“I love *things* just as much as *people*”:

Material Culture and

L.M. Montgomery’s Emily Trilogy

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Table of Contents

Abbreviations

Emily of New Moon: *ENM*

Emily Climbs: *EC*

Emily's Quest: *EQ*

Anne of Green Gables: *AGG*

Pat of Silver Bush: *PSB*

Mistress Pat: *MP*

Jane of Lantern Hill: *JLH*

The Selected Journals of L.M. Montgomery, vols. I-V: *SJ I, II, III, IV, V*

Abstract

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Allison Hudson

The intersection of material culture with children's fiction is an underexplored area of study. Lucy Maud Montgomery, the Canadian author most famous for Anne of Green Gables, provides an ideal starting point for such an examination. Most of Montgomery's twenty novels are categorized as children's fiction and contain references to hundreds of everyday objects with varying degrees of significance: some hugely symbolic or plot-driving, others seemingly incidental but often with unexpected meaning. Montgomery represented her time and place in her realistic fiction and perhaps had no intention of drawing particular attention to material things. However, I argue that these objects are a significant aspect of her fictional worlds, connecting characters, propelling narratives, and enabling protagonists' growth and development, as well as illuminating aspects of the culture and society of Canada in the early twentieth century.

In applying material culture theory to Montgomery's fiction, I am using various works to provide anthropological context, sources on children's literature, and others on Montgomery studies to explore the roles of objects in these works with a particular focus on the Emily trilogy. Using close reading and the application of material culture theory as my methodologies, I examine the significance of objects to the protagonist's growth as a young woman and her career development despite various barriers, as well as exploring connections between characters and even between author and reader.

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For Kathy, who loved people *and* things (especially books)

"I love *things* just as much as *people*":

Material Culture and L.M. Montgomery's Emily Trilogy

Introduction: L.M. Montgomery and Material Culture

Author Lucy Maud Montgomery (1874-1942), one of Canada's most beloved writers for young people, is best known for *Anne of Green Gables* (1908) but also wrote twenty other novels as well as poetry, journals, and hundreds of short stories. Her realistic fiction generally focuses on the development of a female protagonist and is known for its lavish descriptions of the natural world, its keen and often humorous insights into human nature, and its satisfyingly resolved narrative arcs. Montgomery, although often underappreciated as a serious literary figure during her lifetime,[1] was nonetheless named an officer of the Order of the British Empire in 1935 and has been more recently celebrated and studied in a wide range of contexts. For example, in 2024, the 150th anniversary of her birth, the Royal Canadian Mint released a coin in her honour (notably, in this context, a material object). Her novels have been translated into more than thirty languages, and *Anne* has sold more than fifty million copies. Scholar Elizabeth Waterston points out that Montgomery's novels have "the immediacy of description and the subtlety of characterization that made *Anne of Green Gables* so lasting a favourite" (*Magic Island* 1, 2008), and it is perhaps this skill that has resulted in all of her novels still being in print in the twenty-first century (6).

[1] Literary journalist William Arthur Deacon, for example, "wanted Canada to develop world-class writers and its own literature" but "regarded as hopelessly old-fashioned the writers who appealed to only 'lowbrow' unsophisticates," including Montgomery, whom he described as a "national embarrassment" (Rubio, *Wings* 353).

Montgomery's fiction, especially the Emily trilogy (*Emily of New Moon*, 1923; *Emily Climbs*, 1925; and *Emily's Quest,* 1927), is rich in fictionalised objects – from houses to trees to notebooks – that serve many functions within the narrative. This trilogy in particular, therefore, is an ideal candidate for the application of material culture theory in the fictional worlds of children's literature, and material culture studies is a particularly apt lens through which to view Montgomery's fiction specifically. This thesis will explore the significance of fictional objects within the Emily trilogy narrative, demonstrating that a close reading of these novels through the lens of material culture studies can provide a fresh and revealing perspective on a work of children's literature. This approach has been underutilised thus far and has great potential in this field.

Material culture studies is, put simply, the study of physical objects. It is an approach traditionally used by archaeologists, anthropologists, and historians to examine cultures, past or present, through the objects they make and use. According to researcher Ian Woodward,

> Objects are the material things people encounter, interact with and use. Objects are commonly spoken of as material culture. The term 'material culture' emphasises how apparently inanimate things within the environment act on people, and are acted upon by people, for the purposes of carrying out social functions, regulating social relations and giving symbolic meaning to human activity. (3)

In recent years, the study of material culture has also been used as a lens through which we can examine literature, the idea being that fictionalised objects reveal as much about the characters and their culture within the narrative as real objects reveal about the people who use them and their cultures. This development is part of a larger movement within academia away from the purely discursive and toward a more embodied, material perspective in the humanities in general. The focal point of this movement is the idea that objects contain and convey meaning; as Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi and Eugene Rochberg-Halton state, "they are objects in the sense that we attend to them as patterned, meaningful

information" (14, 1981). This meaningfulness is evident when we pay particular attention to the objects that are represented in fiction.

The so-called material turn in the humanities and social sciences in the last two decades has focused attention on physical objects in a wider variety of disciplines, including literature studies. Therefore, this thesis will contribute to more recent debates on using material culture studies as a lens through which to study children's fiction. Because the role of objects in children's literature is a relatively new and underexplored topic, I am arguing that material culture studies can be used to examine children's books with a fresh and helpful perspective. This material turn has been discussed by many scholars in recent years; for example, sociologist Chandra Mukerji points out that

> the analysis of materiality in the social sciences has developed in many directions: looking, for example, at the material lives of suppressed groups; considering the social power of consumer goods, fashion, and taste; tracing the role of territorial control to the growth of states; and even addressing the questions of how humans affect the Earth's climate and how climate change demonstrates nonhuman agency. (1, 2015)

She further states that "all of the new work in materiality studies emphasizes the entanglements of people and things, and the mutual production of social worlds and material environments" (9), and these sorts of entanglements between people and objects are, I argue, evident in fiction such as Montgomery's, forming an integral part of the narrative.

In terms of literature studies, the material turn has been observed in fields such as comparative literature, as discussed by Kiene Brillenburg Wurth in "The Material Turn in Comparative Literature: An Introduction" as "a forum of converging ideas and approaches in comparative literature and such related disciplines in the humanities as art theory, media studies, sociology, and anthropology" (247, 2018). Articles in this special

issue[2] discuss the "renewed relevance of matter and materiality to comparative literature in the last two decades. This renewed relevance … grew out of new methods and approaches developed in anthropology, philosophy, cultural theory, art, music, and media theory that are pertinent to comparative literature, as well as from the digitization of culture" (248). Thus, material culture studies is particularly apt for the study of literature: Cydney Alexis and Hannah J. Rule state that "a material culture approach foregrounds and maintains focus on the everyday artifact as meaningful and as a revealer of culture and history, as a way to account for the experiences and lives of particular people, as well as communities, in situated contexts" (5, 2022). Furthermore, they write that

> The idea of everyday artifacts being meaningful in themselves for their potential to reveal human cultures and histories is what motivated interdisciplinary scholars throughout the 1970s and 1980s to study how everyday objects mattered. These scholars, who included artists, art historians, folklorists, historical archaeologists, psychologists, and consumer researchers initiated a movement that validated the 'low-art,' ordinary, everyday artifact as worthy of scholarly study (*ibid*.).

These "everyday artifacts" and their inherent meaningfulness are particularly evident in Montgomery's realistic fiction, as will be demonstrated in the following chapters.

One aspect of the material turn is the recent theoretical shift toward embodiment and the physicality of the human body. For example, Roberta Seelinger Trites, in her book *Twenty-First-Century Feminisms in Children's and Adolescent Literature* (2018), discusses ecofeminism and material feminism in fiction for young people and points out that ecofeminist novels "tend to interrogate the false duality between discourse and the material. They also invariably demonstrate a young woman gaining increased knowledge of herself as embodied in the world" (61). I am arguing in this thesis that we apply to

[2] *Comparative Literature*, Vol. 70, No. 3, "The Material Turn in Comparative Literature" (September 2018), pp. 247-263.

fictive objects the logic that other scholars such as Trites are applying to characters' bodies, dismantling this "false duality" and focusing on the embodied.

Kimberly Reynolds points out that children's literature often "interfaces with other disciplines, not least by appropriating critical and theoretical approaches developed for one purpose or discipline and adapting them to support thinking and investigation based on narratives for children" (Grenby and Reynolds 123, 2011). There are but a few studies on material culture and children's literature, most notably including a groundbreaking 1994 paper by Peter B. Crabb and Dawn Bielawski entitled "The social representation of material culture and gender in children's books," which "examined the gender-typed portrayal of material culture in Caldecott Award children's books published between 1937 and 1989" (69), and a much later follow-up article in 2011 by Crabb and Deb L. Marciano.[3] There is also a study of the use of objects by novelist Edith Wharton, entitled *Memorial Boxes and Guarded Interiors: Edith Wharton and Material Culture* (2007), edited by Gary Totten, who points out that "material culture functions in fiction not only as prop and decor, but also as the metaphorical manifestation of ideology, evidence of deep engagement with intellectual, philosophical, and moral issues" (5). Totten also discusses Wharton's "deliberate use of material objects as signs of cultural beliefs and patterns in her life and work and ultimately revealing … that material culture is an integral part of the human story" (7). Elaine Freedgood, in her book *The Ideas in Things: Fugitive Meaning in the Victorian Novel* (2006), uses examples from Victorian fiction to discuss the ways in which objects in novels add various meanings to the narratives. It is clear from the above overview that material culture theory has been

[3] Crabb, Peter B. and Deb L. Marciano. "Representations of Material Culture in Award-Winning Children's Books: A 20-Year Follow-Up." *Journal of Research in Childhood Education,* Vol. 25, Issue 4, 2011, pp. 390-398.

underutilised in the context of children's fiction, however, despite having the potential to provide fresh and unique insights.

Montgomery's Context and Background

Montgomery's Emily trilogy is the story of an eleven-year-old orphaned girl sent to live with her mother's family, the proud Murray clan, on a rural Prince Edward Island (PEI) farm in eastern Canada. The protagonist, Emily Byrd Starr, has been brought to live with her aunts Elizabeth and Laura and her cousin Jimmy at New Moon Farm in the fictional village of Blair Water after the death of her father. The novels follow her development from the beginning of adolescence and her first spark of writing ambition to the career successes and personal challenges of her young adulthood, and they draw heavily on Montgomery's own journals.

Montgomery grew up in tiny PEI among the Scottish Presbyterian families of her mother, Clara Woolner Macneill, and father, Hugh John Montgomery. Biographer Mary Rubio points out that "most of Montgomery's immediate kindred were feisty and literate Scots-Canadians, particularly gifted in wit and rapier-like wordplay" (*The Gift of Wings* 18, 2008). She lived in the small agricultural community of Cavendish with her maternal grandparents after her mother died of tuberculosis when she was not yet two and her father moved to western Canada when she was six, thereby experiencing a sort of orphanhood that she wrote into many of her fictional characters. The tightly knit Cavendish was "an easily agitated hive of gossip – an immensely rich landscape for a future novelist" (20), and Rubio also notes that "a notable literary and artistic strain was present in both clans" (23), so it is perhaps not surprising that Montgomery pursued a literary career. After achieving some success with poetry and short stories, Montgomery found much greater fame with the publication of *Anne of Green Gables* in 1908. Montgomery's enduring popularity with readers is evidenced by such rankings as a list

of the "greatest Canadian children's books of all time"[4] on the web site "The Greatest Books," which includes *Anne of Green Gables* at number one, *Emily of New Moon* at number three, and *Anne of Avonlea* (the sequel to *Anne of Green Gables*) at number six.

Although she loved PEI and set all but one of her novels there, Montgomery moved to Ontario at the age of thirty-seven after her 1911 marriage to the Reverend Ewen Macdonald, who had obtained a parish in Leaskdale (north of Toronto). She expresses her desire to write the Emily trilogy in her journal: "I want to write a book dealing with grown-up creatures – a psychological study of one human being's life" (*SJ II* 390, 1987). The trilogy, which concerns the growth and development of an artist/author and therefore can be considered a *Künstlerroman*, is a fascinating "psychological study" of the protagonist's young life and career development, more heavily emphasising the role of objects in the narrative than in any of Montgomery's other novels. This thesis will explore the most significant objects in the Emily trilogy, divided into four categories, namely houses, writing materials, domestic objects, and natural objects.[5]

Material objects have an important role in the Island life portrayed in the novels and were clearly a significant aspect of Montgomery's life even long after she left PEI, and, of course, many of the everyday objects Montgomery used and wrote about were also familiar objects in Ontario in the first half of the twentieth century. The objects portrayed in the Emily series generally reflect life in Canada in the early years of the century, which hints at Montgomery's nostalgia for the time before the Great War. This nostalgia is evident in her journals, where Montgomery states that her tenth "Anne story" will deal

[4] https://thegreatestbooks.org/the-greatest/children-s-books/books/written-by/canadian/authors. The site states that "this list represents a comprehensive and trusted collection of the greatest books. Developed through a specialized algorithm, it brings together 464 'best of' book lists to form a definitive guide to the world's most acclaimed books."

[5] Due to the unavailability of earlier editions of Montgomery's novels, I will be using the Bantam editions of the 1980s. These editions do not contain the full, unabridged text of the original editions, but the changes made by the publishers are not significant in terms of their application in this thesis.

with "her sons and daughters during the years of war. That will end *Anne* – and properly. For she belongs to the green untroubled pastures and still waters of the world before the war" (*SJ II* 309), and she writes in *Emily Climbs* of "the olden years before the world turned upside down" (1). Montgomery does not mention specific dates in the trilogy apart from Emily's diary headings, which all contain "19—" (see *EC* 15, for example); she does not refer to the war at all and so seems to have set the narrative between about 1900 and 1914. The objects mentioned are appropriate to this time period; the Murrays use a horse and buggy (*ENM* 49), for example, as automobiles had not yet become commonplace[6]. The family's choice of vehicle may seem like a minor detail, but it reveals important information about them and their social status: Virginia Careless points out that

> the type of conveyance had a lot of meaning and would not have been arbitrarily chosen, by either the characters or by the author. That a girl was in a stage coach, or in a buggy, or on a train spoke volumes to people of the time as to her family's economic status, the stage of development of her locale, the age, taste, ethnic group, and even religion of those who sent her in this way, and so on. (153, 2003).

One of the most significant aspects of the trilogy in terms of material objects is the fact that Montgomery embeds many of her own objects, and especially her first published book, into her fiction. She writes in her journal about the newly published *Anne of Green Gables* as the physical embodiment of her own hopes and dreams: "There in my hand lay the material realization of all the dreams and hopes and ambitions and struggles of my whole conscious existence – my first book!" (*SJ I* 335, 1985). This, as we will see in Chapter Two, is echoed by Emily when the first copy of her book arrives from the publisher. Montgomery weaves many such significant objects into the trilogy in a manner that emphasises their contribution to Emily's development, both as a writer and as a young

[6] The first gasoline-powered car was brought to PEI in 1905, and there were still only seven of them on the Island when they were banned in 1908. The ban was not completely lifted until 1919, well after the Emily trilogy was set (https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/prince-edward-island/pei-car-ban-battle-book-1.4104246). See also https://islandarchives.ca/islandora/object/vre%3Aislemag-batch2-567?solr_nav%5Bid%5D=cc8e12cc21f29aed1676&solr_nav%5Bpage%5D=0&solr_nav%5Boffset%5D=1&search=dairy

woman. A close reading of these novels will demonstrate the functions that selected objects have within the narrative, including Emily's career growth and the facilitation of connections between Emily and other characters.

In a statement that reflects the very normal humanity of Montgomery's protagonists, Emily writes in her journal, "'I love *things* just as much as *people*'" (*EC* 210). Emily's declaration forms the foundation of this thesis, as it demonstrates the significance of material objects in these novels to the protagonist and, by extension, to Montgomery. Emily later writes, "'I get so much pleasure of out of all my little belongings. They have a meaning for me they have for no one else'" (220), demonstrating Montgomery's desire to express the importance of objects to her characters and to her readers. This is not a *materialistic* (in the sense of being excessively concerned with material possessions or money) point of view, but rather one that emphasises the material aspects of life as being as significant as relationships with people. Morally, it might seem surprising that Montgomery, who was raised in a very strict, almost puritanical Presbyterian family, would develop such an appreciation for the physical world when the teachings of Christianity tend to reject the material in favour of the spiritual and regard objects as necessary evils rather than things to be celebrated.[7] However, Montgomery often rebelled, albeit privately, against her strict upbringing and had clearly delineated opinions about her beliefs that she wrote in her journals. Her thoughts on the physicality of the human body, for example, demonstrate her strong feelings about problems with her religion in terms of materiality:

> The great lack of Christianity – its cardinal mistake – lies in the fact that it has over-emphasized the spiritual – taught that the body must be mortified – or at best, disregarded as of no importance – a false and ugly – yea, and a blasphemous doctrine – blasphemous because it lowers the 'image of the Creator' below the

[7] The general Christian tendency toward the emphasis of the spiritual over the material, as Montgomery discusses in the quotation on this page, sits in apparent contradiction to the so-called Protestant work ethic that is an expression of capitalism, as discussed by philosophers such as Max Weber (see https://gpde.direito.ufmg.br/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/MAX-WEBER.pdf).

> brutes. Mind and soul can express themselves only through the body and therefore we should try to make it and keep it as perfect an instrument for their expression as possible. (*SJ I* 247)

Montgomery clearly valued the physical body as a means of expression, hinting at the same "false duality between discourse and the material" (61) as mentioned in Trites' discussion above.

The Autobiographical Influence

As will be demonstrated throughout this thesis, there is a significant autobiographical element to the trilogy, although it is highly fictionalised. Montgomery herself stated in her journal that New Moon "is in some respects but not all my own old home and 'Emily's' inner life was my own, though outwardly most of the events and incidents were fictitious" (*SJ III* 147, 1992). This is an important aspect of the trilogy in terms of context; M.O. Grenby points out that " … the author needs to be factored into the relationship between text and context. No text straightforwardly reflects its milieu. Rather, a creative intelligence will have intervened … " (103). Montgomery's lifetime's worth of journals constitute an important source for this thesis, as they provide inspiration for many of the objects in her fiction; Montgomery even intended these journals for eventual public consumption. According to Rubio, she willed them to her son, Stuart Macdonald, "with the instruction that he should publish them eventually" (*Wings* 6). Although not strictly autobiographical, the Emily trilogy contains many details taken directly from Montgomery's journals and is often referred to as being semi-autobiographical; as a result, it is generally much darker in subject and tone than the Anne series. Waterston, for example, points out that "much of the material for the first book in the series came not from the direct journal account written in the 1880s when Montgomery was not much older than young Emily, but rather from the long diatribes written later in adult moods of depression" (113); Rubio writes that "in the semi-

autobiographical Emily trilogy, . . . [Montgomery] focuses on how a young woman who wants to become a writer learns to negotiate with a patriarchal society which discourages female selfhood and individuality" ("Trite" 8, 1992). Her attitudes and feelings toward physical objects are most evident in this trilogy, particularly in the passages that reflect her own journals. Montgomery thoroughly enjoyed the writing of *Emily of New Moon,* noting that she "'had more intense pleasure in writing it than any of the others – not even excepting *Green Gables*'" (*SJ III* 39).

Montgomery's "creative intelligence" takes many real-life events, people, and feelings and transmutes them into Emily's story. For example, Emily's Cousin Jimmy, a "thwarted genius" who wrote poetry and boiled potatoes for the pigs, was clearly modelled after Montgomery's "Uncle Jimmy." She writes in her journal:

> 'Uncle Jimmy' lived next door to us in Cavendish and was what was called in the vernacular 'a character.' We young fry thought him half crazy but it was probably only the eccentricity of thwarted genius. He would probably have made a good sailor but as a farmer he was a failure. He had the family gift of verse-making and as he sat and watched 'pigs' potatoes' boiling on the long autumn evenings he composed hundreds of poems … Not a line of them was ever written down which was a pity because they were capital. (*SJ IV* 127, 1998)

Montgomery's Romantic and Gothic Influences

Another significant influence on the trilogy was the fact that Montgomery's reading tastes were heavily Romantic in nature, with some of her favourite authors being Edward Bulwer Lytton, William Wordsworth, and Washington Irving; she rejected Modernism wholeheartedly (as will be discussed in Chapter Four) and wrote in a realistic style clearly inspired by Romantic authors. Elizabeth Rollins Epperly points out that "in late Victorian rural Eastern Canada in a community of largely English and Scottish descent, Montgomery was schooled in interpreting nature through the Romanticism of … William Wordsworth, Sir Walter Scott, and Washington Irving" ("Natural Bridge" 89). Furst, of the many scholars of Romanticism, explains the movement most succinctly, and most

appropriately for studies of Montgomery's novels, when she states in her article "Romanticism in Historical Perspective" that "in place of the Neoclassical ideals of rationalism, traditionalism, and formal harmony, the Romantics emphasized individualism, imagination, and emotion as their guiding principles" (116). This definition is clearly applicable to Montgomery's heroines; Emily, in particular, is an imaginative, emotional character whose individual, often solitary, quest to become a writer is central to the trilogy. Emily often reflects Furst's criteria of "the unbridled creative urge of the original genius" and a "dynamic outpouring of feeling" (*ibid.*) in both her personality and her writing.

In some respects, Montgomery's Emily is an ideal Romantic child, what some would call the "essential child." Judith Plotz, for instance, claims that "Romantic Discourse produces the Child, a timeless figure of essential childhood" and that "this essential timeless figure is principally produced by two initiatives: the identification of childhood with Nature … and the attribution to children of an autonomous, unitary consciousness" (5). Emily has a particularly strong connection to the natural world, more than anyone around her; she thrives on imagination and experiences strong emotions. Plotz posits that "the equation of childhood with the ancient and abiding realm of nature universalizes and essentializes the child as a figure of nature rather than culture who is therefore the guardian of human nature" (6). Emily takes on this task of "guardian" in a sense when she chooses or accepts her vocation as a writer; as she states in *Emily Climbs*, "could she dare try to carry some of the loveliness of that 'dialogue divine' back to the everyday world of sordid market-place and clamorous street? She *must* give it – she could not keep it to herself" (178).

Emily is somewhat isolated by her unique artistic identity; she stands out from her peers and from the society she inhabits and is often misunderstood. While she is never

completely solitary or cut off from society, she is often lonely or creatively independent. Plotz goes on to point out that "the mental qualities imputed to childhood are those befitting a solitary creative genius who in isolation from human society is able to form unitary visions of a world instinct with meaning" (13), qualities that Emily reflects throughout the trilogy.

Another aspect of the Emily trilogy that reflects Romantic ideals is its Gothic intrusions and undertones. Montgomery includes supernatural details that set Emily apart as a somewhat isolated character with uncanny gifts, such as her ability to communicate telepathically (as when she saves her friend Teddy from sailing on a doomed ship in *Emily's Quest*) or reveal knowledge during sleep that she would have no logical way of obtaining (such as when she draws the location of a missing boy in her sleep in *Emily Climbs*). Emily's surroundings are, as Rubio points out, "full of beauty and fascination, but at the same time it is also a darkly complicated place" (*Wings* v.), and a close reading of the trilogy demonstrates that objects facilitate the portrayal of this beauty found in darkness, particularly in its Gothic intrusions that are enabled by objects.

Sigmund Freud, in his essay "The Uncanny" (1919), researches the etymology of the terms and finds that, as in the English words "uncanny" and "canny," the words are not exactly opposites. The use of the German word *unheimlich* (uncanny), as Anna Jackson points out, "has been understood … as not quite the opposite of *heimlich*" and that there are home-like and familiar qualities to much that is uncanny in Gothic literature (157). Jackson goes on to explain that "the quality of uncanniness seems to belong to a situation or even, as an *effect* the situation or event produces, whereas canniness is a quality that properly belongs to a person" (158). Emily, therefore, is not *unheimlich* or uncanny herself but occasionally ends up in situations that are uncanny. She is actually quite "canny" too – a word that, according to Jackson, "has increasingly come to mean a

cleverness that is not just about knowing things, but … has to do with self-possession – a self-possession that makes you capable of acting powerfully in and on the world. And if we understand canny as a type of self-possession, suddenly it makes perfect sense that issues of identity should be explored through narratives of hauntings, narratives about being *possessed*" (159). Emily, after some of her uncanny experiences, describes feeling almost "possessed" and "'as if I were marked out in some uncanny way'" (*EC* 207). It is worth noting that in a trilogy about a young woman developing her self-identity, she struggles with the idea of being possessed by "'some *other* intelligence'" (*ibid.*), which is antithetical to her strong desire for independence. This Gothic feature of the novels often uses objects to aid in Emily's uncanny experiences, as will be demonstrated in the following chapters.

Montgomery's Novels As Children's Literature

Although Montgomery's novels are usually labelled as literature for children, this was not her primary focus. She does not mention her intended audience when she first writes in her journal about the creation of *Anne of Green Gables* (*SJ I* 330), although she does write afterward that it was written "with a juvenile audience in view" (*SJ I* 339). Rubio points out, however, that at the time, Montgomery was "downplaying her writing career to show 'womanly modesty'. Later, when attitudes towards women writers changed, Maud would boldly assert the truth – that she had not written *Anne* for children, but for herself and other adults" (*Wings* 289). Rubio states that Montgomery "had not written her books specifically for children; they had been written for a general popular audience. It was a happy coincidence that they were equally successful with children" (*ibid.*); the novels, then, would be what we consider today to be crossover fiction (that

which is intended for one audience but appeals to another)[8]. The language and subject matter of most of her books is accessible to older children, though, and many people consider Anne to be an essential part of the children's literature canon. Most of her novels, with the exceptions of *The Blue Castle* (1926) and *A Tangled Web* (1931), which Montgomery intended expressly for adults, would be considered "young adult" literature now; the 1983 Bantam Seal editions of the Emily trilogy are recommended for "age 11 and up" (*ENM* iv). She did lament that she was classified only as a writer for children: when she begins to discuss the creation of the Emily books, she writes, "And I want – oh, I want to write – something entirely different from anything I have written yet. I am becoming classed as a 'writer for young people' and that only" (*SJ II* 390). It is not clear whether she is lamenting this classification because children's literature was regarded as a lower form of literature than books for adults or simply because she had not intended to be limited to one genre, but the former would not be surprising, as children's literature has not always been regarded as "serious" literature. For example, Beverly Lyon Clark writes about "how highly the nineteenth-century cultural elite regarded such literature, compared to the twentieth-century cultural elite" (xii, 2003) – and Montgomery's novels were all written in the first half of the twentieth century. Her intent with the Emily trilogy was not a series for children, but this depiction of a girl beginning at the age of eleven (like Anne) has meant that it has also been classed as such, despite the much more mature subject matter and tone, particularly of *Emily's Quest*. For the purposes of this thesis, then, we are considering Montgomery's novels as *suitable* for young readers rather than *intended* solely for them.

[8] See, for example, Sandra L. Beckett's book *Crossover Fiction: Global and Historical Perspectives,* Routledge, 2010.

Although the focus of this thesis is the Emily trilogy, I will also touch briefly on some of Montgomery's other novels that also feature significant objects. *Anne of Green Gables* (1908), *Pat of Silver Bush* (1933), *Mistress Pat* (1935), and *Jane of Lantern Hill* (1937) are worth examining for their similarities to Emily in their semi-autobiographical details and the "aspects of selfhood" (Woodward, vi, below) that the fictional objects enable the protagonists to construct. Montgomery wrote in her journal in 1932, "Today I finished *Pat of Silver Bush* … It has a setting after my own heart and 'Pat' is more myself than any of my heroines. I have put Alec's Secret Field in it and the Webb cats and 'Silver Bush' is so real to me that I feel I have lived there myself" (*SJ IV* 211), revealing the significance of that novel's physical setting as well as its semi-autobiographical nature. Epperly remarks on the autobiographical qualities of some of the objects featured in *Jane of Lantern Hill*:

> I believe we should look to *Jane of Lantern Hill* if we want to see, pressed into one place, all the homey things Montgomery herself loved, as she described them over the years in her letters and her journal. Jane delights in naming, in Bible verses (Montgomery's own favourites), ocean bathing, salt air, P.E.I. Junes, cats, gardening, star-gazing, quilts, buggy rides, driftwood fires, storms, wild strawberries, salt codfish, and a table laden with pies and pickles and chicken. (*The Fragrance of Sweet-Grass* 222, 2014)

These similarities to the Emily trilogy serve to emphasise the importance of the physical world to some of Montgomery's other heroines and further demonstrate the significance of material culture in children's literature.

Natural Objects

An important question regarding the use of material culture studies to examine Montgomery's fiction is whether natural objects (as opposed to manufactured) can be considered part of material culture. Many scholars of material culture would argue that the discipline refers only to manufactured objects, which makes sense in terms of studying a culture through the objects it creates and uses. Tilley *et al.*, for example, state that "the

word material in material culture refers to a broad, but not unrestricted, range of objects. It embraces the class of objects known as artifacts- objects made by man or modified by man. It excludes natural objects" (2, 2006).

Other scholars, however, would include natural objects in their definition of material culture studies, arguing that objects that exist in the natural world can still be used by different cultures in different ways and still exist as objects, whether or not they have been created or manipulated by humans. Some, including Jean Baudrillard (see page 22), point out that manufactured objects are originally created from natural objects, and I therefore claim that there is no reason to distinguish between the two. In fact, I would argue that any object, created or manipulated by humans or not, is physically available to the senses and can have a role in human society and relationships and should therefore have the potential to be considered "material culture."

Cszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton, in their work *The Meaning of Things,* state that

> man-made things are twice as much dependent on intention for their existence: Like any other object, they can be interpreted through the psychic activity of the interpreter; unlike natural objects, they were originally given shape by the investment of psychic energy of their maker. The physical constitution of the sun or the rain is independent of human intentionality. They are objects in the sense that we attend to them as patterned, meaningful information. But a sculpture or an old shoe owe their very physical existence to the attention and intention of their maker. (14)

Despite this delineation between manufactured objects and natural objects in terms of intention, the "meaningful information" that either set of objects represents is equally important in exploring Montgomery's fictional objects.

Daniel Miller points out that for Karl Marx, "humanity starts with nature itself. This is the raw material from which we make our lives. Our social evolution consists not of advances in consciousness per se but in our increasing capacity to create an artifactual world from nature …" and that "the initial process is always one of labour. It is human

labour that transforms nature into objects, creating this mirror in which we can come to understand who we are. So labour produces culture in the form of stuff" (*Stuff* 58). Tilley *et al*. include, in their conceptions of materiality and material culture, things "as materially existing and having a significance in the world independent of any human action or intervention" (4), including natural objects such as stones, animals, and trees; their exclusion of natural objects as mentioned above, then, seems contradictory, and there are many reasons to include natural objects as material culture, not least their physicality and their necessity in the creation of manufactured objects.

For the purposes of this thesis, then, natural objects are treated as being as valid as manufactured objects in studying the characters and culture of Montgomery's novels. Natural objects, as characters relate to them, function in the same way as manufactured objects in terms of providing information about a culture within the literature. In her writing, Montgomery seems to consider manufactured and natural objects as having equal significance; she does not favour one over the other when developing her characters. Anne, for example, is as fascinated by a tree as she is by a beautiful dress, and Montgomery does not draw attention to either object's origins. Living, sentient creatures, however, will be excluded from the definition of objects for the purposes of this thesis, as they blur the line between human character and inanimate object in a complex manner that does not benefit this study of objects in fiction.

Although it might seem relevant, the scope of this thesis does not employ what has come to be known as "thing theory."[9] Bill Brown's seminal work on this concept focuses on the ideas of things rather than the physicality of material objects. For the purposes of

[9]See Bill Brown's article "Thing Theory," *Critical Inquiry,* Vol. 28, No. 1, Autumn 2001, pp. 1-22, and Sarah Wasserman's entry in *Oxford Bibliographies* on thing theory: https://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/display/document/obo-9780190221911/obo-9780190221911-0097.xml

this thesis, however, I am looking *at* objects rather than *through* them, as thing theory does. Physicality is of central importance in discussing Montgomery's fictional objects; we are not dealing here with the concepts and ideas but the objects and their purposes. As Sarah Wasserman points out, "thing theory emerges from the scholarly concern with commodity capitalism" (*Oxford Bibliographies*). Although, as she states, "it has primarily been used by scholars in the humanities to discuss the representation of such things in art and literature—specifically as a means to understand what meaning such representations hold" (*ibid.*), the particulars of thing theory are less practical for the purposes of looking at the significance of objects in the Emily trilogy and is more focused on the dialectic than is helpful in this thesis.[10]

Although consumerism is often discussed in terms of objects, but this is also not the focus of this thesis and therefore largely omitted, with the understanding that manufactured goods are generally inseparable from consumerism (we assume that any object from a house to a pencil must have been purchased at some point) whereas natural objects are generally separate as they exist outside of human systems of consumption and capitalism except as raw materials.

This thesis will comprise a chapter on the main houses that feature in the Emily trilogy, or domestic architecture as material objects (Chapter One); another on books, paper, and writing materials, which are essential to the protagonist's personal development and her career as a writer (Chapter Two); a chapter focusing on the smaller, domestic objects found within the home (Chapter Three), and finally, a chapter on the material objects found in the natural world that are significant to the narrative and

[10] There are several related theories that could be discussed in this context, including Bruno Latour's actor-network theory about the agency of objects and Graham Harman's Heidegger-influenced object-oriented-ontology, but they are also beyond the scope of this thesis and have limited relevance to the discussion of the significance of objects within children's literature.

protagonist (Chapter Four). An appendix will contain relevant photographs and details of various objects discussed within the thesis.

The work of scholars in various disciplines is essential to this thesis, so in order to contextualise my work, I will be examining sources in the categories of material culture studies, Montgomery studies, and children's literature studies.

Literature Review

1. Material Culture Studies

The field of material culture studies has existed within anthropology for decades, but only became a distinct discipline at the end of the twentieth century (the *Journal of Material Culture* only began publishing in the 1990s, for example). This discipline has become much more prominent in the humanities and social sciences in the twenty-first century. In discussing material culture studies, it is necessary to begin with an overview of general works including Chris Tilly et al.'s *Handbook of Material Culture* (2006) and the *Oxford Handbook of Material Culture Studies* (2010), edited by Mary Beaudry and Dan Hicks, as well as the *Oxford Handbook of History and Material Culture* (2020), edited by Ivan Gaskell and Sarah Anne Carter. These anthologies provide a thorough overview of the field and its various theories. Tilley *et al*., for example, state that "Although questions of materiality[11] pervade a wide range of disciplines in the social and human sciences, no single academic discipline unifies the various approaches to material culture and gives them an institutional identity" (2), demonstrating that the study of material culture is still in the process of development; I argue that there is great scope to adapt it to the study of children's literature. Material culture, they claim, "centres on the idea that materiality is an integral dimension of culture, and that there are dimensions of

[11] "Materiality" refers to the physical qualities of things, which is related to but not quite interchangeable with "material culture," which can refer to both physical objects and the study of them.

social existence that cannot be fully understood without it," that "the study of the material dimension is as fundamental to understanding culture as is a focus on … representations (literary and art historical studies)," and that "material culture studies may be held simultaneously to intersect with and to transcend the special concerns" (*ibid*.) of various disciplines. Most significantly in terms of this thesis' aims, they claim that "what is … implied by all the results of anthropological research, whether this has been a principal concern of the anthropologist or not, is that *persons cannot be understood apart from things*. Much of material culture studies is concerned with deepening our insight into how persons make things and things make persons" (*ibid.*, emphasis mine). For cultural materialists, it follows that literary protagonists such as Emily cannot be understood fully without considering the fictional objects with which they interact.

Works such as French sociologist and philosopher Jean Baudrillard's *System of Objects* (1968), material culture and consumption researcher Ian Woodward's *Understanding Material Culture* (2007), and the various works of anthropologist Daniel Miller, including *Stuff* (2010), *The Comfort of Things* (2008), and his edited collection entitled *Material Cultures: Why Some Things Matter* (1997) provide helpful additional perspectives. These texts aid in understanding the basic tenets of material culture in the fields of archaeology, anthropology, and consumer studies and, as will be demonstrated, how they might be applied to children's fiction and Montgomery's novels.

It is helpful to consider Baudrillard's work when discussing the significance of domestic objects in Montgomery's novels in particular, as it is concerned with "the processes whereby people relate to [objects] and with the systems of human behaviour and relationships that result therefrom" (2). It is these "systems of human behaviour and relationships" that are most relevant to a study of objects in fictional literature. The ways in which Montgomery's protagonists relate to the domestic objects around them, and their

resulting "systems of human behaviour and relationships," form a significant part of the narrative in each of her novels. Emily, for example, has to learn how to navigate her relationships with her aunts and cousin at New Moon, and she often does this through the domestic objects they share. In *Anne of Green Gables*, the protagonist has a close relationship with Matthew, a father figure who expresses love for her by noticing her longing for a dress like those of her friends and enduring much social anxiety to get one made for her as a Christmas present (*AGG*, chapter 25).

Baudrillard discusses the function of furniture and objects in the family home on a physical, emotional, and spiritual level (14). The family home is the primary setting for the majority of Montgomery's novels and is the most important setting to consider in terms of material culture in light of Baudrillard's claims. The furniture and objects in Emily's home, New Moon, are significant to the narratives for several reasons that will be explored in this thesis, including the fact that they represent the "moral dimension" of the relationships and shared spaces of the narratives. For example, Aunt Elizabeth believes that fiction is inherently sinful, and Emily therefore never writes stories in the shared spaces at New Moon, only alone in the garret or her own bedroom.

Baudrillard also addresses the question of the natural world's relationship to manufactured objects. He states that there is "a complete mode of life whose basic ordering principle is Nature as the original substance from which value is derived. In creating or manufacturing objects, man makes himself, through the imposition of a form … into the transubstantiator of nature" (27). The domestic objects that are significant to Montgomery's characters were, of course, originally created from natural materials, and, as discussed above, Montgomery seems to make little distinction between the natural and the manufactured in her narratives. For example, trees and writing materials are of equal importance to Emily in her quest for self-actualisation as a writer.

Daniel Miller's academic works provide clear definitions of material culture studies and discuss the ideas behind the connections between people and their possessions. His book *Stuff* is particularly useful in exploring these connections. For example, he states that "our use and identification with material culture provides a capacity for enhancing, just as much for submerging, our humanity" (6). The field of material culture studies is, he says, "becoming recognized as a vital contribution to half a dozen established disciplines, from archaeology to design" (2). Although Miller does not mention the study of literature here, this thesis will demonstrate the value of material culture studies in this context. If, as Miller states, "a more profound appreciation of things will lead to a more profound appreciation of persons" (6), reflecting the claims of Tilly et al., then a more profound appreciation of the objects in Montgomery's novels can lead to a more profound appreciation of the characters in her novels – their fictional personalities, relationships, and societies.

In *Stuff,* Miller presents an argument for what he calls "the humility of things," intimating that objects have at least some agency in human lives:

> Objects are important, not because they are evident and physically constrain or enable, but quite the opposite. It is often precisely because we do not see them. The less we are aware of them, the more powerfully they can determine our expectations, by setting the scene and ensuring appropriate behaviour, without being open to challenge. They determine what takes place to the extent that we are unconscious of their capacity to do so. (50)

This "invisibility" of objects in fictional worlds performs the same function: objects can determine both characters' and readers' expectations by "setting the scene and ensuring appropriate behavior" (*ibid.*). Miller states that he was "taught that the best way to appreciate the role of objects was to consider them as signs and as symbols that represent us" and that "material things were a neglected adjunct to the study of language: an apparently unspoken form of communication that could actually speak volumes once we had attuned ourselves to this capacity" (12). Attuning ourselves to the objects

represented in children's literature, then, will help us to recognise and understand this "apparently unspoken form of communication."

In a similar vein, Woodward, in his work *Understanding Material Culture,* states that human lives "are characterised by innumerable encounters with objects" and that "even the most commonplace object has the capacity to symbolise the deepest human anxieties and aspirations" (vi). The significance of objects lies in the fact that "people require objects to understand and perform aspects of selfhood, and to navigate the terrain of culture more broadly" (*ibid*.). By extension, then, the objects used in a work of fiction can be deeply symbolic and significant to a character's selfhood and existence in his or her society. Woodward works on the premise that "to study the objects themselves, and people's relations with them, is an effective analytic strategy for understanding … culture broadly" (vii). This is one of the most important tenets at work in this thesis, as these ideas hold throughout Montgomery's fiction, and I will argue that the objects used and encountered in the most routine and everyday manner are the objects that are most significant to the characters and the narratives. Emily's blank books, which give her an opportunity to explore her emotions, can be seen to symbolise her "deepest human anxieties and aspirations"; Anne finally being able to wear a beautiful dress with puffed sleeves is an expression of her selfhood and an inroad into her ability to "navigate the terrain of culture." Other Montgomery creations such as Jane and Pat also use everyday objects of great significance to their development as a character, particularly in the domestic sphere as both share the same deep, abiding love of home that Anne and Emily experience.

In discussing specific aspects of material culture such as architecture and clothing as well as general tenets of material culture theory, art historian and material culture specialist Jules David Prown's article "Mind In Matter: An Introduction to Material

Culture Theory and Method" (1982) is particularly relevant. Houses are one of the most significant objects in the Emily trilogy, with New Moon, the Disappointed House, and several other dwellings providing various opportunities for personal development, connection to family, and career growth for Emily. Prown claims that architecture "share[s] with gravestones the same quality of rootedness that ties artifacts to a particular fabricating culture … Having been built for human occupancy, it responds in very direct ways to people's needs … It is both a work of art and a tool for living, combining aesthetic with utilitarian drives at a variety of conceptual levels" (13). This "rootedness" helps connect Emily to her clan, and Montgomery makes the houses in the novels respond to her character's needs, discussing their aesthetic and utilitarian qualities throughout the trilogy. Additionally, Prown expands on the definition and scope of this topic, explaining that "material culture is the study through artifacts of the beliefs – values, ideas, attitudes, and assumptions – of a particular community or society at a given time. The term material culture is also frequently used to refer to artifacts themselves, to the body of material available for such study" (1). He goes on to point out that "the underlying premise is that objects made or modified by man reflect, consciously or unconsciously, directly or indirectly, the beliefs of individuals who made, commissioned, purchased, or used them, and by extension the beliefs of the larger society to which they belonged" (2). The objects that Montgomery includes in her narratives, therefore, reflect her characters' beliefs and those of their society.

Tara Hamling and Catherine Richardson, in their book *Everyday Objects* (2010), point out that "knowing about people's possessions is crucial to understanding their experience of daily life, the way they saw themselves in relation to their peers and their responses to and interactions with the social, cultural and economic structures and processes which made up the societies in which they lived" (1). I maintain that this

knowledge is equally significant within realistic fiction such as Montgomery's: her characters' possessions help us understand her characters and how they see themselves.

Alexis and Rule's edited volume *The Material Culture of Writing* (2022) focuses on "the material culture of writing—the everyday, often overlooked objects, tools, and artifacts that accompany writers and help them perform their work" (11). In much the same way, this thesis looks at the material culture of a variety of everyday objects that accompany Emily and some of Montgomery's other heroines in their everyday lives. Alexis and Rule's work is particularly salient to Chapter Two, "Books and Writing Materials."

2. Montgomery Studies

The work of Montgomery scholars is, of course, essential to this thesis' perspective on her novels. Montgomery scholarship has undergone exponential growth in the past few decades and particularly since 2008, the centenary of the publication of *Anne of Green Gables*. Core texts such as *The Selected Journals of L.M. Montgomery* (1985-2005, five volumes), edited by Mary Rubio and Elizabeth Waterson, and Rubio's extensive biography, *Lucy Maud Montgomery: The Gift of Wings* (2008), provide vital autobiographical and biographical information on Montgomery as an author, including her influences and cultural background. Equally valuable are Waterston's *Magic Island: The Fictions of L.M. Montgomery* (2008) and Epperly's *The Fragrance of Sweet-Grass: L.M. Montgomery's Heroines and the Pursuit of Romance* (2014) and *Through Lover's Lane: L.M. Montgomery's Photography and Visual Imagination* (2007), which provide seminal and thorough investigations into Montgomery's fiction.

Although the use of material culture studies as a lens through which to view Montgomery's novels is new, several articles and book chapters have explored related topics. Most salient for this thesis are E. Holly Pike's chapter "Reading the Book as

Object and Thing in the Emily Series" (2018), which discusses the role of books in Emily's life as fetishes, taboos, and archives as well as their intended purpose as transmitters of information. Pike points out that the physicality of books involve the senses, which "forms an integral part of Emily's experience of reading" (1), and that "the subject-object relation between people and books is illuminated in a variety of forms" in the novels (3), informing this discussion of objects as a means of connection between characters. Her discussion of the importance of Emily's "Jimmy books" and the archival role of books such as the one that Mrs. Kent lends Emily, which contains an unread letter, are also helpful starting points for the discussion of material culture in Montgomery's novels.

A special 2005 edition of the *Journal of the Centre for Research and Education in the Arts (CREArTA)* focuses on Montgomery's interior and exterior landscapes, which is relevant to this study of the physical features of the novels' landscapes, including houses as domestic spaces, natural elements such as trees, and books. Articles such as Rita Bode's "Mediating Landscapes: *Jane of Lantern Hill*" and Rosemary Ross Johnston's "Landscape as Palimpsest, Pentimento, Epiphany" are particularly helpful in this regard. Bode points out that Jane acts from her imagination and feelings to create her place in the world and discusses the significance of the contrast between her Toronto and Prince Edward Island houses. Johnston discusses the connections between Montgomery's fictional representations of landscape to the spiritual; she points out that Montgomery's landscapes are always relational and have the idea of home at their core. The houses that become home for Anne, Emily, Jane, and Pat, she explains, are the "pivot of identity and of relationship with world" (18).

Bode, together with Jean Mitchell, edited a collection of essays entitled *L.M. Montgomery and the Matter of Nature(s)* (2018) that further illuminate Montgomery's

landscapes and are particularly relevant to this dissertation's chapter on natural objects. Bode's "Indoors and Out," Epperly's "Natural Bridge," and Lesley Clement's "The Empathic Poetic Sensibility" are especially applicable in this context. Other important works to consider in terms of natural objects include Timothy Clark's introduction to *The Cambridge Introduction to Literature and the Environment* and Kirstie Blair and William V. Thompson's article "The Mood of the Golden Age: Paganism, Ecotheology and the Wild Woods in L.M. Montgomery's *Anne* and *Emily* Series" (2016).

In discussing the growth of visual culture studies in Montgomery scholarship, Clement, in her *Journal of L.M. Montgomery Studies* article "Visual Culture, Storytelling, and Becoming Emily: An Illustrated Essay" (2020), points out the various types of objects, artifacts, and places that are being examined. She points out that "the portraits with which Montgomery's Emily Byrd Starr engages, including portraits of herself, shape her as a woman and artist throughout the Emily trilogy" ("Subjectivity and Selfhood" section). Clement argues that Emily both engages with and resists "the encoded meanings and stories of portraits to which she is exposed" (*ibid.*), and her study illuminates the significance of various portraits in the trilogy.

Montgomery's use of Gothic tropes in her version of Romanticism, most clearly written into the Emily trilogy, is helpfully discussed by Kate Lawson in her articles "The 'Disappointed' House: Trance, Loss, and the Uncanny in L. M. Montgomery's Emily Trilogy" (2001) and "Adolescence and the Trauma of Maternal Inheritance in L.M. Montgomery's *Emily of New Moon*" (1999). Deidre Shauna Lynch's chapter "Gothic Fiction" (2008) provides useful general background information on this topic. Margaret Steffler's chapter "Brian O'Connal and Emily Byrd Starr: The Inheritors of Wordsworth's 'Gentle Breeze'" (2003) is an excellent discussion of Emily as a Romantic child and a valuable resource for this thesis.

It is also necessary to consider Montgomery's work within the context of Canadian children's fiction, and for this reason Mavis Reimer's edited volume *Home Words: Discourses of Children's Literature in Canada* (2008) is helpful, particularly her introduction and chapter entitled "Homing and Unhoming: The Ideological Work of Canadian Children's Literature." Aïda Hudson and Susan-Ann Cooper's edited volume *Windows and Words: A Look at Canadian Children's Literature in English* (2003) is also an invaluable source. Another helpful collection is E. Holly Pike and Laura M. Robinson's *L.M. Montgomery and Gender* (2021); in particular, Rebecca J. Thompson's chapter, "'That House Belongs to Me': The Appropriation of Patriarchal Space in L.M. Montgomery's *Emily* Trilogy," is particularly relevant to the discussion of Emily's mother's bedroom and all that it means for the protagonist.

3. Children's Literature Studies

There is a clear gap in the research on material culture in children's literature, with only a few scholars to date having written on the subject. Jane Carroll's books, *Landscape in Children's Literature* (2011) and *British Children's Literature and Material Culture: Commodities and Consumption 1850-1914* (2022) have begun filling this gap, initiating fresh discussion on objects in children's literature. Although their focus is more on the objects in Susan Cooper's The Dark is Rising series in the first book and on consumption in the second, the theories behind these works are applicable to an examination of objects in children's fiction more generally and remind readers of what can be discovered if we learn to pay close attention to these objects, echoing D. Miller's call to "attune ourselves to this capacity" (12) in the study of material things. Some works focus generally on children's books themselves, or their related materials, as objects rather than looking at the fictional objects within the narratives; these works on the material culture *of* (or relating to) children's literature, include Robin Bernstein's articles "Toys Are Good for

Us: Why We Should Embrace the Historical Integration of Children's Literature, Material Culture, and Play" (2013) and "Children's Books, Dolls, and the Performance of Race; or, The Possibility of Children's Literature" (2011). Consumption and commodities tend to be the focus of most work on material objects in fiction, possibly because objects such as clothes can, according to Peter Stallybrass, "haunt late capitalist society … The social formation of late capitalism, far from valuing such materializations, is embarrassed by the fetishization of objects and prefers to deal with them as commodities" (Liliana Weisberg in her "Introduction" to Dan Ben-Amos and Weisberg's *Cultural Memory and the Construction of Identity* 18, 1999). Objects are fetishized when they are not used for their originally intended purposes, which is often, if not always, the case in fiction because, as this thesis will demonstrate, the objects can also have many other roles in the narrative that contribute to such elements as social structures, protagonist development, or narrative movement.

Maria Nikolajeva's *From Mythic to Linear: Time in Children's Literature* (2000) and *Reading for Learning: Cognitive Approaches to Children's Literature* (2014) are helpful background texts in considering various aspects of children's literature, as is M. O. Grenby and Kimberley Reynolds' (eds) *Children's Literature Studies: A Research Handbook* (2011) and Bruno Bettelheim's *The Uses of Enchantment: The Meaning and Importance of Fairy Tales* (1976) and Jack Zipes' *Breaking the Magic Spell: Radical Theories of Folk & Fairy Tales* (1979). Nikolajeva points out in her article "Recent Trends in Children's Literature Research: Return to the Body" that

> The common denominator of many new crossdisciplinary fields is their focus on materiality. However, this conspicuous trend does not simply take us back to essentialism, but reflects the complexity, plurality and ambiguity of our understanding of childhood and its representation in fiction produced and marketed for young audiences. These recent studies explore in more detail the complex relationship between perceptible phenomena and their representations in children's fiction; between the physical body and its immaterial, linguistic fictional portrayal; between physical and fictional place… (2)

Nikolajeva also cites several works that deal with materiality in various fields.[12]

So, what can the objects in Montgomery's fiction reveal if we are to examine them through the lens of material culture studies? A close reading of the Emily trilogy (with brief examinations of some of her other novels) will, I believe, demonstrate different types of connections that are facilitated by material objects, including aspects of her characters' personalities and relationships; the contexts in which the narratives take place, which, being realistic fiction, also reveal the context in which Montgomery lived and wrote; and the culture(s) that Montgomery's fiction both created and reflected (i.e. the connections and disconnections between Montgomery's fictional culture and the Canadian cultures of the time).

The use of material culture studies as a lens through which to view Montgomery's Emily trilogy will, I believe, "reflect the complexity, plurality and ambiguity of our understanding of childhood and its representation in fiction produced and marketed for young audiences" (Nikolajeva, *Mythic* 2), and also demonstrate the value of this theoretical standpoint (as well as the methodology of close reading) in helping us obtain a deeper understanding of, and appreciation for, children's literature more generally.

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[12] "ecocriticism ([Sydney] Dobrin and [Kenneth] Kidd, [*Wild Things: Children's Culture and Ecocriticism*], 2004; [Alice] Curry, [*Environmental Crisis in Young Adult Fiction: A Poetics of Earth*,] 2013), place related identities (Cutter Mackenzie et al., [*Experiencing Environment and Place through Children's Literature,*] 2011) … disability studies ([Lois] Keith, [*Take Up Thy Bed and Walk. Death, Disability and Cure in Classic Fiction for Girls*,] 2001; [Helen] Avelyn, [*Unseen Childhoods: Disabled Characters in 20th Century Books for Girls*], 2009) and cognitive poetics ([John] Stephens, ["Schemas and Scripts: Cognitive Instruments and the Representation of Cultural Diversity in Children's Literature"], 2011; [Bettina] Kümmerling—Meibauer, ["Emotional Connection: Representation of Emotions in Young Adult Literature"], 2012; [Roberta Seelinger] Trites, [*Literary Conceptualizations of Growth: Metaphors and Cognition in Adolescent Literature*], 2014). They explore maps in children's literature ([Anthony] Pavlik, ["A Special Kind of Reading Game: Maps in Children's Literature"], 2010), the physicality of landscape ([Jane] Carroll, [*Landscape in Children's Literature*], 2012), objects and artefacts, including dollhouses ([Nancy Wei-Ning] Chen, ["Playing with Size and Reality: The Fascination of a Dolls' House World"], 2015) and fashion ([Kiera] Vaclavik, ["The Dress in the Book: Children's Literature, Fashion and Fancy Dress"], 2014) …" (*ibid.*).

Chapter One

Houses: The Loci of Home and Growth

"There was a certain charm about the old house which Emily felt keenly and responded to, although she was too young to understand it… 'Why – I'm going to *love* New Moon,' thought Emily, quite amazed at the idea." (*Emily of New Moon 61)*

Introduction

Architecture is a significant example of material culture, both real and fictional. Buildings are one of the largest and most imposing objects with which people interact, and domestic architecture in particular is vital to human survival and the preservation of culture. Like other objects, houses can be powerfully representative and have the capacity "to symbolise the deepest human anxieties and aspirations" (Woodward vi). Houses provide shelter, of course, but also the physical provision of a sense of "home" and of anchorage in a particular location, as well as a sanctuary in which an individual can, as Gaston Bachelard puts it, "dream in peace" (*Poetics of Space* 28, 1958). Bachelard points out that the house is "our corner of the world … our first universe, a real cosmos in every sense of the word" (26), and this significance is not overstated when discussing Montgomery's fictional houses. Although the concept of "home" is not necessarily the same thing as the physical object called a "house," the physical object is vital for the purposes of this dissertation because it provides the possibility of a sense of home for the protagonist. Therefore, although the concept of "home" is not the focus of this thesis, it is essential to consider it along with physical houses as far as it is relevant to the houses in Montgomery's fiction. As Epperly points out, "all Montgomery's heroines experience powerful love of the physical home" (*Sweet-grass* 211). Each of the houses that feature in the Emily trilogy that we will be discussing are also homes to some degree, whether to Emily herself or to another of the main characters.

As Douglass Bailey and Lesley McFadyen state, architecture "is often seen as the most significant piece of material culture in archaeology and anthropology because it is considered to be grounded in context and rooted to the spot … [it] is understood as the social blueprint by which societies organize themselves … " (563). Of all categories of architecture, domestic dwellings are one of, if not the most, significant of these "social blueprints," providing the basis for a society's everyday life and revealing much about the occupants and their relationships. Elizabeth Pauls, in discussing J.B. Jackson's 1953 essay "The Westward Moving House," explains "how the physical form of a house can embody the cultural ideals of an era and impose order on the physical space in which the family lives, particularly noting the repetitive way that the order or organizational scheme is reiterated in house, farm, town, and family" ("The Place of Space: Architecture, Landscape, and Social Life" 68, 2005). Considering the house as the physical object that enables the sense of home, Victor Buchli states that "the home is typically how we know the world and know about people who inhabit the world. It is the key point of orientation for members of a given society [including, I argue, fictional characters] as it is to its visitors and outsiders" ("Households and 'Home Cultures'" 503, 2010). In fiction, therefore, the home can be regarded as the "key point of orientation" for both characters ("members of a given society") and readers ("visitors and outsiders"). In this chapter, I will first explore the significance of domestic architecture in children's literature in general as well as in Montgomery's other fiction before focussing on the Emily trilogy in particular.

Houses in Children's Literature: Identity and Relationship

In the context of children's literature, houses, both familiar and unfamiliar, often occupy a central focus in the narrative. Nikolajeva states that "a strange house in which the protagonist moves at the beginning of a narrative is a commonplace in children's

fiction" (*Mythic* 161), and, in her consideration of the importance of landscape in children's literature, Carroll points out that

> the home…is a point of contact – it is the nexus between the individual and the physical environment. Providing a point at which the human body, the built environment and the natural landscape come together, the home is where the connection between human and landscape is at its most intense, where the boundaries between person and place, between the Self and the landscape, dissolve altogether. (*Landscape* 20)

This "point of contact" is clear in such famous examples of houses in children's literature as Misselthwaite Manor in Frances Hodgson Burnett's *The Secret Garden* (1911), which provides the protagonist, Mary, with her introduction to the Yorkshire landscape; Bag End in J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Hobbit* (1937), where Bilbo Baggins begins and ends his journey beyond the comfortable Shire; and the March family home in Louisa May Alcott's *Little Women* (1868), which acts as the locus for the four girls as they begin to make their way out into the wider world. Each of these homes is rooted in its landscape and provides the physical connection between the characters and their surroundings.

Green Gables is the most famous of Montgomery's houses, but many of her novels feature a house that both provides the setting and contributes toward the formation of the protagonist's identity (including *Pat of Silver Bush* and *Jane of Lantern Hill)* – in other words, a home. In *Jane of Lantern Hill*, for example, Epperly points out that the house "becomes an instrument for autonomy – in her happy story, domesticity is a means for blissful self-discovery and affirmation" (*Sweet-Grass* 212). According to Carroll, "given its central value to the lived environment, both as a locus for identity and a nexus for personal effects, the home is by far the most common manifestation of the topos, providing the setting for the opening and the closing of many stories … home becomes synonymous with personal identity" (23). Montgomery's novels are a prime example of this centrality of home, as evidenced by the majority of her titles, which privilege the house names but also help define the identity of each protagonist: *Anne of Green Gables,*

Rilla of Ingleside, Pat of Silver Bush, and, of course, *Emily of New Moon.*[13] These ideas of identity and home are further explored by Johnson, who points out that in Montgomery's landscapes, "the powerful associations of coming home, finding home, and making home are part of her ideology of home as ontological beingness" (15), and that "at the centre of Montgomery's relational landscapes is 'home', and home is the pivot of identity and of relationship with world for Anne, Emily, Jane, Pat – part of their sense of selfhood and becoming" (18).

The houses in Montgomery's books, then, provide a physical object that enable identity formation and the development of relationships. Further to the exploration of relationships in Montgomery's fiction, Epperly posits that " … Montgomery's writing relies on several basic conceptual metaphors about relationships and creativity that make her works particularly accessible: the conceptual source domains of architecture and building become ways of understanding the target domains of landscape, creativity, and relationships" (*Matter of Nature(s)* 93). The creation of "home" and the relationships therein is made possible with a physical building; in *The Fragrance of Sweet-grass,* Epperly states that "Each of the heroines learns to value herself in relation to the surrounding community and culture; each heroine learns to love and create a home for herself. In discovering or appreciating or creating 'home,' the heroines are creating or strengthening interconnections between themselves and the value or beauties of the spiritual or material culture around them" (7). These interconnections between the protagonists and the "spiritual or material culture" in which they live are made possible by the existence of the physical houses.

[13] Interestingly, Montgomery's house names often also refer to the farms on which they are located, but for the purposes of this chapter, I will be referring to the house itself when I use the names.

As previously noted in the Introduction, Montgomery's novels, although also widely enjoyed by adults, are usually classed as children's literature. Montgomery's use of houses in her narratives fits well within the conventions of home in children's literature, illustrating Reimer's assertion that "the primary setting of children's books typically is the dwelling in which the protagonist lives … Narrative adventures and misadventures that take a child away from home often are resolved with the child's return to it, so that theorists of children's literature sometimes use 'home' to describe the full narrative closure of conventional texts for children" (xiii). Montgomery's heroines often leave their homes and later return, including Emily, who goes to Shrewsbury for three years and then comes back to New Moon.

In children's literature, as in life, the house is the physical manifestation of the emotional and spiritual state of being "home." Montgomery's protagonists – Emily, Anne, Pat, and Jane in particular – become increasingly attached to their houses/homes, and even when they do not return permanently to their houses (for example, Pat's Silver Bush burns down), the homes continue to be the strongest emotional anchor for the characters throughout the novels. Montgomery usually creates the narrative closure that Reimer discusses by ending her novels within the protagonist's home: In the first books of the series and in the standalone *Jane*, Anne and Emily are at their bedroom windows, Pat is looking at her house, and Jane is reunited with both parents at Lantern Hill. Reimer points out that "because home normally is the site of the satisfaction of the most basic human needs for shelter and food, the depiction of stable and safe housing in narratives for children can be read as the adult promise, or hope, that the world is a place in which children can not only survive, but also thrive" (xiii). Characters such as Anne and Emily certainly thrive in the houses that become their homes in the first novels of the series. Their basic needs and more are met in these houses, and Montgomery ensures that the

adults (such as Marilla and Aunt Elizabeth), however reluctantly at first, grow to love and nurture the protagonists and allow them to become part of their homes. Emily writes partway through the trilogy, for example, that she is beginning to understand Aunt Elizabeth better and says, "I believe she likes me now, too. I was only a duty at first, but now I am something more'" (*EC* 210). The normally brusque and unemotional Marilla admits that she is glad Anne has returned after a few days away and says, "'It's been fearful lonesome here without you, and I never put in four longer days'" (*AGG* 237). Along with providing for the protagonists' physical needs, characters like Aunt Elizabeth and Marilla learn to love their charges and accept them as part of their homes.

As we have seen, objects in fiction can be symbolic but can also stand alone as significant aspects of the narrative. Montgomery's houses fulfil both roles: Bode claims that Montgomery's "fictional houses are the metaphorical and symbolical expressions of her story's meanings, [and] they are also a pronounced physical, material presence, both objects and subjects in their own right" ("Inside and Out" 78). Montgomery is interested in houses as "the physical structure than encompasses these elements" (*ibid.*) as well as in her fictional houses' interior and exterior spaces, including gardens. As such, Montgomery's portrayal of houses in her novels supports D. Miller's contention that " … housing implicates contours of power and scale that make such intimate issues as our personal relationships often contingent upon much grander forces … housing brings with it powerful forces which are by no means under [people's] control" (*Stuff* 80). Montgomery often uses the physical structures of houses to create atmosphere and to provide connection between characters through these "powerful forces," and we can see the inspiration for this in her journals, which reveal the power of architecture in her own life. For example, when visiting her grandmother's original home in England, she writes, "I cannot describe my feelings – nor account for them. I had expected to feel an interest

in the place, naturally, but I had the strangest sensation of *coming home.* My emotion almost overpowered me. It seemed to me that grandmother and Aunt Margaret *must* be somewhere around" (*SJ II* 79). These overwhelming emotions demonstrate Montgomery's experience of the power of architecture in terms of connection to family and family history, but even houses that have no such connection for her have a comparable power. Of a boarding house bedroom she writes, "I shall be sorry to leave it … as I always am to leave an old room. A room where one sleeps and dreams and grieves and rejoices becomes inseparably connected with those processes and acquires a personality of its own" (*SJ I* 193). It is not surprising, then, that Montgomery often personifies her featured houses through her protagonists; Pat, for example, believes that houses have feelings and says that Silver Bush "'is glad when we are and sorry when we are. And if it was left without any one to live in it it would break its heart'" (*PSB* 89).

The entanglement of body and home is evident in Montgomery's narratives, in which she tends to describe the houses in great detail before much of the story takes place, hinting at the significance of the house as a metaphor for the person and their "kinship". Buchli states that

> houses are so essential to humans, including fictional children, that it is difficult to disentangle to what degree the house is metaphor for the body or the body the metaphor for the house. Both Carsten and Hugh-Jones go further to describe the dynamic 'process' of houses, as animate: 'they are endowed with spirits and souls' (1995:37), and intimately linked with the process of kinship – constantly reworked and rebuilt – where in fact persons and buildings are nearly impossible to disentangle in relation to one another. (507)

One of the metaphorical expressions of houses in Montgomery's narratives is the comparison of the human body to the house, such as her statement that Emily fit into the atmosphere of New Moon like "a hand into a glove" (*ENM* 188), as will be discussed below.

Houses in the Emily Trilogy: Tradition, Relationship, and Identity

Houses, therefore, play a pivotal role in the Emily trilogy just as they do in the Anne and Pat books and *Jane of Lantern Hill.* Even the phrasing of the titles, including the word "of," emphasises the protagonists' belonging to their homes. Their dwellings provide a home, family, tradition, security, and many other significant aspects of life; as Epperly observes, "the physical house [in Montgomery's novels] reifies each heroine's perception of beauty, honour of tradition, and sense of self" (*Sweet-grass* 211). This is most true of Emily, who becomes more a part of the Murray clan and develops an increasingly confident perception and expression of beauty, both as a young woman and as a writer, the longer she lives at New Moon.

Montgomery often focuses her narratives on strong female protagonists who grow up in a rural, domestic setting, and these protagonists, including Emily, develop deep connections to the houses in which they live. On returning to New Moon after three years away at school, Emily expresses this connection and love when she tells Miss Royal, who had invited her to New York, "'I can't leave New Moon – I love it too much – it means too much to me'" (*EC* 309). This demonstrates the fact that Montgomery's created buildings are central to her protagonists' lives. These houses are also affected by their occupants, particularly Emily, Anne, Pat, and Jane's transformative imaginative powers, and these powers in turn help create the ideal houses for their protagonists. They respond to the characters' needs, and their "rootedness," or deep connection to their environment and their occupants, connects them to their (fictional but realistic) culture. Prown claims that "architecture … having been built for human occupancy … responds in very direct ways to people's needs" (13). In examining the Emily trilogy, we can see that Montgomery's fictional architecture provides much that Emily needs in terms of shelter, space to work and grow, and connection with family. Even the less attractive houses in

the narrative, such as Aunt Ruth's, provide difficulties and challenges that contribute to Emily's character growth and her development as a writer.

A close reading of the Emily trilogy reveals the role of houses in the main character's development and will demonstrate different types of connections that are facilitated by the dwellings that feature in the narrative, including aspects of the characters' personalities and relationships. These roles, we might assume, reflect aspects of Montgomery's own life and culture; although not strictly autobiographical, the Emily trilogy, as discussed in the Introduction, contains many details taken directly from Montgomery's journals. Rubio draws attention to Montgomery's admission that "Emily's inner life is partly hers" and that the "psychological hardships that Emily suffers in a restricted, contained, and confined life, [draw] heavily from her own memories" (*Wings* 291). Waterston points out that *Emily of New Moon* is "an amalgam of details drawn from the journals and from more immediate experiences" following the war years (113).

Montgomery had a particular fondness for the "right" sort of houses, as is made clear in many of her novels. In *Jane of Lantern Hill,* for example, when Jane and her father go house hunting and she says, "'you want to feel that the house is *yours* before you buy it'" (71). In *Pat of Silver Bush,* Pat and her friend Hilary, walking along a road that "always compelled Pat to admit that there were a few satisfying houses in the world beside Silver Bush" (245), see a house that she describes as "'so … so *right'"* (246). Montgomery's attitudes and feelings toward houses as physical objects are equally evident in the Emily trilogy. Emily's strong reaction to the Scobie house while canvassing the countryside with Ilse in *Emily Climbs*, for example, demonstrates this "magical" quality. When she sees it, Emily instantly proclaims, "'That house belongs to me'" (181), and then explains that the little house is full of personality: "'There isn't a line or a corner that isn't eloquent, and those casement windows are lovable – especially that little one

high up under the eaves over the front door. It's absolutely smiling at me … The little house is greeting us. You dear friendly thing …'" (182). Emily describes the opposite of the "right" sort of house when she writes about Aunt Ruth's house: "' … I shall never like Aunt Ruth's house. It has a disagreeable personality … Inside, its rooms are all square and proper and soulless. Nothing you could put into them would ever seem to belong to them. There are no nice romantic corners in it, as there are at New Moon'" (101). This imaginative, intuitive response to domestic dwellings is an important feature of the trilogy. Montgomery creates houses and rooms that lend themselves to the power of Emily's fertile imagination, which both shapes and is shaped by the spaces in which she lives.

Some of Montgomery's feelings about houses seem to have been influenced by her love of such Gothic tropes as ghosts; for example, in *Pat of Silver Bush,* Pat says that new houses do not have ghosts and explains that she means that "'when a house has been lived in for years and years … *something* of the people who have lived in it *stays* in it'" (173). The Gothic is an important element of the Emily trilogy in particular. D. Miller hints at this concept in his consideration of

> stately home[s] built centuries ago … the current householder may feel more like someone keeping it well for the future, rather than simply being the owner. We have a sense that the house has its own powers and properties that lie beyond us – something that may be easier to comprehend if we give that power and history an anthropomorphic form … A ghost may express this feeling that there is power in the mere longevity of the house, an agency which represents the limits of our own agency. A ghost can stand for that ancient history in a manner that we cannot. (*Stuff* 93)

In her journals, Montgomery echoes this concept, as mentioned above. Furthermore, in a letter to her friend George Boyd MacMillan, she writes of visiting her old home in Cavendish, PEI (note the Gothic comment about the "lonely, hungry ghosts"):

> I stood in the old kitchen … I went through the sitting room and the parlor. In each I shut my eyes and *thought myself* back into the past. Everything was around me as of old – each picture, each chair, each book or flower in its old place. I went up the

> dark stairs. I stood on the threshold of my old room – my old small illimitable kingdom where I had written my books long ago. But I did not go in … Somehow I could not enter it. It was too full of ghosts – lonely, hungry ghosts. They would have pulled me in among them and kept me. (Bolger and Epperly 89)

Exploring each of the significant houses in Emily's life will demonstrate the ways in which Montgomery uses such concepts in her fiction and highlights the significance of the physical house to her characters and narratives.

The House in the Hollow: Love, Loss, and Nature

Emily of New Moon opens with a description of the first house in which the protagonist lives, before she is orphaned and goes to New Moon:

> 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. (*ENM* 1)

The fact that Montgomery begins the series by describing a house rather than the main character highlights the importance of such material objects to the narrative. She is perhaps using the house as a device to introduce Emily indirectly, however, focusing on its isolation and connection to nature, characteristics that mirror Emily's situation and personality.

Montgomery often illustrates the location of her fictional houses in great detail as well as their physical characteristics. Furthermore, she almost always emphasises their connection to the surrounding natural world and disconnection from the human. Green Gables, for example, "was a scant quarter of a mile up the road from Lynde's Hollow. To be sure, the long lane made it a good deal further … Green Gables was built at the furthest edge of his cleared land and there it was to this day, barely visible from the main road along which all the other Avonlea houses were so sociably situated" (*AGG* 3). Lantern Hill is described as being

> right against a little steep hill whose toes were lost in bracken … On one side of the house was a clover field and on the other a maple grove, sprinkled with firs and spruces … Lantern Hill was at the apex of a triangle of land which had the gulf for its base and Queen's Harbour for one of its sides. There were silver and lilac sand-dunes between them and the sea. (*JLH* 75)

Montgomery also describes many of the physical details of these houses but almost always begins with their rural locations and natural surrounding features. Montgomery's nature-based description of Emily's first house alerts the reader to Emily's own connection to the natural world. Emily is a typical Romantic child: imaginative and sensitive, with a strong affinity with nature. Steffler refers to this sort of character when she comments on the significance of

> the presence of the Wordsworthian child, in the tradition of *The Prelude*, in Canadian literature. … Emily Byrd Starr, who takes her place beside W.O. Mitchell's Brian O'Connal as our ideal of the Canadian Romantic child … The Wind Woman in *Emily of New Moon* and the Young Ben and prairie wind in *Who Has Seen the Wind* are the mysterious and animate forces of the universe, which, in the manner of Wordsworth's 'gentle breeze,' inspire a response from the receptive child. ("Inheritors" 88)

The House in the Hollow, then, described as looking like it had grown like a mushroom, is a fitting first home for the receptive and responsive Emily.

Emily's father, Douglas Starr, dies of "consumption" (tuberculosis) in the third chapter of *Emily of New Moon*, leaving Emily orphaned and in the care of her mother's family. Just before she leaves the house in the hollow for the last time, Emily "said good-bye to everything" (*ENM* 48), including the trees, the old wing-chair, and her bedroom window, all of these objects connected to the house being of equal importance to her. She anthropomorphises the house as she takes a final look, projecting her feelings onto it, thinking that "the little, old brown house in the hollow had a broken-hearted look. She longed to run back and comfort it" (50). This endowment of houses with human characteristics continues throughout the narrative and, indeed, throughout Montgomery's

novels, demonstrating that objects contain meaning beyond their mere practical functions for her characters and very often reflect her protagonists' state of mind and emotions.

New Moon: Tradition and Kinship

The most significant house in Emily's life is, of course, New Moon itself. Emily's father, in preparing her for his death, explains that her mother came from New Moon, a farm steeped in family history and tradition: "'they … always have lived there since the first Murray came out from the Old Country in 1790. The ship he came on was called the *New Moon* and he named his farm after her" (*ENM* 13). It is perhaps significant that the Murrays' arrival in the New World occurred during the height of the Romantic period, especially as Montgomery was hugely influenced by the English writers of this time. More salient, however, is the fact that the Murrays hold on to the traditions of their Scottish and English ancestors; Aunt Elizabeth and Cousin Jimmy in particular seem to have a strong attachment to the past, at least in terms of the Murray family history. Cousin Jimmy, for example, tells Emily that they use an "immense iron pot" from England for boiling the pigs' potatoes: "'Blair Water folks think it old-fashioned; they've all got boiler-houses now … but as long as Elizabeth's boss at New Moon, we'll use this'" (*ENM* 142). He seems to resent Aunt Elizabeth's preference for traditional methods of farming, but he is equally proud of his family history and ways, telling Emily that the Murrays are "'the finest people ever happened'" (70). Montgomery tends to describe Cousin Jimmy as an ideal Romantic character (despite his desire to modernise on the farm) – slightly uncanny, imaginative, impractical, like a fairy-tale creature – "looking, with his queer, forked grey beard and belted 'jumper,' just like some old gnome or troll of northland story mixing the contents of a magical caldron" (142). Next to his more practical cousins, Elizabeth and Laura, Jimmy's fairy-tale qualities provide New Moon with an

otherworldly atmosphere that suits Emily's temperament and helps her to feel at ease in her new home.

Emily's first glimpse of New Moon, the "dear, friendly, little dormer window peeping through vines on the roof – and right over it, in the opalescent sky, a real new moon, golden and slender" (*ENM* 53), gives her "the flash," her wonder-moment of transcendent beauty that inspires her throughout the trilogy. (It is particularly significant that it is the new moon itself that gives Emily the flash, as will be discussed in Chapter Four.) Montgomery here combines manufactured and natural objects in describing her setting, emphasising the equal significance of both for her protagonist, as discussed in the Introduction. The house itself, its physical presence and characteristics along with its connection to natural objects, gives Emily great joy from the very beginning, and, as Bode points out, "among the several houses that Emily encounters, the dwelling's relationships to nature are a significant factor in determining their value" ("Inside and Out" 83). Montgomery usually names her houses, as we have seen, often referencing natural features such as the moon (New Moon), trees (Silver Bush), and hills (Lantern Hill). Montgomery uses such names as a way of signalling to her readers her characters' strong, Romantic sense of rootedness in the natural world, as well as her own Romantic sensibilities, while at the same time maintaining her focus on the solid material presence of the houses that anchor her protagonists to a sense of home.

It is not only New Moon itself, but also its interior physical characteristics and objects that make it so significant to the narrative and the protagonist. The house provides an ideal environment for Emily's creative and sensitive young mind, and during her first few days in the house, she finds everything fascinating, "from the moment she came down the long, polished staircase into the square hall that was filled with a soft, rosy light coming through the red glass panes of the front door" (*ENM* 61). Montgomery, in these

introductory chapters, lists many of the house's objects and states that "there was a certain charm about the old house which Emily felt keenly and responded to, although she was too young to understand it" (61). Emily is surprised to discover that she is prepared to love the house, foreshadowing her gradual acceptance into, and of, the Murray clan despite her initial struggles. The house itself and the objects it contains are central to her ability to develop and be content there, even as she is homesick for her father's house and desperately missing him. Emily's innate need for "rootedness" is met at New Moon, a house firmly rooted in its surroundings with several generations of history reflected in it.

New Moon is a prime example of the fact that houses and the objects they contain often play an important role in the relationships between people, in both real and fictional contexts. Until Emily arrives, the furniture and objects of New Moon can be seen to signify the relationships between Elizabeth, Laura, and Cousin Jimmy, but when Emily moves in, she joints this web of relationships and forges a place for herself in this non-physical dimension. Baudrillard points out that in a family home, "the primary function of furniture and objects … is to personify human relationships, to fill the space that they share between them, and to be inhabited by a soul. The real dimension they occupy is captive to the moral dimension which it is their job to signify" (14). He further states that "human beings and objects are indeed bound together in a collusion in which the objects take on a certain density, an emotional value – what might be called a 'presence'" (*ibid.*). Montgomery seems to be very aware of this "presence" of the objects in her fictional houses, supporting Baudrillard's argument that "what gives the houses of our childhood such depth and resonance in memory is clearly this complex structure of interiority, and the objects within it serve for us as boundary markers of the symbolic configuration known as home" (*ibid.*). Emily, for instance, is at a disadvantage when she arrives at New Moon because she has not grown up there; she is a relative but not yet part of this

"symbolic configuration." The furniture and objects personify relationships of which she has yet no part, but, as she spends time at New Moon and develops her relationships with her aunts and cousin, as well as learning to love New Moon and its contents, she becomes "bound together" with the occupants of the house, and the objects take on an "emotional value" for her. New Moon becomes home, she becomes part of the Murray clan, and its objects become hers as well as theirs; in addition, Emily's strong imaginative presence provides the house with an added dimension of youth and creativity (a nod to the future of the house along with its past).

Emily delights in most of what she sees when she first arrives at New Moon, with Montgomery writing that "the garden was lovely and the house quite splendid to her childish eyes" (*ENM* 68). Architecturally, the house's large front porch with its straight lines and classical columns is contrasted with the less ordered natural world. Montgomery describes hop vines that "rioted over the whole porch and hung in pale-green festoons" (*ibid.*), giving her readers a prime example of the contrast between the artificial domestic and wild, untamed – and Romantic – natural world. The columns, she further tells us, "were thought very elegant in Blair Water, and went far to justify the Murray pride" (*ibid*.); in other words, readers realise that they are a good example of objects as a signifier of wealth and social standing, in common with many of the objects at New Moon. Emily for her part enjoys this aspect of the house, hinting at her future alignment with the Murray pride: she says that the house is "'noble'" and the garden "'fit for a queen'" (69).

New Moon has very few negative qualities in Emily's eyes, but she does not like the parlour or the spare room (which, interestingly, only seem to be used for visitors). Emily is afraid of the parlour because of all the intimidating portraits of Murray ancestors, and she finds the spare room "'just as gloomy as the parlour'" (98). These rooms are exceptions, though, and Emily goes on to list all the parts of the house that she does like,

including the kitchen, garret, cook-house, sitting-room, hall, dairy, and cellar cupboard. It is worth noting that these are mostly communal rooms, demonstrating Emily's need for socialisation and acceptance within her household. With one of her subtle touches of humour, Montgomery has Emily say that she "'doesn't like the other New Moon rooms'" (*ibid.*), although there cannot be many rooms left not to like. It is possible that Montgomery is indicating the family's wealth by hinting at a large number of rooms in what would have been a larger-than-average house at the time. A typical PEI farmhouse in the early twentieth century would have contained a modest number of rooms, as North American farmhouses were generally built with practicality and economy as priorities rather than luxury. According to Fred W. Peterson, " … established upon frugality rather than riches, the simple, plain structures of the nineteenth-century farm home document a set of values and practices that resulted in a distinct and relatively different architectural style from the complexities and varieties of the revival fashions" (416, 1982). The Murrays' house was probably one such simply structured farmhouse without the "complexities and varieties of the revival fashions," but Montgomery may have endowed it with a little extra space and luxury (such as the above-mentioned columns) to emphasise the Murrays' wealth and higher standing in the community.

Emily initially must sleep in Aunt Elizabeth's bedroom when she arrives at New Moon, and Montgomery makes clear that the objects in the room reflect Elizabeth's stern personality. She describes the room as a "big, sombre bedroom where there was a dark, grim wallpaper that could never be transformed into a fairy curtain, a high black bureau, topped with a tiny swing-mirror … tightly closed windows with dark-green curtains, a high bedstead with a dark-green canopy, and a huge, fat, smothering feather-bed, with high, hard pillows" (56). The adjectives in this description all suggest entrapment and darkness to an almost Gothic degree: The "tightly closed windows" shut out the natural

world; the bed is "smothering," suggesting something sinister and oppressive; and everything is "dark" or "black" in colour. The hard pillows and closed windows point to Aunt Elizabeth's stern, unyielding manner, and the space is not conducive to Emily's imagination – the wallpaper cannot be imagined as "fairy curtain." Emily's misery on her first night in this bedroom stands in stark contrast to her first night in her mother's childhood room later in the novel (as will be discussed later in the chapter), which demonstrates the difference in personality between Aunt Elizabeth and her deceased half-sister, Emily's mother, as well as the importance of furnishings and other objects to the atmosphere of a room. Emily's first impressions of Aunt Elizabeth's bedroom reflect her initial sense of alienation and lack of belonging, having no room of her own and no connection to any of the objects in this room.

In a later chapter, Aunt Elizabeth punishes Emily for disobedience by locking her in the dreaded spare room, which was "so big and dim that a dreadful number of things could be imagined in it. Its bigness and dimness filled her with a terror against which she could not strive" (110). This room has the opposite effect of Aunt Elizabeth's bedroom on Emily's imagination; it is overstimulated to the point of horror here. Montgomery describes the gloomy room, with its dark curtains and canopied bed and walls "like those of the parlour, … adorned with pictures of departed relatives" (*ibid.*), in enough detail to give the reader a sense of the terror cause by the combination of the gloomy atmosphere with Emily's overactive imagination. This chapter functions as a prime example of Montgomery's use of the Gothic and clearly alludes to earlier works, including Charlotte Brontë's 1847 novel *Jane Eyre,* whose protagonist is locked in a "red room" as a punishment (5-12). Montgomery mentions her own admiration for Brontë in her journals, writing that it was "a dear wish of my heart to make some day a pilgrimage to Haworth and see the old house she lived in and wrote her wonderful books in" (*SJ II* 36) and of the

"fascination Charlotte Brontë's life and personality held for me" (*SJ III* 250). An equally strong allusion to this episode in *Jane Eyre* occurs when Emily visits her great aunt at Wyther Grange, as we shall see below.

Despite this terrifying experience, Emily quickly finds her place at New Moon. Significantly, Montgomery points out many material objects in and around the house itself, stating that Emily loved "every stick and stone and tree and blade of grass about it – every nail in the old kitchen floor, every cushion of green moss on the dairy roof, every pink and white columbine that grew in the old orchard … " (*ENM* 188), which highlights the importance of the material to Emily's sense of home and belonging. Montgomery also writes that New Moon had gotten "pretty thoroughly into her blood. Perhaps it had even been born there" (*ibid.*), reinforcing the significance of Emily's maternal inheritance in the form of the physical house – and using the physical metaphor of blood to represent Emily's psyche. Architecture here is clearly a physical representation of family history and the protagonist's sense of belonging.

Another significant aspect of this particular passage is the repeated reference to parts of the body in relation to Emily's love for New Moon, as with "blood" above. Montgomery writes that she "fitted into its atmosphere as a hand into a glove," loving it "as well as if she had lived there all her short life" (188). With the simile of a hand fitting into a glove and the idea of the home being "in her blood" (*ibid*.), the emphasis on the physicality and embodiment of the idea of fitting in further demonstrates Montgomery's affinity with the material world and how she draws upon this in her portrayal of her protagonist. Early in Emily's life at New Moon, physical aspects of the house are described in great detail, with attention to both natural and manufactured elements. Montgomery calls the "dairy behind the cookhouse," for example, a "delightful spot," noting that it is surrounded by vegetation with stone steps leading down to a "clean,

earthy-smelling, damp, cool place with an earthen floor and windows screened by the delicate emerald of young hop vines" (*ENM* 63). This multisensory description of a space that is almost indistinguishable from nature (and that Emily loves) is in keeping with Emily's sensitivity toward physical and natural objects and will be further discussed in Chapter Four. Montgomery rarely refers to the dairy after this, so the purpose of its description seems to be to reinforce the notion of the charm and beauty of New Moon as a whole and to provide a sense of the Murray family's determination to uphold certain domestic traditions. However, the presence of a dairy is also a signifier of wealth and productivity, both sources of the Murray pride. The narrative notes that on the "broad wooden shelves all around … stood wide, shallow pans of glossy brown ware, full of milk coated over with cream so rich that it was positively yellow" (63); this description on the one hand hints at the ample proportions of the dairy, while on the other intimating that its shelves are stocked with plenty of produce. Later, in *Emily Climbs,* Emily writes in her diary that Cousin Jimmy is trying to convince Aunt Elizabeth to try "'the new creamers that every one else is using'" and is glad that she refuses: "'I don't want our beautiful old dairy and the glossy brown milk pans to be improved out of existence. I can't think of New Moon without a dairy" (*EC* 154). This, one of the only other mentions of the dairy in the trilogy, provides an example of Emily's growing affinity with Aunt Elizabeth despite their many clashes; the house and its physical elements provide common ground for their disparate personalities.

The garden of New Moon is another significant physical space in Emily's life. She praises it to Cousin Jimmy, satisfying his pride in it; later in the trilogy, it also becomes a receptacle for Emily's own pride in her first published poem when she plants the seeds she is awarded. Emily writes, "'I am sure it will be beautiful: and I shall look at its September loveliness and think, "*This* came out of my head!"'" (*EC* 154). Emily

continues to root herself in the physical presence of New Moon by adding her own material objects to the melange at New Moon, which itself is rooted in place in the community of Blair Water. She also continues the traditional activity of planting seeds and maintaining the garden, contributing to New Moon's legacy.

Toward the end of *Emily of New Moon,* Emily gets her own bedroom, marking a significant step in her growth toward independence and maturity. Formerly her mother's room and called the "lookout room" because it looked out "over the front door to the garden" (*ENM* 283), it is "old-fashioned, like all the New Moon rooms" (284), highlighting again the natural elements and the sense of tradition that Montgomery weaves into the narrative. It also reflects Montgomery's own childhood, when she had her own "lookout room." In her diary, she writes, "This little room was where I used to sleep in summer until I was about twelve or thirteen … in it I kept my few books and magazines, my dolls and work-box and all my little knick-knacks … Poor little room! I dreamed many a bright dream there …" (*SJ II* 6).[14]

Emily's lookout room is a significant space for her due to its contribution to her growth as a young woman and as a writer (see Chapter Two), and because it fosters her connection to her mother: "she felt deliciously *near* to her mother – as if Juliet Starr had suddenly become real to her" (*ENM* 285).[15] Emily's sense of closeness to her deceased mother is triggered by the presence of physical objects in the room: "it thrilled her to think that her mother had probably crocheted the lace cover on the round pincushion on the table. And that fat, black jar of pot-pourri on the mantel – her mother must have compounded it" (*ibid.*). There is a somewhat ghostly, Gothic element to this connection,

[14] See Appendix A, Figure 3, for a photograph that Montgomery took of her aunt's home, the model for New Moon, with its own "lookout room" window over the front door.
[15] "Juliet Starr" here would be more accurately described as "Juliet Murray," as she had been before her marriage to Douglas Starr; her identity as a Murray is significant here as Emily is also deepening her own identity as a Murray.

but it is a positive one, in contrast to the intimidating ghostly qualities of the spare room. She is even moved to speak to her mother when she sees a "picture of her mother hanging over the mantel – a large daguerreotype taken when she was a little girl"[16] (*ibid.*). Bode points out that "through Juliet's girlhood objects and spaces, Emily identifies with her mother" and, when writing to her mother as well as her father, Emily will "redirect the maternal legacy toward Murray approval, dispelling the sense of disgrace that the family harbors toward the dead Juliet" ("Claiming and Reclaiming" 139) – a powerful act that is sparked by the material objects in this space.

Montgomery describes this room in as much specific detail as she did the kitchen and sitting room upon Emily's first arrival at New Moon. She writes, for example, of a "pretty homespun carpet and round braided rugs … a high black bedstead with carved posts, a fat feather-bed, and an Irish chain quilt … " (284). In so doing, she emphasises once again the significance of domestic objects to her narrative, as well as providing a sense of verisimilitude.

In her journals, Montgomery reveals similar strong feelings toward beloved childhood rooms, which perhaps inspired her writing about her fictional rooms. She states that "*New Moon* is in some respects but not all my own old home" (*SJ III* 147), and of her childhood bedroom, she writes, "My poor little room where I have been so happy! I wonder if old dreams can haunt rooms – if, when one leaves forever the room where she has dreamed and thought and joyed and suffered and laughed and wept, something of her, intangible and invisible, yet none the less real, does not remain behind like a voiceful memory" (*SJ I* 160). Emily, as we have seen, senses this "intangible and invisible" presence of her mother in her room, and the connection it provides is precious. Montgomery's use of the Gothic term "haunt" when considering the effect that people

[16] Regarding this portrait, see also Chapter Three, page 139.

have on rooms is clearly worth noting; as she describes it in her journal, it is not an uncanny or ghostly effect but a comforting, welcome sense of presence.

Thompson suggests that "the lookout room is the most freeing and the most influential" chamber of Emily's home, mainly because it is "free of patriarchal influence" (*Gender* 159). There is no mention of any male Murray relative in connection with this room, and, as Thompson states, "by having a room of her own and material objects that connect her to her matriarchal line, Emily is able to write and create and, eventually, earn money, which allows her to be even more independent" (*ibid*.). Thompson's allusions here are reminiscent of Virginia Woolf's arguments in *A Room of One's Own* (1929), where she stresses the importance of a dedicated and private space to both the creative process and the achievement of independence. Although Montgomery was not overtly feminist, she spent much of her life carving out time and space to write and make a career for herself despite societal barriers. As Rubio points out, "women [in Montgomery's time] were shut out of an experiential creative realm that validated their existence and challenged oppressive attitudes. What both Montgomery and Woolf recognized was that it is necessary for women writers to have equal opportunity to create fictional worlds from women's perspectives - to create, so to speak, rooms of their own" ("Trite" 7). Montgomery claimed a "room of her own" in which to write when she lived in various houses in Ontario, creating these fictional worlds that in turn contain rooms for creative women; Emily uses her lookout room as her private writing room that enables her to be creative and develop a career. Emily, as well as having the lookout room in which to live and work, eventually inherits other objects from her maternal line,[17] such as her great-aunt Nancy's "gazing ball and brass chessy-cat knocker" (*EQ* 80)[18] and a "priceless pink

[17] See Chapter Three, page 122.
[18] See Appendix A, Figure 4: the type of "chessy-cat" knocker that Montgomery owned and might have used as the inspiration for this fictive object; see also Chapter Three, page 122.

lustre jug and a delightful old dinner set of real willow-ware – Emily's grandmother's own wedding set" (76), reinforcing Montgomery's emphasis on the female and matriarchal.

As with many of her fictional objects and spaces, Montgomery personifies the lookout room and its contents, stating that its charm stemmed from the fact that "the pieces of furniture, whether old or new, are well acquainted with each other and the walls and floors are on good terms" (*ENM* 285). Emily senses this charm and instantly feels at home, and she henceforth uses this room for writing rather than the garret and loves it "intensely" (*ibid*.). Later on, Montgomery further personifies the room explicitly by stating that "it was almost like a living thing to her – a sharer in gladness – a comforter in sorrow" (316). Her use of this device further emphasises the importance of material objects, including rooms within houses, to both herself and her female protagonists. This personification also tends to reflect the protagonists' emotions: Emily herself feels gladness and sorrow in the lookout room and then imagines that the room feels these emotions too. The many instances of such personification throughout the trilogy signify the effect of Emily's vivid imagination on her emotional responses to the buildings and rooms in which she dwells. As we shall see, most of the houses with which Emily interacts lend themselves to the transformative powers of imagination. There are a few negative spaces, however, such as her bedroom at Aunt Ruth's house (and, indeed, Aunt Ruth's entire house), which resist this transformation and remain generally unappealing to Emily.

Aunt Elizabeth's decision to give Emily the lookout room also represents another step in the development of their relationship, allowing Emily to enjoy increased privacy and independence and fostering more gratitude and less resentment toward her aunt. It might also signal a tacit acceptance on Aunt Elizabeth's part of Emily's writing, as Emily

no longer has to "hide" in the garret to write. Similarly, Emily's love for the house and its material objects eventually helps her connect with her rather cold and distant aunt; as she observes at one point when discussing her love for objects as well as people, "'I think Aunt Elizabeth is like this, too. That is why she will not have anything changed at New Moon. I am beginning to understand her better'" (*EC* 210). Emily recognises Aunt Elizabeth's very human resistance to change as well as her sentimental attachment to certain objects, demonstrating a growing capacity for empathy as well as self-knowledge. Aunt Laura, on the other hand, is much more benign and welcoming from the beginning, and Emily does not need the aid of objects to feel the connection with her that she must develop slowly with Aunt Elizabeth. At their first meeting, for example, Aunt Laura is warm and affectionate and says, "'You poor, dear, little child'" (*ENM* 27) and hugs Emily, whereas Aunt Elizabeth "shook hands and said nothing" (28). Even before they reach New Moon, Aunt Laura has offered Emily enough understanding and sympathy that Emily is moved to say, "'Oh, I just love you, Aunt Laura,'" (50), demonstrating their immediate connection.

In *Emily of New Moon,* the second volume of the trilogy, while living in nearby Shrewsbury to attend the High School, Emily writes of the "old familiar things": "'Every week-end I come home to New Moon these things seem dearer to me – more a part of me. I love *things* just as much as *people*" (*EC* 210). By the end of this book, Emily feels beyond any doubt that she belongs to New Moon and the Murrays; it is New Moon itself that convinces her that she does not need to go to New York to pursue her literary career, and indeed, that she should stay at home because, as she says, "some fountain of living water would dry up in my soul if I left the land I love" (*EC* 311), meaning both Canada

and New Moon.[19] Emily is convinced that her physical surroundings – the house, garden, farm, trees, family graves, and so on – are an inspiration and a necessary reminder of where she can best develop her sense of self and her career. Her connections to the material objects of New Moon are as vital to her as her relationships with Aunt Laura, Aunt Elizabeth, and Cousin Jimmy, and she shares with all three the love for New Moon that sustains them.

Emily also has strong feelings specifically about the "pond burying-ground" (*EQ* 11), which is the Murray family graveyard and another source of clan pride, beauty, and belonging for Emily. In the first volume, Cousin Jimmy shows Emily around the graveyard and explains the origins of the inscriptions, telling her the clan stories (*ENM* 70-73). Jimmy tells her that the Murrays, though proud, were buried there because there had been no graveyards nearby and kept up the tradition; Emily responds, "'I kind of like the idea of a 'sclusive burying-ground like this,'" and Jimmy replies, "'And yet they say you ain't a Murray'" (71). He is presumably referring to other members of the clan like Aunt Elizabeth or Aunt Ruth, who initially regard Emily as more like her father than themselves. It is worth noting that Jimmy, one of the most observant and sympathetic characters in the trilogy, had almost immediately recognised Emily's resemblance to the Murrays; in an early chapter, he tells Emily that she is stubborn like the Murrays and that "'the Starr is only skin deep with you'" (46). At the family graveyard, Jimmy's stories help Emily feel connected to the clan that she has only just met, and she mentions it a few times throughout the trilogy as a beautiful place to visit. She also underlines the connection to her clan that she feels there when she writes, remarking, "'I can't see anything morbid about it. It's a beautiful spot … so quiet and peaceful, with the old graves

[19] Although Emily had not visited Canada outside of PEI, Montgomery had (having travelled to Saskatchewan to stay with her father for a year when she was a teen), and Montgomery imbued Emily with a sense of national pride; she tells Mr Carpenter, who wants her to be "'pure Canadian through and through'" (EC 305), that she "'wouldn't get Yankeefied'" (*ibid.*).

all about me … Men and women of my house are lying there'" (*EQ* 11). In this way, the gravestones function as a tangible, physical connection to Emily's Murray ancestors, facilitating her sense of belonging and providing a beautiful setting for her creative imagination. She muses, for example, "' … perhaps they [ancestor Mary Murray and her husband] come back sometimes in the dark o' the moon and look at the inscription and laugh at it'" (*ibid*.). The graveyard, then, provides connection for Emily through both location (being as rooted in place as New Moon itself) and time (with the gravestones providing physical evidence of the past lives of the Murray clan).

The Disappointed House: Imagination, Love, and the Uncanny

Very early in her time at New Moon, Emily discovers an abandoned house nearby that turns out to be of great significance in her life and imagination, second only to New Moon in its importance to the narrative. Montgomery describes it, too, in terms of its situation in the natural environment: The house, "on the crest of a steep little hill, covered with young birches and firs" (*ENM* 65), is unfinished and boarded up but not old. Emily is confused and intrigued by it and feels that it "was meant to be such a pretty little house – a house you could love – a house where there would be nice chairs and cosy fires and bookcases and lovely, fat, purry cats and unexpected corners" (*ibid*.). Once again, Emily immediately comments on specific physical aspects of the house, while also subjecting both the house and its objects to the powers of her imagination. Emily names the dwelling the "Disappointed House" and spends "many an hour thereafter" (*ibid.*) daydreaming, imagining it finished and full of furniture and occupants. She also anthropomorphises the house after Cousin Jimmy explains that it was built by a man whose fiancée jilted him and who refuses to sell it; she declares that she is sorry for the house because it "*wants* to be" finished (74). Apart from its effect on her imagination, the Disappointed House is significant to Emily for several other reasons.

Later in the first novel, for example, Emily and her friend (and future love interest) Teddy Kent break into the Disappointed House to explore it. She describes the experience in her diary, noting that she and Teddy have decided to buy it and live there when they are older, foreshadowing future events (287). Montgomery hints at Emily's independence and prioritisation of career over marriage by having Emily write, "'Teddy said he supposed we'd have to get married, but I thought maybe we could find a way to manage without going to all that bother'" (288). This unconventional partnership appeals to Emily, and their plans are very materially specific: "'Teddy will paint pictures and I will write poetry and we will have toast and bacon and marmalade *every morning* for breakfast … Teddy is always going to help wash the dishes and we'll hang the gazing-ball from the middle of the ceiling in the fireplace room'" (*ibid.*). Montgomery subverts the convention of the time that a woman had to give up her career when she got married, demonstrating her subtle but strong belief in the ability of women to have a successful career. In so doing, she also reflects aspects of her own life, wherein she achieved literary success, fame, and financial independence as well as being married. She also subverts the idea that women must do all the housework, hinting at gender equality in Emily and Teddy's unconventional relationship. The Disappointed House becomes the site of Emily's future romantic and career potential, as well as a symbol of her success and independence.

In the second novel, Emily writes about visiting the Disappointed House and personifies it once again. She describes "'its blind windows … peering wistfully from its face as if seeking vainly for what they cannot find,'" (*EC* 162), and wishes that she owned it (in another example of foreshadowing). As the reader discovers in the third novel, many misunderstandings and difficulties seem to doom the Disappointed House to its lonely fate. Emily and Teddy continue to develop their romance, but it is not until the final chapter of the trilogy that they finally clear up their various misunderstandings and admit

that they love each other. Before this, though, Emily comes very close to marrying Dean Priest and moving into the house with him.

When Emily agrees to marry Dean in the third volume, *Emily's Quest,* he buys the Disappointed House for them. Emily tells him that she "always loved that house. It's one of those houses you love the minute you see them. Some houses are like that, you know – full of magic" (*EQ* 71). Montgomery often writes about "magical" fictional houses, as mentioned above, but it is difficult to define precisely what she means by "magic." From the context of her novels, it seems to refer to a positive, enchanted quality beyond the physical characteristics of a house, a combination of the material and immaterial. Montgomery's houses are often imbued with emotions and atmosphere that her protagonists in particular recognise as special or significant, created by carefully chosen elements of a house and its surroundings. For example, in *Jane of Lantern Hill,* when Jane and her father go looking for a house, they reject one that "seemed to be all a house should be," but lacked magic (*JLH* 73). They then find one that "was simply jammed with magic" (77), Lantern Hill. Montgomery does not elaborate on what Jane and her father mean by "magic," but it is clearly an ideal combination of elements that suit their personalities, including many natural features, a view of the sea, and unique furnishings such as "a dear little glass-paned cupboard in the corner fasted with a wooden button" (75). Such houses are clearly inspired by Montgomery's feelings for real homes, as mentioned in her journals. Of her childhood home in Cavendish, for example, she writes that it is " … a bowery 'haunt of ancient peace.' It is at such moments that I realize how deeply rooted and strong is my love for this old place … " (*SJ I* 351), and, when she is older, she writes that "the old home … is and ever must be hallowed ground to me. Everything I looked on had some memory of pleasure or pain. That old farm is very eloquent" (*SJ IV* 11) – and by "eloquent," she perhaps means that the house "speaks" to

her through her many memories of it. Of her uncle's house at Park Corner, where she spent a lot of time, she writes, "From my earliest recollection a visit to Park Corner was the greatest treat in the world. Each room has its memories" (*SJ I* 257), and "the big beautiful, orchard-bowered house that was the wonder castle of my childhood … " (*SJ III* 189). These deep, nostalgic emotions inspired by the houses highlight the significance of the physical qualities of the houses as well as the memories connected to them, and this is reflected in the fictional houses she creates.

It is significant that Dean, not Emily, owns the Disappointed House during the period of their engagement. In many ways, it is another piece of Dean's property, along with Emily herself. Dean is clearly a collector – he fills the house with objects from his worldwide travels – and just as clearly regards Emily as his ultimate prize. She does not see this at first, merely observing that the house was "longing for happiness … how sweet it would be to have a home of her very own" (*EQ* 73). New Moon was "home," of course, but Emily would never own it,[20] and there is also a negative quality to each of Emily's dwelling places in the trilogy that leads her to long for an ideal home of her own. This longing also demonstrates her independent spirit and her desire to shape her own traditions and destiny. The Disappointed House has the potential to be this ideal home, but as long as Emily is engaged to Dean, she is as trapped as she was in the spare room at New Moon (*ENM* 109) or under Aunt Ruth's thumb in her house. Lawson compares Emily's attitude to the Disappointed House to her existence at Aunt Ruth's house: "In this last novel, it is Emily's relation to the 'disappointed' house that symbolizes the same paradoxical sense of entrapment and freedom in a homelike space as was presented in the previous novel" ("The 'Disappointed' House" 82). Thus far, Aunt Ruth's house (as we

[20] Due to the patriarchal inheritance laws of the period, New Moon would go to Emily's cousin Andrew after Elizabeth's death (*ENM* 298).

will explore below) and the Disappointed House are "homelike spaces" but not ideal homes for Emily. This demonstrates another of Montgomery's nods to the Gothic, as we noted earlier. The concept of female entrapment is, after all, a common theme in almost all Gothic novels, as Samina Akbar, Mudassar Hayat, and Mohsin Raza point out: "Isolation and entrapment are recurring themes in literature, particularly within the Gothic genre, where these elements are often used to explore the darker aspects of human nature, societal constraints, and psychological tension" (945).[21] Significantly in this context, Dean is a good example of a Gothic villain; there is his sinister "ownership" of Emily that undermines her career and treats her as a collector's object, along with his physical deformity and shady past. Emily's friend Mr. Kelly actually warns her that "'he's after knowing far too much'" (*EQ* 67), and Montgomery describes how "a little chill crept over her as if a wind from the grave had blown across her spirit. All at once an old, old story … flashed into her recollection. Dean, so it was said, had seen the Black Mass celebrated" (68) – a sinister connection to his last name. As Lawson goes on to point out, "that the disappointed house is so intimately connected with a failed marriage makes it an appropriate setting to explore Emily's lack of fulfilment and sense of positive entrapment as she anticipates her marriage" (83).[22] This demonstrates the complex readings of the Disappointed House through feminist, Gothic, and realist lenses.

Emily's happiness during her engagement to Dean is disturbed by the sight of ashes in the fireplace, left from the fire "she and Teddy had kindled years ago that adventurous summer evening of childhood – the fire by which they had sat and planned out their lives together" (*EQ* 74). The ashes seem to haunt Emily and symbolise the death of her relationship with Teddy, but Emily's emotional response to the sight foreshadows the

[21] "Gothic Elements in Victorian Literature: Investigating the Use of Gothic Motifs in Victorian Novels and Their Significance." *Contemporary Journal of Social Science Review*, Vol. 3, No. 1 (2025).
[22] The marriage of the original owners of the Disappointed House had not "failed" but actually never took place, so it would be more accurate to describe it as a "failed relationship," like Emily and Dean's.

opposite: Later, an uncanny event takes place in the house in which Emily saves Teddy from certain death (*EQ* 88), leading to her breaking her engagement to Dean. Lawson writes that

> Emily's joy lies in imagining a recovery of the place of disappointment and loss, of seeing the uncannily familiar but empty space of the house transformed into a homelike and loving place. It is thus in tune with the darker tone of this novel that this proposed recovery and transformation does not take place; rather, the house is the setting for the event that breaks their engagement ("The 'Disappointed' House" 84).

Although this "proposed recovery and transformation" of the house does not happen immediately, it does happen at the end of the trilogy when Emily and Teddy are reconciled and become the owners of the house, and only *because* of the event that leads to the breaking of Emily's and Dean's engagement.

The Disappointed House, therefore, is a highly significant building in Emily's life and the narrative arc of the trilogy. In fact, the very last line refers to this house: "Before her on the dark hill, against the sunset, was the little beloved grey house that was to be disappointed no longer" (*EQ* 228). It is worth noting that the focus shifts from her former home, New Moon, to this house, and Emily is preparing to marry Teddy and move away, but its close proximity to New Moon demonstrates the fact that Emily remains rooted in her locality. Her career and relationships can continue to develop in her beloved home community, with her clan's house nearby.

Aunt Ruth's House: Fussy and Unfriendly

In describing some of Emily's yet-unknown relatives at the beginning of the trilogy, Douglas Starr's housekeeper, Ellen Green, mentions Aunt Ruth's house as a potential home for Emily: "an elegant house in Shrewsbury with bow windows and wooden lace all around the roof. It's very stylish" (*ENM* 21). This description is lost on the grieving Emily, who simply states that she wants someone to love her and has no interest in

whether or not a house is "stylish." The house is not mentioned again until the second novel, when Emily is allowed to go to Shrewsbury to attend the High School and must board with Aunt Ruth:

> Emily thought it a very ugly house, covered as it was with gingerbread-work of various kinds. But a house with white wooden lace on its roof and its bay windows was the last word of elegance in Shrewsbury. There was no garden – nothing but a bare, prim, little lawn; but one thing rejoiced Emily's eyes. Behind the house was a big plantation of tall, slender fir trees – the tallest, straightest, slenderest firs she had ever seen, stretching back into long, green, gossamered vistas. (*EC* 94)

Emily is not impressed by the house's fussy elegance, for it signifies to her the opposite of the homely, simple beauty of New Moon. This contrast between the houses is reflected in the harsh, unsympathetic personality of Aunt Ruth compared to the warmth of Aunt Laura and Cousin Jimmy, and even the strict Aunt Elizabeth, of New Moon; Aunt Ruth's house functions as a foil to New Moon. Emily feels the aforementioned entrapment in this house: She has to stay to help with housecleaning every other weekend instead of going home to New Moon; Aunt Ruth does not allow her to have friends visit the house; and she locks Emily out of the house (a sort of reverse entrapment) when Emily takes part in a play against her aunt's will (*EC* 139).

Montgomery again describes the house in terms of its situation in the natural world, and the natural objects are not only as important as the manufactured but are the saving grace for the protagonist in a negative, hostile environment. It is notable that this is one of the only houses in which one of Montgomery's heroines lives that is not named; this draws attention to the fact that she only names the houses that are beloved of their central characters and where the characters feel a strong connection to their owners: Green Gables, Lantern Hill, and Silver Bush. Aunt Ruth's house, apart from its trees, is not a pleasant place for Emily, and its many hated objects provide a stark contrast to all the beautiful and beloved objects of the beautifully named New Moon. For example, Emily's bedroom is an ugly and suffocating one, with a door that "wouldn't shut tight; the slanting

ceiling was rain stained, and came down so close to the bed that she could touch it with her hand. On the bare floor was a large 'hooked' mat which made Emily's eyes ache" (*EC* 95). Emily also hates the pictures that adorn the walls, including an unflattering and vulgar "chromo of Queen Alexandra" (96) and a rather grim portrait of Lord Byron on his deathbed (102). Emily anthropomorphises the room, stating that it feels "'unfriendly – it – doesn't want me – I can *never* feel at home here'" (*ibid.)* – again allowing the house to reflect her own feelings toward it. She is willing to make the sacrifice of living in such a negative environment for the sake of her education and career, however, and finds some solace in the view of the fir grove and the addition of pictures she does like (248). A house, in this instance, sits in opposition to its natural environment, a negative object in contrast to its positive natural setting, and this contrast serves to illuminate further Emily's character and connection to nature.

Even in this negative house, however, Emily manages to gain family approval and belonging. Her relationship with the cold and unreasonable Aunt Ruth does not greatly improve, but Emily does take a few small steps toward rapprochement with her aunt with the help of domestic objects. For example, Emily embroiders a centrepiece for Aunt Ruth's birthday and writes that "'she thanked me rather stiffly and didn't seem to care anything about it'" (*EC* 166). Later, though, she hears Aunt Ruth proudly showing off the gift to a visitor, praising Emily's skill (*ibid.*). Even more significantly, Aunt Ruth goes on to praise both of Emily's parents, much to the girl's amazement. It is worth noting that her aunt's approval is not related to Emily's writing but to her skill in the domestic arts; Aunt Ruth's unsympathetic and old-fashioned personality does not comprehend Emily's desire for a career and does not approve of women as writers. Montgomery, arguably, was a realist about women's roles in early twentieth-century Canada and created protagonists who not only excelled at non-traditional careers for women such as writing

but also had the life skills expected of women at the time. Characters like Aunt Ruth seem to support the traditional female roles, and Montgomery both supports and subverts these stereotypes by having her protagonists excel at life skills, holding their own against negative characters who do not value their non-traditional achievements.

Aunt Ruth's house, then, is a difficult place for Emily to live during her three years in Shrewsbury – it is, perhaps, too temporary a home for her to be transformed by her imaginative powers – but its negative aspects help her to mature and develop as both a young woman and as a writer. She even writes that she will be "oddly sorry to leave this little room I've never liked and that has never liked me, and that long hill starred with lights — after all, I've had some wonderful moments here" (*EC* 324). The house also provides a contrast to the positive aspects of New Moon, allowing both Emily and the reader to observe and more greatly appreciate the benefits of her life there.

Wyther Grange: *Jane Eyre* and the Gothic

Emily's visit to her Great-aunt Nancy's home, Wyther Grange, late in the first novel, contains another of Montgomery's nods to the Gothic. Indeed, Emily's first experiences of the house are compared to Gothic romances and reflect Burke's notion of the sublime:[23]

> They went through the spacious hall, catching glimpses on either side of large, dim, splendid rooms, then through the kitchen and out of it into an odd little back hall. It was long and narrow and dark. On one side was a row of four, square, small-paned windows, on the other were cupboards, reaching from floor to ceiling, with doors

[23] Hogle explains that "the aim of arousing terror … derives from its being the basis of the 'sublime' in Edmund Burke's *Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (1757). For Burke 'the strongest emotion' arousable by art-forms comes from artist and audience 'apprehensions' of possible 'pain or death' when faced with immensity, 'obscurity,' ghosts, towering or ruined old structures, or intimations of God-like 'power exceeding the bounds of our comprehension'…For that affect to be pleasurable, not revolting, however, the artwork must render its fearsome objects as aestheticized and thus placed 'at certain distances' from their physical realities… To that end, the most sublime medium of art is 'words,' signifiers always at some remove from their points of reference, because they can arouse 'affections in the soul' without a firm 'representation in the mind of the things for which they stand …'" (135).

> of black shining wood. Emily felt like one of the heroines in a 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'[24] before the taboo had fallen on Dr. Burnley's bookcase. She shivered. It was awful but interesting. (*ENM* 238)

Wyther Grange was clearly inspired by Montgomery's grandparents' original house at Park Corner, PEI. In a journal entry dated January 7, 1910, she writes that her relatives

> lived in the 'old house' then – a most quaint and delightful old place as I remember it. I recall in particular a certain long 'back hall', with cupboards on one side and a window on the other. At the end of this was a short flight of steps going up to a little private sitting room of Grandmother Montgomery's. Out of this another flight of steps led down to Grandmother's bedroom. (*SJ I* 369)

Emily, reflecting this entry, describes being presented to her great-aunt on her arrival at Wyther Grange: "At the end of the hall a flight of steps led up to a door … and they went down another four steps – was there ever such a funny house? – into a bedroom" (*ENM* 239). These very specific details based on Montgomery's memories lend the narrative a sense of verisimilitude, making Wyther Grange an easily imaginable piece of architecture with a unique atmosphere.

The physical structure of Wyther Grange is imbued with Gothic qualities – its oddness, dimness, size, shape, and décor. Its name, as Epperly points out, is "reminiscent of Thrushcross Grange and Wuthering Heights in Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights*, and it is Gothic horrors Emily thinks of when she first enters the old house" (*Sweet-grass* 159). Most significantly, Emily is frightened on her first night in the bedroom she is given, the "Pink Room," by a mysterious and terrifying sound, that of hundreds of swallows in the disused central chimney. This episode again alludes to the Red Room of Brontë's *Jane Eyre*.[25] Wyther Grange, triggering more fear in Emily than the spare room at New Moon, "suddenly became a dreadful, uncanny place" (*ENM* 245), due to the combination of the

[24] British novelist Ann Radcliffe's pioneering Gothic novels of 1794 and 1791, respectively.
[25] See Elizabeth Epperly's *The Fragrance of Sweet-grass: L. M. Montgomery's Heroines and the Pursuit of Romance,* part II, "The Struggle for Voice: Emily of New Moon" for a thorough discussion of the similarities between *Jane Eyre* and *Emily of New Moon.*

physical aspects of the house and the presence of the swallows, an element of the natural world in an unnatural setting. Montgomery, according to Kathleen Miller, "makes use of many of the same Gothic elements from Brontë's novel as occasion for encouraging Emily's artistic self-expression and psychological development" ("Transfiguring the Divine" 140, 2005). Once Emily learns the real reason for the sounds, she learns to love Wyther Grange, "with its flavour of hidden secrets – a flavour that was wholly a trick of its architecture, for there had never been anything in it but the simple tale of births and deaths and marriages and everyday living that most houses have" (276). Montgomery excels at taking these "everyday" elements and creating an atmosphere that is much greater than the sum of its parts; she again thereby reveals her attitude toward the power of domestic architecture, as discussed in the introduction to this chapter, particularly in terms of the uncanny and Gothic. The house has the atmosphere of a much older one, the sort on which D. Miller comments regarding "home[s] built centuries ago" (see quotation on page 38). Miller goes on to discuss the idea of houses having agency: "A house is much more likely to be experienced as an independent and autonomous agency than some lesser species of material culture. But the basic idea that things have agency holds for much more flimsy substances" (95). Whether this agency and power are innate in architecture or exist only because of its connection to human life is debatable, but it is clear that Montgomery senses the power of architecture when she writes of houses such as Wyther Grange.

Montgomery spends little time discussing the objects within this house, but she mentions a few that hold particular significance for Emily later on. Emily writes in her diary that "'there are many interesting things in this house. I love to look at them'" (*ENM* 249). After describing a few curiosities, she states that what she likes best is "'a great silvery shining ball hanging from the lamp in the parlour. It reflects everything like a little

fairy world'" (250). This object, with its mirror-like, otherworldly quality, later serves as a sort of enchanted mirror, well suited to Emily's inherent Romantic leanings. Great-aunt Nancy leaves the gazing-ball to Emily, who hangs it in the Disappointed House in *Emily's Quest* during her engagement to Dean (80). Before they can be married, however, Emily visits the house and falls into a sort of trance while looking at the gazing-ball. She "sees" Teddy at a ticket window and feels compelled to save him from "some terrible danger" (89) before returning to her senses. Teddy is overseas at the time, and he experiences something of Emily's "vision," enabled by the gazing-ball, causing him to miss his train and therefore his ship home. The ship then sinks due to "a fatal collision with an iceberg" (*ibid*.), meaning that this supernatural experience saves his life. Emily's "'horrible power or gift or curse'" (90) makes her realise that she cannot possibly marry Dean due to her deep connection to Teddy: "'I am not going to marry another man,' Emily found herself saying" (91). The gazing-ball of Wyther Grange, then, is a significant object in Emily's life, saving her from a potentially disastrous marriage, and it enables Montgomery's continued use of Gothic and fairy-tale allusions.

Other Houses

Apart from these five houses in the Emily trilogy, there are several other allusions to buildings of significance to Emily, and there are many in Montgomery's other novels that would be a suitable topic for future research.

One such house contributes to another Gothic intrusion and appears in *Emily Climbs*, when Emily and Ilse are canvassing the countryside for magazine subscriptions and come upon a house to which Emily immediately senses a connection. She and Ilse had been told about a missing seven-year-old child in the area, and the story had deeply disturbed her: "The story haunted Emily all the rest of the day and she walked under its shadow. Anything like that always took almost a morbid hold on her" (*EC* 180). With

that thought hovering in her subconscious, Emily sees the house and exclaims that it belongs to her, telling Ilse that it is full of personality and that it smiles at her, in another example of the personification of a house (181). Then, as they turn to leave, she tells Ilse, "'I hate to leave it. I have the oddest feeling, Ilse, that it's calling to me — that I ought to go back to it'" (182). That night, staying by chance in the house of the missing child, Emily has another of her supernatural experiences: she wakes up to find a picture of the house she had seen earlier with Ilse drawn in her notebook with the words "Allan Bradshaw is here" (referring to the missing child) in her own handwriting (201). She has no memory of drawing or writing this and claims she cannot draw, but regardless, the house is searched and the boy found, leading Ilse to proclaim that Emily is psychic. Emily is not comfortable with this "gift," telling Ilse, "'I don't want to have any such power — you don't know how I feel about it, Ilse. It seems to me a terrible thing — as if I were marked out in some uncanny way — I don't feel human'" (207). Montgomery might have intended this episode as merely another excuse to include Gothic elements in Emily's character development, but there are other possible interpretations. For example, Lawson comments, "At one level, the house in this story … is a clear contrast with the house she shares with her Aunt Ruth in Shrewsbury" ("The 'Disappointed' House" 81). Emily cannot feel at home in Aunt Ruth's house but feels that she "owns" this house she has never seen before. Lawson points out that "Emily may feel metaphorically imprisoned at Aunt Ruth's; however, the lost child, Allan Bradshaw, is literally imprisoned in a room that is the antithesis of Emily's own" (*ibid.*). She mentions the irony of this imprisonment and states that

> the idea of a comfortable, familiar homelike space, a space that is Emily's own, is thus undercut by an uncanny doubling of the home as a space of prison and confinement. That the home with which Emily feels a psychic bond is not only believed to be empty but actually contains a prisoner desperate to escape suggests that Emily's own dreams of fulfilment and home may be in some sense contaminated at their source. (82)

Indeed, Emily can never be truly at "home" until she and Teddy come into ownership of the Disappointed House at the end of the trilogy. Even New Moon contains spaces of imprisonment for Emily: Aunt Elizabeth's smothering bedroom and the spare room into which Emily is locked as a punishment. Montgomery uses Emily's uncanny gift to free the imprisoned child, however, just as she "freed" Ilse and her father from the painful misconception about Ilse's mother's disappearance, and just as she is liberated from her connection to Dean Priest by her supernatural connection to Teddy experienced in the Disappointed House.

Houses, then, are clearly one of the main ways in which Montgomery weaves Gothic elements into the story, develops her protagonist, and advances the narrative in the Emily trilogy.

Conclusion

Houses are such a prominent feature of Montgomery's novels that it is possible to overlook them as mere background or setting, but they are in fact one of the most significant objects in her fiction, particularly for Emily. Most of the houses she describes are older houses, ones that seem to contain something of the people who have lived there – a concept that is reflected in Montgomery's fictional houses but is commonly held regarding real houses. As Carl R. Lounsbury states, "only a very small number of them survive for much longer periods to give an historical dimension to the landscape" ("Architectural and Cultural History" 485, 2010), and this is particularly true of most Canadian houses, which are often built of timber and do not last longer than a century. Barbara Voss, on the other hand, points out that

> one particular effect of material culture is that it objectifies – physically embodies – the social relations that produced it. Some objects, such as tableware ceramic dishes, can be readily replaced as social ideologies and fashions change; other objects, like architectural forms, are more durable and persist long after the

> gendered ideologies and ideals that shaped their design have been abandoned. ("Engendered Archaeology" 119, 2006)

Not only do Montgomery's fictional houses survive as long as the books do, but some of the real houses upon which hers are based are still in existence, providing the "physical embodi[ment]" of the "social relations that produced" them. The inspiration for New Moon, for example, was the original Montgomery homestead[26] in Malpeque, PEI, built in the late eighteenth century, and it is, remarkably, still standing, though it is privately owned and inaccessible to the public. The houses that provide the models for Green Gables (in Cavendish) and Silver Bush (in Park Corner) still survive and are open to the public as museums, however, providing a sense of history and reality to visitors who know of the fictional counterparts. In fact, the cover artist for the 1988 Bantam Seal edition of *Pat of Silver Bush* and *Mistress Pat*, Ben Stahl, used the real house as the model for his book covers.[27] The existence of these houses and their similarities to the fictional versions provide verisimilitude and a sense of connection for readers, an added dimension to our experience of the narratives.

We will now turn our attention to the use of books and writing materials in Montgomery's fiction, exploring the significance of these objects for Emily and her development, particularly as a writer.

[26] See https://www.historicplaces.ca/en/rep-reg/place-lieu.aspx?id=19510 for more information about the house and location.
[27] See Appendix 1, Figure 5, for photographs of book covers and the real house on which Silver Bush is based.

Chapter Two

Books and Writing Materials

"I *can't* help writing, Aunt Elizabeth. It's in my blood. There's no use in asking me. I *do* want an education — it isn't pretending — but I can't give up my writing to get it." (*Emily Climbs* 82)

Introduction

The Emily trilogy is an excellent example of a *Künstlerroman* – a novel about the growth of an artist (in this case, a girl/young woman with ambitions of becoming a successful poet and author). It comes as no surprise, therefore, that books, paper, and writing materials are a noteworthy category of material objects in this trilogy, concerned as it is with Emily's identity and development as a budding writer. These objects are often, when we read attentively, clearly significant in literature in general and are found in a wide variety of narratives, including the fictional letters that constitute epistolary novels[28] such as Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818) and Jo March's precious writing materials in Louisa May Alcott's *Little Women* (1868), in which the heroine shares similar ambitions with Montgomery's Emily. The tools of Emily's trade, which contribute significantly to the construction of her identity, take many forms, from the books she reads to the letters she writes to her dead father to the book she finally writes herself, as well as the various other references to paper that play a role in her life, both as a young

[28] Epistolary novels, especially those written by women, are particularly significant as an early influential form of the novel, and Montgomery is continuing this long-established tradition. Amanda Gilroy and W.M. Verhoeven, for example, discuss "the persistence of a rhetoric that equates epistolary femininity and feminine epistolatory, a rhetoric that derives largely from a particular view of the eighteenth-century novel and its association with women" (1) in their volume *Epistolary Histories: Letters, Fiction, Culture* (2000). They point out that at the time, "the form of writing most accessible to and acceptable for women was letter writing … they spoke in the private voice appropriate to women whose roles were increasingly circumscribed within the constraints of bourgeois ideology" (2); as this chapter will explore, Montgomery's Emily writes letters to her dead parents that are, amid her own constraints, her only outlet for her private emotions and struggles.

woman and as a writer. As previously discussed, Montgomery set a strong autobiographical precedence for the Emily novels, writing much in her own journals about her struggles and joys on the road to becoming a successful, published author. Epperly points out that the Emily trilogy "offers Montgomery's most detailed study of the female artist and the constraints upon her" (*Sweet-grass* 12), as Montgomery was drawing on many of her own experiences. Emily shares with Montgomery a love of books and a dependence upon writing materials as a means to success and personal fulfilment as a writer. A close examination of these items will demonstrate the power that a very specific category of objects can have within a fictional context – in fiction for young people, in Montgomery's novels, and in Emily's story in particular.

Books and paper are also important objects in Montgomery's other novels, although her other characters do not have such high writing ambitions. In *Pat of Silver Bush*, for example, Pat's friend Jingle had secretly written letters to his absent mother throughout his childhood but never mailed them. These letters are a physical manifestation of the boy's love and desperate longing for a mother figure. After he finally meets his mother and, according to Epperly, "suffers the loss of his childhood dream from his mother's coldness," he and Pat "burn the letters … and beside those ashes he rises phoenix-like, transformed into the young man Hilary Gordon" (*Sweet-Grass* 217). Paper in various forms is also significant for Jane in *Jane of Lantern Hill;* in particular, she finds a picture on the front page of a magazine of a person who turns out to be her father (34), and a letter from her father changes the trajectory of her life (45). For Anne of Green Gables, a newspaper contains the pass list for Queen's (263), a highly significant point in her life, and a slip of paper causes the heart attack that results in Matthew's death (294). It is Emily, however, to whom this category of objects is most vital: they contribute in no

small way to her sense of identity as well as to the development of her career. As Alexis points out:

> People use objects when trying to access [their] desired identity. How a person approaches and uses an object is intimately connected to family, sense of self, writing history, relation to peers, media connections, social awareness, and life story. Hence, turning to objects is one way of uncovering the very complicated identities that perform the practice of writing and for understanding the writing process itself. (Alexis and Rule 25)

In *Emily of New Moon*, the reader is introduced to eleven-year-old Emily, whose recently deceased father has brought her up with an appreciation for the written word. The trilogy traces Emily's development from an orphan who inherits her father's love of writing to a young adult with a burgeoning career as an author. Objects to do with writing are, therefore, a significant element of Emily's life, especially in terms of cementing her identity as a writer.

Examining Emily's writing objects, which include scraps of paper, account books, blank books, and even the backs of advertisements, as well as ink, pens, and pencils, can help us understand the complex identity she creates for herself in part through the writing process. Paper in its various forms, for example, provides Emily with at least some agency and independence throughout the trilogy, and particularly when she begins to earn her own money through her writing. As Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton claim,

> The tools of one's trade, perhaps more than any other set of objects, help to define who we are as individuals. Karl Marx was right: Humans create their existence primarily through productive efforts … Productive action reveals a great deal about the worker's ingenuity, skills, endurance, as well as his or her limitations. Thus whatever information we get about our selves from productive acts becomes a central component of the self as a whole. (Alexis and Rule 93)

Books, paper, pens, and related implements help to define who Emily is as an individual and writer in this fictional world, just as these "tools of the trade" help define Montgomery, her author.

The act of writing is rooted in the physical; although it deals with the non-material world of thoughts and ideas, it depends upon physical objects in order to transmit these ideas. Alexis and Rule point out that

> in our home field of writing studies … it is impossible not to notice that objects are everywhere. How could they not be? Objects populate homes, writing desks, personal lives … in short, they fill or constitute every contour of historical, social, cultural, and individual (writing) lives. Along with being a cognitive, social, and cultural practice, writing is a material practice. (3)

In this same volume, Laura Micciche states that "the authors' attentiveness to discrete artifacts shows how people creatively use objects with and against their intended usage in order to construct identity, preserve connection to one's history, and articulate a future for oneself" (vii). Emily uses her writing-related objects both "with and against their intended usage," as we will see in this chapter, to perform these acts in a fictional but completely believable setting, a testament to Montgomery's detailed, realistic writing and her semi-autobiographical style.

Journals: Emotion Venting, Writing Practice, and Identity Formation

The physical presence of paper, and access to it due to its scarcity, are hugely significant to Emily, both in terms of her burgeoning career as a writer and her identity as a creative, vibrant young woman. At the beginning of the trilogy, Montgomery presents the young Emily reusing the only paper source available to her, an account book, to write in (*ENM* 10), and suggests that this writing comforts her and helps her through difficult situations. This significance of paper for Emily is palpable even before she begins to have ambitions to become a writer. When Emily is caught eavesdropping on the Murrays as they decide her fate, she "couldn't bear all the pain and shame that was burning in her heart. Then her eyes fell on the old yellow account-book on her little table" (41). The material presence of the paper (and writing instrument) provides an instant antidote to this "pain and shame." Emily describes the whole experience in writing, and in doing so,

"pain and humiliation had passed away … It had been fun, finding words to fit Uncle Wallace, and what exquisite satisfaction it had been to describe Aunt Ruth …" (42). This idea of writing feelings down on paper as self-expression and as a necessary vent is present throughout the trilogy: For example, Emily writes after her years in high school about her self-discipline as a writer, choosing words carefully but "'not in my diary perhaps – I just let myself go here – one must have a 'vent'" (*EC* 323). She again uses her diary as a place to write whatever she feels like, rather than what she *should* write to practise the craft, knowing that her teacher and mentor Mr. Carpenter would not approve but claiming it to be valid because it was just what she felt (another Romantic tendency: to value emotions), and because "'who cares what this old journal thinks?'" (*EC* 259).[29] She uses it again for this purpose in *Emily's Quest* after a discouraging series of rejections: "'I feel much better now than when I began this entry. I've got quite a bit of resentment and rebellion and discouragement out of my system. That's the chief use of a diary, I believe'" (*EQ* 14). Having a physical means of externalising emotions is an important part of Emily's life, and, indeed, Montgomery's. Although both Emily and Montgomery write with the intention of eventual publication (and therefore public consumption of their work), both also require a private means of writing out their thoughts at the time – particularly Montgomery, who, as a minister's wife, had to conform to high expectations of conduct and could not express herself freely in public (until much later – the journals were not made public until after her death). Rubio posits that "as a minister's wife … her more frank private thoughts had to be carefully hidden from view. Her tendency to sarcasm and irony needed management. … The journal kept the two sides of her persona – the public and the private – well enough connected that she did not implode" (*Wings*

[29] Emily uses the words "diary" and "journal" interchangeably, using both terms to describe books in which one writes personal reflections rather than a daily record of events.

272), in reference to this journal entry: "I could not live without my journal now. Temperaments such as mine *must* have some outlet, else they become morbid and poisoned by 'consuming their own smoke'. And the only *safe* outlet is in some such record as this" (*SJ II* 1). Montgomery repeats this metaphor when writing of Emily: "Sometimes she felt that if it were not for her diary she would have flown into little bits by reason of consuming her own smoke" (*EC* 2). Montgomery and Emily, with their intense personalities, need a physical method of expressing their innermost thoughts and emotions, one that is entirely private and "safe" and functions as a "vent" for the intense, emotionally dangerous "smoke" of their thoughts. Journals provide a physical receptacle for Montgomery's and Emily's experiences, their interpretation of their worlds, and their own selves, in contrast to the writing that is intended for immediate publication and therefore public consumption.

Apart from its role as a "vent" and confidant, journaling is a vital aspect of Emily's life, both as a source of personal development and as a means of honing her craft. Like many other aspects of the trilogy, this has autobiographical precedence in Montgomery's own lifelong journaling habit; life writing functions as a form of self-actualisation for both author and protagonist. Carole Gerson points out that

> in view of her later preparation of these personal writings for public view, with ample opportunity to adjust her wording while she recopied the text and added numerous photographs, I think it quite possible that this professional storyteller shaped her own story retrospectively. In a sense, the journals can be seen as sequels to her life and her published books. ("Chariot Wheels" 56)

I would argue that rather than sequels, Montgomery's journals (at least those entries written before she finished the trilogy) can be read as *prequels* to the Emily trilogy, with so many passages in the novels either taken directly from her own entries or echoing Montgomery's own writing practices and attitudes (as reflected in such passages as Mr.

Carpenter's criticism of Emily's writing in the last chapter of *Emily of New Moon*). Waterston points out that in *Emily's Quest,*

> … the long sections of Emily's journal … are essential to Montgomery's central purpose: to tell the whole story of the life of a writer. For her, periods of lonely introspection, times of writing up her own response to nature and recording local voices and gossip, along with her meditations on faith and astronomy, were all essential parts of her growth as an artist. Emily's journal, like Montgomery's, is central to her life. (*Magic Island* 146)

Like Emily's letters to her father, these "long sections of Emily's journal" provide the reader with a window into her inner life and "growth as an artist" while also providing insight into Montgomery's.

"Jimmy-books": "for certain matters which burned for expression"

Emily's journaling habit depends, of course, on the physical availability of paper. With the lack of available writing material at New Moon, Emily depends on Cousin Jimmy, who, anticipating a need, often provides her with blank books. These books are of great value to Emily, providing the physical "home" for her writing practice and the safe "vent" for her understandably strong emotions, as discussed above: "The fat, black 'Jimmy-book' seemed to her like a personal friend and a safe confidant for certain matters which burned for expression and yet were too combustible to be trusted to the ears of any living being" (*EC* 2). Once she stops writing letters to her father (as will be discussed later), the books function as journals and are, as such, precious in this *Künstlerroman* context, and, in the economical environment of New Moon, they are a luxury that Emily alone enjoys. The blank books also function at first as a symbol for the young girl: a *tabula rasa* (blank slate) whose pages offer potential and innocence. In *Emily's Quest,* however, the tone of Emily's life writing becomes darker and, at times, more despairing, as Emily has become an adult with various issues to deal with, so the blank books cease to act as a *tabula rasa*.

Cousin Jimmy is a similarly creative figure who composes poetry, and, although he does not write down his creations, he understands Emily's need; he explains that "'paper's too scarce at New Moon. Elizabeth has some pet economies and writing paper of any kind is one of them'" (*ENM* 67). It is not clear why the Murrays eschew writing paper; the family considers themselves to be socially superior in their community and does not suffer financially, so the reasons for Elizabeth's "pet economies" seem to be a matter of personal preference or habitual frugality rather than necessity – or even a way for Montgomery to present Aunt Elizabeth as a foil for Emily. The clan's low opinion of writing serves to highlight the difference between Emily and most of the family, who seem to distrust intellectualism and literary ambition. Emily is an anomaly in her desire and need to express herself through writing, with the other Murrays (apart from Cousin Jimmy) having no apparent need for introspection and self-expression. Montgomery herself had suffered from a similar lack of available paper; her first diary and creative work was written on "'letter bills' and in the little yellow notebooks sent out by a patent medicine firm" (*SJ I* 375).[30] This lack of available paper formed a habit that lasted throughout her lifetime: In 1929, she writes that one of her peculiarities is that she "*cannot* discard any piece of blank paper. I *must* save it to write on" (*SJ IV* 5). Montgomery endows Emily with the same appreciation for writing material in an environment where it is scarce, but where she is aided by the supportive and empathetic Cousin Jimmy, who provides for her need for paper.

[30]According to Mark Kuhlberg, writing paper was not plentiful at the time because "while Canada's abundant wood and water power resources made it apparent in the late nineteenth century that it was an ideal place to manufacture pulp and paper, its natural endowments combined with political forces to dictate that its production would be confined largely to newsprint" (Kuhlberg, "Pulp and Paper in Canada: Its First Century." *Pulp and Paper Canada,* 1/5/2003).

The blank books, then, are an important resource for Emily in an environment where writing is not generally valued (especially by Aunt Elizabeth, who actively tries to stop her, and Aunt Laura, who does not encourage her). Montgomery writes that

> blank books of any sort were not easy to come by at New Moon, and if it had not been for Cousin Jimmy, Emily might never have had one … Aunt Elizabeth thought Emily wasted far too much time 'over her scribbling nonsense' as it was – and Aunt Laura did not dare to go contrary to Aunt Elizabeth in this – more by token that Laura herself really thought Emily might be better employed. (*EC* 2)

Jimmy's empathy and support are therefore an important factor in Emily's development. Emily "dared not ask Aunt Elizabeth for any [paper]. There were times when she felt she would burst if she couldn't write out some of the things that came to her" (*ENM* 90). This experience is demonstrated early in *Emily of New Moon,* when Aunt Laura finds a bundle of old paper that had been used when the house had been the local post office and plans to burn it – an episode inspired directly by Montgomery's own childhood, when her grandparents had the post office in the house where she lived with them in Cavendish, PEI.[31] Emily, desperate for writing material, begs to be allowed to keep the paper and begins to write letters to her dead father (92). This is her chosen method of connection to him, the only person with whom she has had a close relationship until her arrival at New Moon and with whom she can no longer communicate directly. This act, and the keeping of a journal that starts in the second book, enables Emily to develop her gift for writing and begin a literary career, as well as providing her with the comfort of continued communication with her father: "The bitterness died out of her grief. Writing to him seemed to bring him so near; and she told him everything" (94).

Cousin Jimmy has an uncanny knack for knowing when Emily needs a new blank book, and although they are not easy to obtain (*EC* 2), he manages to procure them for

[31] An example of these post-office "letter bills" is pictured in Appendix A, Figure 6.

her: “when the notion occurred to him that Emily probably wanted another ‘blank book,’ that blank book materialised straightaway” (*ibid.*), thereby enabling her writing practice and career development. Montgomery seems to be suggesting that Jimmy is attempting to make up for what he has lost in terms of intellect and career prospects (having been injured when he was accidentally pushed down a well by Elizabeth as a child), and Montgomery does this through the medium of paper by having him provide writing material for Emily. She is, even at such a young age, somewhat aware of this loss of potential: “Emily, listening to him, felt vaguely that if it had not been for that unlucky push into the New Moon well, this queer little man beside her might have stood in the presence of kings” (143). Jimmy is, however, considered a genius by some, but his genius is not widely recognized because his intelligence and perception are not conventional. Emily (who could not be considered “conventional” herself) and Jimmy understand each other, and paper is the primary object that represents the strength of their relationship: The blank books reflect his intuitive understanding of Emily’s needs. Their mutual respect and Jimmy’s support of Emily’s gift develop as the trilogy progresses. The very fact that he takes her writing seriously when others (such as Aunt Elizabeth, Aunt Laura, and Dean Priest) do not is very important to Emily; both love literature and are on the margins of the Murray clan and therefore have a particular bond. Later in the trilogy, for instance, Jimmy is “speechless with indignation” when he brings publishers’ rejections for Emily home from the post office (*EQ* 33) and is so excited about her success with her book, *The Moral of the Rose,* that he “gave up unblushingly his plan of finishing the ploughing of the hill field to sit at home and gloat over the book” (170).

Cousin Jimmy sometimes gives Emily these blank books to mark milestones in her career, as Emily writes:

> ‘I have been listed by name as “one of the well-known and popular contributors for the coming year” in Girlhood Days. Cousin Jimmy has read this editor’s foreword

> over half a dozen times and I heard him murmuring "well-known and popular" as he split the kindlings. Then he went to the corner store and bought me a new Jimmy-book. Every time I pass a new milestone on the Alpine path Cousin Jimmy celebrates by giving me a new Jimmy-book. I never buy a notebook for myself. It would hurt his feelings.' (*EQ* 15)

As gifts from Cousin Jimmy, the blank books therefore signify the supportive, empathetic relationship he has with Emily, which is as encouraging and helpful to Emily as the books themselves. Emily's reference to the "Alpine path" here is a quotation from a poem called "The Fringed Gentian[32]," which Dean had clipped and given to her (on another significant scrap of paper) and which inspires her to vow to "'climb the Alpine Path and write my name on the scroll of fame'" (*ENM* 290). Emily returns to this metaphor of climbing a steep slope to represent the struggle for success throughout the trilogy, as does Montgomery herself: Her 1917 autobiography, first published in serialised form, is entitled *The Alpine Path: The Story of My Career.* On the final page of this work, she writes, "The 'Alpine Path' has been climbed, after many years of toil and endeavor. It was not an easy ascent, but even in the struggle at its hardest there was a delight and a zest known only to those who aspire to the heights" (qtd in Lefebvre 2018, 311).

The blank books, like the account book and letter bills, provide a way for Emily to materialize her thoughts, lending them permanence and giving Emily the ability to look back on her writing and learn from it — an important opportunity for growth in her writing ability. As well as using them as a source of creativity and development for Emily throughout the trilogy, Montgomery also uses them to provide a means for one of her characteristic Gothic details. Emily takes a blank book with her when she and Ilse spend a weekend canvassing for a newspaper, and she uses it to jot down descriptions of the people they meet (*EC* 171) and thoughts that come to her (179), as well as to record a

[32]Brenton Dickieson writes about the origin of the verse, a fragment of a poem by an unknown author, here: https://apilgriminnarnia.com/2018/05/31/alpine-path/

moment of beauty when the sun illuminates an old house (184). Its most significant use, however, occurs when Emily is asleep (as discussed earlier in this thesis) and draws a picture of the house she had seen recently with a mark below a window. In her handwriting is a note indicating the location of a missing child, which turns out to be accurate even though Emily had no way of knowing that the child was there (*EC* 201). This incident of a sort of automatic writing, in which the writer has no awareness or memory of the act, recalls the earlier Gothic intrusion of Emily's vision of Ilse's mother in the delirium of fever as well as Emily's mysterious, Romantic gift of "the flash." In this case, the tools of Emily's trade are taken beyond her usual talent for composition into the realm of artistic representation – she points out to Ilse that she cannot draw, giving credence to the idea that "something else" used her as an instrument. Montgomery was fascinated by spiritualism and the occult and, indeed, participated in "table rappings" and séances,[33] so it is not surprising that one of her Gothic intrusions includes the spiritualist phenomenon of automatic writing. Spiritualism, according to Margaret Mills Harper, was

> an energetic religious movement that claimed to be a new and scientific form of Christianity [that] swept the United States, Great Britain, and parts of continental Europe beginning in the mid-nineteenth century and waning early in the twentieth (with a late resurgence during and immediately after the Great War). For the sake of simplicity, its doctrines may be reduced to two: the continuance of the human personality after death (whether through one or many incarnations) and the ability of human spirits to communicate from beyond the grave through sensitive individuals in this world. (*Wisdom of Two,* 2006, p. 4)

The uncanny incident, which leads to the saving of the child's life, marks a completely different purpose for a Jimmy-book than Emily's career development and helps reinforce the image of Emily as a Romantic child with supernatural gifts. Interestingly, Emily wants no part of this "psychic" side of her identity; she says to Ilse, "'Perhaps I'll grow out of

[33] Montgomery writes in 1906 about having a "séance and made a table rap" and about reading a book by Thomson Hudson called *The Law of Psychic Phenomena* (1893), which she describes as a "wonderful book," and says that she is "intensely interested in some of its theories and conclusions" (*SJ I* 318).

it … I hope so – I don't *want* to have any such power … It seems to me a terrible thing – as if I were marked out in some uncanny way – I don't feel *human* … Don't ever speak of it to me again, Ilse'" (*EC* 207). As Jessica Wen Hui Lim puts it, Emily is "uncomfortable with being an instrument for supernatural forces. She finds her psychic encounters particularly isolating and unsettling … Emily is unsettled by her lack of control over herself" (*Emily of New Moon: A Children's Classic* 46). It is somewhat surprising that Montgomery, with her own fascination for the occult, endows her protagonist with an aversion to it and involves some of the objects that are precious to Emily (the Jimmy-book and pencil here and the gazing ball in which she rescues Teddy in *Emily's Quest*) in these (for Emily) negative incidents. It is possible that Montgomery was acutely aware of her young readership and wanted to avoid being accused of tainting impressionable young minds with an overt fascination with the supernatural.

Set within this Gothic episode of the lost child, in a blatant narrative intrusion, Emily is given an opportunity for career advancement. She meets an old Scottish woman, Mistress Macintyre, who tells her a story about her encounter with Queen Victoria's children. Emily asks if she can write the story down, initially as a school essay, and possibly get it published. One of her teachers gave "The Woman Who Spanked the King" "first place and commented on it specially in his class criticisms'" (*EC* 208), and then the essay "was accepted and published by a New York magazine of some standing," which gave Emily confidence "at the psychological moment when the sands of Emily's faith were running rather low" (262). This episode, which depends entirely upon writing materials, serves a dual purpose: the advancement of Emily's career, and the personal growth obtained through the harrowing ordeal of the missing child due to her uncanny gifts.

For Montgomery, journals are a source of comfort, although a bittersweet one, that proves vital when she loses her closest friend and cousin, Frede Campbell McFarlane, to the influenza pandemic in 1919. She writes in her journal, "It has been dreadful to write all this [the circumstances of Frede's death] out. On every page I have had to stop and cry my heart out. And yet there has been a strange sad comfort in it – as if it brought me nearer to Frede to write thus of her – as if death and the grave were cheated for a little while" *(SJ II* 305). Later in life, after a particularly difficult time while her husband was the Presbyterian minister in Norval, Ontario, she states, "Writing it all out seems to have taken some poison out of my soul. I think the wounds will heal up wholesomely now. The scars will always be there but the old ache will disappear" (*SJ IV* 373). This statement reveals the therapeutic benefits of "writing out" difficult emotions and circumstances, and "writing therapy" or "therapeutic writing" has indeed become an accepted practice in counselling. Psychotherapist Kathleen Adams, for example, states that "the combination of therapy and writing helps bring out an individual's natural capacities for healing and change. When writing is used either as an adjunct to the therapeutic process or as a therapeutic process in and of itself, it is possible to cathart, process, reflect, and integrate" ("Writing as Therapy," 1999, p. 1). Montgomery clearly used writing "as a therapeutic process" and endowed her protagonist Emily with the same outlet, although the befits of writing as therapy did not become widely known until the latter half of the twentieth century.

More than any of Montgomery's other novels, the Emily trilogy often mirrors Montgomery's own journals – notably, a material source – sometimes directly copying passages (including some of the various passages mentioned already in this chapter). Epperly points out that " … in the early 1920s, when she was establishing Emily, Montgomery had recently published her autobiographical account of her very young

career and was also copying out recollections of her own early adult life. Is it any wonder that we find whole sections of her journal transcribed into the Emily novels?" (*Fragrance* 146). It is worth noting that the physical act of writing and the presence of Montgomery's own journals inspire and contribute to an entire trilogy. This power lies in the fact that journal writing is a form of self-determination and identity formation – one of the acts that Woodward describes as an "aspect of selfhood" (vi) – and is as such a vital aspect of Emily's, and Montgomery's, life. Montgomery's practice of describing the world around her, while externalising her emotions, also reflects her experiences and transcribes the outside world into a more internal, private world under her own control. Both Montgomery and Emily also intend for their journals to be eventually available for public consumption (Emily writes "' … that it may be published when I die,'" *ENM* 339), and the act of recopying and editing her journals (an act upon which Montgomery spends a great deal of time) meant that Montgomery has control over what the public would be able to know about her. She and her protagonist therefore have creative agency and power over the content of the potentially public journals, whose material nature allows their contents to live on long after their writers. Emily's life and journals are fictional, but their semi-autobiographical nature adds another layer, fictionalised but realistic, to Montgomery's life writing.

Letters: Memory, Communication, and Connection

Epistolary novels have long been an important category of literature, and the physical presence of letters within fictional worlds is a significant aspect of this.

Additionally, the "intercepted letter"[34] is a common trope, from Jane Austen's *Northanger Abbey* character Mrs. Allen, who is introduced as one who "will, probably, contribute to reduce poor Catherine to all the desperate wretchedness of which a last volume is capable … whether by intercepting her letters, ruining her character, or turning her out of doors" (7), to Aunt Elizabeth reading Emily's letters to her father. Paper in the form of letters holds great significance for Emily throughout the trilogy. After her father's death, for example, Emily writes letters to him and hides them in the garret throughout most of *Emily of New Moon.* This method of connection is continued throughout the novel until Aunt Elizabeth finds the letters as the novel moves toward its climax (*ENM* 309). As Lawson puts it, " … Emily's connection to a fantasy version of her father is broken late in the first novel when Aunt Elizabeth reads Emily's 'letters' to him and thus destroys her sense of closeness to him" ("Adolescence" 75). Emily is furious at this intrusion on her privacy, and her outrage leads Aunt Elizabeth to question her own methods and eventually apologise. Emily, despite this reconciliation, finds that she can no longer write these letters and decides to write a diary at the end of the novel (*ENM* 339). The letters, many of which Montgomery includes as part of the narrative, provide the foundation for Emily's future writing endeavours as well as giving her some sense of closeness to the father she misses.

[34] As discussed by scholars such as Nicola J. Watson in *Revolution and the Form of the British Novel, 1790-1825: Intercepted Letters, Interrupted Seductions* (1994), which "charts the suppression of epistolary fiction, exploring the attempted radicalization of the genre by Wollstonecraft and other feminists in the 1790s, its rejection and parody by Jane Austen and Maria Edgeworth, the increasingly discredited role played by letters in the historical novels of Jane Porter and Walter Scott, and their troubling, ghostly presence in the Gothic narratives of James Hogg and Charles Maturin. The shift in narrative method is seen as a response to anxieties about the French Revolution, with the epistolary, feminized, and sentimental plot replaced by a more authoritarian third-person mode as part of a wider redrawing of the relation between the individual and the social consensus" (abstract from https://academic.oup.com/book/7664, accessed 3/4/25).

As part of the narrative, these letters also help the reader see how Emily learns to navigate her life at New Moon. Kate Scarth points out that Emily

> writes herself into New Moon's domestic spaces through these letters, telling her father about details of the house – its rooms, routines, traditions – and she also negotiates more negative aspects of life there…she thus exerts power by explaining and understanding her relationship to this home from her perspective, with herself, not Aunt Elizabeth, as the central player. ("Childhood at Home," 2022, p. 40)

Emily, by writing about her life in the letters, gives herself agency and control over her place in the home and the Murray clan. It is an act of self-actualization, as though she is repeating the statement, "'I am important to myself,'" which she retorts to Ellen Greene at the beginning of the trilogy when Ellen tells her she is "'not of much importance'" (*ENM* 21). Writing the letters places Emily at the focal point of the home, helping her observe changes in the relationships; for example, she writes to her mother that "'Aunt Elizabeth says you were wicked [to elope] … but *I* don't think you were," (286) near the end of the first novel, claiming agency over her mother's behaviour and rejecting Aunt Elizabeth's judgment in the only way available to her.

As discussed in the last chapter, Emily later moves into her mother's bedroom, known as the Lookout, and starts writing these letters to her mother, sensing more of a connection now that she is surrounded by her mother's material belongings. Scarth goes on to state that "once installed in the lookout room and feeling more connected with its previous inhabitant, her mother, Emily starts writing to her as well, thereby psychically creating a connection with her mother through this space and through these letters" (*ibid.).* I would argue that in writing letters to her mother, Emily is *physically* as well as "psychically" creating a connection – as physical as is possible with someone who is not present. The letter writing, an attempt to forge connections with her late parents, is a way to deal with the loneliness and isolation she feels as an orphan and a relative outsider in her new home.

These letters are also significant in terms of Emily's developing writing career, functioning as literal, material records of her improvement. Heidi Lawrence posits that

> The underlying sense throughout all these letters is that Emily's father inspired her to become the author he never had a chance to be, and that she finds strength and support in the idea that he continues to be proud of her efforts from beyond the grave. She incorporates poems that she has written in these letters and points out her improvements in spelling and vocabulary. ("Absent Fathers" 187)

Another autobiographical detail included in the trilogy is Emily's habit of hiding her writing from public view. As previously mentioned, she hides her letters to her father in the garret: "Then she stepped softly across to an old, worn-out sofa in a far corner and knelt down, stowing away her letter and her 'letterbills' snugly on a little shelf formed by a board nailed across it underneath. Emily had discovered this one day when playing in the garret and had noted it as a lovely hiding-place for secret documents. Nobody would ever come across them there" (*ENM* 93). Montgomery also hid her "manuscripts" on boards on the underside of a sofa as a child, and she re-read them occasionally. In her journal, she writes

> I wish heartily that I had those same MSS now. They would be invaluable to me. But every year, as I used to read them over, some seemed to my maturing intelligence too silly to be kept. I was ashamed of them and burned them – as when I was about fourteen I burned all the 'note book' diaries I had kept – something I shall always regret having done. They were quaint little documents, as I remember them – quaint and naïve and painfully truthful and sincere … (*SJ IV* 5).

Montgomery seems to have written some of this quaintness, naïveté, truthfulness, and sincerity into the young Emily's letters to her father. For both Emily and Montgomery, the material remains hidden until it is destroyed or discovered; for the most part, both author and protagonist have control over their own writing and whether or not it is made public – except for Aunt Elizabeth's discovery of Emily's letters, as discussed above.

Letters provide comfort to both Emily and Montgomery in various ways; most significant for Emily is the letters that she writes to her father, but most significant to Montgomery seems to be the letters she received from her cousin Frede. After Frede's

death in 1919, as mentioned above, Montgomery is heartbroken, but she derives some comfort from re-reading Frede's letters, which would not have been possible had she not retained these physical documents:

> Lately I have been so tortured by the thought that I can never again look forward to getting a letter from Frede. So I got out all her old letters. The reading of them was not painful – on the contrary, it was a comfort and a strange, bitter pleasure. While I read them Frede was *alive,* she existed – she was somewhere in the world. The vivid personality behind those letters *could not* have been blotted out. (*SJ II* 310)

She is also comforted later in life, when her mental health is very poor, by her fan letters:

> I had another letter today from a woman who had just read *Windy Poplars*. She said in conclusion 'Thank you for the simple charm of people, humor and quaintness – for a wisp of fairyland – for the scarlet, purple and blue!' When dreariness and fear threaten to overwhelm me I shall remember this letter and say to myself, 'Take heart my child. As long as you can bring a little delight or comfort into the lives of others life is worth living. And there are countless lives waiting for you yet in the years of eternity and in stars yet unborn.' (*SJ V* 280, 2004)

One of Montgomery's last journal entries before her death in 1942 is a mention of "that famous letter I received from Mark Twain after *Anne of Green Gables* was published. Hardly a month passes that I do not see it still quoted or referred to in some publication … As I prize it and want it preserved I am going to stick it in here for safer keeping" (*SJ V* 331).[35]

Montgomery's appreciation of letters from fans is evidenced by a journal entry in 1910, when she had gained fame for *Anne of Green Gables*: "To-day I received a very bright, amusing, interesting letter from a girl of sixteen in faraway Australia. It was a pleasure to read. I get so many such letters – two or three almost every day … What a small big world it is! And how far little red-haired Anne has travelled!" (*SJ II* 18). Emily, too, is encouraged by letters from fans, including one that she receives from a Mexican

[35]This letter has, in fact, been preserved in one of Montgomery's scrapbooks and can still be accessed in the L.M. Montgomery Collection in the University of Guelph archives (catalogue no. XZ5 MS A002).

reader, so touching for Emily that she "slept with it under her pillow. No lover's missive was ever more tenderly treated" (*EC* 263).

Letters are also significant for Emily in other ways. She is invited to her life-changing stay at Wyther Grange, for example, by a letter from Great-Aunt Nancy (*ENM* 225); this invitation is hugely significant, as her stay there results in Emily's friendship with Dean Priest and her eventual uncanny experience of solving the mystery of the disappearance of Ilse's mother. Emily's day of glory when her first book is published (*EQ* 170) is abruptly cut short by a letter, this time a very unwelcome one, from Ilse telling her that she is going to marry Teddy (172). One of the most important letters, however, is one that she never receives – one that Teddy wrote to her proclaiming his love but that his jealous mother intercepts and destroys. (This is a prime example of the "intercepted letter" as mentioned above.) Mrs. Kent's confession comes about after Emily discovers another significant letter, this time from Mrs. Kent's long-deceased husband, in a book she has borrowed. Montgomery uses this letter as a device to create a connection between the two women who love Teddy the most: Mrs. Kent tells her that she has never known about this letter (194), and it finally brings her peace but also motivates her to tell Emily that she destroyed the letter from Teddy. Mrs. Kent explains what Teddy had written to Emily: "'He had meant to tell you how much he loved you before he went – and if you could care a little for him to write and tell him so'" (198). It is apparently too late for Emily to do anything about it, as Teddy is on the point of marrying Ilse, but the confession at least removes the "bitterness – humiliation – shame" (199) and anger from her life. The destruction of the letter has, according to Mrs. Kent, ruined Emily's life and possibly Teddy's (199), until Ilse leaves Teddy at the altar and Emily and Teddy eventually reconcile. Montgomery uses this letter as another device, this time to heighten the dramatic tension of the narrative as it reaches its climax. The physical nature of the letter

is, of course, what makes the message vulnerable to loss or destruction, therefore causing miscommunication and a break of several years in the relationship between Teddy and Emily; letters are usually means of communication and understanding, but here they function as obstacles.

Letters were, of course, a much bigger part of everyday life in Montgomery's time than they are now, and they served as a source of connection between people separated by both time and space – as we have seen in the letters from Frede that she kept and read after her death. They also provide connection to her mother, who died when she was very young: "Aunt May … brought me a real treasure trove – a letter written by my mother to Uncle Leander … I was overjoyed to get it. I never had a scrap of mother's composition before … It doesn't express any of mother's real personality but it is delightful to have it" (*SJ II* 146). Emily does not have any such letter but experiences a similar sense of connection from moving into her mother's bedroom at New Moon.

The transition from letters to her dead father (and later also to her mother) to writing a journal is a milestone in Emily's maturation, both as a young woman and as a writer. Journaling is an inward form of communication, a letter to one's self, which suggests that Emily has achieved a new level of self-sufficiency. Writing is an almost reflexive act that Emily turns to in joy as well as in pain, and one particular example of this occurs at the end of the first novel, when Mr. Carpenter gives her positive feedback on her writing. It is a significant step for Emily to have her teacher and mentor encourage and critique her work, so much so that it sparks this decision to start a diary:

> She was so full of rapture that she must write it out before she went back from her world of dreams to the world of reality. Once she would have poured it into a letter to her father. She could no longer do that. But on the table before her lay a brand-new Jimmy-book. She pulled it towards her, took up her pen, and on its first virgin page she wrote,
> "New moon, Blair water, P. E. island. October 8th.
> I am going to write a diary, that it may be published when I die." (*ENM* 339)

The phrase "when I die" that Emily uses indicates her awareness of death from a young age, having been orphaned, and also reflects Montgomery's desire to have her journals published after her own death (avoiding any conflicts with the subjects of the journals while she is alive).

Books: "the material realization of all the dreams and hopes and ambitions and struggles"

Books are, of course, extremely significant in the life of a budding writer. Emily, who has been raised by her father to believe that books should be freely available to everyone, is surprised when Aunt Elizabeth rebukes her for "meddling" with the New Moon bookcase soon after her arrival (*ENM* 54). The Murray attitude to books is clearly very different from the attitude with which Emily was raised by her father; Emily protests, "'I though books belonged to everyone'" (*ibid.*), but Aunt Elizabeth seems to regard books as private property and Emily as an outsider who does not have the right to the New Moon books, either because she is a child or is not yet a true Murray of New Moon. Emily is later allowed to read some of the books, such as "'a history of the reformation in France' and 'a little fat book deskribing [sic] the months in England'" (99), but worries how she will learn to write novels because Aunt Elizabeth will not let her read them, believing novels to be sinful: "Fiction of any kind was an abominable thing. Elizabeth Murray had been trained up in this belief in her youth and in her age she had not departed from it" (305). Montgomery here is reflecting the stricter, more puritan side of her Presbyterian upbringing; she was not forbidden to read fiction but was not actively encouraged to either, probably because fiction was considered to be "lies," as Aunt Elizabeth states later in the narrative about Emily's published book. Montgomery writes of her childhood that "there were not many novels to be had. Those were the days when

novels were frowned upon" (*SJ I* 374), presumably for the same puritanical reasons that Aunt Elizabeth considers novels to be "sinful."

Emily then reads some of the books in the bookcase at Dr Burnley's house, but when the puritanical Aunt Elizabeth finds out, she tells him to keep his bookcase locked and says, "You know that I have forbidden you to read novels, Emily Starr. They are wicked books and have ruined many souls" (*ENM* 224). Montgomery mentions specific novels that Emily had managed to read before this: Ann Radcliffe's *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794) and *The Romance of the Forest* (1791), which had the effect of making her feel "like one of the heroines in a Gothic romance, wandering at midnight through a subterranean dungeon, with some unholy guide" at her great-aunt Nancy's strange house later in the first volume (238). It is fitting that a Romantic child such as Emily would have read books by this particular author: *The Mysteries of Udolpho* was one of the most well-known and popular Gothic novels and features a heroine named Emily who, in many ways, is echoed by Montgomery's Emily (see Drew's "The Emily Connection").[36]

Living with Aunt Elizabeth's religious strictness gives Emily experience with books as forbidden objects, but they still help to shape Emily's tastes and writing style. In fact, the forbidden nature of the books can be seen to represent Aunt Elizabeth's rather Victorian attempt at preserving Emily's innocence; as G. A. Woods notes,

> Montgomery seems to indicate that everything will be fine as long as the patriarchal structure is preserved. Moreover, there is a strong hint that there would have been no traumatic experience had Emily not somehow transgressed the norms of female behaviour within the patriarchy. This transgression has very much to do with the heroine's own identity as a developing writer . . . there is a sense of prohibition (on the part of Aunt Elizabeth, alias the 'phallic mother' and representative of the patriarchal order) associated with inscribing one's own feelings in one's own discourse. ("The (W)rite of Passage" 1997, p. 148)

[36] In her article "The Emily Connection: Ann Radcliffe, L.M. Montgomery and 'The Female Gothic,'" Lorna Drew discusses the many similarities between the Emily trilogy and Radcliffe's *The Mysteries of Udolpho*.

Emily subverts Aunt Elizabeth's authority, and, by extension, the patriarchy, by borrowing books from Dean (*EC* 29) and by reading Washington Irving's *Tales of the Alhambra* (1832) – another Romantic work – with him. *Tales of the Alhambra* was one of the books that Montgomery read and loved, as she discusses in a journal entry in 1903: "It was a volume of pure delight … The book seemed to me the gateway of an enchanted world," (*SJ I* 286), and re-read, as she states in a journal entry of 1936 (*SJ V* 59). It is worth noting that Montgomery's inclusion of some of her own beloved books in her fiction (as well as in her life writing) is way in which she re-materialises her books and other belongings, giving them a new type of existence in her fictional worlds. The appearance of "real" books within the fictional world of Emily provides a sense of verisimilitude, significance, and connection.

One of the books that Dean lends Emily is, he claims, a mistake, and Emily recognizes it as inappropriate, saying that it is "just like a pig-sty"; Montgomery is clearly hinting here at a novel with sexual content that threatens Emily's naïveté (though Emily obviously knows enough to be aware that it is inappropriate). Despite Aunt Elizabeth's attempts to guard her innocence, reading this book makes Emily feel "as if my hands were soiled somehow and I couldn't wash them clean" (30). Although Emily regrets reading it, this novel undoubtedly affects her personal growth (robbing her of some childhood innocence) and, by extension, her development as a writer. The episode also serves to hint at some of Dean's sexual intentions toward Emily, despite his insistence that it was an accident.

Emily is given her father's books early in her time at New Moon, and they serve to provide a connection to him, but Aunt Elizabeth takes them away because she has marked them. As she writes in one of her letters to her father, "'Aunt Elizabeth has locked your books away and says I'm not to have them till I'm grown up. Just as if I wouldn't be

careful of them, dear Father. She says I wouldn't because she found that when I was reading one of them I put a tiny pencil dot under every beautiful word. It didn't hurt the book a bit, dear Father'" (*ENM* 183) - significantly, she returns them to Emily on her fourteenth birthday (*EC* 32), apparently acknowledging Emily's maturation. Emily writes, "'It seems to me that a part of Father is in those books. His name is in each one in his own handwriting, and the notes he made on the margins. They seem like little bits of letters from him. I have been looking over them all the evening, and Father seems so *near* to me again, and I feel both happy and sad'" (32). This strong sense of kinship continues later in the trilogy, when she writes, "'I've been reading one of Father's books tonight. I always feel so beautifully near to Father when I read his books — as if I might suddenly look over my shoulder and see him. And so often I come across his pencilled notes on the margin and they seem like a message from him" (220). These physical extratextual elements of the books – signature and marginalia – are as important to Emily as their content because they provide connection, and the embodiment of her father in the annotations in these books make them an extremely important set of objects for the growing Emily, providing a link back to her childhood as she quickly moves forward into maturity. Ironically, Emily's father does not represent the patriarchy in Emily's life: he is absent and was never a controlling or dominating personality, unlike Aunt Elizabeth; he was considered a failure by the Murrays and is, in fact, one of Montgomery's anti-patriarchal male figures (along with Cousin Jimmy). Drew, in her article "The Emily Connection," describes several male characters in the trilogy as being "coded feminine" (25) because of their physical illnesses or non-traditional roles, including Teddy, Dean, Mr. Carpenter, and Emily's father. Douglas Starr has inscribed his identity into these books, and his presence lingers in their pages, or even haunts them; these inscriptions also make the books special and uniquely his.

This marginalia, and Emily's connection to it, is an example of the fetishization of objects, when objects are, as E. Holly Pike phrases it, "more than artifacts with a particular function" ("Reading the Book" 105); here, the books and their marginalia function as a source of connection between Emily and her dead father. Although the primary function of books is to convey information, various forms of books are often present in Montgomery's fiction as objects with other purposes. Pike points out that books "as material objects independent of consideration of their designed function . . . transmit and store meaning in other ways in the Emily novels, as fetishes, taboos, and archives" (106).

When Emily discovers the New Moon bookcase and is chastised by Aunt Elizabeth for "meddling" with things that do not belong to her, as mentioned above, Montgomery states that Elizabeth manages to "convey the impression that New Moon books were in a class by themselves" (55) – one example of many of the Murray pride demonstrated through objects, and an indication that the books are not really there for the purpose of reading but to convey status. The rebuke serves to label the New Moon parlour books as "taboo," and Pike posits that "it is difficult to determine if the taboo on books and the sequestration afforded by the 'chintz-lined glass doors' at New Moon and by Dr Burnley's lockable bookcase are intended to protect the books as things … or as objects that may be tabooed because of their content and function" ("Reading the Book" 107). The taboo also functions as a marker of Emily's standing as an outsider at New Moon who is "meddling," either because she is a child or because she is a Starr who has not yet been accepted as part of the Murray clan.

Emily goes on to describe the books from the New Moon bookcase, mentioning the contents of some but also describing their physical qualities: "I don't like the feel of them. The paper is so rough and thick it makes me creepy. Travels in Spain, very fascinating with lovely smooth shiny paper … " (*ENM* 99). Emily writes that "'there is a little curly

black-covered book in Aunt Elizabeth's bookcase called Thompson's Seasons'" (98), and these multisensory (visual and tactile) descriptions reveal Emily's (and Montgomery's) regard for books as objects as well as reading material. Pike points out that "Emily's sensory response to books is a response to the book as a thing independent of the textual content", but still "constitutes an experience of books as conveyors of meaning or experience" ("Reading the Book" 106). Books are, again, items with more than one function: conveyors of meaning and conveyors of sensory experience, as well as facilitators of connections between people both alive and dead.

This concept of the book as object continues throughout the trilogy. Emily writes about a book belonging to Aunt Ruth, "'the only novel in Aunt Ruth's house'" (*EC* 223). Aunt Ruth received *The Children of the Abbey* (1796), written by the Irish Romantic novelist Regina Maria Roche (1764–1845), as a gift from a love interest in her youth, and Emily says that Aunt Ruth thinks it very sad but that she found it funny because "'the heroine fainted in every chapter and cried quarts if any one looked at her'" (223). As well as inserting another reference to a popular Gothic novel, Montgomery seems to be using a book as a means of highlighting the difference between Emily's and Aunt Ruth's literary experiences and personalities: Emily loves to own novels whereas Aunt Ruth has only the one (given as a gift and not purchased by Ruth herself), and Aunt Ruth finds the story sad whereas Emily finds it so ridiculous that she laughs, to Aunt Ruth's amazement. Emily is quite dismissive, even ridiculing, of Aunt Ruth's opinion of the book, and Montgomery ends the paragraph by having Emily state that "'it seems impossible to think that Aunt Ruth ever had beaux'" (223). Aunt Ruth's behaviour throughout *Emily Climbs* does little to garner sympathy, and Montgomery paints such an extreme difference between the characters that readers might find it hard to accept Ruth as realistic. This episode also highlights Emily's youth and lack of understanding of older generations; her

lack of empathy toward Aunt Ruth reflects as poorly on herself as Aunt Ruth's lack of literary experience and understanding reflects on her.

Books as gifts are mentioned again in *Emily Climbs*, when Emily writes of Aunt Laura's book of Romantic author Felicia Dorothea Hemans' (1793–1835) poems, a "'cherished volume, bound in faded blue and gold, with an inscription from an admirer. In Aunt Laura's youth it was the thing to give your adored a volume of poetry on her birthday'" (253). Mr. Carpenter has been "berating" Emily for reading it because of his low opinion of Mrs Hemans' poetry, but Emily demonstrates her agency by claiming that although Mr. Carpenter might be right, she likes some of her poems, with their occasional line or verse that delights her (*ibid.*). Emily also receives books, not exactly as gifts, as she inherits her father's books and borrows books from Dean, but as tokens of love or esteem. They serve the same function: the content of the books is not the focus but rather the fact that the books, as objects, are transferred from one person to another and indicate a connection.

Another aspect of books as objects is that of the archive or repository, a good example of which is Great-aunt Nancy's "big parlor Bible." Pike describes this Bible as a "receptacle for ephemera associated with experience" ("Reading the Book" 110); it is itself a material object but also contains material objects, acting as both book and archive. Emily writes, "'I love to look at [it] because there are so many interesting things in it – pieces of dresses and hair and poetry and old tintipes [sic] and accounts of deaths and weddings. I found a piece about my own birth and it gave me a queer feeling'" (*ENM* 251). This could be the first time that Emily has discovered physical evidence of her existence in the minds of the Murrays before she met any of them, which might explain her "queer feeling." As a book, the Bible is a text of religious instruction and moral

guidance that highlights the Murray clan's religious tradition, but as an archival object, it functions as a means to preserve family history and memories.

In *Emily Climbs*, Emily goes into the "Booke Shoppe," where "the aroma of books and new magazines was as the savour of sweet incense in her nostrils" (*EC* 115) – a direct quote from Montgomery's own journals (*SJ I* 253) – to learn about the types of articles and poems that were being published at the time. Books here serve to help develop Emily's writing career, and they also further demonstrate Montgomery's and Emily's multisensory experience of books. In her journal, Montgomery writes about books as fetish objects – bought not only for their textual meanings that serve her love of British and American poetry but as attractive objects to collect and own: "I went uptown to invest my *Mail* prize money to-day. I wanted to get something I could keep always and not get tired of, so I got Tennyson, Longfellow, Whittier[37] and Byron. They are nicely bound and I've always longed to have them of my own" (*SJ I* 158). There is more autobiographical precedence for Emily's love for books: In 1900, Montgomery writes in her journal, "Blessings be on the inventors of the alphabet, pen and printing press! Life would be – to me at all events – a terrible thing without books … It is fortunate, situated as I am, that I can read books over and over again with never failing interest and zest; otherwise I could never get enough reading matter to satisfy my voracious appetite" (*SJ I* 247). Not long after this, she writes that one particular book is, despite its flaws, "after all a welcome addition to the rows in my plain little bookcase. I like to look up from my work occasionally and gloat my eyes on them. They are all my pets" (251), a statement that highlights the books' aesthetic appeal and value as collector's items as well as their literary qualities.

[37] John Greenleaf Whittier, 1807 – 1892, was an American Quaker poet and abolitionist.

Another example of the fetishisation of books occurs later in *Emily Climbs,* when Emily's story "The Woman Who Spanked the King" is published, and she is paid forty dollars for it and decides to spend some of the money on a "set of Parkman" (*EC* 263). The books, as well as being the writings of American historian and horticulturist Francis Parkman (1823-1893), function as a marker of career success for Emily; the money she won "meant much, but the storming of that magazine much more. She felt that she was surely winning a foothold" (263). The Parkman books, which Emily bought because she had missed out on a prize set that her rival, Evelyn Blake, won in a poetry contest, is a boost to Emily's self-confidence and career goals as well as an example of pure fetishism: "It was a much nicer set than the prize one – which the donor had really picked out of a mail-order list – and Emily felt much prouder of it than if it had been the prize. After all, it was better to earn things for yourself" (263), demonstrating Emily's increasing sense of agency. Montgomery, as narrator/"biographer," even mentions that "Emily has those Parkmans yet – somewhat faded and frayed now, but dearer to her than all the other volumes in her library" (*ibid*.). It is worth noting that Parkman's books, being about the natural world, are ideally suited to Emily's Romantic leanings, and are therefore an appropriate choice for Montgomery to include. Pike points out that Parkman is "particularly significant as a writer model because of the style of history he wrote: twentieth-century historiographers consider Parkman a "romantic" historian" ("The Romance of History" 164). It is not clear whether Montgomery owned her own "set of Parkman," but she mentions in her journal that she read "Parkman's *Wolf and Montcalm*" (the sixth volume in his *France in England and North America* series) in 1900, when she writes, "Fiction no longer satisfies me. I want to read what *real* men and women have done and thought and endured," and says that she found it "fascinating" (*SJ I* 250).

Another significant book for Emily is the scrapbook she finds in the "old John house" when she and her friends are sheltering from a snowstorm (*EC* 273). In it is the poem that her rival Evelyn claims to have composed, and with which she won the Parkman books that Emily now knows she deserves to have won herself. Emily is able to use this evidence of plagiarism to force Evelyn to confess to a prank that Aunt Ruth had suspected her friend Ilse of committing, thereby finally gaining a moral victory over Evelyn: "In that moment Emily felt that the score between them was at last even" (274); "she had finally conquered in the long duel. And she held in her hand what would finally clear Ilse in Aunt Ruth's eyes" (275). This scrapbook is another example of a book as archive, containing a piece of paper that serves to advance the narrative, righting a wrong and demonstrating the power of truth through a material object.

Partway through the final novel of the trilogy, Emily receives the most significant book in terms of her career: her own published novel, *The Moral of the Rose*. "There lay her book. *Her* book, spleet-new from the publishers. It was a proud, wonderful, thrilling moment. The crest of the Alpine Path at last? … One could never reach the top really. But what a moment when one reached a plateau and outlook like this!" (*EQ* 170). This episode directly echoes Montgomery's own experience of seeing *Anne of Green Gables* in print for the first time:

> My book came to-day, fresh from the publishers. I candidly confess that it was for me a proud, wonderful, thrilling moment! There in my hand lay the material realization of all the dreams and hopes and ambitions and struggles of my whole conscious existence – my first book! … As far as appearance goes the book is all I could desire – lovely cover design, well bound, well printed.[38] *Anne* will not fail for lack of suitable garbing at all events. (*SJ I* 335)

Note Montgomery's emphasis on the material aspect of the book as a representation of her ambitions and struggles, as well as its physical appearance. She also writes about

[38] See Appendix A, Figure 7.

receiving her first copy of *Emily of New Moon:* "The cover design of *Emily* is the prettiest one on any of my books I think. The little girl really does look as I imagined 'Emily' looked … The English edition of *Emily* has a plain cover but a pictured jacket. Somehow there is a certain eerie quality about the English artist's conception of 'Emily' that I like" *(SJ II* 147)[39]. This "eerie quality" is very appropriate, considering Montgomery's Gothic leanings in this trilogy in particular.

With the publication of Emily's book, Cousin Jimmy and Aunt Laura are as proud as one would expect, and even Aunt Elizabeth, though she "looked indifferent," "made some rather foolish mistakes in her quilt patches that afternoon and she did not once ask Jimmy why he wasn't ploughing" (*EQ* 171). She even puts the book on the parlour table when unexpected visitors drop by and is highly indignant when they fail to notice it. Aunt Elizabeth's pride in Emily, though she does not express it in any obvious way, is embodied in the book. *The Moral of the Rose* is very successful and gains Emily the respect of her clan as well as praise from writer Miss Royal, who tells her she was right not to go to New York as she could not have written it there. Even the notoriously critical Dean is impressed (178). After reading various mixed reviews, Emily feels that "it was better to have won her standing with the New Moon folks than with the world. What mattered it what any reviewer said when Aunt Elizabeth remarked with an air of uttering the final judgment: 'Well, I never could have believed that such a pack of lies could sound as much like the truth as that book does'" (182). This book, then, symbolises Emily's development as a person and author as well as her attainment of agency and sense of independence; in addition, she is now regarded in a different light by her relatives, who finally accept her writing as legitimate.

[39] See Appendix A, Figure 8.

Paper: Agency and Independence

Paper, in its simplest form (neither letters nor books), becomes increasingly necessary for Emily as she grows. It is a slip of paper, for example, that helps to decide Emily's future when she is orphaned. The Murrays cannot decide which of them should take Emily in after her father's death, so they write their names on slips of paper and draw lots (*ENM* 43). Emily is reduced to a piece of property, in a way treated like an object by this act, but she becomes an established member of the Murray clan as the series progresses and is never treated by the family in this way again. It is fitting that despite being treated like an object, Emily is given some agency and control over her destiny by "drawing lots," selecting a piece of paper from a bunch of papers with the names of the Murray households on them. The Murrays give her this illusion of agency at least, but it is a mixed blessing, for it is a heavy burden: "This was terrible — it seemed as if she must blindly settle her own fate" (*ibid.*). From this point onward, paper in its various forms increasingly provides Emily with some degree of agency and independence as the trilogy progresses.

Writing eventually becomes Emily's vocation as well as a necessary method of expression for her passionate, sensitive nature. Emily hopes to win fame and success, taking the "Alpine Path" vow to "write upon its shining scroll/A woman's humble name" and she exults and celebrates when she makes steps toward this fame. (Note the use of the scroll here as a physical symbol of success, as well as the fact that this is a gendered poem focused on women, although they are expected to be "humble"). At one point, however, she tells Mr. Carpenter that she *has* to write, regardless of whether or not she can achieve career success (*ENM* 338), Dean recognises this need when he tells her, "'You *would* keep on anyhow – you have the itch for writing born in you. It's quite incurable'" (270). Later, when Aunt Elizabeth discovers that Emily is using the money

she earns from selling her hen's eggs to buy paper on which to write stories, she is shocked and tells Emily that she must stop, puritanically believing fiction to be sinful (as discussed earlier in this chapter). Emily replies, "'Oh, I must write, Aunt Elizabeth … You see, it's this way. It is in me. I can't help it'" (306). Montgomery makes clear how necessary writing, and therefore paper, are to the young writer: "Emily was respectful and reasonable and aboveboard; she bought no more paper with egg money; but she told Aunt Elizabeth that she could not give up writing stories and she went right on writing them, on pieces of brown wrapping paper and the blank backs of circulars which agricultural machinery firms sent Cousin Jimmy" (305). Paper is the embodiment of Emily's need to write, and the presence of these random scraps of paper affords Emily the agency to choose to continue writing, despite Aunt Elizabeth's disapproval. Emily uses the material to subvert her aunt's patriarchal and puritanical nature, while also asserting an important aspect of her own identity. Paper here represents the vast difference between Emily's and Aunt Elizabeth's natures: the former needs it to perform "aspects of selfhood" (Woodward vi) almost as much as basic necessities like food and water, whereas the latter does not seem to need or value paper at all, and her negative opinion of the act of writing highlights the contrast between the characters.

In the second novel, Emily attends an evening prayer meeting at church and writes on a scrap of paper various observations and reflections. She jots down an idea for a story on the scrap, which she has found in her hymn book (which functions here as an archive), and later some "fragmentary notes … a rather biting description of scrawny Miss Potter in the choir – a couple of satiric sentences regarding Mr. Sampson himself – and a few random fancies which she desired most of all to hide because there was in them something of dream and vision which would have made the reading of them by alien eyes a sacrilege"

(*EC* 43) – recalling the burning of her account book so that no "alien eyes" could commit a similar sacrilege against her private thoughts. Woods writes that the

> slip of paper which she inserts into her hymnbook is a testament of her revolt, for it is her own discourse (just a small piece of paper) within the imposing discourse of the patriarchal world (the hymnbook). If her notations on this slip of paper were to be seen 'by alien eyes,' it would be tantamount to 'sacrilege'. No wonder that she simply must find this subversive slip of paper again, which she by mistake … left behind on her way out of the church. As a result of having to retrieve her own discourse from the established discourse, she is locked up inside the church. (152)

Emily getting locked in the church because of the slip of paper results in a series of events that leads to a major milestone in her life; as Montgomery puts it, the night of "horror and mystery and strange delight" meant that she "left childhood behind her for ever" (*EC* 37). The horror that Emily endures seems like a punishment for her rebellious act of writing (and criticising the church leadership) during a church service. This episode occurs just after Dean accidentally lends her the explicit novel, and the combination certainly serves to propel Emily forward in terms of maturity, traumatic experience, and loss of innocence.

As previously discussed in terms of letters, the physical nature and fragility of paper makes it vulnerable to "sacrilege" and destruction, as Emily experiences several times throughout the trilogy: once when she burns the account book so that Aunt Elizabeth cannot read it (*ENM* 47), several times when she rereads her old material (315), and once when she burns the manuscript of her first novel after Dean lies and tells her it is no good (*EQ* 53). This vulnerability, while it carries the risk of loss, also gives Emily the agency to decide who can read her work: but its privacy is never completely guaranteed (as in when Aunt Elizabeth finds and reads Emily's letters to her father) unless it is destroyed.

Paper serves another important function in Emily's development in the form of rejection letters and acceptance cheques. Emily quickly develops a strong sense of ambition for writing fame and attempts to get her work published. She is disheartened for some time by some "icy little rejection slips or a few words of faint praise" until she

finally gets a story accepted by a New York magazine (*EC* 262). The rejection slips are a discouraging inevitability of a writing career, but Emily uses them as motivation: "Down, deep down, something told her that her time would come. So, though she flinched momentarily at each rejection, as from the flick of a whip, she sat down and – wrote another story" (*ibid.*).

At the beginning of *Emily's Quest*, Emily writes that she has had a poem accepted by the magazine *Marchwood's* and that it was given a page to itself and illustrated, which "'bolstered up'" her self-respect even though she believed her verses to be "'trashy enough'" (*EQ* 10). Later, after a poisonous encounter with Dean, Emily's "self-respect and ambition" are partially restored by "a nice fat cheque and a kind letter of appreciation" (32). Montgomery writes that Emily felt that "every new magazine conquered meant a step upward on her Alpine path. She knew she was steadily gaining the mastery over her art" (33). Another important letter is brought to her by Cousin Jimmy, who had submitted her book manuscript to "the oldest and most important publishing house in America" (162) after she had given up on getting it published: "He had come to bring her a letter – a thin letter – and if Emily had not been too much absorbed in herself … she might have noticed that Cousin Jimmy's eyes were as bright as a cat's and that an air of ill-concealed excitement pervaded his whole being" (*ibid.*). This letter marks a turning point, heralding her first book publication, and also illustrates Cousin Jimmy's continued support of her literary ambitions. Paper here is vital to Emily's identity as a writer, giving her the confidence to carry on with her career after various blows to her self-esteem. Paper serves as the physical vehicle for her life's work and as the messenger of both failures and successes. The above examples demonstrate the importance of even the most mundane material object, with paper often being an extremely significant aspect of the lives of Montgomery's characters and her protagonists in particular.

Pens, Pencils, and Ink: Power and Potential

Other writing materials, such as pens, pencils, and ink, are essential to Emily's narrative, although Montgomery mentions them less often in the trilogy. The pen, as a material conduit between the internal and the external, can be seen as a symbol of power on several occasions, most significantly as a means for Emily to subvert Aunt Elizabeth. When the patriarchal Aunt Elizabeth tells Emily that she can attend the High School in Shrewsbury if she gives up her writing, Emily replies, "'I *can't* help writing, Aunt Elizabeth. It's in my blood. There's no use in asking me. I *do* want an education – it isn't pretending – but I can't give up my writing to get it" (*EC* 82). Her use of the phrase "in my blood" here is significant: The act of writing is as important to Emily's selfhood as blood is to human physical survival. Aunt Elizabeth only becomes reconciled to her writing much later in the trilogy, but Emily does not allow this disapproval to stop her, sincerely believing that writing is as vital to her identity as New Moon itself. Apart from the occasional manifestation of the "Murray look" on Emily's face, over which she has no control, Emily has no real power over Aunt Elizabeth or indeed over her own life until she is an adult, but her writing instruments – pens and pencils – are an exception, giving Emily the means to have some agency. Indeed, the pen, as an instrument of writing, is not only an important object in terms of Emily's identity as a writer; it also serves as a symbol of Emily's power, knowledge, and self-expression, one that Aunt Elizabeth seeks to limit in order to maintain control over her charge and, she hopes, keep her from making the same "mistakes" as Emily's mother. Christopher Gittings points out that

> … writing facilitates Emily's self-expression and empowerment. Initially, it is a covert practice that must be hidden from Elizabeth Murray who seeks to withhold the pen from Emily as a means of socializing her charge. A single woman in a man's world, Elizabeth has internalized patriarchal values, the dominant phallocentric Presbyterian codes of what it means to be a socially acceptable girl/woman in nineteenth-century Prince Edward Island. Withholding the pen from woman is tantamount to denying woman access to knowledge, and communication; it is an action perpetuating inequity. Elizabeth acts as an agent of the patriarchy … (25)

The pen is also used symbolically when Emily vows, "My pen shall heal, not hurt" after writing a satirical "obituary poem" that upsets her teacher, Mr. Carpenter (*EC* 22); when she is released from her promise not to write fiction and writes, "'my fingers tingle to grasp a pen'" (255), and again when Dean complains to Emily that Teddy draws Emily's soul into all his pictures and says """let him keep his pencil and brush off *my* property""" (31). He is referring to his rescue of Emily from a cliffside at their first meeting, when he says, "' … your life belongs to me henceforth. Since I saved it it's mine'" (*ENM* 271). Emily rebels against this objectification and sense of ownership but has little means to control it until she finally breaks off their engagement much later in the trilogy. It is worth noting that both Emily and Teddy's chosen instrument of expression is the pencil: their ambitions are similar, making them seem more suitable for each other than the possessive, jealous Dean for Emily.

Pens were, of course, an important everyday object in Montgomery's own life, though she seldom mentions them in her journals. She does, however, discuss her change of mind about the type of pen she prefers (referring to the nibs of pens dipped in ink) in one entry from 1938:

> I wrote with all kinds of pens in childhood and up to the time I taught in Bideford [PEI]. That year I discovered the 'Ball pointed pen' and found they suited me very well indeed. But a year or two later I was in a Ch'Town [Charlottetown] bookstore and saw the slogan that was known for years, 'They come as a boon and a blessing to men/The Pickwick, the Owl, and the Waverley pen.'[40] I bought half a dozen Waverleys – and from that day to this have never used any other. … but of late Simpson's and Eaton's have ceased to stock them and I have had to walk quite a distance to a wholesale house. I had not time to do it today so, having discovered an improved type of the old ball-point pen – though not so named – I thought I would try them. I find that I like them even better than the Waverley and I have decided to use them henceforth – with a queer absurd sense of disloyalty to an old faithful friend. (*SJ V* 271)

[40] See Appendix A, Fig. 9, for a photo of a tin of MacNiven and Cameron's Waverly pen nibs.

Note Montgomery's typical personification, expressed in her "absurd sense of disloyalty" to a type of pen: Such personification often serves in her fiction to emphasise the importance of objects and the lack of distinction between living things and various types of inanimate objects.

Montgomery wrote about the value of having a writing instrument always handy in the Emily series, with Emily always keeping a pencil in her pocket or having one nearby. After an upsetting incident at school, Emily is in need of a way to write out her feelings, and this is when Aunt Laura finds and gives her the old letter-bills:

> In the recess of the dormer-window she crouched — breathlessly she selected a letterbill and extracted a lead-pencil from her pocket. An old sheet of cardboard served as a desk; she began to write feverishly. "Dear Father" — and then she poured out her tale of the day — of her rapture and her pain — writing heedlessly and intently until the sunset faded into dim, starlitten twilight … Emily, in the delightful throes of literary composition, was lost to all worldly things. (*ENM* 93)

Although pens and pencils are such quotidian items that Montgomery almost seems to take them for granted and does not mention them often, Emily's detailed descriptions of her surroundings sometimes include her writing instruments. During her stay at Aunt Ruth's house, she writes about getting up in the night to jot down an idea and spilling ink in the dark: "' … in pawing around my table to find my candle, I upset my ink bottle … How could a small stone ink-bottle hold a quart of ink? There *must* have been a quart to have made the mess it did'" (*EC* 113). It is worth noting that the very ink that Emily relies on to put her thoughts on paper can also destroy or obscure the work and anything it touches; it is a powerful substance that must be handled with care. It is also significant that this accident happens in Aunt Ruth's house; Aunt Ruth is even more critical of Emily's writing than Aunt Elizabeth and even more particular about keeping her house clean: Emily writes, "'Aunt Ruth wants me every other Saturday to help "houseclean." We go over this house from top to bottom whether it needs it or not … '" (99), which explains Emily's chagrin and Aunt Ruth's horror at the mess made by the spilled ink.

The physical act of writing with a pen or pencil is clearly important for Montgomery and her characters, and there is scientific evidence to support this. In their article on embodied cognition in children's writing instruction, for example, Anne Mangen and Lillian Balsvik point out that "human cognition is not limited to internal processes within the brain, but that cognitive processing is fundamentally dependent on the body, postures and bodily movement in and engagement with the physical environment in which we live" ("Introduction" 2016). Physical objects like pens, paper, and ink, and the physical act of using them, are therefore deeply entwined with a writer's cognition and ability to learn, create, and express oneself. Montgomery's descriptions of this embodied cognitive act are a significant aspect of the Emily trilogy, so it is fundamental to our understanding to pay attention to the objects involved.

Conclusion

Books, journals, letters, and writing materials are clearly an important set of objects in the *Emily* trilogy, given their roles in Emily's development as a character and as a writer and in propelling the narrative forward. As everyday objects, of course, they feature in most (if not all) of Montgomery's novels, but they hold particular significance in this *Künstlerroman,* given how necessary they are for Emily's writing career.

The physicality of books and writing instruments is what gives Emily the agency to control what happens to her written expressions of self: she has the power to hide, destroy, share, or publish her writing, thus choosing who can or cannot read these works. She also develops the power to earn money with her writing; Emily overhears Aunt Ruth telling someone that she "'has made fifty dollars by her pen,'" and Emily enjoys the independence and sense of success this gives her. Of particular importance is the standing that this ability to earn money gives her at New Moon, where the practical Aunt Elizabeth reigns; the Murrays value money and productivity much more highly than creativity. As

Cousin Jimmy tells Emily, "'Ever since you got that cheque for a story last winter Elizabeth's been wondering if she oughtn't to let you write … Money makes the Murray mare go, Emily'" (*EC* 255), reflecting the evangelical Protestant belief that worldly wealth is a sign of divine favour.

Of all of Montgomery's protagonists, Emily has the heaviest reliance on books, paper, journals, and writing materials, and in this way is the most autobiographical character in Montgomery's novels. Montgomery clearly cherishes the written word and the physical objects that make this possible, and this is constantly highlighted in the Emily trilogy. This set of objects has an important role in advancing the narrative, revealing autobiographical detail, and developing Emily's sense of self and her career ambitions. Montgomery also emphasises the roles of other small domestic objects, those found within the home, which will be discussed in the next chapter.

Chapter Three

Domestic Objects

> "Everything was fascinating from the moment she came down the long, polished staircase into the square hall that was filled with a soft, rosy light coming through the red glass panes of the front door." (*Emily of New Moon* 61)

Introduction

Having examined the role of houses, books, and writing materials in Montgomery's fiction, we can turn our attention to other smaller, albeit equally significant, domestic objects in the Emily trilogy. These will include objects that are generally found inside a home, such as clothing, portraits, kitchen utensils, and furniture. The characters in these three novels constantly interact with many such items, and these objects have various important though often subtle roles in the narrative. Most significantly, these domestic objects often have a profound effect on, or are used to reflect, the protagonist's development, identity, and relationships. As Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton point out, "one can argue that the home contains the most special objects: those that were selected by the person to attend to regularly or to have close at hand, that create permanence in the intimate life of a person, and therefore that are most involved in making up his or her identity" (17). Emily's identity is partially built upon these "most special objects" in the home, as we will explore in this chapter.

The significance of such objects comes as no surprise to scholars of material culture, who recognise the deeply important role of things in the lives of human beings. As Woodward states, " … objects are routinely, mundanely, part of everyday existence. Moreover, beyond this pragmatic view, even the most commonplace object has the capacity to symbolize the deepest human anxieties and aspirations … people require objects to understand and perform aspects of selfhood, and to navigate the terrain of

culture more broadly" (vi). In the Emily novels, Montgomery utilises such commonplace objects for various purposes, both practical and symbolic. Some objects have a vital role in the advancement of the narrative, others provide a sense of verisimilitude, and some help to connect the protagonist with other characters. For example, the kitchen furnishings and objects that Montgomery describes when Emily first arrives at New Moon provide a detailed and realistic picture of a PEI farmhouse, helping readers connect with Emily as she experiences her new home (*ENM* 53).[41] Montgomery uses candles as a means to connect Emily to her Aunt Elizabeth despite their differences in personality (*ENM* 281). These and many other examples of domestic objects demonstrate the significance of material things to the novel. As already highlighted, Emily, like many of Montgomery's characters, is deeply connected to her surroundings; the objects around her, with their physicality, sensory qualities, and meaning, help her to feel "rooted" and grounded in her environment, and this trilogy is particularly rich in its use of domestic objects to express this connection.

Characters such as Emily encounter objects within the home that help define and shape their personalities. As we have seen, the books that Emily reads and the paper on which she writes, for example, are not remarkable objects in themselves, but they directly affect her identity as a budding writer. Objects are crucial to the development of Emily's identity and selfhood, including the smallest and most quotidian. This chapter will examine the significance of particular household objects in the Emily trilogy with brief reference to a few of Montgomery's other novels, focusing particularly on clothing, food, and portraits as well as household items more generally.

[41]See https://islandarchives.ca/islandora/object/vre%3Aislemag-batch2-403?solr_nav%5Bid%5D=5f1bd1345795be7f0149&solr_nav%5Bpage%5D=0&solr_nav%5Boffset%5D=2&search=kitchen for a description of a PEI farmhouse in the 1920s.

Household Objects: Belonging and Connection

As an orphan, Emily's need for belonging is satisfied at New Moon, and her connection to the Murray clan and their shared heritage is very often represented through domestic objects. For example, not long after Emily arrives at New Moon, Montgomery writes:

> Already she felt as if she belonged to this old cradle of her family. She thought a great deal about the old Murrays; she like to picture them revisiting the glimpses of New Moon – Great-grandmother rubbing up her candlesticks and making cheeses; Great-aunt Miriam stealing about looking for her lost treasure; homesick Great-great-aunt Elizabeth stalking about in her bonnet … her own mother dreaming of Father – they all seemed as real to her as if she had known them in life. (*ENM* 89)

Montgomery refers to everyday things such as the candlesticks, cheeses, and bonnet to connect Emily to family members she has never met; the familiar objects give Emily a sense of kinship. In the case of the bonnet that was worn by a long-dead ancestor, the object is no longer physically present in Emily's time, but Cousin Jimmy's stories allow Emily (and the reader) to imagine this familiar object as the defining feature of the great-great-aunt.

After living just a few days at New Moon, Emily begins to feel this sense of connection with the help of Cousin Jimmy, whose stories help to shape Emily's view of her family. Some of these stories are particularly significant for Emily. For example, Great-aunt Miriam's "lost treasure," the family diamond, especially captures Emily's imagination, and, when she eventually finds it (*EQ* 140), the Murrays agree that she should keep it, tacitly conferring upon her the full status of a Murray. The "Lost Diamond" is significant for various reasons and will be discussed later in the chapter in more detail. Other stories also give Emily a sense of kinship by awakening empathy; Emily can relate to the homesickness of Great-great-aunt Elizabeth, for instance, which is represented by the bonnet that she refused to take off when she first arrived at New Moon. Other household items highlight Emily's fascination with her new home as well

as the old-fashioned, traditional lifestyle of the Murrays. Montgomery describes Emily's first impression of New Moon in great detail; in the kitchen alone, she points out the bench, table, dresser, candlesticks, and plates, and refers to food and objects hanging from the rafters (*ENM* 53). Montgomery hints at her awareness of the connection between objects and relationships in her writing about the close-knit Murray clan and their traditions.

Many of Montgomery's other novels also contain such details of domestic objects. As in the Emily trilogy, Montgomery often describes aspects of the interiors of the house in *Pat of Silver Bush* (1933) and *Mistress Pat* (1935), and these descriptions help the reader to picture the everyday objects of Pat's life clearly. The housekeeper Judy Plum's bed, for example, is described as "an enormous one with a fat chaff tick" and "pillowslips trimmed with crocheted 'pineapple' lace, and was covered with a huge 'autograph quilt' which some local society had made years before" (4). Many of the objects are family heirlooms, including "a quaint old black cradle … a cradle a hundred years old which Great-great-Grandfather Nehemiah had made with his own hands. Every Silver Bush baby had been rocked in it" (29). This echoes the emphasis on family heritage and tradition that is found in the Emily trilogy.

Objects such as candles, lace, and cooking implements help to form bonds between Emily and her aunts, and D. Miller's claim that household objects are "a material expression of the breadth and depth of the relationships within [a] family" (*Comfort* 30) supports this idea. As Emily settles in to New Moon and increasingly becomes part of the family, objects within the household serve to represent these relationships. Emily is given chores to do, including mopping and sanding the floors (*EC* 60), and seems happy to have these responsibilities and to have her aunts teach her the traditional methods of the Murrays. As such, Emily demonstrates Miller's argument that in a healthy family, "the

ways persons become objects of care and objects become subjects of relationships blend imperceptibly with each other in the overall fullness and artistry of these lives" (31). Emily becomes an "object of care," and she is given the responsibility for the objects at New Moon, which function as the focal points of the relationships between Emily and her relatives. She learns, for example, the New Moon tradition of "how to put pickles into glass jars in patterns" and is pleased that she can do it as well as Aunt Laura, earning rare praise from Aunt Elizabeth (213). Aunt Laura also teaches Emily how to sew an invisible hem on muslin because it is a family tradition, and Emily hopes that she will teach her how to make a "lace" handkerchief because all the Murray women had one when they got married (*ENM* 181).[42] The way in which Montgomery weaves these objects into the trilogy's narrative supports Miller's claim that "material objects are viewed as an integral and inseparable aspect of all relationships" (286).

Ownership is an important aspect of the role of objects in the trilogy. Emily often forms intimate bonds with domestic objects, and these bonds are a result of ownership and use over time. The more familiar Emily gets with the objects of New Moon, the more "at home" she feels as part of the Murray family. As Deborah Wynne points out, "as early property theorists have maintained, the basis of property ownership developed from humans' relationships with objects and these were often particularly intimate" (6). Two of the primary property theorists to whom Wynne is referring are John Locke and Hugo Grotius: "For … Locke, appropriating a thing means it becomes part of oneself, while for

[42] Montgomery herself made lace, and an example of her work is on display at the Anne of Green Gables Museum in Park Corner, PEI (see Appendix A, fig. 1). She writes in her journal that point lace was "in" when she was a child and that, as an adult, she "decided to make several pieces of 'point' for my 'hope chest'" (*SJ IV* 49). These domestic objects, then, provide connections between not only the fictional characters but also between the author and her characters *and* the readers who can see real-life examples of these objects.

… Grotius, people's personalities become part of the objects they own" (*ibid.).*[43] New Moon and the objects in it become entrenched within Emily's personality, and, like many of Montgomery's heroines, her sense of belonging increases with her growing familiarity with the material aspects of the house as well as the people who live there. In fact, Emily writes that "'it will soon be a year since I came to New Moon. I feel as if I had always lived here'" (*ENM* 179), and soon after, Montgomery writes that

> Emily had lived long enough at New Moon for it to get pretty thoroughly into her blood … She loved … every stick and stone and tree and blade of grass about it – every nail in the old kitchen floor, every cushion of green moss on the dairy roof, every pink and white columbine that grew in the old orchard, every 'tradition' of its history. (188)

Domestic objects often allude to the family history and traditions of New Moon, which are a major factor in the Murray pride. The clan seems to believe itself superior because of its long history in PEI, as is clear in the clan stories that Cousin Jimmy relates to Emily in the first novel (*ENM* 61-76). He explains to Emily about the importance of tradition at New Moon, saying that Aunt Elizabeth "doesn't like new-fangled things. In the house we belong to fifty years ago … In the house – candles; in the dairy, her grandmother's big pans to set the milk in" (52). Jimmy is proud of the beautiful garden he has cultivated (68), and, even there, outside the house, his pride in family history is revealed in his explanation of the sundial that Emily's great-great-grandfather brought

[43] Philosopher John Locke (1632-1704) argued in favour of individual property rights, and theologian and lawyer Hugo Grotius (1583-1645) reconceptualized "persons" as beings who have rights to things. Both philosophers' ideas were used to justify the European conquest of North America, and Montgomery clearly shared the coloniser's attitude toward possession. The Murrays are proud of their European heritage as early settlers of PEI; they, like Montgomery's family, developed "intimate relationships" with the land itself and appropriated it for their own use. Montgomery's colonial attitude is clear in that she never mentions the Indigenous peoples of North America as the land's original, displaced owners. A few scholars have undertaken a postcolonial reading of Montgomery's work, including Rob Shields in "Lifelong sorrow: settler affect, state and trauma at *Anne of Green Gables"* (*Settler Colonial Studies,* vol. 8, issue 4, 2018, pp. 518-536). See also https://journaloflmmontgomerystudies.ca/vision-forum/lm-montgomery-institutes-bipoc-resource-list for a list of scholarly essays on this topic.

from the "Old Country" (most likely Scotland, as Montgomery's family had come from Scotland) (68).

Other parts of New Moon also contain objects that reflect aspects of family members' characters. Aunt Elizabeth's bedroom, for example, where Emily must sleep initially, is described in such a way that the objects seem to reflect Elizabeth's stern personality, as previously discussed; it is a formidably large, dark room with deep colours, always-closed windows, and uncomfortable furnishings. Emily's misery on her first night in that room stands in stark contrast to her first night in her mother's old room later in the novel, and this demonstrates the differences in personality between Aunt Elizabeth and her half-sister as well as the importance of furnishings and other objects in creating the atmosphere of a room. In contrast to Aunt Elizabeth's room, Emily's mother's room "was full of that indefinable charm found in all rooms where the pieces of furniture … are well acquainted with each other and the walls and floors are on good terms," and Emily "felt perfectly at home" (285). Emily's first impressions of Aunt Elizabeth's room therefore reflect her initial alienation and lack of belonging, with no room of her own and no connection to any of the objects in the room. Her only relief on her first miserable night is the presence of her imagined Wind Woman at the window, which enables her soul to "escape from the bondage of Aunt Elizabeth's stuffy feather-bed and gloomy canopy and sealed windows" (60). Emily's mother's room, on the other hand, is "papered with slender gilt diamonds enclosing golden stars," a "pretty homespun carpet and round braided rugs," and "lovable little cupboards with leaded-glass doors like those in the sitting-room" (285), which better suit Emily's personality. It is also significant that Emily has the room to herself, as this privacy allows her much more freedom and independence. The room and its furnishings provide Emily with a new sense of connection to her mother, "as if

Juliet Starr had suddenly become real to her. It thrilled her to think that her mother had probably crocheted the lace cover on the round pincushion on the table" (285).

Other domestic objects provide Emily with more connection to her family heritage but are not given to her until her adulthood. In the final novel, for instance, Aunt Elizabeth gives Emily, during her engagement to Dean, all the china, silver, and other objects that had belonged to Emily's grandmother. Montgomery describes specific items in this collection, including "a priceless pink lustre jug and a delightful old dinner set of real willow-ware," a "little gilt-framed oval mirror with a black cat on top of it … and an old clock with a pointed top and two tiny gilded spires on each side" (*EQ* 76). Having passed down through the Murray clan, these objects continue to strengthen Emily's ties to her family, and Montgomery's very detailed descriptions make them easy for the reader to picture. As with the Lost Diamond, Aunt Elizabeth is signalling that Emily has been accepted as part of the Murray clan when she gives her these precious heirlooms.

Another of Emily's inherited objects that she adds to the Disappointed House is a brass door knocker in the shape of a Cheshire cat (from Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland,* 1865)[44] that she receives from the estate of Great-aunt Nancy, as previously mentioned. Emily "put the chessy-cat on the front porch door of the Disappointed House" (*EQ* 80), creating a connection to her past visit at Aunt Nancy's but also, for those who have read Montgomery's journals, a connection to Montgomery's own life. Montgomery writes in 1921 of shopping for an

> adorable Chessy-cat brass knocker … I was delighted over my find for it had an interest for me entirely apart from its own quaint charm. In the summer of 1918 when Frede and I were at Park Corner she showed me with great delight a chessy-cat knocker exactly like this one … we laughed and gloated over it … the next time I saw it was in her room at Macdonald after her death … I would have like to have had the thing – it was so expressive of Frede – the very spirit of all our old jokes and tradition was in it. It was impossible to look at the grin on the face of that cat without a responsive grin … I shall put it on my room door … and every time I see

[44] See Appendix A, Fig. 4.

> it I will see Frede, too, with her laughing face and pleased eyes, and she will not seem altogether gone from me … (*SJ II* 28).

This object, then, provides connection to her closest friend, who had died (but Frede's husband did not give Montgomery the knocker, as she had hoped, so she bought one); she wrote the knocker into the Emily trilogy, where it provides a fictionalised memorial to Frede for readers who are familiar with Montgomery's journals.

In anticipation of her marriage to Dean, Emily places these objects in the "Disappointed House," and, after she breaks the engagement, she leaves them there until her marriage to Teddy, when Dean gives her the deed to the house and contents. The idea of ownership is particularly significant in this situation. Because Dean owns the Disappointed House and, technically, all its contents, Emily's material inheritance is endangered by her broken engagement. Dean frequently refers to Emily as his property; for example, when he saves her from falling off a cliff at their first meeting, he warns her not to forget that her life henceforth belongs to him and tells Emily that her rescue "'has cost you your freedom'" (271). Ilse even warns Emily that she will "'belong to him body and soul. Dean can't bear any one to have any interest outside of him. He must possess exclusively'" (*EQ* 63). Until Dean gives Emily the deed to the house, his ownership extends to Emily's inherited belongings as well as her self. This could be seen as a threat to Emily's identity as a Murray, but her continued residence at New Moon, and the proximity of the Disappointed House, counterbalances that threat. Dean, an unhealthy and overly possessive man, finally redeems himself by giving Emily the house and its contents, completing the freedom she partially achieved by breaking the engagement.

It is worth noting that Emily can only contribute these few heirlooms to the marital home, whereas Dean provides a large amount of furnishings and objects – another example of the imbalance in their relationship. Waterston points out that Dean had collected many of his objects on his travels, whereas Emily, who had never travelled far,

"can only contribute some bits and pieces inherited from her long-dead mother and grandmother" along with Great-aunt Nancy Priest's "gazing-ball" (*Magic Island* 145) – and both Dean and Emily are related to her. Significantly, Emily's inherited objects come from the female line of the family, which could reflect the association between domesticity and the feminine in literature of the period but could also demonstrate Montgomery's tendency to de-emphasise the role of men in her novels and reveal her subtly feminist views.

Waterston further states that "the irony of the disparity of belongings brought to the shared house destabilizes what seems at first to be the conventional ending of a courtship story" (*ibid*.), but I would argue that Dean and Emily's toxic relationship was *never* stable. Emily ends the relationship, but even then, it is only after some time, and Emily and Teddy's reconciliation and engagement, that Dean gives up ownership of Emily (and her inherited possessions). It is also ironic that Emily (and Teddy) end up owning the objects that Dean had collected and placed in the Disappointed House; it provides a sense of poetic justice for Dean's overbearing, destructive "ownership" of Emily.

Objects, Social Status, and Agency

In the Emily trilogy, characters use commonplace domestic objects that often reveal something of their social and economic status and serve to convey the pride and social standing of the Murray clan. By reflecting the everyday realities in her realistic fiction, Montgomery reveals her entrenched ideas of social class and status, with objects like a fringe-topped buggy and certain tableware presented as markers of status. Prown points out that "a society puts a considerable amount of cultural spin on what it consciously says and does. Cultural expression is less self-conscious, and therefore potentially more truthful, in what a society produces, especially such mundane, utilitarian objects as domestic buildings, furniture, or pots" (4). Montgomery writes her own "cultural spin"

into the narrative by drawing attention to this social standing, often employing such mundane objects as modes of transportation or kitchen utensils.

When Emily first travels to New Moon, for example, she rides in "the double-seated buggy with its fringed canopy always affected by the Murrays of New Moon," and Montgomery writes that Emily "had never driven in anything so splendid before" (49). The word "affected" intimates that the buggy is particularly expensive or showy and that it is being used as a symbol of wealth as well as a mode of transportation. Montgomery uses an object here to draw attention to the fact that Emily has been saved from poverty and orphanhood and brought into a life of higher social standing and material comfort. The mention of the "fringed canopy" signals even to readers unfamiliar with such modes of transport that the Murrays are much wealthier than Emily's father. He did not own any type of transportation, having borrowed a "buckboard and grey pony" when they needed it (49).

Another household item that demonstrates the Murrays' social standing is tableware, which plays a part even in a house Emily merely visits. There is nothing particularly high-status or fancy about the New Moon kitchen; Montgomery does not mention any specific tableware or other items that might convey a high social standing; nevertheless, the Murrays seem to have a reputation for being more wealthy or of a higher class than their neighbours. When Emily and Ilse travel around the area to canvass for a newspaper in the second novel, they are forced to seek shelter from a storm in a house in a neighbouring community. When the housekeeper asks their names and discovers their connection to the Murrays, her attitude, already hospitable, quickly becomes deferential: "Mrs. Julie Hollinger's 'Oh' was subtly eloquent. She had been setting dishes and food down at a rapid rate on the clean oil-cloth on the table. Now she swept them aside, extracted a table-cloth from a drawer of the cupboard, got silver forks and spoons out of

another drawer, and a handsome pair of salt and pepper shakers from the shelves" (*EC* 187). Nikolajeva points out that food-related objects can represent individuals' standing within communities (*Mythic* 16). Mrs. Hollinger's actions reflect her conviction that at least one of her visitors has a higher social standing than she originally assumed, and the objects she sets out for the visitors (despite Emily's plea for her not to go to any trouble) signify their status. The housekeeper is also demonstrating that the household contains such objects and is therefore not too far below the Murrays. Young readers in the twenty-first century might find this behaviour strange, but older generations will remember the practice of saving the "good" tableware for visitors, and in Montgomery's time, only certain visitors would have been considered worthy of this treatment. As Woodward states, " … objects become incorporated into, and represent, wider social discourses related to extensively held norms and values enshrined in norms and social institutions" (4). Emily, though proud to be a Murray, is embarrassed by these "norms and values" that place her family on a higher standing than others, and Montgomery is perhaps revealing her own discomfort with social inequality through her protagonist. The tableware in this situation is helping in "forming or negating interpersonal and group attachments, mediating the formation of self-identity and esteem, and integrating and differentiating social groups, classes, or tribes" (Woodward 4).

Objects also play a role in helping Emily gain agency for herself. Emily's determination to reclaim her own agency is demonstrated when she refuses to let Aunt Elizabeth cut her hair in the first novel; in this case, the click of a pair of scissors triggers Emily's uncanny facial resemblance to her grandfather's, which scares Aunt Elizabeth enough to abandon her autocratic efforts for the moment. In this short but significant Gothic episode, Montgomery writes that "Aunt Elizabeth returned with the scissors; they clicked suggestively as she opened them; that click, as if by magic, seemed to loosen

something – some strange formidable power in Emily's soul" (*ENM* 107). The physicality of the scissors, to which Montgomery points by describing the sound they make, is essential to this episode and to Emily's power over her aunt. Emily's determination to claim independence is also demonstrated by her reaction to Aunt Elizabeth reading her "private papers" (*ENM* 310), another important object. The outraged Emily rebukes her aunt, sparking a crisis in their relationship that is resolved when Aunt Elizabeth apologizes (313). Household items such as scissors and paper, then, are instrumental in the development of relationships in the novel as well as helping Emily to regain self-agency and self-determination. The question of agency also arises in terms of clothing and portraits, as will be demonstrated below.

Clothing: "personal identity and values"

Authors often use items of clothing in their fiction for a variety of purposes; sometimes these are subtle and apparently secondary to the narrative, but often they are significant on closer examination. Peter Stallybrass points out that clothing is a material that is "richly absorbent of symbolic meaning, and in which memories and social relations are literally embodied" (31) and that "a network of cloth can trace the connections of love across the boundaries of absence, of death, because cloth is able to carry the absent body, memory, genealogy, as well as literal material value" (37) – a point particularly salient in terms of Emily and her dead mother, as we will see below. The study of clothing in fiction can add another dimension to the examination of a text, just as the study of clothing in society can deepen our understanding of that society. Prown points out, for example, that "personal adornment promises to be a particularly rich vein for material culture studies," observing,

> Adornment, especially clothing, has, like the applied arts, the advantage of touching on a wide range of quotidian functions … The potency of this material as cultural evidence can be tested by the simple act of criticizing someone's clothes; the

> reaction is much more intense than that aroused by comparable criticism of a house, a car, or a television set. Criticism of clothing is taken more personally, suggesting a high correlation between clothing and personal identity and values. (13)

This correlation is clearly visible in Montgomery's fiction. Montgomery herself loved beautiful clothes and often wrote in her journal about them, demonstrating their important role in developing her own sense of identity and values. For example, she writes, "My enemies accuse me of being 'fond of dress.' The charge is perfectly true. I am very fond of pretty dresses, hats and jewels and cannot enjoy myself if I do not feel well-dressed" (*SJ II* 393). It is therefore not surprising that Montgomery also gave many of her characters a love for clothing that transcends practical considerations. Pat Gardiner in *Pat of Silver Bush*, for example, is so attached to her childhood clothing that she hates giving up even the items she has outgrown: "Pat was always like that about her clothes. She wore them until [her family] simply wouldn't look at her because they were so dear to her she couldn't bear to give them up. She hated her new duds until she had worn them for a few weeks. Then she turned around and loved them fiercely, too" (2).

Although *Anne of Green Gables* is less concerned with domestic objects than the Emily trilogy, it does feature some everyday objects that similarly help to define the protagonist's character and deepen her relationships. Clothing is the most notable of these objects, and, being one of the most basic human necessities, it highlights the contrast between Anne's orphanhood before arriving at Green Gables and her much more comfortable life after Matthew and Marilla take her in and provide for her needs.

Montgomery carefully describes Anne's appearance when Matthew first meets her, noting that her dress is a "very short, very tight, very ugly dress of yellowish gray wincey" and that she wears a "faded brown sailor hat" and carries a "shabby, old-fashioned carpetbag" (*AGG* 11). Anne's basic needs have clearly not been adequately provided for, and Anne feels the lack; she tells Matthew that she loves pretty clothes but has never

owned any (13), and Marilla observes that Anne has lived "a life of drudgery and poverty and neglect" (41). Christa Zeller Thomas points out that " … the novels whose plots are triggered by or hinge on the death of the mother, frequently foreground material deficiencies and insufficiencies of various kinds for the female protagonists," and when Anne first lives at Green Gables, "even these meagre material comforts are somewhat grudgingly provided to Anne at this stage … ," referring to her stark, bare bedroom (2). Like Pat, Anne often mentions her love for pretty clothes, and she is disappointed to discover that the dresses made for her by the practical Marilla are not pretty and do not have "puffed sleeves" (*AGG* 80). Montgomery writes in her journals of her fondness for puffed sleeves, a clear inspiration for Anne: " … I felt quite at home in the puffed sleeves. I wish they would come in again. They were the prettiest fashion ever was in sleeves before the puffs became too big … " (*SJ IV* 31).

One of the turning points of the narrative occurs when the sympathetic Matthew gets a beautiful dress made for Anne as a Christmas present. Anne is so touched by Matthew's gift that her "eyes had suddenly filled with tears. '*Like* it! Oh, Matthew!' Anne laid the dress over a chair and clasped her hands. 'Matthew, it's perfectly exquisite. Oh, I can never thank you enough'" (201). Anne finally has the puffed sleeves she always longed for, and this represents the home, family, and love that she has lacked until now. While Emily did not live the same life of neglect before arriving at New Moon that Anne did prior to her arrival at Green Gables, Emily was also inadequately clothed: "She was little and pale and poorly clad; sometimes she shivered in her thin jacket" (*ENM* 6).

Like Anne and Pat, Emily is also interested in clothes. As a child, she keeps a picture of a beautiful ball gown that "she had cut from a fashion sheet … Emily had pictured herself a thousand times wearing that dress" (*ENM* 49). This fascination is modelled on Montgomery's journals, where she writes of her own childhood, "remember[ing] the

preposterous fashion plates of bustles and overskirts which I though very wonderful and beautiful. I used to pore over them, imagining myself arrayed in them, and firmly determined to have something just like them when I grew up" (*SJ I* 375). Rubio and Waterston note that Montgomery's photographs of clothing in her journals "make their own claim to a place in the history of dress; discussions of materials and hairstyles supplement the knowledge we have of the vagaries of fashion" (*SJ II* xv). An entire page of Montgomery's journal is devoted to photographs of the dresses in her wedding trousseau (*SJ II* 65), and her scrapbooks even contain swatches of fabric from various articles of clothing, providing further evidence of the significance of clothing in Montgomery's life and its influence on her writing.

As with other objects previously discussed, one of the main ways in which references to clothing are used in the Emily trilogy is to signify social status and elevate Emily to the level of the proud Murrays, at times to her chagrin. On their way to New Moon following Emily's father's funeral, Aunt Elizabeth states that Emily "'must not wear that cheap black dress in Blair Water. You could sift oatmeal through it … I shall get her a nice white dress with a black sash for good, and some black-and-white-check gingham for school'" (*ENM* 51). At that time, anyone connected to the deceased would have been expected to wear black, or at least no colours, as a sign of mourning for a significant period[45], but the Murrays clearly believed that they must also wear high-quality clothing in keeping with their social status. Emily's father also mentions that when his wife, Juliet Murray, died, Aunt Elizabeth "'wore her best black satin dress to the funeral. For any funeral but a Murray's the second best one would have done'" (*ENM* 16). Whether this was a general societal expectation or the Murray interpretation of

[45] See, for example, Sonia A. Bedikian's "The Death of Mourning: From Victorian Crepe to the Little Black Dress." *OMEGA*, Vol. 57(1), 2008, pp. 35-52.

societal expectation is unclear, but Montgomery seems to be suggesting that the Murrays had high standards for, and opinions of, themselves. Emily's father had not been able to afford better quality clothing for his daughter, and Aunt Elizabeth is determined to maintain the Murray standards by getting better clothes for her.

On Emily's first day of school, Aunt Elizabeth makes her wear "a terrible gingham apron and an equally terrible gingham sunbonnet" (76), much to Emily's humiliation, and she is not comforted by the fact that the items had belonged to her mother. She "rebelled to the point of tears" about the apron and begs her aunt not to make her wear "that horrid thing," referring to the sunbonnet (77). Emily is mocked by her classmates for the "baby apron" (79), sunbonnet, and buttoned boots, which they regarded as too old-fashioned and evidence of the "Murray pride," a trait for which the clan is well known in the Blair Water community. Aunt Elizabeth's choice of clothing for Emily clearly demonstrates her practical nature as well as her uncompromising, unsympathetic method of guardianship. It also sets Emily apart from her classmates, just as Aunt Elizabeth's refusal to adapt to prevailing fashions and methods and her preference for the traditional, such as using candles instead of lamps, set the Murrays apart from their neighbours. Montgomery was drawing on personal experience for this incident, for she discussed her own humiliation at having to wear a "baby apron" in her journal (*SJ I* 277). This further reveals the author's awareness of the social significance of clothing as well as the strong autobiographical influences on the novel.

Later, as Bode points out, Emily "conveys pride in her appearance" when Aunt Laura permits her to wear "'mother's blue silk sash with the pink daisies on it that she had when she was a little girl at New Moon'" at Christmas (*ENM* 215), which shows "Montgomery's awareness and acknowledgement of the power" of material culture ("Mothering and Mothers" 137); it is clothing, in this case, that has the power to spark

pride and belonging in a child. It also demonstrates the connection that clothing can provide, in this case between mother and daughter, particularly when one is deceased; the dress brings "comfort to the motherless daughter" (138). Bode goes on to point out that "Montgomery provides Emily with a sensitivity to her surroundings and to the materials in them, both organic and manufactured … " (*ibid*.). Emily's mother Juliet's presence at New Moon manifests itself in objects, traditions, and memories, Bode says, bringing Emily the comfort of connection. Montgomery herself, in her longing for her absent mother, pastes a scrap of her mother's green silk wedding dress in a journal entry of 29 December 1921 (*SJ III* 34), reflecting the significance of clothing as objects of connection.

Montgomery writes about silk clothing in particular several times throughout the trilogy. Emily comments in her diary that she wishes she could have a pair of silk stockings, but Aunt Elizabeth believes them to be "'*immoral*'" (*EC* 4). Emily's aunt embodies the religious conservatism with which Montgomery was brought up, in her "strict Presbyterian" community (Rubio, *Wings* 97). As Rubio points out, children in Cavendish churches "grew up in a complicated world, where the forces of Good and Evil were in constant competition for their souls," and Montgomery absorbed from her childhood reading and upbringing that "pleasure and fun were inherently sinful" (43). Aunt Elizabeth's condemnation of silk for clothing is obviously connected to this puritanical opinion of pleasure. Emily, however, comments on the sensory qualities of silk and loves its extravagance: "'It is so rich and sheeny. I would like to dress in it all the time, and if I could afford to I would'" (*EC* 5).

When Montgomery wrote the trilogy, silk clothing was only beginning to become affordable for the average consumer, so it would have been a luxury in the early twentieth century. A study by the Dominion Bureau of Statistics in Canada in the early 1930s states

that "'silk stockings, for example, which were formerly considered a luxury, are today considered a necessity even by girls who are getting as low a wage as possible'" (qtd in Liverant, 112). Montgomery writes in her journal in 1910 that her Aunt Emily, for her wedding, "was dressed in brown silk. A silk dress was a great rarity in those days and nobody expected to have more than one in a lifetime" (*SJ I* 372).[46] The Emily trilogy takes place in a time when silk stockings were considered extravagant; a silk dress would have been even more expensive, but Emily plans to one day buy one that "'is to be of shot silk, blue in one light, silver in others, like a twilight sky, glimpsed through a frosted window pane'" (*EC* 5). Emily's desire becomes a reality in the third novel, after she has earned enough money with her writing, and she "spent the whole price of a story on it, to her aunt's horror" (*EQ* 37). Emily remembers that Teddy, by this time estranged from her, had promised to paint her in that dress. The silk dress, therefore, represents career success and a high degree of financial independence for Emily, but not relationship success. This arguably points to Montgomery's prioritising of a writing career over marriage; she herself was already well known for *Anne of Green Gables* (with resulting financial benefits) when she married Ewen Macdonald in 1911. In fact, it is possible that Montgomery only married to "escape from her position as a clever but plain young woman without an inheritance or the means to a good education" (Rubio 57), and in *Anne of the Island,* Montgomery has her "college girls see marriage as a fate to be put off as long as possible" (186). Rubio further points out that this third novel in the Anne series "appears to reaffirm the prevalent view that a woman's duty is to marry and procreate, not to seek an education" (*ibid*.) but that there are new and attractive alternatives such as attending college before marrying. Emily, who finds success in her writing career (as

[46] It is possible that Montgomery named her silk-loving protagonist after this aunt, as she had lived in Montgomery's home until her marriage, and Aunt Emily's wedding was "the last festivity" in this house, a memorable occasion for the then-seven-year-old Montgomery (*SJ I* 372.). Montgomery does not, however, mention this possible connection in her journals.

represented by her ability to afford extravagant silk purchases) and does not marry until later, seems to reflect Montgomery's views on the subject.

Before this success and independence, however, Emily has very little agency in terms of what she wears. When she is preparing to move to nearby Shrewsbury to attend high school at the age of fourteen, for instance, "Elizabeth and Laura held long conferences over Emily's clothes. She must have an outfit that would cast no discredit on the Murrays, but common sense and not fashion was to give the casting vote. Emily herself had no say in the matter" (*EC* 87). Emily's guardians plainly still treat her as a child and grant her no choice of clothing as self-expression, highlighting her need for writing as a means of expression.

Further, although the Murray pride might be satisfied by the financial ability to acquire silk clothing, the clan's traditionally puritanical beliefs and "respectable" self-image do not allow for such purchases for a minor. Emily is disappointed not to have a taffeta silk blouse, while her friend Ilse has three (87). Emily's aunts all wear silk dresses, and Aunt Elizabeth's condemnation of the material seems to be aimed solely at the underage Emily, and only for certain garments: Early in her time at New Moon, one of Emily's dresses has a "black silk sash" (*ENM* 97).

Montgomery mentions silk stockings again in connection to Emily's high-school antagonist, Evelyn Blake. Always petty, Evelyn is "prepared to be disagreeable" because she has not been invited to an event that Emily is attending (118). Montgomery describes Evelyn as "swinging her high-silken-sheathed instep flauntingly in the face of girls who had no silk stockings" (*EC* 118). In addition, Aunt Ruth ridicules Emily's claim that she will someday wear silk petticoats, asking what she has to get them with, and Emily responds by proudly stating that she has a future (159). Emily also writes that Aunt Ruth often hints about the expense that Emily is to her, saying things like "'"Oh, no, Mr.

Morrison, your new goods are beautiful but I can't afford a silk dress *this* spring"'" (154). Emily's eventual purchases of silk clothing, then, become small victories over her "enemies" as well as markers of success. They also hint at Emily's increasing sense of selfhood: she can begin to clothe herself – provide for her own needs in the manner of her choosing – due to her success as a writer.

Even after Emily finishes high school and returns to New Moon aged seventeen, allowed to "grow up" because Aunt Elizabeth lets her drink real tea (*EQ* 1), she "had no real hope that she would ever be permitted to wear silk stockings. A silk petticoat might be tolerated, being a hidden thing, in spite of its seductive rustle, but silk stockings were immoral" (1). Elizabeth's often religion-based tyranny over New Moon continues into Emily's adulthood, and, as aforementioned, it is only Emily's financial success that gives her the freedom from this tyranny to obtain silk clothing for herself.

Another example of Emily's restricted choice of clothing appears in the form of the "Mother Hubbard"[47] in *Emily Climbs.* Emily is given the task of sanding the kitchen floor (to clean the bare boards), and Aunt Elizabeth "exasperated Emily somewhat by insisting that the latter should put on Aunt Laura's old 'Mother Hubbard' while she was scrubbing the floor" (60). Montgomery, acknowledging that her readers might not be familiar with the term, offers a rare explanation of one of the objects she includes in her narrative:

> A 'Mother Hubbard,' it may be necessary to explain to those of this generation, was a loose and shapeless garment which served principally as a sort of morning gown and was liked in its day because it was cool and easily put on. Aunt Elizabeth, it is quite unnecessary to say, disapproved entirely of Mother Hubbards. She considered them the last word in slovenliness, and Laura was never permitted to have another one. (*EC* 60)

Further explanation is provided by Mikyoung Whang and Sherry Haar: "In the 19th century, the Mother Hubbard was the middle-class housewives' housedress characterized

[47] See Appendix A, Figure 2.

by its loose fit (typically fitted only at the shoulder yoke) and plain fabric… Despite its multi-functional role, the Mother Hubbard was viewed as old-fashioned in the early 20th century" (2014, p. 5). Emily, keenly sensitive about her appearance, resents Aunt Elizabeth's dictum:

> Emily detested Mother Hubbards as heartily as Aunt Elizabeth herself did. They were worse, she considered, even than the hated 'baby aprons' of her first summer at New Moon. She knew she looked ridiculous in Aunt Laura's Mother Hubbard, which came to her feet, and hung in loose, unbeautiful lines from her thin young shoulders; and Emily had a horror of being 'ridiculous.' She had once shocked Aunt Elizabeth by coolly telling her that she would 'rather be bad than ridiculous.' Emily had scrubbed and sanded with one eye on the door, ready to run if any stranger loomed up while she had on the hideous wrapper. (*EC* 61)

Although Emily and Aunt Elizabeth both dislike the Mother Hubbard, they do so for different reasons: Emily because it makes her look "ridiculous," and Aunt Elizabeth because it is "slovenly." The garment's lack of shape might not be the only reason that Aunt Elizabeth disapproves of it; according to Sally Helvenston Gray, the Mother Hubbard "conveyed a confusing message about sexuality, worn by innocent children on one hand and by prostitutes on the other" (2014, p. 30). Gray goes on to say that "admonitions in advice literature regarding the wearing of wrappers tend to indicate that they were the lowest among at-home dresses and were sometimes associated with the slattern" (47); she claims that

> seeing a woman in a Mother Hubbard provided a rare instance to observe the female body without multiple layers of undergarments and body-shaping devices like the corset. That these occurrences also happened outside the world of prostitution alludes to the general sexual nature of the garment. The dress was provocative based on the male viewers' imagination of the accessible body underneath rather than by what the garment actually revealed. (51)

In this comedic episode, visitors arrive at New Moon, and Emily hastily decides to hide in a closet to avoid being seen in the Mother Hubbard. She overhears the callers discussing her in less than flattering terms, and finally bursts out of the closet in silent rage when one of the women states that she pities Emily. This event, instigated by the

article of clothing, might seem like a mere light and humorous addition to the narrative, but it reveals interesting aspects of Emily's character as well as her increasing affinity with the Murray clan. This episode echoes Emily's previous experience with eavesdropping, when she heard the Murrays say unpleasant things about her before deciding who would adopt her (*ENM* 37). Emily has come to consider herself part of the Murray clan, however, so when one of the women criticises Aunt Elizabeth, Emily feels "suddenly very angry with Miss Potter. She, herself, often criticized Aunt Elizabeth in secret, but it was intolerable that an outsider should do it" (64). Emily's developing pride in her family is highlighted several times throughout this chapter, as are Montgomery's ideas of social standing. Aunt Elizabeth, for example, not knowing what has happened, wonders why the visitors are acting strangely but then reminds herself that "a Murray did not care what Potters thought or did" (69). Emily writes that although she is proud, it is justified: "'I can't help carrying my head at a certain angle and I can't help feeling it is a great thing to have a century of good, upright people with fine traditions and considerable brains behind you. Not like the Potters – upstarts of yesterday!'" (73). It is worth noting that Montgomery also uses the name "Hubbard" earlier in the trilogy to refer to the local woman who had lent Emily's father an "old buckboard and grey pony" (*ENM* 49) and who makes the cheap black mourning dress for Emily (19). Montgomery might have chosen this name at random, but it is possible that she associated the name with drab, lower-quality, lower-class, or old-fashioned items.[48]

Emily uses the Mother Hubbard incident as a means of examining herself, writing that "'Mr. Carpenter says we should make every experience teach us something'" (*EC* 69). Although hearing negative things about herself is unpleasant, Emily demonstrates

[48] It is likely that the Mother Hubbard garment was named for the character in the nursery rhyme "Old Mother Hubbard," but only indirect evidence for this connection exists (see Anita Stamper and Jill Condra's *Clothing through American History: The Civil War through the Gilded Age, 1861-1899*, Santa Barbara, California: Greenwood, 2011, p. 309).

maturity and increasing strength of character by choosing to analyse herself and learn something. In this incident, then, Montgomery uses a domestic object to spark an important episode of character development along with providing some light-hearted humour.

Portraits: Ekphrasis and Possession

Montgomery's use of portraits in the trilogy also brings up the question of possession, and portraits and pictures become significant objects in Emily's life and growth. Montgomery's ekphrastic descriptions of several of these pictures help to illuminate aspects of Emily's character and the general atmosphere of the scenes in which they are set. Ekphrasis, a literary device involving detailed description of a work of visual art, is often used to help the reader picture a work as vividly as possible. One of the most famous examples of ekphrasis is John Keats' poem "Ode on a Grecian Urn" (1820), which describes, amongst other things, a pair of lovers on an ancient vessel. It is not surprising that Montgomery uses ekphrasis, known as she is for her detailed descriptions of landscapes. As objects, the portraits in particular are important to the narrative in many ways, including they helping to create atmosphere, facilitate the development of relationships, and portray the protagonist's character development; as such, Montgomery's ekphrastic descriptions highlight this significance. As Clement points out, Emily

> interrogat[es] and/or empathiz[es] with women from an eclectic gallery of images: … bodiless ball dresses in contemporary fashion sheets; gloomy pictures of departed relatives; photographs of her mother; Aunt Ruth's chromo of Queen Alexandra; engravings of portraits of Lady Giovanna, Elisabeth Bas, and the Mona Lisa; … and the sketches, illustrations, and paintings of Teddy Kent. ("Visual Culture" paragraph 2)

These portraits and others cause Emily to reflect on her own identity as well as those of the women in the portraits, and, as will be discussed later, this helps her to break free of the sort of constraints from which these "framed" women suffer.

The spare room and parlour of New Moon, as discussed in Chapter One, contain portraits of deceased family members, much to Emily's horror. The spare room, for example, contains a portrait of the formidable Grandfather Murray. When Emily is locked in the room as a punishment, she is terrified when a beam of light "fell directly athwart the picture … hanging over the mantel-piece … In that gleam of light his face seemed veritably to leap out of the gloom at Emily with its grim frown strangely exaggerated" (*ENM* 111). Emily's traumatic interaction with the portrait causes her to flee from the room in a panic, via a ladder at the window, which in turn leads her directly to meeting Ilse Burnley, who becomes her closest friend. As an object, then, this portrait of Grandfather Murray creates atmosphere, reveals an aspect of Emily's character, and advances the narrative.

Another portrait that is significant to Emily is one of her mother as a little girl that hangs in the "lookout" bedroom. Emily appreciates the fact that she owns this picture now that she has moved into this bedroom, another example of the importance of possession. Aunt Elizabeth had taken Emily's only other picture of her mother and "hung it in the parlour where Emily seldom saw it" (285). The lookout room's picture of Emily's mother as a "golden-haired, rose-cheeked girl, was all her own," and Emily "could look at it – talk to it at will" (*ibid.*). She begins to address the letters she writes to her father to her mother as well, saying, "' … you didn't seem *real* till that night I came home [and was given the lookout room]'" (286). This portrait, then, aids the orphaned Emily in a newfound connection to her parent, and its acquisition compensates for the loss of Emily's other picture of her mother to the parlour with the other ancestors.

Teddy's painting of Emily in her long-desired silk dress is another important portrait in the narrative, and Montgomery again ekphrastically describes it: Emily says, "'I look as if I was listening to something that made me very happy … It does make me better looking than I am … " (*ENM* 180). When the young Teddy first paints this watercolour sketch of her, Emily, in an act of rebellion and agency, sends the picture to her great-aunt Nancy, preferring its depiction of her over the photographs that Aunt Elizabeth has taken to send. Emily, demonstrating her early admiration for Teddy and his talent, writes to Aunt Nancy that she is "'only *lending* it to you, not *giving* it, because I valew [*sic*] it very highly'" (*ENM* 226). Emily's replacement of the photographs with the painting is significant and intersects with Gammel's examination of sexuality in literature for girls. She points out that in this episode, "Montgomery argues against the autocratic adult [Aunt Elizabeth] who refuses to respect the girl's body agency and the reader's sympathy is with Emily; in fact, the reader's pleasure consists in participating in Emily's subversive reclaiming of self-representational agency as in the example of the photography specially commissioned for Aunt Nancy Priest" ("The Eros of Childhood" 2003, p. 104). In sending Teddy's portrait to her aunt, as Gammel puts it, Emily is "reclaiming her body-self, and checking the repressive adult's power" (105).

Emily is also frustrated when Aunt Nancy refuses to return Teddy's drawing, though she promises to leave it to Emily in her will, and, indeed, the sketch is only returned to Emily after Aunt Nancy's death in the third novel. This eventual re-ownership echoes Emily's belated ownership of the Disappointed House and its contents at the end of the trilogy. Emily's inability to take ownership of some of her possessions until she is a fully-fledged adult has to do with both age and gender norms of the period. The frustrations that Emily experiences because of these conventions contribute significantly

to Emily's growth; she is determined to become a successful author in order to gain independence and agency.

Once Teddy gains fame "as a painter of lovely women" (*EQ* 165), Emily is relieved that he has become successful enough to "give up magazine work" because it means that "she would no longer dread to open a magazine lest she see her own face – or soul – looking out at her of some illustration – with 'Frederick Kent' scrawled in the corner, as if to say 'know all men by these presents that this girl is mine'" (165). Emily is in love with Teddy and thinks that he might have been in love with her, but through various misunderstandings, and a good dose of Emily's Murray pride, they have grown apart. Emily most resents the pictures in which the eyes look like hers: "To be able to paint her eyes like that Teddy *must* know everything that was in her soul. The thought always filled her with fury and shame – and a sense of horrible helplessness" (165) at the idea that she could never stoop to acknowledge that she has noticed this tendency. Montgomery is clearly aware that the painter of a portrait assumes a sort of power of ownership over the subject, of the power of ownership through portraiture, and through Emily she is highly critical of the autonomy that Teddy takes from Emily by incorporating her eyes and "soul" in his work without permission. Although they are estranged, Emily still feels that Teddy owns her because he knows her well enough to portray something more than just her physical features in his art. Emily eventually receives a letter from Ilse telling her that one of Teddy's portraits "had been accepted by the Paris *Salon*" (144), the official exhibition of the Académie des Beaux-Arts, and that it was a glorified version of the sketch Teddy had made of Emily that Aunt Nancy had kept. She says, "'I've seen that very smile on your face a hundred times … Teddy has caught the very soul of it'" (144). Teddy's habit of incorporating Emily's features into his work typifies the objectifying effects of the male gaze. It is not only her body that is objectified: Emily feels "a certain

small, futile anger with Teddy. What right had he who scorned her love and was indifferent to her friendship to paint her face – her soul – her secret vision – and hang it up for the world to gaze at?" (145). Emily does not seem to be aware of her own "ownership" of Teddy, that he is so haunted by her that he cannot help putting something of her in his paintings.

Ian Menzies claims that Teddy's initial gift to Emily of a painting of herself is "a noble and graceful gesture except that the gift announces his monomaniacal concern with his own art, while Emily, the subject, is enclosed and framed by it" ("The Moral of the Rose" 1992, p. 56). Teddy's enclosure or even entrapment of Emily foreshadows the fact that he claims ownership of her in adulthood. It is only at the end of the trilogy when the pair has reunited and clarified their misunderstandings that Teddy's "ownership" of Emily becomes a reality and Emily stands on equal footing (she "owns" him as well). Their unhealthy "ownership" of each other becomes a much healthier relationship of mutual belonging. In fact, Emily tells Aunt Elizabeth, "'Teddy has always belonged to me and I to him. Heart, soul and body'" (*EQ* 227). Montgomery's treatment of this ownership, of course, appears to imply that it is healthy and based on love in comparison with the rather sinister, one-way type of ownership originally implied by Teddy's painting of Emily's features, or indeed by Dean's claim on Emily throughout much of the trilogy.

Significantly, Teddy speaks of his possession of Emily during her engagement to Dean: "'For the first time it occurred to me that you really didn't belong to me, after all … But when you – *you* – saved me from going to my death on the *Flavian* I knew you *did* belong to me, once and for all, whether you knew it or not" (*EQ* 226). Interestingly, Teddy does not suggest here that he might belong to Emily as well. In this context, his and Dean's ideas of Emily as a possession might reveal something of Montgomery's mixed feelings about marriage and the gender imbalance that was prevalent in her

lifetime. Emily's statement that she and Teddy belong to each other places them on an equal footing, which could be Montgomery advocating for the equality in relationships, and life in general, that she herself did not enjoy. As Epperly points out in relation to Teddy, " … Emily is free to pursue her own work. Teddy, who becomes a famous painter, accepts Emily as his equal without question" (*Sweet-Grass* 147). It is unclear from Montgomery's journals whether she believed, or felt that others believed, that her work as a writer was "equal" to her husband's work as a minister.

These and other portraits in the trilogy all help Emily to "unframe" her own identity, to discover and create her own self in opposition to the people in the portraits; as Clement points out, Emily negotiates

> her visibility as a woman and writer as she discovers how her own narratives—past, present, and future—reflect, challenge, or subvert those of other women who are positioned as visual subjects. Although she ultimately attaches herself to a portrait painter whose reputation rests on pictures that she perceives to be a violation of the privacy of her innermost soul, Emily transcends these subject positions and becomes a creator in her own right as she unframes her sense of self and discovers her identity. ("Visual Culture" paragraph 2)

In other words, Emily becomes Teddy's equal as a creative person; by the end of the trilogy, she is no longer entrapped by his paintings of her "soul" and is, as Epperly puts it above, "free to pursue her own work" with Teddy alongside her.

Food and Related Objects: Kinship and Nostalgia

Food is a significant material item in fictional worlds. Joan Fitzpatrick, for example, point out that "literary critics who write about food understand that the use of food in novels, plays, poems, and other works of literature can help explain the complex relationship between the body, subjectivity, and social structure regarding consumption" (122). It lends verisimilitude to narratives and allows readers to relate to the characters in an imaginative but familiar way, and as a basic necessity of life, it is often present at

least in the background of fictional narratives. Montgomery enjoyed good food and often wrote about it in both her journals and her fiction. “I have never been one of those who consider ‘a liking for a tasty bit’ something to be rather ashamed of. Frankly, I’m very fond of a good table. I keep one myself and I like to sit down to one. It is an old Montgomery tradition … ” (*SJ II* 264), she writes. Elaine and Kelly Crawford note in *Aunt Maud’s Recipe Book* (a collection of Montgomery’s recipes including biographical information) that the shared experience of cooking “grants an intimacy that establishes membership in a small and select group, usually the family. Appreciation of food is a common thread running through the most divergent families … ” (1996, p. 129). This appreciation is echoed by the Murray traditions around food in the Emily trilogy. “New Moon sausages,” for example, “were the last word in sausages. Elizabeth Burnley had brought the recipe out from the Old Country and its secret was carefully guarded” (*ENM* 172). Montgomery chooses a rather dramatic way to describe a quotidian food item here, demonstrating her Romantic sensibilities as well as reinforcing the Murray proclivity for family tradition. She also reflects her own love for sausages as described in her journals: “I have quite a weakness for sausages and the picture of myself at home, eating sausages for supper, gave me enough grit to worry through that fearful drive,” referring to a drive home during stormy weather (*SJ II* 21). Readers are likely to be familiar with such a common food item and can therefore easily imagine Emily’s chagrin when she is denied sausages for supper as punishment: “Emily went to the pantry and ate her bread and milk, with the odour of the delicious sausages the others were eating for savour. Emily liked sausages … and Emily was hungry” (*ENM* 172).

Diane Tye, in discussing “the importance of food and memory in Montgomery’s work” (“Food and Memory” 2005, p. 113), states that Montgomery’s journal reveals her “relying on food memories to evoke the past” (112). Indeed, Montgomery writes, “It is

curious how old memories bob up. A phrase in what I have just written – 'the odors of supper seeping in from the kitchen' – makes me remember our old 'cook house at home' … Grandma made her cheese curds there, too, and put them into the 'hoops' which were then carried out to the cheese press at the corner of the orchard fence where a big gray stone served as a weight" (*SJ IV* 141). Montgomery's descriptions of the tastes and smells of food are highly evocative and closely tied to her childhood memories, often creating nostalgia for the past. Indeed, Cretien van Campen explains that "smell memories … are more evocative and more emotional than memories elicited by images and sounds" (*The Proust Effect,* 2014, p. 52). Montgomery uses such memories to enrich the Emily trilogy with realistic details. Emily, for example, is excited that "Aunt Elizabeth had begun making cheese – New Moon was noted for its cheeses – and Emily found the whole process absorbing, from the time the rennet was put in the warm new milk till the white curds were packed away in the hoop and put under the press in the old orchard, with the big, round grey 'cheese' stone to weight it down as it had weighed down New Moon cheese for a hundred years" (*ENM* 232). Montgomery here emphasises the importance of tradition along with the realistic details, provided by her own childhood, about the food itself, and the inclusion of the phrase "for a hundred years" evokes Montgomery's nostalgia.

Another example of the importance of food to the narrative occurs when Emily tells Cousin Jimmy that Aunt Ruth "'keeps up one New Moon tradish at least. She has a good table'" (*EC* 148). Emily notices the kinship that exists between Aunt Ruth and the rest of the family in terms of this tradition, despite Aunt Ruth's nastiness. Cousin Jimmy explains the difference between the women when he tells Emily that despite her provision of good food, Ruth is "'spite and malice and all uncharitableness … Dunno where they got her. Elizabeth is a crank but she's sound as a nut, and Laura's a saint. But Ruth's

worm-eaten'" (*ENM* 70). Montgomery again reflects the importance of tradition as expressed through food, and this is common in children's literature in general. As Nikolajeva points out, food often has a narrative function in children's literature as well as ritual significance (*Mythic* 11). She points out that " … rituals around food have their origins in the most basic aspects of human behavior …" (14). Although Montgomery does not emphasise food as a central aspect of her narrative, her treatment of it in the Emily trilogy clearly demonstrates Nikolajeva's claim that the "security of home, represented by food, is to be found in all types of children's fiction" (16). Nikolajeva also states that food can be "a symbol of community, of belonging to a certain group. By accepting or rejecting food, the protagonist is associated with a group of people" (*ibid*.). Emily, by partaking in the ritual of food and mealtimes with her Murray relatives, is automatically associated with the clan, and by providing her with this basic need, the Murrays include her as part of the family.

Another example of the verisimilitude provided by Montgomery's seemingly incidental references to food comes from Aunt Laura's provision of treats. Readers can relate to Emily's experiences of this aspect of her domestic sphere, connecting them to the protagonist. Most young readers, for example, will be comforted by the idea of Aunt Laura giving Emily a "big plummy cooky" and sending her to bed with kisses after the terrifying ordeal of being locked in the spare room (*ENM* 116). As Tye points out, "although food is not an emphasis in Montgomery's work … it nonetheless emerges … as an important means through which she develops character and creates convincing female fictional worlds" (112). Small objects like the "cooky," which Emily feels she does not deserve because she "disgraced the Murrays going barefoot" (*ENM* 116), provide opportunities for Montgomery to reveal aspects of her characters' personalities (as well as providing another example of Montgomery's use of clothing to demonstrate the

Murray pride). In this instance, Aunt Laura says that she would have also disobeyed Elizabeth and gone barefoot, revealing both sympathy and collusion with Emily and her own resentment of Elizabeth's power and control. Aunt Laura is portrayed as using food as a means of comfort and subversion, whereas Aunt Elizabeth uses it as a means of authority. Food is not the main emphasis here but provides both touches of verisimilitude and the means for Montgomery to develop her characters.

There are other references to food in the Emily trilogy that are apparently inspired by Montgomery's journals, including an incident to do with apples. Montgomery focuses a whole chapter on the apples that Emily eats in the neighbour Lofty John's workshop and the consequences of this act, and, as Tye states, "she reproduces the tastes of the apple varieties in her grandparents' orchard in *Emily of New Moon*" (117) Montgomery writes that they "had almost the only orchard in [Cavendish] at that time" (*SJ I* 50). She specifically describes the

> 'scabby apples,' that looked as if they had leprosy but were of unsurpassed deliciousness under their queer blotched skins; the 'little red apples,' scarcely bigger than a crab, deep crimson all over and glossy as satin, that had such a sweet, nutty flavour; and the big green 'sweet apples' that children usually thought the best of all. (*ENM* 133)

Such detailed, multisensory descriptions add to the realism of the narrative, and Montgomery was clearly inspired by the orchard at her grandparents' home. She writes nostalgically that "Grandmother was a crackerjack at making apple turnovers. She always made me one when she baked the pies. To run in from outdoors on a crisp cold autumn dusk and eat a hot, spicy, juicy apple 'turnover' was to pity the gods on high Olympus with nothing to eat but ambrosia" (*SJ IV* 142). Montgomery also uses a childhood incident as inspiration for the chapter in *Emily of New Moon* when Emily eats an apple that she believes has been poisoned for rats (132); one of Montgomery's relatives fell victim to the same prank (*SJ III* 147).

In the first novel, Cousin Jimmy recites his poetry when Emily and her friends are gathered around a huge iron pot to boil potatoes for the pigs; like the sausage recipe, the pot was brought from the "old country" a hundred years previously. Jimmy tells Emily that "'Blair Water folks think it old-fashioned; they've all got boiler-houses now, with built-in boilers; but as long as Elizabeth's boss at New Moon we'll use this'" (141), and Emily can understand this charm of the old pot. Food and its preparation is a matter of tradition to the "old-fashioned" Elizabeth, just as with other household items and rituals. Later, in *Emily Climbs*, Aunt Laura teaches Emily how to make a "Devil's Food" chocolate cake, for which no one else in Blair Water has the recipe; this serves to highlight both the exclusivity and superiority of the Murrays and the puritanism of Aunt Elizabeth, who refuses to use the name "Devil's Food" (*EC* 251). It also brings into focus the different attitudes and inclinations of the sisters. Food is used here to demonstrate Aunt Laura's view of food as a treat and something to be enjoyed, as it is when she gives Emily the cookie after her ordeal in the spare room (*ENM* 116), as well as a way to strengthen her bond with Emily and undermine Aunt Elizabeth's authority. Aunt Elizabeth, on the other hand, tends to withhold food as a punishment (*ENM* 172), giving Emily plain bread and milk when the family is eating sausages, and making her eat alone, denying her the social aspect of the family meal.

At the beginning of *Emily's Quest,* Montgomery uses real tea as a symbol of adulthood, as previously mentioned. Emily had been allowed to drink only cambric tea, a weak tea with milk and sugar given to children, while living with Aunt Ruth, but on her return to New Moon after her years in high school. Aunt Elizabeth "permitted Emily to drink real tea" and "thereby tacitly consented Emily to grow up" (*EQ* 1). Montgomery depicts food and drink here as a means of control: Aunt Elizabeth decides when Emily can be treated like an adult by controlling her access to certain foods.

Emily's acceptance into the Murray clan and the New Moon household is therefore marked by particular foods like tea and cake, which supports Tye's contention that "the everyday routines of which daily meals are part and the repetition of particular foods builds a familiarity that can be key to children's sense of security and family" (118). As Tye also points out, Montgomery "prides herself on providing her own guests with well cooked meals and ample servings … She sees it as part of her Montgomery lineage and a way by which she expresses her family identity and upholds the family name" (119). This pride is reflected in Murray traditions such as never having an empty pantry, which Emily upholds by making a cake for unexpected visitors when her aunts are away (*ENM* 177). The cake earns rare praise from Aunt Elizabeth, who tastes it and says, "'Well, you have got *some* Murray in you anyway'" (*ibid.*). Although this is rather lukewarm praise, Emily is pleased because it is the first time Aunt Elizabeth has praised her at all; food here provides a significant moment in their relationship. Emily's dominant emotion in this instance is pride because, recognising the value of providing food for visitors, she "'had saved the Murrays from disgrace'" (*ibid.*).

Like the Emily trilogy, *Jane of Lantern Hill* is a good example of a narrative that features significant objects that have to do with food. Jane Stuart, a shy and awkward young girl who lives in Toronto with her mother and tyrannical grandmother, is reunited with her father, who lives on PEI. He buys a small house for them to live in during the summers, and Jane grows in confidence as she discovers her gift for domestic arts as well as her affinity with her father.

Montgomery describes Jane's triumphant experiences in setting up housekeeping and learning to cook, providing specific details about her ability to find what she and her father need: "'Oh, there's an iron frying pan in the bottom of the cupboard,' said Jane serenely. 'And a three-legged cooking pot'" (81). These details underline Jane's self-

discovery and growth in confidence, with her natural competence in the domestic sphere given the opportunity to show itself. For example, "the stove was a bit wobbly on one of its feet, but Jane found a piece of flat stone in the yard which fitted nicely and everything was shipshape […] Aloud all she said was … but she nearly burst with pride as she said it … 'How do you take your tea, dad?'" (82). Then, "the day Jane achieved unaided a dinner of roast lamb with dressing, creamed peas, and a plum pudding […] was the proudest day of her life" (103). This mirrors Emily's pride in her success at baking a cake to uphold the Murray tradition of having food on hand for unexpected guests.

In *Jane of Lantern Hill*, such food-related domestic objects act as a vehicle for the protagonist's self-discovery and self-expression, as well as her growth in confidence. In the Emily trilogy, food also serves to help Emily gain confidence in herself, but this confidence is more about finding her place in the Murray clan. As a character, Emily has a stronger sense of self to begin with than Jane, so the role of food in the trilogy has more to do with kinship than individual growth.

Pat of Silver Bush and *Mistress Pat* are particularly rich in domestic objects, including food. Pat is very attached to the traditions around food at Silver Bush, begging Judy not to give up making cheese and exclaiming that she hates changes when Judy tells her that people were starting to get all their cheese from factories (*PSB* 6). She and Judy both like the fact that the water comes from an "old-fashioned open well with a handle and roller and a long rope with a bucket at its end … Pat was glad Judy wouldn't let them change the old well. It was beautiful …" (10). Pat likes to "have the milk poured over their porridge out of her 'cream cow' … that little old brown jug in the shape of a cow, with her tail curled up in a most un-cowlike fashion for a handle and her mouth for a spout" (27), and the description is so specific that it is easy to imagine that Montgomery based it on a real object. The Emily trilogy also features many autobiographical details,

as we have seen from the references to Montgomery's journals, making these novels similar in some ways.

Other Domestic Objects and Family Heirlooms

Emily is fascinated by the family tale of the Lost Diamond, which had belonged to a relative and was lost decades previously near the New Moon summer house (*ENM* 75). She eventually finds it in *Emily's Quest.* The diamond, a valuable clan heirloom, is a symbol of the Murray wealth and status, and Emily's finding it deepens her connection to the family. Her Uncle Wallace believes that it should be sold and Emily given only her mother's share of the money, but the others believe that, as Aunt Elizabeth states, "'one shouldn't sell a family diamond'" (141), highlighting yet again the strong sense of tradition in the Murray family. It is significant that Aunt Elizabeth argues in favour of Emily keeping the diamond: this could be regarded as an example of Montgomery's feminist leanings, with a matriarchal figure influencing the decision about an important family heirloom, as well as Aunt Elizabeth's acceptance of Emily as a Murray.

Cousin Jimmy, by contrast, brings attention to the more fairy-tale qualities of the diamond, telling Emily that it will bring her luck and asking if he can hold it sometimes. He says, "'When I look into anything like that I – I – find myself. I'm not simple Jimmy Murray then – I'm what I would have been if I hadn't been pushed into a well'" (142) – drawing attention to the fact that, like the diamond, some part of him was lost. This statement intimates that Jimmy is not referring to his place in the clan because of the diamond being a family heirloom but to the diamond as a beautiful, almost supernatural object, akin to a magic looking-glass, that reminds him of his personal identity (apart from clan associations). The diamond here stands in contrast to the dark, negative underworld associations of the well, which will be discussed below. As with the Jimmy-books, Emily's objects highlight the loss of Jimmy's potential as a poet and hint that he

is living somewhat vicariously through Emily. He seems to feel no bitterness or resentment toward her, though; he is glad that Emily has the diamond and always enthusiastically supports her and her career.

Wells are a recurring object of significance in the Emily trilogy, which is not surprising, given Montgomery's penchant for Romantic and fairy-tale allusions. Along with the well into which Aunt Elizabeth pushed Cousin Jimmy as a child, there is a well in a pasture near New Moon that sparks Emily's curiosity and imagination, resulting in life-altering consequences for other characters. Cousin Jimmy tells Emily that two brothers had dug the well but quarrelled over a detail, with one killing the other in anger (*ENM* 148). The well was planked over and never used, and Cousin Jimmy had written a poem about it that "made Emily's blood run cold with a fearful joy … ever since she had wanted to see the old well" (*ibid*.). This "fearful joy" reflects Montgomery's fascination with the sublime and uncanny and her enjoyment of the Gothic. For example, in her journals, Montgomery writes, "I read a perfectly harrowing ghost story … The story was [Edward Bulwer] Lytton's 'The Haunters and the Haunted' and I can conscientiously recommend it" (*SJ I* 283), and discusses her long-standing appreciation of Bulwer-Lytton's Gothic novel *Zanoni* (*SJ III* 166). Montgomery imbues Emily with this same fascination: Emily writes to her father that she often worries over Ilse's mother and also about the story of the brothers at the well (*ENM* 174). Emily is deeply disturbed when she hears the shocking story of Ilse's mother, who is believed to have abandoned her husband and child to run off with a cousin. In the delirium of measles, Emily conflates the two stories and states that Ilse's mother actually fell into the old well and died (322); this is discovered to be the truth, and Beatrice Burnley's reputation, along with Ilse's relationship with her father, are restored (327). Emily's fixation on the well and the

sublime horror and fascination with the stories connected to it furnish the impetus for this climactic episode. Dr Burnley, looking for a logical explanation, says that

> 'these things are beyond us … Emily has evidently been told about Beatrice and worried over it … and the tales of the old Lee well naturally made a deep impression on the mind of a sensitive child keenly alive to dramatic values. In her delirium she mixed this all up with the well-known fact of Jimmy's tumble into the New Moon well – and the rest was coincidence.' (325)

Lawson draws a parallel between this climax and the beginning of the novel:

> Emily's narrative of Beatrice Burnley's death – of the mother's joyful return home to her baby tragically cut short by a fall into an uncovered well – recalls her own dancing and joyful return home in the first chapter, only to have that home, as she reaches its threshold, metaphorically cast into an abyss by the sudden fact of her father's imminent death. The deep, dark well in which Beatrice Burnley dies is thus in one sense a figuration of lack, of the antithesis of home, and of the sudden dizzying trauma associated with loss … Emily's uncanny exploration of Beatrice Burnley's death thus could be said to function as a repetition and resolution of Emily's own traumatic return home. (79)

The well, therefore, can be seen as a symbol of the "antithesis of home" as well as a plot device used to advance the narrative toward the novel's climax.

Other scholars have also commented on the symbolism of the well as an underground object with parallels to graves. Menzies posits that the well might appear in *Emily of New Moon* "because Montgomery is alerting the reader to its true purpose as a literary device. It is a symbolic entry point into a place where stories come from" (56), referring to the stories of Ilse's mother and the murdered brother. Less obviously, Menzies suggests, however, that the well "may also serve as a reference to Montgomery's mother's grave" – a connection to Ilse's mother, whose grave, until Emily's discovery, has been the old well, and to Emily herself, who has lost her mother. Montgomery's autobiographical insertion of motherless characters who are connected by an object common at the time provides further evidence of the significance of objects to the narrative. Lawson further suggests that the well "also bears an important relationship to the novel's continuing representation of female rage and familial aggression," pointing

out that it "figures in the story on two occasions prior to Emily's hallucination. First is its connection to female aggression in the story of Cousin Jimmy being pushed down the New Moon well [by his sister]. Second is the story of domestic rage in the story of the Lee brothers who dig the fatal well together … Both occasions are thus enmeshments of familial aggression and rage" ("Adolescence" 37). Regardless of one's interpretation of the use of wells in the trilogy, they are clearly a significant object used to advance the narrative, particularly its more Gothic elements.

Emily's engagement ring from Dean is apparently less uncanny but still one of the darker aspects of the trilogy. It quickly becomes a negative object that represents imprisonment and Dean's continued ownership of Emily; Montgomery writes that to Emily, the ring sometimes "seemed like a fetter" (*EQ* 80). It is very possible that Montgomery was connecting her misgivings about her own marriage to Emily's ill-advised decision to marry Dean. In her journals, Montgomery writes that during her wedding dinner, she

> felt a sudden horrible inrush of *rebellion* and *despair*… I felt like a prisoner … something in me – something wild and free and untamed – something that Ewan had not tamed – could never tame – something that did not acknowledge him as master – rose up in one frantic protest against the fetters which bound me. At that moment if I could have torn the wedding ring from my finger and so freed myself I would have done it! But it was too late – and the realization that it was too late fell over me like a black cloud of wretchedness. *(SJ II* 68)

This reference to the ring hints at the fairy-tale quality of rings, which often cast a spell on the wearer until removed. Foreshadowing the breaking of her engagement, Emily takes it off once "just to feel free for a little while" (80). When she ultimately returns it to Dean, "she felt sick with regret when she realised it was gone – forever. For with it went something that had made life beautiful for years – Dean's wonderful friendship and companionship … She had not known how bitter a thing freedom could be" (98). Emily is left, however, with the "mocking triumph that Dean had at last admitted she could

write" (98), so although the loss of the ring represents the loss of a friendship, it also symbolises a significant advance in her confidence as a writer as well as the freedom from a toxic relationship. This dichotomy around the ring demonstrates Montgomery's skill as a writer in dealing with complex personalities and relationships. The symbolism of rings was significant to Montgomery in her own life: in her journal, she writes of a ring that she had given to a teenage sweetheart that was sent back to her after his death:

> … When I opened the letter I found in it a tiny packet enclosing a little gold ring worn almost to a thread – the ring I gave Will six years ago and which he had always worn to the day of his death. I slipped it once more on my finger and thought of all the changes that have been, of all that has come and gone since last I wore it. It seemed like a golden link between me and my lost self, between the present and the past. Poor little ring! I shall always wear it in remembrance of those dear old days. Its circle is the symbol of eternity and eternal friendship. (*SJ I* 196)

Following Emily's broken engagement to Dean, Montgomery uses other domestic objects to provide focal points in the narrative regarding Emily's string of love interests that summer, when "the Murray clan had a really terrible time … so many beaus and not one of them such as the connection could approve of" (*EQ* 129). These episodes serve to highlight Emily's uniqueness among her clan, who are shocked and bewildered at her unusual suitors, as well as providing an injection of light-hearted humour after the dark period following Emily's accident and engagement to Dean. One of the men, Emily claims, "'was the kind of man who would give his wife a vacuum cleaner for a Christmas present,'" and Aunt Elizabeth despairs that Emily "'will not take anything seriously'" (131). Another, whom Emily rejects because they had only just met (and because he seemed less than sane), grabbed "Aunt Elizabeth's rock-crystal goblet with its ruby base – a treasured heirloom of New Moon" (132) and "dashed it violently against the stove" (136). Aunt Elizabeth thinks that there must be "something wrong with a girl when a man proposed marriage to her at first meeting. And hurled heirloom goblets at inoffensive stoves" (137). Interestingly, Aunt Elizabeth blames Emily for the loss of the heirloom,

not the strange behaviour of her suitor. Then, Emily befriends a visiting Japanese prince, who gives Emily "a little frog beautifully cut out of moss agate" (137), an object only given as a marriage and betrothal gift in the prince's family (and another of Montgomery's fairy-tale allusions). The Murrays are scandalised about the possibility that Emily might be engaged to this suitor, and Emily is annoyed and refuses to answer their questions because of "the unnecessary way her clan had heckled her all summer over suitors that were not of her choosing and whom there was not the slightest danger of her taking seriously" (138). Demonstrating the overt racism of her time and culture, Montgomery writes that "no Murray before her would ever have dreamed of marrying any foreigner, much less a Japanese. But then of course she was temperamental" (*ibid*.). To the Murrays' relief, the prince is summoned back to an arranged marriage in Japan, but he leaves the agate frog with Emily. These small objects, the goblet and the frog, are minor focal points in this part of the novel, but Montgomery uses them to provide some levity and increase the sense of drama in the scenes. Emily even jokes about the vacuum cleaner, a very modern domestic object that the tradition-bound Aunt Elizabeth would certainly shun. These objects also help to highlight Emily's uniqueness among her clan; despite the fact that they have long accepted her into their family, the Murrays still regard her as an unusual and unpredictable young woman. This uniqueness is also reflected in the unusual nickname that the teacher Mr. Carpenter has for Emily; he calls her "Jade" (*ENM* 334, *EC* 13), presumably after the green stone, but Montgomery makes no explanation for this anywhere in the trilogy. The reader can only assume that Mr. Carpenter chooses this object to refer to Emily because of her unique beauty and personality.

Conclusion

Domestic objects are clearly significant in the Emily trilogy, with everything from food to clothing to portraits fulfilling various roles. These objects help create atmosphere, develop characters and their relationships, and reflect aspects of Montgomery's own life in this semi-autobiographical series, and they help situate Montgomery's work in literary traditions such as fairy tales and the Gothic. Montgomery's style of realism is well served by her specific descriptions of objects and by the way she uses them to develop her characters. The physical presence of such objects within the text lends the narrative verisimilitude and aid the reader in imagining Emily's experience of her fictional world, just as studying real-world objects reveals much about our own lives, past and present. As we have seen, Montgomery weaves small, everyday household objects throughout the Emily trilogy in a way that demonstrates their importance to her narrative and her protagonist's life. These objects have various purposes, from practical to symbolic, but, as demonstrated, all tend to have some role, subtle or otherwise, in Emily's development and in her relationships.

We will now turn our attention to the natural world, where many objects hold a similarly significant role in Emily's life and growth.

Chapter Four

Natural Objects

"I had besides, then as now, two great refuges and consolations – the world of nature and the world of books. They kept life in my soul; they made me love my home because of my dreams and rambles and the deep joy and delight they gave me – because of the halo they threw over what was otherwise bare and savorless." (*SJ I* 301)

Introduction

Having examined the role of domestic objects, houses, and writing-related objects in the Emily trilogy, we now turn our attention to a very different, but equally significant, category of material culture – that of natural objects. This term refers to any physical object in nature, from stars to rocks (as discussed in the Introduction). The natural world is of the utmost importance to Montgomery, as evidenced by her many journal entries on the subject and by its continual presence in her fiction, particularly the Emily trilogy.

Montgomery's descriptions, particularly of the natural world, are often multisensory, and there is some evidence that she might have been synaesthetic[49] or at least had an understanding of this condition, as evidenced in another of her novels, *The Golden Road* (1913), sequel to *The Story Girl* (1911), which features a girl who is clearly synaesthetic. Sara Stanley describes her thoughts as being coloured: "'Why, I can always see the colour of any thought I think' … the months of the year ran through all the tints of the spectrum, the days of the week were arrayed as Solomon in his glory, morning was

[49] "Production, from a sense-impression of one kind, of an associated mental image of a sense-impression of another kind" (Oxford English Dictionary, https://www.oed.com/dictionary/synaesthesia_n?tab=meaning_and_use, accessed 19/4/24).

golden, noon orange, evening crystal blue, and night violet. Every idea came to her mind robed in its own especial hue" (87). Epperly states that

> Whether or not [Montgomery] was herself synaesthetic, she created images that enabled readers to experience, through metaphor, colours, shapes, textures, tastes, fragrances, movement, and space. All three *Emily* books – like all Montgomery's books and yet differently – are filled with passionate nature descriptions that rely on synaesthetic metaphor … Montgomery … show[s] synaesthetic nature descriptions as mirroring the growing consciousness of a woman who also writes. ("Green Alternative" 215)

For example, in *Emily's Quest,* Montgomery describes the "violet-sprinkled valleys of spring – blossom-script of summer – minstrel-firs of autumn – pale fires of the Milky Way on winter nights – soft, new-mooned skies of April – gnomish beauty of dark Lombardies against a moonrise – deep of sea calling to deep of wind – lonely yellow leaves falling in October dusks – woven moonlight in the orchard" (221), a multisensory feast that Emily is able to experience fully, despite her struggles, due to her maturing consciousness. Epperly describes the multisensory quality of Montgomery's nature descriptions in *Anne of Green Gables*: "Despite the obvious preoccupation with colour, Montgomery's descriptions also appeal to touch and hearing and taste and smell – the 'satin-smooth roads with the snow crisping under the runners' [152], the spicy scent of ferns, the fragrance of trampled mint, and the tang of the sea are never far away" (*Sweet-Grass* 28); such descriptions can be found throughout Montgomery's oeuvre.

As discussed in the introduction to this thesis, scholars of material culture studies disagree on whether natural objects should be included in the definition of material culture. As stated in the Introduction, I argue that any object, created or manipulated by humans or not, is physically available to the senses and can have a role in human society and relationships and should therefore have the potential to be considered "material culture." In Montgomery's fiction, natural objects are often treated with the same sense of significance as any other object and therefore cannot be excluded from her world of

material culture. Additionally, natural objects are often used and manipulated by humans and therefore contribute to culture as much as any manufactured object.

Laura M. Robinson, in her essay "Kindred Spirits," alludes to the blurred lines between human culture and nature when she discusses "how Montgomery situates the human being as part of nature" and states that "nature is not simply landscape or the nonhuman but is also the human in its environment and … in its social environment" (172). Montgomery's fiction illustrates the idea that there is "a complete mode of life whose basic ordering principle is Nature as the original substance from which value is derived. In creating or manufacturing objects, man makes himself, through the imposition of a form … into the transubstantiator of nature … " (Baudrillard 27). Montgomery's created characters and cultures, rooted as they are in the landscape and natural objects around them, seem to have been "transubstantiated" from the natural world, and their creations, such as Emily's writings, are most certainly transubstantiated from the "original substance" of nature. This is hardly surprising when we consider Montgomery's formative years, during which she spent as much time as possible outdoors. According to Mary Rubio, the "happy, active, free outdoor life … in her Cavendish surroundings was an ideal palliative for her overly sensitive and emotional nature" (*Wings* 29). By the time she was twenty, "rendering nature was already Maud's forte, given her wide reading of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century landscape word-painting" (82),[50] and this ability is, I would argue, one of the primary reasons her writing has enjoyed enduring popularity.

[50] William Wordsworth, for example, is famous for his "landscape word painting," such as these lines from "Influence of Natural Objects in Calling Forth and Strengthening the Imagination in Boyhood and Early Youth" (1815): "…In November days,/When vapours rolling down the valleys made/A lonely scene more lonesome; among woods/At noon; and 'mid the calm of summer nights,/When, by the margin of the trembling lake,/Beneath the gloomy hills, homeward I went/In solitude, such intercourse was mine: … The leafless trees and every icy crag/Tinkled like iron; while far-distant hills/Into the tumult sent an alien sound/Of melancholy, not unnoticed while the stars,/Eastward, were sparkling clear, and in the west/The orange sky of evening died away" (https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/45522/influence-of-natural-objects-in-calling-forth-and-strengthening-the-imagination-in-boyhood-and-early-youth, stanza 2)

Montgomery's first novel, *Anne of Green Gables,* is well known for its vibrant descriptions of the natural world and for its protagonist's connection to it. The natural world is central to the character of Anne Shirley, and natural objects provide comfort, a source of pleasure and beauty, and a platform for her vivid imagination. Anne often talks about trees and flowers in particular, especially during her early development, and Montgomery is very specific about the types of trees and flowers that Anne encounters. Montgomery, throughout her life writing, demonstrates a particular awareness and appreciation of nature from a young age; it is not surprising, therefore, that this found its way into her fiction. Waterston claims that the "vivid sensuality" in *Anne of Green Gables* "erupts like Montgomery's own ecstatic response to the rich sounds and sights, odours and textures of her environment of woods and sea-shore and farm home" (*Magic Island* 14), and this sensuality is present in all her novels. Waterston points out Anne's autobiographical qualities: she is "an essential part of Montgomery herself, sensuous as child and adult" (*ibid.*). Montgomery never strayed far from the natural world in her novels, even in parts that are set in less rural locations (including the big city of Toronto in *Jane of Lantern Hill*), but the Emily trilogy is the most saturated in natural objects that shape the life of the protagonist in vital and significant ways. Emily, for example, writes that at the age of eight, she "'found a little hollow between two spruces that was just carpeted with tiny, bright-green leaves, when everything else was still brown and faded. They were so beautiful that the *flash* came as I looked at them'" (*EC* 37).

The centrality of the natural world is evident from the first page of the Emily trilogy, when natural objects are referenced in the description of the setting. Montgomery's first introduction of Emily herself includes the fact that she is not lonely because she has the Wind Woman and the trees (*ENM* 1), and it discusses the "eerie beauty" of her twilight walk "over the fields to the spruce barrens" (6). Emily's full name, Emily Byrd Starr, is

an unusual compendium of natural objects, with its thinly disguised references to birds and stars. Her father described the night she was born as having "a west wind … blowing silvery clouds over the moon. There was a star or two here and there. In our tiny garden … it was dark and blossomy" (15). These strong associations between the moment of Emily's birth and natural objects are very apt for a such a Romantically inspired character. Later, Emily, after escaping from the spare room at New Moon where she had been locked as a punishment, says, "'I feel as if I was a little bird that had just got out of a cage" (112), reinforcing the association of her middle name, Byrd, with the natural world.

Particularly in her younger years, Emily tends to anthropomorphise natural objects such as the wind and specific trees; this is a common trait in children's literature. Nikolajeva explains that the act of ascribing human consciousness to non-human things and " … the tendency to anthropomorphise animals, inanimate objects, natural phenomena and even abstract notions is a way we try to understand the world … " (*Reading for Learning* 103). Emily's "Wind Woman," as previously discussed, provides comfort on her first night at New Moon when she has to sleep in Aunt Elizabeth's dark, forbidding bedroom: "she heard the Wind Woman at the window – she heard the little, low, whispering murmur of the June night breeze, cooing, friendly, lovesome" (*ENM* 60). As she matures, Emily naturally grows out of this tendency as she learns to understand the natural world on its own terms, and, by the end of the trilogy, as Clement points out, Emily has "eschewed the anthropomorphism that hinders a truly empathic relationship with nature and experienced a more mature empathy with all aspects of sentient life … " ("Poetic Sensibility" 194) – and, I would argue, also with non-sentient aspects of the natural world.

Romanticism and Natural Objects

As previously discussed, the young Emily is an ideal example of the typical Romantic child; she maintains a deep connection to the natural world. In fact, as stated above, the first book opens with a description of the house in which Emily lives in its natural setting and compares it to a natural object (see Chapter One, page 43). Montgomery was, as we have seen, deeply influenced by her favourite British Romantic poets, including Wordsworth, and, quoting his "Ode: Intimations of Immortality," Montgomery writes about her local landscape in her journal, where there is clear inspiration for Emily:

> … everything was invested with a fairy grace emanating from my own imagination – the trees that whispered nightly around the old house where I slept, the paths and lanes where I loved to stray, the fields, each individualized by some oddity of fence or shape, the sea whose murmur was never out of my ears – all were radiant with 'the glory and the dream.' (*SJ I* 121)[51]

Epperly points out that this poem, a childhood favourite of Montgomery's, "is shown … to be woven into Emily's understanding of her own depressions and transcendent joys, reminding her … of the enduring blessing of nature" (*Sweet-grass* 200). Montgomery wrote Emily as a similarly Romantic-inspired creator; Epperly says that "in the Emily books, the writer Emily not only gives us many of [Montgomery's] descriptions themselves, but also … pays tribute to one inspirer of them. We are never to forget with Emily that she is a worshipper of nature and literature – and a worshipper who also creates" (*ibid*.). Emily, as a writer, embodies Montgomery as a worshipper and creator.

Montgomery's Romantic influences, including Wordsworth and Washington Irving, are easily discerned in Emily and her other heroines; John Sorfleet, for example, argues that Anne is "attuned to nature and the powers of the imagination—an outstanding example of the child as conceived of by the Romantic poets (also suggested by the

[51] This quotation from Wordsworth is, incidentally, the title of chapter 36 of *Anne of Green Gables*.

allusions to Wordsworth, etc., in the novel)" ("From Pagan to Christian" 180). As Epperly points out, "all of Montgomery's (novel) heroines experience what can be called communion with nature – a reciprocal, animated interaction that renews the spirit or awakens it" ("Natural Bridge" 89). These influences are most obviously presented through Emily, though, because of her literary ambitions; she often refers to these Romantic writers, including several mentions of her reading of Irving's *The Alhambra* (*ENM* 157) and with Dean in *Emily Climbs* (29). Emily expresses her Romantic leanings perfectly when she writes that "'that book always makes me feel as if I had opened a little door and stepped straight into fairyland'" (*ibid*.). These Romantic influences on Montgomery and, by extension, her characters, are of great significance to a discussion of natural objects in her novels because of the importance that the Romantics placed upon the natural world and on the human connection to it. Epperly writes that "Montgomery, like Wordsworth, Emerson, and Irving, incorporated into her seeing and into the writing about her seeing not only a complex understanding of nature … but also a belief in the kinship of all things in relation to each other" (91). Epperly also, in the introduction to her book *The Fragrance of Sweet-Grass,* discusses Montgomery's "idealized, late-Romantic, occasionally transcendentalist nature descriptions" as being "wonderfully attractive and versatile," with the natural world being "a continuing source of joy, beauty, and power for the female hero" (9). Montgomery idealised the natural world in a manner that enables deep connections between her characters and nature but still presents a realistic portrayal of her Canadian settings.

There is, of course, a Canadian element to Montgomery's Romanticism, as her work could not fail to be influenced by the landscape in which she lives and works. Margaret Steffler claims that Montgomery values Wordsworth's poignancy and that it appears in her work as a celebration of the Romantic temperament (which is "fully developed" in

Emily) but is rooted in the Canadian landscape of PEI, despite its origins in Britain's Lake District ("Brian O'Connal and Emily Byrd Star" 89). With Emily, Steffler states, Montgomery has "effectively transported the Romantic Child" to the "receptive Canadian landscape … of the Maritime island" where she "flourish[es] in the sublimity" of the landscape (*ibid.*). Emily is a truly Canadian Romantic character who flourishes in Montgomery's rendition of the landscape of PEI.

Romanticism versus Modernism: Pine Woods and Pigsties

In *Emily Climbs*, Montgomery quotes the Canadian Confederation poet Bliss Carman directly, writing that Emily "was one of 'the eternal slaves of beauty,' of whom Carman sings, who are yet 'masters of the world'" (151). Montgomery's Romantic designation, Bode and Mitchell claim, "not only links her to a British tradition but also aligns her with her Canadian contemporaries," specifically the Confederation poets, including Carman – "the Canadian poet to whom Montgomery was most closely drawn, as reflected in her many allusions to his work, especially in the semiautobiographical *Emily* series" (*Matter of Nature(s)* 4). Writing during the burgeoning Modernist period's "demands for starker realities and more abstract forms of expression detracted from the critical appeal of the Confederation poets and Montgomery's work alike" – neither Carman nor Montgomery "benefitted critically from their powerful, romantic renderings of nature" (7). It is not clear whether Montgomery knew whether her clear rejection of the Modernist movement in the Emily trilogy (and her less overt but still obvious decision to eschew it in most of her work) was connected to her lack of critical acclaim during her lifetime. This rejection of Modernism comes most plainly through her character Mr. Carpenter, Emily's harsh but helpful teacher, who tells her to ignore "'those howls about realism. Remember – pine woods are just as real as – pigsties – and a darn sight pleasanter to be in'" (*EQ* 24). This is a thinly veiled response to Canadian modernist authors such

as Morley Callaghan and their increasingly popular realism and naturalism[52]; as Rubio points out, "the new post-war Modernist critics called for a tough, hard-edged, pared-down style, as well as gritty subject matter … Maud's writing – humorous, domestic, and localized in a rural region – fell short on all counts" (*Wings* 463). Montgomery, Rubio states, "often lapsed into sensuously evocative and lush 'purple prose,' particularly when writing about nature. The Romantic and Victorian poets had been an important early influence on her, with the belief that Nature should be a primary subject for art" (*ibid.*). Mr. Carpenter's reference to "pine woods" is significant in the context of this thesis; Montgomery here is drawing attention to the physical reality and presence of natural objects that she argues have an equally valid place in literature to the less pleasant "pigsties" of modernist literature (such as, perhaps, the book that Dean accidentally lends Emily that she finds so upsetting). Johnson points out that " … Montgomery's representations of landscape (which somehow continue to captivate and enchant despite twentieth century modernism and postmodernism …) overtly describe a real-life geography and topography … " (13), highlighting the realistic nature of Montgomery's writing.

The above quotation of Mr. Carpenter is directly based on a journal entry, as Lefebvre points out:

> In a journal entry dated 1928 but not published until 1992, Montgomery attacked Callaghan's debut novel *Strange Fugitive* (1928), calling it 'a much be-trumpeted novel' which she found 'the deadliest dull thing I ever tried to read': 'Callaghan's idea of "Literature" seems to be to photograph a latrine or pigstye [sic] meticulously and have nothing else in the picture. Now, latrines and pigstyes [sic] are not only malodorous but very uninteresting. We have a latrine in our backyard. I see it when I look that way—and I also see before it a garden of color and perfume—over it a blue sky—behind it a velvety pine caressing crystal air—a river of silver and aquamarine—misty hills of glamor beyond. These things are as "real" as the latrine and can all be seen at the same time. Callaghan sees nothing but the latrine and

[52] According to Nancy W. Fraser, naturalism could be categorised as a branch of twentieth-century realism that, "by portrayal of the darker side of life, can include social criticism" ("Development of Realism" 288).

> insists blatantly that you see nothing else also. If you insist on seeing sky and river and pine you are a "sentimentalist" and the truth is not in you.' (*SJ III* 387, qtd in "Pigsties and Sunsets" 125)

Montgomery clearly believes in the value of a more Romantic, beauty-centred theory of literature inspired by the physical presence of natural objects, and she adamantly continued to reject the Modernist style despite the fact that this meant risking critical oblivion.

The Nature/Culture Divide (or Lack Thereof)

Montgomery's work is almost synonymous with her vivid descriptions of the natural world. She often introduces natural objects into domestic or manufactured spaces: for example, in *Anne of Green Gables*, Anne decorates her room with "the cracked blue jug full of apple blossoms" (162) and the dining-room table with an "abundance of roses and ferns" (174). Bode writes that "Although nature was a source of intense joy for Montgomery, and one of her aesthetic strengths is her ability to evoke a deep appreciation of and respect for the natural world, she never felt … the need to choose between civilization and wilderness" ("Indoors and Out" 75). In fact, I would argue, Montgomery did not even consider the difference when writing her novels; Bode goes on to say that "her perspective on the natural landscape includes the human presence within it" and that "Montgomery's outlook on the sentient world and its habitations … look[s] not to divisions among species and between the human and nonhuman but, rather, to continuities and connections" (76). Montgomery's perspective is certainly one of connection rather than disconnection.

This blending of the natural with human culture is gaining new academic attention. Regarding the "new approaches to understanding human and nonhuman relationships continually emerging" in the twenty-first century, Bode and Mitchell point to political ecologist Jane Bennett's work on "vital materiality" and "material vitality" and how she

"advocates a sharpened focus on the materiality of humans and the vitality of nature. By reframing both matter and agency, she challenges the boundaries between culture and nature" (*Matter of Nature(s)* 4). They also state that

> critical reassessments of Romanticism, the aesthetic tradition closely involved with nature, also offer new insights into the past representations of human and nonhuman relationships. Such developments introduce a range of opportunities for enriched readings of Montgomery who … clearly privileged her own relationship to nature. (*ibid.*)

Montgomery, indeed, "privileged her own relationship to nature" and paid no heed to the divide between natural objects and manufactured: her descriptions include both and, indeed, seem at times to blend the two seamlessly. A close reading of the Emily trilogy demonstrates this tendency on many occasions. For example, when Cousin Jimmy shows Emily around the farm for the first time, Emily sees the "old orchard," which "seemed to be a delightful place where trees had come up at their own sweet will … where blue-eyed ivy twined about their roots and wild-briar roses rioted over the grey paling fence. Straight ahead … was a little slope covered with huge white birches, among which were the big New Moon barns …" (*ENM* 63). Fence and barns coexist with trees and flowers, creating a bucolic scene that delights character and reader alike. As explored in Chapter One of this thesis, Montgomery often describes manufactured objects such as buildings in their natural context, continually reinforcing her emphasis on the significance of both to her narratives. About New Moon, Bode writes that "among the several houses that Emily encounters, the dwelling's relationships to nature are a significant factor in determining their value. Emily finds pleasure in New Moon when her first sight of the 'big house' has it 'peering [at her] whitely through a veil of trees'" ("Indoors and Out" 83) – and this house's relationship to nature is its first indication of its value for Emily.

Montgomery's description of Cousin Jimmy's garden is similarly seamless in its inclusion of both natural and manufactured: there is a "high hedge of clipped spruce all

around it, spaced at intervals by tall lombardies," a "long row of peonies," a "stone bench, made of flat shore stones worn smooth," and "an old summer house" (*ENM* 68). As in most gardens, natural objects like trees are shaped by the human effort of clipping, and manufactured objects such as benches are made from natural objects like stones. According to D. Miller, the garden space "differs from the interior because of its interface with 'nature'"; he considers the garden "as mediator linked to the natural, social and cultural environment" … the natural "is transformed with the help of artefacts" (*Material Cultures* 48). In the case of the Emily trilogy, Montgomery creates a garden that mediates with ease the natural and manufactured, transforming the garden space into a combination of the "natural, social, and cultural environment;" it is neither indoors nor wholly wild but a perfectly balanced blend of both.

The idea of the garden as a mediator between the natural world and the manufactured indoor world is discussed also by Carroll, who points out that a garden is "a deliberately distilled version of the natural world. Like the house, it is kept strictly separate from other less selective, less rarefied spaces" (*Landscape* 52). She states that " … the garden is not a true domestic space; its boundaries cannot be fully secured and defended like those of the sanctuary topos. The garden … is open to the earth and also to the sky and so to many kinds of attack which the house, by virtue of its enclosed nature, resists. The garden, in truth, lies between the house and the wider world" (*ibid*.). The New Moon garden does not suffer from any real attack during the span of the trilogy, but this is explained during one of Montgomery's Gothic moments, when Cousin Jimmy is introducing Emily to New Moon and his garden: "and then a strange sound crept into [Cousin Jimmy's] voice and an odd look into his eyes. 'There is a spell woven round this garden. The blight shall spare it and the green worm pass it by. Drought dares not invade it and the rain comes here gently'" (*ENM* 69). This fairy-tale-like garden is therefore safe

to be able to protect the house and act as a buffer between it and the wider Blair Water community, also serving to set the Murrays apart from their community as people of a higher class.

The blurring of the line between natural and manufactured continues throughout the Emily trilogy, including the descriptions of the houses in which Emily lives or visits. New Moon, for example, is described as being covered in hop vines and surrounded by trees (*ENM* 62); Emily decorates the Disappointed House with "a shadowy grey paper with snowy pine branches over it" (*EQ* 76); and Wyther Grange has hundreds of swallows living in the central chimney (*ENM* 247). As discussed in Chapter One, the first page of the trilogy describes Emily's father's house as "looking as if it had never been built like other houses but had grown up there like a big, brown mushroom" (*ENM* 1). Bode comments that "in her fiction, Montgomery articulates a dynamic architecture that looks to nature's presence and forms to create an environment in which the constructed is not only a shelter for its human inhabitants but is itself contained in harmony with and by the land on which it is situated" ("Indoors and Out" 75). This "dynamic architecture" is also evident in Montgomery's other novels: Lantern Hill, for example, "squatted right against a little steep hill whose toes were lost in bracken" and "two small rooms … whose windows looked right into the side of the hill where ferns grew as high as your waist" (*JLH* 75).

The farms on which the houses are situated, as well as their gardens, are important sites of interaction between natural objects and manufactured in Montgomery's novels. Emily's first home, the House in the Hollow, for example, "does not alter the natural landscape but rather emerges from and merges with its surroundings" ("Indoors and Out" 84). New Moon, as we have already seen, is a farm as well as a house and provides the setting for Cousin Jimmy's pride and joy, his garden that incorporates both elements.

Bode points out that "farms and gardens draw the human, the organic, and their environs into the material intimacy of a shared common existence" (77). This "material intimacy" creates the sort of setting that dominates Montgomery's novels: a domesticated landscape that is firmly rooted in the natural world but stops short of being wild or alien.

The domestic dwellings that Montgomery sets in her farms and gardens – often sharing the place name, from Green Gables to Lantern Hill to New Moon – are, as discussed in the previous chapter, both symbolically significant and an important physical aspect of the narratives. Bode points out these houses' connections to the natural world in her chapter "Indoors and Out":

> While her fictional houses are the metaphorical and symbolical expressions of her story's meanings, they are also a pronounced physical, material presence, both objects and subjects in their own right. In building them, Montgomery envisions an architecture in which construction and design bring into creative interplay the indoors and out. (78)

Montgomery's heroines often break down the barriers between the outdoor natural world and the indoor world of their houses. Johnson claims that Anne, for example, "begins to break down any barrier between outside and inside" when she opens the window on her first morning at Green Gables (21), and Emily opens windows when she feels stifled by the darker rooms at New Moon. "Houses have thresholds and doors that keep out and keep in, but Montgomery's houses spill over the thresholds into a phenomenology of landscape where home and place become one" (*ibid.*); Johnson here echoes Bode's remarks about the blending of architecture and nature. This characteristic phenomenology is also evident in *Jane of Lantern Hill*, in which, as Bode points out,

> the outside is not remote or something to be admired and longed for at a distance but rather a proximate and intimate experience. This accepting, inclusive space allows for nature's autonomy as well as for Jane's growing independence. A mediating space itself, Lantern Hill encourages other intercessionary activities through which the raw materials of nature turn into cultural expressions: liberation comes in many forms. (82)

Jane, another of Montgomery's typical nature-loving protagonists, lives in the big city of Toronto, in a house that is bleak and very separate from the natural world, before she visits her father on Prince Edward Island. As one might expect, Jane is quite miserable in the grim urban setting of her grandmother's rather hostile house, and she only begins to flourish once she spends time in the rural landscape and natural surroundings of PEI. Bode remarks that in order to comfort herself, "Jane establishes a relationship with the moon and finds solace for her dreary Gay Street life through this connection with nature … Jane reaches out and invites in, refusing to recognize the boundaries that distinguish indoors and out" (81). For Jane, however, real connection with the natural world is only possible once she goes to PEI. She writes to her mother that "'I go barefoot sometimes here … It's so nice to run through the cool wet grass and wriggle your toes in the sand and feel wet mud squashing up between them'" (*JLH* 117), pointing out the multisensory aspects of the physical world. Bode posits that the novel

> suggests that seeing the country in opposition to the city is problematic, but also that positioning nature against culture simply does not work. Jane's father introduces her to the beauty and wonder of the stars, but he also brings his field-glasses and knowledge of astronomy to it. He puts Jane in touch with nature but also with culture as they read the Bible and other great works of literature together … ("Mediating Landscapes" 173)[53]

This is one of many examples of the lack of divide between nature and culture in Montgomery's works.

Jane is one of the few characters in Montgomery's novels who lives in an urban environment, and this novel serves to highlight Montgomery's contrasting opinions of rural life, with its close connection to the natural world, and urban living, with its disconnection and negative qualities. Emily and Anne spend most of their time in the

[53] See Bode's article "Mediating Landscapes: *Jane of Lantern Hill*" in *CREArTA*, vol. 5, 2005, pp. 167-176, for a thorough discussion of the nature/culture binary in *Jane of Lantern Hill*.

pleasant nature/culture mix of the rural environment; Anne only goes to the city temporarily to study, and Emily tries to avoid it altogether by turning down Miss Royal's offer of a job in New York City. Even her stay in the town of Shrewsbury at Aunt Ruth's is temporary, and she only lives there in order to further her education.

Anthropomorphising and Multimodal Imaginings

Many of Montgomery's protagonists often imagine natural objects as something else, often manufactured objects. Anne's imaginative rendering of the landscape of Prince Edward Island, for example, sometimes involves a comparison of a natural object to a manufactured one: when Matthew is driving her toward Green Gables for the first time, she compares a wild plum tree to a bride "all in white with a lovely misty veil" (*AGG* 13). This reinforces Nikolajeva's claim that the "tendency to anthropomorphise animals, inanimate objects, natural phenomena and even abstract notions is a way we try to understand the world" (103). Anne, as a young girl, also personifies natural objects, claiming that brooks are cheerful because "'they're always laughing'" (31) and naming a geranium because "'it makes them seem more like people'" (35). She also compares a "'wild cherry tree all white with bloom in the moonshine'" to "'marble halls'" (12). As she matures, however, she ceases to compare and personify and instead enjoys nature for its own sake. For example, in Chapter Twenty-Two, she notices her surroundings while she speaks to Marilla and "somehow felt that wind and stars and fireflies were all tangled up together into something unutterably sweet and enchanting" (*AGG* 180). In the final chapter, sixteen-year-old Anne is out for an evening walk, and Montgomery writes that "the beauty of it all thrilled Anne's heart, and she gratefully opened the gates of her soul to it" (307).

The same process of growth can be observed in the Emily trilogy. At the beginning of *Emily of New Moon,* Montgomery describes Emily's "dreams of wonder": "the brown,

frosted grasses under her feet were velvet piles. The old, mossy, gnarled half-dead spruce tree … was a marble column in a palace of the gods; the far dusky hills were the ramparts of a city of wonder" (*ENM* 6). During a solitary night-time walk in *Emily Climbs*, Emily imagines natural objects as fantastical things: "the dead thistles of last year were goblin groups along the fences: that shaggy, old yellow birch was some satyr of the woodland … those gnarled stumps on the hill field were surely Pan piping through moonlight and shadow with his troop of laughing fauns" (152). Although Emily often enjoys the beauty of natural objects for their own sake – for example, she writes, simply, "'It is snowing a little tonight. I love to see the snow coming down in slanting lines against the dark trees'" (*EC* 20) – the comparative passages illustrate the importance of imaginative transcendence to her. Commonplace natural objects often serve as a counterfoil to her rich, creative imagination, while at the same time providing the beautiful settings for which Montgomery's novels are famous. There is autobiographical precedence for this tendency to imagine objects in different modes, as one of her journal entries illustrates: "The fields are like breadths of green velvet and birches and maples swing heavy curtains of green leaves" (*SJ I* 90). Although Emily still thinks in terms of personified natural objects after her evening of terror in the church (*EC* 37-59), listening to the "freakish voice of the Wind Woman around the white church – the far-off, intriguing voice of the sea … " (*EC* 54), Montgomery points out that Emily hears them "more with the ears of her soul than of her body, it seemed, as she had never heard them before" (*ibid.*), indicating the maturation mentioned at the beginning of the chapter: "Emily Starr never forgot the night when she … left childhood behind her forever" (*EC* 37). Even in the third novel, however, Emily, as a young woman, compares natural objects to manufactured ones, but it is only during an episode in which she needs comforting (a more childlike state of mind, perhaps). Emily is sitting beside Mr. Carpenter as he lays dying; she looks

at two fir trees of the same height "against the silver dawn-lit sky like the twin spires of some Gothic cathedral rising out of a bank of silver mist … their beauty was a comfort and stimulant to Emily under the stress of this strange vigil" (*EQ* 22).

The Flash: "a wonderful, mysterious thing of persistent beauty"

A notable effect of the physical presence of beauty in nature is one that Montgomery herself experienced and wrote into the character of Emily, fictionalising it as her "flash." In 1905, Montgomery wrote,

> It has always seemed to me, ever since I can remember, that, amid all the commonplaces of life, I was very near to a kingdom of ideal beauty. Between it and me hung only a thin veil. I could never draw it quite aside but sometimes a wind fluttered it and I seemed to catch a glimpse of the enchanting realm beyond – only a glimpse – but those glimpses have always made life worthwhile. (*SJ I* 301)

Montgomery echoes this description at the beginning of *Emily of New Moon*, using words like "wonderful beauty," "enchanting realm," and "unearthly music" (*ENM* 7), and it is reminiscent of Wordsworth's "flash" of "inward eye": Epperly states that the flash

> is a metaphor Montgomery created to describe, in Emily's story and then in her own journals about her own experiences, the lightning-swift glimpse of a world of perfect beauty that leaves the viewer mute with rapture. I imagine she adapted the word *flash* from Wordsworth's "I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud,' where he recalls the day with daffodils as images that 'Flash upon that inward eye / That is the bliss of solitude.' (*Lover's Lane* 15)

To gain a full appreciation of the flash in Montgomery's work, one must consider the idea of the sublime as discussed by Edmund Burke in his 1757 work on the subject, as mentioned in Chapter One. Mere beauty, according to Burke, represents order and harmony, whereas the sublime is beyond expression and can be disconcerting; it hints at obscurity, vastness and irregularity. Burke writes, **"**Whatever is fitted in any sort to excite the ideas of pain, and danger, that is to say, whatever is in any sort terrible, or is conversant about terrible objects, or operates in a manner analogous to terror, is a source of the SUBLIME; that is, it is productive of the strongest emotion which the mind is capable of

feeling" (Section VII, "Of the Sublime"). Emily's "flash" is the ultimate expression of this concept in its most positive sense: it is often inspired by the natural world and produces the strongest of emotions, both painful and delightful – sometimes both at once: Emily writes that "' … the flash came – I felt as if I had just seen something that happened long, long ago – something so lovely that it hurt me'" (*ENM* 209).

Emily's flash, these recurrent moments of transcendent wonder and beauty, are often triggered by the physical presence of natural objects: "It never came twice with the same thing. To-night the dark boughs against that far-off sky had given it. It had come with … a greybird lighting on her window-sill in a storm … " (*ENM* 7). These moments of inspiration are essential to Emily's character and identity and continually provide her with hope, contentment, and inspiration, as well as the hints of veiled mystery that add a Gothic depth to her Romantic-child-like character in the first volume. In the first chapter, for example, Montgomery writes that "always when the flash came to her Emily felt that life was a wonderful, mysterious thing of persistent beauty" (*ibid*.). The sight of the new moon, "in the opalescent sky … golden and slender" (53), along with her first glimpse of a dormer window of New Moon through vines, also inspires the flash, reinforcing the power that natural objects have in Emily's life and the appropriateness of her new home's name. The idea of the sublime is at the very core of the trilogy. Epperly writes that the flash

> presupposes a world of beauty to be discerned beyond our everyday material world. At the same time, it suggests that beauty visits the artist from outside, that apprehension and comprehension come to the artist. Here Montgomery would have been developing what she had learned as a child from Romantic poets – most especially from Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Shelley. (*Lover's Lane* 16)

Epperly goes on to point out that, like the Romantic poets, " … Montgomery saw the artist … as in communion with and in some ways dependent on a spirit or force outside themselves that visits when it wishes" (*ibid.*). As she further explains,

> as children, [Montgomery's] heroines romanticize the natural world – trailing Wordsworthian clouds of glory, they thrill to the beauty and splendour in the hills and fields and woods and shore and sky … As they grow older, they continue to enjoy nature, which continues to be described in rhapsodic language … Ultimately, each heroine defines herself through a highly idealized perception of natural beauty, which is given to us in Montgomery's romantic descriptions … (11)

Emily's flash is a particularly Romantic construction that is often inspired by "highly idealized" natural objects and is often described in "rhapsodic language". Waterston describes this phenomenon as "a sudden heightening of the senses in the presence of nature" (*Magic Island* 119). (This is not always the case, of course; sometimes it comes with a hymn sung in church (*ENM* 7) or finding the right word to use in a description, but more often than not, it comes with encounters with or within the natural world.) Waterston writes that

> in a 'glorious, supreme moment' she catches a glimpse of a realm beyond the natural world. She is *intensely stirred by something physical*, 'the dark branch boughs against the far-off sky, a high wild note of wind in the night, a shadow wave over a ripe field, a greybird lighting on a windowsill'… Her 'flash' represents an excess of consciousness, a radiant surge of response to stimulus. (119, emphasis mine)

The flash is often clearly triggered by "something physical," not just an ephemeral idea or concept, although there are a few exceptions (such as her realisation that she can write poetry (*ENM* 80)). It is usually the physical presence of natural objects that is most effective in triggering Emily's moments of inspiration.

Trees, Flowers, and Other Natural Objects

Some of the most significant natural objects in the Emily novels, particularly in terms of symbolism, are trees and flowers. An omnipresent natural object in the trilogy, roses are mentioned at least thirty times; they are obviously a favourite of Montgomery's and would have been plentiful in the gardens of PEI. Emily loves the roses in Cousin Jimmy's garden and states that "'deep down in my heart I know I love the late roses best.

You just can't help loving the roses best'" (*ENM* 289). Roses appear on clothing, including a treasured picture that Emily keeps: "the picture of the ball dress she had cut from a fashion sheet. It was such a wonderful dress — all white lace and wreaths of rosebuds, with a long, long train of lace flounces that must reach clear across a room" (49). Emily imagines roses and other flowers in the Disappointed House, long before she owns it: "'I am finishing the Disappointed House in my mind. I'm furnishing the rooms like flowers. I'll have a rose room all pink and a lily room all white and silver and a pansy room, blue and gold'" (213). Roses also inspire the flash in a multisensory manner, when Emily first moves into her mother's room:

> And that flat, black jar of potpourri on the mantel — her mother must have compounded it. When Emily lifted the lid a faint spicy odour floated out. The souls of all the roses that had bloomed through many olden summers at New Moon seemed to be prisoned there in a sort of flower purgatory. Something in the haunting, mystical, elusive odour gave Emily the flash — and her room had received its consecration. (285)

This passage has an echo of the Gothic about it, with its mention of souls in purgatory and the "haunting" odour, and this element is what often sets the Emily trilogy apart from Montgomery's other work for children, particularly in terms of natural objects.

Roses are also used as a synonym for an abundant life when Montgomery writes, "Emily grew rapidly that summer in body, mind and soul. Life was delightful, growing richer every hour, like an unfolding rose" (315). Dean uses a rose as compliment when he says to Emily, "'Your skin is like a narcissus petal. You could dare to hold a white rose against your face — very few women can dare that'" (*EC* 215). Another flower, the white narcissus, which is often used to symbolise hope, purity, or faithfulness, symbolises Emily's purity here. Dean is intimating this with his declaration that "few women" compare to her, but ironically, it is Dean who threatens this purity with his possessive intentions toward her, even when she is very young: She is only twelve when they first

meet on the cliff and he states that he will wait for her (*ENM* 268) and teach her how to write "love talk" (270).

Roses are, of course, often used as symbols in literature, and Menzies states that Montgomery uses them to

> encode[s] anti-art signifiers in association with Teddy. Emily opens a letter and finds inside the red rose Teddy had given her a decade earlier - now desiccated. The red rose is Montgomery's ultimate code word for human vitality as inscribed in writing: the title of Emily's novel was, we remember, *The moral of the rose*. But unlike the roses usually referred to - the ones in Cousin Jimmy's garden, on Ilse's dresses, or in Emily's hats - this one dissolves into dust in her hand. (55)

This is another example of a rare occasion in Montgomery's work – a flower being used as a negative symbol – and she writes that the rose "fell in her hand, faded, unbeautiful, like the rose-hopes of long ago, yet with some faint bitter-sweetness still about it" (*EQ* 161) to emphasize the loss of youthful innocence, ambition, and love. Menzies goes on to claim that

> if we read all of Montgomery's symbolic codes carefully, it becomes apparent she feels that Teddy will be as destructive to Emily's career as Dean would have been. Where Dean lies about the true value of her novel, hence destroying her self-confidence and causing her ambition to atrophy, Teddy inflates the importance of his profession to where it suffocates Emily's, a fate not unlike that of the rose sealed in the envelope. (56)

However, Menzies mistakenly attributes to Teddy a dismissive statement about Emily's writing that was actually spoken by Perry, so the basis for this argument is rather weak, and there is no direct indication in the text that Emily's career will not flourish after her marriage to Teddy, although Waterston states that when she admits to being too proud, "Emily is signalling to the reader as well as to Teddy the submissive role she is prepared to play … he will never be truly involved in her concerns because he is so absorbed in himself" (*Magic Island* 149). Many scholars agree with Menzies' conclusion that Teddy was not a suitable husband for Emily, however, and that her art would suffer by her choice, but I argue that Montgomery's decision to end the novel before their marriage

leaves a happy, or at least open, ending as a very possible conclusion. The dead rose in the envelope was, I believe, intended as a temporary symbol of the broken relationship between Teddy and Emily, a symbol that no longer carries meaning once they are reconciled. Significantly, Emily's first published book is called *The Moral of the Rose,* and Miss Royal writes to tell Emily that her story is "like a wild rose, dear, all sweetness and unexpectedness with sly little thorns of wit and satire" (*EQ* 178), restoring the positive association with roses in the trilogy.

Other flowers and trees are also significant, particularly in places such as in Cousin Jimmy's garden or the fir grove behind Aunt Ruth's house that provides a refuge for Emily. There are, of course, innumerable such natural objects at New Moon, which contribute significantly to Emily's love for the farm: " … the 'old orchard,' where Cousin Jimmy said the columbines grew and which seemed to be a delightful place where trees had come up at their own sweet will, and grown into individual shapes and sizes, where blue-eyed ivy twined about their roots and wild-briar roses rioted over the grey paling fence" (*ENM* 63).

Montgomery often wrote in her journals about her love for trees: "God be thanked for trees. I shall always be grateful that my childhood was passed in a spot where there were many trees – 'old ancestral trees', planted and tended by hands long dead, bound up with everything of joy and sorrow that visited the lives in their shadow" (*SJ II* 37), so it follows that her characters also hold them in high regard. Emily writes in her journal of the "'wonderful, tall, slender trees'" (*EC* 249) in what she calls the "Land of Uprightness" (the fir grove) at her Aunt Ruth's house while she is attending high school in Shrewsbury. She says that she not only loves trees but worships them, that they "'always improve on acquaintance,'" and that they "'have as much individuality as human beings'" (249), and she personifies them as being sociable or exclusive.

Later, in *Emily's Quest*, Montgomery writes of Emily's deepening love for the natural objects in the garden of New Moon:

> Emily loved every flower and shadow and sound in it, every beautiful old tree in and around it, especially her own intimate beloved trees – a cluster of wild cherries in the southwest corner, Three Princesses of Lombardy, a certain maiden-like wild plum on the brook path, the big spruce in the centre of the garden, a silver maple and a pine further on, an aspen in another corner always coquetting with gay little winds, and a whole row of stately white birches in Lofty John's bush. (*EQ* 4)

Montgomery is very specific about the types of trees (wild cherries, wild plum, spruce, silver maple, pine, aspen, birch) and other natural objects, emphasising their significance. Another reason for their importance is outlined in the next paragraph: "old ancestral trees, planted and tended by hands long dead, bound up with everything of joy and sorrow that visited the lives in their shadows" (4). Trees provide connection to family and ancestors, and their lives are "bound up" with human emotions and connections. Montgomery's journal entries about trees, including this one, underscore this significance: "How I love trees! Often and often, when I am alone in the woods I will put my arms tenderly about some old, gray-lichened trunk and press my face to it, feeling its life and balm flowing through every vein in my body as if it and I were one" (*SJ I* 185).

Continuing to demonstrate the connection between her own life and that of her character Emily's, Montgomery often talks about flowers in her journal entries. For example, when she was visiting her father in Saskatchewan, Montgomery wrote, "To-day I got a letter from home with some pressed flowers in it – red poppies and purple pansies. It just seemed as if they *spoke* to me and whispered a loving message of a far-off land where blue skies are bending over maple-crimsoned hills and spruce glens are still green and dim in their balsamic recesses" (*SJ I* 34). Another example comes from a question that someone asked her about her "favorite object in Nature" – "After all, I think my answer to that must be 'A Prince Edward Island wood of fir and maple, where the ground is carpeted thick with ferns'. Specifically, my favorite object in Nature is *Lover's Lane"*

(*SJ II* 145). One of Montgomery's journal passages describing Lover's Lane demonstrates the power of such natural objects in her life:

> I went for a walk in Lover's Lane yesterday. It is the dearest spot in the world to me and has the greatest influence for good over me. No matter how dark my mood is, no matter how heavy my heart or how vexed my soul, an hour in that beautiful solitude will put me right with myself and the world … the dear lane itself, running on along the rim of the woodland, with the maple and birches and wild cherries and spruces meeting overhead and the low murmur of a hidden brook ever in our ears – every step a revelation and a benediction. (*SJ I* 243)

This affinity for trees and flowers is also evident in novels other than the Emily trilogy. Even before Anne arrives at Green Gables, for example, Montgomery specifically describes the back yard as "very green and neat and precise … set about on one side with great patriarchal willows and on the other with prim Lombardies" (*AGG* 4).[54] Anne's love of trees is mentioned very early in the narrative, demonstrating its significance. On their way to Green Gables for the first time, Anne tells Matthew that she knew there were trees all around it, saying that when she heard that, she was "'gladder than ever. I just love trees. And there weren't any at all about the asylum, only a few poor weeny-teeny things out in front with little whitewashed cagey things about them. They just looked like orphans themselves, those trees did. It used to make me want to cry to look at them'" (*AGG* 15). Trees have a slightly different focus in *Jane of Lantern Hill.* Montgomery writes that in Toronto, "the trees that lined Gay Street were so old and huge and stately that it was difficult to think of them as trees at all" (1); this is a rare negative description of trees that Montgomery inserts due to their location and associations for Jane. But the tree next door, "the cherry tree, with the moon hanging over it like a great pearl, was so beautiful that Jane felt a queer lump in her throat when she looked at it … almost as if she wanted to cry" (14). This tree is a source of comfort for Jane until she can escape to PEI,

[54] Note Montgomery's continued use of personification here: one tree is "patriarchal" and the other "prim."

where, of course, trees abound. The trees that populate the Pat novels are often personified. For example, Montgomery writes that "the trees … old maples that Grandmother Gardiner had planted when she came as a bride to Silver Bush … were talking to each other as they always did at hight. Three little birch trees that lived together in one corner were whispering secrets … " (*PSB* 17). Pat is a typical Montgomery heroine in her affinity for nature, particularly trees: "Everybody at Silver Bush loved the birch grove, though to none of them did it mean what it meant to Pat. For her it *lived.* She not only knew the birches but they knew her: the fern-sweet solitudes, threaded with shadows, knew her: the wind in the boughs always made her a glad salutation" (*MP* 1). This passage, with its personification of trees, again demonstrates Montgomery's sense of connection between human and nature.

Flowers help provide the impetus for significant turning points in the narrative of the Emily trilogy. Emily is led to meet her future love interest Dean Priest when she reaches for some flowers ("a magnificent spray of farewell-summer," *ENM* 261) and slips down to the edge of a cliff, from which she is rescued by Dean. Montgomery continues to refer to these flowers when Dean states that it was the farewell-summer (aster, which aptly means "star," a nickname that Dean gives her) that caught his attention and helped him find her, and jokes that the flower has cost Emily her freedom because her life now belongs to him (*ENM* 271). Emily is uncomfortable with this idea and crushes the flower in rebellion: Montgomery writes that Emily "didn't fancy the idea of her life belonging to anybody but herself" (*ibid*.) and she destroys the beautiful flower rather than give up her independence. Dean "was joking, of course – yet Emily felt as if a cobweb fetter had been flung round her. Yielding to a sudden impulse she flung the big aster on the ground and set her foot on it" (281). It is a highly symbolic act and, in one of her most strongly feminist passages, Montgomery uses a natural object as a catalyst for the whole chapter,

and, indeed, a foreshadowing of the failure of the highly possessive Dean's attempts to obtain Emily as his wife and property.

Cobwebs are intermingled with this symbol of the aster, helping to portray the idea of entrapment throughout the trilogy, often symbolising the suffocating sense of imprisonment that Emily suffers in her relationship with Dean. This is a rare example of Montgomery using natural objects in negative situations, with the destruction of the flower failing to gain Emily her freedom and the cobweb symbolising entrapment. Epperly writes that Emily's crushing of the flower is "the most important gesture in all three of the Emily books – instinctively Emily fights against the power that wants to dominate her" (*Sweet-Grass* 162). However, she goes on, "we notice that the narrator does not say that Emily broke through the fetters when she crushed the aster. Instead the fetters get tighter the closer she comes to accepting his standards of taste and value" (163). The fact that Montgomery continues to associate cobwebs with negative ideas highlights Emily's inability to gain her freedom, though in different ways. For example, the darkest example of the use of natural objects in the *Emily* trilogy occurs in *Emily's Quest,* when Dean tells Emily that her writing is nothing but "'pretty cobwebs'" (30), meaning that it is insubstantial and inconsequential. When she reluctantly asks him to confirm this opinion, he calls her writing a "'little hobby'" with which she can "'amuse'" herself and that it is "'foolish to carry childish dreams over into maturity'" (31). Dean has used a natural metaphor to undermine Emily's writing career while at the same time suggesting that she is now an adult and should put aside her childish dreams of a literary career in order to belong to him. This is a cruel insult to Emily on many levels, as Dean knows how highly she values the natural world, his opinion of her writing, and her career goals (indeed, writing is a major aspect of her identity). Montgomery hints that Dean is deliberate in his crushing of her dreams by noting that he feigns surprise at her reaction

to the metaphor: “Dean looked surprised, doing it very well” (31). The metaphor is repeated a few chapters later, when Emily has written her first book and gives it to Dean for criticism. He tells her again that her writing is “‘cobwebs – only cobwebs,’” “‘pretty and flimsy and ephemeral as a rose-tinted cloud’” (51). This is later revealed to be a lie, born out of Dean’s jealousy for Emily’s career (97), and it is particularly damaging: Emily burns the manuscript (53), rushes downstairs and falls, seriously injuring herself and muting her creativity for a long time. The burning recalls the episode in which she “burned her old ‘account book’ rather than let Aunt Elizabeth see it”; it tortures her in a similar way in that “she had destroyed something incalculably precious to her.” Dean eventually admits that he lied, stating that her book was “‘out of the ordinary both in conception and development’” (97), because she was more interested in it than in him and because he knew it would be successful and that he would lose her.

Stars and the Moon: Inspiration and Comfort

Another natural object that holds significance for Emily, particularly in terms of her relationship with Teddy, is a star (apart from the pun on her name; Dean Priest often calls Emily “Star” (*EC* 30)). At the beginning of *Emily’s Quest,* when Emily and Teddy are finished high school and embarking on their respective careers, Emily tells him that her favourite star is Vega of the Lyre (*EQ* 8) because Teddy “used to spin us wonderful tales about that star – and of a life you had lived in it before you came to this world” (9). They resolve to think of each other whenever they see that star, and Teddy leaves for art college. Emily’s pride then takes precedence, however, and she wonders why she “said that thing about the star” and thinks that “dusk and fir-scent and the afterglow of autumnal sunsets make people say absurd things” (9), foreshadowing the trouble that lies ahead for the couple (it is usually their pride that gets in the way of their expression of their feelings for each other). A few months later, Emily writes that Vega “‘shines brightly every

night'" and wonders if Teddy can see it in the city, where he is "'doing splendidly at the School of Design'" (10). She mentions, seemingly in passing, that he seems to see a lot of Ilse – more foreshadowing of trouble for Emily, as Teddy and Ilse become engaged later, as previously mentioned. Emily later hopes that the "coldness that had grown up so inexplicably between them" would disappear when they see each other again, after his last letter had not referred to Vega (41), but he comes to visit with Ilse and only "shook hands with a cool detachment that almost equalled her own" (42). Emily rebukes herself for "mooning romantically about in a twilight garden" and prides herself on being "as gracious and impersonal as to an entire stranger" (*ibid*.). After Teddy leaves, Emily thinks of the star as nothing "but a whirling, flaming, incredibly distant sun" (46), and once Dean has criticised the book she has written, she "glanced up at the starlit sky of the autumn night. Vega of the Lyre shone bluely down upon her" (53) before burning the manuscript. Epperly points out that "urged by this despairing reminder of Teddy, she believes Dean at last, and in the death of the novel comes the symbolic death of her youth" (*Sweet-Grass* 185). Then, just before Emily is to marry Dean, she goes out to see the Disappointed House one evening and sees that star "in a sudden pale rift between the clouds" (87) right before her strange vision that saves Teddy from death on a doomed ship. After breaking her engagement, Emily writes that she went out studying the stars but refused to look at Vega (103). The pair are reunited soon afterward and talk about Vega (108), and Emily even seems to decide that her relationship with Teddy is more important than her career: "And what star of destiny was ever brighter and more alluring than Vega of the Lyre? Which, being interpreted, simply meant that nothing mattered any more in this world or any other except Teddy Kent" (109). Further misunderstandings and Emily's pride lead to another estrangement, however, and Teddy proclaims that Vega is the one star that he hates (207) just before his marriage to Ilse. He mentions it once more, reaffirming its

significance, in the conversation he has with Emily years later when they clear up their misunderstandings (*EC* 227). This one star, then, fluctuates between being a positive symbol of connection between Teddy and Emily and a negative symbol of their estrangement until the end of the trilogy.

Stars are, of course, present in Montgomery's other fiction. In *Jane of Lantern Hill*, for example, her father tells her that she "'must know the stars' […] So, with dad's field-glasses, they went star hunting on moonless nights, and Jane became learned in lore of far-off suns. […] Jane loved it. It was so wonderful to sit out on the hills with dad in the dark and the beautiful *aloneness* while the great worlds swung above them in their appointed courses" (177). He tells her, "'Watch the stars whenever you are worried, Jane,' said dad. 'They'll steady you … comfort you … balance you'" (*ibid*.).

The moon is also a significant natural object in Montgomery's novels, apart from the most obvious reference to it in the title of the first book of the Emily trilogy. Its importance is highlighted by the fact that it is present for many of the "firsts": One of the first things Emily sees in the first chapter is the "sky with the new moon in it" (*ENM* 6); the flash is inspired by the "real new moon" when she arrives at New Moon for the first time (53); and the sight of the full moon seems to inspire her to send her first poem to a magazine for publication (301). Additionally, Emily's beauty is compared to that of a young moon (*EC* 150), and, in a more metaphorical use of the moon, Dean tells her Emily stop reaching for the moon, using it as a symbol of career success (52). There are also countless references to moonlight throughout the trilogy, usually to provide atmosphere.

In a particularly Gothic-inspired passage, Emily sees the "dim old moon," an apt symbol, while she sits with Mr. Carpenter as he lays dying (*EQ* 22). In one paragraph alone, Montgomery uses several ideas and words that reveal her love for the Gothic, including "darkness," "ghostly," "haunting," and "strange":

> Mr. Carpenter closed his eyes and relapsed into silence. Emily sat quietly, her head a soft blur of *darkness* against the window that was beginning to whiten with dawn. The *ghostly* hands of a fitful wind played with her hair. The perfume of June lilies stole in from the bed under the open window — a *haunting* odour, sweeter than music, like all the *lost* perfumes of old, unutterably dear years. Far off, two beautiful, slender, black firs, of exactly the same height, came out against the silver dawn-lit sky like the twin spires of some *Gothic* cathedral rising out of a bank of silver mist. Just between them hung a dim old moon, as beautiful as the evening crescent. Their beauty was a comfort and stimulant to Emily under the stress of this *strange* vigil. Whatever passed — whatever came — beauty like this was eternal. (*Emily's Quest* 22, emphasis mine)

The moon (and its light) is often a useful tool in providing a Gothic atmosphere in these novels, and in this case Montgomery also uses the old moon as a symbol for Mr. Carpenter's waning life.

The moon is also present in Montgomery's other novels, including *Jane of Lantern Hill.* It tends to be a source of respite from Jane's difficult life in Toronto: her secret, imaginary "moon life" (22) brings her comfort when in conflict with her grandmother (38). The moon provides a connection to her mother when she first arrives in Prince Edward Island (59). In *Anne of Green Gables*, the moon is often included in Montgomery's descriptions of the natural world that is visible to Anne, but it carries much less symbolic weight than in the Emily trilogy. For example, when Anne goes to Diana's mother to apologise for intoxicating Diana, Montgomery writes, " … steadily she took her way down through the sere clover field over the log bridge and up through the spruce grove, lighted by a pale little moon hanging low over the western woods" (129); the moon here is mentioned in passing, though perhaps its paleness reflects Anne's nervous mood. The moon has a similar role in the Pat books, usually as part of the descriptions of the setting. It sometimes also reflects the general atmosphere, such as the night her sister was born: "Pat looked at the moon disapprovingly. It didn't look like a proper moon … so queer and close and red and lanterny. But it was all of a piece with this odd night" (*PSB* 22). It is in the Emily trilogy, however, that the moon has a much more significant role,

with its constant presence in the name of the house and farm and as a source of inspiration for Emily as a writer.

As with many references to natural objects in Montgomery's fiction, there is autobiographical precedence for her veneration of the moon. For example, Montgomery writes,

> The good hour came as I was walking home alone. Before me arched the afterlight of a glorious sea-sunset. The tall slender firs along the moist red road came out against it in a grace and beauty that made me ache for joy; and behind me a full moon deepened until the white radiance mingled with the gold and flame of the west. I came down the hill and up the lane. The birches hung out young-leaved boughs over me. The apple trees crowded lovingly about the old house. The moonlight softened all until it looked as it used to look long ago – a bowery 'haunt of ancient peace'. It is at such moments that I realize how deeply rooted and strong is my love for this old place – a love of instinct and passion, blent with every fibre of my soul. (*SJ I* 351)

Montgomery is clearly deeply affected by the sight of the moon and moonlight, as it has the power to make her aware of her love for place and home.

Natural Objects and the Spiritual/Mystical

It would be impossible to discuss natural objects in Montgomery's work without acknowledging the connection between the natural world and the spiritual aspects of her character's lives or the mystical aspects of the narrative. As Johnson points out, " … landscape is deeply, profoundly, spiritual, imbricated with what Montgomery often refers to as 'soul' … " (15), and Montgomery imbues her fictional landscapes with natural objects whose souls feed her protagonists' own. K. Miller, commenting on Montgomery's "day-by-day intimacy of domestic lives," points out that passages such as the descriptions of Emily's arrival at New Moon are "carefully observed images of the capacity of real life, ordinary life, to contain beauty. Part of this beauty is the interaction and overlap of spiritual and physical" ("Transfiguring" 23).

Natural objects are as central to the narrative and the character development in the *Emily* series as they are in *Anne of Green Gables,* which is famous for its purple prose describing natural scenery. The Emily trilogy, however, has an added spiritual dimension tied to natural objects that has a depth not reached in the *Anne* series. Montgomery's spirituality as reflected in her fiction becomes more sophisticated in the Emily trilogy, which is understandable considering the dates of publication (*Anne* was first published in 1908 and *Emily* in 1923). Montgomery, though raised a strict Presbyterian and married to a Presbyterian minister, developed her own spiritual beliefs that were not always orthodox. These beliefs are well represented by this extract from her journals: Rather than go to church, as she had been raised to do dutifully, she writes,

> … I would *like* to go away on Sunday morning to the heart of some great solemn wood and sit down among the ferns with only the companionship of the trees and the wood-winds echoing through the dim, moss-hung aisles like the strains of some vast cathedral anthem. And I would stay there for hours alone with nature and my own soul. (*SJ I* 162)

Her somewhat unorthodox and rebellious beliefs for the time are reflected in her fictional characters. Anne, for example, tells Marilla that instead of kneeling down to pray, she would rather go into a field or the woods and then just "*feel* a prayer" (*AGG* 51). Later in life, Montgomery reiterates this view of prayer: "To me, ten minutes alone in a great forest, or beside the sea, or under the stars would be filled with more of the essence of prayer than could be contained in a lifetime of 'asking for blessings'" (*SJ II* 113). This solitude-focused, pantheistic religious outlook is present throughout Montgomery's novels and journal entries; Montgomery seemed to believe that God was present in everything, or at least everything beautiful.

Montgomery's spirituality also tends to emphasise God as the embodiment of beauty and love. She writes, " … I look out my window and, beholding the fine and beautiful austerity of my pine wood on this gray autumn twilight, feel comforted. For

where there is Beauty – there is God" (*SJ IV* 27); it is interesting to note that the physical presence of pine trees inspires this comment. At the beginning of the Emily trilogy, Montgomery, through Emily's father, expresses God's identity as synonymous with love: "'You can't help liking God. He is Love itself, you know'" (*ENM* 18). He then tells her not to mix God up with "Ellen Greene's God," meaning a more traditional, orthodox (for the early twentieth century) and judgmental idea of God, which Emily understands to mean the God pictured in the housekeeper's book in which "'he has whiskers and wear a nightgown'" (23). Emily "hadn't any idea what Father's God was like" but says, "'He is clear as the moon, fair as the sun, and terrible as an army with a banner'" (*ibid*.). Not long after she arrives at New Moon, Emily has the opportunity to ask her family's minister questions, and when she says she is worried that there are things she loves more than God, like "'flowers and stars and the Wind Woman and the Three Princesses [trees],'" he responds, "'But they are just a part of God, Emily – every beautiful thing is'" (185) – reflecting clearly Montgomery's pantheistic spirituality of embodied beauty. As she grows up, Emily develops her idea of who God is, often inspired by natural objects. For example, when she and Ilse get lost and spend a night sleeping on a haystack, Emily is inspired by the beauty of the natural world and "shivered with the pure ecstasy of it … she was afraid to move or breathe lest she break the current of beauty that was flowing through her" (*EC* 177). This ecstasy is, of course, dependent on the physical presence of the natural objects around her: the moon, a hemlock tree, a star. She prays that God will make her worthy of the beauty and of the responsibility to "carry some of the loveliness of that 'dialogue divine' back to the everyday world" (*ibid*.). It is important to note, however, that Montgomery uses the language of pre-Christian, pagan gods in this passage rather than the Christian God to whom Emily prays: She writes that Emily was "a high priestess of loveliness assisting at the divine rites of her worship – and she knew her

goddess smiled" (*ibid*.) and that Emily is "high priestess of beauty – yes, she would serve at no other shrine!" (178). Although these references are generally symbolic or poetic, they might have seemed somewhat mystical and unorthodox to Montgomery's contemporary audience.

Another aspect of Montgomery's spirituality is its femininity. K. Miller points out that

> Emily describes a feminized landscape in … PEI, the setting of the novels; her enjoyment of nature's beauty comes from recognition of its feminine power. Hence, her appreciation for this landscape fosters her decision to embrace feminine spirituality – a feminine Romantic spirituality. Her esteem for nature and its feminine power not only leads her to develop a feminine spirituality, but it also informs her artistry. An admiration for nature, a deep connection to her home soil of PEI, and an acknowledgement of female imagination and spirituality inform and inspire Emily's writing. ("Transfiguring" 144)

Her constant engagement with the sublime in the Emily trilogy reinforces Montgomery's role as the creator of a unique Romantic spirituality, one that is naturally feminine partly due to the fact that the vast majority of her protagonists are young women and partly due to her subversion of typically patriarchal Christianity. Miller goes on to explain that

> … unlike prototypical Romantic thought, which alienates women from the sublime, Montgomery illustrates the accessibility of the sublime for women. She demonstrates how the transcendent is, in fact, a derivative of great feminine power and authority by imbuing landscape with awe-inspiring feminine sublimity that serves to foster female imagination and artistry. (148)

In her subtle but unmistakable subversion of patriarchal Christianity throughout her work, Montgomery demonstrates that, as Miller puts it, " … female imagination and creativity fosters spirituality. Emily's feminine spirituality aids her in recognizing and creating beauty – two essential elements to her writing" (149). There are several examples throughout the trilogy of references to female spiritual beings, and all to do with beauty, writing, or both: Mr. Carpenter, for example, tells Emily that she has "'chosen a jealous goddess'" (meaning the "goddess" of writing) (*ENM* 336), and Emily immediately believes that "her goddess would listen to her" (*ibid.*). Montgomery later refers to Emily

as “a high priestess of loveliness assisting at the divine rites of her worship” (*EC* 177), and Emily refers to the writer Miss Royal as a “high priestess” (288). Emily also refers to herself as “‘a Druidess in the woods – I regard trees with something more than love – worship’” (249).

Montgomery continues to refer to Emily’s exposure to pre-Christian spirituality, through conversations with Dean and others but also often inspired by natural objects throughout the trilogy. To Emily’s surprise, Mr. Carpenter tears up one of her poems, written after a walk in the woods after dark. She states that “‘the whole character of my Land of Uprightness seemed changed. It was eerie – almost sinister … I felt as if I were escaping from some fascinating but not altogether hallowed locality – a place given over to Paganism and the revels of satyrs. I don’t believe the woods are ever wholly Christian in the darkness,’” and then writes a poem that “‘exorcised something out of my soul’” (*EC* 247). Mr. Carpenter, when Emily tells him that she was in the mood of the “Golden Age” when she wrote the poem, tears it up because, he says, “‘That poem was sheer Paganism, girl, though I don’t think you realise it … Didn’t you feel *possessed* when you wrote it?’” (252). Although he is not a particularly religious man, Mr. Carpenter is clearly threatened by Emily’s awareness of “paganism” and would be more comfortable with her writing expressing a traditional Christian patriarchal system of belief. Blair and Thompson point out that

> … readers of the 1920s would … have associated the phrase ‘Golden Age’ with popular conceptions of childhood as a time of innocence and intimacy with nature – a time of closeness to this lost world…and its wistful and joyous depiction of children roaming freely in the English countryside. Emily’s defiant assertion of Golden Age loyalties is thus both adult – implying her knowledge of the classics and a pre-Christian world –and childish, in that she does not seem to recognise the danger, for a young woman on the verge of adulthood immersed in a small-town Presbyterian environment, of such declarations. (132)

They go on to claim that Emily’s “passionate response to nature” has “a revisionary Christianity that may seem conventional on the outside but is doubtfully orthodox in the

context of early twentieth-century Canadian Presbyterianism; a response linked to 'paganism' and the classical 'ancient gods'; and a sense of the 'fairy'" (133). Montgomery's own unorthodox leanings are clearly the inspiration for Emily's "paganism." In one of Montgomery's journal entries, she writes after a walk in Lover's Lane after dark:

> … I was really a little bit afraid, with a not unpleasant fear [recalling Burke's notion of the sublime] … when I left the lane I … felt as if I had escaped from some fascinating but not altogether hallowed locality – a place still given over to paganism and the revels of fauns and satyrs. None of the wild places are ever wholly Christianized in the darkness, however much so they may seem by daylight. There is always a lurking life in them that dare not show itself to the sun but regains its own with the night. (*SJ I* 332)

Montgomery edited this passage somewhat when she included it in *Emily Climbs*, but she seems to have wanted to share her unorthodox views, if not publicly, than through her journals (which she intended for eventual publication) and fiction. Clearly, natural objects are a strong inspiration for Montgomery's spiritual subversion, experimentation, and unorthodoxy in her work.

Natural Objects and Career Inspiration

Montgomery uses the physical, tangible aspects of the world in which Emily resides and works to inspire Emily's writing throughout the trilogy. As well as being a vital aspect of Emily's identity, these natural objects also spark her imagination, which is one of the reasons for her eventual success as a writer. At the earliest stage of her writing career, as a child who loves words, the young Emily's imagination is inspired by nature; Montgomery states that "a queen might have gladly given a crown for her visions – her dreams of wonder" evoked by the field in which she stands *(ENM* 6.). It is the physical presence of the "brown, frosted grasses under her feet", the "old, mossy, gnarled half-dead spruce tree", and the "far dusky hills" (*ibid*.) that spark Emily's visions and flights of imagination. It is worth noting that she has an immediate need to "go home and write

down a description" of her view of the new moon that appears in the sky; this foreshadows her chosen career and roots it firmly in the inspiration of the natural world. Even if Emily's response to nature gradually matures as she grows, this first introduction by Montgomery reveals an essential aspect of Emily's character that remains true throughout the trilogy. The passage also foreshadows Emily's future home at New Moon – "there was a sudden rift in the curdled clouds westward, and a lovely, pale, pinky-green lake of sky with a new moon in it" (*ibid.*) – and establishes the importance of the natural object as a central aspect of the narrative.

Emily later names her ambition as the eventual ability to transmute the beauty of the natural world into words for readers, writing that she is "'always listening for'" the "random word" of Emerson's unfinished poem "The Poet"[55] and hopes to be 'able to translate its beauty into any words I know'" (*EC* 11). Again, the lines that Dean quotes to Emily refer very specifically to pine trees, a favourite of Montgomery's.

Montgomery uses a flower to symbolize Emily's writing ambition when she adopts a poem called "The Fringed Gentian" as her personal metaphor; the lines "Then whisper, blossom, in thy sleep/How I may upward climb" suggest that inspiration comes from the natural world (*ENM* 290). Montgomery, as Epperly points out, "had found [the poem] in an issue of her grandmother's *Godey's Lady's Book* and had pasted into her own scrapbook to serve as her motto" (*Through Lover's Lane* 140).

Natural objects provide the setting for another milestone in Emily's career when she and Ilse have to sleep outdoors after getting lost (*EC* 174), as previously discussed. Once Ilse is asleep, Emily "wanted to lie awake for the pleasure of it and think over a thousand things", and the night "filled her with its beauty, which she must later give to

[55] See https://quod.lib.umich.edu/a/amverse/BAD1982.0001.001/1:9.1.2?rgn=div3;view=fulltext for the text of the unfinished poem.

the world" (174). Montgomery describes the moon, stars, and northern lights, which spark Emily's imagination and whose beauty provides a moment that is "inexpressibly wonderful – as if the finite were for second infinity – as if humanity were for a space uplifted into divinity – as if all ugliness had vanished, leaving only flawless beauty" (177). The experience, sparked by natural objects, solidifies Emily's vow to "carry some of the loveliness of that 'dialogue divine' back to the everyday world of sordid market-place and clamorous street" (178), referring again to Emerson's "The Poet." This raises Emily's writing career to a higher level than simply a money-making endeavour or a personal quest for greatness; the spiritual inspiration of the natural world drives Emily toward a lofty, ministry-like goal. The haystack then serves as a prosaic and humorous counterfoil to the transcendent experience, when Emily wakes up the next morning having slipped to the bottom of it (178).

Montgomery herself, according to Epperly, "lived with nature and was transported by it. She focused on nature as a way to understand the human heart and as a way to commune with those who were also inspired by natural beauty" (*Lover's Lane* 17). Montgomery, through Emily, seems to believe it to be her responsibility to transmute the beauty of nature through words into something that others could read and comprehend.

Montgomery documents Emily's imaginative development with regard to inspiration from nature throughout the trilogy. Clement points out that at the early stages of Emily's development, her "imagination is ungrounded, disembodied, and while nature provides inspiration for her poetic outbursts, examples [of her writing] reveal a young girl in thrall to her own responsiveness to nature rather than the mature seeker of guidance and insight from nature" ("The Empathic Poetic Sensibility" 190). In *Emily Climbs*, by contrast, her "adolescent transition from intimacy to empathy" comes "as she strives to grasp humanity's 'enduring kinship' with the natural world" (*ibid*.). In terms of the

Romantic inspiration for Emily's writing career, Clement discusses the importance of empathy for the natural world:

> Montgomery's characters who are endowed with poetic sensibility have the capacity to develop an intimate relationship with nature and, through close observation, to discern and embody nature's secrets, including that of empathy. In Wordsworthian fashion, current or remembered perceptions engage the imagination, but this imagination must be complemented by empathy if nature's varied moods and manifestations are to be transmuted into artistic form. The stages of the creative process, then – perception through imaginative engagement to expression – are dependent on progressive stages of a relationship that develops through intimacy (which requires a high degree of familiarity) to empathy. (186)

Clement claims that for Montgomery, empathy can be not just an intimate relationship between humans but also "a reciprocal relationship between humans and nature" (*ibid*.). Emily, she explains, "succeed[s] in negotiating the threshold not only between perception and imaginative engagement but also between imagination and creative expression … to attain the empathy required to understand nature on its own terms" (*ibid.).* Emily's empathy with nature, like her writing career, clearly mirrors Montgomery's own.

Emily, of course, thrives on natural beauty, and passages about natural objects demonstrate their importance to her character, but an added dimension of this importance is Emily's eventual ability to protect the natural world around her with her earnings from career success. For example, when Emily's uncle Oliver and his son Andrew, who will inherit New Moon, have been talking about changes that would make the farm more profitable, Montgomery writes that from Emily's perspective, "to see New Moon desecrated – her old, intimate, beloved trees cut down – the spruce field where wild strawberries grew improved out of existence – the dreamy beauty of the old orchard destroyed – the little dells and slopes that kept all the ghostly joys of her past changed – altered. It was unbearable" (*EQ* 150). Montgomery gives Emily (and Aunt Elizabeth) the same hatred for change that she feels and mirrors Montgomery's own sorrow at the loss of natural objects such as the school bush:

> The old school woods had been cut down!! That once green, wide, beautiful hill was an abomination of desolation of stumps. The schoolhouse sat on its crest wantonly, indecently naked. The whole sight was obscene… it hurt me horribly – not only then, but every time I passed it. A thousand little pitiful ghosts were robbed of their habitations and haunts by the felling of those trees. Scores of tender memories were outraged and banished. (*SJ II* 251)

Aunt Elizabeth reminds Emily that she could have had New Moon if she had agreed to marry Andrew, but Emily knows that Andrew would have made changes regardless (*EQ* 150). A few pages later, however, Emily, thanks to the earnings from her writing, is able to buy one of her favourite parts of New Moon, a section of bush that technically belonged to their neighbour, Lofty John. She revels in the possession of "'all the lovely things in it … its moonlit vistas – the grace of its one big elm against the starlight – its shadowy little dells – its June-bells and ferns – its crystalline spring – its wind music sweeter than an old Cremona'" and what it means: "'No one can ever cut it down or desecrate it in any way'" (157), thanks to the earnings of her latest serial and Emily's agency in using her earnings in this way. Career success for Emily, then, is more than a source of fame and pride; it enables her to protect her beloved landscape from destruction and change, a more feminine interpretation of the idea of success than the traditional patriarchal one. In fact, the sense of ownership is completely turned around when Emily imagines the natural objects having ownership over her instead: Blair and Thompson point out that

> Although Emily first figures her possession of the woods as ownership, she ends the entry by asserting companionship and friendship with nature. In her journal entry on the following page, the possessiveness is reversed: "'You are mine,' called the sea beyond Blair Water. 'We have a share in her,' said the lulls. 'She is my sister,' said a jolly little fir-tree.'" [*EQ* 158] Emily's relationship with the natural world, as an adult, is mutual care in the assurance of God's presence. (143)

This "ownership" of Emily, and Emily's "ownership" of the woods, is entirely positive, one of mutual care and kinship, rather than a negative sense of ownership such as Dean's claim over Emily, as previously discussed.

The Comfort of Nature: Restorative Powers

Natural objects in general have another very important role in Montgomery's fiction: that of comforter. All realistic protagonists have times of trouble, and Montgomery's almost invariably turn toward the natural world for solace (as does Montgomery herself, as evidenced by the epigraph for this chapter). Jane, as previously mentioned, turns to the moon and the cherry tree next door during her miserable existence in the city: after a confrontation with her despotic grandmother, Jane says, "'I wonder … if *anyone* was ever happy in this house.' Then she saw the moon … In a moment Jane had slipped away from all her sorrows" (38).

Nature provides comfort for Emily in her darkest times. The exception that proves the rule might be when Emily's father dies and she finds that "it did not matter that the little squat apple tree … had become a thing of rose-and-snow beauty – that the hills beyond the hollow were of green silk, purple-misted – that the daffodils were out in the garden … None of these things had any charm or consolation for her now" (*ENM* 24), highlighting the extent of her grief. On her first lonely night at New Moon, however, Emily finds immediate solace in the presence of her imaginary Wind Woman, the "little, low, whispering murmur of the June night breeze" (60). This physical reminder of the presence of the outside world leads Emily to imagine that she is "out in the open with the Wind Woman and the other gipsies of the night – the fireflies, the moths, the brooks, the clouds" (*ibid*.) and falls asleep easily. When she is terrified by the gloom of the spare room, she opens the window and "a blessed flood of sunshine burst in. Outside was a wholesome, friendly, human world" (111). When a neighbour announces that he is going to cut down the woods next to New Moon, Emily is inconsolable; she "thought her heart *was* breaking; she couldn't go on living and suffering like this," but Montgomery points out that Emily sobs, "'I *can't* bear it' … to the rosebushes.'" (189).

With maturity, even the worst of Emily's troubles are mitigated by the presence of nature, including her times of estrangement from Teddy in the final novel. For example, after he leaves and she spends a miserable autumn, she writes that she went "'out for a moonlit snowshoe tramp. There was a nice bit of frost in the air and the night was exquisite – a frosty, starry lyric of light'" (*EQ* 127). Epperly writes that " … though Emily later is to find that the beauty of nature is not enough to fill her soul, she does identify with Wordsworth's praise of nature's restorative and inspiring powers … Amid sorrow she sees the beauty of April and is reminded, by her 'supernal moment,' the flash, of her own immortality" (*Sweet-Grass* 199). The natural world is, in fact, one of Emily's only comforts in this last, darkest novel of the trilogy.

There is, of course, autobiographical precedence for the comfort of the natural world: Later in life, Montgomery wrote, for example,

> And then last night after sunset – for a wonder there had been a clear sunset – I looked out of the front door glass on going upstairs and saw a thin silvery green sky behind the snowy winter pines on the west-branch hill. Instantly the old enchantment of life returned for a moment. It was as if some ancient spell had been worked whereby I escaped through some door of dreams to far secret meadows by rivers where there was peace and among blue hills where there were sparkling fountains. It lasted only a moment – but I seemed, as always, to get strength from it. Life has not seemed so bleak and bitter today. (*SJ IV* 255)

There is even medical evidence for the benefits of the natural world on our mental and physical health: a recent article by Sarah Conrad Gothie[56] discusses these findings in detail. As stated above, Montgomery, who suffered from mental health issues for most of her life, wrote about the positive influence of the natural world often in her journal entries: "No matter how dark my mood is, no matter how heavy my heart or how vexed my soul, an hour in that beautiful solitude will put me right with myself and the world" (*SJ I* 243).

[56] Sarah Conrad Gothie, "I would rather lose everything else I possess: Love of Nature and L.M. Montgomery's Intuitive Wellness Strategies, 1901-11." *Journal of L.M. Montgomery Studies,* 2024.

Later in life, when her mental health was particularly troublesome, a walk outdoors helps her state of mind: "I felt light-hearted with relief and some power of enjoyment came back to me. There was a wonderful sunset, with great headlands of gold and purple in the west. Once again the first star was a miracle as it always was in the years before the world grew dark" (*SJ IV* 277).

Conclusion

In children's literature and fiction in general, the physicality of everyday objects acts as a foil to the mystical, imaginative, transcendent worlds of characters and grounds the narrative in a reality that makes the work, however unfamiliar, historical, or fantastic, relatable to its readers. The landscape – the natural world in which the human-created fictional world is set – provides the connection between this physicality and the imaginative. A reader of Emily, for example, may be utterly unfamiliar with the sea or the rural landscape of Atlantic Canada in the early twentieth century, but Montgomery's descriptions of the physical surroundings and objects that are significant to the protagonist make the text accessible and, indeed, inspiring to the reader's imagination.

Natural objects, as we have seen, perform several roles within the narrative of Montgomery's novels and the Emily trilogy in particular. From providing the natural landscape within which Montgomery's heroines flourish in their human-built environments, to supplying comfort in difficult times of growth and loss, to supplying the raw materials for Emily's mystical flashes of inspiration, natural objects are essential to these texts. A study of the Emily trilogy would be completely inadequate without close examination of the role of the natural world, and the wealth of scholarship available on nature in Montgomery's work in general is evidence of this. By attending to the natural objects in Emily's world, we gain a deeper sense of her identity and, indeed, that of her creator.

Conclusion: Montgomery, Material Culture, and Meaning

"' … I get so much pleasure out of all my little belongings. They have a meaning for me they have for no one else.'" (*Emily Climbs* 220)

Once we, as readers, become attuned to the presence of fictive objects, their significance becomes much more obvious. Although we tend to think of certain objects in fiction as symbolic, they often have various other roles, from advancing the narrative to contributing to a protagonist's identity or helping form connections between characters. This thesis has argued for importance of attending to the objects in fiction, particularly in Montgomery's Emily trilogy, and explored the value of material culture studies as a lens through which to examine these works.

It is clear that material culture theory and the study of objects in fiction for young people is a rich and promising direction for both Montgomery scholarship and, more generally, for children's literature studies. This thesis has demonstrated the ways in which objects are vital to the protagonist and the narrative, and I have examined several specific examples of the significant roles that objects have within the Emily trilogy and other works by Montgomery where relevant. In the introduction, the Literature Review demonstrates the breadth and depth of scholarship that exists within material culture theory, children's literature, and the works of Montgomery, but it also reveals a disconnect between these fields. The role of this thesis is to fill this gap and bring material culture theory into children's literature and, specifically, Montgomery studies. Grounding this thesis in the theory of material culture studies from various scholars including anthropologists, philosophers, art historians, and children's literature specialists has demonstrated the usefulness of the so-called material turn in the humanities and its value for children's literature.

Chapter One examines the role of houses as physical objects in the Emily trilogy, discussing the most important houses in Emily's life and their significance in her development, relationships, and Montgomery's Gothic intrusions. As the largest set of objects that feature in this thesis, houses are physically prominent but also emotionally essential to works of children's literature in providing the possibility of home and kinship. In the Emily trilogy as well as children's literature in general, houses are vital to a protagonist's identity as well as forming the loci for families.

Chapter Two discusses the significance of books and writing materials to the narrative, particularly in terms of its role as a *Künstlerroman,* chronicling the development of the protagonist as a writer. These smaller but no less significant objects reveal themselves to be essential to Emily's identity formation as a person and as a writer, and this chapter also demonstrates the emotional significance of objects such as journals and letters to both Emily and Montgomery. The autobiographical component of this trilogy is particularly clear in this chapter, with Montgomery's life writing providing much of the inspiration for Emily's ambition and growth as a writer.

Chapter Three focuses on the meanings of other smaller, domestic objects such as clothing, portraits, and food-related objects that play various roles in the trilogy and in children's literature more broadly, including that of strengthening connections between characters and highlighting the importance of tradition. The ownership and use of these small objects over time tends to foster a sense of belonging in characters such as Emily, and reading about familiar objects can help readers feel connected to the narrative. Food-related items are particularly significant in children's literature as signs of security and kinship, and in the Emily trilogy, food helps to define the protagonist's relationships with her aunts.

Chapter Four examines the significance of natural objects such as trees and stars in the narrative, and particularly the protagonist's development and identity. This chapter demonstrates the validity of considering natural objects as material culture when humans interact with them, as well as the importance to Montgomery of blurring the lines between natural and manufactured, both of which are meaningful to her characters.

This thesis opens up various possibilities for future research in the fields of children's literature studies, specifically in terms of material culture studies, and within Montgomery scholarship. A thorough examination of the role of significant objects in all twenty-one of Montgomery's novels would be a valuable contribution to Montgomery studies. In the field of children's literature studies more generally, my research into the connections between material culture studies and children's literature reveals seemingly endless possibilities for the examination of various genres, from picture books for the youngest readers to the complex world of manga and comic books; from the simplest chapter books for beginning readers to multi-volume series of young adult books. There are also pedagogical implications for this focus on material objects in children's books; educators will, I believe, be influenced by the material turn in the humanities when learning about various aspects of children's education, and material culture theory could have a profound effect on the ways in which teachers are trained and the ways in which children are taught. For example, Norris Brock Johnson, in a study of "the material culture of classrooms within an elementary school in the rural midwestern United States,"[57] found that "classroom material culture reinforces the symbolic integration of heterogeneous local school communities into a national society and culture" (abstract). By contrast,

[57] Norris Brock Johnson. "The Material Culture of Public School Classrooms: The Symbolic Integration of Local Schools and National Culture." *Anthropology & Education Quarterly,* vol. 11, no. 3, 2009, pp. 173-190.

teachers' focus on objects in wordless picture books from around the world could help children to learn more about society and culture in other countries as well as their own.

There is also great potential for the continued use of material culture as a lens through which to study children's picture books. Peter B. Crabb and Dawn Bielawski, for example, discuss whether prescriptions are made about the appropriate gender of users of specific types of material culture. They refer to " … children's picture books as one medium which may both express and model social representations of material culture and gender. Of particular interest were the illustrations in children's books, which pictorially represent the storyline of the text but may also display information about material culture which is not explicit in the text" (71).

In terms of limitations, it would not be possible within the parameters of a PhD thesis to undertake a study of every object mentioned in even one novel, let alone an entire trilogy, so I have had to limit this thesis to the four main categories explored here: houses, domestic objects, books and writing materials, and natural objects. Another necessary limitation is the exclusion of sentient creatures from the category of material culture, simply because although animals and humans have physical bodies, their position as creatures with agency and free will means that they are not acted upon in the same way as inanimate objects and are therefore too complex to be treated as such. (Material culture theory treats only inanimate objects as "culture" because of its focus on things that are made and used by humans and therefore become part of their societies). There are also various related theories, such as Bill Brown's "thing theory" and Bruno Latour's actor-network theory, that might contribute to this discussion but are not possible to cover in a study of this length. This limitation also demonstrates that there are other (but similar) lenses that remain underutilized and potentially valuable to the study of children's

literature, including ecocriticism, with its focus on the materiality of the natural world, and feminism and gender studies, with its recent turn toward embodiment.

The last word on this subject goes to Montgomery herself, who wrote, as Emily, "' … I get so much pleasure out of all my little belongings. They have a meaning for me they have for no one else,'" (*EC* 220), and "'I love *things* just as much as *people*'" (*EC* 210).

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(Although these Bantam editions do not contain the full, unabridged text of the original editions, I chose to use these because of the difficulty in obtaining the originals and because the changes made by the publishers do not significantly affect the narratives as far as I used them in this thesis.)

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Appendix A

Figure 1. Point lace centrepiece by L.M. Montgomery, courtesy Anne of Green Gables Museum, Park Corner, PEI. Photograph my own.

Point lace patterns:

https://www.antiquepatternlibrary.org/pub/PDF/GoubaudPointLace.pdf

http://archive.org/details/cu31924050724636/mode/1up?view=theater

Figure 2. Front, “Mother Hubbard” gown. (Gift of Mary and Joseph Koval, American Textile History Museum, Lowell, MA; photo, Karen Herbaugh.) Gray, 32.

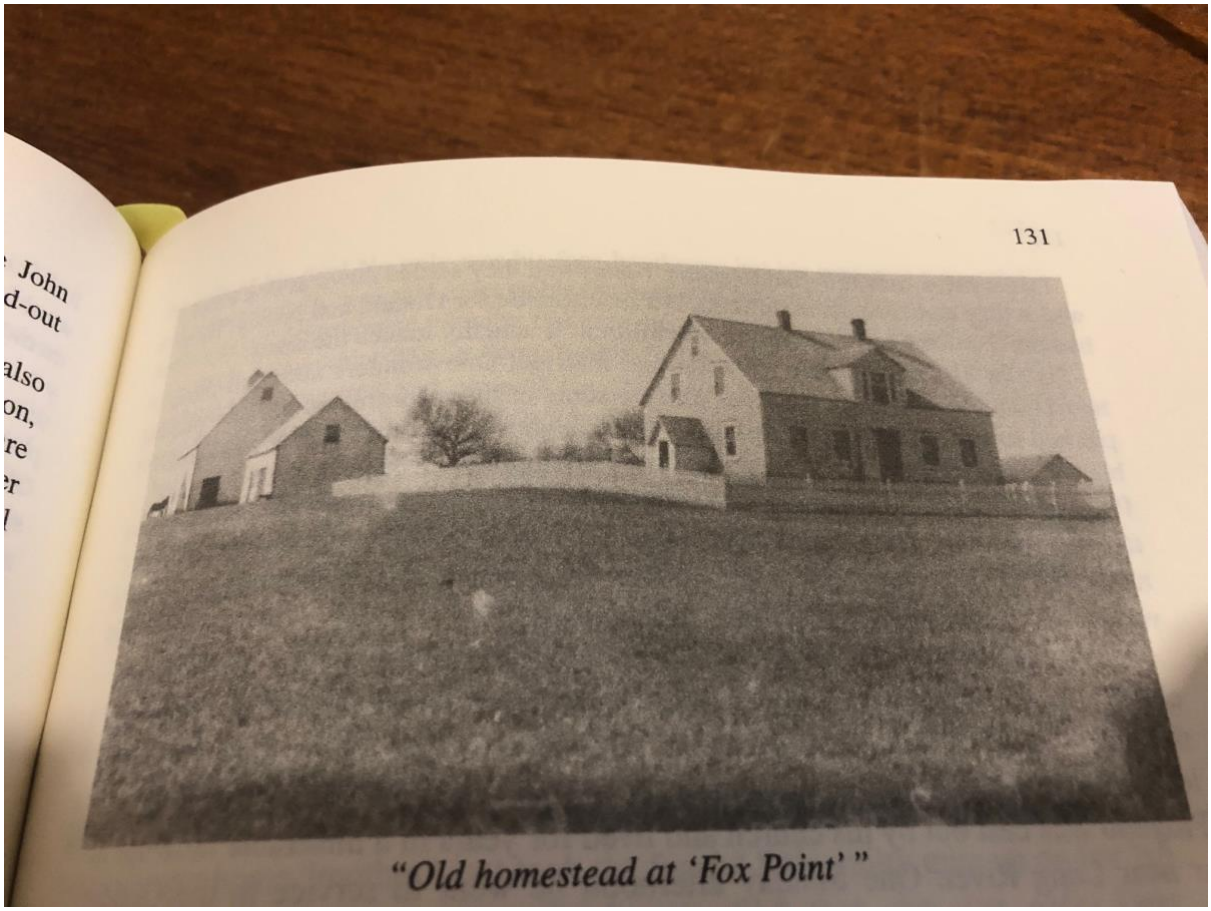
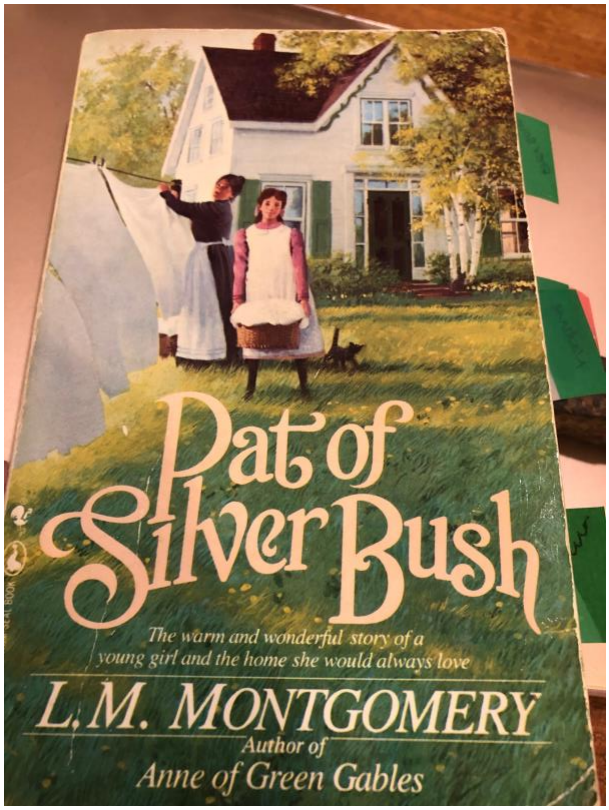


Figure 3. The model for New Moon, the original Montgomery homestead at Fox Point, Alberton, PEI, showing the "lookout" room (top right). Photograph by L.M. Montgomery, printed in *SJ IV* 131.

Figure 4. A "chessy-cat knocker" of the same type purchased by L.M. Montgomery in 1921, possibly the inspiration for the object mentioned in the Emily trilogy (*ENM* 239). Photograph my own.



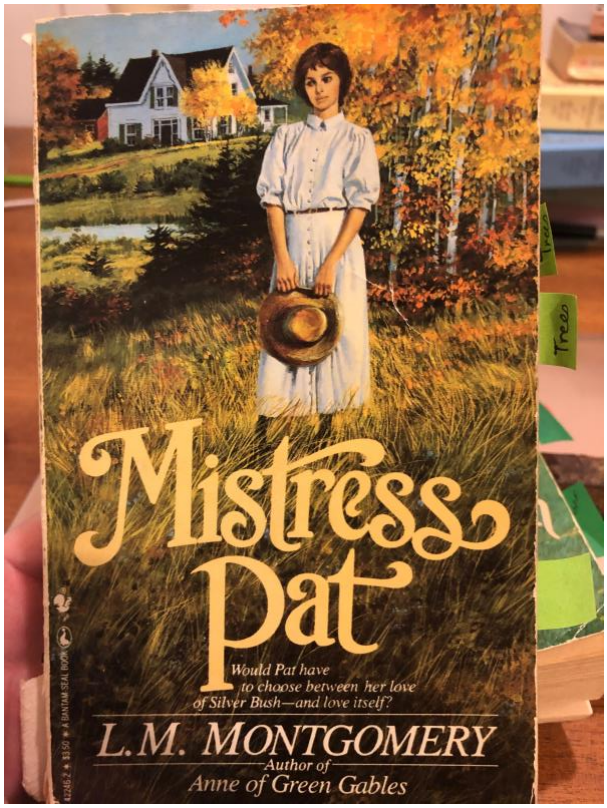


Figure 5. Book covers of "Silver Bush" featuring the art of Ben Stahl, based on the house at Park Corner, PEI (now the Anne of Green Gables Museum), which belonged to Montgomery's aunt and uncle, and a photograph of the house itself (photograph my own).

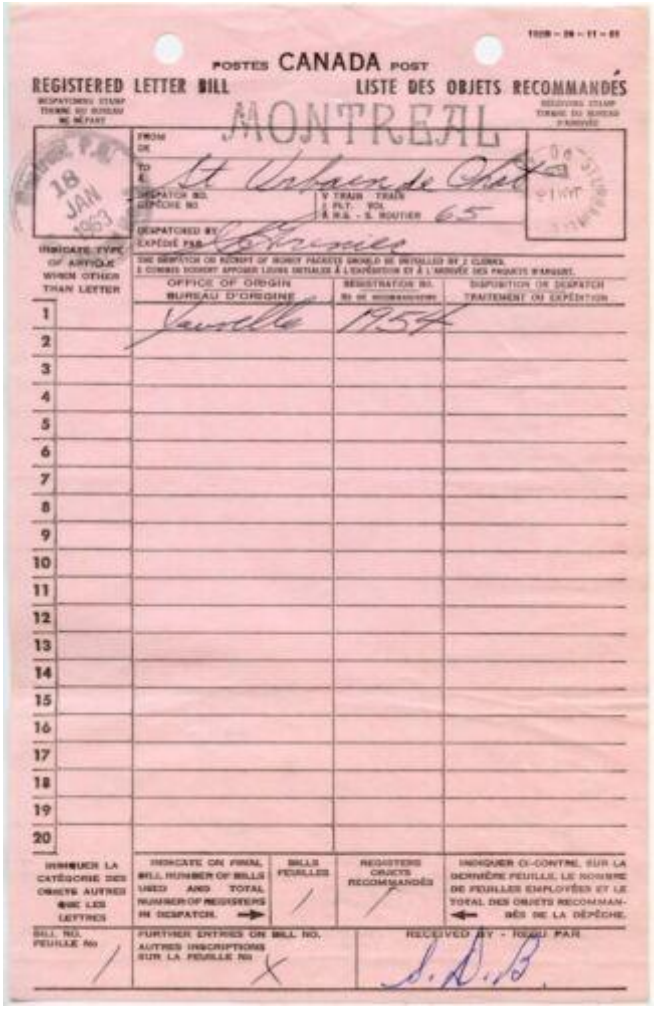


Fig. 6. A 1963 Canada Post "letter bill" of the type that Montgomery and Emily used for writing on their blank backs. (photo courtesy eBay: https://www.ebay.com/itm/274503641934, accessed 3/2/2024).

A link to an archived circular to postmasters from Canada Post regarding letter bills: https://recherche-collection-search.baclac.gc.ca/eng/home/record?app=canposoffpub&IdNumber=371&q=BILLS (accessed 3/2/2024).

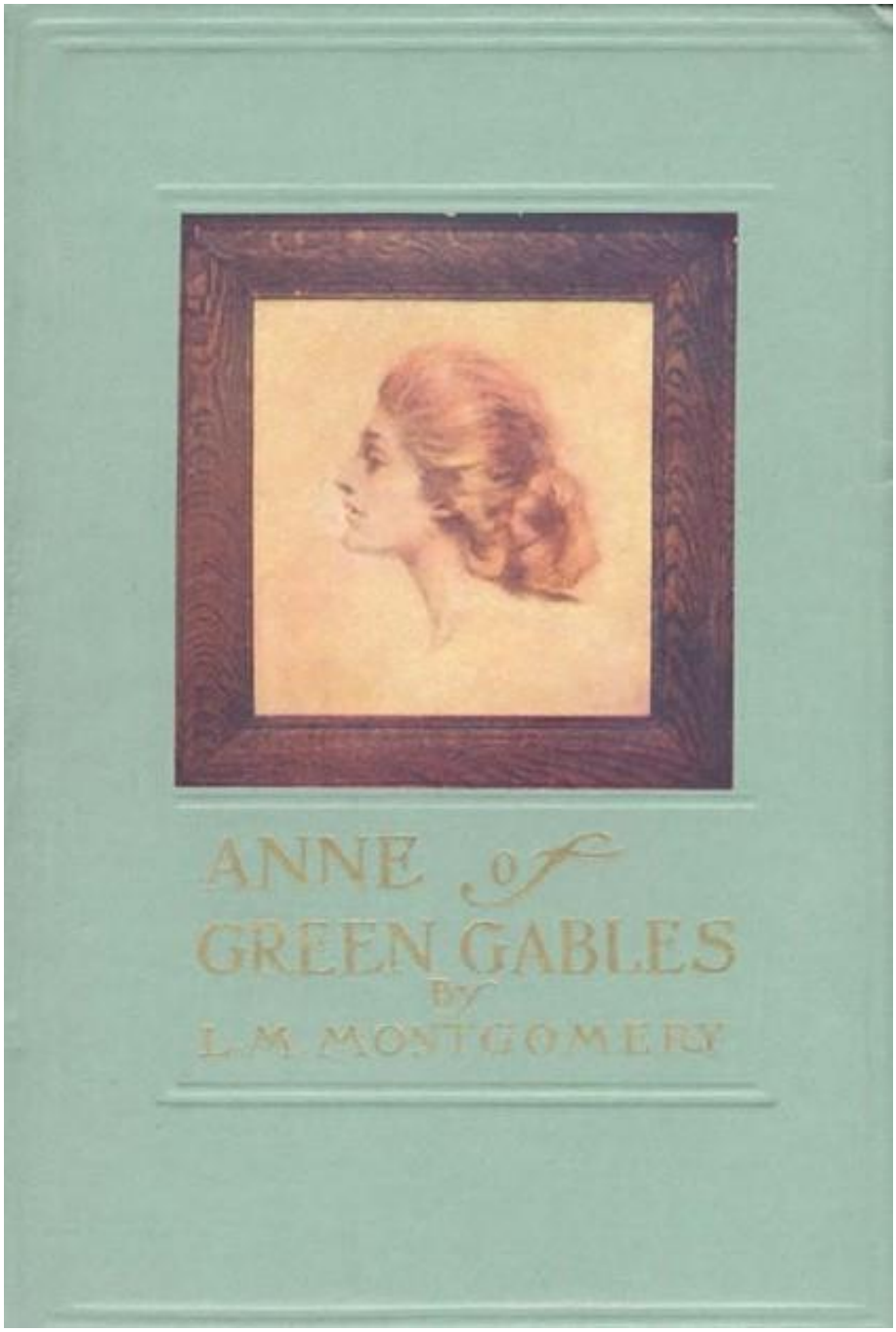


Fig. 7. First-edition cover of *Anne of Green Gables*.

Fig. 8. First-edition cover of *Emily of New Moon.*

Fig. 9. Macniven & Cameron Waverley pens, the type that Montgomery used as mentioned in her journals.