May 16. She stayed for six or seven nights at the Bright Angel Camp with plans to meet her brother in Flagstaff the following week to explore Indian ruins outside of Flagstaff.⁶

The principal method for traveling to the Grand Canyon from Winslow in 1912 was by steam train. Cather would have boarded the Santa Fe Railroad at Winslow for the Grand Canyon via the town of Williams, Arizona. The daily run between Williams and the Grand Canyon took three hours, cost \$3.95, and traveled through Arizona's relatively flat and open plains country. Train service between Williams and the Grand Canyon began on September 17, 1901, and its popularity earned the town of Williams the title, "Gateway to the Grand Canyon."

The Grand Canyon is a gorge of immense proportions with subsidiary canyons and ravines cut into the high Kaibab Plateau of northern Arizona by a combination of erosion and the uplift of the earth. The first European visitors to the Grand Canyon were members of Coronado's expedition who arrived in 1540 under the leadership of Garcia Lopez de Cardenas. Led by Hopi Indians, they were searching for the mythical seven golden cities of Cibola. Spanish missionaries followed in 1776, and American fur traders and prospectors a half-century later. John Wesley Powell, a one-armed Civil War veteran, led a scientific expedition down the Colorado River by boat in 1869 and was the first to fully document his explorations. He led nine men in four boats and covered more than 1,000 miles of the river in 98 days. After a second journey in 1871 he published an illustrated report,

The Exploration of the Colorado River of the West, which did much to stimulate interest in the Grand Canyon. By the 1880's tourists began to arrive. Theodore Roosevelt visited the Canyon in 1903, and in 1906 established the Grand Canyon Game Reserve for protection of wildlife, and in 1908 established the Grand Canyon National Monument. However, the establishment of a National Park did not occur until 1919 under President Wilson.

Willa Cather stayed at the Bright Angel Camp, a collection of rustic cabins and tents nestled close to the Canyon's rim. The Camp was begun by J. Wilbur Thurber in 1896 to accommodate those early tourists who arrived on the stagecoach service he started out of Flagstaff. The Camp remained until 1935 when The Bright Angel Lodge designed by Mary Jane Colter was built on the site of the Camp. Several of the original nineteenth century cabins of the Camp have survived, and one in particular is named The Buckey O'Neill Cabin for the man who originally built it in the 1890's. William Owen O'Neill, known as Buckey because he was always "bucking the odds" in card games, came to the Grand Canyon from Missouri as a copper prospector in 1879. Unable to make a profit because of the cost of shipping the ore, he eventually sold his land to the Santa Fe and Grand Canyon Railway. He moved on to become the sheriff of Prescott, Arizona, and later one of Theodore Roosevelt's Rough Riders who died on San Juan Hill.

The other principal buildings very near the Bright Angel Camp at the time of Cather's visit include The Kolb Studio, El Tovar Hotel, Hopi House, and Verkamp's Curios.

The brothers Ellsworth and Emery Kolb built the Kolb Studio at the head of Bright Angel Trail in 1904 to photograph mule riders descending into the Canyon along the Bright Angel Trail. In the course of their business they took over 1.5 million photographs to sell to tourists as remembrances of their visit. Every day beginning in 1915 they showed a motion picture they had made in 1911 of scenes of the Grand Canyon and the Colorado River. In 1917 they began a program of hosting Wednesday night dances and showing Hollywood motion pictures on Saturday nights.

The Santa Fe Railway commissioned the construction of El Tovar Hotel in 1902. Designed on a grand scale by Charles Whittlesey with the intention of complementing the physical appearance of the natural surroundings, it opened its doors on January 14, 1905. It is named in honor of Pedro de Tovar of the Coronado expedition and is constructed of native stone and Oregon pine poles and panels in imitation of a cross between a Swiss chalet and a European hunting lodge. Furnished with Stickley Brothers furniture made of oak and leather, the Hotel's restaurant features fine china, crystal and spotless linen. In Cather's time it was staffed by the Harvey Girls—young unmarried women who lived and worked for the Fred Harvey Company under strict personal supervision. Harvey Girls dressed meticulously in black with white aprons and collars and followed very specific routines of behavior and manners for addressing and serving guests. Food was brought in daily on the train, but the Hotel had its own dairy herd for cheese and fresh milk, and its own greenhouse for fresh flowers. Large picture windows in the dining room overlooked the Canyon, and a coal-fired generator powered electric lights. The Hotel featured several public areas—art and music rooms, ladies lounging room, a clubroom, a solarium, a grotto, and a roof garden.

As an outlet for selling southwest Indian arts and crafts,

Hopi House is a romantic reconstruction of the Hopi Pueblo buildings found in Old Oraibi on Third Mesa in northwestern Arizona. Hopi House was designed by Mary Jane Colter for the Fred Harvey Company and built by Hopi Indians using native materials. Completed on January 1, 1905, Hopi House is a multi-story building of stone and adobe masonry with inside ceilings thatched with layers of saplings and timbers. Located just yards away from El Tovar, it was built to include a Hopi ceremonial altar, a sand painting and a Totem Room to acquaint the public with Native beliefs and rituals.

In 1898 John G. Verkamp set up a tent along the rim and was the first to sell curios and Indian arts and crafts to sightseers for the Babbitt Brothers' Trading Company. In 1906 he constructed Verkamp's Curios, a wood-shingled "modified mission" style two-story home and business a short walk east of Hopi House.

Despite the fact that Cather described the Grand Canyon as devoid of commercial development, in fact there was considerable commercial activity on behalf of tourism along the rim in what became known as Grand Canyon Village. There were the four major buildings described above besides the Bright Angel Camp all clustered within a short walking distance of each other. These establishments were in existence and prospering for many years before Cather's arrival providing luxury accommodations, meals, and other services for overnight guests. The selling of souvenirs and curios as well as native arts and crafts had been going on for at least a dozen years before her arrival.

Cather accompanied a group of English tourists down the Bright Angel Trail four and a half miles to the Halfway House located at Indian Gardens, an area fed by springs and farmed by pre-historic Indians. Although it was a difficult hike for her, she was well conditioned from the previous hiking she had done around Winslow.

The Bright Angel Trail itself begins near the Bright Angel Camp where Cather was staying and provides a twisting switchback filled eight-mile hike down 4,400 feet all the way to the Colorado River. The trail was originally established by prehistoric Indians along a natural fault in the cliffs. Miners using the trail in the late 1800's developed and widened it. But, when it became clear that mining was not profitable, Ralph Cameron, an early miner who had filed numerous mining claims along the rim and at Indian Gardens, took control over the trail and established a toll road. In 1903 he began charging \$1.00 to every tourist descending into the Canyon along the Bright Angel Trail. The Santa Fe Railway filed suit against Cameron, but litigation lasted until 1920 when his claims over the trail were finally invalidated.

3.

After almost a week of sightseeing at the Grand Canyon, Willa Cather returned by train to Flagstaff to meet her brother, Douglass. According to her May 21 letter to Elizabeth Sergeant they were planning to visit Indian cliff dwellers' ruins along the Little Colorado River. They went to Walnut Canyon, which,

however, is not along the Little Colorado River. Cather may have confused the cliff dweller ruins at Walnut Canyon with the multi-storied pueblo ruins located in the Colorado River Valley some 35 miles to the northeast in what is now known as The Wupatki National Monument.

They arrived at Walnut Canyon, and she signed the visitor's register on May 23, 1912, as "Miss Cather New York," just above her brother's signature, "C D Cather Winslow." (See illustration.) Their names are the only entries for that date. She signed in a second time on May 25 as "Miss W S Cather New York," this time above the signature of her brother's housemate, "H L Tooker Winslow" followed by her brother's signature, "C D Cather Winslow." It appears that they spent a period of possibly three days in Walnut Canyon, having left at one point to meet Douglass' housemate before returning into the Canyon with him.

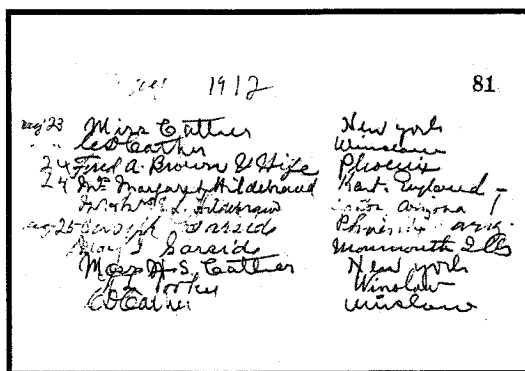
Walnut Canyon, named for the Arizona Walnut tree that grows there, is a small, lush canyon situated 5 miles southeast of Flagstaff and is the site of cliff dwellings occupied by a small group of Sinagua Indians from approximately 1100 to 1250 AD.⁸ The Sinagua built their dwellings by forming stone walls between the large natural limestone overhanging ledges 150 feet above the Canyon floor. The walls were held in place with mortar made from wet sand and dirt brought up from the stream below. Low entranceways, small smoke holes and window

openings were also provided in their construction. Besides the natural abundance of wild life, edible plants, fruits, and nuts in the area, the Sinagua sustained themselves with dry farming techniques in the relatively fertile soil of the north rim of the Canyon. It is believed the Sinagua abandoned Walnut Canyon in the middle of the 13th century because of drought, disease, hostilities, or a breakdown in trade. When the Sinagua left the Canyon they appear to have drifted north to become part of the Hopi Tribe.

When Willa Cather came to Walnut Canyon by train from the Grand

Canyon, it is likely she got off the train at the Cliffs Siding, a station serving the community of Cliffs founded in the 1880's located about five miles east of Flagstaff and due north of the Canyon. The station, non-existent now, was located in the vicinity of the modern Flagstaff Mall. Cliffs flourished briefly and maintained a separate post office in 1907-08, but was eventually absorbed into the town of Flagstaff. There was a dirt road near the station that led directly to Walnut Canyon, a major portion of it still in existence known as Old Walnut Canyon Road. This road remains unpaved and much of it is fairly rough and rocky today. In 1903 a horse drawn carriage carrying William Jennings Bryan along this road suffered a near fatal mishap in a particularly treacherous section known as the Bottomless Pits. It was so called because of a series of sinkholes of varying size, which have since been fenced and filled in. The carriage, momentarily misdirected, fell into one of the holes. The driver was able to save the carriage and all passengers through quick and firm handling of his horses.⁹

There were three stagecoach companies providing tours and transportation to Walnut Canyon ranging in cost from \$1.00 to



Walnut Canyon Visitors' Register, August 1912. — Author's personal collection.

CATHER IN ARIZONA

(Continued)

\$3.00. They were the Babbitt Livery, Grand Canyon Stage Lines, and a stable operated by E. S. Wilcox.

At Walnut Canyon Cather would have been greeted by Ranger Pierce and his wife Mattie. The Ranger's Cabin where they lived was built in three sections beginning in 1904 and remains standing to this day, although in need of repair. In 1912, the Cabin consisted of two main rooms—a large living area and a kitchen with porch. A distinctive feature of the porch is a large old Alligator Juniper allowed to grow through a hole cut into the porch overhang. The Pierces kept flower and vegetable gardens around the cabin, and the rooms were neatly maintained with family photos on the walls and Navajo rugs on the floors. There were also a corral, barn, cistern, outhouse, and public picnic area nearby. Visitors were asked to sign a guest book and were invited to use the kitchen to heat food and beverages.

From the cabin there is a narrow foot trail that descends through a side draw known as Ranger Canyon about a half mile directly into the area of cliff dwellings. There is evidence that this entrance to the Canyon was also used during ancient times. Along the way there is a large section of bare rock wall with numerous carvings and writing with lead or charcoal of the names, dates, and hometowns of the earliest sightseers. Similar graffiti appears also on the walls of a number of the cliff dwellings themselves. Although Cather would not have been able to visit all of the three hundred rooms that line the Canyon walls in the few days she was there, she would have been able to visit a good number of those accessible along this trail known as the Ledge Trail, and along a connecting trail known as the Island Trail.

None of the cliff dwellings at the time of her visit had undergone reconstruction or archeological maintenance. She would have seen more pottery shards and other small artifacts lying about than one sees today. The walls of the dwellings would not have been cleaned of their soot, nor floors swept of their dirt and debris. Fallen blocks of stone, original crumbling mortar, scattered dried plants, corn husks, and burned firewood would still be in place. Even today, along this trail from the Ranger's Cabin, many of these items remain *in situ* despite thievery and vandalism over the years. It is clear that Cather drew upon her experience in Walnut Canyon in the creation of the fictional Panther Canyon which Thea Kronborg visited in *The Song of the Lark*.

In 1904 a dam had been built upstream on Walnut Canyon Creek, so Cather would not have seen the Canyon floor exactly as it was in ancient times. No doubt she saw pools of water and some minor flowing from snow melt, but the Canyon in 1912 had already begun to sprout the vines and trees which choke the Canyon floor today.

4.

All together Cather spent at most forty days in Arizona during 1912. She wrote specifically about Arizona only in *The Song of the Lark*. Other aspects of her experiences in Arizona figured in her great New Mexico works *Death Comes for the Archbishop* and "Tom Outland's Story" in *The Professor's*

House. She returned to the Southwest several other times in her life but never again spent a lengthy period of time in Arizona. Although she was attracted to the high desert country of northern Arizona, the extremes of climate and landscape she found there and the ancient cultures that thrived throughout the region, Arizona had served its purpose for her at a critical time in her life. Douglass moved to California, and eventually Cather found other favored places to visit at the opposite end of the country in New Hampshire.

Arizona helped as a catalyst for her creativity after years of stultifying office work and voluminous amounts of journalism. Nearing forty, Cather came to see that if she were going to offer the world a body of writing that was long lasting and significant, she would have to begin immediately concentrating her time and energy. With a realization of how many of her years were already lost to journalism, she became selfish of her time, and learned how to avoid engagements and entanglements that would distract her from creative writing. She learned how to marshal her energy for concentrated periods of productivity, and made it a point in her later life always to find homes, apartments, and rooms where solitude and space were ample for creativity. Although she never wrote while in Arizona, she credits the place with helping her to recover "from the conventional editorial point of view" (*Willa Cather on Writing* 92).

A phrase came into her mind from Balzac's short story "A Passion in the Desert" one day shortly after she left Arizona: *Dans le desert, voyez-vous, il y a tout et il n'y a rien; Dieu sans les hommes* ("In the desert, you see, there is everything and nothing; God without men") (qtd. in Sergeant 83-84). Its meaning became clear to her now that she had been to the desert. While Arizona may have helped her to see the eternal in life, as an artist her subject was the temporal world of men and women to which she must return.

Notes

¹ For biographical details I have relied mainly upon Stout and Woodress.

² Other biographies and studies that have linked the effects of the southwest upon her writing include Brown, Creutz, Funda, Harrell, Jacks, O'Brien, Powell, Robinson, Stouck, Stout, Sullivan, Woodress, and Yongue.

³ Cather's reactions to Winslow are in letters to Elizabeth Shepley Sergeant April 20, April 26, and May 21, 1912. Also see, Sergeant 74-87 and Lewis 80-85.

⁴ For a history of the Beale Road, see Pare 94-95, 161-63, Trimble 230-33, and United States Department of Agriculture.

⁵ Details of the history and cultural life of early Winslow are from Carlson and Rodriguez, and the 1912 files of the town's newspaper, *The Winslow Mail*.

⁶ Cather's letter to Elizabeth Shepley Sergeant written from the Grand Canyon on May 21 reporting her impressions of the Canyon and her plans to meet Douglass is written on El Tovar Hotel stationery which features a picture of the Hotel at the top of the first page.

⁷ Material relating to the Grand Canyon is drawn from Beal, Berkowitz, Hughes, Manns, Mc Clintock, and Suran.

⁸ Material relating to Walnut Canyon is drawn from Baldwin, Downum, Hochderffer, King, Mangum, Nobel, Short, Thybony.

⁹ This episode is recorded in Vabre 1.

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Bibliography for 2000-2001 Continued

Jo Ann Middleton

(This bibliography is the third part of a series begun in the fall 2002 *Newsletter and Review*.)

My Ántonia

Ed Kleiman proposes that elements of the grotesque in *My Ántonia* are essential to her vision of an America formed of "the odds and ends, the flotsam and jetsam" in "Bipolar Vision in Willa Cather's *My Ántonia*" (*English Studies* 82:2, 146-53); only those who recognize the "golden light" within the grotesque and balance the permanent life force with transience and mortality, can achieve "the golden life of America's promise."

Beginning with the premise that Cather portrays "not only the content of Jim's memories but also their structuring, their methods of articulation," Lisa Marie Lucenti provides a splendid analysis of the ways in which memory works in the novel in "Willa Cather's *My Ántonia*: Haunting the Houses of Memory" (*TCL* 46:2, 193-213). Ultimately *My Ántonia* suggests that, like Jim's "Gothic" memory, "cultural or national memory frequently struggles to preserve a sense of identity by excluding or abjecting memories for which it cannot or will not account."

In "Marek Shimerda in *My Ántonia*: A Noteworthy Medical Etiology" (*ANQ*, 13:1, 29-33), Patrick Shaw identifies the malady afflicting Marek as syndactyly, exaggerated by Cather into

"grotesquerie" to demonstrate the frightening counterdesign beneath Nature's reliable and reassuring pattern.

The Song of the Lark

Katherine Boutry investigates the "double standards" that Cather held for literature (in which emotive passion is "naïve or 'mawkish'") and music (which should elicit an "emotional" and non-intellectual response) in "Between Registers: Coming In and Out Through Musical Performance in Willa Cather's *The Song of the Lark*" (*Legacy* 17:2, 187-98). Cather "blends active and passive sexualities" in her musical scenes, effecting a "sexual crossing" that couples the masculine and the feminine and creates an "underground communication" of bisexuality.

O Pioneers!

Marie Mullins probes the dynamic that is created when a female writer looks back to male precursors for models in "'I bequeath myself to the dirt to grow from the grass I love': The Whitman-Cather Connection in *O Pioneers!*" (*TSWL* 20:1, 123-36) and convincingly shows how Cather absorbed a sense of place, an enthusiastic embrace of America as subject matter, and "a rapturous appreciation of the land and people from *Leaves of*

BIBLIOGRAPHY 2000-2001

(Continued)

Grass and transformed its themes, imagery and poetic style into “the epic story of a strong female pioneer.” Dana K. Kinnison wonders why Alexandra has not been identified with the mythical figure of the Amazon as yet, then traces striking parallels that define Alexandra’s powerful female energy, but identifies correspondences between the Nebraska plains and the Amazonian homeland as well (*Expl* 58:2, 97-98).

A Lost Lady

Robert Seguin’s “Ressentiment and the Social Poetics of *The Great Gatsby*: Fitzgerald Reads Cather” (*MFS* 46:4, 917-94) elucidates the “inter-textual currents” flowing between Cather and Fitzgerald by tracing elements of *ressentiment* (“the smouldering hatred of a peasant”) in *A Lost Lady* and *The Great Gatsby*.

Focusing on Marian Forrester as “erotic spectacle,” Stephanie Bower locates Cather within the contemporary discourse of sexology in “‘Something Coarse and Concealed’: Female Sexuality in Willa Cather’s *A Lost Lady*” (*Legacy* 17:1, 59-72). By reading Marian’s sexuality as deviance, Bower demonstrates how *A Lost Lady* inscribes the “essential corruption of the generation who inherits—and betrays—the ‘legacy of the ‘pioneer period.’”

The Professor’s House

For Rafeeq O. McGiveron, the gaze of Cather’s characters across the “evocative vistas of space and time” serves to anchor the individual within the human family”; Professor St. Peter, Tom Outland, Father Duchene, and Professor Crane all search for their place in their physical, social, and moral surroundings by contemplating the vast distances that surround them (“From a ‘Stretch of Grey Sea’ to the ‘Extent of Space’: The Gaze across Vistas in Cather’s *The Professor’s House*” [*WAL* 34:4, 389-407]).

Donald Lyons reads *The Professor’s House* as an inquiry into the nature of civilization in “Willa Cather’s “*The Professor’s House*” (*NewC* 18:5, 10-16), which holds in equipoise both “the nobility of the civilizing instinct and the certainty of its frustration,” and in which a modernist architecture matches the polyphonic variety of its narrative voices.

Noting that a favorite pastime of Cather scholars is “tracking down and documenting the lives of Cather prototypes,” Merrill Maguire Skaggs, perhaps the best tracker of them all, finds a model for the elusive Myra Henshawe in “Viola Roseboro’: A Prototype for Cather’s *My Mortal Enemy*” (*MissQ* 54:1, 5-21). Beginning from Jane Kirkland Graham’s 1955 biography of Roseboro’, Skaggs presents convincing evidence that links Cather, Roseboro’ and Myra in an imposing web of correspondences.

Death Comes for the Archbishop and Shadows on the Rock

In “The Influence of Willa Cather’s French-Canadian Neighbors in Nebraska in *Death Comes for the Archbishop* and *Shadows on the Rock*” (*GPQ* 20:1, 35-54), Kathleen Danker takes Cather at her word and traces the French culture she

absorbed from her immigrant neighbors, “before the age of fifteen,” that surfaced as she was writing her “French Catholic novels.” Although these works draw on historical texts and Cather’s study of art and literature, as well as her adult travels in France, Quebec, and the southwestern United States, they also echo the church, clergy, community and traditions she encountered first in Nebraska.

Stories

“Paul’s Case” continues to intrigue Cather critics. Michelle Bollard Toby proposes that readers are challenged to assume the role of “an investigative physician who must carefully track and interpret Paul’s symptoms” in “‘There Is Something Wrong about the Fellow’: Willa Cather’s ‘Paul’s Case’” (pp. 252-59 in *Teaching Literature and Medicine*, ed. Anne Hunsaker Hawkins and Marilyn Chandler McEntyre [MLA, 2000]), and competently explicates the intersection of medical, legal, and religious discourses that marked the historical emergence of homosexuality as a medical “disorder.” Ultimately, the story asks readers to empathize with Paul, to consider the dangers of medicalizing homosexuality, and “to question the repressive white middle-class ideology against which Paul’s difference asserts itself.” Sherry Crabtree extends the analysis of Cather’s flower imagery in “Paul’s Case” beyond the usual discussion of the red carnation, demonstrating that these frequent references to other flowers symbolize Paul’s desires and mirror his disconnection from the world by enhancing our understanding of his fragility, his craving for beauty, and his inability to thrive in his environment (*Expl* 58:4, 206-08).

In “The Hero and the Fool in Willa Cather’s Early Short Fiction” (*MQ* 42:1, 42-50) Richard C. Stimac identifies the “artistic man-boy,” a recurring character in Cather’s stories, who combines the hero and the fool archetypes; “The Bohemian Girl” and “The Treasure of Far Island” notably demonstrate how this character follows the plot sequence of the hero and, instead of a boon, returns from his quest with the gift of eternal childhood.

“Willa Cather’s Use of Planetary Light Imagery to Depict Character in Selected Novels” (*International Journal of Arabic-English Studies* 2:2, 289-97), Asad Al-Ghalith’s analysis of light imagery in *O Pioneers!*, *My Ántonia*, *One of Ours*, and *Death Comes for the Archbishop*, explores Cather’s use of the sun, moon and stars as a device for revealing the personalities, qualities, and moods of her characters.

Evelyn Haller imagines that Ezra Pound “could not bear to give his child a book not well written” and so he gave her *Shadows on the Rock* in an essay that manages to be both charming and erudite, “Willa Cather’s *Shadows on the Rock* and Ezra Pound’s Daughter, Mary,” pp. 187-99 in *Ezra Pound and Poetic Influence: The Official Proceedings of the 17th International Ezra Pound Conference Held at Castle Brunnenburg Tirolo di Merano* (Rodopi, 2000), ed. Helen M. Dennis. Haller situates Mary de Rachewiltz’s story in juxtaposition to Cécile’s, suggests reasons that the book resonated for both father and daughter, and finds, through Mary, “a further dimension of Pound.”

Finally, Doris Grumbach recalls her research for the book on Willa Cather she didn’t write—including an interview with Alfred Knopf and a trip to Taos, New Mexico—in “Journal: An Aborted Project” (*ASch* 70:1, 133-34).

Willa Cather's Radical Empiricism

Merrill Maguire Skaggs, Drew University

One doesn't need to pass through six degrees of separation to connect Cather to William James; two steps will do it. Cather's zealously mentoring friend Viola Roseboro',¹ the McClure's reader to whom Cather sent her early manuscripts, loved James. And what Viola loved, her friends and colleagues were required to read also. Moreover, V. R., as her friends called her, was strenuously advocating James while simultaneously educating Willa in 1904. In that year two James essays—"Does Consciousness Exist" and "A World of Pure Experience"—were both published in *Journal of Philosophy, Psychology and Scientific Methods*, where they provided one cutting edge for the nation's intelligensia. Later, these became the first two essays in James's posthumous *Essays in Radical Empiricism*, published in 1912.

James had become before his death in 1910 a famous and beloved figure, especially in the last decade of his life. He was attended closely by press and public when he lectured on Pragmatism at Columbia in 1907 (just after Cather moved to New York); and he was feted at that time by Mark Twain (Horn 24), with whom Willa Cather was also in touch (Comeau 201-02; Skaggs, "Willa Cather and the Father of History"). After all these proddings both personal and public, we can reasonably guess that Cather read William James. She would have been "tuned to James" when she read or re-read a section in the second essay of his final collection which would importantly affect her career. In "A World of Pure Experience," James declared *my* to be the "grammatical particle" (45),² indicating both the highest order of intimacy and inclusiveness (45), and also getting one closest to the "universe of human experience" (45).

It was James's "universe of human experience" Cather would reach for by means of intimacy and inclusiveness, six years later in *My Ántonia* (1918). A few years later, still, she would critique much of that same material in *My Mortal Enemy* (1926). Thus, two charged titles of dense and profound novels, one lauding and one criticizing women and related subjects, would begin with the Jamesian connective the philosopher declared would show the most intense "conjunctive relation." *A Lost Lady* (1923), which intervenes between these two *my* titles, denotes a generic, unsecured, watched-but-not-known opposite kind of female: evoked as a "thin miniature" (Bohlke 7), not a "character study," of a "rare object which one may examine from all sides" (Sergeant 185). The intensity and intimacy James associated with *my*, and the emotional distance implied in *A*, its opposite "grammatical particle," indicate the span of Cather's literary ambitions. She even starts *My Ántonia* with a horizon-wide landscape.

For those like me who enjoy reversals (a trick of looking at the world upside down or through one's legs, as Cather's beloved Emerson advocated in "Nature" [44], there's a double somersault in this three-novel sequence about women. When stalwart Ántonia holds our attention she seems to illustrate fecundity, like the "founders of early races" (353).³ Two novels later, sexy and fragile-looking Marian Forrester in *A Lost Lady* is backlit almost as a silhouette. Then after *The Professor's House* attends to a couple of males, narcissistic Myra Henshawe demands our attention in *My Mortal Enemy*. As she throws around the weight

of her "short, plump" figure (11), Myra, first spotted in a mirror, reverses both *A Lost Lady* and *My Ántonia*. She becomes a nemesis who negates "all one hopes for." (113).

William James actually advocates such reversals in *Essays in Radical Empiricism*. He prescribes "renouncing finality" (247).⁴ The esthetic practice Cather based on this advice, which has long puzzled and fascinated Cather critics like me, requires, in James's phrase, "a real change of heart, a break with absolutistic hopes" (247). This break means that every Cather novel will create the momentary sense of a complete world, while her next novel is sure to turn it inside out, upside down, or sideways; the author's boundaries keep moving.⁵ This esthetic of fluidity requires that readers leave all answers provisional, as James advocated. Some themes, questions, or images may run through all Cather novels; but since the fictional point of view changes, any generalizations about what Cather *really* thinks must also change from one book to another. What Cather inferred might occur when she dwelt in the openness of this Jamesian possibility shaped the tour de force structure, as well as the themes and thrust, of *My Ántonia*.

With James's encouragement we can state that whatever else Cather achieved in *My Ántonia*, she *intended* in starting with a Jamesian *My*, to include as much of the universe as was possible. It was to be *at least* more than anyone else had lassoed. Or to put it another way, in creating a world of pure experience Cather meant to create a world so purely experienced by every reader that it was possessed, as James said, at highest intensity of conjunctive force.

In *Essays on Radical Empiricism*, James repeats Lotze's point about substances: "to *act like* one is to be one" (59). By acting like a Jamesian as consistently as Cather did in this novel, she became one: she publicly acknowledged, openly possessed, James's ideas. I think that's why Jim Burden adds *my* as the last thing he writes on his (presumably thereafter unaltered) manuscript when he hands the pages to Cather, in a throat-clearing moment that calls for attention to be paid (iii). *My* is the first and last word in this story.

Before exploring what else Cather learned from William James, I want to describe the structure of *My Ántonia* as I understand it. I hope to make crystal clear the magnitude of Cather's plan, as well as the degree to which it represents what James called *radical empiricism*.

My Ántonia, like *Death Comes for the Archbishop*, starts twice. Both beginnings in both novels define what Cather wishes to do in the works to follow, for she wishes in both novels to do two *primary*, opposite, central things (Skaggs, *After the World Broke in Two* 120).⁶ In the italicized Introduction to *My Ántonia*, a female speaker whom we may call Willa Cather both names and locates on her train a male protagonist, Jim Burden, whom she introduces in the first sentence. Conversely, in the first sentence of Chapter One, a male narrator named Jim Burden introduces a central female figure riding his train, named Ántonia. As William James says, the world is a pluralism in which "trains of experience, once separate, run into each other" (89).

While the journeys of these "trains of experience" are long

RADICAL EMPIRICISM

(Continued)

and fatiguing, one may say that the two first sentences identify different and opposite-sexed protagonists, each of whom may be considered the center of another narrator's story. Jim writes a novel about *his* *Ántonia*, and Cather writes a novel about *her* Jim [gem].⁷ What each sex should do for gems is a matter angrily argued by Myra in *My Mortal Enemy* (68). Meanwhile we notice that *Ántonia* is a feminized male name; and in his Virginia accent, Jim sounds like a female decoration. Thereafter *My Ántonia* proceeds as *two* androgynous stories told not just side by side, but simultaneously. The female story, Tony Shimerda's story, recapitulates Nature's eternal return. James *Quayle* Burden, as the first edition clearly names him, centers a story about fluttering like a quail from one spot to another. Each of the novel's five books is circular and represents a complete year's cycle. Each also supplies a chronological, linear account of Jim's life. *Ántonia* is finally seen as a "rich *mine* of life, like the *founders* of early races" (my italics, 353) out of whose well-stocked fruit cave erupt her many children, dazzling (339).

Jim, conversely, centers an education novel which moves like Aristotle from beginning, through middle, to end: phallic linear structure, some might call it. One symbol for *Ántonia* becomes the stationary fruit tree she puts her hand on while standing in her own orchard, because she loves "planting and tending and harvesting" (353). An apt symbol for Jim is the moving train on which we first see him, on which he later crisscrosses America, and by which he eventually makes his living. We only *hear* about *Ántonia* on that first train. *Ántonia*'s cyclical story revolves instead where our children's story starts: on a Nebraska farm. Jim's linear and childless story hurdles toward the future in which he hopes to glimpse more of *Ántonia*, his cherished past. What amazes me besides the way in which both protagonists move concomitantly through a coherent tale appropriate to each, is that the final paragraph completes both structures—the linear and the circular—while it recapitulates their central symbols:

This was the road over which *Ántonia* and I came on that night when we got off the train at Black Hawk and were bedded down in the straw, wondering children, being taken we knew not whither. I had only to close my eyes to hear the rumbling of the wagons in the dark, and to be again overcome by that obliterating strangeness. The feelings of that night were so near that I could reach out and touch them with my hand. I had the sense of coming home to myself, and of having found out what a little circle man's experience is. For *Ántonia* and for me, this had been the road of Destiny; had taken us to those early accidents of fortune which predetermined for us all that we can ever be. Now I understood that the same road was to bring us together again. Whatever

we had missed, we possessed together the precious, the incommunicable past.

No paragraph this brilliant springs full-grown like Athena from the head of Zeus. Hints and ideas for it rumble somewhere. For example, William James wrote, "the only fulfilment we can speak of is the reaching of a certain experienced end. When one experience leads to (or can lead to) the same end as another, they agree in function" (63). He thus summarizes abstractly what Cather accomplishes experientially. I would like, then, to suggest that one originating source for Cather's conclusion is William James's "A World of Pure Experience." James explains:

Within each of our personal histories, subject, object, interest and purpose *are continuous or may be continuous*. Personal histories are processes of change in time, and *the change itself is one of the things immediately experienced*. 'Change' in this case means continuous as opposed to discontinuous transition. But continuous transition is one sort of a conjunctive relation; and **to be**

a radical empiricist means to hold fast to this conjunctive relation of all others, for this is the strategic point, the position through which, if a hole be made, all the corruptions of dialectics and all the metaphysical fictions pour into our philosophy. The holding fast to this relation means taking it at its face value, neither less nor more; and to take it at its face value means first of all to take it just as we feel it, and not to confuse ourselves with abstract talk *about* it. . . . Continuity here is a definite sort of experience. (bold type mine, 48-49)

Thus, Cather's story is "continuous"; as Jim says, "I simply wrote down pretty much all that her name recalls to me. I suppose it hasn't any form" (iii). It follows the changes "in time" (both linear and cyclical time), and the change is experienced immediately and sensually, without abstract talk.

For example, when Jim sets out to take *Ántonia* and her little sister Yulka on a straightforward-and-back sleigh ride, after the first Nebraska snowfall in early December, he passes "a great circle where the Indians used to ride" (62), which "showed like a pattern in the grass" (62) and seemed "a good omen for the winter" (62). With hot bricks and warm buffalo robes in the sleigh, the children set out "along a road that happened to be broken" (63), and are "extravagantly happy" (65) while they "laughed and shouted" (64). Then, the sky changes and they grow cold and miserable. They learn "that man's strongest antagonist is the cold" (66); all the continuous sensations are assimilated to produce opposite effects, and because they are directly experienced, the changes themselves are the most memorable events within the "continuous transition," which is also this sequence. The experience of this changing sleigh ride itself becomes a conjunctive relation to which Jim holds fast. Its face value, and felt value, is its ultimate value. Jim needs no abstract talk to explain



his conclusion about man's strongest adversary. He feels it directly and then conveys his direct experience to us who feel it with him, continuously.

Because Cather wants the clarity of William James's "plain conjunctive experience," she will not marry Jim and Antonia; married, they would (with luck) become one—as Mary and Anton Rosicky do.⁸ A happily married couple, once united, cannot move oppositely (as the unhappy Henshawes come to do in *My Mortal Enemy*), or change in different or disruptive ways (as the Forresters do in *A Lost Lady*). Antonia and Jim must learn, as we must learn, that they move in James's continuous transition, always changing and always becoming.

In *Essays in Radical Empiricism*, James explains in Kierkegaard's words, applicable to *My Antonia's* final paragraph, "we live forwards—but we understand backwards" (238). Antonia understands that fact: "Look at my papa here; he's been dead all these years, and yet he's more real to me than almost anybody else. He never goes out of my life. I talk to him and consult him all the time. The older I grow, the better I know him and the more I understand him" (320). Jim could say the same of Antonia.

Radical Empiricism is James's final name for an evolving worldview. He explains his *Weltanschauung* this way:

Taken as it does appear, our universe is to a large extent chaotic. No one single type of connection runs through all the experiences that compose it. If we take space-relations, they fail to connect minds into any regular system. Causes and purposes obtain only among special series of facts. The self-relation seems extremely limited and does not link two different selves together. . . . Even so my experiences and yours float and dangle, terminating, it is true, in a nucleus of common perception, but for the most part out of sight and irrelevant and unimaginable to one another. This imperfect intimacy, this bare relation of *witNESS* between some parts of the sum total of experience and other parts, is the fact that ordinary empiricism over-emphasizes against rationalism, the latter always tending to ignore it unduly. Radical empiricism, on the contrary, is fair to both the unity and the disconnection. It finds no reason for treating either as illusory. It allots to each its definite sphere of description, and agrees that there appear to be actual forces at work which tend, as time goes on, to make the unity greater. (46-47)

The key points in this *modus operandi* can be summarized: admit no untested assumptions; deny no exceptions; acknowledge connections; correct nothing gratuitously; honor conjunctive relations; value intimacy.

As a guide to Cather's strategies in planning *My Antonia*, James's philosophy answers several persistent questions. For example, Cather never leaves Jim and Antonia in the same space for long, because she does not want *place* or proximity to explain their closeness: so even when Antonia works nearby in the Harling house, class status divides her from Jim and the other children. Further, causes or goals—even their need to prepare for adult life—cannot explain their bond. As Antonia says to Jim sadly at the end of the first book, "Things will be easy for you. But they will be hard for us" (140). The central facts about their lives stress disruption: as many have noticed, Antonia does

not even appear in Book III, when Jim goes off to college in Lincoln: his sexual initiation there involves Lena Lingard, not Antonia. Radical empiricism, however, acknowledges both conjunction and disruption, and points out that as time goes on, a once-ruptured unity can grow stronger. Thus William James delivers a philosophical challenge that this novel takes up: "The conjunctive relation that has given most trouble to philosophy is *the co-conscious transition*, so to call it, by which one experience passes into another when both belong to the same self" (47). In other words, both my experience of my self and my experience of another are *my* experiences; the other is *my* other, as I am the other's other. Jim says it this way to Antonia:

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. (321)

And Antonia replies, "Ain't it wonderful, Jim, how much people can mean to each other? I'm so glad we had each other when we were little" (321). Demonstrably, they understand James's point two different ways. But both understand that point.

For Jim, Antonia has become an idea, a part of his mind. For Antonia, Jim has become a feeling and a relation. Thus, Cather makes real and vivid William James's "co-conscious transition" as a potential in anyone who can hold *another* in the head, either as an idea or a strongly-felt relation.

In James's radical empiricism, parts come first. William James doubts the validity, the realness, of universals or absolutes. (Hence, Antonia must be held as Jim's idea of her individual self, not as *our* abstraction for some universal principle such as earth mother.)⁹ And the story Jim writes of her, in William James's words, "lays the explanatory stress upon the part, the element, the individual, and treats the whole as a collection . . ." (41). James goes on to describe James Quayle Burden's procedure, as well as his own: "My description of things, accordingly, starts with the parts and makes of the whole a being of the second order. It is essentially a mosaic philosophy, a philosophy of plural facts . . ." (42). William James approaches the words Jim Burden will also use later, when James says, "*the relations that connect experiences must themselves be experienced relations, and any kind of relation experienced must be accounted as 'real' as anything else in the system*" (42). Hence, Antonia's gladness in Jim is as real as Jim's idea of her. And Antonia becomes for Jim "the closest, realest face, under all the shadows of women's faces, at the very bottom of my memory" (322). Antonia replies, "You'll always remember me when you think about old times, won't you? And I guess everybody thinks about old times, even the happiest people" (321). Immediately thereafter "the system," an androgynous system, manifests itself:

As we walked homeward across the fields, the sun dropped and lay like a great golden globe in the low west. While it hung there, the moon rose in the east, as big as a cart-wheel . . . For five, perhaps ten minutes, the two luminaries confronted each other across the level land, resting on opposite edges of the world. (321-22)

RADICAL EMPRICISM

(Continued)

Put the statements of the two Jameses, as well as of Jim and Antonia, together and we recall William James claiming proudly that radical empiricism does *not* correct its incoherencies (43) while it “does full justice to conjunctive relations” (44). It honestly accounts for what we know as *my* world, the real one, the one we inhabit and possess.

Why does Cather require two protagonists to make this Jamesian point? Because, as James explains,

What I do feel simply when a later moment of my experience succeeds an earlier one is that though they are two moments, the transition from the one to the other is *continuous*. Continuity here is a definite sort of experience; just as definite as is the *discontinuity-experience* which I find it impossible to avoid when I seek to make the transition from an experience of my own to one of yours. In this latter case I have to get on and off again, to pass from a thing lived to another thing only conceived, and the break is positively experienced and noted. Though the functions exerted by my experience and by yours may be the same (e.g., the same objects known and the same purposes followed), yet the sameness has in this case to be ascertained expressly (and often with difficulty and uncertainty) after the break has been felt; whereas in passing from one of my own moments to another the sameness of object and interest is unbroken, and both the earlier and the later experience are of things directly lived. (49)

In short, Cather’s structure, with its breaks between books, renders both William James’s continuous transitions and his discontinuity-experience. It renders both Jim’s lifeline as well as the breaks in Antonia’s intimacy with Jim.

The fact that Cather realizes this Jamesian worldview of *Essays in Radical Empiricism* is an index of her ambitions and of her achievements. “A World of Pure Experience” starts by noting “a softening of oppositions, a mutual borrowing from one another on the part of systems anciently closed” (39). Ambitiously, in *My Antonia*, Cather softens the violence of the war between the sexes and deliberately mixes qualities more often seen as gendered or mutually exclusive. James’s sentence goes on to mention “an interest in new suggestions” and his desire for “a true landscape” which is “less clipped, straight-edged and artificial” (40). Cather creates what he asks for: she meets his challenge to make “a world where experience and reality come to the same end” (59). Thus, when Jim is blessed in his reconciliation with his beloved and disgraced Antonia, he can see for an extended moment both sun and moon together:

In that singular light every little tree and shock of wheat, every sunflower stalk and clump of snow-on-the-mountain, drew itself up high and pointed; the very clods and furrows in the fields seemed to stand up sharply. I felt the old pull of the earth . . . the solemn magic that comes out of those fields at nightfall. I wished I could be a little boy again, and that my way could end there. (322)

Here Cather sweeps us into the wonder that James first described: “In a world where both the terms and their distinctions are affairs of experience, conjunctions that are experienced must be at least as real as anything else” (59). Not only does she build therefore her own world, as Emerson demanded at the end of “Nature”; she builds James’s world also. Further, she builds as James commanded, through “unions by continuous transition [that] are the only ones we know”; and “these are all that we can ever *practically mean* by union, by continuity” (59).

Cather acts on James’s assurances: “to act like one is to be one”; “to be experienced as continuous is to be really continuous”; “experience and reality come to the same thing”; “conjunctions that are experienced must be at least as real as anything else” (59).

Thereafter Cather vivified through sensual details the final conclusions of that philosopher who has been hailed as a progenitor of America’s first indigenous philosophical system. “Truth is a name of double meaning” (248), he said. Playing Pygmalion, *she brought his abstraction to life*. She dramatized his doubled truths so clearly that school children would feel they could understand the Jamesian “plain conjunctive experience” of oneness in twoness. Cather must have wanted to believe James when he said, “If . . . [philosophical language] is ever to grow into a respectable system, it will have to be built up by the contributions of many co-operating minds” (91). She may have wanted to help build this system because she hoped to become America’s most comprehensive novelist, in every sense. I believe she was.

Notes

¹Viola Roseboro’ took a very personal interest in young Willa Cather when Roseboro’ was the reader for the McClure’s syndicate whose job it was to discover genius; Cather was one of her finds. Cather submitted her manuscripts to McClure’s in the 1890s. For more on the Cather/Roseboro’ connection see Skaggs, “Viola Roseboro’”; for further information about Roseboro’, her love of James, and her mentoring of young writers including Cather, see Graham.

²Cather could have read the essay earlier, though textual evidence in *My Antonia* suggests that she proceeded through James’s final collection from beginning to end, once it was published in 1912. That is, she uses materials found at the end of the collection, as well as the beginning.

³All the nurturing fertility of Antonia’s Nebraska farm appears as incarceration, of course, or farmlife’s blighting oppressiveness, in the male-centered war novel that starts on a Nebraska farm and that Cather writes next: *One of Ours* (1922).

⁴“For humanism, conceiving the more ‘true’ as the more ‘satisfactory’ (Dewey’s term) has to renounce sincerely rectilinear arguments and ancient ideals of rigor and finality. It is in just this temper of renunciation, so different from that of pyrrhonic scepticism, that the spirit of humanism essentially consists” (247).

⁵*Complete* thus becomes a loaded, volatile and ambiguous word in Cather. When in *My Antonia* Jim defines happiness as “To be dissolved into something complete and great,” he is feeling “erased, blotted out” (8)—clinically depressed and longing for dissolution. In the moment he is lying in a declivity in the earth while he emulates an interred body and feels like a pumpkin. “Queer little red bugs came and moved in slow squadrons around me. Their backs were polished vermilion, with black spots. I kept as still as I could. Nothing happened. I did not expect anything to happen” (18).

⁶Cather signals in her two first sentences two heroes; two subjects—individuals and institutions—; two times, places, predicaments, symbolic landscapes; and two themes: continuity and loss.

⁷This homophone and pun are central to Mark Twain’s work, as in *Nigger Jim*, *Jim Smiley*, et al.

⁸The Rosickys, of course, are also based on Antonia’s prototype Annie Sadilek

and her husband. They certainly illustrate what happens to an *Ántonia* when she is happily married: the defining force or agent of change in her narrative becomes her man. In "Neighbour Rosicky" the wife Mary cannot even see her husband clearly, because he has seemed for so long a part of her own body. Cather's clear goal in *My Ántonia* is to keep separate the two she will study in continuous transition. James's repeated motto is "Life is in the transitions."

"For the record, I myself think Cather is beginning to ponder here the history games she'll play so brilliantly in *The Professor's House*. She thus allows Jim to state, "The changes [in the land] seemed beautiful and harmonious to me; it was like watching the growth of a great man or of a great idea" (306). These ideas need to be compared, in fact, to the meditations on history which Robert Penn Warren realizes through Jack Burden in *All the King's Men*, and behind which Warren sees the great figure of William James. In any case, I believe the susceptibility to the seductions of a great idea is, to Cather and William James and possibly to Warren, a preponderantly male weakness. Or as James said, "this is the strategic point, the position through which, if a hole be made, all the corruptions of dialectics and all the metaphysical fictions pour into our philosophy" (48). Jim's ideas are what make Cather's Burden more masculine, in contrast to *Ántonia*, who knows by touching. But Cather manages to write in *My Ántonia* a novel about opposites which does not degenerate into dialectics. That, in itself, seems to me a *tour de force*.

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Plow Symbol Placed at Pavelka Grave Site

Don E. Connors

Don E. Connors, of Huntington Beach, California, and Red Cloud, Nebraska, is a long-time member of the Board of Governors of the WCPM. A retired literature teacher, he introduced Willa Cather's novels to generations of high school students. The following is an excerpt of an article which appeared in the Red Cloud Chief, September 25th, 2002.

For a very long time descendants of Anna Pavelka and Don Connors have wanted to place a miniature plow at the grave site of Anna Pavelka. At long last the goal has seen fruition.

Anna Sadilek Pavelka served as the prototype of *Ántonia Shimerda Cuzak* in Willa Cather's novel *My Ántonia* and of *Mary Rosicky* of "Neighbour Rosicky" from *Obscure Destinies*. As a consequence, hundreds of visitors to Webster County every year seek to find the grave site.

In *My Ántonia* Cather describes a scene in which Jim Burden, the narrator, and the hired girls of Black Hawk (Red Cloud) are having a picnic on the bluffs of the river a mile south of town. "Just as the lower edge of the red disk rested on the high fields against the horizon, a great black figure suddenly appeared on the face of the sun. We sprang to our feet, straining our eyes toward it. In a moment we realized what it was. On some upland farm, a plough had been left standing in the field. The sun was sinking just behind it. Magnified across the distance by the horizontal light, it stood out against the sun, was exactly within the circle of the disk; the handles, the tongue, the share—black against the molten red. There it was, heroic in size, a picture writing on the sun."

Jim Peirce of Hastings agreed to work his magic and arti-

sanship in creating a plow which is a scale model of an actual plow.

Jim grew up in Red Cloud. His parents, Russell and Betty, owned and operated the McFarland Hotel for many years. Jim serves as blacksmith at the Stuhr Museum in Grand Island. He has fashioned a masterpiece and placed it in the Cloverton Cemetery near Bladen.

Saturday, September 21, Father Mel Rempe of Sacred Heart Roman Catholic Church offered a blessing at the completion of the placement of the plow.

Many of the grandchildren of Annie Pavelka contributed to the creation and placing of the plow at Annie's gravesite. They include Antonette Turner and her husband Carrol of Bladen; Mildred D. Neff



Kay Skupa, Antonette Turner, Don Connors, Bob Beardslee and Father Mel Rempe. Photo—Mike Offner.

and Husband Kenneth E. of Atwater, California; Wilma F. Jones of Hastings; Bernard Pavelka and wife Elsie of Hastings; George C. Pavelka and wife Philomena of Walnut Creek, California; Marcella L. Vontz of Hastings. Other contributors include Lydia Pavelka, daughter-in-law, of Campbell; great grandchildren of Annie: Susan C. Irons of Hastings; Kay Skupa of Aurora; Steve Skupa and wife Jenny of Campbell; Alana Hoyt and husband Ronald Hoyt of Culbertson, and Dr. Barry Turner and wife Joyce of McCook. Antonette Turner served as fund raiser for the creation and placement of the symbolic plow. Both she and Bob Beardslee of Red Cloud coordinated the project with sculptor Jim Peirce. Don E. Connors of Huntington Beach, California, worked as the catalyst to get the project started.



News From The Executive Director

Greetings to you, the readers of the *Willa Cather Pioneer Memorial Newsletter and Review*. As the Executive Director of the WCPM, I am pleased to be writing this column. My goal is to continue the work that began in 1955 when Mildred Bennett founded the organization. This is a challenging and humbling position in which I find myself, but I look forward to serving the membership of the WCPM in the fine tradition that has been previously established.

Coming at the end of March, my stepping into the position of Executive Director was certainly not well timed. I was still teaching English and creative writing at Hastings High School, the Spring Festival loomed ahead, and with it the dedication of the newly restored Red Cloud Opera House. There was much to be done in Red Cloud, most of which was accomplished by the able staff at the Foundation Office. I want to pause here to thank Jan Offner and Judy Graning especially for their able work.

Because the re-opening of the Opera House was woven into the events surrounding the Spring Festival this year, planning and organizing events became a challenge especially for Steve Shively, who chaired the Spring Festival Committee. On Friday afternoon, the 2003 Norma Ross Walter Scholarship winner Sarah Fattig from Kearney, Nebraska, and runner up Amy Sauer from Bayard, Nebraska, read the essays they submitted for the scholarship award. These essays indicated to an appreciative audience that Cather scholarship will have a bright future. The afternoon session continued with Dr. Mary Ruth Ryder from South Dakota State University reading her paper "Bringing Us Home: Cather's Children's Stories." The program concluded with a delightful presentation of a day in an old-fashioned elementary school, taught by Ardis Yost and her string of highly individualized students. Friday evening an inspiring candle light program at St. Juliana Falconieri Catholic Church featured the St. Juliana choir, always a beautiful experience, and John Swift's gentle reading of passages from Cather's work. Author Mary Pipher highlighted the Passing Show on Saturday morning of the festival. The success of Mary's presentation can best be gauged by the energetic discussion that followed. Both the Passing Show and the Banquet Saturday evening were well attended.

Under Ron Hull's able leadership, the dedication of the Opera House was conducted on Saturday afternoon outside and in front of the newly renovated building. Ron pulled out all the stops, including an order to the weatherman to delay the rainfall (which he evidently did) and provide decent weather for the 3rd of May. It was a bit breezy, but the temperature was comfortable. We were pleased to see so many dignitaries from Nebraska and around the nation and delighted that Nebraska Governor Mike Johanns and Lucia Woods Lindley from Evanston, Illinois, were among the participants both at the dedication and the banquet. Lucia was a member of the WCPM Board of Governors when we started the Opera House renovation project, she provided one of the largest gifts to the project by funding the Auditorium, and she helped us celebrate the opening. She has played an essential role throughout the renovation process.

When the Opera House filled to overflowing twice for the grand performances of *The Bohemian Girl*, I believe everyone involved in the renovation felt a true sense of pride and gratification. I said at the dedication that the Red Cloud Opera House belonged to the people present in the audience and to those across the nation who have dedicated both time and resources to the renovation. With this in mind, on behalf of the WCPM I want to express gratitude to the readers of the *Newsletter and Review* who have played an important role.

I indicated at the beginning that my arrival as Executive Director came at a busy time. Yes, events have slowed a bit at the WCPM, but the Opera House performances continue to draw large audiences, visitors to the site have increased, and we continue to be busy planning Cather events in and out of the Opera House.

May of 2003 ended with a terrific Ninth International Seminar at Bread Loaf in Vermont. You can read more about this in the next issue. And what is on the agenda for the remainder of the summer? It is certainly a time to get back into the trenches. The NEH Challenge Grant comes first to mind. We are considerably short of the NEH monetary goal for the third year as we go to print. If you can provide time, resources, or just give us direction, we will appreciate the help. The Endowment is essential if we are to operate the Opera House.

I started as Director at break-neck speed, but thanks to the support of so many in the Cather community, all has gone well. This is an important job, and I hope to continue to meet my new responsibilities with energy and dedication.

WANTED:



One new or used Steinway piano in good condition to be donated to the newly restored 1885 Red Cloud Opera House—or a donation in lieu of the actual piano. This piano will be required to have a marvelous tone quality that will attract the finest performers from around the world to perform in the Lucia Woods Lindley Auditorium for years to come. Phone: 402-746-2965 or write to the WCPM & EF, 413 N. Webster, Red Cloud, NE 68970

Beginning in the Heart

Laurie Smith Camp

(The following is the text of a speech by Laurie Smith Camp, United States District Court Judge for the District of Nebraska, first given to newly naturalized American citizens on June 14, 2002. Laurie Smith Camp is also a reader of Willa Cather and a member of the Board of Governors of the Willa Cather Pioneer Memorial and Educational Foundation.)

My fellow citizens –

Nebraska's greatest author, Willa Cather, said: "The history of every country begins in the heart of a man or a woman." Today, the history of America begins a new chapter in your hearts. You have chosen the United States of America as your country, and you have chosen to begin your new life as Americans in the heart of America—the state of Nebraska.

Thank you for making these choices. America will be enriched by your citizenship.

Today, you also renounced your former citizenship in other countries. For some of you that was an easy decision. For others, that may have been a painful choice. I remind you that while you have renounced your former citizenship and pledged your loyalty to the United States, you do not give up your own history and culture. Those things you cherish about your past—your memories of family and friends, your music, your literature, your celebrations, your manners, please bring with you. Those of us who have been American citizens for many years can learn much from you.

There may be things in your past that you gladly leave behind you. Just as you chose what items to pack in your suitcase when you came to America, you will choose what customs from your past you will abandon and what you will preserve.

Some of you have lived in America for many years, and some of you are still growing accustomed to the United States. You all know that your new country is not perfect. Everything that is American is not necessarily good. You may be faced with difficult choices as you decide what aspects of the American culture you will adopt and what you will reject. You will make decisions about who you will trust and who cannot be trusted. You will make choices about your work, your friends, your education and the education of your children. You will decide how your money will be spent, how your leisure time will be used, and how you will vote. As you make these decisions, you will consider what is best for you, what is best for your family—especially your children, and what is best for your fellow citizens.

You may have heard the Latin phrase – *E Pluribus Unum* – Out of Many, One. We are one nation of people from many backgrounds bound together by certain principles of freedom, equality, and justice. We all share a responsibility to each other and to future Americans to preserve freedom, equality and justice. You have chosen to become Americans at a time when America is in danger, at home and abroad. Your new country will need your help. America's strength does not lie in its military or its economy as much as in the hearts and minds of its people—good people, of strong character. People like you.

I began my remarks with a quote from the Nebraska author Willa Cather. Cather wrote about immigrants who came to America and settled in Nebraska. She wrote about Bohemians, Swedes, Norwegians, Germans, Mexicans, Jews, French, and Irish. She observed that within one generation, the immigrants and their children were as successful or more successful than the Americans whose ancestors had lived in this country for generations. Hard work, determination, and a true understanding of the nature of the American dream gave the immigrants an advantage over people who took their blessings for granted.

My own grandfather immigrated to America from Ireland when he was 13 years old. His family rented farmland in Ireland, and when their crop failed one year, they were evicted. They were in debt and had no home. At that time, the Union Pacific Railroad advertised in Ireland, encouraging people to come to Nebraska. The Union Pacific needed workers. The advertisements said that Nebraska was the most beautiful and prosperous place in America, and had the best weather. For my grandfather and his family,

Nebraska was a beautiful new home. I am grateful to the United States for the opportunities it has given me and my family over the years, and I have chosen to stay in Nebraska, although the Union Pacific may not have told the truth about the weather.

I wish you great success as new American citizens. I hope that you will measure your own success not in terms of how much property you own, but according to how you preserve and share the American dream.

Willa Cather said "That is happiness; to be dissolved into something complete and great."

Today, you become a part of something great—America. And today, America becomes greater and more complete because of you. Congratulations.



**WILLA CATHER
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The *Newsletter and Review* welcomes scholarly essays, notes, news items, and letters to the Managing Editor. Scholarly essays should not exceed 2500-3000 words; they should be submitted on disk in Microsoft Word or WordPerfect (8 and up) and should follow *The MLA Style Manual*.

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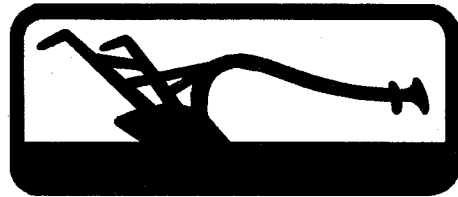
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Essays and notes are listed in the annual *MLA Bibliography*.



**WILLA CATHER
PIONEER MEMORIAL
& EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION
(The Willa Cather Society)**

Founded 1955 by Mildred Bennett

Mrs. Bennett and seven other founding members of the Board of Governors defined the Foundation's mission, which has evolved into these

AIMS OF THE WCPM

To promote and assist in the development and preservation of the art, literary, and historical collection relating to the life, time, and work of Willa Cather, in association with the Nebraska State Historical Society.

To cooperate with the Nebraska State Historical Society in continuing to identify, restore to their original condition, and preserve places made famous by the writing of Willa Cather.

To provide for Willa Cather a living memorial, through the Foundation, by encouraging and assisting scholarship in the field of the humanities.

To perpetuate an interest throughout the world in the work of Willa Cather.

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And now on to the next challenge!

The grand re-opening of the Red Cloud Opera House was a major accomplishment that could not have been completed without the generous support of hundreds of individuals, businesses, and foundations. The Willa Cather Pioneer Memorial and Educational Foundation now has a permanent home for its programming and its archives. The community of Red Cloud has a beautiful addition to its historic Cather landmarks. Perhaps even more importantly, however, everyone who treasures Cather can now experience the place that introduced the young Willa Cather to opera, to theater, and to the world beyond Webster County.

With your help, the Red Cloud Opera House can continue to open the world of the arts and the humanities to children and to visitors from around the world. It can provide the scholar access

to important research materials. In December 2000, the National Endowment for the Humanities awarded the Willa Cather Pioneer Memorial and Educational Foundation a coveted challenge grant of \$275,000 to establish an endowment of \$1,000,000 to permanently support programming and the archives. The Foundation must raise the three-to-one match of \$825,000 by July 31, 2004. We ask you to make a donation today or pledge to make a donation by July 1, 2004. Please complete the form below and make the promise of the Red Cloud Opera House a reality for scholars, for readers of Cather, and for children whose imaginations can be opened to the world of the arts and the humanities just as Willa Cather's was.



In recognition of the need for the Willa Cather Pioneer Memorial & Educational Foundation (WCPM) to establish an Endowment Fund for the 1885 Opera House in Red Cloud, Nebraska, and to assist the WCPM in raising \$825,000 before July 31, 2004, so as to enable the WCPM to obtain \$275,000 in challenge-grant funds for such purpose from the National Endowment for the Humanities, I/we hereby state my/our intention to contribute to the Willa Cather Pioneer Memorial & Educational Foundation's Opera House Endowment Fund the sum of \$_____

I/We expect to make this gift payable over a period of one year, with the initial payment to be made as follows:

1. \$_____ hereby: Check enclosed Visa MasterCard

Account # _____ Expiration Date _____; and/or

2. \$_____ on or before July 1, 2004.

3. Other: _____

I/we also understand that all contributions are deductible for federal and state income-tax purposes.

_____ Date

_____ Signature

Please complete as you wish to be listed.

Name _____ Title _____

Address _____ Zip _____

Day Telephone _____ Evening Telephone _____ E-Mail _____

Let us not forget...

Over 130 generous donations supported the return of Michael William Balfe's *The Bohemian Girl* to the Red Cloud Opera House for its Grand Reopening performance. We want to thank the following patrons of the performance whose names were inadvertently left out of the program:

Ardis Yost; Dan and Dee Yost; Jack Yost; June Yost; John A (Jay) Yost; John Yost.

Thanks to all who contributed to bring *The Bohemian Girl* back to the Red Cloud Opera House!

Red Cloud Opera House

Fall Season 2003

"The Listening Room"

at the Red Cloud Opera House
Robin Harrell & Peter Lainson
August 29 - 7:30 p.m.

Gregg Howard

Cherokee Storytelling
October 19th

"Photographic Journey's"

A collective photographic exhibit.
August 29 - October 14
Gallery

Barbershop Harmonies

November 1 - 2:320 & 7:30 p.m.

Janna Harsch

"The Grace & Power of Equines"

Acrylic & Mixed Media
October 16 - December 4
Gallery

Kerry Grombacher

"Cowboy Songs"

November 17 - 7:30 p.m.

For more information on the
Red Cloud Opera House Schedule
call or e-mail the Foundation Office:
402-746-2641 or wcpm@gpcom.net



Willa Cather Pioneer Memorial and Educational Foundation

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