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**VIVISECTION AND PASTRIES: EXAMINING THE SOCIAL AND
SEXUAL POLITICS OF THE VICTORIAN ERA THROUGH THE
CONFESSION ALBUMS OF JM BARRIE AND WILLA CATHER**

by

Amanda Ashley Marinello

**Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree**

of

DEPARTMENTAL HONORS

in

**Literary Studies
in the Department of English**

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“Who is your favorite author?” “Do you believe in love at first sight?” “What is the mark of a true friend?” These questions are not mere conversation starters, but are representative of a literary genre - namely the confession album. While the original date of appearance for the confession album, also called autograph album or survey, is uncertain, they became extremely popular both in the United Kingdom and America during the mid-nineteenth century. The questions and form of the confession book evolved over the next century, but their popularity never died out. Even today, they exist in the form of email surveys and magazine questionnaires. Seemingly trivial, these confession books are highly representative ephemera of the era in which they were written and give direct insight into the author of the survey. Autograph albums can be viewed as mini autobiographies that provide not only rare insight into the personal lives of youth growing up during the Victorian era, but also show evidence of the influence of Victorian social politics upon individual. More than a “sentimental game,” the autograph offers insights into an integral part of Victorian autobiography.

The critiquing of confession albums as a literary genre is a relatively new field of literary criticism and the process of examining confession albums as literature has been hindered by a number of complications. Most of the research that has been conducted on the genre has focused on the influence of confession albums on the American South – completely ignoring the British Victorian culture from which confession album writing originated¹. Also, because the confession album was mainly used as a social tool for courtship, many libraries and museums have archived albums with games and amusements rather than as biographical literature.

Confession albums originated as autograph albums in the mid-1800s. Originally, the books were designed simply to hold collections of signatures; the owner of an album would ask their family and friends for the signatures as a token of remembrance. Over time, this process

evolved and instead of merely giving their signatures, contributors in albums began writing small poems, memories of experiences with the owner of the album, and advice to the owner of the album and to others that might read the album. These early albums were very ornate and often included poetry sections and artwork provided by the publisher. Later, autograph albums evolved into confession albums in which each person would fill out a survey – their “confession.”

Although titled “confessions,” these surveys did not have overt religious overtones and were not meant to be a catharsis for previous sins or a place to admit transgression. Albums do not ask the author’s personal views on Christ, the scriptures, or organized religion. Many early forms of autograph albums included verses from the scriptures; these verses were included not for religious purposes, but because they were widely known passages of literature that the general public would be able to recognize and identify with. While autograph album questions do not specifically ask the author about his/her religious beliefs, the questions that they do ask can still be viewed as moral questions. For example, the question “Your most esteemed virtue?” requires the author to draw upon their opinion of morals – presumably which were learned from their association with religion. Likewise, open-ended questions allow the author’s answers to be religiously centered. Questions such as “My idea of perfect happiness” or “My chief ambition in life” allow the author freedom to reveal their religious beliefs, if they feel inclined.

Instead of being focused on religion, the primary function of the confession album was to act as a courtship tool by giving insights into the preferences of the person filling out the survey, specifically about what they were looking for in a mate. Beyond being a simple remembrance of friends, this new evolution of sentimental albums was a step between autobiographical writing,

and a game of fortune telling (Matthews 1). Most surveys were typically composed of around twenty questions. Questions that were usually included in surveys were:

What is your favorite opera?
Your flower and color?
Have you ever been in love? And if so, how often?
Do you believe in marrying for love and working for money?
Do you believe in love at first sight?
Who is your favorite historical hero?
Who is your Favorite Poet?
Favorite amusement?

Being sexually suggestive, at least by their contextual time period's standards, these confession albums are situated within the traditional courtship of Victorian society by focusing on domestic questions. They were an accepted tool of courtship because they masked sexual desires and still promoted ideals of home and family with questions like "describe your future residence."

Considered "modest" by society's standards, they provided an acceptable outlet for the fulfillment of sexual desire.

Despite the confession album's primary function as a courtship tool, the genre was still held within the private sphere, and allowed the opportunity for the author to analyze events and social progression. In her article on autograph albums, Samantha Matthews explains "A 'hard question' is a complex or searching query that needs time for reflection, but it is one that also tests frankness." (Matthews 2). The questions of album surveys are "hard questions" when examined through a Victorian lens. Victorian autobiography became literary in nature as a combination of fact and poetic poise to depict events and the shaping of character. Confession albums, though very brief in what they reveal, follow a format of introspection and revelation about character.

The brevity of autograph albums is one of the difficulties of viewing the albums in terms of literary criticism. Typically limited to only twenty questions, the initial examination usually

leads to an over-analysis of remarks in the survey and misinterpretation of information as being important. Not all of the answers on the survey are important to the critique of the genre, but the difficulty is discerning *what* answers are important and *why*. Unfortunately, this process of discerning what questions are important has to be determined on a survey to survey basis. There is not an individual question included on the survey that allows the examiner to distinguish the complete nature of the author. Instead, surveys must be analyzed as a whole in order to determine, by writing style and by the answers themselves, the deeper feelings of the author.

The unexamined aspects of confession albums leave questions about its function as a literary genre. Like all autobiography, there is a question of how much of the private self the author has revealed. An additional layer to the “private self” question is added when the public and recreational nature of the confession album is considered; as a courtship tool, confession albums were very closely scrutinized within the personal circle of the author which probably caused self-censorship in order to conform to his/her contemporaries. This implication possibly negates its role as an autobiographical form because it limits the true sentiments of the author. But, the conformity of authors of confessional surveys could also reveal social trends and ideologies of the time period in which the survey was written. The very fact that authors avoid questions related to sexual intimacy confirms that the society considered physical courtship to be confined to the private and not public sphere. And, the way that authors chose to respond to these societal norms through their survey answers indicates their personal views of the social expectations and the author’s personality. Even though we are able to view patterns within the surveys, and therefore further establish cultural expectations and beliefs, the surveys still reveal the individuality of the author; they reveal the author’s choice to conform to society, or openly clash against it.

How an author chooses to present him/herself to the album's audience is a key component to the genre. Peterson argues that "autobiography distinguishes itself as a genre by the act of interpretation rather than the act of presentation" (Peterson 4). This concept might be true if the autobiography remains within the private sphere and is merely written as a self-reflection. Within Victorian society, as autobiography moves into the public sphere, presentation is equally important because it *fosters interpretation* of the individual by the public. Confession albums existed solely within the public sphere and were very closely scrutinized within the personal circle of the author which probably caused self-censorship in order to conform to his/her contemporaries. "A few writers may have composed their own sentiments, but probably most signers chose from among verses [confessions] they had already seen, perhaps making some minor changes" (Henricks 172). By simply questioning preferences, confession albums largely ignored personality traits, such as moods and tempers, social backgrounds, and family situations – at least on the surface. The further examination of confession albums shows that these simple questions do give insight beyond the finding of a mate. Depending on the author, they can reveal personality, humor, and even underlying fears and triumphs.

Even with short question and answers, authors of surveys did find ways to reveal their deeper personalities and writing abilities. If the author is willing to be honest and disregard societal implications in writing, the format of the confession album survey provides an accurate depiction of the individual and their society. A typical problem of autobiography is that it is composed of memory, which becomes distorted over time and often becomes a reflection of societal fiction. The short question and answer format of the confession album resolves this memory problem by asking the author about that specific moment in time; there is no contrast between public and private memory because the confession album is current. Instead, the genre

elicits what the author thinks *now*, not how they came to their position. Insight provided by albums might seem small, but with analysis it becomes significant in cultural contextualization and to reveal the individual's character.

The confession album, although largely ignored by literary critics, is a form of autobiography. The format of the albums provided a forum for common writers to become autobiographers. Encompassing all levels of society - middle and upper classes, educated and uneducated, men and women - albums provide a portrayal of the social concerns of the Victorian era, including the evolution of social beliefs. But, this semi-private space also allowed writers to be introspective and depict their most central values and the deeper part of their personalities. Not just random questions as part of a game, these albums were their authors' "confessions" – a revelation of their true character, personal desires, and personality.

Even with all of the information that we have surrounding the history of confession albums, there are still many variables within the genre. Because confession album surveys are both within the private and public sphere, is it possible to determine which questions are standardized throughout the genre, and prescribe a way to analyze the author's responses? Also, confession albums were spread across multiple cultures; does each culture require a different technique of analysis? We must also recognize that confession albums were mainly completed by teenagers; do the responses they give represent the individual throughout their lives, or just during that specific time period, and how did this time period influence their future personal and professional lives? Were confession albums just a passing trend, or do they reveal information about individuals that are accurate throughout their lives?

I expected to find the answers to these questions about the confession album genre through the surveys of JM Barrie and Willa Cather. Barrie and Cather both completed

confession album surveys during their teenage years. The two authors were born only thirteen years apart and were influenced by the same world events. Both Barrie and Cather had similar educations and family backgrounds, began their careers as journalists, and both were heavily involved in theatre. Publishing in roughly the same time period and having a number of common associates and interests, they can easily be considered contemporaries. In my preliminary research I discovered that connections between Barrie and Cather have already been established. Rosanna West Walker showed that Cather was influenced by *Peter Pan* and used similar themes and characters for her work *The Professor's House*. This connection between their later writings has already been established, but I believed that the connection between Barrie and Cather existed not only in later adulthood, but during their adolescent years as well. The surveys, which have been largely ignored by most Barrie and Cather experts, should reveal interests, attitudes, and even writing styles of the authors. By examining the surveys produced by each of them, I expected common interests, attitudes, and even writing styles to be evident emerge.

The primary researcher of confession album literature has been Dr. Samantha Matthews. In 2000 Matthews published her article "Psychological Crystal Palace?: Late Victorian Confession Albums" which focuses on the form of confession albums, specifically the social and sexual politics behind the composition of the surveys. While she focuses on the intent of the genre, she rarely encountered completed albums within her research and is therefore unable to draw extensive conclusions about the actual use of albums by authors. When I examined Barrie and Cather's surveys, it became evident that they completely disregard the courtship purpose, and instead reformat the genre in order to fulfill their own ideals: Barrie uses the genre in order to win the approval of his mother, and Cather resists the goal of seeking anyone's approval.

Both of these authors not only resist the courtship intent of the genre, but also reformat it to fulfill their own interests. My initial goal in analyzing Barrie and Cather's albums was to interpret the information within the albums in order to enhance the biographical information of each author. In the fall of 2006, I traveled to the United Kingdom and met with numerous Barrie scholars, examined his personal manuscripts within the National Library of Scotland archives, read numerous works by both Barrie and Cather, and exhausted resources that linked the two authors. I directly interviewed Dr. Matthews regarding the albums, which she had not known were in existence. Even after my extensive research I found myself becoming progressively frustrated because of the many inconsistencies between Barrie and Cather's biographical literature and their albums; there are many responses within each author's survey that cannot be analyzed because they are too cryptic.

Over time, this project evolved into a revelation of the complexities and contradictoriness of the confession album genre itself. Instead of trying to use Barrie and Cather's albums in order to impose meaning upon their biographies and literary works, I have come to revel in the ambiguity that their albums offer. My work is an extension of Matthews' in which I show that a model of the process of analyzing confession albums fails because of the social and personal complications of the individual authors. For instance, if it is truly "confessional," what reading can we impose on a text when it is evident that the author has purposely disregarded questions that are intended to evoke ethical beliefs? If it is autobiography, how valid is it, given that the answers were probably given at the behest of someone else and that the participant knows their private thoughts are for public display in this forum? And if it is a form of autobiography, what are we to make of the clichéd answers even young writers like Cather and Barrie sometimes relied upon. Further, if the album reveals rebellion against expectations of conformity, is that all

there is? Is the sum of their usefulness merely confirmation that participants were sometimes rebellious against social mores? Regardless of the antagonistic attitude that both Barrie and Cather portray towards the genre within their individual surveys, the fact that they completed the process of filling out these surveys means that they were participating in a sophisticated and complex engagement with the belief systems of their family, friends, cultures and themselves. With such a complicated confrontation within such a brief format, there cannot be any simple answers or clear conclusions. What we gain from the examination of confession albums is the realization that these albums exist as evidence that the moral and social principles of the Victorian era were often *undefined* and fluid. There is a structure, but respondents are able to manipulate the form.

“Pleasing Mum”

Barrie’s Courtship of Family

Literary critics have previously shown how Barrie's personal life influenced his literatureⁱⁱ. But, Barrie scholars have largely ignored his confession album survey. Although the survey is intended to be a non-fictional work, Barrie crafted his answers in order to promote an idealized version of himself which borders on fiction. While Barrie was aware of the confession album's role within culture as a courtship tool, he recasts its function within his own life. For Barrie, courting a potential spouse turns into courting the pleasure and approval of the women in his family, namely his mother and sister. Even after having established the main theme of Barrie's survey, there are many convoluted questions that surround his attitude towards the genre in general. Specifically, how and why he perpetuated the genre to his posterity? Is Barrie antagonistic against the genre, or does he truthfully answer the questions and expect others to do the same?

Barrie received his album as a birthday present from his mother, Margaret Ogilvy, when he turned seventeen. We can assume that Ogilvy would be reading Barrie's survey entries and is his intended audience. Matthews identifies his primary purpose behind the album as "trying to please mum" (Matthews interview). Barrie's relationship with his mother has been a central focus within the analysis of his literature. Psychoanalytic criticism has questioned if Barrie suffered from the Holy Mary Syndrome (the idolization of women) or the Oedipal Complex (Holbrook 72). Barrie himself establishes the importance of Margaret Ogilvy within his literature by stating "if readers discovered how frequently and in how many guises she appeared in my books – the affair would become a public scandal" (Barrie, *Margaret Ogilvy* 172). Therefore establishing a pattern that will hold true for the rest of his written work, the survey is one of the first examples of Margaret Ogilvy participating in Barrie's literature.

Scholars consistently agree that Barrie never broke away from the influence of Margaret Ogilvy. Early within his biography of his mother, *Margaret Ogilvy*, Barrie recounts the events surrounding the death of his brother David. Barrie, at the suggestion of his matronly sister Jane Ann, was able to rouse Ogilvy from her grief by dressing in David's clothes and adopting his mannerisms. Instead of maturing, Barrie subjected himself to the perpetual role of a thirteen year old boy. The theme of perpetual youth colored all of Barrie's literature and it is evident that Barrie's role-playing of his dead brother affected his psyche. David Holbrook states, "For Barrie, as a child, was deeply involved in his mother's failure to mourn, while at the same time as an adult he wrote all his books for her, in a way parallel to his attempts as a boy to lift her depressions by amusing her" (Holbrook 73). Like his literature, Barrie was in a constant precarious position between reality and fantasy. "From the very beginning, he invented different personae to sign the different voices and senses in his work" (Jack 15). Through his character Tommy Sands, supposedly based on his experiences at Dumfries, Barrie complains, "It is easy [for] you that has just one mind," expressing his frustration at not being able to establish a stable personality (Barrie, *Sentimental Tommy*). Establishing and defining personality, at least in a public forum, is one of the key goals of the confession album genre. But, Barrie could not fulfill this purpose of the album because he was aware of the fact that his survey was a performance piece, and that it had to reflect the dual character that he had already created for his mother.

Barrie faces a typical problem found within the confession album genre; in order for the survey to function correctly and give an accurate depiction of character, the author has to assume that the survey will remain private. But, since courtship was the primary purpose behind establishing the character of the author, the private aspect of the genre is automatically negated. Although Barrie is not interested in the typical romantic courtship pattern that the genre

perpetuated, he is interested in courting the happiness of his mother. Barrie states within notes from his classes at Edinburgh University, “Confession consists in yielding a point to the other side” (Barrie *MS 6652* 48). Written only two years after his confession album, this quote begs us to ask the question, “what point was Barrie yielding within his confession album?” We can only assume that within his confession he yielded points of his personality, including his sexual personality, in order to please his mother. And, was Barrie only yielding temporarily, or was his it a permanent change? The survey itself does not show any signs of Barrie feeling emotional distress over the discrepancies between the character he created for his mother within the album, and the frustration he felt in struggling to “have one mind.” By reformatting the album to court his mother, Barrie relinquishes the opportunity to define his personality and instead continues having multiple minds.

Samantha Matthews gave additional insights into Barrie’s survey and how he formatted his answering style. During my interview with Matthews, she indicated that the first three answers in Barrie’s survey are significant because they reflect a Victorian social mindset and therefore suggest he was consciously writing for a public audience. These questions and responses are:

Your most esteemed virtue.....Modesty.
Your highest characteristic in man.....Sense.
Your highest characteristic in woman.....Silence????

Matthews points out immediately that “Modesty” was by far the most common answer to the “virtue question” in surveys. Additionally, the next two answers of “Sense” and “Silence????” highlight the gender politics, stereotypes, and expectations of the time period. Barrie asserts social expectations that men should possess “sense” – an interesting response for an author who is primarily known for his fantasy literature. Here, Barrie is possibly asserting that he wishes he

had “sense,” which goes against the theme of perpetual youth found in a majority of his literature but does hold with social gender expectations. By questioning the ability of women to remain silent, Barrie further asserts that men have more sense and more self-discipline, and therefore should remain more powerful because they are natural leaders. Of course, it is a possibility that Margaret Ogilvy would have been offended by Barrie’s questioning if women were capable of remaining silent, but because of the gender stereotypes of the time period, it was probably a joke that she was accustomed to and able to entertain. These answers show how the surveys interact with the culture; a joke about women’s chattiness was common in surveys, but it was common not just because authors read and copied the answer of others, but because they were able to identify with this answer in a social context. The expectations of women were recorded in surveys because they had become engrained within the culture and therefore within the authors participating in the surveys.

Barrie accepts the Victorian role of women, but because he is focused on the “courtship” of his wife and sister’s approval, he is forced to completely reject the romantic courtship that pervades the confession album genre. Instead, as Matthews stated in our interview, Barrie “uses a strategy of evasion. He refuses to follow the code of courtship.” Confession album questions were crafted to give insights into what the author was looking for in a marriage partner, as well as what they will offer in a marriage relationship. Some of the questions were sexual by Victorian standards, “Describe the personal appearance of your love,” but they survived within the Victorian society by being focused on domestic affairs, “What will be your future destiny?” Barrie does not answer these questions in order to find a spouse, but instead mocks the genre and avoids answering directly. Comparing these answers with his journal entries, it is evident that Barrie avoids the questions because of his own nervousness about courtship. One entry from

around 1878 states, "Greatest horror-dream I am married- wake up shrieking" (Birkin 12). But, it is this terror of courtship that causes Barrie to become wittier in his rhetoric in order to mask his fear of inadequacy in romantic courtship.

Just as the confession album genre masks sexual questions by focusing on domestic affairs, Barrie's literature focuses on the domestic role of women in order to mask his admiration of their strength and intuition. In his fiction Barrie does choose to have his female protagonists fulfill typical roles and puts a specific emphasis on the role of mothers, and his female characters are usually his strongest; within *Peter Pan*, for instance, it is always Mrs. Darling who acts reasonably, with "sense," and controls the overly-emotional passions of Mr. Darling. Barrie recognizes the public context the album will be in and bows to the social expectations of women, but he also makes use of the freedom provided by the confession album genre and asserts his appreciation of strong women, such as Cordelia and Joan of Arc, and the woman who possesses his "most lovable name... Minnie or Jomina Jane!" Barrie scholar R.D.S. Jack stated in an interview the fact that "Barrie always had a fascination with names and this answer is a reference to his sister, and second mother, Jane Ann." Although supposedly a tribute to his mother, *Margaret Ogilvy* is equally a biography and praise of Jane Ann. Barrie continually describes Jane Ann as a balance of matronly femininity and pervasive strength and leadership within the Barrie home. The chapter "Her Maid of All Work," within *Margaret Ogilvy*, recounts Barrie's failure to assume his sister's role as cook, attendant to his mother, and housekeeper when Jane was bed-ridden. Although Jane's health suffered continually, she insisted on maintaining the household and "prevent[ed] a stranger's getting any footing in the house!" (160). By acknowledging his sister with his survey, Barrie uses the album as an admiration of Jane Ann and the idea she represents of the ideal Victorian woman. In this confession survey Barrie

establishes his personal and rhetorical beliefs about women: that they should fulfill the roles assigned to women, but that they have heroic power and capabilities that men are not capable of acquiring.

Although the questions of the album are focused on courtship, with the very first question addressing the courtship issue “At what age should a man marry?”, Barrie shows his hesitancy by replying with a sarcastic “Dot-age.” Instead of prescribing a numerical age, Barrie avoids answering the question directly. Matthews commented on this answer that, “Barrie was not the first to answer this question this way. It was not a common answer, but undoubtedly he had seen it somewhere before” (Matthews interview). Barrie seems to be showing that he has no desire to marry, and distracts the reader from this taboo by making use of a pun. This choice shows Barrie’s emerging aesthetic as a writer – he is obviously already invested in the ability to use words and makes crafty use of rhetoric in order to emphasize the points within the survey that he chooses to and avoid the points of his writing that reveal too much of his personal life. The way that Barrie answers the next question, “At what age should a woman marry?” proves this point. When the attention is not focused on Barrie’s own role in courtship, and is instead turned to the women, Barrie answers directly and states “Anytime between 18 and 60.” Because Barrie is able to rely on the social expectation that women should marry, the attention is automatically turned away from himself and he is not required to supply a witty response in order to hide his discomfort.

Barrie’s album, and particularly his attitude towards courtship, becomes further complicated because of the multiple interpretations of answers offered by different scholars. While it seems that Barrie refuses to conform to the culturally expected “courtship code” within his survey and that his answers suggest he does not want a romantic relationship, some answers

on the survey can be interpreted to be a mask of his sexual desires. When questioned, “Do you believe in love at first sight?” Barrie responds by answering, “Yes, if the object is in the pastry line.” Initially this response seems like a witty replication of the previous answer, with Barrie once again concealing his discomfort by relying on wit instead of candor. Instead, suggests Matthews, Barrie is masking his desire for eroticism by, “substituting sweets for sexⁱⁱⁱ.” Either Barrie is rejecting the question entirely and refusing to name the woman he is in love with, or Barrie is aware of the connotations of “sweets” within his society and is using the “pastry line” to covertly portray his masked desire for sexual intimacy. Either reading of his answer contrasts to his previous assertions that “modesty” and “sense” were the highest virtues. When I presented Barrie scholars Ken Simpson and R.D.S. Jack with Matthews’ interpretation of this answer, they both independently disagreed with Matthews and did not interpret this response to be a covert outcry for sexual fulfillment. Instead, they interpreted Barrie’s response as being an early example of Barrie’s writing style, using wit in order to mask his own awkwardness within relationships. Jack acknowledged that Barrie was obsessed with control, and his answers within the survey show that he refused to “lose control in love” (Jack interview). Later in life Barrie, had anxieties about his relationship with women and his writing, particularly his survey, shows this feeling of inferiority also existed during his adolescence. Barrie answering with witty, covert answers is his way to control the survey and his audience in order to mask his inferiority. Samantha Matthews interpreted Barrie’s “pastry line” response to have a covert response within the courtship code by linking sweets with sexual desires. She did argue, however, that Barrie was probably aware that his sexual response would be obvious to certain members of his society, but still hidden from the modest and prim members of Kirriemuir – particularly his mother, Margaret Ogilvy.

Just as Barrie reformatted his album in order to court his mother, Barrie's adopted sons later answered questions within their albums in order to "please Uncle Jim." Michael, after whom the character of Peter Pan is most likely modeled, states in his confession album:

Your favourite novelist.....J.M. Barrie
Your favourite hero in fiction.....Peter Pan
Your favourite heroine in fiction.....Tiger Lily.

Michael was eight at the time of this survey entry, in 1908, and unlike Barrie who covertly courted his mother's affection, Michael makes no attempt to hide his admiration for "Uncle Jim." Barrie responded to this admiration in Michael's album by perpetuating the confession album genre to his other adopted sons. What were Barrie's expectations with these albums? Was he trying to record admiration that was already present, or trying to inspire it by giving his adopted sons the albums? In 1914, Barrie gifted a confession album Nico, who was eleven at the time. While Barrie resisted the album's purpose of romantic courtship, he reformatted the function of the album to focus on family dynamics. By giving his sons a confession album to complete, he was hoping that they would continue his pattern of answering and "court Uncle Jim." This trial had mixed results – Michael responded in much the same way as he had six years earlier, but George, now aged twenty-one, had no intention of formatting his album in order to please Barrie.

Barrie's and George's surveys are juxtaposing examples of how the genre functioned. Barrie used his album to perpetuate the role that he had created to please his mother, while George uses the album to break free of the restraints of recreating himself for Barrie. This difference indicates that the genre fails in always giving an accurate depiction of a person's character, but it consistently achieves one of its intended purposes by offering freedom to the author to present himself as he chooses at a given moment. Barrie and George fulfill the courtship function – they both seek the approval and admiration of their intended audience.

Barrie writes his confession survey for Margaret Ogilvy, whereas George writes the album for himself in order to find self-approval and to unmask his feelings of depression. Some of George's responses include:

Your ideal woman.....Non-existent
Your ideal way of spending xmas day.....being drunk
Your idea of absolute misery.....being sober
The most unselfish thing you could do.....suicide
When did you feel at your worst.....I always do.

Although George's album fails in the "pleasing Uncle Jim" intention that Barrie had for it, it does fulfill the purpose of being a historical record and is an accurate depiction of George's feelings. George was serving at this time in WWI, and his answers reflect the disillusionment and hopelessness that has come to be associated with the soldier's life. He was later killed on March 15th, 1915, less than three months after completing his survey. His survey entry remains one of the last pieces of evidence that records his feelings about life and the war^{iv}. While George made no pretensions to rewrite his confession album to please Barrie, his letters from the warfront are purposefully crafted to shield Barrie from the risks and dangers, even saying, "Uncle Jim, you must carry on with your job of keeping up your courage"^v (Birkin 244).

Letters between Peter and George elaborate on the feelings that they hid from Barrie.

Peter recounts –

"I wish you would write and tell me exactly what your sensations are, and whether you experience any more of that jolly old depression which descended upon us during the first week at [Sheerness]. I still get it sometimes, and if I thought the war was bound to last more than a year from now, I believe I should commit suicide" (Birkin 234).

Based on these accounts, it is obvious George shielded Barrie from his bouts of depression, and crafted his war letters in order to comfort Barrie's concern. George did not reformat his album to please Barrie, but used it as a public forum to express his disillusionment in an indirect way.

Instead of writing a letter to tell Barrie directly of his depression, George uses the album as a public oracle in order to inform Barrie of his feelings. Whether Barrie ever acknowledged the message that George portrayed in his album survey is unknown, but it exists as an example of the Barrie-Llewlyn-Davie's family dynamics. George's approach seems to more aptly fulfill the purposes of the genre by being an accurate depiction of his feelings, a record of social/political events, and an archive of family dynamics^{vi}.

While Barrie and George's albums seem to present us with cultural and family history, all of the information that we abstract from the surveys remains unproven. Various scholars disagree over aspects of the albums, and no accurate conclusions can be drawn without Barrie and George commenting on the surveys themselves. It is obvious that both are rejecting the courtship function of the genre, but what are they doing instead? Although we cannot draw any valid interpretations on the albums, their ambiguity is a testimony of the fact that the Barrie family dynamics, both with his mother and adopted sons, were complicated and could not be easily recorded in a few lines.

“Clashing Cather”

Cather’s Use of the Autograph Album as a Social Critique

Like Barrie, Cather ignores the traditional use of the autograph album as a form of romantic courtship and instead revises the genre to function as her courtship of art and land. The dismissal by Cather of romantic courtship is evident with the first few responses within the album. Asked her favorite flower, again a question meant to evoke the use of Victorian flower symbolism, Cather responds with "Cauliflower," which is an immediate signal to the reader that Cather is not interested in following the "courtship code" found within typical albums. Instead of leaving the question blank, which would have signaled a complete dismissal of the genre, Cather instead answers with a witty response. Showing that she is willing to play with the genre, and even challenge its goals, throughout the survey she uses multiple tactics in order to re-format the survey in order to promote her own interests.^{vii}

One step that Cather takes within the album to dismiss the courtship purpose is to argue against the traditional role of women within Victorian society. Completed in 1888, Cather's album does reflect the reformation of women's sphere that occurred during the time period. Since the Seneca Falls Convention of 1848, the question of the role of women within society was infused throughout Cather's society. Cather's album establishes her personal beliefs of the role of women and also draws attention to the surrounding social attitudes. Several responses within Cather's survey establish her dismissal of the traditional role of women as the matronly, passive, uneducated nurturers considered the norm during the nineteenth century. The first answer that directly points to this attitude is Cather's answering that her favorite music is "A Squalling Baby." The adjective "squalling" connotes a nuisance or disturbance, which contrasts the matronly attitude traditionally held by women during this time period. "Society wanted women to be wives and mothers, not writers and opera singers" (Woodress 268). Cather refuses to conform to the domestic life that the album is formatted to perpetuate. Instead, she rejects the

espoused traditional desire of women to create life and asserts that her favorite amusement is “vivisection” - the dissection of reptiles. Unlike her female contemporaries, Cather is almost morbidly amused with studying the anatomy of creatures.

Perhaps even more socially distancing than Cather’s scientific experiments, was her personal questioning of the dress standards assigned to women by her society. Photographs from this time period show Cather’s experimentation with dress and hairstyle (see appendix 1). Dressed as a boy, and even in her cousin’s Civil War uniform, Cather stretches the boundaries of her gender and attempts to establish her own identity at the time of her survey. The question of whether Cather dressed in masculine attire for practical reasons or in order to make a statement about her ability/desire to bend her gender boundaries is answered by her survey entry. She “advocates...sincerely and particularly” the reform of huge bustles, and identifies the “greatest folly of the nineteenth century” as dresses and skirts. By stating that they are the greatest folly of her time period Cather is not only critiquing fashion, but the social politics that stipulated female dress standards. And, considering that Victorian dress, particularly its principles of modesty and purity, was supposed to reflect the “angel of the house” standards of the time period, Cather is not only rejecting the dress standards, but also the “cult of true womanhood” that women were subjected to^{viii}. Because of the public nature of the confession album, Cather’s survey was a public oracle for critique of Victorian gender standards.

Cather’s survey not only reflects the Victorian mindset of the inferiority of women outside of the domestic sphere, but also the elevation of men within academics and practical circumstances. When asked what Cather would most desire if she found herself shipwrecked on a desolate island, she responds with “Pants and coat.” She does not conform to the dependent female role that existed within the society by desiring to have a male companion, but instead

asserts that *she* could, and would, fulfill a masculine role and be assertive in relieving her problematic situation. By asserting that she would dress in male clothes, Cather is showing that she would literally assume male characteristics in order to solve her problem. Assuming that wearing the costume of a man would make her more capable of functioning within a problem situation, Cather is asserting that she believes that roles, even gender roles, can be easily changed in order to function more effectively, and with a more desired position, within a society. The discovery and re-creation of self is one of the primary functions of the confession album. The questions were formatted not only to give a clear indication to possible suitors of your character, but also to help the author establish their own identity through twenty questions. Not only was the confession album meant to be a tool of discovery, it was also a means of self-discovery and asserting individuality. Cather does not only assume "Pants and coat" through her written survey, but in actuality throughout her life as well, and her survey only acts as a written account of her previous experimentation with gender roles.

During her adolescence Cather created an alternate persona for herself: William Cather, M.D. During this time period Cather accompanied her town doctor, Dr. McKeeby, on medical visits throughout Red Cloud and assisted with administering anesthesia during the "amputation of limbs," which the survey indicates is "her perfect happiness" (Woodress 267). Cather developed an interest in medicine and further distanced herself from the traditional role of women by publicly asserting her "Chief ambition...to be an M.D." Cather's interest in the medical profession is not evident only in her survey. Before changing to literature, Cather's initial major at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln was pre-med. By signing her survey, which is supposed to serve as concrete evidence of her personality, as "William Cather, M.D." Cather asserts that she is not only experimenting, but actually desires to create an alternate persona for

herself. Her new persona, focused on promoting masculinity in order to enhance social opportunities, has overtaken *Willa Cather* and manifests itself in her "confession." While this period is short-lived, between the ages of thirteen and eighteen, and she returns to traditional dresses and hair styles during her years at college, this period is fundamental to Cather's writing. In her survey Cather is experimenting with recreating herself, but the format of the album allows her a pattern to create characters within her literature. Many of her novels assume the perspective of males, including: *My Ántonia*, *A Lost Lady*, and *The Professor's House*. While a complex human may not be able to be fully defined by twenty qualities, a well-rounded character is typically defined by few, solidified qualities – typically how they are distinguished from their society. The way in which Cather distinguishes herself from her Nebraskan society by masculinizing herself shows her ability to create characters. Her experimentation with dress and gender roles was not only to create a new identity for herself, but to experiment in the process of creating characters.

Cather's questioning of gender roles extended beyond experimentation of appearance and asserting the ability of women to enter the medical profession; she also questioned heterosexual relationships. Literary critics consistently assert the ambiguity of Cather's life and writings regarding her sexual orientation. Evidence exists supporting the assumption that Willa Cather was homosexual, but within her literature Cather remains ambiguous about her sexual orientation while continuing to assert both a fascination and admiration of powerful women. While this fascination is clear, especially with such characters as Alexandra from *O Pioneers!* it is highly debated whether her admiration extended into homosexual feelings and behaviors. Her survey does not answer this perplexing question, but instead maintains, and is maybe the first written example, of Cather's ability to create ambiguity. For example, when Cather is asked "The trait I

admire most in women is..." she answers with "flirting." Cather could be admitting the fact that she admires "flirting" in other women because she does not possess the trait herself. Considering that Cather throughout the survey masculinizes herself and exhibits her belief that she is a powerful, assertive, and complete woman, admitting that she is lacking a trait makes her seem weak and incomplete – especially because flirting is a trait that is strongly associated with the typical role of the Victorian woman. The second explanation of this answer is that Cather admires flirting in other women, because she likes flirting with other women.

The ambiguity surrounding Cather's sexual orientation within her survey becomes further convoluted as she answers that "The greatest wonder of the world, according to my estimation is... a good looking woman." Cather could be asserting her belief that a "good looking woman" is a rarity, and therefore the greatest wonder of the world, or she could be answering that she admires, perhaps in a homoerotic form, good looking women. Both interpretations share the fact that Cather intended the answer to be ambiguous, and that she intentionally uses her writing ability to reformat the primary function of the confession album to not be focused on heterosexual courtship.

Even though Cather's album does not focus on the search for a heterosexual relationship, it can still be interpreted as a courtship tool; Cather uses the album to espouse her love for and "court" academic knowledge and art. Commenting on Cather's time at the university, Woodress states "It seems clear that from 1891 on, art was to be her religion, and this single-minded pursuit of art helps to explain her subsequent life as a single artist" (Woodress 75). Despite the ambiguity surrounding Cather's answer of "flirting" as the most admirable trait in women, there is no ambiguity about her answering that "an original mind" is the most admirable trait in men. Considering that Cather allies herself more with the traditional role of men throughout the

survey, in critiquing this answer we can conclude that Cather estimates that the most admirable trait that *she* could acquire would be “an original mind.” Accounts given of Cather during her adolescent years reflect this attitude. Regardless of her rural setting, Cather is known for having had a large collection of books and being a voracious reader, which confirms her answer of “Books” to the question “There is always some one person, or thing, for which we have an attachment exceeding all other endearments in intensity. Instead of establishing her desire for a romantic relationship, Cather instead asserts that she already has a relationship, and will continue to grow and foster a relationship, with her true “passion” – knowledge.

Typically within autograph albums there is not an individual answer that can be interpreted solely in order to examine the personality of the author; the answers must be analyzed as a whole, allowing for connections to be drawn between the answers in order to establish patterns. The analysis of Cather’s survey follows this principle. Only through analyzing the survey as a whole, and recognizing the overall themes of the rejection of Victorian femininity and traditional modes of courtship do specific questions become valuable. One example from Cather’s survey of this principle is the simple question of “My pet Hobby.” The seemingly trivial question warrants analysis because of Cather’s answer of “Snakes and Sheakspear [sic].” Connecting this answer with the rest of Cather’s survey, it becomes significant because it emphasizes Cather’s theme of balance between masculinity (and nature) and art. Recognizing that Cather later states that she is amused by vivisection, we can assume that Cather is once again promoting masculinity over femininity. By adding her interest in Shakespeare into the answer, Cather is again courting the balance between both art and masculinity, as well as “showing off” her knowledge of Shakespeare to the audience of the album. When I asked Matthews to read Cather’s survey, she added another interpretation to this answer by pointing to the fact that

Cather is making use of the word “pet” by including snakes. Because of the nature of the question I do not believe that Cather was using the “snakes” to avoid answering the question, but as Matthews said, “Even at this young age she was a developing author, and couldn’t resist the opportunity to make a joke” (Matthew interview). The answer is not necessarily indicative of Cather’s writing style, but it does show how she was conscious of her writing and how to craft it.

Cather’s writing style within the album does show that she was mocking the genre. She refuses to answer the courtship questions in the expected manner, and instead rewrites the format in order to align with her courtship of art. Even though Cather mocks the genre, she still completes the album. At the time period of the album’s completion, 1888, confession albums had begun to lose popularity and were beginning to be considered cliché. Many authors would not finish the survey, but would only answer selected answers – either because they were bored with the concept of the album, or because they did not want to answer questions that they were uncomfortable with, typically the courtship questions. Cather, although obviously making light of the format of the album, does not follow this pattern, but instead answers all of the questions – often times going to the edge of the line. By viewing the album, we can estimate by her handwriting and spacing on some of the lines, that she even went back and added information^{ix}. Cather mocks the precepts behind the album, but she still plays the “confession album game.” While the main purpose behind the confession album genre was courtship, Cather instead focuses on the other central concept – the establishment of identity.

Even with all of the information that we are able to withdraw from the album, problems surround Cather’s album that limit a full analysis. The main concern surrounding her album entry is that we only have Cather’s survey and not the entire album^x. We do not even have the actual survey, but a reprinted copy that only exists in Mildred Bennet’s early study of Cather,

The World of Willa Cather. An important element in analyzing surveys is to analyze the album as a whole because they often reveal themes and trends in writing that were prevalent among friends. Multiple answers within her survey seem to refer to personal jokes, indicated by use of quotation marks, but they cannot be fully analyzed without the complete album. One such example is her applying quotation marks to the answer of ““slicing [sic] toads”” as her summer occupation. She does not include quotation marks around her answer of “Vivisection,” which leaves the reason for her punctuation choice unexplained. While these answers are explicitly indicative of personal references, they also lead to the question of what else in the survey was answered because of an inside joke, and therefore may not reflect the true attitudes of Cather, but were written to please her audience. And, without the album, or even the accurate knowledge of whose album it was written in, we are unsure of the audience.^{xi} Cather is brazen in her answers and we can assume that she would have answered the same regardless of her audience. But a knowledge of the audience would have added an additional layer of analysis to her writing style and the way she chose to present herself. The analytical approach we took to Barrie’s album was based on the knowledge we had of his audience, Margaret Ogilvy. Cather presents herself as a confident and independent woman. But, without a clear knowledge of her audience, we are unsure if she is answering this way simply because she knows that the album will be among friends, or if she is confident of her answers regardless of who views the album.

Unlike Barrie, we have no records of Cather returning to the confession album genre in later years, and therefore cannot directly contrast her entries with later entries in order to compare similarities. But Cather does continually use the themes of masculinity and art within her literature. “Peter,” her first published story, focuses on the theme of placing art above even basic life necessities. Cather’s attitude regarding art contrasts with the “small western

communities” that she portrays in her literature as “provincial, close-minded, materialistic, and unsympathetic to artistic souls” (Funda and Andersen 10). Likewise, her story “Unsentimental Tommy” (1896), which is a response to Barrie’s *Sentimental Tommy* novels (1895), promotes the masculinized, unemotional female, like that portrayed in her responses, as the ideal. These themes, and evidence of Cather’s rising aesthetic as an author, are first present in her survey, which remains as the first example of Cather’s written work.

Cather’s survey provides not only information about her written work and later literary career, but also further information about how to analyze the confession album genre. Her reformatting of the courtship principle shows how albums serve as cultural documents of social issues. The fact that she was forced to rewrite the album in order to match her masculine-oriented personality shows that genre was primarily aimed at traditional female audiences. Our analysis of Cather’s survey is hindered by the fact that we are unable to contextualize the survey within an album, or a specific audience, which is a key element in analyzing surveys in order to understand the author’s full intent in writing as well as individual responses to questions. Cather’s survey shows how the confession album functioned in both the private and public sphere by providing the author a means of engaging with social politics, while preserving privacy through coded responses.

A Final Note:

At the beginning of this project I was hoping to write a detailed thesis on how to correctly analyze a confession album and why these albums contribute to Barrie and Cather studies. Throughout the process of writing I realized that many of the assumptions I came to were based on my personal reading, and could not be supported completely by the texts. Instead of being able to provide concrete conclusions from my research, I recognized that a majority of my research provided ambiguous information, and even with my extensive research into the biographies of Cather and Barrie, as well as into the history and culture of confession albums, I couldn't adequately justify many of my conclusions. After initial frustration with the inconclusiveness of my work, I recognize that my inability to provide indisputable answers attests to the fact that the confession album genre is complicated, and that many answers will only be comprehensible to the author. What I have provided within this thesis is a dialogue of how we, as literary critics, can investigate confession albums as ephemeral evidence of Victorian culture. Beyond this, we can only make suppositions about the connection between confession album surveys and their authors. Confession albums should not be ignored, however they can be a useful historical tool and provide interesting snippets of information about individuals. In our continued study of confession albums it is important to remember that these surveys are simply "glimpses" into the lives of the authors, and cannot be relied upon to reveal an extensive representation of the author.

Barrie Survey – *Questist's Album*, circa 1877

Your most esteemed virtue – Modesty
Your highest characteristic in man – sense
Your highest characteristic in woman – silence????
Your happiest employment – composition, singing hymns
Your greatest misery – shirt-buttons, clean sheets on a cold night
Your pet flower and colour – the rose red
Your favourite novelist – Sir Walter Scott
Your most admired poet – Shakespeare
Your favourite opera and artist – never saw any
Your favourite historical hero – Sir William Wallace
Your favourite historical heroine – Joan of Arc
Your favourite hero in fiction – Cooper's "Pathfinder"
Your favourite heroine in fiction – Cordelia in "King Lear"
Your luxurious ambrosia and nectar – sponge-cakes and lemonade
Your most lovable name – Minnie. (Jomima Jane!)
Your pet antipathy – the academy bell
What peculiarity can you most tolerate? – that of giving presents
Your favourite amusement? - Fishing. Private theatricals
At what age should a man marry? – Dot-age
At what age should a woman marry? – Anytime between 18 and 60
Do you believe in love at first sight? – yes, if the object is in the pastry line
Do you believe in marrying for love and working for money? –
not if you have a rope handy
Were you ever in love? And if so, how often? – yes: every time I pass a sweetie shop
Your favourite proverb? – "be aisy, an if ye canna be aisy, be as aisy as ye can."
Your age next birthday? – Decimal 04. find cube root for answer.

Your most esteemed virtue	<i>Modesty.</i>
Your highest characteristic in man	<i>Love.</i>
Your highest characteristic in woman	<i>Idleness!!!!</i>
Your happiest employment	<i>Compositional singing hymns</i>
Your greatest misery	<i>Shit - last row. (Clean sheets on a cold night)</i>
Your pet flower and colour	<i>The rose. red.</i>
Your favourite novelist	<i>Sir Walter Scott.</i>
Your most admired poet	<i>Shakespeare.</i>
Your favourite opera and artist	<i>Never seen any.</i>
Your favourite historical hero	<i>Sir William Wallace.</i>
Your favourite historical heroine	<i>Jane of Arc.</i>
Your favourite hero in fiction	<i>Cooper. "Ralph Rollo."</i>
Your favourite heroine in fiction	<i>Cordelia in "King Lear."</i>
Your luxurious ambrosia and nectar	<i>Sponges or tea and lemonade.</i>
Your most lovable name	<i>Miriam. (somewhat Jane!).</i>
Your pet antipathy	<i>The Academy bell.</i>
What peculiarity can you most tolerate?	<i>That of giving favorites.</i>
Your favourite amusement	<i>Fishing. Private theatricals.</i>
At what age should a man marry?	<i>Not - any.</i>
At what age should a woman marry?	<i>Anytime between 18 and 60.</i>
Do you believe in love at first sight?	<i>Yes, if the object is on the party line.</i>
Do you believe in marrying for love and working for money?	<i>Not if you have a good handy.</i>
Were you ever in love? and if so, how often?	<i>Yes: many times I pass a novelty shop.</i>
Your favourite proverb	<i>The airy, as if you come to airy, be as airy as you can.</i>
Your age next birthday	<i>Deimal 04. Find into not for answer.</i>
<u>My confession</u>	<i>James M. Barry.</i>



Margaret Ogilvy in 1871 (Birkin 4)

1. The best place to hang a bunch of mistletoe? *In the dark.*
 2. Your favourite motto? *Per mass, per terrum.*
 3. Your greatest ambition? *To grow a moustache.*
 4. Your ideal man? *The Kaiser*
 5. Your ideal woman? *Non-existent.*
 6. Your opinion of motor cars in general? *Haven't got me.*
 7. Do you believe in spiritualism? *Yes.*
 8. Your ideal way of spending Xmas day? *Being drunk.*
 9. Your idea of absolute misery? *Being sober.*
 10. Your favourite picture? *Two lips in a kiss.*
 11. The most suitable place for a flirtation? *A lunatic asylum.*
 12. Your favourite play? *Anna Karenina*
 13. Your favourite song? *The girl I've left behind in (thank g-)*
 14. Your favourite musician? *Nicholas.*
 15. Your favourite magazine? *The B.O.P. of course.*
 16. The most unselfish thing you could do? *Suicide.*
 17. When did you feel at your worst? *I always do.*
- Autograph *Santa Claus* Date *Xmas.*

George Llewlyn-Davies' survey.
Christmas 1914

1. The best place to hang a bunch of mistletoe? In the Dark.
2. Your favourite motto? Per mass, per Terrum.
3. Your greatest ambition? To grow a moustache.
4. Your ideal man? The Kaiser
5. Your ideal woman? Non-existent
6. Your opinion of motor cars in general? Haven't got me.
7. Do you believe in spiritualism? Yes.
8. Your ideal way of spending Xmas day? Being Drunk.
9. Your idea of absolute misery? Being sober.
10. Your favourite picture? Two lips in a kiss.
11. The most suitable place for a flirtation? A lunatic asylum.
12. Your favourite play? Anna Karenina
13. Your favourite song? Illegible.
14. Your favourite musician? Nicholas
15. Your favourite magazine? The B.O.P. of (illegible).
16. The most unselfish thing you could do? Suicide
17. When did you feel at your worst? I always do.

Autograph – Santa Claus Date- Xmas



Cather pictured at around 15

Willa Cather Pioneer Memorial Collection
Nebraska State Historical Society



Nebraska State Historical Society

The Opinions, Tastes and Fancies of—
Wm. Cather Jr. D.
Red Cloud
Oct 10 1888

Autographically expressed (name) _____

My Favorite:

Color: <i>Sea Green</i>	Poet or Poetess: <i>Johnson</i>
Flower: <i>Cayenne</i>	Prose Writer: <i>Emerson</i>
Book: <i>Satchelpar</i>	Composer: <i>Beethoven</i>
Animal: <i>Cat</i>	Character in History: <i>Baroness</i>
Reason: <i>When the Rose is young</i>	Character in Romance: <i>Tristram</i>
Country: <i>The Green Horn & Brochard</i>	Music: <i>A Squalling Baby</i>
Musical Instrument: <i>Pibroch</i>	Amusement: <i>Sticking Toads</i>
Occupation during a Summer's Vacation: <i>Sticking Toads</i>	Pet Hobby: <i>Snakes & Satchelpar</i>
Chief Ambition in Life: <i>To leave W. D.</i>	

The trait I most admire in woman: *Flirting*
 The trait I most admire in man: *An Original Friend*
 The trait I most detest in each: *Dudeism*
 The fault for which I have the most detestation in another person: *Pashers*
 That for which I have the least: *Lack of "fines"*
 The qualifications or accomplishments I most desire in a matrimonial partner: *Lamb-like sweetness*
 My idea of perfect happiness: *Computating books*
 My idea of real misery: *Doing fancy work*
 There is always some one person, or thing, for which we have an unobtainable affection, all other objects in intensity. With me it is for: *Books*
 Of the various modes of travelling, I prefer: *Walking*
 If privileged to make a journey, the single place or locality I would prefer to visit, above all others, would be: *Rome*
 As a travelling companion, I would most highly appreciate: *A cultured Gentleman*
 Discovered on a desolate island, I would most desire: *Penic & boat*
 The greatest wonder of the world, according to my estimation, is: *A good looking woman*
 As an inventor, I think the greatest service towards the world's progress has been rendered by: *Badminton*
 Of the many reforms as present under consideration, I most fervently and particularly advocate: *Huge Bustles*
 The greatest folly of the Nineteenth Century, in my opinion, is: *Drunk & Skirts*
 My motto: *Enjoy, let others weep*

Cather's survey - Oct 10 1888

"The opinions, tastes and fancies of – Wm Cather M.D."

Red Cloud

Oct 10, 1888

My Favorite:

Color: Sea Green

Flower: Cauliflower

Book: Sheakspear [sic]

Animal: "Cat"

Season: When the Roses come again

Poet or Poetess: Tennyson

Prose writer: Emmerson

Composer: Beethoven

Character in History: Bonapart I

Character in Romance: "Tricotrin"

Scenery: The "green shores of Crooked Creek"

Music: A Squalling Baby

Amusement: Vivisection

Occupation during a summer's vocation: "Sliceing [sic] Toads"

My Pet Hobby: Snakes and Sheakspear [sic]

My Chief ambition in life: To be an M.D.

The trait I most admire in woman: Flirting

The trait I most admire in man: An Original Mind

The trait I most detest in each: Dudeishness

The fault for which I have the most toleration in another person: Passion

That for which I have the least: Lack of "Nerve"

The qualifications or accomplishments I most desire in a matrimonial partner:

Lamb Like Meekness

My idea of perfect happiness: Amputating Limbs

My idea of real misery: Doing Fancy Work

There is always some one person, or thing, for which we have an attachment exceeding all other endearments in intensity. With me it is for: Books

Of the various modes of traveling, I prefer: Walking

If privileged to make a journey, the single place of locality I would prefer to visit, above all other, would be? Rome

As a traveling companion, I would most highly appreciate: A Cultured Gentleman

Shipwrecked on a desolate island, I would most desire: Pants & Coat

The greatest wonder of the world, according to my estimation is: a good looking woman

As an inventor, I think the greatest service towards the world's progress has been rendered by: Cadmus

Of the many reforms at present under consideration, I most sincerely and particularly advocate: Huge Bustles

The greatest folly of the nineteenth century, in my opinion, is: Dresses + Skirts

My motto: Enjoy, let others weep

ⁱ See Henricks, Sylvia. "The Gentle Pastime" *Indiana Folklore* (1978): 161-173.

ⁱⁱ See Cheney, Lisa. *Hide-and-Seek with Angels: A Life of J.M. Barrie*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 2005.

ⁱⁱⁱ See also Eric Partridge, *Dictionary of Slang*. "Pastry" gained an erotic connotation around this time.

^{iv} See Matthews section entitled "'My Unacknowledged Fear': Confession Books in the Great War." We did not discuss George's survey during our interview, but I use a lot of her criticism from this section to analyze George's survey.

^v This letter was written the day before George was killed at Flanders.

^{vi} George actually signed his confession album entry as "Santa Claus," signifying that he created a separate persona for the album.

^{vii} Cather scholars do acknowledge the album's existence, but have rarely examined it at any length. Dr. Evelyn Funda and Susan Andersen's essay "Predicting Willa Cather: Using 'Peter' and 'The Opinions, Tastes, and Fancies of Wm. Cather, M.D.'" does include an extensive critique of the album.

^{viii} These ideas appear in Barbara Welter's work, "The Cult of True Womanhood, 1820-1860" and her later book *Dimity Convictions*.

^{ix} An example of Cather returning to answer a question can be found in her answer "When the roses bloom again." The way that her writing barely fits the line signifies that she labored over the answer, and possibly had to return to it.

^x Funda and Andersen speculate that the album is part of the unarchived papers housed at the Willa Cather Pioneer Memorial in Red Cloud. That, however, cannot be confirmed. See "Predicting Cather," forthcoming.

Vivisection and Pastries: Examining the Social and Sexual politics of the late Victorian Era through the Confession Albums of JM Barrie and Willa Cather

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