

## THE REFLECTION OF AMERICAN WOMEN IDEALISM 1920s IN WILLA CATHER'S *MY MORTAL ENEMY*

(Refleksi Idealisme Wanita tahun 1920an dalam Novel *My Mortal Enemy* Karya Willa Cather)

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### Abstrak

Tulisan ini merefleksikan Idealisme Perempuan Amerika tahun 1920-an dalam karya sastra Amerika, yakni *My Mortal Enemy* karya Willa Cather tahun 1926. Myra Driscoll dan Nellie Birdeyes selaku tokoh perempuan fiksi, ingin membangun idealisme perempuan melalui kebebasan, hak kepemilikan atas tubuh, dan melakukan emansipasi pada kehidupan publik. Hal ini searah dengan cita-cita perempuan Amerika yang ingin membangun perkawinan lewat pilihannya sendiri dan memanfaatkan peluang ekonomi di sektor domestik dan publik. Pendekatan yang digunakan adalah sosiologi sastra yang menganggap karya sastra sebagai produk sosial terkait dengan kenyataan yang berkembang di masyarakat menurut tempat dan waktu tertentu. Data sastra dan realitas masyarakat dikumpulkan dengan menggunakan metode kajian pustaka dan dianalisis secara deskriptif. Hasil analisis menunjukkan bahwa baik tokoh fiksi dalam *My Mortal Enemy* maupun tokoh-tokoh perempuan Amerika mencurahkan harapannya kepada generasi baru perempuan Amerika, yakni sosok perempuan yang tampil sebagai perempuan mandiri di berbagai bidang kehidupan dan memanfaatkan peluang kerja di sektor publik dalam mendukung gerakan pembebasan perempuan dan gerakan pencapaian kesetaraan hak-hak perempuan.

**Kata kunci:** karya sastra, perempuan Amerika, idealisme, pembebasan, kesetaraan.

### Abstract

This writing reflects American women idealism 1920s in American literature, namely *My Mortal Enemy* by Willa Cather in 1926. Myra Driscoll and Nellie Birdeyes as fictional characters intend to set up women idealism through freedom, the body owner, and emancipation to public life. The idealism relates to American women goals which build up a marriage of self chosen and take a chance of both domestic and public sector. The approach used is sociological literature which views the literary works as a social product of reflected social reality among people within specific time and place. Data of literature and social reality are collected by using the library research and analyzed descriptively. The result of analysis uncovers that both fictional characters in *My Mortal Enemy* and American women prominent exert all their hope to *New Women*. The women frame is independent women in all life aspects and taking a chance of worked public sector also supporting *women liberation movement* and *women equal rights movement*.

**Keywords:** literary works, American women, idealism, liberation, equal.

## 1. Introduction

The American women idealism philosophically developed similar with American nation liberation spirit. Revolutionary community along American Independence War, Benjamin Franklin used the term of *Mother* who was oppressed by British Colonialist in 1765 (Abbas, 2006: 9-10). It also improved the women spirit to participate in defending mother land of American against British Colonialists. There were around 20.000 American women voluntary support those American patriots in war delivering American Independence from British Colonialists.

However, after Independent Declaration announced on 4<sup>th</sup> of July 1776, American Constitution forgot the women service which they did not have political rights. Abigail Adams expressed her disappointed to husband of John Adams, President of American (1797-1801). She said that if women rights of American were neglected, they had potentially to do rebellion demanded their rights.

The spirit of freedom and equality to antislavery was voiced by abolishes in 1800s like Tocqueville, William Lloyd, Garrison, Frederick Douglas, and Elijah P. Lovelty, also absorbed by American women prominent declare their rights and freedom according to Dorothea Lynde Dix commends in 1855, *In the name of freedom, democracy, and true Christianity*. It became a pioneer of American feminism as a movement of delivering the women equal right of the same level with men. The Feminism Movement led by Lucretia Mott and Elizabeth Cady Stanton declared *Women Rights Convention* in Seneca Falls, New York on 19 - 20 July 1848 which had results 18 resolutions. The convention was important history of women rebellion as an early day of the movement of American feminism (Cineotta, 2004: 160).

When the civil war ended in 1865 Abolishes community won it, the American women still did not accept the political rights whereas they also participated to struggle it. The fact improved feminists form unity organization of collected their struggle in 1868. Feminists like Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony form *National Women*

*Suffrage Association (NWSA)* in 1869, also moderated group pioneered by Lucy Stone and Wendell Philip set up *American Women Suffrage (AWSA)*. Both feminism organizations fused into *National American Women Suffrage Association (NAWSA)* in 1890.

NWSA became a main media of feminists' struggle to do political movement radically. It stressed enforces American Congress to deliver voting in 1920 which had results 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment of American Constitution (Abbas, 2006: 162-163). It ignored American women used their political rights that it was a great success of women movement after 76 years struggle to deliver liberation and equal rights of women.

The idealism of American women forced to move in feministic aspects after 1920. They birthed new consciousness of social awareness to help backwardness women and poor women to achieve women liberation and women equal rights.

The American women idealism in 1920s is also reflected in number literary works of American according to Saraswati's idea (2003: 160) that a feminist author as a member of society will criticize the developed women consciousness. For instance, *My Mortal Enemy* by Willa Cather in 1926 expressed self women conflict of fictional character like Myra Driscoll, who efforts to understand her life follows the changed marriage values. The problem of social and economy becomes main issue in the fiction story.

Referred to involve the literary works keep the social documentation of society within specific time and place like the American women idealism in 1920s, the writer formulates the title of this analysis is *The Reflection of American Women Idealism 1920s in Willa Cather's My Mortal Enemy*.

The analysis oriented in this writing is how to reflect American women idealism 1920s in the novel of *My Mortal Enemy* by Willa Cather in 1926. Fictional characters like Myra Driscoll and Nellie Birdeyes try to set up women idealism through freedom, the body owner, and emancipation to public life. The idealism relates to American women goals which build up a marriage of self chosen and take a chance of both

domestic and public sector.

Based on the problem scope, the writer formulates the objective of this writing is to know fictional characters in *My Mortal Enemy* and American women prominent exert all their hope to *New Women* in order to be able to participate in all life aspects and taking a chance of worked public sector also supporting *women liberation movement* and *women equal rights movement*. The writer also hopes this analysis can enrich the sociological aspects of American literature study so readers are able to understand the social condition of society within specific time and place like the American women idealism in 1920s.

## 2. Theoretical Review

One familiar theory used to analyze the literary works is theory of sociological literature. It focuses that the literary works as a social document of describing one or more life aspects of society at recent time and place. For instance, novel *The Pearl* (1945) by John Steinbeck reflects the Indian society reality in Salinas Southern America, 1945s. It documents the condition of Indian people treated unjustly by European immigrant descents in 1940s.

One of methodological analysis in sociological literature uses the approach of genetic structuralism. It developed the literature approach conventional before is pure structuralism approach. A literature expert of French, Lucian Goldman was at first formulating the approach of genetic structuralism in 1960s. Her main idea is that a literary work is not able to separate from outside reality because it has a background of society (Goldman, 1964). So, sociological aspect is needed to analyze the literary works according to Iswanto in Abdullah (1994: 80) commented, "*Jika karya sastra hanya dipabami dari unsur intrinsiknya saja, maka karya sastra dianggap lepas dari konteks sosialnya. Padahal pada hakekatnya tidak demikian, melainkan selalu berkaitan dengan masyarakat dan sejarah yang melingkupi penciptaan sastra*".

Goldman's idea is mutual combination between structural aspects (intrinsic elements) and sociological aspects (extrinsic elements). In the approach of

genetic structuralism, Goldman (in Abdullah 1994: 5) explained as:

*"Pandangan dunia yang ditampilkan pengarang lewat problematic hero merupakan suatu struktur global yang bermakna. Pandangan dunia ini bukan semata-mata fakta empiris yang bersifat langsung, tetapi merupakan suatu gagasan, aspirasi, dan perasaan yang dapat mempersatukan kelompok sosial masyarakat. Pandangan dunia ini memperoleh bentuk kongkret di dalam karya sastra. Pandangan dunia bukan fakta. Pandangan dunia tidak memiliki eksistensi obyektif, tetapi merupakan ekspresi teoritis dari kondisi dan kepentingan suatu golongan masyarakat tertentu"*.

An author represents number expectations of people surrounding which is written in fictional works. Although literary works is not directing described social reality because it has full imagination but its story has example in carrying out recently condition of society. Through the fictional characters, an author expresses inside aspiration of specific society. It means that even though the literary works is fiction but it reflects social group where is created as it's genetic. It refers to Guerin (1979: 278), "*We might call the approach genetic because it is the word sometimes use when a work is considered in terms of its 'origin'. We could find the term appropriate in studying the growth and development of the work, its genesis, as form its source*".

Then, gender issues are so popular related to women in the literary works so in developed theory of literature analysis also formulated the feminism literature critic. Djajanegara (2000: 148) said that the critical feminism literature is the women issues of reflected literary works. It indicates in a literary works which has main female characters to distinct male characters, it can be analyzed in aspects of gender and feminism.

Therefore, the writer understands that the critical feminism literature is the existence women reflected in the literary works which has been absorbed by an author from the social reality. It refers that one aspect of sociological literature is distinction between literature as fictional works and society condition as social reality. An author as a person

lives among society is less or more absorbing the society values into his/her works, especially women emancipation issues in society. Kramadibrata (1996: 16) also supported it through her statement as:

*Sebagai anggota masyarakat yang hidup dalam suatu lingkungan tertentu pengarang terlibat masalah yang muncul di sekitarnya sesuai dengan cara pandang yang dimilikinya. Selain itu, keterbatasan alamiah yang merupakan juga ciri manusia, menyebabkan apa yang ditangkap dari yang terjadi di sekelilingnya hanyalah sebagian dari keseluruhan yang terjadi. Apa yang ditangkapnya ini kemudian ditafsirkan menurut nilai-nilai yang dianutnya baik secara sadar maupun tidak sadar.*

Similar with Kramadibrata's statement, Hardjana (1991: 65) expressed that an author has social sensitivity of society reality at recently time and place to deliver into fictional story through his imagination. Abdullah (1994: 79-80) also stated that fictional story is not able to separate from social context because it is a personal reflection of author towards society. Therefore, the literary works reflecting women are considered as social reality at recent time and place.

Related to this analysis, the women idealism of America 1920s can be reflected in number literary works at the time, namely novel *My Mortal Enemy* by Willa Cather in 1926. The writer uses the sociological theory of literature to deliver the social facts of fiction through methodological the genetic structuralism approach and feminism literature critic. Then, the writer describes the fictional author of Willa Cather and the fictional synopsis of *My Mortal Enemy*.

## 2.1 Willa Cather

Willa Cather is a woman of letters who has more described population in American West. She was born in Virginia, 1873 and his family moved to Red Cloud, Nebraska. A town of Red Cloud was placed by immigrant of Europe from Scandinavia and French. She completed the degree 1891 to 1895 in University of Nebraska, Lincoln. It is a university of women where Cather learns to write fiction, plays,

music, books, and accompany to media of *Nebraska Journal*. Then, Cather became an editor of magazine in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Afterward, she was a teacher of High School English. In 1906, she leaved to New York as an editor of corruption media journal, McClure's Magazine. She met a regional writer of New England, Sarah Ornet Jewett in 1908. Sarah had most influences to develop Cather's journalistic.

Cather lived in apartment with a boyfriend of Edith Lewis from Nebraska till her death in 1947. Actually Cather had broken life in 1922 while her health decreased into concern condition but she then established to write more after taking spiritual therapy of Episcopal Church in 1932. Like other women of letters as Gertrude Stein, Katherine Mansfield, Virginia Woolf, Mary Ann Cross, and Kate Chopin, Cather had to fight in almost society values of patriarchy and misogyny.

The life end of Willa Cather was dying on 24<sup>th</sup> April 1947 in New York and all her life had produced number works like Poem Collection of *April Twilights* in 1903, Short Fiction Collection of *The Troll Garden* in 1905, Novel *O'Pioneers!* in 1913, Novel *My Antonia* in 1918, Novel *A Lost Lady* in 1923, Novel *The Professor's House* in 1925, Novel *Death Comes for the Archbishop* in 1926, Novel *My Mortal Enemy* in 1926, Novel *Neighbor Rosicky* in 1932.

## 2.2 My Mortal Enemy

Nellie Birdeyes is a young girl who has 15 years old and completed her secondary school. She and family live in Parthia, southern Illinois. Nellie and her mother are invited to come dinner in her aunt, Aunt Lydia, to welcome old friend whose name is Mrs. Myra Henshawe. She ever lives in Parthia but nowadays in New York with her husband, Mr. Oswald Henshawe.

Mrs. Myra is a woman of 45 years old that she likes glamour party with famous people but Mr. Henshawe is a man of merciful and simple. Their life of household has no harmoniously. On the other hand, Nellie appreciates for Aunt Lydia, who is a mother-home has three children and she is able to develop

home-peace and harmoniously. Nellie honestly likes personal of Henshawe and Aunt Lydia which has the character of keep silence, merciful, and simple.

Ten years forward, Nellie comes again in New York to be a teacher. Today, New York changes to the developed city. Once night Nellie takes a dinner in restaurant, she meets Henshawe that he talks a lot of life with Myra to be apprehensive now while Myra is ill. Few days then in the afternoon of early April, Nellie comes to Myra's home and lets her vacation in western beach to enjoy peace situation and away from life problems.

In early June, complicated disease of Myra becomes seriously injured and doctor predicts her life has no more a month. Myra thinks if once time faces a death why she has to die in alone with her great enemy, suffering and unfortunately. She finally says, "*Why must I die like this, alone with my mortal enemy?*" Myra is dying in calm and its cremation within the iron box.

### 3. Methodology

The reflection analysis of American women idealism 1920s in novel *My Mortal Enemy* by Willa Cather is the qualitative research by using the library study to collect all those data. The obtained data is analyzed in descriptive method which describes all phenomena fairly. Then in the works analysis uses the genetic structuralism approach and the critical feminism literature. Both them are applied analysis from the sociological theory of literature.

The use of genetic structuralism approach has several steps. Firstly, the literary works is studied its intrinsic elements that all elements are considered as a unity aspect of delivering meaning. Then, the background of author is also analyzed to find out his mind or idea as a represented specific society. The author is considered as a connector of fiction and social reality. Afterward, the sociological aspect is analyzed to know the society condition at time of fiction created. The society condition as extrinsic situation has influence to create the fiction. Finally, the research finds the great picture the reflected social

reality of its fiction.

In analysis method of critical feminism literature in the literature sociological theory, Abbas (2011: 67) formulated steps in the following as:

1. to identify female characters in the fictional story;
2. to determine role and position all female characters in the fictional story;
3. to find the life goals, behaviors, and attitudes of female characters in the social reality;
4. to analyze distinction between male characters and female characters in the fictional story to reflect social relation between man and woman in society facts;
5. to study the author's character as a part of social reality to present characters of male and female in its fiction.

### 4. Discussion

Novel *My Mortal Enemy* has two female characters of different generation, namely Myra Driscoll as a woman and Nellie Birdeyes as a girl. They are Ireland descent who followers Catholic Church. Myra Driscoll is a nephew also inherited all his uncle wealth's whose name is John Driscoll in Parthia, southern Illinois. John Driscoll is a president of great company in Missouri. Myra is a close-friend to Aunt Lydia, aunt of Nellie. Nellie is a young girl fewer twenty five years than Myra. Nellie as a future female generation presents as a girl of learning from older generation like Myra Driscoll, Aunt Lydia, and Oswald Henshawe.

Myra in *My Mortal Enemy* is considered as a quite different from all women at time. She is more self confidence, independent, strengthen, and strong to keep herself faith, also ready taken a risk. She reflects herself when making a love from a poor man whose name is Oswald Henshawe. He is a descent man of German immigrant and follower the Protestant Church. All those background, he differs for Myra in aspect of social, descent, and faithful that those aspects make John Driscoll prohibits Myra continues her love of Henshawe. However, Myra

does not follow her uncle's hope and does all her will for the deep love reason. She left a luxury house in Parthia and cut off her inherited right then lives in New York as a couple married of Henshawe.

"Myra Driscoll came down that path from the house, and out of those big iron gate, for the last time. She had wanted to leave without taking anything but the clothes she wore – and indeed she walked out of the house with nothing but her muff and her porte-monnaie (purse) in her hands "(Carlsen, 1979: 916).

*My Mortal Enemy* presents conflict and idealism which dominated by social and economical problems in the household acted by Myra Driscoll and Oswald Henshawe. The freedom of chosen a husband by Myra Driscoll is a revolutionary life as a part of reflected Idealism of American Women in 1920-1940. It includes a marriage of developed by togetherness and loving emotion. Other idealism is women have property to their body and productivity; also they cannot restrict themselves in domestication but take a chance of public relation.

Similarly American women after 1920s have taken political right, they will back to glorify marriage and household as in the Victorian pattern idealized a woman of wifely and mother-home. The phenomena also reflect for Myra in *My Mortal Enemy* that she does not refuse marriage on herself but she has to do process pre-wedding finds ideal couple or husband candidate through *dating*. She meets and dating to a young boy of Oswald Henshawe who is faithful and loving but he is a poor and lower social status. What Myra and Oswald Henshawe do in *My Mortal Enemy* is a new style of finding a couple-life. It is a famous style of American young generation in 1920s. According to Waller's research in 1938, it shows that through *dating* among young people can be finding their couple life.

Old people of American's view *dating* behavior are breaking ideally norms and values. Also, church institution declares that *dating* is able to create a moral crisis contrary to religion doctrine and different from ancestor values of American women at past time.

Old parents feel so disappointed look their son or daughter accepts the couple life within the social status different. It is reflected by Myra's uncle, John Driscoll in *My Mortal Enemy*. He refuses Myra's love for Henshawe because Henshawe is a poor boy who will be miserable Myra's future time. John Driscoll says, *It's better to be a stray dog in this world than a man without money. I've tried both way, and I know. A poor man strings, and God hates him* (Carlsen, 1979: 915).

In the fiction story of *My Mortal Enemy*, Myra is determined to follow her love of realizing idealism builds a marriage by togetherness and chosen life with her boy friend. She is chased away from the home and cut off her inherited to defend her idealism. Myra's principle can be understood American people sooner as an ideal behavior of women emancipation. The figures of American women movement like Emma Goldman, Margaret Sanger, Mrs. Ethel Byrne, and others in 1920-1940 point that women have to develop their marriage desire by knowing a husband candidate deeply or pre-wedding process. Dating is considered as cultural value, individual rights, freedom to choose the couple-life, and facility to know the couple-life deeply before marriage.

After long time taking marriage as wife-husband, Myra faces several problems caused by the life background different, behavior contrast, disagreement mind, and inharmonious life. Myra's life background is rich family, established life, and public oriented, causes her like doing big celebration with popular persons or celebrities. Aunt Lydia's opinion, Myra is a materialistic woman who is like to spread money, *My aunt often said that Myra was incorrigibly Extravagant* (Carlsen, 1979: 920).

The life principle of Myra in firstly pages *My Mortal Enemy* is similar to the young people generation of American in 1920s, to obtain material pleasure and opener self for other people. It is supported by economical progress significantly of Gross National Product (GNP) American from US\$ 175 million in 1925 increases US\$ 200 million in 1929 with national asset becomes US\$ 81 billion. The high economical activity results more production activity also improves

the increased people income. The average of family income per month increases from US\$ 254-950 to US\$ 1676-4000. The economical progress situation supports new life style of young people what called as luxury life as *Jazz Age* and *Twenties Road* or young girls are known as modern female group or *flapper*.

The life style of young girls is criticized by conservative group and churchman/churchwomen which they stress the simplicity life, morality, humanism values, and assisted disaster persons. All those kindness are taught in churches, schools of Christian and Jewish, also in several morality organizations like The Christian Endeavour Society, New York Anglican Church Women, and Christian Women Association. Similarly, Henshawe in *My Mortal Enemy* who has background of churchman family presents himself as a simple man and avoid obtaining materialistic pleasure.

The contrary principle and different view between flapper and churchman/churchwomen reflect Myra and Henshawe in *My Mortal Enemy* with number conflicts. In herself, Myra declares a war of love and disappointed. She views Henshawe as disappointed man who unable obtained material pleasure and unwanted associated with prominent persons. Henshawe is considered as personal of passive and monotonous, whereas Myra needs him as active and aggressive to realize the life opportunity. However, Henshawe is not able to follow Myra's hope because he is usually living in simple family by stressing simplicity life patterns and considered as more important social values than material values. The Henshawe's life principle creates deeply disappointed for Myra. She is finally making decision to leave her husband, Oswald Henshawe. She says, *Oswald and I had a disagreement, and I've left him to think over. If he needs me, he can quite well come after me* (Carlsen, 1979: 915).

The household conflict like situation for a couple of Myra Driscoll and Oswald Henshawe is usually happened as a result of coming American women into marriage world or *Back to The Home Movement* after 1920s. In 1920 to 1940 on average 6 - 9 persons in 1000 American women petitions for divorce from her husband. The divorce reasons are dishonest family,

incompleteness economy need, women freedom, and different faith. Related to dishonest family, Henshawe in *My Mortal Enemy* is also accused to do for a young girl who always sends gifts for his office. Henshawe actually does not want betrayal his love for Myra but he will not also make disappointed to refuse gifts from a young girl.

"She's from a breezy Western city, where a rich girl can give a present whenever she wants to and nobody questions it. She sent these to my office yesterday. If I send them back to her it will hurt her feeling; she would think I had misunderstood her (Carlsen, 1979: 922).

Myra knows the betrayal of Henshawe so she leaves him. Myra expresses that woman has to do appearing despotism and lie of man, ... it's distinguishing in a man to lie for personal decorations. A woman might do it, now...for pearls!" (Carlsen, 1979: 930).

Some society components of American agree to set up counseling institutions to avoid disharmonious in the marriage and household life in American people. We note those counseling institutions in 1930s are *Marriage Consultation Service* in New York and *American Institute of Family Relations* in Los Angeles then *American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy (AAMFT)*. Those counseling institutions give the social support of delivering the household problem solving, psychological therapy, and advocated law of wives. It is a similar situation to fiction story of *My Mortal Enemy*; Aunt Lydia gives suggestion for Myra's household problem. Aunt Lydia expresses that man has important meaning in woman life as in her is able to live harmonious within a husband. She says that the betrayal of man is not accepted but he also has a strategic position as a partner of woman.

After 10 years, the life of social and economy for a couple of Myra and Henshawe come in difficult situation and apprehensive. Myra is diagnostic of sick and feels nervousness to seek all life problems in society. It is similar with the developed cities of western American like New York, California, Illinois, etc. Henshawe's failure manages the company of train so he is becoming bankrupt and poor. The situation

causes Myra and Henshawe are leaving apartment, then living in a small room. It is actually reflected from American condition in 1930s according to experienced Myra and Henshawe.

The social life and economy of American concerns great failure what is known as *The Great Depression*. The American economy decreases till 60 percentages. The failure economy caused by businessmen are not able to payback their credit because higher production cost so some banks come into collapse. On the other hand, the high inflation level causes decreased people buy-power so the production is greatly overflows. All efforts the economical recovery has been done by President Hoover but failure whereas economical fluctuation always moves into anxiety level from May 1931 to July 1932.

The economy depression concerns American in 1930-1935 results the decreased people income sharply. The paralyze economy impacts to cut workers greatly or *Pemutusan Hubungan Kerja (PHK)* so number husbands have to back home or jobless. It describes in *My Mortal Enemy* that Henshawe is difficult obtaining his family economy need so Myra is usually unsatisfied him. Myra is very disappointed Henshawe so she expresses as, *Oh, that's the cruelty of being poor; it leaves you at the mercy of such pigs!* (Carlsen, 1979: 934).

To solve the paralyze economy as impacted from economical depression, the household wives of American set up idealism on how to fulfill their household economy need. They build small domestic business and middle industries to help husband's work avoid him as jobless man. The President Franklin D. Roosevelt gives a highly appreciate and thankfully for those domestic industries of household wives' effort which able to develop and increase the economy productivity till 11.7 – 15.2 percentages in 1933. This achievement has been taken by government's attention within *Program of New Deal* because it is able to remove the economical sector real. The household wives ability support domestic economy impacts to independency American women because they can reduce their dependency position from husband. Finally in early 1940s independency women from

man becomes idealism goal of American women.

Even though Myra's spirit is still flaming at present but she has no power more. Her old is nearly 60 years compared a pair of old foxes which will release out their life, *And we so safely hidden in earth, like a pair of old foxes!* (Carlsen, 1979: 932). Similarly Myra's condition, American feminists after struggle tens year by fully idealism and most respected goals, they are coming to decrease situation in 1930s. Feminism values which set up by social norms and human rights principle change to other fact within the changed life pattern of American society are more individualistic and priority to interest of personal or group. Therefore in the end 1930s, the economy pattern of American women is back to follow economical value as a reinforcement movement of family economy basis.

The American women prominent of Emma Goldman (1896-1940), Care Lane Chapman Catt (1859-1947), Margaret Sanger, Dorothy Backer, Hanah Stowe, and Havelock Ellis in the end 1930s, they enter twilight age so their hope comes to young generation. They do not refuse a woman of taking marriage, family, and household, but they will the role of wife or mother unrestricted her in domestic life only. They idealize the woman person makes balanced life of domestic and public without losing her right and body own also productivity value result.

Similar with those American women prominent, Myra also in *My Mortal Enemy* spreads out her annoyance and flaming heart by giving the best advices for young girl as future time generation whose name is Nellie. Myra declares that women have to set up their idealism within freedom and independency from man. She is disappointed for her uncle, John Driscoll who is always forcing his will to woman. She also does not like a man person of Henshawe who is not able to work hard so he neglects family and irresponsible to complete his family economy need. She is so hateful her absurd love for Henshawe in past time and nowadays her losses whatever. Myra like American women idealists are not rejecting marriage and family but she advices for Nellie that both man and woman can be each lovely also become each



enemies at same time. The fullness love of man will change and decrease when his wife has children. At time, they are powerless love and Myra describes his true heart in the following as:

“People can be lovers and enemies at the same time, you know. We were... A man and woman draw apart from that long embrace, and see what they have done to each other. Perhaps I can't forgive him for the harm I did him. Perhaps that's it. When there are children, that feeling goes through natural changes... In age we lose everything; even the power to love”. (Carlsen, 1979: 941).

At once night of early June, it is the last days or edge life of Myra, she mentions for Nellie that the life today is full crowded by living problems. Myra feels several disasters and suffers also disappointed which those facts make her as a great enemy of life, *My Mortal Enemy*. Myra looks changed life of people, especially taught divergence of church in daily life. She criticizes persons are always praying in church but their life are so far away from glorious church. It means they are betrayal the church taught. Finally, Myra will be dying in a place of peace which away from the life problems.

“Myra Henshawe never changed the clause in her will, which requested that her body should body cremated, and her ashes buried ‘in some lonely and unfrequented place in the mountains, or in the sea’ “. (Carlsen, 1979: 945).

Myra's firmness faces death associated with lonely, suffering, and unlucky, all those will be remembered by Nellie in her whole life.

“I have heard again that strange complaint breathed by a dying woman into the stillness of night, like a confession of the soul: ‘Why must I die like this, alone with my mortal enemy!’”. (Carlsen, 1979: 946).

The oldest American women prominent dream bearing *New Women*. They have to take a chance of working in public sector realizing women independency for all life sectors. Its dream in *My*

*Mortal Enemy* is accommodated by a young girl of Nellie Birdeyes who has been taking the public role as a teacher. She is able to provide her life and independent for the whole life aspects.

In novel *My Mortal Enemy* is signed that Nellie Birdeyes accurately will accept the positive advantages of life problems from older generation like Aunt Lydia, John Driscoll, Myra Driscoll, and Oswald Henshawe. Nellie does not declare idealism but she is always finding kindness and wisdom what has been faced by Myra. Nellie considers Myra as a respectful woman of taking her idealism. Myra has taught for Nellie on how to need woman carefully appreciates a love for man. Nellie is hoped to know well character, attitude, and behavior of man before she receives him as a husband. It is important a woman knows a man before taking a marriage so she is not disappointed for future time. On the contrary of Myra, she regrets her marriage in past time with a husband whose name is Henshawe, *He's a sentimentalist, always was; he can look back on the best of those days when we were young and loved each other, and make himself believe it was all like that. It wasn't always a grasping, worldly woman; I was never satisfied* (Carlsen, 1979: 941).

Willa Cather as a woman author expresses deeply flaming heart of self woman in the fiction of *My Mortal Enemy*. The whole woman principle is acted by a woman character of Myra Driscoll with her idealism. Willa Cather describes the social conflict between expectation and reality within the marriage of Myra Driscoll and Oswald Henshawe. Then, the author also presents a young girl of Nellie Birdeyes, who is trying to see the life meaning of past generations as a guided life of her future. Willa Cather among American writers is known as an author who is able to relate past to present and analyzes for future.

Willa Cather as an author of *My Mortal Enemy* stops the role of Myra Driscoll passes her agedness. Although Myra still has a strong spirit, but she is too weak to obtain all goals till her death comes and the only one her hopeful is a young girl of Nellie Birdeyes.

“I haven't people on my mind. But you, Nellie... that different... That different.

Somebody young, and clear eyed, chock-full of opinions, and without a past. But you may have a past, already? The darkest ones come early". (Carlsen, 1979: 932).

Willa Cather's decision ends for Myra Driscoll in *My Mortal Enemy* on her agedness is similar with decreased ability of the American women prominent like Emma Goldman, Care Lane Chapman Catt, Margaret Sanger, Dorothy Backer, Hanah Stowe, and Havelock Ellis. They are also agedness. Similarly Myra for Nellie, the American women prominent are also giving hopeful for future generation which they mention as *New Women*. All new women are hoped to obtain independently women in all life aspects and taking a chance of public sector work. They have to support *women liberation movement* and *women equal rights movement*.

Therefore appearance *New Women* like Nellie Birdeyes, Willa Cather as an author correctly is cutting off all problem sources that they are Oswald Henshawe, a husband of Myra Driscoll. He is death in Alaska several years after Myra also takes a death in western seashore America. Cather expresses the future American women have to realize all goals and idealism of past the American women prominent like Emma Goldman (1896-1940), Care Lane Chapman Catt (1859-1947), Margaret Sanger, Dorothy Backer, Hanah Stowe, and Havelock Ellis.

## 5. Conclusion

The American women condition in 1920s came to transition situation after their obtained political right as in Amendment 19<sup>th</sup> of American Constitution. On the other hand, the developed American economy progress creates new style of American women, namely luxury life as *Jazz Age* and *Twenties Road* or young girls are known as modern female group or *flapper*. However, it was not running long time because American economy is collapse in 1931 so some people became jobless. The situation influenced the idealism of American women back to home or glorification of marriage but independency women from man becomes idealism goal of American women.

Willa Cather also reflects the idealism of American women's above through the fictional female character, Myra Driscoll in *My Mortal Enemy*. She is more self confidence, independent, strengthen, and strong to keep herself faith, also ready taken a risk. The freedom of chosen a husband by Myra Driscoll is a revolutionary life as a part of reflected Idealism of American Women in 1920-1940. It includes a marriage of developed by togetherness and loving emotion. However, she is not able to obtain the whole goals so she is hopeful for Nellie as future generation of *New Women* to support *women liberation movement* and *women equal rights movement*.

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