EVERYTHING "COME[S] TO MONEY IN THE END": A READING OF WILLA CATHER'S MIDDLE NOVELS

by

Zhongxiu He

B.A., Jilin University, 1973
M.A., Jilin University, 1982

PAPER SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF ARTS
in the Department of
English

© Zhongxiu He 1990
SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY
DECEMBER 4, 1990

All rights reserved. This thesis may not be reproduced in whole or in part, by photocopy or other means, without permission of the author.

APPROVAL

NAME: Zhongxiu He

DEGREE: Master of Arts (English)

TITLE OF THESIS: Everything "come[s] to money in the end": A Reading Of Willa Cather's Middle Novels

EXAMINING COMMITTEE:

Chairperson: Dr. Kathy Mezei

David Stouck
Senior Supervisor
Professor of English

Dr. Janet Giltrow
Senior Lecturer,
Dept. of English, S.F.U.

Dr. Paul St. Pierre
External Examiner
Canada Research Fellow, S.F.U.

Date Approved: December 4, 1990

PARTIAL COPYRIGHT LICENSE

I hereby grant to Simon Fraser University the right to lend my thesis, project or extended essay (the title of which is shown below) to users of the Simon Fraser University Library, and to make partial or single copies only for such users or in response to a request from the library of any other university, or other educational institution, on its own behalf or for one of its users. I further agree that permission for multiple copying of this work for scholarly purposes may be granted by me or the Dean of Graduate Studies. It is understood that copying or publication of this work for financial gain shall not be allowed without my written permission.

Title of Thesis/Project/Extended Essay

EVERYTHING "Come[s] to money in the end":
A READING OF WILLA CATHER'S MIDDLE NOVELS

Author:

(signature)

Zhongxiu He

(name)

Dec 13, 1990

(date)

ABSTRACT

This thesis is a study of Willa Cather's three middle novels (A Lost Lady, The Professor's House and My Mortal Enemy) in the light of reception theory. Most Cather criticism has been guided by the pursuit of the author's stated or implied intention. Even recent Chinese critics have tried to be "Western" and to read Cather's novels according to authorial intention. My study chooses to see the meaning of her words as the result of an interaction between text and reader, where the reader is free to "concretize" the text according to hitherto unrecognized consciousness and to imbue the work of art with the semantic unity that is then identified with intentionality. It is the perceiver's attitude toward the works which is fundamental, or 'unmarked' for understanding their intrinsic artistic intent. As a reader from China I approach Cather's novels with a view of art and human relations determined by a socialist political and economic system.

In accordance with my particular "horizon" of expectation, this thesis presents a close reading of the three novels, with the focus on the resolution of some puzzling "indeterminacies." To construct a coherent picture of each novel, elements from different and unlikely perspectives are selected and organized into a consistent whole. By tracing Cather's development of a cluster of themes in the three novels, my constellation of mental images provoked by the textual gaps and blanks will

offer a key to the meaning of the novels: namely, everything "come[s] to money in the end." The side-effect of money - corruption - has left modern man and woman decentered, alienated and homeless. With money as a universal law of gravity, Cather´s world in her middle novels becomes Eliot´s wasteland - its denizens solitary, futile, sterile, loveless.

The purpose of my study, assuming the recognized method of reception theory, is to imbue the structures of the novels with a new character (namely, one that features money as the key player in the modern world) visible to me because of my cultural/historical situation.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author is extremely grateful for the continuing support and guidance of the English Department Graduate Program and in particular her supervisor, Professor David Stouck.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

APPROVAL ii

ABSTRACT iii

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS v

INTRODUCTION: RECEPTION THEORY - MY APPROACH TO WILLA CATHER 1

I. MONEY - THE CAUSE OF MRS. FORRESTER'S FALL AND RISE 12

II. THE ORPHANING AND ASPHYXIATION OF MORAL AND AESTHETIC IDEALS IN _THE PROFESSOR'S HOUSE_ 41

III. POVERTY AS MYRA HENSHAWE'S MORTAL ENEMY 86

CONCLUSION: MONEY - THE MODERN LAW OF GRAVITY 111

WORKS CITED AND CONSULTED 115

INTRODUCTION

RECEPTION THEORY - MY APPROACH TO WILLA CATHER

What does the title of My Mortal Enemy signify? Who or what is Myra Henshawe´s mortal enemy? When and how does Mrs. Forrester in A Lost Lady become lost? Why does Professor St. Peter in The Professor´s House attempt suicide? The reading and understanding of Willa Cather´s three "middle" novels have revolved around these questions of textual indeterminacy. Such questions strike at the very heart of the reader´s reception, and this involves the production of meaning - who or what is responsible for it, and to what extent it is limited. There are two extreme positions on these questions, objectivism and subjectivism. The former holds that there is only one correct and determinate meaning for each work, usually identified with the author´s intention, while the latter maintains that the meaning is totally the product of the mind of the individual reader. The reception theorist Wolfgang Iser tries to take a middle position on this matter. He claims that the text allows for different meanings, while at the same time restricting the possibilities.

If the literary work is neither completely the text nor completely the subjectivity of the reader, but a combination of the two, in reading Willa Cather there are three domains for exploration. The first involves the works in their potential to allow and manipulate the production of meaning. Iser takes the text as a skeleton of "schematized aspects" that must be actualized or concretized by the reader. The second is about the processing of the works in reading. Of central importance here are the mental images formed when attempting to construct a consistent and cohesive aesthetic object. Finally, attention should be focused on the conditions which give rise to and govern the text-reader interaction.

According to reception theorists, there is no regulative context between text and reader to establish intent (Holub 92); therefore, the intent of Cather´s novels must be constructed by the reader from textual clues or signals. The reader takes a productive role in the reading process instead of passively accepting the allegedly inherent messages of the works. Roman Ingarden observes that the literary work of art presents him with the perfect case of

> an object whose pure intentionality was beyond any doubt and on the basis of which one could study the essential structures of the mode of existence of the purely intentional object without being subjected to suggestions stemming from considerations of real objectives. (Cognition lxiii-lxiii)

Reception theorists have tended to call this text-reader relationship the controlling force of the reader. The reader has become, in Hans Robert Jauss´ words, the "arbiter of a new history of literature." Only the perceiver is able to imbue the work of art with the semantic unity that is then identified with intentionality (whatever the reader perceives would become, in his/her perception, the author´s intention). "It is not the originator´s attitude toward the work but the perceiver´s which is fundamental, or ´unmarked´ for understanding its intrinsic artistic intent" (Structure 97). In a certain sense it is the perceiver who determines the artistic quality of Cather´s works. An object can be "created as prosaic and perceived as poetic, or conversely, created as poetic and perceived as prosaic" (Holub 17). For example, some readers perceive Mrs. Forrester in A Lost Lady as a shallow and immoral woman while Cather might have intended her as a victim of commercial values.

Secondly, Cather´s three novels consist of indeterminacies and require resolutions. However solid it may seem, any work for reception theory is actually made up of "gaps" where the reader must supply a missing connection, and these gaps can be interpreted in a number of different, perhaps mutually conflicting, ways. According to Ingarden´s theory of cognition of the literary work, there are layers and dimensions from a skeleton or "schematized structure" to be completed by the reader. There are no places in which represented objects would not be in themselves totally determined. They exhibit "spots" or "points" or "places of indeterminacy" (Cognition 50).

This is especially true with reading Cather. Because of her "unfurnished" writing style, the meanings of her novels are difficult to define, and there are accordingly many "points" or "places" of indeterminacy. In Cather´s view, novels should not be over-furnished: as "a form of imaginative art, [the novel] cannot be at the same time a vivid and brilliant form of journalism" (On Writing 40). She argues that writers should "break away from mere verisimilitude," and follow "the development of modern painting, to interpret imaginatively the material and social investiture of their characters; to present their scene by suggestion rather than by enumeration" (On Writing 40). Cather advocates

> the inexplicable presence of the thing not named, of the overtone divined by the ear but not heard by it, the verbal mood, the emotional aura of the fact or the thing or the deed, that gives high quality to the novel or the drama, as well as to poetry itself. (On Writing 41-42)

Cather also urges "simplification", so that her writing is "as bare as the stage of a Greek theater", and leaves the scene "bare for the play of emotions, great and little" (On Writing 42-43).

Further increasing the indeterminacy of Cather´s works is the fact that she intentionally covered her biographical tracks. She discouraged any biographical studies, even as she discouraged attempts to know anything of her writing other than the novels and selected works published or reprinted after 1912. She repeatedly said that her biography was in the books. According to Merrill Skaggs, Cather "destroyed as many letters as she could and forbade publication of any correspondence left extant. The books she polished and controlled were to be the only material available to her readers. "Therefore the reader must "look for the essential Cather in her books" (396), and whatever the reader finds becomes the author´s intention.

When speaking about My Ántonia, Cather apparently said to her friend Elizabeth Sergeant: "´I want my new heroine to be like this - like a rare object in the middle of a table, which one may examine from all sides´" (Sergeant 139). This statement might be made about most of Cather´s main characters. Her gift for characterization allows us to see and examine her characters from all sides, but these very characters or the text itself are really no more than a series of "clues" to the reader, subtle and elusive, open to any kind of examination and interpretation. As we read on, we encounter many problems, which can be solved only by making assumptions. Consequently, reading Cather´s novels involves us in a surprising amount of complex, largely unconscious labour: although we rarely notice it, we are all the time engaged in constructing hypotheses about the meaning of the text. The reader makes implicit connections, fills in gaps, draws inferences and tests out hunches. Sometimes, when there are not enough textual clues, some readers have to resort to psychoanalysis to work out indeterminacies and create semantic unity. In a word, facing Cather´s four bare walls, the reader has to figure out "spots of indeterminacy" and "gaps" and to transform pieces of language into meanings work out the author´s unstated or non-implied intentions.

A "spot of indeterminacy" is referred to as a "blank" (by Iser), as the "no-man´s-land of indeterminacy" between schematized views. The blank is still initially concerned with connecting various segments of the text. What this entails is perhaps most readily understood in considering the level of plot. In most of the narratives of Cather´s novels, the story line will suddenly break off and continue from another perspective or in an unexpected direction, such as in the case of Myra´s return to religion in My Mortal Enemy, or the sudden shift of the story from the Professor´s family to Tom Outland´s story in The Professor´s House. The result is a blank or structural break - sites of conspicuous indeterminacies. In order to complete the blank or bridge the structural break, the reader must assemble materials (or segments) from various points in plot. Such an assembly thus dissolves the original plot. My reassembled segments in the novels, in turn, constitute a "field of vision." Some segments become dominant, while others recede temporarily in importance. For example, my reading of A Lost Lady highlights Frank Ellinger´s more sophisticated and consequently more sinister materialism, and Ivy Peters assumes a more marginal position. When I have determined the structure of the novel in this way, blanks about Ellinger´s function and Mrs. Forrester´s loss appear on the level of theme and horizon. Whenever a segment becomes a theme, according to Iser, "the previous one must lose its thematic relevance and be turned into a marginal, thematically vacant position, which can be and usually is occupied by the reader, so that he may focus on the new thematic segment" (Reading 198).

To some critics, such new thematic segments might appear simply as "bias" or "prejudice." But Ingarden stresses the concretization of these newly schematized aspects of the text. He insists that the structure of the entire work takes on a new character when the circumstances involving the reader's time and place, and personal or social conditions are altered (Holub 35). Since concretizations of indeterminacies in Cather's books are considered the activity of individual readers, they can be subject to vast variation, for what is at issue is that none of the varieties of reception theory can do without grounding in some historical presuppositions. Reading and understanding a literary text, like its production, are also considered social actions, because, according to Prague structuralist Jan Mukarovsky, the artwork is a social sign and its viewer a "social creature, a member of a collective." The social interaction and movement of norms are of primary importance. Social classes and extra-aesthetic social relations play an important role in establishing and altering norms. In Lowenthal's opinion, the effect of a literary work belongs to its very being: what it is, is determined essentially by the way it is experienced. My own experience is itself largely preconditioned, and for this reason my analysis and reception of Cather's novels involve an understanding of the "life process" of the society I come from.

To a reader from China, Cather's three novels, which mainly expose the spiritual crises and material greed of the capitalist world, will automatically bring out his/her socialist reading habits. In my reading process, I often become aware of the norms of the social system in which I used to live and its norms of literary criticism. These norms situate my perception within an ideological base, with a view of art and human relations determined by a socialist political and economic system and with an emphasis on social decadence and corruption in the capitalist world. This is a kind of taste, which, as Levin Schucking says, "designates a general receptiveness for art, a relationship to art in which a man's entire philosophy of life is mirrored or at any rate one where the inmost being of himself is involved" (Holub 50).

Consequently, when I appropriate an alien experience foregrounded in the text, I simultaneously and unconsciously background my previous experiences and pre-understandings (which should be more accurately viewed as part of my hitherto "unrecognized consciousness") and bring them to the given work. And it is this therapeutic, almost psychoanalytic consequence of my encounter with texts that Iser deems significant as meaning-production. "Reading becomes a medium through which consciousness comes to realize itself" (Holub 92).

My reading process is then the image-making activity. Striving to construct a coherent sense from the text, I select and organize its elements into consistent wholes, excluding some and foregrounding others, concretizing certain items in certain ways, trying to hold "different perspectives within the work together." I have to rely, in other words, upon certain social codes and contexts to form properly the images of my expectation. In effect, the images I form are a combination of perception and ideation. "The former occurs only when an object is present to be perceived, while the latter presupposes the absence or non-existence of an object" (Holub 91). My reading entails ideation, because aside from the marks on the page, I bring forth or ideate the "object" (such as in the case of my reception of Myra´s will that her body be cremated).

Though this aesthetic object of ideation in my reading of Cather is something that may be taken as "bias" or "prejudice", it is within my "horizon", a term Gadamer uses to refer to "the range of vision that includes everything that can be seen from a particular vantage point" (59). For example, some critics might find my reception of the three novels radical and totally unacceptable. But according to Heidegger, it is precisely our being-in-the-world with its prejudices and presuppositions that makes understanding possible. As he writes in Being and Time: "Whenever something is interpreted as something, the interpretation will be found essentially upon fore-having, fore-sight, and fore-conception" (191-2). Therefore, my interpretation is never to me a presuppositionless apprehending of some essential segments.

According to Gadamer, prejudice, because it belongs to historical reality itself, is not a hindrance to understanding, but rather a condition of the possibility of understanding. "What is necessary is a fundamental rehabilitation of the concept of prejudice and a recognition of the fact that there are legitimate prejudices, if we want to do justice to man´s finite, historical mode of being" (Holub 41). Gadamer´s reliance on "prejudice" as a positive value holds true in my understanding of Cather´s works. One´s "prejudices" and preconceptions are a fundamental part of any hermeneutic situation. Thus, in contrast to previous hermeneutical theory, "the historicality of the interpreter is not a barrier to understanding. A truly hermeneutical thinking must take account of its own historicality" (Holub 41).

Therefore, in my reception, "horizon" is an essential part. It thus describes my situatedness in the world. It may also be defined with reference to the prejudices that I bring with me while reading Willa Cather, since they represent a "horizon" over which I cannot see. In accordance with my "historical consciousness" and particular "horizon of expectation", in this thesis I present a close reading of Cather´s three middle novels (A Lost Lady, The Professor´s House and My Mortal Enemy), which highlights in many cases features of the text that other critics and readers have not given emphasis to before. By tracing Cather's development of a cluster of themes in these three novels - money as the key player in Mrs. Forrester's fall and rise, orphanhood and asphyxiation of moral and esthetic pursuits in The Professor's House, and poverty as Myra's mortal enemy - my constellation of mental images provoked by the blanks and indeterminacies will offer a key to the meaning of the novels: namely, everything "come[s] to money in the end." Money becomes even an inevitable and dominating factor in sexuality and family relations in these texts. The purpose of my study, assuming the recognized method of reception theory, is to imbue the novels with the semantic unity that will make their structures take on a new character.

CHAPTER I

MONEY - THE CAUSE OF MRS. FORRESTER´S FALL AND RISE

It is commonly accepted that Mrs. Forrester in A Lost Lady becomes "lost," but as to when and how, critics differ. According to some, her beauty and charm do not equal the pioneer´s investment in the West of man´s spirit and dreams; Marian Forrester enjoys the wealth and luxury of the Captain´s material life, but she is incapable of comprehending the large dimensions of his achievement and his code; as a rather shallow and weak woman, she is "lost" even before she meets Captain Forrester. Some of course maintain that she is "lost" when she begins her affair with Frank Ellinger, while others argue that she is "lost" when Captain Forrester loses his fortune. Others hold that she is "lost" after the Captain´s death, and that her ladyship fails to survive without the security and direction provided by her lord and she becomes a victim of the commercial values represented by Ivy Peters, the novel´s most blatantly vicious character (Helmick). Still others hold that Marian Forrester´s fall is inherent in the novel´s pastoral psychology; as Niel Herbert, the novel´s romantic central consciousness, passes from boyhood to adulthood, Mrs. Forrester´s idealized character and status inevitably become tarnished (Stouck, Imagination). The wide range of readings evoked by the novel´s title is a striking instance of how

Cather's unfurnished style creates a high degree of indeterminacy in a single text. All these critics, however, have in common the aim of reading the novel according to the author's implied or stated intent, however elusive that may be.

In this chapter I will attempt to approach the ambiguities and gaps in A Lost Lady by relying on certain social codes and contexts which have not been given emphasis before. My reception of the novel sees greed at the center of the plot and the heroine's fortune tied to matters of wealth and its acquisition. Marian Forrester's decline accordingly is not occasioned by her husband's losses and death; neither is it caused by Ivy Peters' acquisitiveness nor Niel Herbert's disillusionment; rather her downfall is brought about by the greed of her lover, Frank Ellinger. The latter's sexual aggressiveness, material greed, and moral cruelty function significantly in a carefully designed narrative structure which brings about the loss of Mrs. Forrester's ladyship. I see Ivy Peters as merely Ellinger's successor in capturing Mrs. Forrester sexually and financially and Niel Herbert as the sensitive but forlorn witness to these events.

Under Cather's pen, Mrs. Forrester is a great lady, both beautiful and gracious. Together with Captain Forrester, she represents civilization in the West and all the beauties of a moral, agreeable, and charming life. The Forresters live in "a house well known from Omaha to Denver for its hospitality and for a certain charm of atmosphere" (9). Without Mrs. Forrester, the house would lose that charm. She is a gracious figure, always there to greet visitors; she is warm-hearted and generous (for example, she offers the boys hot cookies and comforts the injured Niel after he falls from the tree); she treats everyone the same and talks with "even very commonplace people" (70). In the eyes of Niel Herbert, Mrs. Forrester is the most charming woman in the world. "Compared with her, other women were heavy and dull; even the pretty ones seemed lifeless, - they had not that something in their glance that made one´s blood tingle" (41).

In fact, Mrs. Forrester has sacrificed herself to repay the Captain who "rescued" her from death in Eagle Canyon. As an unusually charming woman, she might have married someone of her own age or a millionaire (her former fiance is a millionaire). Therefore, her sense of honor makes her choose sacrifice above sexual and material gratification, and her life as the aging Captain´s wife is "the one she had chosen to live" (79). From the time they get married until the Captain´s death, especially when they are extremely poor and he is very ill, she gives him good care "that drained her and dimmed her and kept her from being all that she might be" (152). Even after his death, she still faithfully plans to "plant some of his own rose-bushes beside" his grave (146) and sends "a cheque to the Grand Army Post every year to have flowers put on Captain Forrester´s Grave for Decoration Day" (174).

However, the undeniable fact is that the Captain is twenty-five years older than his wife, and after his crippling accident, as a semi-invalid, he can no longer meet her naturally passionate sexual desire. She must find the life in Sweet Water dreary and confining as she "is stranded" (63) in a country where nothing exciting happens while her "life before Sweet Water gives the impression of adventure, variety, and excitement" (Morrow 288). The cedar-bough-cutting scene reveals indirectly how great her sacrifice is because we can see that she treasures that lovely moment very much. This is the only time she can (or allows herself to) enjoy erotic excitement with a man of her own age. "'What a relief to get away!'" (63) "'Drive slowly,' she murmured, as if she were talking in her sleep.' It doesn't matter if we are late for dinner. Nothing matters'" (67). All this shows a young wife's natural yearning and vigorous capacity for life; compared with the aging Captain, Ellinger is physically attractive and shows tremendous vitality. Therefore, her affair with Ellinger is understandable with respect to sexual life-span and sexual interpretation of beauty.

Besides, the narrator's detached description and the plot arrangement show that Mrs. Forrester should not be blamed morally. As Diane Cousineau observes, "The narrator's cool and detached description of Frank and Marian's drive through the forest and the sudden shift in point of view to Adolph Blum attest to Cather's efforts to provide a perspective that is free of moral judgement" (306). The only person who witnesses the incident is the poor boy, Adolph Blum. "But with Adolph Blum her secrets were safe.... She treated him like a human being. His little chats with her, her nod and smile when she passed him on the street, were among the pleasantest things he had to remember. She bought game of him in the closed season, and didn't give him away" (68). Such details released from the construction of the novel gives the reader the impression that Mrs. Forrester's moral charms (in this case reflected in her kind treatment of Adolph Blum) outshine her flaws (her sexual indulgence). Another segment released from the plot also permits this affirmative interpretation of Mrs. Forrester's affair: after the Captain's death, Adolph Blum sends a great armful of yellow roses "to Mrs. Forrester..., for the Captain", "which must have cost the price of many a dead rabbit" (144-145). In spite of the earlier incident he has witnessed, Mrs. Forrester is still an idol and a lady in his eyes.

Mrs. Forrester's affair with Ellinger is also endorsed by the fact that her husband accepts it quietly. "Niel had often wondered just how much the Captain knew. Now ... he felt sure that he knew everything, more than anyone else, all there was to know about Marian Forester" (117). Several incidents might prove the Captain's acceptance of Mrs. Forrester's affair with Ellinger and his concern over, and understanding of, her distress. After the Forresters are imprisoned by the snow and Niel brings to the distressed Marian two letters (possibly from

Ellinger), Captain Forrester "kept his eye" on his wife "with a certain watchfulness", and he "seemed very much pleased" (74) when she is cheerful again and stops drinking sherry that day; and again after Mrs. Forrester calls Ellinger after his marriage, when Niel comes to tell the Captain that "his wife had been sent for in the night to answer a long distance telephone call" (135), "He looked like a wise old Chinese mandarin as he lay listening to the young man´s fantastic story with perfect composure" (136); on another occasion, he highly praises his wife´s penmanship when he looks at her letter to Ellinger. These episodes reveal that there are no secrets between the Forresters.

As an aging and understanding husband, Captain Forrester himself must realize that it is not fair for him to lock such a young wife totally away from the outside world; he likes Marian to have some young companions. For example, the captain is pleased that his wife has Niel´s companionship, for "To him they seem about the same age. It was a habit with him to think of Mrs. Forrester as very, very young" (75). As John H. Randall III points out:

> The captain envisages a different and subtler kind of loyalty which did not have to include sexual faithfulness, and which in part at least was based on a more realistic sense of human limitations than he was prepared to admit. For it is certainly true that Niel Herbert, idealistic and adolescent as he is, will not recognize that human life has a sexual basis. (190)

Therefore, "Marian Forrester´s transgression of the rules of morality, her affairs with Frank Ellinger, threatens neither the abstract notion of the 'family' nor the more concrete circumstances of her own marriage to Captain Forrester" (Morrow 295). Consequently, to see Marian's affair with Frank Ellinger as sacrificing her ladyship is not a right conclusion. As Henry James Forman says, "[h]er vagaries in no way impaired her other qualities" (178).

Mrs. Forrester does not become lost when her husband loses his fortune. Instead, she stands by him in his decline from wealth to virtual poverty and nurses him devotedly after his stroke. Mrs. Forrester is not money-oriented and knows nothing about the bank except its name. She "seemed unaware of any danger" and speaks of her husband's errand to Denver "merely as a 'business trip.'" Without giving any attention to what might happen to their fortune, "she had taken the occasion of the Captain's absence to let Bohemian Mary go to visit her mother on the farm for a week" (83) and "invites" Ellinger to come over.

Captain Forrester comes home a poor man, as he tells his wife, "'It took about everything there to square up. You'll have this place, unencumbered, and my pension; that will be about all'" (88). This would be a heavy blow to any generous wife, but Mrs. Forrester only grows pale and then "smiled and brought her husband's cigar stand. 'Oh, well! I expect we can manage, can't we?'" she says. Instead of considering that her husband acted foolishly (as a married man, he could have turned certain securities and government bonds over to his wife), she declares, "´I never question your decision in business, Mr. Forrester. I know nothing about such things´" (89). She accepts his choice as a "compliment" (89) to her. "´If Mrs. Forrester is satisfied,´" the Captain says, "´I shall never regret my decision.´ For the first time his tired, swollen eyes sought his wife´s" (89). Captain Forrester never needs to seek his wife´s eyes for permission while he is "squaring up" to pay off those depositors generously because he knows where she stands.

When Judge Pommeroy speaks highly of Captain Forrester´s decision, "´I´m proud of him, Ma´m; proud of his acquittance!´" (92) we are told:

> It was the first time Niel had ever seen Mrs. Forrester flush. A quick pink swept over her face. Her eyes glistened with moisture. "You were quite right, Judge. I wouldn´t for the world have had him do otherwise for me. He could never hold up his head again. You see, I know him." As she said this she looked at Niel, on the other side of the room, and her glance was like a delicate and very dignified rebuke to some discourtesy, - though he was not conscious of having shown her any. (93)

Her generous reaction to the loss of their fortune stands in sharp contrast to the later indecent involvement with Ivy Peters for the sake of money.

After the loss of the money, the Forresters´ life passes from bad to worse. Marian´s annual escape to Colorado railroad society is not possible any more. They are very poor at this time and the house seems diminished and shabby to the townspeople:

> There was nothing remarkable about the place at all! The kitchen was inconvenient, the sink was smelly. The carpets were worn, the curtains faded, the clumsy, old-fashioned furniture they [other townswomen] wouldn't have had for a gift, and the upstairs bed-rooms were full of dust and cobwebs. (138)

However, Mrs. Forrester carries on as usual and faces life cheerfully. Mary, their cook, is going to get married, and they cannot afford a new one, but Mrs. Forrester says to Niel, "'Never mind us. We will pass a quiet winter, like an old country couple, - as we are!' she said lightly" (99). Niel realizes that "she faced the winter with terror, but he had never seen her more in command of herself, - or more the mistress of her own house than now, when she was preparing to become the servant of it" (99).

Mrs. Forrester becomes lost when Frank Ellinger rejects her and marries Miss Constance Ogden. This blow is much, much heavier than the one brought by the loss of the money, because it announces the fruitless end of her long expectation.

For a long time, Mrs. Forrester must have expected to marry Frank Ellinger after Captain Forrester's death. When the Captain was in good health, Mrs. Forrester would not allow Ellinger to write love letters to her because "it's risky" (65). But the real reason is that it had never occurred to her when the Captain was still in good health that she might have the opportunity of marrying Ellinger; therefore, sometimes she did not even answer Ellinger's letters (64). But after the Captain's crippling accident, in her subconscious, as my reassembled segments will show, Mrs. Forrester is expecting something to happen, a change in her life. And this marks a turning-point in her relationship with Ellinger. She says to Ellinger, "'But now you needn't be so careful. Not too careful!'" (65)

From then on, Mrs. Forrester tries to keep in frequent contact with Ellinger, and such contact must be a great comfort in her lonely life and her sexless marriage. She becomes very upset when she and her husband are snowed in and her contact with Ellinger through mail is cut off. When Niel breaks through the snow to see them, Captain Forrester tells him, "'Mrs. Forrester has gone upstairs to lie down; she's been complaining of a headache'" (72). When she appears, "The dark shadows under her eyes seemed to mean that she had been losing sleep" (73), and Niel "smelled a sharp odor of spirits. Was she ill, he wondered, or merely so bored that she had been trying to dull herself?" (74) The first thing she asks Niel is "'And you've brought the mail. Are there any letters for me?'" She suffers from headache and loses her sleep because of the delayed delivery of the letters from Denver (where Ellinger lives). The letters must be from Ellinger, because as soon as she gets them, she excuses herself to "'glance at my letters'" (74), and when she comes back, "She was cheerful" (74). Being in a good mood after reading Ellinger´s letters, she does not need spirits any more: Niel notices that "the Captain ... kept his eye on the side-board with a certain watchfulness, and when his wife brought the tray with tea, and no sherry, he seemed very much pleased" (74). The letters bring back Mrs. Forrester´s appetite: "´You see, Mr. Forrester,´ she said lightly, ´Niel has brought back my appetite. I ate no lunch to-day,...´" (74). What is interesting is that Mrs. Forrester´s remark about her Bohemian cook Mary´s toothache might be taken as another schematized segment which echoes Marian´s own distress (her headache):

> Mrs. Forrester whispered that [Mary] was out of sorts because her sweetheart, Joe Pucelic, hadn´t been over to see her. Sunday night was his regular night, and Sunday was the first day of the Blizzard. ´When she´s neglected, her tooth always begins to ache!´ (76)

That evening, when Mrs. Forrester and Niel are looking at the new moon, "She turned. ´Oh, I saw it over the wrong shoulder!´ ´No you didn´t. You saw it over mine.´ She sighed and took his arm. ´My dear boy, your shoulders aren´t broad enough´" (78). Instantly before Niel´s eyes rises the image of a pair of shoulders that are very broad, objectionably broad, clad in a frogged overcoat with an astrachan collar - Ellinger´s. Even a few days before Ellinger´s marriage, on a July "night of glorious moonlight", Niel sees "[Mrs. Forrester´s] white figure standing on the bridge over the second creek, motionless in the clear moonlight" (121). The symbolic meaning of the reference to the moon is connected with her love for Ellinger, because on the day when Mrs. Forrester is out with him "cutting" cedar boughs, "the orange moon rose over the bluffs" (67).

Mrs. Forrester feels young with the expectation of marrying Ellinger after Captain's death. She tells Niel abruptly: "'You see, two years, three years, more of this, and I could still go back to California - and live again. But after that.... Perhaps people think I've settled down to grow old gracefully, but I've not. I feel such a power to live in me, Niel'" (125). And again, "So that's what I'm struggling for, to get out of this hole,' - she looked about as if she had fallen into a deep well, - 'out of it! When I am alone here for months together, I plan and plot. If it weren't for that - '" (126).

What Mrs. Forrester says frightens Niel. "When women began to talk about still feeling young, didn't it mean that something had broken? Two or three years, she said. He shivers. Only yesterday old Dr. Dennison had proudly told him that Captain Forrester might live a dozen.... What hope was there for her?" (126) What Niel cannot figure out about Mrs. Forrester is that her hope lies in her planning and plotting to marry Frank Ellinger. "If it weren't for that", namely, if it weren't for Captain Forrester who is still alive now, she might marry Ellinger right away.

However, what is ironic is that Mrs. Forrester has been cheated by Ellinger. She does not know his true nature at all.

As Beth Burch has observed, "much of Cather's descriptive imagery focuses on the vitality and sparkle of Mrs. Forrester's eyes - they are 'lively, laughing, and intimate' (35) - but nothing is said of their discerning powers. There are some things Mrs. Forrester cannot see or know" (8), and the despicable nature of Frank Ellinger is one of them.

What then is Frank's despicable nature? Under Cather's pen, Ellinger is not only greedy and cruel, but also sexually aggressive. First of all, as Ronald Butler has written, "Cather presents Frank Ellinger ... with images of animals, repeatedly suggesting sexuality" (35). Cather writes that his "whole figure seemed very much alive under his clothes, with a restless, muscular energy that had something of the cruelty of wild animals in it" (46). "In contrast to Ivy Peters' eyes like a snake's, Frank's eyes 'had something wolfish in them' (65)" (Butler 35). Then Cather draws our attention to his thick curly lips which "seemed very muscular, very much under his control," and to his strong white teeth, irregular and curved, [which] gave him the look of a man who could bite an iron rod in two with a snap of his jaws" (46). A Chinese critic writes, "To a Chinese, Ellinger with his thick muscular lips and strong irregular teeth conveys the sense of cruelty and sexuality, and the energy of a predatory beast" (Dong, Art 16). Niel "didn't know whether he liked him or not. He knew nothing bad about him, but he felt something evil" (46).

However, there is something "bad" about Ellinger. First, though Frank is known in Denver as a "prince of good fellows; tactful, generous, resourceful," he is "apt to trim his sails to the wind; a man who good-humouredly bowed to the inevitable, or to the almost-inevitable" (49). This description of his character foreshadows how he trims "his sail" away from the financially devastated Mrs. Forrester "to the wind" carrying him to his new lover where he "bowed to the inevitable" of the temptation of Mr. Ogden´s fortune.

Second, Frank Ellinger is after money and material pleasure. His love history is linked to fortune. "Niel had heard his uncle refer to Ellinger´s youthful infatuation with a woman called Nell Emerald, a handsome and rather unusual woman who conducted a house properly licensed by the Denver police" (50). Emerald´s properly licensed house must have played an important part in their relationship. Ellinger´s sexual involvement with an owner of a house of prostitution shows that he invariably links sex with money in his life.

Third, the reason that Frank Ellinger is not married at the beginning of the novel is that he has not found a woman to his taste who is both charming and rich. This is made clear by his remark about Mr. Ogden´s plain wife: "´I´m certainly glad I never married a homely woman. What does a man do it for anyway? She had no money, ...´" (63). Obviously, the principal object of marriage for Ellinger is the acquisition of money and sexual values; that is, he chooses money and sex over emotional values.

Fourth, Ellinger is a very deceptive person. "Young Ellinger had been devotedly caring for an invalid mother, and he was described as a terribly fast young man and a model son. That combination pleased the taste of the time. Nobody thought the worse of him" (50). Nobody in the novel condemns him or is reported to have condemned him. This reveals Ellinger´s deceptive personality. He trims his sail towards the morals of the time and makes himself acceptable socially. My presentation of these reassembled and unconnected details composes a totally unpleasant portrait of the unlovable Ellinger and confirms the greedy, cruel and deceptive nature of the fortune-seeker, "one of the new breed of ´coarse worldlings,´ young men who aspire to money and material pleasure but who presumably have no aesthetic sense" (Yongue 119).

While Ellinger is attracted to the charming and rich Mrs. Forrester, Constance Ogden is attracted to him. At the dinner party held at the Forresters´, Ellinger offers the cherry in his cocktail to Constance, and later refuses her a second cocktail, giving her only the Maraschino cherries. But she plays the coquette, saying, "´I want the one in your glass.... I like it to taste of something!´" (47) When Niel talks to her, she "seemed nervous and distracted, kept glancing over her shoulder, and crushing her handkerchief up in her hands. Her mind, clearly, was elsewhere" (44). While playing cards Constance Ogden prefers Ellinger to Niel, and she even wants to go cutting cedar-boughs together with Mrs. Forrester and Ellinger, seeking a chance to be close to him. Therefore, later that night after the dinner, Mrs. Forrester warns Ellinger: "'Be careful,' she murmured as she approached him, 'I have a distinct impression that there is some one on the enclosed stairway. There is a wide crack in the door. Ah, but kittens have claws, these days!'" (59) And again, "'I heard silk stockings on the stairs'" (60). Constance is fervently pursuing Ellinger.

Though Constance takes every chance to attract Ellinger's attention, she is not attractive enough to him, possibly for two reasons. First, compared with Mrs. Forrester, Constance is too dull and, like her mother, too homely for Ellinger (nor is she attractive enough to readers). Her eyes are "inexpressive", "her face was not altogether agreeable" (44). We are told that "Two dissatisfied lines reached from the corners of her short nose to the corners of her mouth", which sometimes "gave her a suspicious, injured expression" (44). And her disagreeable personality turns to a "stubborn piece of pink flesh" (47). Second, her father is not rich enough, as he has still "been on his way to it [money]" (63). Therefore, when sensuous Ellinger can still have beautiful, young and rich Mrs. Forrester (Captain Forrester does not have any children to inherit his money), Constance has no room in his heart. This is why Ellinger, with his arms folded tight over his chest, his curly lips compressed, frowns into the fire after Mrs. Forrester is gone, though Constance is easy prey for him. He is one of those men who marry to obtain possessions and wealth. His choice of Mrs. Forrester at this stage is not accidental or random.

However, when Captain Forrester´s fortune is gone, Mrs. Forrester is no longer so charming and beautiful, and she can no longer compete against Constance. Though Ms. Ogden´s first name "Constance" suggests that she is constantly after Ellinger and that she remains the same and constantly unattractive girl, she is the daughter of a successful business man and can increase Ellinger´s private property. Mrs. Forrester´s denunciation of him reveals very clearly his intention in managing a material rise by marrying Constance: "´Play safe! When have you ever played anything else?... You´ve got a safe thing at last, I should think; safe and pasty! How much stock did you get with it? A big block, I hope!´" (134) With the big "block" he gets from the marriage, Ellinger does not even inform Mrs. Forrester of his marriage and never comes back to Sweet Water after the Captain´s money is gone, nor does he appear at his funeral. This exposes Ellinger as a ruthlessly ambitious man, willing to do anything to get ahead. He is hardly concerned with the emotional needs and possible suffering of Mrs. Forrester. This might be proven by his total withdrawal from Mrs. Forrester's life (from the novel as well) after his financially profitable marriage while she is struggling in poverty. Mrs. Forrester is cruelly betrayed and victimized by a fortune-seeker.

There is a very interesting incident, which, though not overtly connected with Ellinger thematically, confirms him, from a different angle, as a fortune-seeker. After the Captain's death, Mr. Ogden comes to Sweet Water to inquire after Mrs. Forrester. "He had been devoted to Mrs. Forrester" (150). However, the narrator comments that "It hadn't been the Forresters' reversal of fortune that had kept him away" (151). It seems to me that it is the reversal of Captain Forrester's fortune that has kept Ellinger away. In Ellinger's relationship with Mrs. Forrester and Constance, the essential element is money. Though money is not mentioned directly, it runs through their entire relationship and its effect has been felt all the time.

It is at this point in the story that Mrs. Forrester becomes "lost." Several weeks before this, she still feels "such a power to live"(125), because she has a reason to keep going, to resist growing old. But when Frank Ellinger rejects her she falls apart.

On the night the news of Ellinger's marriage appears in the Denver paper, leaving Captain Forrester alone at home, Mrs.

Forrester crosses, in the storm, the creek which is "up to a horse´s belly in the ford´". When she arrives at Judge Pommeroy´s office, Niel observes that

> Everything but her wet, white face was hidden by a black rubber and a coat that was much too big for her. Streams of water trickled from the coat, and when she opened it he saw that she was drenched to the waist, - her black dress clung in a muddy pulp about her. (129)

And Niel notices that "she smelled strong of spirits; it steamed above the smell of rubber and creek mud and wet cloth" (130). All the details describing her show how devastated she is by Ellinger´s marriage: "Her blue lips, the black shadows under her eyes, made her look as if some poison were at work in her body" (131). She wants to phone Ellinger, "´It´s the telephone I want, long distance.´... She snatched up the desk telephone" (129-130).

At this point Mrs. Forrester becomes absolutely oblivious to everything around her. She cares nothing about social formality. When Niel tells her that Mrs. Beasley, who is the Sweet Water telephone operator, "will hear every word you say", "Mrs. Forrester paid no heed to him, did not look at him, sat staring at the wall" (131). "Her mind was struggling with something, with every blink of her lashes she seemed to face it anew" (131).

Mrs. Forrester castigates the newly-married Ellinger. The two must have planned a possible future marriage. If she had expected to be Ellinger´s mistress all her life, she could not be so frustrated and outraged. She seems to expect Ellinger to change his mind about his marriage, even at this late stage, and this phone call is her last straw to cling to. While she is waiting for the call to get through,

> she was watching the telephone as if it were alive. Her eyes were shrunk to hard points. Her brows, drawn together in an acute angle, kept twitching in the frown which held them, - the singular frown of one overcome by alcohol or fatigue, who is holding on to consciousness by the strength of a single purpose. (131)

At last she, without knowing that the wire is cut off by Niel, begs Ellinger, "'Frank, Frank, say something!'" (134) Again, this shows her expectation of marrying Ellinger. Probably, she is still expecting Frank to say that he will give up Constance.

After the call, with her last hope gone, she is too drunk and hysterical to return home. "She flung the receiver down, dropped her head on the desk, and broke into heavy, groaning sobs" (134), and then "[s]he was asleep, sunk in a heavy stupor. Her hands and face were so cold that [Niel] thought there could not be a drop of warm blood left in her body.... She was absolutely unconscious" (135). Her present state is in marked contrast to her easy and generous reaction to the loss of the fortune. Up to this point, normal erotic and passionate life has been more important to her than money, but, with her soul thirsting for love and life killed, she becomes lost. As one critic puts it, "The lady is lost not because of her unfaithfulness to her railroad-building husband but because she has no focus for her energies, no creative dreams to absorb her vitality" (Lavender 302).

Before this incident, Mrs. Forrester has been facing life with a strong will, and "[e]ven after their misfortunes had begun to come upon them, she had maintained her old reserve. She had asked nothing and accepted nothing. Her demeanor toward the townspeople was always the same; easy, cordial, and impersonal" (137). When any of the housewives from the town come to call, she meets them in the parlour, chats with them in the smiling, careless manner they could never break through, and they get no further. They still feel they must put on their best dress and carry a card-case when they go to the Forresters' (137).

But now, after Ellinger's marriage, Mrs. Forrester becomes sick and frustrated. She has totally collapsed, and gone "to pieces" (137). She seems to have given up all hope in life. "She could hold off the curious no longer.... She was worn out; so exhausted that she was dull to what went on about her" (137-138). "She drudged in the kitchen, slept, half dressed, in one of the chambers upstairs, kept herself going on black coffee and brandy. All the bars were down. She had ceased to care about anything" (139).

Though she is in command again after a week, she is a different person. She is often absent-minded and starts drinking heavily. Ed Elliott's mother says:

> "I never go there now that I don't smell it[alcohol] on her. I went over late the other night, and she was on her knees, washing up the kitchen floor. Her eyes

> were glassy. She kept washing the place around the ice-box over and over, till it made me nervous. I said, 'Mrs. Forrester, I think you've washed that place several times already."
>
> "Was she confused?"
>
> "Not a particle! She laughed and said she was often absent-minded." (140)

That long week that Mrs. Forrester spends in bed, "sleeping", symbolizes her initiation into a new understanding: she has finally realized that her beauty and happiness are related to her husband's money. Love and romance do not work when separated from money. A tremendous struggle must have taken place in her mind between the claims of moral value and the temptation of happiness based on money. Consequently, her emotional bankruptcy leads to her spiritual and moral bankruptcy: the loss of her moral sight. As many critics have pointed out, the loss of Mrs. Forrester's sight is closely related to the scene in which Ivy Peters stuns the female woodpecker with the rock and destroys its eyes. After being blinded, the female woodpecker "rose in the air with a whirling corkscrew motion, darted to the right, struck a tree-trunk, -to the left, and struck another. Up and down, backward and forward among the tangle of branches it flew, raking its feathers, falling and recovering itself" (24).

After Ellinger's marriage, Mrs. Forrester's actions are somewhat similar to those of the bird which, sightless, flaps wildly in terrible despair. Her moral sight is blinded, and her moral beauty is drained and dissected, by another evil and greedy figure, Ellinger, who, in his wanton destructiveness (trapping a mistress and abandoning her at will) is an embodiment of pure evil and the destruction of beauty by the commercialization of marriage. The lost Mrs. Forrester, like a blinded bird, flies into the hands and arms of Frank Ellinger´s successor, Ivy Peters. About this time, she is seen on the street wearing a veil, a symbol of mourning but also of her obscured vision. She is "like a bird caught in a net" (110), and as a "ship without a ballast, driven hither and thither by every wind" (152).

With her old sight and moral values gone, "Mrs. Forrester is neither always there nor always the same" (Rosowski 128). She shows symbolic signs of drifting away from her husband: Niel "had noticed that often when Mrs. Forrester was about her work, the Captain would call to her, ´Maidy, Maidy,´ and she would reply, ´Yes, Mr. Forrester,´ from wherever she happened to be, but without coming to him,..." (142). In fact, the Captain has sensed that she is changing and drifting away from him and from his values ever since the telephone incident. Realizing that his wife is getting lost, "He wanted to know if she were near, perhaps" (142). As a person who "knew his wife better even than she knew herself; and that, knowing her, he - to use one of his own expressions, -valued her" (143), Captain Forrester values her for her dedication to him and for the difference between "the life she might have been living ... and the one she had chosen to live" (79) - he values her morally. Now he does not like to see her drift away from their old moral values and concede to corruption following her rejection by Ellinger. But as a helpless captive of Peter's material attack, the Captain has no means to bring his "lost" lady back.

Ellinger's marriage and, subsequently, the loss of Mrs. Forrester's ladyship have a great effect on Captain Forrester: "Soon afterward", he "had another stroke", which, Mrs Beasley and Molly "were perfectly agreed", is "a judgement upon his wife" (137). In the course of the novel, the Captain has altogether two strokes, each of which is closely connected with a heavy blow: one is after the loss of his fortune, and the other is after the loss of his wife's ladyship following Ellinger's marriage. And this last stroke has its lasting effect: it eventually takes the Captain's life. Several weeks before the end of July that year, "Dr. Dennison had proudly told him [Niel] that Captain Forrester might live a dozen. 'We are keeping his general health up remarkably, and he was originally a man of iron'" (126). Ellinger gets married at the end of July, and the Captain suffers another stroke. With his wife adrift, the Captain must be driven to anguish and despair. His death occurs in early December. Cather's plot arrangement is also closely linked to the effect of Ellinger's marriage: the doctor's remark, Ellinger's marriage, the loss of Mrs. Forrester's ladyship, and the Captain's death happen in three successive chapters. The narrator's remark that "No judgement could have been crueller" (137) is vital to the central meaning of the book, as the cruelty of Ellinger's material pursuit has taken two lives: it directly takes Marian Forrester´s moral life and indirectly the Captain´s physical life.

Mrs. Forrester´s new insight and the values instilled by Ellinger bring an important change in her. Before Ellinger rejects her, she is after romantic love. Now, as she is financially and emotionally changed, she is after money, because her own lesson, the same experienced by Myra Henshawe in My Mortal Enemy, has taught her that happiness and love are closely related to one´s fortune. So, because of her financial difficulties, she involves herself with Peters. As she tells Niel, "´Money is a very important thing´" (114). She betrays the old friends after the Captain´s death because the values they hold do not work: instead, they lead to the loss of money, and eventually, the loss of love. Marian turns herself and her little money over to Ivy Peters, the town´s "shyster" lawyer, one of the "coarse worldlings" like Frank Ellinger. When Niel reproaches her for permitting Ivy´s rudeness, she says "´we have to get along with Ivy Peters, we simply have to´" (123). At her party, Niel observes "her eyes were hollow with fatigue, and she looked pinched and worn as he has never seen her" (161). He cannot understand why she gives a party for people like Ivy Peters. "Why did she do it?" (162) But what Niel does not understand is that the only solution to her present devastated state is to get money, which in her judgement, only persons like Ivy Peters can help her to get. If she wants to survive in the modern commercial world, she has to please Ivy Peters. Poverty has driven her to become a common woman and Ivy's sexual captive.

Though Mrs. Forrester is sexually involved with Ivy Peters, what she expects from their relationship is quite different from what she expected from that between her and Ellinger: money instead of love. She is emotionally involved with Ellinger but financially involved with Peters. As proven by Judge Pommeroy's letter to Niel, her affair with Peters brings her neither happiness nor passion: Mrs. Forrester "does not look happy, and I fear her health is failing,..." (170). And again, "Of Mrs. Forrester,... She is sadly broken" (171), and "She seemed pretty well gone to pieces" (174). During the great part of Book II - in which Mrs. Forrester is sexually involved with Ivy Peters - the reader can no longer hear her musical laughter. In fact she is suffering while she has to degrade herself and submit to Peters' sexual attack. Patricia Lee Yongue points out that "[l]oathsome though Ivy Peters and his manners have always been to her, Ivy Peters can make what little money she has left productive" (124). She does not fail to see his true nature, as she confesses to Niel, "'But, my dear boy, you know nothing about these business schemes. You're not clever that way, - it's one of the things I love you for. I don't admire people who cheat Indians. Indeed I don't!' She shook her head vehemently" (124). But in her desperation for money for the sake of survival, she has to sell herself to a commercial Philistine.

Despite his vicious nature as a character, Peters, through fraudulent means, manages Mrs. Forrester´s finances well: he enables her to take a vacation with the Dalzells away from her housework, to have her new clothes (the first she has "had in years and years" [157]), and later, he sells Captain Forrester´s house at an acceptable price. As a result, the lost lady can never be saved because her new commercial values work. She does not lose money under Ivy Peters´ "care."

Mrs. Forrester´s new values finally lead her to a lucrative re-marriage. In a certain sense, she marries "money", as her second husband Mr. Henry Collins, a big ranch-owner, is very rich. We are told that "[s]he was all done up in furs" (173) and "[t]hey travelled in a fine French car, and she had brought her maid along, and he had his valet" (173). Her second husband is stingy and quarrelsome, but he is generous to his wife: "she seemed to have everything" (173). His quarrelsome and stingy personality forms a sharp contrast to the generosity of Captain Forrester, which, however, leaves his wife almost penniless. Captain Forrester does not quarrel with anybody when his bank fails, but gives up all his money to pay off those poor depositors, while the stingy and quarrelsome Mr. Collins would never do such a thing. Mrs. Forrester finally finds financial security. She will never be left destitute by her new husband. As Niel says, "so we may feel sure that she was well cared for, to the very end" (174) and even after her death: the old Englishman sends a draft for the future care of Captain Forrester's grave, "in memory of my late wife, Marian Forrester Collins" (174).

Under the care of her new husband, Mrs. Forrester becomes quite a different person. Ed Elliott says to Niel, "[i]t was remarkable, how she'd come up again. She seemed pretty well gone to pieces before she left Sweet Water" (174). She asks Elliott to tell Niel, "'Things have turned out well for me. Mr. Collins is the kindest of husbands'" (174). Things have turned out well for her because she has learned a new way of living in this world, a lesson she has learned from her experience with Frank Ellinger and Captain Forrester: to choose a husband who will not, under any circumstances, give his money away and betray her financially.

With her newly found security, her beauty is restored, too. But in my perception, it is a kind of commercialized, meretricious beauty: "'She was a good deal made up, of course, like most of the women down there, plenty of powder, and a little red, too, I guess. Her hair was black, blacker than I remembered it; looked as if she dyed it'" (173). Her commercial beauty is indispensable to her survival and to keeping her rich husband close to her, and this again forms a sharp contrast with her former image when she is first seen running out of the house to greet her husband's friends. Then, "she came out in her apron, waving a buttery iron spoon, or shook cherry-stained fingers at the new arrival. She never stopped to pin up a lock; she was attractive in dishabille" (12). Mrs. Forrester does recover after her second "financially profitable marriage" (Yongue 124), but "[w]hat emerges most forcefully in her final portrait is the degree to which the lost lady's mystery and difference have vanished. She has been found and tamed, relegated to the care of the "kindest of husbands" (Cousineau 321).

To conclude, Mrs. Forrester is a victim of the corruption of Ellinger and "the encroachment of the 'coarse' bourgeoisie and rampant materialism" (Linda Lewis 31). She "participates in cause-and-effect relationships in time: she flourishes as a result of her husband's prosperity and suffers by his loss of his fortune" (Rosowski, Voyage 118). After submitting herself to the onslaught of the money-grubbing materialism of people like Ellinger and Peters, she has joined the Philistines and come to life again sustained by her second husband's wealth. Therefore, "Mrs. Forrester's generosity and her greed, her exquisiteness and her coarseness, her fidelity and her betrayal" (Rosowski, Voyage 128) are closely related to wealth. In a world full of "coarse worldlings" like Ivy Peters and Frank Ellinger, Mrs. Forrester cannot avoid the fate of being "crushed, cut, or pieced" (Lee 201) "into profitable bits, as the match factory splinters the primeval forest" (106).

CHAPTER TWO

THE ORPHANING AND ASPHYXIATION OF MORAL AND AESTHETIC IDEALS IN THE PROFESSOR'S HOUSE

The reader of The Professor's House faces quite a few indeterminacies: What is the cause of Professor St. Peter's malaise? Why is he so deeply depressed? Why does he cling to his old house? Why should he in his middle years lose his interest in life after Tom Outland's death? A careful study of various unconnected segments and some missing connections in the novel will show that the origin and nature of the Professor's despair, the symbolic significance of the old house, and the relation of Tom Outland's experience to the Professor's are all closely connected with the Professor's invisible status as an orphan. The Professor's House is a story of orphanhood and asphyxiation, of moral and aesthetic pursuits which are totally rejected, isolated and alienated from the "human family" and the "human house" of the modern world.

The word "orphan" triggers images of children - bewildered, defenseless, and suddenly bereft. Of course, this is true in life. But these tragedies in every generation have so riveted us with their lasered focus on weakness that we have ignored adult orphans, who are strong and independent, but nonetheless morally bereft. In The Professor's House, Godfrey St. Peter and Tom Outland are such adult orphans. Their pursuits are bereft of those qualities that emanate from "parents" - love and compassion from one´s own country and human community, and that elusive something called "home," not an expensive house or elegant furniture, but "mother" and "father" as moral sources of strength, support and protection for their children. In Chinese, the word orphan is made up of two words: Solitary child or isolated child. In The Professor´s House, the "solitary" or "isolated" status of moral and aesthetic pursuits is fully reflected in Godfrey St. Peter and Tom Outland´s "desire to retreat to a more ideal order of life in the past" and "escape into a pastoral world of innocence and youth" (Stouck, Imagination 98, 103). The destruction of their pursuits, a function of society´s brutality, establishes an inexorable link between personal annihilation and social corruption.

St. Peter´s orphanhood traces back to a childhood connected with pastoral, natural, and esthetic life. Originally he was part of nature, and nature was symbolically his mother. "When he remembered his childhood, he remembered blue water" (29-30). To St. Peter, "the great fact in life, the always possible escape from dullness, was the lake" (30). His reverie of childhood is structured around the love of mother Nature which "made him happy" (30) instead of around his own practical and strong-willed mother. "He could recall [the lake´s] aspects perfectly. They had made pictures in him when he was unwilling and unconscious, when his eyes were merely open" (30). To him, the lake, like a nourishing mother, determines "a part of consciousness itself" (30). That symbolic association between the lake and mother conforms to the unconscious image at work in the child's psyche. Water, for St. Peter, expresses her character as the mistress of all the implied protection of a nursing and nourishing mother, and this echoes the motif of Walt Whitman's poem "Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking":

> O madly the sea pushes upon the land,
> With love, with love. ...
> And with the key, the word up from the weaves,
> The word of the Sweetest song and all songs,
> That strong and delicious word which, creeping to my feet,
> (Or like some old crone rocking the cradle, swathed in
> sweet garments, bending aside,)
> The sea whisper'd me. (234)

However, ever since his childhood, St. Peter's life has been one of orphanhood and isolation. His ideal and natural life has always been in conflict with human material and non-esthetic pursuits. When he was eight years old, his "practical" parents sold "the lakeside farm and dragged him out of his beautiful natural world to the wheat lands of central Kansas. "St Peter nearly died of it" (30). Since he was so dependent on his mother of Nature, the loss of Her was very traumatic, and his life was greatly disrupted: "Never could St. Peter forget the few moments on the train when that sudden, innocent blue across the sand dunes was dying for ever from his sight. No later anguish, and he had had his share, went so deep or seemed so final" (31). It was at this time that he was separated from his mother of nature which had been nurturing him ever since his birth, and became a victim of the commercial ventures of the early generations. As his essential self is "a primitive ... only interested in earth and woods and water" (265), to be separated from the lake means to be left without a self, orphaned and unaccommodated.

From this point on, in spite of the fact that the Professor seems to have lived a normal life, earning his living during the day, carrying full university work, "feeding himself out" to hundreds of students in lectures and consultations, and having a "happy" family, behind the gilded facade of his family and professional life, there is another life: "St. Peter had managed for years to live two lives" (28) and his real life all these years "seemed to him like the life of another person" (267). As the unsurfaced and hidden life of his other half is still that of the Kansas boy, "the original, unmodified Godfrey St Peter" (263), he is searching unconsciously for his original and natural mother and drifting towards her though his life since early childhood has "been accidental and ordered from the outside" (264). "Even in his long, happy student years with the "Thierault family in France, that stretch of blue water [in Michigan] was the one thing he was home-sick for" (31). Afterward, when St. Peter was looking for a professorship, out of the several positions offered him he took the one at Hamilton, "not because it was the best, but because it seemed to him that any place near the lake was a place where one could live" (31).

In fact, part of his adult life is still sustained by his natural mother. From the window of his old house where he has lived for many years, he can see, far away, just on the horizon, "a long, blue, hazy smear" - Lake Michigan, "the inland sea of his childhood." The sight of the lake these many years has been of more "assistance than all the convenient things he had done without would have been" (31). Whenever he is tired and dull, he will leave his desk, take the train to a little station twelve miles away, and spend a day on the lake with his sail-boat. St. Peter´s experience with water as an analogue of his inner state is a reminder of his longing for reunion with the Mother. The lake is a place of unconsciousness to which he is drawn by his desire for regression.

The homelessness which prevails over St. Peter´s attempt to find refuge is also explained through his relationship with the garden. He struggles to cultivate carefully an artificial physical landscape - a French garden in the yard of his old house. St Peter has tended this bit of ground for over twenty years. "In the spring, when home-sickness for other lands and the fret of things unaccomplished awoke, he worked off his discontent here. In the long hot summers, when he could not go abroad, he stayed at home with his garden" (15). "And it was there he and Tom Outland used to sit and talk half through the warm, soft nights" (15). Nature, to borrow a few words from William Wordsworth´s poem "Tintern Abbey", has become the "anchor" of St. Peter´s "purest thoughts, the nurse,... The guide, the guardian of [his] heart, and soul of all [his] moral being" (92).

However, his walled-in garden, like its master, is also "orphaned". Its enclosed space suggests its isolation from the surroundings. The garden "was the one thing his neighbours held against him" (14), just as his family were against the lake many years ago, because the rest of the world, even including those in his own family, care nothing about nature, and, busily engaged in their material pursuits, they "really don´t remember much about trees" (53). When the Professor moves away, he has either to "destroy" the garden or "leave it to the mercy of the next tenants" (77). Besides, the Professor´s garden is of an uncommercial nature, with glistening, barren shrubs and the good ground, in his landlord´s words, "wasted behind his stucco wall", with "dem trees what don´t bear not´ing" (52). But the Professor maintains that in Nature, "there is no selection." Because of the greedy "hand, fastidious and bold, which selected and placed" commercial values against natural law and "made the difference" (75), St. Peter resents nature´s mortal enemy - science (symbolized in the novel by Louie´s profession, electrical engineering).

As a result, in spite of his unconscious efforts to be as close as possible to Nature, St. Peter "lived in the most depressing and unnecessary ugliness" (142). All the traces of natural order are willfully subverted by "fastidious and bold" hands: the state legislature is undermining the academic standards of the university, his colleagues are after commercial gains, students are no longer interested in academic pursuits, and his family is always in an insidious turmoil over money and commodities. But for St. Peter, true values are intellectual, spiritual and aesthetic. Consequently, the Professor, sensing all the time the radical discontinuity of natural things, is like a solitary island, profoundly alienated from the values of his contemporary culture of which he wants no part. This division between St. Peter and his environment produces the orphanhood which displaces his true self and makes him naturally homeless.

St. Peter´s unconscious search for his natural kinsfolk leads to his identification with Tom Outland, a real orphan. Tom´s parents were "moved people," and both died when they were crossing southern Kansas, leaving behind them an orphan who "hasn´t any birthday" (122). With the death of his pioneering parents, with the heroic age of daring and action gone, Tom is a homeless and rootless "tramp" and "cowboy," looking for his original home and kinsfolk.

The orphan condition of Tom´s remarkable character stands out in contrast to the people around him. He has "a simple and straightforward personality" (172). When he was little, he was a sensitive boy, taking a "more responsible position" of a call boy. In personal relations "he was apt to be exaggerated and quixotic" (172). One of his sentimental superstitions "was that he must never on any account owe any material advantage to his friends, that he must keep affection and advancement far apart" (172). He dreams of "self-sacrificing friendship and disinterested love among the day-labourers" (172). His fine long hand with the backspringing thumb "had never handled things that were not the symbols of ideas" (260).

With his pioneering spirit that leads to his discovery followed by the work of path-building and exploration, Tom is like a "turquoise set in dull silver" (107) which is plain-looking outside (dull) and valuable inside (silver) and has the simple but original and natural color, "just the way [it] come[s] out of the mine, before the jewellers have tampered with [it] and made [it] look green" (120) to give it commercial value. However, it is orphans like Tom, "turquoise set in dull silver", who make way for others and create wealth for the parasitic, black-coated officials in Washington and the deceptive smooth talkers like Louie to usurp.

Morally, Tom is isolated and homeless. In his case, orphanhood is a metaphor of the rootless self which in turn furnishes the motif of quest for fulfillment. Tom´s quest is a journey to find a physical, moral and ideal home. Because the orphan is by definition without the intervening support of parents, orphanhood is a paradigm of the deepest dependency between self and world.

Tom's unconscious search for his lost kinsfolk makes him always flock with the people of his "feather." Naturally he is attracted to another homeless and wandering orphan, Roddy Blake, who ran away from a broken home when he was a child because his mother married "a man who had been paying attention to her while his father was still alive" (185). Despite his dirty appearance, Roddy, like Tom, is a "democratic American hero, a self-reliant working man with no life except what he makes for himself" (Lee 250) and has a highly developed social consciousness. As an avid reader of newspapers, he "brooded on the great injustices of his time" (187). Without being "trained by success to a sort of systematic selfishness," Blake "was the sort of fellow who can do anything for somebody else, and nothing for himself" (185). He gives up a fine job firing on the Santa Fe, and goes off with Tom to ride after cattle for hardly any wages, just to be with Tom and take care of him after he has had pneumonia. Tom likes the way they treat each other as brothers: "He surely got to think a lot of me, and I did of him" (185). Tom forms a temporary home (actually an orphanage) with his newly-found kinsman.

A third member of this orphanage is Henry Atkins. Though he is nearly seventy years old, he is actually another deserted orphan of society, as he is an old "boy," simple, kind and helpless as a "child" anybody "could take advantage of" (197). He is "a pitiful wreck" of an old "orphan," who is "dropped" by his employers, who run away after having "done something shady," and is picked up at Tarpin. The three social castaways - Tom, Roddy and Henry - are attracted to each other as they are all marginal to society and share similar moral features. Tom recalls, "´the three of us made a happy family´" (198); they were "off alone" (194), away from the material greed and possessions of "human" society where people as "innocent and defenceless" as they are "cannot manage to keep alive and get along at all." The setting of the cabin is clean, fertile, and colorful - in fact, "the sort of place a man would like to stay in forever" (189). Because Tom perceives Henry through the eyes of an orphan, he inevitably transforms Henry into a maternal figure who "kept that cabin shining like a playhouse; used to dress it all out with pinon boughs, and trimmed the kitchen shelves with newspapers cut in fancy patterns" (197). Living in harmony with these kinsmen, away from the rest of the world, Tom no longer feels he is an orphan. Nonetheless, their way of living on the Mesa, cut off from society at large, manifests the homeless quality of their moral selves and suggests the narrowness of the search for a home.

Tom´s unconscious search for his kinsfolk is further reflected in his intention of going to Washington for help. Before he leaves for Washington, he tells himself: "I would have done my duty by it [Mesa]; I would bring back with me men who would understand it, who would appreciate it and dig out all its secrets" (224). Tom´s sense of finding someone to help indicates clearly his moral stand: he never regards the artifacts as his own, but as property that belongs to the country and "all the people." This also shows his trust in the morality of his mother country and his naive imagination that the people in Washington might be of his "feather."

However, Tom´s experience in Washington reveals, from another angle, that he cannot shed his orphan status. Instead of responding eagerly to the discovery and sending archaeologists to the site, the officials in Washington care less for the American past than for medals from foreign governments. Tom Outland´s trip to Washington is a young man´s journey of discovery: his mother country in Washington (or "Uncle Sam") is not interested in his discoveries and, in effect, rejects him. In Freudian terms he is "disillusioned when he first learns that in reality his mother is not a virgin" (Edel 208). Consequently, the artifacts which have been neglected and abandoned for so many years do not find a home, though they "belonged to this country, the State" (242), and they are but Tom´s "private property" (245), "his spiritual property, belonging by right only to him - because only he appreciates their significance" (Schroeter 80). Tom ends his trip feeling evicted from his mother country.

As a moral orphan, Tom is alienated from almost everyone in Washington. The people he meets are morally "dead." Going to lunch seems to be the only thing the officials do regularly in Washington (228); the only means to get attention is through a lunch invitation. People there will do almost anything for a good lunch (220); under the cover of curiosity, officials, big or small, always try to trick Tom out of his best Indian artifacts; selfish and depressing black-coated clerks and petty bureaucrats in their boxlike houses struggle to outdo each other. Tom tells the Professor, "Their lives seemed to me so petty, so slavish. The couple I lived with gave me a prejudice against that kind of life'" (232). Tom, like the speaker in Eliot's Waste Land, "had not thought death had undone so many." The original purity of Tom's pursuits cannot be found in his mother country.

Totally alienated from his surroundings in Washington, Tom "wanted nothing but to get back to the mesa and live a free life and breathe free air" (236) at his own home. However, what is waiting for him is another blow: the breakdown of his new home - the orphanage. Blake finally turns out not to be Tom's real orphan brother. He sells the artifacts when Tom is away in Washington. To Roddy, everything "would come to money in the end" (244), and the artifacts are physical property in their common possession, instead of spiritual cultural property. Actually, "the factor of money, which leads to the final betrayal of the ruins by Roddy, is present in every stage of exploration" (Strychacz 55). Hermione Lee says, "It looks as if Roddy is set up simply as a foil to Tom to show his unique aloofness from profit motive" (250) and to indicate the extreme isolation of his ideal pursuit against commercial values.

The social and family structure fails the orphan who moves through it in search of shelter and mother. Tom´s alienating experience in Washington and the breakdown of his new home alter his perception of the Mesa where he experiences his own re-birth: "Every morning ... I wakened with the feeling that I had found everything, instead of having lost everything" (251). He is a kind of primitive, almost absorbing the landscape through his pores (Arnold 172). He is lost in "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 color of the sky" (240). Tom, the solitary orphan, has experienced on the mesa what the social man of the twentieth century world can not have.

The significance of the mesa lies exactly in its potential orphan status against all other cities (such as Washington and Hamilton) and all modes of human social behavior. "The beautifully proportioned buildings are arranged together like a beehive, reflecting the close-knit communal nature" of the ancient life. "The reverence for the ancient people that Tom feels there is not simply for humanity that raised itself out of mere brutality, but for the way the Pueblo Indians lived together in harmony and 'built themselves into the mesa,' not against it. The significance of these communal buildings in natural harmony with their setting emerges in the contrast with other buildings in the novel" - The Professor's new house built to meet his wife's desire to reflect their affluence, "the Norwegian manor house being built as a showcase for personal wealth, or the city of Washington where its petty bureaucrats in their boxlike houses struggle to outdo each other" (Stouck, "Indian Heritage" 435). All the buildings in the novel are places of envy and commercial pursuits, the sites of betrayal, corrupt social structures expressive of a petty disorder in human relations. They are purely commercial in their foundations.

"After the psychologically-devastating visit to Washington and the bitter estrangement from his 'family,' Roddy Blake" (Petry 28), Tom is unconsciously courting death, a dead stone city over human love. The fundamental reason is that he cannot find a living lover. Only with the dead is he among his kinsfolk. To him the night of his return is "'the first night I was ever really on the mesa at all--the first night that all of me was there. This was the first time I ever saw it as a whole'" (250).

Tom's delighted feeling that "all of me was there" "depends on his state of total solitude, obtained through displacing Roddy and claiming the mesa for himself" (Strychacz 57), and this shows his preference for being in an ideal, though solitary, home rather than flocking with people so unlike himself. His sense of wholeness lies in the purity and isolation of his pursuit. Nowhere in America can Tom enjoy the feeling of wholeness except in this deserted dead land. The crucial meaning here concerns the creation of a home of his own in which he can find sanctuary. His moral pursuits take him out of a human world in which he is an orphan and into a dead Mesa where he establishes his own house with the dead.

Tom´s desire to create his own home on the Mesa grows as each alien structure fails to accommodate his spirit. In Psychology of the House, Oliver Marc identifies "spiritual necessity" as the rationale for the formation of a personal shelter:

> To build a house is to create an area of peace, calm and security, a replica of our own mother´s womb, where we can leave the world and listen to our own rhythm; it is to create a place of our very own safe from danger. For once we have crossed the threshold and shut the door behind us, we can be at one with ourselves. (75)

Rejected by his mother country, Tom´s pioneering spirit is frustrated. He is no longer interested in carrying out his "duty" or digging out all the "secrets": "I didn´t want to go back and unravel things step by step. Perhaps I was afraid that I would lose the whole in the parts. At any rate, I didn´t go for my record" (252). He wants to be one with "the secrets", in which, psychologically, he has found his origin and roots. He says, "There is something stirring about finding evidences of human labour and care in the soil of an empty country. It comes to you as a sort of message, makes you feel differently about the ground you walk over every day" (194). With his feet on the "real" and "solid ground" and his new possession of a home, Tom´s experience on the Mesa is a religious journey: "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 a great happiness. It was possession.... For me the mesa was no longer an adventure, but a religious emotion" (250-1). In Leon Edel´s words, Tom finds a cave city: "Caves are often feminine sexual symbols. These caves are for him inviolate and untouched, like a seemingly virginal mother preserved from others, a mother of long ago, of the infant years, who belonged only to the child greedy at her breast" (209). Different from the mother figure Tom tries to find in Washington, this mother is a virgin and provides him with a pure and ideal home isolated from the commercialism of the modern world. His religious journey is a progress toward the recovery of his real home, his natural mother, and above all, his orphanhood, in which he finds his own past, a history and an original America which has nothing to do with its present human surroundings.

Tom´s appearance solidifies the obvious alter-ego relationship between himself and Godfrey St. Peter. Before this, because of various setbacks he has experienced in the commercial "human" world, St. Peter has withdrawn from his environment. He avoids "college politics"; he "has no real friends among his colleagues;" and none of the students "mean[s] anything to him." However, the Professor finds in Tom, for the first time since his childhood, his kinsman, and, despite their difference in age, instantly the two become intimate brothers as they are "mentally and spiritually kindred spirits" (Wild 264). As orphan brothers, their similarities are marked by the orphanhood of their pursuits.

Both St. Peter and Outland are exceptionally rare observers of the societies around them. The Professor has "eyes that in a flash could pick out a friend or an unusual stranger from a throng" (13), and Tom´s eyes "saw a great deal." Their awareness of the orphan status of their ideal and aesthetic pursuits keeps them somewhat aloof from their culture and their inner and esthetic lives independent of their environments. Both of them seek solitude from others to live an engaging life of the mind; both need much time for contemplation. They are both inclined to be intellectual rather than emotional in their dealings with others, and each is somewhat obtuse in human interactions. And both intertwine art and religion as governing principles in their lives.

The most obvious orphan status of St. Peter and Outland can be found in the fact that they are the only two characters in the story who do not see things in monetary terms (even the pious dressmaker, Augusta, invests her money in an attempt to get profits, and Crane who used to be interested in nothing but his scholarly pursuits now admits that it is the money from the patent that interests him). In Cather´s words, the world has "broken in two" because society has been marred by greed and materialism. The Professor´s non-materialism accordingly isolates him from his surroundings, even from his own family. Similarly, it is money that separates Tom from his former orphan brother, Roddy Blake. To both Tom and St. Peter, "there are things which cannot be measured in monetary terms, and only such things have lasting value in this life" (Arnold 171). They live "for something more than food and shelter" (219).

Though the Professor is "the best friend [Tom] had in the world" (61), Tom leaves his patent to Rosamond, and "there was no word about [the Professor] in his will". When Rosamond suggests that St. Peter use some of Tom´s patent money for himself, the Professor is very upset: "´[T]here can be no question of money between me and Tom Outland .... [I]t would somehow damage my recollection of him, would make that episode in my life commonplace like everything else.... [M]y friendship with Outland is the one thing I will not have translated into the vulgar tongue´" (63). The Professor closely follows the moral law: "´My [bond] with [Tom] wasn´t [social], and there was no material clause in it´" (63). The only present Tom gives the professor is a saddle blanket which he has used out on the Mesa, and which in damp weather still smells of pony-sweat, a natural and spiritual bond between himself and the

Professor. As the Professor's younger daughter, Kathleen, says to him, "'[Tom] wouldn't have given it to anybody but you. It was like his skin'" (130). Though the blanket is valueless commercially, nothing can part the Professor from it.

"Tom Outland has an almost mystical and mythical presence about him" (Bohlke 21), which awakens the Professor's "other life" and causes his true self to surface. Before he meets Tom, St Peter has "had two romances: one of the heart ... and a second of the mind - of the imagination." Lillian is the object of the first romance, and the Spanish Adventures of the second; but Tom Outland has entered the romance of his mind and wholly appropriated the romance of his "heart." Tom's adventurous experiences create for St. Peter a vivid link to "the great dazzling South-west country" and make "the last four volumes of Spanish Adventures more simple and inevitable than those that went before" (258). As James Wordress writes, "Tom was the living embodiment of the spirit of Professor St. Peter's great imaginative work - the living symbol of the second romance" (78).

As to the romance of the heart, St. Peter has unconsciously given up his wife and formed a "new family" with Tom, his real kindred brother. This might be suggested by my reassembled segments released from syntagmatic plot-grounded structure of the novel. After Tom's appearance, St. Peter begins to drift away from his family. He has always preferred the company of Tom to that of his family (even in diary form after Tom's death). While Tom is living, we are told that "The Professor began to take Tom up to the study and talk over his work with him, began to make a companion of him" (173). He and Tom Outland "used to sit and talk half through the warm, soft nights" (15). Then Mrs. St. Peter withdraws her favour. "[Tom] and St. Peter now met in the alcove behind the Professor's lecture room at the university" (173). They often go swimming together. When his family are away, every Saturday "the Professor turned his house over to the cleaning-woman, and he and Tom went to the lake and spent the day in his sail-boat" (176). Two years after Tom's graduation, they go to the Southwest and Tom's Blue Mesa together. The next summer they go to Old Mexico. They have planned a third summer together, in Paris. In a word, Tom has become the object of St. Peter's first romance and replaced Lillian.

According to the Professor, "people who are intensely in love when they marry, and who go on being in love, always meet with something which suddenly or gradually makes a difference. Sometimes it is the children, or the grubbiness of being poor, sometimes a second infatuation. In their case it had been, curiously enough, his pupil, Tom Outland" (49) who came between him and his wife. When Lillian hints at this, we are told that "there was something lonely and forgiving in her voice, something that spoke of an old wound, healed and hardened and hopeless" (94). Lillian's voice suggests that St. Peter and she are only in the same "family" in name, and his second infatuation with Tom has led to the establishment of a new family in deed.

Why is St. Peter "falling out of love" with his wife? The professor´s unconscious divorce from his wife starts with the re-birth of his former self brought about by his association with Tom. Though they have been husband and wife for thirty years, St. Peter has nothing in common with Lillian. They do not even know each other. His heart is a "dark forest" to her, and Godfrey "understood his own wife very little" (78). As his other half is still that "Kansas boy", St. Peter has never really been a full member of the family. For many years he has stuck to the attic room "where he could get isolation, insulation from the engaging drama of domestic life." The everyday life of the rest of the family is an "engaging drama" precisely because it has nothing to do with his former half: noninvolvement gives him a sense of aesthetic detachment. He makes sure to have everything he needs upstairs, for should he "journey down through the human house he might lose his mood, his enthusiasm, even his temper" (27).

After he meets Tom, who "brought him a kind of second youth," the Professor begins regretting the life he so far has spent with his family. He tells his wife, "´It´s been a mistake, our having a family and writing histories and getting middle-aged. We should have been picturesquely ship-wrecked together when we were young´" (94). But he finds that his wife is not in his dream of the shipwreck. "Indeed, nobody was in it but himself" (95). This might suggest that in his subconscious his wife has never been his kinsfolk, and his "other self," the orphan, has never been emotionally committed to her. Once the Professor has started a new "home" with Tom, he has put behind, and is tired of, his regular family life with Lillian. When Lillian says, "'It's [a change] in your mind, in your mood. Something has come over you. Is it merely that you know too much, I wonder?'" (163) the professor says, "'It's the feeling that I've put a great deal behind me, where I can't go back to it again - I don't really wish to go back. The way would be too long and fatiguing.... And now I seem to be tremendously tired'" (163). He is tired of being in a family with those who do not share his ideals at all. Symbolically, the Professor is "falling out of love" with the commercial values his family represent. His separation from his family is, therefore, "a natural process" (35). He is divorced from his wife morally and physically (in the new house he has his own bedroom and bathroom), and invisibly and unconsciously he has formed a new family with his orphan brother Tom.

Finally, Outland and St. Peter's orphan status that binds them to each other is seen in their sense of insufficiency - a feeling of inadequacy which renders each incapable of claiming an independent life. And both eventually see their essential selves in their orphaned condition as having little to do with the events of life around them and have a shared sense of fatality about life. Tired of their adversarial relationship to the world in which they are uncongenial inhabitants, both St. Peter and Outland seek the same escape - death.

Does Tom manage to escape by going to war to die? Probably so. As James Schroeter says, "Tom is that kind of free, solitary individual on the mesa, not the man of commitments - to Roddy, to Rosamond, to the culture. He went off to die in World War I" (81) to escape the "trap of worldly success" (260). This viewpoint might be confirmed by some of my schematized segments, which, though not closely connected thematically, form paradigmatic features and present hermeneutical unity. What is essential is that Tom has courted "death" once before on the Blue Mesa. He comes down the Mesa with an unhealed psychological and mental wound which he has experienced after being rejected and betrayed by his mother country in Washington and his orphan brother Blake. He comes to Hamilton to study, probably partly because institutions of higher learning are still a mystery to him and partly because Blake has urged him to get educated, to get his "sheepskin." However, at Hamilton, as St. Peter´s best friend, Tom must have seen with his own eyes that the academic profession is no longer a clean profession. He must have sensed that the university where he has studied and worked has become a place for "the new commercialism," a "trade school," and the academic profession is no longer a mystery to him. He has realized that he himself will become a slave of "the new commercialism." When he is working on his experiments in gas, he once remarks to the Professor that there might be a fortune in it: "To be sure, he didn't wait to find out whether there was a fortune, but that had to do with quite another side of him'" (61). This other side of Tom has made him escape becoming the instrument of those "who would grow always more exacting" (259). This is suggested by another paradigmatic detail: Tom "had not only invented [the gas], but, curiously enough for such a hot-headed fellow, had taken pains to protect it" (40). It seems he knows that he will not come back; he "empowered" Rosamond, in the Professor's words, to carry out all his wishes. "Outland got nothing out of it but death and glory" (41).

Surprisingly enough, it is during Father Duchene's short stop in Hamilton on his way back to Belgium that "Outland made up his mind, had a will drawn, packed, and said good-bye. He sailed with Father Duchene...." Sailing together with a priest suggests that Tom undertakes a second religious journey (his first religious journey is connected with courting death on the Mesa). He answers God's call and, by sailing to death, returns to the earth, the origin and source of his status. He comes to this world as a homeless orphan, and dies a homeless orphan in a distant land, as in this "human" land of his mother country, his pursuits are always out of place. The language of the narrative relentlessly tracks Tom's downward plunge into moral and ideal oblivion: Tom "dashed off to the front" (40), and "[s]imply bolted to the front" (40). Unconscious despair would seem to drive Tom to seek reentry into the house of childhood.

Tom Outland is dead and "had not come back again through the garden door as he had so often done in dreams!" (263) With his new "home" split, the Professor too feels a sense of homelessness again. Now he can only find pleasure in his memories of Tom. But the fact is that the real flesh and blood Tom is soon forgotten; for as Scott says, "´Tom isn´t very real to me any more. Sometimes I think he was just a - glittering idea´" (111). It is very hard for the Professor to find someone who will share his memories. Once he begs his younger daughter: "´Can´t you stay a while, Kitty? I almost never see anyone who remembers that side of Tom´" (132). After Kathleen hurries away, "[he] looked after her until she disappeared. When she was gone he still stood there, motionless, as if he were listening intently, or trying to fasten upon some fugitive idea" (132).

Before his acquaintance with Tom, St. Peter has consciously accepted life for what it is, though unconsciously he is looking for his moral kinfolk. But his experience with Tom has brought his true self to the surface. As Stouck points out:

> He comes to recognize the nature of those forces whose conflict brings into question the values by which he has always lived and the fact of his continuing survival.... Slowly the Professor comes to recognize that the family´s desire for wealth and status is being fulfilled at the expense of all the civilized values he has lived and fought for. (Imagination 101)

With the commercialization and corruption of those values, St. Peter finds no bond between his own two "halves" symbolized by the two "houses." He cannot go back to his family unless he can escape his orphan status. However, moral orphanhood is a serious social disease, and in modern America, there are no moral, legal, or medical solutions to it.

First, morally, commerce usurps his home, which is, for the homeless orphan, a topology of hell. His wife has totally given herself to materialism. St Peter feels that Lillian has no real "mind" but rather a "richly endowed nature" given to "vehement likes and dislikes" (49-50). To him "she was growing more and more intolerant, about everything." As the Professor admits to her, "´My forbearance is overstrained, it´s gone flat. That´s what´s the matter with me´" (35). With Rosamond, St. Peter´s patience runs thin. She has totally submitted to Louie´s "florid style" (48) and is indulging in the conspicuous consumption of Tom´s fortune.

The other two members of his family, Kathleen and Scott, are no longer their former selves. They come to accept the flawed nature of the world. Scott wants to become a writer, but, because he needs money to marry, he finds himself trapped in writing "inspirational" newspaper poems that will sell. Kathleen used to be a very considerate girl; at the age of six, when she once was stung by a bee, she had waited outside her father´s study half the morning instead of interrupting his work. But now her jealousy of, and bickering relations with, her sister upsets the Professor. In his house of wares, one becomes aware of the dehumanized quality of life with the focus on the collection and exchange of merchandise. St. Peter is constantly surrounded by commercial bargains, acquisitive vanities and jealousies.

Another reason for the lack of a moral solution to the Professor´s orphan status is that deception and sophistication are part of the modern commercial world. The Professor, however, is not part of it. Many syntactically unconnected segments might confirm that he is always his true self, while almost everyone around him puts on a "mask." False appearances abound in the story´s imagery. Augusta points out, "´so many of my customers are using [false hair] now´" (24). There is "false hair" in "all the shop windows" (23). But, as far as the Professor is concerned, we are told that "for looks, the fewer clothes he had on, the better" (12). Because he is always his true self, Kathleen "had done several really good likenesses of her father - one, at least, was the man himself" (64). His uniqueness and isolation from others is shown by the mould of his head; his profile, we are told, "was so individual and definite, so far from casual, that it was more like a statue´s head than a man´s" (13).

As for the other five members in St. Peter´s family, Cather´s gift for drawing them with complex and contradictory natures reveals vividly that deception and sophistication have become the _modus vivendi_. For example, it seems to Kathleen that she has never done a really good likeness of her mother. "She tried again and again, but the face was always hard, the upper lip longer than it seemed in life, the nose long and severe, and she made something cold and plaster-like of Lillian's beautiful complexion. 'No, I don't see mamma like that,' she used to say....' It just comes like that'" (65). Actually, what Kathleen produces is her mother's true self, and it is what she looks like in her daughter's subconscious. Lillian is "a bitter person" (257). Her upper lip does grow "longer and stiffened as it always did when she encountered opposition" (81): hers is indeed a "cold" and "plaster" image. Kathleen's painting has exposed Lillian's "worldliness, that willingness to get the most out of occasions and people," which has hitherto been hidden from the naked eye.

As Lillian's "second self" (66), Rosamond also is deceptive in appearance. Kathleen "had done many heads of her sister, all very sentimental and curiously false, though Louie protested to like them" (65). These heads seem "false," but in fact, they are Kathleen's mental image and internal impression of her sister, and thus are her true images. Louie likes the heads as his wife's true nature meets his taste. However, clothes can express or mask true personalities, and Rosamond's physical beauty clothes a spiritual emptiness. For example, we are told, "a coat of soft, purple-grey fur ... quite disguised the wide, slightly stooping shoulders" (82). "People were aware only of her rich complexion, her curving, unresisting mouth and mysterious eyes." Even Tom, a young man who "saw a great deal," "had seen nothing else" (59). Although nearly "everyone considered Rosamond brilliantly beautiful," her father, who has sharp eyes, "demurred from the general opinion."

In fact, everyone in St. Peter´s family (except himself) is connected with deception and sophistication, and falsities are positioned in the overall frame of the novel. As a result, though Kathleen´s drawing-teacher at the university has urged Kathleen to go to Chicago and study in the life classes at the Art Institute, she says resolutely: "´No, I can´t really do anybody but Papa, and I can´t make a living painting him´" (65). Though she has "flashes of something quite different" (66) about the world and a curious questing nature (her figure in profile "looked just like an interrogation point"), she has given up a career in which she cannot be successful unless she tells the truth. This is also the case with Scott McGregor. The new group of poets make him angry. When a new novel is discussed seriously by his friends, "he was perfectly miserable" because none of the poems and novels tells the truth. The trouble with Scott is that "´[u]nless I keep my nose to the grindstone, I´m too damned spontaneous and tell the truth, and the public won´t stand it´" (44). The public have, as Rosamond and her mother, a "fastidious taste in literature" (44): they, strange enough, can no longer stand truth. To tell the truth means, in Scott´s words, to "lose my job." One either has to give up a "dirty profession" or, in order to survive, deceive by not telling the truth.

The dilemma of modern values for the Professor is focused in his son-in-law, Louie Marsellus. From Mrs. Crane's account, we can see that he is, like Frank Ellinger in A Lost Lady, a fortune-seeker and came to Hamilton and married Rosamond for her money. "'Mr. Marsellus came here a stranger,'" says Mrs. Crane. "'just at the time the city was stirred up about Outland's being killed at the front'" (136). Louie must have got wind that Outland had left something valuable behind and tried to get acquainted with the Professor, who "brought Mr. Marsellus to [the Cranes'] house and introduced him" (137). After that Louie "came alone, again and again, and he got around" Mr. Crane who told him a great deal about what he and Tom Outland had been working on. "Mr. Marsellus is very smooth. He flattered Robert and got everything there was" (137). Then, according to Mrs. Crane, as Marsellus "saw there was a fortune in the gas" Tom had made, "the first thing we knew, your daughter's engagement to Marsellus was announced, and then we heard that all Outland's papers had been given over to him'" (136). With his "salesman's ability" and his full knowledge of "twists and turns," Louie has commercialized the patent. To justify his usurpation, he says shamelessly, "'My wife was young Outland's fiancee - is virtually his window'" (41).

However, Louie has a veil over his face: he has a generous appearance and uses money to maintain human relationships. According to Frank G. Novak, an ingratiating charm accompanies Louie´s obsessive materialism. He is always cheerful and generous; he is tolerant and desires to be well-liked. He is never malicious or vindictive. It is this seductive charm of Marsellus, his ability to disguise his materialistic and avaricious instincts under a disarmingly ingenuous and open appearance, that makes him and all that he represents so insidious (124).

Because of Louie´s sophisticated nature, although at times St Peter thinks that there is "too much Louie in his life" (152), he admits that Louie is "magnanimous and magnificent!" (170) As William Curtin puts it, Willa Cather manages "to create the ´exploiter´ as a man of generous emotions" (39). As the "evil and insensitive agent of the new mercantile world", Louie is symbolically dismantling the old house, "building" the mansion of new commercialism, and, like Ivy Peters in _A Lost Lady_, draining and crushing the life of its culture. It is people like Louie and Ivy Peters who have driven Tom and the Professor to their condition as orphans and outsiders. Surrounded by such deception and sophistication, St. Peter will remain outside his family and community.

Secondly, there is no legal solution to moral orphanhood. With the moral law broken, the written law is the only solution to injustice. However, the written law itself cannot solve most social injustices. As Mrs. Crane says, "'There are some things the law don't cover'" (139). As Rosamond's bond with Tom is "social, and it follows the laws of society, and they are based on property" (63), she and Louie get the patent while the unworldly Crane who helped Tom with the invention has no "legal rights" (139) to the patent. What disappoints the Professor most is that Rosamond is not morally but legally bonded to Outland's trust. Outland leaves his patent to her, with the belief that she will take the responsibilities to help people like the Cranes, as "there is enough to cover the fine, the almost imaginary obligations" (63), but he never suspects that his fiancee "is too blind to responsibilities of that kind" (129) and would reject the Cranes' claim through legal means. Rosamond and Louie are ruthlessly greedy and spend their usurped wealth at will, for example, building their costly "Norwegian manor house" (39), which is "rather an expensive affair" (38) even by Marsellus' standards, while poor Crane continues to live in poverty and poor health, without the provision of basic comforts for his family. Though the Cranes "want justice," the written law will not provide it, no matter "how clear the matter is to unprejudiced minds" (149). Under the written law, Crane "would lose the case and get nothing."

Ironically, after the wind has blown the flame out of the Professor's stove, he asks, "how far was a man required to exert himself against accident? How would such a case be decided under English law?" (276) These questions show his defiance and protest against written law. With the whole world greedily associated with "dirty" money, the law is no longer, in the words of Judge Pommeroy in A Lost Lady, a "clean" profession, and only immoral shysters like Ivy Peters can be engaged in it. The story exposes certain of the defects of society through the failure of the unjust and dehumanizing written laws. The distortion of both written and unwritten laws is part of the ordinary ugliness and vulgarity that attend life in this world.

Thirdly, there is no medical solution to moral orphanhood. It is commonly accepted that St. Peter suffers from a certain "malaise", which leads to his alienation from his family and community. However, feeling that "he was nearing the end of his life" (74), St. Peter does try to seek medical help before his attempted "suicide." He goes to see the doctor, who, however, finds there is "nothing the matter" with his patient. Medical service rejects St. Peter´s complaint just as legal service will reject the Cranes´ claim. Then what is St. Peter´s malaise? In fact, his malaise is a social disease, typical and universal, not merely personal. The doctor is not in a better position to know what is wanted than is the patient´s own psychic constitution, which may be quite unconscious to the patient himself. In light of Carl Jung´s analysis of modern man, St. Peter's case can be diagnosed as a disease of modern man in the twentieth century.

According to Jung,

> The man we call modern, the man who is aware of the immediate present, is by no means the average man. He is rather the man who stands upon a peak, or at the very edge of the world, the abyss of the future before him, above him the heavens, and below him the whole of mankind with a history that disappears in primeval mists,... The man whom we can with justice call 'modern' is solitary. (Soul 197)

Jung's modern man, like St. Peter, is physically, morally, and emotionally a social orphan.

St. Peter's case reveals an agony of spirit. To such a man, the world is a sort of hell, perhaps in some degree a purgatory. As a result, St. Peter, the representative of the modern man, is pathetic. There is, between him and the rest of the world, an invisible barrier which keeps the world at a physical distance from him and a psychological distance too.

In accordance with Jung's analysis, the revolution in our conscious outlook, brought about by the catastrophic results of the world war, shocks itself in our inner life by the shattering of our faith in ourselves and our own worth. He says:

> I admit this the more readily because I realize only too well that I am losing my faith in the possibility of a rational organization of the world, that old dream of the millennium, in which peace and harmony should rule, has grown pale...through his skepticism the modern man is thrown back upon himself. (Soul 203)

Consequently, rational medical treatment does not yield satisfactory results, as St. Peter's malaise is not a clinically definable neurosis, but stems from the senselessness and emptiness of his life. Jung describes this as "the general neurosis of our time" (Soul 61). With the whole world either morally or neurotically sick, people like the Professor, in Irving Marlin's words, do not and cannot belong to the outside world. This lack of communication creates anxiety. They do not know where to turn for assistance and comfort except to doctors. With the failure of medical treatment, gradually they turn more and more inward, and they realize at last that their only "inseparable love" is the "mirror" in their orphanage.

With no moral, legal and medical solutions to his orphan state, the Professor is unable and reluctant to rejoin his "human family" after Tom's death. This is symbolized by his refusal to move out of the old house completely at the opening of the novel: Professor St. Peter is "alone in the dismantled house where he had lived ever since his marriage." His reborn but still unaccommodated self and his "Original nature" resist the move and stick to the memories of youth, the old dress forms, and Tom Outland's diary sheltered in the old house. The new house, with "the new study on the ground floor," would restore him as a family member and make him conform to the other family members' desirable order of things. The unnaturalness of St. Peter's orphanhood is apparent when he awakes next morning in the new house and wishes that "he could be transported on his mattress from the new house to the old" (46).

In an effort to escape the emptiness of his present life after Tom´s death, St. Peter allows himself to become attached to the dressmaker´s forms in the old sewing room. He becomes quite upset when Augusta comes to remove them; he says that he will be "damned" before giving up his "ladies," whose company he obviously prefers to that of his family (21). One of the forms is an ample, mature, billowy busty lady. It seems "as if you might lay your head upon its deep-breathing softness and rest safe forever" (18), but it is also shockingly hard, of "a dead, opaque, lumpy solidarity" (111). The Professor is attracted to its hardness. It contains perhaps the Professor´s ideal image of the female: feminine and static. The other form is legless and more "self-revelatory." Though at times "the wire lady was convincing in her pose as a woman," unlike St. Peter´s wife and daughters, it won´t change commercially into a woman of "light behavior." These forms remind the Professor of "certain disappointments" or "of cruel biological necessities" he has experienced with the living women in his family. He laments, "When a man had lovely children in his house, fragrant and happy, full of pretty fancies and generous impulses, why couldn´t he keep them?" (126) But he never complains of the forms (21) as they are always their original true selves and he can always "keep" them in their fixed positions away from the corrupted world. The fact that the Professor fears biological life is symbolically a reminder of the need for spiritual life in the human family and community where everyone is busily engaged in material pursuits and spiritual life has become an orphan.

The Professor is not rejecting normal marital life, but rejecting life with changeable women of "light behavior." He forms a new family with his lonely "ladies," making up for what he is missing in his family life after Tom´s death. He has given up living human beings to marry "dead" forms whose rigidity is like his primitive self. This symbolizes St Peter´s developing flirtation with death just as Tom courts death on the Blue Mesa peopled by four dead Indians. St Peter "has indeed become only a "form", devoid of human content" (Clive 281). He "could remember a time when the loneliness of death had terrified him, when the idea of it was insupportable. He used to feel that if his wife could but lie in the same coffin with him, his body would not be so insensible that the nearness of hers would not give it comfort. But now he thought of eternal solitude with gratefulness" (272). He prefers to die beside the forms. They are in the same house, which has become a coffin. St. Peter´s orphan status is moving him nearer to the death and immobility of the "forms."

Because of his identification with dead Tom and dead forms, St. Peter manages to stay away from the new house as long as possible. He even spends the whole of Christmas Day alone in the old house. He is getting more and more indifferent to his existence in Hamilton as the growing concern of his "human family" with materialism has made him feel more and more isolated from them and from what they represent. When he is invited by the Marselluses to go to France, he "knew that he would never be one of this light-hearted expedition" (159) though he has his "foster-brother, Charles Thierault" there. What he feels instead is regret "that he had never got that vacation in Paris with Tom Outland." He wants to "hide behind" the desk and draws away from the family. He plans to go into Tom Outland´s country "if he went anywhere next summer" (270). After his family are gone, "he smuggled his bed and clothing back to the old house and settled down to a leisurely bachelor life" (171), to edit Tom´s diary, to fall back into his memories of his orphan brother, to go to Lake Michigan to wash away his despair, while the family letters often go unread.

However, as the family´s return draws near, he will have to decide, as Scott says to him, where he is going to live, the old house or the new one. His true self tells him that he can no longer live with his family, "especially not with Lillian!" (273) as she is no longer a member of his true family. "He really didn´t see what he was going to do about the matter of domicile. He couldn´t make himself believe that he was ever going to live in the new house again. He didn´t belong there" (271-72). He is falling out of love, "falling out of all domestic and social relations, out of his place in the human family" (275).

It is at this time that the Professor´s conscious regression takes place. He is unravelling "things step by step" and gradually returning to his childhood. He realizes that "[i]t was falling in love that had grafted a new creature into the original one" (267) and made him a member of the human family. His original self is the Kansas boy with whom "he had meant, back in those far-away days, to live some sort of life together and to share good and bad fortune" (264). But after young St. Peter went to France to try his luck and was adopted into the Thierault household, he remembered very rarely that other boy he left behind in the Solomon Valley, only in moments of home-sickness. After he meets Lillian Orsley, St. Peter forgets "that boy he had ever lived" (264). "But now that the vivid consciousness of an earlier state had come back to him, the Professor felt that life with this Kansas boy, little as there had been of it, was the realest of his lives, and that all the years between had been accidental and ordered from outside" (264) and his career, his wife and daughters all "had nothing to do with the person he was in the beginning" (264). "´Real´ is an important word to the Professor now, as he tries to acknowledge that which is dead and to disengage from that which is artificial" (Wild 271).

It is falling out of love that brings back his "original self," the solitary and primitive Kansas boy who is one with the elements of water and earth. Tom has not come back again through the garden door, but another boy has: the boy the

Professor had long ago left behind in Kansas, in the Solomon Valley - the original, unmodified Godfrey St. Peter. The Kansas boy who had come back to St. Peter this summer "was not a scholar.... He seemed to know, among other things, that he was solitary and must always be so; he had never married, never been a father. He was earth, and would return to earth" (265). With the Kansas boy coming back to him, the Professor has become one with Tom, and formally and consciously gone back to the point at which he was orphaned: "the first nature could return to a man, unchanged by all the pursuits and passions and experiences of his life; untouched even by the tastes and intellectual activities which have been strong enough to give him distinction among his fellows and to have made for him" (267).

St. Peter's true self as an orphan can never find a real footing in the modern world, with its commercial values so inimical to his essential being. The orphan theme climaxes here. To him,

> The university, his new house, his old house, everything around him, seemed insupportable, as the boat on which he is imprisoned seems to a sea-sick man. Yes, it was possible that the little world, on its voyage among all the stars, might become like that: a boat on which one could travel no longer, from which one could no longer look up and confront those bright rings of revolution. (150)

The theme of being "lost" here assumes cosmic proportions.

Now the Professor becomes "terribly wise. He seemed to be at the root of the matter; Desire under all desires. Truth under all truths" (265). First of all, the "wise" Professor has realized that his ideal pursuits are doomed. As Tom's tale has ended in "youthful defeat" (176), the Professor also faces the end of his hopes: his old belief that "a man can do anything if he wishes enough", that "[d]esire is creation" (29) gives way to the despairing recognition that seldom do things "turn out for any of us as we plan" (16). Society itself, St. Peter claims, dooms the outcome of potentially creative ideas and actions and puts them into an orphan status.

Secondly, he has also realized that, as the future of America belongs to the "young Marselluses" who are not his real kinsfolk, the old house is no longer a house of his own but a reminder that he has no home of his own. He consciously realizes his orphan status as he gets "used to the feeling that under his workroom there was a dead, empty house" (15-16). With the old house "dismantled," a symbol of the modern world getting rid of old values and morality, St. Peter is morally homeless and has nothing to cling to. Throughout the novel, the image of the old house as a sanctuary for an orphan is threatened numerous times: his landlord wants to rent it to someone else; his wife complains about the rent; Rosamond tries to lure him out of it by offering to build him a new study; other family members and friends cannot understand why he lives there. His own refuge will soon be taken away by the commercial workings of "progress."

His sense of being an orphan deepens as everything in this world connected with his true self is dead: the Blue mesa is dead, Mother Eve is dead, his orphan brother Tom is dead, the old house is going to be taken away. The Professor, the last bastion of an old morality, is going to die, to disappear from this world. Suicide, possibly like Mother Eve, is the only way out. The Professor ultimately searches for it by passively seeking death, the only means to maintain his status as the primitive Kansas boy. He wants to die together with the old house, a "coffin" of morality and old values.

As a result, St. Peter submits to the regressive lure of the unconscious world. It is the fulfillment of an infantile longing to go back to the mother. Jung describes the psychodynamics of the situation in this way: "The more a person shrinks from adapting himself to reality, the greater becomes the fear which increasingly besets his path at every point. Thus a vicious circle is formed: fear of life and people causes more shrinking back, and this in turn, leads to infantilism and finally ´into the mother´" (Transformation 297). St. Peter seeks death to be united with Tom and their "mother" in the house of childhood and to be free of his orphan status.

However, the ending of the novel tells the story of the failure of that "original ego" to assert itself. Materialism triumphs over idealism. Even St. Peter´s suicide attempt is not allowed to succeed: he is saved and restored to the world of the living when all he seeks is freedom and a release through death. However, he cannot live in this world with his ideal pursuits. He experiences a kind of psychic and symbolic death: "He has let something go--and it was gone: something very precious, that he could not consciously have relinquished, probably" (282). Though the professor survives physically, he is dead spiritually. "His new state is death-in-life" (Doris 343). With his natural self gone and dead, the orphan from Kansas is dead. Human desires for moral, religious and esthetic pursuits have been ruthlessly "asphyxiated." It is "a live burial" (Lee 241) of morality, and the old "house" finally becomes a grave of morality as opposed to the corrupted and immoral life around it.

The Professor emerges from his death with a new understanding and resolves to endure. Though he knows intellectually that true pleasure derives from art and religion, neither seems to sustain him as he faces his future. He lets Tom Outland and his orphan status go to the past, and finally accepts Augusta´s way as a possibility, that is, enduring an existence "without delight" (282), hope or great interest. "Augusta was like the taste of bitter herbs, she was the bloomless side of life that he had always run away from, -yet ... he had to face it" (280). "For a man like the Professor, this means self-denial, for he has told us that ´he was by no means an ascetic.... If a thing gave him delight, he got it, if he sold his shirt for it´ (26-7)" (Wild 272). But now he has come to terms with life, the only terms available to him.

Only after he lets his former true self go, does the Professor feel "the ground under his feet" (283). With the world turned upside down, the old standards, conventions, convictions, and ideals are upset, and all melt under one´s feet. With his orphan status gone, St. Peter has gained his "human" identity: "He thought he knew where he was, and that he could face with fortitude ... the future" (283). Like Augusta, he is now "seasoned and sound and on the solid earth" (281).

This is really "a story of letting go with heart," as Cather said to Robert Frost, and the ending is crucial: Tom and the Professor´s ideal life cannot practically be applied among modern men. Their names suggest aloofness, and "Godfrey St. Peter and Tom Outland remain outlanders in the deepest sense without home, without happiness" (Giannone 466). They are outlanders, outsiders in personal relations. They are alienated from modern America. They are at home in the memories of their childhood and youth, in the ancient civilization of Tom´s diary, on the dead Blue Mesa and in the attic room of the "dismantled" house. As Scott says, "´This country´s split in two, socially´" (108). The part where the Professor and Tom Outland remain stranded is in the moral orphanage. This presents an image of The Waste land, where one "can connect nothing with nothing" (T.S. Eliot 3). In Cather´s view, this wasteland - solitary, futile, sterile, loveless - is the Professor´s world. Man in the twentieth century, says Beckett, is an almost helpless cripple striving to make his way in an absurd world.

CHAPTER THREE

POVERTY AS MYRA HENSHAWE´S MORTAL ENEMY

The largest indeterminacy in My Mortal Enemy lies in its title: What does "My mortal enemy" signify? Who or what is Myra Henshawe´s mortal enemy? This question has been a puzzle since the book was first published in 1926. Most readers have been guided by what was apparently authorial intention. James Woodress records that in at least two letters Cather identified Myra´s husband, Oswald Henshawe, as "the enemy of her soul´s peace" (384-85). Critics have suggested other possible answers: some see Myra as her own mortal enemy (Stouck Imagination 121), others her disease, cancer, which is slowly killing her (Yongue 116). Even the narrator Nellie Birdseye has been named the enemy in a reading which questions the novel´s narrative strategies (Skaggs 14). But these are all psychological readings of the novel without reference to the social and economic order it portrays. To a reader from a socialist political and economic system, My Mortal Enemy is most strikingly a drama of capitalist discord and the enemy that Myra Henshawe identifies as destroying her life is poverty. This reading of the novel in China is hinted at in a short piece by Jean Tsien of the Beijing Foreign Language Institute, who writes about Myra Henshawe´s avarice and her "bias towards wealth" (23). But Professor Tsien modifies this negative view of the novel's protagonist by arguing that Myra Henshawe ultimately uses money to attain spiritual fulfillment. I will argue to the contrary that Myra's quest is not finally a religious one but a secular one, a desperate yearning to return to her childhood of wealth and privilege associated inextricably with her uncle's religion, Catholicism.

Myra's story from the outset turns on questions of class and money. The young Myra Henshawe, without any experience of the world's materialism, was carried away by her passion and gave up her inheritance to marry handsome but penniless Oswald Henshawe for romantic love. However, Myra's childhood as the spoilt niece of the wealthy Irish-Catholic John Driscoll, has already formed in her an aristocratic nature. After the marriage, as a vain and dramatic woman, Myra still attempts to live aristocratically within her husband's limited income, most of which is spent on sustaining domestic elegance and satisfying her expensive tastes. Their delicate apartment, her clothes and jewelry, her expensive and beautiful presents to her friends, and her extravagant way of giving away Oswald's shirts and tipping cab drivers and delivery boys all show her aristocratic style of living and her vain nature - her desire to "show off." However, Myra is not happy. She says of herself "'I am a greedy, selfish, worldly woman; I wanted success and a place in the world'" (91). She no longer has "everything" as she used to have before she broke away from her uncle. She wishes "for a carriage - with stables and a house and servants" (52) which can make her take on the "loftiest and most challenging manner" (50). She can no longer do anything to her heart's content because her marriage to Oswald has robbed her of "the first power to back it up" (97); her remark "'it's very nasty, being poor'"(53) echoes her uncle's motto "'Better to be a stray dog in this world than a man without money'" (22).

Myra clearly regrets her marriage and youthful romantic commitments because she warns Nellie, at the beginning of the novel, "'love itself draws on a woman nearly all the bad luck in the world'" (38). She tells Nellie that if she had money she might be consoled for the loss of "the power to love." To Myra, the power of money is stronger than that of love. Her failure to maintain a luxurious life and satisfy her vanity makes her more aware of the limitations of love and the privilege of her former noble status.

But in the second half of the novel, this nobility, in Patricia Lee Yongue's words, "turns to bestiality as Myra grows incapable of supporting her expensive, albeit aristocratic, habits" (116). Living now on the west coast, "Oswald ha[s] a humble position, poorly paid" (84), and his small income can only afford them a "shabby, comfortless room in a hotel wretchedly built and already falling to pieces" (72). They are "under obligation to the management." Now Myra is a sick old woman, and illness, rather than taking away her hate of poverty, has only increased it; she becomes more conscious than ever of the wealth she gave up to marry Oswald. Her sharp sense of poverty makes her "acutely sensitive to sound and light" (86), and the most painful and rancorous experience of her life now is the noise of her neighbors upstairs. She says bitterly, "'Oh, that's the cruelty of being poor; it leaves you at the mercy of such pigs! Money is a protection, a cloak; it can buy one quiet and some sort of dignity'" (83). Poverty has become Myra's mortal enemy and turned her into an eccentric and brutal woman.

Each tramping from upstairs makes Myra's features become "tense, as from an attack of pain." It seems as if she is living in hell, suffering through hellish torments. Myra uses violent neurotic language to curse the tramping and shrieking; she calls the people upstairs "animals," "cattle," the woman an "adder," because Myra, with her aristocratic nature, could hardly stand "to be tormented" and "despised and trampled upon" by her enemy. This has made Nellie realize "how unable she was to bear things" (81), because, as Oswald says, "'she isn't people! She is Molly Driscoll ... she can't endure,...'" (92). The root of her being is more than ever in her former aristocratic self.

At this point, we can see clearly that she totally regrets her marriage. When talking with Nellie, Myra says, "'I've no patience with young people when they drift. I wish I could live their lives for them; I'd know how! But there it is; by the time you've learned the short cuts, your feet puff up so that you can't take the road at all'" (79). And later: "'I wakened up in the night crying, and it did me good. You see, I was crying about things I never feel now; I'd been dreaming I was young, and the sorrows of youth had set me crying!'" (95) "Oh, if youth but knew!" (90) She wishes that she could become young again and take a short cut and go back directly to her uncle's wealth.

As she cannot be young again, she can only try to fight her enemy by whatever means she can find, and Oswald has become the target of her emotional and physical attack. She accuses him of insufficient effort to help her and blames him for everything; she even attributes the noise overhead entirely to him because it is he who has dragged her into such poverty: "'Ah, there he's beginning it again,' she would say. 'He'll wear me down in the end'" (109-110). "'You ought to get me away from this, Oswald,'" (89) she cries. But she knows at the same time that they can never afford a better apartment. Besides her savage outburst against Oswald, she even locks him out though she is entirely dependent on him. Her ferocious treatment of Oswald shows that there is no true reconciliation between her and the enemy brought about by him.

But we cannot forget that she loved Oswald fervently many years ago, and Oswald is devoted to her and self-sacrificing. What has happened to her great capacity for love and friendship? The answer is that poverty has destroyed all her grand passion and romantic commitment. "'It's been the ruin of us both. We´ve destroyed each other. I should have stayed with my uncle. It was money I needed. We´ve thrown our lives away,´" (91) she says sadly. The romantic passion of youth unsustained by money is short-lived. "Driven" and "tormented" by poverty, Myra and Oswald are drawn apart "from that long embrace". The poorer they become, the more she hates him, because he can never have sufficient means to meet her demands as he does not have her uncle´s wealth to back them up. An interesting and indirect segment in Myra´s fight against poverty is that she hides her gold pieces from Oswald for fear that he might steal them away, just as many years ago her uncle tried to keep Oswald from getting her and his wealth by threatening her with the loss of her heritage if she married Oswald. Now, in Myra´s eyes, Oswald is a criminal who has robbed her of her wealth. She will not let herself be robbed for the second time.

If Myra Henshawe is so obsessed by her poverty, what then is the significance of her return to religion? According to Hermione Lee, "the religious feeling of My Mortal Enemy is disconcerting. For all her speeches about absolution and renunciation, Myra goes on clutching and wanting till the last" (221). John H. Randall asserts that "in returning from worldly satisfaction to religious ritual she shows no real understanding of either.... In dying she is as self-centered and selfish as she was in living; she leaves life without having begun to understand it" (238). He concludes "that the book has no religious overtones whatsoever, but is a brute glorification of the power of money" (238). Stephen L. Tanner argues that "[i]n the case of Myra, as has been frequently noted, her reconciliation with religion is no reconciliation with the obligations of human affection" (34). Even John J. Murphy, who sees Myra undergoing an authentic religious experience in her final days, concedes that there is "tension between what appears to be Christian service to Myra on Oswald´s part and the socially cruel, vertical mysticism of her conversion ("Dantean Journey" 11). All of these critics, in varying degrees, see Myra´s religious "conversion" as contradictory, paradoxical, even negative. Therefore, a plausible interpretation and evaluation of Myra´s religious reversion is a key issue in our understanding of the novel as a whole. As David Stouck points out, allusions and veiled references count for a great deal in My Mortal Enemy because of the book´s "unfurnished" brevity; accordingly we must look carefully at the veiled references to her religious reversion if we are going to understand its direction and significance. This is indeed a novel with many "spots of indeterminacy," inviting the reader to collaborate in the fabrication of its meaning. I will, with my socialist "prejudice," argue that Myra´s deathbed return to her great-uncle´s Catholicism forms an important part of her fight against, and attempt to escape from, poverty. In her religious "conversion" she may be attempting to complete a journey of spiritual ascent, but unconsciously she is trying to return to her childhood of wealth and privilege, symbolized by the forms of her uncle´s Roman Catholicism.

Before we can fully understand what I would call Myra´s religious "reversion," we should, first of all, try to know her true nature. It relates directly to one of Willa Cather´s consistent themes - the desire to return to childhood and youth. In relation to Carl Jung´s psychological analysis of human souls, Myra´s behavior in the second part of the novella originates from the estrangement of her Self, resulting from the split of her soul from the security of her childhood and youth which was characterized by wealth and privilege. Besides the cancer, Myra is suffering from another kind of "infection", spiritual and psychological in nature. Myra herself admits this: "´I´ve two fatal maladies´" (89). She has suffered from this "infection" since she was thrown back upon herself when she was separated from her wealthy childhood. Myra´s whole psychological domain is symbolically made up of two halves, her former self connected with her childhood before she married Oswald and her present self after the marriage, or, in other words, her real soul, which is deeply rooted in her former aristocracy, and a false soul which is temporary and floating. Myra´s loss of her real soul and real self was a traumatic experience which has eventuated in her despair. Her return to Catholicism is at once a restoration of her soul to the security of childhood and a return of the self to her socially and economically privileged status.

On the surface, Myra has rejected the physical world and normal life of human love in preference for the life inside her own "spiritual" estate because of her awareness of the physical world's inability to bring her back to her former wealth. For example, Myra insists on calling attention to her devastated state: "' Why must I die like this, alone with my mortal enemy?'" (113) However, this does not mean she has really accepted her present state; on the contrary, it suggests that she is struggling to insulate herself against its condition of poverty. Despite the fact that she is deep in poverty, Myra's subconsciousness is still rooted in her childhood of aristocratic privilege closely associated with wealth, power, command, and control (Myra once remarks that her head "'was no head for a woman at all, but would have graced one of the wickedest of the Roman emperors'" [77]).

As a result, Myra's religious pursuit becomes of utmost importance. Because of her quarrel with her uncle over the penniless free thinker Oswald Henshawe, "son of a German girl" and "an Ulster Protestant whom Driscoll detested" (20), John Driscoll puts his cards on the table: her love, or his money. By breaking with her uncle and his church, Myra has broken with wealth and dragged herself into poverty. She comes to blame herself for rejecting her uncle's advice. "'The Church has been on her mind for a long while,' said Henshawe. 'It is one of her delusions that I separated her from the Church´"(116). Myra has seen a connection between wealth and Catholicism on the one hand and a connection between poverty and her marriage on the other hand because Oswald´s non-Catholic status is the only stated reason for John Driscoll´s opposition to the marriage. Therefore, she tries to find happiness and restore her wealth spiritually by turning against her husband and returning to the wealthy Irish roots and the faith of her ancestors.

Through the naivete of Myra´s pleasure in identification with Catholicism, in reality a nostalgic longing for childhood and youth, we can see more clearly her true nature. Under the cover of a pious quest, there is a constant and pathetic wish in the inner heart of Myra for something else - for the recapturing of wealth, the fulfillment of her childhood happiness, the chance to have a complete and fruitful conciliation with her uncle: "´I´d go back to him and ask his pardon´", she confesses. Here secular and religious motives become confused. As John J. Murphy has observed, "in [Myra´s] mind and in the novel´s iconography, Old Driscoll, who withdrew his favor and made her poor, was like God" ("Dantean Journey" 11).

However, Myra is in search of her former soul and wealth unconsciously. Myra´s infection can be "traced back to those knots in psychic life that we call the complexes" (Jung Soul

167). Myra´s individual psyche refuses to fit into her present devastated state and instinctively makes her leave her romantic and rebellious ways to explore the bypaths and lanes which "any sort of ticket" would bring her to, to fall back upon the reality of psychic life and expect from it that certainty of aristocratic privilege which her marriage has denied her.

What is significant in psychic life is always below the horizon of consciousness, and when we speak of the spiritual problem of Myra, we are dealing with things that are barely visible and here are rendered even less visible by Cather´s "unfurnished" style. We can not tell whether Myra is intentionally redeeming herself for the sake of recovering her wealth. Perhaps her spiritual disease is even invisible to her own consciousness. She forgets her present self, restoring her instinctual nature and putting her own conception of her former self in place of her false being. In this way she slips imperceptibly into a purely conceptual world where the product of her unconscious activity progressively replaces reality. Carl Jung sums up this process:

> The active contents of the unconscious do behave in a way I can not describe better than by the word "Autonomous." The term is used to indicate the fact that the complexes offer resistance to the conscious intentions and come and go as they please. According to our best knowledge about them, complexes are psychic contents which are outside the control of the conscious mind. They have been split off from consciousness and lead a separate existence in the unconscious, being at all times ready to hinder or to reinforce the conscious intentions. (Soul 79)

Myra's real unconscious intention in her religious quest can be traced throughout the second part of the book where the association of religion and money creates a suggestive sub-text. The first time in Part II of the novel that the offices of the church are invoked - Nellie is asked to have a mass said for the repose of Modjeska's soul - is also the time when Myra reveals the gold pieces she has been hoarding. This money, she says, kept for "unearthly purposes," is a solace, and we are reminded of her constant wish for money so that she might shelter herself from common people like the Poindexters overhead.

Once Myra herself openly confesses what she is seeking from religion. Nellie tells us that "when [Myra] had been lying like a marble figure for a long while, she said in a gentle, reasonable voice: 'Ah, Father Fay, that isn't the reason! Religion is different from everything else; because in religion seeking is finding'" (111). From this we can imagine that Father Fay and Myra have discussed in what way religion is different from everything else. Father Fay, as a Catholic priest, must have held that religion is different from everything else because spiritual pursuit in religion is pure, selfless, and it brings one consolation. Myra, upon her own meditation after Father Fay is gone, has rejected this reasoning. Her "gentle, reasonable voice" shows that she is really reasoning seriously with Father Fay during his presence, and absence, and has figured out her explanation. Her real intention in "seeking and finding" is interpreted by Nellie:

> She accented the word ´seeking very strongly, very deeply. She seemed to say that in other searchings it might be the object of the quest that brought satisfaction, or it might be something incidental that one got on the way; but in religion, desire was fulfillment, it was the seeking itself that rewarded. (111)

Nellie´s interpretation is that, to Myra, in religion, it is not "the object of the quest" that brings satisfaction; therefore, salvation after death is not really the goal of her search. Rather, being engaged in the quest is itself fulfilling. In fact, Myra´s religious reversion is a process of seeking for her Catholic roots. By returning to Catholicism, what she is going to find will be not a spiritual illumination, but a fulfillment of her former material privilege. Her sole purpose is to fulfill her old desire for money and to look for the reward of wealth through being a pious and penitent sinner; she seeks to be reconciled in spirit to her great uncle who is closely identified with the church and God.

Father Fay is another person who has, to some extent, sensed something unusual in Myra´s religious pursuit. As an impressionable young observer, he suggests that her spiritual quest is deceiving when he says "´She´s a most unusual woman, Mrs. Henshawe´" (110). It seems that Myra´s argument with him about the function of religion and her other unusual forms of behavior have fascinated him and made him ask himself: what is this unusual woman after? He smiles "boyishly" (111). This detail of the smile suggests his boyish curiosity has been met, that he has discovered Myra's spiritual infection hidden behind her physical disease. His sharp eyes may have discerned that Myra is not what she likes to be taken for - a truly pious woman. Myra's reasonable voice and Father Fay's facial expression suggest that both of them have found clues to their respective questions: Myra's religious quest is for "a different reason."

As a result, in her dying days, Myra is appeased by religion and becomes more and more pious. "Father Fay came to see her almost daily now. His visits were long, and she looked forward to them" (110). And during those days and nights when she talks very little, "one felt that Myra's mind was busy all the while" (111). Again, Nellie finds out that Myra's religious reversion is different from normal religious pursuit. Once when Nellie picks Myra's crucifix up from the bed to straighten her sheet, Myra "put out her hand quickly and said, 'Give it to me. It means nothing to people who haven't suffered'" (109). This detail shows a different dimension of Myra's quest. Her peremptory retrieval of the crucifix from Nellie's hand is usually attributed to her intense suffering, but the very rudeness of the gesture suggests the old grasping Myra, not the contrite penitent. The religious icon, which would have been part of her childhood, recalls her psychological and material losses as well as the suffering of Christ. For both Christ and Myra poverty was a condition of suffering, but while for Christ it was a condition of humility, for Myra it is a bitter struggle with an enemy. Both Nellie and the reader know that Myra has suffered from poverty. So the crucifix "means" a lot to her because she is using it, the symbol of her pious devotion to Catholicism, as a means to banish poverty. Therefore, Nellie "felt now that [Myra] had [the crucifix] for a different reason" (109). What "a different reason" implies here is probably not conventional spiritual pursuit. By merging herself with the symbol of Catholicism, the crucifix, Myra perhaps feels herself removed from poverty and spiritually closer to her childhood.

This preoccupation with her childhood and youth and her unconscious attempt to recover her wealth through redemption can also be found in her reflections on literature which contain some specific allusions to Shakespeare´s plays Richard II and King John, each of which is about deposed or failed kings. According to Harry B. Eichorn, "The significance of Myra´s quotation of the opening line of Richard II depends on the context of the passage in the novel. Myra has just been talking about her uncle. John of Gaunt, of course, is King Richard´s uncle, and Miss Cather seems to be suggesting an ironic contrast between Myra and King Richard in their relations with their uncles" (236). Richard brings his own downfall by rejecting his uncle´s accusation of his irresponsible rule. Similarly, observes Eichorn, "Myra Henshawe comes to blame her misfortunes on her rejection of John Driscoll´s advice" (236). In the other play Myra likes, King John, the king tries to promote a marriage, for purely political reasons for his niece, Blanch of Spain, who, says, "My uncle´s will in this respect is mine." King John´s nephew, Arthur, on the other hand, fights against his uncle upon the latter´s opposition to his claim to the throne and gets himself killed. The two plays remind Myra of her own youthful years with her uncle. She must be filled with regret that she, unlike Blanch, "defies" her uncle´s opposition to her marriage, and like Richard and Arthur "she unsuccessfully challenges her uncle´s authority" (Eichorn 238) and loses her wealthy and aristocratic status. It seems, then, that her conviction of being a sinner (for giving up her fortune) in need of forgiveness is especially strong.

Similarly, in Heine´s poem about "the old tear left from youth´s sorrows, and in the verse about the poor-sinner´s-flower[that grows in the suicide´s grave], she hears the drama of her own life rehearsed - the pursuit of romantic love, the sorrow of the penitent" (Stouck, Imagination 127). There are invisible tears on Myra´s face, for religiously and financially she committed suicide when she married Oswald and has been a sinner and pauper ever since.

When Nellie reminds Myra that she liked Walt Whitman, "she chuckle[s] slyly. ´Does that save me? Can I get into your new

Parnassus on that dirty old man? I suppose I ought to be glad of any sort of ticket at my age!'" (97) This is the voice of faint hope and illusion, evidence of an inner struggle against poverty. The words "slyly", "save", and "ticket" suggest that Myra has subconsciously connected her literary taste with her religious redemption, with the hope of being "saved" from her poverty. Unconsciously she would resort to any means to achieve her ends, as "any sort of ticket" might offer her passage back to her childhood. Directly after she calls Walt Whitman "that dirty old man" (this echoes "A poor man stinks"), she tells Nellie a lot about her uncle and speaks highly of him. To return to her Catholic roots, Myra has to give up poor and rebellious poets like Walt Whitman who can offer her no "ticket" of "passage" back to wealth, together with her own rebellious ideas, and return to her uncle's taste: "'I like the kind [of poetry] bad boys write on fences. My uncle had a rare collection of such rhymes in his head that he'd picked off fences and out-buildings. I wish I'd taken them down'" (97).

We, as readers, know clearly what kind of poems her uncle would appreciate as he was illiterate. To some extent, her uncle himself has become a kind of God figure to her. Because it is her uncle, not God, who is directly connected with her former wealthy childhood and who holds the key to her readmission into Catholicism, what she is worshipping throughout her religious reversion is her uncle, instead of God, and whatever she does and says is totally in accordance with her uncle's motto. Because of her desperate longing for her uncle's wealth, the fence rhymes of his taste will definitely outshine Whitman's poems and can also meet her emotional needs even though they are so far away from her former elegant tastes.

In fact, in my perception, the whole third chapter in Section II is specially designed by Cather as an intricate mixture of not overtly connected segments to describe Myra's practical literary taste and her high opinion of her great uncle, and it ends up with Myra unconsciously redeeming herself by "murmuring at the very bottom of her rich Irish voice: Old John of Gaunt, time-honoured Lan-cas-ter..." (99). All these allusions to King John, Richard II, King Lear, Heine's poem, and fence rhymes offer an insight into the true nature of Myra's literary taste, which, however, no longer has much to do with a normal artistic quest because both her old poets and fence rhymes are linked to her regret, guilty feelings, and her respect for her uncle. They are her spiritual "props" and are her indispensable means of bringing herself closer to the moment of forgiveness and to restoring her status as Driscoll's niece.

Theodore S. Adams points out that "[i]n the second section we ask how a woman so disloyal and cruel can yet be a saint.... But angels and devils warring for possession of her soul present an eternal human paradox. My Mortal Enemy dramatizes but does not resolve this paradox" (148). However, it seems to me there is no real paradox here. It is Myra's eager craving for the wealth and power of her youth, intimately connected with the church, that makes her put on the look of a saint in front of the priest, Father Fay, but makes her behave towards her husband, the source of her physical poverty, as a disloyal and cruel woman. Her return to religion and simultaneous ferocious treatment of Oswald come as no surprise because her religious gestures are motivated by material and psychological rather than spiritual ends.

At this time, Myra's Catholicism is quite similar to that of her old great-uncle's. "Indeed, she was a good deal like him; the blood tie was very strong" (20). She speaks admiringly of her uncle's "violent prejudices" (97) and of his ability to get what he wanted, whether in helping his friends or in crushing his enemy. One of the things that he wanted was wealth, and one of the enemies he wanted to crush would have been poverty. What he said about wealth and poverty proves this: "'It's better to be a stray dog in this world than a man without money. I've tried both ways, and I know'" (22). Myra is striving both consciously and unconsciously exactly as her uncle did before. By the end of the novel, Myra Henshawe has once again become Molly Driscoll: as Oswald says of the later Myra "'But that was just Molly Driscoll!'" (121) This naming serves as another answer to the paradox of Myra's double images both as a disloyal and cruel woman and as a saint: they (Myra and her uncle) behave like saints in front of their friends (one of them is wealth), but they are violently cruel in crushing their mortal enemies.

Myra's attempt to escape from poverty has reached its climax in her choice of place to die: a headland overlooking the ocean. This might seem to be a final act of penitence in her quest to be forgiven, absolved of her sins, but it can also be read as a last desperate act to escape and find release physically from poverty. She leaves the shabby hotel room and the husband which are the symbols of her poverty. Afraid Oswald might find her and drag her back to this location of poverty again, she leaves a note behind, saying,"My hour has come. Don't follow me. I wish to be alone" (115). This might be interpreted as "Leave me alone." It is incredible that "A woman so ill" has a "yearning strong enough to lift that ailing body and drag it out into the world" (117) away from her mortal enemy. Her decision to die by the cliff facing water (across which Christ travels) expresses her desire to return to Catholicism so intimately associated with her childhood. Such a reversion may be her only consolation against dying. It is the only way now that she can triumph over poverty, her mortal enemy.

We could not but feel shocked by such an ending, finding Myra an absurd and uncanny person. But if we have any idea about Myra's conscious ego personality and the real psychic facts which are for the most part hidden from us, the ending is not surprising at all. According to Jung, in this respect "the psyche behaves like the body with its physiological anatomical structure, of which the average person knows very little too" (Self 7). Because of this state of unconsciousness, which is immune to conscious criticism and control, Myra stands firm in her unconscious quest, open to all kinds of temptation and psychic infections. What Margot Northey says about the grotesque can accurately sum up Myra's case:

> The grotesque emphasizes incongruity, disorder, and deformity, and arises from the juxtaposition or clash of the ideal with the real, the psychic with the physical, or the concrete with the symbolic.... Sometimes given a transcendent reference, the grotesque can be seen as an indirect search for a higher reality or the sublime via the unconscious or demonic region of the mind. (7)

Northey makes a similar remark (in the same book) which also confirms Myra's unconscious quest:

> Both the Gothic and the grotesque present mysterious, non-rational levels of experience, whether one chooses to call these the dark side of the soul, the night side of life, seeking in strange ways a truth beyond the accepted surface of life. (8)

Myra's desperate escape from the shabby hotel reflects the dark side of her soul and her indirect search for a higher reality connected with her aristocratic childhood. She dies in her self-made domain and unconscious dreams, and it seems to her, away from poverty.

Another reason that Myra has chosen the cliff as her death place is that her uncle's magnificently elaborate religious funeral seems in retrospect to resemble worldliness and wealth, and Myra is seeking to ritualize her death in a similar religious way to make it as scenic as his funeral. She is concerned with religious rituals and her immediate after-life even before her death. She remembers her uncle´s magnificent funeral, a showcase of his wealthy status. Because of his money, "Driscoll did not come to the church; the church went to him" (26), and the whole church was at a dead man´s command. We are told that at his funeral "the high altar blazed with hundreds of candles" (26), and it seems that "he had gone straight to the greater glory, through smoking censers and candles and stars" (27). It would appear that he bought his way into heaven. Perhaps Myra is thinking of this when she asks Nellie: "´Why is it, do you suppose, Nellie, that candles are in themselves religious? Not when they are covered by shades, of course - I mean the flame of a candle´" (111). With this strong memory of her uncle´s apotheosis, she asks Nellie and Oswald to use candles for light during their watches, even saying accusingly, "´At least let me die by candle light; that is not too much to ask´" (110). Probably, she also likes to leave this world, like her uncle, through the flame of smoking candles, rising to the greater glory. And Myra has hoarded gold, so that she might have masses said and like her uncle buy her soul´s peace. To ensure that she can get a decent mass after her death, she keeps the gold coins "for unearthly purposes; the needs of this world don´t touch it" (102). This shows that she thinks that money can buy anything, as her uncle´s funeral has set her a vivid example of money´s ability to open all doors.

Though Myra is not buried in the king´s highway, she does succeed in making her final escape to her cliff, where, according to Nellie, "There was every reason to believe" she "has enough desperate courage" (92) to endure the dark hours to live to see the dawn which she views as "always such a forgiving time" (89). Myra must have found at the dawn the absolution that she has so aspired for: "´You know how the great sinners always came home to die in some religious house, and the abbot or the abbess went out and received them with a kiss´" (89). Through the ceremony conducted by herself, Myra seems to have seen herself forgiven by her uncle and received into his wealthy home with a kiss. She has come back in her imagination to the "pomp and dramatic splendor" (27) of the "big stone house", the "finest property in Parthia" (18), to be one with "the Sisters of the Sacred Heart" who took over the big house at John Driscoll´s death. All these scenes suggest that Myra´s desire for redemption is rooted in her irrational desire to return to her uncle´s shelter, not the one he ironically provided for her in his will (the home for aged and destitute women in Chicago), but the one that surrounded her lavishly in childhood.

Another interesting detail is that Myra dies with "the ebony crucifix" in her hand and her head bowed. This forms another sharp contrast with the scene of "that thrilling night" many years ago "when Myra Driscoll came down that path," "leaving a great fortune behind her," "with her head high" (22-23), and when she "continued to hold her head up haughtily" (12) even ten years ago with Oswald's ample income. But now she is dead with her head bowing before Catholicism and wealth.

According to some critics, Myra's will that her body be cremated is in defiance of the Church to which she has finally returned as cremation did not accord with Catholicism. But this might be interpreted as her further attempt to redeem her sins and punish herself by purifying herself in the fire of hell symbolized by cremation. Just as the cancer which ultimately takes Myra's life is incurable, Myra's lust for wealth (her other fatal malady - her spiritual infection) can never be cured. From the way that Myra has exaggerated the value of money, we can assume that she could not have minded suffering one more time in the fire so long as her former status could be restored. So, "My Mortal Enemy can be viewed as an allegory of the apostasy of a soul - its days of sin, its punishment,... The novel depicts a journey like the journey in Dante's Divine Comedy, and like Dante's poem includes the confessional ritual, the crucifixion image, the ascent to the mountain top, and the vision of dawn" (Murphy Journey 11), and above all, the last stage of the journey, purification in the fire (which Myra herself cannot accomplish before her death). It is true that Myra's end is a drift away from humanity; however, it is not likely a journey towards God, rather retrogressively a journey to all the security of privileges of her childhood, and to a God figure, her wealthy uncle.

To sum up, Myra, through her religious reversion, is not attempting to escape from the commercialism of the modern world, nor is she developing a profound desire for spiritual things. She is attempting all the time to escape from poverty. Her last minute return to the church and last hour repentance are not a spiritual triumph but a final testimony to her confused feelings of greed and nostalgia. Now we can see the true nature of the "vertical mysticism" of Myra´s religious reversion. It is not "admirable and genuinely religious." From the beginning to the end, Myra remains the same extremely worldly and greedy woman. So throughout the novel, Oswald, as Aunt Lydia says, "´has been devoted to a fault.´" The truth of this American novel, like the truth of The Great Gatsby, is an economic and psychological one; it has little weight as a drama of the soul.

CONCLUSION

MONEY - THE MODERN LAW OF GRAVITY

Willa Cather's three "middle" novels reflect an increasing preoccupation with money. The theme is less obvious in A Lost Lady, and critics accordingly have more often viewed the novel in light of its romantic, pioneer and pastoral themes. However, the novel marks the turning point in Cather's writing - from the pastoral "fresh, green breast" of the new world to a wasteland dominated by money. Mrs. Forrester's sudden realization of the importance of money in solving the problems of life has ultimately turned her into a product of the modern commercial world.

The theme of money is much stronger in The Professor's House. Even though the novel is viewed by many critics in relation to nostalgia and a mid-life crisis, the question of commercial values and "progress" cannot be evaded. Cather uses money values to characterize an isolated moral vision inadequate to meet the realities of life's pragmatic conditions. Money is then the emblem of the irreducible reality which almost every character in the novel must accommodate. Surrounded by commercialism, those with ideal pursuits face the reduction of being and humanness to a compromise condition in which life and death are forced into a stasis of powerlessness.

Money becomes a really brutal theme in My Mortal Enemy. Cather uses money to symbolize the central force in a relativistic world. While the novel focuses on the complexity and mystery of the human condition, the reality of money, which is of central concern at the outset of the novel, becomes a metaphor for the emotional needs at the basis of human motivation, even for religious and spiritual quests.

In Cather's three novels, moral and aesthetic pursuits are constantly defined by changing circumstances of reality. Cather is acutely conscious that money is one of life's powerful exigencies, exposing people to the reality of the world, and she presents situations in which money becomes the only controlling factor in the actions of her characters. This study of the development of Cather's ideas about money in relation to moral vision confirms her concept that the world had "broken in two." In a world where moral and natural law no longer exists and the written law is not effective, there is only one law which is most effective - money, which has become the modern law of gravity and towards which everybody is drawn.

Failing in her goal to discover and depict a modern self with a sense of relatedness and the certainty of being "at home in the world," Cather seems to finish with the money theme in this middle period, and turns to history and religion to create an Edenic vision and describe redemptive myths. In novels like Death Comes for the Archbishop and Shadows on the Rock she attempts to draw sustaining force from a mytho-poetic reordering of North America's religious past.

However, money as the law of gravity does not end with Cather's middle novels. In fact, what is depicted in the three novels is not only a drama of capitalist discord, but also a forecast of a future in which money will become a universal law of gravity. Money - and its associated corruption - has brought about the decline and collapse of so many "socialist" countries. It is true that my socialist training as a reader of literary texts makes me foreground certain motifs in A Lost Lady and My Mortal Enemy, but what accounts for more in my reception of the three novels lies in my identification with certain characters in the novel, the victims of money, Mrs. Forrester, Tom Outland and Godfrey St. Peter. My own experience as a university teacher in China has made me suffer from the same malaise that Professor St. Peter does. My pure and ideal academic pursuits were asphyxiated long ago. Tom's experience reminds me constantly of my own exiled or orphaned status from my mother country where I was an "outlander." The side effect of money and corruption has left me decentered, alienated, outcast, and homeless. I have joined Cather's succession of aimless characters and drift about together with Tom Outland and St. Peter. Their uncertain, ever-wandering, home-borrowing condition of metaphor forecasts my own future. Behind the homeless voices of The Waste Land "How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?" echoes my cry "How shall we sing the national anthem in a strange land?" With money as a universal law of gravity in both capitalist and socialist countries, Eliot´s wasteland - solitary, futile, sterile, loveless - is forever our world.

WORKS CITED AND CONSULTED

Adams, Theodore S. "Willa Cather's My Mortal Enemy: The Concise Presentation of Scene, Character, and Theme." Colby Library Quarterly, 10 (1973): 138-48.

Ambrose, Jamie. Willa Cather Writing at the Frontier. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1988.

Arnold, Marilyn. "The Function of Structure in Cather's The Professor's House." Colby Library Quarterly, 11 (1967): 169 -78.

Bakhtin, Mikhail M. The Dialogic Imagination. Trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1987.

Bloom, Harold, ed. Willa Cather. New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1985.

Bohlke, L. Brent. "Godfrey St. Peter and Eugene Delacroix: A Portrait of the Artist in The Professor's House?" Western American Literature, 16 (1981): 21-38.

Bredella, Lothar/Haack, Dietmar. Perceptions and Misperceptions: The United States and Germany. Druck: Gahmig Druck Giessen, 1988.

Burch, Beth. "Willa Cather's A Lost Lady: The Woodpecker and Marian Forrester." Notes on Contemporary Literature, 11 (1981): 7-10.

Butler, Ronald. "Sexual Imagery in WIlla Cather's A Lost Lady." Willa Cather Pioneer Memorial Newsletter, 1989, 33 (3): 32-35.

Callander, Marilyn Berg. Willa Cather and Fairy Tale. London: UMI Research Press, 1989.

Cather, Willa. My Mortal Enemy. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1964.

-------. Not under Forty. New York: Knopf, 1936.

-------. The Professor´s House. Toronto: The Macmillan Company of Canada.

-------. A Lost Lady. New York: Random House, 1972.

Chang, Shong Ru. Theory of Literature. Jilin: Jilin People´s Press, 1982.

Cousineau, Diane. "Division and Difference in A Lost Lady." Women´s Studies, 1984, 11 (3): 327-45.

Curtin, William M. "Willa Cather´s Individualism and Style." Colby Library Quarterly, 8 (1968): 37-55.

Dong, Hengxum. "Willa Cather." Foreign Literatures Quarterly (in Chinese), 3 (1984).

-------. "Art Lies in Appropriateness - Willa Cather´s Mode of Expression in A Lost Lady." Willa Cather Pioneer Memorial Newsletter, 1988, 32 (3): 15-18.

Eagleton, Terry. Literary Theory - An Introduction. Oxford: Basil Blackwell Ltd., 1986.

Edel, Leon. "A Cave of One´s Own" in Critical Essays on Willa Cather, ed. John Murphy. Boston: G.K. Hall & Co., 1984, pp. 220-217.

Eichorn, Harry B. "Falling out with Love: My Mortal Enemy" in

Critical Essays on Willa Cather, ed. John Murphy. Boston: G.K. Hall & Co., 1984, pp.230-243.

Eliot, T.S. The Collected Poems. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1930.

Forman, Henry James. "Review of A Lost Lady" in Critical Essays on Willa Cather, ed. John Murphy. Boston: G.K. Hall & Co., 1984. pp. 177-178.

Giannone, Richard. "Music in The Professor's House." College English, 26 (1965): 463-69.

Grumbach, Doris. "A Study of the Small Room in The Professor's House." Women's Studies, 11 (1984): 327-45.

Hart, Clive. "The Professor's House: A Shapely Story." Modern Language Review, 67 (1972): 271-81.

Heidegger, Martin. Being and Time. trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson. New York: Harper & Row, 1962.

Helmick, Evelyn Thomas. "The Broken World: Medievalism in A Lost Lady" in Critical Essays on Willa Cather, ed. John Murphy. Boston: G.K. Hall & Co., 1984, pp. 179-186.

Holub, Robert C. Reception Theory. London and New York: Methuen Inc., 1984.

Ingarden, Roman. The Cognition of the Literary Work of Art, trans. Ruth Ann Crowly and Kenneth R. Olsen. Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1973.

Iser, Wolfgang. The Act of Reading: A Theory of Aesthetic Response. Baltimore and London: John Hopkins University Press, 1978.

Jauss, Hans Robert. Toward an Aesthetic of Reception. Trans. Timothy Bahti. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1982.

Jung, Carl. Modern Man in Search of a Soul. Trans. W.S. Dell and Cary F. Baynes. New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1933.

-------. Psychology of the Unconscious. Trans. Beatrice M. Hinkle. New York: Dodd, Meadd, 1965.

-------. Symbols of Transformation. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1956.

-------. The Undiscovered Self, trans. R.F.C. Hull. Boston: Little, Brown & Company Limited, 1957.

Lavender, David. "The Petrified West and the Writer." American Scholar, 1968, 37 (Spring): 302.

Lee, Hermione. Willa Cather - a Life Saved Up. London: Virago Press, 1989.

Lewis, Edith. Willa Cather Living. New York: Alfred A. Knopf Inc., 1953.

Lewis, Linda M. "Cather's A Lost Lady and Flaubert's Madame Bovary: Re-envisioning Romanticism." Willa Cather Pioneer Memorial Newsletter, 33 (1989): 31.

Lowenthal, Leo. Literature and the Image of Man. Boston: The Beacon Press, 1963.

Morrow, Nancy. "Willa Cather's A Lost Lady and the Nineteenth Century Novel of Adultery", Women's Studies, 11, p. 288.

Murphy, John J. "The Dantean Journey in Cather's My Mortal Enemy." Willa Cather Pioneer Memorial Newsletter, 1986

(Summer), 30(3): 11-14.

-------, ed. Critical Essays on Willa Cather. Boston: G.K. Hall & Co., 1984.

Northey, Margot. The Haunted Wilderness: the Gothic and Grotesque in Canadian Fiction. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1976.

Novak, JR., Frank G. "Crisis and Discovery in The Professor's House." Colby Library Quarterly, 22 (1986): 119-132.

O'Brien, Sharon. Willa Cather: The Emerging Voice. New York: Oxford University Press, 1987.

Petry, Alice Hall. "In the Name of the Self: Cather's The Professor's House." Colby Library Quarterly, 23 (1987): 28.

Qian, Qing. "Willa Cather and My Mortal Enemy." Foreign Literatures (in Chinese), 1(1986).

Randall, John H. The Landscape and the Looking Glass - Willa Cather's Search for Value. Cambridge: The Riverside Press, 1960.

Rosowksi, Susan J., ed. Cather Studies, Vol.I. Lincoln: University Press, 1990.

-------. The Voyage Perilous - Willa Cather's Romanticism. Lincoln & London: University of Nebraska Press, 1986.

Schroeter, James. Willa Cather and Her Critics. New York: Cornell University Press, 1967.

Sergeant, Elizabeth Shepley. Willa Cather: A Memoir. Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott Company, 1953, p.139.

Skaggs, Merrill. "Death Comes for the Archbishop: Cather's

Mystery and Manners." American Literature, 57 (1985): 395-406.

-------. "Nellie Birdseye." Willa Cather Pioneer Memorial Newsletter, 1986 (Summer), 30 (3): 14-16.

Slote, Bernice/Faulkner, Virginia, ed. The Art of Willa Cather. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1974.

Smith, Anneliese H. "Finding Marian Forrester: A Restorative Reading of Cather´s A Lost Lady." Colby Library Quarterly, 14 (1978): 221-225.

Stouck, David. Willa Cather´s Imagination. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1975.

-------. "Willa Cather and the Indian Heritage." Twentieth Century Literature, 22 (1976): 433-43.

Strychacz, Thomas F. "The Ambiguities of Escape in Willa Cather´s The Professor´s House." Studies in American Fiction, 14 (1986): 54.

Sullivan, Patrick J. "Willa Cather´s Southwest", Western American Literature, 7 (Spring): 31.

Tanner, Stephen L. "Seeking and Finding in Cather´s My Mortal Enemy." Literature and Belief, 8 (1988): 27-38.

Tsien, Jean. "The Fascinating Complexity of My Mortal Enemy." Willa Cather Pioneer Memorial Newsletter, 1986 (Summer), 30 (3): 22-25.

Ueda, Makoto, ed. Explorations - Essays on Comparative Literature. New York: University Press of America, 1986.

Wellek, Rene. Concepts of Criticism. New Haven and London: Yale

University Press, 1964.

-------. Theory of Literature. London: Jonathan Cape, 1966.

Wild, Barbara. "The Thing Not Named in The Professor's House, Western American Literature, 12 (1979): 264.

Woodress, James. Willa Cather: A Literary Life. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1987.

-------. Her Life and Art. New York, 1970.

Xie, Lihong. "Willa Cather's Pursuit of Spiritual Values." American Literature Series (in Chinese), 2 (1983).

Yongue, Patricia Lee. "WIlla Cather's Aristocrats, Part II." Southern Humanities Review, 14 (1980): 111-125.

Whitman, Walt. Walt Whitman. London: Chelsea House, 1967.

Wordsworth, William. The Poetical Works of Wordsworth. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1982.