



Willa Cather's Southern Connections: New Essays on Cather and the South

Ann Romines

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Willa Cather spent her first nine years in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia, where her family had lived for five generations. Even after the Cathers' move to Nebraska, she came of age in an emphatically southern extended family, surrounded by Virginia stories, customs, and controversies. As Eudora Welty has declared, "She did not come out of Virginia for nothing." Throughout her career, Cather's fiction drew strength from the people, places, and issues of the Reconstruction South of her birth, culminating in her final novel, *Sapphira and the Slave Girl*.

This collection of essays is the first to look at this important southern connection in Cather's writing life. Ann Romines has brought together eminent Cather critics and fresh new voices. Judith Fetterley and Lisa Marcus restore Cather's southern origins to a central place in her career. Robert K. Miller reads *My Mortal Enemy* as a Reconstruction narrative, and Patricia Yaeger theorizes the racial language of Cather's landscapes. Among several essays on *Sapphira*, Mako Yoshikawa's and Tomas Pollard's contributions explore the novel's racial and sexual dynamics and abolitionist concerns. Cynthia Griffin Wolff views Cather's youthful experiments with clothes and gender as responses to contemporary theater and her mother's southern feminine style. Other critics compare Cather to other Southern writers: Allen Tate, Ellen Glasgow, Flannery O'Connor, and Toni Morrison.

Grounded both in traditional literary criticisms and in cultural studies, these sixteen essays make a compelling claim for the importance of Cather's southern connections.

Contributors:

Roseanne V. Camacho, University of Louisville
Judith Fetterley, University at Albany, State University of New York
Lisa Marcus, Pacific Lutheran University
Marilyn Mobley McKenzie, George Mason University
Robert K. Miller, University of St. Thomas
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Ann Romines, The George Washington University
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Merrill Maguire Skaggs, Drew University
Janis P. Stout, Texas A&M University
Joseph R. Uργο, Bryant College
Gayle Wald, The George Washington University
Cynthia Griffin Wolff, Massachusetts Institute of Technology
Patricia Yaeger, University of Michigan
Mako Yoshikawa, Harvard University

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Melinda Walton:

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