

In Search of Enigmatic Individuals: A Psychoanalytic Discussion on Willa Cather's *My Mortal Enemy*

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Abstract

Enigma is a ubiquitous essence in characters of 19th century American literature which commonly refers to the sarcastic or mysterious meaning of human life. America subsequently received great literary works encompassing contemporary provincial life including the haul of capitalism, versatile artistry along with unfolding of bemused human mindset. American stories, prior to the era of modernism were mostly magnified and critiqued with socio-economic perceptions rather than being scrutinized with concentrated psychoanalytic studies. Willa Cather's *My Mortal Enemy* illustrates bewildered minds of people. Central characters of the story are inflicted with the pursuit of worldly attainments. Extreme divergence amid the characters' desire and reality has left the whole story into paranoia. Myra Henshawe, the protagonist of the novella is a neurotic crippled patient who has deserted her soul's aesthetic beauty under the grasp of terrestrial obsession and disturbing psychosomatic pattern. Jacques Lacan's three stages of psychic development will be maneuvered in this paper to evince the uncanny of shared life in Cather's story. The novella has a fictional as well as real time setting where people are found to sprint for materialistic self-indulgence. Cather has crafted some rare and intriguing discovery of seeking one's mortal enemy in such an enigmatic plot which will complement the psychogenic discussion of the paper. This paper emits a critical study on how the characters turn as indecipherable in *My Mortal Enemy* by spot lighting on Freudian construction of ego, sublimation, desires and Lacanian psychoanalytic models.

Keywords: Bewildered minds; Construction of ego; Desires; Paranoia; Provincial life; Psychosomatic pattern

Introduction

The word 'enigma' is associated with riddle, hidden resemblance and displays meanings like scripture. Enigmatic mode invites readers into never-ending observation of stories. The interpretive voices of enigmatic literature can be didactic as well. Matthew of Vendome in the third book of his *Ars Versificatoria* said: "Enigma is an obscure meaning concealed with a wrapper of words." (Vindocinensis, 1176). He mentioned that enigmatic meaning in literature is something between openness and hidden; between transparency and opacity. Enigmatic thoughts help literary theories such as colonialism, feminism, psychoanalysis, gender and race studies to find the truth of different phenomenon.

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Robert McCrum in "Herman Melville, The Last Great Enigma of American Literature" mentioned, "If ever a writer was a mystery inside a puzzle, wrapped in a riddle, it's the authors of American modern literature." (McCrum, 2011). It is a common feature that American writers, as their creative genius released, they seem to illustrate the enigma of creativity in their life and works as well. Many of the authors from America had become pessimist about worldly life after getting a broader recognition for their literary masterpieces. These writers' lives and appeal remain mostly unknowable. One such American writer Herman Melville said: "Deep, deep and sill deep and deeper must we go, if we find out the heart of a man." (McCrum, 2011). Willa Cather, the Pulitzer Prize winner and the author of *My Mortal Enemy* once quoted about America and the great Nebraskan plain, "This Land was an Enigma. It was like a horse that no one knows how to break to harness, that runs wild and kick things to pieces." (NET Nebraska, 2015). Willa Cather's ecstatic responses remained silent as per her critiques; she chose to live behind the spotlights. Cather's psychosomatic juncture was reflected in her writings.

Willa Cather spent her happiness and curses in the Nebraskan great plain. She was a very wild and untamed young girl whose bohemian mind triggered the immigrant peoples' stories who lived around the great plain. Unlike the protagonist of *My Mortal Enemy* Myra Henshawe, Cather seized the essence of life from the vastness of Nebraskan émigré life. Cather had a very deep psychological bond with the environment which influences the understanding of any of her writings. She was a strong, romantic female character as she said, "They are not true portraits, but they are composites that I know and I'm inspired." (American Center Moscow, 2020).

Willa Cather is recognized as the most successful of her time to bring out the psychosomatic aspects of her fictional characters. Marcus Klein, in "Unmasking Willa Cather's "Mortal Enemy" mentioned that, "the story of Myra Henshawe must have been the product of a personal crisis." (Johanningsmeier, 2003) The personal resemblance might have been created as Cather was a silent observant of acquisitiveness along with the gust of enormous Nebraskan prairie life. The protagonist of the novella *My Mortal Enemy*, Myra, has the same knack for the land of her childhood; also, she is a woman who intended to have the most beautiful jewels and aristocratic luxury vividly in her life. James Woodress said, "She had Known Myra's Real-life model very well!" (Johanningsmeier, 2003)

The protagonist of *My Mortal Enemy* Myra Henshawe is a character who tried desperately to convince herself that her primary concern of a happy life is love; later she is forced to realize that her essential passion has always concerned money.

"Inside Cather's novella as a 19th century American portrayal, readers will find the frustration of debased American dream of fame and fortune" (Vijayakumari 2018). James Woodress mentioned that, "Although Cather was a devoted romantic believing in the creative imagination to connect individual with the world, she regarded romantic love as over indulgence in emotion." (Woodress, 1975) Hemione Lee observed the novella *My Mortal Enemy* and said, "The young lovers, Myra and Oswald became each other's punishment with the struggle of worldly life!" (Johanningsmeier, 2003) All the above quotes are evocative to the curving of Cather's novella from a paranoid tenor.

Jacques Lacan's guru in psychiatry Gaëtan Gatian de Clérambault mentioned paranoia as "a desperate phenomenon of madness, and the common motif of the pattern of madness is something being imposed from 'outside'." (Ward & Zarate, 2014). Willa Cather's creation Myra Henshawe faced an intense mystification when it came to decide the ultimate contemplation of life. Myra said, "And they rise above us all and the whole world around us, and there isn't anybody, not a tramp on the park benches that would not wish them well and very likely, hell out of it." (Cather, 1926). The quotes are very much associated with the ongoing madness of Myra; her tension of losing financial soundness compared to the other friends, her distressed nuptial bond and the final rupture of her madness is committing suicide as a neurotic cripple. Critically commenting on Myra, Sally Peltier Harvey, "so caught up with her own times. She becomes a divided person. On the one hand the mortal nature of worldly grasping and on the other an altruistic nature that rejects materialism." (McFarland, 1972)

Lacanian encounter of the three psychic development stage (imaginary, symbolic and real) and understanding the uncanny of the novella are strongly allied. As Peter Barry expressed, "Lacan's foregrounding of the unconscious leads him to speculate about the mechanism whereby we emerge into consciousness." (Barry, 2010), it is assumed that the protagonist's character from Cather's story flaunts how the unknown of a human mind comes out and takes control of the whole surface of human psyche. The showcase of losing everything desired and the challenge to surviving afterwards of the character's lives are feedable to the canon of Lacanian psychoanalysis. "Cather's heroines are able to do personal development, understood themselves as loners and were ambitious to run after their kind of fulfillment." (American Center Moscow, 2020). The indulgence of American materialism and the evolving of Myra Henshawe from a modern young American woman to a suicidal neurotic cripple will bring out the ultimate purpose of the paper; the search of enigmatic Americans resembling with uncanny of their lives.

Analysis

America has been considered as a land of dreams for the last two centuries. The American dream is remarkably special for the struggles that American people made and those struggles redefined those people's reverie. The right to be engaged in many varied pursuits of happiness is counted as the heart of American philosophy. James Truslow Adams said, "It is not a dream of motor cars and high wages, but a dream of social order in which each man and each woman shall be able to attain to the fullest stature of which they are innately capable. It has been a dream of being able to grow to the fullest, to be unrepressed by social orders." (Adams, 1941)

The promise of the American dream with its guarantee of fuller liberties was absent in Willa Cather's life. The only credential that has been inquired by American nation was the boldness of the dream. Cather had also a dream to maintain solidarity. She was being able to speak her mind regardless of the positions she took, she chose to be unrestricted in her own literary world. Unlike many American writers, Cather's response to the questions towards her creation remained a mystery. It is a common feature that American writers release the creative genius and illustrated the enigma of creativity altogether.

In American history of literature, especially during the 19th century, it is vividly seen that when an author becomes celebrated, they somehow become pessimist about the world. Every American artist suffers lack of companionship; one can be out of the track of discipline. (American Center Moscow, 2020). The Nebraskan great plain had a huge influence in Cather's writings. Settlement in new lands and nature were very vivid and influential in Willa Cather's literature.

Cather wrote about the people's mind in America, she told and shared how artists become artists, how writers become writers. At her early age, she tended to ride her horse through the great prairie and went to the refugee people's home to deliver letters and to listen to their stories. Her characters were connected with family and friends, but they were loners, their loneliness was mostly intellectual. (American Center Moscow, 2020) Writers like Henry James, Edith Wharton, James Joyce, Leo Tolstoy had great influences in Willa Cather's writings. Nebraska was the land which was surrounded by immigrant people. There were people who settled and tamed Nebraska, the land where Cather was grown up. From a very early age, Cather had an interest in observing people's psychology silently. People at that time in Nebraskan prairie, were appreciating art but didn't encourage to leave small town and to go for chasing talents and ambitions. (American Center Moscow, 2020). The protagonist of *My Mortal Enemy* Myra Henshawe had the same phenomena where she faced barriers and rejection from family while she intended to have a free

life with Oswald Henshawe. Cather's writings are full of memories from the Nebraskan house, her stories had a feeling of losing something, but there is no specification of what it is. Something created a tightness inside her literary pattern. Cather thought she would never get out of the cornfields of the prairie and would die there unnoticed. ((NET Nebraska, 2015). The above-mentioned features kept Willa Cather far from optimism in real life as well as in her creative juncture even after being recognized by the whole nation for her brilliant literary mind. The reflection of American pursuit of worldly attainments inside *My Mortal Enemy* brings out the answer of why the people pelted their enigma and psychic evolution in the shade of social customs of uprightness.

The sense of emptiness and sense of loss played a big role to create the character of Myra Henshawe. Myra's character represented the American enigma to the fullest. Cather was considered as the finest author who was successful to represent the psychic representation of her time. With the merger of literature, she incorporated environment, economic surroundings, social life and cultural background to portray how 19th century American literature contributed to understand human life at that time. The novella was an extended attempt by Willa Cather, was as hot to move on in a world stripped off from romantic illusion, taking the people and places who inhabited for what they really are, how she had idealized them.

From the discussion of "Unmasking Willa Cather's *My Mortal Enemy*", the character of Myra is a shadow representation of Hattie McClure who was the wife of SS McClure. SS McClure was the owner and editor of McClure magazine for which Cather worked for long time. It is also considered that Cather was the ghost writer for McClure's autobiography; the experience helped her to narrate her novella from a male's point of view." (Johanningsmeier, 2003). It is known that *My Mortal Enemy* was narrated by the character Nellie Birdseye but there is a blend inside the narration having the point of view from both male and female perspective. By observing McClure family, Willa Cather channeled her novella about the depravities of deceit involved in superficially passionate bonds. Cather herself was clustered into a void of communal cynicism and it was a tough call for her to come to the terms with the Lacanian 'real' stage of the American society. Louise Williston (compared to aunt Lydia from *My Mortal Enemy*), a friend of McClure said, "it is a fearful awakening to a woman when at 30 or in any other ages, she probes the fact of love, poverty and social acceptance." (Johanningsmeier, 2003). Cather mentioned in the novella, "For one thing Myra now more than ever greatly regrets, having married to Oswald and trading money for love." (Cather, 567) The revelation of stereotypical truth that the love and passion between Oswald and Myra were not sufficient lead a life full of satisfaction; rather, wealth in needed to uphold Myra's circles, parties and régime introduced the enigmatic soul of the story. It's a blended

situation where the mind gets bewildered for accepting or not accepting the clatter between passionate lovers' bond or the clash between a husband and a wife who quarrels for not having the whole shebang of gentry. Inside the novella Myra mentioned, "Money is a protection, a cloak, it can buy one quiet and some sort of dignity." (Cather, 78) The quote is the proof that Myra is a woman who gets paranoid in absence of money, but then again, she is able to differentiate that her reality is underprivileged, and what she desires is her fantasy to be well-heeled. The illusion of existence in peers of the realm is Myra's madness and the madness are perceptible to her own self which signs her neurotic manic condition.

As per the discussion of Sigmund Freud, "Desire takes up what has been eclipsed at the level of need. Desire it is linked to conditions in contrast the register of demand. Desire and we are something that one demands consciously. Wish is just an alibi. Desire is simply equivalent to the process of distortion which is turned the wish for shelter." (Ward & Zarate, 2014) Neurotic people, those who do not commit their fantasy is not corporeal and reality is way more different than their illusion, they provoke madness. Myra as a crippled, neurotic patient, is seen to destroy her goodness with the passing of time. She said to Oswald, "We have destroyed each other, I should have stayed with my uncle. It was money I needed. We have thrown our lives away." (Cather, 42). The quote is a reflection where Myra's regret to leave uncle Driscoll's house and crisis of money arose out. Myra tried to be very much like the mythical characters of Diana or Medea. But she couldn't feel up her desire. Thus, desire remained suppressed. The failure of not being able to accomplish her hankered life made her to outburst with all her neurosis. Myra sacrificed everything for a man who couldn't bring her happiness. The wrong choice and sacrifice made Myra her own mortal enemy as well as made her to think that her beloved Oswald is her ultimate mortal enemy.

Enigmatic writers create perfect sense to its intended audience, enigma provides mysterious motives. All the elements of enigmatic components are present in the growth of *My Mortal Enemy*. Enigmatic reading comparatively, create a sense of reality and mystery. It is an unreserved time for ambitious literary or artistic work. It gains strength against a classical decorum. Enigma reckons human finitude and fallibility, looks for the truth. *My Mortal Enemy* is the grimmest novella by Cather, Myra the protagonist of the story rejected her husband only to recapture a desired past decorated with money, fame and aristocratic status. With the omniscient narrative, Myra Henshawe's character has been presented with scrutinized psychoanalytic perspectives. Myra is represented as a very modern, isolated and fragmented character. She seems to be a dominator, and is absolutely not submissive of the society, family or to her husband Oswald. Myra's dominating nature presents a unique individuality. If we scrutinize this protagonist's character's

depth, it is understood that Mrs. Myra Henshawe has some escapism such as suicidal tendency to get rid of all imperfections of life, her run away with Oswald from all barriers given by her Uncle, Mr. John Driscoll, is her another denial. Some of the weaknesses of Myra can be found when her worldly aristocracy bust out and her financial lacking to maintain status came to the surface.

A psychologically complicated character Myra Henshawe seems as an oddly strong women of the then period's American society. Throughout the novel, readers can discover Myra as rebellious, courageous and a freewill person. Myra has strong feminist elements present inside her character. She is known as a culture vulture in her surroundings. She has a concentration on mythological female characters. She is passionate for music, especially Opera stages. Inside the novella, the characters of Diana, Norma and Medea are found out to be admired by Myra. Diana is the Goddess of the hunt, wild animals' fertility and the moon. (Downing, 1981) Diana is a Goddess of Maidenhood and Parturition. Diana's identity is recalled as intricated with olden topographies. Diana is known for taming the country sides inside the mythological stories. The same character feature is present in Myra's character as well as she said about finding truth and tame the fact of Oswald's being a womanizer, "I was sure to find out. I always do. Don't hold it against you!" (Cather, 1942) Diana wore jewels and golds all the time. So many similar phenomena between Diana and Myra can be connected and Myra's enigma is articulated by Cather accordingly. Myra's love for riches and jewels, dominating tendency over her surroundings, the wildness in her complex character can be considered as a stimulus from the goddess Diana. Another reference of character from the myth is present inside this novel, that is the character of Medea. From the mythological references, it is known that Medea is a young mortal woman, a goddess who can transcend mortal world, who can spread love among the mortals (Lies, 1999). The title of the novella bids an import of the mortal enemy from the mortal world, but has a mysterious impact about identifying the enemy which is carried along with Myra's death to the immortal world as well. Similar to Medea, Myra Henshawe can transmit the essence of life, specifically the gist of Myra's worldly struggle has been travelled beyond the thin line of life and death. After her demise, in reminiscence of her crux, Oswald shared with Nellie, "Remember her as she was when you were with us on Madison Square, when she was herself and we were happy. Yes, happier than it falls to the lot of most mortals be." (Cather, 32).

The character of Myra is very much associated with the construction of ego. Myra asked Nellie "Does this necklace annoy you? I will take it off if it does" (Cather, 1942). The above quote is representation of desire for gems, aristocratic ego and the madness of Myra. She is a lady who believed in aristocracy and thought that money can buy anything. While sprinting after all the riches and jewels, Myra forgot

her old, young self who left the house of Driscoll and left all property rights only to share a loveable life with Oswald. She is a character who understood that the desired social position can never be achieved by seeking innocent love, rather a run for the materialistic obsession is required. Myra adopted the tendency to search for the ultimate satisfaction for high life in other people's eyes but compromised with her soul's aesthetic beauty and contemplation. She has known both the destinations, the materialistic and the aesthetic; but the unrest to choose any one of the calls made Myra paranoid and triggered her madness.

Myra's own self and otherness are parallelly represented by the Amethyst necklace's incident. The amethyst in the necklace are representation of Myra's desire for expensive gems. Nellie had a gaze upon the necklace during a conversation and that gaze created a tension for Myra whether the spuriousness of the gems might come into light. Myra's tension reminds us of madness and the relevant occurrence of her paranoia inside the story. Myra knew the fact that she might not have a rich, posh & prosperous life after marrying Oswald which she had under the guardianship of her uncle Mr John Driscoll. Not having everything big, living a minimal life created the kernels of paranoia inside her brain. Myra said to Oswald, "I cannot tolerate you into fitting things." (Cather, 1942) The concern about Oswald's outfit is bigger than the concern about how their psychological soundness is tuning into nothingness. Myra's psychic details are the main factors of Willa Cather's story. Myra was born and brought up in an aristocratic environment even though she had unstable mental upbringing. Myra's neurosis is related with her construction of ego, superego, with the activities she had done in her life. The aesthetic connection of the story through portraying the real American society is very much detailed as well as exceptional at that time of Willa Cather. Neurotic patients can differentiate about their fantasy and reality. (Barry, 2010) Myra has all the symptoms in herself as a neurotic personality. Attaining the Opera, arranging the garden party, admiring the art and craft, being apart from the religious value as a Catholic, all these features created a steady and endless tension inside her personality to maintain these social norms no matter how. At the very beginning of marrying the bohemian, free thinker man Oswald Henshawe, Myra knew that she would face absence of social status maintenance in her new conjugal life. Even after knowing the condensed financial status and situation of Oswald, Myra ran after position which is difficult to achieve in companionship of a struggler. The dilemma of accepting own fate and making her desire to get riches are representation of Myra's psychic sublimation. "Sublimation is one kind of defense mechanism of Freudian psychoanalysis. It is meant that repressed material is promoted into massive and veiled as roughly Moral". (Tyson, 1999). All the luxurious things, jewels and gems, velvet and expenses were grander to her compared to her soul's peace until her last day in this world. Myra shared her Uncle Mr. John Driscoll's words with Nellie, "It's better to be a stray dog in the

world than a man without money. I have tried both and I know." (Cather, 1942) The mentioned quote is the representation of ultimate psycho somatic pattern of characters in the novella.

To understand the uncanny of the author's life as well as the uncanny of the story, Lacanian psychoanalytic levels are significant. Lacanian psychoanalysis describes the three levels of psychic orders by discussing the behaviourism and psychic development of human being. (Ward & Zarate, 2014). The three stages discover the world of imaginary order, symbolic order and real order for the protagonist of the novella. "Imaginary order or mirror stage is the psychic phase when any human being finds own self as a whole image of perception and fullness, completeness and delight." (Ward & Zarate, 2014) In imaginary order, Myra finds a fragmentation of conceptual masses about her thoughts and abode. Her fantasized world, the proclamations of thoughts are to be understood by Lacanian imaginary order. Myra thinks that she has no individual existence out of the world of peerage, rather she is intended to discover her own self in a united image along with her parties, jewelleries, enjoying the Opera and running far away from the acceptance of her middle class married life. "The big stone house, set in its ten acres park of trees and surrounded by high wrought iron fence, in which Myra Driscoll grew up In Parthia." (Cather, 1942) As per the quotation, Myra throughout her life, understood and wanted to hold desired objects and appearances, she had the illusion of control in every sphere of her life. Nonetheless, deep down in her mind she knew that those were her fantasy; the middle-aged middle-class life as Oswald's wife is her reality. In this way, Lacanian imaginary order found its signature inside the novella.

The second stage of Jacques Lacan's discussion is the symbolic order which starts as a blend with the first stage, the imaginary order. Here, a person can identify own individuality, meaning making of life, sense of separation from desired one. It's compared as a child's separation from its mother after it learns own language. The language adoption works as discovering own meaning making, communicating with the outer world. (Tyson, 1999).

The symbolic order creates the experience of loss and haunting. It ends the feeling of completeness and brings out the sense of lack. Any person who belongs in this symbolic state, needs own decision and words to synthesise individuality. This order pins the conscious and unconscious mind after the first stage of imaginary order. Replacement of Desire happens inside the symbol stage (Ward & Zarate, 2014). Myra has been found into her own nirvana after she met her supposition with her irreconcilable partner Mr. Henshaw. Myra said, "In age, you will lose everything, even the power of love." (Cather, 1926) Consistent with the idea of symbol order, Myra has experienced uncovering of the romantic illusion with Oswald. At

her young age when she left the house of Driscoll, she thought the love and passion would be enough to lead a prosperous life. With the stream of time, she found out experience of loss, she had lost the right of the property and the richness from her family & Uncle John Driscoll. She said, "I am a greedy, selfish, worldly woman, I wanted success and a place in the world" (Cather, 1926). Her marriage asserts that one does need wealth or position to find happiness for fulfilment in life. E K Brown said about My Mortal Enemy, "but soon life takes its turn and becomes poor. Then Myra becomes another being, malevolent and rough. Myra has lost almost all that had given her life appearance & atmosphere of enviable achievement" (Brown, 1953) After the realisation and facing the sense of loss and own individuality, Myra constantly got dashed by the absence of aristocracy and brutality of the world, Myra said, "And they rise above us and the whole world around us, and there isn't anybody not a tramp on the park benches that it would not wish them well. And very likely, hell will come out of it. (Cather, 1926) The mentioned quote from My Mortal Enemy is about the black neighbours living on the upper floor of Myra's apartment. Once a lady of bounty confronts the disturbance from neighbours, especially the black neighbours. The concept of demeaning own neighbours for their race and activities represent Myra's realisation about distinctiveness and her current place in a very mediocre typical society. Her existing society was not posh, rich & sophisticated, she was just living in a very common and middle-class life. There was no plenteousness of jewels and gems, of expensive goodies in her Madison Square life. The symbolic order according to Lacanian psychoanalysis, makes her see the real struggles and harshness of time and understand that the harshness of death is not very rare and is able to strike anyone in life.

Lacanian real order is created by ideologies of society to explain anyone's existence. In Lacanian psychic development stage, real order is something we can know about. We expect to have anxious feelings from time to time but can do nothing about the happening facts. (Ward & Zarate, 2014) Various trauma experiences are the makers of real orders ideology. It's a kind of reality which is beyond our knowing, beyond our capacity to control. To interconnect the novella's final evaluation, a significant time elapse was when Willa Cather came to know about Mr Albert Hurd during her journalism days in magazine. Mr Albert said to his daughter Hattie McClure, "Love and poverty will give you a very wretched life." (NET Nebraska, 2015). It is awakening that Hattie who is an influential character to create Myra Henshawe, does not love the soul she is mated with as it is impossible for her to love anymore. (NET Nebraska, 2015). Eugène England has argued that "Myra deserves a good deal of blame for her marriages sorry state and the same might be saved for Hattie. If Myra had felt in somewhere responsible for her husband being attracted to other women, it is possible that her guilt would have led her to avoid confronting him." (England 1990). Cather seems to have produced a final catharsis

to live in a fallen world. Myra's idealistic view turned out to be embittered and wicked. The protagonist said, "I was always a grasping worldly woman, I was never satisfied". (NET Nebraska, 2011) Sally Peltier Harvey says, "So caught up with her own time, Myra becomes a divided person. On the other hand, the mortal nature of worldly grasping generated the characters' altruistic nature that rejects materialism." (Vijayakumari, 2018) The worldly woman Myra Henshawe has passed out of worldliness into preoccupation with primary realities through committing suicide. In her death scene, Cather mentioned, "we found her wrapped in a blanket leaning against the Cedar trunk, facing the sea. Her head was fallen forward, the ebony crucifix was in her hands. she must have died peacefully and painlessly" (Cather, 1926) The entire story covered vivid description of the American land, the Seasons the beauty, the buzz of the city and the words which murmured inside Myra's brain. These are the elements that give them life; made the characters who they are to the readers. From the ultimate realisation about own life, about own decisions and all the wrong doings until the death makes the real order of Lacan triggered for Myra Henshawe. Cather was very much influenced by immigrant people and their stories; the protagonist of the novella Myra is also a kind of immigrant in different phases of a life where she constantly tried to settle but faced failure of adjustment. Seeing Myra as she declares Oswald as her mortal enemy and embrace the afterward belief made the narrator of the story Nellie Birdseye distrust human love itself. After the passing out of Myra, Nellie finally found herself in an emotional poverty. Lacanian real order offers nothingness to perceive ultimate destiny of psychic world. The novella is no such different then to familiarize the characteristics of real order. Nellie's experience suggests that after all there may be something sadder then falling out of love, falling out with love before one has ever fallen in.(Eichorn, 1973) Dragging a whole life with so many complaints and incompleteness, with Madness and Paranoia, Myra says, " love itself draws on a woman nearly all the bad luck in the world" (Cather, 1926) and in consequence with Myra's realisation, Nellie Birdseye mentioned, " she looked strong and broken, generous and tyrannical, witty and rather wicked old woman, who hated life for its defeat and loved it for its absurdities" (Cather, 1926)

The final retreat was to get rid of her stinky, middle class apartment and to free herself as a loner who took her last breath to a lonely Cliff while Myra looked at the mighty Pacific Ocean, mightier than her desire. At the last age before death, Myra got back to Catholicism, alike to her childhood days. Returning back to religion and aestheticism is a proof of Myra's personal magnetism. An intense personality like Myra Henshawe actually tried to find out bounty in her friend circle, in people's appreciation, in a good-looking life where no odd words and experiences will take place due to the lack of money. In the end of a life when she got tired to sprint after a materialistic world, she changed her track and returns to

Catholicism as a woman of middle-class, crippled & paranoid. Return to Catholicism is heroism, self-indulgence of repentance and vanity for the protagonist. Myra never put her head down, never shed tears for her trauma, for losing the capacity to love. Myra ended her journey with bravery and with solidarity with her very own boldness. Homecoming to her religion gave her confidence to face her death alone. The novella carries the most despairing vision of life by Cather. The compactness and the starkness of the author and the protagonist suggest confident to end this American classic story; it also leaves a memo that how a social story can give a tour inside the very surreptitious chambers of our life. Mystery and the universal enigma that route inside intellect and cognizance with its magnanimous figure are well presented in *My Mortal Enemy*.

Conclusion

Cather's stories have an essence of the land of America, specifically the vastness of Nebraska and great plain leave a signature inside her literary works. The novella *My Mortal Enemy* is no such different but the focus of the novella is possessed by the enigmatic soul of the protagonist Myra. The women turn into a paranoid neurotic, creates fuss and domination on her husband for not having riches and ultimately dies on a lonely Cliff, the death scene gives an idea of how mysterious human mind and the desire in itself can be. The final destination of Myra, her planned death is surely a spiritual one. People may commit sin; they might transgress humane purpose of their lives and violate the purity but Cather has a charisma of having a magnanimous path. Any person should be judged by their integrity but not by their few incidents. At long last, both the protagonist and the author have achieved healthy relationship with their mortal enemy by propensity to over idealize the past. Myra searched for immortality, searched for fame; these are explicit in the second part of the novella. Myra's search for having hedonistic experience against her destructivity, impermanence is what she really wanted in her life. As a female American writer, Willa Cather is an inspiration who created female characters as not perfect, her characters are unhappy, lonely, depressed but real. These female characters are not likeable by most of the time; they doubt their own self and their life's journey are questioned. Nonetheless, they are strong, ambitious, not people pleasing, might not be friendly to all. Their impact to society is very intense as their characters dissect the never-ending mysteries of the social doubts. (American Center Moscow, 2020). By all means, Willa Cather made phenomena to present and riposte the American culture from mysterious modern life, frazzled immigrant life and it helps the reader to understand the attitude of the modern literary growth in America.

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