The Female Heroine and Her Natural Counterpart: An Ecofeminist Reading of Willa Cather’s O Pioneers!

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Abstract

Willa Sibert Cather is an American author famous for her representation of the struggles of the early pioneers. She is mainly concerned with underlining the role of these pioneers in the establishment of the Garden of the World and that is why she sets her stories in the American Midwest, especially the Nebraska prairies. What is special about Cather is her focusing on the female sector of these pioneers, and portraying her female heroines as shattering all common social stereotypes through their struggle with the natural environment in which they have been unwillingly planted. This line of thought adopted by Cather in dealing with her female heroines as well as the natural environment embracing them has been echoed several decades later by scientists and scholars who have sensed the abuse faced by nature and females alike. This feeling has led to the emergence of Ecofeminism. The paper under study adopts an ecofeminist approach in studying Willa Cather’s Pioneers! as a significant representation of the female struggle and success with the surrounding natural environment.