



## Willa Cather and the Myth of American Migration

Joseph R. Urgo

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In a land where there is constant migration, can there be a "homeland"? In the United States, migration is initially experienced as immigration, but the process never achieves closure. Migration continues as transience - restless, unsettled movement across social and economic classes, states, and national borders. In this nuanced study grounded in literature, history, and popular culture, Joseph Urgo demonstrates that American culture and our sense of national identity are permeated by unrelenting, incessant, and psychic mobility across spatial, historical, and imaginative planes of existence. There is no better example of a writer reflecting on this migratory consciousness than Willa Cather. At home in numerous locations - Nebraska, New York, New Hampshire, Pennsylvania, Maine, and Canada - Cather infused her novels with the cultural vitality that is a consequence of transience. By locating transience at the center of his conception of our national culture, Urgo redefines the mythos of American national identity and global empire. He concludes with an analysis of a potential "New World Order" in which migration replaces homeland as the foundation of world power.



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