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JEJICH ANTONIE

CZECHS, THE LAND, CATHER, AND THE PAVELKA FARMSTEAD

DAVID MURPHY

The literature of Willa Cather has long been praised for its rich and evocative description of place. Her raw material was drawn primarily from personal experiences in late nineteenth-century Webster County, Nebraska, during the period of initial settlement, and renewed by frequent visits home the first decades of this century. The Pavelka farmstead was one of the important places in her life; it was used as the setting for Book V of *My Ántonia* and for “Neighbour Rosicky,” a later short story.¹

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Just as their farm was the setting, Jan Pavelka and Antonie Sadílková Pavelková were prototypes for the Czech immigrants in the two works—Anton and Ántonia Shimerda Cuzak in *My Ántonia*, and Anton and Mary Rosicky in the short story. Both works are replete with Czech culture—from fringed and embroidered shawls, lacework, and featherbeds, to mushrooms, poppy seeds, and *koláče*, and numerous references to Bohemia and its language. Cather’s empathy with Czech culture was broad and deep; her allusion to it was informed, not merely exotic. As a result, many Czechs and Czech Americans ultimately saw Ántonia as *jejich Antonie*, or “their Ántonia.”

The real farmstead manifests Czech immigrant culture’s strong relationship with the land, a relationship that resonates through Cather’s texts so profoundly that it assumes mystical and transcendental qualities. In both fact and fiction the farmstead is a kind of middle landscape, present horizontally between the old and new Czech worlds, and vertically in between the earth and the heavens (Fig.1).

[GPQ 14 (Spring 1994): 85-106]



FIG. 1. *The Pavelka farmhouse: between the earth and the heavens*. Photograph courtesy of D. Murphy, 1982.

CZECH RESPONSE TO CATHER

Czech and Czech-American intellectual response to *My Ántonia* was positive. Both presidents of the first Czech Republic, Tomáš Masaryk and Eduard Beneš liked the book.² Frank J. Sadílek, freethought orator and dramatist from Wilber, is said to have sent his personal copy to a friend in Prague, with his recommendation that it be translated.³ Nebraska's own historian, Rose Rosicky, in a 1926 letter to Cather, stated: "When I heard

that you had written a book about Bohemians, my first thought was that . . . you took for a theme something you thought would be novel, but when I read the book . . . [e]very little detail you described about them is so true to life." Rosicky publicly showed her appreciation in her history of the Czechs in Nebraska, adding: "It is very unusual for an American, be he or she ever so kindly and broadminded, to entirely grasp the psychology of a foreign people, but Miss Cather has done it thoroughly."⁴

Cather's work was also popular in translation.⁵ An undated Czech version of *My Ántonia*, entitled *Naše Tonička*, reveals the depth of the publishers' identification with Ántonia in the title change from "my" to "our" and the change from the formal "Antonie" to the informal affectionate form of "Tonička." In an open letter to Cather, publishers Šolc and Šimáček expressed their gratitude for the "beautiful novel about our pioneers in America" (*jejich Antonie*) along with the hope that someday they might return the favor.⁶

The renowned Czech historian Otakar Odložilík, an avid reader of Cather, was greatly impressed with the novel and the short story: "Through [Ántonia's] effort, she made her place in the world literature, with her husband and flock of children, personification of Czech immigrants and Czech settlers on the white preries [sic] in the Middle western region of the United States." Odložilík ranked Cather with Czech authors Božena Němcová, Karolina Světlá, and Teréza Nováková. He considered her most akin to Němcová, the nineteenth-century author of *Babička*, a story with many parallels to *My Ántonia* in its celebration of rural Czech life.⁷

LIFE WITH THE LAND AND IMMIGRANTS

Cather's accuracy seems to have come not from familial or cultural predilection but instead from keen observation.⁸ Born in 1873 in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia, Cather came west with her family at the age of nine in 1883. They lived initially on the "Divide," the high plain between the Big Blue and Republican Rivers in northern Webster County, near her uncle and grandparents. The family moved to Red Cloud late in 1884 where Cather stayed until she left for the University of Nebraska in Lincoln in 1890, returning to Red Cloud for school vacations and for a period after graduation in 1895.⁹

The prairie and its startling contrast to the Valley of Virginia exerted tremendous influ-

ence on Cather. By her own account the country "was mostly wild pasture and as naked as the back of your hand. . . . So the country and I had it out together and by the end of the first autumn, that shaggy grass country had gripped me with a passion I have never been able to shake."¹⁰ The experiences gained her the two most important themes in her writing, identity with the land and empathy with the foreign immigrants.

Cather visited immigrants at every opportunity. She found the Old World gathering on the Divide, the foreign speech and customs, fascinating: "an imaginative child, taken out of the definitely arranged background, and dropped down among struggling immigrants from all over the world, naturally found something to think about."¹¹ Some of her most eloquent statements concerning the foreign born appeared in a 1923 essay:

Colonies of European people . . . spread across our bronze prairies like the daubs of color on a painter's palette. . . . When I stop at one of the graveyards in my own county and see on the headstones the names of fine old men I used to know . . . I have always the hope that something went into the ground with those pioneers that will one day come out again . . . not only in sturdy traits of character, but in elasticity of mind, in an honest attitude toward the realities of life, in certain qualities of feeling and imagination.¹²

For Cather, the literary theme moved beyond empathy. Ultimately she favored foreign over Anglo-American ways, and developed a strong distaste for Anglo-centrism.¹³ In a 1921 interview she attacked the prevailing xenophobic mood:

They have come here to live in the sense that they lived in the Old World, and if they were let alone their lives might turn into the beautiful ways of their homeland. But they are not let alone. . . .

It wasn't so years ago. When I was a child, all our neighbors were foreigners. . . . We let them alone. . . . They finished their houses as they had in the countries from which they came. Beauty was there and charm . . . nobody interfered with them.¹⁴

She lamented the loss of creativity, observing that the "Americanization worker who persuades an old Bohemian housewife that it is better for her to feed her family out of tin cans instead of cooking them a steaming goose for dinner is committing a crime against art."¹⁵

CATHER AND THE CZECHS

The Czech colony in Webster County was not large. The first seven families settled south of Red Cloud in 1874 and 1876. A second nucleus formed in the early 1880s along the Divide. In 1892 there were thirty and by the 1920s approximately forty-five Czech families in the county. Half of the early families were from the Čáslav district of eastern Bohemia, while the others derived from the adjacent Praha and Jihlava districts of central Bohemia and western Moravia. Four families were Lutheran and the remainder Catholic.¹⁶ A lodge of the Západní Česko-Bratrská Jednota (ZČBJ, Western Bohemian Fraternal Association), a national Czech freethought group, was organized in 1910.¹⁷ They built a hall south of the Divide.

Cather's connection was through Antonie Sadílková, daughter of Antonie and František Sadílek. They had arrived in 1880, three years prior to the Cathers.¹⁸ Mildred Bennett states that Antonie, twelve when she came to Nebraska, spent most of her time breaking sod, planting, and harvesting. At some time she moved to Red Cloud where she worked as a hired girl. Probably in 1891, she moved with a railroader to Colorado. Pregnant and abandoned, she returned to the family farm to bear her first child alone. Four years later she married Jan Pavelka, and together they established their own farm and a family of ten children.¹⁹

Bennett states that it is possible Cather met Antonie while Cather was living in the country, since the wagon road from Red Cloud to Catherton precinct passed near the Sadílek farm. Cather herself stated that she saw a good deal of Antonie from the time she was eight until she was twelve.²⁰ After leaving Red Cloud Cather visited her frequently, making an extended visit to the Pavelka farm during the summer of 1916 shortly before conceiving *My Ántonia*.²¹

Piqued by friendship, Cather's curiosity about Czechs grew. She found her own Divide landscape within Dvořák's *New World Symphony*, which she heard in 1897.

[B]efore you stretch the empty, hungry plains of the Middle West. Limitless prairies, full of the peasantry of all the nations of Europe . . . and it seems as though from each of those far scattered lights that at night mark the dwellings of these people on the plains, there comes a song of a homesick heart.²²

Cather traveled to other Czech communities such as Wilber (MA 332).

In Wilber, in the old days, behind the big friendly brick saloon—it was not a "saloon," properly speaking, but a beer garden, where the farmers ate their lunch when they came to town—there was a pleasant little theater where the boys and girls were trained to give the masterpieces of Czech drama in the Czech language. . . . I could name a dozen towns in Nebraska where one used to be able to go into a bakery and buy better pastry than is to be had anywhere except in the best pastry shops of Prague or Vienna.²³

Some of what she recorded is so subtle that it surely came from actual research. In the first version of the short story, "Peter," for example, she utilized a "thee/thou" form in the narrative that mimicked the second person plural formal mode of the Czech language.²⁴ Whether

intellectual or personal, Cather's identification with Czechs lasted her entire lifetime.²⁵

PROTAGONISTS AND SETTINGS

Much has been made of the real people and places that were prototypes for Cather. She herself stated that a writer's thematic material was all acquired in childhood. The biographical aspect of her work has received considerable attention.²⁶

Cather's settings have also captured the imagination. Judith Fryer suggested that her use of "the actual living person, object, [or] landscape provides the motive from which the invention is spun out." Landscape architect Richard Sutton thinks that the Cather home landscape as a whole should be used as a concordance for her texts.²⁷ In *Red Cloud* the significance of the real settings took root early. One of the principal aims of the Willa Cather Pioneer Memorial Foundation, founded in 1955, was the identification and restoration of places made famous by her writings.²⁸

Czechs, too, have commented on the relationship of the words to the place. Rose Rosicky told Cather, "Your description of the country, the weather, the seasons, make the intangible concrete, and one can see *the very thing* through them, and that is genius." During his last trip to Nebraska in 1955, Odložilík felt compelled to see the Pavelka farm:

How to get to the places, where some parts of the novel *My Antonia* and the story *Neighbour Rosicky* form [sic] the book *Obscure Destinies* are set? Without seeing these places, farms and the fields, would the whole trip be incomplete, as half-read book?

The incidents seemingly complicated, became more clear, as soon as we saw the scene of the novel.

Later Odložilík would ask how it was possible to differentiate between reality and the novel. He considered his trips successful, for he "had a feeling that [he] had seen enough

and that it was not necessary to plan another trip. For great novels [*My Antonia*] and the story about the farmer Rosicky . . . were [now] sufficient."²⁹

WORDS AND THINGS

Words and things, art and artifact: for Cather, description seems naturally to come from observation, the power of the things inspiring the words. For the reader, experience of the thing can manifest its power in ways that otherwise might have gone unnoticed. According to John Milton, it is when "the things of a region become part of the writer's roots, and he establishes an intimacy with his place, that universal insights, meanings, perceptions, and characteristics emerge from below the surface." The thing "serves as a receptacle into which a person can place his experience, and then take it out again later."³⁰

The writer and the builder share, as Laurence Ricou has put it, the urge to erect something in the prairie emptiness in order to assert their presence.³¹ But more important, they share the urge to establish dwelling in the place and the need to give meaning to their presence. Cather was a reliable witness to the builder's attempt to dwell, and this directed her to "write things as they are." It was the things of the land, the people, and the places made on the land that formed the essential "objects" of her work.³² The thing illuminates the text, as the text illuminates the thing, and we can offer an interpretation of each with respect to the other.³³

THE PAVELKA FARMSTEAD

The family farmstead of Jan and Antonie Pavelka, the central "thing" of this discussion, is located on the level plain at the south edge of the Divide. From a distance the farmstead appears as a large grove that breaks the horizon in all directions. From within the grove the effect is one of enclosure, defined both by the plantings and the arrangement of buildings (Fig. 2). The enclosure is "layered," con-

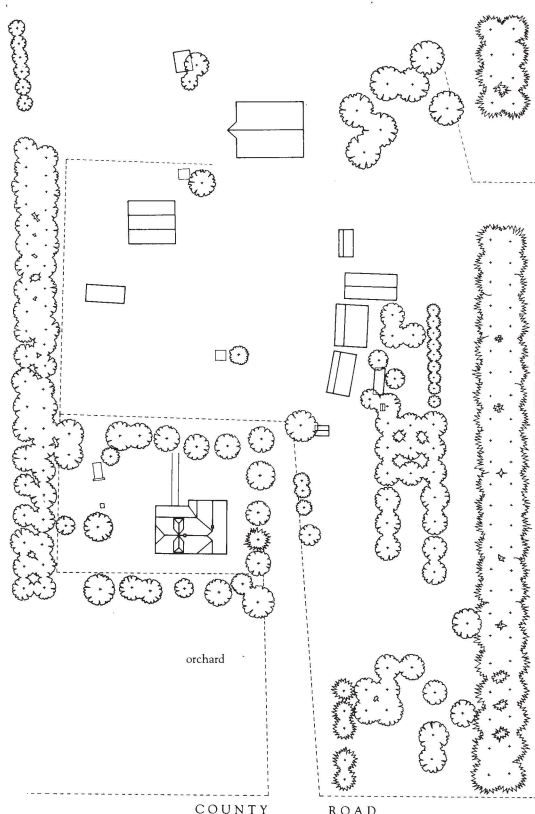


FIG. 2. Site plan of the farmstead, 1993; prospect from the road. Drawing courtesy of D. Murphy.

taining ever more inner spaces within the complex.

The "grove" is formed of a double row of deciduous trees along the south boundary and a double-row coniferous windbreak that extends on the north all the way to the road. Both boundary plantings extend to the western edge of the farmstead. A multiple-row remnant wood lot of deciduous trees, situated between the north windbreak and the house-yard, contributes to the effect. The small field between the road and the house-yard is the former location of the orchard and grape arbor that appear so prominently in both *My Ántonia* (339-44) and "Neighbour Rosicky" (48-49).³⁴



FIG. 3. The farmstead from the road; view along the lane toward the barn. Photograph courtesy of D. Murphy, 1992.

The buildings of the farmstead lie within the grove. Set back from the road is the house within its house-yard, defined by a border of deciduous trees (Fig. 3). Immediately to the southwest is the cellar. The entrance lane divides the house-yard from the north windbreak and wood lot and is bordered along its northern edge with remnant ornamental plantings of coniferous shrubs and lilacs.

Aligned with the lane at the far western edge of the farmstead, and separated from the house by an open courtyard, is the large wood-frame barn (Fig. 4). The northern edge of the courtyard is defined by several small structures: a tool shed, three shed-roofed poultry houses, and an implement shed and shop. The south edge is defined by two grain-storage structures. The granary is the old converted dwelling, to which had been attached a shed-roofed machine shed. The corn crib is a modest pole shed enclosed with woven wire. Within the courtyard nearer the house is the well and former site of the windmill tower. Adjacent to the well is a single lilac bush.

The farm is structurally modest and architecturally ordinary, but it suggests an essential prosperity without wealth. The most substantial structures of the farm, in addition to the



FIG. 4. *The farm courtyard, view from the house-yard.* Photograph courtesy of D. Murphy, 1992.

shelterbelts, are the cellar, the barn, and the dwelling.

The house Willa Cather knew is obscured by a subsequent rebuilding but we can reconstruct most of the original character and the construction sequences. Three distinct building episodes are evident: an original construction, a reconstruction with addition of a major cross-wing (the house in Cather's time), and a rebuild of the first two episodes.

Soon after purchasing the farm in 1906, possibly around 1911, the family relocated a house to the site from the McClure farm to the southeast of their own.³⁵ This two-room hall-parlor house was probably built in the

later nineteenth century by Ludwig Schmidt. The house was set longitudinally to the road so that its gable became the front facade (Fig. 5). The main gable roof extended along the south to cover a porch, and at the "back" of the porch, or its western end, was a small enclosed pantry with access off the principal room. According to informants this first house included two exterior doors, one into each room off the south porch. The door into the small front room was not used as an entrance.³⁶ Thus, a German-American hall-parlor house was converted, via the move and orientation on the site, into a Czech hall-chamber house, or a *světnice-komora* dwelling (Fig. 6).³⁷

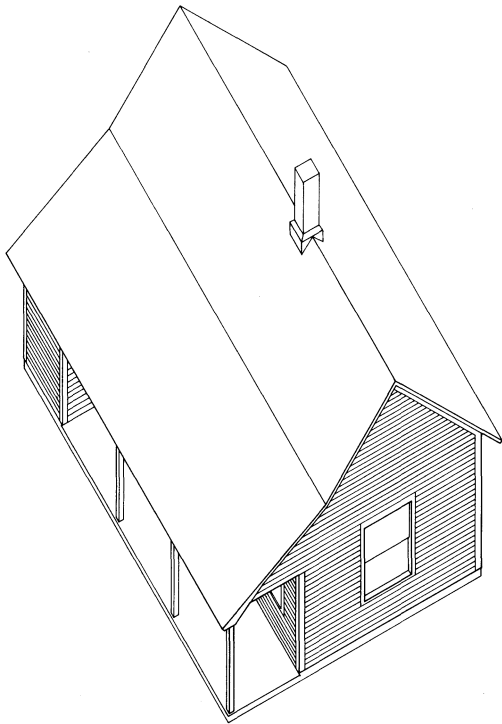


FIG. 5. Axonometric view of the two-room house, prospect from the road. Drawing courtesy of D. Murphy, 1993.

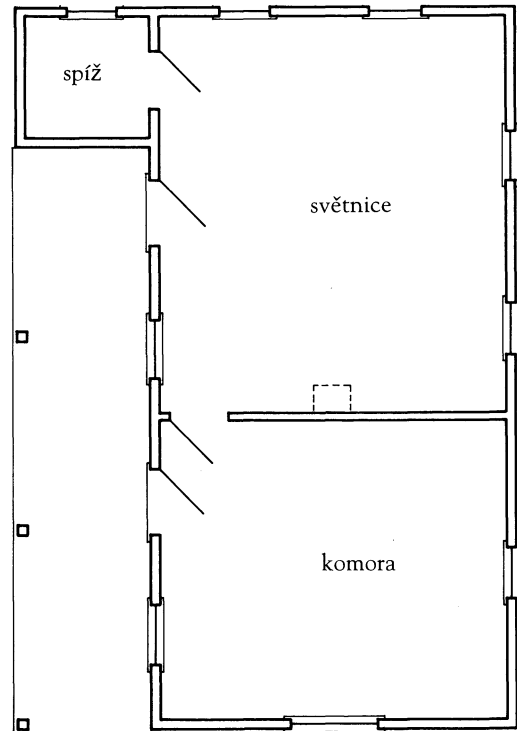


FIG. 6. Plan of the two-room house. Drawing courtesy of D. Murphy, 1993.

Shortly thereafter, certainly by 1915, the family retained Joe Pavelka to build the south bedroom cross-wing addition. This one-and-one-half story frame construction contained three ground-floor bedrooms, a stairway to a finished loft bedroom, and a storage passage (Fig. 7). The passage was heated, as was the bedroom adjacent to the smaller room of the original house. The old chamber then became a parlor; in Czech, an *obývací pokoj* or sitting room. The original south porch was removed and relocated along the west exterior wall of the cross-wing. Like the original, this porch was open (Fig. 8). The exterior door into the principal room, the old *světnice*, now function-

ing more as kitchen (*kuchyně*), was retained. This new house contained seven rooms.

Sometime after the deaths of both Jan and Antonie, probably the 1950s, the house was remodeled, substantially changing the character and function of the dwelling. The external changes included the enclosure of the porch, which was fitted with two exterior doors, and the raising of one south gable window to accommodate interior modifications (Fig. 9). If we relate the Pavelka-Cather era dwelling, however, to both its farmstead and to old world traditions, the evident Czech material presence enhances our interpretation of Cather's texts.

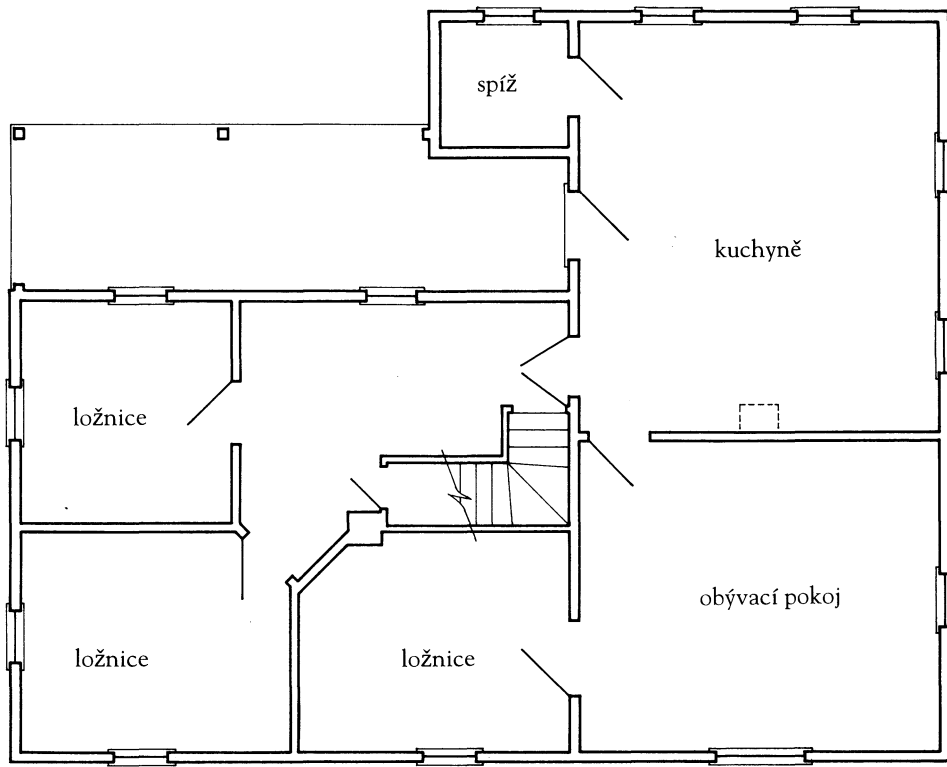


FIG. 7. Plan of the Pavelka-Cather era house, prospect from the road. Drawing courtesy of D. Murphy, 1993.

RELATIONSHIP TO TRADITION

The Pavelka farmstead, particularly the house, shares the spatial characteristics that are traditional in Czech villages. Differences are initially more obvious. Farmsteads in the Czech lands are clustered into small villages, enclosing either a central village green or a wide street. This clustering provided for many social opportunities not afforded by the isolated, dispersed farmsteads of the American Plains.

The typical compact Czech farmstead was formed around an enclosed courtyard created by buildings on three sides, with a wall and

gates on the front or street side. Buildings each had access from the courtyard and functioned individually, but they were typically connected, often with a continuous roof. A common farmstead located the house at the front of one side, behind which was located a store-room, a cow shed, and a stable. At the back was a large hay barn, while along the opposite side of the courtyard were located a pigsty, poultry houses, tool sheds, and at the front, a granary.³⁸

The Pavelka farm unit resembles its old world counterpart. The Pavelka buildings are not connected, following prevailing Anglo-American patterns, but they are arranged

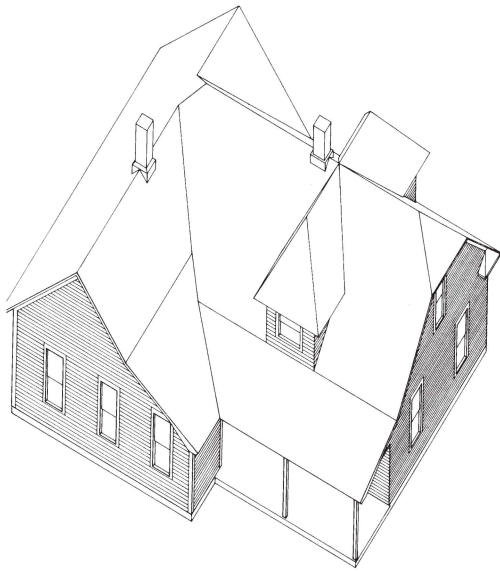


FIG. 8. Axonometric view of the Pavelka-Cather era house, prospect from the farmyard. Drawing courtesy of D. Murphy, 1993.

around the familiar courtyard pattern.³⁹ This loosely knit courtyard retains aspects of the old functional pattern as well, with fowl houses on one side, grain structures on the other, the house toward the front, the barn at the rear, and the centrally located well (Figs. 2, 4). The barn departs significantly from the old country tradition of separate buildings for separate functions. It exists as the most American feature of the farm, serving as shelter for cattle, horses, grain, and hay.⁴⁰

Conversely, the house exists as the most explicitly Czech feature of the farm. The original construction, though relocated from a German-American farm, was placed on the site so that the doorless gable wall became the facade, a most prominent characteristic of Bohemian village dwellings. The gable was consistently retained as the front wall of the Czech-American dwelling on the Plains, in contrast to the American pattern of "front"



FIG. 9. View of the present house, from the farmyard, depicting the third construction episode. Photograph courtesy of D. Murphy, 1992.

doors facing the road (Fig. 5). The porch extension of the roof—an American feature popularly utilized by Czechs—resembles wide-eave roof extensions along entrance walls in the Czech lands. A side entrance facing the private yard or farm courtyard is an essential feature of the Czech peasant dwelling.

The interior of the house also reflected Czech cultural preferences.⁴¹ Among the class of peasants that dominated the nineteenth-century emigration—cottagers, small farmers, and former-peasant artisans—small dwellings of one, two, or three rooms were common. The quintessential peasant dwelling, the *trojdílný dům*, incorporates the basic components of all diminutive variations: the *světnice*, or the hall, that comprises the single-room dwelling; the *síň*, an entrance passage and fire-room that, when connected to the *světnice*, was the common *dvojdílný dům* or two-room house; and the *komora*, a storage and sleeping chamber that, connected to the *dvojdílný dům*, comprised the larger three-room dwelling. In Czech America, the most common *dvojdílný dům*, largely the result of American heating technology, dispensed with the *síň* to become

a house composed of a *světnice* and a *komora*. The threshold was relocated to the side of the principal room. In the old country the *světnice* faced the front, oriented to the village square; on the Plains, the rural *světnice* very often, as in the Pavelka example, was oriented to the farm courtyard. In both cases this room had views toward major activity areas. Antonie's had north, west, and south exposures to the wood lot, farmyard, and house-yard. Virtually all interior living activities were conducted in this room.

The house clearly functioned in traditional *světnice-komora* fashion from the time it was placed on the site until about 1915 when the wing was constructed (Fig. 6). Though the relocated building had two doors, the function of the front or road-side room as storage-bedroom and not as parlor precluded use of the second door as entrance. Essentially the house had one threshold, a key characteristic of the Czech peasant dwelling regardless of size. At the Pavelka house this threshold led into the *světnice*, the principal room, as was common with all *dvojdílné domy* of this new type on the Plains. Occupied by a large family, this room functioned as living space, parlor, kitchen, dining area, and sleeping room. In the old country the single *světnice* often accommodated an extended family in addition to the large nuclear family.⁴²

The bedroom wing lent the house a decidedly American character; yet in other respects it clung to the traditional.⁴³ The four bedrooms clearly reflect late nineteenth-century trends in American farmhouse construction.⁴⁴ The addition made possible the conversion of the former *komora* into an *obývací pokoj*, a parlor or sitting room, and facilitated a somewhat more specialized use of the principal room as kitchen, dining, and living area (Fig. 7). It became more like a kitchen or Czech *kuchyně*. The transformation of the old core house from a *světnice-komora* into a *kuchyně-obývací pokoj* type followed trends in rural dwelling design in both the old and new worlds. The parlor was something of a status symbol to the Pavelka family.⁴⁵

Perhaps most important, the cross-wing sealed the anomalous second exterior door and created a much larger dwelling that still retained a single threshold, into the principal room, now functioning as *kuchyně*. While kitchen doors are often the primary entrances into rural houses, the particular circumstances of the threshold in this Czech-American farmhouse are noteworthy, particularly at this late date.⁴⁶ Cather's text assumes more significance in light of the real artifact: "The boys escorted us to the front of the house, which I hadn't yet seen; in farm-houses, somehow, life comes and goes by the backdoor" (MA 339). Yet the backdoor here is the front door, the only door; and its relationship to the kitchen and farmyard retains its significant connection to Czech practice (Figs. 2, 7). In essence, the "rear" became the new "front" of the house; situated within the grove, with the orchard in front, the farmstead was turned inward.⁴⁷

CZECH PEASANTS, THE LAND, AND THE COSMOS

Czech Americans characteristically and distinctively retained single-threshold dwellings through, in many cases, two generations of dwelling construction. Single-threshold dwellings were commonly associated with old peasant houses throughout much of Europe, but few groups on the Great Plains retained the tradition. Among the most prominent were Czechs, Germans from Russia, and Poles, all central and eastern European immigrants who were conservative in other aspects of their lives as well.⁴⁸

Peasant relationships with land seemed to change significantly in the nineteenth century with the gradual shift from subsistence to market agriculture. In the Czech lands obligations associated with serfdom changed quite late, beginning in 1848; and it often took years for enclosure of the commons to commence. Mass Czech emigration generally followed enclosure.⁴⁹

Love of the land was fundamental to the peasant agriculturalist. Let us make a distinc-

tion here between the "peasant" and the "farmer." The peasant was a landed agriculturalist who produced food primarily for subsistence, not for the market, who viewed the land and food principally as sustenance and not commodity.⁵⁰ Farming, on the other hand, as it emerged in modern times following enclosure and perhaps foremost in the United States, became more tied to commercialism.⁵¹ Peasant immigration to a land of farmers presented striking contrasts that Cather was able to observe and record.

As for the Slavic peasant, Irwin T. Sanders observed that the three most important factors concerning east European life were rootedness in the soil, focus on the family, and orientation to the local village. Slavic peasants were *emotionally* attached to the soil, and perceived "a mystical connection between them[selves] and the Mother Earth with whom they labored." Furthermore, Slavs were great lovers of nature who enjoyed life in the open spaces.⁵² This mystical connection at least in part predates Christianity, when nature and its forces were the basis of religion.⁵³

Nineteenth-century peasant mysticism was woven into the Slavic relationship with nature. As the communal, social, and religious aspects of village life began to disintegrate following enclosure, population growth, and land shortages, festivals changed to focus more on the extended family than the village. The natural and liturgical cycle, however, remained the basis of the ceremonial events.⁵⁴ Love of country, or the land, long preceded love of nation, but both were part of their psyche when Czechs arrived on the Great Plains.⁵⁵

BEING IN THE WORLD

Willa Cather sensed the universal and the particular aspects of these conditions, both intellectually and emotionally, and observed them as a result of real experiences *at the places* where the lives of her people were lived. The two great themes of her prairie novels, the land and the immigrant, come together in an identifiably Czech way in *My Ántonia*: in rev-

erence toward the land, in sustenance, love, and transcendence.

We can better grasp the sense of interrelationship between Czechs, the land, Cather, and the Pavelka farmstead, and of the transcendental qualities captured by Cather, by visualizing the farmstead as a kind of middle landscape, "in between" the earth and the heavens.⁵⁶ The layered enclosures of the farm suggest a spatial inwardness that is key to our understanding of the interrelationship and especially of the transcendence.

The human place is *in* the world, the vast horizontal expanse that is above the land and under the sky; or in between earth and heaven.⁵⁷ In the "new" world on the Great Plains, the horizontal expansiveness was overwhelming. Laurence Ricou's image of vertical man in a horizontal world suggests both the enduring nature of our presence here and the significance of building places within which to dwell.⁵⁸ Place making is the vertical raising of material substance from the earth toward the heavens in order to draw the world close, to gather the expanse near, or to make an interior within which to dwell. This rising substance, whether it be a wall or a windbreak, makes well-being possible; it provides the shelter necessary to be in the world. The way the substance is made to rise depends on many factors, but perhaps none is more important than the dweller's desire to live in a place that is familiar and, therefore, comfortable.

THE LAND AND THE LANDSCAPE

Much has been made of Cather's identification with the land and of the role it played in *My Ántonia*.⁵⁹ The evolution of this theme in the novel develops from the natural land to the modified land or landscape—from raw material to cultural artifact—as the land is settled by Europeans.⁶⁰ A description early in the work sets the stage:

There was nothing but the land; not a country at all, but the materials out of which

countries are made. . . . this was the complete dome of heaven, all there was of it. . . . Between that earth and that sky I felt erased, blotted out. I did not say my prayers that night: here, I felt, what would be would be. (MA 7-8)

Later, artifacts rise between this earth and sky. The appearance of the plow within the disk of the setting sun is most provocative, for it is also symbolic of a developing way of life:

a great black figure suddenly appeared on the face of the sun. . . . On some upland farm, a plough had been left standing in the field. The sun was sinking just behind it. Magnificent across the distance . . . it stood out against the sun . . . heroic in size. . . . (MA 245)

By the end of the book cultural landscape dominates. Jim Burden describes the Pavelka or "Cuzak" farm:

Set back on a swell of land at my right, I saw a wide farm-house, with a red barn and an ash grove, and cattle-yards in front that sloped down to the highroad. . . . The roof [of the house] was so steep that the eaves were not much above the forest of hollyhocks, now brown and in seed. Through July . . . [t]he house was buried in them; the Bohemians, I remembered, always planted hollyhocks. The front yard was enclosed by a thorny locust hedge, and at the gate grew two silvery, mothlike trees of the mimosa family. From here one looked down . . . over a wide stretch of stubble which they told me was a ryefield in summer. (MA 329, 339)

Growing things and built things transformed the land into landscape.

This landscape was created by the "Cuzaks," and Cather saw *Ántonia* as virtually inseparable from it.⁶¹ *Ántonia* preferred to be out on the land, where she "knew every stack and

tree, and where all the ground is friendly. I want to live and die here" (MA 320). Anton too, in "Neighbour Rosicky," had the same longing. As a young man living in New York he noticed:

. . . so much stone and asphalt. . . . The emptiness was intense . . . it took all the strength out of one. . . . It struck young Rosicky that this was the trouble with big cities; they built you in from the earth itself, cemented you away from contact with the ground. You lived in an unnatural world . . . after that . . . the desire to return to the country never left him. To work . . . to see the sun rise and set and to plant things and watch them grow. . . . (30-32)

Cather makes the identification complete.⁶² Of the young *Ántonia* Cather wrote: "Her neck came up strongly out of her shoulders, like the bole of a tree out of the turf" (MA 122). Rosicky was also likened to a tree "that has not many roots, but one tap root that goes down deep" (NR 32).

TRANSCENDENCE

The transcendence of humans beyond the land is also personified in *Ántonia*. Just as the land was raised into landscape through the course of the novel, so does *Ántonia*'s life rise from the earth to transcend it. The young *Ántonia* Shimerda literally emerges from her home, a dugout barely distinguishable from the earth:

As we approached the Shimerda's dwelling, I could still see nothing but rough red hillocks, and draws with shelving banks. . . . Presently, against one of those banks, I saw a sort of shed, thatched with the same wine-coloured grass that grew everywhere . . . and then I saw a door and window sunk deep in the draw bank. The door stood open, and a woman and a girl of fourteen ran out and looked up at us hopefully. (MA 21-22)

When her children emerge from the earth at the end of the novel, transcendence has occurred.

We turned to leave the cave; Ántonia and I went up the stairs first, and the children waited. We were standing outside talking, when they all came running up the steps together . . . a veritable explosion of life out of the dark cave in to the sunlight. It made me dizzy for a moment. (MA 338-39)

Ultimately Ántonia appears as earth mother:

She lent herself to immemorial human attitudes which we recognize by instinct as universal and true. . . . she still had that . . . look or gesture that somehow revealed the meaning in common things. She had only to stand in the orchard, to put her hand on a little crab tree and look up at the apples, to make you feel the goodness of planting and tending and harvesting at last. All the strong things of her heart came out of her body, that had been so tireless in serving generous emotions.

It was no wonder that her sons stood tall and straight. She was a rich mine of life, like the founders of early races. (MA 353)

The fruition of her life makes of her a veritable earth-goddess, recalling the mystic Slavic identification with Mother Earth. She became "earth mother, metaphysical paternity, Christmas and resurrection . . . all in one," and embodied transcendence.⁶³

Spirituality in the two works, while powerfully portrayed, remains only implicit. Paul Olson states that Cather is too subtle to reveal the spiritual sources underlying her characters' transcendence. Her work nevertheless "gravitates toward quintessential seekers" and oneness with the universe.⁶⁴ In Cather's depiction of Ántonia's pregnancy, abandonment, and return to the land, however, we recognize a Christian (and an agricultural) metaphor in the rebirth: "Except a corn of wheat fall to the

ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit."⁶⁵

Ántonia's spirituality literally connected the earth with the heavens. Her return was to rootedness in the land, from whence she grew to heavenly fruition—she loved the land, then loved the child, and then her new family. Rosicky's spirituality was similarly grounded. According to Rosowski, he was "a man who, like Christ, changes the world by inspiring others to love."⁶⁶

SANCTUARIES

It is a paradox of the spiritual dimension that in order to achieve "expansion" into Oneness, tremendous "contraction" deep within then beyond the self is required. Significantly, the places associated with transcendence in Cather's work, principally the orchard and the kitchen, are the two "inner-most" places on the farm; they were private "sanctuaries," protected by the layered enclosures of the farmstead (Fig. 2).

The most provocative image of Ántonia's spirituality is set within the orchard. There, standing on the earth, hand on the rising trunk rooted deeply in the ground, looking up at the fruit, the symbolic connection of earth to heaven is complete (MA 353). This place was literally a sanctuary:

In the *middle* of the orchard we came upon a grape arbour, with seats built along the sides and a warped plank table. . . . There was the deepest peace in that orchard. It was surrounded by a *triple enclosure*; the wire fence, then the hedge of thorny locusts, then the mulberry hedge which kept out the hot winds of summer and held fast to the protecting snows of winter. The hedges were so tall we could see nothing but the blue sky above them, neither the barn roof nor the windmill. The afternoon sun poured down on us. . . . The orchard seemed full of sun, like a cup, and we could smell the ripe apples on the trees. (MA 340-41, my emphases)

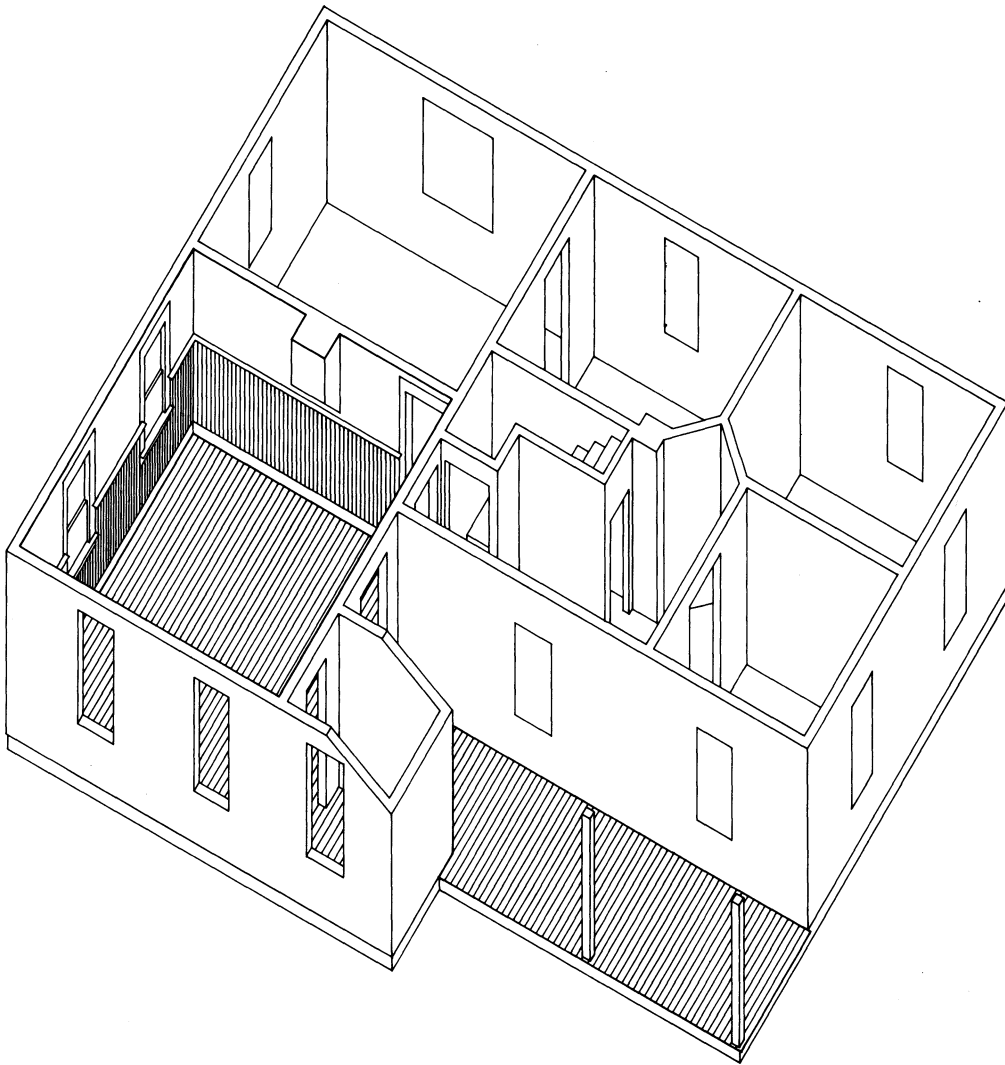


FIG. 10. Drawing of the first floor of the Pavelka-Cather era house shows passage from the fields through the farmyard to the kitchen. Drawing courtesy of D. Murphy, 1993.

It was a place of solitude and contemplation, of conversation and nourishment, deep *within* the farm. Sheltered from the “world” by rising substance, the multiple enclosure, the view was only to the heavens, which filled the sanctuary with light.

The kitchen was a kind of sanctuary as well; an interior and familial one. Its enclosure gath-

ered the whole farm, from fields and orchard through the farmstead and the bordered house-yard with its cellar. All farm paths led to this kitchen, for the only door into the dwelling entered this room, and as we have seen, this room was essentially *the entire dwelling* (Fig. 10). As the center of family life, it contained virtually all activities:

What a tableful we were at supper: two long rows of restless heads in the lamplight, and so many eyes fastened excitedly upon *Ántonia* as she sat at the head of the table, filling the plates and starting the dishes on their way. . . . Anna and Yulka left their chairs from time to time to bring fresh plates of *kolaches* and pitchers of milk. (MA 347)

The kitchen was also the essential center of social life, the room inside the "front" door:

the long table covered with a bright oilcloth, was set out with the dishes waiting for them, and the warm kitchen was full of the smell of coffee and hot biscuit and sausage. . . . Some country housekeepers would have stopped to spread a white cloth over the oilcloth, to change the thick cups and plates for their best china, and the wood-handled knives for plated ones. But not Mary. "You must take us as you find us." (NR 9-10)

Open and honest, like the land itself, and the heart and hearth of the home, such social unselfconsciousness is the quintessence of peasant hospitality.⁶⁷

The kitchen was also a transcendental place. Perhaps the most explicit scene involves Rosicky. Returning home one evening, "He stopped by the windmill to look up at the frosty winter stars and draw a long breath before he went inside. That kitchen with the shining windows was dear to him; but the sleeping fields and bright stars and the noble darkness were dearer still" (NR 93-94). The movement from field to kitchen to the heavens expresses the essential relationship. For Rosicky, the kitchen mediated between the sources, the earth and heaven, much as the crops mediate between the darkness of the earth and the light above.

It is more than happenstance that both sanctuaries are associated with food.⁶⁸ Nourishment in the Cather works exists as yet another kind of middle landscape, in between the crops of the field and the body of the soul.

The kitchen is where the transformation occurs. Roger and Linda Welsch state that all food is part of the nourishment that rescues and protects the soul. Indeed, the *inward* passage of food from field to kitchen to body is not complete with consumption, for it is also in the kitchen (at the table) that prayers are raised. Though Cather is silent on the matter of prayer, it was part of her experience for *Antonie* was a devoutly religious person.⁶⁹

THE LANDSCAPE IN BETWEEN

If we look closely at the sanctuaries within which transcendence is captured, we see that they reconcile union with the land and union with the universe at the loci of the vertical and horizontal Czech worlds.⁷⁰ The vertical connection between earth and heaven is linked to the historical connection between the old and new worlds by the Czech-American place.⁷¹

The Pavelka farmstead, both as text and as artifact, exists as a significant landscape in between. Horizontally, or historically, the farm is captured between the old country tradition and the new, polyglot, post-industrial environment. Vertically, the whole place is made of substance that rises between earth and heaven, but these two axes most meaningfully cross in the sanctuaries of the orchard and the kitchen.

The orchard provided Czechs with a surrogate "forest." The old homeland was a forested place in the deep past, its farmlands wrested from it over time immemorial. The forest remained a place of mystery, contemplation, recreation, and food-gathering over the centuries and held a special place in the hearts of immigrants. The treeless Plains deprived Czech Americans of this sanctuary, which they provided by planting orchards and parks.⁷²

Ántonia's and Rosicky's orchards were forests as well as sanctuaries. The orchard was the location of Rosicky's picnic, a transcendental celebration that marked the failure of the crops one year (NR 48-9). This thanksgiving held in the face of economic disaster em-

phasizes Rosicky's enduring faith. Cather changed the plantings around the arbor in the story to linden trees, the ancient sacred trees of the Slavs, thereby reinforcing the place as one of transcendence and recalling the vertical axis of *Ántonia* by the tree.⁷³

The kitchen is even more important than the orchard. The Pavelkas' was culturally in between the old and new worlds. It began as the *světnice*, the principal room, whose etymology enhances our understanding. In Old Czech both *svět* and *světlo* meant "world," in particular that part of the world that was lit. Later *svět* came to refer to the whole world, and *světlo* came to mean "light" (as in the Creation, "let there be light"). *Světnice* was derived from *světlo*, and literally meant "light room," probably because of its windows. But the ancient reference to "world" remained implicit in room function, since it was the interior world.⁷⁴ While the technology of the Pavelka *světnice* was more new world than old, the functional character of the room remained quintessentially Czech.⁷⁵

This principal room remained such even after the more American cross-wing addition to the house. While the enlargement allowed for greater specialization of function room by room, essential aspects of use remained unchanged. The old *komora* became an *obývací pokoj* or parlor, and the old *světnice* became more kitchen-like, but virtually all family life except sleeping and the most formal entertainment continued to revolve around the *kuchyně*. Equally important, the enlarged house retained the single exterior threshold directly into this room from the fields (Fig. 10).

Retention of the principal-room, single-threshold type dwelling represents a survival of ancient Czech attitudes toward life, hospitality, the land, and the cosmos. Horizontally and vertically the *kuchyně* is firmly fixed in the in-between. Culturally it is distinctly Czech-American in a continuum from Czech to American. And vertically the room in fact mediates between the earth and heaven as suggested by the texts—in the continuum from earth to field and crop, to kitchen, table and

food, to body, soul and prayer, and then to heaven. The attitudes evident in these loci form an essential part of the pioneer Czech character on the Great Plains, attitudes observed, understood, recorded, and interpreted by Willa Cather. The words appear authentic to the thing and the thing authentic to the text.

NOTES

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1. Willa Cather, *My Ántonia* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1918); and Willa Cather, "Neighbour Rosicky," *Obscure Destinies* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1932), pp. 3-71; hereafter cited parenthetically as MA and NR.

2. Mildred R. Bennett, *The World of Willa Cather* (1951; rpt. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1961), pp. 52, 203; S. J. Woolf, "Masaryk: Philosopher of a Revolution," *New York Times Magazine* (14 July 1929), p. 11; Cather to Masaryk, 2 February 1925, Masaryk Institute, Prague, copies deposited at the Nebraska State Historical Society (NSHS), Lincoln Archives, MS2693.

3. [Mrs. Lad J. Skocpol], NSHS Museum Collections file, #7403.

4. Rose Rosicky to Willa Cather, Omaha, 6 October 1926, Willa Cather Historical Center Archives (WCHC), Red Cloud, Nebraska: Incoming Correspondence, Letters Received by Willa Cather, folder 8. No record of a Cather response to the letter is known; she may have answered indirectly with the title of the story "Neighbour Rosicky." Rose's father, Jan Rosický, was a well-known publisher in Omaha, and reference is made to the Czech paper in Omaha in the story (NR 32). Rose Rosicky, *A History of Czechs (Bohemians) in Nebraska* (Omaha: Czech Historical Society of Nebraska, 1929) p. 207; originally published as Růžena Rosická, *Dejiny Cechů v Nebrasce* (Omaha: Českého Historického Klubu v Nebrasce, 1928).

5. An incomplete list of translations is available at WCHC. Known Czech publications include W. S. Catherová, *Naše Tonička* (Préložil Karel Pelant. Praha: Šolc & Šimáček, n.d.), copy at the Dvoracek Memorial Library, Wilber, Nebraska; Willa Catherová, *Moje Antonie* (Trans. Olga

Fialová and Emanuela Tilschová. Praha: Mladá fronta, 1966), copy at WCHC; and Willa Cather, *Farmář Rosický* (Přeložila L. Weinfurterová. Praha: F. Topič, 1933).

6. Catherová, *Naše Tonička* (note 5 above), back endpaper.

7. Otakar Odložilík, *Obrázky z dvou světů* (Lund, Sweden: Skånska Centraltryckeriet AB, 1958; rpt. Philadelphia: N.p., 1958); citations from his own typescript translation, "Pictures from two worlds," 1958, pp. 119, 120, 6; original at WCHC. *Babička* was published in 1855; see the translation, Bozena Nemec, *The Grandmother: A Story of Country Life in Bohemia*, trans. Frances Gregor (Chicago: A. C. McClung, 1892).

8. Cather stated that her Virginia kin were "provincial and utterly without curiosity" concerning their foreign neighbors on the Divide; "Nebraska: The End of the First Cycle," *Nation*, 1923; rpt. Virginia Faulkner, ed., *Roundup: A Nebraska Reader* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1957), p. 5.

9. Bennett, *World of Willa Cather* (note 2 above), pp. 1-39, *passim*.

10. Interview in L. Brent Bohlke, *Willa Cather in Person: Interviews, Speeches and Letters* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1986), p. 32. Cather states that one year on the Divide was "enough to make an indelible impression on a nine-year-old"; quoted in Elizabeth Shepley Sergeant, *Willa Cather, A Memoir* (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1953), p. 16.

11. Quoted in James Woodress, *Willa Cather: A Literary Life* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1987), p. 37. For more on the cultural mix see Bernice Slote, "Willa Cather and Plains Culture," in Virginia Faulkner with Frederick C. Luebke, eds., *Vision and Refuge: Essays on the Literature of the Great Plains* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press for the Center for Great Plains Studies, 1982), pp. 96-97; Bennett, *World of Willa Cather* (note 2 above), p. 53; for historical data on Cather's Webster County, see Robert W. Cherny, "Nebraska, 1883-1925: Cather's Version and History's," in John J. Murphy, et. al., eds., *Willa Cather: Family, Community, and History* (Provo: Brigham Young University, Humanities Publication Center, 1990), pp. 229-38.

12. Willa Cather, "Nebraska" (note 8 above), pp. 5-6.

13. John J. Murphy, *My Ántonia: The Road Home* (Boston: Twayne, 1989), pp. 16, 77; Sharon O'Brien, *Willa Cather: The Emerging Voice* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), p. 21; David Daiches, "Decline in the West," in Harold Bloom, ed., *Willa Cather's My Ántonia* (New York: Chelsea House, 1987), p. 13. See also Bernice Slote, "Willa Cather" (note 11 above), p. 93.

14. Reprinted in Bohlke, *Willa Cather* (note 10 above), p. 71-72. "Americanization" often meant "Anglicization;" see, e.g., Joseph S. Rouček, "The American Czechs, Slovaks, and Slavs in the Development of America's 'Climate of Opinion,'" in Miroslav Rechcigl, Jr., ed., *Czechoslovakia Past and Present* vol. 1 (Paris: Mouton, 1968), 815-43.

15. Reprinted in Bohlke, *Willa Cather* (note 10 above), p. 147.

16. See Rosicky, *History* (note 4 above), pp. 207-08; *Hospodář* (15 September 1892); and "Coming of the Bohemians," *Webster County Argus* (14 April 1905) 1:2. Antonie was Catholic and Jan Pavelka was Lutheran; see obituaries at WCHC. A concise overview of the Czech-American experience is provided in Karen Johnson Freeze, "Czechs," in Stephen Thernstrom, et. al., eds., *Harvard Encyclopedia of American Ethnic Groups* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1980), pp. 261-72.

17. *Fraternal Herald/Bratrský Věstník* 75 (no. 7, July 1972): 243, 247. For more on freethought see Bruce Garver, "Czech-American Freethinkers on the Great Plains, 1871-1914," in Frederick C. Luebke, ed., *Ethnicity on the Great Plains* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press for the Center for Great Plains Studies, 1980), pp. 147-60.

18. Date from obituary of Mrs. Anna Pavelka, WCHC. František (Francis) Sadílek is the subject of the suicide in both *My Ántonia* and the short story "Peter"; see Willa Cather, "Peter," published in differing versions in 1892 and 1900, reprinted in Mildred R. Bennett, ed., *Early Stories of Willa Cather* (New York: Dodd, Mead & Co., 1957), pp. 1-8.

19. Bennett, *World of Willa Cather* (note 2 above), pp. 47-9. Thirteen children were born to Antonie, and three died in infancy; see Beth Bohling, "The Husband of My Ántonia," *Western American Literature* 19 (no. 1, 1984): 30; and United States Federal Census, Population Schedule, Glenwood Precinct, 1910, house 132, family 155, at NSHS.

20. Bennett, *World of Willa Cather* (note 2 above), p. 46 n.18; Cather statement from Latrobe Carroll, in Bohlke, *Willa Cather* (note 10 above), p. 22. Woodress, in *Willa Cather* (note 11 above), p. 41, claims there is no evidence they met until Antonie moved to Red Cloud to work for the Miner family.

21. Bennett, *World of Willa Cather* (note 2 above), p. 49; Woodress, *Willa Cather* (note 11 above), pp. 289, 284-85; John J. Murphy states the extended visit occurred in 1917, see *My Ántonia* (note 14 above), pp. 9-10.

22. Quoted in Slote, "Willa Cather" (note 11 above), pp. 96-7.

23. Cather, "Nebraska" (note 8 above), pp. 4-5.

24. She is said to have gone to Wilber before writing *My Ántonia* to learn more about Czech names, and received assistance there from Frank Sadílek; see Skocpol (note 3 above). Compare Cather, "Peter" (note 18 above), pp. 1-2 to *Jak se máš?* (How are you?) which is the first person singular informal form used by a grandparent to address a grandchild, or the form of address between two lovers, with the second person plural form, *Jak se máte vy?* (How art thou?) used by a grandchild to address a grandparent, or the form used between non-intimate young men and women. Today in Nebraska the former is used exclusively.

25. Woodress, *Willa Cather* (note 11 above), pp. 294-95; also see her 1939 letter to Dayton Kohler, paraphrased by Woodress, p. 480.

26. Cather interview, 1921, Bohlke, *Willa Cather* (note 10 above), pp. 31-32. For biographical studies see Bennett, *World of Willa Cather* (note 2 above), Woodress, *Willa Cather* (note 11 above), pp. 290-92; Beth Bohling, "The Husband," (note 19 above): pp. 29-39; Antonette Turner, "My Grandmother, Antonia," *Nebraska Voices: Telling the Stories of Our State* (Lincoln: Nebraska Humanities Council, 1993), p. 116-19; and forthcoming works including the Cather Scholarly Edition of *My Ántonia*, edited by Susan J. Rosowski, a dissertation on *One of Ours* by Becky Faber, and a dissertation on *A Lost Lady* by Lonnie Pierson.

27. Judith Fryer, *Felicitious Space: The Imaginative Structures of Edith Wharton and Willa Cather* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1986), p. 208; Richard Sutton, "Not For the Tourist's Eye Only: Willa Cather's Divide Landscape Today," *Selected Works* (1991): 15.

28. In addition to Bennett, *World of Willa Cather* (note 2 above), see the local surveys conducted by Carrie Miner Sherwood and John March in 1960, at WCHC; the 1969 survey by Helen Obitz, at WCHC; and the 1969 survey by Mildred R. Bennett, at WCHC. The synthetic work in D. Murphy, Ann Billesbach, and Joni Lidolph Gilkerson, "Willa Cather Thematic Group: Sites and Districts in Webster County Nebraska," *National Register of Historic Places: Inventory Nomination Form* (Lincoln: Nebraska State Historical Society, 1980) begins to analyze artifacts, while Elaine Freed, *Preserving the Great Plains & Rocky Mountains* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1992), pp. 214-20 discusses preservation efforts in a regional perspective.

29. Rosicky to Cather, (note 4 above); emphasis is mine; *Odložilík; Obrázky* (note 7 above), pp. 110, 118, 7.

30. John Milton, "From Artifact to Intuition in Great Plains Writing," *Prairie Schooner* 55 (nos. 1,2, 1981): 135.

31. Laurence Ricou, *Vertical Man/Horizontal World: Man and Landscape in Canadian Prairie Fiction* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1973), p. 8.

32. Reprinted in Bohlke, *Willa Cather* (note 11 above), p. 88; see also David Laird's discussion of things, history, and fiction, in "Willa Cather's Women: Gender, Place, and Narrativity in *O Pioneers!* and *My Ántonia*," *Great Plains Quarterly* 12 (no. 4, 1992): 249-50.

33. Cather intuitively understood that historical, cultural, and social meaning is inherent in ordinary objects. On "reading" things see e.g. the essays in Thomas J. Schlereth, ed., *Material Culture Studies in America* (Nashville: American Association for State and Local History, 1982); Amos Rapoport, *The Meaning of the Built Environment: A Nonverbal Communication Approach* (Beverly Hills: Sage, 1982); and Henry Glassie, *Folk Housing in Middle Virginia: A Structural Analysis of Historic Artifacts* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1975). On place, history, and literature, see e.g. the essays in Douglas C. Popock, ed., *Humanistic Geography and Literature: Essays on the Experience of Place* (London: Croom Helm, 1981); and David Lowenthal, *The Past is a Foreign Country* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), pp. 224-31.

34. Orchard location from Antonie's granddaughter, Antonette Turner, (personal communication, 24 January 1993); see also her "My Grandmother" (note 26 above).

35. Technical archeological notes on the building sequences are not included here. Sister Mary Vavricka, Hastings, in notes from a conversation with Ann Billesbach, n.d., at WCHC (copy at NSHS, Nebraska Historic Building Survey file WT00-104) states that the McClure name is associated with the relocated house, that it was moved from a location southeast of Pavelka, and that the old house already on the site was unsuitable because its floors were in poor condition. The Thomas W. McClure farm was in SE, 33, 4-10, approximately six miles to the southeast. It was acquired by him in 1916. Previously the property was owned and occupied by Ludwig Schmidt, and the August and Albertine Kroning Brosch families.

36. Vavricka, *ibid.*, stated that the bedroom (smaller room) had an outside door, a fact also recalled by Emil Pavelka in a recorded interview with Ann Billesbach, 10 March 1979, at WCHC. Physical evidence of former fenestration along that wall is not present, or is obscured. My reconstruction of this wall is conjectural beyond that stated above.

37. Room names commonly used in the architectural literature are based on the English-American

can tradition; see Dell Upton, "Vernacular Domestic Architecture in Eighteenth-Century Virginia" (pp. 318-23), and Abbott Lowell Cummings, "Inside the Massachusetts House" (pp. 220-25), both reprinted in Dell Upton and John Michael Vlach, eds., *Common Places: Readings in American Vernacular Architecture* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1986).

38. For Czech villages, farmsteads, and houses see Alois Jirasek, *Some Aspects of Czech Culture*, trans. Richard Neuse (New Haven: Human Relations Area Files, 1953 [1894]); Zdenek Salzmänn and Vladimir Scheufler, *Komárov: A Czech Farming Village* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1974); J. Sanda and M. Weatherall, "Czech Village Architecture," *Architectural Review* 109 (no. 652, 1951): 255-61; Václav Frolec and Josef Vařeka, *Lidová architektura* (Praha: Nakladatelství technické literatury, 1983); Václav Mencl, *Lidová architektura v Československu* (Praha: Nakladatelství Československé akademie věd, 1980); and Antonín Robek and Josef Vařeka, eds., *Národopis jihočeská vlastivěda* (České Budějovice: Vydalo jihočeské nakladatelství, 1987).

39. Vestigial components of central and eastern European connected building architecture are evident in America; see Michael Koop and Stephen Ludwig, *German-Russian Folk Architecture in South-eastern South Dakota* (Vermillion: State Historical Preservation Center, 1984); and David Murphy, "Czechs," in Dell Upton, ed., *America's Architectural Roots: Ethnic Groups That Built America* (Washington: The Preservation Press, 1986), pp. 112-17.

40. Translators of Cather's work would not have known the specific circumstances of this building. *Naše Tonička* (note 5 above), p. 273 translates the barn as *stáj*, or "stable," while *Moje Antonie* (note 5 above), p. 210 uses the term *stodola*, or "barn," though this term in Czech denotes a hay storage facility. Reference to the "hayloft" is translated by both as *seník* (pp. 285 and 219, respectively).

41. In the Pavelka house, where English was not spoken (MA 335), we would expect room names to have been rendered in Czech. My terms are based upon the physical evidence, the vernacular architectural literature, and upon extended conversations with Josef Vařeka and Alena Plessingerová in Prague, 18-19 September 1988, and Míla Šašková-Pierce in Lincoln. See particularly Frolec and Vařeka, *Lidová architektura* (note 38 above).

42. In the south Bohemian village of Komárov a governmental decree of 1906 prohibited the occupation of a single room by more than one family; see Salzmänn and Scheufler, *Komárov* (note 38 above), p. 30.

43. In form, note the clipped-gable roof of the wing, a type common in the Czech lands (*polovalbá*

strěcha). Visually this roof gives the house a "ground-hugging" feel that Cather captured in a different way: "The roof was so steep that the eaves were not much above the forest of tall hollyhocks" (MA 339).

44. See Sally McMurry, *Families and Farmhouses in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), pp. 196-203; for Bohemia see Salzmänn and Scheufler, *Komárov* (note 38 above), pp. 30-33.

45. McMurry, *Families and Farmhouses*, *ibid.*, pp. 135-69. Both of Cather's works reinforce the significance of the Pavelka parlor: "a nice parlour for company" (MA 334), and "tired and sullen . . . in a kitchen that was a parlour also" (NR 41). The widespread pattern of house transformation among Czech Americans via the incorporation of kitchens in cross-wings is summarized in David Murphy, "Czech-American," in Paul Oliver, ed., *Encyclopedia of Vernacular Architecture of the World* (Oxford and New York: Basil Blackwell, forthcoming).

46. See Roger L. Welsch, "Front Door-Back Door," *Natural History* 88 (no. 6, 1979): 76-82.

47. A pattern of Czech-American architectural convergence of the "front" and "back," or more properly of the public facade with the rear entrance wall, was recently explored in David Murphy, "Settlement and Building: Some Aspects of the Czech-American Vernacular Landscape," Symposium on the History of Czech Immigrants in the United States, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, 22 September 1992. Antonette Turner, in personal communication at the farm, 24 June 1993, was insistent that the front of the house was the farmyard side.

48. See the essays in Dell Upton, *America's Architectural Roots* (note 39 above) for a survey of various traditions. For eastern Europeans see Frederick C. Luebke, "Ethnic Group Settlement on the Great Plains," *Western Historical Quarterly* 8 (no. 4, 1977): 427. These same groups used conservative building technologies. See David Murphy, "Building in Clay on the Central Plains," in Thomas Carter and Bernard Herman, eds., *Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture*, vol. 3 (Columbia: University of Missouri Press for the Vernacular Architecture Forum, 1989): 78-83.

49. See Jerome Blum, *The End of the Old Order in Rural Europe* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978), pp. 221-26, 381-82, 263-71; and Doreen Warringer, *Economics of Peasant Farming* (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1964), pp. 12-17. Salzmänn and Scheufler, *Komárov* (note 38 above), pp. 63-64, note enclosure's beginning.

50. Kenneth D. Miller, *Peasant Pioneers: An Interpretation of the Slavic Peoples in the United States* (New York: Council of Women for Home Missions

and Missionary Education Movement, 1925, rpt. 1969), p. 24 n.1; Robert Redfield, *Peasant Society and Culture: An Anthropological Approach to Civilization* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1956), pp. 26-27. For the distinction between sustenance and commodity see the comment by Irwin T. Sanders in "The Peasantries of Eastern Europe," in Irwin T. Sanders, ed., *Collectivization of Agriculture in Eastern Europe* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1958), p. 25.

51. Blum, *End of Old Order* (note 49 above), p. 263; and see D. W. Meinig, *The Shaping of America: A Geographical Perspective on 500 Years of History*, vol. 1 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986): 409-12.

52. Sanders, "The Peasantries" (note 50 above), p. 25; see also Miller, *Peasant Pioneers* (note 50 above), p. 20; for other Slavic attitudes toward the land, see Ray E. Wakeley, "Peasantisms," in Sanders, *Collectivization* (note 50 above), p. 207.

53. Will S. Monroe, *Bohemia and the Čechs* (Boston: Page Company, 1910), pp. 210-11.

54. Ernest Zizka, *Czech Cultural Contributions* (N.p., n.d.), p. 83; Josef J. Barton, "Religion and Cultural Change in Czech Immigrant Communities, 1850-1920," in Randall M. Miller and Thomas D. Marzik, eds., *Immigrants and Religion in Urban America* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1977), pp. 6-10; Blum, *End of Old Order* (note 49 above), pp. 292-95.

55. Love of country was deeply rooted while love of nation emerged during the nineteenth century *Národní obrození* (National Revival). The Czech National Anthem, *Kde domov můj*, written during this time, fully expresses both; see Vladimír Kůčera and DeLores Kůčera, eds., *Czech Music in Nebraska/Česká Hudba v Nebrasce* (N.p., 1980), pp. 14-17.

56. My use of "middle landscape" here is "in between" other things; see Leo Marx, *The Machine in the Garden: Technology and the Pastoral Ideal in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976), p. 113, *passim*.

57. My discussion is derived in part from Christian Norberg-Schulz, *Genius Loci: Towards a Phenomenology of Architecture* (London: Academy Editions, 1980), pp. 5-23.

58. Ricou, *Vertical Man* (note 31 above), pp. 1-9.

59. For examples see Richard Dillman, "Imagining the Land: Five Versions of the Landscape in Willa Cather's *My Ántonia*," *Heritage of the Great Plains* 22 (no. 3, 1989): 30-35; Fryer, *Felicitous Space* (note 27 above), pp. 244-52; Murphy, *My Ántonia* (note 13 above), pp. 58-59; John H. Randall, *The Landscape and the Looking Glass: Willa Cather's Search for Value* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1960), pp. 109-10, 144-45, *passim*.

60. I distinguish between "land" and "landscape" on the basis of cultural activity, as in John R. Stilgoe, *Common Landscape of America, 1580 to 1845* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982), p. 3.

61. Wallace Stegner, "Willa Cather, *My Ántonia*," in Bloom, *Willa Cather's My Ántonia* (note 13 above), p. 47.

62. Susan J. Rosowski, "Willa Cather—A Pioneer in Art: *O Pioneers!* and *My Ántonia*," *Prairie Schooner* 55 (nos. 1 & 2, 1981): 141-54; Shelley Saposnik-Noire, "The Silent Protagonist: The Unifying Presence of Landscape in Willa Cather's *My Ántonia*," *Midwest Quarterly* 31 (no. 2, 1990): 171-79; and Murphy, *My Ántonia* (note 13 above), p. 60.

63. Murphy, *My Ántonia* (note 13 above), p. 93, quoted; see also James E. Miller, Jr., "My Ántonia: A Frontier Drama of Time," in Bloom, *Willa Cather's My Ántonia* (note 13 above), p. 25; Randall, *The Landscape* (note 59 above), p. 143; Woodress, *Willa Cather* (note 11 above), pp. 296-98; and Stegner, "Willa Cather" (note 61 above), p. 49. See especially Evelyn I. Funda "'Neighbour Rosicky': Ever Widening Time," *Nebraska English Journal* 37 (no. 1, 1991): 52, 59.

64. Paul A. Olson, "The Epic and Great Plains Literature: Rølvaag, Cather, and Neihardt," *Prairie Schooner* 55 (1981): 284; Steven P. Ryan, S.J., "'A World Above the World': Transcendence in Cather's Fiction," *Willa Cather Pioneer Memorial Newsletter* 34: 3(1990): 31, quoted.

65. John 12:24 (KJV). Compare Rosowski's discussion of Cather's transcendence as a negation of the ego, a movement out of the self (or beyond the self to selflessness) to unity with an other, in "Willa Cather" (note 62 above), pp. 143-44, with Ann Romines, *The Home Plot: Women, Writing & Domestic Ritual* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1992), p. 143, and Saposnik-Noire, "Silent Protagonist" (note 62 above), pp. 174-5.

66. Susan J. Rosowski, *The Voyage Perilous: Willa Cather's Romanticism* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1986), p. 192; cf. John, chapters 12-18; Ryan, "World Above" (note 64 above), pp. 31-32; and Kathleen A. Danker, "The Passing of a Golden Age in *Obscure Destinies*," *Willa Cather Pioneer Memorial Newsletter* 34 (no. 3, 1990): 28.

67. Compare this kitchen with the high-tech, "progressive" American kitchens; see McMurry, *Families and Farmhouses* (note 44 above), pp. 118-28; and Fryer, *Felicitous Space* (note 27 above), p. 34. Peasant-like hospitality and the centrality of kitchens was long retained by Czechs even in more urban settings; see Joseph S. Roucek, "Passing of American Czechoslovaks," *American Journal of Sociology* 39 (1954): 615; and Joe Kvapil, "Bohemian

Town," in *Plattsmouth* (Plattsmouth, Nebraska: King Korn Klub., n.d.), p. 128.

68. The "stages" of food production are related to similar stages in the transformation of the landscape; see Susan J. Rosowski's foreword in Roger L. Welsch and Linda K. Welsch, *Cather's Kitchens: Foodways in Literature and Life* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1987), pp. x-xii.

69. Antonette Turner, personal communication, 24 January 1993; see also Turner, "My Grandmother" (note 26 above), and Welsch and Welsch, *Cather's Kitchens* (note 68 above), p. 10. Among some Catholics grace is said both before and after the meal.

70. Ryan, "World Above" (note 64 above), p. 32.

71. See Stegner, "Willa Cather," (note 61 above), pp. 41, 47.

72. The Shimerdas' mushrooms were a product of the Czech forests (MA 77, 79); mushroom hunting is still a favorite pastime in the Czech Republic. Cf. the community histories of Nebraska Czech settlements. The Rosicky picnic held in the or-

chard recalls Czech folklife customs (NR 48); see Cynthia J. Andes, "The Bohemian Folk Practice in 'Neighbour Rosicky,'" *Western America in Literature* 7 (Spring 1972): 63-64.

73. Cather draws a more explicit reference to tree-worship in Bohemia in Part II of *O Pioneers!*; see also Andes, "Bohemian Folk Practice," *ibid.*

74. Míla Šašková-Pierce, personal communication, 22 December 1992; cf. also two other traditional rooms of the peasant house, the *komora* and the *Černá kuchyně*, both of which from late medieval times were "dark" rooms.

75. The transformation of the old *světnice* via the introduction of metal plate stoves was well underway even before emigration. See Josef Vařeka, "Ländliche Bauten des 19. Jahrhunderts in Böhmen," *Hausbau im 19. Jahrhundert* (Jahrbuch für Hausforschung, Band 38. Soderheim/Marburg: Jonas Verlag, 1989), pp. 247-62; Salzmann and Schleufler, *Komárov* (note 38 above), p. 30; Welsch and Welsch, *Cather's Kitchens* (note 68 above), pp. 2-4.