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JIM BURDEN'S DORMANT AND ZIP IN *MY ANTONIA*

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ABSTRACT

Willa Cather's writing style and her usage of language triggers me and gives me an immense idea in pen down my thoughts into an article. While reading the novel *My Antonia* supplies an idea, but rereading this novel again and again fills my pleasure and helps me to write. Cather's heroines are adorned by the passive heroes. They remain silent throughout the novel. With their silence, they give life to her novels. Willa Cather's heroes have essential imaginative knowledge which is enough to suggest a story to the readers. Cather's heroes are balanced and they are lovelier than the heroine who is actually playing in the novel. It is the efficiency of Cather to create such silent and strong characters in her novels. In this paper, Jim Burden in *My Antonia*, is carrying the novel in his shoulders. He never allows the readers to think of their own. He influences the readers by his ideas. This paper reflects the silent nature of Jim Burden in *My Antonia*.

**Key Words:** Jim Burden, Passivity, Silent, dormant

Introduction

*My Antonia*, the most famous work of Willa Cather, discloses the fact that Antonia is the protagonist and the story encompasses Antonia from the childhood. The narrator Jim, who is in front of the readers from the beginning of a story, remains passive till the end. His strength is not seen obviously to the readers. Most of the readers run behind Antonia and her sufferings. Though Jim remains behind the screen, his presence is felt by the readers.

Jim Burden's Dormant and Zip

It is Cather who creates both Jim and Antonia. In his tender age, Jim loves his country and he never misses any one from helping them. He has the greatest tendency of helping people. It is the basic sense for living in this world. Cather always insists on the quality of the people and their way they live in this world. Cather thinks that it is the responsibility of the writer to teach this world. The

world is looking keenly on the words from the writers. Jim is a responsible character created by Cather. Cather introduces Jim as a boy of 12 years, as the novel grows, he grows as a guy of 21 years old. At the age of forty years only Jim recalls his memories and writes and pictures Antonia before us. Jim's character is significant in the novel. His significance is known by the nameless narrator. The nameless person and Jim are friends; Antonia is a common friend to both of them. So this nameless narrator requests Jim to share his experience and notes his thoughts as *My Antonia*.

Jim recalls his first meeting with Antonia in a train journey to Nebraska. Willa Cather brings in Jim from the opening of the novel. By narrating the story of Antonia he attracts the attention of the readers to fall in his own view. The readers can see Antonia through the eyes of Antonia. Jim burden with his high imagination power he transmits his actuality and visionary intensity into Antonia.

Nietzsche and Freud, the famous critics, analyze Cather's novels and her heroes. Though Antonia is the representation of Willa Cather, she is explored by the male narrator. Cather loves herself, so she creates lovely heroines.

In representing the relationship among the characters Cather always stands and proves her strength. Without any expectation, Jim Burden loves Antonia. Throughout the novel Jim represents Antonia from her childhood to the married woman. His love is pure and he celebrates his love along with the growth of Antonia. Antonia stands as an emblem of perfection in the hands of Jim Burden. Jim presents his childhood memories and he shares his experiences of tender love and his close intimacy with Antonia. While deserving Antonia and her qualities, anyone can understand American History at that period. In Cather novels, as the character grows, the growth of history and the culture is interwoven. Jim shows and shares his personal love and also his passion for the great country. Jim appreciates the beauty of Nebraska.

Jim's passivity, his energy and his achievement is not seen obviously Willa Cather adopts a male personality Jim to appreciate Antonia. This is something different, even he friend Sarah Orne Jewett told her that it is difficult to view female character in the male's point of view. But Willa Cather follows this technique in her writings. Antonia and Jim begin to show their relationship from childhood but when they grow up there is no virtual strong relationship between Jim and Antonia.

Jim is impressed by the quality of Antonia. He admires her from standing away from her. Antonia loves farm land and she is a great optimist in her fully collapsed life. At this time, Jim stands over her and looks her life. In the mid of the novel when Jim happens to see Antonia and cutter, he begins to stop his friendship with Antonia. Jim also shows his passion for land. His approach to the land is different. This novel '*My Antonia*' is analysed for eco friendly novel. Jim is not destroyed by the growth of Antonia. He lives in his own way. The title may insist that the protagonist of the novel is Antonia, but she is introduced in the story after two chapters by Jim. The readers can't find her always in

all the five books. She has not seen in two books out of five books. Cather shares her feeling for Antonia.

The original name of Antonia was Annie Sadilek Pavelka, a Bohemian woman. With his presentation, the readers can judge Jim as a protagonist. As a girl, Antonia always runs along with him, laughing and, making his days memorable. In the first book, Jim describes her as a small girl, she is enjoying with him and talking broken English to him. Jim records her growth and the males who crossed her life. In the second book, Antonia stands as a beautiful adolescent woman. Antonia's strong love towards Donovan destroys the true friendship of Jim and Antonia. In book three, Jim turns towards Lena Lingard, where he loses his concentration on Antonia. After two years, from neighbors, he can understand the life of Antonia. At this point, the readers may think that Jim will give a life for Antonia. But Cather separates Antonia and Jim. Cather wishes the readers to maintain their relationship in good condition. Moreover Jim also confuses him by his own emotions. In the mean time, they meet each other briefly without any particular intension.

After twenty years, they meet. At this last moment everything is resolved. Jim admires her greatest beauty. Cather's glory of Antonia is viewed and exposed by Jim completely. Jim appreciates Antonia for her motherhood, Antonia becomes mother for eleven children. Jim looks her, he can find the same cheerful and charming eyes on her beautiful face. As an artist, Jim controls the whole motion of the story. He not only describes Antonia. He describes everyone that he contacts in his country. He gives life to all the people whomever he meets in his life.

In describing the incident of death of Pavel and Petr, Jim emotions emphasize his presence. He and Antonia share this incident for so many years. He couldn't come out from this incident. It's a new beginning for Jim to learn to overcome the painful thoughts. Jim teaches Antonia to be strong enough to digest this. Even in that age, he is grown physically and mentally. Jim's actions and reactions are passive. The readers could not visualize his character. But the talent of Cather prevails in

nurturing his character. He is standing behind the strong and an optimistic quality of Antonia.

Though out the novel, the character of Jim is blended with full of experiences. He starts his new life in Nebraska with his grandparents. He is always ready to undertake risks and also imitativensess. Being an immigrant from Virginia to Nebraska to live along with his grandparents, Jim helps all the immigrant to face new world with new enthusiasm. The Bohemian immigrants do not know to tame the land. Jim strengthens Antonia's mind to struggle to live. After Shimerda's death Antonia does not know what to do, at this high time Jim as a friend consoles her. Antonia stands in that crucial situation only because of Jim. Jim never disappoints his fellows.

He is having a duality mind. When the readers read the novel, they confuse by Jim's attitude towards Antonia. Jim's anxiety and his roughness towards Antonia sometimes clouds our sense that he is in love with Antonia. But it is not happened till the end. From his memopirs, the readers can judge how Antonia enters into him and affects him. On reading the biography of Jesse James, a Western adventurer, Jim also indulges himself as an adventurer and finds the infinity in reality.

On narrating his friendship and relationship of Antonia, the readers can not stop themselves from appreciating Cather and her efficiency. Cather figures out Jim as a forty year old man, but his imagination and the representation of Anton ia steers him as a matured and civilized man. When the moves on , one could understand his love and his passion for the country. In describing the roads and the paths, he shares us the history of new lands and also his wonderful life with his grandparents. Jim's voice is very obvious and he strengthe ns the novels by being passive.

Jim chooses to live as a traditional family person. Jim never craves for his parents, instead he crops up his happiness from his grandparents and also from his new life. He has this quality after reading *The Swiss Family Robinson*. He rejoices when he is surrounded with caring people. His reading teaches him more. Jim is an affectionate person; he is the greatest appreciation of the classics. He respects all religions. When he realizes

Antonia's soul is in household, he marks himself as an emotional person and he proves how he is close with the Shimerdas. After the death of Mr. Shimerda, Jim cannot spend his life time physically with Antonia he can feel for Antonia and Antonia is also ready to face with such boldness that she learnt from him. Jim not only narrates Antonia, he structures her at time whenever and wherever she meets with difficulties.

At the end of the novel, Antonia is shown as a mother of eleven children. Her life is fulfilled, but there is a emptiness in the life of Jim. With so much of sentiments, the novel grows and it forces the readers to focus on Antonia. Jim's passivity and his deep sense of reliability are endowed with his own ideas. His initial observation of life is depicted and it is put down in an order by Cather. Through Jim, Cather reflects the common sentiments and the history of American literature. He is marked as an empty man. But he is complete. Though he stands behind the story, he is the pillar of the story.

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