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**INTERPLAY IN THE "EMILY" TRILOGY OF L.M. MONTGOMERY:
A CANADIAN PORTRAIT OF THE ARTIST AS A YOUNG WOMAN**

Thesis Submitted to the Department of English,

in partial fulfilment of the requirements for
Master of Arts, English Literature

Submitted by Gwendolyn Ann Guth

Thesis Supervisor: Dr. David Staines



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Nevertheless, there have always been women writing. What is one to do with them? One can leave them where they are, like so many sleeping dogs, and mention them only in passing as epiphenomena in every period, despite the incontrovertible evidence that most were successful and even literarily influential in their day. One can continue, then, a policy of benign neglect that reads difference, not to say popularity, as inferiority. Or one can perform two simultaneous and compensatory gestures: the archaeological and rehabilitative act of discovering and recovering "lost" women writers and the reconstructive and re-evaluative act of establishing a parallel literary tradition...

Nancy K. Miller¹

¹ "Emphasis Added: Plots and Plausibilities in Women's Fiction," PMLA, 96 (1981), p. 37.

INTRODUCTION

"That Lucy Maud Montgomery deserves to be taken as seriously as is Charles G.D. Roberts as a Canadian culture hero should be accepted as a truth self-evident."

Janice Kulyk Keefer¹

By the time L.M. Montgomery wrote her "Emily" trilogy--Emily of New Moon (1923), Emily Climbs (1925), and Emily's Quest (1927)²--she was an internationally translated, financially independent author.³ She had become the first Canadian woman to be named a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts (1923), and was soon to become an Officer in the Order of the British Empire (1935) in recognition of her outstanding literary achievement. Today, the popularity of her novels in countries as varied as Japan, Poland, Korea, Czechoslovakia, and Argentina is commensurate with their continued success in the English-speaking world. Literary critics, however, have been less enamoured of Montgomery's

¹ Janice Kulyk Keefer, Under Eastern Eyes: A Critical Reading of Maritime Fiction (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987), p. 188.

² Emily of New Moon (1923; Toronto: New Canadian Library, 1989), Emily Climbs (1925; Toronto: New Canadian Library, 1989), and Emily's Quest (1927; Toronto: New Canadian Library, 1989). All subsequent references to these novels will be cited parenthetically, with the respective abbreviations NM, EC, and EQ.

³ In a journal entry for Feb. 10, 1921 Montgomery records her computed earnings since the day of her first publication twenty-five years previously: "The result totals up to about one hundred thousand dollars. Not bad, considering the equipment I started out with--my pen and a knack of expression." This figure is all the more astonishing when one realizes that Montgomery had written only eleven of her twenty novels by 1921. See volume II, p. 401, of Mary Rubio and Elizabeth Waterston, eds., The Selected Journals of L.M. Montgomery, vols. I and II (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1985-88). Subsequent references to the journals will be cited, with appropriate pagination, as either "Journal I" or "Journal II."

fiction over the years. An overview of the evolution of Montgomery criticism demonstrates how the attitude of condescension and dismissal that has grown up around this author's work is an historical construct that is finally eroding: the present tide of critical interest in Montgomery is turning gradually toward a revisioning of the works themselves. The "Emily" trilogy is fertile ground for such revisioning. Through its delineation of the memorable writer-heroine Emily Byrd Starr, it comprises the premier Canadian example of a "Portrait of the Artist as Young Woman." If for no other reason than the creation of this validating vision of the female artist in Canada, Montgomery deserves the commendation of the above epigraph: she is a "Canadian culture hero" whose achievements merit a respectful prominence in the history of Canadian literature.

Particular historical trends in literary criticism stand behind the reception of Montgomery's fiction.⁴ As the biases of modernism made their influence felt in the 1920s, the enthusiastic critical response that had greeted Anne of Green Gables (1908) and other of Montgomery's early novels gradually dwindled into static categorization.⁵ In the 1930s, as realism pushed itself to the forefront of literary fashion, Montgomery's style of fiction became *passé*. In the 1940s and 1950s, criticism of her work tended to consist of either

⁴ See chapter one, "An Historical Perspective on Montgomery's Fiction and its Criticism," pp. 5-31, in Heather Margaret Avery, "One Author's Response to a Changing World: A Study of the Variations in Selected Novels of Lucy Maud Montgomery," M.A. thesis (Carleton University, 1985).

⁵ Heather Margaret Avery posits the Toronto Globe and the New York Times reviews of the 1920s as exemplary of the beginnings of the critical pigeon-holing of Montgomery's novels under the respective labels of "wholesome" (fiction reviewed in opposition to the then-disturbing current of literary realism), and "children's literature" (fiction "unworthy of being judged by the critical standards applied to an adult novel"). See Avery, "One Author's Response," p. 11.

openly derogatory slurs," or tepidly positive reformulations of the old categories that dismissed her work as simplistically "wholesome" and "not worthy of serious study."⁷ A notable exception is the well-intentioned but scantily documented biography, The Story of L.M. Montgomery (1956), by Hilda Ridley.⁸

Several publications in the 1960s and 1970s initiated a revival of critical interest in Montgomery. The early years of Montgomery's correspondence with Ephraim Weber were edited and published by Wilfred Eggleston in 1960 as The Green Gables Letters to Ephraim Weber, 1905-1909.⁹ Elizabeth Waterston's influential article, "L.M. Montgomery," in The Clear Spirit: Twenty Canadian Women and Their Times (1966) demonstrated that

⁶ For example, E.K. Brown's infamous epithet that Montgomery was among the "aggressively unliterary" authors at the turn-of-the-century who were "satisfied to truckle to mediocre taste." See Brown's "The Problem of a Canadian Literature," in On Canadian Poetry (Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1943), p. 4.

⁷ Desmond Pacey wrote of Anne of Green Gables that a critic "would be silly to apply adult critical standards to it." See Creative Writing in Canada (Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1952), p. 98. Arthur Phelps' condemnation of Montgomery and other popular Canadian "romantic and sentimental writers" is positively vituperative:

By the standards of discriminating literary criticism [neither L.M. Montgomery, nor writers like her, such as Ralph O'Connor] is important. No critic would think of them as having made a serious contribution to literature. Yet these writers have carried the name of Canada here and there throughout the English-speaking world, and, in some cases through translation, beyond the English-speaking world.

Now how shall one interpret this phenomenon? Some Canadians hang their heads in shame.

See Canadian Writers (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1951), p. 85.

⁸ Hilda M. Ridley, The Story of L.M. Montgomery (London: George G. Harrap and Co. Ltd., 1956).

⁹ Wilfrid Eggleston, The Green Gables Letters to Ephraim Weber, 1905-1909 (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1960).

Montgomery's fiction deserved further textual study.¹⁰ A special issue of Canadian Children's Literature in 1975 explored Montgomery's writings in seven essays.¹¹ Mollie Gillen's discovery of Montgomery's letters to G.B. MacMillan, and her subsequent biography, The Wheel of Things: A Biography of L.M. Montgomery, Author of "Anne of Green Gables" (1975),¹² contributed to the body of Montgomery criticism.

The 1980s constituted a second revival in Montgomery criticism. The MacMillan correspondence, spanning nearly forty years, was published in 1980 as My Dear Mr. M.: Letters to G.B. MacMillan.¹³ Selections from Montgomery's personal journals, edited and published by Mary Rubio and Elizabeth Waterston in 1985 (Vol. I: 1889-1910) and 1987 (Vol. II: 1910-1921),¹⁴ sparked critical speculation on Montgomery-the-artist.¹⁵ The later

¹⁰ Elizabeth Waterston, 'Lucy Maud Montgomery: 1874-1942,' The Clear Spirit: Twenty Canadian Women and Their Times, ed. Mary Quayle Innis (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1966). See Gabriella Åhmansson's "Critical Revision: Phelps vs. Waterston," for an insightful comparison of two very different generations of Montgomery critics. In A Life and Its Mirrors. A Feminist Reading of L.M. Montgomery's Fiction, Vol. I, Uppsala: Acta Universitatis Upsalensis, Studia Anglistica Upsaliensia 74, 1991, pp. 20-23.

¹¹ Canadian Children Literature 1.3 (1975). Reprinted as L.M. Montgomery: An Assessment, John Robert Sorfleet, ed. (Guelph: Canadian Children Press, 1976).

¹² Mollie Gillen, The Wheel of Things: A Biography of L.M. Montgomery, Author of 'Anne of Green Gables' (Toronto: Fitzhenry and Whiteside, 1975).

¹³ Francis W.P. Bolger and Elizabeth R. Epperly, eds., My Dear Mr. M.: Letters to G.B. Macmillan (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1980).

¹⁴ A third volume, revealing journal entries from April 1921 to Montgomery's death in 1942, is scheduled for publication by Rubio and Waterston in 1992.

¹⁵ Janice Kulyk Keefer states, in her review of the journals in Antigonish Review 73 (Spring 1988), p. 88, that "For those who had hoped to discover, in these journals, the artist within the world-celebrated author, there will be a disappointment." Several recent critics, however, have made use of the journals to elucidate ideas about Montgomery.

1980s have seen Montgomery studied seriously not only by those who are committed to the exonerating of gender and genre biases in Canadian literature, but also by those who wish to learn from her life and works about the plight of the woman artist/author in the early decades of the twentieth century.

Recent critics have attributed to Montgomery's best fiction the status of literary precursor to the works of contemporary Canadian women novelists and short-story writers:

Emily of New Moon and, to some extent, Anne of Green Gables are worthy anticipations of the portraits of young female artists that are given in the works of later writers such as Margaret Laurence and Alice Munro. I mention Montgomery in conjunction with Laurence and Munro in all seriousness. Like them, she had the ambition to write "serious" fiction, and she took as a major theme of her work a subject that Laurence and Munro have now made familiar to all readers of our fiction: the development of a young female artist. Montgomery's best work, then, announces the beginning of a struggle for self-expression by Canadian women writers that has continued virtually to the present day.¹⁶

Although MacLulich and others may quarrel with Montgomery's discretion in matters sexual and the seemingly "formulaic" marriage-ending for her artist-heroine, no one can underestimate the importance of the female "portrait of the artist" that she puts forward in the best of her fiction, the "Emily" trilogy. As Alice Munro observes in her "Afterword" to Emily of New Moon: "what's central to the story, and may be harder to write about than sex or the confused feelings in families, is the development of a child--and a girl child at that--

discuss her fiction in her journals, especially her lack of reference, in 1904, to the writing of Anne of Green Gables. See "Montgomery's 'Rear Mirror Journal' and the Writing of Anne of Green Gables," in A Life and Its Mirrors, pp. 57-63.

¹⁶ T.D. MacLulich, "L.M. Montgomery's Portraits of the Artist: Realism, Idealism, and the Domestic Imagination," English Studies in Canada, 11.4 (December, 1985), p. 459.

into a writer."¹⁷ It is a concern at the heart of Munro's own story cycles, Lives of Girls and Women and Who Do You Think You Are?, and one that continues to inform the writing of Canadian women.

Throughout her literary career, Montgomery delighted readers with fictional versions of her own childhood's story: the dilemma of a spirited, imaginative, often "artistic" girl, thrust among stoic and undemonstrative old guardians, who craves love and approval in her struggle to grow into womanhood. In many of Montgomery's novels--as in her own life--the struggle of the emerging woman to espouse a role other than the passive one traditionally allotted to women parallels the struggle of the artist to assert herself in a rural world unreceptive to art. The adventures and the foibles of the iconoclastic red-headed orphan, Anne Shirley (Anne of Green Gables, 1908), generate an archetypal tale of the artistic child. Anne's creative adeptness in the world of make-believe and her attempts to cast herself into fiction through overblown rhetoric and melodrama make her the first of several "artist" heroines who would come to life with varying success in Montgomery's novels, including Sara Stanley (The Story Girl, 1911) and Marigold Lewis (Magic for Marigold, 1929).

It is predominantly in her "Emily" trilogy, however, that Montgomery explores the "artistic child" theme with serious psychological intent. In Emily of New Moon, Emily Climbs, and Emily's Quest, she creates the complex character of Emily Byrd Starr, an orphaned writer-in-embryo whose finely-tuned artistic sensitivity must endure adult hardships and deprivations before achieving in the final book the tandem reward of professional

¹⁷ "Afterword" to Emily of New Moon (Toronto: New Canadian Library, 1989), p. 359.

success and happiness in love. Emily fleshes out Montgomery's conception of the female artist: an exceptional young woman who intuits the interplay of forces in her life--familial, vocational, societal--and explores and incorporates the possibilities inherent in each on her journey along the "Alpine Path" to artistic fulfilment. The "Emily" trilogy, Montgomery's most representative portrait of the artist as a young woman, merits an exploration of this interplay.

The classification "Portrait of the Artist as a Young Woman," applied to the "Emily" novels by myself and others,¹⁸ borrows from James Joyce's A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man, published in 1916, seven years before the appearance of the first book of Montgomery's trilogy.¹⁹ Joyce's landmark work has garnered such respect among scholars that, aside from the German word *Künstlerroman*, there exists no twentieth-century literary terminology other than his title to describe the fictional life of the developing artist figure.²⁰

¹⁸ John Robert Sorfleet claims that the trilogy "presents what might be called a 'Portrait of the Artist' in the successive stages of girl, teenager, and young woman." See Sorfleet's "Montgomery, L(ucy) M(aud)," in Twentieth-Century Children's Writers, ed. D.L. Kirkpatrick (MacMillan Press, Ltd., 1978), p. 907. See also T.D. MacLulich, "L.M. Montgomery's Portraits of the Artist," and Judith Miller, "The Writer-as-a-Young-Woman and Her Family: Montgomery's Emily," New Quarterly: New Directions in Canadian Writing 7. 1-2 (1987): 301-19.

¹⁹ James Joyce, A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man (New York: Viking Press, 1974). All references are to this edition and will be cited parenthetically.

²⁰ In his Season of Youth: the Bildungsroman from Dickens to Golding (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1974), Jerome Hamilton Buckley defines the Künstlerroman as "a tale of the orientation of the artist," citing this form as one of the off-shoots of the German Bildungsroman, the "novel of all-around development or self-culture" (p. 13). He observes that the English adaptations of the Bildungsroman genre have been "far less rigid" than the German categories:

the English Bildungsroman...has also frequently been a kind of Künstlerroman. Its hero, more often than not, emerges as an artist of sorts, a prose writer like David Copperfield or Ernest Pontifex, a poet like

Joyce's novel, following the traditional male paradigm for the artist novel--the repudiation of country, family and religion--has become the yardstick for an evaluation of the twentieth-century *Künstlerroman* in general.²¹ Needless to say, this fact raises interesting questions with regard to works that detail the female artistic experience. How, for instance, does Montgomery's heroine fit into the Joycean paradigm? Do Stephen Dedalus and Emily Byrd Starr share any points of intersection on their roads to artistic self-knowledge and "freedom"?

Predictably, Joyce and Montgomery have vastly different agendas with regard to

Stephen Dedalus...Insofar as the word Bildung is related to Bild and Bildnis, it may connote "picture" or "portrait" as well as "shaping" or "formation"; and the *Bildungsroman* may then typically become what Joyce's title promises, A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man, or rather, as Joyce develops his material, a study of the inner life, the essential temper, of the artist in his progress from early childhood through adolescence. In such novels, as certainly in Joyce's, the "artist" in question is often not far removed from the novelist, or at least from the novelist as he remembers himself to have been in his formative youth (pp. 13-14).

²¹ Maurice Beebe remarks that within this tradition--a tradition that had "developed steadily for more than a century [and] reached a crest in the first two decades of the twentieth century"--repudiation is the normal course for the artist: "Narrative development in the typical artist-novel requires that the hero test and reject the claims of love and life, of God, home, and country, until nothing is left but his true self and his consecration as artist..." See "The Artist as Hero," by Maurice Beebe, quoted in A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man; Text, Criticism and Notes, ed. Chester G. Anderson (Middlesex, England: Penguin Books Ltd., 1977), pp. 341, 343.

The question of whether or not Joyce's Portrait presents an ironic vision of Stephen Dedalus as artist--mocking his "repudiation" as well as his now-famous "esthetic theory"--has contributed substantially to the industry of Joycean scholarship. Chester G. Anderson delineates the main arguments in the controversy in "The Question of Esthetic Distance," A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man; Text, Criticism and Notes, pp. 446-454. My own reading of Joyce's novel does not hold to the "ironic artist" theory, despite current trends in criticism. In essence, such a theory is mute to my discussion of Joyce, as I am interested in his Portrait primarily as it delineates--at least on the surface--a traditional (male) vision of the artist as repudiator of outside influences.

"freedom," both for their hero/ine and for themselves as author-narrators. This thesis does not propose to set out a detailed comparison between Joyce and Montgomery; nevertheless, a brief examination of their respective "Portraits" does provide a springboard into a detailed discussion of Montgomery's "Emily" trilogy. As an introductory metaphor, I propose that if "repudiation" serves as the liberating principle for Joyce's male artist, then "interplay" is the rejoinder that Montgomery offers for her female artist.

Stephen Dedalus steadfastly chooses to repudiate any and all influences that stand outside the individual artistic consciousness, be they political, familial, or religious. His artistic process of self-purgation would appear to be Joyce's own;²² Stephen's resounding echo of Milton's Satan—"I will not serve"—confirms him as "a being apart, in every order" (Portrait, 161). Named both for the first martyr of the Christian Church and for the mythic Greek artificer, Stephen Dedalus is both a martyr for his art (cast off as a youngster by his classmates and bullied for admiring Lord Byron) and a rebel without a cause (a godless self-sufficient, forging his way out of a labyrinth that one suspects is largely of his own construction). Despite all this struggling, however, the end of Portrait makes it clear that "Joyce never produces a picture of Stephen as creator but only of Stephen in the throes of

²² Diane Fortuna notes that Joyce published his first short stories in 1904 under the pseudonym "Daedalus." See "The Labyrinth as Controlling Image in A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man," Bulletin of the New York Public Library (1972), 76: 120-180, p. 124. Also in 1904, Joyce wrote an autobiographical essay entitled "A Portrait of the Artist," which was later reworked into Stephen Hero, a novel which, according to Joyce's brother Stanislaus, was both "autobiographical" and "satirical." This early novel was abandoned in 1907, ostensibly because Joyce felt that it "gave a false picture of the artist." Joyce subsequently produced his present Portrait in 1916. See A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man. Text, Criticism, and Notes, pp. 257, 273, 290.

becoming a creator."²³

Neither human nor divine relationships fuel Stephen's imagination; instead, his art is informed by a decidedly misogynous, adolescent brand of *eros*.²⁴ The bird-girl who inspires the poem he completes ten years after encountering her is a skewed Dantescan Beatrice, a muse-cum-harlot, a Virgin Mother siren, "the temptress of his villanelle" (223). His lustful appropriation of the bird-girl for artistic inspiration parallels his earlier bold "awakening" into sexuality and sin with the nameless prostitute; as such, we are prepared for the fact that, Ulysses-like, Stephen transfers the notion of desire for a real woman to desire for "the white arms of roads" and "their promise of close embraces" (252). Because Stephen-as-artist consistently uses women to gain access to erotic-sensual experience, it comes as no surprise to the reader that he finally repudiates the notions of intimacy and marriage at the end of Portrait.

Joyce desires in narration the same "unfettered freedom" that Stephen strives for in his fictional life and art (246). The structural manipulations in Portrait--the lack of distinction between conversation and narrative, the "stream-of-consciousness" technique--are now bywords of modern fiction, and are not perhaps as interesting as is the tone of the narration itself. The author who stands behind Portrait cares little for convention and its

²³ Joseph A. Buttigieg, A Portrait of the Artist in Different Perspective (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University press, 1987), p. 10. The only samples of Stephen's "art" that the reader ever sees are the rather simplistic villanelle (p. 223) and the short series of diary entries that constitute the last pages of the novel (pp. 247-53).

²⁴ See Suzette Henke, "Stephen Dedalus and Women: A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Misogynist," in James Joyce's A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man, ed. Harold Bloom (New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1988), pp. 55-75.

morality, even though his character struggles with these. Religion, sex, philosophy, aesthetics--all these are topics for exploration in Joyce's novel, and all are subject to Joyce's satire, sensual description, and intellectual probing; curiously, they also fly free of moralistic classifications. There is a sense in which no topic is entirely taboo in Portrait, no subject unmentionable. Much may remain to be forged in the smithy of the soul, but what is known is stated unequivocally.²⁵

Montgomery's, of course, is another story. Like Stephen, Emily Byrd Starr is created--at least partially--in her author's image,²⁶ yet in many ways, Emily and Montgomery are much more elusive figures than their male counterparts. The fact that Montgomery was a Canadian woman of a specific historical era, and that she wrote largely for a female audience, placed specific constraints upon her writing the like of which Joyce never encountered. Emily as writer battles the same taboos--sexual, societal, vocational--that fettered Montgomery throughout her writing career. Refreshingly, however, Emily and her creator are unencumbered by the repudiative "anxiety of influence" that plagues Joyce and Stephen Dedalus; as such, they can live within a community and still observe it critically.

²⁵ Along these lines, consider Carolyn Heilbrun's statement that "nothing can be found in a Joyce text that Joyce did not consciously put there." Hamlet's Mother and Other Women (New York: Ballentine Books, 1990), p. 82.

²⁶ In a letter to Ephraim Weber, 19 October, 1921, Montgomery writes:
 I am working now on a brand new heroine with the tentative name of "Emily of New Moon" and like her. It's very delightful to be rid of Anne who weighed on me like an incubus when she ceased to be an inspiration. "Emily" will be, in a sense, more autobiographical than any of my other books. People were never right in saying I was "Anne" but *in some respects*, they will be right if they write me down as Emily.
 See the Weber Collection, Public Archives of Canada, MG30 D53, pp. 5-6.

indulging in comic realism, for example (an area generally avoided by Joyce and Stephen) both as a means of inspiration and, periodically, as a locus for ironic narrative distance.²⁷ The interplay between seriousness and comedy, concealment and revelation, the keeping of "rules" and the breaking of them, societal expectations and inner desire, is central to the "Emily" trilogy. Montgomery and her artist-heroine are quilters of narrative rather than Joycean blacksmiths of story: they piece together rather than construct of a piece; they juxtapose and contrast texts and styles to achieve a colourful "interplay" of material.

I propose, then, that what makes Montgomery's "Emily" trilogy a "portrait of the artist as a young woman" is precisely the prioritizing of interplay over repudiation. Interplay is Montgomery's "playing among," rather than Joyce's "playing outside of," an awareness that conventions and influences frame existence but do not necessarily constrict it. Interplay is the juggling of given elements in order to constitute slightly different combinations--combinations so carefully juggled as to appear barely disturbed. Interplay is both the boundary and the intersection among a syllogistic threesome: author, character, and reader.

My exploration of the "Emily" trilogy presents three areas in which interplay seems to present itself within Montgomery's portrait of the artist as a young woman: genre, narrative voice, and the thematic justification of closure. In an attempt to redress the genre pigeon-holing of Montgomery's work, chapter one explores the ways in which the "Emily" trilogy plays among various genres to arrive at the representative amalgam that is Montgomery's blue-rose genre: a "portrait of the artist as a young woman." Ostensibly

²⁷ In this manner of applying a gentle but often ironic humour to small community settings, Montgomery deserves serious study as a humourist in the tradition of her Canadian contemporary, Stephen Leacock.

directed toward children, the "Emily" series speaks fully only to the perceptive adult reader who recognizes the author's specifically female interplay in three areas: the Romantic/"mystic" conventions of nineteenth-century orphan fiction as opposed to the moralistic ones of contemporary orphan fiction for girls; the reinterpretation of the traditionally male *Bildungsroman* in terms of the mastery of "various modes of discourse" for a female child within a specific community of women;²⁸ and the *Künstlerroman* idea of the artistic sense of self as interactive with the detachment of the artist from the-self-within-experience. By means of interplay among these three genres, Montgomery treats realistically--yet with a heightened sense of the Romantic and the domestic--the subject of a young girl's early influences in her development as a writer.

Chapter two attempts to circumvent the biographical fallacy often committed against the "Emily" trilogy by examining how Montgomery uses an interplay of narrative voices--the "autobiographical" one of Emily herself, and the more "biographical" of the narrator--to tell the story of her writer-heroine. The voices are changeable, both within each novel and throughout the portrait as a whole; they reveal, in varying ways, the several sides of Emily's artistic personality as it grows through the raptures and agonies of girlhood, the mysterious new awakenings of adolescence, and the expectations and disappointments of young adulthood. The interplay of voices also creates a distance between narrator and character that cues the reader variously to comic and sympathetic responses to the developing female writer.

²⁸ The phrase--although not the formulation of the argument--comes from John H. Smith, "Cultivating Gender: Sexual Difference, *Bildung*, and the *Bildungsroman*," *Michigan Germanic Studies* 13 (1987), p. 210.

Chapter three reveals how the concept of interplay informs the major themes of the trilogy, and how in turn these themes justify the often-disparaged marriage conclusion. An examination of the "love plot" alongside the "artist plot" reveals that the interplay between the two is both essential and inevitable. Thematically, tribulation is balanced by compensation and destiny fuses with choice to achieve for the heroine a "happy ending" which--although requisite in Montgomery's day--nevertheless upholds the integrity of her portrait of the female artist. Unlike Joyce's Stephen, Emily does prove successful in her chosen profession as writer: she publishes numerous poems in small magazines, and eventually a large and reputable publishing house accepts her first novel. It is only after her publishing success that Emily is reunited with Teddy Kent, the man whom she has loved from the beginning of the trilogy, and who--unlike the malevolent Dean Priest who threatens Emily's artistic autonomy from their first meeting--is himself an artist, "freeing" Emily into art as well as love.

CHAPTER ONE: GENRE AS INTERPLAY IN THE EMILY TRILOGY

"every text participates in one or several genres, there is no genreless text; there is always a genre and genres, yet such participation never amounts to belonging."

Jacques Derrida¹

Little has been written of Montgomery and the concept of literary genre. She is not recognized as an innovator, like her contemporaries Joyce and Woolf,² yet, like them, she was interested in a fictional portrait of the artist. Not for Montgomery, of course, the "conscious intentionality" of Joyce's method,³ and the Stephen Dedalus child-man who discovers art through life's extremes (violent political polarities, faceless prostitutes and virginal bird girls, unequivocal seductive Catholic theologies, dry aesthetic philosophizing, and the ultimate repudiation of country, family and religion). Neither to her purpose--although resembling it more closely, in some ways--the "tunnelling" method of Woolf,⁴ and

¹ Jacques Derrida, in "The Law of Genre," trans. Avital Ronell, *Glyph* 7 (1980), p. 212.

² Joyce and Woolf were exact contemporaries--1882-1941--with eight days between their births and three months between their deaths. Montgomery was nine years older (born 1874), and died one year later (1942). Their respective "portraits of the artist" were published in 1916 (Joyce, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*), 1923-27 (Montgomery's "Emily" trilogy), and 1927 (Woolf's *To the Lighthouse*).

³ Carolyn Heilbrun uses this epithet of Joyce, later clarifying it with the assertion that "nothing can be found in a Joyce text that Joyce did not consciously put there." See "Virginia Woolf and James Joyce: Ariadne and the Labyrinth," in *Hamlet's Mother and Other Women*, p. 82.

⁴ *Ibid.* Heilbrun quotes Woolf's discovery of her "tunnelling process": "I dig out beautiful caves behind my characters; I think that gives exactly what I want; humanity, humour, depth."

her painter Lily Briscoe's obsessive self-doubt and artistic awakening at the mature age of forty-four. Montgomery was not even familiar with Joyce and Woolf; neither her fiction nor her published personal correspondence betrays any knowledge of or interest in their works.

Montgomery's journals, letters and novels display a decided preference for the rich literature of the Romantics and Victorians, a literature which she comments on at great length, and with which her work is often associated in a derogatory manner. Montgomery's allegiance to a pre-Modernist generation of writers, however, does not diminish the importance of her contribution. The value of her artist trilogy does not proceed from the ways in which it does or does not recall Joyce in its tracing of the artistic mind from childhood to early adulthood (although it does), or for how its concerns with the inner artistic life of a sensitive girl/woman do or do not suggest Woolf's distinctly feminine concerns about--as Alice Munro would term it--the "life spreading out behind the story--the book's life"⁵ (although they do). Rather, the significance of the "Emily" trilogy lies in the ways in which its choices and omissions put forward a particular portrait of the artist in the particular context that was, for Montgomery, rural Prince Edward Island.

As this chapter's epigraph from Derrida suggests, "genre" is not a self-sufficient category. A text need not--perhaps cannot--belong exclusively to one genre. Derrida's concept of "participation" in several genres may indeed correspond to an idea of interplay among several genres within a single text. Montgomery's "Emily" trilogy reveals such an interplay. It consists of the interaction among elements that have been chosen, reshaped, and excluded from other literary genres; specifically, from the Romantic as opposed to the

⁵ Munro, "Afterword," p. 360.

sentimental genre of nineteenth-century orphan fiction, and the traditionally male, realism-oriented genres of *Bildungsromane* and *Künstlerromane*. The trilogy is simultaneously an orphan story of the Jane Eyre variety, the account of a young girl's growing up in a small farming community, and a depiction of the progress of the artistic sense of self through childhood and into early adulthood. A close reading of the "Emily" trilogy in light of the idea of "genre as interplay" rescues the series from the shadow of the often pejorative critical labels that are applied indiscriminately to Montgomery's corpus of writing: "children's classic," "regional idyll" and "domestic romance."⁶ As Gabriella Åhmansson astutely observes, "[such] genre classifications are not totally wrong, [but] neither are they totally right. The problem is that they do not cast their net wide enough to include such aspects of Montgomery's work that have to do with her female context."⁷ Montgomery herself, consciously or unconsciously, casts a wide net in the "Emily" trilogy. She creates, out of the

⁶ Vicki L. Williams, in her M.A. thesis entitled "Home Training and the Socialization of Youth in the Sentimental Novels of Marshall Saunders, Nellie McClung and L.M. Montgomery" (Carleton University, 1982), describes Montgomery as "a writer of domestic romance: idealized people, and their everyday relationships with family, friends and lovers are her primary subjects" (p. 69). Williams also quotes Sheila Egoff's opinion from The Republic of Childhood (1975) that Montgomery belonged to "the heavily sentimental 'sweetness and light' school of writing for children" that had come to Canada from England by 1900 (p. 5). T.D. MacLulich accuses Montgomery of "succumb[ing] to formulas of popular sentimental fiction," presumably because she had "acquired what can only be called a thoroughly domestic imagination...repeatedly adopting traditional women's roles, ministering to others rather than striving after her own fulfilment." See "L.M. Montgomery's Portraits of the Artist: Realism, Idealism, and the Domestic Imagination," pp. 471-72, 464. MacLulich's generalizations about Montgomery's "thoroughly domestic" life ignore her teacher's certification at Prince Edward College (1893-94), her English studies at Dalhousie University (1894-95), her three years of school teaching experience (1896-98), and her work as a proof-reader for the Halifax Daily Echo (1901-1902).

⁷ See A Life and Its Mirrors, vol. I, p. 39.

interplay of existing genres, a genre that is itself malleable and generative: the first Canadian "Portrait of the Artist as a Young Woman."

I The Young Emily: A Typical Orphan?

The sense of belonging to a particular place is central to a Montgomery novel; identity is contingent on one's security or insecurity in the place one calls home.⁸ This is no more true than in Montgomery's first orphan novel, the perennially popular Anne of Green Gables (1908).⁹ A philosophy of social harmony lies behind Anne of Green Gables as the organizing principle, in the manner of contemporary orphan fiction for girls; in contrast to the "glad girl" novels of its era,¹⁰ however, Anne of Green Gables distinguishes itself not only for its "realism,"¹¹ but also for what one critic has characterized as its

⁸ Eleven of Montgomery's twenty novels bear a title in which the name of the heroine is joined by the preposition "of" to the name of the place with which she is associated, as in Anne of Green Gables and Emily of New Moon. See Appendix A, "Other Works by L.M. Montgomery," pp. 128-30.

⁹ L.M. Montgomery, Anne of Green Gables (1908; New York: Bantam Books, 1979). All subsequent references to this novel will be cited parenthetically, with the abbreviation AGG.

¹⁰ For example: Eleanor H. Porter, Pollyanna (1913), Jean Webster, Daddy Longlegs (1912), Gene Stratton Porter, The Girl of Limberlost (1909), Kate Douglas Wiggin, Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm (1903).

¹¹ Mary Rubio argues that Anne of Green Gables should be considered "an example of literary realism," noting that "[t]he realism and genuine characterization in Anne become very apparent by comparison" with a "sentimental tear-jerker" like Pollyanna. Musing on the fact that Mark Twain himself had written to Montgomery in 1908 in praise of Anne (and Twain was not "in the habit of writing encouragement to unknown, aspiring authors—especially if they were writing sentimental fiction, a mode he particularly disliked") Rubio concludes that: "one cannot dismiss [Anne of Green Gables] as typical of the overblown romantic fiction which was churned out for the popular markets of the day, the genre in which the New York Times reviewer [18 July, 1908] puts

espousal of a new form of naturalism and determinism--namely that "one's imagination could influence the external world."¹²

An interesting question poses itself: given that Montgomery's first attempt at orphan fiction was already concerned both with realism and with providing a new framework in which to view the Romantic power of the imagination, how do such concerns figure in the "Emily" series, written fifteen years later, a trilogy in which the orphan heroine is not merely a child with an active imagination, but a young aspiring writer? What happens when "home" for a heroine becomes an imaginative--an artistic, a mystical--place, rather than a merely physical one? And how does the artist-heroine exist in such a place while remaining integral to an extended family that cannot comprehend it? A possible answer seems to lie for Montgomery, as it did for Charlotte Brontë in Jane Eyre, in resorting to the "supernatural" as a metaphorical vehicle for the artistic temperament. What emerges is a different sort of orphan story from the ideal of social bonding inherent in such "guides to good behaviour" as Pollyanna: a realistic portrait in which the "supernatural" acuity of the artist-heroine helps her assert herself and her writing gift within a community that is suspicious of and resistant to her oddity.

In Anne of Green Gables, Montgomery presents an amiable Matthew Cuthbert on his way to collect the orphan whom he and his sister Marilla have arranged to bring into their home. The fact that Anne is a girl rather than a boy never seriously threatens the

it." See Mary Rubio, "Satire, Realism, and Imagination in Anne of Green Gables," Canadian Children's Literature 1.3 (1975), pp. 28, 32.

¹² Ibid., p. 35.

security of her new home: the sparkling personality and vivid imagination that charm Matthew during the buggy ride to Green Gables win over and enrich the lives of the Cuthberts and their community. In short, Anne is wanted; an orphaned child who has experienced hard times, she nevertheless has been "requested" and is eager to belong. The optimistic flavour of the opening chapter pervades the remainder of the book. By the end of the novel, Anne has transformed Avonlea. Her triumph proceeds not only from a lovable creativity lovingly indulged, but also from her own willingness to limit her romantic indulgences--as the Avonlea brook does, as it passes by the home of the decorous and almost choric Rachel Lynde--to a pleasant murmur.¹³ This progression appears as a positive one, however--a previously unloved child exchanging extravagant fantasies for genuine affection--and Montgomery never lets the reader sense that Anne strays from Matthew's advice to "keep a little" of her romance (AGG, 228).

Where Anne of Green Gables presents Anne's entry into the relatively receptive and predictable community of Avonlea, Emily of New Moon, by contrast, introduces Emily into turmoil and ambiguity. In the opening chapter of Emily of New Moon, Montgomery creates

¹³ The image of the brook "taming itself" metaphorically represents the neutralizing effect of the community spirit of Avonlea:

it was reputed to be an intricate, headlong brook in its earlier course through those woods, with dark secrets of pool and cascade; but by the time it reached Lynde's Hollow it was a quiet, well-conducted little stream, for not even a brook could run past Mrs. Rachel Lynde's door without due regard for decency and decorum. (AGG, 1)

a romance expectation only to undercut it within the first two paragraphs:

The House in the hollow was "a mile from anywhere"--so Maywood people said. It was situated in a grassy little dale, looking as if it had never been built like other houses but had grown up there like a big, brown mushroom. It was reached by a long, green lane and almost hidden from view by an encircling growth of young birches. No other house could be seen from it although the village was just over the hill. Ellen Greene said it was the loneliest place in the world and vowed that she wouldn't stay there a day if it wasn't that she pitied the child.

Emily didn't know she was being pitied and didn't know what loneliness meant. She had plenty of company. There was Father--and Mike--and Saucy Sal. The Wind Woman was always around; and there were the trees--Adam-and-Eve, and the Rooster Pine, and all the friendly lady-birches. (NM, 9)

Here Montgomery presents a post-lapsarian view of a pre-lapsarian child. The language of the child--Emily's fanciful description of the house "like a big, brown mushroom"--contrasts markedly with the malicious, gossipy tone of Ellen Greene's declaration of pity. The reader knows that Maywood is an Eden that is destined to become a paradise lost. Emily's orphanhood is already partially complete at the outset of her story, as is evident by the conspicuous absence of the word "Mother" in her list of companions; the reader soon gleans enough information to discern that the death of Emily's father is also imminent. The harsh reality of the news affects the reader--as it does Emily, at the end of the first chapter when it is cruelly relayed by Ellen Greene--with all the force of the Fall. Anne and Emily thus begin their respective orphan stories in opposite ways. Where Anne leaves behind tedium and hardship to recreate an Eden at Green Gables, Emily is thrust out of Eden into the strange sea of orphanhood, with no life jacket except her waif-like wilfulness and her gift for words.

When Emily leaves Maywood, she says goodbye to her reflection, her confidante,

"little Emily-in-the-glass." She is aware, in her childish way, that her new environment will demand of her a different identity: "There might be another Emily-in-the-glass at New Moon, but she wouldn't be the same one" (NM, 58). Emily's orphanhood is the most important determinant in her identity in the first book of Montgomery's trilogy because she is viewed--and views herself--both as an orphan (outsider) and as a member of a family. Anne, "the hail-fellow-well-met little orphan from nowhere" who boldly creates a new family, differs greatly from "reserved *Emily* with her background of family and tradition."¹⁴ Emily inherits a family, learning early that this inheritance is one of proud ancestors and rigid expectations, a milieu in which her inborn creative energies cannot be used to transform those around her, as Anne's can in the manner of a nineteenth-century Pollyanna¹⁵; neither can Emily bury her writing talent and desire under the expectations of her community, as Anne does by tempering her imagination to the conservativeness of Avonlea. Where Anne is bereft of family history in a freeing sense, Emily finds herself constricted by the Starr and Murray blood that flows in her veins.

Paradoxically, however, Emily's identity is bound up with her pride of family heritage; the weight of this tradition is as much a privilege as it is a burden. Thus, "unlike the precocious child of the orphan story" who might be pardoned any unorthodox creative outburst because of her unknown parentage, Emily must struggle at New Moon (and later,

¹⁴ L.M. Montgomery to E. Weber, 1 Nov. 1924, p. 2. Public Archives of Canada, Weber Collection.

¹⁵ This despite the fact that the reviewer for the New York Times Book Review and Magazine (August 26, 1923) states more than a little sarcastically that "Emily brings the proper amount of sweetness and light into the household and gradually the aunts are won over and become mellowed as old maid aunts should" (p. 24).

in Emily Climbs, at Aunt Ruth's home in Shrewsbury) to avoid behaviour that will "discredit her clan."¹⁶ Whether or not one interprets the burden/privilege of family on Emily as evidence of "Montgomery's recognition of the fundamental dishonesty of the orphan story" and her "discontent with the genre,"¹⁷ one senses that the "Emily" trilogy differs in tone from Green Gables. There is a new seriousness here. Montgomery attempts, through Emily's interaction with the relatives who raise her after her father's death--relatives bound to her by blood who yet cannot appreciate what Aunt Laura perceptively calls her "artistic temperament" (NM, 46)--to explore a more realistic type of orphan story.

From the outset of the trilogy, Emily's artistic nature manifests itself with an honesty that clashes with the adult world. The conflict is immediate and deadly serious--certainly not the stuff of "girls' books" as Perry Nodelman generalizes about them:

In ... girls' books, things start well and get better, almost until the very end. The pleasure offered readers is something not usually considered desirable in fiction--lack of suspense, lack of excitement, lack of conflict; it is a pleasure we might associate more with our indulgence in utopian dreams than with our love of a good story.¹⁸

Alice Munro notes, rather, that Emily's sufferings have an acrid, nineteenth-century orphan-story flavour, like those of "Jane Eyre or David Copperfield";¹⁹ she observes that "Emily

¹⁶ Avery, "One Author's Response to a Changing World," p. 80.

¹⁷ Ibid., pp. 76, 75.

¹⁸ Perry Nodelman, "Progressive Utopia: Or, How to Grow Up without Growing Up," Proceedings of the Sixth Annual Conference of the Children's Literature Association (Villanova: Villanova University, 1980), p. 150.

¹⁹ Munro affirms that Emily's suffering "isn't the stuff of children's books, at least not of the children's books of my time." See the "Afterword" to Emily of New Moon, p. 357.

is in trouble because she is an orphan, an outsider, and in fact because she is herself, because she is an outlaw in her heart." ²⁰ Either too evident to be tactful, or too deeply felt to be perceived, Emily's honesty--her "outlaw" nature--brings her into constant conflict with her elders. Unable to abide the hypocrisy of Uncle Wallace's cold kiss ("How *dared* he kiss her--he had hated her father and disowned her mother!" [NM, 34]), she appalls the Murray clan by snatching out her handkerchief to wipe her cheek. Later, when people who had "said harsh things" of her father attend his funeral and gaze with "insolent curiosity" on his dead face, Emily's expressionless suffering of this outrage wins her Aunt Ruth's condemnation that she is "absolutely devoid of natural feeling" (NM, 44).

During the family conclave that follows Douglas Starr's funeral, the Murrays ascribe to Emily a personality as well as a physical appearance that consists (as the indignant Emily protests) of the "scraps and patches" of heredity (NM, 38). Not only are the sins of the father visited upon the daughter ("What's bred in the bone comes out in the flesh," says Aunt Ruth with caustic reference to "failed" journalist Douglas Starr), but indomitable Emily is termed "difficult," "odd," "sly as a snake," and considered likely to die young, as her parents had, of consumption (NM, 46-49). Emily parries with a sharp defence of her father and of her vigorous state of health. An older Emily reacts defensively to Aunt Ruth's hurtful comments about her "plain" appearance by pointing out that her aunt "wouldn't say that to a grown-up person's face"; with acerbic honesty, Emily adds "I don't think it would hurt you to be as polite to me as you are to other people" (NM, 313). Emily refuses to be condescended to--whether by Father Cassidy, about her writing ("Are you making fun of

²⁰ *Ibid.* pp. 357-58.

me?' asked Emily gravely. Father Cassidy swallowed something else besides plum cake" [NM, 210-11]) or by her well-meaning but prudish Victorian aunts ("You might just as well tell me that Ilse's mother isn't to be talked about and I would obey you. I understand *perfectly* what you mean,' [Emily] said as she left the table" [NM, 97]). She rails against mistreatment, and her tenacity is disarming.

If Emily's struggle with her inherited family imparts to her an authenticity lacking in the heroines of the "glad girl" school of orphan fiction, then her participation in the mystical nature of creativity makes her exceptional in the manner of a Jane Eyre. Steeped in Romanticism, Emily is both the spiritually adept Wordsworthian seer-child, and the strangely Gothic and Brontëan young woman of vivid emotion; in the conservative Victorian world of *New Moon*, such excesses make her dangerously suspect as well as strangely compelling. The comparison with *Jane Eyre* is an apt one, and not only because the two characters share the childhood terror of being unfairly locked in a ghostly unfamiliar room.²¹ Emily, like Jane, is an outsider, a type of the "supernaturally sanctioned" nineteenth-century orphan who is both otherworldly and visionary.²² Rochester frequently remarks on the "elfish" quality about Jane; Emily, for her part, bears a physical sign--her pointed ears--"to show that she [is] kin to tribes of elfland" (NM, 13). Rochester's first conversation with Jane, in which he

²¹ Emily has two incidents that parallel Jane's experience of the red room: the first is her punishment by Aunt Elizabeth of being locked in the eerie *New Moon* spare-room in which past generations of Murrays had gone to die (NM, 120-22); the second is her first night at Wyther Grange, when swallows in the chimney flue behind her bed terrify her that the Pink Room is haunted (NM, 258-61).

²² Nina Auerbach, "Incarnations of the Orphan," *Romantic Imprisonment: Women and Other Glorified Outcasts* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985), p. 67.

demands to know if his horse's fall on the ice had been occasioned by his breaking through one of her fairy "rings" as she sat "waiting for [her] people...the men in green,"²³ resembles Dean Priest's opening remarks to Emily, in which he alludes to Rip van Winkle: "Have I been tricked into meddling with fairies, and will I discover presently that twenty years have passed and that I am an old man long since lost to the living world with nothing but the skeleton of my dog for company?" (NM, 281). Neither Jane nor Emily is necessarily surprised by such strange comments, for each has become accustomed to the fact that she is somehow a deviation from the rule. As Ellen Greene harshly informs Emily after her father's death, "The fact is, Emily Starr, you're queer, and folks don't care for queer children ... You talk queer--and you act queer--and at times you look queer" (NM, 30).

For Montgomery, the concept of fairyland is neither a literal nor a frivolous one. The Emily who knows from the age of eight that there are no such things as fairies nevertheless believes with all her heart in an imaginative "place," a Romantic habit of mind, where beauty is benevolent:

It had always seemed to Emily, ever since she could remember, that she was very, very near to a world of wonderful beauty. Between it and herself hung only a thin curtain; she could never draw the curtain aside--but sometimes, just for a moment, a wind fluttered it and then it was as if she caught a glimpse of the enchanting realm beyond--only a glimpse--and heard a note of unearthly music. (NM, 15)²⁴

²³ Charlotte Brontë, Jane Eyre (Middlesex, England: Penguin Books, 1978), p. 154.

²⁴ This passage appears almost verbatim in Montgomery's journal entry for January 2, 1905, in her discussion of her childhood. Although her early years were "never as happy as childhood should be," Montgomery claims that her "glimpses" beyond the veil "always made life worthwhile" (Journal I, p. 301).

"Fairyland" connotes all that is wonderful, all that inspires wonder and demands a mystic response to beauty; indeed, as Dean Priest says to Emily, fairyland "means everything the human heart desires" (NM, 289). Dean desires a second chance at youth, something he seeks through Emily's proximity to the "golden days" of childhood that are one aspect of fairyland. For Emily, however, fairyland is not so much a desire in need of fulfilment as a repository awaiting exploration: "the font from which creative artists, separated from the common run, continue to draw their imaginative powers."²⁵ Emily makes an early association between her "flash" of artistic insight and a realm of spiritual beauty: "I think God is just like my flash, only *it* lasts only a second and He lasts always" (NM, 170). She believes that her dead father waits for her "just behind the curtain" in the beautiful world that her flash reveals in glimpses.

Emily has three profound psychic revelations that allow her access into what Carl Jung (Montgomery's contemporary) would call the "ancestral psyche."²⁶ More profoundly than Jane Eyre, Emily is a visionary, prone to episodes of presentiment. She "sees" how Beatrice Burnley had perished in an open well on an evening twelve years previously, as she returned to her husband and baby Ilse (NM); she "draws" the whereabouts of the lost child, young Allen Bradshaw, though she cannot draw (EC); she rescues far-away Teddy from

²⁵ Jane Cowan Fredeman, "The Land of Lost Content: The Use of Fantasy in L.M. Montgomery's Novels," Canadian Children's Literature 1.3 (1975), p. 60.

²⁶ C.G. Jung, Memories, Dreams, Reflections (1961; New York: Vintage Books, 1965), p. 237.

death aboard a doomed London steamship by "warning" him not to board it (EQ). After each episode, Montgomery invokes the explanation that Emily has "the second sight," an inheritance from her maternal great-grandmother, "a Highland Scotch woman" (NM, 341).²⁷

The three psychic experiences have a "rational" explanation that, while not denying the supernatural element, nevertheless has more tangible significance for Montgomery's female writer: Emily uses an unconscious process to resolve an emotionally-based writer's block. In Emily of New Moon, fever-delirious Emily combines "untrue" gossip about Beatrice Burnley with "the well-known fact of Jimmy's tumble into the New Moon well" (NM, 341). Her "vision" of Beatrice Burnley appears as the imagined completion to her unfinished story "*The Ghost of the Well*, wherein she was weaving the old legend of the well in the Lee field" (NM, 333). In Emily Climbs, Emily's strange kindred feeling for the Scobie House (from which Ilse drags her away before she can talk out a description of it) combines

²⁷ It is interesting that the New York Times reviewer of Emily of New Moon had little patience with Emily's supernatural affinities:

There seems to be still afloat in the literary world a popular fallacy that all unhappy, imaginative children possess a kind of sixth sense which serves as a medium of communication with a world of unreality. It seems also that this sixth sense, through enabling its possessor to consort with elves and fairies, quite successfully compensates for any minor financial or domestic misfortunes which may beset the imaginative child. Whether science will ever succeed in proving that only imaginative children can ever be utterly and miserably unhappy is extremely doubtful. In the meantime L.M. Montgomery, author of "Ann [sic] of Green Gables," has written another book.

The reviewer's terms are telling: "a popular fallacy," "a world of unreality," "[w]hether science will ever succeed in proving." The implication is clear: Montgomery's writing is airy, tiresome romance, unsubstantial nonsense in a "scientific" world where sociological and biological determinism are the doctrines of the day. Because the reviewer interprets Montgomery's use of the supernatural in biased literal terms, he fails to notice the connection between Emily's "sixth sense" and her development as a writer.

with her tormented thoughts of the lost Allen Bradshaw and, in retrospect, with a farmwife's reference to Mrs. McIntyre, "the woman who spanked the King." Significantly, Montgomery arranges her chronology of events so that Emily listens to and offers to publish Mrs. McIntyre's story (which deals, coincidentally, with the rescue of a little boy from a perilous situation) *before* she discovers that, during the night, she has drawn the Scobie house in her Jimmy book, as an indication of Allan's whereabouts. In Emily's Quest, Emily's psychic experience occurs at the beginning of the novel rather than at the end (as in the two previous cases), initiating her spurning of Dean Priest and prompting his subsequent confession that he had offered falsely harsh criticism of her novel A Seller of Dreams. Following on a hopeless period of artistic apathy, this experience exposes Emily again to the "miracle" of the flash, granting her "leave to work" once more (EQ, 102). Each of Emily's episodes of second sight thus proceeds from a combination of emotional upheaval and a blocked desire to write; each episode, in turn, resolves a realistic dilemma for the community and an emotional/professional dilemma for Emily as writer. Montgomery thus makes use of a convention of the orphan genre--the spiritual proclivity of the orphan--to demonstrate that the female artist possesses an imaginatively supernatural acuity that redounds positively on her community as well as her vocation.

II Female *Bildungsroman* and the Mastering of Discourse

The "Emily" trilogy details the struggles, joys, friendships, influences, and social situations pertinent to a young girl growing up on a Prince Edward Island farm during the

years spanning the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth.²⁸ Montgomery revels in the accuracy of her setting; indeed, she faults Mazo De la Roche's Jalna--although she considered it "very brilliantly written ... clever and 'modern'"--because it "certainly does *not* reflect life on the ordinary Canadian farm truly."²⁹ In the "Emily" novels, Montgomery augments the characterization of her orphan heroine by placing her within the typical social setting of the proud but "ordinary" Murray family and its traditions. Just as Emily's natural propensity toward artistic oddity sets her apart in her orphan capacity, her fascination with the "romance" of fiction as a developing child-artist brings her into constant conflict with the Victorian aunts of New Moon and Shrewsbury who prohibit the "untruth" inherent in the act of writing. Such opposition manifests itself as a conflict between romance and realism, a conflict that Emily battles throughout the trilogy in the midst of a daily domestic existence on a typical Prince Edward Island farm.

The "Emily" trilogy can be seen, at least in part, as the sort of "education in the art of womanhood" that informs the nineteenth-century female *Bildungsroman*. This genre, according to critics Kornfield and Jackson, synthesizes "the coming-of-age novel, or bildungsroman (which is usually male-oriented), and domestic fiction," which depicts "life

²⁸ A clue to the dating of the trilogy comes on p. 168 of NM, when Emily records in a letter to her father that, given the choice between being Joan of Arc or Frances Willard, she "would rather be Frances Willard, because she is alive." Frances Willard, an American temperance advocate, was born 1839 and died 1898; thus, one infers that ten-year-old Emily's birthdate cannot be much later than 1888.

²⁹ Montgomery did not enjoy Jalna, but nevertheless sent a copy to G.B. MacMillan in December of 1927, because the novel was "by a Canadian girl" and had won "the ten thousand dollar prize offered [the previous] spring by the Atlantic magazine against fifteen hundred competitors." See My Dear Mr. M., p. 128.

in the home."³⁰ Kornfeld and Jackson's generic use of the German term is useful in its reference to a specifically female novel of development, yet an historical understanding of the term *Bildungsroman* is equally illuminating in its application to the ways in which Montgomery's Emily participates in the Hegelian sense of *Bildung* as "a training of the individual to master various modes of discourse."³¹ Within the parameters of the female *Bildungsroman*, Emily comes into contact with essentially two modes of discourse: a "romantic" (represented by poetry, certain religious texts, and novelistic fiction) and a "realistic" (represented by "real life" experience and by her own prose sketches of "real life" that are often satirical). These two discourses are an analog, in a sense, to the tension between tight-lipped Aunt Elizabeth (who "always spoke crisply and used no unnecessary words" [NM, 60]) and her imaginatively verbose niece Emily. Montgomery emphasizes throughout the trilogy that the two women "d[o] not speak the same language" (NM, 331). Interestingly, Emily comes to espouse Aunt Elizabeth's view that extremes of either discourse are unacceptable and sometimes dangerous. Emily's "mastering" of discourse,

³⁰ Eve Kornfeld and Susan Jackson, "The Female Bildungsroman in Nineteenth-Century America: Parameters of a Vision," *Journal of American Culture* 10.4 (1987), p. 69. Using Louisa May Alcott's *Little Women* (1868) as their paradigm, the authors cite *Five Little Peppers and How they Grew* (1881) by Margaret Sidney (pseud. for Harriett Mulford Lothrop), *Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm* by Kate Douglas Wiggin, and *Anne of Green Gables* by L.M. Montgomery, as representative examples of the female *Bildungsroman*.

³¹ John H. Smith, "Cultivating Gender: Sexual Difference, *Bildung* and the *Bildungsroman*," p. 210. Smith considers *Bildung* to imply a "strict gender codification" that ultimately "makes female *Bildung* a contradiction in terms" (p. 220); however, he does acknowledge the potential of a new genre for the study of women's fiction that would "challenge the dominant developmental pattern we call *Bildung*" (p. 221).

however, proceeds not from a silent rejection of both, *à la* Aunt Elizabeth, but from her skill in creating an interplay among elements of romantic and realistic discourse. As such, Emily's published novel, The Moral of the Rose, not only satisfies the Victorian moral parameters set out by her maternal relatives, but also provides within the text a nearly accurate illustration of Montgomery's own style of fiction.

Emily's conflicts with and discoveries about language and domesticity both circumscribe and liberate her writing. At New Moon, she learns about categories and their artificiality: certain words are "improper," yet they are "striking" and delight with their "tang"; certain behaviours (conformity and lack of ambition) are advocated but not necessarily enforced; certain individuals--Aunt Elizabeth, Cousin Jimmy--have prescribed roles that nevertheless become more defined when they transgress the boundaries of predictability. At Wyther Grange, Emily learns from the unchecked gossip of Aunts Nancy and Caroline about the cruel tyranny of excess and too much realism. At Shrewsbury she discovers how the sacrifice of "writing only facts" can indeed expand the horizons of one's literary expertise. Emily's assimilation or rejection of her experiences in three different households of women shapes her own distinctions between romance and realism.

Central to the genre of female *Bildungsroman*, argue Kornfeld and Jackson, is the creation of a "feminine utopia" with the mother at the heart. In the "Emily" trilogy, however, mothers are either dead or emotionally disturbed.³² Emily's lack of a mother may or may

³² Emily's own mother is dead; Ilse's mother is dead and presumed guilty of adultery and abandonment; Teddy's mother, with her scarred face, is consumed by a bitter jealousy for her son's love; Perry, a true orphan like Emily, lives with his harmless but meddling "beast of an Aunt Tom."

not make her "necessarily self-propelled, [and] self-directed," like other nineteenth-century motherless heroines.³³ Her mother's importance is surely more symbolic, consisting in Emily's matriarchal connection to New Moon: the Murrays are her mother's "people." In many ways, New Moon is indeed a "feminine utopia," run by women, in the best interests of women. Emily's affinity with New Moon is immediate and profound: she feels a proud kinship with the women of her ancestral past, through the house "which aforetime had had vivid brides and mothers and wives," and which still retains "the atmosphere of their loves and lives" (NM, 71). Her Murray aunts are of the strong spinster type often found in the female *Bildungsroman*: women who prove themselves "independent financially and mentally."³⁴ Indeed, Aunt Elizabeth's objection to Emily's pursuit of a writing career stems, in part, from a cherished pride in the fact that "[t]he Murray women have never been under any necessity for earning their own living" (NM, 68). And although much of the New Moon matriarch's initial apprehension about Emily's attending high school proceeds from the fear that the child will flout convention by eloping as her mother had done, part of that apprehension concerns the possibility that a career would make Emily "a slave to the public-no Murray girl ever was *that*" (NM, 315). Unlike the authority figures of the stereotypical nineteenth-century heroine who "exploit or neglect her," thus forcing her "to grow so that when she comes of age she will be able to leave the unfriendly environment and succeed

³³ Jacqueline Berke, "Mother, I can do it myself: The Self-sufficient Heroine in Popular Girls' Fiction," *Women's Studies* 6.2 (1979), p. 194.

³⁴ Kornfeld and Jackson, p. 72.

on her own,"³⁵ Emily's aunts contribute in their own ways to her well-being and her chosen vocation; indeed, she finds that she cannot leave New Moon. When faced, in Emily's Quest, with the choice of pursuing a writing career in New York or remaining on Prince Edward Island, Emily makes the choice that her great-great-grandmother had made generations earlier: she decides to remain in Canada.

Emily's primary influences in the art of womanhood are Aunts Laura and Elizabeth at New Moon. From her first meeting with Aunt Laura at her father's funeral, Emily realizes the kind woman's capacity for sympathy. Aunt Laura facilitates Emily's emotional health through warm affection, and fuels the passionate beginnings of her artistic growth by means of the nearly discarded letter bills on which the child begins a correspondence with her dead father. Emily's own art of writing cannot fail to assimilate the attention to detail inherent in the womanly arts of New Moon tradition that Aunt Laura patiently teaches her: the complicated chocolate cake, the invisible hems on muslin, the intricate point lace, the ribbed knit stockings. The child delights in browsing through cookbooks, selecting recipes whose enchanting names ("Queen Pudding, Sea-foam Sauce" [NM, 190]) link the domestic to the literary. As Emily matures, however, Aunt Laura becomes less influential in her life; increasingly, Emily refers to her with affectionate condescension as "dearest of Victorian aunties" (EQ, 67). There is something banal about the accommodating domesticity of Aunt Laura that cannot engage Emily's artistic self. Indeed, in Emily's Quest, it is Aunt Laura's mending basket, unintentionally misplaced at the top of the stairs, that occasions Emily's fall

³⁵ Nina Baym, Women's Fiction: A Guide to Novels By and About Women in America, 1820-1870 (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1978), p. 37.

into illness and artistic apathy.

By contrast, Aunt Elizabeth imposes herself into the realm of Emily's "scribbling" in an all-too-evident manner. Not versed in conceiving of anyone--let alone an irresponsible child--as an autonomous individual, the New Moon matriarch takes upon herself the duty of intruding into all areas of Emily's life, including her writing. Emily is forced to thrust her old yellow account book into the Maywood kitchen stove to escape Aunt Elizabeth's probing of it. What burns is not, as Aunt Elizabeth believes, something "hidden or underhanded" that Emily is "ashamed to have seen," but rather two sorts of discourse, in a childish context: a romantic component of "fancies" about the Wind Woman and "little cat dialogues," and a realistic component of vitriolic references to the Murray clan (NM, 56). The latter, having developed in specific response to the uncharitable Murray clan, is fuelled by the burning of the old yellow account book. In her letters to Douglas Starr that replace the "incalculably precious" account book, Emily indulges in satirical renditions of the aunt she has decided is "cold and *hawty*;...*not fair*" (NM, 57). She soon comes to realize that her aunt's "fawltz" make for interesting prose: "Aunt Laura is nicer to live with than Aunt Elizabeth, but Aunt Elizabeth is nicer to write about" (NM, 196). A product of Victorian prudery, Aunt Elizabeth fears the consequences of indulging Emily in any behaviour or pastime that might contribute to the cultivation of undesirable traits such as sexual awareness. Emily learns, by default of Aunt Elizabeth's icy silence, that certain words and subjects carry the negative weight of verbal taboos. "I have discovered," says Emily in a letter to her father, "that it is improper to talk about haveing children" (NM, 142). Emily learns to eliminate seemingly innocent words like "bulls," "kittens," and "Devil's food" (cake) from her discussions. She

elicits Aunt Laura's opinion on the word "golly" and regrets that it is not a proper word, "because it's very striking" (NM, 128). The vibrant, colourful words and turns of phrase that Emily must not verbalize at New Moon spill over into the pages of her letters to her father, her Jimmy books, and her eventual diary, where she can muse at will about "why *goblin* is such an enchanting word and *gobbling* such an ugly one" (EC, 250). Interesting in light of Aunt Elizabeth's suspicion of words is her birthday gift to Emily of a "dixonary": a significantly "useful present" for a child whose life revolves around words (NM, 191).

"Obedient to Aunt Elizabeth's command," the young Emily eliminates the word "bull" from her vocabulary; as Montgomery's narrator wryly notes, however, "to ignore the existence of bulls was not to do away with them" (NM, 160). Just as Emily runs into "Mr. James Lee's English bull" one day in an innocent-looking pasture (NM, 160), so she must experience for herself the truth or untruth of Aunt Elizabeth's prohibitions about life and language. Aunt Elizabeth tells Emily that she ought to try to imitate "Anzonetta B. Peters who was converted at seven and died at twelve," but Emily soon learns that Anzonetta's religio-romantic discourse only "exite[s] ridicule" in the real world (NM, 110).³⁶ Aunt Elizabeth forbids the cutting of a "bang" and the reading of novels, but Emily succumbs to both temptations: following her confession of her bang-cutting deed, she admits to reading two books from Dr. Burnley's bookcase: a romantic novel, which proves "very dull" and disappoints her expectations, and a fascinating, illustrated anatomy book, which "tells about

³⁶ In response to Aunt Laura's question about Emily's preference for blue or red stripes in her winter stockings, Emily remarks, in the hymn-verse manner of Anzonetta, "Jesus Thy blood and rightchusness / My beauty are, my glorious dress." In her diary, Emily records that Aunt Laura thinks her "crazy" and Aunt Elizabeth dubs her "irreverent" (NM, 110).

everything that's inside of you" (NM, 238). Both books elicit the vehement objections of a "truly horrified" Aunt Elizabeth. The novel is objectionable not only for its make-believe but for its love-making ("They are wicked books and have ruined many souls" [NM, 238]). The anatomy book, indeed, is "worse than novels," since, as Aunt Elizabeth firmly believes, "[t]hings that were inside of you were not to be read about" (NM, 238). Too much romance, however dull, is improper, but so is too much realism.

Mr. Carpenter, Emily's teacher, stresses this theme repeatedly to his gifted student, although with the intention of improving her writing rather than eliminating it. Emily submits herself to his advice regarding her poetry and airy short stories (romantic discourse) and--unwittingly at first--her satiric sketches (realistic discourse). Often inconsistent in his own advice, Mr. Carpenter offers Emily conflicting suggestions about how to improve her writing: she must curb the "romantic" excesses in her poetry (italics, clichéd subjects, hackneyed expression) in order to "accomplish anything" (NM, 351). Conversely, however, she must also inject more romance into her satire: "There is a place for satire--there are gangrenes that can only be burned out--but leave the burning to the great geniuses. It's better to heal than hurt" (EC, 28-29). The same Mr. Carpenter who cautions Emily that her writing "needs a curb when it strays from realism" (EC, 96) tells her on his deathbed, "Don't be--led away--by those howls about realism. Remember--pine woods are just as real as--pigsties--and a darn sight pleasanter to be in" (EQ, 30).

Emily finds herself repeatedly experiencing a discrepancy between her own romantic absolutes and the reality of everyday life. Ilse Burnley (with whom Emily is allowed to associate, despite Ilse's obstreperous language) teaches Emily that friendship need not be

either a romantic or a tragic affair. Their first argument is a fight with words that Emily admits is "fair and open and above board" in comparison to her painful experience with the sly and treacherous Rhoda Stuart, yet Emily, unable to conceive of forgiveness in such a tragic situation, dramatically "bur[ies]" her friendship with Ilse and "weep[s] over its grave" (NM, 131). She is understandably posed when her friend appears back at the playhouse the next day, Ilse having entirely forgotten the quarrel. Emily's relationship with Ilse proves to be like the friendships of boys, featuring vivid fights that are quickly forgotten. This in itself is a type of discourse that a confused Emily must master: "To be called a serpent and a crocodile one minute and hugged and darling-ed the next was somewhat disconcerting until time and experience took the edge off it" (NM, 131).

When Emily anticipates the entry of novelistic romance into her "real life," she is invariably disillusioned. In the midst of composing a poem about spring and deciding whether to people it with dancing elves or sleeping pixies, she meets an odd-looking character whom her imagination entertains as being "a witch," or perhaps even "an elderly fay of evil intentions--the bad fairy of all christening tales" (NM, 241). Disappointingly, the old woman turns out to be Perry Miller's Aunt Tom, who makes it known that she will not send Perry to college unless Emily agrees to marry him. Although Perry himself rescues Emily from this disagreeable situation by shooing away his aunt, his ensuing conversation with Emily--that he intends to marry her at some point in the future--leaves her defiant and confused. Story-book romance, unsuccessfully adapting itself to Emily's real world, throws that world off balance, making both romance and reality uncomfortable.³⁷ Montgomery

³⁷ Aply, the incident occurs in a chapter entitled "Romantic but not Comfortable."

cleverly closes the chapter by informing the reader that Emily's "particular poem on spring was never finished" (NM, 244).

In a similar incident at Wyther Grange, Emily walks with shrivelled old Aunt Caroline to the Pink Room in a far wing of the house, feeling like

one of the heroines in Gothic romance, wandering at midnight through a subterranean dungeon, with some unholy guide. She had read "The Mysteries of Udolpho" and "The Romance of the Forest" before the taboo had fallen on Dr. Burnley's bookcase. She shivered. It was awful but interesting. (NM, 253)

The night in the Pink Room, however, proves to be an unwelcome first-hand experience in "Gothic" terror, complete with a rattling window, a howling dog, and "uncanny rustles" (swallows) in the wall behind the bed. Emily's imagination works overtime, envisioning "[e]very ghost and groan, every tortured spirit and bleeding nun of the books she had read"; just before falling asleep, Emily disassociates herself from romance, deciding that "Aunt Elizabeth was right--novels aren't fit to read" (NM, 261).

Emily cannot long prevent herself from reading novels and writing in imitation of Sir Walter Scott: gradually, however, in response to circumstances and her own maturation, her outlook and writing assume a more "realistic" character. The final chapter of Emily of New Moon begins this process with Mr. Carpenter's acerbic critique of the thirteen-year-old Emily's effusively romantic poetry. His appraisal is cutting and often sarcastic ("There's only one more rhyme that occurs to me and that's 'liver.' Why did you leave it out?" [NM, 349]). He concludes, however, that there are "ten good lines" in what she has shown him ("child, how can you marry the right adjectives like that? [NM, 350]), and thereby validates her "romantic discourse" with an encouragement to continue writing poetry: "Jade, for ten righteous men Sodom had been spared" (NM, 52). It is Emily's "realistic discourse"

however--the Jimmy-book full of satiric sketches that she shows unintentionally to Carpenter--that demonstrates her undeniable talent and causes Carpenter to exclaim, "Why, I wouldn't have missed this for all the poetry you've written or ever will write! By gad, it's literature--*literature*--and you're only thirteen" (NM, 354). Carpenter himself appears in the Jimmy-book, and "the artistry" of the depiction pleases him (NM, 353). Emily's characterization is "mercilessly lucid" in its attempt to "describ[e] him exactly": "Thanks to her dramatic knack of word painting, Mr. Carpenter *lived* in that sketch" (NM, 353). The schoolteacher's commendation exalts Emily, and, even though she does not yet fully realize that her talents lie more in realistic than romantic discourse, she initiates the writing of a "diary" as an as-yet-unconsciously realistic means of recording her rapture "before she went back from her world of dreams to the world of reality" (NM, 355).

Aunt Elizabeth indirectly facilitates Emily's movement toward incorporating realistic discourse into her writing by again interfering directly in the sphere of her niece's vocation. She offers Emily three years of high school education at Shrewsbury on the condition that Emily entirely forego her writing, her "silly unMurray-like habit of wasting time and paper" (EC, 87). Emily agrees, under duress of Cousin Jimmy's persuasions, to agree to the compromised solution of forfeiting the writing of short stories. The enforced ban initially seems an unimaginable sacrifice, but, as Emily notes in her diary at the end of *Emily Climbs*, "my promise to Aunt Elizabeth *has* helped me ... in my stories and Jimmy books" (328). Emily's attention to "truth" (realistic discourse) as opposed to Aunt Elizabeth's idea of "untruth" (romantic discourse) makes her more objective and causes her to look to her own community as a source of artistic inspiration.

As an adolescent under the story ban in Shrewsbury, Emily continues, on her own initiative, to expose her writing to the influences of "realism." She accepts several prose assignments for the Shrewsbury Times that hone her fiction skills by sharpening her critical faculties. While covering the sermons of Presbyterian ministerial candidates, she mistakenly submits for copy her "vitriolic" analysis of an especially poor offering, complete with "all the inconsistencies, the misquotations, the weaknesses and the wobblings" (EC, 249). Though the report makes her temporarily "infamous" in an uncomfortable way, she is pleased with its appropriateness and with her own skill ("*I didn't mix my metaphors*" EC, 250). Later she is asked by the Times to do an expurgation of "a sensational and sentimental novel" and proceeds to "cut out 'all unnecessary stuff,'" as ordered, by eliminating "most of the kisses and embraces, two-thirds of the love-making and all the descriptions" (EC, 262). Emily's various experiences in editing other people's texts influence her own writing positively; she no longer finds herself "struggl[ing] heroically against the difficulties of affectionate dialogue" or writing about "a dozen other subjects she didn't know anything about" (NM, 316). In criticizing the short-comings of others, she becomes more objective, grounding her writing in the more "realistic" experiences of her everyday life.

Ironically, Aunt Elizabeth's tumble down the cellar stairs in Emily's Quest occasions the writing of Emily's most ambitious venture, The Moral of the Rose, a novel that eventually achieves publication. As a means, one evening, of amusing fretful Aunt Elizabeth during her convalescence from a broken leg, Emily reads her one of her stories. There is "no silly love-making" in it, to the relief of Aunt Elizabeth; rather, in Emily's words, it is "pure comedy" (NM, 150). Aunt Elizabeth becomes curiously involved in the story, and

suggests that if there were more to it, she "wouldn't mind hearing it" (EQ, 150). Emily conceives the idea for a whole novel, and soon she is reading one chapter every evening to an eager, if undemonstrative, audience. When the book itself is actually published—thanks to the doggedness of the incomparable Cousin Jimmy—it proves "a success from the start," with five editions exhausted in only eight weeks (EQ, 185). Emily's success prompts editor Janet Royal, formerly of Shrewsbury, to retract her statement that Emily's choice of a writer's life at New Moon over a journalist's career in New York would be detrimental to her writing career.

As Åhmansson remarks, Emily's "moderate fame rests on exactly the same production as Montgomery's own: poems published in minor periodicals and a novel portraying ordinary people in a Maritime setting."³⁸ The significance of this similarity becomes more pronounced when one realizes that several of the fictional "reviews" for Emily's The Moral of the Rose have been appropriated by Montgomery from original reviews of Anne of Green Gables.³⁹ Emily's fictional creation, like Montgomery's, satisfies the ordinary Prince Edward Island reader, but also appeals to the Janet Royals, who notice, amidst its romantic "sweetness," "sly little thorns of wit and satire" (EQ, 185). In The Moral of the Rose, Emily-like Montgomery, in her rural Prince Edward Island community of old-fashioned values—manages to achieve a complex interplay between the often-opposed discourses of the romantic and the realistic that pleases her clan as well as herself:

Emily smiled. It was better to have won her standing with the New

³⁸ See A Life and Its Mirrors, p. 103, n. 41.

³⁹ Ibid., p. 63, n. 25.

Moon folks than with the world. What mattered it what any reviewer said when Aunt Elizabeth remarked with an air of uttering the final judgement:

"Well, I never could have believed that a pack of lies could sound as much like the real truth as that book does." (EQ, 189)

III *Künstlerroman* and the Artistic Sense of Self

Maywood, New Moon, Wyther Grange, Shrewsbury. Emily Starr doesn't travel far distances during her fictional lifetime. A short buggy ride or a long walk is all that separates her from the places that shape her quest. But she does have a quest. It is not the quest of "[t]he classic novels for boys" that begins with the hero leaving home and then describes his "exciting confrontations with hardship and evil in wild, uncomfortable places, until [he] finally come[s] home again."⁴⁰ Neither is it the stock formulation of the insipid heroine of girls' novels who does nothing but "grow up quietly," "after a series of unsettling adventures which are glossed over rather than described."⁴¹ Emily's quest is that of the artist of the *Künstlerroman*, although not in the traditional manner of an artist-repudiator like Stephen Dedalus: her journey is an internal one through other people's words and influences to her own artistic essence, which is an amalgam and yet distinct. Her education in the art of being a writer involves her development of a sense of self as artist. Two interdependent processes comprise this development: firstly, the acquiring of self-confidence in her ability and her "call" to be a writer; secondly, the learning to become a "spectator" on her own life by cultivating a "Divided Self"⁴² that stands aloof from experience in

⁴⁰ Perry Nodelman, "Progressive Utopia: Or, How to Grow Up without Growing Up," p. 146.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² Maurice Beebe, "The Artist as Hero," p. 343.

anticipation of recreating it into art.

The young Emily's confidence in the face of opposition is remarkable: she is an orphan, but a survivor; she knows in which direction she is headed because all her roads lead to art. "Remember you're not of much importance," says Ellen Greene to the newly bereaved Emily, but the indomitable child replies proudly, "I am important to myself" (NM, 30). Emily's confidence cannot be shaken; her journalist father has given her his literary legacy, assuring her that she "will succeed where [he has] failed" (NM, 21). Her independence is fostered by an unshakable belief in her eventual success—a success that will be financial as well as critical. She informs Aunt Nancy Priest that she wants none of the old woman's money because "I'm going to earn heaps of money for myself" (NM, 293). She agrees heartily with Uncle Wallace that she be allowed, since she "is an orphan," to "[earn] her own living [rather than live] on charity" (NM, 315). A staggered Aunt Ruth learns that Emily will indeed have "silk petticoats" some day because she has "a *future*" (EC, 163). Years later, Emily uses the proceeds from her writing to reimburse both Aunt Ruth and Uncle Wallace for the money they had contributed to her Shrewsbury education; she even manages to avert a minor tragedy at New Moon—the desecration of an ancient stand of trees—by buying back "Lofty John's bush" with "the proceeds of [her] latest serial" (EQ, 164).

Self-confidence arising out of defensiveness, however, is only the public side of Emily's sense of self; her private visions sustain her when neither bravado, financial success, nor encouragement is forthcoming. As a child, Emily's earliest sense of herself is as a recipient of the "flash," a dweller in a world of wonder; poetry, in turn, is her instinctive

response to the "flash." She comes to an awareness of her poetic gifts slowly, and often accidentally, as when a confrontation with abusive classmates reveals her talent to her (NM, 90), or when a brief moment in conversation with Perry alerts her to the possibility that the "queerness" ascribed to her by others may in fact be the poetic talent associated with genius:

"Father said I was a genius but Aunt Elizabeth says I'm just queer."

"What's a genius?"

"I'm not sure. Sometimes it's a person who writes poetry. /
write poetry." (NM, 164)

Emily's poetic sense of self survives, despite a dearth of encouragement from her New Moon aunts. Her first "blank verse" poem meets with a decidedly cool reception from both Laura and Elizabeth Murray (although she had expected that the former "would be overjoyed to find she had a niece who could write poetry"), and she subsequently decides, undaunted, to change her form to "ryming poetry...so there will be no mistake about it" (NM, 109). She plans confidently to become a "famus poetess," a character that she imagines must be "silph-like," in gracefully airy communion with the world of the "flash" (NM, 109). When her sense of herself as poetess gradually expands to incorporate a future identity as a novelist, the fact of her guardians' non-compliance with her vocation ("Aunt Elizabeth won't let me read any novels so how can I find out how to write them?" [NM, 226]) only temporarily disrupts her plans. She soon writes to her father that she will grow up to write "a great novel" (NM, 227), and precociously informs Dean Priest that she will be "either a great poetess or a distinguished novelist" in the future (NM, 285).

With her writer prototypes consisting only of her rejected literary father, "simple" oral poet Cousin Jimmy, and her own "queer" sense of what a poet should be, Emily intuits that the writer is a marginalized figure, a solitary dweller in a world apart. She underlines her

own non-conformity, occasionally even relishing it. "I might be an Alice [in Wonderland] under more favorable conditions," says Emily in a letter to her father, "but I am sure I can never be as good as Anzonetta [the child martyr] was and I don't believe I want to be because she never had any fun" (EC, 110). As Emily matures, she likens herself to "Kipling's cat" from the Just So Stories "as a means of bolstering her identity when it is under attack from the Murrays,"⁴³ and also as a way of symbolizing her propensity for solitude:

I'm like Kipling's cat--I walk by my wild lone and wave my wild tail where it so pleases me. That's why the Murrays look askance at me. They think I should run with the pack. (EC, 94)

By means of the same imagery, she avows the need to take responsibility for her own actions, to make her own choices: "I hate to go mincing through life, afraid to take a single long step for fear somebody is watching. I want to 'wave my wild tail and walk by my wild lone'" (EC, 246).

As her artistic sense of self begins to consolidate, Emily becomes more discerning of the influences and models around her, realizing that part of her nature is formed by impulses alien to her mentors' understanding. On several significant occasions, she rejects--either immediately or in retrospect--Mr. Carpenter's advice about her writing. When he advises her to destroy the satiric poem she wrote as an anti-obituary for the despicable Peter DeGeer, she regrets that the piece has hurt him (for Carpenter sees his own failings satirized in Peter De Geer's), yet she does not dispose of it:

⁴³ Thomas Tausky, "L.M. Montgomery and 'The Alpine Path, so hard, so steep,'" Canadian Children's Literature 30 (1983), p. 13.

I didn't tear up that poem, though--I couldn't--it really *was* too good to destroy. I put it away in my cupboard to read over once in a while for my own enjoyment, but I will never show it to anybody. (EC, 25),

When she shows Carpenter a later poem--in which she had captured the mysterious essence of an evening walk during which everything familiar had suddenly turned "eerie...sinister...creeping and weird" (EC, 251)--he condemns the poem for its "Paganism" and proceeds to "[tear] it into strips" (EC, 256). Emily's immediate diary entry casts aspersions on Carpenter's actions, despite her professed "feeling" that he was right, for she observes: "I have destroyed a great many of my poems that seemed trash on successive readings, but this one never seemed so and it always brought back the strange charm and terror of that walk" (EC, 256). The intrinsic value of the poem to Emily becomes obvious at the end of her Shrewsbury years when her diary records that one of the several experiences that had shaped her irrevocably was "the writing of that queer little poem...that Mr. Carpenter tore up" (EC, 328). The fact that Emily considers the writing of this supposedly "pagan" poem commensurate with another experience of mysterious delight--her night of rapturous artistic insight on the haystack in the farmer's field, during which she had felt herself "a high priestess of loveliness assisting at the divine rights of her worship" (EC, 180)--is significant, if tacit, proof that Carpenter's advice had been misplaced.

While writing the satiric obituary about Peter DeGeer, Emily senses, as she does many times throughout the trilogy, a separation of self from self, a "Something writing through [her]" (EC, 28). Maurice Beebe argues that this sense of the "Divided Self" is a defining characteristic of the *Künstlerroman* genre. A trait common to "many of the artists of fiction," the sense of detachment is the artist character's "ability to step outside the self

and to recognize a difference between the artist and the man."⁴⁴ Beebe cites Thoreau's articulation of the theme in Walden:

By a conscious effort of the mind we can stand aloof from actions and their consequences; and all things, good and bad, go by us like a torrent ... However intense my experience, I am conscious of the presence and criticism of a part of me, which, as it were, is not a part of me, but a spectator...⁴⁵

Not surprisingly, Montgomery's "portrait of the artist" trilogy participates in this characteristic of the *Künstlerroman* genre. Montgomery endows her artist-heroine with the artist's ability to separate the self from experience: "even in the most trying or involving situations, a part of Emily stands aside, an observer watching what is happening to her and those around her."⁴⁶

Emily's sense of detachment from circumstances takes several forms, all of which contribute to her ability to objectify situations as potential subjects for art. In childhood, such detachment is the means by which Emily protects herself from painful realities. Following her father's funeral, she "writes out" her agonizing interview with the Murray clan. In the act of writing, she acquires a curious distance from her pain: "She forgot the Murrays although she was writing about them--she forgot her humiliation--although she was describing what had happened" (NM, 51). During Miss Brownell's interview with Aunt Elizabeth regarding Emily's behaviour in school, Emily divides herself from the unpleasant proceedings with the "curious interest" of an on-looker:

⁴⁴ Maurice Beebe, "The Artist as Hero," p. 341.

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 344.

⁴⁶ Judith Miller, "Montgomery's Emily: Voices and Silences," Studies in Canadian Literature 9 (1984), p. 168.

Now that the crisis had come she found herself able to confront it coolly--nay, more, to take a curious interest in it under all her secret fear and shame, as if some part of her had detached itself from the rest and was interestedly absorbing impressions and analyzing motives and describing settings. She felt that when she wrote about this scene later on she must not forget to describe the odd shadows the candle under Aunt Elizabeth's nose cast upward on her face, producing a rather skeletal effect. As for Miss Brownell, could *she* ever have been a baby--a dimpled, fat, laughing baby? The thing was unbelievable. (NM, 180)

When an older, adolescent Emily is caught in the act of being kissed by Perry, an "unfortunate ... outbreak" of her detached self makes her grin in "impish" enjoyment: "Under all her discomfort and dread, there was *Something* that was standing back and *enjoying* this--the drama, the comedy of it" (EC, 241). As a young woman, she indulges in the trait of detachment as a means of avoiding boredom:

Tonight, Aunt Ruth being out, I tried to discover how little I could really say to Andrew, while I pursued my own train of thought. I discovered that I could get along with very few words ... Andrew talked on, and when he stopped for breath I stuck in 'How wonderful.' I did it exactly eleven times. Andrew liked it. I know it gave him a nice, flattering feeling that *he* was wonderful, and his conversation was wonderful. Meanwhile I was living a splendid imaginary dream life by the River of Egypt in the days of Thotmes I. (EC, 118)

The reflection is notable for the way in which Emily incorporates, within her sense of detachment, a keen observation of Andrew, as if he were a "character" whose emotions she not only controls, but creates.

It is perhaps this sense of the power of creation inherent in her ability to objectify her experiences that feeds Emily's imaginative postulations, even when she is removed from immediate situations. Lying on the precarious-earth ledge of a mountain slope in the wilds of Wyther Grange, Emily can "dramatiz[e] the whole incident for her Jimmy-book ... It would be quite a thrilling bit" (NM, 279), but she can also write in a letter-bill epistle that

she is at work on a "murder story ... trying to feel how a man would feel who was a murderer. It is creepy, but thrilling. I almost feel as if I *had* murdered somebody" (NM, 306). Emily's "divided self" not only allows her the ability to step outside of her own experience, but also gives her the power to step inside the skin of someone else's, to create for that character a fictional existence. In church one evening, she muses about a fellow parishioner whose face seems to betray a "soul full of hatred" (EC, 46), and thereby suggests a characterization for a story. Emily makes the immediate mental note that she

must try to describe such a person in my Jimmy-book. I wonder if hate has driven *all* the love out of her soul, or if there is a little bit left in it for any one or any thing. If there is it might save her. That would be a good idea for a story. I must jot it down before I go to bed. (EC, 46)

Emily's sense of detachment has the potential to discover, in Del Jorúan's words, the "dull, simple, amazing and unfathomable" lives of the people around her, the "deep caves paved with kitchen linoleum."⁴⁷

Emily, then, participates in the *Künstlerroman* genre tradition through her search for an artistic sense of self. For Emily, such an awareness proceeds both from her confidence in her independent ability to become what she feels she must be, and from her continual experience of a predilection to divide herself from the situations of her life, to become objective, an on-looker, a reporter of experience, and a translator of that experience back into the world of art.

If, in a Derridian sense, genre can be seen as interplay—the interparticipation of a text in various genres—then the "Emily" trilogy is a case in point. At once the story of a

⁴⁷ Alice Munro, Lives of Girls and Women 1971 (New York: Signet, 1974), p. 210.

spiritually adept orphan, a developing girl/woman in a domestic atmosphere, and an artist in search of self-definition. Montgomery's trilogy manifests a compellingly accessible amalgam genre, the "portrait of the artist as a young woman." Located within a genre that is itself multi-dimensional, the trilogy implicitly invites a consideration of narrative voice as a means by which Montgomery explores her writer-heroine within a several-sided portrait of the artist as a young woman.

CHAPTER TWO: THE SEVERAL SIDES OF (AUTO)BIOGRAPHY: NARRATIVE
VOICE AS INTERPLAY

Montgomery did not have the luxury of direct speech--especially not on issues of the values of a young woman's life. She spoke indirectly. Her novel has the superficial appearance of an idyllic novel of girlhood, but the careful reader will see something else.

Judith Miller¹

A "portrait of the artist" novel, by its very nature, lures the critic toward biographical fallacy. Montgomery herself invites such speculation about the "Emily" trilogy in a letter to Ephraim Weber in 1921: "'Emily' will be, in a sense, more autobiographical than any of my other books. People were never right in saying I was 'Anne' but *in some respects*, they will be right if they write me down as Emily."² Montgomery's qualification ("*in some respects*") is important, for she is certainly not without ambivalence toward the subject of biography. "Biography is a *screaming farce*," she had written to Weber in 1907 when he offered to 'write her life' if she preceded him to the grave; "No man or woman was *ever* truly depicted. Biographies, even at the best, are one--or at most two-sided--and every human being has half a dozen different sides."³

This vitriolic condemnation aptly represents only one side of Montgomery, who did not allow it to prevent her from contributing to her own autobiography. In 1916 she wrote "The Alpine Path" (subtitled by Everywoman's World magazine "The Story of My Career"),

¹ Judith Miller, "Montgomery's Emily: Voices and Silences," p. 158.

² L.M. Montgomery to Weber, October 19, 1921, pp. 5-6.

³ To Weber, November 10, 1907, in The Green Gables Letters, p. 58.

in which she described her "climb to fame" but prudently omitted any mention of her "love affairs," much to the disappointment of the editor.⁴ She consciously redressed this omission in a journal entry for January 5, 1917 by detailing her love experiences for the sake of her "dear unborn grandchildren": "My grandchildren may include what they like in my biography. But while I live these things are arcana."⁵ Certain of her letters also reveal her deliberate intention that her journals--the fifty-four years of diary writing that detail her life--be published at some future date.⁶

The journals themselves, self-consciously edited by Montgomery throughout her life,⁷ are by no means a one-sided rendering of her experience. "The Montgomery of [the] first Oxford volume has two personalities," says E.R. Epperly, "one bright and fun-loving, the other gloomy, depressed"; stylistically, the entries reveal an author "deliberately entertaining

⁴ Montgomery, The Alpine Path: The Story of My Career (Toronto: Fitzhenry and Whiteside, 1975).

⁵ From Journal II, pp. 201-202, 206.

⁶ On August 29, 1926, Montgomery writes to G.B. MacMillan that she will soon send him a copy of Further Chronicles of Avonlea (the short-story volume about which she had gone to court in 1920 in what was to be a nine-year lawsuit against her publisher, L.C. Page Company of Boston). Her letter muses that "[the book] may be valuable as a 'curiosity' in a generation or so, when my 'diary' is published with a full account of the whole curious transaction." See My Dear Mr. M., p. 125.

On March 10, 1929, Montgomery again promises to send MacMillan Further Chronicles ("the historic book over which such a tremendous legal battle was fought"), advising him that "the day may come when it will be of great value as a curio--(when my diary is published! Your heirs may benefit if not you)." See ibid., p. 147.

⁷ Rubio and Waterston note, in their introduction to the second volume of the journals, that "by 1910 [Montgomery] knew that she was constructing a culturally important and psychologically rich "record": a life-document"; "Also by 1910," continue Rubio and Waterston, Montgomery begins to view the journals as "a professional source book," and she recopies the early entries "as a way of maintaining her access to the life she continued to recreate in successive novels" (p. xi).

an audience, even testing different voices and techniques."⁸ Of the second volume, Epperly remarks that "much of the playfulness of the early journals has disappeared," and instead the reader finds "a mature craftswoman who has found her voice and who writes with clarity and evenness whether she is ironic, cheerful, earnest, or despondent."⁹

How does the "Emily" trilogy--written several years after the well-crafted journal entries published in the second Oxford volume--exemplify Montgomery's ambivalence toward (auto)biography and incorporate her ever-maturing authorial voice? Perhaps such an inquiry is best addressed not by reference to the many incidents in the trilogy that proceed from the author's personal experience or previous writings¹⁰--some of which are noted in footnotes throughout this thesis--but by an examination of the narrative method that Montgomery employs to tell the story of her writer-heroine. A close reading of the "Emily" trilogy reveals the interplay of two distinct narrative voices: the "autobiographical" one of Emily herself, in which she "narrates" much of her own story through letter-bill epistles and diary entries; and the omniscient one of Montgomery's narrator, which is generally descriptive but often opinionated, and, in the middle book of the trilogy, styles itself "Emily's biographer."

In appraising Montgomery's narrative technique, one is prompted to pose the

⁸ E.R. Epperly, "L.M. Montgomery and the Changing Times," *Acadiensis* 17.2 (1988), pp. 180, 181.

⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 181, 180.

¹⁰ Such is the approach of many Montgomery critics, notably Thomas Tausky, who interprets the trilogy as "the fictionalized confession of a troubled personality alternating between confidence in creativity and despairing self-doubt." See "L.M. Montgomery and 'The Alpine Path, so hard, so steep,'" p. 5.

following questions: Does the method of narrative interplay succeed or fail? If it succeeds, what does it convey about the developing writer-heroine? I would argue that narrative interplay in the "Emily" trilogy does indeed succeed, and that it is the means by which Montgomery accomplishes two interconnected goals. The first is the revelation, in letters and diaries, of Emily's development as a writer. The second is the establishment of a "distance" between narrator and character that reveals the narrator's comic and/or sympathetic response to the writer-heroine, and initiates similar responses in the reader. In each of the three novels, the goals take a different form. In Emily of New Moon, Emily's manner of dealing through prose "with people, and often with situations in which she is in fact powerless,"¹¹ as well as her playful discovery of words, combines with a mature narrative voice that is gently ironic of her childish pretensions yet takes delight in her youthful innocence. In Emily Climbs, the young writer's evolving discoveries about her adolescent personality in the midst of her continued apprenticeship with words interplays with the voice of the "biographer-narrator" that cannot disguise its enthusiastic support for her vocation, nor its subtle revelations about the mysteries of adolescence. In Emily's Quest, the voice of an older, weary Emily, cynical even in the face of literary success, sounds against a narrative voice that is equally elegiac, yearning for bygone days of innocence and rapture, yet supportive in Emily's moments of despair. Montgomery's two narrative goals, proceeding from the interplay of the two distinctive voices in the trilogy, thus display, ultimately, her preoccupation with a more complex rendering of her writer-heroine: a several-sided portrait of the artist as a young woman.

¹¹ Munro, "Afterword," p. 359.

Montgomery's narrative method in the trilogy has not always met with favourable criticism. Writing in 1961, Sister M. Joanne of Christ (Gertrude McLaughlin) took issue with the "Emily" novels. Among the contrivances of the trilogy she cited the "annoying" presence of an intruding narrator ("[Montgomery's] style is most laboured when she is especially conscious of the reader for whom she is writing, as in the Emily books"¹²) and the confusing variety of narrative devices employed ("one finds ...soliloquies, letters, diaries, confidants, to show cause and inner motivation instead of the more direct psychological analysis one would find today").¹³ She explains her objection to the second point:

The Emily books are often praised as being L.M. Montgomery's best work. They are certainly her most conscientious effort, but they fail to produce the pleasing impression of her simpler works. The very profusion of methods used dissipates the unity, and by the same means destroys the truth. One never gets to know Emily because one is bewildered by the variety of presentations. Because so many ways are devised to make Emily live, she never does. She is shown in direct description by the author, by self-revelation in letters and diary and in long conversation with a confidant, Uncle Jimmy, Dean Priest or Mr. Carpenter, and in dialogue with the relatively few characters who share the pages with her, besides being talked over directly with the reader.¹⁴

At issue here is the critic's impression that Emily does not "live" in Montgomery's pages, despite her "self-revelation" in confidential mediums such as letter and diary. Emily, in short, is considered "too self-conscious."¹⁵ Jean Little reiterates this criticism in a slightly

¹² Sister Joanne of Christ, (Gertrude McLaughlin) "The Literary Art of L.M. Montgomery," M.A. thesis (University of Montreal, 1961), pp. 21, 24.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 22.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 30-31.

¹⁵ In a comment that insinuates that the creation of Emily is Montgomery's indulgence in literary vanity, Sister Joanne remarks: "L.M. Montgomery very evidently loves her creation who so closely resembles her in physical appearance, talent, and

milder tone in 1975: "Emily's outpourings, while often delightful, should have been cut in half, I think, for here ...Montgomery falls back on Emily's telling about things happening instead of letting the reader be there at the very instant."¹⁶

Proportionately, however, Emily's "autobiographical" narration forms a negligible part of the trilogy: one-sixth of Emily of New Moon, one-third of Emily Climbs, and one-ninth of Emily's Quest.¹⁷ Although the entries do not overwhelm by means of sheer quantity, they do provide a singularly "confessional" quality that is both illuminated and challenged by the trilogy's omniscient narration. While the confessional aspect may surprise some critics and readers unfavourably, it nevertheless provides for an interesting psychological portrait of the young female artist from the inside. Emily's letters and diaries provide access into the creative temperament of the developing writer. From the outset of Emily of New Moon, it is clear that Emily's personality, the essence of her character, is tied to her need to tell about things, to wrap events and feelings in appropriately descriptive words. Initially, she fulfils this need through fanciful entries in her old yellow account book and conversations with her sympathetic father; following his death, she resorts to her series of letters to him, and eventually to her "Jimmy-book" diary. In the final book of the trilogy, the familiar idea is reiterated yet again that "writing, to Emily Byrd Starr, was not primarily

ambition. But Emily lacks the ingenuity that would make her loveable. She is too self-conscious." Ibid., p. 70.

¹⁶ Jean Little, "But What About Jane," Canadian Children's Literature 1.3 (1975), p. 76.

¹⁷ The breakdown of Emily's narration is as follows: New Moon--pages 104-111, 135-142, 164-171, 186-198, 222-232, 263-269, 301-306, 355; Emily Climbs--pages 10-20, 22-42, 74-81, 103-119, 158-170, 212-228, 248-265, 318-329; Emily's Quest--pages 16-24, 55-56, 106-111, 131-135, 158-166.

a matter of worldly lucre or laurel crown. It was something she *had* to do. A thing--an idea--whether of beauty or ugliness, tortured her until it was "written out" (EQ, 8). Who Emily *is* is related to how she deals on paper with her world.

The first chapter of Emily of New Moon introduces the account book that serves as Emily's first means of interacting with her world through writing. The chapter is a wonderful example of omniscient narration that both captures experience through the eyes of the child and shifts suddenly to the adult perspective. Subsequent to a childish description of the Wind Woman "teasing the 'Rooster Pine' behind the house" (NM, 13) and prior to the comic revelation that Emily's last entry in her account book had been the "biograpy" of her cat Mike (NM, 14), the mature narrative voice gives the following description of Emily:

Nobody who saw Emily skimming over the bare field would have envied her. She was little and pale and poorly clad; sometimes she shivered in her thin jacket; yet a queen might have gladly given a crown for her visions--her dreams of wonder. (NM, 14)

Montgomery's skilful oscillation between points of view prevents this passage from appearing trite; indeed, such oscillation prepares the reader for the dual-voice method of narration in the trilogy by establishing a precedent of equality in terms of narrative voice: despite the "distance" between narrator and character, both "voices" are valid.

Montgomery maintains this distance by using the omniscient narrator to describe Emily's chronicling of her tribulations in her account book, rather than presenting the entries in Emily's own voice. The narrative voice thus introduces a pattern in which the act of recording events distances the child from them in a healing sense. Emily's account book, we learn from the narrator, contains her hurt reactions to situations beyond her control--the

departure of her Sunday school teacher, going to bed hungry, being ridiculed by Ellen Greene for her talk of the Wind Woman and the "flash"--incidents which, once recorded, cease to torment her. Later, the account book receives Emily's scornful caricature of the Murray conclave at her father's funeral, through which she assuages somewhat her anger and humiliation. The sarcastic rendering evidences the beginnings of Emily's artistic sensitivity to words, for the writing out of the situation demands the best of her descriptive powers, causing her to "[hunt] through her consciousness for a certain word she wanted" (NM, 51). These words are not presented to the reader, however, except for the narrator's recording of Emily's satisfaction in describing the irascible Aunt Ruth as "'a dumpy little woman'" (NM, 51).

The letter-bill epistles to Douglas Starr provide the first textual examples of Emily's literary response to her world.¹⁸ Although initially a means of achieving vindication through words, as the account book has been, the letters serve two other functions: they comprise the process by which Emily grieves for her father, and they further reveal the development of her artistic mind. The first of the letters--Emily's description of her confrontation with the malicious schoolteacher, Miss Brownell--is introduced by the narrator, in order to emphasize the continuing pattern of writing as a means of distancing immediate experience. Soon, however, the letters become the means by which Emily comes to terms with her father's death, a subject that "couldn't be written about" when she had first learned

¹⁸ Montgomery's comment in a letter to Weber (Nov. 1, 1924, p. 4) is an interesting aside at this point: "You ask if the device of Emily's letters to her dead father is original with me. Yes, as far as my knowledge goes ...I used to write letters myself in childhood to my dead mother."

of it from Ellen Greene (NM, 19):

The bitterness died out of her grief. Writing to him seemed to bring him so near; and she told him everything, with a certain honesty of confession that was characteristic of her--her triumphs, her failures, her joys, her sorrows, everything went down on the letter-bills of a Government which had not been so economical of paper as it afterwards became. (NM, 104)

The narrator's voice amuses the adult reader with its droll reference to paper wastage¹⁹ at the same time that it reflects the child's almost pathetic reliance on letters to a dead parent to expurgate her vividly-felt experiences. Emily's "Dear Father" salutation opens the floodgates of her beleaguered soul.

The twin sonorities of comedy and pathos are sounded in subsequent examples of Emily's letters--"which epistles," the narrator observes, "were steadily multiplying on the old garret sofa shelf" (NM, 135). Through her letters, Emily tries to make sense of school, New Moon, God, and relationships in general. Musing that she does not expect to die of consumption after all, because she is "getting much fatter" and has heard that she might be "handsome" if she "had more colour," she writes innocently: "Is it wrong to want to be handsome, dearest Father. Aunt Elizabeth says it is and when I said to her Wouldn't you like to be handsome, Aunt Elizabeth, she seemed anoyed about something" (NM, 190). The letters reveal Emily learning the "tradishuns" of New Moon, dealing with the taunts of other schoolgirls ("I could not be so crewel to an orfan girl" [NM, 167]), discovering the horrors of gossip amidst the excesses of Wyther Grange ("Oh, Father dear, I have found out all about the mystery of Ilse's mother. It's so terrible I can't write it down even to you" [NM,

¹⁹ This is an allusion, perhaps, to the "economy" necessitated by World War I, a conflict that postdates the events of the "Emily" trilogy, although not Montgomery's writing of it.

269]), and relating comical incidents of daily life ("I thought I would write this to you, dear Father, because it struck me as humerus" [NM, 197]). They also reveal the continuation of her grieving process: "P.S. Dear Father, it is lovely to write to you. But O, I never get an answer back" (NM, 198).

More significantly, perhaps, the letters demonstrate Emily's increasing facility with language. With a writer's ear for dialogue, she reproduces in her letters the phrases she hears around her. In reference to Miss Brownell, she informs her father, "I don't like the cut of her jib. (That's a naughtical frays that Cousin Jimmy uses)" (NM, 106-107). She records Aunt Elizabeth's appalled reaction when she appropriates Dr. Burnley's phrase "devilishly pretty" (NM, 138), an expression that the young writer tells her diary on several occasions is "wikked but striking" (NM, 106). Equally fascinated by Ilse Burnley's speech, she records their pungent quarrels: "Ilse said I was a caterwawling quadruped (which was ridiklus) and didn't know enough to come in when it rained" (NM, 192). A partner, along with Ilse, in the invention of a new language, Emily is equally attuned to the distinctiveness of individual words. Wishing that Ilse "wouldn't clapper-claw Perry so much," she adds that "(Clapper-claw is a word I learned from Aunt Nancy. Very striking, I think)" (NM, 304). Browsing through her father's old books, she marks in pencil "every beautiful word," including "dingles, pearled, musk, dappled, intervalles, glen, bosky, piping, shimmer, crisp, beechen, ivory" (NM, 196). She coins the word "smee" as the precise adjective to describe her cat, Mike II (NM, 193). With the help of a dictionary from Aunt Elizabeth and instruction from Miss Brownell in the finer arts of punctuation ("Miss Brownell is sarkastic but she *does* teach you things" [NM, 195]), she manages gradually to upgrade her

manipulation of language.

The interplay of the omniscient narrative voice with Emily's childish one reveals the distance between the self-assured young writer and the quality of the "inspired" poems she produces. Some of these poems she includes in letters to her father (such as "Lines Addressed to a blue-eyed-grass flower gathered in the Old Orchard" [NM, 140]); others, she sends out to magazines with rapturous visions of publication dancing in her head. She decides to submit her poem "Evening Dreams" to the "Poet's Corner" of the Charlottetown Enterprise, reasoning that her offerings are "quite as good" as any of those printed in the paper--"as probably they were," the narrative voice counters dryly, "for most of the Enterprise poems were sad trash" (NM, 317). When Emily searches the Saturday edition and finds "not a sign of an Evening Dream about it!"²⁰ the narrator describes the young aspirant's bitter disappointment in terms that are punningly comic to the reader, but "horribly real and tragic" to Emily (NM, 318). Emily "[drains] the draught of failure to the very dregs," and finds, during the straining of the evening milk in the dairy, that "the savour had gone out of the world. Even the milky splendour of the still, mild winter evening and the purple bloom over the hillside woods that presaged a thaw could not give her the accustomed soul-thrill" (NM, 318).

The full sympathy of the narrative voice embraces Emily, however, in reference to the hurtful but inevitable process by which she comes to reject many of her poems:

Every time she came to read her little hoard of manuscripts over she found some of which the fairy gold had unaccountably turned to withered leaves, fit

²⁰ Montgomery uses this phrase in her journal to describe her own reaction to her first magazine rejection--of a poem entitled "Evening Dreams" (Journal I pp. 258-60).

only for the burning. Emily burned them,--but it hurt her a little. Outgrowing things we love is never a pleasant process. (NM, 319)

The narrator elicits the same sort of unmixed sympathy when Emily realizes she must abandon the writing of letter-bill epistles to her father. A confrontation of wills pits Aunt Elizabeth's sense of proprietary betrayal (at her discovery of the letter-bills that reveal Emily's dislike for her) against Emily's indignant outrage (at the violation of her "*private papers*"). For a precarious moment, the two stand "not as child and adult, but as two human beings with hatred for the other in her heart" (NM, 326). Both soon feel remorse, however, and approach each other for forgiveness. Emily, eager for her aunt's love, adds "explanatory footnotes" to the letters as a tangible means of redressing her action, but subsequently makes the hurtful discovery that the writing of the letters no longer means anything to her.

The narrative voice is gently understanding:

Perhaps she had been outgrowing it gradually, as childhood began to merge into girlhood--perhaps the bitter scene with Aunt Elizabeth had only shaken into dust something out of which the spirit had already departed. But, whatever the explanation, it was not possible to write such letters any more. She missed them terribly, but she could not go back to them. A certain door of life was shut behind her and could not be reopened. (NM, 330)

There is this same touch of melancholy realism in the narrative voice when it speaks of life at New Moon after the quarrel: "It would be pleasant to be able to record that after the reconciliation in the look-out Emily and Aunt Elizabeth lived in entire amity and harmony. But the truth was that things went on pretty much the same as before" (NM, 331).

The narrative voice in Emily of New Moon that "records" Emily's life and refers to

her story as a "history"²¹ becomes, in Emily Climbs, the self-defined voice of a "biographer." Such an appellation may signify nothing but Montgomery's indulgence in Victorian stylization.²² Conversely, it may suggest something more. Judith Miller, for example, argues convincingly for a reappraisal of Emily Climbs in terms of "juxtapositions of voices and silences."²³ Although Miller's insightful comments acknowledge, in passing, a "narrator" in Emily Climbs,²⁴ she does not address the issue of the narrator as "biographer," nor the implications that such a distinction might have for a novel in which the device of diary entries is prominent. The "biographer" distinction is significant in part, of course, as a device by which Montgomery sanctions the fictional representation of a female artist according to the long-standing literary tradition of "biographical authority," with the diary entries serving as "sources." In a related and more important sense, the notion of an intrusive "biographer" plays with the concept of omniscient narration by making explicit and opinionated the narrative voice that had been implicit and descriptive in Emily of New

²¹ "There was a large bundle of letters by now on the old sofa shelf in the garret--for Emily had written many letters to her father besides those that have been chronicled in this history" (NM, 324).

²² Sister Joanne of Christ, "The Literary Art of L.M. Montgomery," p. 24.

²³ Miller argues that through the "silences" of the text Montgomery "conveys to the reader a different evaluation" from Emily's own of the "possible models, teachers and mentors" that influence her in her search for her own authorial voice. See "Montgomery's Emily: Voices and Silences," p. 158. Miller's is the only article to date to present a defense of Montgomery's narrative technique in the "Emily" novels. The upcoming second volume of Gabriella Åhmansson's dissertation, however, promises to explore "the place of the narrator" in the "Emily" books and The Blue Castle, with emphasis on "the fact that Montgomery has experimented with continuous shifts in points of view, blending her own voice and her own texts with those of her female protagonists." See the summary reference in A Life and Its Mirrors, vol. I, p. 168.

²⁴ Åhmansson, A Life and Its Mirrors, pp. 158, 160, 162.

Moon.²⁵ As such, the "biographer's" voice in Emily Climbs is the means by which Montgomery calls particular attention to her heroine, to elicit either comic or sympathetic responses from the reader.

Montgomery's self-styled "biographer" opens the second chapter of Emily Climbs with a defense of Emily's diary as a narrative sourcebook:

This book is not going to be wholly, or even mainly, made up of extracts from Emily's diary; but, by way of linking up matters unimportant enough for a chapter in themselves, and yet necessary for a proper understanding of her personality and environment, I am going to include some more of them. Besides, when one has material ready to hand, why not use it? Emily's diary, with all its youthful crudities and italics, really gives us a better interpretation of her and of her imaginative and introspective mind ...than any biographer, however sympathetic, could do. (EC, 22).

There is a sense here that the daily happenings of Emily's life ("matters unimportant enough for a chapter in themselves") merit exploration because they are revelatory of the artist's "personality and environment." Such, indeed, is the premise behind the academic study of the diaries of famous figures, and perhaps Montgomery attempts imaginatively to augment her character's artistic status by having readers join with the "biographer" in perusing the "material ready to hand": "the yellowed pages of that old 'Jimmy-book,' written long ago in the 'look-out' of New Moon" (EC, 22). In any case, the diary is consciously offered by the biographer-narrator as a source, an interpretive tool towards the understanding of the

²⁵ Along these lines is a third, markedly less-developed purpose for the biographer-narrator—one, indeed, with the greatest potential for reader interest: the "biographer's" revelation of an older Emily's own sense of nostalgia. This heightened sense of dual time occurs when the narrator describes the adolescent Emily buying particular books with the money she receives for the publication of a story ("The Woman Who Spanked the King"), and then refers to the older Emily's "present" feelings about these books: "Emily has those Parkmans yet--somewhat faded and frayed now, but dearer to her than all the other volumes in her library" (EC, 267).

"imaginative and introspective mind" of the developing female artist.

The diary that Emily begins on a clean white page at the close of New Moon becomes the central focus of Emily Climbs. The longing for artistic immortality that lies behind the child's final words in New Moon ("I am going to write a diary, that it may be published when I die" [NM, 355]) still informs the adolescent writer, though its tone is perhaps less brazen and more introspective: "in my diary, which nobody sees but myself, or will ever see until after I'm dead, I just like to let myself go" (EC, 20). The first chapter of Emily Climbs, entitled "Writing Herself Out," presents Emily alone in her room, "letting herself go" in a brand-new Jimmy-book diary, and feeling--as the narrator says, with a hint of nostalgia--"as happy as any human being is permitted to be" (EC, 9). The diary is "a dominant factor in [Emily's] young, vivid life" (EC, 9), and provides an outlet--as the narrator sympathetically acknowledges--for the trials of adolescence: "even in the magic years when one is almost fourteen one has problems and worries" (EC, 9-10). To the diary Emily can trust, as to "a personal friend and safe confidant," matters "too combustible" to reveal to human ears (EC, 10).

The diary entries in Emily Climbs differ almost categorically from the letters to Douglas Starr in the first book of the trilogy. Gone are the spelling mistakes that amuse both reader and narrator; gone are the appropriations of overheard phrases; gone are the retributory banishings of enemies into uncomfortable and unlikely imaginative settings. Instead, the entries reveal the female adolescent mind in the throes of discovering itself and the complexities of its world. The discovery is increasingly interactive of Emily's emotional and artistic selves, and her language is simultaneously passionate, analytical, and youthfully

optimistic. She still delights in vibrant vocabulary. "exult[ing] as a jewel-seeker" when she discovers "a new, charming word," but her interest has grown past the mere recording of such words: she is "unhappy" until she has "set" the word, jeweller-like, "in a sentence" (EC, 167). The style of her entries displays a growing predilection for the keen-edged humour of juxtapositions, which she applies almost innocently to her descriptions of words, people, and situations. She senses that "big words" such as "'incriminating'--'obstreperous'--'international'--'unconstitutional'" are garish in their pretensions: they remind her of vulgar flowers, like the "horrible big dahlias and chrysanthemums" at a Charlottetown exhibition she had attended with Cousin Jimmy (EC, 12). Self-conscious of the writing habits that Mr. Carpenter has told her unequivocally to cast out (italics, and the predilection for wandering from her topic), she nevertheless bars the comment that reveals the discrepancy between his speech and his actions: "He says I *must* (the italics are his this time!) learn to concentrate--another big word and a very ugly one" (EC, 12). An older Emily, in the final chapter of Emily Climbs, has developed more fully the technique of transcribing juxtapositions into humorous prose:

One of my wonder moments came to me--it seemed that I got out of my body and was *free*--I'm sure I heard an echo of that 'random word' of the gods--and I wanted some unused language to express what I saw and felt.

Enter Andrew, spic and span, prim and gentlemanly.

Fauns--fairies--wonder moments--random words--fled pell-mell. No new language was needed now. (EC, 318-19)

Emily has a new sense, in the middle book of the trilogy, of the interpenetration of language and experience. In her diary, she defends her writing of a story against Aunt Elizabeth's accusation that the activity constitutes "wasting time": "it *wasn't* wasted time. I *grew* in it--I know I did" (EC, 24). Where she had merely experienced the "flash" as a child,

she can muse as an adolescent in her diary about the singularity of this artistic moment: how her first consciousness of it at the age of eight years continues to reveal its beauty in her memory every spring, even though "[n]o one else remembers" the "tiny, bright-green" leaves that had given her the feeling, and "perhaps no one else ever saw them" (EC, 42). She has an increased awareness of the momentousness of the daily life that surrounds her. In a diary tirade against Mrs. Alec Sawyer's claim that "nothing ever happens" in Blair Water, Emily conscientiously writes out all the local stories that she can remember having occurred "in just the last three weeks--comedy and tragedy all mixed up together" (EC, 30). She ends her account with the incident for which "[a] kingdom might have been upset in Europe": her own dropping of "a soft-boiled egg on Aunt Elizabeth's second best cashmere dress" (EC, 31). She may have forsaken her childish belief in "wood elves," but she has not lost the ability to be "incredulous" about her life (EC, 112).

Part of Emily's new awareness is the mature realization--one she shares with the narrator--that the act of writing distances one from the gloriousness of artistic conception as well as from pain.

Nothing ever seems as big or as terrible--oh, nor as beautiful and grand either, alas!--when it is written out, as it does when you are thinking about it. It seems to *shrink* directly you put it into words. Even the line of poetry I had made just before I asked that absurd question [of the new Blair Water minister] won't seem half as fine when I write it down:

"Where the velvet feet of darkness softly go."

It *doesn't*. Some bloom seems gone from it. (EC, 16-17)

The inherent truth of this perception stands behind the narrator's manipulation of Emily's language, in certain instances, for comic effect. Her grand sentences, so lovely in conception, are often foolish on the page. Canvassing for subscriptions in the countryside,

Emily murmurs a clichéd phrase about the dawn, and "Then," as the astounded narrator observes, "she pulled her Jimmy-book out of her bag and wrote the sentence down!" (EC, 183). When she receives the thin envelope that tells her of her first poetry publication, Emily again tries to force the natural world into the ecstatic language of her soul: the snow-covered fir trees along her path look to her "as if ...a veil of aerial lace had been tricksily flung over austere young Druid priestesses forsworn to all such frivolities of vain adornment. Emily decided she would write that sentence down in her Jimmy-book when she went back" (EC, 137). As in Emily of New Moon, however, Emily's voice is validated by the narrator's. Even as it amuses itself at her expense, the narrative voice acknowledges the legitimacy of Emily's emotion: "It was the first sweet bubble on the cup of her success and we must not think her silly if it intoxicated her" (EC, 136).

With an insight more mature than her years, the adolescent Emily links her artistic sense of "something not quite captured"--Emerson's "'random word' ...the *Something* that escapes me" (EC, 18)--with the gaps and blanks in the lives of the people she sees around her. Cousin Jimmy is such a person, with his "spots" of cleverness and the terrible "gaps between" those spots that keep him "simple" in the minds of his neighbours (EC, 18). Mad Mr. Morrison is another such character; despite Emily's desperate fear of him, she knows that his queerness proceeds from grief at the sudden loss of his young wife: "her voice flits on before him--always before him, like my random word" (EC, 19). People, in Emily's diary, are studies in human nature, and she records them honestly, with an uneasy mixture of satisfaction and hesitancy at her ability to probe things hidden and secretive. She quotes Aunt Elizabeth's comment that "somehow it doesn't seem quite right for so young a girl as

you, to--to--to be able to see these things, in short" and admits that she "can't help seeing them" (EC, 26). What she sees are the unspoken pretences and failings of life, from the counterfeit emotions at a funeral (relatives "holding their handkerchiefs to their faces and pretending to cry" [EC, 26]), to the drunken weakness of a farmhand, whom she refrains from reporting to her aunt out of concern for the welfare of the man's wife and children. She records that her silence about the latter incident constitutes what she "thinks" is a "good deed" (she begins her journal with the intention of chronicling honestly both proper and improper actions), but is forced to admit the difficulty of applying morality to life: "I find it is not always easy to be sure whether your deeds are good or bad" (EC, 27). Within months she has given up the habit of recording her good and bad deeds because "so many of my doings were half-and-half. I never could decide in what class they belonged" (EC, 114).

The sense of ambivalence, of the "half-and-half" of insights and deeds, is shared by the narrative voice that alternates with Emily's in Emily Climbs. Significantly, the narrator tends almost invariably to oscillate in favour of Emily, whether by attempting to shirk authorial responsibility for her deeds, or by offering half-hearted reproofs that conceal only partially the tickled sense of humour beneath. On various occasions when the young girl's urge to write causes her to transgress New Moon rules, the narrator's attempt to take a proper moral stand about the incident fizzles into a defense of the writer-heroine. Of the half-burned candle that Emily resurrects late one night to capture an idea, the narrator admits: "It was not, of course, a proper thing to do," but then qualifies the admission significantly: "But I have never pretended, nor ever will pretend, that Emily was a proper

child. Books are not written about proper children. They would be so dull nobody would read them" (EC, 21). When Emily makes a similar use of candlelight at Aunt Ruth's, the narrator speculates that the Shrewbury aunt would likely frown on the action as proof of "slyness," but then refuses to embrace such an unequivocal verdict: "Perhaps it was sly. Remember that I am only Emily's biographer, not her apologist" (EC, 123).

When a still older Emily wreaks a private revenge on Cousin Andrew by being "markedly gracious" to him in an entirely feigned manner, the narrator creates a comic response in the reader by attempting--rather desperately and unsuccessfully--to reprove Emily.

Again, I call attention to the fact that I am Emily's biographer, not her apologist. If she took a way to get even with Andrew which I may not approve, what can I do but deplore it? For my own satisfaction, however, I may remark in passing that I do think Emily went too far when she told Andrew--after his report of some comments his manager had paid him--that he was certainly a wonder. I cannot even excuse her by saying that she spoke in sarcastic tones. She did not: she said it most sweetly with an upward glance followed by a downward one that made even Andrew's well-regulated heart skip a beat. Oh, Emily, Emily! (EC, 290)

In yet another scene--the evening when an "impudent" Perry kisses an unsuspecting Emily just as Aunt Ruth descends the staircase-- the biographer's intrusion arrests the action with perfect comic effect that again results from an attempt to appear provoked: "This is one of the places where a conscientious biographer feels that, in the good old phrase, her pen cannot do justice to the scene" (EC, 236). The biographer "sympathizes" with Aunt Ruth's perspective, admitting "it *did* look bad" and urging the reader to accept the inevitable: "I think we can hardly blame Aunt Ruth for righteous indignation" (EC, 236). When the narrator does chastise Emily at the scene's end ("I haven't one word of pity or excuse for

her" [EC, 238]), the admonishment comes in response not to the scene with Perry, but to Emily's arrogance in staunchly refusing an explanation to Aunt Ruth. This same arrogance is often an excuse for further narrative chuckles, however, as in the description that follows Emily's angry, several-mile march back to New Moon after having been locked out of Aunt Ruth's home for disobedience. Desperate to hold on to her anger, Emily nevertheless succumbs to Cousin Jimmy's proffered donut: "This time Emily took the doughnut. She might as well have some comfort. Now, you can't eat doughnuts and remain dramatic. Try it" (EC, 150).

The narrative voice in Emily Climbs that delights in Emily's escapades is equally skilled in revealing instances in which she is assuredly not in control of her adolescent life. Experience is capricious, the narrator seems to say, and adolescence is sometimes full of terror and humiliation; sometimes, perversely, the other side of terror is delight, and the flipside of humiliation is self-knowledge. Chapters three and four of Emily Climbs demonstrate these respective juxtapositions through an interplay of Emily's voice with that of the narrator, thereby creating a distance between character and narrator that is provocative both of sympathy and of comedy. In the course of these chapters, Emily is the powerless recipient of uncomfortable experiences that the narrative voice nevertheless turns to Emily's advantage, by demonstrating how they mature, in profound ways, her sense of herself.

Chapter three locates Emily at an evening prayer meeting, at the end of which she is accidentally locked in the church, chased by Mad Mr. Morrison, and rescued "heroically" by Teddy. The chapter masterfully creates an amalgam of abject fear and romantic

revelation that Emily later muses will make quite a thrilling diary entry. (The reader never does see her own full account of it.) Montgomery's narrator opens the chapter with obscure language that seems to presage the occurrence of a female rite of passage:

Some of us can recall the exact time in which we reached certain milestones on life's road--the wonderful hour when we passed from childhood to girlhood--the enchanted, beautiful--or perhaps the shattering and horrible--hour when girlhood was suddenly womanhood--the chilling hour when we faced the fact that youth was definitely behind us--the peaceful, sorrowful hour of the realisation of age. Emily Starr never forgot the night when she passed the first milestone, and left childhood behind her for ever. (EC, 43)

The narrator's obliquely-described stages of female life seem to correspond respectively to menstruation, loss of virginity, menopause, and old age, but the narrator chooses to deal only with the "wonderful hour" when childhood becomes girlhood: namely, Emily's first menstruation. ²⁶

Montgomery handles this distinctly sexual subject entirely through the understatement of the narrative voice, by means of analog and euphemistic symbol. The analog is constituted by Emily's own thoughts, which reveal her "speculat[ing] on the histories written in mysterious hieroglyphics" on the "varied faces" around her, and feeling an uneasy sense of "trespass" or "sacrilege" at the knowledge that she is not merely "guessing" but "pass[ing] into their souls and read[ing] therein hidden motives and passions that were, perhaps, a mystery even to their possessors" (EC, 45). The narrator, too, is "speculating" on an experience that is "a mystery" to Emily, and is perhaps even committing "sacrilege"--in the Canadian milieu of 1925, when Emily Climbs was published--by alluding to a subject as

²⁶ I owe the insights about menstruation to Tünde Nemeth's unpublished graduate essay, "Subtexts of Transformation: A Barthesian Reading of Three Women's Novels" (Carleton University, 1986), p. 15.

taboo as menstruation. The symbols by which the narrator further euphemizes the rite of passage appear simultaneously when Emily reaches out for the railing of the stair and instead touches the hairy coat of Mad Mr. Morrison's black dog: she sees the dog's eyes "blazing redly at her," turns "physically sick" with fear, and consciously masters this fear with "unchild-like...determination" about which the narrator remarks, "I think it was at that moment Emily wholly ceased to be a child" (EC, 52).²⁷ The terrified Emily's subsequent flight from Mad Mr. Morrison--who is known to follow young girls and "caress" them in the mistaken assumption that they are his dead bride--is highly suggestive of attempted rape, yet another taboo subject.²⁸

The narrator circumvents a violent scenario, of course, by introducing "Teddy's voice calling to [Emily] from the steps outside the outer door" of the church (EC, 55). In an abrupt reversal of Emily's previous horror, the Mad Mr. Morrison who faces Teddy's angry challenge is "[a]ll at once...not wild or violent--only a heart-broken man who sought his own" (EC, 56). Similarly, Emily is transformed from the helpless victim in an unnatural sexual pursuit to the shy but willing participant in the mysteries of the elusive new world of young

²⁷ These symbols are cited by Nemeth in Ibid.

²⁸ Nemeth suggests that the chase proposes the possibility that Emily--having already passed from childhood to girlhood by means of menstruation--might also have to endure the "shattering and horrible--hour when girlhood was suddenly womanhood" (EC, 43): namely, loss of virginity by means of rape (Ibid., 16). Nemeth points out that the images associated with Mad Mr. Morrison are "penile" ones: the "gray head thrust forward" and the "blood-red hand" (Ibid.). The text itself supports the attempted-rape scenario with the assertions that the senile old man does not let his victims go until they are "rescued by some other person" and that the victims are, nevertheless, severely traumatized: "[i]t was said that Mary Paxton of Derry Pond had never been the same again" after being subjected to the forceable caresses of Morrison: "her nerves never recovered from the shock" (EC, 55).

love. The narrative voice aptly captures Emily's confusion and delight at nestling in Teddy's arms and hearing him whisper that she is "the sweetest girl in the world" (EC, 59). It is to the adult woman reader that the narrator then turns, with impish candour that both mocks Emily's experience and validates it:

The words have been said so often by so many millions of lads to so many millions of lasses, that they ought to be worn to tatters. But when you hear them for the first time, in some magic hour of your teens, they are as new and fresh and wondrous as if they had just drifted over the hedges of Eden. Madam, whoever you are, and however old you are, be honest, and admit that the first time you heard those words on the lips of some shy sweetheart, was the great moment of your life. (EC, 59)

Admitting how negative words can affect her with equal impact is the challenge Emily faces in chapter four of Emily Climbs, when she finds herself the comically unwilling eavesdropper on a conversation in which she herself is the object of discussion. Averse, for pride's sake, to have herself seen in a "Mother Hubbard"--the billowing housedress in which she had been sanding the kitchen floor--she hides in a boot closet and accidentally overhears the gossiped comments of two neighbour women who enter the New Moon kitchen. The narrative voice sets the comic tone by correcting its initial demonstration of sympathy for Emily to an expression of blandly righteous retribution for the young girl's prideful action: "Poor Emily--no, no, we must not call her poor Emily; she does not deserve pity--she has been very silly and is served exactly right; Emily, then, already violently perspiring in her close quarters, agreed wholly with [Mrs. Ann Cyrilla that the day was hot]" (EC, 68). The narrator reports Emily's thoughts parenthetically, in stage direction fashion--"*(Emily, wrathfully:...*)," "*(Emily, sarcastically:....)*" (EC, 69)--with the same farcical effect that later distinguishes Emily's first meeting with Janet Royal and the unruly dog that each assumes

belongs to the other. The reader may be amused, but the gossip of the neighbour women leaves Emily humiliated and "soiled"; only the "writing out" of the experience in her diary makes her feel "clean" once more (EC, 74). Through the diary entry, she attempts to view the incident--and the faults attributed to her by the gossipers--"dispassionately" (EC, 74).²⁹ The reader has the sense that Emily needs just such an imposition of self-analysis, both to alert her to her typically adolescent pretensions, and to oscillate her towards optimism again. She admits in a parenthetical comment at the beginning of the entry, "(I think I am going to find this interesting!)" (EC, 75); by the end of the entry, she has determined that she cannot "live in other people's opinions," and that she believes in herself "[a]fter all": "I'm not so bad and silly as they think me, and I'm not consumptive, and I *can* write" (EC, 80).

It is perhaps this very sense of oscillation towards optimism that Emily--and the narrator--of the third book of the trilogy seem to lack. Emily's Quest differs markedly from the two preceding "Emily" novels, both in its presentation of Emily's voice in the diaries and in the "distance" between the voices of the narrator and the writer-heroine. Emily's diary entries are shorter, fewer, discontinuous in nature, and written as spontaneous outpourings rather than studied--albeit adolescent--reflections. They serve no longer as "sources" toward the development of the female artist, but as a deep reservoir for the overflow of oppressive feelings--as had the letters to Douglas Starr in Emily's childhood. The narrative voice

²⁹ Montgomery herself had indulged in such an exercise of self-evaluation after reading the 1920 autobiography of Margot Tennant Asquith (second wife of Great Britain's Prime Minister H.H. Asquith). "Mrs. Asquith's analysis of herself" prompted Montgomery to "describe and analyze" her own appearance and personality, an endeavour she anticipated would be "amusing and interesting." (See the Journal II entry for December 13, 1920, pp. 391-94, and the editors' note on p. 433.)

changes too, with the abandoning of the enthusiastic "biographer-narrator" distinction for a rather weary, sometimes peevish, omniscient narrator. From the outset of the novel, both voices sound an intrinsically melancholy timbre (a note that is further reinforced in a symbolic sense by the major structural change in Emily's Quest that sees Montgomery's lively chapter titles disappear in favour of numbered chapters and numbered sub-divisions within each chapter). This shared sense of melancholy occasions, in part, a narrowing of the distance between the two narrative voices.

In a related sense, the narrowing of distance also proceeds from two elements of the plot. Firstly, of course, Emily's Quest deals with a young woman rather than a child or adolescent. The increased maturity of the heroine diminishes--but does not quite exclude--the narrative possibilities for the type of gently mocking comedy that offers the heroine's pretensions as a private joke to the reader and narrator. Secondly, Emily's Quest, more so than either of its predecessors, is predicated on a specific type of closure: namely, the happy ending that unites Emily and Teddy in marriage. Since frustration and postponement are integral to this element of the plot, the narrative voice cannot "signpost" events, or make itself overly omniscient about the method by which the required happy ending will transpire: rather, it must style itself, in large part, as an echo of Emily's own mind, following the contours of her changeable and often despairing views of both career and love.

The correspondence between the voices of narrator and character, however, is not absolute, despite the fact that the former often seems as inwardly turned as the latter, for whom New Moon often seems merely a backdrop for psychological introspection and the private inner drama of nearly-unrequited love. The narrative voice does differentiate itself

from Emily's; significantly, such differentiation occurs as a means of counteracting the bleakness of the writer-heroine's outlook. When despair threatens to overtake Emily, the narrative voice acknowledges the emotion as valid, yet gently signals an alternative viewpoint. There is a sense, however, in which the narrator receives Emily's melancholy attitude toward her vocation with more sympathy than her melancholy preoccupation with love and its attendant heartaches. The narrative voice that details Emily's weary discouragement in her vocation sympathizes fully with the young writer's pain; indeed, there is little distinction between the voices. In subtle contrast, the narrator often wields a "fickle" pen to differentiate itself from Emily on matters of love, sometimes mocking, and other times sympathizing with Emily's experiences of love. It is perhaps for this reason that, although Emily's Quest presents more textual cues for sympathetic response than either of the two previous novels, the novel's sense of narrative tends generally to distance the reader—with the exception of the rare passages in which it indulges its old delight in the passionate Emily.

Although the melancholy nature of the narrative does not necessarily diminish its authenticity in presenting a portrait of the female artist in a particular stage of life, the reader senses that Montgomery's narrator must strain toward the optimism that was integral to the two previous "Emily" novels. Early in the first chapter, a paragraph that promises the description of a young Emily "filled with joy in life's mere existence" details instead obstacle after obstacle in her "hard struggle": offended neighbours, rejection slips, editorial condescension, days of mediocrity and bitter disbelief in the poetry of life, days when even the "'random word' of the gods" mocks her listening ear (EQ, 9). Emily is a writer both by

"right divine" and by desire, yet the "immortal" dreams that she attempts to translate to the page are nevertheless dreams that are "lost" (EQ, 8). She is a young woman at "the enchanted portal of seventeen" (EQ, 10), but "Life at New Moon ha[s] changed. She must adjust herself to it. A certain loneliness must be reckoned with" (EQ, 12). The narrator describes the year after Mr. Carpenter dies as passing "quietly, pleasantly" for Emily, but then adds that it also passes, "though she tried to stifle the thought, a little monotonously" (EQ, 33). She experiences "hours of rapture and insight," but they are occasions that must "shed a glory backward and forward" to compensate for hours of black doubt (EQ, 40).

Emily's own voice echoes the narrator's uncommonly pessimistic attitude. In a manner that is almost regressive in its imitation of childhood, Emily assigns her diary the function of her old yellow account book: she admits that the "chief use of a diary, I believe" is to expel "resentment and rebellion and discouragement [from one's] system" (EQ, 20). The diary transforms from the fertile artistic training ground it had been in Emily Climbs to a rather desperate outlet for frustration ("I feel lustreless, dowdy and uninviting--I even bore myself" [EQ, 159]). The new awarenesses of the middle book of the trilogy--the young artist's musings on the unknown lives of people around her, and the maturing sense of the disparity between words and actions, artistic conception and the written word--seem almost to abandon the Emily of Emily's Quest. She does muse once, in her old accustomed manner, about "[w]hyfrog [is] such a funny, dear, charming absurd word," but the musing follows upon the disturbing thought that the "flash" might desert her entirely, leaving her "nothing but 'the light of common day'" (EQ, 165). Even the lush, Wordsworthian descriptions of nature that had fed the young Emily's sense of beauty no longer move her

in the old way; indeed, the appearance of such descriptions in the diary is the exception (accompanying a significant event like the writing of The Seller of Dreams, for instance) rather than the rule. Indeed, the diary that had been a friend and confidant for Emily's awakening wonder in the mysteries of adolescence and vocation now becomes primarily an avenue for solace when "gloom settles on [her] soul"³⁰: "there are hours when sheer loneliness wrings the stamina out of me. In such moments I come to this old journal for comforting. It's like talking it out to a faithful friend" (EQ, 132).³¹

Emily's attitude in her diary to her writing is curiously self-deprecating, despite the fact that it is in this novel that her artistic vocation receives its greatest validation, the publication of The Moral of the Rose. Nearly gone from Emily's Quest are the raptures of New Moon and Emily Climbs that had accompanied the creation and publication of earlier poems; almost gone, indeed, is the unflagging self-confidence of the child/adolescent who had an assured foot upon her Alpine Path. In the first diary entry in Emily's Quest, Emily

³⁰ The following particularly desolate entry in Emily's diary corresponds almost exactly to a passage in Montgomery's letter to G.B. MacMillan, January 8, 1908: [W]hen night comes down early, gloom settles on my soul. I can't describe the feeling. It is dreadful--far worse than any actual pain. In so far as I can express it in words I feel a great and awful weariness--not of body or brain but of *feeling*, coupled with a haunting dread of the future--*any* future--even a happy one--nay, a happy one most of all, for in this strange mood it seems to me that to be happy would require more effort--more buoyancy than I shall possess. (EQ, 161)

See My Dear Mr. M: Letters to G.B. MacMillan, pp. 36-37.

³¹ On February 7, 1910 (the last journal entry in the first Oxford volume), Montgomery writes: "I have come to the last page of this book, and I feel a curious regret as if I were parting from some real old friend and confidant. This book *has* been a friend to me. Without it I verily believe I should have gone under" (Journal I, p. 393).

mentions her newly published poem only because it has been set on its own page and illustrated: "I consider the occasion worthy of mention in my diary because [it is] ...the first time any poem of mine was so honoured" (EQ, 16). For the poem itself she seems to have only scorn, admitting that "[i]t is trashy enough in itself, I suppose": only the mediocre illustrations that surround it on the page might permit "a careless reader [to] fancy there was something in it" (EQ, 16). This is the Emily who now prefers to sit and read not in her beloved "look-out," delighting as before in the "tang" and inspiring "flash" of lovely words, but in an Old Mortality-like graveyard, about which she admits: "I can never feel either much exalted or much depressed there. The sting and the tang alike go out of things" (EQ, 17). When her beloved manuscript, A Seller of Dreams, is rejected by three successive publishers, she "wr[ites] bitterly in her diary" a tirade against ambition:

Ambition! I could laugh[!] Where is my ambition now? What is it like to be ambitious? To feel that life is before you, a fair, unwritten page where you may inscribe your name in letters of success? To feel that you have the wish and power to win your crown? To feel the coming years are crowding to meet you and lay their largess at your feet? I *once* knew what it was to feel so. (EQ, 55-56)

In moments of such black self-doubt, however, the narrative voice distinguishes itself from Emily's in the manner familiar from the previous novels: it validates Emily's emotion while simultaneously exposing the limited vision of that emotion. Following the bitter outburst about A Seller of Dreams, the narrator recognizes Emily's melancholy as the overly dramatic exaggeration of youth that cannot see the future beyond its pain, but also, simply, as pain: "All of which goes to show how young Emily still was. But agony is none the less real because in later years when we have learned that everything passes, we wonder what we agonized about. She had a bad three weeks of it" (EQ, 56).

The narrator is equally sympathetic, but somehow more comically scornful, of Emily's reactions to her love affairs. When Dean begins to impose himself as a potential suitor, the narrator records that Emily awakens in the night "moan[ing] in a despair that was none the less real and painful because of the fact that thirty years later she might be wondering what on earth she had been moaning about" (EQ, 38). When, following her fall down the New Moon staircase, Emily decides to marry Dean and assures her aunt that her soul has become old and wise during the winter of her convalescence, the narrator uncovers Emily's pretentiousness: "Laura also knew that this very feeling old and wise merely proved Emily's youth. People who *are* old and wise never feel either" (EQ, 67). When Emily falls in love with a romantic parody of a man whose words "sho[o]t her clean through the heart--like the unfortunate little duck of the nursery rhyme," the narrator enjoys the ensuing comedy, and comments: "I believe his beautiful and romantic name was Aylmer Vincent" (EQ, 44). Emily's subsequent falling out of love is equally amusing to the narrator:

She tried to pretend the old enchantment still existed. She tried to thrill and dream and blush. Nary thrill, nary blush. Her dark-eyed lover--*why* had it never struck her before that his eyes were exactly like a cow's--bored her. Ay, bored her. She yawned one evening in the midst of one of his fine speeches. There was nothing to add to that. (EQ, 45)

There is even a barb of satire in the narrator's description of Emily's agony at her prideful rejection of Teddy's whistled call: "Oh, how thankful she felt that she had been firm enough not to go. For which reason, no doubt, her pillow was wet with savage tears" (EQ, 174).

The narrative voice, however, indulges in "stolen moments" of genuine sympathy that reveal the acute longing of Emily's attraction to Teddy. As the two sit together on the

banks of Blair Water--having met there accidentally on their separate sunrise walks--the narrative voice allows Emily a moment of decidedly un-Victorian sexual attraction. As she drinks in the opulent, romantic scenery that mirrors her own exquisitely painful delight ("[t]he wild blue irises around the pond, the violet shadows in the curves of the dunes...the cool, delicious gulf breeze, the blue of far lands beyond the harbour"), she feels "the magnetic attraction of his personality," and "admit[s] to herself with a secret candour that would have horrified Aunt Elizabeth that she wanted to run her fingers through his sleek black hair--feel his arms about her--press her face against his dark tender one--feel his lips on her lips--" (EQ, 122). The narrator's words are passionate, as Emily, in the best sense of her young womanhood, is passionate. That passion is somehow mired in negative narration in Emily's Quest, where the weary voices of both narrator and character predominate. In the brief moments that the old passion surfaces, however--on the banks of Blair water, or when Emily records in her diary a night that is "like wine--white wine" (EQ, 133), or when the sight of her published novel causes her, in the delighted words of the narrator, to "[lift] her shining eyes" to her Alpine Path, "to the deep blue November sky [where] peak after peak of sunlit azure still [tower] beyond" (EQ, 177)--in such moments the narrating voices in Emily's Quest strive toward the language of happy endings, and from the interplay of their voices emerges the several-sided portrait of the artist as a young woman.

CHAPTER THREE: TRIBULATION, COMPENSATION, DESTINY, AND CHOICE:
THE THEMATIC PROPRIETY OF A HAPPY ENDING

"L.M. Montgomery's happy endings are dictated not so much by the wishes of readers and publishers, as by her philosophy of life."

V.B. Rhodenizer¹

In a journal entry for February 5, 1911, Montgomery mentions that she has re-read George Eliot's Adam Bede, finding it "a great novel in spite of its inartistic ending" in which Adam and Dinah are married in "a hurried and artificial manner."² Interestingly, one of the more persistent criticisms of Montgomery's trilogy concerns the marriage of Emily and Teddy Kent. Although no one can accuse Montgomery of marrying off her heroine in a "hurried" fashion,³ critics have faulted the third book of the trilogy, Emily's Quest, for "subordinat[ing] Emily as artist to Emily as lover...thereby disappoint[ing] some of the expectations aroused by the earlier books."⁴ One critic goes so far as to claim: "the fact that Emily becomes a woman effectively cancels her status as a writer, at least for the modern reader."⁵ Another considers the marriage ending a wholesale disappointment, a

¹ V.B. Rhodenizer, "Pine Woods and Pigsties," rev. of Emily's Quest, Canadian Bookman (September 1927), p. 273.

² Journal II, p. 46.

³ Åhmansson argues in the upcoming second volume of her dissertation that Montgomery makes consistent use of a "strategy of postponement" in Emily's Quest in order to deal with the issue of Emily's marriage. See A Life and Its Mirrors, vol. I, p. 73, n. 76.

⁴ Tausky, "L.M. Montgomery and 'The Alpine Path, so hard, so steep,'" p. 13.

⁵ Janice Kulyk Keefer, Under Eastern Eyes, p. 245.

sentimentalist's cop-out, a back-sliding betrayal of Montgomery's vision for her female artist.⁶ Montgomery herself claimed that Emily's Quest constituted Emily's "love story," written to satisfy exacting "publishers and public,"⁷ yet, does either this statement, or the assertions of repudiation-minded critics, prove beyond doubt that the requisite happy ending necessarily compromises Montgomery's trilogy-long portrait of the artist as a young woman?

The answer, emphatically, is no. Such a line of argument, although consistent with standard feminist interpretations of texts written by late nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century women writers,⁸ does not explain the complex thematic movement in the "Emily" trilogy that interlaces the "artist plot" with the "love plot." Just as Emily's writing is informed by the domestic aspects of her femininity, it is also a vocation intimately

⁶ MacLulich argues that:

It is small compensation that Montgomery makes Emily's soul-mate an artist, who will--presumably--allow her to continue her literary career...It is a definite comedown for her to finish as an ordinary romantic heroine, however unconventional some of the details of the romance may be.

See "L.M. Montgomery and the Literary Heroine: Jo, Rebecca, Anne and Emily," Canadian Children's Literature 37 (1985), p. 16.

⁷ To Weber, November 1, 1924, p. 3.

⁸ Rachel Duplessis, in her influential chapter "Endings and Contradictions," in Writing Beyond the Ending (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985), observes:

In nineteenth-century fiction dealing with women, authors went to a good deal of trouble and even some awkwardness to see to it that Bildung and romance could not exist and be integrated for the heroine at the resolution...This contradiction between love and quest plots dealing with women as a narrated group...has, in my view, one main mode of resolution: an ending in which one part of that contradiction, usually the quest or Bildung, is set aside or repressed, whether by marriage or by death (pp. 3-4).

Elaine Showalter argues along similar lines that women novelists of the 1920s "found themselves pulled apart by the conflicting claims of love and art." See A Literature of Their Own: British Women Novelists from Brontë to Lessing (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977), p. 244.

connected to the emotional realities of her womanhood. Montgomery has a particular agenda in mind for her heroine: an agenda of interplay between Emily as writer and Emily as lover, in which neither aspect of her life need be repudiated for the other. Rather than creating a situation of compromise for the writer-heroine of the "Emily" trilogy--as George Eliot does in Adam Bede by having the married Dinah forfeit her preaching--Montgomery demonstrates that "love" and "art" need not necessarily conflict for women: Emily may choose both. Through its "happy ending" the trilogy advocates a surprisingly contemporary kind of feminist philosophy: the woman artist can indeed enjoy "the best of both worlds"--a successful career as well as marriage to a friend and equal. This ideal, which eluded Montgomery in her own life,⁹ serves as the courageous organizing principle behind the "Emily" trilogy.

An examination of the manner in which theme illuminates major events in the three novels reveals how Montgomery validates Emily's trilogy-long preference for happy endings by making her the heroine of one in both artistic and emotional terms. From its beginnings, the trilogy presents Emily's life in terms of two themes: that of tribulation followed by compensation, and that of destiny coupled with choice. In the intimate relationship of these

⁹ Judith Miller writes that

Emily's marriage to Dean Priest would have been the parallel of Montgomery's own marriage to Ewan MacDonald [who suffered from religious melancholia and was not a 'kindred spirit' emotionally or intellectually with his wife], but Montgomery changed Emily's life: she won recognition for her writing and then the man she loved, who was himself an artist and had always supported Emily's need to write and to find success doing so. It seems a generous act on Montgomery's part, and, perhaps, a warning to trust life and instincts.

See "The Writer-as-a-Young-Woman and Her Family: Montgomery's Emily," p. 317.

themes. Emily's early choices prove to benefit her writing, and the compensations that follow upon her tribulations almost invariably reinforce her identity and/or her success as a writer; often both choice and compensation seem to occur under the auspices of destiny. As Emily matures and Montgomery's narrative dwells increasingly on the psychology of a more autonomous writer-heroine, the element of choice becomes important for Emily's romantic life as well as for her writing. Because the narrative works consciously toward Emily's best interests in both aspects, destiny steps in--as chance, accident, and psychic prescience--to prevent Emily from making an irrevocably bad choice, namely marrying Dean Priest, the man who first humours, and then disparages, her writing. Destiny also takes a hand in the publication of Emily's novel The Moral of the Rose, and in the cancellation of Ilse's wedding with Teddy. Emily ultimately chooses marriage to Teddy, and this choice comes as the satisfying compensation to the rather sombre latter third of Emily's Quest, in which a melancholy Emily discovers that her writing alone cannot fulfil all her needs. Teddy and Emily are artistical^{ly} interdependent as well as cosmically destined (by means of shared psychic experiences and the Vega of the Lyre star imagery). Their final union thus serves as the thematically justified conclusion to Montgomery's portrait of the artist as a young woman.

Montgomery begins her trilogy with the unsettling reality of Emily's orphanhood, but tempers it with a promise of artistic success that pervades the remaining novels. Before he dies, Douglas Starr missions his young daughter into the world of art with the assurance of an auspicious destiny: "Life has something for you--I feel it. Go forward to meet it fearlessly, dear" (NM, 26). Emily has inherited "[his] gift--along with something [he] never

had"; in short, she will "succeed" where he, a second-rate journalist, has "failed" (NM, 21). After her father's death, she must "blindly settle her own fate" by drawing from slips of paper the name of her new Murray guardian. Montgomery makes it clear that Emily does not consider such a draw to be mere chance: the young child "set her teeth, threw back her head with the air of one who challenged destiny and drew" (NM, 53). She chooses New Moon as her home, a favourable atmosphere in which the already-evidenced kindnesses of Aunt Laura and Cousin Jimmy promise to mediate somewhat the austerity of Aunt Elizabeth. The remainder of the trilogy reveals how Emily has indeed "chosen" wisely in both personal and artistic terms.

Aunt Elizabeth requires Emily to make several difficult choices that disrupt the smooth course of her writing apprenticeship. One of the more hurtful of these--Emily's decision to burn her old yellow account book rather than hand it over to her aunt's Victorian scrutiny--leaves her without paper to "write out" her romantic and tragic moments, and this predicament becomes especially painful when she is humiliated and slapped by the vindictive schoolteacher Miss Brownell. This tribulation, brought about by Emily's innocently rapturous response to a line in Tennyson's "Bugle Song," is assuaged when "destiny step[s] in": Aunt Laura permits Emily to use the old letter bills collecting dust in a bookcase drawer (NM, 102). Emily begins a correspondence with her dead father, detailing and thereby distancing the pain of her ordeal. The compensatory finding of the letter bills is deliberate, as Montgomery's narrator explains:

there is a destiny which shapes the ends of young misses who are born with the itch for writing tingling in their baby fingertips, and in the fulness of time this destiny gave to Emily the desire of her heart--gave it to her, too, on the very day when she most needed it. That was the day, the ill-starred day, when

Miss Brownell elected to show the fifth class, by example as well as precept, how the *Bugle Song* should be read. (NM, 100)

The acquisition of the letter bills is set out as a compensatory act of destiny, providing the central important event in a chapter entitled "A Special Providence."

The thematic pattern of tribulation followed by writing-as-compensation is reinforced several times throughout the first two books of the trilogy, contributing in small ways to the encouragement of the child's budding vocation. The confrontation with Miss Brownell follows an earlier schoolyard showdown in which Emily temporarily triumphs over the cruel teasing of the other school girls, to whom she is "an interloper on probation" (NM, 89). Forced to respond in the negative to questions about what she can do ("Can you sing?...Can you dance?...Can you sew?...Can you cook?...Can you knit lace?... Can you crochet?"), she experiences a revelation about herself:

"Then what *can* you do?" said the freckled-one in a contemptuous tone.

"I can write poetry," said Emily, without in the least meaning to say it. But at that instant she knew she *could* write poetry. And with this queer unreasonable conviction came -the flash! Right there, surrounded by hostility and suspicion, fighting alone for her standing, without backing or advantage, came the wonderful moment when soul seemed to cast aside the bonds of flesh and spring upward to the stars. The rapture and delight on Emily's face amazed and enraged her foes. They thought it a manifestation of Murray pride in an uncommon accomplishment. (NM, 90)

Writing about this incident in a letter-bill epistle to her father, she describes it as a "great diskoverry" and admits to having felt "bound in honour" to attempt the writing of poetry after the queer, unexplainable schoolyard conviction (NM, 108). The incident has two repercussive compensations for Emily: the "flash," which sustains her through the afternoon of the taunting "in spite of the fact that Miss Brownell ridiculed her for her mistakes in spelling" (NM, 91), and, more permanently, the conviction itself, the surprise validation of

a previously dormant "talent," which fuels her desire to write.

A convoluted series of tribulations and compensations occur in Shrewsbury in Emily Climbs when Emily clashes with her "instinctive enemy" Evelyn Blake (EC, 104), niece of Mrs. Henry Blake, the former Miss Brownell. Both girls have "literary ambitions," and Emily is piqued when the poem she submits to the high school paper, The Quill, is refused, yet one of Evelyn's ("a silly, simpering little rhyme" [EC, 114]) is accepted. A few days after this incident, Emily is vindicated. Having forgotten to prepare a quotation for the Monday morning roll call, she supplies a verse from one of her own poems. When Miss Alymer, the vice principal, requests a copy of the "beautiful verse," Emily reveals herself as the author and experiences a curious sensation: "Something in her look made me feel glad and proud and happy and humble--and--and--*prayerful*" (EC, 115). Her journal entry reveals a renewed self-confidence: "Oh, this has been a wonderful day. What care I now for The Quill or Evelyn Blake?" (EC, 115).

Evelyn, however, cannot be so easily disposed of; only destiny, in fact, can oust her. She instigates a "rift" in Emily's relationship with Ilse by drawing a moustache on the sleeping Emily, who wears it unwittingly to her English examination; fleeing to the school bathroom in a rage of humiliation, Emily encounters the coolly deceptive Evelyn, who plants in her mind the idea that Ilse performed the prank. Not only does Emily do poorly in her examination and consequently lose her first-class academic standing, but a "chill" comes over her relationship with Ilse when she voices her half-hearted suspicions. Emily endures a desolate month of polite estrangement from Ilse, aided by Aunt Ruth, who forbids Ilse's visits on the grounds that the trick is representative of her highly suspect upbringing. Both

Emily's troubled state of mind and the scarred friendship are healed, however, when Emily receives in the mail her first acceptance of a poem. Again, the timing is significant: Montgomery's narrator reminds us that "Years before, in the old house at Maywood, [Emily's] Father, bending over her as she slept had said, 'She will love deeply--suffer terribly--she will have glorious moments to compensate.' This was one of her glorious moments" (EC, 137). Emily's elation makes her realize suddenly and conclusively that "Ilse had never done *that*" (EC, 138). The published poem is another two-fold compensation for Emily, both salving a wounded friendship and encouraging the young writer in a moment of artistic doubt: "The creative faculty, dormant through the wretched month just passed, suddenly burned in her soul again like a purifying flame" (EC, 138).¹⁰

Montgomery's trilogy is compensation-oriented; Emily's success as a writer-heroine is imminent. Increasingly, however, the trilogy becomes a study in how one's choices facilitate such compensation. When Aunt Elizabeth asks Emily to choose between writing stories and receiving three years of high school education at Shrewsbury, Emily initially rejects, and then is persuaded to accept, the hard terms of the choice. When the ban is

¹⁰ Emily "finally conquer[s] in the long duel" with Evelyn Blake (EC, 280) through yet another incident of tribulation and compensation that hinges on writing. The winter storm that forces Emily, Ilse, Perry and Teddy to take refuge overnight in the old Shaw house results in hurtful, malicious gossip that thwarts Emily's creativity as acutely as it stings her Murray pride, but it also brings the discovery, in an old dusty scrapbook on a shelf, of the poem that Evelyn had plagiarized to win the Shrewsbury high school poetry contest. Emily's earlier suspicions (*I know that she never wrote that poem*" EC, 263) are thus confirmed, and she castigates her rival by having her sign a statement for Aunt Ruth that frees Ilse from all blame in the moustache-drawing incident.

rescinded in Emily's third year of high school,¹¹ she takes up her stories again with a new wisdom about the "chasm between *seeing* a thing and getting it down on paper!" (EC, 259). Mr. Carpenter's prediction that "stick[ing] to facts for three years" would teach Emily "restraint and economy" proves correct (EC, 97). Through her choice to write only what is "true," she grows beyond her subjectively romantic fancies and begins to probe her own community as a source of inspiration. She becomes aware of the potential for literature in the tragedies of people's faces, and in the foolish and compelling stories of their lives. Eventually, this awareness filters into her writing. She transcribes the tale told her by old Mrs. MacIntyre, and the resulting story, "The Woman Who Spanked the King," is published by "a New York magazine of some standing" (EC, 266). Mr. Carpenter praises Emily's artistic restraint in the project:

"The setting is yours--and what you've added harmonizes perfectly with your foundation. And you didn't polish hers up too much--*that* shows the artist. Weren't you tempted to?"

"Yes. There were so many places I thought I *could* improve it a good deal."

"But you didn't try to--*that* makes it yours," said Mr. Carpenter, and left her to puzzle his meaning out for herself (EC, 267).

One of the more important elements of Emily's apprenticeship, of course, consists in her learning to make the choices that are artistically appropriate to a written work: choices that reveal Montgomery's own decisions in the trilogy about what to retain, what to eliminate, and how to conclude. Just as Emily progressively burns the precious manuscripts of poems and stories that she outgrows, Montgomery rejects, through Emily, various

¹¹ Interestingly, the ban is lifted for pecuniary reasons: Aunt Elizabeth can no longer deny that Emily's writing has the potential to be lucrative. As Cousin Jimmy drolly puts it, "Money makes the Murray mare go, Emily" (EC, 259).

stereotypical literary examples of women's roles. Emily's critical evaluations as a reader inform her later choices about environment and relationship, namely remaining on Prince Edward Island, and marrying Teddy Kent. These choices, which constitute the "happy ending," are sanctioned by the thematic patterns of the trilogy, and function as both compensation and destiny. By means of such choices, Montgomery allows Emily to reject a prescribed tradition of literary closure--the tragic and/or unrequited heroine--and to choose a happy ending that is satisfying in personal as well as artistic terms.

Emily as a reader is an interesting study: as child, adolescent, and young woman, she remains constant in her desire for happy endings, yet she refuses to condone weakness in the women characters she encounters. At the age of ten, she writes to her father that she loves Hans Christian Anderson stories, but "always think[s] of a different end for the Ice Maiden and save[s] Rudy" (NM, 170). Reading Matthew Arnold's "Sorhab and Rustum" when she is eleven, she responds by "weeping sore" over its conclusion, consoling herself only when she has "thought out a different end for it--a happy one" (NM, 196). As a fifteen-year-old, she records in her journal that she is "wretched" until she invents a happy ending for a story she has just read. "I don't care whether it's 'true to life' or not," she writes; "It's true to life as it *should be* and that's a better truth than the other" (EC, 226). In the same journal entry, she counters this apparently naïve romanticism by being harshly critical of ineffectual "romantic" heroines. Just as in childhood she cannot abide Red Riding Hood ("a stupid little thing, so easily fooled" NM, 140), in adolescence she can only ridicule the mawkish heroine of The Children of the Abbey, who "fainted in every chapter and cried quarts if any one looked at her":

But as for the trials and persecutions she underwent, in spite of her delicate frame, their name was Legion and no fair maiden of these degenerate days could survive half of them--not even the newest of new women. I laughed over the book until I amazed Aunt Ruth, who thought it a very sad volume. (EC, 226)¹²

It is arguable whether or not Montgomery designs Emily as a "new woman," yet the type of heroine the child writer chooses to "become" one summer is not a romantic cliché but a self-sufficient pre-suffragette suffragette: "Lady Trevanion," who is both "a famous novelist" and "a member of the British House of Commons" (NM, 333). Montgomery has Emily imagine a scene in which Lady Trevanion, the only woman in the House, defends herself against "[t]he atrocious crime of being a *woman*" by responding that she "shall content [herself] with wishing that [she] may be one of those whose follies cease with their *sex* and *not* one of that number who are ignorant in spite of *manhood* and experience" (NM, 334).¹³ Emily's fictitious role model stands firm against the tyranny of men, and Emily herself has only scorn for female characters--such as Guinevere and Enid in Tennyson's Idylls of the King--who choose not to assert themselves in their dealings with their husbands:

I detest Tennyson's *Arthur*. If I had been *Guinevere* I'd have boxed his ears--

¹² In a journal entry for April 4, 1899, Montgomery describes her reading of "an old tale, 'The Children of the Abbey'" by Regina Marie Roche (1796), with the same words that she later attributes to Emily:

I cannot imagine a worse "future punishment than to be condemned to read such books for all eternity...[It] was the mushiest, slumpiest book I ever read, possessing a most lachrymose heroine who fainted in every chapter and cried quarts if anyone looked sideways at her. But as for the trials and persecutions which she underwent, their name was Legion and no fair maiden of these degenerate days could endure one-tenth of them--not even the newest of "new" women! (Journal I, p. 236)

¹³ The italicized words are Montgomery's witty alterations of "Pitt's reply to Walpole" (NM, 333).

but I wouldn't have been unfaithful to him for *Lancelot*, who was just as odious in a different way. As for *Geraint*, if I had been *Enid* I'd have bitten him. These 'patient Griseldas' deserve all they get. Lady Enid, if you had been a Murray of New Moon you would have kept your husband in better order and he would have liked you all the better for it. (EC, 226)¹⁴

The adolescent Emily intuits and rejects the romantic literary stereotype that demands a tragic ending and a weak, stereotypical heroine. Her brave intentions forsake her, however, in her dealings with a man whose lonely jealousy nearly traps her in a marriage based on artistic apathy and emotional compromise. Dean "Jarback" Priest, green-eyed, hunchbacked, and in search of the fountain of youth in a young girl's eyes, is the most ambivalent character in Montgomery's trilogy. From the first moments of his sexually-charged association with the twelve-year-old child, Dean's intentions are clear: he means to possess her. Rescuing her from the cliff ledge onto which she has fallen while plucking a flower, he assures her, Mephistopheles-like, "your life belongs to me henceforth," mysteriously explaining that

one pays a penalty when one reaches out for something beyond the ordinary. One pays for it in bondage of some kind or other. Take your wonderful aster home and keep it as long as you can. It has cost you your freedom. (NM, 286)

Young as she is, Emily understandably objects to such statements. With a sudden, defiant motion, she throws the aster to the ground and tramples it underfoot. Dean later takes the badly crushed flower home and presses it between the leaves of *Jane Eyre*. He does not realize that although he and Emily share the same age discrepancy as Brontë's Rochester

¹⁴ This passage appears nearly word for word (with the omission of the last sentence) in Montgomery's journal entry for September 4, 1909 (Journal I, p. 358).

and Jane, they do not share the kindredness of spirit that leads to love. Emily does "pay a penalty" for her ambition, but it is a penalty of her own choosing: the tribulation of nearly-thwarted love for Teddy, not the bondage of emotional servitude to Dean.¹⁵

Although Dean's involvement in Emily's early writing earns her trust and friendship, Montgomery continues to hint that to trust Dean exclusively demands a compromise of self. An old school-mate of Douglas Starr, Dean becomes an unwitting father figure for the child, someone "sealed of her tribe" (NM, 284) who sympathizes with her poetry and Jimmy-book descriptions: he "read them gravely, and, exactly as Father had done, made little criticisms that did not hurt her because she knew they were just" (NM, 288). He enchants the young Emily with tales and descriptions of history worded in "unforgettable phrases," and through him she "reali[zes] afresh what magic is made when the right words are wedded" (NM, 289). Having had "only books for companions most of [his] life," he laughs with bitter self-mockery at her comment that she "didn't know that any one ever talked as [he did] except in books" (NM, 289). The reader, however, perceives as somehow reprehensible Dean's verbal manipulations of the child twenty-four years his junior. When the precocious Emily candidly confides that her problem with novel-writing is "the love talk in them," Dean offers to "teach" her some day, and urges a promise that she will not "go looking for another teacher" (NM, 285).¹⁶ Dean's ulterior motive is all too clear; "the love-making parts" of Emily's

¹⁵ Emily's reunion with Teddy resembles (albeit, in a far less "dramatic" and ambiguous way) Jane's reunion with Rochester, just as Emily's rejection of Dean carries with it the same spurning of emotional blackmail that is explicit in Jane's rejection of St. John Rivers.

¹⁶ Interesting in this exchange is Montgomery's omission of adverbs to describe Dean's state of mind as he makes this offer. He does not speak "knowingly" or

stories are an avenue by which he hopes to influence her private emotions (EC, 220).

What is obvious to the reader from Dean's first encounter with Emily slowly begins to dawn upon the maturing girl: that Dean cares for her in an unnaturally possessive manner. Shortly before her fourteenth birthday, he trains upon her an odd look that makes her "uncomfortable":

It suddenly made me think of the time he rescued me from the cliff on Malvern Bay and told me my life belonged to him since he saved it. I don't like the thought of my life belonging to any one but myself—not *any one*, even Dean, much as I like him. And *in some ways*, I like Dean better than any one in the world (EC, 33-34).

He makes the look explicit some days later in a diatribe against the fact that Teddy's pictures seem to capture a bit of Emily's soul: "let him keep his pencil and brush off my property" (EC, 37). Emily is chagrined by such possessiveness, and records in her diary that "Dean laughed as he said it. But I held my head high. I am not anybody's 'property,' not even in fun. And I *never* will be" (EC, 37). Dean is of two minds in his jealous frustration, of course. He desires Emily both as his childish admirer and as a budding woman ("how perfect the white line of her throat—how kissable the sweet red curve of her mouth" EC, 93), and he realizes that the former status is increasingly giving way to the latter, in which there is no place for him: "He must be content with what fate had given him—the friendship and affection of this exquisite, starry creature. In the years to come her love would be a wonderful thing—for some other man" (EC, 93).

Dean, however, cannot be content with "fate." Painfully aware that age and deformity

"mysteriously"; Montgomery simply relates the dialogue and allows the reader to draw conclusions.

conspire against his victory over Teddy or any other of Emily's prospective suitors, he channels his emotional impotence into an area of proven dominance: his influence over her writing. Emily becomes conscious of an increasing reticence on Dean's part to support her writing. She is hurt and discouraged by the patronizing smile he flashes as commentary on her story "The Woman Who Spanked the King," which is later accepted by a prestigious New York magazine, and she momentarily questions her ability:

"It was not the smile I liked, either...It seemed to say, 'You can scribble amusingly, my dear, and have a pretty knack of phrase-turning; but I should be doing you an unkindness if I let you think that such a knack meant a very great deal.' If this is true--and it very likely is, for Dean is so clever and knows so much--then I can never accomplish anything worth while. I won't *try* to accomplish anything--I *won't* be just a 'pretty scribbler.'" (EC, 215)

This self-doubt, which Emily briefly entertains and then dismisses, is the beginning of a process in which she eventually relinquishes faith in her decisions, "choosing" to believe Dean's evaluation of her writing rather than her own.

Dean's early support of Emily's writing had always seemed sincere (his early influence does serve as a sort of "exotic educational device,"¹⁷ and he sends her the poem that inspires her trilogy-long ambition to climb the heights of the "Alpine Path"¹⁸), yet the

¹⁷ Jane Urquhart, "Afterword" to Emily Climbs (Toronto: New Canadian Library, 1989), p. 332.

¹⁸ Emily enjoys the last stanza of "The Fringed Gentian" most of all, as had Montgomery in her youth (Journal II, p. 201):

Then whisper, blossom, in thy sleep
 How I may upward climb
 The Alpine Path, so hard, so steep,
 That leads to heights sublime.
 How I may reach that far-off goal
 Of true and honoured fame
 And write upon its shining scroll

attitude he espouses halfway through the second book of the trilogy—openly belittling Emily's vocation and encouraging an apathy that would put him at the centre of her life—is an unmasked version of opinions he has always held. During Emily's first visit to Wyther Grange, Dean had advised that the ambitious child "be content with fewer thrills" in her life (NM, 290). The "drama" of a "thrilling career," he had argued, would occasion only the "[paying of] the piper in the coin of suffering" (NM, 290). In Montgomery's cleverly disguised adaptation of George Eliot, Dean had assured Emily that "The happiest countries, like the happiest women, have no history" (history consisting, according to his definition, of "Pain—and shame—and rebellion—and bloodshed and heartache") (NM, 290). The careful reader knows, as Emily does not, that Dean has kidnapped Eliot's phrase into an inappropriate context: Eliot uses the line to justify Maggie Tulliver's feverish response to "the half-remote presence of a world of love and beauty and delight," not to disparage her participation in that world:

Such things could have had no perceptible effect on a thoroughly well-educated young lady, with a perfectly balanced mind, who had all the advantages of fortune, training, and refined society. But if Maggie had been that young lady, you would probably have known nothing about her: her life would have had so few vicissitudes that it could hardly have been written; for the happiest women, like the happiest nations, have no history.¹⁹

The heroine with a "history" is the character one wants to read about. George Eliot writes about Maggie Tulliver, not some other young woman, and by that act alone her novel applies "a Paterian criterion of intensity to Maggie's history: the well-lived life is the vividly

A woman's humble name (NM, 305).

¹⁹ George Eliot, The Mill on the Floss 1860 (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1961), p. 335.

felt life that feeds into art."²⁰ Montgomery knew this in her personal life,²¹ and reinforces this sentiment in Emily Climbs with regard to her writer-heroine: "I have never pretended, nor ever will pretend, that Emily is a proper child. Books are not written about proper children. They would be so dull nobody would read them" (EC, 21).

Emily attempts to counter Dean's argument for apathy by demanding the type of fully-lived existence that will justify the pages Montgomery creates about her. Dean, meanwhile, gives small credit to the power of the artistic child's convictions:

"I think I shall be either a great poetess or a distinguished novelist,"
said Emily reflectively.

"Having only to choose," remarked Dean dryly. "Better be a novelist—I hear it pays better." (NM, 285)

His flippancy about the importance of choice is his undoing: he does not believe that Emily can choose to be a successful writer any more than he can understand—in the manner of Aunt Elizabeth—that Emily cannot choose *not* to write. In belittling the importance of choice, Dean belittles the trilogy's overriding plan that Emily's autonomy and her destiny are the same: that what she chooses to be, and what she has no choice but to become, is a successful writer-heroine, and she will become this despite all tribulations. Writing for Emily—like passion for Maggie Tulliver—is a destiny, an instinctive and irrepressible need

²⁰ Nina Auerbach, Romantic Imprisonment: Women and Other Glorified Outcasts, p. 232.

²¹ In a journal entry for January 31, 1920 Montgomery wrote:
One cannot have imagination and the gift of wings, along with the placidity and contentment of those who creep on the earth's solid surface and never open their eyes on aught but material things. But the gift of wings is better than placidity and contentment after all (Journal II, pp. 369-70).

the heroine embraces. Dean's denial of Emily's writing effectively dooms his relationship with her from their first meeting at Wyther Grange, although her own ebbing self-confidence nearly entangles her in the net of apathy that Dean soon holds out to her as marriage.

Emily's Quest presents a Dean Priest who is openly hostile to Emily's writing, and who increasingly plies her emotions. The combination proves to elicit early in the novel Emily's psychological falling away self-reliance and artistic self-esteem. Emily first mentions Dean in a journal entry remarking three important points: he "never praises anything" she writes anymore, she feels compelled to make him praise her because "his is the only commendation, apart from Mr. Carpenter's, that is worth anything," and her friendship with him is "the very salt of life," since her own maturity is closing the age gap between them (EQ, 18). Emily finds herself relying increasingly on Dean's companionship to fill the void left by the departure of her network of supporting friends—Teddy, Ilse, and Perry (who leave Blair Water to further their educations in Montreal and Charlottetown) and Mr. Carpenter (whose death ensconces Dean as Emily's only remaining critic). As Emily speculates on the disquieting prospect that "Dean Priest [is] changing from friend to lover" (EQ, 34), he departs for a winter in Japan, thrusting a last sword into her hopes that he supports her work. Once again the reader knows, as Emily does not, that Dean's labelling of her writings as "pretty cobwebs" of no artistic merit proceeds from the jealous intensity of his amorous feelings for her. He urges that her "little hobby" must not cause her to "dream of being a Brontë or an Austen—and wake up to find [she]'d wasted her youth on a dream" (EQ, 37), and he assures her "in a low vibrant tone" that she "can do more with those eyes—that smile—than [she] can ever do with [her] pen" (EQ, 38). His manipulations weigh heavily on Emily,

who chooses to believe that his cleverness and education lend absolute authority to his opinions: "He *must* know. That was the agony of it ... Emily knew deep down in her heart that she would never be able wholly to believe in herself until Dean Priest admitted that she could do something honestly worth while" (EQ, 36).

When Emily does produce something worthwhile, Dean upsets the thematic movement of the trilogy (in which writing-as-compensation follows tribulation) by condemning the work. As compensation for Teddy's frosty farewell before he sails to Halifax, Emily re-works into a novel (A Seller of Dreams) the story she had outlined years before, when she, Ilse, Perry, and Teddy had taken shelter during a winter storm in an abandoned farmhouse. The writing is both a remembrance of Teddy (inspired by "a certain gay, significant speech" of his, during the storm [EQ, 53]) and a means of distancing his memory ("Everything else was forgotten—for a time at least—in the subtle, all-embracing joy of creation" [EQ, 53]). After three publishers reject the manuscript, however, Emily makes the "sudden terrible resolution" to elicit Dean's opinion, resolving to burn the book if he condemns it (EQ, 56). When he delivers his verdict in the New Moon garden three nights later, he does not provide Emily with the type of artistic validation that had reassured her during her childhood trials with Aunt Elizabeth, Miss Brownell, and Evelyn Blake; rather, capitalizing on his chance to destroy her ambitions, he dismisses the novel and breaks her artistic resolve. As a consequence, Emily not only burns the manuscript—thereby eliminating the possibility of its compensatory publication—but she falls down the New Moon staircase over Aunt Laura's mending basket and contracts blood poisoning when sewing scissors pierce her foot. Dean's deliberate action thus reverses one of the trilogy's established

thematic patterns: the manuscript that should have served as a "compensation" actually elicits for Emily a serious physical and mental "tribulation."

That such a thematic reversal is "evil" in light of the trilogy's sense of justice is manifest in the imagery that posits Dean as the poison-tongued "serpent" who tempts Emily to embrace the "Fall."²² When Dean first views Emily's treasured manuscript in the New Moon garden, "[t]he one black drop in his veins--that Priest jealousy of being first--suddenly made its poison felt" (EQ, 57). That Dean prefaces his dishonest remarks about the novel with the adage "Faithful are the wounds of a friend" (EQ, 57) proves significant in light of the language that describes Emily's blood-poisoning injury as "two cruel wounds--one by the ankle, one on the sole of the foot" (EQ, 61). Dean's fraudulent evaluation of A Seller of Dreams constitutes a spiritual "death" for Emily: she feels as she did on "the night Ellen Green had told her her father must die," and she dismisses Dean with the assurance that he has "just killed" her (EQ, 58).

Emily herself, however, is just as guilty of "murder," and her poor choice with regard to her manuscript temporarily alters the function of destiny in the trilogy. By consciously forfeiting the autonomy to make her own artistic decisions ("Sentence after sentence leaped out at her--witty, poignant, beautiful. No, that was only her fond, foolish, material delusion. There was nothing of that sort in the book. Dean had said so." [EQ, 58]), she commits a crime against artistic integrity. As her manuscript crumbles into ashes, a sudden remorse overtakes her: she feels akin to the pagans of biblical times who had sacrificed their children

²² Such imagery contributes to the already-ambivalent portrait of Dean: his Mephistopheles-like possessiveness of Emily on the Wyther Grange cliff ledge (NM), and the whispered rumour that he "had seen the Black Mass celebrated" (EQ, 74).

as burnt offerings to the god Moloch, and she blindly flees from her room, "away from the reproachful ghosts of her murdered book folks" (EQ, 60). Her subsequent injury occurs in a chance careless moment, but the reader is assured that "That moment was enough for predestination and Emily" (EQ, 60).

"Destiny" has returned, but for the first time in the trilogy its orchestrations are punitive rather than compensatory. Emily's fall down the New Moon stairs is an archetypal descent into the heart of apathy; the sewing scissors that pierce her foot symbolically cut her off from her artistic self, from the "flash" and the belief that she can ever write again. She now accepts--indeed elicits--the prospect of marriage to Dean, who nurses her through the winter of her illness as he had done in her youth during her nearly fatal attack of measles. Although Dean no longer objects to Emily's writing--he no longer fears that it will "take [her] away" from him--Emily is "indifferent" to the prospect, and develops

a growing distaste to the thought of ever taking it up. To think of it meant to think of the book she had burned; and *that* hurt beyond bearing. She had ceased to listen for her "random word"--she was an exile from her old starry kingdom (EQ, 84).

"Not a romantic little dreamer any longer" (EQ, 67), Emily tries to convince others of her loveless "happiness" with Dean. She lightly dismisses the warnings of Ilse ("you'll belong to him body and soul...he must possess exclusively" EQ, 69) and Old Kelly ("the Prastes rule their wives" EQ, 72), yet she must consciously repress her own nagging conviction that Dean has "lost some intangible, all-real zest of faith and idealism" (EQ, 73). "Fettered" by her engagement ring, and suspicious that the women whose portraits adorn the Disappointed House both mock and share her "subtle, secret fear" (EQ, 93), she dons the mantle of marriage with full knowledge that it constitutes an apathetic compromise: she has

"murdered" both her ambition and her sentiment.

In a compensation-oriented trilogy dedicated to the portrait of a successful young female artist, such a negative portrait cannot be long maintained. Montgomery wastes little time in revealing how the upswing of destiny rescues Emily from the state of emotional and artistic bankruptcy instigated by Dean's malignant advice and her own faulty choices. Sitting alone one afternoon in the Disappointed House--the house that means more to her than does Dean himself, with whom she is "doomed" to share it--Emily has a visitation of psychic prescience. Deep in Aunt Nancy's gazing ball she "sees" Teddy Kent at a steamer ship ticket-window in London, England, and is conscious of herself "warning" him away from an "unknown peril" that later proves to be the sinking of the ship he was to board. The incident makes Emily feel "as if she had died and come back to life" (EQ, 95), and leaves her with the profound conviction that she loves Teddy Kent and can never marry Dean Priest. Emily's admission of this prompts Dean to clear his conscience of the lie through which he had originally won her. He confesses that her burned novel had indeed been "good" and his own derogatory comments inspired by the "ugly ... motive" of jealousy (EQ, 103). The confession leaves Emily suddenly "free from remorse, shame, regret. Her own woman once more" (EQ, 103-104). At dawn on a particularly "lyric spring day," she re-experiences the "miracle" of the flash for the first time since recovering from her illness, and gives thanks for having "leave to work" once more (EQ, 108). The psychic re-establishing of the severed link with Teddy thus breathes new life into the emotionally and artistically defunct writer-heroine. Teddy, too, is granted a new artistic awakening as a result of his encounter in the London station: he captures in paint the "very soul" of Emily's childhood

smile--the smile which had characterized her seeing of the "flash"--and he successfully exhibits his portrait "The Smiling Girl" in Montreal and Paris (EQ, 151).

It is no coincidence that the only other person in the trilogy who shares Emily's psychic capability--and her artistic aptitude--is Teddy. Her "warning" of him in the London station is a deliberate parallel of the incident in Emily Climbs when he rescues her as a teenager from Mad Mr. Morrison, having "heard" her call to him from inside the locked church (EC, 57-58).²³ From the outset of the trilogy, Montgomery grooms Teddy as a partner who is "attuned" to her writer-heroine. A talented and sensitive visual artist, Teddy is associated early in the trilogy with Emily's receptiveness to the world beyond the "curtain." In their madcap childhood days of boiling the pigs' potatoes at New Moon, his special whistle animates her like "the echoes in the *Bugle Song*" that had given her the "flash" in Miss Brownell's class (NM, 155).

In a world that misunderstands and often menaces their creative spirits,²⁴ Emily and Teddy are each other's "guiding star," although they officially choose the "Vega of the Lyre." Throughout the trilogy, the star functions as the cosmic validation of the destined union of

²³ Both incidents are reminiscent of Rochester's famous "call" and Jane's "answer" in Jane Eyre, p. 445. Significantly, both incidents "save" Emily from men who would harm her either physically (Mad Mr. Morrison) or artistically (Dean), as Rochester's call effectively saves Jane from the mesmerizing St. John's pressing proposal of marriage.

²⁴ Both Teddy and Emily must overcome, among other obstacles, the jealous, career-thwarting, possessive love of mother (Mrs. Kent) and lover (Dean Priest) respectively. In "Canadian Writers: Lucy Maud and Emily Byrd," Canadian Children's Literature 1.3 (1975), Ann S. Cowan notes that "Montgomery does not admit the right of one person to possess or dominate another, and characters who try to do so in her novels are always foiled. Teddy Kent's mother, in her attempt to possess her son, jealously discourages the friendship between Emily and Teddy. This conflict mirrors the Emily-Dean relationship" (p. 46).

the two artists. It represents the ideal that Teddy and Emily strive for: liberating artistic interdependence within a romantically fulfilling relationship. The ideal, however, capriciously slips in and out of reach numerous times throughout Emily's Quest. Depending on the precarious state of their relationship at a given moment, the Vega of the Lyre is alternately for Emily "a whirling, flaming, incredibly distant star" or a "star of destiny... [ever] brighter and more alluring" (EQ, 52, 115). A short time before Ilse's supposed wedding with Teddy, when a gulf of misunderstanding and stubborn pride lies between Emily and himself, Teddy displaces his anger and confusion onto the heavens when asked to name his favourite star: "I have no especial favourite--there is only one star I hate. Vega of the Lyre" (EQ, 214). By the trilogy's close, when the various obstacles to their union have been removed, Teddy admits to Emily that the Vega of the Lyre had continued to remind him of his connection with her, even when he had been most determined to forget.

Significantly, it is Teddy to whom Emily speaks freely about her literary aspirations. As a teenager she admits to her diary: "Somehow Teddy is the only person I like to talk to about my tomorrows and my ambitions. There is no one else" (EC, 215). When she has "the heart-breaking moments of the true artist" in the realization that words can never capture the imagination's full glory (NM, 332), she can share this, too, with Teddy. Unlike Perry and Ilse (who are lively personalities but only pseudo artist figures), and Dean (whose jealousy blots out any artistic predilection he might have), Teddy can experience with Emily the "despair and anguish of the rainbow quest" as well as its "delight and allurements" (EQ, 13). At the beginning of Emily's Quest, the two aspiring artists exchange a confidential moment in which each admits to the other the daunting fear of never being able to produce

"anything really worth while" (EQ, 13). Even during their estrangement--which occupies much of the final novel of the trilogy--each continues to draw on the other for inspiration. Teddy becomes "famous" because of his preoccupation with Emily's face, unconsciously painting it into every portrait he produces. Emily, unaware that he does indeed care for her, dislikes Ilse's statement that she is "the inspiration of a genius"; she resents how Teddy "must know everything that was in her soul" (EQ, 172). She herself, however, also draws on her association with Teddy as a means toward artistic creation. Out of her disappointment at one of his departures, she resurrects the plot and characters for A Seller of Dreams. Years later, as she muses on her ambivalence toward "The Smiling Girl," she conceives the idea of expanding her stories for Aunt Elizabeth into a novel (The Moral of the Rose). Most dramatically of course, her psychic experience in the Disappointed House is an indisputable boon to the creativity that had been thwarted by her near-marriage to the artistically malevolent Dean.

This last incident provides an opportunity to examine more closely the whole issue of Emily's artistic success: if Montgomery's objective in her trilogy were, as many critics claim, to provide an obligatory marriage for her heroine, then Emily's gazing-ball "vision" would certainly provide justification for a posthaste nuptial with Teddy, and Emily's Quest would constitute a novella-sized finale to Montgomery's portrait of the artist as a young woman. Fully half of the novel remains to unfold, however, once Emily makes the destiny-approved decision to leave Dean Priest. What must occur, in order to establish the credibility of Montgomery's female artist, is Emily's achievement of legitimate recognition and success in the literary world.

There is a tendency among Montgomery critics to gloss Emily's artistic success as an event that capitulates to her marriage with Teddy. Such critics fault Montgomery's "thoroughly domestic imagination" for not allowing "her heroine's literary career [to] interfere with the course of true love."²⁵ Aside from the fact that such an argument uses inappropriate terminology,²⁶ its claim that career for a woman is—or should be—incompatible with romantic love is dangerous. Such an argument equates a so-called "feminism" with a disassociation from men and from society: thus, Montgomery's failure to assign to Emily a Joycean repudiation of romantic ties is said to prove her "reluctan[ce] to adopt a radical feminist outlook" in her trilogy.²⁷ The argument can be re-phrased all too clearly: the female writer-heroine has no business pursuing a love plot when she is created as the perpetrator of an artist plot, and Montgomery as woman novelist has no business putting forward—at the beginning of the twentieth century, when the marriage ending was already a "hackneyed" and "compromising" form of closure—a portrait of the female artist in which the heroine "succumbs" to a love relationship.

Emily's success in the form of the published novel The Moral of the Rose is necessarily prior to her final reunion with Teddy and the "quiet bridal at New Moon" that the reader never actually witnesses (EQ, 235). To marry—even Teddy—before Emily achieves some measure of recognition for her writing would constitute not a "happy ending" in the sense that Montgomery envisions it for her writer-heroine, but another compromise

²⁵ T.D. MacLulich, "Montgomery's Portraits of the Artist: Realism, Idealism, and the Domestic Imagination," pp. 464, 466.

²⁶ Montgomery is concerned with interplay, not interference.

²⁷ MacLulich, "Montgomery's Portraits of the Artist," p. 472.

in the style of Emily's near-marriage to Dean Priest.²⁸ The narrative voice makes this subtly clear in its description of Emily's first meeting with Teddy after the incident in the Disappointed House:

Oh, she was his. By a word—a look—an intonation, he was still her master. What matter if, in some calmer mood, she might not quite like it—to be helpless—dominated like this? What matter if to-morrow she might wish she had not run so quickly, so eagerly, so unhesitatingly to meet him? To-night nothing mattered except that Teddy had come back ... Ambition was, for the time at least, forgotten. (EQ, 113, 115)

Age and suffering must mature Emily still more fully after her psychic experience because she is too ready to give herself to Teddy in "unconditioned surrender," too quick to trade literary "laurel" for marriage's "[o]range blossoms ... a sweeter coronet" (EQ, 113, 115). Montgomery consciously postpones Emily's emotional fulfilment—her marriage with Teddy—until such time as it can complement, rather than dominate, her artistic fulfilment.

In the meantime, the choice-destiny thematic movement of the trilogy demonstrates that Emily's literary success is significant in itself: she not only chooses its parameters—namely, to remain on Prince Edward Island and to write of its people—but she finds this choice later ratified by destiny. As the second book of the trilogy draws to a close, seventeen-year-old Emily is faced with a monumental decision about her writing: whether to accompany editor Janet Royal to New York, where the former Shrewsbury woman would "take her under her wing" and launch her on a promising career as a magazine journalist, or to remain at New Moon and continue her quiet life of writing. The decision is entirely

²⁸ Although Emily herself does not perceive this fact at the time, her character might well say in retrospect, as does Jane Eyre, that "To have yielded then would have been an error of principle; to have yielded now would have been an error of judgement" (Jane Eyre, p. 443).

Emily's; the Murrays consent to agree to whatever choice she makes, and she consults neither Dean nor Teddy. Mr. Carpenter's is the only opinion she seeks out, and his exchange with her is both moving and significant. He predicts that New York will cause Emily to become as "Yankeefied" as Janet Royal, whose "outlook and atmosphere and style are all U.S.":

she isn't a Canadian any longer--and that's what I wanted you to be--pure Canadian through and through, doing something as far as in you lay for the literature of your own country, keeping your Canadian tang and flavour. But of course there's not many dollars in that sort of thing yet (EC, 310).

His nationalist plea is nothing short of stunning, coming through the authorial pen of a woman who was in 1925 forging her own place in the as-yet-fledgling literature of Canada. And when the gruff old schoolteacher responds to Emily's protest "There's no chance to do *anything* here" with the growl "No--no more than there was in Haworth Parsonage" (EC, 310), Montgomery courageously links her unknown Canadian Emily to the famous Brontë sisters. Emily's decision to remain at New Moon proceeds not from Mr. Carpenter's advice *per se*, but from her "deep attachment to her own geography," her sense that "it is the spirit of the place that keeps her there; the same spirit that has enriched and continues to enrich her writing."²⁹ Her response to Janet Royal's subsequent protests cuts through the patronising of the ex-patriate: "people *live* here just the same as anywhere else--suffer and enjoy and sin and aspire just as they do in New York" (EC, 314).

Critics tend to censure Montgomery's decision to keep Emily at New Moon in the

²⁹ Urquhart, "Afterword," p. 334.

same manner that Janet Royal criticizes Emily's naïveté in remaining:³⁰ it is again Mr. Carpenter's advice, however, that is significant in light of the trilogy's themes and Emily's ultimate writing success: "You'd be a fool not to [go to New York]--only--fools do sometimes attain. There's a special Providence for them, no doubt" (EC, 311). Emily's decision to remain on Prince Edward Island is "foolish" by most standards, but destiny vindicates her in its own time. Six years after she refuses Janet Royal's offer, two significant events transpire "accidentally" on the same October evening: Emily finds "the lost legendary diamond of the Murrays" (EQ, 147) and Aunt Elizabeth tumbles down the cellar steps and breaks her leg. The fall repeats Emily's nearly fatal accident several years previously, except that where the first fall had served as punishment for her poor choice in destroying A Seller of Dreams, the second fall precedes the creation of a new novel, The Moral of the Rose, which Emily writes to amuse Aunt Elizabeth during her convalescence, and then sends out to magazines in hope that the luck of the Lost Diamond will be with her. The manuscript, however, is rejected numerous times during the following year, "condemned." Emily suspects, by "the fatal Prince Edward Island postmark" (EQ, 156).

On her twenty-fourth birthday, as she reads a time-capsule letter "from herself at fourteen to herself at twenty-four" with a mixture of scorn and nostalgic longing (EQ, 167), Emily's artistic self-confidence is at low ebb. Tribulation invites compensation, however, and "after so many setbacks," as Cousin Jimmy says (EQ, 171), she is in need of a compensation.

³⁰ Tausky categorizes the decision as "representing the Romantic's preference of the rural to the urban world, the traditional heroine's preference of the familiar to the unknown, and the Canadian artist's inability to break free" ("L.M. Montgomery and 'The Alpine Path, so hard, so steep,'" p. 18).

As she contemplates a "white night" of self-pity, "the footsteps of destiny [sound] on the stairs--though Emily [thinks] they [are] only Cousin Jimmy's" (EQ, 169). He brings her the long-awaited thin envelope whose contents announce that her manuscript has been accepted by the Warehams, "[t]he oldest and most important publishing house in America" (EQ, 169). His prediction months earlier that the Lost Diamond would indeed bring her "luck" proves true, although "luck" is also another name for his own perseverance in secretly sending the manuscript to the Warehams in "an old cracker box" (EQ, 171). Predictably, the novel is "a success from the start," with "[t]he first edition exhausted in ten days--three large editions in two weeks--five in eight weeks" (EQ, 185). Janet Royal, true to her promise in Emily Climbs, writes that Emily's decision to remain at New Moon has been the right one: "You could never have written The Moral of the Rose here [in New York]. Wild roses won't grow in city streets. And your story is like a wild rose, dear" (EQ, 185). Destiny thus operates--largely symbolically perhaps--as both accident and luck to bring about Emily's published novel. The novel, in turn, vindicates her choice to remain on Prince Édward Island and to pursue her career "among [her] own people" (EC, 313).

Emily's history is not completed once she becomes a published author, and although she views her book with "shining eyes" as "a reward for the long years of toil and endeavour and disappointment and discouragement" (EQ, 177), her compensatory fame is bittersweet: she is successful in career but as yet unrequited in love. Since Montgomery has been concerned, throughout the trilogy, with presenting the interplay between Emily as writer and Emily as lover, it is apt that even as Emily prides herself on having reached a thrilling "plateau" on the Alpine Path, she mourns--symbolically--for "her unborn Seller of Dreams,"

the burned manuscript that had been inspired by Teddy (EQ, 177). Her own pride (pointedly refusing to answer Teddy's whistle, in hurt reaction to Ilse's gossip about him in Montreal) and Mrs. Kent's jealousy (burning Teddy's letter to Emily) contribute to the long and painful estrangement of the artists that occupies the latter part of the trilogy. Emily hides such suffering from everyone but her journal and the reader. Ilse's letter announcing her engagement to Teddy—which Emily receives on the day that her book is released from the printers—reveals her ignorance of her friend's true feelings: "You never really cared a hoot about any he-creature, did you Emily?" (EQ, 179); she even requests that Emily be her bridesmaid. During the wedding preparations, Ilse whimsically suggests that Emily might fall in love with Lorne Halsey, Teddy's best man, who is a popular writer of some stature in Montreal. Emily responds wearily:

"Don't go match-making for me, Ilse," said Emily with a faint smile ... "I feel in my bones that I shall achieve old-maidenhood, which is an entirely different thing from having old-maidenhood thrust upon you." (EQ, 198)³¹

Emily has taken ownership of her circumstances. She will not marry for the sake of marrying; her life's direction will proceed from her own choices.

From the time Emily spurns Dean Priest until her final chapter reunion with Teddy, Montgomery parades out for the reader a string of no less than eleven potential husbands for her heroine, all of whom Emily chooses casually to reject, and all of whom are foils for

³¹ The rejoinder is a wry adaptation of Shakespeare ("Some are born great, some achieve greatness, and some have greatness thrust upon 'em") from *Twelfth Night*, II, v: 145-46. Montgomery inserts "old-maidenhood" into this same Shakespeare formulation in *Anne of Avonlea* (1909), p. 265, as pointed out by Rea Wilmshurt in "L.M. Montgomery's Use of Quotations and Allusions in the "Anne" Books," *Canadian Children's Literature* 56 (1989), p. 21. The fascinating suggestion that Montgomery equates "old-maidenhood" with "greatness" is perhaps food for a later debate.

Teddy.³² On several occasions the reason for Emily's rejection of a particular man tellingly reveals him as someone who would most likely dismiss his wife's opinions, domineer over her, or take her for granted. Cousin Andrew Murray is a case in point. In Emily Climbs, his reaction to his rejected suit is one of bewilderment that Emily's lack of love for him should have any bearing on the situation; much later, Emily assures Aunt Elizabeth that even if she had married him, her entreaties would not affect his decision to cut down the New Moon orchard, because "He believes that the husband is the head of the wife" (EQ, 157). As Emily disentangles herself from her inappropriate suitors, "[s]he t[akes] up her pen again with a secret gladness. But for a considerable time the love-making in her stories [is] quite cynical and misanthropic in its flavour" (EQ, 46).

Emily's own life story requires marriage with Teddy to produce the "happy ending" that will--ironically--replace the romantic contrivance of "unrequited love" in Emily's Quest with something more akin to "real life." Her encounter with the colourful Mark Greaves is a perfect dramatization of how Montgomery justifies the trilogy's happy ending by means of an interplay between Emily as writer and Emily as lover. The wild-haired, be-monocled

³² MacLulich is impatient with this plot element, referring to it with utter seriousness as "a disappointing series of abortive courtships," and "a rather dreary succession of unsatisfactory suitors for Emily's hand" ("L.M. Montgomery and the Literary Heroine," p. 16, and "L.M. Montgomery's Portraits of the Artist," p. 470, respectively). No doubt a more accurate interpretation can be gleaned from Montgomery's own comment to Weber, July 18, 1926:

You ask about my literary activities. Well, just now I am trying to marry Emily off and am finding her a bit of a handful. Not because of any special perversity on her part--but simply because--alack!--I can't write a young-girl-romantic-love story. My impish sense of humour always spoils everything (p. 13).

Greaves breaks in upon Emily in the New Moon parlour one afternoon, and, in the midst of falling in love with her at first sight, berates her for having "barbarously mutilated" his story, "A Royal Betrothal," by adding a happy ending.³³ In the hilarious parody of clichéd romance that follows, Greaves advises that Emily "learn never to write happy endings" because "[a] happy ending can never be artistic"; he offers to teach her instead "the beauty and artistry of sorrow and incompleteness," once she becomes his wife (EQ, 141, 142). Her rejection of the ludicrously-offered marriage proposal conveys Montgomery's implicit rejection of the equally ill-reasoned advice about endings. Just as Emily will not compromise herself through marriage to a man whom she does not love, her creator will not force herself to write an ending that she cannot believe in. Montgomery is preparing her readers for the inevitable "happy ending" reunion of Emily with Teddy, and she does so self-consciously, constructing a new paradigm for a form of closure that has itself been "barbarously mutilated" by contemporary critical biases. The words of the adolescent Emily seem to ring out between the lines of Montgomery's text: "I don't care whether it's 'true to life' or not. It's true to life as it *should be* and that's a better truth than the other" (EC, 226).

The happy ending of the "Emily" trilogy is an amalgam of choice and destiny that serves as a compensatory rounding-out of the writer-heroine's fictional existence. Montgomery orchestrates a last act of fate--Perry's minor automobile accident--as the farcical disruption of Ilse's wedding to Teddy. Some time after Ilse forsakes Teddy at the

³³ In one of her external writing jobs, Emily was asked by the Charlottetown Argus to write the lost concluding chapter for its reprint of the story.

altar to join herself to Perry, the man whom she has always loved in secret, she refers to the improbable situation--in appropriate thematic terms--as "a thing that was foreordained" (EQ, 226).³⁴ It is Emily's choice, however, that ultimately decides her future with Teddy. When, several years after the cancelled wedding, she hears his familiar whistle "calling to her across the years," she chooses to answer it, and proceeds "slowly--out--across the garden" to their place beneath the firs (EQ, 232). She is no longer recklessly willing to barter vocation for love, as she had been in youth, and there is significantly "no gulf" between them (EQ, 232). Their union is a compensation for years of tribulation, as well as the satisfying fulfilment of destiny; the reader welcomes its advent as an action fore-ordained by "the world beyond the curtain" that both artists know so well. As Emily remarks to a puzzled and slightly scandalized Aunt Elizabeth when she announces their wedding plans, "Teddy has always belonged to me and I to him. Heart, soul, and body" (EQ, 234).

Appropriately, the trilogy closes with the image of the Disappointed House, "the little beloved grey house that was to be disappointed no longer" (EQ, 235). As a child, Emily had recorded in her diary a secret visit that she and Teddy made to the beloved house on the hill:

We decided that when we grew up we would buy the Disappointed House and live here together ... Teddy will paint pictures and I will write poetry and we will have toast and bacon and marmelade *every morning* for breakfast ... and I'll make lots of jam and Teddy is always going to help me wash the dishes. (NM, 303)

It is a child's fancy, but nevertheless contributes in significant part to Montgomery's

³⁴ The incidental wedding guest "Aunt Isabella Hyslop, *née* Mitchell" had already introduced this theme on the morning of the cancelled wedding by telling Emily of her "presentiment": her "uneasy feeling that trouble is coming" (EQ, 218).

fashioning of the "ideal" husband for her writer-heroine. In a childish letter-bill epistle that predicts Teddy's future behaviour as a husband, Emily had written favourably of his devotion to his mother: "He washes the dishes for her and helps her in all the house work. Ilse says the boys call him sissy for that but I think it is noble and manley of him" (NM, 136). Through the union of the two artists at the end of the "Emily" trilogy, Montgomery asserts the surprisingly contemporary conviction that marriage is not a matter of dominance or prudence or even unabated "romance," but rather of appreciation, cooperation, and friendship: "a mutual respect between equals."³⁵ Certainly Montgomery's writer-heroine has achieved such respect by the end of the trilogy. As she looks out toward the future, to "where the To-morrow Road open[s] out on the Blair Water valley," she hears behind her "Teddy's eager footsteps coming to *her*" (EQ, 235). The trilogy whose themes have provided an interplay between career and love for the writer-heroine ends with the promise that Emily's marriage to an artist will satisfy both her vocation and her emotion.

³⁵ Carolyn Heilbrun borrows this W.H. Auden phrase to characterize what she thinks might be the lasting appeal of the end of Jane Austen's Pride and Prejudice: the capacity for friendship between the married couple, Darcy and Elizabeth. See Hamlet's Mother and Other Women, p. 146-47.

CONCLUSION

It may be entirely too speculative to claim that the impulse toward "interplay" in the "Emily" trilogy is a distinctly Canadian one: a movement toward interaction as opposed to repudiation; a respect for boundaries and traditions that nevertheless uncovers the myriad possibilities within that bounded space. For Montgomery, however, as a Canadian woman writer in the early decades of the twentieth century, interplay seems to have been a habit of mind. She was a dutiful Presbyterian minister's wife and also a heterodox; she looked after her children and engaged in lawsuits with her publisher. She wrote her fiction for an audience of young girls and yet never lost sight of the adult perspective, including in her works playfully altered quotations from literary sources that nevertheless speak to the young readers on whom the allusions are lost, or providing an occasional serious subtext on issues as accessible as marriage, maturity, and religion. In her "Emily" trilogy, she tells her own story and also the story of Del Jordan or Vanessa MacLeod or any other young girl who knows she must be an artist and also knows that she must live in the world. In short, Montgomery makes the most of the Canadian predilection for existing in the "middle way": she looks in the backyard of her own memory and culture, uses what she finds there, and fashions something at once bounded and exemplary.

What is perhaps most striking about the trilogy is its guileless honesty of presentation. From beginning to end it proports to be nothing but what it is: a "portrait of the artist as a young woman." That very declaration, however, is both audacious and infinitely courageous. In a generation that included Joyce and Woolf, who was Montgomery to come

forward--from her nondescript Prince Edward Island roots--with a model for the developing mind of a female artist? Who, indeed, but a pioneer of one of the perennial concerns of Canadian literature.

Each of the three chapters of this thesis has explored interplay in the "Emily" trilogy as the impetus for a new tradition--a Canadian tradition--of artist fiction: a portrait of the artist as a young woman. Each chapter has demonstrated how Montgomery manipulates either genre, narrative voice, or closure in a strangely liberating fashion in her delineation of a female child growing up as an artist within the gendered conventions of family, society, and vocation at the turn of the century. Chapter one challenged historically-based genre biases against the trilogy by premising the existence of a genre that could call itself a "portrait of the artist as a young woman," and then proceeding to locate in the trilogy elements of three existing genres whose interplay might contribute to such a "portrait." Chapter two examined Montgomery's dual narrative voice in the trilogy--an area that has received little critical attention--as a means of acknowledging and yet circumventing the issue of (auto)biographical similarity between Montgomery and her writer-heroine. Chapter three defended the trilogy's happy ending by means of thematic continuity, thus positing an argument (hitherto overlooked by critics) for an overall thematic sophistication for the trilogy. The ensuing vision generated by the "Emily" books is a "portrait of the artist as a young woman" in the complete sense of the genre term, dealing in a complex, thematically and narratively justified manner, with the "woman" as well as the "artist."

Interplay as a technique of writing in the trilogy thus suggests an agenda not of compromise but of quietly determined disagreement with the normative literary tradition

of the artist as repudiator. Montgomery as author and Emily as writer-heroine are far from obscure Joycean entities on the perimeter of a culture, disinterestedly paring their fingernails; they are conscious of the resonance of their existence within a given circle of society. Interplay suggests itself as their possible means of liberation within that circle; a room of their own, in Woolfian terms, in which influences are acknowledged and generative, and where all things, indeed, contribute to a final vision.

Montgomery's "Emily" trilogy sets a precedent in Canadian artist fiction; a little known or a belittled precedent perhaps, but an indelible one all the same. The foregoing thesis, being among the first extended studies of Montgomery's "Emily" trilogy, has attempted to further the process of discovery about an author whose works find themselves in a period of critical reawakening. The female artist novel in Canada exists because of and within tradition, a particular genre with a distinctive voice that demands the right to propound its own unique conclusions. The story of Montgomery's Emily Byrd Starr begins this tradition of female artist fiction in Canada, thereby providing a precursor to the well-known fictional lives of Alice Munro's *Del* and Margaret Laurence's *Vanessa*. It remains both the privilege and the responsibility of future Canadian literary scholarship to explore the bounded spaces of its female artist fiction, elucidating the "Emily" trilogy further, and placing it with appropriate respect within this ever-developing tradition of Canadian literature.

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