

Tracing Heideggerian Authentic Existence in Willa Cather's "Neighbor Rosicky"

Narjess Jafari Langroudi*

Department of English, University of Maragheh, Iran

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Abstract

"Neighbor Rosicky", a short story by Willa Cather, exemplifies Heidegger's concept of authentic existence. This study explores the Heideggerian features of authenticity in the character of Anthon Rosicky, drawing from Heidegger's "Being and Time." Rosicky is portrayed as someone at peace with the world, embracing life with serenity and dying with tranquility. He does not evade choice and makes decisions without regret. Satisfied with his destiny, he remains mindful of different possibilities in the world. Rosicky does not allow himself to be consumed by the mundane aspects of everyday life, enjoying each moment without being bound by the past or overly concerned about the future. Unlike many other characters in literature, he does not experience self-fragmentation, as he knows how to mend the holes to avoid destruction. This study provides a detailed analysis of how Cather's story embodies Heidegger's philosophy of authenticity and offers insights into the nature of human existence.

Keywords: Heidegger, authenticity, Bohemian, Circumspection, Epiphany.

Introduction

Willa Cather's short story "Neighbor Rosicky" offers a rich portrayal of the Czech immigrant experience in the American heartland during the early 20th century. Set amidst the vast Nebraska plains, the narrative illuminates the challenges, aspirations, and values of Czech immigrants forging new lives in the rugged landscape of rural America. At its core, the story embodies the resilience and adaptability of those who sought refuge and opportunity in the New World. Anton Rosicky, a Czech immigrant farmer, serves as the embodiment of this spirit. He embodies the enduring values of his community, characterized by hard work, family solidarity, and a deep connection to the land. Rosicky's reverence for the soil reflects the agrarian ethos prevalent among Czech settlers, who viewed farming not merely as a livelihood, but as a way of life. The agrarian ethos, reminiscent of a simpler time, emphasizes a respect for nature, an understanding of seasonal cycles, and a reliance on manual labor and age-old wisdom. In many ways, it resonates with Martin Heidegger's concept of authenticity, which emphasizes individuals living in accordance with their true selves and values, free from societal constraints and distractions. Within agrarian communities, individuals often find a deep connection to their own existence, grounded in their relationship with the natural world and their cultural heritage. By prioritizing human-scale

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* Corresponding Author: **nl.jafari@ut.ac.ir**

activities and resisting the alienating effects of modern technology, agrarian living offers a potential pathway to a more authentic mode of existence, one that fosters a sense of belonging and continuity within the broader context of existence.

In Willa Cather's "Neighbor Rosicky," the titular character embodies the principles associated with agrarian living and Heideggerian authenticity. Rosicky, a Czech immigrant farmer, finds fulfillment in his connection to the land and prioritizes human-scale activities like working the fields and caring for his family. Despite hardships, he remains deeply rooted in his community and appreciates the natural world, finding meaning in rural existence. Through Rosicky's example, Cather shows how embracing agrarian values leads to authenticity and a sense of belonging. Within this framework, family is central to Czech immigrant ideals. Rosicky's devotion to his family, particularly his daughter-in-law, reflects loyalty and intergenerational solidarity. Despite embracing American life, he holds onto his Czech identity, sharing traditions with his descendants. The narrative showcases Czech immigrants' resilience and adaptability, highlighting their determination to succeed in a new land. Through Rosicky's character, Cather celebrates the enduring legacy of Czech immigrants in American society.

Cather's adept portrayal of immigrant resilience and cultural identity mirrors her own fascination with the complexities of human experience. Just as Rosicky embodies the enduring spirit of Czech immigrants, Cather, too, navigates the intricacies of identity and belonging in her narrative landscapes. Through her works, she not only celebrates the tenacity of immigrant communities but also delves into the universal human quest for connection and belonging. Heidegger emphasizes this interconnectedness, stating, "The they-self understands itself in interpreting as one does so commonly. It has its public, its 'they'; but every Dasein has also its 'they,' albeit not everyone is his own" (Heidegger, 1962, 20). Thus, within the framework of Cather's literary legacy, the narrative of Anton Rosicky becomes not just a story of Czech immigrants but a poignant reflection of the broader human condition, echoing themes that resonate throughout Cather's illustrious career.

Willa Cather's legacy as an esteemed American novelist was firmly established at the time of her passing, and her stature continued to ascend in the subsequent decades. Unperturbed by the world's pessimism, she remained untouched by melancholy, steadfastly preserving her insular sanctuary. Embracing seclusion in her forties, she shielded herself from a world she disdained. Despite inner contemplations that occasionally diverged, she garnered critical acclaim, further solidifying her position. A Pulitzer laureate, Cather's literary journey was resplendent, gracing American literature with enduring works like "Alexander's Bridge," "O Pioneers," "My Ántonia," "A Lost Lady," "One of Ours," and "Obscure Destinies." The latter, a collection of short stories, resonates with the echoes of Cather's Nebraska upbringing. E.K. Brown (1953), Cather's early biographer, suggests that this collection emerged in response to her father's illness and eventual passing, notably Charles Cather (Meyering 1994, 148).

This study will focus on the analysis of one specific short story titled "Neighbor Rosicky" (1998). In her M.A. thesis, Everton (2006) examined gender roles within selected works by Willa Cather and put forth the assertion that Neighbor Rosicky has seldom been the focus of scholarship, but I suggest that it warrants examination because not only does Anton Rosicky serve as a potential study for the role model

of humans, but the story also reveals Cather's own satisfaction with those individuals who define themselves above gender role proscriptions (83).

Undoubtedly, the scarcity of analytical works regarding "Neighbor Rosicky" prompts this researcher to bridge the gap. However, this study diverges from the norm by delving into the integral role of Anthon Rosicky, excluding discussions of gender roles. In essence, this inquiry unearths Anthon's earthly journey, making him the focal point around which the entire narrative revolves. Catalyst to this exploration is the renowned attributed quote to Cather: 'the end is nothing, but the road is all'. Anthon Rosicky epitomizes this sentiment, steadfastly avoiding the tumultuous pace of life. He harbors deeper contemplations, remaining attuned to life's course. This veneration of the journey shields him from deathbed regrets, setting him apart from Tolstoy's Ivan Ilyich. Within this paradigm lies the bedrock of authentic existence: a genuine concern for humanity's welfare, unity, humility devoid of self-aggrandizement, a vivacious existence, and a skillful navigation of life's richness to preclude the bore of monotony. As elucidated by Heidegger, "Authentic Being-towards-death is non-relational: in itself, it cannot be shared; in itself, it cannot be communicated. Dying is something that every Dasein must take upon itself in an absolutely singular way. This possibility is not to be outstripped" (Heidegger 1962, 241). This quote underscores the idea that the confrontation with one's mortality is an intensely personal journey that cannot be fully shared or communicated with others. Each individual must confront their own mortality in a unique and solitary manner, thereby emphasizing the profound individuality inherent in the human experience of death.

Upon realizing that urban life was suffocating, Anthon experienced a revelatory moment. In this epiphany, he recognized the appeal of residing in a rural setting. His intuition whispered that the dissatisfaction bred by city existence would erode his very soul. As a result, in an instant, he retraced his steps to his hometown, purposefully averting his gaze from the urban allure. Echoing Freud's sentiments in "Civilization and Its Discontents (1962)," this transformation underscored the profound impact of urbanization on the human psyche:

Life, as we find it, is too hard for us; it brings us too many pains, disappointments and impossible tasks. In order to bear it we cannot dispense with palliative measures. There are perhaps three such measures: powerful deflections, which cause us to make light of our misery; substitutive satisfactions, which diminish it; and intoxicating substances, which make us insensible to it. (22)

Disillusioned by the industrialized surroundings, Anthon found solace in Freud's palliative approaches. He discovered a substitute contentment in rural living and farm labor, opting for it over factory work. Life's journey is a rollercoaster, marked by highs and lows, and every individual possesses a distinct fate. The enigmatic nature of human destiny need not be perpetually distressing; instead, individuals of wisdom, like Anthon Rosicky, navigate ways to reconcile with fate. Rejecting destiny, erecting defenses against its tumultuous force, and assuming a victim's stance against it only breeds cowardice, leaving a person prone to perpetual grievances.

In understanding Willa Cather's "Neighbor Rosicky" through the lens of Martin Heidegger's notion of authenticity, we embark on a journey that delves into the existential depths of human existence,

juxtaposed against the backdrop of the urban-rural duality. Heidegger's philosophy revolves around the concept of authenticity, which entails an individual's ability to confront and embrace their true self in the face of societal conventions and external pressures. Authenticity, for Heidegger, is rooted in an individual's ability to dwell in their own being, acknowledging their existence in its fullest sense. In "Neighbor Rosicky," the protagonist, Anton Rosicky, epitomizes this Heideggerian authenticity. Rosicky's life unfolds in the rural expanse of the Nebraska plains, where he finds solace and purpose in the simplicity of agrarian existence. Heidegger would likely view Rosicky's connection to the land as an authentic engagement with Being, where he finds meaning and fulfillment in his intimate relationship with nature and the rhythms of agricultural life. Furthermore, Heidegger's phenomenological approach to understanding Being resonates with Rosicky's lived experience. Phenomenology, as elucidated by Heidegger, invites individuals to explore the structures of consciousness and subjective experience in relation to the world. In Rosicky's case, his consciousness is deeply intertwined with the land, his family, and his community, shaping his perception of reality and his sense of self.

The rural setting of "Neighbor Rosicky" also offers a unique vantage point for contemplating Heidegger's views on history and temporality. Heidegger posits that time is not merely a linear progression but is intricately tied to our existential experience of Being. In the rural landscape, time seems to flow in harmony with the natural cycles of the seasons, reflecting Heidegger's notion of authentic temporality, where past, present, and future coalesce into a unified existential horizon. Additionally, Heidegger's critique of modernity and its alienating effects finds resonance in the urban-rural duality depicted in Cather's narrative. The urban landscape represents the epitome of modernity, characterized by technological advancement, industrialization, and societal fragmentation. In contrast, the rural setting embodies a more authentic mode of existence, where individuals like Rosicky find refuge from the dehumanizing forces of modernity and reconnect with their primal being. In essence, "Neighbor Rosicky" serves as a poignant exploration of Heideggerian authenticity within the context of the urban-rural duality. Through Rosicky's character and his engagement with the Nebraska landscape, Cather invites readers to ponder the timeless questions of existence, consciousness, temporality, and authenticity, echoing the profound insights of Heidegger's philosophical discourse.

Anton Rosicky's unity with himself holds a sacred quality due to his embrace of destiny. In Nietzsche's "The Will to Power" (1968), the imperative of embracing fate is emphasized—a resolute acceptance that encompasses both its joys and sorrows. Rosicky seemed to grasp life's playful essence, refraining from approaching it with excessive gravity. He recognized the need to remain attuned to life's vitality and refrained from sacrificing himself for trivial matters. Delving not into the enigma of human fate, he exuded vitality and a zest for life, nurturing his soul. This understanding fueled his courageous approach to vibrant living. His affirmation of existence enriched his essence, as he emphatically endorsed life, notwithstanding its letdowns, tribulations, and trials. His title as "Neighbor" underscores his universal relatability—a representation of humanity at large. He wasn't driven by self-centeredness; rather, his selflessness was apparent. A sense of serenity and maturity marked his journey, grounded in the knowledge that life demands an affirmative embrace achieved through self-renunciation.

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Nietzsche's concept of the affirmation of destiny further enriches our understanding of "Neighbor Rosicky" and its resonance with existential philosophy. Nietzsche, another influential philosopher whose ideas echo through the corridors of human thought, proposed the notion of "amor fati" or the love of fate. In embracing amor fati, one accepts all aspects of their life, including the suffering and hardships, as necessary components of their individual destiny. In "Neighbor Rosicky," we witness Anton's embrace of his fate with a sense of grace and acceptance. Despite the challenges he faces, from leaving his homeland to enduring the harsh realities of rural life, Anton approaches his circumstances with a profound sense of affirmation. His love for the land, his devotion to his family, and his unwavering resilience in the face of adversity reflect a deep-seated acceptance of his destiny. This concept of affirmation of destiny, coupled with Heidegger's notions of authenticity, provides a compelling framework through which to analyze Cather's narrative. "Neighbor Rosicky" becomes not just a story of one man's life but a profound meditation on the human condition, inviting readers to contemplate the nature of existence, the authenticity of our experiences, and the role of destiny in shaping our lives. In essence, Cather's narrative resonates with the philosophical underpinnings of both Heidegger and Nietzsche, offering a poignant exploration of what it means to live authentically and affirm one's fate in the face of life's uncertainties. Through the lens of existential philosophy, "Neighbor Rosicky" emerges as a timeless reflection on the human spirit and its capacity for resilience, meaning, and self-discovery.

In numerous instances, Neighbor Rosicky places himself in the shoes of his loved ones, particularly his daughter-in-law, demonstrating a willingness to lay down his life for their well-being, as well as that of his son. Despite choosing a life of seclusion to avoid the contamination of modern society, he remains profoundly connected to his own family. He possesses the wisdom to discern when to stand apart and when to unite, maintaining a delicate equilibrium between life's seemingly boundless futility and its infinitesimal yet genuine significance. Embracing renunciation and accepting detachment from the world, he underwent a self-emptying process known as kenosis to achieve profound human reconciliation. Neighbor Rosicky's existence was imbued with authenticity, deriving pleasure from life and facing death unflinchingly. His passing seems akin to the completion of a mission on Earth, serving as a poignant reminder to postmodern humanity of their inherent duties as humans, often neglected in favor of seeking refuge in premature death.

Drawing inspiration from Willa Cather's "Neighbor Rosicky" and philosophical concepts like Heidegger's notion of authenticity, we delve into the profound implications of living a life true to oneself. Through the lens of these timeless narratives and philosophical reflections, we explore the delicate interplay between words and actions, sincerity and deceit, and the enduring quest for authenticity in a world too often besieged by duplicity. Join us as we unravel the intricacies of human behavior and endeavor to understand the profound significance of staying true to one's convictions in a society fraught with the perilous consequences of disingenuity.

1. Anthon Rosicky's Intuited Becoming and Authentic Existence

Anthon Rosicky, the central figure in Willa Cather's "Neighbor Rosicky," emerges as a beacon of authentic existence and intuitive becoming, embodying profound philosophical concepts that resonate with the notions of *kertwang* and *Orgone*. Rosicky epitomizes a true heroism rooted in his conscious choice of a secluded life, eschewing the trappings of recognition and societal acclaim. Despite moments of boredom and ennui that inevitably punctuate his existence, Rosicky demonstrates a remarkable resilience in refraining from spreading negativity to those around him. Instead, he embodies a quiet strength and inner fortitude that enable him to endure the vicissitudes of life with grace and dignity. In the realm of philosophical discourse, Rosicky's intuitive becoming mirrors the concept of "*kertwang*" – a state of ideal tension and dynamism. Just as "*kertwang*" signifies the ability to swiftly redirect one's trajectory physically, mentally, or emotionally, Rosicky navigates the ebbs and flows of existence with a similar fluidity and purposeful redirection. His intuitive responses to life's challenges reflect a profound attunement to the inherent rhythms of the human experience, allowing him to adapt and evolve in harmony with his surroundings.

Moreover, Rosicky's authentic existence is intrinsically linked to the concept of "*Orgone*" – a vital life force with therapeutic potential. Rosicky embodies this life force, drawing sustenance from his deep connection to the land, his family, and the simple pleasures of rural life. In embracing his authentic self and cultivating a harmonious relationship with his environment, Rosicky harnesses the healing power of the "*Orgone*" to overcome the grip of fear and existential malaise. Through Rosicky's journey of intuitive becoming and authentic existence, Cather invites readers to contemplate the transformative potential of embracing one's true essence and living in alignment with the natural rhythms of the universe. In a world fraught with distractions and discord, Rosicky serves as a timeless reminder of the profound wisdom inherent in leading a life guided by intuition, purpose, and authenticity.

Anthon Rosicky's intuitive sense of becoming and authentic existence compels him to shape his life according to his personal volition and the freedom of his will. He deliberately avoids conforming to the ordinary existence often referred to as the "*they*" in Heidegger's terminology. This concept of "*they*" signifies the inauthentic lives led by the majority, who become entangled in the monotonous routines of daily life, blurring the line between vitality and lifelessness. In contrast, the inauthentic historicity conceals the original trajectory of fate. The "*they-self*" exhibits inconsistency as it embraces the present moment, only to disregard it in anticipation of the next novelty. The "*they*" mindset evades genuine choices, remaining oblivious to possibilities and unable to repeat the past. Instead, it clings to what remains in the present – the residual world-historical aspects, the remnants, and the factual information about them. Within the confines of the "*today*," it interprets the '*past*' exclusively through the lens of the '*Present*' (Heidegger 1962, 443).

Heideggerian "*They*" find it challenging to derive pleasure from the present moment, often seeking solace in revisiting past experiences. In order to endure the present, they immerse themselves in reflections on past events. Unfortunately, "*They*" fail to recognize that the notion of time, including the present, past, and future, is a construct of human design. In line with Heidegger's assertion, "In our

specialized usage of this term, we must distance ourselves from the commonly accepted notions of 'future,' 'past,' and 'present' that are imposed upon us. This applies equally to concepts of 'time' that are subjective" (Heidegger 1962, 374).

Neighbor Rosicky feels no need to escape from the present condition and resorts to past events. It seems he could hear his heart's voice quite clearly and through the benign depths of his existence, his heart has directed him to an authentic living:

Time is 'intuited' becoming—that is to say, it is the transition which does not get thought but which simply tenders itself in the sequence of "nows". If the essence of time is defined as 'intuited becoming', then it becomes manifest that time is primarily understood in terms of the "now", and indeed in the very manner in which one comes across such a "now" in pure intuition. (Heidegger 1962, 483)

Neighbor Rosicky exudes a resolute certainty in his chosen life path, undeterred by the various possibilities existence offers or the enigma of fate. He navigates his journey without inviting the weight of remorse. "Life is what it always has been, always will be. No use to make a fuss" (Cather, 113). Rosicky's spirit emanates remarkable strength, suggesting that he might have weathered the crucible of an "esprit fort" to grasp life's richness fully. Without this, the world's indifference and destiny's enigmatic nature could propel individuals into oblivion, besieged by a world-weariness or "weltschmerz," compelling them to relinquish their humanity. This spiral could lead them to repeatedly confess their impotence in the face of destiny, perpetuating a cycle of decision paralysis.

Anthony Rosicky's spirit remained undaunted, refusing to let the mundane world inflict wounds upon his soul. He erected a refuge to shield his inner being from the discontents of civilization, thus evading the trap of inauthentic existence. Amidst the desolation that accompanies such a life, those who have lost touch with authenticity fail to grasp the inherent value of existence. The significance of their life and the occurrences that shape it elude them, rendering them seemingly oblivious in their existence. They struggle to comprehend the essence of the present moment, often imbuing their past with greater significance, which, unfortunately, poisons their reflections on previous experiences. This toxicity breeds indifference, causing them to approach their moments of living with a lackluster demeanor.

Inauthentic existence casts a pall of despair over the world, enveloping everything in an aura of unrelenting darkness. In stark contrast, authentic existence radiates with vitality, as evidenced by Neighbor Rosicky's life and passing, both emblematic of a life lived purposefully. His unwavering care for his family—his wife, children, and daughter-in-law—serves as a testament to his responsible nature:

Everyday circumspective Being-in-the-world needs the possibility of sight (and this means that it needs brightness) if it is to deal concernfully with what is ready-to-hand within the present-at hand. With the factual disclosedness of Dasein's world, Nature has been uncovered for Dasein. In its thrownness Dasein has been surrendered to the changes of day and night. Day with its brightness gives it the possibility of sight; night takes this away. (Heidegger 1962, 465)

Those ensnared by the ensnaring grasp of inauthentic existence become oblivious to both themselves and their surroundings, rendering their lives devoid of purpose and akin to a languid existence. Their

vitality ebbs away, leaving them adrift in a life bereft of meaning. Death, to them, remains a distant abstraction, a fate reserved for others and not themselves. On the contrary, Anthon possesses the ability to perceive life as a grand carnival, a celebration woven from the juxtaposition of paradoxes. He discerns death's presence within life's fabric, understanding the need to chuckle at life's gravitas in order to navigate its passage. His wisdom lies in the realization that survival requires sidestepping any encroaching peril. Anthon Rosicky's paramount concern lies in the pursuit of life for life's own sake, despite the inevitability of death that awaits at life's conclusion:

In the understanding of the "for-the-sake-of-which", the significance which is grounded therein, is disclosed along with it. The disclosedness of understanding, as the disclosedness of the "for-the-sake-of- which" and of significance equiprimordially, pertains to the entirety of Being-in-the-world. Significance is that on the basis of which the world is disclosed as such. To say that the "for-the-sake-of-which" and significance are both disclosed in Dasein, means that Dasein is that entity which, as Being-in-the-world, is an issue for itself. (Heidegger 1962, 182)

However, the majority of individuals fall into the clutches of mundane routines, their gaze untrained on the pursuit of profound understanding in life. They remain disengaged from mindful awareness, devoid of any philosophical contemplation, merely navigating life in a disjointed manner. Consequently, the minutiae of life assume unwarranted significance; they become entangled in superficial rivalries, ceaselessly striving to outshine others. Their lives are spent in a ceaseless cycle of comparisons, leaving them perennially dissatisfied. This chronic discontentment breeds an unsettling perspective, rendering them unwell in spirit, as their perceptions toward all things grow increasingly distorted. Driven by an insatiable rush, they tirelessly exert energy, ultimately yielding nothing of value. Neither do their lives contribute to others, nor will their deaths cast enlightening shadows on any heart. Among the burdens of those leading inauthentic lives is an insistent craving for validation from others. Despite being captives of their own mindsets, they perpetually whine about everything, fashioning excuses to evade the responsibility of fully embracing existence, unlike Anthon Rosicky. His prudence served as a lifeboat, rescuing him from the treacherous currents of malevolence that often inundate life. To further emphasize this perspective, we turn to the words of Omar Khayyam, as translated by Edward Fitzgerald. Khayyam's quatrain number 11 "Of all the travelers on that weary road, Where's one returned to bring us news of it? Take heed that here, in feigned goodness, you Pass nothing pleasant by—you'll not come back," poignantly captures the essence of life's journey and the imperative of embracing authenticity in our pursuits.

2. Heideggerian Circumspection and Anthon Rosicky

As we delve into the philosophical depths of Heidegger's concept of circumspection and its manifestation in Rosicky's narrative, Khayyam's timeless wisdom enriches our understanding, reminding us of the fleeting nature of existence and the importance of embracing authenticity along life's weary road. Heideggerian circumspection (*umsicht*) finds its echo in Anthon Rosicky's demeanor. In this

context, circumspection refers to the perceptive faculties through which one can adeptly negotiate the elements within their environment, aligning with the demands of their tasks. It embodies the skill to ascertain how these elements harmonize with one's actions, thus determining the nature of one's interaction with them. Neighbor Rosicky possessed this acumen; he unveiled the shroud from his eyes, enabling him to perceive the entirety with unwavering commitment. His mode of perception bears insightful resemblance to Heidegger's juxtaposition of mere sight and true seeing:

The sight which is related primarily and on the whole to existence we call "transparency" [Durchsichtigkeit]. We choose this term to designate 'knowledge of the Self' in a sense which is well understood, so as to indicate that here it is not a matter of perceptually tracking down and inspecting a point called the "Self", but rather one of seizing upon the full disclosedness of Being-in-the-world throughout all the constitutive items which are essential to it, and doing so with understanding. (Heidegger 1962, 186-187)

It seems Neighbor Rosicky's mind's eye is perspicacious and in this opaque world, he had a transparent vision. When he felt troubled by the pressure of city life, he understood that something is wrong with urban living. Living without any sense of vitality was equivalent to death for him. He could not bury himself in daily endeavors while living in the city, because he was in search of a pristine space for living.

Rosicky, the old Rosicky, could remember as if it were yesterday the day when the young Rosicky found out what was the matter with him. It was on a Fourth of July afternoon, and he was sitting in Park Place in the sun. The lower part of New York was empty. Wall Street, Liberty Street, Broadway, all empty. So much stone and asphalt with nothing going on, so many empty windows. The emptiness was intense, like the stillness in a great factory when the machinery stops and the belts and bands cease running. It was too great a change; it took all the strength out of one. Those blank buildings, without the stream of life pouring through them, were like empty jails. It struck young Rosicky that this was the trouble with big cities; they built you in from the earth itself, cemented you away from any contact with the ground. You lived in an unnatural world, like the fish in an aquarium, who were probably much more comfortable than they ever were in the sea. (Cather 1998, 18)

His grappling with the void in life bestowed upon him a mantle of courage, akin to the "Fortitude to Be" (Die Tapferkeit zum Sein) as espoused by Paul Tillich in "The Courage to Be" (6). Amidst a majority who often grapple with their own vulnerabilities, Anthon made the deliberate choice to embody courage. For Tillich (2000), "the courage to be" equates to affirming oneself in the face of fate and mortality, rather than merely defying hardships and tribulations. This trajectory was inevitable, as summoning the courage to confront guilt inevitably pivots towards considerations of salvation instead of renunciation (11). If we fail to exert the necessary pressure to attain conscious awareness of our behaviors, automatic deceit becomes an unbidden outcome. Seemingly, humanity is engrossed in the world for the sheer sake of amusement, a perspective David Foster Wallace captures by asserting that "game is about managed fear"

(2006, 278). Could it be that the cultivation of our capability to manage our fears constitutes the key to unraveling the enigma of Anthon Rosicky's life? This arises from the notion that the moment your Achilles' heel is laid bare, vulnerability deepens, necessitating a tight aperture of attention to foster resilience.

Beauty blossoms the moment humans embrace their authentic selves. When individuals truly inhabit their own identities, their essence unfurls without conscious awareness of the process of becoming. We often find ourselves enacting roles on this worldly stage, intermittently conscious of our existence; this transient consciousness carries immense significance, sometimes even manifesting as a profound epiphany in our lives. The search for comprehension or sudden insight is a shared pursuit, yet our chief predicament lies in the fact that most of us are acutely aware of our role-playing. This self-awareness lacks restraint in its pursuit. The desire to showcase oneself as a skilled player becomes a driving force, resulting in an unwavering commitment to playing a designated role in life. The prevalence of sycophancy and insincerity spreads unchecked. During the quest for self-discovery, a treacherous transformation takes place: individuals effortlessly morph into "others," *l'autre*, everything but their authentic selves. In this intricate web, can one genuinely expect to unveil their true identity? Unfortunately, most individuals find themselves entrapped within the facade they wear, entangled in a labyrinth reminiscent of Dedalus'. Here, the challenge lies in maintaining one's true self amid the ease of slipping into another identity, akin to escaping from oneself.

A life devoid of perils is almost impossible, but the obsession with fear is so hazardous. Concurrently, individuals consumed by unrelenting and escalating fear will become exceedingly fragile. The palpable frailty of humans becomes evident when they attempt to flee from fears, while conversely, their strength and perfection shine through when they endeavor to transcend disquieting tumult. One inevitability emerges: the direct link between fear and a disturbed conscience, posing a constant threat to human coherence. This predicament submerges us in profound suffering, deeply rooted in our struggle to disentangle ourselves from various fears. Nonetheless, we necessitate a unique form of diversion, as termed by Wallace (2011), an 'Auschlanderian distraction,' to divert our minds from everyday troubles. Failing this, we risk immersion in commonplace tribulations, trapped in a cycle of incessant rumination that may ultimately prove stifling. In the context of Wallace's notion of an 'Auschlanderian distraction,' Heidegger's perspective prompts us to reconsider how we engage with fear and adversity in our lives, much like Rosicky's approach. Instead of seeking mere diversion from our fears, perhaps we should embrace them as essential aspects of our existence, opportunities for deeper self-reflection and understanding. Through this existential lens, we may find new ways to navigate the challenges of fear and suffering, ultimately leading to a more authentic and coherent mode of being.

Regrettably, in contemporary times, there's a pervasive desire among many to underscore the perceived lack of authenticity in others' lives. In contrast, in days of yore, each individual's mere existence served as a vibrant testament to the vitality of life. Consequently, the need to dictate how one should live was largely unnecessary, for the prevailing Spirit of the Time seamlessly instilled the essence of living into human beings. However, in our mechanized world, the *Zeitgeist* faces jeopardy, leading to

the marginalization of true living within life's spectrum. Amidst this milieu, the essence of humane behavior often slips from collective consciousness, inadvertently causing harm to fellow humans, whether intended or not.

Anthon was stifled by the stillness and lifelessness of city existence, perceiving buildings as akin to prisons he longed to break free from. Such yearnings to escape one's perceived version of existence are recurrent in human lives, often manifesting as an evasion of the responsibilities that living entails. The challenge with such escapes lies in their persistent recurrence, ultimately leading to lives characterized by inauthenticity. However, what sets *Neighbor Rosicky* apart is his acute awareness of the reasons behind his need for escape from certain facets of life. This self-awareness enabled him to deliberate and decisively alter his earthly surroundings. As a result, his life embraced a sense of equilibrium, refusing to conform to a mechanistic existence – a testament to his refusal to become a mere cog in a machine:

There were houses that were better kept, certainly, but the housekeepers had no charm, no gentleness of manner, were like hard little machines, most of them; and some were grasping and narrow. The Templetons were not selfish or scheming. Anyone could take advantage of them, and many people did. Victoria might eat all the cookies her neighbor sent in, but she would give away anything she had. She was always ready to lend her dresses and hats and bits of jewelry for the school theatricals, and she never worked people for favors. (Cather 1998, 59)

He sidestepped mechanized existence and sought solace in rural living, driven by a longing for a natural life and a fear of the artificial. Consequently, his return to the rural landscapes wasn't regressive; rather, he perceived it as a progressive step. Central to his life philosophy was the belief that discontent emanates from the very heart of civilization. In his view, residing within the city confines offered no avenue to attain true freedom. Unconfined by the shackles of time, he enjoyed the liberty to lead life on his own terms. His soul remained unburdened, unencumbered by external forces, rendering him free from excessive analysis of events. Unlike many ensnared in the trappings of civilized living, he escaped the paralysis of indecision. In a moment of profound realization, he made an irrevocable choice to forsake city life for good:

On that very day he began to think seriously about the articles he had read in the Bohemian papers, describing prosperous Czech farming communities in the West. He believed he would like to go out there as a farm hand; it was hardly possible that he could ever have land of his own. [...]. After that Fourth of July day in Park Place, the desire to return to the country never left him. To work on another man's farm would be all he asked; to see the sun rise and set and to plant things and watch them grow. He was a very simple man. He was like a tree that has not many roots, but one tap-root that goes down deep. (Cather 1998, 18)

His character serves as a poignant chronicle of his trials, tribulations, joys, and moments of happiness. Embracing a bohemian spirit, he plunged into the depths of rural existence, leading the life of a dedicated peasant, with simplicity as the guiding principle of his existence. Upon leaving city life behind, he wholeheartedly embraced rural living, discovering not hardship but contentment in this

perspective. Notably, he refrained from presenting rural areas in a remorseful light within his narrative. His belief was that by toiling on the land, he was purchasing his own freedom, contrasting with the soul-draining effects of factory work that sold his liberty.

Throughout the story, an atmosphere of prosperity prevails. Residing with his family, he cherished the company of his wife and children, who inspired him to be diligent and responsible. Satisfied with his possessions, he maintained an enduring vitality by relinquishing negative emotions such as conflict, hostility, discord, and envy. Echoing Cather's perspective, the rural populace is portrayed as grounded and unpretentious, their lack of arrogance lending them an almost angelic quality:

Queer or not, Mrs. Rosen liked to go there better than to most houses in the town. There was something easy, cordial, and carefree in the parlour that never smelled of being shut up, and the ugly furniture looked hospitable. One felt a pleasantness in the human relationships. These people didn't seem to know there were such things as struggle or exactness or competition in the world. They were always genuinely glad to see you, had time to see you, and were usually gay in mood--all but Grandmother, who had the kind of gravity that people who take thought of human destiny must have. But even she liked light-heartedness in others; she drudged, indeed, to keep it going. (Cather 1998, 41)

Anthon Rosicky appears to have evolved into a neuter, possibly suggesting that such a state holds an idealized version of human perfection. He embraces this neuter identity, aspiring for all of humanity to strive towards it. The cornerstone of imbuing life with significance resides in genuine communication, whether it's self-reflection or interpersonal interaction. In the pursuit of fruitful communication, each individual should ideally possess an intricate understanding of oneself, surpassing the knowledge held about others. Alternatively, at the very least, no one should be a stranger to their own essence. What distinguishes this exploration is that Cather's character, Anthon Rosicky, doesn't position himself as a definitive and superior entity. His intent isn't merely to admonish others to prioritize caring for each other. As his life exemplifies circumspection and thoughtful consideration, his existence becomes an inspiring model that prompts others to see life through his enlightened perspective.

Human consciousness, sense of duty, obligations, and expectations are poised for a significant transformation, profoundly influencing the notions of reward, happiness, and contentment within their daily lives. As a result, a multitude of individuals don masks, their true identities obscured, wandering aimlessly without a clear direction. In a critical sense, many yearn for a life of ease, only to find themselves adrift in a sea of purposelessness within this realm. In the landscape of the postmodern era, there exists an urgency to live, yet at a deeper level, a true understanding of existence eludes many. Conversely, Anthon's perspective contrasts sharply – he recognizes that haste leads nowhere. His life philosophy is founded upon a profound belief in the absence of urgency, rooted in a profound appreciation for the value of each passing moment. He strives to live contemplatively, eschewing nonchalance and even excessive analysis. A man of maturity, his perspectives on life and death offer a soothing balm to the readers' contemplations.

Anthon was well aware that transcending mere existence required disentangling oneself from the constraints of time, space, and self, thereby alleviating the burden of routine life. This awareness contributed to Anthon's contentment, as he found fulfillment in fulfilling his sense of duty. In contrast to the majority who grapple with inauthenticity, their lives plagued by anhedonia, their pursuit of happiness often doesn't motivate them to fulfill their duties. For Anthon, a dedicated and dharma-oriented individual, the very act of living was viewed as an obligatory duty and an opportunity to align with the aims of creation and engage in the eternal dharma of God. Fortunately, his commitment to this duty granted him a philosophical solace. The consequence of living in accordance with dharma is anticipated to bring about a sense of relief and contentment. However, in our contemporary era, it appears that the fulfillment of duty no longer necessarily yields the Kantian fulfillment that was once expected:

When a thoughtful man . . . is aware of having done his bitter duty, he finds himself in a state that could well be called happiness, a state of contentment and peace of soul in which virtue is its own reward. This delight, this happiness is really his motive for acting virtuously. The concept of duty does not determine his will directly; he is moved to do his duty only by means of the happiness he anticipates. But since he can expect this reward of virtue only from consciousness of having done his duty, it is clear that the latter must have come first, that is, he must find himself under obligation to do his duty before he thinks that happiness will result from observance of duty and without thinking of this. (Kant 1991, 197)

Regrettably, the inner turmoil often acts as a catalyst for heightened awareness amidst life's rush, leading many to simply endure life rather than truly revel in a gratifying existence. The enchantment of life's haste may cast a spell, lulling individuals into an oblivious state that veils the richness of their experience. While it's beneficial to release the current of negative thoughts tied to daily routines, it's essential to acknowledge that negativity is an inherent part of life, impossible to thwart indefinitely. However, one can control the ongoing rumination on these negative scenarios, liberating themselves through the art of forgetting. What do we, as humans, require to enhance our daily lives and alleviate the weight of our *weltschmerz*? Anthon's life remains untainted by the chronicling of worldly suffering; instead, he cultivates gratitude for his life and family despite adversities. His gratitude is uniquely expressed; he imparts his joyous essence to others, akin to an inebriated bohemian, sharing his infectious spirit with those around him.

The enigmatic and enshrouded aspects of destiny failed to divert his focus from the joys of life. He never indulged in complaining about destiny's elusive nature. Numerous authors portray destiny's ever-changing characteristics, depicting humanity as mere pawns in its game. However, Cather's portrayal diverges from this, and Anthon discovered that human access to intuition surpasses their vulnerability to destiny's whims. While people often strain to hear an external voice guiding them, oblivious to the fact that when one sharpens their inner ear, they can listen to their heart's wisdom instead. Anthon chose to heed his heart, gaining insight through intuition rather than surrendering to destiny's uncertainties:

'Intuition' and 'thinking' are both derivatives of understanding, and already rather remote ones. Even the phenomenological 'intuition of essences' ["*Wesensschau*"] is

grounded in existential understanding. We can decide about this kind of seeing only if we have obtained explicit conceptions of Being and of the structure of Being, such as only phenomena in the phenomenological sense can become. (Heidegger 1962, 187)

In interpreting Heidegger's quote, it becomes evident that intuition, along with thinking, is intricately tied to understanding, particularly existential understanding. Heidegger suggests that genuine intuition, even in its phenomenological sense, is rooted in a profound comprehension of Being and its structure. This understanding serves as the foundation upon which true intuition can manifest. Applying this insight to Anthon Rosicky's character, it becomes apparent that his avoidance of disseminating inauthenticity stems from his existential understanding. Rather than succumbing to superficial or external influences, Rosicky operates from a place of deep comprehension of his own Being and the essence of existence. His decisions and actions are guided by this authentic understanding, allowing him to navigate life with integrity and purpose, in alignment with his true self. Thus, Rosicky embodies Heidegger's notion that genuine intuition arises from a profound grasp of Being and its structure, enabling him to avoid inauthenticity in his interactions and endeavors. Furthermore, Rosicky's authenticity extends to his humility. He does not seek praise or validation from others, as his actions are driven by a genuine connection to his inner understanding and values. This lack of need for external affirmation underscores the depth of Rosicky's authenticity, as he remains steadfast in his convictions and actions regardless of external recognition.

Conclusion

In Cather's narrative, the true hero is envisioned to dwell in an incandescent state, occasionally opting for moments of comatose reprieve, thus embracing a cyclical rebirth. Such a reinvigorated individual cannot remain indifferent to the suffering of others; their virtuous and conscientious actions need no audience or applause. Analogous to Wallace's perspective, the authentic hero endures the monotonous passage of real time within the constraints of a confined existence – a testament to genuine courage. True heroism manifests in the silent, meticulous exercise of integrity and care over minutes, hours, weeks, and years, even when no one is there to witness or applaud (*The Pale King*). Anthon epitomized this true heroism, choosing a secluded life and eschewing the desire for recognition. Despite experiencing moments of boredom and ennui, he refrained from spreading them to others. To endure in the journey of living, humans require a life force, an "Orgone," with therapeutic potential to overcome the grip of fear. Additionally, humans must avoid slipping into a vegetated state, consistently oscillating between coming and going, maintaining a state of ideal "kertwang." This state of "kertwang" allows redirection, swiftly propelling an individual onto a different trajectory physically, mentally, or emotionally – an act of purposeful redirection. As it becomes evident, integrating such redirection into everyday life is ideal. If individuals do not proactively embrace redirection, they risk relinquishing authenticity, falling prey to external control and surveillance. This coerced redirection might eventually engender the eternal return of the same, representing a confrontation with determinism within human

relationships. Amidst this struggle, a person might assume a detached, neuter-like state, fostering the experience of detachment.

تتبع الوجود الهايدغري الأصيل في (الجار روزيكي) من قبل ويلا كاتر

نرجس جعفري لنجرودي

طالبة دكتوراه في الأدب الإنجليزي، جامعة طهران، إيران

الملخص

تجسد قصة (الجار روزيكي) وهي قصة قصيرة بقلم ويلا كاتر، مفهوم هايدجر عن الوجود الأصيل، وتستكشف هذه الدراسة سمات الأصالة الهايدجرية في شخصية أنطون روزيكي، مستوحاة من كتاب هايدجر (الوجود والزمن) يُصور (روزيكي) على أنه شخص يعيش في سلام مع العالم، ويعانق الحياة بهدوء ويموت بهدوء. لا يتهرب من الاختيار ويتخذ القرارات دون ندم، راضياً عن مصيره، يظل مدركاً للاحتمالات المختلفة في العالم. لا يسمح روزيكي لنفسه بأن تستهلكه الجوانب الدنيوية للحياة اليومية، ويستمتع بكل لحظة دون التقييد بالماضي أو القلق المفرط بشأن المستقبل، على عكس الشخصيات الأخرى في الأدب، فهو لا يعاني من التشرد الذاتي لأنه يعرف كيف يصلح الثقوب لتجنب التدمير، وتقدم هذه الدراسة تحليلاً مفصلاً لكيفية تجسيد قصة كاتر لفلسفة الأصالة عند هايدجر وتقدم رؤى حول طبيعة الوجود البشري.

الكلمات المفتاحية: هايدجر، الأصالة، البوهيمي، التدبير، الظهور.

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