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Winter 2001

Review of *Cather Studies 4: Willa Cather's Canadian and Old World Connections* Edited by Robert Thacker and Michael A. Peterman

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Maguire-Skaggs, Merrill, "Review of *Cather Studies 4: Willa Cather's Canadian and Old World Connections* Edited by Robert Thacker and Michael A. Peterman" (2001). *Great Plains Quarterly*. 2279.
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Cather Studies 4: Willa Cather's Canadian and Old World Connections. Edited by Robert Thacker and Michael A. Peterman. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1999. Illustrations, contributors, index. vi + 342 pp. \$30.00 paper.

Willa Cather's Canadian and Old World Connections is the first of four new collections that have emerged from international colloquia held in different locales of Cather's work. To those whose Cather is primarily a Nebraska writer, they may provide a jolt. Nevertheless, Willa Cather now not only belongs to the world but is also being claimed by a growing number of its corners: first Quebec; then Pittsburgh; then Winchester, Virginia; later New York City; and, most recently, the Southwest. One explanation for the exponential growth in Cather scholarship is, in fact, these geographical pulls which position her newly and thus undermine critical orthodoxy. In any case, Cather scholars enjoy talking about her in various parts of the world, so there's hope the consciousness of her own wide travels will continue to produce new critical collections.

When one reads such a collection she is, of course, aware of how personal her responses are to particular essays. What one likes best are those that push her either to go a little further down a dimly-glimpsed trail or else to return to a road not taken. In short, one prefers the welcome lift toward a place already calling, toward enjoyable tasks already imagined. Thus the essays most valuable to me may not be those most valuable to you. Having acknowledged the personal, I'd therefore like to salute here those pieces that left me smiling, like Cather's Cécile: "I am delighted at you!"

David Stouck's astonishing lead essay, "Willa Cather's Canada," covers connections from Cather's schoolgirl journalism to her last published story. Stouck finds more Canada in Cather than anyone else could have imagined and grounds this book in provable fact. But where Stouck's reaching arms cover the country coast to coast, Deborah Lindsay Williams's "Losing Nothing, Comprehending Everything" unearths new strata by digging down into *Death*

Comes for the Archbishop. Williams treats more inventively than anyone else the earth goddess materials placed here by Cather as her most dramatic contrast to Catholic Bishop Latour. It's a stellar essay. Two other provocative pieces open up important new interpretative possibilities. Klaus Stich's "*The Professor's House: Prohibition, Ripe Grapes, and Euripides*" puts Godfrey St. Peter in a Prohibition-pinched New Historical context that significantly redefines him. And Françoise Palleau-Papin studies so lucidly the French rhythms, syntax, and linguistic syntheses in "The Hidden French in Cather's English" she ought to open up new frontiers for Cather studies.

I should also mention gratefully four more writers among the many worthies in this collection. Richard Harris discovers a Pierre Charron in Montaigne's work, thereby providing a strong textual link between Cather and Montaigne-loving Emerson. Helen M. Buss's "Reading the Writer through Biographies and Memoirs," a joy to listen to when she first delivered it, remains a joy to read. Richard Millington reads *Shadows on the Rock* through the lens of cultural anthropology, reminding us how attuned Cather was to the thought of her time. And Nadeane Trowse's concentration on "Disease, Doctors, and Diagnoses as Social Action" provokes studies of Cather and medicine soon to appear. All in all, this collection beckons one to "come and buy."

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