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Fall 2012

Review of *The Catherian Cathedral: Gothic Cathedral Iconography in Willa Cather's Fiction* by Christine E. Kephart

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Birns, Nicholas, "Review of *The Catherian Cathedral: Gothic Cathedral Iconography in Willa Cather's Fiction* by Christine E. Kephart" (2012). *Great Plains Quarterly*. 2815.  
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bridge (built, after all, in Québec) as presaging the architectural aspects of the cathedral. In other words, transmuting the bridge into the cathedral is a correlate for Cather's artistic maturation.

Kephart also finds cathedral imagery in *The Song of the Lark* and *One of Ours*, whose protagonists grow as they are brought into contact with Europe and the ecclesiastical heritage they find there. Kephart's book is very much about cathedrals as a form of architecture. Cathedrals possess a material specificity that makes Kephart's subject different from "Cather and religion." The symbolic resonances found in the cathedral and aligned images give a depth and a grounding to Cather's world, showing that culture is only built by the effort and dedication that goes into the building of a great architectural edifice.

There are, perhaps, even more cathedrals. On my first expedition to Cather country in 1996, I visited St. Fidelis Catholic Church in Victoria, Kansas, called "The Cathedral of the Plains." What more Catherian image could there have been, as Cather makes so clear that the vastness of the Plains makes them a kind of natural cathedral akin in the "height and effortlessness" possessed both by Gothic cathedrals and by the receding horizons of the prairies. Yet Cather's Plains novels such as *My Ántonia* and *Lucy Gayheart* receive scant mention. Also disturbing is the omission, in the works cited, of John H. Randall III's *Landscape and the Looking Glass* (1960), the first major critique to link animate and inanimate subjects in the imaging of Cather's fictional worlds. Overall, though, Kephart's book, the first to engage Cather's relation to architecture fully, is an innovative contribution to Cather studies.

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*The Catherian Cathedral: Gothic Cathedral Iconography in Willa Cather's Fiction.* By Christine E. Kephart. Madison, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2012. xiv + 152 pp. Notes, photographs, works cited, index. \$60.00.

Christine Kephart's book is published in a series dedicated to the late Merrill Maguire Skaggs, one of the leading Cather scholars. It honors Skaggs's memory with an original, sprightly, and captivating illumination of the motif of the cathedral throughout Cather's writing. We all know about *Death Comes to the Archbishop* and, to a lesser extent, *Shadows on the Rock* with their overt engagement of New World Catholicism and the presence within them of churches, cathedrals, and bishops. But Kephart looks for the cathedral motif throughout Cather's oeuvre, beginning with her failed first novel, *Alexander's Bridge*, where Kephart sees the gothic, curvilinear aspects of the