



MARY MCDONALD-RISSANEN

Sandstone Diaries

Prince Edward Island Women's Nineteenth-
and Twentieth-Century Life Writing



ACADEMIC DISSERTATION

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the Faculty of Humanities of the University of Tampere,
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P.O. Box 617
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Tel. +358 3 3551 6055
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Sandstone Diaries, an expedition into Island women's life writing, is dedicated to all Island women and especially my sister Virginia, who shares the memory of our grandmother Amy, our mother Katherine and our sister Katherine.



FIGURE 1. Diary of Harriet Bradshaw Dickieson, 1904

INTRODUCTION

Prince Edward Island Women Diarists

Prince Edward Island women diarists are an anomaly of sorts, as most Islanders think there is only one recognizable diarist, Lucy Maud Montgomery (1874–1942). In fact, that is true, as most of the diarists in this research haven't received any public recognition for their diary keeping. It's likely that those around these women were ignorant of or ambivalent about their "scribbling," a term Montgomery often used to describe her own writing. This is the nature of the genre: "it's always been acceptable for women to write diaries because the diary carried with it the intention not to publish" (Kadar xiii). So why research women's unpublished diaries? Why bring these documents into the light of day from dusty drawers and mysterious archives? Simply put, these documents allow us to explore how women, otherwise often silent in the public realm, represented themselves through writing.

The diaries taken up for examination in this research remain unique documents of women acting as writing subjects to record day-to-day events that became an inventory and memory bank of their lives. Because of their unpublished and unedited form, the diaries mediate through their language and presentation numerous linguistic and non-linguistic strategies that would be erased if edited and published. The strategies revealed in the materiality of the diary—the physical diary itself, the handwriting, the layout—are often deemed unimportant in women's articulation of their voices and thus are not preserved in the publishing process. Here in the privacy of her diary, a woman could devise various means to tell her story; she might add a sketch of a bird in the margin or simply leave an empty space. This research strives to expose the linguistic and thematic issues in these documents in their original form and analyze the way their authors manoeuvre in the genre to articulate an evolving "Self."

Nineteenth- and Twentieth-century PEI through Women's Pens

The time frame of these documents—the period from the mid-nineteenth century to the early twentieth century—is one in which scientific observation and recording were recognized as a means to knowledge. In her 1989 article “Women and Diaries: Gender and Genre” in the journal *Mosaic: A Journal for the Interdisciplinary Study of Literature*, Valerie Raoul explores the *journal intime*, which emerged in nineteenth-century France, initially as a private genre that was more demonstratively “feminine” than the novel: a diary, distinctive in its concerns with the self and “the initial absence of any other intentional narratee” (58). On the one hand, keeping a diary was considered a harmless preoccupation for girls and women to engage in as it didn’t interfere with their proper work; it was a harmless activity. On the other hand, as Raoul notes, this “factual account of one life, as all-inclusive as possible, was perceived as potentially valuable, if only for the author” (61–62). The triangulation of writer, reader and subject of the diary and the opportunity to engage in self-reflexive textuality while writing at home, while travelling and at periods of transition (e.g., taking up a job or getting married) make the diary an important site for women to gain access to self-knowledge.

Represented here are women who experienced and wrote about themselves in Prince Edward Island (PEI) when it was evolving from a pioneer society to a more established agrarian one, those who participated in the modernization of Canada, and those who witnessed how Canada bled the Island of its people; yet the women diarists herein stayed behind. These diarists were instrumental in loosening the hold of transplanted Victorianism, and they document in idiosyncratic ways how they moved on to actively engage themselves with various modernist projects. Simultaneously, these women diarists document from their positions in the private sphere of their homes and occasionally from other locations, not only their own story but also those of their fellow human beings caught up in the struggles of everyday life in the home, on the road or in the battlefield. Most importantly, their diaries show how, through diary keeping, women developed a sense of self: the writer positions herself as “the One,” who through writing recreates her subjectivity, writing herself out of the problematic position of being the other, or “not the One.”

This research follows Simone de Beauvoir’s theory of the perception of the feminine as other (171). Here, women are defining themselves in a marginal genre against the grain of their popular depiction and the established status

quo of the male subject. Women were writing in a subversive genre, the diary, while they were still socially and psychologically very much the other—an object of the discourse of church, conduct literature and newspaper ads. By diary keeping, women were engaging with their “chosen other,” and as Mary Mason indicates in “The Other Voice: Autobiographies of Women Writers” (1980), by the “recognition of another consciousness [...] and by grounding their identity in an idiosyncratic linguistic relation to this chosen other, women diarists seem to be enabled to write openly about themselves” (210). The women diarist moved between home, family, friends, countries, work, and community, writing herself into new spheres, but wherever she was, in the countryside or the town, part of the urban elite or the struggling rural folk, she by her writing was colonizing her space with her language and becoming the subject of her own discourse. In this research, I will probe into the documents of this era to expose Island women’s diary practices and juxtapose women’s diaries with other discourse and representations of women to reveal how the diary is an artefact important for women’s self knowledge.

Genre and Gender

The genre in which these Island women choose to write is fundamental to their gaining access to their own discourse. Historically, women were encouraged to stick with their diaries rather than seek to write in other genres, as Raoul points out: “The original non-public, non-literary nature of the ‘genuine’ diary is the first feature which made it a form of writing considered for women” (58). The literary threshold for writing in other genres was too daunting. That little book, shop ledger, almanac or school notebook was already part of her life: it could be kept regularly or irregularly, and it could accept entries at any time, of any length and on any topic. This made the diary attractive to women. The diary, what Virginia Woolf calls a “capacious hold all” (qtd. in Raoul 62), could accommodate a woman’s need to write. The diarist could express and explore her uncertainty of self, and she could play with her language within the unconfined frames of its page, for a moment at least. Looking at the tattered documents I have chosen to classify as life writing becomes somewhat problematic when one tries to fit them neatly into the categories of autobiography, diary, journal, journal intime, memoir, epistle and letter, or life writing.

Following Donald J. Winslow, Marlene Kadar defines autobiography as “the writing of one’s own history, the story of one’s life written by oneself” (Kadar xi). Kadar further classifies autobiographies into the subgenres of *apologia*, apology, confessions, and memoirs (xi). She stipulates that an autobiography, like a memoir, is first “an extended and connected narrative following some kind of chronological, historical, or other clear order”; second, memoir is “meant for the public eye”; third, “the narrator of the modern autobiography usually assumes that he or she is recalling the past with accuracy, and that there is much fact in the recollection”; fourth, “the autobiographer assumes the reader’s interest in ‘the life’ because of the importance given to introspection of self-analysis”; and fifthly, the “autobiography is deemed to exhibit literariness” (xii).

A modern manifestation of the memoir is Elspeth Cameron’s *No Previous Experience: A Memoir of Love and Change* (1997). Cameron, Canada’s most respected biographer, traces her re-evaluation of her sexuality by documenting her past marriages and her new love, and exposing herself as the “real” person who for years had been instrumental in bringing out other people’s stories in her biographies. She has now given herself to the public eye for scrutiny by recalling specific places and people that are well known to the Canadian reading public. That a “thinking man’s Barbie doll”¹ like herself can come out as a lesbian aroused readers’ interest in how the biographer writes herself, which she did with intelligence, passion and literary skill.

The diary or journal Kadar sees as the most personal or private of the life writing genres: it is “ostensibly written by the author for the author on a ‘daily’ or at least on a regular basis and it is assumed that less needs to be *remembered* because recollection is immediate” (xiii). For Canadians, the five volumes of *The Selected Journals of L.M. Montgomery* (1985, 1987, 1992, 1998 and 2004) now hold a place of honour, but for decades Montgomery’s millions of words written from her teen years until her death in 1942 remained unpublished. Kadar does mention that “the unpublished diary in particular is valued as a way of understanding women’s history and voice, because it is one of the accounts by women that we actually do have” (xiii); but I argue that by its very unpublished nature—the handwriting, the quantity of text, the layout of the page, the numerous idiosyncratic features each woman diarist employed in her diary—the textual and thematic features in the diary texts cumulatively reveal the profound process for these women of finding their diary voice.

¹ The phrase comes from the cover blurb on the book.

The idea of voice in Canadian life writing has inspired writers like Margaret Atwood, who bases her book of poetry *The Journals of Susanna Moodie* (1970) on Susanna Moodie's nineteenth-century account that became known as *Roughing It in the Bush, or Life in Canada* (1988). Moodie's journal voice in Atwood's poetry or even Rudy Wiebe and Yvonne Johnson's *Stolen Life: The Journey of a Cree Woman* (1998), where Wiebe and Johnson collaborate to tell her story, serve as examples of blended genres or subgenres of life writing in Canadian literature. Neither Atwood nor Wiebe disguise the fact that they are participating in autobiographical inscription. As Kadar observes, however, "life writing is best understood as a continuum of narrative which spreads unevenly and in the combined forms from the least fictive narration—such as Anne Frank's diary (1943–44)—and to the most fictive—such as Gail Scott's *Heroine* (1987)" (ix).

In my discussion here, I use all these terms to refer to the texts produced by PEI women diarists. Memoir is the least-used term because these diaries are generally raw and in an unedited form; their unavailability and what initially appears as their apparent lack of literariness eliminate them from Kadar's classification of memoir. Life writing serves as a cover term for these texts, as it encompasses on a general level the process the women are engaged in—writing their lives. Life writing texts are defined by Kadar as those "written by an author who does not pretend to be absent from the text itself" (ix). The women diarists studied here clearly presented themselves as the narrators of their texts by putting their names on their diaries and documenting their lives, even if they occasionally attempted to conceal aspects about themselves, their bodies or emotions.

My personal response to the diaries is one of intimacy on numerous levels. I have gained access to, seen and read something that very few others have. I have been engaged intimately with these women, fully aware of the profoundness of their autobiographical act while acknowledging how hard it is to say certain things. Several of these women have played a part in my own life and one, Amy Andrew, is my grandmother. On my way to and from school, I passed the home of Carrie Ellen Holman and her sister Gladys, even visited there and knew they were my grandmother's friends. Wanda Wyatt's house was across from the public gardens, on another school route. I remember meeting her with my mother in the grocery store and hearing stories about her travels and community engagement. All the diarists have written about places that are very familiar to most Islanders and with PEI's small and traditional population base, these women diarists can easily be positioned by fellow Islanders in the contemporary

Island social network. I can't, at times, resist using the most feminine of terms for their diaries, the *journal intime*. Raoul suggests that "[t]he '*journal intime*' in the French tradition may be more demonstrably 'feminine'" (57), and that the diary, because of its "private nature and the usual motivation (a malaise based on a questioning of selfhood)," is produced under conditions that make it "apparently suitable for women" (61).

Perhaps my feeling of intimacy relates also to my initial contact with diaries. As I remember it was one sunny summer day on my mother's² front porch that this research took off. We had planned to take a drive to the north shore, and I would divert our little trip to Park Corner so as to join in on the publication launch of Lucy Maud Montgomery's journals. While we were sitting in the sun porch, our neighbour Linnie Beaton called in for a few minutes and said that she too would not miss this event: Maud, like herself, was a good Presbyterian. My mother was not quite so keen but would come along.

A few weeks later, I was off to England to complete my degree in linguistics with two heavy, autographed copies of *The Selected Journals of L.M. Montgomery* in my bag. My initial attempt to apply linguistic theories to Montgomery's diary texts³ was inspired by Deidre Burton's discourse analysis of Sylvia Plath's poetry, "Through Glass Darkly: Through Dark Glasses" (1982): Burton's questions about Plath, the writer and her agency, haunted me. This research on Island women diarists and the development of their agency through their life writing traces its roots back to Burton's essay and my own research into Montgomery's diary discourse and, in particular, how her rapport with nature spurred her to write in a poetic voice.

As Raoul points out, the diary's lack of imposed form and rules has made it attractive to women, and in the case of Montgomery, her diary became her receptacle of modernist verse, while her published poetry, reprinted in *The Poetry of Lucy Maud Montgomery* (1999), was more stylized, compromising with Canadian literary taste of the time. This discovery aroused further curiosity concerning what might have been edited out of the published versions of Montgomery's diaries. Before I could pursue this question, another exciting discovery diverted my research away from the published versions of Montgomery's diaries and down the road which I now tread.

² Katherine Amelia (née Andrew) McDonald, 1913–2002

³ See my article "Pulling Back the Thin Veil: The Poetic Discourse of Lucy Maud Montgomery" (2001).

Linguistic Analysis of Published and Unpublished Diary Texts

On a visit home my sister and I decided to clean up our mother's bedroom while she was in hospital. In the top drawer of Mom's bedside table was a smallish, motley, leather-bound book that read in gold letters, "A Line a Day." It was our grandmother's⁴ diary from 1910–15. I took it in by my bedside and began reading it.

It was simple and full of routines and people I had heard much about. The more I read, the easier the reading got as I learned to decipher her handwriting and abbreviations. The big events of this time, the war and the sinking of the Titanic, manifested in the diary when Gramma wrote about knitting socks for the soldiers and squeezed the disasters in the margins, as an afterthought to her daily routines.

At first, Gramma's diary appeared to be what I anticipated a diary would look like: the page was divided into five sections of five lines, which, over the five years, Gramma had managed to almost completely fill with her often lovely, scrolling handwriting. Each entry began with a report on the weather and then an account of the day's activities: where she went, who was there and her response, "had a very nice time" (January 8, 1912). Occasionally, community events were reported: "Father to a Hall meeting" (January 9, 1912). However, she failed to indicate whether she participated or not. As I turned the pages, more variation in the length of entries and the quality of her handwriting struck my eye. Then the quotidian passages of the first page took on new forms, there were gaps in various sections of the page and on close inspection many were at the bottom of the page, as in 1914 when she reports that her nine-month-old baby, my mother, was sick: "Baby not very well" (January 3, 1914). For some reason, Gramma could not write more this time, and I began to wonder why. Her text on the page was not telling the whole story, and her reticence was revealing something she perhaps wanted to conceal or couldn't express.

Page after page of new features arrested my attention as winter turned into spring; snow turned to rain as I read from the top to the bottom of each page, through entries for the same day over five years. Alternately, I read horizontally, forward through the year, through the days proceeding my mother's birth when no mention was made of a baby soon to be born, but instead Gramma's entries account for the daily visits of friends and relatives who spent the afternoon with her while my grandfather obviously did the chores. Then, at the end of "a perfect

⁴ Amelia Darby (née Tanton) Andrew, 1881–1965

day,” she writes, “Horace & I drove home for a little while took sick after I got home Harry went after—Dr—& Horace after Mrs Richardson.” The next day’s entry confirmed what I already knew happened on April 5, 1913: my mother was born.

Gradually, I was learning how Gramma was using her diary to record her life: there were self-evident matters, like her pregnancy, that did not need to be stated. I was also learning her inscription patterns, the particular circumstances that should alert me, the reader, to a set of consequences. When Gramma wrote of a death, I could anticipate that she would also mention, a few days later, a funeral, or when she reported the planting of crops she would write of their eventual harvest, and so the pattern went. Her pattern of event and consequence was often disguised, and these parts of her diary became increasingly intriguing, such as when her sister moved off the Island and Gramma did not write directly of her sadness but instead indicated through her actions that she was upset and couldn’t follow through her normal routines or had a headache.

Rebecca Hogan, in “Engendered Autobiographies: The Diary as a Feminine Form” in *Autobiography and Questions of Gender* (1991) notes the same parataxical quality of the unpublished diaries she studies, where her diarists did as Gramma, writing in strings of clauses and incomplete sentences in order to accommodate the day’s activities in the small space of five lines per day. Linda Peterson, in her book *Traditions of Victorian Women’s Autobiography: The Poetics and Politics of Life Writing* (1999), points out such writing strategies as dead-end narratives, reticence, and substitution, which as I read my grandmother’s diary became increasingly obvious.

Lining my grandmother’s unpublished diary up with the published diaries of L. M. Montgomery seemed like a far-fetched comparison, but was nevertheless a very revealing act.⁵ Both women resorted to idiosyncratic strategies in their diaries to write themselves into existence, illustrating the problems women have in using language in their search for a voice. Once Gramma’s diary was transcribed, the contrast with Montgomery’s began to diminish: they were both now just printed words on a page. Comparing Gramma and Montgomery at various turning points in their lives and their accounts of those occasions in their diaries was one interesting point of departure for exploring the commonalities. Generally speaking, Gramma’s sparse diary text and Montgomery’s eloquent diary prose on a more profound level suggested the possibilities each saw in her

⁵ See my thesis “Veils and Gaps: Women’s Life Writing in Early 20th Century Prince Edward” (2002).

diary as a means to articulate that which had no where else to go but in her diary.

For example, both women recorded their weddings in their diaries. Montgomery wrote nothing for months. Finally, her diary confesses that she could not even summon up a response on her wedding day. Clearly, at certain times in their lives women were paralyzed and unable to write a word. Unlike Montgomery, my grandmother did write at the time about her wedding day and the days after, but with reserve in detail and sentiment. Everything went according to plan and she was happy. Below is my grandmother's diary entry of her wedding day, followed by my transcription and a clipping of the event from the local paper.

1912 A perfect day one nice shower
 Lillie & Cecil out all day
 My wedding day every thing came
 off fine lots of cheveree. A regular
 good time.
 1913. A perfect day school children

FIGURE 2. Amy Andrew's Wedding Day Entry, June 26, 1912

June 26
 1912 A perfect day one nice shower
 Lillie & Cecil out all day
 My wedding day every thing came
 off fine lots of cheveree. A regular
 good time.

In my transcription of the handwritten text, the layout of five lines is preserved, but the compactness of the original text is lost when it is transferred to systematically sized characters, evenly spaced, and surrounded by white space. Amy Andrew's typically euphoric initial statement, "A perfect day," in its transcribed form lacks the enthusiasm those first drops of ink release with her scrolling "A." Similarly, when she wrote of other, less perfect days, her uncomfortable sentiment crept

into her handwriting, so that in seeing the “Rainy nasty day” of July 1, 1913, in Amy Andrew’s handwriting, one can also feel the misery she had to endure to go out in the rain and plant her cabbage plants. It was, as she wrote, “Dominion Day,” a national holiday, and she obviously hoped for better weather conditions.

Tucked within the pages of Gramma’s diary was the newspaper clipping (see fig. 3, below) from the local paper of her wedding, held in St. Eleanors, Prince Edward Island, on June 26, 1912. Reading this report with Gramma’s diary account made me realize the details of the event that were totally absent from the wedding day entry: her wedding dress, her sister Marion’s and friend Marion’s attire, the church’s decoration and the music. Undoubtedly Gramma was constrained by the five lines, but also by her modesty and her inability to portray her feelings as she walked down the aisle as Amy Darby Tanton with orange blossoms in her hair and left the church as Mrs. Horace Andrew. The recognition that Gramma in her diary could not after all directly account for her emotions alerted me to what else she could not say here.

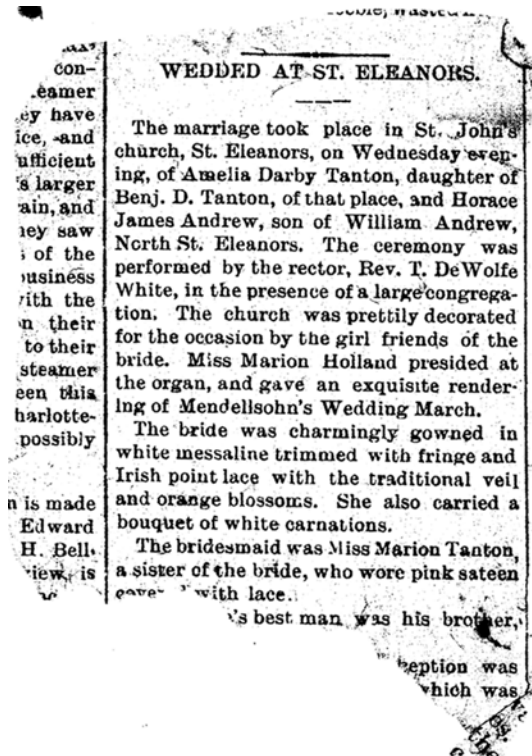


FIGURE 3. Newspaper Announcement of Amy Andrew’s Wedding

Reading and Transcribing “Messy” Documents

Steven Weiland, in his article “Writers as Readers in Narrative Inquiry: Learning from Biography” in *Up Close and Personal: The Teaching and Learning of Narrative Research* (2003), refers to texts such as unpublished diaries as “messy” (204). Handwritten diaries like my grandmother’s and all the other diaries examined here are unique in their page layout and the diarist’s handwriting, and within those general differences are the variations in handwriting within a diary, caused by cold, time, mood or other circumstances. Transcribing such unusual or messy texts demands first that the researcher come to terms with the layout of the diary and with what is written on the page. For example, when reading my grandmother’s diary, I had to decide whether to read it vertically, namely the same day for five consecutive years or horizontally, from day to day. Generally, each diary was read chronologically as most daily entries ran from the top to the bottom of the page, and from the diarists’ narrative of repetition and the general context of people, place, time of year or events, I could conclude the relation of the people and events to the diarist.

Occasionally, there are stumbling blocks in identifying people and places; for example, the newspaper announcement of my grandparents’ wedding above indicates that there are two Marions, Gramma’s sister Marion and her friend Marion Holland. Gramma obviously did not feel the need to explain in her diary which Marion she was referring to, just as she didn’t mention her pregnancy: these were self-evident to her. When reading the other diarists, I knew very little about the people in their lives, and only through their diary discourse and archival research was I able to ascertain with any amount of certainty the relationship of the individuals mentioned.

By far the greatest problem was accustoming myself to the individual writing styles and the idiosyncratic writing features each diarist employed, such as abbreviations, nicknames or general incoherence. Each diary demanded multiple readings before I became familiar with the diarist’s writing and referencing strategies, but there were cases where I had to give up in the transcription and simply add a question mark.

Textual Analysis of Unpublished Diaries

A new phase in the textual analysis of Gramma's diary began after assembling the text as a legible document, selecting particular key passages and transcribing them as above, maintaining the five-line layout and the actual words but stripping the text of its human dimension, the handwriting. Various linguistic theories have been instrumental in understanding the deeper dimensions of Gramma's discourse. Norman Fairclough's method of textual analysis in *Language and Power* (1985) was applied for analyzing the relation of the writer to her milieu through the experiential, relational and expressive values she employs in her diary. The way in which Gramma writes of her social network and natural world, and her relationships with family, friends and neighbours are represented in the diary through various practices that were important ways of defining herself as a writing subject in her diary. Like Burton's analysis of Plath's loss of agency and control, I could see a more empowering agency in my grandmother evolving and being replicated throughout her five years of diary keeping.

Gramma's text, with its gaps and reticence, signalled what were to become the most evasive and challenging linguistic features to comprehend in other diaries to which I would eventually gain access. The actual gaps in the diary, dead-end narratives, fragmented syntax, dealing with the "unsayable," and substituting narratives were some of the textual features women diarists used to tell or to avoid telling what actually happened. Irene Gammel indicates in her introduction to *Confessional Politics: Women's Sexual Self-Representation in Life Writing and Popular Media* (1999) that such linguistic features are part of the confessional framework that disrupt and alert the reader, indicators of both the power and powerlessness of women diarists to manoeuvre in their text. It is necessary to take note of even the most subtle of references, such as the lack of reference to certain events that are reported elsewhere, or any repetition of images or events (e.g., reoccurring headaches or musings about moonlight nights), the positioning of the diarist herself, and the volume of text or lack of it at certain points in her life. The intertextuality of Gramma's diary, with its references to other documents—letters, newspapers, histories, diaries, anecdotes—expanded my understanding of the context from which she wrote and also informed my reading of her diary so I could identify her confessional strategies.

The Researcher and the Historical Document

I began to wonder what it was really like back in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. I remember that Gramma was always reading newspapers, and I decided to see what they were saying at the time she was writing. I grew up across the street from the editor of the local paper, the *Journal Pioneer*, so I assumed that should assure me passage to their archives and it did. I didn't want to focus just on 1910–15 as Gramma did in her diary but rather to look back a little further into the crumbling papers to get a feel for the time.

In those days, newspapers were rows of columns of text, and ever so occasionally there were some illustrations. These caught my eye, and I soon recognized that almost all the visual illustrations had women in them, generally promoting medications for female functions—childbirth, nerves or menstrual pain. The juxtaposition of women's visual presence in advertisements with their absence in the hard news stories was no surprise; but these papers did not capture the domestic world of women, and least of all the rural life of women like my grandmother, Amy Andrew.

Surely other Island women were keeping diaries? I was tipped off that the archives in Charlottetown might be of help. Next to the historic building designated Canada's birthplace is a typical red Island sandstone building that houses the Prince Edward Island Public Archives and Records Office (PEIPARO) on the fourth floor. The reading room was full of people from away, looking for their Island roots as I looked for other women like Gramma whose families might have donated their diaries to the archives. Only one woman turned up during that visit: Mrs. Dickenson wrote her diary in her husband's shop ledger. With every visit over numerous summers and increasingly devious searching strategies, more Island women emerged from the archives; but I was always left wondering, once I found something, what significance such texts could have.

Collecting the Diaries

Over several summers, my collection of women diarists expanded to almost twenty (see table 1, below). Once I located a diarist, I would read through her diary and select sections to be copied. Some of the texts were of limited interest because they were memoirs written decades later about events in the time frame

of this research and did not capture the immediacy of the diary recording process; some were written outside the time parameters of this study.

My copies of the selected diaries listed below were vital for my re-reading and identifying what was on the page. In most cases, the diaries were a single document, but at least three of the women were prolific diarists: the fonds of **Margaret Pennefather Stukely Gray** (1845–1941), later Mrs. Artemas Lord, contained almost forty diaries written from 1863 until her death. Three of these have been published in *One Woman's Charlottetown: Diaries of Margaret Gray Lord 1863, 1876, 1890* (1988). **Lucy Bardon Palmer Haslam** (1865–1943) was equally productive; she began her diary writing in 1884 and continued until her death. Her sisters **Lilly Palmer Inman** and **Amelia Palmer**, and her niece **Mary Inman**, also had diaries in the Palmer Haslam fonds. In total, Lucy produced twenty diaries of the thirty-one artifacts found in the family fonds. **Wanda Lefurgey Wyatt** (1895–1998) wrote more than 100 diaries which, with numerous artifacts, are located in the *MacNaught History Centre and Archives* adjoining her Spring Street home in Summerside. On numerous occasions, I was given the opportunity to read her diaries on the premises and took notes for further reference; I have also used excerpts from her diary published in Deidre Kessler's biography *A Century on Spring Street: Wanda Lefurgey Wyatt of Summerside Prince Edward Island, 1895–1998*.

All diaries examined here, with the exception of **Mercy Ann Coles's** 1864 diary, are handwritten. Hers is a typewritten text of her original diary and is also the shortest diary, four pages about her trip to historic Quebec where Confederation was discussed. Other diaries were the slender six-page original 1873 almanac of urbanite **Mrs. William Douse**, Charlottetown, where she scribbled a few lines in the margins about the weather or daily events; the ten-page 1929–30 original (on microfilm) travel diary of **Vera Hyde**; the twelve-page photocopy of the rural diary of an unidentified female, possibly **Susan Woodman**, from 1896; the 1914 original fourteen-page diary of **Harriet Bradshaw Dickenson**, written in a shop ledger; a twenty-nine page diary that was a photocopy of either **Edward MacGowan's** or **Jean Gurney's** written daily events and weather in a 1876 almanac; the original sixty-one pages of **Mrs. Joseph Stretch's** (Emma Chadwich Stretch) diary of farm life and events from Long River, written in her shop ledger; Maud Jones's original ninety-five-page diary from 1909–40, listing birds, planting, family, and community events; Alberton teacher **Violet Goldsmith's** 1900–1906 microfilm diary of 164 pages; and **Carrie Ellen Holman's** original diaries from 1901 and 1917, 100 and 365 pages, respectively, on her trips to Europe and her

stay in England during World War I. Teacher **Alberta ‘Bertie’ Stewart** wrote from 1915–16 about her home and social life. Reading the diaries demands that one grasps them with a tender, compassionate yet firm hold so that the words of their creators come forth like the shining particles of the sandstone.

After extensive reading of the diaries and their historical context the diaries tend to drift into several thematic areas: the pioneer/immigrant experience, the farm wife experience, the professional experience, the urban bourgeois experience and the experience of travel. For the first four of these thematic areas, one or two diarists emerged as the spokeswomen for the experience; those women’s diaries feature the most prominent in the chapters that evolved from this categorization. The chapter on Island women travellers deals with five travel diarists who either, like Mercy Ann Coles and Vera Hyde, appear to have kept a travel diary of their off Island experiences, or, like Carrie Ellen Holman, Violet Goldsmith, and Lucy Palmer Haslam, embedded their travels in their regular diary production.

TABLE 1. Panorama of the Unpublished Diaries of Prince Edward Island Women, 1859–1998

Diarist	Date of diary	Setting	Type of diary / # of pages	Length of entry	Supra Textual features
Emma Chadwich Stretch (Mrs. Joseph Stretch)	1859–60	Rural	original shop ledger 61 pp.	1–12 lines daily	Accounts integrated with family farm events
Margaret Pennefather Stukely Gray (Mrs. Artemas Lord)	1863–1939	Urban	original daily journals and scribbles 37 diaries	3–6 lines daily	Comprehensive coverage of urban bourgeois life in Prince Edward Island
Mercy Ann Coles	1864 (Oct. 5 to Nov. 2)	Travel	photocopy Trip to Quebec City 4 pp	4–47 lines a day	Descriptive historic events, travel and health issues
Mrs. William Douse	1873	Urban	original Farmer’s Almanac 6 pp.	1–2 lines occasionally	Details on weather, deaths and shipping
Edward Mac Gowan or Jean Gurney	1876	Rural	photocopy Almanac 29 pp.	1 line or phrase	Events, weather, jobs

Lilly Palmer (Mrs. Henry Inman)	1883–1909	Rural	original diaries, scribbles and letters 5 items	a few lines to a page a day	A farm wife diary, rich in detail
Lucy Bardon Palmer (Mrs. George Haslam)	1884–1942	Rural	original diaries, scribbles, notebooks and letters 20 items	a few lines to a page a day	An extensive account of a young woman who becomes a teacher and later a farm wife and mother
Susan Woodman	1896	Rural	photocopy 12 pp.	8-10 lines daily, less Sat/Sun	Rich in detail of family and rural life
Amelia Palmer	1887–89	Rural	original diary 1 item	A few lines a day	A rich portrayal of the life of a teacher in a small Island community and her social life
Violet E. Gold-Smith	1900–06	Rural Travel	microfilm 164 pp.	A few lines to a few pages each day	Rich in detail about teaching, travelling and relocating
Mary Palmer Inman	1907–13	Rural	original 2 diaries	A few lines a day	Descriptive passages of the rural life of a young woman
Wanda Lefurgey Wyatt	1907–98	Urban	original and copies in biography more than 100 items	varied in length	A very detailed diary of expenses, trips, social agenda and everyday life of an educated and worldly woman
Maud Jones	1909–40	Rural	original and microfilm 95 pp.	One word to a few sentences	Nature and later social observations
Amy Darby Tanton (Mrs. Horace Andrew)	1910–15	Rural	original 365 pp.	5 lines a day	A farm wife diary, rich in detail
Harriet Bradshaw Dickieson	1914	Rural	original account book 14 pp.	Varies from few lines to long passages	Chaotic, sporadic and rich in detail
Alberta “Bertie” Stewart	1915–1916	Rural	original	A few lines daily	A cryptic account of a teacher's home and social life
Carrie Ellen Holman	1901 1917	Travel/ War report	original 365 pp./ 100pp.	1 page daily	Rich in detail of travel and war experiences, textually rich
Vera Hyde	1929–30	Travel	original and microfilm 10 pp.	1 page daily	Rich in detail from journey and Bermuda

Archives and the Importance of Archives to This Work

Around the same time as the publication of Montgomery's diaries in 1985, researchers were springing up worldwide and autobiographical research had become a buzz word in academia. Most autobiographical research was on celebrated people's texts, but researchers such as Helen Buss, in *Mapping Our Selves* (1993), focused on Canadian pioneer women writers and lesser-known women. Little had been written on the unpublished manuscripts of PEI women, but the words of Canadian literary scholar Shirley Neuman about the importance of autobiographical writing by ordinary women and Gwen Davies's cry for more research on the diaries of Maritime women spurred me on. Within the context of discovering women's presence in history, it was clear that Gramma and the women of her time had something to say. Their hidden written selves were in their diaries, which were further buried in archives. As the list of Island women diarists grew, I realized that these texts had much potential for exploring the autobiographical act of women at a time when women were powerfully present in the domestic sphere and were moving into the more public sphere. The diary was an important location for women to write their voices, create a subjective identity and redefine their place in the world. This research began by examining unpublished manuscripts to show how the autobiographic genre was vital for these women in finding their voice.

Methodology

This research is an interdisciplinary study of texts written in the autobiographical genre. The texts are written by women who began writing from the place they knew best, the domestic sphere, during the mid-nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Throughout their lives, these women were exposed to discourses of church and conduct literature and literature specifically directed to women readers, such as romance literature. To study how women have used their diaries to develop themselves as writing subjects, theory from several disciplines has been vital to contextualize women within the genre, within their place in their literary history, and in the nineteenth- and twentieth-century context.

The theoretical informants of this research fall into several categories: literary, linguistic, social historical and feminist research. Literary theories of autobiography, domestic fiction, travel diaries, and conduct literature form the

point of departure for exploring the dimensions of the gendered subjectivity of these Island women diarists. This research is primarily based on such established theorists of autobiography as Mary Mason, Estelle Jelinek, Elizabeth Bruss, Mary Louise Pratt, Janet Verner Gunn, Sidonie Smith, Liz Stanley, Linda H. Peterson, Vivien Jones, Susan Bassnett, and those of Canadian origin such as Helen Buss, Shirley Neuman, Marlene Kadar, Valerie Raoul, Kathryn Carter; and numerous other Canadian literary scholars, including W.H. New, Carole Gerson, D.M.R. Bentley, Gwendolyn Davies, Linda Hutcheon, Annis Pratt, and Lorraine McMullen.

Linguistic theories of M.A.K. Halliday, Ruqaiya Hasan, Deidre Burton, Norman Fairclough, and Sara Mills with the applications of these theories to literary texts and texts in general have opened new sites for studying the linguistic workings of diary texts. More specifically, Ruthellen Josselson's series of publications on the Narrative Study of Lives illustrate how narrative study and understanding specific narrative and linguistic strategies such as the "unsayable" (Rogers), "radical parataxis" (Hogan), and narrative dead ends, reticence and repression (Peterson) elucidate meanings from "messy" texts like those discussed here.

Social historians such as Francis Bolger, Maria Tippet, Edward MacDonald, Anthony Giddens, Robert Tuck, Moncrieff Williamson, Wayne Wright and Katherine Dewar are some of the important influences of this research. Without their insights, this study would not be linked to a specific time and place, when Canada was defining itself as a nation and women were becoming more actively engaged in modernist endeavours.

Numerous feminist scholars have been instrumental in providing a home for this research, people whose work on women's writing has been an inspiration and a source of intellectual insights: Gabriella Åhmansson for her exemplarily and pioneering feminist reading of L.M. Montgomery; Päivi Kosonen for her insightful lectures and research in autobiography; and Irene Gammel for her research, publications and engagement with L.M. Montgomery and the confessional genre. Sheila Rowbotham, Nancy K. Miller, and Nancy Armstrong, as well as earlier academics and pioneer Virginia Woolf and Simone de Beauvoir, have blazed a trail that makes feminist research more tangible and important.

My aim in this research is to take up the diary in its unpublished form to show how it was instrumental in women gaining access to a discourse of their own and defining themselves as female writing subjects. Through examining these handwritten texts, like the domestic fiction studied by Nancy Armstrong in

Desire and Domestic Fiction: A Political History of the Novel (1987), in which she takes up domestic women's representation in texts that do not share the literary pretensions of the novel (23), I show how the discourse of gender is implicated when women find their voices through diary writing and are empowered by the process of diary keeping. This research provides a historical perspective on writing women and participates with other projects, like those in Danielle Fuller's book *Writing the Everyday: Women's Textual Communities in Atlantic Canada* (2004) and Kathryn Carter's *The Small Details of Life: Twenty Diaries by Women in Canada, 1830–1996* (2002), to expand readers' awareness of Island women's life writing within the regional and national context.

The first step is to present the texts and images available to the twenty-first-century reader so as to understand women from their grandmothers' and great-grandmothers' times. Most histories, popular histories, songs, stories, newspapers, and advertisements present women in stereotypical ways. This research begins by making those images and stories more visible, and then juxtaposes those images and women's representations of themselves in their life writing.

Redeeming women from their place of obscurity in their diaries and locating their inscribed sites of representation in various archives has indeed opened up a new chapter in women's writing. This research took on private documents for public examination, diaries which were—perhaps intentionally—problematic for others to read and meant to be left in dresser drawers. When these diaries have been bequeathed to a public archive it as if someone is saying, “read me.” With this reading and exposure of women in a historically marginalized genre many questions have arisen. Further research is needed to address the fact that all these women diarists shared the Protestant faith; no diaries of PEI Catholic women appear to exist. Questions of religion, literacy and the absence of the opportunity to confess may have encouraged these Island women to write a diary.

Sandstone Diaries

Sandstone is defined as “any clastic rock containing particles visible to the naked eye” (*Canadian Oxford Dictionary* 1281), and as a metaphor for Island women's unpublished diaries, the brokenness of the pieces of past rocks highlights the diaries' characteristics, as they too draw together pieces of the past to make a new whole. The original diaries discussed here show their origins, the words drawn from their writers' day-to-day lives, from the language of their upbringing,

place, and situation. The women diarists have reassembled the elements of their fragmented lives, one minute here, another there, and then when they could spend a longer time, they might collect bigger pieces of the past day. In the end, the diary was a collection of pieces big and small, unevenly shaped and fused on the page, like the sandstone taking its form from nature's forces on the beach.

Sandstone is the only stone PEI knows. It is red, barely solid and fragile. Similarly, these diaries are some of the precious literary artifacts that document the mindscapes of Island women and by their nature also fragile. Their pages are yellow and crumbling. Multiple methods have been used to examine these fragile sandstone diaries. Theories to expand on the representative potential of language, other theories to articulate why women were working with language in the autobiographical genre, theories to contextualize women's exclusion from participation in social, historical, and political events, and the documentation of their times, all explain the fragments and layers of discourse strung together in these diaries.

The female author gained strength from her own inscriptions and dug deeper into her reserve of language to write even greater passages of her thoughts and doings. The extreme illustration of her literary extravagance occurred when she left the Island for other places and she was released from her everyday life. Then, her quotidian passages evolved into a discourse driven by what she imagined she should, could or wanted to be. At home, women were content with putting closure on a day well spent, as if acknowledging to themselves and the world that they were fulfilling their diary contact and through these incremental deposits accounting for their God-given lives.

For both the rural and urban women, the realities of climate determined mobility, mood and well-being, but in the diary narratives of rural women there was the knowledge that their livelihood was ultimately determined by the weather. For urban women, the weather was the stage for social agendas and more engagement with issues of enfranchisement, philanthropy, equality, and education.

Only by reading the diaries intertextually with other texts could the diaries' triteness be expanded upon. For example, Margaret Gray Lord's diary reveals her preoccupation with establishing a proper milieu, and passages often mirror a longing to maintain the Victorian status quo by selecting and relating local events to match the heroines and victims of her fictive world. As she documents this phase of her life, however, she also changes with the times and writes about her engagement with modernist projects. In contrast, Lucy Bardon Palmer

Haslam's diary gives a strong textual presence of a young woman teacher, expressing her apprehension through complex linguistic strategies of reticence and by diverting her narrative away from the topic of being a teacher new on the job. The intertextuality of Lucy's diary text with Robert Harris's well-known painting, *The Meeting of the School Trustees*, indicates how women's diaries are instrumental for telling from the woman subject's perspective the transition into the public sphere.

Women's diaries are not only glamour and glory, despite what nineteenth-century diarist Mercy Ann Coles wrote about hobnobbing with the political elite of Canada at the historic Quebec Conference of 1864. Diarists like Emma Chadwich Stretch portray the plight of immigration. Through her diary, Stretch redefines her British self in a minimalistic and blurred discourse that other literary scholars have abandoned because of its incoherence. Had this study relied on published diaries from Island women, such as those three years of Margaret Gray Lord's diary and the selected and edited journals of L. M. Montgomery, this research would focus on a very select body of work by Island writers. Rural farm wives, pioneer women, travelling women, and women in the service of their communities and country would be excluded.

In *Aerial Letter* (1988), feminist writer Nicole Brossard has called for all texts by women to be examined in order to map women's territory; Nancy K. Miller suggests in *Getting Personal* (1991) that aspects of language like the metaphor be highlighted in women's writing for understating the spheres of language metaphors bring together. Janet Varner Gunn has outlined in *Towards a Poetics of Experience* (1982) how readers and writers of autobiography and their worlds coincide by participating in the process of life writing texts. Through this process of studying unpublished diaries, using multiple theories and approaches, the more traditional conceptualization of published life writing has been questioned. As Buss says, "no matter how familiar 'autobiography' becomes in a certain culture, the word's very foreignness every time we write it, every time we say it aloud, destabilizes it and makes it new again" (*Mapping* 13). Without the multiple lens of interdisciplinary research on unpublished diaries, Emma and her numerous Island sisters would be the sandstones still buried in the sand waiting to be excavated or stumbled over.

Before probing into the Island women's diaries in chapter 3, chapters 1 and 2 will provide the necessary theoretical and historical foundations for analyzing them. Chapter 1 locates women within the autobiographical genre, integrating excerpts from Island women's diaries to show how gender, genre, and the historical

circumstances of Canadian women are important factors in women adopting the autobiographical genre as their own. Chapter 2 focuses on how women are presented as the subjects in the media of their time and are depicted in the more recent community histories and popular publications. The later part of chapter 2 introduces women as subjects of their own texts. Chapter 3 in its five sections has taken one or more women to illustrate how she/they manoeuvred in their diaries to articulate their evolving self/selves, juxtaposing their representations in their diaries with the more popular representations presented in the previous chapter.

A Stone Diary

At the beginning I noticed
the huge stones on my path
I knew instinctively
why they were there
breathing as naturally
as animals
I moved them to ritual patterns

Pat Lowther (1935–75)

Year 1913	
March 20	First Robin
21	Song Sparrow and juncos
23	Easter Sunday
25	Black-birds
6	Bay clear of ice
18	Yellow Hammer
20	Sowed Wheat
Year 1914	
April 25	Abney Jones dies. I came in house a few days ^{later}
Year 1915	
April 6	Sowed Tomato seed
7	Anno's birthday
9	Bell McPhail died
18	Bay clear of ice
20	Sowed lettuce seed
22	Sowed cosmos
23	Yellow-hammers
29	Ice came in bay
May 11	Ice in bay again went out in a few days
17	Bampfde Wood's funeral
24	Sowed oats at shore
25	Sowing oats
27	Mrs J. Burke's funeral (rain and snow)
29	Rain and snow
31	Planted early potatoes

FIGURE 4. Diary of Maud Jones, 1909-40

CHAPTER 1

LIFE WRITING AND THE WOMAN AS WRITING SUBJECT

The study of women's texts about the self involves assembling their texts and orienting oneself to the process of their reading. The texts themselves, referred to on a general level as autobiographies and life writing, resemble pieces of glass in a mosaic or, more crudely, a rock, formed by the process of recording a life with the events and circumstances of that life. On closer examination, these glass fragments' unique textures are apparent. Some of them are shaped by a regularity of inscription and will be referred to as diaries and journals. Among these textured fragments, there appear to be other features within the inscription, as if the particles of sand from which they were formed consist of reflecting crystals. Only by holding the fragment at a certain angle do we see that this feature resembles the private spectacle that exists in the *journal intime*, the event of a like particle recognizing itself reflected in another.

Unless the glass fragments are viewed through the same lens, their idiosyncratic features remain a blur. The kaleidoscope, with its characteristic mirrors and focusing mechanisms, can be operated to position the fragments for closer analysis. The act of reading the autobiographic fragments takes on the characteristics of studying glass fragments. By shifting the position of the kaleidoscope, the viewer sees new formations. It is these private spectacles (*journal intime*) of the glass fragments and their formations, that lead the mind directing the kaleidoscope to ponder about the glass fragments (genre) themselves, their texture (diary/journal), and their relation to their creator, the woman artist/writing subject.

Journal writers generally come to their diary to reflect on the day past and record it. With each successive day, they build up the story of their lives from

a process of self-reflexive activity. Through all kinds of weather and variations in their locations, with numerous people and events, these women position themselves in their diaries as the actors or instigators. In the readings of these *journal intime*, alternative narratives from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries emerge. Lucy Maud Montgomery, Amy Darby Tanton Andrew and their Island literary sisters who pioneered the wilderness (like Emma Chadwich Stretch) or lived in the urban bourgeois towns (as Margaret Gray Lord did) or entered the professional arena (like Lucy Haslam Palmer) were all exploring their place between the domestic and natural spheres in an emerging modern society.

Locating Women in Autobiography

Women have, through the ages, been actively participating in the autobiographical project of writing their own lives, as documented by Mary G. Mason, Estelle Jelinek, Helen Buss, and many others, but only within the last few decades have women been more actively reading and studying each other's texts. When theoretical and critical literature on autobiography began to appear in the mid-1950s, few if any women autobiographers were found among these studies. French autobiographical researcher Philippe Lejeune listed 20 women's autobiographies out of a total of 106 in his book *L'autobiographie en France* (1971). George Gusdorf, early French pioneer in the study of autobiography and author of the classic text *Conditions et limites de L'autobiographie* (1956), mentioned even fewer. Other influential scholars, such as James Olney and Karl Weintraub, failed to even mention women. Even in the late 1970s, it was problematic finding reference to women's autobiographies as such from texts on women's literature as Ellen Moers's *Literary Women* (1977), Elaine Showalter's *A Literature of Their Own: British Women Novelists from Bronte to Lessing* (1977) or Gilbert and Gubar's *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination* (1979) (Kosonen 181).

The situation began to change in the 1980s when Mary G. Mason published her study "The Other Voice: Autobiographies of Women Writers" (1980). Mason not only establishes important beginnings for women's autobiographies from the fourteenth to the eighteenth centuries, but she also claims that these writers offer a distinct set of paradigms for life writing. Mason bases her findings on Dame Julian of Norwich's fourteenth-century *Revelations or Showings*; Margery

Kempe's *The Book of Margery Kempe*, the first full autobiography in English (ca. 1432); Duchess Margaret Cavendish's *True Relation of My Birth, Breeding and Life* (1656), and Anne Bradstreet's seventeenth-century book *To My Dear Children*. Mason claims that the patterns found in the prototypical male autobiographers, Augustine and Rousseau, do not appear in women's autobiographies. The struggle for the self, which in Augustine's *Confessions* is "the stage for a battle of opposing forces [...] where a climatic victory for one force—spirit defeating flesh—completes the drama of the self" (Mason 210), finds no correspondence with what Mason recognizes in the female self. Similarly, what Mason terms Rousseau's "egotistic secular archetype [...] an unfolding self-discovery where the characters and events are little more than aspects of the author's evolving consciousness" (210), which Augustine hands down in his *Confessions*, is also not useful for an investigation of women's life writing. Instead, Mason sees through the study of her four authors that "the self-discovery of female identity seems to acknowledge the real presence and recognition of another consciousness [...] this grounding of identity through relation to the chosen other, seems to enable women to write openly about themselves" (210).

In the case of L. M. Montgomery, nature is this point of departure for discovering consciousness, as well as defining and exercising her identity as a woman artist through her beautiful other. Her poetry and her journal writing are a location for reflecting on her encounters with nature and sites for readers to understand Montgomery's view of the land. Nature, as her chosen other, became a problem for Montgomery, as for other women writers, primarily because nature had been established by the male Romantic poets as female and the site of *their* "otherness" (Homans 25). If, as Mason says, women's other consciousness is accessed through a chosen other, and in this case nature acts as that place of acknowledged female selfhood, and yet is shared by male writers, then it is necessary to study more thoroughly the gendered aspects of women's visions of nature.

This phenomenon of women seeking rapport with nature as illustrated in literature is pointed out by de Beauvoir in *The Second Sex* (1949) in numerous literary passages where adolescent girls sought refuge in the fields and woods:

At home mother, law, customs, routine hold sway, and she would fain escape these aspects of her past; she would in her turn become a sovereign subject.[...] Whereas among the plants and animals she is a human being; she is freed at once from her family and from the males—a subject, a free being. She finds in the secret place of the forest a reflection of the solitude

of her soul and in the wide horizons of the plains a tangible image of her transcendence; she is herself this limitless territory, this summit flung up towards heaven. (de Beauvoir 341)

Identifying how women perceive themselves in their place and time through their autobiographical writing on their natural surroundings, as well as their social milieu, involves discovering how women position themselves in these spheres. For instance, each daily entry in Amy Andrew's diary "A Line a Day" begins with an account of the weather: For example, "blowing a hurrican & Rained thunder & lightening in evening," she writes on August 9, 1913. The weather becomes a faithful point of departure for her account of her day and her daily activities, whether they be around family and friends, or confined to the house because of the elements.

Despite the fact that women's autobiographies have more recently been anthologized and taken up for analysis, the desire to generalize about specific gender-related features of women's life writing has overshadowed the search for the idiosyncratic discourse strategies of individual writers. Estelle C. Jelinek's comprehensive survey, *The Tradition of Women's Autobiography: From Antiquity to the Present* (1986), focuses largely on the development of American women's voices among the early settlers, suffragettes, and literary personae of modern times such as Gertrude Stein and Kate Millet. Jelinek's anthology meticulously documents the larger historical context from which American women's autobiography takes its origins, and she focuses on the subject matter, narrative forms, and self-image that are projected in these autobiographies. Jelinek states that they emphasize personal matters, "their world" rather than professional, philosophical, or historical events that are often the issue in men's autobiographies. Critics such as Hettie A. Pott-Butler, Ann Duffy and Noreen Pupo, Alison Prentice, and others would not share Jelinek's opinions that such personal matters are indeed personal, or that they did not have consequences beyond their immediate sphere.

Synthesizing a vast collection of women's autobiographical texts, as Jelinek does, becomes problematic as the wish to generalize tends to dismiss some of the interesting variations that exist between diaries. The tendency to clump women into one group and disregard such other variables as social position, education or their immediate environment can result in a study that overlooks the textual manifestations of such variables. For example, even in the small Island communities of the early twentieth century, where all but one of the almost twenty diarists studied here were born, there were vast differences in the lives

of women. The college-educated Montgomery who became a teacher, bourgeois women like Margaret Gray Lord with servants, or homesick Lucy Palmer Haslam teaching on the other side of the Island in Malpeque all had time for writing and reflecting, and thus developing their craft. In contrast, women farmers like Amy Andrew, rural entrepreneur Emma Chadwick Stretch and Lucy Palmer Haslam, in her married life, were occupied by the never-ending chores of family and farm. Their diaries were the record made at the end of the day in the allotted space in a small black book, as Amy Andrew did. All the diaries dealt with here represent contrasting styles of writing within life writing; yet these women shared a place in a time that has left little to document the actual lives of the women who lived during that period.

One is left to ponder the value in contrasting women and men's autobiography, as Jelinek does, when the historical and social conditions of textual production vary considerably between the sexes. In her discussion of the significance of gender in life writing, "Autogynography" (1988), Germaine Brée observes that autobiography implies "he," and it is therefore necessary to indicate the female writing subject with the prefix "woman." Brée, who in "Michel Leiris: Mazemaker" (1980) studied ethnographer Michel Leiris's literary writings, "anti autobiography," poetry, and other work in its entirety as a meta-autobiography, admits that "our male-female polarization cannot even now furnish the proper frame of reference for understanding the relationship of the self to the world" (178). Nelly Furman cautions, "Thinking in terms of binary opposition always implies the subordination of the second element to the first, and reversing the order of the pairing only repeats the system which was at work in the initial opposition. By opposing man to woman or woman to man, whatever the order or the privilege accorded to one of the terms, one is still caught in the system of western philosophical logic whereby one is obliged to search for a truth that is a single, non-equivocal answer" (74-75). When the female perspective has yet to be extensively studied and documented, it may be premature to make comparisons, or set up binary opposites.

Nicole Brossard, in *The Ariel Letter* (1988), also raises the question of how two such bodies of work can be compared and analyzed when women's perspective is a territory that has not yet been mapped. The paradox for women writers is that "the reality has been for most women writers a fiction and women's reality has been perceived a fiction" (Brossard 75). Brossard explains that, in this fictional world, men's fantasy is evidenced throughout history and their subjectivity has been transformed into laws, religion, culture, and so on. De Beauvoir refers to the

same phenomenon when she writes, “man acted upon his experience, and in his symbolic representations, as in his practical life, it is the male principle that has triumphed” (69). In terms of women’s texts, all doors are open, and memory, says Brossard, is one means to explain how women manoeuvre from prose to poetry as a means for retrieving their lost fantasies. Exploring women’s life writing as a product of different social circumstances than those of men demands that the reader be prepared to seek writers’ individual textual solutions, ones that don’t readily surface in comparisons between gender categories.

Nonetheless, by contrasting both the identity construction and the styles in women’s autobiographies to those of men, Jelinek does provide a point of departure and justification for further analysis and elaboration: “In contrast to the self-confident, one-dimensional self-image that men usually project, women often depict a multidimensional, fragmented self image coloured by a sense of inadequacy and alienation, of being outsiders or ‘other’” (xiii). Her comparison of male and female autobiographies overlooks the evolution of female discursive practices particular to the time period of this study, and she reads women’s life writing and women’s relation to success as making it in a man’s world: “paradoxically women do project self-confidence and a positive sense of accomplishment in having overcome many obstacles to their success” (xiii).

To take up the now-published diaries of L. M. Montgomery with the unpublished ones of those like Amy Andrew in relation to Jelinek’s statement, it could be said that Montgomery, who was not only educated but widely read and aware of world events, had time for pondering issues such as politics, world affairs, and psychology. Her world was a larger one than that of women like Amy Andrew, a rural woman who participated with her husband in domestic and farm chores and accompanied him to town and church occasionally. For Montgomery, the diary served as a receptacle for the reflections of her inner life, where the events of her world and her private life were recorded. The unpublished texts of Andrew and her kind were, by contrast, more impulsive and less reflective. Life’s rhythms and the church’s teachings were often the pillars of their lives. Speculation and questioning were not typical of their diaries, nor in the discourses they were exposed to in church, conduct literature, and the press.

While certain variables remain stable in the comparison of educated women like Montgomery and Margaret Gray Lord with rural farm wives like Amy Andrew, Emma Stretch and Lucy Palmer, because they all shared a time in history as well as the social and political frames of their existences, these writers’ textual solutions, as the record of their lives, do not clearly overlap. In terms of

the forms of their life writing and the process each underwent in the recording of their lives, women like Montgomery relating, reflecting, and recording the same incidents in numerous texts, and rural women like Andrew accounting for daily activities in the limited space of one little book, they nevertheless both faced similar situations in their lives that challenged their use of language.

Montgomery's journals are records of a life in process, full of contradictions, inconsistencies and questioning, suggesting that her identity was not a ready-made commodity but one that was shaped by a multitude of forces. By contrast, Montgomery's prose autobiography, *The Alpine Path* (1917), projects a more consistent and balanced view of becoming a person, a writer, indicating that in retrospect the life of the aspiring writer was like following any "hard and steep" path (10). She climbed and reached her goal of fame, and the pain and sorrow of her earlier days was temporarily overshadowed by her feeling of success and pride. *The Alpine Path* exemplifies the fact that women too are capable of producing one-dimensional autobiographies, where through meticulous editing, as Montgomery did of her "original" journals, a more socially acceptable autobiography emerges, absent of the fragmentary and lyrical passages of her *journal intime*.

Women's unpublished diaries were daily rituals of recording the events of the family, farm, and community of friends and relatives. The writers' references to routines and their lack of emotions indicate the different purposes the diary served, as the writer was not writing for posterity. Amy Andrew's only autobiography was "A Line a Day," but to grasp the possible contradictions in her life and the recording of it, it is necessary to examine what is not written, the "gaps" in her text and other anecdotal material. By contrast, Lucy Palmer Haslam wrote volumes of diaries; during her transition to the public sphere as a teaching professional, her unwillingness to express her trepidation because of this change caused her to leave narrative dead-ends and lacunae in her early diaries. More familiar people and events diverted her discourse away from the challenge of performing in the classroom.

Jelinek's emphasis on the paradoxical position of women faced with the task of writing and language can be illustrated by a common discursive strategy of all women, urban or rural, regardless of their educational background or social status: these writers often refrain from writing about issues that today's reader would consider an important part of another woman's life, such as moving from the state of being single to being married, or having children. There are obvious gaps where one might expect their diaries to abound in description; but women

tended to refrain from recording the events surrounding their weddings, for instance.

In *Mapping Our Selves* (1993), Buss sees these gaps as typical for women who have neither the vocabulary nor the literary models for narrating those events and similar female emotions because of the absence of things feminine in the male-dominated genres of their time. In relation to Canadian pioneer writer Susanna Moodie's predicament as a female autobiographer, Buss claims that an intertextual reading of Moodie's more recently published letters shows how her body informed her subjectivity. As Buss says, "Moodie was able to shape the patriarchal language to allow the utterance of a maternal tongue" (85).

Language had not been shaped to express a range of specific female experiences and expressions, and women writers had few strategies for handling issues not previously dealt with in written discourse. For the emotional high points of their lives, women often chose silence and refrained from writing. Montgomery did eventually choose to reveal her feelings towards her marriage but only from the distance of time: "I sat at that gay bridal feast, in my white veil and orange blossoms, beside the man I had married—and I was as unhappy as I had ever been in my life" (*Selected Journals [SJ]* 2: 68). These, Montgomery knew, were not the emotions expected from a newly wed woman. With a lapse of time, she could perhaps better express her true feelings about this marriage.

Margaret Gray Lord writes extensively about the preparations surrounding her sister's wedding. It not being her own wedding, she was perhaps able to distance herself from the deeper emotions of the event and instead take on the responsibility of her deceased mother. Margaret's sister Florence was so distraught at times that the fear of the wedding permeated Margaret's discourse in a way that a bride herself would not dare to admit.

For Amy Andrew, we can only surmise that her wedding created a new emotional situation that could not be accounted for with any language other than what she wrote in most of her daily entries: the weather, other people and, occasionally, herself.

A perfect day one nice shower
Lillie & Cecil over all day.
My wedding day everything came off fair
lots of cheveree¹ a regular good time. (June 26, 1912)

¹ A shivaree is a typical Eastern-Canadian event where the family and friends of the newlyweds gather outside their home on their wedding night making a lot of noise with pots and pans until they are let in; then the partying begins.

Andrew refrains from writing in her diary for the month after she “appeared out”² with her new husband, on June 30. Following this rupture in her text, a new entry indicates the will to continue her story after this dramatic shift of circumstances. Her experiences and daily rhythms were thrust into a new setting; it seems to have taken time to find her place and a language to articulate it.

Montgomery, Lord and the young school teacher Lucy Palmer Haslam gave themselves more freedom in terms of when they wrote, what they wrote about, and the length of their journal entries, whereas Andrew’s daily entries did not surpass five lines generally depicting the weather, the chores, visitors, and such comings and goings. Even when something special did happen, as when her first child was born, her vocabulary, syntax, and tone were restrained:

A very dull day baby born quarter past twelve
awful sick
Mrs Andrew went home
and Mabel came down to stay
Horace took Dr home. (April 5, 1913)

The obvious lack of emotion in this entry exemplifies how she, as a woman of her time, lacked a language of her own and that this experience was outside the general discourse, and in some way, estranged from it, or even taboo. Even though this is a private document, Andrew maintained the silence women generally did about themselves and their bodies, and about experiences exclusive to them, as no idiom for expressing emotions and thoughts that centre on this important female activity existed in the public discourse (Buss 44). The paradox of this textual downplaying of what was likely the most memorable event of her life illustrates the dilemma of early twentieth-century women gaining access to the dominant discourse. Andrew had certainly “laboured” at birthing her child, but she appears passive, while others act around her. In contrast, the entry of July 6, 1914, describes a normal day:

A perfect-day A big washing
in evening Emma and Flosie MacCormack
spent the evening
got sheep sheered.

² “Appearing out” refers to the first time a couple appear in public after their wedding day, as man and wife.

Andrew's "perfect-day" in the diary is one where she actively engages in domestic activities and socializes with her friends. The day of the birth is paradoxically "dull" in the diary's summative evaluation. In the diary, the language for a satisfactory day of work is easily found, but the entry about the birth is written in a disconnected style.

Jelinek perceives women's unfinished and fragmented self-perception as one explanation for the discontinuous forms and disjunctive narrative styles of women's autobiographies. Women's autobiographical styles she sees as being

integral with such a self-image: episodic and anecdotal, non-chronicle and disjunctive. Although there are a fair number of exceptions—women writing typical male progressive and linear narratives and men writing anecdotal and disjunctive, especially in recent decades—the pattern does persist. (xiii)

Autobiography can take many forms, and as Montgomery's texts—journals, letters, prose, and poetry—illustrate, they all contain fragments of her life story. In each of her autobiographic forms she writes as the same person, but from a slightly altered subject position. In both a thematic and a narrative sense, Montgomery's text articulates her uncertainty with her own position as a modern woman subject. For example, in a letter to her lifelong pen friend G.B. MacMillan on November 9, 1904, Montgomery writes of a joyful encounter with nature:

This evening I went for a walk—all alone but not a lonely one. I am sometimes lonely in the house or when walking with uncongenial company but I have never known a moment's loneliness in the woods and fields. I have rich rare, company there. To-night in spite of the world's sadness I was not sad. I felt a conscious gladness as if there was in me something buoyant and immortal that rose above decay and death of the year. The air was very frosty and clear. There were lakes of crimson and gold among the dark western hills. The fields were grey and quiescent, as if brooding over old joys and folding their arms about baby germs that must be kept safe for another spring. (*My Dear Mr. M.* 7–8)

In this letter, Montgomery contrasts "the world's sadness" with her own "conscious gladness," a "buoyancy" that is the gift of the restorative power of nature. Five days later, however, she confides her loneliness to her journal:

If I lived where I could meet with intellectually congenial friends I suppose these correspondences would not mean so much to me. But under my present limitations these unseen friends are of vital interest to me. In my letters to them I “let myself go”—writing freely from my soul, with no fear of being misunderstood or condemned—or worst of all, meeting with a blank wall of noncomprehension. Between these letters and my journal I manage to keep my intellectual life tolerably wholesome. (November 14, 1904; *SJ* 1: 297)

By juxtaposing the coherent thematic/textual orientation she exhibits when writing of her sojourns in nature, with the disjunctive passages full of the despair she felt about many of her social relations, the uncertainty of the emerging woman subject/artist is readily apparent. She is forging not only a physical, but a textual presence in new spheres.

Reading life writing demands sensitivity towards the narrator’s stance vis-à-vis her writing. Reading Andrew’s life writing demands caution: this is not a disjunctive account of her life, but a story whose reading must be supplemented by an understanding of women’s position in society at large and their relationship to the language at their disposal. Acknowledging that women’s autobiographical texts do not conform to the artistic expectations of form and theme, and exhibit less recognizable aesthetic criteria, is not problematic. Rita Felski has indicated in *Beyond Feminist Aesthetics* (1989) that “a conscious artistic structure is in fact suspect insofar as it implies distance and control rather than unimmediate baring of the soul” (97). Once the reader has reached this level of understanding of the subject’s position(s) in the text, the possibility exists to explore new orientations to a world that has remained relatively unaccounted for in other documents from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Locating Women in the Canadian Context

Buss’s open-ended and inclusive approach to a nation of autobiographical texts, *Mapping Our Selves: Canadian Women’s Autobiography in English*, reviews a broad range of texts from different times, regions, and ethnic groups in order to elaborate on how other visions of identity can be understood through women’s autobiographical writings. Almost all the diarists from the mid-1800s to the early 1900s were first-generation Canadians reliant on the cultural inheritance of their predominately English ancestors and English models. The origins of

contemporary Canadian culture's self-image as a mosaic of separate, individual parts that fuse to make one picture can be found from the early twentieth century, when individuals considered themselves as first and foremost part of a region, a socio-economic class, and a particular religion and ethnic group. For women, it was a period of "attempting to articulate a subjectivity that has remained uninscribed" (Prentice et al. 164), and it has taken until the mid-1990s before "new work, new perspectives and new questions make a more nuanced account (of the place of women in Canada) possible" (1). In addition to the discursive limitations mentioned above, many obstacles came between women and their self-inscription. Such things as the scant representation of women in standard studies of Canada encouraged scholars to use new objects and methods of inquiry, autobiography among them, to study women's place.

Autobiography, as Buss sees it through its etymology (*autos* [self], *bios* [life] and *graphie* [writing]), does not allow its writing/reading subject to take anything for granted: "It is fortuitous that they remind us always of another language, of strangeness, so that no matter how familiar 'autobiography' becomes in a certain culture, the word's very explicit foreignness each time we write it, every time we say it aloud, destabilizes it and makes it anew again" (*Mapping* 14). This is particularly true when comparing Montgomery's autobiography of 1917, *The Alpine Path*, and her journals. Buss points out that in the former, Montgomery gives the impression of a "positivist expression of a straightforward climb to success [...] nothing so difficult that a girl of spunk and daring cannot overcome" (164), whereas in the journals, innumerable obstacles threaten her throughout her life. For these reasons, the diary discourse of the various authors presented here will be read and analyzed to explore their discursive strategies, and then destabilized and read intertextually with other texts to elaborate on the apparent textual contradictions that were their solutions for the problem of self-expression.

Buss also questions other qualities frequently identified and deemed typical of women's autobiographical writing, such as the space from which women are generally thought to write, the margins. In her opinion, the view of woman as a victim, positioned on the "margins of hegemonic discourses, social spaces carved in the interstices of institutions and the chinks and cracks of the power-knowledge apparatus" (*Mapping* 190), overlooks what she refers to as "the centre of our culture"—our bodies.

Exploring autobiographical texts as Buss suggests demands exploring corporeality as it is embodied in the text. Incorporating the significance of the

body with that of the environment it occupies could, as Elizabeth Grosz points out in *Space, Time and Perversion: Essays on the Politics of Bodies* (1995), “prove to be of major significance in feminist research into women’s experiences, social positions and knowledges” (84). Empowered with a sense of history, one can interpret women’s reproductive role as not unproblematic to them. Early twentieth-century Island women in particular teetered between the more traditional options of maternity and domesticity, and the new opportunities outside the home, that is, whether to keep the home fires burning or to go down the road to a more urban environment.

It was not often a clear either/or situation for women like Montgomery, who eventually attempted to combine her career with her family. Once established as a writer, she felt obliged to fulfil her social and physiological destiny and have children. She writes at length about childbirth and her sons’ births but she writes discretely about her “private escape from a familiar and external social code that scorned the expression of emotions which carries suggestions of sublimated frustration” (Rubio and Waterston 3: xviii). Montgomery, on the cusp of change, having found a language, a vocabulary, and a place, ventured into her journal to relate her physical and emotional experiences, ranging from “the tragedies of motherhood”—the weaning of her first born (*SJ* 2: 117)—to those of her lost childhood landscapes: “I had no thought of going further, but I would just look up the lane and spin out the tread of my fancy. The shock of what I saw turned me quite faint. There was no lane” (2: 128).

When Amy Andrew or Emma Chadwick Stretch refrains from introducing and elaborating on their physical and psychological states, then the gaps and the deflated language of their diaries provide sites for further questioning and speculation. The devaluation of women’s work and experience through history makes autobiography an interesting and important site for exploring a history of denial, both individual denial and the public lack of recognition. Most of the diarists dealt with here more closely resemble Amy Andrew in their diary discourse. They were not writing for posterity but to indicate to themselves that they were indeed following the code of expectations of conduct literature and scripture in their own ways.

While Montgomery-the-writer’s texts reveal the physiological and psychological reality of the author in more detail than the texts of her less literarily inclined sisters do, Montgomery nevertheless exercises restraint and apprehension in some incidents while creating narrative strategies in others. She even creates what can be considered an early form of modernist verse, poetic

verse, amidst her journalistic prose, “prosetry”³ and picks up age-old metaphors to textually expose the relationship she cultivated with her natural environment. Women’s power in their life writing to manoeuvre in the area of the “body”—what Gammel calls their “confessional modalities” (8) in her introduction to *Confessional Politics* (1999)—demands further analysis and will be taken up in more detail below.

It is not the intention of this study to suggest that by examining the life writing of ordinary women one can unfurl hidden dimensions of Canadian women at the turn of the twentieth century. Instead, my purpose is to convey the subtler dimensions of women’s everyday lives and how in their writing of their daily experiences the void in the literature of their time can be addressed. Concentrating on the textuality of women’s autobiographical production reveals interesting dimensions of how women experience their natural surroundings; but it also simultaneously questions the gendered perceptions of time and place embedded in many current beliefs presented in literary studies concerning the relation of the individual to her environment. The narrative forms, subject matter, and self-images focused on in Jelinek’s study of women’s autobiography take on particular significance in early twentieth-century Canada when women come forth from their vantage points in the new nation.

Life Writing Forms

Rita Felski sees the proliferation of feminist literature during the last half of the twentieth century due to autobiography and the confessional diary as having an important role in women’s textual production. Women writers were publicly admitting their experiences and sentiments, and so feminist fiction was viewed as both “a product of existing social conditions and a form of critical oppressions to them” (1). The unpublished testimonies of early Island women in the form of their life writing illustrate that “the voice of our early women writers has not only reflected their place in culture and society but also helped create that place” (Graddol 10). It is necessary to differentiate between the terms associated with life writing and how, by their very form they can be said to be instrumental to the forging of women and their accounts of their lives into the literary scene.

³ “Prosetry” is a term coined by Juhani Lindholm when he referred to Michael Ondaatje’s *The English Patient* and his translation of this text which is both poetry and prose (qtd. in Haapakoski 16–18).

Autobiography and *life writing* are terms used when referring to the overall genre of the “story of a person’s life written by him/herself” (*Gage Canadian Dictionary* 75); in the case of published works, the five volumes of Montgomery’s selected journals would qualify. Her almost forty-year correspondence, published as *My Dear Mr. M.: Letters to G. B. MacMillan* (1980), and her autobiographical (personal) memoir *The Alpine Path: The Story of My Career* (1917), can also be seen as part of Montgomery’s autobiographical production. For the unpublished writers, autobiography is the story that emerges from the scraps of paper, account books, and diaries that tell of how they represent themselves with the physical and intellectual resources available to them.

The diary is “an account written down each day, of what one has done, thought, etc. during the day” or “a book for keeping such an account” (*Gage Canadian Dictionary* 327), for which Amy Tanton Andrew’s “A Line A Day” or Mercy Ann Coles’s travel diary would qualify. A journal is more generally defined as “a daily record, such as a diary” (638), which implies that it more explicitly includes issues beyond those which are of a “personal” nature, as Montgomery did concerning social issues in her journal and Margaret Gray Lord did about life in Victorian Charlottetown. These definitions will be used as a point of departure for my discussion, but as autobiographic research indicates, much overlap in these terms exists.

In “Women and Diaries: Gender and Genre” (1989), Valerie Raoul selected the private diary, the “*journal intime*” as the generic space where women’s writing has flourished outside the more mainstream literary forms. Raoul outlines three features of the *journal intime* that make it particularly suitable for women: its private nature, the questioning of selfhood, and the conditions for diary writing. The rules for diary keeping remain less structured than those for other genres: it can be kept regularly or irregularly, over a shorter or longer period of time, and entries can be of any length. Diaries have added appeal to women because of their potential to hold all, to accept entries at any time, in any form, on any issue. Virginia Woolf referred to her diary as a “capacious holdall” (quoted in Raoul 62) serving as a repository for what would not fit in elsewhere. Subjects considered too trivial or considered marginal in a man’s world could be described as central in the discourse of women’s diaries (Raoul 57). As Raoul points out, in diaries and autobiographical texts, such as the *journal intime*, the identity of the author, narrator, the main character, as well as the addressee, is shared.

This lack of imposed form and rules has made the diary an attractive genre for women. It is unlikely that Amy Andrew, and many others like her, would

have left any documentation of their lives without the open/unstructured page of the *journal intime*, which gave them unrestricted licence to write whatever came to mind. Nor would an unassuming young person have predicted that the consequences of her keeping a diary would feed her love of writing and lead her to be a recognized writer, as was the case with Montgomery. The exclusion of diaries from the literary canon in Raoul's estimation has been due to their "apparent lack of selectivity and the absence of conscious artistic effect" (61), the same feature that Felski claims would attract women to the diary.

In developing the question of style further, Raoul sees the diary as being closer to postmodern fiction in which "structure and consistency are overturned in favour of self-reflexive textuality" (62). Stylistically, diaries, more often in their original form, are characterized by rhetorical questions, gaps, exclamations, torn out pages, and very short and meandering sentences, which, Raoul reminds us, are features not typical of women's writing but associated with diary writing, regardless of the gender of the writer.

The two dominant themes in the *journal intime*, according to Raoul, are the uncertainty of self and the relationship of this self and its life to writing; these are important considerations within the social context of these early twentieth-century Prince Edward Island women. The diaries of school teachers Violet Goldsmith and Lucy Palmer, as well as Wanda Wyatt's diary, openly question the form and importance of their diaries, while Carrie Holman conscientiously experiments and hones her war diary with other discourses. Women were not publicly recognized in the historical records or media of the time, so in order to claim that they indeed had a life women themselves were to write that life into existence. In forging their place in society, and eventually the literary genre of life writing, women had little recourse to models; they often created their own patterns and scribed them day after day, with their pens and pencils.

Lucy Maud Montgomery used her diary as a deposit of her dreams, as the diary's form or formlessness gave her inner feelings a place for expression. On June 9, 1893, she wrote, "It's such a beautiful day and such a beautiful world that I must 'bubble over' to someone, and you, old journal, are the only one I dare bubble over to" (*SJ* 1: 90). By contrast, in the minimalist discourse of Maud Jones (see fig. 4), the earliest entries consist only of the date followed by the name of a bird she sighted; these initially very short entries gave her passage to the world of writing, and Jones goes on to fill pages in later entries that capture a more eventful life.

Women diarists were living in the shadow of nineteenth-century women who were discouraged from writing for the public and instead ushered into the private sphere of writing diaries. “Non-productive” writing was permissible “as an accomplishment and recreation, provided that it did not interfere with the business of being a woman” (Spender 194). Girls were encouraged to keep diaries during this period of transition from childhood to adulthood, but as Raoul continues “once married, writing about themselves was perceived as an unjustifiable self-indulgence, a theft of time more profitably spent (on others)” (58). Andrew’s silence for a period immediately after her marriage can partially be explained by the fact that diary writing was perceived as a selfish activity that took time away from the common good of the family.

On the cusp of a new century, women like Montgomery were already challenging this traditional image of women, privately keeping her diary and entering the public arena with her poetry. By contrast, women like Andrew stayed safely within the traditional boundaries of the genre, quietly recording her life. For both writers and the other women taken up here, the act of keeping a diary was an assertion of themselves and their lives lived as writing subjects.

Raoul raises two important questions about women as writing subjects: does diary keeping provide effective therapy in the face of women’s alienation, provoked by the recognition of essential otherness, or do these journals illustrate the ways in which the construction of self through language is problematic for women in particular (Raoul 63)? Life writing for women could be both therapy and a means for the construction of one’s identity, but only through a closer reading can these issues be more thoroughly addressed. The *journal intime* provides the opportunity to speculate on and analyze the self in the process of defining and creating itself.

The Autobiographical (P)Act

Taking the *journal intime* as a dynamic representation of a life in process and in dialogue with itself, it simultaneously challenges and sets itself apart from those other forms of autobiography. Philippe Lejeune defines autobiography as “retrospective prose written by a real person concerning his own existence where the focus is his individual life, in particular the story of his personality” (xx). The emphasis in Lejeune’s definition is on a clear identification of a life among many on a determined course that can be unproblematically read and deciphered.

Within the last thirty years, with the increased interest in the study of autobiography, many aspects of this definition remain problematic. Critics have been answering demands made by Brossard, among others, to open the door to texts exhibiting lost or hidden fantasies. Instead of viewing memoirs, autobiographical poems, and diaries as just some of the genres closely related to autobiography, others (such as Olney, Celeste Schenck, and Marlene Kadar) situate poetry and letters among the various sub-genres that have expanded the reading and analysis of life writing beyond straightforward prose.

Questions of fact and fiction, or whether an autobiography can be written about another person, often plague the reader embarking on a text that does not conform to their expectations of the oneness of author, subject and reader, and the authenticity of the life experience. The reader is in this way signalled to respond critically and question the authenticity of the *real* person or the *real* story. The unravelling of the autobiographer's personality and her world demands textual strategies to meet the challenges of the diversifying nature of autobiography and the possibility of reconceptualizing the autobiographical act.

Lejeune sought to clarify the generic boundaries of autobiography and set limitations on the form of language, the subject treated, the situation of the author, and the position of the narrator. His analysis concludes by allocating autobiographical texts to a space in which the reader (for whom he claims the autobiographical texts were written) is outside of the text, and that same reader has the power to determine the meaning of the text. Lejeune has been instrumental in defining the autobiographical "pact," the conditions, elements, and categories by which autobiography can be defined and identified. But resistance to such prescriptive depictions of the autobiographical genre has been raised among scholars of autobiography. In particular, Elizabeth Bruss's 1976 study of four male autobiographers from the last four centuries (John Bunyan, James Boswell, Thomas De Quincey and Vladimir Nabokov) challenges the categorization set up by Lejeune. She claims that "the diversity of these works alone should be enough to demonstrate that there is no intrinsically autobiographical form" (Bruss 10).

Bruss also addresses the relationship between autobiographer and audience, in addition to the transitory aspects in the interaction between the two, which are similar to an elocutionary act. Bruss indicates that autobiographies serve a particular communicative function. Margaret Atwood's *The Journals of Susanna Moodie* (1970) does just this. Atwood picks up Moodie's journals and retells her story in verse about events that are already questionable in their historical accuracy in Moodie's original. The writer/reader, Atwood on Moodie,

or Montgomery, the journal writer/editor, takes artistic licence to play with the conventions of the autobiographic genre by acting out the life of an other, an other subject position. The authenticity of the subject and her story extend the autobiography to a position where it can be read as an example of the irony of the “real.” The reader, in Lejeune’s sense, is outside the text and excluded from entering into any kind of dialogue with the text. Bruss’s title, “acts,” as compared with Lejeune’s use of “pact,” suggests a more interactive approach to the reading of autobiographical texts. Not only do we find new literary forms but also new ways of reading old works, and “either reader or writer can use his performance to modify the rules of the autobiographical act” (Bruss 16).

Between these two positions, in *Towards a Poetics of Experience* (1982), Janet Varner Gunn starts not from the private act of the self writing but the cultural act of the self reading. This reading (or interpretative activity) is moreover performed by selves who inhabit worlds, not by a subject who has had to pay the price of world-habitation for access to self. Gunn insists that reading enables the reader’s world to coincide with the writer’s, and instead of firm answers or models, the reading subject comes away with questions as an affirmation of participation in the process of life writing; yet the self-reflexive act of the writing/reading subject engaged in the reading of her own text is not accounted for by Gunn and would be an important consideration. Montgomery reveals in her journal, letters, and poems that she has also gazed into her own texts and derived narcissistic pleasure from composing texts and reflecting on them.

Writing subjects who gain fame, such as Montgomery, often perceive their autobiography as part of what Gunn refers to as the “price of world habitation” (19) that they have to pay to eventually know themselves and be a living example for aspiring writers, as Montgomery so altruistically claims. She offers, in *The Alpine Path*, to tell the tame story of her career in order to help someone else who may be struggling along this same “path.” For women like Andrew, the self-reading process is less clear and more speculative. Her writing, as her reading of her daily rituals in her diary, was one form of accountability, of how her days were spent and the eventual fruits of her, and her family’s, collective labour. Just as particular textual strategies alert the reader, such as the presence and absence of her words on the page, as well as the various types of discourse Andrew engaged in, it appears that Andrew, like Montgomery, was beckoned back to her text after periods of silence.

For the astute reading subject to engross him- or herself in life-writing texts, however, the language, the choice of words, structures, and discursive strategies of

such texts should alert the reader to the polyphonic aspect of the autobiographic discourse: "It is by means of language (*graphie*) that self both displays itself and has access to depth, it is also through language that self achieves and acknowledges its bios" (Gunn 8–9). Gunn shares with Bruss an understanding of the fluidity of the autobiographical situation where there is rejection of harmony and any final sense of closure. Gunn nevertheless approaches the autobiographical situation from three interrelated moments that further emphasize the relative nature of autobiography, and project autobiography further from its didactic mould.

Firstly, she points to the autobiographical impulse that arises out of temporality and the fact that the past can never be fully explicit. The formlessness or emptiness of the open page invites the writer to tell all and serves as an incentive to create a text of her life, for few texts by women from this period (the mid-nineteenth to the early twentieth centuries) exist. The writer is further encouraged to tell what has not been told, or to reach out to others in the process of baring her soul. As women's textual visions are absent, it is highly unlikely that one can attempt to draw broad generalizations from those few women autobiographers whose texts have been redeemed. The idea of capturing the (whole) truth is one that some women autobiographers have mocked and adopted as a trademark of their autobiographic project. The playfulness that Atwood (in *Journals of Susanna Moodie*) and Gertrude Stein (in *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas*) exhibit in their response to the opportunity to "tell all," even if a bit slanted, suggests that autobiography challenges master narratives by playing with the strict boundaries of the genre and questions of truth and meaning. Virginia Woolf refers to the question of the relative nature of truth in women's writing: "Lies will flow from my lips, but there may perhaps be some truth mixed up with them; it is for you to seek out this truth and to decide whether any part of it is worth keeping" (*Room* 6).

Montgomery herself does not rely on one form of life writing to tell her story. She relies primarily on her journal, even though in her letters and poems she writes about events and feelings, but when her journals are approached intertextually and cumulatively with her other texts, they tell that same story but from another angle. Gunn's point concerning the complexity of any one autobiography to tell it all can be further illustrated by examining contrasting types of life writing by the same author, as in Montgomery's case.

Gunn's second point, concerning the "autobiographical perspective" that is involved in bringing oneself to language is interpreted as the woman writer's struggle to find the words that best capture the experience. Not only, as Dale

Spender claims, is language “man made,” and “males as the dominant group have produced language, thought, and reality” (“Extracts” 106), but also, as Lev Semenovich Vygotsky suggests, “there is a vast area of thought that has no direct relation to speech” (47). The interpretative reader of women’s autobiographical texts thus must assume that the discursive strategies, including the autobiographical form, taken up by the author, are suspect. What Gunn assumes as problematic for women—their approach to language and its limitations for expression—can be inverted and referred to as the possibilities of language to open up new meaning in such texts. Metaphor, imagery, and textual gaps are some of the strategies that a published diarist like Montgomery and unpublished diarists like Andrew employ; through these strategies, readers are challenged to discover and create new meanings. For example, Vera Hyde’s perception of herself as Alice in Wonderland gives her a metaphoric point of departure to reveal her exotic perspective of the landscape and the people of Bermuda.

One such aspect of language, the metaphor, has been emphasized for its workaday quality and used by women in their writing to bring spheres of knowledge together, as Nancy Miller suggests in *Subject to Change* (1988):

Metaphors are to be taken seriously, they appeal to me as an economic way of both to theorize outside of systems dependent on a unitary signature (allowing you to combine things that usually don’t go together) and to imagine in the material of language what hasn’t yet come—what might not be able to come into social being. (xii)

The pervasive power of the metaphor illustrates women writers’ idiosyncratic perceptions of a previously unnamed place. Emily Dickinson and her choice of nature metaphors clearly challenged her male poet predecessors, giving to her readers a female perspective on nature and her identification with it (Homans). The predominant metaphors of the land in American literature as mother, wife and lover, as Annette Kolodny claims, “stem from the desires and tensions that arise when patterns from within the human mind confront an external reality of physical phenomena” (8). Early male explorers often projected their conceptualization of themselves in relation to the new land as conquering a pure, untouched woman, a “virgin,” and genderizing the man/nature (female) relationship into metaphors of rape, birth, and nursing.

In contrast, Montgomery uses the metaphor of the veil throughout her autobiography to highlight the border she acknowledges between herself and her ideal, her natural paradise. Nature and Montgomery’s varied nature metaphors

in her autobiographical texts call into question aspects of her identification with nature—nature described as a universal dome, friend, and place of untamed spirits.

Gunn's third autobiographical perspective, "the autobiographical response", (12) is the virtual space where the reader and text's horizons may fuse. In the cognitive activity of reading, the written text and the reader come together to compose meaning or make sense of the text. The reader is, for example, challenged by the various types of gaps in Amy Andrew's text, the partial or total absence of anticipated information, which create the fragmentary nature and appearance of the text, and which disturb that cognitive meeting of reader and text. Such forms of reticence give a site for the reader to pause and reflect on the omissions and consider the information gaps as another rhetorical feature of the autobiography.

The praxis of autobiography and the rapport established between the creator, reader, and text can lead to new understandings of earlier texts, and autobiography can then grasp, as Virginia Woolf has said, "all sense of what it's all about" (qtd. in Bruss 1).

Autobiography and Identity

Midway through the twentieth century, James Olney, in his introduction to *Autobiography: Essays Theoretical and Critical* (1980), asks about recent critical interest in autobiography: "why? why now? why not earlier?" He goes on to explain:

[I]t was something more deeply embedded in the times and in the contemporary psyche, something more pervasive in the intellectual and spiritual atmosphere that caused and continues to cause a great number of investigators, thinkers, and critics to turn their attention to the subject of autobiography. (11)

On the national level, Canada, since the 1960s, has been in the throes of struggling with questions of national identity. Thirty years later, in what Linda Hutcheon would term Canada's postmodern era, the coinciding of feminism and postmodernism is for her of particular interest. As she says, "the postmodern concept of 'different', is starting to replace the humanist 'universal' as a prime cultural value" (Hutcheon ix). The intersections of national and feminist

agendas are giving rise to introspection on national, regional, and personal levels, particularly in the area of differences from the more traditional Anglo-Francophone perspective in Canada. A “looking within” characterizes the proliferation of Canadian literature in the last few decades, and more recently a reassessment of our early writers, such as Montgomery, is taking place.

Exploring the construction of self and taking time out to create a personal biography are seen as a post-traditional societal phenomenon (Giddens). In the contemporary preoccupation with questions of identity in this “post-traditional society” (a term chosen by Giddens to replace postmodern), personal lives are seen as open projects. A study of other nineteenth- and early twentieth-century unpublished texts, such as Andrew’s, can only broaden and lead to new understandings of female identity and the psychological and sociological conditions in which that identity was constructed.

Outlining the historical and generic considerations for understanding late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century women like Montgomery and Andrew through their autobiographical texts is part of coming to terms with “textual production”; but to study their conceptualizations of the spheres they occupy, both private and domestic, a deeper understanding of their reality in its spatial and temporal dimensions is inevitable. Both women’s natural environments and their homes are important locations for examining the textual solutions to which they each resorted in order to articulate their sense of self.

THE ISLAND FARMER, MAY 24, 1905

MOTHERHOOD

Actual Sterility in Women is Very Rare—Healthy Mothers and Children Make Happy Homes.

There was a Japanese maiden in Foo, Whose headaches were many, poor I. A. But her father one day Made her feel ever gay By bringing her some of Zutoo.

Such is the experience of thousands of women in Canada who are users of Zutoo. They used to suffer from headache, neuralgic pains and colds without a remedy, being afraid of the doctors. Today, however, by using Zutoo, they are free from all these troubles. Zutoo is a powerful nerve tonic and may not have any effect on the system, but it has the effect of making the system feel better. It is the only medicine that has been found to be so effective in the treatment of these troubles. It is a powerful nerve tonic and may not have any effect on the system, but it has the effect of making the system feel better. It is the only medicine that has been found to be so effective in the treatment of these troubles.

MODERN MARTYRS!

The age of martyrs is not past. There are thousands of women all over the country who are physical martyrs. They are victims of the modern world, and they are suffering from the same troubles that our mothers suffered from. They are suffering from the same troubles that our mothers suffered from. They are suffering from the same troubles that our mothers suffered from.

George W. Ballstrom, Mary Campbell, and other people who have suffered from these troubles, are now happy and healthy. They are now happy and healthy. They are now happy and healthy.

From a story of a woman who has suffered from these troubles, and is now happy and healthy. She is now happy and healthy. She is now happy and healthy.

Three have been together for a long time. They are now happy and healthy. They are now happy and healthy. They are now happy and healthy.

"Wash!" "That's a!" "E. C. F.!" "Wash!" "That's a!" "E. C. F.!" "Wash!" "That's a!" "E. C. F.!"

Oh, I'm So Tired!

When a woman involuntarily says this after only an ordinary amount of exertion, she needs a tonic to restore her strength. Her system is run down and she may have female organic trouble as well. To neglect this warning of nature may mean serious uterine or womb disease—and the grave. For such a woman nothing would be so beneficial as

The Ladies of Summerside May Now Grow Beautiful

Gourlay the Drugist backed up by the manufacturers of SALVIA, the Great Hair Grower, guarantees it to grow hair. The roots of the hair are so in ten days. The hair is made soft and fluffy. Like all American preparations SALVIA is daintily perfumed. It is hard to find an actress who does not use SALVIA continuously.

At Wadena, Sask., Mrs. James McNicol and her six children, ranging from two to fifteen years, were asphyxiated to sleep by fumes from coal stoves. This is a general merchant.

Electric Restorer for Men

Phosphonal restores every nerve in the body to its proper tension; restores vim and vitality. Premature decay and all sexual weakness arrested at once. Phosphonal will make you a new man. Price \$3 a box, or two for \$5. Mailed to any address. The Scofield Drug Co., St. Catharines, Ont.

Or at Gourlay's Drug Store.

Dr. Hugo's Health Tablets For Women

For this extraordinary medicine the feminine world owes a debt of gratitude to that great specialist in female diseases, Dr. J. Hugo, of Paris. This man has devoted his life to the relief of female complaints, and his clientele in Europe is something wonderful.

Those who can afford to pay the fee, are charged \$50 for exactly the same medicine we offer you for 50 cents.

We control the Canadian and American rights to the formula of this up-to-date remedy, which is far superior to preparations which have been on the market for twenty-five or fifty years.

The formula combines the best ingredients to

Make Healthy Women

known to medical science in the twentieth century for the ills of women.

Your Health Tablets have brought sunshine into one home at least—my own. My wife needed the help of the time of her life, and she did feel better after trying a box of the tablets she bought to improve, and now goes about her work without a pain. No medicine ever gave her such a relief. —FRANCIS E. MORRISON.

FIGURE 5. Images of Women from Island Newspapers

CHAPTER 2

IMAGES OF NINETEENTH- AND EARLY TWENTIETH-CENTURY PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND WOMEN

With the recent publication of the first edition of a statistical description of women's lives and work in Prince Edward Island, *Women in Prince Edward Island: A Statistical Review*, the Minister for the Status of Women observed that the report does not provide an analysis of those statistics. She insisted that much more work is needed to explain and interpret the statistics. Such a publication represents one of many that leave to readers the task of extrapolating meaning and interpreting facts that assist in the construction of an image of women of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Where the statistical publication fails to provide an understanding of women of the past, so do other publications. Women have seldom been key participants in recorded historical events or stories related to these events. Instead, women are often peripheral in these accounts, or at most, the "written subject," the one who is written about. Focusing on women as "writing subjects," as they present themselves in their own life writing, enables the reader to suspend belief in the commonly held images of women and explore how women attempted to write themselves into existence. In the discussion below, I consider women from these two perspectives: that of the written subject, or how they were written about in history; and that of the writing subject, or how they wrote themselves into their autobiographical texts.

When re-creating the circumstances of women's lives, it is important to look at the meagre statistics and how they can be read intertextually with other texts. For example, the life expectancy of women in Prince Edward Island (PEI) has from

the 1920s to the 1980s remained above the national average and it increased 32.1 percent during that period.¹ It is crucial to probe into other areas to understand not only the duration of women's lives but also the quality of their lives, both physically and intellectually.

The media of the early twentieth century would have had readers believe that women were less healthy than men, even though statistics tell us that women lived on average two years longer than men. Were such images of women as "Modern Martyrs," an advertisement that appeared in the *The Island Farmer* on March 25, 1914, intended to reinforce the myth of woman as the "weaker sex," unfit for the public arena because of her "female functions"? Advertisements give the impression that women's health was important for reproduction, the care of children, and the maintenance of a happy home: "Motherhood: Actual Sterility in Women Is Very Rare—Healthy Mothers and Children Make Happy Homes" proclaimed another *The Island Farmer* advertisement. There appears to be a contradiction in how women are depicted and how they depict themselves. Texts written by women and read intertextually with statistics, historical accounts, and images found in the media provide more profound insights into the physical and intellectual circumstances of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Island women. It is helpful to review how women are depicted in popular texts from the region and the period under study, such as those images of women as the subject of others' texts, before juxtaposing these against the woman as the subject of her own text, her diary.

Woman as the Written Subject in the Histories of Prince Edward Island

Confederation and Women

Documentation of women's lives is often not found in mainstream publications on history and politics, mainly because women have been "officially excluded from the politics of men for much of Canada's history" (Prentice et al. 1). Francis W.P. Bolger's *Prince Edward Island and Confederation, 1863–1873* (1964) is a case in point, as there is no reference to what significance women might have had in this historical event. Thus, in reiterating the question, "Can women therefore be said to have had a politics separate and distinct from that of men?" (Prentice

¹ During the 1990s, PEI women began to die earlier than other Canadian women.

et al. 2), it is imperative to demonstrate how women's politics and political involvement might be identified and described.

The questions here remain at a more general level: what images of women does a reader acquire from texts originating from the events of this period, how can these images be interpreted and where can readers turn in order to develop a fuller understanding of women's lives. Addressing these questions provides a context for examining women's spheres of influence in the early twentieth century and shows how the traditional domestic sphere evolved into a more public one (MacDonald).

Historically and politically speaking, one of the most remarkable events in the transformation of British North America into the Dominion of Canada was the Charlottetown² Conference (1864). PEI has since been recognized as the "birthplace of Canada" and the "cradle of Confederation"; but it was not until 1873 that PEI decided to enter into the newly founded Confederation of Canada. As Bolger's account of that event indicates, women were not sitting at the discussion table. The only women mentioned in his book are the wives of high-ranking delegates, who were escorted on the arms of their prestigious husbands or their colleagues into drawing rooms, banquet halls and ballrooms. Another group of women mentioned by Bolger are those absentee proprietors, Lady Fane, Miss Sullivan, Lady Wood, and Miss Fanning, who resided in England and owned large tracts of land on Prince Edward Island. Interestingly, one woman, Anne Brown, acted as a recorder and editor of the historical event.

Women were not physically present in this important historical decision-making process. They either stood in the sidelines by their spouses or, as Anne Brown did, performed secretarial assistance to ensure that historical records—letters, papers, minutes—were transcribed and preserved. It would be another half century before Canadian women would be granted the vote and the right to candidacy. Confederation was first and foremost the politics of men, and women were essentially absent from this forum.

Women in Popular History

Douglas Baldwin's more recent text, *Land of the Red Soil: A Popular History of Prince Edward Island* (1998), traces the Island from its evolution to the present day. When compared with Bolger's historical text, Baldwin's is popular, or

² Charlottetown is the capital city of PEI.

written “of the people in general” (*Gage Canadian Dictionary*, 1983), rather than exclusively about specific historical figures. Baldwin writes about well-known contributors to local and national history and culture, and gives a place for the average person’s, women among them, contribution to history. Nevertheless, he follows the chronology of historical events typical of Island histories, one that remains problematic, not only for women, but also for Native Canadians and Acadians.

From Baldwin’s history, it becomes clear that the period of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was one of radical change in Island society; yet the dominant roles for women during this period—mother, homemaker and community worker—are not mentioned as contributing to this transition. Even though women were also responsible for the general welfare of the community by assisting in births, nursing the sick, and raising money for churches and the Front during the war years, Baldwin’s accounts fail to elaborate on specific cases where women were instrumental in the bringing about of change.³

Women’s contributions and the depiction of their involvement are missing from both the press and texts documenting the history of the early twentieth century. Women’s position in society and the public discourse about women relegated them to the margins of the discourse on health.⁴ A close reading of texts such as Baldwin’s reveals that women are occasionally read into the success stories of men. Textually, we hear of the male activities of political decision-making, the expansion of ship building and fox farming; and simultaneously, stories of females being accessories to their success.⁵ Baldwin draws broad generalizations

³ To take one example, five pages of Baldwin’s chapter “Caring for the Sick” concentrate on pioneer doctor John Mackieson’s career; the section concludes with an overview of the Red Cross’s activity and two women instrumental in developing public health, Amy Mac Mahon and Mona Wilson. They remain among the few women heroes briefly mentioned in Baldwin’s popular history of medicine. The significance of women in the health sector and their importance in bringing health from the private to the public sphere is overshadowed by the stories of doctors. Generally, the doctors were men like Dr. Hugo of Paris, who is accredited in the local paper (*The Pioneer*, 7 January 1905), for having “devoted his life to the relief of female complaints.” Such doctors were given extensive acknowledgement. Women would either work in a less prestigious and socially recognized sector of health care or be part of the “feminine world [which] owes a debt of gratitude to that great specialist in female diseases, Dr. H. Hugo of Paris” (*The Pioneer*, 7 January 1905).

⁴ MacDonald and Wright and Dewar show in more depth the areas overlooked in previous texts on women’s work both in general, as in MacDonald, and more specifically about the health sector, in Wright and Dewar.

⁵ Shipbuilder James Yeo is a case in point. He came from a poor British family; his wife died leaving him with three sons—which led him to drink. Yeo’s luck changed and he began building his business on “hard work, intelligence and ruthlessness.” He was not alone as he

about local identities when he refers to the 1860s as the “golden age” (86), when people supposedly valued conservatism, self-reliance and community.⁶ He also claims that many Islanders still cling to these values as an expression of the Islandness they want to maintain. Without probing other sources such clichés repeatedly reinforce and unquestionably thrust a blanket identity on a people.

It is necessary not only to expose and question such observations and analyses, but also to take up other representative stories, particularly those of women who have been under-represented and often spoken for by their fathers, husbands and brothers, history makers, and more generally by the men who acted as recorders of their stories. This is specifically what Nelly Furman refers to when she says it is “the function of feminist endeavour [...] to unveil the workings of the patriarchal system of values and display the structures which control the social and cultural order” (59–60). The bringing forward of other cultural artifacts by women writing at the same time not only expands readers’ conceptualizations of the early twentieth century, but sharpens the understanding of the pervasive power of language to create and transmit values over time.

Life writing represents one such cultural artifact, which embellishes the contribution “ordinary” Islanders, such as homemakers, have made, and Baldwin’s title “popular” suggests: “Farm women worked hard and their labour contributed significantly to the economic welfare of the farm,” as Edward MacDonald observes (64). However, those women and the more than 10 percent of women who joined the work force outside the home remain unaccounted for in Baldwin’s book.⁷ Women in Baldwin’s text do have a strong visual presence.

built his fame and fortune, and a place in local history, with the help of his entire of family—his second wife and five daughters managing his store and his sons trading goods and operating the largest shipyard on the Island. While Yeo himself is credited with doing much to develop the Island’s economy, his wives’, daughters’ and sons’ labours do not merit more attention in Baldwin’s text, nor in Island history in general (Baldwin 91–92).

⁶ The invisible nature of women’s work and the lack of recognition in terms of equal remuneration is perhaps that “golden age” feature that lingers today on the Island, even though women’s work and incomes are critical to Prince Edward Island families (*Women in Prince Edward Island* 4–1).

⁷ The hospitality industry, on which PEI currently relies for a large portion of its revenue, has its roots in the domestic culture maintained by nineteenth- and twentieth-century women. Baldwin overlooks the fact that the traditional way of life that is sold to twenty-first-century tourists (to whom his book is also marketed), originates from the homes of women homemakers of this time. The Island way of life, packaged and sold to the more than a million tourists who annually visit PEI, is readily available both textually and visually in tourist brochures that pay homage to the culinary and homemaking traditions originating from homes managed by women, yet Baldwin fails to provide this vital link between women, history, and economic well-being.

The photos and drawings of early Acadian women over boiling pots and caring for the aged, pioneer women spinning and doing kitchen chores, clearly indicate the domain that belongs to these anonymous women. Textually, however, they remain obscure and taken for granted, despite their vital roles in the home and beyond.⁸

Women's lives in PEI, like those of women elsewhere in Canada, were determined through a series of written and unwritten laws devised by men. Women did not have the right to vote in federal elections until 1918, as according to the Election Act of the Dominion of Canada, an eligible voter in Canada was defined in 1890 as "A male person, including an Indian and excluding a person of Mongolian or Chinese race... No woman, idiot, lunatic or criminal shall vote" (Baldwin 156). On a local level, there was more variation with regards to enfranchisement. Women property owners in towns were granted the right to vote in municipal elections between 1888 and 1892, and women with school-aged children living in towns were granted the right to serve on school boards in 1899. Rural women did not obtain these privileges until 1917, indicating that the rights of Islanders varied not only in terms of gender, but also according to location.

Baldwin indicates that the public presence of women in all spheres of Island life in the late twentieth century has much to do with the events of the earlier part of the century, but gives no specifics.⁹ Readers of Baldwin's book are left to sift through his evidence, and that of other accounts by historians and writers, in order to acknowledge the various roles played by women at the turn of the century.¹⁰ In fact, women were entering the labour force in increasing numbers,

⁸ By contrast, women who had gained recognition in the public sphere were given both a visual and textual presence. For example, Robert Harris's painting of the woman teacher in *A Meeting of School Trustees* (Baldwin 139) attests to the unmentioned fact that women teachers were becoming increasingly popular and outnumbering men in Island schools. Public health pioneer Mona Wilson and writer L.M. Montgomery are among the few women whose names and stature are recognized in photographs; Baldwin fits Montgomery in a chapter entitled "Entertainment" and credits her for putting PEI on the map with her fiction and its spin off in the entertainment industry.

⁹ Present-day visual images of women in Baldwin's book range from a Native girls' performance to Montgomery's stage characters, Anne and Diana, and "the women in power (1993–96) who held the six most senior legislative offices in the Island government" (160). Few links from the early part of the twentieth century to the present are provided to show how this presumed transformation was generated.

¹⁰ With the collapsing economies of shipbuilding, fox farming, and agriculture, along with the increasing outward migration and the involvement of Islanders in the Boer War (1899–1902) and World War I, women's work on the home front expanded. Simultaneously women's

as teachers, secretaries, maids, nuns, factory workers, and nurses, those jobs traditionally reserved for women. MacDonald emphasizes that women challenged the Victorian status quo by becoming active social agents and participants through their organized efforts in temperance groups and other formal organizations such as Women's Institutes. Women extended their traditional nurturing role beyond the home to issues of society at large—women's rights, education and moral purity; yet Baldwin gives little, if any, attention to this fact.

Baldwin sets out with the intention of asking different questions of previously examined material and as a result has located women in Island history as primarily in the shadow of events in which men, their fathers, husbands, sons, and brothers, were the main actors. As a popular history, this book represents a typical mainstream publication where the historically familiar events and actors are recast for a twenty-first-century readership.¹¹ The popular aspect remains problematic, however, as Baldwin's book is based more on the popularly held beliefs about the Island than any new insights or facts that would make his popular history stand out as being more representative of all Islanders.

New texts must be introduced—texts where lives are inscribed and more directly mediated by their authors. Such texts expose the physical and intellectual space of the *populus*. The exclusion and marginalization of women creates curiosity about where the rest of the account can be retrieved and reread so that a more representative history can be presented. As Nancy Armstrong says, “[I]f writing is not figured in political history then it might well appear that the power of men and the role played by women will remain unexamined for the political force it was and still is today” (256).

Women in Folk Stories

Women's presence is often found in folk stories such as those collected by David Weale in *Them Times* (1992). Women are idolized for their domesticity in their roles as mothers and wives: “a woman's house was her person you see, and her

organisations such as the Women's Institutes (WI) and Imperial Order of the Daughters of the Empire (IODE) were established.

¹¹ See also *Down at the Shore: A History of Summerside, Prince Edward Island (1752–1945)*, by Robert Allan Rankin (1980), and *Roads to Summerside: The Story of Early Summerside and the Surrounding Area*, by Ada MacLeod, edited by Marjorie MacCallum Gay (n.d.), as other examples of local histories. The former claims on the dust jacket to deal with women in history but has only sketchy details and a picture of an unidentified woman within.

pride and joy” (Weale 21). Women stand out as heroes within the expected surroundings of the home with stereotypical characteristics, such as pride in her clean and tidy home. Weale’s “historical vignettes” are meant to capture PEI at that point when the twentieth century “seemed to hit the Island.” Like any anthologist/editor, he aspires to capture what Shirley Neuman, in “Life-Writing” in *A Literary History of Canada: Canadian Literature in English* (1990) refers to as “contemporary narratives of disappearing ways of life” (349). Weale’s writing and publishing of these stories at this time is part of a cultural phenomenon of “producing memoirs about pioneering and fur-trapping [that] value [these] aspects of the past but, no longer anticipating the endurance of its hardships, turn them into romantic adventure” (Neuman 349). Part of creating that romantic image was depicting women as “silent partners in the life of the Island [...] far away from the levers of social, political or economic power” (MacDonald 62). Women of those times were indeed generally homemakers, but as Hettie A. Pott-Buter has pointed out, the nature of their housework extended outside the domestic sphere. Nonetheless, Weale, like Baldwin, fails to represent the complexities of daily living, which women themselves have done in their diaries and journals.

Women’s own portrayals of their roles as mother, wife, and homemaker defy a strict demarcation of tasks associated with each role and location of work, whether at home or in the community. Undoubtedly, there were gender-related roles and different spheres of influence that were regarded, then as now, to be of different value. Women did not convey through their life writing that their roles were more or less important than those of men, however. Instead, the overall definition of work and the calculated participation in the labour force by associating work with “pecuniary gain” (Pott-Buter 3) has undervalued women’s work in the home. Like all the other characters of Weale’s accounts, women are the subject of his discourse, lacking a voice of their own and being interpreted by him.¹²

Regardless of what women were thinking about their bodies, nurturing was women’s primary social function, and Weale makes an interesting reference to this in his chapter on pregnancy, “The Great Taboo”: “pregnancy was a problem,

¹² Weale’s book, like the local and popular histories, is written in the third person, by an outside observer/editor. With Weale acting as an ethnographer of stories from within the homes and institutions, schools and churches, patterns in the life styles of individuals come out more clearly than in the community histories. He not only explores some of the rituals and traditions of Island people, but he also raises a hierarchy of attributes which mark women and men as being remarkable.

being an indisputable visual attestation to the fact that sexual activity had occurred. The obvious solution was to keep pregnant women out of sight and that is just what happened” (49). However, this perspective is one oblivious to the feelings of the mother/subject of the story. Readers have no indication as to how women felt about being kept out of sight when they were performing their most anticipated social role, to have children. Woman is the subject of the discourse, but she lingers voiceless on the outskirts of Weale’s stories. Who, after all, could talk about pregnancy with authority, if not women? This raises the issue of women’s voices and experiences being appropriated by another and questions the author’s assumption of his authority to tell women’s stories. The exclusion of women from the public sphere in the early twentieth century, referred to in MacDonald, is reinforced, maintained, and promoted a century later by Weale in *Them Times*.

Women are seldom portrayed as important or influential agents in their communities. In fact, they are often referred to anonymously as, “a woman from a family of ten children [...] her mother” (Weale 22), “one woman from a large family [...] she” (27), or “an Acadian woman, [...] two older women” (92), when men are often indicated by their names, e.g., Jim (75) or Harold MacLeod (112). Women are eliminated entirely from the record when, for instance, health care is being discussed. Doctors are portrayed as solely responsible for bringing children into the world and maintaining a standard of health on the Island.

Within the last few decades, the traditional lifestyle of PEI has undergone dramatic changes, and Weale has tried to capture in his stories his personal encounters with what he felt has typified the Island life through time. Women, in Weale’s stories, have the roles of mother, homemaker, and wife, making ends meet by sewing clothes from flour bags and serving up molasses as a regular meal when times were hard. Men spent their days on the sea or in the fields, as in Weale’s chapter on “An Awful Man to Work” (79): in Island terminology, they were “awful” to work and thrived by labouring. Work was instrumental for survival, and work gave many their place in history as good bakers of bread or tough tillers of the soil. In other words, Islanders have a history of being hardworking, good living, rural folk.¹³

¹³ Weale does not mention the rich variety of material cultures that still thrive today in forms of music, theatre, dance, local cuisine, and handcrafts. Nor is there any account of those less public voices who tucked their dissenting thoughts within the ironic lines of verse, or inscribed them in their life writing.

One must turn to other sources to eclipse the sentiment people used in writing their own lives, as for example the ironic poetry of Mrs. W. W. Rodd (qtd. in MacDonald 62).¹⁴ With each genre, a different discourse about life is created, and so here the voice of a woman, through her own text, indicates that women were entirely cognisant of their limited “rights,” exclusive to them in their domestic sphere, out of the public eye or ear.

If readers attempt to create an image of people from times gone by through the stories offered by Weale (1992), then their images from the past will remain as ill-informed as those offered by Baldwin (1998). Both authors/editors fail to attain fair representations of Islanders, both in the scope of their content in its absence of women and also in their method of author/editorship with their insensitivity to the position of their subjects.¹⁵

Images of Women in the Press

On March 25, 1914, *The Island Farmer* published an advertisement with the headline “MODERN MARTYRS!” The advertisement stood out from the columns of dreary text, not only with its explicit headline, but also because of its sensational illustration of a voluptuous woman, tied to the stake with the word “disease” burning at her feet. This was the newspaper that circulated in thousands of Island homes and gave its readers a sense of their local and larger community.

¹⁴ The right to be a happy wife
 To live and pray and sing
 The right to nurse sweet little ones, whose arms around her cling,
 The right to teach those loving ones
 In virtue's path to tread,
 The right to cheer the suffering
 And watch beside the bed.
 The blessed right to serve and wait,
 To minister the man.
 The right to cheer up lonely hearts
 As only women can... (qtd. in MacDonald 62)

¹⁵ Weale seldom enters his characters' intellectual space; he upholds them as icons of hardworking and uncompromising sacrifice. He laments the times gone by, the pathos of today's old people “without honour” (111) and shares his nostalgia for a past that cannot be regained. However, the reader yearns to hear from the storytellers themselves, like the woman suffering from post-partum haemorrhaging whose life is saved by kitchen table surgery, or the man who remarks, “we were brought up on work, that was all we ever knew” (81). Did they have dreams of a better life, free from suffering and hard work? What was their response to their life circumstances when they spoke or wrote their inner thoughts both publicly and privately?

Few if any Island women were newsworthy, but they were nevertheless often targeted in advertisements, the vehicles through which medical remedies were promoted. In addition to its compelling headline, its strategic position at the top of the paper, with its illustration, the advertisement textually lures the reader from the very first line: "The age of martyrs is not passed." Undoubtedly, most readers could identify the common-sense assumptions of the acknowledgement of history, as well as the Bible being drawn upon, but were oblivious to the reconstruction of the woman in this article. She is one whose body is shrouded in mystery, and who is victimized physically and mentally by its functions.

The article's sensational appeal draws on colourful language to first depict the disease: "physical torture and mental anguish beyond description"; and then to proceed to describe the victim's suffering with a series of antonyms—"not victims of persecution," while at the same time referring to women's suffering as "modern martyrs"—"borne in silence [...] scarcely less intense" and "hidden from the world." The abstract nature of the suffering discourse is actually reinforced in the vague reference to the body part inflicted, "this portion of the anatomy," "the parts that are inflamed." Only in the letters testifying to the curing powers of "Orange Lily" do readers fully know that Orange Lily is a suppository for curing "inflammation of the womb." Outside lay persons are admitted to the discourse arena to confirm that the readers' suspicions about the disease and cure, are indeed correct. Mrs T.H. Hatton also gratefully testifies that it was indeed the pain in her womb and ovaries during her menstrual period that almost prevented her from doing the housework: "It is eight months since I began the treatment but I feel like a new woman. I work right through everything now."

Interestingly, the women caught up in this dilemma are described as ladies: "These ladies, as a rule, are women and girls of refined and sensitive temperaments. Knowing that their sufferings are due to a disordered condition of the female functions, their native modesty deters them from seeking relief in the earlier stages" (*The Island Farmer*, 25 March 1914). The woman, as subject and target of this discourse, is both appealed to and recreated, by common knowledge and experience. She is told that these biological realities, and this particular response, make her "refined and sensitive." Her disposition is regulated by the state of her reproductive organs, and when all is well with this "portion of the anatomy," then "the sunshine and joy of life again become part of her being."

It was no coincidence that women became the site for problematizing the transformation that was taking place in society at large. Modernization was changing Canada from a collection of self-sufficient agrarian communities to

a more socially, economically, and culturally integrated and viable nation; this demanded a rallying around specific images and notions of nation. Advertisers were instrumental in leading the way: “women were put to work by the images” (Coward 82).

The image of women at this time in the press¹⁶ did not represent a pivotal place for women in society other than being beautiful, healthy, and fit for reproduction. Women were seldom newsworthy unless their acts were heroic or out of the ordinary, like Mrs. Joseph DesRoches, who saved a child (*The Island Farmer*, 17 January 1912), or Mrs. McGee who was arrested on charges of murdering her family by food poisoning (*The Island Farmer*, 1 May 1912). Ironically, the newspaper called *The Island Farmer* made little reference to the farming family and even less to the women instrumental for its survival. It was taken for granted that

the well-being of farm families depended on the efforts of the farm wife and widowed farmers would need to quickly remarry. The farming family required women’s myriad labours: producing clothing and quilts, keeping poultry, making soap, tending the vegetable garden, churning butter, preserving and preparing food, candlemaking, cleaning, supervising, planting, and harvesting the land. (Duffy and Pupo 14)

Although women were not visible in the circles of politics and trade, they nevertheless did have spheres of influence beyond the home, in places like churches, hospitals, schools, and the cultural sphere, generally doing volunteer work. Occasionally women like Miss Mary F. Hunt were briefly mentioned in the press, as she was in a few lines for her involvement in the local Handcraft Guild (*The Island Farmer*, 10 January 1912).

The problem for the researcher is determining “how separate the so-called ‘domestic’ (or ‘private’) and ‘public’ spheres really were” (Prentice et al. 3), and why, in the case of certain activities in the public sphere, men received considerable coverage while female interests were ignored. The exclusion of women from newspapers of the early twentieth century, as well as from historical texts, does not correspond with the fact that women were truly in the traditionally public

¹⁶ During the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century, Islanders had access to several newspapers: the *Summerside Journal*, established in 1865 and currently known as *The Journal Pioneer*; *The Island Farmer*, established in 1887, but no longer published; *The Guardian*, established in 1887, now incorporated *The Evening Patriot*, established 1864; as well as the *P.E.I. Agriculturalist*, which is no longer published.

sphere.¹⁷ Subtle references such as *The Island Farmer's* advertisement of 27 January 1915 for women to purchase a "British Butter Worker", show women being encouraged to turn their domestic chores into marketable goods.¹⁸ The advertisement reminds readers of the precarious position of women in the demarcation between housework and market work: in the former, she performs small amounts of a great many kinds of work, and in the latter she performs an appreciable share of one particular kind of work (Pott-Buter 7)—usually for some financial gain.

Women's labour in the market is often regarded as a resource to be called upon in hard times, and in better times, an optional activity for the individual and society. The origins of women's active participation in the labour force can be traced back to the period under investigation here. During the nineteenth century, the economy was suffering and family incomes had to be supplemented. Another surge in women's involvement in the labour force occurred at the onset of World War I when women filled the positions vacated by those who went off to war.¹⁹ It was obvious that women were considered a surplus and manipulable resource. The media of the time appears to take the agricultural sector for granted with little reference to farming issues and even less to the plight of rural women. Obviously, the media was well aware of the ongoing outward migration at this time and of PEI's declining population.²⁰ The agricultural sector was rapidly losing its people to other sectors, following the overall pattern in Canada (Denton).

Newspapers began producing new messages for a new era. According to these images, women would usher in new times for Islanders. The most predominant image in these papers is that of a sick, weak, or unattractive woman who could be restored to a state of health, strength, or beauty. Often women's bodies in these images are scripted with the prevailing ideals that "[w]omen become the sex, the

¹⁷ The fact is that in Canada as a whole the labour force participation rate for women in 1911 was 16.6 percent (Wilson 64) but as Prince Edward Island was a mainly agrarian society, the percentage of women employed outside the home was considerably lower. Women nevertheless had, as Duffy and Pupo relate, a significant role in the well being of the farm, the community, and society as a whole.

¹⁸ Women in PEI have a long tradition of "picking up" another job to supplement the family income; often, without this income, families would be living below the poverty line (*Women in Prince Edward Island* 4–4).

¹⁹ Interestingly, between the wars the local press, *The Guardian* wrote, "Working wives are a menace to the general welfare, to the public health and the morals of the nation" (22 July 1939; qtd. in Baldwin 155).

²⁰ PEI's population in 1891 was 109,078 in 1901, 103,259 (Basavarajappa and Ram).

sex differentiated from the norm which is masculine” (Coward 82). Through these advertisements, it appears that “[w]omen are the sex which is constantly questioned, explained, defined. And as the defined sex, women are put to work by the images” (82).

A juxtaposition of the public and private stories about women offers insights about why an advertisement in the *The Island Farmer* proclaimed, on 24 January 1912, “The Ladies of Summerside²¹ May Now Grow Beautiful Hair.” Women were given permission to act and change, not only to look more attractive for their men but to join the twentieth-century project to remake themselves and their lives. With the help of such modern products as “SALVIA, the Great Hair Grower,” women could have “soft and fluffy hair” and potentially open up the space for individuality and social participation that Peiss argues became so important in the modernist era (166). These advertisements were the advent of a phenomenon that heightened in the 1920s and 1930s, where

cosmetic producers, advertisers and beauty experts shifted the burden of female identity from an interior self to a personality made manifest by marking and colouring [...] and through these powerful beauty images, makeup’s aesthetic wedded women’s modernity and individuality to a normative female identity. (Peiss 166)

News, or “stories” about women reflect a preoccupation with women’s health—female pills for the female system, or a “local” treatment for women’s disorders that even promises relief from mental depression (“Modern Martyrs”). Why were women the object of medical speculation and offered cures for their gender-related “illnesses” in the media? Possibly because, as Coward says, they were put to work by these images: “Do some work! Transform yourself! Look Better! Be more erotic! And through this command to meet the ideal our society writes one message loud and clear across the female body. Do not act. Do not desire. Wait for men’s attention” (82).

The images gleaned from the press strongly suggest that women had to be enhanced to meet the social agenda of the time, one where women were to be fit for their roles as childbearer²² and homemaker.²³ Advertisers also appeal to men

²¹ Summerside is PEI’s second largest community.

²² “Motherhood: Actual Sterility is Very Rare—Healthy Mothers and Children Make Happy Homes” (*The Island Farmer*, 24 May 1905)

²³ “Your Health Tablets have brought sunshine into one home at least—my own,” writes Mr Francis E. Mordaunt. (*The Pioneer*, 7 January 1905)

to be sensitive to all these demands on women.²⁴ The same press often contrasts the stories of suffering women with those of their less dynamic sisters who had either special mental abilities²⁵ or sad fates.²⁶ Advertisements directed to women give them advice and cures for coping with the fatigue brought about by their roles as mother and homemaker. Many of these advertisements are illustrated with both the tired woman at work and the man who had found the “cure” for her “ailment.”²⁷ Very little effort was made to localize these appeals: apparently, women were women wherever they were; their very sex determined the fact that they were suffering irregardless of whether they be in Canada or Japan.²⁸ In both of the advertisements above, men are instrumental in curing women who couldn’t cope with what are vaguely referred to as a “disordered condition of the female functions” (“Modern Martyrs”) or “unstrung nerves” (“There Was a Jap”).

²⁴ “If you want to save a disturbance in the home go quickly to any one of the agencies of the Charlottetown Woolen Company and buy a suit of cloth. The good wife’s time is occupied sufficiently without being annoyed and worried in mending”. (*The Prince Edward Island Agriculturalist*, 9 September 1886)

²⁵ Mrs Scott in early spring after a dream informed the police where her dead husband’s body could be found in the melting ice following his winter drowning (*The Island Farmer*, 17 January 1912)

²⁶ Below the advertisement for the “Ladies of Summerside,” we read of “Mrs James Mc Nichol and her six children who were asphyxiated while asleep” and then it concludes: “Mr Nichol is a general merchant” (*The Island Farmer*, 24 January 1912).

²⁷ “Oh I’m So Tired” (Advertisement): When a woman involuntarily says this after only an ordinary amount of exertion, she needs a tonic to restore her strength. Her system is run down and she may have female organ trouble as well. To neglect this warning of nature may mean serious uterine or womb disease—and the grave. For such a woman nothing could be so beneficial as Dr. Hugo’s Health Tablets for Women. For this extraordinary medicine the feminine world owes a debt of gratitude to that specialist in female diseases Dr. H. Hugo, of Paris. This man had devoted his life to the relief of female complaints, and his clientele in Europe is something wonderful. Those who can afford to pay the fee are charged \$50 for exactly the same medicine we offer you for 50 cents. The formula combines the best ingredients to **Make Healthy Women** known to medical science in the twentieth century for the ills of women. Your Health Tablets have brought sunshine into one home at least—my own—My wife used to complain all the time of backache and feeling tired. But after trying a box of the tablets she began to improve, and now goes about her work without a pain. No medicine ever gave her such a relief—Francis E. Mordaunt” (*The Pioneer*, 7 January 1905).

²⁸ There was a Jap maiden in Foo
Whose headaches were many, poor I. u.
But her father one day
Made her feel very gay
By bringing her some of Zutoo (*The Pioneer*, 7 January 1905)

Occasionally, women are instrumental in curing their weaker sisters, suggesting women's power to better their own lives, or attesting to the fact that they joined the previously male driven campaign to "cure" other women from an ill-defined "disease." In one such advertisement, a dialogue is created between Mrs. Pinkham, the founder of a vegetable compound, the cure for women's ills, and two other women whose lives were transformed by it. "Motherhood," reads the ad with the subtitle "Actual Sterility in Women is Very Rare: Healthy Mothers and Children Make Happy Homes" (*The Island Farmer*, 24 May 1905).

The images of women associated with health, motherhood, romance and beauty dominate the early twentieth-century media. Men are represented through their public participation and achievements, with only minor attention paid to their health or physical attributes. Advertisements relating to men's health issues are more subtle, they get significantly less space, are more discreet—lacking sensational headlines and illustrations²⁹—and appear to be rather low key. The advertisement for the male disorder assumes that the problem is temporary, as the treatments for men return them to their usual healthy state: "restores vim and vitality" asserts one advertisement ("Electric Restorer for Men"). In comparison, references to the female condition imply that she is doomed by the cyclical nature of her metabolism and she gets only temporary relief from a more or less permanently flawed "female function." Dramatic and vague references to menstruation as the basis of women's nature, one synonymous with mental and physical suffering, blurred the reality of women's increasingly important role in such issues of the day as increased participation in paid labour, enfranchisement, temperance union, and the war effort, and ignored the fact that women were indeed capable of escaping their biological fate of periods and babies.³⁰

The images in literary works by Canadian women writers of this time³¹ did not share the agenda of the media. Women protagonists in these works are still firmly rooted to their locale and are not yet adopting modern urban values and images to the extent the press would have readers believe; but so too is the woman protagonist in a poem from the September 18, 1884 issue of the *Prince Edward Island Agriculturalist*, called "The Farmer's Wife." The poem offers an

²⁹ "Electric Restorer for Men": Phosphonel restores every nerve in the body to its proper tension: restores vim and vitality. Premature decay and all sexual weaknesses averted at once. Phosphonel will make you a new man (*The Island Farmer*, 17 January 1912).

³⁰ Even through advertisements for shoes in *The Pioneer* (28 June 1902), readers could see that women were nurses, waitresses, salesladies, and that the call for women to work outside the home was real.

³¹ See, for example, the collection *Aspiring Women* (1993), edited by McMullen and Campbell.

interesting diversion from the advertising images of women and reiterates the division of labour told about in both *Them Times* and the early St. Eleanors histories to follow. What the poet conveys in the poem resembles farm wife Amy Andrew's diary accounts (1910–15) of life at this time, except that the poem is written by an observer, not the insider, the labouring woman subject herself:

For he sows
and he hoes
all for the good of the land

And she must boil
and she must broil
and she must toil

For he sows
and he hoes
all for the good of the land

There are pies to make
there is bread to bake
and steps to take

For he sows
and he hoes
all for the good of the land

The poem emphasizes the routine of men and women's work: his in the larger sphere, "for the good of the land," and hers being a list of musts and duties within the domestic sphere, the home. Interestingly the poem is titled "The Farmer's Wife," suggesting both a type of ownership and a containment within the space of the house. At the same time, the poem is one of the rare examples of the agrarian strife and the division of labour based on gender. The poem indicates that he, as the tiller of the soil, remains close to nature and works in harmony with the land. There is no indication that she would leave her domestic abode to reflect on her natural surroundings. Emma Chadwick Stretch's pioneer diary (1856–59), examined in chapter 3, elaborates on this imagery of the rural woman's access to nature and relationship to domesticity.

Images of women in the media serve as indicators of how a society simultaneously creates and reflects the subject/reader. Newspaper images of

women are one means of analyzing the shifting social context of women's lives and questioning why women at the turn of the twentieth century were being publicly scrutinized in newspapers, photographs and films the way they were.

Women in Local Community Histories

Memories: A Historic View of St. Eleanor's, 1747–1995

One would expect women to be more visible in local community histories, where the threshold for participation in local affairs was not lowered by the national disenfranchisement of the nineteenth- and early twentieth-century women. Women were clearly prevented from participating in national and provincial politics. Nevertheless, in one local history, *Memories: A Historic View of St. Eleanor's, 1747–1995* (1995), readers get a picture of nineteenth-century women portrayed as “lovely wives,” creators of beautiful shawls, delicious cooking, and baking, such as Mrs. Craswell, Mrs. Ramsay, Mrs. Bell, Mrs. Darby, and Mrs. Ness were (Bryson and Taylor 25). Their works were displayed at the local bazaar and presided over by High Sheriff Thomas Hunt, Esq., and Major Compton. Women came into the public forum under the auspices of the esteemed men of the community to display the fruit of their domestic labours—baking and handwork.

From the material made available by the women editors of this publication, readers witness a series of men presiding over all community events and women standing in the sidelines. One such incident illustrates the division of labour: the men of St. Eleanors were to enforce the law on Jerry Mahar and carry out “a punishment of 39 lashes on his bare back while the housewives of St. Eleanors stopped preparing their dinner so that they were able to cover their ears, to prevent them from listening to what was taking place in front of the Courthouse” (Bryson and Taylor 27). Implied here is the idea that a woman couldn't cope with the harsh realities of law enforcement because of her psychological makeup. As MacDonald puts it, “men went out in the world; women presided over the family in the refuge of the home” (62).

When such historical anecdotes are read intertextually with women's own words, however, readers are challenged to question women's supposed innate inability to tolerate the harsh realities of implementing justice, and also, whether women even shared the values of the justice system when they were excluded

from this and other public forums. Despite their presumed inability to deal with the harsh realities of law enforcement, women were given space in at least one of the professions, which corresponded with women's supposed nurturing ability: teaching.³²

Thus continued the occupational segregation of women, moving from the old sectors of agriculture and domestic service to new female sectors, like junior white collar/administrative work, sales, caring, and teaching services (Pott-Buter 278). Women were entering the labour force in increasing numbers and before the end of the nineteenth century they would outnumber men teachers. By the turn of the century, one tenth of the Island work force (MacDonald 64), and approximately 15 percent nationally (Duffy and Pupo 19) were women who were employed primarily in jobs that were an extension of their traditional sphere of influence, the home.

Nevertheless, in other spheres, women were absent. Of the 72 industry and craftsmen in Hutchinson's 1864 *Island Directory of St Eleanor's*, only two were women, Angelina Cameron, clerk, and Mary Smith, widow of Hugh. Clearly women did not hold public office and were absent from the public sphere and thus the public records of many such communities (Bryson and Taylor). Women's identity was often indicated, by their being either their fathers' daughters or their husbands' wives. Women seldom came into the community on their own but arrived as wives, sisters or daughters, patronized by a father, brother, or uncle. Many men's profiles—teachers, tanners and cheese makers, were highlighted by the fact that when they had come "from away," they married women of the community, daughters of local men. Women thus served as the path for their husbands' social integration into a community, one where they themselves had little social mobility;³³ when histories such as this are compiled, it is the death dates of men, such as the above, which are reported, and so women remain, in death as in life, unaccounted for.

Women seldom received attention in the histories of this community, nor did they appear to position themselves and their work in any pivotal role for the life

³² One of the first women to hold a public position in the community was Miss Lawson (Mrs. Thomas Walsh) who in 1851 was a teacher and ranked the best in the county by the school inspector. Even though Miss Lawson's male predecessors were more notorious for their military backgrounds and drinking habits, her entry into the teaching profession signifies a pattern which echoed throughout the province and the country (Bryson and Taylor 34).

³³ Men such as Joseph Patton Sherlock, George Jones, and Sydney Richardson are chronicled as being in famous battles, or the first of their profession as cheesemakers or tanners in the village. These men came to St. Eleanors and married local women, Emma Cannon, Margaret Green, and Isabella Compton respectively (Bryson and Taylor 47).

and survival of the community. Daughters were proud of their fathers, of whom they wrote glowing accounts.³⁴ Women themselves, such as storyteller LaVoie, and Bryson and Taylor, have assumed a taken-for-granted agenda of events and hierarchy of work where men's work was more highly valued and recognized than that of their own sex. Women are more clearly acknowledged in histories at a local level but the general conditions of the ordinary citizen, man or woman, are of little concern to the editors. People came into the public sphere with their skills, and for women these were generally of a domestic nature, or due to her birthright as someone's daughter or wife. *Memories* gives the impression that women were not as important as men in the public sphere of the community, as no woman has been singled out as making any remarkable contribution to the history of St. Eleanors.³⁵

When reading women into local histories, even the most subtle features of naming or the use of titles, such as Miss or Mrs., indicate that a change is taking place. This change resulted when women's work was extended from its traditional place in the home or she acquired status or property. With this transition came the resistance to the "conventions of representation which have been historically constructed" (D. Cameron 19). Such early twentieth-century St. Eleanors women, in abandoning their titles and using their first names, resisted conventional naming patterns, thus challenging the traditional representation of women. This deconstruction of old naming patterns gave women a stronger presence in the documentation of their community whereas previously they remained completely obscured behind their husbands' or fathers' names.³⁶ One local history in itself cannot adequately inform readers of the circumstances

³⁴ In 1989, Blanch LaVoie (qtd. in Bryson and Taylor) writes about the world that is no more, that of her father, the village blacksmith. Even though LaVoie indicates that "energetic housewives 'took tourists' as more and more people 'from away' discovered the charmed tranquillity of 'An Island Vacation'" (48), her story focuses on that work more generally accepted as vital to the community. Ironically, it is that women's work of taking in tourists that is the backbone of the present-day Island economy, a fact that has seldom been lauded or extensively documented, then or now (Bryson and Taylor 48–51).

³⁵ Women did make some firsts in St. Eleanors. According to this history, Mrs. Katherine Darby had the first residential telephone in the early 1900s (72), and Mrs. Linda Muirhead became the first woman postmaster in 1944 (71). Interestingly these two women, unlike their predecessors, used their Christian name with their married name, something previously unheard of.

³⁶ The pattern began in records from the early 1920s when women such as Ethel Tanton, Katherine Darby and Caroline Ireland were mentioned as major shareholders and directors of companies. This suggested that women were entering the public sphere and taking on their own identity, in other words, acting as people in their own right, independent of men (97).

of women's lives, other than to note that women did not appear to merit any recognition and, for the modern reader, were conspicuous by their absence.

Sketches of Old St. Eleanor's

Compiled by the St. Eleanor's Women's Institute, this booklet, *Sketches of Old St. Eleanor's*, was written by the Women's Institute to preserve the history of the early days of the community.³⁷ In the documentation of this period, few women survived and those that did, like the wives and housekeeper of Colonel Compton, to whom the British Crown had granted the land on which St. Eleanors stands, have a reputation to this day.³⁸ Women worthy of any mention were generally daughters of important people or married to a man of social significance, as Harriet Washbourne Compton was: a granddaughter of Colonel Compton, who married William Andrew, the high sheriff of Prince County. Gaining access to the local history could be achieved by working in the public sector, as Bryson and Taylor also acknowledge. Mrs. Eliza Jane Lyle and Mrs. Bertha A. Craswell were two of the few women identified, respectively as holding positions as hotel owner and in charge of the post office, (*Sketches of Old St. Eleanor's* 22–23). Generally, however, women gained access to local history as the wife of a man who inherited property, the grandmother of a prominent businessman, or a

³⁷ The publication gives no mention of the native population who inhabited the area prior to European settlement in the mid-eighteenth century and few details of the Acadians who resided in the area when the ancestors of current day residents moved in. Wives, children, and servants accompanied the men of the family and were all part of the late eighteenth-century migration, which was primarily from England.

³⁸ One of the famous stories from the community, which has survived to this day, is of Charlotte, the wife of the founder of St. Eleanors, Colonel Harry Compton. Charlotte commanded her husband to build the family home before she would join him with their children. When she arrived from England, her husband proudly gave her a tour of their new home. She confessed that the only features of the house she appreciated were the doorknobs. As the story goes, the colonel removed all the doorknobs, put them in a bag, set the house ablaze, and put Charlotte with the bag on the next boat for England. Little else is known of Charlotte. Compton's maid, Eleanor Skanskey, after which St. Eleanors was named, similarly played a role in this man's life and therefore entered the chronicles of St. Eleanors history. Little is known about Eleanor other than that she, the Colonel and his sons and daughter converted from Anglicanism to Catholicism. This soap opera has been immortalized in St Eleanors history. Women like Charlotte and Eleanor loom in the history as those "matriarchs" who existed on the margins of power and could move even the most powerful men by their whimsical moods and nature, to burn houses or name territory after them.

granddaughter who went on to become the wife of a higher status resident, all contingent on their men's merits.

When women married and gave up their maiden names, their ancestry became obscure, unless they were given their mother's maiden name as Harriet Washbourne Compton was.³⁹ Through records of births, marriages, and deaths, little information remains to help locate women in equally prominent places in genealogical records as their male counterparts. Nevertheless, *Sketches of Old St. Eleanor's* relies on the surname to indicate lineage, and obscures women when it writes that "Benjamin Andrew, South Drive, is the only male descendant still living on P.E.I. with the Andrew name" (*Sketches* 35); in fact, female descendants exist.

The male's centrality to history telling is evidenced in the story of Benjamin Darby, who was "born at Devonshire, England in 1742. A Loyalist, in 1790 he came to Saint John, N. B. and later to Prince Edward Island. His first wife was believed to be from England and they had a family of two daughters. He then married a widow whose name was Bramble and they had a family of eight children" (*Sketches* 35). Scant information is available about Darby's wives. One was vaguely referred to as "believed to be [...]," and the other, a woman carrying her former husband's name, is moved like chattel, from being Bramble's property to Darby's. Women have remained obscure and in some cases even nameless while the record keepers have accepted that these women's identities do not share the same merits as their men.⁴⁰

Such incidents reinforce the idea of Island women as chattel goods, the property of father and husband, sanctioned by English civil law, which "considered husband and wife to be one person, and the husband was that person" (MacDonald 62). The beginning of the twentieth century would see women's rights emerge as women fought to exorcise the alcohol from Island life through the temperance movement. The less-than-public role women played in their communities in the nineteenth century was taking on new dimensions, and the private sphere served as a springboard for entering the public sphere to better society's ills: not all work for women was in the home and within the family. With the dawn of the new century, women as the absent subjects in local history could now be read as more

³⁹ Such women were given their mother's maiden name as a middle name and in this way a woman's ancestry could more easily be traced through the matriarchal lineage as well.

⁴⁰ Even at birth, baby girls were destined to become wives. A young neighbour was sent to inquire about another who had just given birth. When presented with the newborn, the "joking" remark was made, "here's a little wife for you" (*Sketches* 41–42). Twenty-one years later, he married this "little wife," and they had eleven children.

visible and active subjects. Other documents make more specific reference to the place women were carving for themselves in their milieu.

Women as Writing Subjects

One Woman's Life: The Biography of Wanda Wyatt (1895–1998)

As the reviews of the above publications indicate, little information about the actual lives of women is gleaned from such histories, overviews, or stories. An increasing appetite for local and personal histories has encouraged publishers, editors, and writers to focus on what they know best, their own local communities. No doubt the recognition of women's absence from historical records has spurred this project, but so too has the acknowledgement that the conventions of women's writing were unique. Women's absence from the public forum was paralleled by their absence from the literary one as well; but one literary form was considered more suitable for women than others and that was the diary (Jelinek; Didier).

The *journal intime* emerged in early nineteenth-century France as a private mode of writing. Over the past centuries, the position of the diary, like that of letters, has shifted from their exclusion from canonic literature to their becoming a convention of its own. The “non-public, non literary nature of the ‘genuine’ diary [...] a form of writing considered appropriate for women” (Raoul 58), has become central to Canadians’ “conception of narrative of the self and therefore to our literary and cultural consciousness” (Neuman, “Life Writing” 345).

Wanda Wyatt's life was by no means that of an ordinary Island woman of her time and for this reason bears some of the elitist features that Canadian literary scholar Shirley Neuman refers to as typical of the lives that get recorded in the auto/biographical genre. Neuman goes on to warn that such records of privileged lives “leave gaps in our historical and sociocultural understanding” (338); but as the local histories have shown, ordinary people's (and in particular women's) lives did not receive attention. From this point of view, the study of a prominent Island woman from the early part of this century who has left a record of her life can serve as an enlightening point of departure for studying the lives of women who did not come from such a privileged position.

One of the shortcomings of reading a biography is that readers have little direct exposure to Wyatt's own words. Only a few passages from her volumes of diaries are available to readers in Kessler's book.

However, Deidre Kessler's publication of Wyatt's life in *A Century on Spring Street: Wanda Lefurgey Wyatt of Summerside, Prince Edward Island, 1895–1998* (1999), which is based on and includes sections from her diary, is a remarkable step forward in the writing of Island history.

Unlike the editors of the local histories, Kessler was able to build a history from one set of archives, that of a woman who lived on PEI for more than a century. Through Wyatt's autobiographical material, Kessler constructs a detailed account of a woman who in the early twentieth century endeavoured to do things previously undreamed of by Island women. Wyatt was born into a well-to-do, established Summerside family, and with her sister she became heir to the family's fortune and lifestyle—and yet, she pursued an education and became the first woman on PEI to be admitted to the study of law.

Wyatt's triumph appears in her diary on November 6, 1919: "Father had an application put thro in court to-day for my admittance as a student of law. So now I have something to work for" (198). The local paper reported the event "it is not a novelty now to read of the invasion by women of the spheres of activity which up to later years have been monopolized by the masculine sex" (199). Wyatt's pioneering into the public forum, her account of it, and the press clippings in her diary indicate an historical moment for both Wyatt and those women who would follow her. Her "invasion" of the male sphere of activity exhibits how she sought to cross the political divide and become detached from the practices "that govern the female domain from those that govern the marketplace" (Armstrong 9). Coming from a family and a community strongly rooted in commerce and trade, Wyatt and her diary can be considered to represent what Raoul (1989) refers to as the "material preservation of life." In the hundred-plus volumes of her diaries, she meticulously records everything from lists of Christmas gifts to detailed itineraries of the many trips she made.

Although Wyatt's biography is constructed from her own words, experiences and images, the biographer, like the historian/story teller, has a major role to play in the selection and contextualization of this woman into her place and time in history. Nevertheless, readers' horizons are broadened and new paths trodden when history is made and told through the life of a woman.

Personal Narratives and Historical Consciousness

Personal narratives are important resources for acquiring an historical consciousness outside the realm of the more traditional accounts of events. With the flowering of Canadian women's history in the 1980s and 1990s came the search for a history: "more reliable than the stereotypes in the written materials produced by male pundits [were] the records generated by women themselves: their actions, their words and their artefacts" (Prentice et al. 116).

Part of this national search was the retrieval of documents and manuscripts such as Susanna Moodie's *Roughing It in the Bush* (1989), which now stands as a Canadian classic among pioneer autobiographical texts. Moodie's personal genealogies have inspired other writers—Margaret Atwood and her *The Journals of Susanna Moodie* (1970) and researchers such as Helen Buss and her *Mapping Our Selves: Canadian Women's Autobiography* (1993)—to explore the questions of gender and nation through women's textual representations of themselves.

In 1889, PEI's own Lucy Maud Montgomery began her "new" diary. Almost a hundred years later, in 1985, selected entries from her journals were published for the world to read. Carol Shields refers to these journals as both an extraordinary social history and an "excavation into the mind of a woman" (18). In 1996, I found my grandmother Amy Andrew's diary, which she kept from 1910 to 1915. Montgomery and Andrew were not central to the historical events memorized by every Canadian school child, but they represent people who bravely took up the pen to tell their stories.

In her discussion of life writing, Neuman writes, "most auto/biographies still view life writing about Canadians as primarily an historical genre and so direct their attention to the life (bio) at the expense of its writing (graphie)" ("Life Writing" 361). Through the life writing of pioneer Emma Chadwich Stretch, L. M. Montgomery, Amy Andrew, Wanda Wyatt and numerous other Island women diarists, women's processes of asserting their lives/selves into their texts can be read. In the study of the unpublished diaries of Island women both the subject matter of their texts and their specific textual strategies enlighten this twenty-first-century reading of past personal narratives.

The Study of Life Writing

Retrieving a place for women in history, as Sheila Rowbotham has done in *Hidden from History: 300 Years of Women's Oppression and the Fight Against It* (1974), demands dexterity in reading and assimilating numerous types of texts—poetry, philosophy, journals, novels, and other documents—to discover a picture not previously seen. Rowbotham has done in writing what Pam Morris has suggested be done in reading: “to oppose the ideological implications of the classic plot structures” (33) and so Rowbotham has resorted to numerous texts to construct her history.

Having established that PEI women from the nineteenth and early part of the twentieth century have been hidden and misrepresented through history, it is important to turn to specific texts that can document that women were nevertheless writing, and through an examination of these texts study how women represented themselves and their surroundings. As Evelyn J. MacLeod states in her introduction to *One Woman's Charlottetown: Diaries of Margaret Gray Lord 1863, 1876, 1890* (1988), what makes such study worthwhile is not only the fact that little space has been devoted to the activities and concerns of women in Canadian history texts, documents, and newspapers, but also the discovery that women's journals are, in themselves, a rich source of information.

The published texts from and about the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries discussed above convey their perceptions of reality by locating women in the margins as the silent subject and/or exemplary object. Few women were writing for public consumption, but women were writing diaries. The diaries of two well-known Island women have been published: those of Margaret Gray Lord, *One Woman's Charlottetown: diaries of Margaret Gray Lord 1863, 1876, 1890* (1988), and Lucy Maud Montgomery, *The Selected Journals of L.M. Montgomery*, vols. 1–5 (1985, 1987, 1992, 1998, and 2004). These are the most obvious examples of a private female narrative, ones to be juxtaposed with the public narratives of the press, history books or popular culture readings.

It was, however, in the more humble and cryptic texts of ordinary diarists like my grandmother Amy Darby Tanton Andrew, whose diaries have survived by luck and the kindness of families who donated them to the public archives, that this research opens up new findings. These obscure Island women pioneered a new existence, kept farms, raised children, taught school or travelled the world while recording in their diaries. In their unpublished forms, these handwritten diaries on numerous levels reveal through complex recording strategies

representations impossible to construct on a printed page. These unpublished diaries are examined so as to indicate how women were actively engaged in the recording of their times. Island women diarists' representations of themselves and their times provide evidence of the development of a writing female self. All the writing subjects studied here assert a presence that has been constrained by other discourse types (Fairclough 39) and so through the keeping of their diaries they become the active subjects of their own discourse.

The openness and lack of prescriptive rules of the autobiographic genre entice women to write to, about and for themselves, exercise their literacy and give voice to their experience. Generally, the author is free to write when, how, and what she wishes, with the only constraints being those created and imposed by her. These women diarists often create a recording pattern of following the sequence of the events of the day, beginning with an opening about the weather and concluding with an account of the day's activity. Within such autobiographic narratives are woven stories of immigration, birth and death, travel, and living lives as women in times of personal and societal transition. Grasping their use of language and the assortment of narrative strategies they employed in their writing of these stories will be instrumental for understanding their representations. The initial readings of these texts take into consideration the subject position of the author/authority of her subject matter. In the practice of reading as a woman, there is a need to "open alternative spaces of freedom for women within the text against the often relentless logic of the story" (Morris 33).

On a grander level, these journals were women's space to open and articulate their versions and visions of nineteenth- and early twentieth-century PEI. Each diarist employed familiar themes and linguistic strategies to articulate her everyday life, resulting in the creation of original text types that appropriated texts these women were exposed to—the Bible, conduct literature, poetry, and novels. Cultural artifacts, what today are regarded as "folk art," were the necessary items of food, clothing, and implements through which women shaped the natural resources of gardens and fields, and materials imported or procured through bartering, into serviceable items for consumption or use. These artefacts were inscribed with the creator's trademark and survive today as Aunt Gertrude's pickles, Ethel's Queen Ann's lace or Lucy's rag doll, all bearing the inscription of the "author" and in their own way symbolic, yet similar relics from their era, and not unlike the diary with its linguistic inscription.

The specific discourse features within the narrative of the *journal intime*, like the texture of the lace or the fragrance of the cake, particularly in their

unpublished form, illustrate the gruelling, joyful, and uncertain circumstances of the woman behind the pen. For these reasons, the study of these texts focuses on the production of the original text and those strategies and circumstances that emerge as being instrumental in its production as for example the pen or pencil, the quality of the handwriting or gaps in the text. Two of the main discourse features, beyond those elaborated on in the general discourse analysis method (Fairclough), focused on in Lucy Maud Montgomery's and Amy Andrew's texts (McDonald-Rissanen 2002) are those outlined by Irene Gammel in *Confessional Politics Women's Sexual Self-Representations in Life Writing and Popular Writing* (1999): confessional intervention and confessional modalities. Gammel examines how women represent themselves through the discursive choices they make.

Both Montgomery and Andrew, though in very different ways, disrupt the reader with confessional interventions, Montgomery with her metaphors and descriptive passages on nature and Andrew with her cryptic text, awkward pauses and gaps. Montgomery experimented with her own poetic discourse, producing journal prose that indicates that her journal was her playground for honing her literary skills. Similarly, Andrew developed confessional modalities, or idiosyncratic discursive strategies that communicate her emotional reaction to nature.

Both Montgomery and Andrew engage in discursive strategies that have been recognized by feminist scholars as significant in understanding women's relation to language and identity. Although women were encouraged to keep a diary because it did not interfere with being a woman, it was a private endeavour and the diary was not meant for public eyes. Women's silence has often been attributed to the fact that female voices and concerns are absent from high culture (D. Cameron 4). They were nevertheless writing in more private genres, which were also somewhat marginal within the literary genre. Still the existence of a place for women like Andrew and Montgomery to write did not guarantee them immediate access to an "inner voice." For example, the reticence that typifies Andrew's text when she experiences marriage and birth is a reminder of women's alienation from the discourse of her body. The diary was that literary convention where women dared to tread, reaching out of their silence and playing with the male-dominated discourse in creative ways.⁴¹

⁴¹ MacLeod has pointed out in her introduction to Margaret Gray Lord's diaries that surviving samples of women's diaries from this time are rare, as the majority of women did not know how to write and many others did not have the time or the energy to keep records. In addition, any diaries that might have survived were often considered worthless; owners didn't think of donating them to archives.

Andrew's particular feature of withholding information about pregnancy or emotions is not read here as a technique used for aesthetic reasons, as Leona Toker has pointed out in her examination of other writers' fictional narratives, but instead it was a response to a language that had not been shaped by women's experience. The language available to Andrew was shaped by the discourses of church, conduct literature, and media. Her journal was her articulation of the cumulative effect of inherited discourse and the assertion of the merging female self.

Montgomery's reticence is more complex, as her journal entries have been edited. Examination of her five available selected journals reveals a reticence when writing in a poetic voice. Her very private encounters in nature, lavishly portrayed in her journal, did not translate into the more popular poetic forms of the early twentieth century. Instead, after her teen years Montgomery wrote her most poetic lines in her journal. The nature entries in her journal can be read as some of Canada's early modernist verse.

Both women's reticence is an important consideration for understanding their life writing in relation to language, genre, and ultimately their lives. Allowing "silences to speak," as Adrienne Rich suggests in "Taking Women Students Seriously,"

listening and watching in art and literature, in the social sciences, in all descriptions we are given of the world, for the silences, the absences, the unspoken, the encoded—for there we will find the true knowledge of women. And in breaking those silences, naming our selves, uncovering the hidden, making ourselves present, we begin to define a reality which resonates to us, which affirms our being. (245)

Montgomery's and Andrew's positions as writing subjects create representations through their choices of vocabulary, grammar, and syntactic structures of physical, social, intellectual, and emotional responses previously overlooked. These specifics of their language are the key elements for study and the means through which to read and hear their muted voices and will be adopted here for the reading other women's diaries.

Norman Fairclough (1985) argues that, by analyzing the linguistic features of a text, the relation of the individual to his or her surroundings can be explained by the experiential, relational and expressive values imbedded in the writer's choices. He sees the experiential value, "a trace of and a cue to the way in which the text producer's experience of the natural or social world is represented"; the

relational value, “a trace of and a cue to the social relationships which are enacted via the text in the discourse”; and the expressive value, “the trace of and a cue to the producer’s evaluation (in the wildest sense) of the bit of reality it relates to, ‘as means for uncovering the positions of the subjects and consequently their social identities” (Fairclough 112). Both Montgomery and Andrew, in their discursively contrasting diary texts, have provided representations of their surroundings. Often their expressive values are written into their descriptions of nature or weather, and the social locations that acted as contexts for their day-to-day lives. Through their depictions of these places, they simultaneously reveal the relationships enacted with family and community and an assessment of their physical and emotional space.

Beyond presenting women like Montgomery and Andrew and the collections of almost twenty other women diarists from mid-nineteenth- to early twentieth-century PEI as cases for redeeming women from their obscure position outside the margins of history and establishing a significant place for women and their life writing, the new insights discussed in this study will be highlighted by a discussion on women’s relationship with their natural and social space. This work goes beyond Fairclough’s more general advice to uncover the subject position in the text to a more focused analysis of the subject position in diaries written by women over a period of time, as for example Lucy Haslam Palmer’s first (1884) and last diaries (1943), as well as the Malpeque diaries (1889) from that important period when she first entered the teaching profession. My reading strategy for what are obviously disorderly or “messy texts” (Weiland 204) is based on the “tensions, contradictions and hesitations [working] back and forth” (204) in such unpublished documents. Metaphors have been instrumental for numerous researchers of life writing—map (Buss), quilt (Vilkko) and journey (Schiwy)—but here I have resisted any metaphorical framework for studying Lucy Palmer and other diarists’ texts so as to allow the diarists’ subjective nuances to emerge in their narratives. For example, Margaret Gray Lord (1845–1941)’s diaries cover an interesting period in women’s history, the transition from the Victorian to the modernist era. Her text, devoid of any particular metaphor as “engine and compass” (Rosenwald 144), reveals how she writes herself out of the dilemma of living up to Victorian ideals and how she then emerges through her text as a socially engaged modern woman.

Nature represents one significant sphere for the woman subject to work and play within, and around which she narrates her subject position. This analysis focuses not only on defining the subject, but more specifically the writing subject

and her relationship with her own discourse on her natural milieu, in addition to her domestic one. Emma Chadwich Stretch seldom writes about her natural milieu, but on Sundays when she occasionally walks to the shore or rambles in the fields, her thoughts turn more reflective than in her daily entries from within her home. Intertextually read through her journal entries from home and in nature, Emma is redefining herself as a new world subject as she writes herself in her diary/ledger from her British roots into her Canadian home.

Island women travel diarists offer an interesting opportunity to juxtapose themselves as writing subjects in both their native milieu and in an other place. The woman writing in her new social and natural situation articulates both the experiential world view of the self and its relation to those new and old locations. By contrast, when the woman is the object of newspaper discourse, she is almost exclusively presented in the domestic sphere, at the ironing board or in the nursery. When she has the opportunity in her diary to write her physical and intellectual representation, nature often strongly figures in the way the self is constituted. Montgomery sought a female voice through nature and her journey into the solitary world of her psyche. Her journal entries are read here using the phases Annis Pratt describes in her article “Surfacing and the Rebirth Journey in the Art of Margaret Atwood” (1981).⁴²

For women, nature was a force to be contended with, and for this reason a discussion of nature and women’s relationship to it represents the discourse of the self in dialogue with the world. For the analysis of this discourse, the study of transitivity choices makes it possible “to make more general statements about the way that characters view their position in the world and their relation to others” (Mills 144). Travelling women diarists (Mercy Ann Coles [1864], Violet Goldsmith [1901], Carrie Holman [1916], Vera Hyde [1929–30], and Lucy Palmer Haslam [1932]) are examples of how women’s “writing voice discovers and presents itself in ‘other’ discourses” (Watson 180). Goldsmith’s, Hyde’s, and Haslam’s trips resemble archetypal journeys as each visits a site of renewal—Goldsmith writes her journey into the discourse of her Canadian home and her ancestral England, Hyde, as a tourist in Bermuda, positions herself as an Alice

⁴² Phase 1 Splitting off from the world of the ego
 Phase 2 The green world guide or token helps her to cross the threshold
 Phase 3 Confrontation with parental figures
 Phase 4 The green world lover
 Phase 5 The shadow
 Phase 6 The final descent to the nadir
 Phase 7 Ascent and re-entry into society as known

in Wonderland, and Palmer writes herself into the modernism of the Canadian city. For Mercy Ann Coles and Carrie Holman, both recording their engagement with nationally significant endeavours, Confederation and World War I, otherness was “less a substitution, more a constitution of the autobiographical ‘I’ in texts where an external other seems to loom largest as the apparent subject of life-writing” (Korte 182). Holman and Coles write themselves into the nation/empire through texts where they engage with the assertion of national identity and survival. All five travelers explore and present their mosaic of selves in other surroundings—Holman used her poetic discourse, Palmer develops a deflated vocabulary, Hyde and Goldsmith contrast local people and customs with more familiar ones, and Coles writes the discourse of the desirable female, giving voice to yet another self.

This research has been driven by a belief that women’s life writing and other “creative forms of writing can offer special insights into human experience and shape our perception of social reality” (Morris 7). An important part of that experience for Canadian writers has been their views of nature. Women’s relationship to nature is instrumental in the formation of the “master model” (Plumwood 23), a model where there is a “feminine connectedness with and passivity towards nature [...] and complementarily one of exclusion and domination of the sphere of nature by white, largely male elite” (22–23). Examining women’s life writing gives the opportunity to explore women’s rapport with nature in their day to day lives and destabilize images linking gender and nature. Plumwood claims that “it is perilous for feminism to ignore the issue because it has an important bearing on the model of humanity into which women will be fitted and within which they will claim equality” (23).

For this reason the messy unpublished texts of ordinary Island women will be taken up and examined like rocks, objects that I have stumbled over. In the course of examining them, I stop, look, and think, why this now? In Canada great emphasis has been placed on the land and the inhabitants’ relationship to that land, and since art is one of the most illustrative sites for studying that relationship, it is imperative that readers attend to what the female writing subject has to contribute to this discussion.

May
 Jan 6th At home no company rather a
 dull day
 Mon 7th Mr Oldfield sowed 14 bushels of the
 mowing wheat on the upper land
 George harrowing and winnowing
 the barley fine day Josy went
 to the store for tobacco and
 found his boat on Costello's shore
 Kitty Shaw brought me some hop plants
 Tues 8th Sowed the oat on the upper land
 and George finished harrowing it
 and also ploughed barley patch
 Joe walked up to Hodyson in the
 evening Josy went to set potatoes
 at Mr Eachers got 2 doz eggs
 went to Oldfields for 5 bushels of oats
 Wed 9th Smith brought barrel of goods
 which came in the Isabel
 George ploughing Joe cutting potato
 sets Angus altered calf
 Thurs 10th George busy sowing manure
 set 3 bushels of small potatoes
 Kitty here cleaning Weatherby's girl
 got for tea

FIGURE 6. Emma Chadwich Stretch's Diary

CHAPTER 3

ISLAND WOMEN DIARISTS (1856–1998)

The Emerging Pioneer Subject: Entrepreneur Emma Chadwich Stretch's 1856–60 Letters and Ledger

When the barque *Isabel* set off from the English coast in early autumn 1856, her passenger list included two families bound for a new life in the British colony of Prince Edward Island (PEI) on Canada's east coast. The story of the Harris family is well documented as two of their sons gained national recognition, Critchlow for his architecture and Robert for his painting. The other family, the Stretches, went on to establish tenacious roots in PEI almost immediately after they entered Charlottetown harbour on October 11, 1856.

My interest in this story stems from the handwritten ledger of Mrs. Joseph Stretch which she started keeping three years after her arrival, during 1859–60; I stumbled upon it in the provincial archives of PEI. Emma Chadwich Stretch's ledger is about sixty pages. It began as a record of the goods and services exchanged from the Stretch household in England; the earliest entry is dated 1850 (six years before they emigrated). Among these early entries in the now-tattered book is a plea to one of their clients to settle his account, as the Stretches desperately needed the money. The account book was obviously precious to the Stretch family since they carried it with them to the new world. Through a close reading of the jottings in Stretch's shop ledger and Robert Critchlow Tuck's *The Island Harris Family* (1983), the circumstances of the Harris and Stretch families' departure from England and entry into pre-Confederation Canada emerge.

D.M.R. Bentley, in his article "Breaking the 'Cake of Custom': The Atlantic Crossing as a Rubicon for Female Emigrants to Canada," explores the processes of

migration (departure, voyage and arrival) and the literary response of women like Catharine Parr Traill and Susanna Moodie to the transatlantic voyage. Bentley suggests that such pioneer women “forged in their lives and in their writings a new role model for Canadian women in the pioneering and post pioneering period” (96). Stretch similarly deals with the consequence of migration, how she disengages with some old practices, retains others and modifies her life and that of her family to their new locale. Writing her ledger diary was her means of reassembling her life and recreating a recipe from old and new world ingredients. Her writing, like that of other emigrant women, serves as a record of her construction of her new world identity from the “cake of custom” shattered by her relocation.

Stretch’s account book is one of the oldest surviving documents written by a woman from Prince Edward Island. The daily vignettes in her diary reveal the complexity of managing a rural home and the importance of collaboration within the family unit and the community. Without Stretch’s entrepreneurial skills and her ability to record the events and transactions in Long River, the Island would have few such comprehensive accounts from the pen of a nineteenth-century pioneer woman.

Emma Chadwich Stretch’s Handwritten Ledger

At first, Stretch’s diary appears fragmented and opaque, but after multiple readings her handwriting becomes more familiar and her character oozes through her scrolling and occasionally cryptic text. Stretch’s dexterity as a shopkeeper and recorder of goods and services to and from her household predominate in her diary discourse. Take for example an entry from November 22, 1859: “Peggy here working Peter McFagan sold us two geese for a lb of tea.” This shorter-than-average entry illustrates a typical daily pattern in the diary, an exchange of labour and goods, with reference to Stretch’s currency, tea. Almost daily throughout her diary, she mentions various labourers or employees, either Peggy, Kitty or Betsy, who assisted her with the washing and cleaning and were often paid in tea. Callers like Peter McFagan and Mrs. McEachern generally came to purchase tea with their own produce, such as geese or hand-knit socks, as items of exchange.

A second entry from a few days later is somewhat more complex. More people call in to the Stretch home and various types of arrangements for payment are recorded: “on trust,” in exchange for services, or on the family account (sometimes

with a down payment). The complexity of her dealings required Stretch to keep track of the transactions: “McPhail boy came for 1 lb of tea on trust Chad went to Mrs McEwen for letters also took her 1 lb of tea McLaughlans girl got 1 lb of tea paid 2/3 on a/c got blk pkg” (November 24, 1859).

A third type of transaction does not involve currency of any material nature but is simply a gesture of good will. On Monday, November 28, 1859, Stretch’s complete entry reads, “Hector Blue brought a little pig for baby.” Apparently Grace and Hector Blue had a special relationship with the Stretch family; in August 1859 when the baby was seriously ill, Stretch records their visit and how they helped out.

Cash was obviously the desired currency, and when it arrived in the Stretch household in the form of a draft (possibly from England), Stretch was able to buy geese and rum in time for Christmas and pay off their debts to their neighbours. The day before Christmas 1859, Stretch writes, “Joe & Josy cropped the ice going to town received note from Ian Tom enclosing draft bought beef 5 geese 2 gal rum paid ‘Tho’ Dodd £3—Rankin £3 also W Dodd for things bought at Burrow’s sale £5–7–6” (December 24, 1859).

All four entries indicate how Stretch managed the business of her pioneer household in a community that could not rely on a regular flow of cash. This system is based on an agreed rate of exchange, as seen when Peter McFagan gives two geese for a pound of tea. Many other types of exchanges exist, such as Stretch’s children helping out neighbours or the lending and borrowing of farm animals and equipment. Stretch represents her family and community in her accounts primarily as being active in their farm and beyond by their bringing material wealth to the family/community in addition to sharing and exchanging the fruits of their labour.

The exchanges are not always straightforward, and Stretch’s text indicates that numerous other ways of paying and receiving payment took place. For example, on Saturday July 9, 1859, “Grace Knight brought 3 quarts of oysters and helped me to finish the cleaning.” Three days later, the record reads, “sent 5/ to Knight to pay for 2 qts of berries & 2 of rhubarb.” Then again, on July 18, the oysters are finally paid for: “Paid Grace Knight 2/3 for oysters.” The flexibility and creativity of this pioneer community surface in Stretch’s journal as she acts as the recorder and overseer of these transactions and reveals what Charlotte Perkins Gilman in her 1898 manifesto *Women and Economics* suggests, how nineteenth-century women opened up female avenues for establishing economic enterprises. Stretch’s account book is also a record of her gaining access to a

discourse of her own that hinges strongly on her economy. Her bookkeeping proved instrumental in giving her a space to take pen in hand and create her economic prose, a cryptic narrative where she strings people and events together as a way of practicing and affirming her domestic femininity.

Through immigration, Stretch had broken “the cake of custom” (Bentley) and created a new self-narrative determined by the circumstances of her new home. She exemplifies the creativity of emigrants and the “implications, for female identity and writing, of emigration to Canada in the nineteenth century” (Bentley 94). Her unpacking of her cultural baggage and reassembling of her self in a new land is portrayed in her shop-ledger diary. Like Susanna Moodie and her pioneering sister Catharine Parr Traill, Stretch and other women emigrants in their inscriptions left “a part of themselves that endures and, even as it does so, reveals something of the complex process of retention and modification, disintegration and reassembly, that must always have been an aspect of great migrations, especially those involving long journeys across oceans” (118).

The New World Subject

Stretch’s diary evolves from a record of exercising her numeracy skills as a shop keeper while still in England. Once on PEI, she begins inscribing her day-to-day activity, expanding on neighbours’ visits, farming tasks, weather conditions, and of course the trading of goods and services. She obviously was focused on her role of household manager and only mentions family when they participate in the farm work or help with household duties, or when they fall ill or move out of the circle of family or community:

Joe took Smith and sea chest also Jane Mescles [?] and Josy in the cart to town, plough went to the Smithy Sandy commenced working with us busy thrashing with Chad and fencing fine day had 1 qt of milk. (April 11, 1859)

Stretch’s accounting strategy is embedded in her entry here with lists of people performing various tasks: her husband Joe, accompanied by their child Josy, delivers people to Charlottetown; her son Chad and the new hired hand Sandy work on the farm; equipment is being repaired; and finally the results of the milk production are recorded. Her narrative illustrates economically the variety of activity surrounding her by ignoring punctuation and failing to cohesively

link events. No one event is more important than the other, only the sequence in which they occur is important. Stretch relies on this writing strategy to record what Rebecca Hogan sees as the feminine aesthetics of ordinary women's diaries in her essay "Engendered Autobiographies: The Diary as a Feminine Form" (1991). Such a horizontal, non-hierarchical flow of events as in Emma's diary is an example of the feminine form of the diary, which embodies what Virginia Woolf refers to as the "loose drifting material of life" (*Diary* 266).

The parataxical nature of Stretch's diary discourse suggests how she responded to the new circumstances of her life by describing a life rich in interaction and activity yet obviously having to manoeuvre around her limited time for recording events. This is evident not only in the variation in her handwriting, from scribbling to scrolling in style, to run-on sentences lacking in punctuation, which can initially scare off a reader in search of a coherent and readable autobiography. After multiple readings, however, the diary illustrates Stretch's creative strategies: the diary recaps the highlights of the day and creates coherence and cohesion, all within very short passages that ultimately are linked with her larger diary narrative. Her idiosyncratic inscription style (see November 24, 1859, cited above) reveals a discourse of abbreviations, "on trust," "paid 2/3," "on a/c" (account) and "blk pkg" (bulk package), that encode her tea transactions in a minimalistic and efficient manner. This bookkeeping writing technique extended to Stretch's more prosaic diary passages with shortcut references to events, as on Wednesday, January 25, 1859: "Josy took 1 1/4 tea up to Mrs McEacherns Joe cut up the pig busy rendering lard wrote to Mr Chalmer." Read in isolation, Stretch's sparse accounts of domestic matters overlap and merge with her accounting practices, making her text at times problematic to decipher, but she continues to deposit those "loose knit" details into her "hold-all" ledger.

Through multiple readings of Stretch's text, her strands of people and events weave into a tapestry of settlement. In her day-to-day entries, Stretch was obliged to discard all superfluous detail, tailoring her text to match their ascetic lifestyle, where all energy was invested in the farm and their survival. Her text demands that the reader enter the same mindset, and patiently construct the day from a series of events that, like the incremental work on a farm, may or may not immediately bear fruit in the construction of meaning in the text; or one detail might be a vital clue that confirms the cohesion of the diary's textual fragments. Stretch's telegraphic text takes on a naturalness of its own as the reader forms such connections. Eventually, threads match and the reader is able to weave,

with Stretch, a host of familiar characters and events that reassemble from day to day.

Perceiving Stretch's ledger diary as Ruthellen Josselson describes narrative in *Narrative in Ethics and Process*, as "grouping for clarity about [herself] and [her] world" (272), with all its paratactical and fragmented discourse, demands an understanding and appreciation of the potential of the diary to accept entries at any time, on any topic and often written idiosyncratically. Stretch's life in these early years of settlement in rural PEI defined all that was familiar experientially and textually to her in her ledger diary.

Stretch, after all, emerged out of mid-nineteenth-century England where, as Linda Peterson writes in *Traditions of Victorian Women's Autobiography: The Poetics and Politics of Life Writing* (1999), women seldom received the call to authorship and were advised to maintain their integrity and speak no ill (46). Stretch, liberated from the confines of British middle-class expectations could, like her Upper Canadian sisters Susanna Moodie and Catharine Parr Trail, reform the shattered "cake of custom" (Bentley 93) through her writing. The opportunity for resistance to conventional norms of writing gave birth to new variation in the autobiographic genre and a newfound agency to its writers.

Complicating her cryptic and parataxical recording practices is the fact that Stretch's diary is handwritten and unpublished. At times, her penmanship is clean and consistent, suggesting the pleasure she found in writing and creating/relating her own story. The more problematic passages to decipher seem to have been roughly and hastily penned with a dull pencil, and Stretch's exhaustion and desperation permeate her text. As important as the visuality of Emma's textual presentation is for an initial rather impressionistic reading, this together with her parataxical textuality inform the circumstances and the process of self-inscription under such trying and primitive circumstances. Kathryn Carter points out in "An Economy of Words: Emma Chadwick Stretch's Account Book Diary, 1859–60" the difficulties of navigating "the ellipses and compressions found in this form of writing"; but in working with any archival material in its original form, before printing presses have erased those individualistic marks of the author, there is an opportunity for reading these signs, too. Both text and the visual presentation of its larger context expose various forms of tension and generate opportunities for new readings. Similarly, a more descriptive analysis in the study of such life narratives should drive the reading of these unpublished manuscripts rather than any urge to measure the text by predefined and prescribed categories. Stretch's unconventional rhetorical style of favoring short

and simple syntactical patterns illustrates that this too is what being human can be like.

Stretch's Self-Narrative

Stretch's lack of emotion and her reticence about her physical state and that of her family members is obvious throughout her diary. Within her account book, her bodily references are obscured and prefaced by descriptive discourse. For example, on July 13, 1859, Stretch's entry begins with a neighbour calling in for medicine, her son Chad and husband Joe's visits to the neighbours, and finally she writes of her own misery: "Betsy returned Mrs Hodgson came to see for medicine for Mr Hodgson who had been taken ill in the night Mr Lamont called to see if all was arranged respecting row Joe & Chad walked to Blues and Hodgsons in the evening felt very poorly myself." The following day's entry replicates the same pattern of discussing others first, and then turning to herself and her physical state: "Donald here using Peter McTagary's [?] moulding plough very hot day Grace Blue brought a doz eggs and sat a hen she also got ¼ of tea paid 0/ [?] Joe went to Hodgsons who fixed to go to town with him in the morning John Shaw called felt rather poorly." Subtle references to Stretch's physical health do creep into her narrative. In these lengthy entries of July 13 and 14, 1859, she writes at the end that she was not feeling well. Her ill health was obviously wearing her down, but she only admits to it as an appendix to the account of services, goods and labour. For two consecutive days, Stretch repeats the same pattern of giving space in her diary first to others and then finally to herself and her physical state.

Shirley Neuman states that "bodies rarely figure in autobiography"; she suggests that one of the chief reasons for this effacement of bodies in autobiographies is the Platonic tradition, which "opposes the spiritual to the corporeal and then identifies the 'self' with the spiritual" ("An appearance" 291). Christian theology similarly elevates the soul over the body as does the Enlightenment with its "man" whose whole essence is to think. Within this paradigm, the tradition of autobiography was established and corporeality as spirituality's binary opposite was repressed in representation. In order for women to write autobiography, they had to transgress the cultural norms that ascribed women to the private sphere and identified them with corporeality while at the same time men were more particularly identified with soul, intellect and public space.

Stretch's positioning herself as an appendix to her own text reflects the difficulty of transgressing the place designated for women socially and textually. Her diary illustrates how she manoeuvres within the discourse of her domestic performance as part of her public sphere engagement; yet she occasionally disrupts her accounting with an inscription of her own body. Stretch's ledger diary falls between the chink of public and private discourse as a documentation of the economy she operates and a record of all other matters that occupy her everyday. She positions family members in her entries when they perform for the good of the family, and ultimately the community, and only when the rhythm of farming and daily life is disrupted by accidents or sickness does this break of routine allow her and her individual family to merit an appearance in her diary pages.

Stretch discursively represses her own body in her diary; her body is instrumental to the writing of the diary and thus self-evident. Giving her physical presence too much attention is somewhat marginal to the task at hand—keeping the books. Nevertheless, Sidonie Smith sees some kind of history of the body always inscribed in women's autobiographical texts, no matter how muted or loud (271). She observes, "autobiographical practice, then, is one of those cultural occasions when the history of the body intersects with the deployment of female subjectivity as the women writer struggles with multivalent embodiment" (271). Stretch's emigration from Victorian England into Canada forced her to rewrite the "cake of custom" recipe. For women, the Victorian diary was confined to documenting spiritual quests and travels, but in a world of pioneers who daily toiled close to the land, women's diverse performances generated other scripts that defied neater categorization of texts and bodies. The autobiographical body within women's autobiographic writing can be approached as suggested by Smith, by seeking the body's autobiographical lexicon, where the body is narratively found and how it circulates in the text, how the body is the preformative boundary between the inner and the outer, the subject and the world, and what kind of performance her body is allowed to give.

Stretch's articulation of her autobiographical body does not readily surface in her text but by its absence creates various forms of tension. On numerous Sundays, she does mention her physical and mental state: her entry of April 1, 1860, reads, "Rather a dull day no visitors felt very far from well went to bed early"; two weeks later, she writes, "Rough day ... felt very much indisposed." Sunday was the day the Stretch family and the community refrained from all but the most necessary work, and Stretch had time to stop and reflect, and to

feel the toll life was taking on her. Weather, visiting neighbours, the opportunity to read and leave home to wander outdoors (occasionally with her husband Joe) signify a break in her daily routine. On these days, Stretch's recording practices acknowledge her physical and mental state directly or occasionally even less so, as she does on November 18, 1860, when she writes simply, "alone." Sunday entries are sandwiched between entries overflowing with activity within the home and the perpetual intervention from outside, as Stretch mediates between tea purchasers with their exchanges of butter and mackerel. Her performance in the domestic sphere six days a week, when juxtaposed with her Sunday entries, suggests that her discursively invisible body awakens and reflects on itself only after the week of exertion or when in a state of collapse or the threat of such.

When compared to other diarists of the same time and place, such as Mercy Ann Coles, an urban bourgeois Island woman who focuses intently on her autobiographical body in her travel diary of 1864, with long passages about her diagnosis, treatment, and confinement, Stretch's minimalist references to seemingly serious ailments leave readers cold. Nor did other rural Island women diarists such as Amy Tanton Andrew (1881–1965) lavishly depict their bodies within their diaries. Farm wives did not focus in any great detail on life and death issues within their own personal spheres in their diaries.¹ Rural women tended to prioritize their neighbours' (or even animals') encounters with birth, sickness, death, or any misfortune rather than their own. Such personal misfortunes destabilize and threaten the farm wife/diarist's well-being and that of her family, and are generally not part of the pact of keeping the record or document of accountability.

One can deduce from farm wives' diaries that their bodies were expected to perform designated tasks of nurturing, reproduction, and all that fell in the realm of the domestic sphere while often participating in micro-enterprises. Any threat to the farm wife's role in maintaining this status quo, such as sickness or even childbirth, disrupted the rhythm of domestic life and were potential threats. As a bourgeois woman would groom her body for her male suitors' taking, the rural woman sustained her body as a resource to be mobilized when duty called. Stretch's meek utterances at the end of her daily account above were expressions of her deepest concern that her body would not endure.

Such repressed discourse is also employed by Amy Andrew, whose "sore back" and other mild references to her physical state are linguistic clues that she could

¹ See, for example, my discussion of L.M. Montgomery's and Amy Tanton Andrew's diaries in "Veils and Gaps: The Private Worlds of Amy Andrew and L.M. Montgomery, 1910–1914."

not keep up her normal pace; something was wearing her down. In Andrew's 1913 account of childbirth the wealth of emotion so often associated with today's birthing narratives is missing and her deflated entry reads, "A very dull day baby born quarter past twelve awful sick" (April 5, 1913).

Stretch's body generally "drops out" of her diary discourse, and others have a profound presence in and out of her entries as they pass through her door. Her body has its strongest presence in her entries from July 15 to August 2 when she was obviously very ill. Between her record of family members going to town, she writes: "I was taken very poorly several of the ducks got killed" (Friday, July 15, 1859). For the next two weeks, almost daily, she writes about her condition: "fine day but felt much worse" (Saturday, July 16), "felt poorly with diarrhea" (Wednesday, July 20), "still felt very poorly" (Friday, July 22), and then in a summative account of the next week she writes of how the baby becomes seriously ill: "Baby no better me worse" (Saturday, July 23-Saturday, July 30). Finally, she concludes, "Felt rather better but fear I've lost my hearing Baby no better weaned him altogether." During her illness, Stretch still carried on recording as usual but the baby's health is continually mentioned in the diary until he disappears from her entries in early September:

Bad harvest weather got our oats into barn also had the barley cut [...] school children had holidays for the harvest Pierre Costello brought two loads of mussel mud. Malcolm Shaw returned from the States Baby much better Service was held at the school by Mr Shaw, had lb 1 ½ of butter from Mrs Mc Eachern also 1lb from Grace Knight Donald came up to borrow sugar. (August 29-September 3, 1859)

Both the baby's and Stretch's bodies, generally downplayed in her diary, take on a narrative presence when they fall out of their usual state of wellness. The symbiotic rapport between the sick mother and her baby also brings them together in her text where Stretch admits she is forced to wean herself from the child.

Her diary ledger resists a more conventional linear discourse and instead provides an early example of how pioneer women write their physicality in the form of their body into their texts. "Writing with the body," suggests Susan Knutson in *Narrative in the Feminine* (2000), "might retune grammar to the frequencies of many women's lives" (4,) and as Daphne Marlatt has said, "how can the standard sentence structure of English with its linear authority, subject through verb to object, convey the wisdom of endlessly repeating and not exactly

repeated cycles her body knows? or the mutuality her body shares embracing other bodies, children, friends, animals, all those she customarily holds and is held by?” (qtd. in Knutson 47–48).

By creating and assuming the role of a PEI farm wife, Stretch similarly weans herself from the conventions of femininity she was raised on in England, and on this new soil she writes her performance of daily activity. The literacy and numeracy skills of her inherited discourse are redefined in her ledger diary using rhetorical strategies that highlight her physical and mental stamina in idiosyncratic ways. Through discursive strategies of abbreviations in business dealing, and silence and subtlety in personal matters, Stretch defines herself as a new-world subject in a world where actions speak louder than words. The autobiographic genre opens a space for the British immigrant to recreate her self through a narrative of backdoor bartering on a Canadian east coast island.

Stretch is creating within her account book a space for herself and thus expanding her discourse beyond the original pact. Helen Buss claims in “Women and the Garrison Mentality: Pioneer Women Autobiographers and their Relation to the Land” (1989) that Canadian women pioneers’ “optimism verifies the belief that survival and success here, in life as in literature, depends [...] on our ability to adapt old skills to new needs, on our desire for community and communication, and on our need to make a connection with the land by positive acts of the imagination” (133). Stretch, with her written accounts of her barter economy, maintains her family and farm through her creative diary discourse, and carries her self over the threshold to a new location of ‘self’.

Stretch's New Found Land

Families like the Stretches and Harrises were instrumental for the settlement of the Island; it was vital for Britain to have her people occupying the territory that it claimed following the eviction of the Acadians in the mid-eighteenth century. By the mid-nineteenth century, Native people had also been forced to the margins, allowing the new settlers to take over the land. The Harrises carved out an existence for themselves in Charlottetown while the Stretches headed for the nearby countryside of Long River, where they obtained land.

Stretch describes in the early pages of her diary how her husband and son began clearing the land for farming: “Joe and Chad busy hauling longers” (Monday, April 4, 1859). Her diary offers an important narrative on how settlers started

over in this new land and eventually took over the land by establishing tenacious roots to make the Island theirs. W.H. New, in “Landing: Literature, Contact and the Natural World” (1997), points out that “[t]he language of starting over [...] codes a set of ingrained attitudes [; ...] the terms by which the people who came to assume power in the country—shaping the dominant culture” (32)—transplant old world’s old language to a new locale. Stretch’s diary, her letters and historical documents illustrate the processes of starting over in the new world.

Documents written prior to Stretch’s diary can best fill the gap between the intervening years from when the Stretches and Harrises left England in 1856 to when Stretch took up writing her diary in 1859. Both Stretch and her sister-in-law, Sarah Stretch Harris, left a trail of documents for retracing their journey and settlement with their husbands, Joseph and Critchlow, and their offspring, five Stretch children and seven Harrises, as well as their tutor and his wife, employed to educate their children, and a servant. Sarah kept a diary of their journey across the Atlantic, and once landed, she carried on correspondence with family members in the old world. The only surviving letter of Emma Chadwick Stretch is published in Robert Critchlow Tuck’s *The Island Family Harris: Letters of an Immigrant Family in British North America 1856–1866* (1983), where he celebrates the historically significant Harris family. What emerge from these documents are first-hand responses from the pens of English women to their immigration to PEI.

Stretch’s letter-writing voice indicates her positive disposition, which she claims radiates throughout her family: “I quite rejoice at the exchange we have made” (qtd. in Tuck 46), she writes about leaving behind life in England for the new world. She states her, and her husband Joe’s, belief that “if a man cannot do well here he can’t do so anywhere” (qtd. in Tuck 47). Stretch’s letter reveals how her children became more “useful” by fishing and farming and a generally positive attitude radiates in her reporting to her English relatives of the family’s doings in the new world.

Stretch’s letter offers an illustration of how their response to immigration differs from that of the Harrises. In her letter of 1856, Stretch writes, “I must not forget to tell you what nice furniture my good man has manufactured for me in the shape of a grand dresser; also a Table Plate shelf and cupboard, and several useful box Ottomans. We only want a tidy bit of carpet and then I should consider myself furnished extraordinary” (qtd. in Tuck 47). This proud admission of her husband’s active role in home building illustrates how the family collectively took advantage of the local resources to define and furnish their new home. By

contrast, the Harrises carried their furnishings in the hold of the *Isabel* from their old home in England; Tuck writes, “Besides the spinet piano there was a large dining room table, a handsome Gothic chair, a two-piece chest made of mahogany with brass fittings, a mirror, an iron and brass bedstead and a large glass-fronted bookcase, as well as lesser pieces” (38). These pieces of furniture were to grace the substantial house Critchlow and Sarah Harris anticipated they would acquire after Critchlow’s launching of his career. This became increasingly problematic because of some unlisted baggage, Critchlow’s unsettled disposition. No doubt the Harris family anticipated that through migration they could improve, or at least maintain their social status and merge into the bourgeois community that was forming in Charlottetown. By contrast, it appears that the Stretches had no such illusions and opted for a rural life.

The Stretches’ attitude and actions in those early days appear as the stuff of the pioneer spirit that other Canadian pioneer writers Moodie and Traill (*The Female Emigrant’s Guide* [1854]) elaborate on extensively. Stretch’s texts offer an east coast version of a pioneering woman whose performance and definition of her rural domestic femininity is textualized in her shop ledger diary. Stretch did not have the literary background or ambitions of the Strickland sisters, but she undoubtedly wanted to exercise and preserve her literacy and writing skills by documenting her everyday. Like her Upper Canadian sisters, she was defining her English self in her Maritime milieu, and this diary would serve as her link from this primitive new environment to the old world literacy and civilization she left behind in England. Her life was a blend of old ways from their land of origin, maintaining a shop of sorts, and PEI’s new opportunities to use local resources for building their home. It appears from Stretch’s diary discourse that this was their method of survival as she discursively pieces those worlds together.

No doubt Stretch refrained from conducting business on Sunday, yet she had the urge to write: “at home, fine but dirty” (March 27, 1859). Sundays stand out in Stretch’s diary by their entries’ visual simplicity, usually a one-line statement acknowledging an existence other than her daily one, more relaxed, sometimes with church-going activity or visitors: “Mr Hodgson called also Mr Westbury” (June 26, 1859). Sometimes there were none: “Rather a dull day no visitors felt very far from well went to bed early” (April 1, 1860). On Sunday, May 6, 1860, she writes, “At home no company rather a dull day.” Her April 1, 1860, entry acknowledges the coincidence of bad weather, no social contacts and subsequently her unhealthy condition, suggesting how these indicators of well being accumulate to predispose her to illness.

Stretch's Sunday entries record those rare accounts of her going out of doors and experiencing nature:

Took baby down to the beach for a walk children had a sail in the boat H and A Blue came up to tea and Mr & Mrs Hodgson spent the evening with us (September 18, 1859)

Took a walk round the farm Joe met Oldfields and walked up to Hodgsons to tea (June 17, 1860)

Emmy went with Sarah across the river George here to tea took a walk over the farm with Joe (July 1, 1860)

Generally, it is her husband, sons and neighbours who work the land and who merit space in her entries, but on Sundays, she refrains from accounting and the natural space outside her home enters the diary. Such accounts of natural phenomena are rare in her ledger as her sphere was the domestic one and she seldom ventured far from home.

Ironically, the female immigrant persona is conventionally identified with the land (New 171), yet when reading Stretch's diary account she expresses a different rapport with nature, not that she is the land but she writes the land through her (and her family's) settlement of it. No doubt, after three years on the Island, Stretch is still somewhat estranged from her new land, and her old vocabulary of familiar words does not suffice to capture her natural milieu. She does not textually recognize herself in this new land, but through numerous textual accounts of her performances related to settling she begins to articulate an Emma Stretch of Long River. She uses her journal to speak the open-endedness of her own identity. The pages of her journal are the map of settling into her new home, and the diary's very structure accommodates Stretch's incremental day-to-day coming to terms with her integration into her new natural milieu, although she still resists closure with her former land, and thus documents an identity in progress.

As limited as her passages are when referencing her natural surroundings, Stretch creates the home from which the others depart—weathering storms, encountering the elements and returning home. Their direct experiences give her indirect access to nature. This coincides with her writing strategy, which downplays personal experiences, and it allows her to exercise her agency and account for what is going on outside the home. By managing the family chronicle,

Stretch was pioneering a diary that documents the family business of farming. Later farm wives like Amy Andrew and Lucy Haslam would engage with a similar discourse when they wrote about their lives in symbiosis with nature—observing, recording, and responding to the weather by planting and harvesting crops according to nature’s agenda and living within the rhythms of nature.

Nature appears in Stretch’s ledger either through her own experience of the elements directly or through her record of natural phenomena, such as the isolation of a winter day: “winterly day alone,” Stretch writes on April 9, 1860. A July entry reads, “got 3 quarts strawberries from little Kitty” (Saturday, July 7, 1860), acknowledging nature’s impact on her life. Working close to the land and reaping its rewards or reprimands instils in rural people their vulnerability in times of bad weather and the wish to rejoice with bountiful harvests. Stretch’s records of these ups and downs indicate the emotional ties between climate and mental and material well-being. Communally, the frolic was the celebration of the culmination of hard work and collaboration, and having achieved the reward of a good harvest. Stretch writes of numerous frolics, those times of celebration that gave farmers a time to temporarily halt the routine and rejoice, so much so that, after “Shaws had a frolic in the evening” (May 27, 1859), Sandy, the frequently mentioned hired hand, was unable to come to work the following day: “Sandy did not come Chad [... ?] boat to town Joe set Longham & other seeds in the garden” (May 28, 1859).

Stretch is as careful to articulate her personal joy and satisfaction as those other farm wives who followed her in their diary writing. Her handwriting, the cohesiveness of her text and the topic are clues that her life, for at least that day, has been eventful and happy. Nature or natural occurrences spur her to express such sentiments: “Eclipse of the sun rather cooler George finished ploughing and went down with Josy to catch oysters” (July 18, 1860). The spectacle of an eclipse prompts Stretch to indicate that one farming task is completed and George and her son Josy can take time for recreation, all expressed in her long scrolling penmanship. Nature, in spectacles big and small, gives the woman writer a point of departure for recording her stories.

Another Island diarist, Maud Jones, begins her diary by simply listing bird sightings: “First song sparrow” (April 7, 1909). In this way, she allows nature to lead her into keeping an ever-more-complex record for the next thirty years of her life. Similarly, favourable weather generated cohesiveness in Amy Andrew’s text allowing her to take agency and express her contentment: “A regular summer day cleaned Stan’s bedroom and got land ready for sweet peas” (May 8, 1912). Andrew

rejoices in filling her five-line-a-day contract in a narratively restrained voice. For rural women like Stretch, Andrew, and Jones, the experience of weather, natural phenomena, the seasons and the farming/nature rhythms enter their journal discourse by serving as an impetus to write. Through their nature-generated entries, the writers gain control of their narrative, revealing moods and the day's activities simultaneously. The culmination of events, the consequence of nature's goodness, fine weather, is to be celebrated and written down, for there would be cold, snowy, and wet days that would impede textual production. Stretch's diary is vital as an interlocutor with whom she could relate the experience of coming and settling into the new land and establishing authority as a woman.

Women's nature entries, whether they be references to the weather, changes in nature, or bird sightings, were important enough to them to be mentioned in the small amount of text each woman daily wrote; but when the whole diary entry is examined, it appears that nature gave women access to a vocabulary and the process of diary keeping that otherwise couldn't be articulated in writing. More occasional, cryptic winter entries indicate how the writer was affected by the cold and unable to write, debilitated physically and mentally. Stretch, like Andrew and Jones, suggests in her text that her survival strategy was not a taming or harnessing of nature, but instead that she and her family acknowledged that nature was all-powerful and commanded respect: "George here ½ a day shearing 4 of the sheep afternoon he went to Lamonts to load [... Lighter?] Kitty Malcolm came to borrow a cup of tea Josy went an oystering and had all his oysters stolen out of the boat, hen hatched five chickens lent Angus Charlie [their horse]" (June 4, 1860). Rural women's depictions in their diaries reflect their rapport with nature, one which resists the stereotype of the submissive, passive or receptive role. Their texts resist the tendency to directly gender nature.

Nor do rural women diarists through their actions, carving out a life off the land, occasionally harnessing nature or freely enjoying nature's bounty, indicate that they experience themselves as acted upon by some hostile other. On the contrary, their journals reveal accounts of living in peaceful coexistence with the land and the elements. Bentley in *The Gay/Grey Moose* explores ecologies and mythologies through Canadian poetry, pointing out how poems in this period transplanted ideologies in the new world. His analysis of cultural artifacts indicates art's ability to perpetuate visions of the land generally in harmony with those imported forms and techniques. The contact language of the early explorers, poets, and artists generally took ownership in metaphoric depictions derived from another place. Through time, a new art emerged that reflected more local

experience of the new land. The diaries of women like Stretch represent another genre that imports an earlier tradition, yet absorbs and reflects the local milieu, becoming a hybrid form for women writers to articulate their new selves.

Nature's debilitating aspect does not dominate either Stretch's or Andrew's texts, but their relationship to nature is articulated using linguistically complex strategies. It becomes apparent that nature influences their daily rhythms and consequently their moods, feelings and eventually their livelihood. When all goes well and the farming rituals fall into their seasonal rhythms, all is well, as when Stretch writes, "George hauling manure set 3 bushels Swinbul & Jennys potatoes lent Angus Charlie for ½ day who killed the heifer calf for us Kitty here cleaning lighted several fires on the hill" (May 12, 1860). By contrast, Stretch's narrative indicates that the land and the community of others were key to their survival in this new land. Harnessing nature—clearing the land, planting crops and harvesting them—became the primary issues embedded around the exchanges of goods in Stretch's diary entries: "Sandy & Joe hauling longers from the upper woods Grace Blue here let her have ½ lb of tea took fat so to make soap for me" (April 18, 1859).

The focus of Stretch's diary discourse is day-to-day commodity-based exchanges. When people enter Stretch's diary, their interaction is generally combined with an exchange of goods or services, suggesting Stretch's preoccupation with the whole community collaborating in sharing produce, skills, and medicine while working the land: "Josy and his Papa got a basketful of smelts out of creek, Malcolm Shaw had a ploughing frolick George took our horses to it Kitty here cleaning felt very poorly al day" (May 2, 1860). She admits that nature occasionally gives more freely and the children bring home mackerel or oysters from the nearby waters, but as a rule the meat and vegetables are the results of their labour in nature, or the exchange of labour or goods with others.

Pioneering the Diary

Over time, Stretch expanded the original ledger/diary contract to produce a document more typical of the *journal intime*. The new autobiographical act came out of her transition to a new world. Pushed by their desperate situation in England and the pull for a fresh start in the British colony, Stretch and her family became pioneers. Her daily re-creation of herself in this new world was

fueled by her literacy and the conventions of, as well as her access to, her diary—her link to the old world and her old self in a genre acknowledged as feminine. From day to day, she acts out her femininity in the rural setting as mother, wife, manager of her barter economy and coordinator of goods and services around the running of her household in series of performative acts. She records what a woman was expected to do and in the process defining herself as the female narrative subject.

The new land was the vehicle through which Stretch and her family would survive and flourish, but for Stretch, the land was her meaningful other and the location for defining her femininity. Her sense of self in Long River would be an extension of her English self and her reconstruction of herself as the autobiographical subject would take on board the spatial dimensions of her everyday existence—weather, animals, crops, and farming practices. The landscape was the new cultural context for practices of mothering and domesticity Stretch had already practiced in England.

The urge to articulate herself in writing would necessitate creating a new script embodying strategies that would allow her to enter in and out of the transcription of her everyday, and thus her economic prose was born. Her economic prose mirrored the life of fragmented and unfinished processes and the ongoing formation of the woman immigrant, to be constantly ready for what life would cast her way in terms of weather, disaster or death.

Stretch's is part of the colonial migration of the middle class to British North America for the purpose of spreading British culture and values. Her diary is her documentation of an immigrant's new start, "which implies several kinds of premise—renewal, repetition, re-enactment, reconstitution" (New 23). She recognized that language and her own literariness was her umbilical cord from mother England to the PEI frontier, one that would never be severed but modified and taken up by her children as she mothered their language development within her diary. Passing on her literary heritage to her offspring was an obvious offshoot of her diary and her correspondence. Her daughter Emmeline's draft of a letter to be sent to her godmother/aunt in England appears in the first page of Stretch's diary. She begins, "Mamma says you would like to get a little letter from your goddaughter so I will try and write the nicest I can to please you" (April 28, 1860).

Stretch's only letter is reproduced in Tuck's *The Island Family Harris* and is prefaced by one written by her son Chadwick to his grandmother. For a young boy, his language is sophisticated and poetic. In this letter of October 1856, he

writes, “I am sure you will be pleased to hear that we are all got safe here after having all braved the perils of the deep with extraordinary fortitude” (qtd. in Tuck 46). John Chadwick Stretch (1841–1924) also used the early pages of his mother’s ledger diary to practice his penmanship as his attempts at writing his signature appear on the bottom part of an 1850 account. “Chad,” as his mother refers to him in her diary, returned to fill the empty ledger pages with his poetry. Identical handwriting can be found in his three diaries from 1884, 1886, and 1889.² His mother’s ledger/diary thus also engaged her children Chad and Emmy in the process of writing, thereby mothering their language and emphasizing the fundamental value of writing oneself into life.

Together, Stretch’s diary and the literariness she cultivated illustrate

a deep and abiding attachment to relationships, both those severed by the move to Canada and those that facilitate entry into the new land, a desire to represent the experience of the new land in accuracy and detail [...] and a keen and growing interest [...] in showing the unanticipated personal changes in abilities and consciousness that the new world has afforded. (Buss, *Mapping* 38)

Representing the experience of the new land figures strongly in Stretch’s diary and is an integral part of her developing textual identity. In *Mapping the Private Geography: Autobiography, Identity, and America* (2000), Gerri Reaves studies the autobiographies of Gertrude Stein, Sam Shephard, Lillian Hellmas, and Joan Didion, and demonstrates how, in the textual construction of the self, place has special significance. For Stretch, the narrative of the land was her strategy for survival, which can also be read as her symbolic confrontation with the new world. Through her diary, she defies literary conventions of grammar and discursively defines herself through the open-ended passages of her fragmented performances.

In the 1960s, when critical attention to Canadian literature was increasing, it was Northrop Frye’s idea of the “garrison mentality” that captured the minds of scholars.³ During the past twenty years, critics have sought new insights that would not only include women’s voices but would also look beyond the

² These are held in the Stretch fonds at the Public Archives of Prince Edward Island.

³ Frye describes the development of the garrison mentality: “Small and isolated communities surrounded with a physical or psychological ‘frontier’ separated from one another and from their American and British cultural sources: communities that provide all that their members have in the way of distinctively human values, and that are compelled to feel a great respect for the law and order that holds them together, yet confronted with a huge, unthinking,

established canon to archival material and autobiography, what Buss refers to as “going back to the site” of Canadian tradition to expand the perimeters and “even change our definition of territory” (Buss, *Mapping* 126). According to Buss, “imaginative identification of self-development with the experience of the land is always present in Canadian women’s autobiographical writing throughout the nineteenth century and into our own” (131).

Stretch’s narrative visually and textually falls out of the margins of the tidy texts literary scholars generally focus on, but in the pursuit of the female narrative, such texts illustrate that their story is different and therefore written and presented in its own individualistic way. Stretch gives no indication of “being swallowed up by an alien continent” (Frye 824); rather, she is part of a tradition of early Canadian women writers who indicate that “being enclosed by the land is a somewhat more positive experience, one which demands metaphors of a more erotic and maternal nature” (Buss 133).

In contrast to the farm wives, aspiring writer Lucy Maud Montgomery (1874–1942) used her diary to hone her literary skills and would use such incidents as her personal encounters with births or deaths as an opportunity for philosophical musing. Her diary was indeed the “capacious hold all,” in Virginia Woolf’s term (qtd. in Raoul 62) for such matter, which eventually she transformed into prose. For the less literarily inclined like Stretch and Andrew, there was hardly time to retread the daily gamut of events let alone the emotions associated with them, even if they had the words.

Migration of Literary Genres

Within the migration of people and species, the migration of literary genres becomes an important consideration. How Stretch and other women kept their diaries gives some indication of how life writing was transplanted into North America. Buss describes how Susanna Moodie’s narrative of her trip through the cold and stormy terrain of Ontario to help a neighbour in need can be read as a woman’s adaptation of the “mythic narrative” within the North American context. Read intertextually with Moodie’s autobiographical texts, her diary and letters, this elaboration of her journey creates new meaning when the narrative is

menacing, and formidable physical setting—such communities are bound to develop what we may provisionally call a garrison mentality” (830).

taken up by a middle-class British emigrant woman struggling with her isolated sisters in the backwoods of a hostile land.

Stretch's narrative similarly depicts the hostilities she surmounts. Her textual solutions are far less verbose than those of her Upper Canadian sisters but are nevertheless a meaningful illustration exercising her literacy, albeit in a cryptic, minimalistic style. She further illustrates her intellectual needs when, amidst the hustle and bustle of the October 1860 autumn harvest, she interjects that she will subscribe to a publication: "George here killed pig and salted it wet day hauled loads of mussel mud onto the land. Busy cleaning & commenced subscribing to the Protestant newspaper. Mr Knight's brother called" (Saturday, October 6, 1860).

Such texts as Stretch's expand on D.M.R. Bentley's eco-analysis thesis in *The Gay/Gray Moose*, to include women's response to landscape, people, flora and fauna. According to Bentley's theory of cultural ecology, poems could be added to the migration of peoples and plants, which have undergone historical processes to adapt to their new time and space. Diaries such as Stretch's undergo such a migration; as cultural artifacts, they reveal the mind that generated them, and they show how that mind conceives the relationship between itself and its environment. What Stretch has left us are stories not easily accessed. Like the finds of an archeological dig, they are neither touched by editors or printing presses, nor enclosed within glossy covers. Instead, they are a woman's construction of her life, and by their visual presentation alone they represent life writing as art. Delving into the textuality of the unpublished diary brings us closer to how the writer worked her way into this new land by writing, working the land, and inscribing a self in her ongoing diary dialogue.

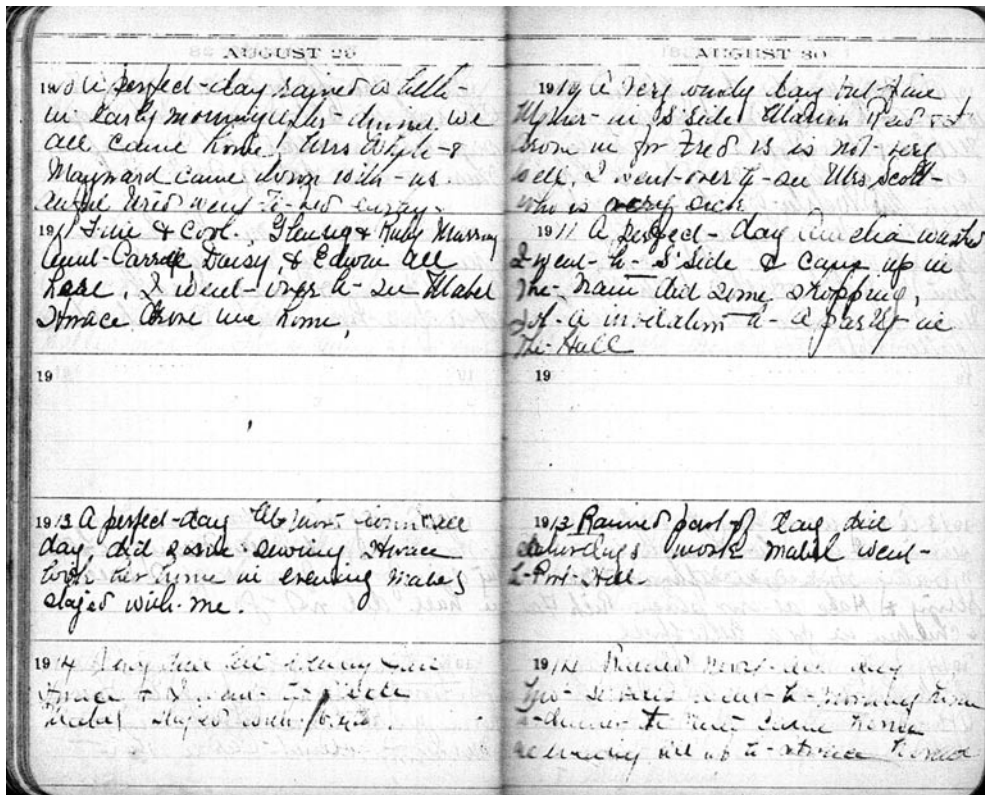


FIGURE 7. Amy Darby Tanton Andrew's 1910–15 Diary

A Rural Woman's Perceptions of Home and Beyond: Farm Wife Amy Darby Tanton Andrew's "A Line a Day," 1910–14

Amy Tanton⁴ was in her late twenties when she started to keep her diary, "A Line a Day." She was living at home with her mother, father, brothers (Stan and Fred), and her sister (Marion) on their farm in St. Eleanors, a small community a few miles from a town called Summerside. A large network of relatives and friends came into their lives on a daily basis, and the family travelled almost daily to the nearby town to shop and visit friends and relatives. In addition to farming, they collected taxes and were active in the church and the community.

⁴ Amy Tanton Andrew was married while still writing in this diary; I will refer to her by her married name, Andrew, throughout most of this discussion.

Amy Tanton commences each day in her *journal intime* as if greeting a friend, with a commentary on the weather followed by an account of the events of her day. The writer's encounter with her open page parallels that of meeting a companion who is formally greeted and then told the news and events of the past day. As the friendship between the two deepens, their communication patterns develop so that words and their sequencing in various structures signal a battery of empathetic sentiments between the two. To the reader and researcher, their relationship can only be explored by studying the communication between the scribe and the diary.

Reading the Visual/Textual Aspects in "A Line a Day"

Inside the black leather cover, Amy Tanton has written her name three times on the pale blue page. "Amy Tanton," almost in the same way I remember her writing it on my birthday cards when she was in her seventies and eighties; "Amy Tanton, St Eleanor's," suggesting a perfected penmanship with the constraint and control of a woman in mid-life; and then her final, scrolling "Amy Tanton St. Eleanors," which carries a strong resemblance to her first lines on January 1, 1910, a young woman in her prime, full of happiness and joy when she wrote, "a beautiful day."

On the next page, the red and black text reads, "Ward's 'A Line A Day' Book, A Condensed Comparative Record for Five Years 'Nulla dies sine linea' (no day without a line)." The next page, called the "Prefatory," provides guidance for keeping the diary: "jot down a line or two most worthy of remembrance [...] a record of events, incidents, joys, sorrows, successes, failures, things accomplished, things attempted." This Amy Tanton Andrew did for the next five years (1910–14), religiously, except for a four-month period in 1912. The small black book with the golden text on its cover is the text Andrew inscribed and left intact as it now is. Neither Andrew nor any editor rewrote or edited what she wrote, and in this way it is a complete and authentic document.

The problematics of reading this text present themselves on the first page, January 1, 1910, 1911, 1912, 1913, and 1914, with each day of each year allotted 5 lines on the one page. Initially there appear to be two main strategies, either to read from day to day, through one year at a time, a horizontal or chronological reading, or to read one day over a period of five years, a vertical or thematic/annual reading. Both strategies are used in this study, the first to get an overview of the people and events in Andrew's life and to become familiarized with her

writing style. A thematic reading enables the reader to understand the seasonal rituals and rhythms of her life as well as the development of specific events.

The book itself places limitations on the recording of events, in its limited space, five lines a day, and in the fact that the introduction stipulates that it be written daily rather than when the urge takes one. Andrew plays within these constraints. Her lines occasionally cannot be contained in the space allotted for that day; her text runs outside the borders of the day, whereas at other times she appears to be hardly able to scribble a word. The yellowing page, ink absent, arrests the reader entirely, and in this way Andrew's discourse, or lack of discourse, has raised questions in the minds of her reader: why this now?

Because Andrew's "A Line a Day" diary is an authentic document and has not been edited, copied or published, several features make the reading somewhat arduous. In this reading and transcription of Andrew's diary, her own words and structures are adhered to, despite the fact that words can be wrongly spelled (e.g., "hear" for "here" [January 11, 1910]) and no clear punctuation is used, causing one idea or sentence to run into another (e.g., "Still blowing & drifting roads awful bad we could not go to church" [January 11, 1914]). Andrew's diary in its original form has given the opportunity for exploring some of the features of her *journal intime* discourse that are lost in the process of editing and publication. For example, gaps in the text, like silence in verbal communication, raise questions as to why the narrator disrupts her narrative and withholds information. The reader is unsettled by the disruptions in women's confessional framework, which Gammel refers to as the author's confessional intervention. Gammel uses the concept of confessional intervention for discussing women's engagement with the confessional process. Confessional interventions signal "women's abilities to disrupt confessional frames and unsettle the confessional reader's expectations" (8).

Another of the visual aspects of Amy's diary is her handwriting, both the calligraphy and the orthography. The free-flowing handwriting of her early entries, during 1910–12, when she wrote out the established routines in the security of her family home, contrast with the cryptic text of her days full of responsibility and stress. From the period 1912–14, Amy and her young family were occasionally facing the impending insecurities of sickness, weather, and making ends meet. The contrast in her styles of handwriting is best exemplified by a vertical reading of the text. Not only are there more gaps and less text in the lower section of each page, but also the handwriting is often constrained and the syntax fragmented. This feature indicates Amy's power and powerlessness,

at various times of her life, to manoeuvre within her text, what Gammel refers to as confessional modalities. According to Gammel, confessional modalities “serve to investigate the power and limits of women’s ability to maneuver and shift positions within the frame of institutionalized confessional politics” (8). Montgomery’s confessional modalities appear as her metaphors and symbols in her journals, means for empowering her to articulate that which could not readily be admitted, her profound engagement with nature.

There are other features that draw the reader’s attention to the text, such as when the entry is suddenly written in pencil rather than ink. Until the time she and her husband appeared out, a few days after their marriage, Amy Tanton Andrew’s entries are written with a fountain pen. When she returns to her diary after a month’s silence, with a report of the Duke and Duchess of Connaught’s visit, the entries are kept in pencil. Another period of silence is followed, three months later, with an entry in pencil on November 4, 1912:

A perfect day Started the
turnips, washed wall &
called on Mrs. Brown, Mrs. Richardson
Mrs. Compton and Fanny awful
cold.

Amy Tanton Andrew rejoined the sphere of married women as Mrs. Horace Andrew, managing her own household, but she nevertheless remained strongly linked to her former home, family, and friends. She had moved into new circumstances and the gaps and the use of a pencil illustrate her inability to resume writing in her diary as before. She was a new person in a new setting, having to find herself again and not always having the words or the instrument to manoeuvre in her diary. Obviously, the new family’s economic situation, doubled with the impending World War I, threw the young woman into a doubly vulnerable economic situation.

Amy Tanton Andrew’s Natural World Discourse

The overall pattern of the entries can be described as an opening declaration of the weather conditions, followed by a report of the events of the day, with an occasional closing. Beyond the neat structure of the page and entries, Andrew’s language—the vocabulary, grammar, and syntax of her minimalistic discourse—

reveals how she positions herself in her natural, social, and familial milieu, what Fairclough refers to as the experiential, relational, and expressive values in texts. Amy Tanton Andrew through her linguistic choices indicates how she positions herself in this rural Island setting.

Taking Fairclough's experiential, relational, and expressive values as a guide (rather than as a blueprint) to understanding Andrew's text, together they illustrate the relationship of the woman to her world. She generally opens by describing the day in terms of weather: "very warm all day very heavy shower in evening" (July 13, 1910), or, four years later on the same day, "fine but cold." The only lines recorded on October 13, 1913, are "poured rain all day." Not a day goes by in her diary that she does not refer to the weather in the opening; sometimes, in the body of the entry, the weather is also linked with the day's activities. Through the weather and the specific lexical items and syntax of the phrase, Andrew's experience of her natural world opens the daily entry and often resonates throughout. Her diction patterns suggest that a perfect day could be warm or cold, depending on what was appropriate for the season. December 8, 1914, is described as "Cold and blowing [space] churned [end of entry]," but in other entries when she writes about how the wind blew, the absence of positive adjectives like "perfect," "beautiful" or "fine" suggests that she considers it a less agreeable day: "a very cold day & blowing a hurricane." When the weather is disagreeable, she refrains from using a negative attribute and reserves attributes for the weather she appreciates. Her text implies that a cold north wind is not a good day; a fine day that is awful cold, is one that is clear and quite cold in Island English ("awful" is not necessarily a negative intensifier in the provincial use of the term). Andrew reports the weather and refrains from directly giving an expressive value judgement. Her seemingly complex strategy as a text producer expresses a neutral stand with the absence of positive and negative judgements, suggesting the stance farmers must take towards the climate. They are forced to live and act in accordance with the weather. PEI was primarily an agrarian society at this time, so the weather determined the day's agenda and, at the end of the season, the more or less bountiful harvest and ultimately the quality of life.

Lucy Maud Montgomery also often begins with a reference to the weather: her entry of September 11, 1910, begins, "To-day was very beautiful. We had service in the morning" (*SJ* 2: 2). Contemporary diarist Wanda Wyatt (1895-1998) begins with a similar theme, as in the entry of February 23, 1912: "Very windy and rather cold [...] Had supper early—" (qtd. in Kessler 102). On those

same days, Andrew wrote, “A perfect day very warm, went to church” (September 11, 1910), and “Cold & blowing a hurricane” (February 23, 1912) respectively. Montgomery, unlike Andrew, attached emotional values to a bad day: “Yesterday was Christmas—a very dreary day. It rained heavily from dawn to dark” (*SJ* 2: 34). Andrew denies herself the expression of negative feelings or unpleasant emotions, unlike Montgomery. Andrew’s life is more dependent on nature for her family’s sustenance, whereas Montgomery, who also lives in a rural community, is not involved in farming and less dependent on the weather for her livelihood. Instead, nature and its manifestations for Montgomery was more a determiner of mood, an object for reflection.

Within the farming families, weather more directly influenced people’s work and social agenda, and subsequently their health and spirit. Harriet Bradshaw Dickieson’s record of events in rural PEI was hastily scribbled on a few pages within her husband’s 196-page diary from the period 1909–15. Here, she indicates a rush of activity accelerated by the good weather:

a lovely day Mrs Blanchard was here to dinner she started to pick the potatoes over at Melville’s Gordon [?] was here to dinner he brought Harry down to Mr Hatfield Kennedy bought him for Hatfield Richie started to haul manure at Melvilles. (March 16, 1914)

The next day was another matter, described in the diary as “a foggy morning Arthur and Ruth is going to town if it clears off” (March 17, 1914). Her text comes to a halt; the fog has stifled the activity and she becomes tentative. The next day, the weather co-operates and once again the farm routines continue: “a lovely morning Alden and Richie hauling manure Arthur & Ruth went to town yesterday roads pretty soft” (March 18, 1914).

Almost a half century earlier, in 1863, Margaret Gray Lord (1845–1941), living in the Island’s capital city Charlottetown, began her diary in a somewhat similar way:

Fine bright day, I went over at twelve to the Peters—had a very little German & then Carry & I walked to Helen’s & had luncheon there, they left me at my singing & we all went together to the E. Church Sunday school tea party. After that we had tea at Wm. Bayfields & walked home at nine— [?] came in for us & Bob & Ned walked out with us Matilda & Charlotte Cambridge had tea there too & we had a little singing. Papa very poorly tonight. (December 23, 1863)

Margaret Gray at this time was a young Victorian lady who was educated and had been brought up to respect the traditions and privileges of her class. According to Evelyn J. MacLeod, the editor of Margaret Gray Lord's diaries, diary keeping and letter writing were fashionable pastimes for upper-class Victorian women. The conventions of keeping this diary were undoubtedly passed on to women like Amy Darby Tanton Andrew and Harriet Bradshaw Dickenson. Writing as they did from their rural location, the elements took on other forms of significance. Rather than describing the weather at the beginning of entries as Gray does—"fine bright day" (December 23, 1863) or "dull snowy day" (December 27, 1863)—with little connection between the weather and the events of the day, Andrew's and Dickieson's rural versions of the weather are indicators of the day's rhythm and the functioning of the farm.

Through the subtle nuances of weather discourse, these women scrolled their responses to their natural milieu. Andrew's confessional modalities of gaps, her colourless lexical choices, or topic shifts, are found in the following entries describing the harsh weather. After a succession of days of bad weather in November 1914, she wrote on each of those days a limited amount of text:

A regular snow storm got
storm doors on (November 18, 1914)

Still storming banking
house awful cold (November 19, 1914)

Rain & sleet—. churned (November 20, 1914)

Not only are the gaps on the page increasing with each day's worsening weather, but also the cohesion between the weather and its consequences changes. On the 18th, the use of "got" creates a connection of agency between the storm, and the storm windows being put on. The following day, the cohesion is further disrupted by the absence of a link between the causal agent—the storm—and the fact that the house should be banked with straw to be kept warm. With each day of threatening weather, her syntax is reduced so that on the third day she scribes word-&-word-gap-word: "Rain & sleet [space] churned." She could hardly have said less. Her text was limited as though she herself was left paralyzed by the cold and unable to write more than how they were trying to cope, and keep the house warm, and yet fulfil her commitment to "jot a line."

The cumulative effect of Andrew's choice of words and their sequence and the processes within her text, when more closely examined, reflect how she responds to nature. The weather—as storm, storming, rain and sleet—creates the conditions that force Andrew and her family to act—to put the storm windows on and bank the house—and then the weather allows her to resume her normal duties, such as churning. The lexical items, the weather and the activities associated with hard weather, are the processes, and the actors are those responding and caught up in the weather. Her diary entry does not mention the actors, suggesting that characters are self-evident and their response to the situation which repeats itself year after year is predictable. Nature is all-powerful and the actors operate within the dictates of nature; they do not attempt to harness or control nature. By their absence in the text, Andrew has made herself and her family invisible. These entries reflect the most dramatic responses to nature: Andrew could not freely choose what to do on these days as she did on a daily basis when she sewed or visited. On these days her actions were determined by nature.

Other women diarists like Montgomery write about how they were overcome by the powers of nature. Nature was the tormentor of Montgomery's psyche and the site for philosophical meanderings; but for Andrew, nature brought concrete consequences and demands to reorient herself on a more concrete level by, for instance, banking the house so as to insulate it from the cold. In both cases, the diarist is acted upon by nature. These processes can be compared as M. A. K. Halliday and Ruqaiya Hasan do, making a distinction between material and mental processes in articulating the orientation of the individual to an event, whether she is an active participant or a passive recipient. Montgomery comes across as fluctuating between these two roles while Andrew is primarily the active, fighting, and sometimes automatic in her seasonally appropriate response to nature.

When the weather turns milder, Andrew resumes her domestic chores with a sense of relief, indicating that there is more to life than fighting the elements. Throughout most of her entries, she is actively experiencing the weather; her mood and text flow with its variations. The weather and the seasons influence what jobs are done, and she derives a sense of satisfaction and great delight from these routines. Compared to her cryptic winter text above, Andrew's spring text covers the five lines with a considerably more cohesive text. Weather is described in complete phrases, conjunctions link phrases, and punctuation is used:

A regular summer day cleaned
 Stan's bedroom and got land ready
 for sweet peas. Went down to Grand-
 fathers in evening. Called in Eliza
 Dunn Horace hear to. (May 8, 1912)

Andrew resorts to textual devices that, when combined with her lexical choices, such as regular (=proper), sweet peas, and reference to numerous people, create a feeling of control over her life and a sense of contentment with it. Such fluctuations in her entries alert and unsettle the reader (confessional intervention) until it becomes clear that these are her indirect way of communicating the events that make up her day-to-day existence, and her commentary on those events. Over the five years, no matter what the day or the events it brought forth, the weather came first in the diary. The weather and the seasons provide the setting for the events of the day, whether it be fine weather and the spring cleaning, a bad harvest and her dismay about a poor crop of potatoes, or the return of spring and the pleasure she conveys from her first bouquet of mayflowers.

Montgomery did the same in her autobiography, *The Alpine Path*, where she gives the impression that there were no obstacles too great for her to overcome on the road to success. In her journal, in contrast, she writes about the particulars of the process, of the mental anguish of the rejection of her early manuscripts, and the eventual struggles with her publishers. Andrew refrains from fretting over herself, and instead resorts to an attitude of spunkish perseverance, having faith, and being optimistic. Thinking or behaving otherwise could bring about devastation. Both women are suggesting that their life writings were a means through which they talked themselves through their lives, encouraging the self as a means of survival. Their diaries and journals became the internal dialogue documenting the struggles in their building of character and a fine location to return to in order to gaze upon themselves, a site for self-reflexive textuality.

Andrew's Discourse of Her Physical Self

Andrew's writing strategy concerning the weather is not one of binary opposites, of a good or bad day, but one that uses positive attributes and then a series of other strategies to (almost) refrain from saying the inevitable negative comment. She similarly avoids dwelling on the negative in writing about her body. Three obvious ways in which she avoids negative expression in relation to her physical

state are, first, to resort to minus discourse or gaps, that is, not mention the issue at all; second, to make a topic shift, such as she does on her visit to the dentist when she talks about the baby; or third, to resort to a rather colourless lexical choice, such as she does with the word “sick,” to refer to the labour she endured in childbirth.

Beyond the opening and in the body of her diary entries, it is evident that Andrew often refrains from expressing or reflecting on her own illness:

Fine baby & I spent the day
in S’Side Mr Andrew drove me
in and came after me got seven
teeth filled baby good (June 9, 1913).

Even though she is in pain from her visit to the dentist, her diary entry focuses on the baby rather than reflecting on her own state. Why did she want to dwell on the miseries of life, weather or suffering, when she could divert her attention to something more positive, or say nothing at all?

Andrew did not have the discursive options Montgomery had. Montgomery was, from an early age, exposed to a variety of discourses and was acutely aware of language, as from early on she aspired to become a writer. In 1913, Andrew was a new mother, having to travel to town with both her baby and her father-in-law. She didn’t have the personal space to move in, as she had earlier, nor did she have the language to reflect on her own painful state. She was in her father-in-law’s wagon with her child in her lap, maintaining her position and her responsibilities while having to attend to her own health. Her private space had diminished so that her diary was one of the few sites for privately assembling her life, but even there her commentary is sparse.

Andrew’s plight resembles that of pioneer Susanna Moodie and is read here as Buss reads Moodie’s memoirs *Roughing It in the Bush; or Life in Canada*. In this, Moodie’s more public text, there is no indication of a suffering woman, but only through her private documentation in her letters is one able to decode her message, one of an anguished woman alone in the wilderness. As Buss writes, “To restore that voice, the subjectivity of the suffering, loving body of Susanna Moodie, it is necessary to undertake the kind of reading Miller advises, an intertextual reading of autobiography and fiction” (*Mapping* 92). When reading Andrew’s text, there is no supplementary text from which to read another version of her life. Instead, sections of her text are read intertextually and questions

raised at even the slightest hint of diversion from what the reader would assume could be written or focused on.

Andrew lacked a vocabulary for directly expressing negative matters. She simply mentions the fact that she had a headache or is not feeling well. A few hours after her first child is born, she writes that she is “awful sick.” Her restrictive vocabulary when referring to her own state of health, remains throughout her diary rather colourless, as though her own suffering is not to be dwelt upon, or as if no register exists for the language of her body. Like the bad weather and the visit to the dentist, she does not write further about it but instead changes the topic.

The entry from the day on which she gives birth to her first child exemplifies her writing strategy: to simply and indirectly mention her own misery in a lexically colourless manner, “sick.” She immediately changes the topic by moving on to mention her mother-in-law’s return home after obviously assisting in the delivery. In addition to the implied self and the baby, the other people in the entry, Mrs. Andrew, Mabel, her husband Horace and the doctor, are the actors in the drama:

A very dull day baby born
 quarter past twelve awful sick
 Mrs. Andrew went home & Mabel
 came down to stay. Horace took
 Dr. home. (April 5, 1913)

In contrast with the advertisements in the local paper attesting to the fact that motherhood brings happiness, there is little direct reference to this fact in rural women’s diaries. Both preceding the actual birth and immediately following it, the diary indicates that Andrew is not her usual self. Her text contains more references to her physical state, “a awful sore back” (March 27, 1913) and the fact that she “took sick” after she got home the day before the birth (April 4, 1913); she also stays closer to home on the days preceding the birth. Following the birth, the days are filled with accounts of numerous visitors, after the fact that she reported the weather or road conditions. There is only the occasional mention of her mental or physical state:

snowed & roads very bad
 nothing happened but be in bed
 & [?] legs very week (July 7, 1913)

Still snowing & dirty—
Villers Carr a son I feel like
helping some poor soul, nothing
to eat but soda [?] & water. (April 8, 1913)

Ten days after the baby is born, Andrew mentions her child for the first time:

A perfect day got up for the
first—put the clothes out—Mrs
Richardson went over to see Leo
baby weight—nine lbs. (April 15, 1913)

Similarly, in Harriet Bradshaw Dickieson's diary we read of a woman attending another woman's childbirth: "A fine day saturday Cyrus came after me to go up about six o'clock Nettie pretty sick but Drs there the baby was born about six in the evening" (April 18, 1914). For the woman giving birth and those attending her, the commentary on pregnancy and giving birth is limited and absent of the emotion often played up in advertisements on the female function, motherhood, and happy homes in the press of the time. By comparison, the 1914 birth of a foal is anticipated and frequently mentioned in Dickieson's diary. She first notes her observations on April 10: "watching Bess she has no foal yet." Two days later, she states, "Bess has not new foal," and then three days later repeats, "Bess has not her foal yet." Finally, on April 16, Dickieson writes, "Bess foaled last night about two o'clock."

Giving birth was a real risk for a women and her child at the beginning of the twentieth century. Andrew, while confined following her own child's birth, mentions, "Mrs White's baby died" (April 9, 1913), and then records the funeral two days later: "Mr White's baby burried Horace went to funeral." Death was never far off and life could be threatened at any time. Rural women at the turn of the century silently witnessed their own and their neighbours' struggles with coming to terms with the inevitability of death's intervention. The farm animals were important for the welfare of the farm, but anticipation of their birth and the sadness of their death is charged with emotion seldom recorded when a similar fate occurs among humans.

For an urban woman, as Montgomery was when she gave birth for the first time in July 1912, living in Central Ontario, the situation was somewhat different. Like the account of her wedding, she wrote about her "confinement" months later, on September 22. In that entry, she attests to the fact that she had suffered

more pain with toothache than she did in labour. It is her fears for her own and her child's survival that haunt her most:

In the dead, dim hours of night fears and gloomy dreads came to me. I put them resolutely away, but always they lurked in the background of my mind. Would I escape with my life? [...] These and a score of other fears haunted me. And not the least dreadful among them was the quiet, persistent, secret dread that I would not love my child when it came. (SJ 2: 99)

Montgomery's account, in retrospect, irons out the details and narrates a story similar to the *Alpine Path* version of her life, an account of events that have been selected and reflected upon and considered as a more conscientious account of her life and times. Nevertheless, her analysis of her first child's birth reiterates belief in the power of mind over body:

A few years ago I read Hudson's "Law of Psychic Phenomena". Ever since I have had a strong belief in the power which the subconscious mind can exert over physical functions. Every night, as I was dropping off to sleep, and frequently through the day I repeated over and over the command to my subconscious mind Make my child strong and healthy in mind and body and make his birth safe and painless for me. (SJ 2: 101)

With the distance of time, Montgomery puts together a story that demonstrates how an early twentieth-century urban woman could take on board medical and psychological teachings, in the process of becoming a mother. For rural women like Andrew, the day was prefaced with a series of physical symptoms and social events that subtly hinted that new life would enter her life. Family and friends assisted and witnessed this event, and gradually the community came forth to greet its new member: her diary entry positions the event in terms of community and family, rather than in terms of her psychological development.

People and Events Discourse

Within the report of the main event of each day, such as "came home in evening did some sewing" (January 4, 1911), Andrew implies that the subject of her writing is self-evident, and is usually herself, the author of the diary, rather than explicitly "I." Similarly, when Andrew's family sells a pig, the subject is implied,

and does not need to be revealed or repeated. She knows what she means. There is, however, a blurring and a downplaying of the subject “I” and an assumption that “I” and “we” are the same. This can be problematic when trying to identify Andrew’s voice among the others. Often, the reader is left to draw the conclusion that Andrew feels that “I” and “we” are synonymous, and that life for her is a series of common endeavours where the household, family and extended family are more important than she as an individual is. She minimizes her own role in events, but in the case of other actors, she clearly makes them the subject: “Aunt Ellen spent the day” (February 3, 1910), or “Warm misting a little Horace took Katherine for a drive” (March 4, 1914). Generally, her direct references to herself are made only in connection with someone else: “Horace & I went to church” (March 27, 1914), or “Tillie & I went and spent the evening at Edwins” (April 10, 1912).

The fact that various individuals are repeatedly mentioned, and there is an overlap of people and events in her text, whether reading the text horizontally or vertically, contributes to the development of Andrew’s narrative of people and events: “Uncle Tommy Murray died,” she writes, and then a few pages later, “Uncle Tommy Murray buried.” Her long friendship and eventual courtship with Horace Andrew, and the accounts of his brothers, sisters, and parents, regularly enter the pages of her diary in entries noting that “Horace came in for a few minutes” (January 1, 1910), or that “Horace called we went for a long drive” (February 2, 1914). Entries like “A perfect day I went up to the Andrews” (September 20, 1913) indicate that the narrative of the self is woven in with that of the others, as the self was primarily defined in terms of the others.

Andrew, as the author, selects the characters, sequences the events, and makes linguistic choices from her repertoire, to narrate these five years of her life. She simultaneously constructs and exposes herself through these social relations.

The cohesion in her diary comes in the reporting, which involves the repetition of people’s names, places, events, and activities. The great number of people who enter her daily life, and the variety of activities she mentions throughout her diary, indicate the richness of her life and the importance of these people and events to her. A close reading of this text indicates her pride in the social network of family and friends, and the satisfaction she derives from performing her duties at home and in the community. Andrew’s repetition of people and events over the entries emphasizes their importance to her and the significance of the social network of caring friends and family:

Very cold did some sewing in
 morning afternoon Marion & I went to Aunt
 Carrie's to tea after tea went to Aunt
 Sarah's had ice cream played cards
 Fred started to come home. (June 6, 1910)

The complete phrases, sequencing of events, use of prepositions, and repetition, all contribute to the cohesion of her entry and reflect a state of contentment with the day's accomplishments. Fairclough discusses the experiential values of grammar as having to do with "the ways in which grammatical forms of a language code happenings or relationships to the world, the people or animals or things involved in those happenings or relationships and their spatial and temporal circumstances, manner of occurrence and so on" (120). Andrew's diary demonstrates these relationships.

Andrew lived through other people, and her daily report makes constant references to frequent visitors: "Carrie & Kate Scott hear to tea," she notes on May 6, 1912. She is also preoccupied with the nuclear family and its well-being, as in her entry of June 9, 1910: "I went to the Andrew's they lost Lolly a horse," or when, on June 18, "Uncle Harry's baby boy died very sudden." Like Stretch, her descriptions of others' state of health are often far more descriptive than those she provides about herself. In fact, even Amy's description of the animals surpasses her references to herself:

A very cold day we lost our
 red mare only a few hours sick
 They did all they could for her a lot people
 here did not go to church Mabel to tea
 Fanny & Rick to spend the evening (September 14, 1912).

Andrew writes about herself as a person constructed from interaction with family and friends, and in her empathy with the family and community she finds and relates her self, her subjectivity. The social interaction, on a day-to-day basis as well as at times of crisis, provides grist for her entries more than any specific self-reflection on her mental or physical state, as is the case in Montgomery's journals.

Not only people, but the annual events on the farm and the community, such as the harvest party where they congregated, were a source of excitement and satisfaction. For example on August 8, 1910, when the hay was finished, she writes, "Marion & I went to Miscouche to get a fiddler for our party and invited

some people for the party.” When the diary is read vertically, three years later on the same day, she records that “the men were working at the hay.” A few days later, on August 15, 1913, she records, “A perfect day finished the hay.” If any sense of reflection takes place in her diary, it occurs when Andrew traces the annual harvests and rituals from year to year. Through this strategy she reports how she and her family coexist with the elements and celebrate this coexistence. Their relationship to the land is not the relationship of the individual attempting to harness nature, but more of peaceful coexistence and respect for nature, and a sense of gratitude for the consequences of this relationship.

Still, there is always a sense of relief at the completion of a season’s work and reason for reflection and celebration. One cold winter day’s entry reads, “A perfect day finish thrashing oats, turned out very good” (December 10, 1913). The triumph of getting the last of the farming tasks completed before the hard winter sets in is palpable. Such entries challenge conceptualizations of nature as woman, or woman in harmony with nature, as Andrea Pinto Lebowitz writes in her introduction to a book by the same name *Living in Harmony: Nature Writing by Women in Canada* (1996), when she says, “For all the writers whose voices you will hear in this anthology the goal is to find ways to live in harmony with nature and to act as stewards of the land” (1). In fact, Andrew is revealing dimensions of a more complex relation with nature, one where farming communities are involved in the processes of nature. Andrew, like Montgomery, is writing out the enactment of her rapport with nature, but through different practices. Neither is eliminating the other’s view of nature, but rather both can be viewed as representing “the great plurality of particular beings in nature as capable of their own autonomy, agency and ecological or spiritual meaning” (Plumwood 128).

Andrew lived and wrote her life around the ups and downs of life in the country, the joys at the end of a successful growing season, and the sorrows of losing people precious to her, not only to death, but to out-migration:

Fine and warm the potatoes finished
the potatoes very glad a very good
crop. Aunt Kate went away. (October 12, 1914)

She is capable of expressing the common sentiment of a good crop, but at the thought of losing her favourite aunt, she leaves two empty lines. Aunt Kate returns in letters and visits, but she represents one of the many who had to go away to make a living. Andrew’s sister Marion, like so many of her family and friends, disappears from her narrative:

Rainy, Marion went to Winnipeg
 she went off in good cheer, Ethel
 and her husband went away that
 morning to I did not go to church
 Horace came in & we had practice. (October 14, 1910)

The comforts of family and social relations, and the day to day rituals once disrupted, have their ramifications for her behaviour: “I did not go to church,” she writes on the day she lost her sister to the established pattern of outward migration. On a normal day, she would have gone to church, but obviously broken-hearted at losing her sister, she refrains. Her emotions are indirectly expressed by her inability to carry on as usual. Her sadness is temporarily diverted when “Horace came in and we had practice” (Andrews played the organ and Horace sang in his tenor voice) indicating that others were there for comfort and support, so that she could put Marion’s departure aside and resume her church and community activities.

The next day, she writes about normal seasonal events:

A perfect day but cold—Mother
 went Grandfathers—Fred to S’side I went up
 to the church help to decorate for the harvest
 festival

As after other setbacks, her life goes on, but the pattern of withdrawal from social obligations after an emotional setback can be read, in many entries, as an indication that she could not carry on as usual. Similarly, after the death of the mare, she writes, “did not go to church.” In this way, Andrew indicates textually, through her social milieu of the presence/absence of people and events, her ability as a diarist to express her experiential state of being temporarily displaced, what Gammel refers to as the confessional modalities of women writers to use their own (idiosyncratic) writing strategies to tell their story.

The pattern of repetition (sister Marion’s presence in her life) followed by absence (created by Marion’s departure) leaves a temporary vacuum in Amy’s life, one she expresses by her inability to fall into the social expectations of going to church. She eventually sees many friends and family members leave the Island. Horace’s sister Isa left later in 1910, and then Mabel, the Carr girls, and others go in 1913:

A perfect day Mabel went out
 west Horace took her to the boat
 Carr girls went to Ella over (September 22, 1913)

Mrs Holland to Montana & Nellie
 Compton back to Boston (September 27, 1913)

But so too do they return:

[...] Uncle
 John arrived home awful glad
 to see him (September 27, 1910)

The report of daily events, visits, meals or work, generally fills the remainder of the entry after the opening, with the weather conditions. She provides a closure to the entry and to the day by referring to the day's end: "Stan & I went for a walk with them" (June 30, 1910) she records, or "Gladys Holman called" (October 28, 1913). Sometimes, she ends with a simple evaluative statement such as "had a very lazy day" (July 5, 1913), or "awful tired went to bed early" (August 29, 1910).

The Layered Language of Amy Andrew's Personal History

Beyond the pattern of the daily diary entries there are other forms of consistency as well, namely the use of verb tense. Andrew's text seldom reflects on events other than those of the past day. She notes "A perfect day—Stan married at 7 o'clock in the morning (September 1, 1914), or the social patterns of her milieu: "Stan and Dot appeared out" (September 27, 1914). Generally there are a string of verbs in the past tense:

A very dull day rained a
 little Stan went over to the
 Island and brought home all there
 rigging Started to make a dress
 Made my fruit cake a beauty
 [and, outside the five lines:]
 The largest steamer Titanic sank with 1707 lives. (April 15, 1912)

Often the verb, like the subject of the sentence, is omitted: “Mabel up for a spell Marion hear also”; the strategy allows her to crowd more into the five lines, to record the day’s events, without causing any incoherence. A few times, this technique causes confusion as to who the subject is—clear to her, but not to her unintended reader. One example is on election day when “Richards got in but lost the government [?] quite disappointed” (September 21, 1910); the entry leaves the reader to ponder who was disappointed: Richards, Amy herself, or the whole family? Generally, the text is elliptical in terms of its verb usage, and where she can avoid using verbs, she does: “Fine in morning very dull in afternoon” (March 11, 1911). Even in the sparsest of entries, where she minimizes the text to a few words such as “A perfect day ironed” (September 3, 1914), the opening, with the verb, suffices to communicate what she considers is important to say about her day.

Both the temporal and spatial qualities of Andrew’s life are obvious in the above diary entry from April 15, 1912. She writes out of the immediate past and prioritizes the events that take place in her locale, rather than the tragedy that took place off the Canadian coast, the sinking of the Titanic. Events close to home were primary in her life, and she makes little reference to places beyond her community and the neighbouring one. Other locations are mentioned when a family member departs for a far away destination, or when she receives a letter from a relative living away. There were nevertheless important links to distant places, such as Europe and England. As nine men from the community were lost in World War I, there was an added interest and participation in the war effort. On October 1914, Andrew writes that she has been to a party in the hall: “a big crowd there [...] proceeds for Belgium relief fund.”

The royalty of England were of great interest, and her silence after “coming out” (after her wedding) is broken with an entry about the visit of the Duke of Connaught: “Went to service in S’Side church the Duke & his staff were in church” (July 28, 1912). The next day, she writes again,

Was in S’Side all day
Saw the Duke and Lady [?]
the Duke opened the hospital.

During these five years of her diary keeping, it appears that she seldom left the area of St. Eleanors and Summerside. Visiting the mainland was truly a big occasion. Her life from 1910 to 1915 was lived close to her childhood home, and

being a farm wife there were few opportunities for her to be free from her chores for any longer period of time.

As her text is limited in the dimensions of time and space, she records events with a minimum of detail, sparsely using adjectives and adverbs, even for sorrowful events. The overall effect is one of reduction of syntactic coloration. Her text is striking in its limited use of adjectives. Once she moves away from the details of the weather, the events, no matter how tragic, are simply mentioned: “Ben Sharp was buried” (January 18, 1910). The simple language conveys helplessness at times of sorrow, particularly when recording infant deaths. Infant mortality, in the early twentieth century, was considerably higher, and institutions had not yet removed health care far from the homes and community, so that women were giving birth at home and the sick and dying were nursed at home. Everyday confrontation of life and death among fellow human beings, as well as animals, was a marker of the time. In Andrew’s as well Harriet Bradshaw Dickieson’s texts the social response to a death in the community was similar. Oftentimes the sick and dying person was mentioned prior to their death, then the actual death was recorded, followed by a response in terms of a visit or a gesture to the family of the deceased. A few days after the death, the funeral was recorded. Amy Andrew simply writes: “Uncle Tommy Murray died” (May 25, 1913). The next day she writes, “Horace made some cakes,” implying their response to the bereaved family in their time of grief, to provide them with sustenance. Two days later, Andrew writes: “Uncle Tommy Murray buried” (May 28, 1913). In this way, Andrew repeats and renews the personal and communal response to death, briefly through a ritualistic response, lacking any direct expression of grief. Grief, shared by the community, had its institutionalized and ritualized responses, but her personal grief and sorrow appear in the diary not through adjectives describing emotion but through patterns of activity.

Similarly, Harriet Bradshaw Dickieson writes, “Mrs [?] Ling died today very suddenly” (April 1, 1914); a few days later on April 5, she adds, “went to Mrs Ling funeral a big crowd there” (April 5, 1914). By contrast, her diary entries are not restricted to five lines like Amy Andrew’s, but Dickieson’s diary was in her husband’s accounts book from March 26 to April 30, 1914, where she writes anywhere from 1 to 18 lines a day. This additional space allows her to regulate her account from short entries: “Muriel is sick she got a cold” (February 23, 1914) to more complex ones with more intricate clause structure: “they have gone down to Stanley Bridge I intended going down to Albertas but I could not be bothered getting ready” (March 15, 1914). Dickieson did not have to contain her entry in

any predetermined space, but could play with the conventions of the open page and vary her entry in length and structure. Amy Andrew's text, by comparison, developed consistent minimalistic and cryptic textual solutions to record her life over those five years.

Even though the space allotted for each day was limited, the lack of adjectives to describe the sorrow or pain was not entirely a question of space. Extensive details on other, or even lighter matters, are rarely found. Andrew's emotional state can be read through the conventions associated with events; her sadness was experienced through death rituals, such as funerals, or her happiness in completing the day's agenda and fulfilling her role as a homemaker. Extremes in her expression of misfortune, or sorrow, like those of joy and happiness, are not highlighted textually with adjectives, or with any clear linguistic structure. Supratextual features such as the quality of her handwriting and anecdotal evidence do, however, hint that what Amy Andrew did write, had other inscribable dimensions, but she does not overtly dwell on emotion. For example, the incident of November 20, 1912, seems in the diary a rather minor one when compared with the story I remember my grandmother telling us as children. She writes:

Fine but roads something
terrible Mabel & I drove to S'Side
The horse ran away pulled Mabel
and me off the wagon broke the harness got a awful
fright. (November 20, 1912)

The story was always highlighted by Gramma showing us the long deep scar on her arm, caused when the horse pulled her along the barbed wire fence. The emotional reserve in the diary is evident in many entries, as it appears that superlatives were not part of her discourse, no matter how dramatic the event was.

Amy Darby Tanton Andrew: The Writing Subject

On one level, Andrew's life writing fills the gaps in local history, while on another level, her writing is that of a woman writing herself and her kind into history. In some cases, the discursive strategies she employs in the telling of her story suggest the obvious comfort she found from the rhythms in her life.

Good weather, completing the housework, and the fact that the family strived together, as her brother did by making his contribution to the household, all account for a good day, each fulfilling their respective roles. These scarce lines, over the period of five years, provide rich detail about life in the first decade of the twentieth century. For example, when she writes about the weather, she also goes into the implications of the weather in terms of travel, the conditions of the roads and the functioning of the trains, as well as the impact weather had on the farm harvesting and house work, and finally her implied state of mind.

Beyond the local histories and folklore examined earlier, there are a limited number of texts where one can get a glimpse into how women lived their lives at the beginning of this century in rural Eastern Canada. There are even fewer documents written by women where readers can obtain a woman's view of the early decades of this century on PEI. Andrew's diary is an example of a discourse seldom exposed for public scrutiny. Its narrative is not easy to access as it is written in a very abbreviated form, with reference to people, places, happenings, things, and customs unfamiliar to most twenty-first century readers; yet there remain few documents from this time in which the woman is either included as a subject, or is herself the writing subject.

From Andrew, we gain insight into how women went about their day-to-day lives. Writers like Montgomery write with more introspection and self-awareness; in contrast, Andrew writes herself through a continuous narrative of farm rituals, exposing the continuum of social relations within the family and community. From these women's autobiographical records, women get a presence unaccounted for in local histories and increasingly being referenced in the more recent histories of Canada (Prentice et al.; MacDonald). Diarists like Andrew not only account for themselves, but also for thousands of others they take into the pages of their diaries. As Nancy Armstrong writes in *Desire and Domestic Fiction: A Political History of the Novel* (1987),

If [women's] writing is not figured into political history, then political power will continue to appear as if it resides exclusively in institutions that are largely governed by men, the role played by women at various stages in the middle-class hegemony will remain unexamined for the political force that it was and still is today. (256)

Amy Andrew's "A Line A Day" diary is rich in references to the spatial and temporal confines of a rural woman at the turn of the century. Over a period of five years, she indicates how and where she spends her time between home,

relatives, and activities in the immediate and neighbouring communities. Within those entries, she provides extensive evidence of the social relations and patterns within her family, extended family, and the community at large. Andrew gives a personal face to the common phenomenon of outward migration, typical of PEI all through the twentieth century. Through her accounts over these five years, readers are constantly reminded that the subject is a woman, doing a woman's work, experiencing woman's pain, and in a minimalistic way, relating it in five lines a day.

In her analysis of Canadian life writing, Shirley Neuman has stated that "the auto/biographical genres are almost by definition elitist: few 'ordinary' lives get written, a fact which leaves gaps in our historical and sociocultural understanding" ("Life Writing," 338). She goes on to explain that life writing has not been for the majority of Canadians (Aboriginals, poor, immigrants) part of their lives. Even in situations where circumstances have supported the necessary reading and writing skills, other problems have arisen:

[A] double bind prevents such people from writing their lives: they are generally too busy making a minimal living to write, and should they write, the literary conventions that would make their work acceptable to publishers and reviewers are not necessarily those with which they can best frame their experience. (338)

In relation to Neuman's observations, Andrew remains a case in point, one that raises many issues about the writing rural woman at the onset of the twentieth century. Literary and linguistic theories address the numerous questions such an autobiographical text raises, but such theories give only tentative answers about the construction of the woman subject in her *journal intime*. While Andrew's text stands with a body of other autobiographical works remembered for the integrity of their story rather than the art in their telling, according to Neuman, this is not seen as problematic. Such diaries stand with numerous other unpublished manuscripts of the self, on the border of "conventional literary expectations" (Neuman, "Life Writing" 338); but when examining this inscription of the female self through language and juxtaposing it with other texts, the *journal intime* has shown indeed that it has inherited a place of its own, one worthy of literary inquiry.

1884. 20

Feb 27th. This is my birthday: have been asked over to Birchgrove to spend it. Had herring & rice for dinner, could not have a roast on account of Ash Wednesday. Papa brought me home in the evening, after I had finished making a large rag doll for Anne Ethel Ruby; when I got home I found Miss Hunter & Miss Charlotte Evans here spending the afternoon. Miss Hunter sang and played for us before tea among some of the songs were "Joni's Sister," "Mother Says I must," & a "stuttering song of some kind"; they went home again about 8 o'clock, when we started for Sing School, Christy & I had some good fun coaxing Hannah Campbell to take off her jacket & show her new apron.

Feb 28th. Lily, Henry & Children came over in the afternoon. I went down to the river and had a brief skate with Christy & when I came home, about 7.30 Lily & family were

FIGURE 8. Lucy Palmer Haslam's 1884 Diary

The Modern Professional Woman: Teacher Lucy Bardon Palmer Haslam's Unpublished Journals (1884–1943)

The Palmer/Haslam Fonds

When the archivist brought the Palmer/Haslam family fonds to me, I gasped at the quantity of material contained in the boxes. As far as archival material was concerned, I had been working with scattered pages of scribbling, sometimes a few dozen pages that seemed to come out of nowhere or words written in the margins of an almanac. My immediate thought was to abandon all the other diaries and take up the Palmer sisters as the sole informers of women journal writers on Prince Edward Island (PEI) from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In all, there were thirty-one separate items. The first eight were by Lucy Palmer (1865–1943), dating from 1884 to 1894, followed by her correspondence from 1876 to 1919 and a teacher's register from 1888. Next on the file list were diaries, notebooks, a student exercise book, and correspondence by Amelia Palmer, Lilly Palmer Inman, Henry Inman, Mary Inman, and Reg Inman. The last eight items were dated from 1883 to 1943 and were more diaries of Lucy Palmer Haslam. One item (#20), "Lucy of Ozendyke" by Michael Bliss, 1992, a computer printout, stood out from the rest, indicating that distinguished Canadian historian had indeed studied this collection of documents.

I put on my white cotton gloves and dove into the collection of neatly packed books of various sizes, wondering how such material had escaped the attention of researchers of women's life writing. In the first book, following the date February 27, 1884, Lucy Palmer introduces a host of characters, place settings, and the events surrounding her nineteenth birthday. Her next book is prefaced by a knitting pattern on the left-hand side of the page; on the right, following the date March 30, 1887, she announces that she has "Arrived at Kensington." Thus her diaries for ten years of her young adult life begin as she writes about her immersion into new phases of her life, in places beyond her Ozendyke home. The small, leather-bound book called item #5 stood out from the larger exercise book of the previous year; it reads "Trousseau and wedding gift book of Lucy Palmer, 1893." The next two diaries cover the years 1884 to 1902, and these are written by Lucy Palmer Haslam. Ten years later, she begins keeping her diary again, almost uninterrupted until her death in 1943; these last nine diaries evidence the fact that she was indeed a voracious diarist. A cursory glimpse of the contents of these boxes demonstrates that Lucy Palmer Haslam is the star diarist of those

Palmer sisters who also kept diaries, Lucy, Lilly and Amelia. Twenty of the thirty-one items were penned by her, and she was chosen by her descendant, historian Michael Bliss, as a representative diarist documenting the life of a PEI woman.

Lucy Palmer, Her Family and the Conditions of Diary Writing

Lucy Palmer's journals were becoming the more obvious focus for my further reading in what was undoubtedly one of the most impressive collections of handwritten documentation from the late nineteenth to the mid-twentieth century from the pens of women on PEI. Emerging from this collection of letters, diaries, and account books is a history of life in rural PEI that depicts how women lived and experienced their existence. Although Lucy Bardon (or Borden according to the Baptismal Records of PEI) Palmer, born in 1865, is the primary figure here, many of her nine siblings also recorded chapters from their lives, which are important documents for understanding the times and give perspective to Lucy Palmer Haslam's life writing. Together, these excerpts from the Palmer fonds captivate lived lives in households and communities that collectively serve as a point of departure for isolating and examining her *journal intime*.

The Palmers were a nineteenth-century family that was comfortably settled on a large farm in rural PEI. The parents, James Burdin Palmer Jr. and Anne-Marie (Annie-Maria on baptismal record) Marshall, were descendants of Irish and English immigrants respectively. They settled on the farm "Ozendyke," which they acquired from Anne-Marie's uncle Thomas Marshall when he returned to England.

Lucy Bardon Palmer and her writing of her life stand out not only because of the volume and duration of her texts but also because she exemplifies a woman who did not immediately settle into the role of a farm wife but became a teacher. Only after ten years from her first appointment did she marry. She was not exceptional among her siblings; in fact, it appears that her elder sister Lilly, born 1855, was perhaps the only Palmer girl who entered directly into matrimony and the domestic sphere, moving from her childhood home in Ozendyke to her adult one, three miles away in Birchwood. Lucy's other older sisters, Edith, born in 1861, and Mary, born in 1862, had already departed for Boston in the early pages of Lucy's 1884 diary. Another sister Ida, born in 1858, had moved to the provincial capital city Charlottetown, thirty miles east of Ozendyke, the previous

year, while Lucy's younger sister Amelia, born in 1867, took up a teaching position in Kensington shortly before Lucy took up her teaching job in nearby Malpeque. The oldest sister Sarah (or Sara), born in 1850, appears to have stayed home for an extended period of time, possibly to head the house and fill the position of their bereaved mother.

Palmer's text is pivotal in reconstructing the family and in particular the options exercised by the Palmer women in the late 1800s. Documents from her sisters supplement her accounts and provide additional detail and perspective on her life and choices. Amidst the vast amounts of diary material Palmer has generated, it is her journals prior to her marriage, when she was pursuing her career as a teacher, that have a special appeal.⁵ The variation in the quality of her handwriting and the length of her journal entries signals a period of experimentation in this early writing. Later on in life, her penmanship is more consistent, and the length and substance of her meticulously scribed journal entries also remain more constant.

Palmer's journals display how she established the thematic content early on and how throughout her life she broadened the entries to account for social and, to a lesser extent, emotional encounters. Household tasks or her family and social life are the main subject matter for her entries and provide her with obvious joy, as the more goes on in her day, the more text is generated. This obsessive accounting for the details of her everyday life appears to have compelled her to record all by squeezing baking, cleaning, and church going into whatever space is available. Having established in her early diaries the importance of recording her engagement with familial, domestic, and social matters, she does not allow herself to directly allude to matters of the heart and mind; but through her textual practices, she creates her own textual strategies to confirm that she is living up to social expectations of what a good woman should be, as dictated by her church and the conduct literature of her home, entitled *Golden Thoughts of Mother, Home, and Heaven, from Poetic and Prose Literature of All Ages and All Lands*, (Cuyler, 1883). Women like Lucy were the targets of texts that focused on women and femininity, and conduct literature played an important role in a "wider redefinition of social categories and social roles" (V. Jones 7). Excerpts from literary texts introduced by clergy, such as the above publication or other conduct literature, like *Vivilore: The Pathway to Mental and Physical Perfection*;

⁵ Because of this, I will refer to her by her maiden name (Palmer) when discussing these premarital teaching diaries, and use her married name (Haslam), only for discussing her later writing.

The Twentieth Century Book for Every Woman (1904), written by Dr. Mary Ries Melendy, single women out to be guided and worked upon by passing on words of wisdom and advice from “Man’s Ideal of Woman” and “Influence of Women in Public Affairs” to “Hygiene in the Home.” In *Mrs Beeton’s Book on Household Management* (1861). Isabella Beeton gives extensive advice to the Victorian household on servants, religion and legal matters sandwiching in dozens of chapters on cooking. Conduct literature showed women the way to manoeuvre through their lives while in their journals women like Palmer wrote the lives they lived.

The texts written at various stages of Lucy Palmer Haslam’s life indicate that she, like numerous journal writers, used various strategies at different times within her journal to write her world. Her texts fall into three periods: those from her single life as a young woman at home (1884); those written as a teacher from the onset of her teaching career in 1885 in Bonshaw and which began in earnest with her appointment in another Island community, Malpeque in 1887; and her diaries from her married life as Mrs. George Haslam (1894–1943). Within the archival collection, her diaries provide the entry into the family fonds (items 1–10), as well as a closure (items 21, 23–31); in fact, items 11–20 and 22, written by other family members, often overlap with hers in terms of time and recorded events.

By contrasting the three different periods in Palmer’s textual production, her early formative years of diary writing (1884), her independent single years as a young teacher away from home (1889), and those of her later life (1940), her textual transition over these periods shows that in her Malpeque teaching journals (1889) she temporarily escapes the straightjacketed representation expected of her kind in the domestic sphere and textually and thematically breaks from her self-imposed restraint to allow a different textual identity to emerge. She did not sustain this textuality into her accounts of her married life which perpetuate an image of the more traditionally prescribed woman, duty bound and faithful.

In an early entry written while still living in her childhood home of Ozendyke, Palmer describes the day’s events: “Lovely fine day. Maggie walked over to Philip Beer’s. Lilly & I & chds drove over home in evening & got over just in time to miss a big rain storm” (October 4, 1885). The following days show similar visits, brought to a halt by the rain:

5th Mon. Lilly walked over to see Mrs Farrow very windy.

6th I walked over to see Mrs Smith. Aggie came over & I drove back with Henry & stayed home for to go to exhibition in morning

7th Very wet day, raining heavy from noon until evening

Palmer's early diary establishes the young woman's textual presence in a world of her own home, braving or basking in the elements as she visits others, and documenting all in the least possible words. This exposure to nineteenth-century lives through life writing gives access to the textualization of the everyday details and to the relations the writing subject has to others and her surroundings that make her human.

With every dramatic turn in her life, Palmer's diary traces her expanding sphere. Her move to teach in Malpeque in 1887 brought not only a dramatic change in her life but her documentation of it. Entries from September 1889 demonstrate her social confidence in this period of her life:

11th Lovely fine day & still no rain but very heavy dews. Last night after I got into bed & got asleep there was an apple came pelt through the open window & woke me right up. There was a wagon went by but I did not get my senses quick enough to tell who it was, but found out since that it was Sine and Jack Kier. Went over to Prayer Meeting in school. There were a good lot there. Bessie came over after school to learn the Kensington stitch.

12th Warm enough for my muslim [sic] still. Mr McNutt brought a Mr McKay in to the school for a while, he is of the "Stanley". Susan came down & did a washing here as their well is nearly dry. Mary went down to Mr Ellisons & in the evening I went up to Mr McNutts, as they had written a letter asking me to go up & go for a walk, so I went & we went away up the road to Kensington direction & had a regular old fashioned talk especially about the amt of drinking done by our young men of the place: coming home there was a little black kitten followed us for a mile, & it mewed so that it worried us fearfully so Edith & I took the string off a parcel, that we were carrying, & tethered him to the grave-yard fence & Janey stood back & laughed, but we had only gone a few yds when the brute broke lose & came dangling under our feet again, so notwithstanding, hicks & scolding it followed us right to the door. We three went upstairs & had a lovely talk by ourselves, then I played the organ & last of all we landed in the pantry & ate corn beef, plain cake, washington Pie & chow chow, bread until we

could hardly get out, & ending off with a good laugh I came down her with Jane, a lovely bright moon light night.

Palmer's carefree days away from her childhood home document her coming of age as a vibrant, active young woman. Her Malpeque diaries ooze with "the substance of everyday life—'human raw material' in its simplicity and its richness" (Lefebvre 97). In contrast, her 1885 diaries from her first teaching position at Bonshaw demonstrate a poetics of the "unsayable" (Rogers et al. 79) that avoids articulating the stresses of her new position: she draws birds in the margins and symbolic texts alluding to Christopher Marlowe's "The Passionate Shepard to His Love," which transform the diary into a document of adventure in a new world. Weather is not the key issue as earlier but a preface for encounters with other young women and men, for heart-to-heart talks, flirting, wandering, and late night splurges. Her diary text expands to articulate the complexity of her everyday and her expression of her new self in relation to a milieu where she carves out new relationships while engaging and redefining old preoccupations.

Much later, after years as a farm wife, her pattern as a diarist is anchored in the routines of life on the farm, overshadowed by World War II:

Good bye to old 1940—& may we have a better year in 1941 1940 has been a bad one full of war troubles & anxieties Got read(y) for new yrs. atho' we only expect Jim. Reg spent the day finishing up different pieces of work. Did not wait for me to help him take fat off fox bodies as I was baking a large batch of bread but surprised me by finishing them & bring in a large box of fat, all read[y] to be rendered. So good to have it all done as I dreaded it for one can never tell who may walk in when at the job. We fully expected Jim esp as the bus pulled up at head of the road but he failed to come. It was some one else got off up here. (December 31, 1940)

Her marriage and her return to a domestic abode follows her period of independence in Malpeque. Empowered with her own discourse and position as subject in her own home with her family, her diaries represent the life of a woman exercising her domestic power.

I focus on adopting a reading strategy for what are disorderly or "messy texts," as my research is based on the "tensions, contradictions and hesitations [working] back and forth" in such unpublished documents (Weiland 204). Such a position of "moving and acting" within the "open-endedness, incompleteness, and uncertainty" (204) is one way to resist some of the overused and popular

metaphors of journey (Schiwy), map (Buss) or quilt (Vilkko) in the study of autobiography. Here in the study of life stories, such ready-made metaphors could easily override the individual's actions and instead direct one's attention to view the external conditions as the main source of variation. Instead of the metaphor as my "engine and compass" (Rosenwald 144), a close reading of Lucy Palmer Haslam's representation of her life through her narrative account of it is the path I have chosen. Stripping the reading of any metaphorical framework allows the clues Lucy offers me in my reading to be taken up and examined like rocks, objects that I stumble over in the course of this reading, ones that make me stop, look and think, why this now?

Starting with Palmer's older sister Lilly's 1883 diary can best illustrate the circumstances in which the Palmer sisters were living and serve as a logical starting point for their saga. Chronologically, Lilly Palmer Inman's diary from 1883 is the first family document although it is item 13 in the fonds. Sequencing and piecing the family stories together forces the reader to act as a sleuth, and brings intertextual insight to the reading of Lucy Palmer's diaries. In 1883, Lucy Palmer was an eighteen-year-old witness of her older sister's married life. In Lilly's diary, we read not only of her life but observe her style of inscription. In many ways, she represents Lucy's choices as an Island woman. Lilly Palmer Inman's account of one representative day reads,

Ethel & Annie are sleeping away & Baby is on the floor crawling. It is nearly tea time. Alice, Henry & Men are up in the back field putting in potatoes we were washing this morning & I am tired. Lucy went home last evening. She was with me most of last week. Came to help me garden but it rained most of the time only on Saturday we put in three beds of corn, beans and peas. On Sunday we went over home. Lucy & I walked & took Baby in the carriage. H. had the children with him in the wagon. (May 29, 1883)

Lilly's text illustrates features typical of a rural woman in her position as a farm wife and mother. As if painting on a canvas, Lilly creates vignettes where she fulfils her roles as mother, wife, sister, and employer, simultaneously having the responsibilities for children, husband, and siblings, as well as the various helpers in her home and in the fields. She inscribes a self with "values that [address] a whole range of competing interest groups [...] through her, these groups gained authority over domestic relations and personal life" (Armstrong 19). Lilly wrote of what Armstrong refers to as nineteenth-century "domestic surveillance" (19), a kind of power women like her exercised in the home, which formed the

foundation of modern institutions. Her domestic practices and rituals oversaw the traditions of family life. Conduct books were instrumental in communicating the domestic ideals and diaries the location for women to account for their living up to these expectations. Lilly's diary and eventually her sister's both represent rural women's documentation of their authority in the domestic sphere, the difference being that Lucy incorporated that domestic authority after having asserting her professional authority as a teacher.

In contrast with Emma Chadwich Stretch's immigrant experience, Lilly Palmer Inman has a network of family and an established community surrounding and supporting her. Although Lilly is twenty-eight years old and mother of three children when she begins her diary, she expresses a life of patterned relationships and ritualistic domestic activity. Her maturity and domesticity can partially be attributed to the fact that her mother died in 1877 when Lilly was twenty-two, leaving her and her older sister Sarah (Sara), to care for six younger sisters (Lucy was twelve) and a younger brother Hedley, born in 1857. Lilly acted as a mother/housekeeper before and during the setting up of her own household upon her marriage to Henry Inman in 1877. There was a natural transition from her domestic responsibilities in Ozendyke to those in her nearby home, three miles away at the mouth of the DeSable River. The close bonds with her family are evidenced in almost every journal entry.

The circumstances that drove Stretch to write came out of her immigrant experience and the need to supplement the family income with the backdoor enterprise of her barter economy, for her diary was initially her account book, too. Lilly Palmer's diary focuses on her immediate family and her sisters coming together at the family farms of Ozendyke and Birchwood or those of neighbours and relatives. For this reason, the diary focuses on Lilly's (and Lucy's) social locale and their lived experiences within the sphere of the home: the keeping of the home and the upbringing of children was their chief enterprise. The concept of the family farm assumed that women would take charge of the domestic sphere. Lilly was very much the embodiment of the traditional role allotted to women at this time on PEI, one that was heavily reinforced by church scripture and the generally accepted community values that sanctioned the piety of such women's position in this private sphere. It was within the private space of the *journal intime* (Didier) that women like Lilly and Lucy could textually reclaim their space and discourse, which was largely denied in the public sphere.

Lilly's journal was important to her. She kept returning to it as it obviously sustained her in times of exhaustion, giving her life and her textual representation

of it meaning and definition. She religiously upheld the writing pact with her diary, as did Stretch despite her less established social and family infrastructure, which forced Stretch to act creatively as an entrepreneur to assure her family's survival. Stretch's pact was her determination for documenting her commitment to the ways she saw fit for survival in her new land. Lilly, as a second-generation Canadian, could rely on the family network, their wealth and the well-being established by her predecessors. Nevertheless, both women's lives and diaries were preoccupied with carving out their place in the scheme of things and reasserting the daily routines that structured their life stations into reflective accounts of their paths.

Lilly's diary serves to illustrate the most obvious option available to her, her sisters and most women at the end of the nineteenth century. Lilly, her diary and her choice to maintain the role traditionally available to women illustrate a manifestation of the matriarchal line of women who wrote on rural domesticity. Their lives as homemakers, wives and mothers are more comprehensively dealt with in a subsequent chapter on farm wives. Nevertheless Lilly appears to have assumed a surrogate mother role for her younger sisters, and in particular Lucy. Initiating Lucy into the habit of recording her life, as Lilly herself was doing, was an important aspect of Lilly's care. Lucy acquired her first diary from Lilly and thus the older sister thrust the younger one into the world of journal writing.

Asserting one's femininity by keeping a personal journal, a *journal intime*, did not interfere with the business of being a woman. As Didier has pointed out,

Mais il y a une certaine 'féminité' de l'écriture diariste, et justement cette passivité, ce laisser-aller, cette fluidité un peu molle qui s'apparentent avec une image de la féminité telle que l'a divulguée le xixe siècle. (Didier 106)

But there is an unquestionable femininity in diary writing and it is precisely this passiveness, this careless, this steady flow which has something in common with the image of femininity as it was revealed in the nineteenth century.⁶

The sisters' accounts of drifting from home to home in Lilly's and Lucy's diaries, and particularly in Lucy's diary, entries at home in Ozendyke and her Malpeque diary, create a whimsical flare in Lucy's recording technique, echoing

⁶ Translation of Didier's text in this and all subsequent quotations was provided by Aline Kaihari.

the freedom she experienced at this time in her life. In late nineteenth-century Eastern Canada, women's horizons were gradually broadening, but a young woman knew her place as a woman and a journal could be that place to write around this situation and maybe even out of it into new locations, mentally and physically.

Lucy the Diarist

Lucy Palmer enters the scene as a diarist in 1884 with the gift of a diary on her nineteenth birthday from her sister Lilly. In it, Lucy writes us into the Palmer home, and her earliest entries have abundant reference to Lilly and her family, reiterating the closeness Lilly also alludes to and the shared reality that Lucy Palmer, like Lilly, belongs simultaneously to two families and two homes. Here Palmer accounts for her birthday at Lilly's home:

This is my birthday: have been asked over to Birchgrove to spend it. Had herring & rice for dinner could not have a roast on account of Ash Wednesday. Papa brought me home in the evening after I had finished making a large ragdoll for Annie, Ethel and Baby. (February 27, 1884)

This is a special day for Palmer, as well as a reminder of the missing mother and the omnipresent surrogate one, Lilly, who arranged a celebration. Religion intervened and a modest dinner resulted, herring as opposed to roast beef, reiterating the importance of adhering to Anglican religious practice, similar to the Catholic one, to refrain from eating meat on Ash Wednesday. Mobility between Lucy's two homes, on this occasion, is facilitated by the father, perhaps because it was a special day and for this reason he accompanied his daughter. On any other day, the women used this opportunity to move freely and independently with the horse and wagon, or on foot, as mobility was treasured and something to write about in their diaries and reflect upon in the years to come.⁷

⁷ Road conditions impeded mobility and women's diary entries often connected the weather and road conditions in their daily comings and goings. On November 28, 1884, Lucy Haslam's diary reports, "Raining hard, soft muddy roads, Mrs C. Baby & I walked down to Mrs. Crosby's." A few weeks later, she notes, "we were caught in a snowstorm [...] called into Mrs Mc Dougall's got a nice lunch & well warmed before starting out again" (December 16, 1884). The next day, she was on the road again: "got a drive home from school with Wild Jack & the wife" (December 17, 1884).

Providing further documentation of nineteenth-century women, Lucy Palmer's text is indeed a gem, but as Lucy weaned herself away from Ozendyke and into the larger community, her diary takes on new features that beg another kind of reading. By piecing the accounts from Lilly's diary with a note jotted down by Lucy in the back of her 1884 diary—"Began to teach in Bonshaw Sept. 29th 1884"—it signals that Palmer is not telling the whole story. On the first day of her new job, the diary gives no account of the beginning of her career but only records, "Baby a little quieter"; in the diary Lilly's newborn takes precedence over Lucy's new teaching venture. Such textual strategies question the author's inability or unwillingness to record this historic turning point in her own, and an increasing number of other Island women, when they entered the public sphere and abandoned the domestic one.

Up until this point, Lilly's and Lucy's diaries reflect the domestic settings they occupied and how their respective spheres intersected, but Lucy, ten years younger than Lilly, had not yet committed herself to establishing her own home so such options as teaching were open to her. Lilly nevertheless appears to have assumed the role of family historian, conserving the family memories just as an elder male sibling in such rural environments would take charge of preserving the family farm to assure the material well-being of the family.⁸

Lilly was obviously well anchored in the community, but her sister's options were open. From Lilly, we learn that Lucy Palmer left home for Charlottetown to attend teacher training college and upon her return took up a position in the neighbouring community of Bonshaw. The details of Lucy's education, teaching position and boarding with the Cyrus family are the subject of Lilly's journal; but once Lucy turns nineteen her sister marks Lucy's diverging path with the gift of a diary, encouraging her to write her own life. What is important about Lucy Palmer's diary is her loitering between the traditional and modern alternatives available to women of her time. She offers an account of her dilemma by textually deflecting her entries to more familiar subjects like the weather, road conditions and babies.

Once Palmer has established herself in a new community and firmly committed herself to her new profession, the linguistic freedom of her journal text emerges to

⁸ Traditionally, with the older siblings having assumed positions of responsibility on the family farm, the younger siblings were compelled to look beyond the community, the province and often the country. The traditional industries of PEI, fishing and farming, could only sustain a population of 100,000, and as families like the Palmers and Inmans continued to be large, the population the Island was producing could not be absorbed into the workforce and was forced to look off the Island for opportunities.

match her independent life in Malpeque. Initially, the reserve of her handwriting and the triteness of her text illustrate the trepidation she must have felt in 1887, prior to meeting the school trustees in order to agree about the school: “The Trustees came & we agreed about the school & Mr Clark came up & took me to down to my boarding house & from there to school. I had 14 scholars first day” (April 4, 1887). By the following January, her diary is an exercise book and she is conscientiously fulfilling her diary contract: “I am now in Malpeque teaching and have started this new Diary hoping to find something of interest to put in it before it is filled” (January 1, 1888). Her handwriting is less constrained and her text more free-flowing with full sentences and comments on the document she is in the process of composing. Entries often lavishly documented her social life of church going, visiting, and her numerous friends, all embellished with reference to the weather and road conditions:

Jack M & I, Tom Ed & Jamie all drive up to the Carnival in evening. A lovely moonlight night [...] had a lovely time started home about 12 o'clock under a very heavy white frost & bright, bright moonlight night. Got home about 2 o'clock, made some hot ginger tea & started to bed. (January 31, 1888)

Such passages secure Lucy Palmer a special place among Island women diarists. Her journal allows her to voice the joy she experiences of having found her place outside of the domestic sphere and become engaged in the concerns of her more modernist sisters in the public sphere.

When her life changes again, and she decides to marry, once again she does not divulge a major turning point in her life in her diary. Through her correspondence, her love affair with her husband-to-be emerges. On December 4, 1892, she writes, “Spent a quiet evening, but one never to be forgotten by me.” Her correspondence from 1892–96 contains the letters she received, enabling one to piece together, particularly with the help of letters to her from George Haslam, the development of their relationship. Although the “Trousseau and wedding gift book of Lucy Palmer” from 1893 clearly indicates that a wedding took place, her diary entries don’t give the facts directly. Following her wedding in January 1894, two of her diaries cover a span of approximately twenty years (item 6, 1894–98, and item 7, 1898–1902) when Lucy Palmer Haslam establishes a home, has five children and is a gregarious farm wife. These are busy years as Haslam expresses directly and though her hurried handwriting and often abrupt

entries. Nevertheless, these diaries are engaging as her sister Lilly's and many other farm wives' accounts of coming to terms with the demands of rural life.

Haslam appears not to have kept a diary from 1902–12, but when she does resume her diary writing in 1912 she continues until her death in 1943. The nine diaries from 1912 to 1943 (items 23–31 from 1912–1943 in the Palmer fonds) record everyday existence in a thorough and exhausting manner. Visually, the January–February 1928 page of her diary is very compelling as she reduces the size of her handwriting so as to squeeze January 1–15 and everything therein on one page.

Her account of her trip to New Brunswick, Quebec, and Ontario in 1932 (item 23) is taken up separately in chapter 5 on women's travel diaries. Haslam resorts to interesting documentation strategies when she is temporarily uprooted from home and observing another kind of modernism, the city. Item 28 is another travel diary but somewhat more tattered than her journal diary of 1932, which is a neat black letter case that protects the valuable records within from the wear and tear of travel.

In the final year of her life in 1943, at seventy-eight years of age, Haslam's diary documents the writing of her will. Lucy Palmer Haslam writes herself out of her life as she did into it, focusing on the practicalities of her everyday on December 31, 1943: "Overcast looks like a storm [...] 40 doz eggs gathered up." With this statement, her textual representation of her life is complete. Her *journal intime* is a record of response to her life and her daily encounters, and thus she recreates her life almost to its end. As a woman brought up in the Victorian era, she writes in a simple and explicit style with neither pretense nor pride and adheres to the tenets of her time. In her apparent sincerity, her autobiographic intention (Marcus 3) becomes accepted as a serious one. By the end of her life, she is celebrating her domesticity in a dedicated and sincere manner.

Didier argues that the diary genre is inherently insincere:

Le journal est insincère, come toute écriture; il a le privilege sur d'autres types d'écriture de pouvoir être doublement insincere, puisque, encore une fois, le 'moi' est même temps sujet et objet (117)

The diary is insincere, like any writing; it is privileged on other kinds of writing to be doubly insincere since, once more, the "I" is both subject and object.

Nonetheless, I regard these Island women's textual representations as partial truths—the events and people within these diaries certainly existed, but the diary context of these people and events does not tell the whole story, and occasionally other anticipated incidents and responses are overlooked. The complexities for women in inscribing their everyday and the truthfulness Lucy Palmer Haslam attempted to scribe will be explored in the next section in an elaboration of her textual strategies.

Textual Identity in the Life Story

Reconstructing Lucy Palmer Haslam's life through her own words and those near and dear to her is an important part of this project; but how the woman diarist uses the medium of her *journal intime* to tell her story is of primary concern, as she conscientiously selects and sequences the events of her everyday, rereads and goes on writing despite constant interruptions. Her loss of words or ignoring of events arouses suspicion when the twenty-first-century reader recognizes the gaps in her text, such as those in entries about her early teaching years, which contrast so obviously with her later Malpeque diary, in which her text overflows with excitement of having found the words. For PEI women, their entry into the teaching profession signifies their engagement with the modernist project and entry into the public arena as waged employees. The “raw human material” (Lefebvre 97) of Palmer's diaries as a young teacher exposes the mindset at this turning point in history. Here, her personal literary mindscapes are opened up as moments for scrutinizing the elements that constitute the modern subject and her everyday.

Other projects from PEI, such as Shawna McCabe's *The Narrative Landscapes of A.L. Morrison* (2000), stress the importance of giving narrative shape to personal and cultural landscapes. Palmer's numerous journals throughout her life, but in particular those from the period of her transition to a professional persona, illustrate the significance of the journal as a vehicle for telling, and thereby facilitating, the transition. Her diaries are stripped of the local colour of McCabe's subject (folk artist A.L. Morrison's paintings), and also lack the decorum of the popular female image of her time. Palmer's handwritten entries, when juxtaposed with the rhetoric of church and conduct literature, on the surface appear bland and reflective of a dull life. On closer examination, however, these diaries highlight a socially gregarious woman in search of love

and acceptance beyond her own family and community while brazing the trails towards a modern identity.

Robert Harris's painting *A Meeting of the School Trustees* (1885), a realistic depiction of a female teacher in a nineteenth-century Island classroom, when read with nineteenth-century teacher Lucy Palmer's diary text, provides an opportunity to study a woman when she is both visually and textually represented. Palmer's teacher diary provides a sense of the mimetic function of artistic representation, both visually and textually. The intertextuality between autobiographical texts and other cultural artifacts demonstrates the ability of women diarists as textual portrait artists who give breath and dimension to a history in which they have been absent.

Visual and Textual Images of the Modern Island Victorian Woman: Kate Henderson and Lucy Palmer

Incidents inspire stories, and in this case, Robert Harris's encounter with a school teacher acquaintance in Long Creek, coinciding with the intellectual backdrop of women's entry into the public arena of professional life, inspired the artist to create his painting *The Meeting of the School Trustees*. Lucy Palmer's diary gives us access to the mind of a nineteenth-century woman in her PEI milieu, through her own words. In 1887, Lucy Palmer wrote in the back of her diary, "Began to teach in Bonshaw Sept 29th 1884 \$5.00 for board." She was nineteen years old at the time of her first appointment, and it was after her term there ended on June 30, 1885, that she records the fact. "The Statistical Tables of the PEI School Visitor Reports from 1889" (in "Annual Report of the Public School of Prince Edward Island, for the Year 1889. Part II: Statistical Tables") confirms that Lucy Palmer was part of the advancing army of women entering the teaching profession. Harris's painting highlights women's entry into the public sphere, but it is through the texts of women teachers like Lucy that we are enabled to explore the everyday lives of such women.⁹

⁹ During the 1880s, the number of female teachers in PEI increased from 196 in 1881 to 257 in 1889, while the number of male teachers fluctuated only slightly, from 267 in 1881, to 247 in 1883, to 261 in 1889 ("Annual Report of the Public School of Prince Edward Island, for the Year 1889. Part II: Statistical Tables"); women were entering the labour force in increasing numbers. The teaching profession was seen as a natural choice for women, one that corresponded with their natural nurturing capacity; but entrance into the public sphere would position women like Kate and Lucy within the male-dominated and driven school system. Women teachers

When Island painter Robert Harris returned from his European honeymoon in late summer 1885, he took his new bride Bessie directly to Charlottetown, PEI. During this visit, he introduced her to his Stretch cousins (descendents of Emma Chadwich Stretch) in Long Creek and visited the one-room school where they met Harris's friend Kate Henderson. It was this chance meeting with the school teacher and her relating how she had been "laying down the law" to the school trustees and "talking them over" that inspired Robert Harris to paint *The Meeting of the School Trustees*.¹⁰ Kate Henderson is thus a rare example of a nineteenth-century Island woman given recognition and visibility. Island women's textual and visual representation has been contingent on their participation in the major historical events of their times, and as MacDonald has acknowledged, "the convoluted rationalizations of Victorian thought had placed 'Woman' high on a pedestal, conveniently far from the levers of social, political, or economic power" (61–62).¹¹

saw themselves in the woman in Harris's painting, like the sixteenth-century person reflected in the mirror, and there was "an enrichment of the sense of self" (Smith 53).

¹⁰ Moncrieff Williamson explains in his biography *Island Painter: The Life of Robert Harris (1849–1919)* (1983) that this painting became Harris's masterpiece, creating a sensation when it was displayed at the Colonial Exhibition in London in 1886 (109). Harris's mimetic recreation of existing subjects from his childhood home province gave a particular impetus to the plight of the nineteenth-century rural woman school teacher. Islanders inherited a visual history of what MacDonald refers to as "the silent partners in the life of the Island" (61), namely women. No doubt by portraying as Harris did the phenomena of women's participation in the work force, he reiterated the dawn of a new era, one that he had witnessed elsewhere. But this time modernism was epitomized by dark-haired Kate, who caught the gaze of her male trustee superiors. A textual history of these first professional Island women and their even less visible sisters remains to be told.

¹¹ Late twentieth-century texts still portray women as silent objects and consequently invisible in the chronicles of the history of our province. In my research into the imaging of PEI women from the nineteenth- and twentieth-century publications, including newspapers, local histories and texts of popular history and folklore, women did not participate in the imaging of themselves but instead were depicted by their male counterparts (McDonald-Rissanen, "Veils and Gaps: Women's Life Writing"). Our women's histories are no exception and they correspond with what Sheila Rowbotham (1989) elaborates on in *Hidden from History: 300 Years of Women's Oppression and the Fight against It*. Women's marginalization by their fathers, husbands, brothers and sons, and within actual historical events themselves, has spurred numerous Canadian researchers of autobiography (Buss, Conrad et al., Carter, and others) to anthologize and study the life writing of the many notable and less famous women's diarists and their letters. My research attempts to fill the gaps in this national and local tapestry with our Island women and their accounts of lived lives. The intertextual reading of fragmented and unpublished documents written by ordinary Island women, juxtaposed with familiar images on canvas, in song lyrics or in popular folklore texts, has been the basis of my methodology for exploring Island women's history.

In *The Meeting of the School Trustees*, Robert Harris offers viewers the image of a woman on the cusp of an escape from the rigid tenets of Victorian PEI. His representation of a modern Island woman confirms her entry into the public sphere and entices viewers to discover her reality beyond the canvas, one disclosed by her pen. Reading a female teacher's diary from this same time frame can not only elaborate on Harris's subject's reality but will also inform readers about women's own engagement and perception of their world.¹²

Art as a source of information for understanding history is not unheard of. For hundreds of years, the painting *Girl with the Pearl Earring* by Johannes Vermeer (1632–75) enthralled viewers with a young female servant who inspired the great master. Then in 2001, Tracy Chevalier peeled back the pages of history and wrote a fictional account of this young maid. Contemporary British writer Sarah Dunant's portrayal of the everyday of medieval Italian women came about using a similar technique, namely taking art as her point of departure for exposing a history of women overshadowed by a male establishment embedded in the religious and artistic communities. Dunant's *The Birth of Venus: Love and Death in Florence* and Chevalier's *Girl with a Pearl Earring* provide the stepping stones for reading our own less conspicuous historical figures like teachers Kate Henderson and Lucy Palmer.¹³

¹² Harris was obviously aware of this transition when he placed Kate in the fore of his work. As Williamson relates, "franchise and women's opinions did not find favour with male Islanders or males anywhere else in Canada" (111). It was during the period 1871–73, while studying in Boston, that Harris attended a lecture by the American suffragette and reformer Mary Ashton Livermore. Harris wrote, "Last Tuesday I heard Mary Ashton Livermore lecture [...] I liked the lecture well, good sound sensible talk, and her manner was unaffected—which I did not expect—for from all I had heard of women speakers I expected nothing but a lot of fireworks, and poor ones at that" (111). With *The Meeting of the School Trustees*, Harris was immortalizing Kate and all those other women fighting to pull down the "Victorian man [...] from his pinnacle of righteous self-complacency" (111). The universality of women's oppression struck Harris and remained with him as he painted Kate and her kind to life.

¹³ English-born Harris was not oblivious to the intellectual trends in Europe and North America. Prior to painting his Island subject Kate, Harris had spent considerable time in England, France, and United States acquiring a familiarity with the great masters and developing a sensitivity to their technique and treatment of their subjects. Having just completed what was to become his most famous work *The Fathers of Confederation*, Harris was ripe to take on a more passionate subject. It was no coincidence that he was newly married and had reasonable financial security, so he could break from his commissioned portraits of the upper-class Canadian establishment. Paintings of his wife Bessie (*Bessie in her Wedding Gown*, 1885; *Harmony*, 1886), teacher Kate (*A Meeting of a School Trustees*, 1885) and male and female teachers (*The Local Stars*, 1888) all position women as the central figures on the canvas. Such paintings invite the viewer to perceive women as important subjects in their own right, instigators of change to be observed and taken note of.

Robert Harris, in his realistic depiction of Kate Harrison, is like a child at play who gets his “fingers and mind around objects otherwise alien and imposing” (Brooks 1). Harris’s painting provides a location for understanding the complexities of this new era by presenting the new woman of the modern age. Realism and its reliance on sight and first impressions attempts to reproduce the look and feel of the object; here, the representation of Kate Henderson represents what Brooks explains as “the struggle of imaginative forms and styles to emerge that would do greater justice to the language of ordinary men and to the meaning of unexceptional human experience” (7).

Perceiving the autobiographical artifact exclusively as a realist depiction of life ignores the author/creator’s role in the artifact. The artist—visual or textual—exemplifies more than a “naïve photographer, a belief in the ‘innocent’ disinterested eye of the camera which simply, as if immediately, represents the real” (Docherty 242). Diarist Lucy Palmer was not merely pasting her life on the pages of her diary but was generating her life through the cumulative effect of writing, reading, and reflecting on her own life’s experiences, producing a text of her life in a mediated form. Palmer was engaged in a literary pursuit not unlike the “highly complex, over determined process with many different and conflicting literary and non-literary determinants (historical, political, social, ideological, institution, generic, psychological, and so on)” described by Toril Moi (45).

Palmer provides a testimony of a relatively ordinary life in her approximately twenty unpublished diaries, written from 1884 to 1943. The culmination of the rise in literacy and women’s assertion of their presence by exercising their literacy has left numerous documents such as diaries and letters that have survived the culling of attics, disasters, and family censorship. A PEI woman’s diary was one of the few outlets of personal expression. When life revolved around the family and the immediate community and varied little from one community to another, she would tease out the details of her everyday to maintain her own human dignity and preserve a memory of her times. Perceiving the diary as a memoir, the genre of recollection, or “a generic response to the vital task of designing memory [one which] employs rhetoric values and procedures to fulfil the task” (Struever 427) encourages the reader/researcher to uncover the surrounding discourses in women’s lives.

As a writing subject on the brink of modernism, Palmer was hovering between the traditional dogma of domesticity, conduct literature, and church while taking delight in the act of creating her “personal singularity” (Porter 3) in

her diary. Her Protestantism sent her on this soul-searching mission, which she documented in a form most accommodating to her gender, the autobiographical one; for the boundaries of her self were yet to be defined. With her diary, she could turn the random events of her life into a rational plot, one where she was the subject, author, and reader of the story. As Jody Greene succinctly puts it, “autobiography [...] is a seemingly natural site for those wanting to locate the modern subject at the moment of its historical emergence” (18).

Lucy's Bonshaw Diary

With such an artistic display of Kate Henderson in her professional milieu, one would anticipate that when Lucy Palmer took up her pen to write out her teaching experiences there would be an opportunity to grasp the more subtle details of a teacher's life. Initially, however, Palmer appears to be overcome by reticence and unable to account directly for what happened in her classroom. Instead, she resorts to strategies such as writing around the classroom events or taking up other themes, giving the impression that her new career is not important or that she has not the language with which to capture the experience. Up until this point, her diary flows along like her older sister Lilly's domestic memoir; but her early accounts of her life while teaching demonstrate her uncertainty.

The back of the black, weathered scribbler diary bears the note, “Began to teach in Bonshaw Sept 29th 1884.” The diary entry for that day, however, reads, “Baby a little quieter,” indicating that her sister Lilly's newborn's health takes precedence over her own new teaching venture. Palmer seems to lack the language to write her budding professionalism and entry into the more public sphere in her journal. Under the influence of the inherited traditions of the Victorian era, which idolized spirituality and domesticity, forging a new discourse for the modern woman was problematic. Victorian women's autobiography revolved primarily around traditions of spiritual autobiography, family memoirs, and *chroniques scandaleuses* (Peterson 4); but Palmer's inherited discourse of church, family, and conduct literature had definite expectations of piety, patience, and endurance (53). The agenda for female authorship, “its stylistic simplicity, and its freedom from writerly pretension and pride” (52), were the virtues women were expected to extol.

Prior to her Bonshaw entry of 1884, Palmer's textual strategies reflect her domestic settings, and yet once removed from that location her narrative does not

directly depict her new setting. Instead, her diary narrative represses, substitutes, creates links to other topics, and occasionally reaches dead-ends in much the way Peterson has indicated Victorian women autobiographers did when confronted with a new situation. Palmer's diary gives few accounts of her actual experiences in the classroom but instead focuses on the weather and road conditions on the journey to and from school: "Frostiest day that has been for years, it was 18 below zero, drove to school, no fire when I got there only 10 scholars" (December 20, 1884); in the margin of the text, a bird is drawn, with the words "come Birdie come & live with me." The entry provides a gloomy image of Palmer struggling through the harsh Island winter only to find a cold classroom of a few scholars. Her response was to seek solace in the thought of another season and the comfort of a bird as her companion. She could not utter the discomfort of the moment, so she repressed or diverted her narrative into a visual illustration of hope for a better day.

After her Christmas holiday, Lucy resumes her teaching: "Pa & Aggie [her younger sister, b. 1871] drove me down to school. Aggie stayed in my school all day. Very bad head-ache in evening. Ida [her older sister, b. 1858] came down after both of us & took Bertie up also" (January 26, 1885). Coming to and from school dominates her diary discourse; she minimizes her place of work and pays attention to family members who not only accompany her to and from school but also remain with her in the classroom, providing a domestic familiarity in the school setting. Her physical reaction shows that the job is demanding, even with her family there supporting her.

Again, on January 29, she writes, "Storming hard drove over to the school very few children, dismissed them & came back." For the next few months, she writes about the treacherous journeys to and from school but little about her job. Her uncertainty as a young teacher does not find utterance in the diary; nor does the diarist find words to put the experience on paper. The classroom experience remains unexplored, as the new teacher writes herself into dead-end narratives about her work.

One very important teaching day does finally merit a series of inscriptions. On April 28, 1885, she writes, "Cyrus & Mr MacRae went to town from Harris' [?] wharf in steamer. Sent an invitation to DRC today to come and examine my school." For the next few days, she writes about how she "drilled" the scholars: "Very busy drilling my scholars, got sick & fainted in school. Barney left [...] Very cold blowy night" (May 3, 1885). Like Kate in the painting, Palmer is called to account by the authorities. Her physical reaction of feeling sick and

fainting culminate in her reference to the adverse weather, perhaps one of the few references to the uniqueness of challenges in her new life situation. At the end of the day, in her cryptic style, she confesses to having survived both the professional challenge of teaching and the elements.

On June 29, 1885, with the term coming to an end, she writes about a wedding, visiting Mrs Crosby, fishing with Bertha until dark and then, finally, she notes, “We were still fishing when [*sic*] the trustees came looking for me about staying in the school longer although I had bid all my scholars goodbye not intending to go back. I told them I would let them know by thursday.” Palmer’s narrative repression of her teaching duties, possibly in order to maintain her own integrity and hide her uncertainty, gives way to a more confident voice to articulate her survival to the end of term and her success. With the busyness and her obvious stress over the examination of both herself and her pupils behind her, her confidence has developed. She adopts the composure of Kate Henderson when meeting the establishment; however, this latest entry does report her decision to terminate her career as a teacher, at least at the Bonshaw school.

Lucy’s Malpeque Diary

In the larger arena of artistic images of the time, women were being depicted as Madonna, seductress and muse, but in PEI the few images of women that were projected came from the local press in the form of Victorian women apparently concerned with preserving and maintaining their reproductive capability and being good mothers. The beauty product ads did hint at women being attractive for their own sake and possibly being prepared for a world outside the traditional family circle. In this light, Lucy of Ozendyke’s story could be the real-life embodiment of a woman who textually articulates through her journal the mindset of a female who confronts the male establishment, challenges this stereotypical image, and enters the work force as a teacher.

Reading Lucy Palmer’s Malpeque diaries corresponds with Perreault and Kadar’s emphasis in “Tracing the Autobiographical: Unlikely Documents, Unexpected Places” (2005) on the practice of reading for auto/biographical insight. Selecting Palmer’s text of her transition to a new location for closer reading further focuses on those aspects detrimental to her subjectivity at this time in her life and also for other PEI women destined to work in the public sector. As Rosi Braidotti points out, however, “woman is not a monolithic essence

defined once and for all but rather the site of multiple, complex, and potentially contradictory sets of experiences, defined by overlapping variables such as class, race, age, lifestyle, sexual preference, and others” (4). Three axes where Palmer’s assertion of her subjectivity will be explored are, first, her transition in the public sphere as a female teacher, second, her practice, as a teacher, of her gendered self and, third, her idiosyncratic and discreet textual practices of scribing matters of the heart.

Palmer’s Malpeque journals, named here after the community where she taught from 1887 to 1890, are the artistic/textual representation of a nineteenth century teacher’s life. When she embarked on the train to Malpeque, she no doubt knew that there was no turning back to life as the farm girl of Ozendyke. When she picked up her diary on the other side of the Island, she was well aware of the genre’s expectations. Her diary story would bear some similarities to the conventions of her old diary and that of her sister’s, but it would take some new turns. She had already sensed that a different life would herald a document reflecting that life, and the uncertainty of life and the writing of it haunted her. Her new diary would play an important role in the person she was to become and her relocation in a new community would prove important in the constitution of her subjectivity. Her diary would serve as a site for exposing the challenges of her new setting. The social setting of Malpeque and the social and professional contexts it presented to Palmer are woven in her diary creating a coherent narrative that sustained her. As the reflexive project of the self, the diary would as Ian Burkitt maintains re-enact the paradox of agency; it would continue to be revised. Breaking up the previous structures of her life, home, family, and social circles by her move to Malpeque demanded that Palmer reconstruct her identity in the face of this fragmentation.

Letters kept the Palmer sisters in touch when their paths separated, but Lucy’s diary would allow a more immediate and intimate report of her daily activities away from home. For Palmer, as for her contemporaries of the late nineteenth century, women’s professional training was justified by reference to family values. Women teachers, as Martha Vicenies explains in “Independent Women” (1995), passed from their real families into the substitute families of the college and from there women would extend their caring role into the public sphere. Lucy Palmer, the Victorian subject, had taken the opportunity to enter the public domain and was a perfect candidate for inculcating middle-class ideals and practices. Her Bonshaw diary narrative already indicates that Palmer is awakening to the world outside the domestic spheres of Ozendyke and Birchwood and is responding

textually by attempting to depict it. Now in Malpeque, she would expand her narrative scope to match her ever-increasing involvement as the female teaching professional.

Well beyond the mid-twentieth century, the two-story Fanning School building stood in a stately though dilapidated state at the intersection of two roads in Malpeque. Today, remnants of the school can be found in the museum located within nearby Cabot Park, on the site where L.M. Montgomery's *Emily of New Moon* was filmed. There former students of Fanning School reminisce about the one-room schools and their experiences. No doubt the desks in this museum were the same ones their grandparents sat in when in 1887 Miss Lucy Bardon Palmer entered the classroom. Lucy's diary from the period 1887 to 1890, when she was a teacher in Fanning School and living in the community of Malpeque, exposes the life of a young nineteenth-century woman professional in more detail. This diary is less conspicuous, a small notebook that she appears to have confiscated from her sister Amelia, who had used it to record knitting patterns. Despite its humble appearance, this flimsy notebook remains a valuable source of information concerning the next phase in Lucy's teaching career.

Response to Transition

Comparing Lucy with other young women teacher diarists like her own sister Amelia, teaching in a nearby community, and Violet Goldsmith, teaching in the western part of the Island, both contemporaries of Lucy, reveals similarities and differences in their responses to their transition to the public sphere. Both Lucy Palmer and Goldsmith address the uncertainty of what type of diary they should now write in their new circumstances. Amelia expresses her emotions through other texts, often Biblical verse or hymns, indicating the difficulty of finding her own words and her reliance on the emotional responses of others. All three women grow increasingly articulate in airing their assertiveness whether it be acting as a vanguard of etiquette or publicly displaying the moral fibre of their sex.

Lucy Palmer's diary evolves into a full account of how she redefines her self in the professional setting as a female teacher who upholds the gendered aspects of the school system. Her recording of her performance in the roles of teaching handcrafts, delegating discipline to her male colleague, and dealing with the emotional trauma of her students, indicates how she brought traditional female attributes into the classroom and part of her budding professional identity.

In her new community, Violet Goldsmith immediately adopts the role of moral authority and confidently attempts to guide the people there to a morally higher ground. Her diary entries on these episodes are verbally profuse, suggesting that Goldsmith perceives herself as an extension of her father's ministry.

As single women in the public arena, Lucy and Amelia Palmer and Violet Goldsmith were under the close scrutiny of the people in their new communities. Their diaries became accounts of their living up to their social obligations and living meaningful lives as young women. Unlike her sister Amelia, Lucy employed more discrete textual strategies when writing about matters of the heart. She gives the impression of conscientiously obeying the behaviour standards expected of teachers while abiding by the norms of behaviour for good women prescribed by conduct literature and the church. Amelia's diary appears as an account book of her social encounters, particularly with the opposite sex.

Textualizing the Uncertainty of Self

Lucy Palmer's self-awareness and her constructing of this becoming self as subject is most obvious in her apprehension towards her documentation of her new life in Malpeque in her diary. The uncertainty she experienced in Bonshaw is reiterated more directly in Malpeque when she confronts her diary with the problem of what to write. Like other young women teacher diarists of her time, she acknowledges her uncertainty directly in her journal as an attempt to come to terms with it. After a year teaching in Malpeque, she is still haunted by what her "new" diary should look like: "1st January 1888 I am now in Malpeque teaching and have started this new Diary hoping to find something of interest to put in it before it is filled." The entry obliquely expresses her doubts about whether her life, in this transitional time of building a career in the public sphere, will offer details worthy of record. Previously in her Bonshaw diary Lucy would only record the toll of headaches or fainting spells this change of status took on her. Within her new niche, she expresses her uncertainty more directly.

So too did Violet Goldsmith, another young Island teacher, who at the onset of her diary also expresses apprehension in fulfilling the diary contract. Goldsmith has just returned home to Alberton, in western PEI, from Prince of Wales College, the same teacher-training college Lucy Palmer had earlier attended, when she muses: "I wonder if I shall ever write the last page of this book? If so, I wonder where I will be then? God only knows" (June 7, 1900). Returning with

her teaching credentials to the security of her home community was not a leap into the unknown, but both she and Palmer were establishing their (re-)entry as professional women into these communities with some uncertainty. They were instilled with the Victorian ideals of women's role at home, school, church and in society at large, yet they were adhering to the call for their participation as educators. For Goldsmith and Palmer, both living within the traditional parameters of women's sphere in 1880s rural PEI, the diary was a safe place for scribing their female subjectivity. Their diaries would document their passage through this period of transition from Victorianism to modernism.

The first page of entries in Lucy's 1887 diary contains neatly penned entries on how she is transported from Kensington through a heavy snow storm by a delegation of men from the community of Malpeque. The following day, the male trustees appear, and then her landlord Mr. Clark takes her to her new "home" and from there to the school, where she meets the scholars and her colleague Mr. Sutherland. Lucy writes a few letters, begins a new rug and claims to be busy reading *David Copperfield*. A break in her reserved textualization of these initial weeks takes place when the girls and women befriend the new teacher by invitations to tea and walks on the shore. Eventually, the whole community gathers round Lucy, her diary entries fill up with names of young people like Nellie, Bessie, Jack and Rob with whom she travels throughout the countryside exploring her new surroundings: "drove down to the breakwater, it was just lovely there were a dozen large vessels in, we gathered piles of moss & dulce & pretty sea grasses, it was dark when we got home" (July 22, 1887). By the time Lucy Palmer returns to her Ozendyke home in October, her diary has become an account of constant invitations to various homes, regular accounts of church-going activity, and stories of the people of Malpeque and the surrounding districts.

In her own diary, Violet Goldsmith writes how she temporarily re-enters her father's household in Alberton and will soon abandon those dear familiar teacher friends to follow her preacher father on a new life in the neighbouring province, New Brunswick. In her last days on PEI while cleaning the parsonage and packing up the family belongings, she weaves the story of her classmates Bessie and Eva who would stay behind to teach. On one morning, she hitches the horse and drives Eva eighteen miles to her school in Cape Woolfe:

We left here a little after six and got there about nine. It was a perfect morning and we enjoyed the drive. We went to Mr. Costain's and had a lunch and then to school. I heard the fourth & the second class for her. I left at recess and got home in early afternoon. (July 9, 1900)

Violet's recounting of those last days in the familiar surroundings of her Alberton home, basking in her childhood landscapes, gives way to a document of her locating in a new community. In Alberton, Violet is a young woman who had the license to move freely in her life as in her text, unconstrained, but she would soon be relocating and her diary documents the void in her life caused by leaving home, and as a consequence would leave a similar void in her diary. On October 17, 1900, she writes, "I am sorry I did not write in my Journal the last few weeks, After many ups and downs I am at last in charge of a school of my own." The upheaval of relocation and finally finding her place leaves a gap in her diary, one that Violet manoeuvres over with an apology and confession.

Lucy's sister Amelia did the same, following a gap in her diary with the enthusiasm of an inspirational verse:

Laugh and the world laughs with you
Weep and you weep alone
For the sad old earth must borrow its mirth
But has trouble enough of its own
Rejoice and men will seek you
Grieve and they turn and go
They want full measure of all your pleasure
But they do not need your woe. (1887)

This short verse is squeezed into a space at the end of "Just as God leads me," almost as a reminder to maintain a positive outlook on life in order to be desirable company. In Amelia's smaller and more concise diary, she writes out numerous poems suggesting her love of verse, particularly those poems associated with religion. Neatly scribed are verses from hymns such as "The Christian Secret of a Happy Life," "Just as God Leads Me On," "There Is No Death," and "The Changed Cross."

Transcribing verse into her little black diary frees Amelia from searching for her own words. Her sentiments are found in the transcribed hymns and verses where she subsequently builds up the narrative of a good woman with accounts of her church related activities: listening to a guest preacher (December 2, 1887), attending choir practice (December 3, 1887), participating in a clerical association meeting (December 4, 1887), receiving communion (December 5, 1887), and attending prayer meetings (December 6, 1887). Her diary is as a place to exercise her own literacy, that which she should cultivate in her pupils, while immortalizing her favourite psalms. Her journals became primarily a

catch all, for a variety of texts that by their selection and copying indicate their significance to her. Transcription of texts demonstrates familiarity with the Bible through reading and, as Protestants, Goldsmith and the Palmer sisters had the advantage over their Catholic sisters of being encouraged to independently engage with the Bible. This fact, combined with the confessional nature of the diary, offered Protestants the opportunity to express independently that inner space of selfhood so crucial to women and modernity (Stanley 45).

Meanwhile, Lucy Palmer records attending prayer meetings, practicing on the organ, singing in the choir and attending missionary meetings while providing a commentary on how she was affected by sermons and engaged in social encounters associated with church events:

All drove up to Church. Roads pretty bad. Mr. Millan preached a good sermon for it being Easter Sunday from Luke XXIV 34. Flo had her fattened turkey for dinner & we had great fun as we thought we would get somebody to help us eat it but not a soul came from church, so we enjoyed it ourselves. Drove up to Prayer Meeting in evening, minister read the 27th chapter of Acts spoke [...] Charlie Black was there & took Edith home from Church. Will R made arrangements for us to visit John Montgomery's tomorrow evening. (April 6, 1890)

Her journal serves as the repository for her church activity where her religious commitment is taken for granted as a ritual of religious and social activity:

We had some nice playing & singing from them. Then supper came and after that John MacGougan dressed up as a minister and delivered a mock sermon and when he finished that they coaxed him to recite another piece which was still more comical, he had us in fits with laughing. (January 27, 1888)

So much is Palmer compelled to report her affiliation with the church that, when she fails to attend, she confesses her absence in her diary: "We didn't go to church, strolled around all day & in the evening Jack & I drove A into Kensington coming back we got a large bunch of 'Lilies of the Valley' it rained heavy all night" (July 24, 1887). Amelia's visit and her outing with Jack divert Lucy from church. Beneath the solemn words of hymns and reference to liturgy is the author's intent to develop an account and cultivate in the diary the basic tenets of a good life as determined by the conduct literature of her childhood home—spirituality, domesticity, and womanliness. Entering into their new communities, the Palmer

sisters' narratives cling to the home-grown values of religion, and their diaries demonstrate that the recording and auditing of their lives was an admonition to them to make good of their God-given life on earth.

These confessional aspects of the diary allude to the fact that women, regardless of faith, were compelled to monitor themselves in living up to socio-religious expectations.¹⁴ Catholic women confessed to a priest as part of their religious commitment and refrained from the sinfulness of the self-indulgence of diary writing.¹⁵ What the Catholic woman engaged in through confessing her sins to a priest was an external system of surveillance in which regulation and requirement were associated with organization, power, and audit (45).¹⁶ Protestant women like Goldsmith and Amelia and Lucy Palmer (and all the Island women diarists studied here) did not have the option, nor were they obliged to participate in a ritual where they revealed their innermost lives and their shortcomings to a male authority acting as a mediator between the woman sinner and her God. If a Protestant woman had the need to confess, it was an “internal” act of self-surveillance in her journal within its inherent structure and linguistic references.

The diary is precisely the place to confess not only one's breaking the autobiographical pact but also to plead for forgiveness for this “sin.” From May 6th to July 9th Lucy Palmer took a break from her teaching duties in Malpeque to return home to Ozendyke. Re-capping the interlude from work and diary keeping, she writes, “June all gone and I did not write a word in this about it” (May 7–July 17, 1887). She then proceeds to relate the key events. She clearly feels compelled to maintain the writing pact; this interruption is a lapse. She develops a new strategy for filling the gap, admitting to the fact before her re-entry into Malpeque when she writes, “It rained all this week, lots of scholars in School. Think the new teacher Fulton will be nice, was down to his house to tea. The Margate Hearse is all the talk now” (July 1887). Similarly, after a period of transition from PEI to her new home in New Brunswick, Violet Goldsmith writes, “I am sorry I did not write in my journal the last few weeks. After

¹⁴ The diary is generally associated with the act of confession, the most famous being St. Augustine's *Confessions* (397–401) described as “a self-portrait of the soul as guilty sinner” (Porter 2).

¹⁵ For Catholics, non-spiritual diaries that reflected on the self represented what was sinful: “selfishness was the archetype of all sin [...] self denial was the supreme good, as expressed in monastic rule; saints and mystics transcended their selfness in divine love” (Porter 2).

¹⁶ On the basis of the diaries examined here, one can conclude that diary keeping was not a preoccupation of Catholic Island women, as in my search for diaries none appeared.

many ups and downs I am at last in charge of a school of my own" (October 17, 1900). Words like Goldsmith's— "I am," "I did not," "I am"—a triad of refrains, resemble the *mea culpa, mea culpa, mea maximum culpa* of the Catholic Act of Contrition, said aloud to seek forgiveness from a priest. Instead, Goldsmith's journal utterance contains an empowerment potential and a system for auditing her day-to-day existence herself, before moving on.

The confessional impetus for the keeping of a diary gave Protestant woman the opportunity to advance their literacy and develop a discourse undoubtedly influenced by the discourse of church and the fact that they, more than their Catholic sisters, were encouraged to read and study the Bible. Other variables contributed to Island Protestant women's advancement as diary keepers, namely the educational institutions that admitted them to become teachers. Both Lucy Palmer and Violet Goldsmith (in addition to Lucy Maud Montgomery) attended Prince of Wales College, which became coeducational in 1879 and was nondenominational or inter-denominational; this led many Roman Catholics to label the college Protestant. Some Catholic women barred from the corresponding Catholic university (St. Dunstan's University, established 1854) also attended Prince of Wales College. Most female Catholic educators were nuns and had acquired their training as teachers while in convents.

The Historically Gendered Woman Teacher

Teachers were expected to maintain high moral standards and live by example. Standards extend from the practical duties of keeping the school warm and clean to behavioural conduct. Men could use one evening a week for courting, two if the male teacher went to church regularly, and women teachers who married or engaged in unseemly conduct would be dismissed. Reading the Bible was encouraged, but only after ten hours in school. Women's diaries give further testimony as to how women cultivated an identity within these expectations. The events of their everyday lives revolved around church activities, and numerous incidents from their diaries illustrate the budding moral superiority teachers were meant to adopt.

Between October 1900 and May 1901, a few pages in Violet Goldsmith's diary suffice to record some of the more memorable incidents of that period:

Yesterday was one of the most exciting days of my life. At school at recess a man came along with a dog and set him & Bingo fighting. I asked him to part them and he refused. Then I made the children go in and take their places. Several of them were crying. Then I told him that if they must fight they were not to do it on the school grounds. (November 30, 1900)

By her use of personal pronouns “my” and “I” (three times), Goldsmith takes up a position of authority in her diary when confronting the male dog owner. Unlike Palmer, Emma Chadwich Stretch, and Amy Andrew, Violet’s self-referencing raises questions about how she so confidently asserts her self when other women diarists deflate the self in their text.

The daughter of a church minister, Goldsmith continues cultivating and asserting her moral superiority in her new sphere in New Brunswick. She is obviously proud of her stamina as the incident jettisons her back into keeping her diary after a considerable silence. She continues by relating incidents where she took command of the situation as the minister’s daughter and school teacher. Immediately after the above incident, she writes:

Mr. & Mrs. Holmes went to Fredericton Wed. & Mr. H. came home drunk. The trainmen dumped him on the Siding & he was there some time before we knew it. Miss Gills, [?] the girl Mrs. H. left in charge & I went down and brought him home. When we got there we found the house full of company. We got a fire on in the parlor & got the company in there. Mr. H had a bottle of whiskey with him and I ran down the hill with it, broke it against the fence. He was cross when they first told [him?], but he is glad now. He feels very much ashamed of himself this morning.

In contrast to Lucy’s narrative on her first days in Malpeque and her being taken in by the community, Violet’s response to her new position and people in her community was more authoritarian, protecting the children and upholding particular moral values. Strengthened, perhaps, by the presence of her father and her status as a minister’s daughter, Violet writes herself into a hero position vis-à-vis the milieu in which she moves.

Lucy Palmer writes as if to blend into the social fabric of her locale and become “one of them.” Her obvious desire to live according to the norms of the community by attending church regularly and functioning in church-related activities, and integrating into the social network by visiting the sick and dying are all communicated with pride in her diary: “Went to church in evening Rev John McMillan preached, like him very much, it lightened very brightly when

were walking home” (July 31, 1887). She is fulfilling the expectations her new community had for her as a teacher and model to the young people she was to educate:

All went to church Mr. McMillan preached a splendid sermon from St John IX 25. It began to storm in afternoon & stormed all the evening but that did not stop us from going to Bible Class. There were only about two dozen there, but we enjoyed it all the more. Polly was here to dinner & came back after Bible Class & stayed all night. (March 23, 1890)

Palmer’s communal identification is linguistically marked by her absence of self-referencing; instead, she writes collectively as “all,” “two dozen” and “we.”

Both women’s texts provide a historical perspective on the development of a feminist consciousness. The self-consciousness about themselves as women moving more freely than their predecessors in their communities and mingling with authority figures such as the school trustees and church ministers inevitably gives them the prerogative to interact more gregariously as authority figures. Their self-representation as morally astute women in the shadow of the church represents a legacy of women in the early stages of a struggle to build a healthy relationship with sacred and social institutions and become more inclusive in the religious sphere from which they have been as women historically ostracized.

By writing themselves into the public sphere as single women, moving as Lucy Palmer and Violet Goldsmith do, actively participating in church activities and enforcing moral uprightness in their midst, they have cast themselves as precursors of contemporary feminist critical consciousness. As women engaged with the power of the scriptures, they maintain a relationship with the church as an institution. By their involvement, these women maintained and broadened women’s role in the church and were an instrumental link in women’s challenge to church patriarchy.

Professionally Astute

Lucy Palmer’s ever more expansive narrative strategies develop her *journal intime* from the paratactical format to one where she performs as a modern woman subject. Her modernity manifests itself as her early trepidations are abandoned when she writes herself into a world reflecting the gendered roles of female teachers. Her diary is an early example of a woman constructing the life

she lives, the life that is hers as shown above when she writes herself out of her family sphere and into a new community in her narrative of self and us.

Shades of her old life and the hues of her new one incrementally fuse making patterns in her inscriptions of her life. The grains of her experience cumulatively fix themselves together morphologically as a kind of artifact. On April 4, 1887, in Malpeque, Palmer's text when compared to her Bonshaw diary entry recording her encounter with the trustees suggests the development of a more confident self. Nevertheless, when compared to her entries on social events this account is indeed trite: "The Trustees came & we agreed about the school & Mr Clark came up & took me to down to my boarding house & from there to school. I had 14 scholars first day." The bluntness of her entry suggests that she is keen to be explicit in her diary narrative. Instead of burying the encounter with the male trustees within the entry as she does in Bonshaw, she thrusts the event to the forefront of her text. Here, Lucy Palmer stands close to Kate Henderson, the female subject who finds a position from which to assert her presence in the public arena. Soon afterwards, she recaps the visit of the trustees, giving primary attention to the weather and walking conditions: "Beautiful day walking quite dry. Three Trustees visited our school to see how we were getting on" (May 4, 1887). Her nonchalance in this entry, giving textual priority to the day's weather, indicates that she has acquired a position of ease vis-à-vis these authority figures. This transition in her reporting style shows her capability in manoeuvring as an independent being both in life and in her textual account of it.

Lucy Palmer represents the Victorian woman subject who documents both thematically and narratively her entry into the male-dominated public domain. Not only do her autobiographical texts indicate the conditions of the historical shift that gave women entry into new professions, but her *journal intime* emphasizes the autobiographical performance's role in creating Lucy, the writing subject. Radstone elaborates on this process: "Recent histories of autobiography have moved from understanding autobiography as a reflection of historical shifts in the ontology of the subject to an emphasis upon the constitutive role of autobiographical text in the production of subjectivity" (203).

Beyond Lucy's encounter with the school trustees of Bonshaw and Malpeque, and her inscription indicating her response to the male authorities, other more daily occurrences demonstrate her assertion of herself as a woman. Part of Lucy's performance of her gender was in the classroom with her young girl students, and it was inevitable that this work would be part of her daily account in her diary. Since she shared her teaching responsibilities with a male colleague, the

segregation of pupils on the basis of sex and the teaching of gender-specific subjects were all part of the details of professional practice Lucy accounts for in her diary, ones gendering both the men and women teachers and the students:

Roads fearfully wet. Books in the library. Mr Sutherland took all my boys up to his room in evening to reprove them for using improper language outside of the school. Three were found guilty Russell Ramsay, Issac Peters, Gordon Murphy. I hope all the rest will learn a lesson from it. (April 11, 1887)

The male teacher takes responsibility for disciplining the boys while she focuses on the softer issues of helping pupils deal with emotions. Palmer's ease with this division of labour, as evidenced by the cohesion and flow of sentiment with which she accounts for dealing with one scholar's bereavement with her class, illustrate her familiarity with acting as a maternal figure: "This evening poor little Tommy Craig was drowned while playing with a little boat" (August 18, 1887). Subsequent entries document the school and the community's ritual processing of grief and loss:

nineteenth August 1887

We all gathered at the school this morning but had to dismiss all the scholars completely broke down when they all got seated & no Tommy with them. It was like a funeral procession going from behind everybody was so sad. In the evening I collected some bright geraniums & mignonette & made a very pretty wreath & took it down to be laid on the coffin.

twentieth August 1887

Tommy was buried this morning with six of his little school-friends for Pall-bearers

As in other women's diaries, loss is expressed through actions rather than a description of emotions, but Palmer is clearly monitoring her students' progress here.

Handwork also dominates Palmer's journal entries and becomes a way to perform collectively with other women and girls a common feminine preoccupation. Peterson writes about Victorian women taking up either the "pen or pin" but in Lucy's case she uses her pen to scribe her pin's activity. Lucy simultaneously writes about the symbolic inscription of hooking, sewing, knitting, quilting, crocheting, and embroidery: "Girls down in my room at the

two recesses talking as usual [...] Girls busy hooking their mat, going to look very pretty” (March 22, 1890).

Female camaraderie and inculcation of female preoccupations were sites for Palmer to write about her acceptance and joy in her role as a woman teacher. Her text demonstrates that she obviously warmed to the idea of girls seeking her company, even during recess time when they flocked to Miss Palmer’s room to hook their mats. For the young teacher, it was an indication of her acceptance by these young girls on another level, as an adult in her performance as a mentor of feminine preoccupations. Such handwork scenarios were easy topics for inscription as this was part of women’s traditional work as the cohesiveness of the handwork entries shows: “We had the sewing Circle meet in the school & had great fun, all took their tea with them & we had a regular picnic, all enjoyed themselves more than at any other Circle. I am working a very pretty toilet set of garnet & light blue” (March 29, 1890).

Handwork, like the *journal intime*, was a private practice of women’s self-expression, a way of carrying ideas and symbols through time from one generation or even one community to another.¹⁷ Palmer’s journal indicates that the integration of academic tasks and the more practical skills of crocheting often took place on her visits to her neighbours’ homes. Here the unspoken intimacy among women as fostered by Palmer with her scholars was once again reinforced.

The social and professional interaction with her pupils and community make up the bulk of the diary’s entries, generally written in long descriptive passages acknowledging her existence in a new setting. By opening the door to spaces previously unoccupied by her sex, Palmer was participating in an activity exhibiting what Giddens refers to as an assertion of modern personhood. Palmer’s autobiography is her act of recognition of her self as understood in terms of her biography. As a key actor, she epitomizes the new role for Island women engaged in the modernist project of asserting themselves on this new turf in their life writing. The autobiographical process of writing and her reflection on the “text of self” illustrates “the core of self-identity in modern life” (52–54).

¹⁷ Women’s various inscription projects of diary writing, handcraft and women’s talk were often regarded as marginal to other activity and done in “off time,” when more meaningful tasks were completed. The commonly held assumption of handwork as “making something out of nothing” or “making nothing out of something” (Lippard 62–65) has been equally applied to diary keeping. Both were considered a harmless activity that kept women from dabbled into the more important things in life.

Judging by the relatively limited number of entries of short duration on her actual teaching, Palmer's articulation as a subject defined by her engagement in the public sphere can be best grasped through her social and religious activity, which generated more lengthy entries. As with the home and school encounters, community and church overlap in Palmer's diary indicating a blurring of themes in what evolves as domestic/professional/social/spiritual journal writing:

Last part of this week was a series of storms from Wednesday until Sunday. On Thursday I went to school though a bit fearful but only found three scholars so came back. On Friday it was just as bad but still I went & again only found three. Fulton took them up into his room and [...] I got my work & got Mr. C. to drive me over to Mr. MacNutts. Here [...] Jamey & I studied out some grammar [...] then after dinner I taught J. a crocheting pattern. I learnt some patterns for darned lace. When the evening came they wouldn't here to me coming home so I stayed all night & slept with Jamey. (January 1888)

Palmer's diary records the companionship she sought to compensate for the family and community she left behind; she brings her skills in handwork and grammar in exchange for the warmth of friendship. This detail acknowledges her recognition of how she is gaining appreciation and acceptance by the people of Malpeque, through traditional feminine activities. Her success encourages her to preserve these moments in her memoir.

Her journal narrative becomes the story of the emergence of Palmer the empathetic woman/teacher: "Poor little Annie had been out of school for 3 weeks & was so glad to see me that she sat on my knee nearly all evening" (April 4, 1890). Her empathy towards Annie is returned with Annie's affection, like an exchange of commodities. Her initially terse uncertainties in her diary gives way to her participation in the community as a full-fledged member and her recounting in long passages the delight of this "belongedness," thus her position as the "relational female subject" (Chodorow 169) is reaffirmed.

Discrete Textuality

Palmer creates her own discourse to express within a closed system of representation just how her desires were or were not being fulfilled. Confined to her boarding home because of snowstorms, she seeks refuge at a neighbour's

home where she stays for a few days. After days of social isolation, her desire for human companionship is met.

18th January 1888 [...] I got my work & got Mr. C to drive me over to Mr. MacNutts. I couldn't stand another whole holiday home here. They made me very welcome.

21st January 1888 Storming just as bad, we had a splendid time all day

22nd January 1888 Lovely fine day but fearful frosty, after breakfast I started up here.

As a single woman of twenty-three, her life (and her diary) is not without the presence of the opposite sex:

Jack M & I, Tom Ed & Jamie all drive up to the Carnival in evening. A lovely moonlight night [...] had a lovely time home about started 12 o'clock under a very heavy white frost & bright, bright moonlight night. Got home around 2 o'clock, started to bed made some hot ginger tea (January 31, 1888)

Her topically tight control of her narrative makes the tensions, contradictions, hesitations, and working back and forth, typically apparent in unpublished life writing, problematic to decipher. Apprehensiveness for women in relation to their social position has generated textual responses such as silence, or diversion of topic, or writing on something more positive in order to avoid dealing with any unpleasant or taboo linked situation or topic (see Amy Andrew's gaps in the post-nuptial period of her diary 1912, discussed above). An intertextual reading of Palmer's abundant and opaque texts of belonging, juxtaposed with entries suggesting more subliminal undertones, allows exploration of her representation of her self as a modern female subject.

Palmer's teacher sister Amelia writes with more frequency and detail of going out with men, using her diary almost exclusively as an affirmation of her desirability. She recounts, "went for a drive before school with Mr. M. and Maggie" (January 1, 1887), and then again a few days later notes, "Mr. Haslam from Springfield took me for a drive before practice." By contrast, Palmer's strategy is less conspicuous; she dreams of sleigh rides, masking her desire in moonlit encounters: "It is the loveliest moonlight night that I was ever out but not a breath of wind, how I would love a sleigh drive" (January 28, 1888).

Her numerous entries on the appeal of being out in the moonlit night, on the road and in a sleigh suggest her way of inscribing a physicality and emotional need to connect with the larger universe. Recording such practices again and again, Palmer re-enacts a performance of these desires. Such entries reiterate what Sidonie Smith refers to as “cultural practices that surface on the body and through the body to get at the emergence of the autoiographical subject” (270).

The sisters’ recordings of similar events illustrate their individual responses to romance in their journals. Amelia writes, “Lucy & Peter Mac Neill drove in from Malpeque. He went to S’Side by train she stayed with me all night. Had great fun in evening. Mr. Mc Nutt got her to take a glass of whiskey. J.A.M. in for” (January 1, 1889). Lucy continuously and indirectly diverted her interest into romance by writing of another’s romantic attachments: “Charlie Black was there & took Edith home from church” (April 6, 1890).

Lucy Palmer does hedge around the issue of romance in her diary by incorporating her romantic encounters within their moonlit settings. She writes of various courtesies offered by certain men friends she appreciated while there were some others she avoided: “Pet MacNutt invited me to go over to his house in Darnley some evening. It was a perfect moonlight night. Charles Taylor bought a pair of skates for me” (January 27, 1888). The next day, she wrote: “I spent a very pleasant evening. We walked home about eight & who must I find here but Dickieson. I dodged him all the evening then made out I was away.” Socially acceptable displays of affection towards the opposite sex give her licence to hint at the sexual attraction buried under the practice at the Institute picnic when a man purchases the basket of the young woman of his desires. The Malpeque girls filled decorated baskets with their baked goods and handwork and men bid for the basket of the girl they felt attracted to. Lucy’s basket got the second highest price and was bought by a Mr. Ives. She mentions the other girls and who they “got,” and how Lucy McNutt ran off from John Hamilton, yet she omits the details revealing the consequence of her basket and her potential suitor Mr. McNutt.

What accounts for Lucy’s long, detailed entries and yet her failure to verbally commit herself to any one of the male candidates who hover around her? No doubt she was dutifully fulfilling the conventional contract to her community that she as a teacher would not keep company with any one man. Her diary is the documentation of that contract and with each entry young men and women’s names alternate, as if she were covering the whole community and fairly distributing her presence in all homes and social circles while not favouring

anyone in particular. She covers incidents with the same great detail she learned to apply to her “Teacher’s Register and Class Book.” Through her astuteness and diligence as a teacher and role model, the honing of her literary and numerate skills would continue to flourish in the recording of her private life for years to come.

Lucy Palmer fails to write directly about incidents where she lapses from the disciplined path she is cultivating in her diary, and consequently she perpetuates the image of the good woman by writing herself into this virtuous life. She is forthright in revealing her pride in living according to the socially appropriate behaviour but she seldom directly reveals her vices in any obvious way. Her self-fulfilling discourse is a way of disciplining the self, looking in the mirror of her text and seeing a virtuous self, thus encouraging herself to keep to the behavioural standards required of her.

The “gaps” and “veils” strategies that farm wife Amy Andrew and writer L.M. Montgomery adopt in their diaries¹⁸ are writing techniques that came to their rescue in their “pioneering” attempts to scribe experiences for which they had no words or models. Just as Andrew falls silent at certain times in her diary or Montgomery perceives the unattainable as veiled, Lucy Palmer develops techniques of her own to mask her desires. Weather or natural phenomena unleash feelings and expressions of isolation and provoke Palmer to seek companionship or at least admit her desire to be with others.

She does not directly acknowledge romance in her journal but through successive references to the moon she indicates a desire or a longing for romantic encounter. For instance, on January 25, 1888, she writes, “It is the loveliest moonlight night that I was ever out not a breath of wind, how I would love a sleigh drive.” Her recording strategies correspond to what Gammel refers to as confessional intervention and confessional modalities. Lucy Palmer shrouds her desire for romantic engagement in her repetitive references to “moonlight nights” and “sleigh rides” at the end of numerous journal entries. Amelia’s diary occasionally mentions her sister in the company of various men, suggesting that Lucy was romantically attached while in Malpeque. Michael Bliss also indicates that Lucy Palmer was popular with the opposite sex. In her diaries, however, she refrains from elaborating on relationships with men but instead diverts her thoughts and resorts to her refrain of yearning for the experience of the romance of her pristine surrounding. Employing confessional modalities in the form

¹⁸ See McDonald-Rissanen, “Veils and Gaps: Women’s Life Writing in Early Twentieth-Century Prince Edward Island” (2002).

of her own symbolic representation of her expression of erotic desire is Lucy's most intriguing textual strategy. The unedited manuscript allows for reading the accumulated references to her symbolic embodiment of the "romantic." She acknowledges that secretive aspect of her desiring self. Repetition on this theme releases her from her self-imposed straight-jacket teacher-self and allows her to express yearning desire.

Palmer often disrupts her discourse, leaving readers wondering about the consequence of specific incidents. Her confessional intervention is particularly obvious when she brings her narrative to a dead end, failing to reveal the consequence of the basket purchase at the Institute picnic. She faithfully accounts for her friends and their purchaser/admirers but refrains from revealing her own fate:

The baskets sold very well. Mine was the 2nd highest it sold for \$2.50 Mr. Ives brought it. There was an awful crush when eating time came. Mary got Tom McNutt, Edith, Preston & Jane, Edmund Philips. Lucy McNutt ran off from the one who bought her basket [John Hamilton]. (March 19, 1890)

Palmer's textualization of her self is beginning to take new forms with new tensions and hesitations around designated themes that, because of their frequency, give shape and permanence to her narrative identity.

The absence of family control allows her to test other relationships as teacher, friend, and authority in her new communities and to recreate her experiences in her diary. Her memoirs from these times as a single woman when she could exercise a kind of freedom unknown before leaving her childhood home serve as a document of her formative years as a modern woman.

When delving into Palmer's *journal intime*, it becomes apparent that there is a fictionalization of particular themes with various patterns emerging, the most predominant of these being desire. Her desires for social acceptance, professional acknowledgement, and romantic attachment are elaborated on extensively in her journals and are the most obvious pillars of her blossoming subjective self. Her dead-end narratives and selection of details on her romances ignore a reality pointed out by other readers of her journals who claim that Palmer had numerous relationships with men while in Malpeque.¹⁹ Her diary discourse appears to be,

¹⁹ See Michael Bliss's articles "'The Dairies of Lucy Palmer and Lilly Palmer Inman (1813–1887): Sisters of the South Shore'" and "The Social Life of Lucy Palmer, School Teacher, 1887–1890: Party time in Malpeque" for details about Palmer's social life and the men linked with her.

as Didier claims for the *journal intime*, insincere (117). Her diary can be read as a fictionalization of that person she wants to see herself as and leave her memoir to represent. Palmer's diary can thus be read as part of the humanist project of engaging in autobiography, where she revealed in heightened perceptions of individuality, taking delight in her self, the apex of creation, the master of nature, the wonder of the world.

After Malpeque: New Beginnings and the Little Black Book

Three years after Lucy Palmer left her teaching position in Malpeque, she initialed the upper corners of a little black book with LBP with her very best handwriting and for the last time. In this diary, her free-flowing handwriting reveals she is to get married and is itemizing her trousseau. First, she lists four pages of items purchased for her new home, such as "11 yds white sheeting 25cts \$3.08," and then items of clothing she has been setting aside for her married life, such as five white nightgowns and six unbleached ones, followed by four pages under the heading "Wedding Presents."

Her professional accounting of scholars' attendance and achievements and her more private auditing of her life as a teacher, away from her old home in Ozendyke, is now about to be transformed into another account of transition to married life. In between these phases of Lucy's life was her courtship and correspondence with her fiancé George Haslam. Much of this is expressed obliquely. For example, on December 4, 1892, Lucy writes, "Spent a quiet evening but one never to be forgotten by me." What apparently happened with George was not to be revealed, but Lucy documents the event so as to treasure it through this obscure reference.

George's letter to Lucy (year unknown) indicates how in the early stages of their relationship he did not make the same mistake Mr. Ramsay of Malpeque did by immediately taking the privilege of referring to Lucy by her Christian name.²⁰ George Haslam writes:

²⁰ "Stormy. I wrote a letter home. Mr. Ramsay came down to spend the afternoon. He was talking to me about the organ & called me by my christian name. I felt so foolish" (Saturday 15 March 1890).

Springfield Lot 67

Dec 23

"Dear Lucy"

I think it is presumption on my part to call you anything but Miss Palmer, but when I forget myself I cannot do anything else but break through and call you Lucy and I hope it will be pleasing to you, to do the same to your humble servant, for he wants no handles from you and mind mustn't expect them.

Their romance is expressed in ways that emphasize mutual understanding and knowledge. Later, George reflects, "Just think you and I only had two short drives down to Crapaud Church and I'm sure the distance didn't appear long." Nevertheless, at twenty-eight years of age, Lucy Palmer, on January 3, 1894, married George Haslam. It was not long until she established an accounts book for recording the household's budget of money spent from January 1, 1895: "Jan Lamp Glass 6cts postage 3cts hell protectors 12cts .21cst." So too she records the money brought into the household the same year in the form of eggs, calves, pigs, butter, milk, and wool: "June 12 ½ Eggs at 9cts. Butter 28lbs at 16cts 4.48."

Unlike Emma Chadwick Stretch, who embedded her journal in her accounting text, Lucy Palmer Haslam initially allots separate pages for these accounts. Her journal now focuses on herself and her husband George building their new home and their common life. Weather, family, and community are still very present in her daily narratives, but her position as farm wife in partnership with her new husband dominates her entries. Having developed a technique of extended detail in her earlier diaries, Haslam is not constrained by space or vocabulary and gives lengthy accounts of this period of her life:

Very disagreeable day. Geo finished his horse stable, swept it all out & called me out as I wanted to be the first to lead them into their new stalls. We had a great time, it was strange & they didn't want to go in so by coaxing & shaking oats, they were tempted & I tied Maudy up & Geo tied Row [?]. I gave them a feed of oats each in honour of their new stable. I am all alone this afternoon & it is raining & wet but I am happy as I can be looking forward to Geo coming home to tea. (November 10, 1894)

The common agency—Geo & I/we—and her reflection on her own happy state are communicated in consistently tidy, unconstrained handwriting. Lucy is not entirely her own person but Mrs. George Haslam, and for the remainder of her life her inscription will always account for this union of herself and her husband and their common endeavours.

In her diary entry of July 8, 1896, Lucy Haslam exuberantly announces, “Our darling little baby girl was sent to us at 25 minutes to 12 o’clock today. Geo drove through to Crapaud in the evening & met Ida at Addie’s & brought her out to stay with me.” Her partnership with her spouse George is reiterated throughout her journals (at least until her 1932 travel diary); but as her family grew and the demands on her time were great she resorts to very short, occasionally one-word entries. For example, on December 13, 14, and 15, 1887, she simply writes for each day, “Busy.” For a ten-year interval from 1902 to 1912, there are no records of her diary keeping at all. Possibly Haslam was preoccupied with her 5 young children while carrying on with her egg business. On January 1, 1912, she began writing again, this time in the eighty-four-page Exercise Book of her son Robert Haslam. Beside his name on the cover is written the word “diary.” The scribbler gives four pages for 1912, one for 1913, one for 1914–17, five pages for 1917 and the last three to 1917–1925.

In 1928, Haslam resumes keeping a diary where she once again, as she did in Malpeque, accounts for her day in all its completeness. Visually, her scribbler page is full of tight, neat writing with an entry following every day’s number. The meticulousness of her text in form and content indicates a need to tell all her life has come to. When taking up the multiple tasks of a farm wife, she develops a new style in her journal. It is stripped of the detail, decorum and grammaticality of her Malpeque diaries as she uses a variety of new techniques for recording her everyday existence. Although it is true, as Carolyn Heilbrun confirms, that “there will be narratives of female lives only when women no longer live their lives isolated in the houses and the stories” (4), in Haslam’s case it was the interlude between homes that gave her life story narrative a chance to flourish. Over the years following her teaching years in Malpeque, Lucy modifies her writing technique to meet with the ever-increasing responsibilities of family, husband George (Geo), daughter Muriel and Baby, and the farm work:

Just a perfect day, hot sun & mild. Geo took milk to Ken, left horse harnessed & Muriel & I went in to Station [egg grading station] sold 11 1/2 doz eggs for 12cts. Sent for some garden & flower seeds. Muriel sat on the seat beside me for the first time & thoroughly enjoyed herself in the lovely hot sun. (March 8, 1898)

Haslam attempted to maintain her diary writing contract for fifty more years but only with the use of various new textual strategies, integrated with her previous and more familiar ones, could she write as time, energy, and mood allowed her.

Her text, written from her position as a farm wife, resembles her sister Lilly's diary, written under the same circumstances of caring for children and maintaining a home and farm. Both allow themselves to write briefer entries, with short, more direct sentences. Elimination of lexical items such as articles, pronouns and prepositions and addition of numerous other features that would allow brevity, such as punctuation, abbreviations, and nicknames, become the norm. The most impressive visible feature of Lucy's text of this period compared to her early Malpeque journals is the obvious hurriedness of her handwriting. Her loose scroll from her farm girl days at Ozendyke evolved into the more conscientious handwriting of her Malpeque teacher journals, which now compete with all the other demands of her life.

Nevertheless, Haslam persevered with writing and maintaining her diary a writing style, which often begins with the weather even in the earliest years: "Still the storm rages," writes Lucy Palmer in her first diary on February 29, 1884. Subsequent diary entries from her teaching years in Malpeque are similarly set off with weather references or the consequence of the weather. On April 13, 1890, she writes, "Sunday. Not fit to take a sleigh to church so we all rigged up in rubbers & walked." Eight years later, Lucy Palmer Haslam as a farm wife issues a report of the day's weather, "just a perfect day" (March 8, 1898) and slips into the day's events. Weather determined the events of the day and was often a safe start. Later, when Lucy's life was either too busy or she had nothing particular to write about, the weather would suffice as an entry: "Raining heavy all day" (December 11, 1894). Within this pattern, diary storytelling becomes her trademark and main strategy for writing herself into existence. Patterns from past diaries are carried forward throughout her diary discourse. New variations appear as necessary for accounting for herself and her family members as extensions of that self.

In 1943, approaching ninety years of age, Haslam writes in extensive detail about the signing of her will. Once again her time is not so constricted, so she elaborates in detail about the circumstances surrounding this, perhaps her last, important act:

Ben drove the girls (Maude & Ada) up in the p.m. & they took great pleasure in seeing our Christmas presents. They went home about 5 o'clock after witnessing the signing of my will. Jim left places to be signed very very plain—but hurriedly put down my business name (Mrs. Lucy Haslam) on one sheet after Jim leaving it to be signed as Lucy Borden Haslam. So Mur is writing to him tonight & shall send the sheet in to be retyped or

initialled so I feel it sure it will be perfectly all right when Muriel takes hold to save me worry (December 30, 1943)

For sixty years, Lucy Borden Palmer Haslam took up her pen and scribed her life, her home milieu and, in particular, a textual representation of Island women's entry into one of the first professions that opened up to women, teaching. At various stages of her life, her narrative takes different forms. Her Malpeque journal exemplifies how she expands her diary entries by using great detail to describe her daily life. Later, her urge to expound upon her day's activities is restricted by the demands and diversification of her life. So, too, did she diversify in her documentation from journal writing to letter writing to itemizing her trousseau and then accounting for household purchases. Peppered within her journal entries are her children's upbringing and her own endeavours with farming, raising chickens, selling eggs and poultry.

When All Is Said and Done

It is through the repetition and reiteration of the textual act of keeping her diary that Lucy Palmer Haslam found herself repeatedly coming back to her *journal intime* with renewed dedication to fulfilling her initial contract. Her early insecurity over having "something of interest to put in it" was overcome by her compulsion to nevertheless tell the story of her everyday life, a story that would span sixty years. Ritual patterns adopted from her professional life as a teacher, accounting for her accomplishments and professional, and social dedication to her new community, became embedded in her diary. Behind her practice of inscribing her daily life was her debt to her older sister Lilly, who gave Lucy her first diary. Lilly well understood that a woman's work is never done and her story rarely told, and seldom without its documentation is any trace left of it. Lucy Palmer was destined to join the ranks of the public domain and there she would need a confidant to bear the joys and sorrows that were not to be publicly aired. It was with the repetitious daily inscriptions that Palmer's diary confidant took on significance for defining her as a female subject, what Judith Butler refers to as a woman whose "gender is crafted by acts." Her work falls between her performance and her record of her subjectivity.

As Susan Chase has said in "Vulnerability and Interpretive Authority in Narrative Research" (1996), "understanding the meaning and significance of a

story requires understanding how it is communicated within or against specific cultural discourses and through specific narrative strategies and linguistic practices” (55). Coming out of the Victorian tradition of writing, Lucy Palmer Haslam’s journal illustrates many of the narrative attributes Linda A. Peterson outlines. In her early diaries while on her first teaching assignment in Bonshaw, narrative repression and reticence dominate references to her physical and mental state. Narrative substitution prevails when she alludes to the weather and roads when in fact she had made a huge step into the public sphere as a young woman. Women like Haslam, reared on religious texts and conduct books, adopted writing strategies typical of *l’écriture féminine*. At times, she uses a form of parataxis, where her diary text operates beyond the grammatical level as she establishes an organization based on fragmental utterances, what Rebecca Hogan has identified as “radical parataxis immersion in the horizontal, non-hierarchical flow of events” (102). Like her teacher colleagues, Lucy Palmer writes on her uncertainty and assertiveness over a period of time, using various themes as the organizing principle of the text. She obviously felt a compulsion to express her passions and disguised them in the repetitive romantic sojourns of sleigh rides and moonlit sightings. Her *journal intime* could accommodate the gamut of emotions inscribed in idiosyncratic transcription patterns.

When she died, her representation of her life remained buried in the family archives. Her public representation in her obituary illustrates the broad frames of her existence typical of “death writing,” what historian Janice Hume characterizes as a balance between the related functions of “chronicling and commemorating” (qtd. in Couser 2). As can be seen here, the obituary departs from the self-written life of Haslam the writing subject as she is cast here first as a woman in her historical context. She is overwritten by her obituary:

Obituary: Many Mourn Death of Mrs. G. Haslam

Many friends will regret to learn of the death at Springfield on Saturday of Mrs. George Haslam, aged 79 years. The deceased, who was the former Lucy Barden Palmer, was the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. James B. Palmer of De Sable, P.E.I. The late Mrs. Haslam was widely known and highly esteemed in the community in which she had lived for many years.

She is survived by her husband, one daughter, Muriel, at home, and four sons, A. James Haslam in Charlottetown, Reginald at home and Robert and Lloyd in Ontario.

The funeral was held yesterday from the home to St. Elizabeth's Church, Springfield. Rev. Canon Albert Haslam officiated at the church service, assisted by Rev. J.A. Morrison, Bradalbane, Rev. J.A. Murchison officiated at the grave.

The pallbearers were Messrs. Percy Howatt, Arthur Inman, Judge H.L. Palmer, Ernest Haslam, Pinnie Haslam, and Robert Howatt. (11)

G. Thomas Couser, in "The Obituary of a Face: Lucy Grealy, Death Writing and Posthumous Harm in Autobiography" (2004), claims that the obituary is the most widely disseminated life writing genre and thus the one most widely consumed by the public. He also contends that as the obituary memorializes, it also marginalizes its subject. Reviving Lucy Palmer Haslam through her own construction of her subjectivity and the development of female agency draws her out of the margins of history and into the spotlight as a modern woman.

JANUARY, 1897.

4 Monday (4-361)
 Give into any. I went in to the W.C.M.
 to the prayer meeting praying for the
 success of the prohibition law. Mrs. J. M.
 & Mrs. Greenwood came up after tea
 & spent the day. We had snow & cold
 & I should say Christmas things
 have very little at the bank.
 were the holidays a thing of this
 sort & the community more
 appreciative than ever! Noisy day
 close because I arrived, not too late to the
 jubilee party.

5 Tuesday (5-360)
 pouring rain. Drove in to market
 but missed house. Disappointed
 we could not hold our union
 working mission meeting. Could
 in to the houses with a couple
 - I committed a pair of flannel
 drawers for Friday. No meeting
 tonight.

6 Wednesday (6-359) EPIPHANY (Quebec)
 raining but cleared up. I went over
 to see Bertie but did not have much
 of a visit as she was going out. But
 here for the afternoon. After tea
 we went to St. Paul's but Mary & I
 left before the meeting was over to
 say good-bye to Lizzie who left tonight
 for home. John & Annie were off
 - then - & the Misses Moore. I dined
 in with the Sullivans with a flower

FIGURE 9. Margaret Gray Lord's 1897 Diary

Urban Bourgeois Women and Their Everyday: Margaret Gray Lord (1845–1941) and Wanda Lefurgey Wyatt (1895–1998)

“None of them came from over home, & I am longing to see the face of a woman, have not set eyes on one for a fortnight & the loneliness is intense,” wrote Lilly Palmer in her diary on April 23, 1887, according to Michael Bliss in his article on Lilly’s sister “Lucy of Ozendyke.” Women thrived and survived on each other’s company whether in the countryside as Lilly was or in the town as were bourgeois women Margaret Gray Lord and Wanda Wyatt. All of their diaries give a prominent place to the women in their lives—mothers, sisters, daughters, friends and neighbours. Lord and Wyatt were born into privileged circumstances, grew up in wealthy Victorian homes, obtained a good education and had only sisters, no brothers (Wyatt’s only brother died in infancy), and strong fathers who were political and financial pillars of the Island community. Both kept diaries that document women’s transitions from the Victorian era to the modern one.

Both women were born into Prince Edward Island’s “golden era” (Baldwin 86). Their Island origins go back to when Britain had a firm grasp on her small colony and had awarded “lots” of land to gentlemen who had performed honourable deeds for the Crown. The Native community and French settlers were displaced to the margins of the growing centres of commerce and politics around the towns of Charlottetown and Summerside. Shipbuilding, fox farming and politics brought wealth, privilege and social status to both the Gray and Wyatt families. Given the Island’s small size, British dominance was quickly established. The Gray family came from England and traces its ancestry to the United Empire Loyalists. Margaret Gray Lord carried on regular correspondence and visits with her sister, grandparents and friends in England and in her diary, she often mentions rubbing shoulders with the likes of the British ship magnate Samuel Cunard. Wyatt shared the stage with royalty and other celebrities on their visits to the Island while Amy Andrew and Emma Chadwich would simply mention such visits in their diaries.

Nowadays, twenty-first-century PEI culture pays homage to relics from the Victorian era these families were so influenced by. Victorian architecture, English place names and the emphasis on a British past in historic sites that re-enact historical events are trademarks of Island life.²¹ Today’s imagery is

²¹ PEI has had many names during its history. The Native names were *Abeqweit* derived from Mi’kmaq meaning “cradle of the waves” and *Minegoo*, a Mi’kmaq god, the French later name was the Island *Ile St Jean*, and even the Irish suggested a name, *New Ireland*. The Island’s

often overwhelming and spills over to other cultural phenomena associated with marketing PEI to tourists and developing PEI's prime industry, tourism.²² The Island still celebrates its Victorian past with homage to its remarkable individuals such as Sir John Hamilton Gray and Lady Gray and to the other Fathers of Confederation such as the Honourables George Coles and William Henry Pope, through tours given by period-costumed guides who recap the events leading up to the Island's inaugural meeting of the Fathers of Confederation in the capital city in 1864. The most visible testimony to this colonial past is to be found in the architecture of Island homes and institutions established during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Throughout the countryside, and particularly in places like Charlottetown and Summerside, are some of the best examples of Victorian architecture outside of England.²³ These homes were built by the transplanted bourgeois and incorporate the values they carried into their new home.²⁴

Much is known about the men of such houses—shipbuilders, fox farmers, politicians—and how their endeavours shaped the Island's identity and future, but the women contained by these houses on the whole remain relatively obscure. At least two women born into this social class kept diaries: Margaret Gray Lord (1845–1941) and Wanda Wyatt (1895–1998). Their diaries offer profound understanding about how upper-class women constructed themselves

current name, like the majority of the now official names, are derived from either British royalty—Charlottetown, formerly (Port la Joie) or English place names—Kensington, New London, Brighton, or individuals from British history—Darnley, Stanhope, Cavendish. Only a few Native names remain—Bedeque, Malpeque, Cascumpec—but somewhat more French ones—Miscouche, St. Chrysostome, Baie Egmont, primarily in the western part of the Island, have survived. Irish and Scottish settlers also respectfully named their communities after their places of origin—Emerald, Kinkora, Belfast or Uigg, New Glasgow, Mount Stewart.

²² As Alan Rayburn states in *Geographical Names of Prince Edward Island* (1978) through toponymy, “the origins of names assigned to specific places provide us with valuable insights into the history, the culture and the characteristics of the regions studied” (iii). There is still a strong preference for naming institutions to emphasize the Island's colonial past and British ancestry rather than names from nature or any other ethnic group or geographical region—Queen Elizabeth Hospital, Colonel Gray High School, Holland College are a few of more recent examples suggesting the impact of colony and the colonization on the Island.

²³ Local heritage organizations and businesses participate in welcoming visitors to the impressive homes of nineteenth-century shipbuilders, fox farmers and leading citizens of distinction—politicians and merchants, to acquire a sense of history.

²⁴ Boats, bridges, hospitals, schools and tourist establishments reflect the ongoing identification with England and specifically English history. The renaming of Native and French communities was part of the colonization process initiated by the rural settlers and urban inhabitants reflecting their nostalgia for and memories of Victorian England; this renaming was a powerful force in asserting their dominance over the new land. Communities, streets and institutions would be built and named to reflect those left behind.

discursively and how they negotiated the restrictive parameters that typified the lives of the petit bourgeois. Both women's positions of privilege can best be approached by understanding the families they were born into and the homes from which they wrote.

Impressive houses from this period like the Lefurgey House in Summerside, built in 1871 by the shipbuilder John Lefurgey, the grandfather of Wanda Lefurgey Wyatt, are some of the best preserved nineteenth-century Victorian homes in Canada. What is so remarkable about these locations is that Wyatt has documented her life as a prodigy of this Victorian culture, demonstrating how she, from her Victorian upbringing, moved with the times to become a modern woman of the twentieth century. Her own home has stood on Spring Street for more than a hundred years. Her mother's home, Lefurgey House, since converted into the Lefurgey Cultural Centre, stands next door, while across the street from Wanda's home the more than 100 diaries and personal effects are housed in another period house, the MacNaught Historic Centre and Archives. All three structures reflect the aesthetics of the nineteenth century, which individuals like Wanda grew up in, subscribed to and were defined by.

Helping us to grasp fully the society Wanda Wyatt and her contemporaries were born into, the diaries of an earlier Victorian woman, Margaret Gray Lord, offer profound insights into the "leisured lives" of bourgeois women in another urban Island setting, Charlottetown. The homes of her childhood, Inkerman, and her married life, The Nest, portray the re-creation of values dear to the hearts of the families therein. Inkerman's symbolic garden links the house to the faraway military conquest it is named for;²⁵ The Nest, exemplifying the Gothic Revival style, acquired its name from an association with previous owner Mary M. Robin. Helen A. Lawson, in *One Woman's Charlottetown: Diaries of Margaret Gray Lord, 1863, 1876, 1890* (1988) describes Inkerman:

²⁵ Margaret Gray Lord and her sisters reflect Britain's reach and imperial ambitions. Their father, Colonel John Hamilton Gray, boasted that his daughters were born in four quarters of the globe: Harriet on a ship in the Red Sea, Margaret in South Africa, Florence in England and the younger sisters in PEI. Colonel Gray was born in PEI as a member of the upper class, son of Robert Gray, who as a Loyalist fled the US for Canada and was awarded land in Spring Park in Charlottetown by Commander Edmund Fanning, who later became Lieutenant Governor of PEI. Margaret's father went to school in England and joined the British Army. He married Susan Pennefather, the daughter of his commanding officer. In 1856, following the Crimean War, Colonel Gray built a large house on a piece of property overlooking the York (North) River in Charlottetown; he called the house Inkerman, and landscaped it to tell the story of the Battle of Inkerman where Pennefather's 3,000 men forced the retreat of 35,000 Russians.

On the right (of the front lane) was a row of lime trees, planted meticulously by the Colonel, exactly forty feet apart; on the left were white birches, beeches, mountain ash and poplars. The heavy limes [...] were supposed to represent the Russians, and the lighter wood on the left the British and French in the battle of Inkerman. (qtd. in MacLeod 5)

It was here at Inkerman that Margaret Gray began her 1863 diary at the age of eighteen, giving readers a glimpse into her Victorian lifestyle. She continued her diary keeping throughout her life and left a legacy of thirty handwritten diaries. Evelyn J. MacLeod published three of these diaries in *One Woman's Charlottetown: Diaries of Margaret Gray Lord 1863, 1876, 1890*, which remain to date the only published diaries written by a nineteenth-century PEI woman. The handwritten drafts of these same diaries are discussed here;²⁶ using the original manuscript allows a reading of the idiosyncratic material qualities of diary, paper, and handwriting, as is the case with the unpublished diaries discussed in other chapters of this work. Margaret Gray Lord's inscription patterns—her handwriting, punctuation, gaps in her text and other textual features—provide the opportunity for further speculation about her discursive practices. Nevertheless, MacLeod's book is extremely valuable for its extensive background research and comments on Lord's diaries.

Even though Margaret broke the silence expected of women—albeit within the confines of the socially acceptable diary—it is not always easy to hear what she is saying. In her introduction to the diaries, MacLeod writes,

The entries in these diaries are simple and spare, and unfortunately they do not reveal much of their writer's personality. Only rarely does Margaret write about her concerns, opinions, or ambitions. Often, however, the most contemplative, detailed diaries reveal only partial, distorted truths about their writer, since diarists often write in a particular frame of mind and in a particular diary voice. (2)

The three diaries chosen by MacLeod will be further examined, first to expand upon the context of Margaret Gray Lord's life and then to more closely delve into those three periods of her life as a single woman of eighteen in 1863, a married woman of thirty in 1876, and a family woman in 1890. In the study of Lord's discursive identity in her diaries, those three phases in her life as a single

²⁶ There is some slight variation between these unpublished diaries and the versions published by MacLeod.

woman, a married woman, and a mother each highlight the processes of acting out a transplanted British identity on foreign soil, an identity modified for local circumstances. Examining the textures of Margaret Gray Lord's unpublished diaries reveals her discursive identity in flux from colonial daughter to dedicated wife and concerned social activist as she negotiates the parameters of an upper-class Victorian upbringing.

The Diary of the Young Victorian Woman: Margaret Gray's 1863 Diary

On Wednesday, December 23, 1863, at the age of eighteen, Gray describes the social life of a young Victorian lady in her handwritten diary:

Fine bright day, I went over at twelve to the Peterses. Had a very little german & then Carry & I walked in to Helen's & had luncheon there: they left me at my singing & we all went together to the E. Church Sunday School tea party. After that we had tea at Mrs. Bayfields and walked home at nine [Louuvry? came in for us—& bob & Ned walked out with us²⁷] Matilda & Charlotte Cambridge had tea there too & we had a little singing—Papa is poorly tonight.

Complying with a lifestyle of tea parties, regular church attendance and social contacts with like-minded people was deeply engrained in Margaret's everyday existence. Such preoccupations reinforced the gender divisions of labour among the cultural elite where power in the political sphere was relegated to men and the private sphere of home and domestic institutions (including social relations) was the province of women. The discourse of complementarity is used to promote a strictly hierarchical system based on separate spheres—women have the power to “civilize and govern” the family in support of men's authority in “public affairs” (V. Jones 99).

Women like Margaret Gray Lord and her contemporary Mercy Ann Coles, both diarists and daughters of the political and social elite of PEI, were instrumental in cultivating, transforming and transplanting colonial ideals to the new soil of the emerging nation of Canada. At the same time, through her diary, Lord became the subject of her own narrative, one that would continue for almost eighty years. In 1863, she was part of “the class of people on whom writing

²⁷ The section in square brackets is missing from the MacLeod edition of Gray's diaries, although it appears in Gray's original ms diary.

conferred authority by placing them in a new era and distinctive relationship with themselves, with other people and with a world of objects” (Armstrong and Tennenhouse 1): “Beautiful day again Indian summer. Mama much better; drove into town and brought out Minnie and Jessey Cambridge to spend the day [...] M.H. Haviland came late to see Papa abt Georgetown. I wrote to Helen and Matilda; went into the library—no Books given out” (January 3, 1863).

Bourgeois women’s self-construction in their life writing indicates their own discursive relationship with the “leisured” and contained life allotted to them; through the process of writing they resisted this containment. Despite Gray’s carving out a discursive presence by recounting the weather, sicknesses, visits, and social engagements of a young woman, her discourse on her father and his political activity appears as her longing to enter a more public sphere. Her diary begins in 1863 by listing the “Gentlemen” they received in their home on New Year’s Day. The next day’s entry reads, “Papa and I out visiting all the afternoon, Mr. Mackieson, B. Stewart, H. Haviland.” Gray’s father and his male associates, church ministers and their world have a special prominence in her diary thereby allowing her to connect with a world which was not women’s. Gray did not flirt with the male establishment as Mercy Ann Coles claims she did in her 1864 travel diary account. Margaret instead appears to long to be associated with men, or even boys, who could lead her into this other world: “Beautiful day for the Election. Archibald off at 5 to vote at “Murray Harbour” (walking). Helen and Matilda spent the day with me. I walked with them to the Bridge. Rob walked home with me, gave us a little news abt. the Election. Mama reading to the little Peterses” (January 21, 1863). Men tackled the issues of the public forum and women and girls socialized and maintained domestic serenity. In Gray’s initial comments, she acknowledges her preoccupation with the election, the weather was even co-operating, men like Archibald were prepared to walk long distances to cast their vote and even young boys were privy to election news. Meanwhile she, her friends and her mother were engaged in their day-to-day feminine sphere. It would be several decades before they could exercise their enfranchisement.

Gray’s home, maintained by servants, her private tuition in music, languages and drawing, her preoccupation with reading and writing letters, and her friendships with families of the same social class all served to reaffirm her position within this colonial community. However, the breaking of the “cake of custom” referred to by Bentley in “Breaking the ‘Cake of Custom’: The Atlantic Crossing as a Rubicon for Female Emigrants to Canada,” where he analyzes the shattering transition emigrants undergo in the removal and relocation to

a new land, for these bourgeois urbanites of PEI would be compensated by the opportunities presented in towns to congregate with others who shared their isolation in the colonies. This emerging political and social elite was composed of “people who sought gentility by emulating everything they associated with the elite way of life” (Armstrong and Tennehouse 159).

Undoubtedly the harsh weather, the knee deep mud, and the long periods of isolation because of ice conditions around the Island were constant reminders of a world much different than the European one Margaret Gray was born into and whose values constituted the woman she, her sisters, and girlfriends were being raised to emulate. Constant contact with Britain through correspondence and visits was cultivated to build a bridge between these worlds, yet they reminded Gray and her kind of their position of exile. At times, she expresses hopelessness in the culmination of weather, and as a consequence the isolation of the Island in her diary, indicating her acute awareness of where she was physically living her life: “Dull snowy day. Not out all day and no one here! No news of our mail!!” (December 29, 1863). By the end of the year, she was typically able to express more optimism:

Thursday December 31 (page torn) [The last day of] the old year and what a happy year to us it has been. Oh what will /64 bring to us! I sat a little bit with Helen and I went to see Matilda but she was out and I went to see Carry. Col Peter Stuart brought our dear letters this morning. All well and off for the South of France. We sent in our letters this evening. It was a fine bright day. The End of this year!! (*One Woman's Charlottetown* 27)

Gray was living very much through her family (the “us” in her text), friends, and those letters connecting her to a faraway land. She writes her diary as though she’s the family chronicler, documenting not only her own daily events but those of her family members. This suggests the tightness of the family unit and can be compared to Amy Andrew and others who describe their family networks in rural early twentieth-century PEI. Exempt from domestic chores, Gray writes longer passages than her rural farming sisters, giving full sentence accounts of books read, letters written, social engagements, and community events. Her diary gives voice to a woman constructed from the pages of conduct literature and novels she confesses to reading, such as *Life of Amelia Opie: For Better or for*

Worse.²⁸ Gray would continue to write herself around this conundrum of her European inheritance, supplemented by romantic literary figures while enjoying the pastimes of a young bourgeois women as she sat in her room in Inkerman at the end of a long lane of birches, beeches, limes, poplars, and mountain ash on PEI.

The Diary of a Young Victorian Wife: Margaret Gray Lord's 1876 Diary

By 1876, the year Lord's second selected diary is written, she was thirty-one, married to Artemas Lord and settling into their new home, The Nest. The first page of the 1876 diary reads,

Margaret P. Lord
1876
It is I be not afraid.
—I will trust & not be afraid.

Lord's determination to persevere, comforted by the words of scripture, suggests that beneath her life of comfort was a feeling of fear and insecurity. Ten years earlier, her mother had died from complications related to childbirth; she and her husband Artemas had since undergone their own family tragedies, losing two sons at a very young age.²⁹ On the next page, she writes,

Artie went to meeting and Bert and I to Kirk. Had a most affecting sermon from dear Mr. Duncan. We attended Covenant meeting after dinner and received the blessed communion. Artie and I finished such a touching little story called "Misunderstood". Poor Artie felt it dreadfully—the characters of the two little boys were so exactly like our own two. (January 2, 1876)

Lord's *journal intime* reveals an increase in references to religion and church-going activities, giving specifics about sermons on "confession and praise," "arise and rebuild," and "the power of the resurrection" that obviously comforted her and provided another social outlet. As a good Victorian woman, she also gave

²⁸ Amelia Alderson Opie (1769–1853) was an English writer of radical principles and friend of Mary Wollstonecraft. Most likely Margaret was reading *A Life*, by Miss C.L. Brightwell, published in 1854.

²⁹ William Hamilton Lord died in 1874 at three years of age of diphtheria, and John Pennefather died before he was a year old (MacLeod 90).

comfort and support to those around her and wrote her self into the authorial position of the good woman.

Lord records her feelings for her husband Artie and fails to admit her own sorrow regarding the sons they lost and the association of this personal trauma with the story they were reading. Her silence and self-sacrifice are part of the virtues instilled in Victorian women by their upbringing and reinforced by education and religion. She was further writing herself into the position of the desirable spouse as defined by law, her social status and wife in her new domestic setting. She was reiterating in practice what William Blackstone in 1765 (442) stipulated in his *Commentaries on the Laws of England*: “By marriage the husband and wife are one person in law: that is the very being or legal existence of the woman is suspended during marriage, or at least incorporated and consolidated into that of the husband” (qtd. in V. Jones 224 n1).

Cultivating feminine personalities exemplifying chastity, submissiveness, and modesty was deeply engrained in the literature recommended and avidly read by upper-class women as well as those who aspired to be like them. Conduct literature, those books found in the homes of Amy Andrew (*Vivilore: The Pathway to Mental and Physical Perfection; The Twentieth-Century Book for Women*, 1904) and Lucy Haslam (*Golden Thoughts on Mother, Home, and Heaven, from Poetic and Prose Literature of All Ages and All Lands*) gave women guidelines for good behaviour and reiterated the values cherished in middle-class homes. Vivilore, in a section entitled “A Man’s Best Business Policy,” advises women thus:

A wife should have some insight into her husband’s business; enough to enable her to bring her fine intuitional powers to her aid in advising on delicate points, and also avoid mistakes to her own field of managing household expenses. [...] and the best thing he can do in all cases is to take her into his confidence and initiate her, in a degree, into the mysteries of how that income is produced. Both are equal partners; he furnishing the source of supply for the household needs, she caring for, arranging and preparing the necessary materials. Neither should be wholly ignorant of the duties of the other. (257)

The hidden contract of the husband’s and wife’s “businesses” is the subtext to Lord’s diary. Artie supplies the household needs, and she manages the household expenses, as her May 1890 diary indicates the cash accounts allocated for meat and groceries, fish, books, hat, oilcloth, and the like. In 1876, she conducts herself at her husband’s side as she often had her father’s in the public sphere: “Our darling

Willie would have been five years old today. But he is still our little Willie they don't grow old in Heaven. I went in to Market Artie and I walked in to meeting Mr. Currie spoke on the power of the resurrection" (April 25, 1876; *One Woman's Charlottetown* 73). Her social stability was based not only on her subjugation to her husband through marriage but on other institutions, such as the church, whose discourse reinforced women's place as passively functional at man's side. A few decades later, Margaret would write about this same church and how it became the site for women's engagement in social issues and their own eventual emancipation: "I went in to the WCTU [Women's Christian Temperance Union] to the prayer meeting praying for the success of the prohibition bill" (January 4, 1897).

The spring of 1876 was full of excitement as Margaret and Artemas prepared to move into their new home. From January to March, they transformed the "dilapidated" house with "poky rooms" (January 11, 1876) into their new home, "The Nest," with its Victorian drawing rooms displaying Lord's exotic ornaments and handcraft. From her parlor, she religiously recorded the weather and its impact on her mobility, yet her greatest preoccupation was with the affairs of the home—managing the servants, working on her hand-work, and following the health and comings and goings of family and friends. In this her second diary, she creates a more consistent format that would be replicated in the more than thirty diaries she was yet to write. Her diary narrative from 1879 maintains the same pattern of 1876, an initial statement about the weather and then the consequences "Fine for the washing" (July 2, 1876), or "Fine, but a poor drying day" (March 10, 1879). This pattern is maintained until she writes, "A lovely soft day it was. I went to the market" (December 30, 1941) in the second last diary entry of her life.

Embedded in almost every entry is Lord's preoccupation with health, subtly referencing her own, induced by her pregnancies: "Arty thought I had better not go and I scarcely felt equal to going" (November 14, 1876); similarly, three years later, thirteen days before the birth of her next child:

Such a long, long day—I was in bed the whole of it with one of the worst headaches! I thought something would come of it but it did not tho! I was sick all night! Phernie and Mrs. [?] fixed the bed for the nurse & otherwise made preparations but in vain! (March 5, 1879)

In years and diaries to come, others' well being would surface as the key theme of Lord's entries. Her hardly legible entries from September 1917 relate how she managed family and household matters around visiting the sick:

Friday, 28

[...] I went in this afternoon to Mrs. Sterling—she is better but very weak.
Ella [...]

Sunday, 30

[...] I went in to see how Mrs. Sterling is—she was very restless & weak & had a hard night. Poor Ella I do feel sorry for her I believe she will soon be alone [...]

Monday 1

[...] I walked in to see how is Mrs. Sterling—did not stay—as it distresses [...]

Tuesday 2

[...] Mrs. Sterling no better took two oysters [...]

Lord's caring for other women is a major theme in her diary entries throughout her life but the culmination of her "caring" was in 1876, when she was seeing her sister Florence to the altar. Florence's wedding—sewing her trousseau, baking cakes, nursing Florence out of depression—floods Lord's diary up until the big day, June 15, 1876: "Raining and miserable out I went over for dear Florence—her last Saturday with us as Florence Gray. I am beginning to realize she we will soon be lost to me. Oh how I shall miss her in every way" (June 10, 1876).

Married for seven years herself, Lord was well anchored in the everyday of female bourgeois preoccupations, and she knew what the transition from the colonel's daughter to the admiral's wife meant. Her diary illustrates the uneasiness she experienced by "the hurry and preparations for dear Florence's going" (December 31, 1876), as the sisters attempted to negotiate the restrictive parameters of Victorian ideals of women as chattel transferred from one man to another and their feelings as sisters experiencing their loss of each other through this transfer. Having buried their mother ten years earlier, it was the sisters' responsibility to prepare for Florence's wedding, dealing with both the emotion and tradition they were expected to uphold as the Charlottetown elite. After all, according to their mother's obituary in the *Herald*, Susan Pennefather Gray embodied the desired ideal of the good bourgeois woman of the late nineteenth

century, friend of the poor and one of society's brightest ornaments (qtd. in MacLeod 88). Another newspaper, the *Islander*, describes Sarah Pennefather Gray as an "amiable and pious lady ... whose whole enjoyment seemed to consist in doing good to her fellow creatures, without respect to condition or creed" (qtd. in MacLeod 89).

Margaret herself was seduced by all of these discourses into a position of subordination as she appears destined to lead an adult life not so different from that of her mother's generation. Nevertheless by the end of this year she was anticipating a new year and "our own hope coming" (December 31, 1876) as she would once again become a mother. The highs and lows of Margaret's 1863 diary, its substance and diverse textuality give way to a more even-paced discourse of a mature married woman with few instances of spontaneity to interrupt the composure of this urban nineteenth-century bourgeois woman: "Went in to market and drove Aunt out to see Mrs. Harvey. Her dear baby died the evening before last. It looked so beautiful. I felt dreadfully worked up after that visit. Went over to Papa's to ask Mary and Bertie to come tomorrow to Lobster Point with us, in a boat" (August 25, 1876).

Infant mortality was common, and loomed large in Margaret's mind as she obviously feared for the child she was carrying while writing her 1876 entries and had to bear that fact of being a woman in silence. In 1879, she was anticipating the birth of another child. References to her daily activity and well being illustrate how her married life reached a new state of fulfillment on March 18: "Our dear baby was born today I am thankful to say—I had a very easy time—short and soon over Mrs. Gray was with me & I found both the Dr & nurse altho' strangers very kind. I was down stairs at a little before 7—& a few minutes after 8 baby arrived." In the years following Margaret Gray Lord's 1876 diary she would reenact the narrative of her time and place, but once the events of the new era modern reared their head, Lord reshaped her narrative and herself.

The Diary of Familial and Social Engagement: Margaret Gray Lord's 1890 Diary

By the 1890s, Margaret Gray Lord's life had expanded to include a level of social activism:

I went in to the WCTU to the prayer meeting praying for the success of the prohibition bill. (January 4, 1897)

The next day, Lord records that she was disappointed at not being able to hold the union women's missionary meeting. She was typical of like-minded women stepping out of the home to organize social reform, with the sense of doing something useful and humanitarian. Consequently, as Wendy Mitchinson and Ramsay Cook indicate, women were also learning the skills of organization, public speaking, and social investigation.

Lord's handwritten 1890 diaries indicate a shift in her diary recording. Previously she used the open page to scribe entries of varying lengths, but now she is writing in a commercially printed diary that confines the day's events to a third of an unlined page under the date (month, day's date, days passed and remaining in the year, the year), and Sunday would be squeezed in with Saturday. With a family of five children Margaret was obviously more pressed for time, yet she writes of travel, visits, sewing, and reading books as though little had changed since her 1876 life. Her nine-year-old daughter Gladwys accompanies her on visits, while at home Lizzie does the washing, Minnie the cooking, and Dinah the sewing.

One early page of her 1890 diary reads:

January Thursday 16 (16-349) 1890

Snowing & hailing. Mending all morning, Went in to the sewing. A good many there in spite of the storm. Reading "A Second Life" by Mrs. Alexander. The Stanley got over to Pictou she was out 9 hours.

January Friday 17 (17-348) 1890

Nice bright day but very cold went to market and to see Aunt. After dinner went to see Mrs. Rankin, Mrs. Churchill and Mrs. Lapthorn, such a satisfactory visit saw a washing machine washing at Mrs. Lapthorn's. Poor Henry suffering still—the 15 pieces of flesh grafted from his father's arm have taken. Heard from Florence and the Stanley crossed in four hours.

January Saturday 18 (18-347) 1890

felt poorly all day so did not go out Henry too was in bed with headache. Ernest & Emily tobogganing Mrs. [?] was here & Bertie. then M. came in just now. [entry missing from MacLeod's edition]

Sunday 19 [handwritten]
 in bed all day with dreadful headache—the boys horrid [?] too [?] out.
 Hear from [?] [entry missing from MacLeod's edition])

For urban women like Lord, the weather was at best an impediment for her sewing circle or the ice boat *Stanley* to transport her letters to and from the Island but still the weather gives an opening and closing for her diary voice, just as the rural woman's agrarian rhythms and diary records flow with the climate. Unlike her rural sisters Amy Andrew and Emma Chadwich Stretch, Lord's state of health initiates the diary entry rather than being dispersed within or terminating their diary entries, or often more discretely disclosed. The bourgeois woman could admit and succumb to her weary state whereas the rural farm wives had to persevere despite weariness (though they might acknowledge their physical and mental state in other ways).

During the fourteen-year interlude between Lord's previous published diary of 1876 and this one of 1890 (she kept diaries from the years 1878, 1879, and 1888, but they remain unpublished), her life changed dramatically. Now forty-five and a mother of five children (Ernest, Harry, Victor, Gladwys, and Florence), she is able to maintain her social network of friends and comment on the social and political events, undoubtedly because of the help of women like Eliza, to whom she reports paying \$2.00 for cleaning (MacLeod 114). Still, Lord's rushed handwriting and cryptic text indicate that even with home help her energies were stretched and that the Victorian woman was torn to keep her life in pace with the ideals of that era, the leisured life. Practicing femininity according to eighteenth- and nineteenth-century conduct manuals' expectations, even for upper-class women, became problematic. The chapter "What Marriage Involves" in Vivilore stipulates that

It is often necessary for a young wife to learn all the mysteries of housekeeping after marriage. This is not the ideal condition of affairs, but the problem can be bravely met. Concentrating the mind on the work in hand, whatever it may be, makes of that work a delight as well as a work of art [...]. The woman of power and of practical resources will need to know something of household hygiene [...]. She should no more be expected to perform all the complex duties of the household without the assistance than a man would be expected to carry on his own entire business without hiring help. (256–57)

The advice is obviously directed to women of Lord's class and means, and she indeed employed the necessary help to sustain their Victorian household's standards.

Her role to "civilize and govern" the family (V. Jones 99) in support of her husband Artemas's authority in the public sphere as federal agent for the department of marine and fisheries in PEI would eventually evolve into her engagement with causes outside the domestic sphere. Lord was becoming more socially engaged in organizations like the King's Daughters, an organization founded in New York in 1886 and then in Canada in 1887, and based on the recognition of "the universal desire on the part of women to make their lives a service and triumph instead of a defeat and a regret" (MacLeod 152). Lord presided over the Ladies' Aid of the Kirk of St. James, whose aim was to help the poor. She also attended lectures promoting total abstinence that in turn supported the enfranchisement of women, and she was involved with the Ladies' Hospital Aid Society, supporting both patients and the hospitals' needs through fundraising, hospital visits and the like. Women's issues and social engagement were introduced primarily from the pulpit and through organizations like the Women's Foreign Missionary Society, where the male ministry spoke of "the influence of women in the Bible and throughout the history of Christianity" (MacLeod 171 n62), and commended women for their contribution to the cause. Lord's comments on these commitments appear in her diary in 1890:

Mending all morning. After dinner went to the sewing at Mrs. James' and sewed 'till 6. After tea walked in to the W.C.T.U. meeting had a very full meeting the house crowded. Walked out with Mrs. Goodwill the addresses were all excellent specially Mr. Lloyd's (November 27, 1890)

Her diary suggests how consolation through her religious dedication evolved into a sense of personal fulfilment and "put conduct-book construction of femininity under pressure to accommodate, or refute" (V. Jones 100). Soon women like Margaret would be engaged with the modernist concerns of female enfranchisement that would undermine previous gender definitions and, from a religious commitment based on subjugation, a discourse of liberation begins to rear its head.

A Victorian Woman's Diary

Margaret Gray Lord's diary reveals how her loyalty to the Crown and nineteenth-century British ideals was a point of departure for redefining herself as a socially engaged twentieth-century woman. Her diaries illustrate how she manoeuvres between the social expectations of an era that emphasized "that virtue for women lies in self-sacrifice [and] has complicated the course of women's development by pitting the moral issue of goodness against the adult questions of responsibility and choice" (V. Jones 132).

From her early diaries, Margaret writes of her own and her sisters' Victorian upbringing of music lessons, foreign languages, and dance, typical of the self-improvement considered appropriate for girls: practical for their station, such skills did little to encourage independence from the patriarchal rule in all spheres. Margaret could have expressed the same sentiments as the nineteenth-century "Girl of a Period" whose comments appeared in *Canadian Monthly*:

I want to know why it is that I, a well-brought-up lady-like [...] girl, am so utterly helpless and dependent. I have not been taught anything that is of the slightest earthly use to anybody in the whole world. Of course I can sing correctly; but have no special power or compass of voice [...]. As a pianist I am a brilliant success, and yet as humbug as regards the science of music [...]. I can sew—fancy work; but I could not cut out and "build" a dress, even if I was never to have another [...]. My dear old "Pater" and my good kind mamma are fairly well-off, I believe (but I really don't know), and are very willing to give me a good share of all these enjoyments; but it does make me often "feel mean" to know I am utterly dependent on them [...]. Why Mamma won't even let me into the Kitchen to learn how to do things. She says it is not lady-like. ("Girl of a Period" 65)

Through her diary discourse, there is evidence that Lord did within the norms of her Victorian upbringing willingly perpetuate and exhibit those values, ones Hannah More discusses in her *Strictures on the Modern System of Female Education* (1799). More and the "Girl of a Period" above were resisting the fact that "the chief end to be proposed in cultivating the understandings of women is to qualify them for the practical purposes of life" (qtd. in V. Jones 137) by writing their lives through direct confrontation with the obstacles that hindered their advancement to the public sphere or by disclosing their worlds through their actions.

Lord resorts to her diary in part to exercise her intelligence in one of the few socially acceptable places to articulate her passion for writing and enlarge upon the superficiality of her education. Often she did not need to go far to find the heroines of her text. Female family members, characters from fiction, and local women charged with murder or simply the victims of misfortune, childbirth, and violence give Lord the opportunity to exercise her literary skills within her *journal intime* as stories within her own story emerge. For example, on Tuesday, March 18, 1890, she writes, “Heard Miss Weeks was found drown today.” The next day’s entry reads, “Miss Wilson there she was full about Miss Weeks it is very sad” (Wednesday, March 19). Then, finally, the diary reports, “Miss Weeks buried today” (Thursday, March 20). Miss Weeks’ melodramatic story is fragmented, its fragments interspersed with sewing, writing letters and making marmalade. Lord’s obsession with the plight of the Victorian heroine, scenes of neglect, suffering, and death of women offer a parody to her personal plight by juxtaposing these events within the context of her everyday reality in her journal.

A few days after Miss Weeks’s misfortune, another woman surfaces in Lord’s diary as the “missing witness” in a murder case involving the poisoning of one woman by another. On April 1, Lord writes, “the examination of the ‘missing witness’ took place today and her evidence is very condemnatory.” Two days later, the topic resurfaces, “The investigation all over and to be decided on Saturday” (Thursday, April 3). Finally the case is closed as on Saturday, April 5, Lord concludes, “Mrs. W— got ‘bail’ to appear on trial at the Supreme Court. Heard from Mrs. Gray wrote to Mattilda.”

Even the innocent child victim of a shooting enters Lord’s 1890 diary, alongside women who die in childbirth, through misfortune or by the hand of another woman:

Tuesday, July 1 “Dominion Day” nice and fine for a wonder. Artie went boat-sailing. Lizzie Hudson went home: I quite miss her. A little girl of Gay the Butcher’s was shot today by some boys. There was a “field day” in the park. Aunt and Mrs. Dean and Mrs. Sterling drove out.

Images of women in the press as martyrs or as victims or perpetrators of crime were supplemented with corresponding literary heroines and the ideal women of conduct books in Lord’s diary. Each story is a narrative exploring women’s possibilities and agencies. Lord’s own act of agency, her diary, simultaneously

holds such women up for inspection while she herself textually unravels the woman she is supposed to become and the one she is becoming.

Lord's journal discourse is a narrative of how in becoming a woman she was engaged in specific activities and once independent of her childhood home she manoeuvred within her own home and community to redefine her British colonial inheritance in the light of important societal advances. Through writing these heroines' lives into her diary, she was consciously narrating her own existence as observer/recorder. The construction of her narrative voice in her diary hinges strongly on her colonial status as British immigrant to Canada when the colonial tide of politics and the corresponding Victorian values were shifting. Lord was living the life of a conduct manual, a lifestyle instrumental in defining an ideological identity of the emerging middle class. As her diary discourse indicates, she casts herself as the perfect Victorian woman, mingling with like-minded people never far from the domestic sphere and in places that reinforced similar values, such as church, temperance, and charity groups. She makes the world aware of her existence in part through those social reform activities, and constructs her subjectivity through that most available cultural paradigm, the diary, exploring how that subjectivity is experienced and over the years how it develops:

Writing was the one career which even a fairly conventional education opened up for women. But to write, or at least to publish, was for the eighteenth-century woman a transgressive act. Though the gendering of mental qualities associated femininity with imagination and creativity publishing exposed an essentially private activity to the public gaze, blurring the conduct-book delineation of separate spheres. (V. Jones 140)

As the twentieth century approached, however, Lord was typically blurring the separate spheres, stepping outside the home, and meeting with like-minded women. Cook and Mitchinson indicate that through such engagements women were also learning the skills of organization, public speaking, and social investigation. Her writing would not yet be exposed for public gaze but privately the diarist was engaged in the process of putting herself and her world into words. As Armstrong says, "the novel over time produced a language of increasing psychological complexity for understanding individual behavior" (253). Women like Margaret Gray Lord had in their journals been inscribing such complexity in less structured and more idiosyncratic ways.

Lord's documentary journal entries on how she and other women negotiated between social expectations, their desire for social reform, and their private emotions illustrate the complex and contradictory roles women were expected to play. Within the bourgeois community of Charlottetown, the display of wealth, status, political and religious affiliation, and women's compliance with those expectations were detrimental to maintaining the status quo. In the end, women's obituaries put the "appropriate" closure on their lives, as was the case with Lord's mother and then herself.

Reenacting tradition and family rituals, such as a wedding, also provided the opportunity to reaffirm the Lords's position in society; yet between the lines of Lord's diary the psychological costs of this public display for women is proof of the toll their Victorian lifestyle took on them. In 1876, Florence's wedding was the discursive culmination of Lord's Victorian upbringing. The passages indicate how Lord oversaw the transformation of her sister, from a single woman in their father's (and step-mother's) home, to a new position as the wife of Mr. Henry S. Poole. Lord's diary narrative is tinged with romance and dramatic excitement. Like all narratives it has dramatic tension—there is much uncertainty about whether Florence will fit the true role of bride—but culminates in triumph. During the lead up to the big day, Florence appears paralyzed while others work themselves into a frenzy to see the event come off. References to some hidden knowledge suggest that someone—God?—besides Lord knows something that cannot be readily admitted, possibly Florence's mental or physical state. Lord realizes on May 6, on seeing Florence's dress, that something is awry: "Poor Florence her wedding dress makes me realize matters." In the end, however, the story is a social triumph: "Everyone thought they had never seen such a lovely bride."

Prior to her sister Florence's wedding, numerous activities are mentioned, the preparations—baking cakes, seeing to her gifts, arranging her trousseau, packing her valise, and sewing Florence's wardrobe. As the older sister and with their mother deceased, Margaret oversaw her sister's wedding, but throughout the entries leading up to Florence and Mr. Poole's nuptials, there is tension:

May 6th Saturday. Mr Poole got off today and Florence's box arrived. She sent over for me. The things were so nice [...]. Poor Florence her wedding dress makes me realize matters.

Monday May 29. Rainy and dismal all day, I might say outwardly and inwardly. I sent for the Dr. for Florence and he thought her ill and prescribed at once [...].

Margaret's next entries read:

June 2nd Friday. First birthday I ever past without some demonstration or other!! This day year we were at Queenston. I drove Florence home she felt weak and depressed [...].

Monday June 5th. Raining again today. Finished Florence's dress. Went over to see her after dinner and tried on her cloak which I cut out this morn.

Wednesday June 7th. Went over early and put out Florence's trousseau. Staid over there all day. Papa arranged her presents on the piano. She got several today. I altered her grey cloth dress for her [...].

Saturday June 10th. Raining and miserable out I went over for dear Florence—her last Saturday with us as Florence Gray. I am beginning to realize she will soon be lost to me. Oh how I shall miss her in every way [...].

Finally, after days of preparation, the wedding day approaches:

Wednesday June 14th [...] Dear Florence cool and calm and self possessed, all going on well! I rushed into town and finished shopping and all promises well for tomorrow [...].

Thursday June 15 all is over dear Florence is really gone from us. I do believe he will make her happy. It was beautifully fine till after Déjeuner then it came on to pour in Torrents. Everyone thought they had never seen such a lovely bride. She certainly sustained her part nobly and Papa did so well. The guests seemed thoroughly to enjoy themselves and all went off well. They left for Summerside in Conolly's carriage at ¼ to 2. How I shall miss her I dread to Think. He knoweth. I came home with a raging headache. [...] Dear Florence. I can scarcely realize she is really off.

While Lord's diary entries aren't explicit, the mysterious "realization" of May 6, Florence's repeated illness, the problem with the dress, and then Lord's rescue—working not only on the wedding dress, which she finishes on the

June 5, but also altering her sister's grey dress two days later—suggest that for some reason (pregnancy?) Florence is ill and stressed, and her clothes don't fit. The cumulative effect throughout this section of the diary suggests Margaret's concern about what Florence's condition will be if and when she makes it to the altar. The decorum of the wedding celebration would be a reflection on and public acknowledgement of the wealth and status of the Gray family; but in the privacy of Lord's diary text, she admits to the rush of activity and her concern as they patch over the cracks in the façade. The triumph at the end is tinged with relief and curious preoccupation with the wedding guests' perception of the bride's appearance. After the season-long ordeal, Lord's wedding-day headache turns into near-collapse from illness and concern for her sister, as well as ongoing social damage control:

Friday June 16th Got up not feeling at all well and so depressed [...] Of course all our thoughts have been with the dear bride and we are wondering how she proceeded on her journeying. I wrote to darling Gran. [...] Bessie came out to see me after tea. She pained me much by telling me she had received an anonymous letter requesting her not to come to the wedding. I have been puzzling over the matter and wondering who could have written it.

Margaret sustains her narrative by underlining key aspects of the wedding scenario, Florence acting her part nobly, the guests playing their role as amused audience while God in heaven knew the true circumstances (“He knoweth”) of the event, but clearly more was going on than a simple wedding.

Such public adherence to the values of bourgeois Victorian society was becoming more problematic to uphold. Margaret herself was acknowledging the physical and mental strain of living up to these ideals with her frequent headaches. By contrast, her passages on more domestic and everyday activities gave her more joy, especially when she could combine them with her own public duties and those of her husband as part of the Island's elite: “Made 10 qts. Black currant and ditto of raspberry preserve: hot work. Walked in to the meeting of the ‘Y.M.C.A.’ it was very nice [...]. Sir John Macdonald and Lady Macdonald arrived tonight and visit Mr. Ed Hodgson” (August 7, 1890). Lord was taking more joy out of domestic duties as she continued to also take an increasingly active role in the community but still maintaining her position with Canada's political elite at her husband's side. By this time (1890), Lord was, in Samuel Johnson's phrase, a true “amazon of the pen” (qtd. in V. Jones 140), at least in terms of the sheer volume of her diaries. Her diary was a sign of what Virginia

Woolf in 1928 wrote of as an event of historical proportions, when middle-class women—as opposed to aristocratic writers a century earlier—began to write in ever-larger numbers. Within this modern form of power women were exposing what lay beneath the surface of wealth and status, and in this way, “[w]omen’s writing is thus defined as a threat to the existing social order” (V. Jones 140).

Lord’s particular diary voice does open up a discursive space to reassess the cultural artifacts deeply embedded and idolized in contemporary Island culture that her own and other bourgeois family were instrumental in establishing on the Island. Her authority in her diary informs how homes, dress, decoration, and ceremony produced a Victorian life that she, her mother, sisters, and friends, as women, were instrumental in complying with to constitute and perpetuate their social identity and status. By Margaret’s very appearance as an author, she became part of “a class of people on whom writing conferred authority by placing them in a new and distinctive relationship with themselves, with other people, and with a world of objects” (Armstrong and Tennenhouse 1). In her diary, Margaret puts her experience of travel and the world behind her, and focuses on the incremental day-to-day horizontal construction of her everyday. Her diary becomes the testimony of the foundation on which the colonial empire was constructed and her role in bring up her children, sustaining British customs, and indulging in symbols imported from England were all instrumental in building the colonial mindset.

In this context, Lord positioned herself as an agent of the colonial project, caught between the old world of England and a small town of the new world. Manoeuvring between like-minded bourgeois, clergy, and the more average citizens, in a recreated world mimicking the bourgeois homes and buildings of England, Margaret’s text illustrates the space that was hers—the home, the homes of her family and social equals, and the space surrounding these places. Her diary emerges from the domestic space of Victorian homes and a community that preserved symbols of their British inheritance in their homes and habitus.

Immigrant farm wife and entrepreneur Emma Chadwich Stretch nevertheless had her husband who built their home and furnished it to meet the local conditions, thereby defining her agency out of a need to survive with locally available resources. Stretch’s sister-in-law’s family, the Harrises, brought their English furnishings with them and constructed an urban lifestyle more compatible with the bourgeois community. As Stretch reconstructed herself in her rural milieu through her diary, so did Lord in the narrative space of her diary thematically and linguistically structure herself as the urban bourgeois.

Mercy Ann Coles's travel diary suggests that her colonial agency, like Margaret Gray Lord's, emerged from her Britishness at the margins of the empire. Both wrote with a concentrated effort for conserving the world they and their families left behind. Unlike Mercy Ann Coles who wrote a travel diary, both Lord and Stretch wrote from their homes, the bosom of domesticity where, as women, they possessed special authority; the domestic as well as the urban or rural environment were important elements of their agency, Stretch and her family for their real survival and Margaret's for the preservation of her family's socio-political power structure and her own social influence. Franco Moretti (1998) has pointed out in *Atlas of the European Novel, 1800–1900* that "space is not 'outside' of narrative but an internal force that shapes it from within". Or in other words "in modern European novels, what happens depends a lot on where it happens" (70). So too in life writing the space from which women write determines them textually, both thematically and linguistically, Stretch elliptically on her agrarian domesticity and Margaret elaborately on her urban lifestyle.

Armstrong sees the domestic space as engendering textuality that eventually is instrumental in projecting the female writing subject into new spheres:

the sudden appearance in the 1840s of novels that turned political information into a language of the modern self adds something to the theory of power. The predominance of domestic fiction suggests the degree to which such power did not in fact rely on overtly juridical or economic means so much as on cultural hegemony, that is on the notion of the family, norms of sexual behavior, the polite use of language, the regulation leisure time and all those micro techniques that constitute the modern subject. (210)

Lord's account of her life and transition from one Victorian estate to another gives insights as to how women and families were contained by these fortresses of Victorian decorum. The Gothic Revival architecture of Margaret's married home, The Nest, with its semi-circular eyebrow window in the large centre gable, with decorative cornice that accents the roofline and its verandah with ornate trellage mimic the pseudo-Gothic architectural features of eighteenth-century British architecture. According to James MacNutt and Robert Tuck, the picturesque Gothic Revival came into favour in countries of the British Empire where "it was perceived as more British and true to the British national spirit" (29). The home's ornament was intended to add beauty, yet the "aesthetic features" were extrinsic to the structure. Such décor in architecture and general aesthetics was

apparent in women's fashion, and references were often made to the ornamental value of women and their function, such as when Lord's mother was referred to in her obituary as one of society's brightest "ornaments" (qtd. in MacLeod 88). The architecture of Victorian Charlottetown reflected the general aesthetics and the social ordering that accompanied the time through re-enacting Victorian customs and practices.

Lord's diary text illustrates how closely she adhered to the expected social customs when on her numerous visits she obeyed the social norms of women of her class by leaving her calling card or even having servants act as messengers. Correct etiquette, not only in behaviour but also in physical appearance and presentation were marks of status and taste in the Victorian era. Through her diary, she testifies to how she learned these behaviours and later applied them. In her later life, she reveals a more relaxed attitude.

Within the walls of Inkerman in 1863, the youthful Margaret Gray engaged in sewing, embroidering, and assembling a wardrobe that reflected Victorian tastes shared among young women: "One of the veriest cold days. Carry not here. Sent Maria in the even. With note for Helen for pattern of petticoat bodice. She brought me one and 'a volume' (February 4, 1863). Her occasional references to dress relate to the young bourgeois woman's preoccupation with presentation of self and the symbols and styles they engaged with in the process. Claire Hughes sees dress as a social code that "allows us to trace the growth of luxury and consumption in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries," as well as a language of a social system of signs, values made visible (2). Exchanging and copying patterns, giving gifts of clothing or jewelry as daughters of the local elite did, was also an obligatory display of their father's financial success.

Still as Hughes elaborates, in fiction, dress is the most personal shell of all and by exploring the poetics of dress the picture of imagined worlds of fiction is embellished. Lord's diary response to viewing Florence's wedding dress, "the most gorgeous and most symbolic dress of all" (9) reveals the uneasiness of associations with the wedding dress: "Poor Florence her wedding dress makes me realize matters." The wedding dress signals another side of a culturally important ritual, one often charged with emotional contradictions. More articulate diarists like L. M. Montgomery even had problems writing about the wedding day, as Montgomery wrote it up in her diary several months after the event and was still filled with the unhappiness she felt under the veil and in the dress so typical of Victorians.

Regardless, Lord sewed and helped Florence assemble her trousseau so that the presentation of the bride impressed the guests, and for that reason success was met, at least in Margaret's textual resolution of the episode. Behind the veil, distraught Florence had successfully retained her composure as a passively decorated woman: "Everyone thought they had never seen such a lovely bride. She certainly sustained her part nobly and Papa did so well. The guests seemed thoroughly to enjoy themselves and all went off well" (Thursday, June 15, 1876).

Photos of Margaret's daughter Gladwys's 1908 wedding (MacLeod 115) indicate that the tradition of the extravagant white wedding was carried over to the next generation; but modernity and the advance of the photographic image would shape fashion in another way, and as Roland Barthes contends in *The Fashion System* (1983), "clothes live in close symbiosis with their historical context" (185). Lord's fashion statement, epitomized in the dressing of her sister and her daughter as virtuous brides, suggests that she still clung to Victorian values of decorum when in fact in other ways she was writing and upholding modernist values.

Lord and Mercy Ann Coles, both bourgeois women diarists, signal by their fixation on their garments their obsession with their outward appearance; adhering to determined dress codes distinguished them from more ordinary women. Rarely do diarists such as Emma Chadwich Stretch or Lucy Palmer Haslam elaborate in their diaries on their apparel. Stretch relates how she exchanged tea for the clothing from a dressmaker neighbour as part of her economy of exchange. Lucy has a separate book for her trousseau, indicating the importance of the wardrobe for her new "position" as a married woman, but she refrains in most entries from focusing on her clothing, instead writing about her handwork, which she made as gifts or to furnish and decorate her home.

The emphasis, by bourgeois diarists like Margaret, on their dress confirms to themselves privately what the trappings of home and social position do publicly, their success at maintaining their position within the Charlottetown elite. In exploring this phenomenon of clothing in literature, Barthes goes on to say that clothing constitutes

an excellent poetic object; first because it mobilizes with great variety all the qualities of matter: substance, form, color, tactility, movement, rigidity, luminosity; next, because touching the body and functioning as its substitute and its mask, it is certainly the object of a very important investment; this "poetic" disposition is attested to by the frequency and the quality of vestimentary descriptions in literature. (185)

Through time, Lord's diary entries redefine her role as a woman who not only adopts the values her own parents instilled in her but acts them out with her father, her sisters, her husband, her own children, and the people of her community. From her first diary, she relates the details of how she lived with her times, and as times change, so does her self-construction in the diary. When, on the advent of the twentieth century, she picks up her diary, she writes of her engagement with the social issues of her time that gave her and other woman new avenues for articulating their concerns about alcohol, poverty, and the enfranchisement of women that came in the wake of those social concerns.

Family, friends and self preoccupy Lord's diary discourse as the social position of the Gray family did not oblige them to get involved in household duties. Instead, as a young woman of eighteen, her main preoccupations were visiting and socializing. On December 23, 1863, she encounters nine different individuals or families and enjoys tea on at least three occasions during the day. Woven in the accounts from December 23–25, 1863, is constant commentary on the weather: "Fine bright day," "Rather stormy", "Such a fine bright night." Health and sickness also preoccupy her: "Papa very poorly tonight," "Poor Papa in bed nearly all day," and finally, "Papa a little better." Church activity is also a preoccupation: "the E. Church Sunday School tea party," "from the English Church to prayer," "Xmas day. Mama and I went to E. Church in the sleigh." Her diary articulates Victorian domesticity, the place that women knew best and that was consistent with their "education in keeping with the providential role (to see women) as rulers of the domestic economy" (V. Jones 98); but by textualizing their reality, women like Lord create a whole new vocabulary of social relations and whereby write the norms of female behaviour into the dominant strands of their diaries. This redefines and establishes the significance of the domestic sphere to women in a new way in the new world.

In her obituary, Margaret Gray Lord is remembered for her many roles: Victorian daughter, wife of a prominent politician and businessman, mother and sister, and a member of the local upper class who became heavily engaged in philanthropic activities. Her obituary fixes in the public's mind her witness of the historical circumstances of her life, her paternal lineage, and the family's, and sometimes her own, affiliation with Canada's birth as a nation. Her passing becomes an opportunity to retell the history through which she lived, and she and her sisters' lives are mentioned only in relation to their marriages or death. Despite the fact that she is the subject of the story, the only image of Margaret in the obituary positions her in a domestic setting, surrounded by trinkets collected

throughout the world: like her “fine old china,” she is one more artifact from a former age characterized by Imperial ties and trade:

In her last years, the late Mrs. Lord lived surrounded with pieces of fine old china and many things that had been collected in the far corners of the earth, by members of her family. Not the least of her precious possessions was a certain box filled with flowers of fine old lace, in which she made her bow to the last of the Colonel Governors who helped at the birth of this great Canada.

She was a brilliant conversationalist and almost up to the last continued to take a deep interest in the affairs of the day.

Interestingly Margaret Gray Lord’s diary has little reference to the grand historical events which the obituary alludes to:

Mrs. Lord in her day had mingled with the great statesmen of Canada, their wives and daughters, and had helped to entertain them during the memorable conference of 77 years ago. She came of a family that has been highly honored in this province and while she was naturally proud of the part she played in the Confederation story, she always retained her gracious unaffected kindly manner. (“Mrs. Artemas Lord”)

The obituary spends three quarters of its space on Lord’s family history, siblings, and husband, and their connections to Imperial society and its nineteenth-century history. She would not necessarily have disagreed with the obituary’s evaluation of her family’s importance, but lost here is the vibrant voice in her diary, the engagement with social reform movements and the part she played, as a woman of the twentieth century, in the making of a modern Canada. The image Margaret Gray Lord creates of herself over her many years of diary keeping is of a woman who moved with the times. Born in Fort Beaufort, South Africa, on June 2, 1845, into a family of British origins she made her home in PEI when she was eleven years old. It appears her diary writing began in 1863 when she was eighteen years of age, and she produced almost forty volumes of diaries throughout her life.

Her life was rich in an experiential sense as Lord had ongoing contact with the old world, England, where her sister Harriet lived with her grandparents. PEI was strongly invested in reproducing British customs and establishing institutions that would connect it with the motherland. In this way, a Victorian

British lifestyle flourished in the colonies long after it had been abandoned in England; but during Lord's lifetime, radical changes took place in her milieu and while she was very much a part of learning and cultivating the old Victorian ways, she was also part of the transition into modernity.

Lord's diary is evidence of how she flowed with the times, maintaining the status quo as a member of the elite class, but engaged with the projects of modernism, including the temperance movement and its affiliation with women's suffrage. Positioning Lord in her time and place allows readers of her diaries to understand her as a member of the socio-economic elite; one of the pillars of her rather conservative identity as a middle-class woman was being passively functional. Her daily rhythms clearly indicate that, unlike immigrant/entrepreneur Emma Chadwich Stretch, she could rely on the economic security of her father and husband and dwell on activities that contained her independence. By analyzing Lord's everyday patterns, it becomes more apparent how her leisured existence of visiting like-minded women, attending church and succumbing to a home education supplemented by conduct literature all served to preserve bourgeois conservatism, even while other activities promoted social reform and change. At a period when England was being transformed into an increasingly industrial society, her little Island colony would remain a bastion for the British upper-class lifestyles and values for a few more decades. Women had a great role in maintaining the status quo and holding back time.

Another Victorian Diarist: Wanda Lefurgey Wyatt, 1895–1998

In 1930, Wanda Wyatt follows up an entry questioning the value of a daily diary of "trivial things" by speculating on the value of accrued detail:

March 24 What is the use of putting down the trivial things that are accomplished everyday. Perhaps my diary which seems so commonplace if read for example—would show some pattern being built up little by little. Washed blankets today with Dora. Gloriously fine & clean & everything fluffy & lovely.

At this point, Wyatt had been keeping her diary for eighteen years and was thirty-five years of age. Her eighty-two years of diary keeping (1912–94) remain in the archives of the Wyatt Heritage Properties, unpublished except in a biography, *A Century on Spring Street: Wanda Lefurgey Wyatt of Summerside, Prince Edward*

Island, 1895–98, in which Deirdre Kessler gives an overview of Wyatt's life and includes some excerpts from her letters and diaries.

Wyatt began her diary writing at age seventeen while attending Edgehill, an elite school for girls in Windsor, Nova Scotia. Her first entry, from February 20, 1912, appears neatly written and sets a precedent for entries to come: "Shrove Tuesday A holiday—great excitement—Night before ie Monday night wanted Mabel to come to sleep with me but she wouldn't." The precursor of her diary was a ledger, which dates back to 1907, in which she diligently kept track of her finances; it stayed with her during her university years in McGill (1913–17). While away at school and university, she developed the art of letter writing, and in addition to supplying numerous excerpts from Wyatt's diary, Kessler includes letters from the nine years Wyatt spent away at school, filling the gaps of her diaries from that same period. When she resumed diary writing in 1917, Wyatt wrote from home, but often her diary was from an off-Island location where the family was either holidaying or seeking cures at far away sanatoriums.

When World War I ended, Wyatt was in Chicago:

Nov.11 Mon. PEACE

It's hard to believe that it has actually come—what thankfulness there must be throughout the world—Chicago took the news I should think in a much more boisterous way ... Our boys, I expect, will not be back for two years yet. I must get started at Re-construction work of some kind—I regret so much that I could not have been one to go to France during the war, but it seemed that is was impossible, and perhaps my niche is right here. (qtd. in Kessler 185)

Her keen observations and direct engagement with issues by frequently referring to herself in the first person suggest Wyatt's ambition, as does her fantasy about a more active part in the war. The following year, 1919, her niche materialized when she was admitted to study law in the province of Prince Edward Island:

I left for Ch'town to take in a couple of dances etc. Virginia came down in the aft. stayed to supper & all night. D.B. & Elli down after supper for awhile. Austin phoned but I declined his invitation. —Father had an application put thro in court today for my admittance as a student of law. So now I have something to work for. (November 26, 1919; qtd. in Kessler 198–99)

Next to this entry, Kessler reproduces the newspaper clippings “Miss Wyatt to Study Law” and “First Young Woman to Become a Law Student.” This indeed was a turning point in Wyatt’s life and for women in general, as no woman was considered qualified for admission previously or allowed to invade the spheres monopolized by the masculine sex.

Wyatt never practiced law but became actively engaged in community work through various organizations affiliated with women, culture, health, and education. Travelling was her passion, and many of her diaries and paraphernalia from these journeys around the world are part of her legacy. One trip in 1964 generated this entry: “Sun Up in time for 11am service—lunch sat near MacDonald’s & watched magician acts reading minds, etc—pretty well fixed [...] Met a Mr. Ramsay a widower from Victoria” (January 26, 1964; qtd. in Kessler 371). She maintains her diary style of faithfully recording the people and events that fill her leisured existence, only occasionally reflecting on the diary, questioning the sense of keeping a record, and the possible pattern that might emerge through it all. All in all, she wrote over 100 volumes consisting of almost 15,000 pages and more than 2.5 million words. What remains most impressive is Wyatt’s documentation of a woman who emerged from a Victorian childhood, a childhood informed by the teachings of *Tokology: A Book for Every Woman* by Alice B. Stockham, to a modern professional woman strongly committed to her community.

Like other diarists, Wyatt’s ledger was the precursor of her diary, suggesting that her record keeping of her early finances spurred her on to keeping another kind of record, that of her life. The social and historical circumstances of her life obviously instilled in her a feeling of privilege and the idea that she had a special vantage point from which to tell her story. Wyatt’s diary became her way to make the world aware of her existence; Brossard writes, “one must want consciously or not, to make the world aware of one’s existence” (qtd. in Hunter 143), and that Wyatt did at selected periods of her long life.

Textually, in 1912, Wyatt established a pattern to tell all that took place in the run of a day at Edgehill: weather, daily routines of eating and sleeping, classes and friends all in a tight knit penmanship, tidily presented on the page. Her first diaries were regulation notebooks labeled “Church School for Girls, Windsor, N.S.,” where she wrote “Wanda Wyatt, Strictly Private, Vol. I.” Her rhetorical style in these early diaries favours simple sentences: “Very windy and rather cold ... Had supper early—7 o’clock and then got dresses & Pip took us up to the

Opera House. Lecture by Canan Broom—on how we got our English Bible. It was very interesting” (February 23, 1912; qtd. in Kessler 102–103).

Typical of what Hogan refers to as the “feminine form,” Wyatt’s diary entries often consist of a somewhat static list of events with few cohesive markers and the occasional assessment: “it was [...] interesting.” The diary entries take on a predictable non-hierarchical list of events often based on the chronology of their occurrence. Wyatt has clearly broken from what Peterson identifies as narrative strategies typical of Victorian women writers, that is, to speak no evil. Wyatt often records how she shuns those seeking her friendship. After a long account of the day’s activities on February 21, 1912, for instance, Wyatt writes, “Had a dance with Phyllis and Dot. & Ella—Dot still up to it and asked me for one of my carnations. Told her I would give her a dead one all I could spare. She seemed satisfied.” Her ruthlessness persists throughout her diary entries, as she goes on to reject numerous suitors at home and those she met on her travels. Her repressive narrative strategies give little indication why she never accepted any of these men for the long term. Instead, Wyatt proudly projects herself as capable of managing independently and cultivated her integrity as a self-made woman.

After the death of her parents and sister Dorothy, Wyatt’s engagement with her community and business interests increased as did her travels. She was to live to see the fruition of her social dedication and the distribution of her accumulated wealth. At the age of ninety-two, her diary continues to document her social activities:

This turned out to be very important day for me personally. A reception at Eptek in aft. It was I.O.D.E. founders day and the Abeqweit members made it very special for me. Mayor Stewart was there & presented me with a plaque from the Town in recognition of my contribution to the community. (February 13, 1987)

Soon after this entry, Wyatt’s handwriting became shaky, but she continued to keep her diary by dictating to her caregivers well into her hundredth year when, in her last entry, she writes, “Very good night last night. Up 2. Cloudy. windy. 9 A.M. still sleeping [Clara]” (September 7, 1994; qtd. in Kessler 454).

A Modern Island Woman Diarist

Amy Andrew and Lucy Haslam wrote in their diaries of sisters and neighbours who left the Island for other parts of Canada and United States because of the absence of opportunities on the Island. Most women who stayed behind entered domesticity through marriage and the diarists wrote themselves into that sphere through their journals. Few women could afford to stay single unless they had the financial security Wanda Wyatt did. The status of women in Canada was changing, so that by 1922 women had won the right to vote in every province except Quebec. As Wyatt's 1919 diary indicates, a wider range of opportunities were opening up to women. Maria Tippet writes, through "the advent of the shorter skirts, cigarette smoking, mechanical labour-saving devices and new attitudes to raising children, women found a new image for themselves" (61). Wyatt's textual representation of herself and the accompanying photos in Kessler's book demonstrate her writing herself out of her Victorian childhood in her early teens and into an era of independence. When she moved to Montreal to attend university, she shed her Edgehill, Victorian-style dresses for Greek costumes and excelled in dance.

Wyatt, like other bourgeois women diarists Mercy Ann Coles and Margaret Gray Lord, records in her diary how she manoeuvred through life in the wake of her father's position. Her lawyer father was the speaker of the house in the PEI legislature; their ongoing relationship is well documented in their letters. Wyatt appears to have increasingly reserved her diary for accounts of caring for her ailing mother and the nuclear family. Behind the scenes, her father was instrumental in passing a bill in the Island legislature to give women property owners the right to vote. Wyatt could write with ease in her diary on domestic issues as outside her diary was the world of property, investments and opportunity.

Cities like Montreal, Chicago, and far away lands were the sites Wyatt engaged in her modernist exploits. After resuming her diary at the end of 1917, Wyatt takes up issues with a deeper level of reflection while in Chicago, writing on January 13, 1918,

The four of us went off to the West Side Auditorium on Racine & Taylor to hear Emma Goldman, an anarchist speaker. The hall old & typical of such meetings, crowded with Russian Jews & foreigners, air bad. Sold books on anarchism and "What a young girl ought to know." [The book to which Wyatt referred was written by Emma Drake and was part of the Self & Sex Series]. Audience enthusiastic. Gave me a queer creepy feeling to be at such

a meeting & among such people. I felt as if I were not actually there but looking on at something about which I read, but never expected to realize or fit into the picture of myself (qtd. in Kessler 169)

Soon twenty-two, Wyatt with her future ahead of her is searching the wide world for intellectual stimulation and purpose to bring into her life on Spring Street. Chicago, in her diary, throbs with the pulse of ethnic, political, and intellectual activity that gives her that “queer creepy feeling” that obviously moved, yet challenged, that person she felt she was to become. Through this diary entry, Wyatt’s lifelong impulse to enjoy life, her curiosity, and occasional questioning the impact of this life on her self-image surfaces in her diary. The “bad air” of the American metropolis signified to Wyatt the dawning of a new era, where radical thoughts would fly and rising classes would challenge the status quo. As she herself admitted this did not “fit into the picture of myself.”

It appears that Wyatt did find an image of herself as a modern woman in the post-World War I period as she began her law studies; she could choose a single life. The social stability women generally sought through marriage often involved their subjugation. Textually, through her diary, Wyatt writes herself as a woman seeking a position from which she can maintain her integrity and independence, though still relying on family and inherited wealth. Where Margaret Gray Lord was content to live in the company of like-minded people, Wyatt would attend similar functions but also became engaged in other spheres, extending the domain of feminine activity by actively initiating programmes in her community.

Wanda Wyatt’s obituary emphasizes her contribution to her community. Unlike Lord’s obituary and the focus on the historical and familial context, Wyatt remains the focus of her obituary, which characterizes her as “one of [the arts and cultural community’s] most ardent supporters and generous benefactors”:

The Wyatt Foundation contributed \$1 million to the [Wyatt Centre] and Wyatt’s generosity was credited as being the impetus that made the long-talked-about centre a reality.

But Wyatt’s contributions to the arts community went much farther than financial donations. Many Island artists will remember Wyatt for the encouragement and support she lent them.

‘She’s been my best friend for 26 years,’ said Summerside artist Ardis Desborough. “I found her a very kind, and gentle woman but a very strong woman.... She was my mentor. That’s the easiest way for me to explain how I feel about her.” (“Wanda Wyatt Dies”)

The obituary also connects her to the 1912 establishment of the Prince County Hospital, the Imperial Order of Daughters of the Empire, Prince of Wales College, the P.E.I. Humane Society, the Canadian Red Cross Society, and the University of Prince Edward Island. The obituary partially un-writes Wyatt’s self-representation in its emphasis on her philanthropic social support; such activity, in the 1990s, has the aura of old, conservative Victorian values. In her day-to-day recordings, she writes herself out of a Victorian world, discarding the symbols of the era, and through various places and practices reconstructs her identity. She admits in her diary to the changes in her life and her neglect of the autobiographical pact: “So many days have elapsed since I last wrote in this diary—and so much has happened to change the whole trend of my life.” (May 18, 1937).

She continually revised her narrative of agency as she moved from home to school to university and travelled the world. Burkitt draws on Liz Stanley’s work when he writes, “taking responsibility and agency through the narrative there is also established at its centre the sense of ‘I’ so common in autobiographical” (104). Autobiographers occasionally rewrite their own life stories to resemble obituaries like the above, giving the impression that their lives were a linear progression of accomplishments. This is what L.M. Montgomery did with *The Alpine Path*. Wyatt’s diaries like Montgomery’s journals tell us otherwise; they are documents that reveal the inconsistencies in the fragments of their everyday as these women write themselves into new worlds.

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April Wednesday 19 1916

words but ugly tho he was the slight smile as he spoke and his confident words made him seem inspired to me. At St Pauls he made use of Lincoln's words not - Is God with us - but are we with God some are.

This is the first beautiful day for weeks but I have flu & feel my legs are all knees. Awfully busy at office, tomorrow carnally hits - girls working till 11:30. 600 casualties removed in one day, result of the glorious fight of Vimy Ridge & horrible as the suffering is one feels the men don't begrudge it. Th & I left office abt 6:45 got a bus to Knightsbridge walked a little but I was shaky so we sat for a while & then went in to a nice place. She is the sweetest thing, I love her profile. The birds were so merry.

I was nearly sick when she referred to the Germans' brutal treatment of the dead. She thought I had seen it. Nothing could be more ghastly or absolutely barbarous. Got home very late as weak as a cat.

FIGURE 10. Carrie Ellen Holman's 1917 Diary

Travelling Women's Diaries: Mercy Ann Coles (1864), Violet E. Goldsmith (1901), Carrie Holman (1917), Vera Hyde (1929–30) and Lucy Palmer Haslam (1932)

Winter Studies and Summer Rambles in Canada (1838), written by Anna Brownell Jameson, is the most famous of nineteenth-century Canadian travel books by women. Based on her experiences in Canada from December 1836 to August 1837, Jameson integrates the observations recorded in her travel diary from this period with her extensive studies of European literature, art, and society. Her displacement from her European cultural milieu into the cultural wilderness of Canada provided the impetus for a book that often focuses more on her feminist agenda and the state of the arts in Europe than her immediate surroundings.

Nevertheless, it was travelling and moving in a new milieu that connected her stories of her close friend Otilie, Goethe's daughter-in-law, and her thoughts on Coleridge with accounts of the sounds of the cracking ice in Toronto bay. Jameson's "studies and rambles" of two months in "Canada" within a 200-mile radius of southern Ontario in the mid-1800s have been valorized as an "invaluable record of life in pre-Confederation Canada."³⁰ Jameson's account of her travels corresponds closely with what Mary Louise Pratt, in *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (2001), labels "European discourse about non-European worlds [...] an urban discourse about non-urban worlds, and a lettered, bourgeois discourse about non-lettered, peasant world" (34–35). Writing in the tradition of botanist Carl Linnaeus and Alexander Humboldt, Anna Jameson also scribed her "bourgeois form of authority" about her subject matter, employing the imperialist overtures that Pratt points out are particular to Alberto Moravia and Paul Theroux's travel accounts.

To give some indication of women and their accounts of travel, it is worth reviewing one of the conventions, namely, the arrival at the object of the journey. On December 20, 1836, Jameson writes, "Toronto,—such is now the sonorous name of this our sublime capital,—was, thirty years ago, wilderness, the haunt of the bear and deer, with a little, ugly, inefficient fort, which, however, could not be more ugly or inefficient than the present one" (9). She takes some ownership in this city as her husband was employed in the province's highest legal position. She had come to Canada to arrange a legal separation from him and also temporarily to enjoy her position as Lady Chancellor and the special privileges

³⁰ The phrase comes from the blurb on the back of the McClelland and Stewart 1990 edition.

such a position would offer. As Pratt acknowledges, like other arrival texts, this one also serves as a “potent site for framing relations of contact and setting the terms of its representation” (78).

For less accomplished writers, the format for telling the story of their journeys is less disguised or sometimes imbedded within another text. Their travel diaries simply exhibit what Lisa LaFramboise has noted in her observations of Canadian women travel writers, “a strong documentary impulse, recording facts and figures, describing communities, landscapes, and people, and relating stories and events” (304). This is not as innocent as it may first appear as many of these travellers and writers to and within Canada were, as Pratt observes, “converting local knowledges (discourses) into European national and continental knowledges associated with European forms and relations of power” (202).

Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Island Women Travel Writers

Diversity in women’s travel accounts derives from differences of social class, age and religion and also from shifts in time from journeys to different parts of the world (Bassnett 228). In this respect, Island women travel writers are no exception: each of the five women discussed here left the Island at different times and for various destinations, and scribed their journeys in unique ways in their journals. **Mercy Ann Coles** (1838–1921) authored the first of these, in which she describes her trip to Quebec City from October 5 to November 2, 1864, to attend the famous Quebec Conference with her parents. Coles gives a playful account of mingling with Canada’s nation builders. **Carrie Holman** did what every conscientious Canadian was expected to do, stand by Canada’s allies in times of distress. Her journal account from England reveals the culmination of a modern Canadian woman subject who seriously puts her religion, political persuasion, and literariness together on the April 19–21, 1917, pages of her diary. Out of the 200 pages of the “Diary of **Violet E. Goldsmith** Alberton teacher June 7, 1900–March 15, 1906,” there are 40 pages, from January to August 1901, when Goldsmith and her Aunt Maggie sail off to England to visit relatives and acquaint themselves with their land of origin. No doubt her father organized the trip for his motherless daughter so that she would have the opportunity to acquaint herself with her English roots. Her diary tells how she moved around relatives, sights and events, only to realize that she could never feel “at home” in such places. **Vera Hyde**’s “Diary on Bermuda Trip” from December 22 to April

1930 records her experiences on the cruise ship to and her sojourn in Bermuda. Detailed descriptions of people, events and places by this self-acclaimed Alice in Wonderland offer a travelogue par excellence of a single young woman's last "fling" in this exotic milieu. After years of diary writing, **Lucy Palmer Haslam** at the age of sixty-seven takes a trip with her son to visit family in Ontario and Quebec. During July 1932, Haslam documents her trip from the farm door by car, ferry and train to Canada's metropolis, where she experiences the sights and lives of those family lured to the hub of Canadian political and economic life.

Their Diaries

Mercy Ann Coles: The Colonial Subject in Waiting

For a month in autumn 1864, Mercy Ann Coles kept a diary of her trip with her parents, PEI Premier George Coles and her mother Mercy Haine Coles, to Quebec City. This was no ordinary trip, as the purpose of the journey was the second official meeting, following the Charlottetown Conference held earlier the same autumn in Coles's hometown, to establish Canada as a nation. The Quebec Conference, October 10–27, 1864, was to continue this process with delegations from six "provinces" meeting and socializing with their potential compatriots. Coles was twenty-six when she embarked on this journey and, being her mother's namesake, was perhaps the favourite daughter of the twelve Coles siblings and therefore chosen to accompany her parents. More likely, the family hoped that Mercy Ann would find a suitable husband from among the numerous eligible bachelors of high status attending the conference. Her older and younger sisters were either married or heading for the altar, and Coles' focus on her encounters with the opposite sex suggest a desire for romance with the male delegates at the conference.

Coles's diary survives in the archives in a typewritten form, which appears to be a rough draft (with editorial comments) of an article published in *Atlantic Advocate*. Her journal entries are prefaced by the day, date, and sometimes the time of day, or the place, and are of varying lengths. She writes a documentary style travel diary, giving facts and figures of arrivals and departures, and names of people and places, building up a scene and cast of players in her traveling documentary:

Left Charlottetown 3 a.m. at 2:30 reached Shediac. I was very ill as it was so rough. [...] found a special train waiting for us at Shediac, arrived at

St. John at 6:30. Mr. Tilley and Mr. Steves at the Hotel to receive us. Ma, Pa, Mr. Tilley and I went to see Mrs. Perley. Mr. Tilley did not come in. (October 5, 1864)

Interspersed in the journey are incidents indicating an evolving plot of escape from her everyday Island life for an opportunity to mix with high society and experience Lower Canada.³¹ Her textual intervention in her travelogue hints at a hope of romantic encounter with Mr. Tilley, another delegate who greets the Islanders upon their arrival to the neighboring province, New Brunswick. It becomes apparent that as the evening approached Mr. Tilley “helped” Miss Coles admire the mountains from the train window and also had to “humour” five other young ladies. After Mr. Tilley “took charge” of Coles, walking about with her the whole of one evening during a reception hosted by the governor general, he disappears into a sea of male dignitaries who reappear as chaperones and dance partners for the ladies of the delegation.

What is of interest in this travel diary is how the self “unfolds” in her text and how through specific strategies various representations of the persona of Mercy Ann Coles emerge. Her travels gave her the opportunity to re-bake the colonial “cake of custom” (Bentley 93) vis-à-vis British political and social norms, by reenacting the narrative of the colonizer in dress and social interactions. Coles’s “relations of contact” (Pratt 78) with her social equals on her journey through other parts of Canada culminate in the city. Her diary sets the terms for her representation in the literary genre most accessible to her as a Victorian bourgeois woman, and consequently her *journal intime* offers Coles a site for negotiating with the restricted thematic and linguistic parameters at her disposal, those laid down for women of her kind in conduct and romance literature.

In “Breaking the ‘Cake of Custom,’” Bentley raises the idea of English immigrants renegotiating their identity upon their entry to British North America with his depiction of the process in his “cake of custom” metaphor (93). Numerous Canadian writers of fiction admit to conscientiously depicting characters caught up in the old/new world dilemma (Robertson Davies lecture in Helsinki, 1986) but few if any have examined women’s life writing in this context in her life writing, Coles offers a firsthand account of a young single woman constructing a new world self within the bourgeois population of the nineteenth-century British colony of Canada.

³¹ Upper Canada refers to what is today the southern portion of the province of Ontario.

*Carrie Ellen Holman: "We stand on guard for thee..."*³²

"Peggy" was the name of the dog Carrie Holman gave to my mother's family, as Holman and my grandmother were great friends. Carrie Holman was of the same generation as Amy Andrew but while Andrew was raising her young family in St. Eleanor's in 1917, Holman was in London, England, working for the war effort. Her meager war diary of only a few pages gives an interesting testimony of an Island woman engaged on the Front.

My personal memory of Carrie Holman is from our home town, Summerside, where she and her sister Gladys lived in a beautiful Victorian home, flanked by its period garden. She was the elderly lady who stood in her Girl Guide uniform and attended our teas and ceremonies. Little did I know she was such an accomplished woman: the first Island woman to graduate from McGill University in 1900, she afterward worked as an educator, author, volunteer, and broadcaster. Her commitment to her Island community led to her acting as a liaison between Islanders and national and international movements such as the Children's Aid Society, Girl Guides, the Canadian Handcraft Guild of PEI, and the Red Cross, which led to her serving in World War I.

Carrie Holman's diary from 1917 gives the perspective of a socially engaged and educated woman of Victorian times who offered her service to her own country and Mother England. She had been exposed to and influenced by the discourses of the Church of England, and Canada, though part of the British Empire, was celebrating its half century as a nation. Without her diary account there are few, if any, documents that give a direct account of World War I from the pen of an Island woman. From the first words of the surviving pages from April 19, 20, and 21, 1917, of Carrie Holman's war diary, it is evident that she can articulate with poetic ease the flood of activity and emotion in which she is caught up:³³ "ugly tho he was. The slight smile as he spoke and his confident words made him seem inspired to me. At St Pauls he made use of Lincoln's words not—Is God with us—but are we with God & we are" (April 19, 1917).

Holman weaves her personal assessment of the "ugly" though "inspired" speaker together with his politics from the pulpit, which she aligned herself with using the plural first-person pronoun: "& we are." The passage continues, "This is the first beautiful day for weeks but have flue & feel my legs are all knees." In

³² The refrain is from the poem by Stanley Weir written in 1908, which later in revised form became Canada's national anthem.

³³ In 1916, Carrie Ellen Holman edited a book of war poems entitled *In the Day of Battle: Poetry of the Great War* (Toronto: William Briggs).

any other genre, such strands of text could not be strung together, but Holman's diary accommodates the private, physical, and even ideological in her vignettes: "Awfully busy at office, more news casualty lists girls working till 11:30, 600 casualties & more come in one day, result of the glorious fight of Vimy Ridge³⁴ & horrible as the suffering is one feels the men don't begrudge it" (April 19, 1917). In one sentence, Holman captures the routines of death, lists of the dead, and the glory and horror of men offering their lives while she and her kind work overtime. She is shaken by her day at the office but, to restore her spirit, she focuses on her friend in the next sentence: "She is a devilish thing, I love her profile. The birds are so merry." Such phrases, side by side with her reports of hardship and casualty lists, suggest how she maintained her zeal for participating in this war and saw herself through it. Her own physical state, having the flu, "legs are all knees" and going "shaky" is shaken off by the camaraderie of friends and the beauty of nature. Like other diarists, she wrote herself through the anguish; the diary offers catharsis, and she returns to work.

Fragments of physical and mental anguish are interspersed with utterances of joy: "I was nearly sick when she referred to the German's [?] treatment of the dead [...] Nothing could be more ghoulish or absolutely barbarous. Got home very late as weak as a cat" (April 19, 1917). The following morning, she writes,

Greatly thrilled this morning at seeing the Star & Stripes flying everywhere, walked down by Oxford St to see them, was told they were flying with our flag over the Parliament buildings—quite unprecedented—but precedent is being cast aside in England to a large extent. (April 20, 1917)

The flag signifies America's support for the British Empire—including Canada. Her polemic is sustained by her religious commitments on this not-so-foreign soil. Holman's ancestral roots went back to England and the Church of England, and as a Canadian she stood by her nation in her support for the war. The discourse of church and state fuse in Carrie's diary as, in her own voice, she writes,

I heard him [Bishop of Philippines] preach a very fine sermon at St. Margaret's on the War & America & the Allies' ideals, the three great democracies of the world joined hands— Pray God never again to separate. Have never heard any one speak with such confidence & inspiration to mourners—made so light of death itself (Brooke's our worst friend &

³⁴ Canadian troops were instrumental in capturing Vimy Ridge from the Germans between April 9 and 19, 1917.

enemy is but death itself!) as just a way leading to something grander—the resurrection glorified & sanctified the crucifixion, so the future life glorifies a hero's death. (April 20, 1917)

On her final page, Holman reverts to the lighter side of life, her meeting with friends, (possibly her brother Claude), where they plan further reunions. Her record of that day focusses on what obviously sustained her spirit, turning away from the anguish of the previous days.

Holman's diary accounts of her time on the Front in wartime England elaborate on the feminine response to military duty, one that occasionally emulates an endurance more typical of male narratives, but she is also concerned with friendship and possible romance. The complexity of her textual strategies indicates how "daughters of the empire,"³⁵ wrote themselves into the public sphere. She was a female narrative subject whose narrative was her strategy for survival but she was by example a modern subject who achieved objects: jobs, rooms of their own.

Once home in Canada, Holman's engagement with Europe's war would eventually develop into local action in community organizations. Other contemporary female figures—nurses, missionaries, and travellers—were also acting as scouts of the nation and became mentors for Holman. In 1909, the Girl Guide movement was established with the motto "how girls can help to build up the Empire"; Lady Baden Powell acted as Chief Guide for Britain in 1919. Holman's participation in and awareness of such moments generates, in her diary, a female "heroic" discourse of nationally significant events.

As Mary Louise Pratt suggests, travel diaries "converted local knowledges into European national and continental knowledges associated with European form and relation of power" (302). In Holman's travel diary, the discourse from the Empire's fringes revisits its place of origin. The war presented women like Carrie with the opportunity to travel while engaging in a nationalist cause. Her diary narrative advanced the intertextuality of various genres—poetry and life writing with Biblical, historical, and journalist texts— and created a literary space along with a social space for asserting a presence.

³⁵ The Imperial Order of Daughters of the Empire (IODE) was founded in 1900 by Margaret Polson Murray and, according to its website <http://www.isn.net/IODE>, the mission of IODE, a Canadian women's volunteer organization, is to improve the quality of life for children, youth and those in need through educational, social service, and citizen programs.

Violet Goldsmith: Returning to Her Roots

Before settling down, Violet Goldsmith, accompanied by her Aunt Maggie, visited her relatives in England. Her diary appears to be that interlude in her life where she writes out her encounters in acquainting herself with her Britishness. “Diary of Violet E. Goldsmith Alberton teacher June 7, 1900–March 15, 1906” reads the archival description of a 200-page manuscript written by a young woman who had lived in the east and west parts of the Island and studied to become a teacher at Prince of Wales College in Charlottetown, PEI. Within twenty pages, Goldsmith has relocated to live with her preacher father and aunt in New Brunswick, and ten pages later, from May to August 1901, she is experiencing a journey to the home of her ancestors in England.

Goldsmith was twenty years old when she took this trip, and she appears to be motherless as nowhere in her diary is a mother mentioned, nor are any siblings. England provides a chance to experience the family life she never had. As a Canadian of British origin, her journey to England in her diary can be read as a return to the Mother (England) to reaffirm her bonds with her unknown other. Relatives and various locations provide her with exposure to that other home, the Empire. She appears to respond with textual reserve, expressing her response as a compulsive impulse to report what is new and different: “we went to the old Cathedral. It was Roman Catholic before the Reformation” (June 4, 1901), writes Goldsmith colourlessly. Her uncertainty in dealing with an other that is partially familiar yet different is evident in her emotionless, factual, disciplined style. She reverts to a mundane discourse, providing regular entries and maintaining a consistent style while attempting to cover all the experiences and filling in any gaps with a recap of the events afterwards in order to compensate for the initial inexpressibility of the other.

Before her journey, on March 23, 1901, Goldsmith opens her chronicle by writing, “I see I have made no entry since I came home. I will try to write an account of the last three months.” She tells of herself and Aunt Maggie abandoned by their horse Nell and having to walk home. Her next entry is on May 4, 1901, and here her easy-going handwriting turns heavy as if to ensure that what comes next will never be erased or forgotten. Her emotion comes through in the impress of pencil on paper. Goldsmith confesses what has been transpiring during the last few months’ gap in the diary: “About three weeks ago Aunt Maggie and I decided to go to England this summer. We left home last night at midnight.” Her attention is taken up by a “big, fat priest” who pompously parades up and down the train car in his gown with a purple sash, a gold cross and chain, and a gold

ring on his finger. Already, the world is an exotic place of strange people and extremes of behaviour. Gradually, she enters another world of French speakers. Before embarking, she provides a detailed account of the numerous places of historic significance: General Montcalm's house, a French one 200 years old, the Plains of Abraham, prisons, hospitals and a monument to commemorate General Wolfe's fall, whose victory sealed the fate of French Canada. Her encapsulation of her own Canadian history will soon be supplemented with new experiences from the old country awaiting her across the sea, but the travel diary begins, with this entry, by establishing her own country's relationship to her family's ancestral home.

Nine days after their departure, Goldsmith picks up her pen to briefly relate the unpleasanties of the voyage: "We had a very unpleasant passage, not a fine day till today but no bad storms. Some days it was not fit to be on deck. I was sick nearly all the time, but feel as well as ever today. I suppose the sunshine & sight of land cured me" (May 13, 1901). From the deck of the ship, she admires the "perfect" scenery of Ireland's shore, its hills, yellow flowers, green hedges and ruins of an old castle. Before leaving ship, she introduces some of her fellow travelers: the Professor of Palmistry, an old gentleman with long hair, another without manners, and several children, such as the boy sent from the Bernardo home in England to work as a farm labourer in Canada, who dies onboard on his way "home." Her discourse emphasizes difference in people and places as she prepares for her arrival in Britain.

Once in England, Goldsmith writes herself through the flow of life with her English cousins, who share the same passion for church, community activities, and visiting. Occasionally, her text breaks off to make evaluative statements, but the bulk of her travel diary resembles a "patterned epistolary travel account" (Bassnett 239): "On Sunday I went to church morning and evening and to Sunday School in the afternoon. I do not like the service as well as our own" (May 28, 1901). Numerous events that did not meet her expectations or approval are elaborated on, but often in her home diaries only the more sensational events of her everyday were recorded. Travelling demands an account for every day, whether it was eventful or not, but her voice gradually develops as she inscribes these experiences, even if it is a voice expressing her disappointment:

June 1 We visited the museum. I was most interested in the wild animals. There was a tiger, a leopard, a bear and everything I could think of. Amongst the birds was an eagle. I did not see an ostrich.

On Thursday the crowning of the May Queen took place. That part of it was very good, but they had wire walkers & a trick cyclist afterward. I thought their performances very vulgar. It was got up by the Congregational Church. In the evening we went to the Fair. Ethel's young man was there, so I had to be "Gooseberry" most of the time. I kept away behind coming home, though.

Her diary gives her the space to not only relate the events but also her reaction when they cross the line of decency. By writing out her feeling of rejection because of the impoliteness of her cousin, she is able to continue the next day playing the role of the good visitor, having left the incident behind, at least in her diary. The diary returns to recording her visits to the historic sites of London generating a litany of places and a commentary similar to that which describes Quebec: the two places, it seems, are similarly alien to her and sites for juxtaposing the familiar and less familiar. Wherever she ends up, there is always reference to religion or a service to attend. Church is a familiar place, even in another country:

We saw where Lady Jane Grey and Anne Bolyn were executed. We crossed the Tower Bridge, walked some distance and returned by London Bridge. Then we walked along the Victoria Embankment to Westminster Abbey, where we were in time for service. The singing was grand. There is a nice monument to John and Charles Wesley, on which are the words, "The best of all is God is with us" and "I look upon the whole world as my parish."
(July 24, 1901)

Goldsmith consoles herself with biblical verse that temporarily reassures her of God's presence no matter where in this wide world she is, pacifying her to downplay any feelings of discontent.

Once home, however, she writes, "It was a treat to get Canadian cake and cream of tartar biscuits. We are very glad to be home" (September 5, 1901). Goldsmith represents a new breed of travellers who revisit the land of their forefathers and mothers to find and identify the constructs of the identity that British Canadians were expected to adhere to. In the end, Goldsmith, like Holman, returns to Canada enriched by the experience but determined that this is where she truly belongs. Her narrative portrayal of her exploration of the mother country and her textual response with its Biblical, historical, and literary references assures her that her cultural inheritance has its roots, but nevertheless the true elixir of the journey was her realization of her future in Canada. Both within her travel

diary and her longer diary Goldsmith is the protagonist of this narrative journey to England and her more extensive journey through her early life.

Vera Hyde: "Figurez-vous—on my way to Bermuda"

On December 22, 1929, at twenty-six years of age, Vera Hyde from Meadowbank, PEI, boarded the *Canadian Forester* with her Aunt Maud and Uncle Dave to sail to Bermuda. According to archival records, Hyde was married in 1930, so it appears that this was her last outing as a single woman before marrying Voncture Jones. For five days, from December 22 to 26, Hyde describes life on the high seas, focusing on meals, mealtimes, the ship's interior, crew, and the social program in complete sentences, never hesitating to express her amazement: "It gave me quite a thrill to be sitting down to a swell dinner on board boat" (December 22, 1929). From the very onset of her diary, it appears that Hyde is aware of the uniqueness of this adventure, one that calls for a special language of pleasantries and corresponding social etiquette. Her first words, "Figurez-vous," indicate that ordinary language does not suffice to captivate the experience. Vera is conscious of slipping into the discourse of another world: "I pretty nearly forgot myself and said 'tea' but I'm beginning to catch on to a few social hints—That one for instance" (December 23, 1929). Travel gives her the opportunity to become a person that did not exist at home, to exercise a language, indulge in food, keep company, and dress in ways Island women seldom did. Her diary is just the place to recreate Vera Hyde, the voyageur on her way to the outreaches of the British Empire.

Mealtimes and socializing generated longer passages in Hyde's travel diary and accompanying every description of a meal was Vera's reference as to whether her food would stay down: "Here's hoping I keep on enjoying it until it digests naturally" (December 22, 1929) or, "If I get it down it will stay down" (December 23, 1929). Her discursive presence in her diary text is twofold: she re-creates herself and her journey by writing about personal and domestic issues and situations on which she as a woman has the authority to speak (Foster and Mills 5), yet she structures these experiences as an informative authority, more like high-level masculine discourse (5).

As a young single woman, the trip is an opportunity—perhaps her last—to play the field, and she flirts with the captain, a man she refers to as "a jolly old fellow" who showed her the "ins & outs of the upper part of the ship." She draws the line, however: "I'm not keen to go somehow," she writes, when the "regular old joker" offers to take her below. Nevertheless, she is amused by his dinner

table antics and his referring to the lamb as “old dog meat” and the “nice sized cockroach” that strutted across her plate as “part of the ship’s crew,” (December 23, 1929). The flirtation culminates at Christmas dinner when the captain gives her the honour of cutting the cake, only after complimenting her on her blue georgette dress, saying it would suit his wife to perfection. Her diary narrative was creating a woman of the world who temporarily left the everyday of Prince Edward Island behind and engaged in a possible other, Vera in Bermudaland, before resettling into domesticity as Mrs. Voncture Jones.

“Well I shall never forget the wonderful impressions I had of Bermuda as we stood on the deck and the ship floated in,” writes Hyde on December 26, 1929. Captivated by the blue sea, the white soil, the elegant flowers, and the “niggers sticking around the dock as thick as peas,” she writes as a self-confessed Alice in Wonderland in this new-found world. Her perspective from the ship’s deck and her rendition of it in her diary as “monarch of all I survey” (Pratt 201) suggest her adopting the discourse of civilized (European) society, one of racism and superiority (Korte 94–96).

Throughout Hyde’s fairyland narrative are the contrasts of white and dark, building upon her earlier perceptions and granting herself authority within her own narrative; but, like Violet Goldsmith, Hyde finds comfort in church where she again emphasizes the whiteness of the landscape alongside the darkness of the local people: “went to the Pembroke Church in the evening. It is a smaller church but I like it better—was able to understand the service better. The interior seems to be so white & clean. The niggers attend there also but are kept in a corner by themselves” (December 30, 1929). Church is one of those locations where “native quarry and granite from Scotland” (December 30, 1929) shelter the community of worshippers, and even the local birds flock in to celebrate with their song. Bermuda shares with Canada a British inheritance of institutions, language, place names, and mindset, but Hyde, brought up in a primarily White society, had no vocabulary of race and was forced when depicting the local people to adopt the extreme discourse of other. Each of her reported encounters with the local Black population indicates her surprise that they do in fact live, work, and worship with their White counterparts: “We went into several stores. They seem to be quite different to ours—some of them have nigger clerks” (December 27, 1929).

Hyde’s “aesthetic vocabulary of the sublime” (Foster and Mills 99) throughout her diary discourse focuses on her emotional reaction more than any description of the landscape or sites themselves. Her enthusiasm for exotic places is expressed

in the quaint names of cottages jotted down in her diary, “Inglewood” and “The Gables”; yet these names come from a language shared with the Bermudians. Because Goldsmith as a young woman tourist is celebrating her last days away from home before her marriage, she must inscribe these experiences in all their intensity so they will be forever remembered.

Lucy Palmer Haslam's Canadian Tour

Lucy Palmer Haslam's travel diary begins on July 12, 1932, almost forty years after she began her first diary in 1894. At sixty-seven years of age, she had experienced the transition from girlhood on the family farm to teacher training, joining the ranks of early PEI women teachers, and then marriage and establishing a farm with her husband, operating her own egg and poultry business while raising a family.

For a few days, instead of recording the familiar events on the farm Haslam writes herself out of her home in an old diary from 1930. Every episode of her trip—by car to the train that eventually boards the boat that sails for the mainland—is documented with the same detail as her previous diaries. As the ferry crosses the Northumberland Strait, Haslam uses the opportunity to socialize with other Islanders, sharing the experience of leaving home. Before nightfall on her first day, she has experienced the beauties of the new landscape from her train seat: “went down to the observation car & thoroughly enjoyed the part of the trip along Metapedia River. It was simply lovely” (July 12, 1932).

It is the third incidence of “lovely” in Lucy's entry for that first day of travel. The next day in Montreal, she experiences a “lovely breakfast,” sees “lovely buildings,” and waits for her train to Ottawa in the “lovely station house.” Experiences unmatched by those she is familiar with fall into the realm of “lovely.” The unfamiliar grandeur is a kind of otherness that deserves mention, yet the repetition of the same positive adjective implies her bewilderment and a loss for (more) words. Still, Haslam is responding with a polite and socially anticipated female response, that is, to say something positive. She is not embarking on the same adventure as a young woman diarist, out to see and record the world for the first time or even maybe one last time before settling down. Her trip is of a more modest nature, a chance for her family to introduce her to places that drew so many children of Island parents.

Her travel diary is an “8 lines a day” type, in which she has scratched out the printed dates to make room for the new ones of this adventure. In addition, she creates her own conventions by allowing each day's events to run from one page to

another, in disregard of the pre-set margins. Gone is the constrained handwriting of her earlier domestic diaries, for now she is experiencing something new for which she has not yet created a recording formula. Places, events and people pass through her life in the next few days, and she hurriedly scribbles in one day's events before the next one is upon her.

Along with the out-of-the-ordinary experiences of sightseeing, visiting notorious and nationally significant political and educational institutions, Haslam takes in urban modernity in the form of “a 2 hour show” and “radio music.” The routines of sleeping and eating give her the opportunity to write beyond the loveliness of travel and elaborate on the discomfort of being away from home: “Had my first experience in a berth with Robbie [her son] over head. Was nervous & kept light & glasses on all night but had a nap towards morning. Got a good wash and felt alright” (July 12, 1932).

Once Haslam arrives in the city of her destination, whether it be Montreal, Ottawa or Hamilton, she is met by either family or friends and introduced to the attractions. Her diary becomes the repository of these experiences as well as of her slight restraint in her response to these new places, events, and people. On July 15, she writes, “Took the train at ¼ to 12. I was too nervous to take Pullman again so we slept the best we could in our seats & it was miserable.” Despite her discomfort in the actual travel experience, she is beginning to have less reticence here and accounts for her feelings in greater detail.

The travel diary is reminiscent of her first teaching experiences in Bonshaw where other events took precedence in the diary, displacing the anxiety of the neophyte teacher. Here, her initial flatness of vocabulary and structure in diary passages from the sites of Quebec and Ontario signal her inability to take the same kind of agency she asserts in the recording of her familiar rhythms on the farm. “Mrs. Nelson and I walked out later & saw all the lovely flowers” (July 13, 1932), writes Haslam from Ottawa, Canada's capital. Rural scenes tend to captivate her textual attention: “the lovely rockery just perfect in its ruggedness” (July 16, 1932) and once “at home” with her hosts, she focuses on those domestic issues in greater detail: “Had a late dinner when we returned all good & hungry, roast beef, carrots potatoes, strawberries & cake. Had a nice cozy time afterwards” (July 13, 1932). Domesticity has been the area in which Haslam textually established her subject position in her home diary so it is no surprise that she is “authorized by her peculiar knowledge of the material she is presenting” (Mills 11) in her travel diary as well.

Autobiography as Travel Diary

“All travel writing is autobiography,” writes Helen Carr in her article “Modernism and Travel (1880–1940)” (79). For some of the women above (Coles and Hyde), their travel diaries were their only surviving texts but for others (Goldsmith and Haslam), their travels were incorporated in their diaries. The question remains, however: what is distinctive about their travelogues as autobiography? Both textual and thematic features of the diaries indicate how the travellers write themselves out of their everyday existence at home and into a new setting, creating a travel narrative where the writer herself is the active agent in the plot of the travel adventure.

The need to capture the new world into which they are moving characterizes the travel accounts of these Island women. Typical of these narratives are those features found in what Mary Louise Pratt refers to as “contact zones,” namely “three strategies—estheticization, density of meaning, plentiful use of adjectives and a general proliferation of concrete, material referents introduced either literally or as metaphors” (217), as well as domination and authority—what they see is what there is. All of the above, generally acknowledged as part of the more classic travel narratives, are also at work here as Hyde contrasts the white sand and the dark-skinned Bahamians, Haslam the lovely modernist structures, and Coles the mountain view from her train seat.

Collectively, these travelogues cover a period of almost a hundred years during which Canada severed its ties with England and became an independent country. These travel narratives highlight the pre-Confederation times of the mid-nineteenth century, the early twentieth century, the First World War, and the period prior to the Second World War. Despite the fact that all of these writers share a British heritage, Britain is that place of otherness embodied within themselves. Their journeys and records indicate a reawakening of those ties and a “rebirth” generated by it.

Island Women as Travelling Agents

Canada, as a nation built on the traditions of English institutions, was for these women another England. Their education, religion, and politics were modeled after similar British institutions. Thus, the subjectivity that these women scribed in their diaries was not so distinct from a British one. They took both the model of self and the means for inscribing the self from English language and culture. One needs only to look at the English language literary canon in the schools

and universities of English Canada up until the 1960s to verify the reality of Britain's long-time influence in Canada. When these "English" Island woman left for other places, they moved out of one familiar sphere of Britishness and into another less familiar one. Carrie Holman best illustrates this as she was indeed the Victorian woman well equipped with a discourse—the culmination of university learning, the Anglican church, and English literature—who was fueled with her experiences in philanthropy and instilled with a discourse of modern heroism.

Mercy Ann Coles: The Personal and Provincial Irony of an Island Debutante

Holman and Mercy Ann Coles both represent women participating in important historical events and while positioning themselves in the narrative they write about such colonial endeavours. Coles clearly presents herself as the daughter of imperial feminine virtues—conscious of the male gaze and playing the role of a young woman under its spell. In her accounts of social engagements, she positions herself physically in the limelight and as the evening progresses her moral integrity is highlighted, casting herself as a most desirable and appropriate match for any man of the Empire:

That evening we dined at Government House. It was a very pleasant party. D'Arcy McGee took me into dinner and sat between Lady McDonnell and I. Before dinner was over he got so intoxicated he was obliged to leave the table. I took no notice of him. Mr. Grey said I acted well. The sun has not shone 2 hours since we arrived. I was never in such a place. (October 13, 1864)

As if scripted from the pages of a conduct book, Coles blends into the social milieu as any young debutante should. Her agency as a blossoming bourgeois woman of high morals (intolerance to drunkenness) immediately emerges ("I too," "I acted") and was even recognized by another man of status, Mr. Grey.

With each occasion, her confidence to confront and perform for the male establishment develops: "I went to dinner and John A. sat beside me—what an old Humbug he is. He brought my desert into the drawing room—The Conundrum" (October 26, 1864). Coles's encounter with the future prime minister of Canada reads as a woman whose narrative has been influenced by the literature of romance. Her account of her encounters with the men in power gave her an increasing amount of grist for her diary: "I had to refuse six gentlemen" (November 2, 1864), "I had to come away with a half dozen not danced with"

(November 2, 1864), and “I danced every dance and had several engaged when I came away” (November 3, 1864). The narrative of Coles’s diary confirms not only a journey into the colonial heart of Canada but her participation in representing and occupying the role of a good woman, one who would merit a like-minded man for the long term.

Her textualization of herself in this travel segment of her life story focuses on how she writes herself into a new place and situation. Her fairytale existence on this journey is created through her narrative of a journey to a centre of power and prestige. In the true autobiographical sense, she is the primary actor within her text, but when her account is read within the historical context of this political event, Coles, like all the other women, is a fringe member of the delegation, accompanying her father, occasionally flanked between the official delegates at the banquet table or lining up as potential dance partners. She is part of the new emergent class made up of people who “sought gentility by emulating everything they associated with the elite way of life” (Armstrong 159).

On the one hand, Coles was a Victorian woman, whose identity as a passive female was constructed for public consumption in literature written by men; but her writing from the heart of the dominant ideology in her travel diary disrupts this depiction as she acts with agency and becomes the protagonist of her own text—albeit a text that reconfigures the Quebec Conference as a series of social encounters. This is her first step in negotiating herself out of the narrow parameters laid down in conduct literature and the seductive position of subordination to patriarchal ideals. Coles is a reminder of how “the fluid boundaries of female subjectivity provide the means for imagining what a decolonization of self might mean” (M.L. Pratt 224).

The Quebec Conference, a congregation of individuals engaged in the follow up of the contact/colonial phase of their encounter with Canada, in Coles’s diary, is portrayed as pouring the foundations of the new nation by reverting to old world customs, thereby redefining the colonial frontier. A variation of the “contact zone” phenomenon, which Mary Louise Pratt holds as synonymous with “colonial frontiers and describes as an attempt to evoke the spatial and temporal copresence of subjects previously separated by geographic and historical disjunctures (6), presents itself in Coles’s travel diary. Colonialists, geographically separated from England and one another in the new world, gather to reenact through numerous cultural rituals the new frontier of British North America.

Coles shared in the isolation of this colonial community, but later women protagonists would go on to produce ironic reversals from this same contact

zone. Almost a decade and a half later, a sense of historical irony creeps into Coles's diary as a gap emerges between her telling of women's oppression and her writing her way out of that same situation. Coles's travelogue carves a lacuna or opportunity for speculation and playing with the conventions of her language.

The overflowing and exaggerated discourse of the self in Coles's diary, particularly from the pen of an upper-class woman, reads as ironic in the eyes of modern Canadian readers who no longer embrace an English identity. Numerous voices from Canada's diverse culture have sought to deconstruct the colonial past by using parody to challenge the status quo. Today, Coles's diary might also read as a desperate attempt to compose a proper self for the occasion by establishing how she and other women conform to the norms of beauty, good behaviour, and impeccable morals. Her narrative of defending her own moral fibre, a diversion from her physical beauty, almost suggests her sense of despair and defeat at being seduced into the subordination of the marginalized female ornament. Glimpses of the lives of the more privileged class through their diaries thus reveal a kind of subordination to old world power structures, and an inability despite their position to readily re-assemble their "cake of custom" in their new country. Emma Chadwick Stretch worked her way on the land into her new milieu while her contemporary Mercy Ann Coles wallowed in the sitting rooms of her Victorian Charlottetown home until she took to the road to Quebec City with diary in hand.

Embedded in both Stretch's and Coles's narratives are stories of identities that shift through migration, stories that are constantly reassembled to construct understandings of the past on how women have defined themselves at various times and places. The acuteness of identifying a past where women were actively reconstructing themselves has been an ongoing task of Canadian writers and researchers. Texts such as Lucy Palmer Haslam's mundane home tour narrative and the extravagance of others like Mercy Ann Coles's travel diary are part of the project of finding women hidden in history. Such texts are waiting to be re-read, re-narrated and re-represented so as to enrich women's writing history in Canada.

The apparent self-irony in Coles's travel diary hints at the parody feminists more commonly uphold as their way of challenging the more masculine universal narratives of our inherited literatures. Parody, according to Linda Hutcheon, is an ironic form of intertextuality and one of the most popular feminist "'modalities' and a way of investigating the position of women within the tradition as a way of discovering possible positions outside the tradition"

(110). The travel diary removed her from her daily self and followed her into a brave new, yet often familiar, old world, giving her a chance to write the self in and out of the traditions in her own life.

Inserted in the margins of what are now acknowledged as Canada's grand historical events are Coles's self-acclaimed moral superiority and her playing up of feminine virtues. Apparent frivolous comments like, "I am going to ask the Dr. to let me go down to dinner tonight... Mr. Lea was delighted to find me better" (October 21, 1864), and "Mr. Bernard was waiting in the Parlour for us when we came home and took us down to dinner. He had been laid up with gout. He looked badly. I tease him about it that is a shame" (November 3, 1864) exemplify how Coles's representation of her self in almost every instance in her diary relied on the male gaze from which she, like Canada and its English gaze, cannot yet free itself. Similarly, Coles colonizes other women for their success or failure to live up to the same expectations: "The ladies were dressed to death and some were very pretty," and again when recalling her previous night's adventure as she wrote from the seat of her train while heading home: "We went down to the drawing room last night, quite a crowd when we all got together and the ladies looked very well and were quite a credit to the lower provinces" (October 12, 1864). Coles has internalized the dominant discourse and is participating in her own subjugation.

Coles's diary discourse follows a pattern identified by M.L. Pratt in her discussion of Mary Kingsley's *Travels in West Africa* (1897): "through irony and inversion, she builds her own meaning-making apparatus out of raw material of the monarchic male discourse of domination and intervention" (213). Coles adopts a monarchic female voice that asserts its own kind of mastery even as it denies domination and parodies power. As the men and women flirt on a somewhat superficial social level more serious flirting was the essence of this political meeting. As Upper Canada's political elite was endeavouring to shake off some of its colonial ties with Britain and inviting Lower Canada and the Maritime provinces to join it, serious attempts to woo the lower provinces were on the agenda.

Here Coles, at an age when women generally seek independence from their parents, joins the national struggle for independence from Mother England while continuously re-enacting the rituals of that colonizing mother. PEI did not join Confederation in 1867 with Upper Canada and the two other lower provinces, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, but remained "single" until 1873. Mercy Ann Coles appears to have maintained her single status throughout her life, for her

gravestone in the Anglican Cemetery on St Peter's Road in Charlottetown reads "Mercy Ann Coles 1.2.1838–11.12.1921."

Carrie Holman: Heroic Discourse from the Front

If Mercy Ann Coles can be viewed as ushering in through her self-reflexive textuality early strains of irony for which Canadian literature is earmarked (Hutcheon), then Carrie Holman makes an equally important contribution to early twentieth-century Canadian literary narratives. Holman was a willing colonial subject, confirming her commitment to Britain in a more independent and collective manner. Her ownership in the value of the Empire arose from being a Victorian subject born in 1877 when Canada was ten years old as a nation and building on its British cultural inheritance. Being educated and unmarried gave her the opportunity to pursue a heroic path. Armed with the discourse of state and religion, she moves effortlessly in her text as she does through the streets of London. She is not a tourist but a collaborator who feels at home at the heart of the Church of England and the site of the levers powering the war machinery.

Holman's diary captures her emotional response by reporting how she was "greatly thrilled" by the sight of the American flag flying everywhere and with "our" flag (Canada and Britain shared the same flag until the 1960s) over the Parliament Buildings, and "disappointed" not to have attended the American Service with the King and Queen in state. With family and friends at her side, Carrie writes herself into a community of those supporting the same allegiance to the Empire. There is a sense of adventure in Carrie's account of their get-togethers: "April Saturday 1917 So glad last night to find Artie back from Brighton & with the news that Claude might come up from Chatham.... Came back late expecting Artie to be gone but found note to go to Holburn Rest. to meet her & C & W. Wright" (April 21, 1917). Both Holman's and Coles's diaries reveal their ownership in the values of the Empire, and in the writing of their diaries they reaffirm these values.

Holman's diary differs from that of Coles in the dignified style of direct references to the big players of the scenario in which she works. Holman is directly engaged in a struggle to defend her own, her nation's and its allies' beliefs with all the discourse such events gather. The early twentieth-century cultural scene was writing and painting Canada onto the world stage with depictions of nature and life in the vast country. Canadian heroes and heroines in life and art were those who survived the elements as the pioneers did. The landscapes projected

onto the canvases of painters like the Group of Seven³⁶ became synonymous with Canada. Women rarely ventured beyond their domestic abode so their art and literature focused on “expressing some of the realities and tensions of the changing female role”³⁷ closer to home. Women like Lucy and Vera could treasure their escapades outside their domestic spheres years later through their travel diaries.

Holman’s *journal intime* represents another unretrieved narrative from Canada’s early days of literary endeavours by women; but what makes Carrie’s narrative unique is its move out of a specific Canadian locale and onto a stage few women did. More typical are the male narratives from battle, and what Carrie represents is a female vision of war in a woman’s voice.

The “Home” and “Grand” Tours of Haslam, Hyde, and Goldsmith

Lucy Palmer Haslam’s trip and her travelogue were of the “home tour” variety, which originated in eighteenth-century England from pilgrimages made to destinations within one’s own country (Korte 67); but domestic travel for Canadians after 1930 had the purpose of familiarizing themselves with their vast country. For Haslam, it was an opportunity to see other parts of her nation, those modern centres that had absorbed so many of her fellow Islanders, her children among them. Her diary becomes the repository of her experiences, as well as reactions of a more personal and temporary transition to and from these centres.

By contrast, Violet Goldsmith’s and Vera Hyde’s trips are more aptly described as variations of the “grand tour,” a “journey associated with a particular value for the traveler’s formal education and his personal development” (Korte 41). The grand tour in its heyday in the early eighteenth century was meant to “help polish the traveler’s cosmopolitan manner and the shape his aesthetic taste” (42). By the mid-nineteenth century, when a woman participated in this male, bourgeois preserve, she was to be accompanied by husbands or families. Goldsmith’s and Hyde’s journeys take on the dimensions of this grand tour, an “archetypal form [that] merged into the tourism as we understand it today” (41). Goldsmith’s purpose was to gain firsthand familiarity with the origins of her own identity by seeking her father’s English heritage with her own Canadian reality. When she

³⁶ The Group of Seven were seven painters—Tom Thomson, J.E.H. MacDonald, Arthur Lismer, Frederick Varley, Frank Johnston, Franklin Carmichaels, and A.Y. Jackson—who in the early twentieth century painted Canada, particularly Central Canada, as they found it.

³⁷ The quotation comes from the cover blurb of McMullen and Campbell (eds.), *Aspiring Women*.

eventually arrives at her destination, she writes as an estranged subject, going through the motions of routine “tourist” activities and only writing with any kind of engagement when she enters the familiar church sphere. By contrast, Hyde is more playful when describing her role as a tourist and whimsically takes ownership in the familiar by basking in the differences, of climate, terrain and people. Liberated from Canadian winter and her Island lifestyle, Hyde is temporarily free from the tangible realities in her life and the impending change in her single status.

Hyde writes of the White Bahamian colonial culture juxtaposed with the Indigenous people in the margins in a demeaning way. When socializing with acquaintances like Mrs. White, Mr. Kuhn, Mrs. Murphy and Mr. Black, or seeking out the familiar in visits to the English Cathedral and the Pembroke Church, Hyde (dis)places the Bahamians off doing their own thing. Despite the playful energy of her narrative, the persistent and uneasy contrast between Black and White suggests that whatever agency she gains through travel is paralleled by her desire to marginalize the Bahamians from their own territory, refigured in her diary as her own tourism fantasy land.

Like the phases of an archetypal journey, many of the steps to the site of renewal or visitation overlap in the journals of Violet Goldsmith, Vera Hyde and Lucy Palmer Haslam. The purpose of each diarist is relative to the role each carves out for herself, however: Goldsmith writes herself in the discourses of home and England, Hyde takes on her Alice of Wonderland role, and Haslam writes herself around her encounters with another form of modernism, the city.

Their departure passages reveal how they textually remove themselves from their familiar homes and locate themselves in this state of flux between home and the other place. Hyde’s travel narrative begins, “We got on board about 5:00 pm and shortly afterwards we went down to the saloon and had dinner: (December 22, 1929). Goldsmith recaps the train journey episode into French-speaking Canada. Haslam notes that “Jimi drove Mur, Rob & me to Emerald” (July 12, 1932), as she and Rob (her son) catch the train to Ontario. The journey has commenced and the diarists have initiated a new discourse as they draw away from home and into a foreign world of saloons as they advance to new places. Goldsmith and Haslam emphasize the split from the everyday world.

Once the journey is in progress, out of the ordinary people, scenery and food propel the discourse into the sphere of otherness: Hyde describes foods as “the first I had ever eaten”; Haslam writes of “the most beautiful scenery”; and Goldsmith notes that “almost everyone is talking French.” Physical discomfort,

or the fear of it, overpowers the diarists, and each is compelled to confess that she is not “herself”: “I feel as though I might be alright,” writes Hyde. Goldsmith confesses, “Sometimes I could not eat anything, sometimes the steward brought me my meals. Haslam writes how she was nervous in the train berth and kept the light and her glasses on all night. The tokens of otherness—tastes, emotions, and language—lead to a physical unease that is also a metaphorical unease with difference.

Once the diarist arrives at her new destination, however, she makes herself “at home” through the process of location, describing herself in this new place where she faces the opportunity to achieve a new-born agency: “Aunt Ellie & Uncle Fred were at the station and gave us a most hearty welcome,” writes Goldsmith from Lymm, England, May 14, 1901. Hyde observes, “I shall never forget the wonderful impression I had of Bermuda as we stood on the deck and the ship floated in” (July 13, 1929). Haslam writes, “When we got off the train Lloyd (Lucy’s son) was right there to meet us. We three went, oh so happy to have Lloyd and had a lovely breakfast” (July 13, 1932).

Goldsmith’s cohesive discourse of familiar people and places in her home diary becomes static and factual in her travel diary from this new location. Her former diary style of sporadically recording passages of runaway horses and community social events on the other side of the Atlantic is now supplanted by one of routine observations recorded in a more simplistic and disengaged style. Her short simple sentences are prefaced with day and date, indicating purchases, prices, and churches attended, supplemented by significant dates in history. Occasionally, her subtle reactions emerge in her text, as she relates and constructs her kinship with people and places; with increasing frequency, she is writing out her isolation and estrangement from her English cousins and historic homes:

Yesterday Aunt M. and I went to Chester by train.[...] It was a delightful sail. We had a walk through the park to Eaton Hall. We went through the Hall. I could not describe it if I tried. But after all, none of the rooms looked as if one could sit down and be comfortable in them. There was nothing homelike about them. (June 5, 1901)

Visiting the resting places of her literal and religious forefathers, Goldsmith seems at first to be strengthening her transatlantic links: “Wednesday we went for a walk to the Cemetery where we saw Grandfather’s grave & the Kirk Bradden graveyard where we saw Grandpa’s Grandpa’s grave (1809) and several others

of interest” (July 1, 1901). Her visit to the grave of John Wesley is particularly positive:

We went to the city Road Chapel and saw Mr. Wesley’s & Dr Adam Clark’s graves. We went to the museum & sat in his chair. We saw the room where he died, and his room for private prayers, where he spent from 4 to 6 [?] o’clock every morning. We went to Bunhill Burial ground and saw Mrs. Susannah Wesley’s grave, Issac Watts’, John Bunyan’s Daniel De Foe’s grave. (July 24, 1901)

Goldsmith’s pilgrimage to her family graves and those associated with her religious conviction and her father’s calling to the church ministry were obviously meaningful to her as they did generate more detail in her diary. As she admitted earlier in the day, however, she longed for her true home: “I am enjoying my visit very much, but am beginning to long for regular work again” (July 24, 1901).

Vera Hyde, having spent one full day on Bermuda, writes:

You poor young diary— to think I neglected you for a whole day but it wasn’t much wonder—so much has happened. [...] I can’t begin to describe it as it impressed me. The water beneath us was the most wonderful shade of blue—in fact we noticed a change in color the second day we were out and as we got along it seemed to get bluer. (December 26, 1929)

Through her ever-evolving descriptions of transforming nature, Vera herself is transforming into Agent Alice. The elegant flowers, the white soil, and the “nigger parade” reaffirm the surreal otherness of the new milieu she finds herself in: “I can see something new and different wherever I look,” she writes the next day. Even the next day’s routines of eating meals become a part of her role playing: “Well we started in housekeeping today—Had our first play-house meals.” Nature, too, colludes with Hyde’s euphoria, with the birds flocking into the church and singing with the choir.

Goldsmith maps her travels through the graveyards and historic sites in her diary as her path to the realization of her inherited traditions; Hyde similarly traces her steps into a world where with each day and action she writes herself as someone who did not exist at home. When confronting this new culture, she creates a role, partially derived from the fictive character Alice but also a discourse of other travelers. Encounters with landscapes unlike those at home generated an aesthetic vocabulary reminiscent of nineteenth-century high status discourse and Romantic poetic language (Foster and Mills 91). So too were Vera’s

racist observations a reflection of a socially sanctioned discourse, not unlike the “explorer-man paints/possesses newly unveiled landscape-woman” artifacts described by Mary Louise Pratt (213). Participating in this “grand tour” was Hyde’s finishing school; she absorbed experiences of “otherness” and created through her diary writing another more sophisticated and worldly self.

Once in the urban centre of Canada, Lucy Palmer Haslam’s textual representation of her journey there resembles her previous encounter with the “unsayable,”³⁸ namely her entry into the role of a modern professional woman in 1885. Now, in 1932, she is experiencing the modern city, and it leaves her with a similar loss for words. On her first day in Montreal, she mentions, “We did some shopping & sight-seeing and then the boys took me to a 2 hrs show” (July 12, 1932). The next day, she writes that while visiting the Nelsons they had “lots of radio music” (July 13, 1932). The cityscapes of universities (McGill and McMaster), lovely dwellings, buildings and “the lovely new Bridge with the large lamps on it” (July 16, 1932) are all selected by Lucy to represent the new milieu in which she moves.

Violet Goldsmith, Vera Hyde and Lucy Haslam write as the other described by Julie Watson in “Shadowed Presence: Modern Women Writers’ Autobiographies and the Other” (1988). These English/English-Canadian women expand in their travel diaries their normally dormant “multiple or serial” (Watson 180) identities or “network of identities” (Neuman 7), Goldsmith through a network of cousins, uncles and aunts in England, Hyde as a Bermuda cruise diva, and Haslam as tourist in Upper Canada. When travelling, they discover new outlets for their repressed or passive discourses or even an emerging new discourse. Collectively, these women travel diarists write themselves into new environments where they will spend a specific amount of time and then return home. Unlike Emma Chadwick Stretch and Sarah Stretch Harris, who documented their immigration from England to PEI, the travel diarist’s journal is cyclical; it begins and ends in the same familiar place. For most of the diarists, the journey to and from the destination is as eventful as the visit itself and therefore merits extensive documentation in their diaries.

³⁸ The “unsayable” is a term referring to the negativity in speech and writing and “implicit in virtually all poetic, philosophical, and even historiographical language” (Rogers et al. 79). “A provisional way of identifying and interpreting languages of the unsayable include (a) a language of negation (b) a language of revision (c) a language of smokescreen and evasion, and (d) a language of silence” (87).

Conclusion

While the diary has been the location for Island women to assert their “mosaic” of selves in their everyday lives, travelling offers them an opportunity to explore new places and record themselves moving in other off Island locations. In these instances, their “writing voice discovers and presents itself in ‘other’ discourses” (Watson 180). The five Island women diarists here discovered and presented their others in their accounts of their journeys. All resort to various textual strategies within their journals to write their travelling voice. For each, textual strategies illustrate this diversity and individuality, “a writer’s preference for certain textual strategies [that] depend not only on their suitability for rendering a particular travel experience, but is also determined by the general cultural and aesthetic discourses in which the respective text participates” (Korte 179).

Reading these travelogues intertextually with their everyday texts such as Haslam’s and Goldsmith’s other diaries, or within their historical circumstances, considering Holman in wartime or Coles on the fringes of Confederation, or as Hyde’s travelogue shows, within the generic conventions of travel writing, confirm how different lives and circumstances generate diversity in women’s documentation in their life writing.

Exercising their otherness in writing every day in not-so-everyday circumstances requires these women to use discourses that represent more aptly the experience of getting themselves born as North Americans and women. Fulfilling their autobiographical pact meant writing themselves out of pristine PEI and into foreign places, documenting the archetypal journey in the best way they found. For each writer, mediating her voice in her travel narrative and achieving agency revolved around negotiating a subjectivity represented as a desirable colonial women, a heroic Canadian, an identity ridden woman, a stranger in paradise, or a woman facing urban modernism. These models of otherness are “less a substitution, more a constitution of the autobiographical ‘I’ in texts where an external other seems to loom largest as the apparent subject of life-writing” (Korte 182). Coles masquerades in her diary as the desirable colonial woman; her textual representation acts as a connective tissue to the Island bourgeois identity. Holman overtly writes herself into a heroic stance as the ultimate assertion of national dedication. Goldsmith’s travelogue diary text resembles a skin of an identity she is ready to shed. Hyde, through her fictive other, Alice, anchors herself to an Island and identity at least more sublime and

exotic than her home Island one. Palmer writes herself into the otherness of central Canada from her “down east” home.

Much has been written about British women’s travel diaries of their colonial exploits (Mills, Pratt) but when the colony echoes back to the Empire the discourse takes new dimensions. The authority of diarists such as Vera, Lucy, Violet, Carrie, and Mercy Ann and the narratives they sustain is partially shaped by the discourses of England, its language, culture and traditions being creatively redefined and re-invented in a new cultural milieu over time.

CONCLUSION

LIFE WRITING, WOMEN AND THEIR TIMES

The intertextual and interdisciplinary reading of the diaries of approximately twenty Island women through literary and textual analyses supports what Janet Wolff refers to in *Feminine Sentences*, that by “weakening of discipline boundaries” (104), new possibilities for reading women’s texts are created. All the autobiographies here are dealt with in their unpublished form and are private documents written on scraps of paper or in account books, scribblers, and proper diaries that have been problematic to assemble for analysis. Having studied the published diaries of Lucy Maud Montgomery and the unpublished diary of Amy Andrew, I was motivated by the unpublished diary’s appeal to find more such documents. The pressure Amy Andrew put on the pencil, the sketches of birds in the margins, the empty space here and there, all beckoned me to read on and peer at the beauty of the inscriptions. Like the pebbles on a sandstone beach, each diary here has a story to tell.

Two important considerations have driven this study: what is it about the journal *intime* that has such an appeal to women, and how did these women use their diaries in the creation and articulation of their own voices?

First, the *journal intime* did not interfere with the business of being a woman and perhaps just for that reason it was given to Lucy Haslam by her older sister Lilly. The diary did not demand too much, maybe five lines a day or an entry when the spirit moved one or when recording something or somewhere out of the ordinary, such as London in wartime or Bermuda in January. For Emma Chadwich Stretch, a diary could even be kept in an account book that was already part of her life as a shop keeper: she simply used the space as an opportunity to scribe other things too. The diary possessed an unquestionably feminine form like that highlighted by nineteenth-century visions of feminine passivity,

somewhat careless yet inviting the woman's flow of words, in drips and dribbles or eloquent prose.

What (*bios*), when she had the empty page in front of her, she choose to put on it and how (*graphie*) she presented her story vary from diarist to diarist and depend on the writer's history, social position, or even something as simple as the weather. This was just the beauty of her artifact; the form accommodated everything that filled her day whether it be hobnobbing with Canada's social elite, having a baby or marrying off one's sister. The writer could structure her story, emphasize some aspects, ignore others and still be filling her diary contract. Andrew wrote to her diary as if to a friend, Stretch kept an account of her tea sales alongside the farming and domestic rituals, Lord kept her diary like a social calendar, and Hyde wrote herself into a new self and place. Their diaries are their lives both in the content and the parole they experimented with. At times fragmentary and others poetic, the aesthetic features of these diaries, beyond their "organic" appearance as being crafted by a human hand, hint at the joys and pains of creation by a woman diarist giving birth to her diary voice.

These Island diaries have been read to examine what these women say about themselves and their relation to others and their world, what Sara Mills refers to as transitivity choices (143). The diary has been the genre of happenings or events, states of being or activities, and the experiential activity of the teller, or the field. The diarist or teller is the one involved in the text, the tenor, who uses the semantic and textual features of language, the mode for creating her text. Textual analysis of the women diarists' transitivity choices opens up new documents for reading nineteenth- and twentieth-century Island women and accessing old texts that previous researchers have refrained from examining because of their opaqueness or apparent superficiality.

This research has shown that the images women revealed of themselves in writing the self (*autos*) are instrumental for "adding a new vitality, a new willingness to enter into a dialogue with history on new terms" (Hutcheon 23). Chapter 2 deals with nineteenth- and twentieth-century images of Island women in folk stories, histories, and the press as a way of unsettling unexamined truths and setting up tension between the taken-for-granted historical and socio-cultural understandings. This context demonstrates how women were presented as subjects when written by local historians and advertisers, and thus serves as a point of departure, as these images are juxtaposed with how the writing diary subject represented her world and her self. The most poignant example of this is the case of diarist Margaret Gray Lord's obituary. Throughout her life

(1845–1941), she kept a diary of her life in Victorian Charlottetown where she writes of her engagement in the public sphere through the church, hospitals, and temperance organizations. To the readers of *The Guardian*, however, she is remembered for her social position as daughter of one prominent politician and wife of another. The *journal intime* for these Island women was a site unrestricted by form or subject matter, where its author might expose and question the self and world habitation. For the reader, the *journal intime* is an entry into that world of the author as an interlocutor, interrogating the author/subject through her text.

The diary narrative has its particular discourse features—parataxis, gaps, diversion and dead-end strategies, metaphors, parody, discrete referencing, symbols—combined with references to persons, places and things particular to their time and place, all inscribed idiosyncratically in varied handwriting styles. Patterns in other literary texts have been instrumental in elucidating, for example, the archetypal journey of Lucy Maud Montgomery into her natural paradise. When Island women like Vera Hyde and Violet Goldsmith write themselves out of their domestic settings and into the new worlds of Bermuda and England, they describe themselves shedding the familiar and taking on new positions in their diaries for exploring new selves in new places and coming home rejuvenated, having found the elixir of knowledge or adventure.

Often, dead-end metaphors, such as Lucy Haslam's references to moonlit nights, signal an inability to entertain or admit to entertaining pleasure, possibly sexual pleasure. Lord wrote in her diary extensively about her sister Florence's wedding, suggesting that "He knoweth" something that Lord obviously did too. Most likely, Florence was pregnant when she walked up the aisle as Lord subtly referred to her sister's dress needing work. The fact that Florence may not have been a virgin was neither socially nor morally correct, especially for upright Victorian families, and Margaret could hardly admit this fact even to her most intimate companion, her diary.

Women's reticence in their diaries took on many forms as the examination of Amy Andrew's diary discourse indicates. She uses rather colourless descriptors and discrete referencing to her pregnancy when she only refers to being "sick." Margaret Gray Lord uses a similar strategy, but as other people such as nurses were listed as moving into the house at the same time one could anticipate that she was about to give birth. Emma Chadwich Stretch in her diary prioritizes everything in her midst before her own physical state and similarly exhibits apprehension or fear of her own body, that it would not endure the hardship of

her pioneer existence. Still she, like Andrew and Lord uses her diary to record the people in the community who have passed away. Diverting their diary discourse to birthing animals or neighbours' dying babies is a way of coming to terms with the constant threat of life and death at a distance but never too far away. Diversions in their diaries had other dimensions relating to the inability to articulate certain fears, that is, to deal with the "unsayable," such as Lucy Palmer Haslam's fear in the public forum of the classroom. Instead, she took up her sister's baby or a fishing expedition.

Carrie Holman took on the horrors of war and wrote in a nationalistic and prosaic manner from England. Holman's diary is the best example of a diarist embedding discourse from religion, nation, and poetry in her *journal intime*. Other women wrote of religious practices, inscribed hymns and verse and how they acted in a morally superior fashion suggesting their familiarity with the Bible and how they emulated Christian teachings. Subliminally, most diarists were accounting whether their lives matched up with those prescribed by the social expectations abundant in conduct manuals.

For some, keeping a diary required that they develop short cuts for expressing themselves. The most obvious case is Maud Jones, who just wrote the names of birds day after day until eventually she was hooked into the practice of keeping her diary; after a number of years, her diary passages were full of people and events. Parataxis is a space- and time-saving technique that allows diarists like Amy, Lucy and Margaret to crowd much more in their diaries than if they wrote grammatically constructed texts. Obvious cases of catharsis or short outbursts were recorded because of exhaustion, loneliness or the inability to say more. Emma's lonely Sunday utterances, removed from her everyday, resonate with her emptiness when she is jettisoned into the vacuum of a day without work, echoing her immigrant state of a woman displaced.

Irony, like that of Vera Hyde, in her response to adopting a new role "Alice in Wonderland" and a new language—"Figurez-vous"—suggests that women could in their journals step outside of themselves and gaze at themselves in a new way. Mercy Ann Coles's account of her flirting with the male colonial establishment in the grand historical circumstances of the Quebec meeting resembles the secret ironic passages of truths known by women that they dress up in a discourse of parody, making fun yet playing along with, in their diaries.

Throughout the diaries runs a narrative of women socially engaged in activities that today mark the transition to modernism. Women were mobilized to support causes beyond their immediate homes, churches, and communities;

they took on issues of prohibition and were the precursors of the suffragettes. Social relationships within society took on new meanings, and women took on new challenges. The twentieth century saw women in the more urban and cosmopolitan regions discover new lives for themselves around the imagery of “flappers” and “the working girl” (Prentice et al. 2). Wanda Wyatt’s diary accounts relating her frequent trips to the modern centres of the world document an Island woman’s reception of modernism and her redefinition of her Victorian childhood into that of a modern, socially engaged woman. Most Island women were going down the same path in a more modest way: Andrew knitted socks for the soldiers on the Front and Lord helped the sick, and like Holman and Wyatt, they set up an infrastructure for women’s social engagement in more specific women’s organizations like Girl Guides, Imperial Order of Daughters of the Empire, Women’s Institutes and the like.

The particular focus of this research has been to return to a time when the traditional world of Eastern Canada, like so many other regions, was at the dawn of the modern era. These changes coincided with the rush towards modernization elsewhere in the country, and throughout the Western world. The more industrialized regions of Canada and the United States beckoned people from the rural areas while at the same time the significance of the farm for the economy began to dwindle, forcing people to other regions in search of a new life. Andrew saw family and friends leave “home” in search of work in these more industrialized regions. Textually, this departure is somewhat complex to unravel, as Andrew like most diarists did not openly admit to her feelings but related a withdrawal from her normal routines, thereby indicating her sadness, the negative emotions she never allowed herself to express directly. After her initial reaction of distress, she writes how she resumed her activity in her home and community.

The vitality and willingness to enter into dialogue with history on new terms (Hutcheon 23) take on various manifestations in Maritime Canada, one being that of reinventing tradition and of redescribed “identities” in an imagined Golden Age (McKay 1), one that also values conservatism, self-reliance, and community. These reconstructions of the past are closely tied up with cultural policies, image-making, and the tourist industry. Most of this rediscovery of the past has attempted to reconstruct the special significance of specific landscapes, history, and signs of local identity, to remind residents and visitors that their society is “innocent of the complications and anxieties of twentieth century modernity” (2). “Modernizing anti modernism,” as McKay terms this practice,

is particularly evident in the way in which women's lives have been portrayed, or have failed to be portrayed, in the contemporary cultural scene. My argument that women have been conspicuous by their absence in the depiction of early twentieth-century PEI is not the key challenge of this research; rather, it is through presenting women within their own literary context in their diaries that there is the possibility "to reconstruct the more subtle politics of cultural selection and to understand the ways in which contingent and partial readings attain the status of obvious truths" (3).

Literary critic Gwendolyn Davies states that "current scholars should be in some haste to retrieve diaries and letters from the 1920s and 1930s, to interview those who have both shaped and responded to the period and to analyze the relationship of the literary and cultural patterns of that time to our own" (iv). Undeniably, women played with language and the literary form of the *journal intime* to articulate their outer and inner worlds. Thematically, these diarists have left unique depictions of the advent of modernism, women's perspective on modernism prior to the surge of modernism (Wolff 59), namely, how women were faced with the conundrum of marriage and staying single while facing the facts of having an education and a profession. The more intimate aspects of their very bodies loomed in their diaries, peering through the lines, spaces and letters on the page. It was often the writer's natural milieu that had a special role, and associations with nature gave her space to express the unsayable, women's perspective on modernism prior to the surge of modernism (Wolff 59).

Not all the diarists here sought marriage early on in their lives or even later. Andrew and Hyde married in their thirties; Wyatt never married, nor did Holman. It was as if they were either seeking alternatives to marriage by remaining single, or postponing marriage. The "odd" woman phenomenon, the woman who would not marry, discussed by Elaine Showalter, was part of the modernist tendency to try and change women's sphere of activities and envision alternatives to the domestic sphere and marriage. Montgomery's journal testifies to this fact, that she indeed hesitated to marry and considered undermining "the comfortable binary system of Victorian sexuality and gender roles" (Showalter 19). Andrew through her diary discourse reveals that her life at home with her family was rewarding and meaningful, and that she was in no rush to leave home.

What drove some women to the more conventional arrangement of marriage while an increasing number of women like Wanda Wyatt chose to remain single? Women who delayed the decisions to marry and have children, or who never

married, had set off a national alarm in Britain with their increasing numbers, as they signaled new emerging patterns in sexual anarchy. At the beginning of the twentieth century, both Europe and North America witnessed the emergence of the “new woman,” who not only criticized society’s insistence on marriage as woman’s only option for a fulfilling life, but was also “university educated and sexually independent (and) engendered intense hostility and fear as she seemed to challenge male supremacy in art, the professions, and the home” (Showalter 38).

When comparing Montgomery, Andrew, and Wyatt, it is apparent that economic factors for both Andrew and Montgomery reinforced their traditional beliefs that they would be better off married. Wyatt did not have these economic concerns. Her family’s wealth secured her education and the possibility to work in the public sphere for the good of the community. Montgomery’s fame and fortune was far from certain in the early part of her career and marriage. In fact, the controlling hand of her grandmother ensured that Montgomery was not extravagant with the royalties she received from her publishers.

The shame and apprehension women displayed about their bodies in their diaries questions the junction from which they wrote. The press, conduct books, and religion had defined the mores for women’s physicality, and even the diary had been reserved for more “masculine” matters of the mind, but as Sidonie Smith admits, women did sabotage the diary and discretely slipped their bodily discourse into journals and other private writings. The press images from the early twentieth century situate women at the crossroads with their model of a woman forced to face her innately flawed body as she was encouraged to fix it with a *manmade* cure. Thus, as Wolff and others have pointed out, medical science made the female body into a new entity in the modern age (133). She was not to be the active agent, as Montgomery was in her natural paradise, but instead the passive victim of the new technologies, directed by powers beyond her control. Advancements in medicine also functioned by “upholding the pre modern, quaint, therapeutic ‘Otherness of a Folk’ [...] simultaneously drawing them inextricably into the commercial and political webs of modern society” (McKay 16). Women were thrust into the contradictions of the era and attempted to articulate their dilemma by developing a form of agency through this writing.

Margaret Atwood, in her thematic guide to Canadian literature, has commented,

Poems which contain descriptions of landscapes and natural objects are often dismissed as being mere Nature poetry. But Nature poetry is seldom just about Nature; it is usually about the poet's attitude towards the external natural universe. That is, landscapes in poems are often interior landscapes: they are maps of a state of mind. Sometimes the poem conceals this fact and purports to be objective description, sometimes the poem acknowledges and explores the interior landscape. The same tendencies can be present in the descriptive passages of novels or stories with natural setting. (Atwood 42)

The same can be said about women and their life writing. Nature provided the staying power for Stretch: it physically occupied her existence on weekdays keeping up with the rhythms of nature for survival, and on her day of rest she basked in the peace of pasture. She gained her place in the New World through the land, both physically and mentally. For the next generation of rural women, Andrew and Haslam, nature and their lives were tamer versions of country life. Both the land and their cultivation of it was a more ritualistic endeavour, and they celebrated the identity they shared with the land as giver of sustenance.

Understanding the fragments women diarists left behind gives readers sites for comprehending the past and reformulating the present, and reconsidering "modernizing antimodern" (McKay) and a contemporary obsession with what Hobsbawm and Ranger refer to in *The Invention of Tradition* (1993) as a "continuity with a suitable past" (1).

Like any artifact attached to its woman creator, the journal intime is part of what Val Plumwood refers to in *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature* (1993) "as an important problematic tradition which requires a critical reconstruction, a potential source of strength as well as a problem, and a ground of both continuity and difference with traditional ideals" (64). For those like Andrew, their writing of their lives was a record of time well spent, and at times a record for possible further reflection so they could look upon those busy years of establishing a farm and family with a certain sense of pride and a feeling of accomplishment. Perhaps that is why Andrew cherished her diary and saved it for more than fifty years, passing it on to her daughter and her daughter's daughter. Andrew represents what Wolff has referred to as a positive celebration by women in writing and art, one that informs our reading of women as authors. Such texts, like the sandstones on the Island beach, tell us much about the waves and tides that washed over their surfaces and sculptured their unique textures like the Island women's diaries.

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