

Shelby Weitz, 2017

“Artistic Process as Female Empowerment within Willa Cather’s *The Song of the Lark* and Virginia Woolf’s *To the Lighthouse*”

Capstone Abstract:

Willa Cather and Virginia Woolf are both female authors who use their artistic passion as a tool to express their beliefs and values of feminism. My Capstone, “Artistic Process as Female Empowerment within Willa Cather’s *The Song of the Lark* and Virginia Woolf’s *To the Lighthouse*,” addresses how artistic process is viewed as female empowerment within Cather’s *The Song of the Lark* and Woolf’s *To the Lighthouse*. Critics have recognized the author’s abilities of integrating artistic qualities into their writing and into the construction of the female literary characters within their texts. I add to the conversation by recognizing that, through accessing the artistic passion within them, Cather and Woolf’s literary characters, Thea and Lily, discover empowerment within themselves. Through multiple instances within both novels, Thea and Lily employ artistic process, which embodies three recursive steps: both characters work throughout the novel to create a private space to work, to overcome the oppressors surrounding them, and to undergo artistic realization. My Capstone thesis ultimately works to show that artistic process is crucial for women. By recognizing that Cather and Woolf found artistic and female empowerment through creating novels that contain inspiring female characters, I show that, through art, women will encounter empowerment.