Taking Emily Seriously – The Depiction of the Canadian Female Artist in the 1920's in L. M. Montgomery's *Emily* Trilogy

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English Philology
Masters Thesis
February 2007

Tampereen yliopisto
Englantilainen filologia
Kieli- ja käännöstieteiden laitos

Paasonen, Hanna-Reetta: Taking Emily Seriously – The Depiction of a Canadian Female Artist in the 1920's in L. M. Montgomery's *Emily* Trilogy
Pro gradu-tutkielma 73 sivua + lähdeluettelo 4 sivua
Kevät 2007

Tässä pro gradu-tutkielmassa käsittelen kanadalaisen naiskirjailijan kuvausta L. M. Montgomeryn *Emily*-trilogiassa, johon kuuluvat teokset *Emily of New Moon* (1923), *Emily Climbs* (1925) ja *Emily's Quest* (1927) (suomeksi *Pieni Runotyttö, Runotyttö Maineen Polulla ja Runotyttö Etsii Tähteään*). Trilogia on kasvukertomus Emilyn kehittymisestä naiskirjailijaksi. Montgomery käsittelee Emilyn kautta naiskirjailijan asemaa ja esteitä oman aikansa Kanadassa. Lähtökohtani on, että Emily on kuvattu lahjakkaana naisena, joka kykenee murtamaan joitakin naiseuden normeja, joita perhe ja kyläyhteisö hänelle asettavat. Kyse on siis eräänlaisesta feministisestä luennasta, vaikka en olekaan käyttänyt mitään erityistä teoreettista viitekehystä.

Montgomerylle oli tärkeää olla nimenomaan kanadalainen kirjailija ja edistää Kanadan kirjallista kulttuuria. 1920-luvulla Kanadan taiteessa olivat vastakkain romanttinen, realistinen ja modernistinen suuntaus. Montgomery itse kuului romanttiseen koulukuntaan ja kirjoitti myös Emilyn hahmon romanttisten ihanteiden mukaiseksi taiteilijaksi, joka edistää oman maansa kulttuuria sen sijaan että lähtisi Amerikkaan luomaan uraa.

Olen tutkinut näitä teemoja sekä Emilyn että muiden hahmojen kuvauksen kautta. Emilya naiskirjailijana on tutkittu aikaisemminkin, mutta toisten hahmojen taiteilijuuden käsittely tuo tutkimukseen uutta näkökulmaa. Uskonkin, että Montgomery on halunnut muiden hahmojen kautta korostaa Emilyn lahjakkuutta, taiteelle omistautumista ja taiteellista rehellisyyttä. Olen käyttänyt työssäni mm. Elizabeth Epperlyn, Mary Rubion, E. Holly Piken ja Elizabeth Waterstonin Montgomerya käsitteleviä kirjoja ja artikkeleita.

Avainsanat: tyttökirjat, sukupuoli, Kanada

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1. Introduction

1.1. L. M. Montgomery and The Emily Books

Lucy Maud Montgomery (1874-1942) was a well known and productive Canadian author. She is best known for her romance novels about the orphans Anne Shirley and Emily Starr. Montgomery's production includes novels as well as short stories and poetry, but her most popular and best-known work remains her first novel, *Anne Of Green Gables* (1908), which quickly became a worldwide success, spawned seven sequels, and was later adapted into a TV series. Montgomery was a very popular author in her own time and her works are still read worldwide. She has inspired many female authors, including Canadian authors Margaret Laurence, Alice Munro, and Margaret Atwood, as well as the Swedish author Astrid Lindgren, whose Pippi Longstockings character was inspired by Anne. Montgomery was the first Canadian woman to be made a fellow of the British Royal Society of Arts in 1923.

Montgomery wrote her books within the genre of romance. This was partly because it was expected of a female writer and partly because Montgomery had to support her family with her writing, so she needed to write within a popular genre. The romance novel was a genre with fairly strict rules: happy endings – i.e., love stories ending in marriage – were obligatory; the topics were found in the domestic sphere, and important societal issues could not be dealt with openly. The readers and publishers expected sentimental tales for young girls, and Montgomery wrote by these rules. However, she also embedded social commentary into the stories. She used sarcasm to convey her criticism of her society, and this commentary has often been lost on both readers and critics who insist on seeing her books as nothing but sentimental stories for girls. William H. New argues that “[s]he softened her satire with humour and whimsy, but her

writing dissected her society and showed its injustices and idiosyncrasies"[1]. A careful reader can find criticism of patriarchal authority, people's attitudes on women and female writers, Christianity, and many other things in Montgomery's seemingly unchallenging text. Considering the rebellious undertones of her novels, it is not surprising that they were banned in post-war Poland.

Montgomery's choice of genre was what gave her such a wide audience, but it also led people to believe that her books had no literary value and could offer their readers nothing but nostalgia and sentimental love stories. Another reason for this prejudice is that Montgomery's novels have been marketed for young girls only. They were not originally meant for a child audience, and people of all ages read them. However, after the Second World War, there was a change in the marketing of her books. They were placed in the children's section in book stores, the new cover illustrations depicted younger girls than before, and people began to see them as sentimental reading for adolescents and schoolgirls. Even *A Tangled Web*, a more "serious" novel about an old lady, was placed in the children's section. Montgomery's novels became a part of girl's culture. They have been passed on through generations of women – from mothers to daughters, godmothers to goddaughters. However, most men have been unwilling to read them due to their classification as "girl books". Grown women, too, have been dubious as to what books like these can offer an adult reader.

Montgomery's books have also been dismissed by most critics. For a long time, they were not so much as mentioned in volumes on Canadian literature, nor were they considered a valid topic for literary study. According to Mary Rubio and Elizabeth Waterston[2] , there are three reasons for this: firstly, Montgomery was a female writer;

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[1] New, William H. *Encyclopedia of Literature in Canada.* Toronto, Buffalo, London: Toronto University Press, 2002, p. 750.

[2] Rubio, Mary and Elizabeth Waterston. *Writing a Life: L. M. Montgomery.* Toronto and Ontario: ECW Press, 1995, p. 12.

secondly, she wrote in a popular genre; and thirdly, her books were best sellers. Critics were not interested in looking beyond the surface of Montgomery's seemingly light novels. This attitude changed when her dark-toned journals were published. They revealed her controversial and bitter thoughts about her society, thoughts she was forced to keep secret because of her status as a minister's wife. After reading her journals, critics began to look into her novels more seriously and find the social commentary behind her humor. However, this is a fairly recent development, and most of the detailed studies on Montgomery have been written in the 1980's and after. There is still little research on Montgomery and most of it has been published in *Canadian Children's Literature* and such publications, further marking it as children's literature. Furthermore, a lot of the research on Montgomery has focused on her journals, letters, and the autobiographical elements in her novels. Most of the criticism on her work focuses on the *Anne* novels, particularly the first one and the last one in the series. There is, therefore, need for further research on Montgomery's work outside of the *Anne* series.

The *Emily* trilogy was written fairly late in her career, after *Rilla of Ingleside*, the last book in the *Anne* series. Montgomery had written the sequels to *Anne* mostly because of her contract with the publisher and requests from her audience. She was tired of the Anne character, and the quality of the sequels suffered. After finishing the series, Montgomery began working on a new heroine, Emily. She wrote three books on Emily: *Emily of New Moon* (1923), hereafter ENM; *Emily Climbs* (1925), hereafter EC; and *Emily's Quest* (1927), hereafter EQ. The trilogy focuses on the life of Emily Byrd Starr, a young girl who wants to become a poet and writer, and her development into maturity and artistry. The character of Emily and the story of her career are largely autobiographical. Before starting on the *Emily* books, Montgomery edited all of her

journals for publication (she wanted them to be published after her death). Emily's career as a writer begins similarly to Montgomery's: she starts as a writer of poems and short stories for journals and then, in her mid-20's, publishes a novel.

Emily of New Moon was Montgomery's own favourite among her works. She was not equally happy with *Emily Climbs* and *Emily's Quest*, and felt relieved when the trilogy was finished, mainly because she hated writing about Emily's love life. However, the *Emily* series never suffered the same drop in quality that the *Anne* series did, perhaps because it was not expanded into too many volumes. It also remained focused on the main character and her development, while the *Anne* books began to focus more and more on Anne's children and neighbours. Theodore Scheckels[3] finds that "perhaps none but the very first" Anne novel measure up to the level of the *Emily* trilogy. The depiction of Emily as a female author has been an inspiration for many female writers. Elizabeth Epperly mentions that Alice Munro and Jane Urquhart "talk about the important influence of Montgomery on their understanding of themselves as females and as writers"[4].

1.2. The Finnish Readership of Montgomery's Novels

The Finnish readership of the *Emily* novels, much like the readership elsewhere, has mainly consisted of young girls and grown women who read them as girls. Montgomery's works have been very popular in Finland for several generations, particularly the *Anne* and *Emily* series. Anna Makkonen, one of the editors of an anthology on Finnish readers of Montgomery, concludes: "Oli selvää, että kyselymme oli osunut johonkin tärkeään ja merkittävään, monia sukupolvia yhdistävään asiaan.

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[3] Sheckels, Theodore F. *The Island Motif in the Fiction of L. M. Montgomery, Margaret Laurence, Margaret Atwood, and Other Canadian Women Novelists.*New York: Lang, 2003, p. 20.

[4] Epperly, Elizabeth, *The Fragrance of Sweet-Grass: L. M. Montgomery's Heroines and the Pursuit for Romance.* Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992, p. 4.

Vastauksia tuli eri puolilta Suomea ja monenlaisilta ihmisiltä maatalon emännistä filosofian tohtoreihin”[5]. David Robertson, in his comparison of Finnish and Canadian texts, suggests that there is a similarity in Finnish and Canadian literatures in relation to nature. The nature in Finland and Canada are markedly similar, and this has also affected the depiction and importance of nature in the literatures of these two countries. Not only do the literatures exhibit “an intimate relationship with nature”, but they also focus on rural themes[6]. Nature was a very important theme for Montgomery, and her novels contain long nature descriptions. Some writers of the anthology also mention these moments in the novels as influential. For example, Kanerva Frantti writes: “Epäilemättä juuri L. M. Montgomery on vaikuttanut siihen, miten näen luonnon ja sen yksityiskohdat”[7].

Despite the long history of Finnish readers, Montgomery is not equally popular among the current generation of young Finnish girls. Perhaps one reason is the dated translation by I. K. Inha, made in 1961. The language in the Finnish editions is as romantic as in the originals, but some of the phrases and grammar has aged, which might be off-putting for younger generations. This passage from *Runotyttö Maineen Polulla* (*Emily Climbs*) is a good example: “Emilia lähti kaihomielin kirjakaupasta, jossa kirjojen ja tuoreiden aikakauslehtien haju kutkutti hänen sieraimiaan kuin Arabian sulotuoksut”[8]. To a modern reader, the language seems ridiculously eloquent, and the phrase “Arabian sulotuoksut” (translated from “incense”) might not even be familiar to younger readers.

Another problem with the Finnish editions is that many passages have been left out.

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[5] Makkonen, Anna. *Annan ja Runotytön Jäljillä Eli Mistä Tämä Kirja Sai Alkunsa.* In Ahola, Suvi & Satu Koskimies. (ed.) *Uuden Kuun ja Vihervaaran tytöt – L. M. Montgomeryn Runotyttö- ja Anna-kirjat suomalaisten naislukijoiden suosikkeina*. Hämeenlinna: Karisto, 2005, p.11.

[6] Robertson, David. “Finnish and Canadian Literatures: A Comparison Using Salme Orvokki Pinola's The Fatherless As an Illustration.” in *Journal of Finnish Studies, I* (1997), pp.145-54.

[7] Frantti, Kanerva. “Toinen, Oma Maailmani.” In Ahola & Koskimies 2005, p. 11.

[8] Montgomery, L. M. *Runotyttö Maineen Polulla.* Juva: WS Bookwell, 2003, p. 111.

In some cases it seems to be because of cultural differences – like the passage where Emily discusses the Creole family living in a nearby town – while other passages may have been deemed unfitting for a young female audience – Dr Burnley telling a joke that makes women blush (even if the joke itself is not related in the text). In other cases, it is more difficult to understand why something has been left out. For example, this passage about Teddy in *Emily of New Moon* has not been translated for the Finnish readers:

> Teddy says that before he was born into this world he lived in another one where there were two suns, one red and one blue. The days were red and the nights blue. And he says the brooks run honey instead of water. But what did you do if you were thirsty, I said. Oh, we were never thirsty there. But I think I would *like* to be thirsty because then cold water tastes so good. I would like to live in the moon. It is such a nice silvery place.[9]

It seems like a perfect example of the young artist's imagination, which should have been suitable for a children's book as well, but the translator has decided to leave it out. Perhaps, if the novels had been translated as adult books, they would have been retained much as they were. For a discussion of the translations of the titles and their effects on the categorization of the novels, see below in 4.3.

1.3. My Study

In my study, I have decided to focus exclusively on the *Emily* trilogy. As most of the research on Montgomery is on the *Anne* novels and most of the *Emily* research is on the first novel only, I felt there was need for further research on the *Emily* trilogy as a whole. My study will focus on the character of Emily Starr and how she is depicted as a true artist and truly Canadian artist in the novels, as well as her status as a female author

[9] Montgomery, L.M. *Emily of New Moon.* New York: Random House, 1993, p. 126. omitted from Montgomery, L. M. *Pieni Runotyttö.* Porvoo, Helsinki, Juva: WSOY, 1999.

in a small rural Canadian community of the time. The topic of Emily as a female artist has been researched before by Elizabeth Epperly, E. Holly Pike, Judith Miller and Marie Campbell, among others. My own addition to the topic is the discussion of how the other characters are used to emphasize different sides of Emily as an artist.

My thesis has no particular theoretical framework. However, I have used a kind of feminist reading to analyze Emily's depiction as a female artist. As Peter Barry writes, literature has been one of the most important objects of feminist analysis, because literature "provided the role models which indicated to women, and men, what constituted acceptable version of the 'feminine' and legitimate feminine goals and aspirations"[10]. The legitimate feminine goals of Montgomery's time were to marry and have children, which were usually the ultimate conclusion of romance novels. I will explore how Montgomery constructs Emily as a different kind of role model, one whose goal is a career as a female author.

I will attempt to place the novels in the framework of the state of Canadian art and artists in the 1920's. For that, I need to use a kind of historicist approach. However, it cannot be strictly labeled either old or new historicism. Peter Barry points out that "new historicism refuses to 'privilege' the literary text" and uses non-literary sources to analyze it[11]. While I do not intend to refer to any such sources, my approach cannot be called strictly old historicist either, as I do not intend to simply point out the prevalent ideas of literature at the time and how they are shown in Montgomery's work.

I decided early on that Emily's love life would not play a significant part in my study. The focus of the trilogy is clearly in Emily's development as a female artist, not in the love themes, which are fairly unimportant in the novels until the last book. This topic

[10] Barry, Peter. *Beginning Theory – An Introduction to Literary and Cultural Theory.* Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2002, p.122.
[11] idib., p. 172.

has also been researched quite extensively by others and I found it hard to add anything new to the discussion. However, a discussion of Emily as a female artist requires a brief discussion of Dean Priest's possessive love for her, which I have dealt with in 4.3.2. Emily's relationship with Teddy Kent and its possible consequences on her career as a writer are likewise briefly discussed in 3.4.2. Emily also had other short-lived relationships which I have largely ignored in my study.

In Chapter 2, I will discuss Canadian nationalism in the literature and art of the 1920's as well as the tensions between the Romantic movement and the Realist and Modernist writers. In 2.2., my focus is on how Emily is depicted as a Canadian author through her refusal of an offer to live and write in New York in *Emily Climbs*. I will look briefly at Margaret Atwood's *Survival* (1972), as well as Frank Davey's *Reading Canadian Reading* and Northrop Frye's *The Bush Garden* (1971), for ideas of Canadian literature.

In Chapter 3, I will discuss how the other characters in the novels are used to draw out Emily's talent and devotion to her art. There has been very little study on the other characters besides Emily, and this chapter mainly consists of my own analysis. In my reading of the other characters, I realized there were many similarities between certain characters and their relationship with art. I drew out four rough categories of artist types: Oral folk tradition artists, whose art is oral and only shared with those who they think will understand it; Interpreting artists, whose art consists of interpreting other people's words, not creating their own; Fake artists, who use art for fame and/or appreciation from other people, not for purely artistic means; and finally, "True" artists, Emily and Teddy, to whom art is a calling. There was a fifth possible category, the Failed Artists, which included Emily's father, Mr Carpenter, and Dean Priest. There was, however, too much overlap with "Interpreting Artists" and "Male Critics", so I

have left out this category. In the first three sub-chapters of Chapter 3, I will outline the features of each category and how they depict both the other characters' and Emily's artistry and also serve to convey Montgomery's own criticism of the artistic climate of her time. In the fourth sub-chapter, I will discuss Emily as an artist in more detail. My focus here is on Emily as a Romantic artist after the Wordsworthian ideals. I will conclude Chapter 3 with a discussion of Emily and Teddy and their status as the only "true" artists of the text, and I will also briefly discuss Emily and Teddy's relationship as lovers and argue against the idea that the marriage with Teddy stifles Emily as a female author.

Chapter 4 focuses on Emily as a female author. I will begin by comparing and contrasting the ideas some readers and critics have had of Emily as a role model for modern girls. I will continue with a discussion of why Emily is depicted as a female author who breaks out of the domestic sphere and refuses to let the "women's work" at home define her. In 4.1.2., I will take a look at the Finnish translations of the titles of the *Emily* books and how they have affected people's attitudes on the novels and contributed to their categorization as "girl books". In 4.2., I will discuss the three most important male critics of Emily's work: Father Cassidy, Dean Priest, and Mr Carpenter. I will show how Father Cassidy and Dean Priest both encourage Emily and mock her as a female artist, while Mr Carpenter acts as her mentor and challenges her to perfect her own style and voice.

For material, I have used mainly studies on Montgomery in general and the *Emily* books in particular. I had two problems with finding material: firstly that there has been quite little study done on the *Emily* novels, and secondly that a lot of the material there is has been written by the same people, perhaps making my study narrower in scope than it could have been, had I had a wider selection of references. I have relied quite

heavily on Elizabeth Epperly's *The Fragrance of Sweet-Grass: L. M. Montgomery's Heroines and the Pursuit for Romance* (1992), which contains a detailed analysis of each *Emily* novel and particularly the depiction of Emily as a female artist. I have also used several articles from *Harvesting Thistles: The Textual Garden of L. M. Montgomery* (1994), a collection of articles on Montgomery's work, edited by Mary Henley Rubio. I have used Montgomery's journals, edited by Mary Rubio and Elizabeth Waterston, for brief quotations from Montgomery regarding art. I have also used quotations from *Uuden Kuun ja Vihervaaran Tytöt,* edited by Suvi Ahola and Satu Koskimies, which is a Finnish anthology of women's writings about reading *Anne* and *Emily* novels. It was collected through a research project where women were asked to send their memories and thoughts of Montgomery's work to the editors. This will give me some indication to how educated, intelligent female readers of Montgomery have seen her works. Several of these women are also writers, often inspired by Montgomery. I will not analyze them too closely, but I will use them for references where applicable. This can be seen as an element of reader response theory in my work.

2. The Canadian Artist

2.1. Canadian Art in the 1920's

In the 1920's, when Montgomery was writing the *Emily* novels, Canadians had begun to take an active interest in creating essentially Canadian art and culture. According to E. Holly Pike, there was a renewed interest in Canadian nationalism in Canada after the First World War, which led to a wave of nationalism in literature and painting[12]. Among them was the Group of Seven, a group of young painters, who were trying to redefine Canadian art. Influenced by Scandinavian art movements, they wanted to find a new way of depicting the nature of Canada. Like Montgomery, they rebelled against the ideas of Realism[13]. At the same time, an influential female artist called Emily Carr was also working on making Canadian art. She was not a member of the group, but received support and recognition from the members, which made her work more well-known. She began her career as a painter in the early 1900's, but did not become widely known until the late 1920's. Later on, in the 1930's, she turned more and more to writing[14]. Like the similarly named Emily Starr, she wrote short stories about nature and animals. Emily Carr became the best-known female artist in the history of Canadian art, and she could be seen as a possible model for the characters of both Emily and Teddy.

However, the ideal of “Canadian art” was loosely defined. For instance, Pike discusses the criteria that some anthologists had for truly Canadian literature: the writer had to be born and bred in Canada, write about Canadian subject matter, and remain true to Canadian style. If one relied too heavily on influences from other countries, the

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[12] Pike, E. Holly. "(Re)Producing Canadian Literature: L. M. Montgomery’s Emily Novels". In Gammel, Irene & Epperly, Elizabeth.(ed) *L. M. Montgomery and the Canadian Culture*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999, p. 64.

[13] New 2002, p. 455.

[14] Carr, Emily. *The Heart of a Peacock* (1953). Irwin, 1986, p. xii.

literature was sometimes dismissed as un-Canadian[15]. Northrop Frye argues that the lack of a distinctly Canadian language makes Canadian writers by definition members of the literary tradition of another country: "A nineteenth-century Canadian poet writing in English will be emulating Keats and Tennyson; writing in French, he will be emulating Victor Hugo or Baudelaire"[16]. Fry further points out that a distinctly Canadian literature is difficult to create, because Canada lacks a cultural tradition of its own: "British Canada was first a part of the wilderness, then a part of North America and the British Empire, then a part of the world. But it has gone through these revolutions too quickly for a tradition of writing to be founded on any one of them"[17].

There were different literary movements trying to redefine Canadian literature at the same time. Montgomery was a part of the Romantic movement, which was already becoming old-fashioned in her time. Realism was the new trend; abandoning the Romantic conventions of writing about nature and idealizing beauty, the Realists turned instead to the angst and ugliness of urban life. They were trying to write about life as it really was, a technique Montgomery criticized several times in the *Emily* trilogy (see 3.4.1). At the same time, Modernism was emerging and demanding topics of "fragmentation, angst, and disillusion"[18]. The Modernist protagonists were male, lone wolf type characters who had to make sense of a fragmented post-war society. This led the critics to abandon Romanticism as sentimental and unimportant literature. The contrast was strengthened by the fact that the Realists and Modernists generally came from the big cities and wrote about urban life, while Romanticists mostly dwelled in the countryside and wrote about the beauty of nature.

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[15] Pike 1999, p. 64.
[16] Frye, Northrop. *The Bush Garden – Essays on the Canadian Imagination.* Ontario: House of Anansi Press, 1971, p. 145.
[17] ibid., p. 219.
[18] Rubio, Mary & Elizabeth Waterston (ed.) *The Selected Journals of L. M. Montgomery. Volume IV: 1929-1935.* Oxford University Press, 1998, p. xii.

Some of the first Canadian female authors that were critically acclaimed were Susanna Moodie and her sister, Catharine Parr Traill. They emigrated into Canada with their husbands in 1832 and were given estates in the rural areas of Canada, where everything was still very primitive and rough. They wrote books about their experiences in the Canadian countryside or "bush", as it is often called, depicting Canada as a backwoods both literally and in an artistic sense. The book titles describe this idea – Moodie titled hers *Roughing it in the Bush* (1852), while Traill's book was called *The Backwoods of Canada* (1836). These books were very important for the development of Canadian literature. The themes presented in them – survival in nature, rural Canada as opposed to the cities – became dominating themes in Canadian literature until the 1970's.

Modernism rejected traditional ways of writing, and the Modernist ideas made romance novels with their sentimental view of life seem frivolous. Jennie Rubio compares people's attitudes on Montgomery to the treatment of a Modernist author of her time, Frederick Philip Grove. While Grove was studied in the university and seen as a serious author, Montgomery was demoted to a writer of simple children's stories. Grove complained about "frivolous women writers who catered to popular audiences"[19], while Montgomery complimented his work. Rubio blames Modernism of having led to "the dismissal of a great deal of influential women's writing, especially popular romances"[20]. She points out that while Modernism sought to break free from traditional women's roles, these roles were the reference point for "middle-class, respectable fiction" written by women[21]. A female writer, therefore, had little

[19] Rubio, Jennie: "Strewn With Dead Bodies: Women and Gossip in *Anne of Ingleside*." In Rubio, Mary Henley (ed). *Harvesting Thistles: The Textual Garden of L. M. Montgomery.* University of Guelph: Canadian Children's Press, 1994, p. 168 .

[20] ibid., p. 167.
[21] ibid.

opportunity to write about women in a way that would have pleased Modernist critics.

For a long time, the outside world was uninterested in Canadian art and literature. In her book *Survival,* Margaret Atwood discusses the position of a Canadian artist before the 1960's. She points out that most of the art in Canada was imported from the US or Great Britain; there was no market for Canadian art, because the critics would dismiss it as second-rate simply because it was made in Canada. Atwood argues that a Canadian artist had three choices: disguising as an American or British writer; moving to one of the art capitals in Europe – as Teddy does for some years in *Emily's Quest* – or staying in Canada and trying to create art there, accepting that one can only expect small editions and "at the worst, total oblivion"[22]. It was not until the 1960's that the work of Canadian artists was re-examined by the public outside Canada. The first artist to receive attention from the outside world was Bill Reid, a sculptor whose work was strongly influenced by Native Canadian totem poles. That was when the Group of Seven, who had also worked with similar themes, became recognized elsewhere, and authors such as Margaret Laurence, Alice Munro, or Atwood herself began to emerge.

Atwood argues that the central symbol of Canadian literature is survival. It might mean getting settled and surviving in a new country, the survival of French culture in English Canada, the survival of Canadian culture as separate from the more powerful American and British cultures, or surviving a natural disaster or accident. The basic theme, according to Atwood, is not of triumphant survival, but of bare survival, staying alive without achieving anything positive[23]. In her opinion, this has made Canadian literature rather pessimistic. Atwood further argues that Canadian literature has treated failure and unhappy endings as the only valid conclusion for a story.

Frank Davey questions Atwood's thematic position. He feels that it is a mistake to

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[22] Atwood, Margaret. *Survival – A Thematic Guide to Canadian Literature*. Ontario: House of Anansi Press, 1991, p. 181-182.
[23] ibid., p. 33.

make such wide generalizations of an entire country's literature, because it leads to seeing texts “mainly as signifiers of pre-existent cultural 'themes'” and encourages “superficial readings of texts in terms of their explicit themes”[24]. Indeed, Atwood seems to use dozens of texts as simply examples of a certain unified theme, instead of discussing them as individual texts by individual authors. Her introduction to the theory shows this attempt at giving one universal explanation to Canadian texts: “But if the coincidence intrigues you – so many writers in such a small country, and *all with the same neurosis*- then let me offer you a theory”[25]. Atwood also seems to rely on the value judgements mentioned above that Montgomery's books are frivolous:

> You might decide at this point that most Canadian authors with any pretensions to seriousness are neurotic and morbid, and settle down instead for a good read with *Anne of Green Gables* (though it's about an orphan...)[26]

She seems to be saying that reading optimistic books is ultimately settling for the less artistic option, while the art critic must look into more “serious” novels for analyses of what Canadian literature is truly like. However, if Montgomery is read as a Canadian writer, her work to some extent disproves Atwood's theory. The *Emily* trilogy can be seen as a story about the survival of a female author, but it is a triumphant survival: Emily reaches publication and success and gets recognition from the people around her. Montgomery's Canada is not as bleak as the Canada in Atwood’s theory. The element of failure is there – Emily's father, Mr Carpenter, and Dean Priest are examples of a failed talented person who are scorned by the people around them and never fulfil their potential – but there is a strong theme of hope in the novels, and the happy ending give a positive idea of the future of a Canadian author. Elizabeth Waterston points out that the Canadian female authors Margaret Laurence and Alice Munro have found

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[24] Davey, Frank. *Reading Canadian Reading.* Winnipeg: Turnstone Press, 1988, p. 4.

[25] Atwood 1991, p. 35.

[26] ibid.

Montgomery and her heroines encouraging examples of a Canadian female author: “the knowledge that Montgomery had succeeded in weaving her fables out of Canadian materials was an empowering inspiration to these and other later writers”[27].

2.2. Emily as a Canadian artist

Montgomery shared the concerns of nationalism and creating Canadian literature. She even wrote to Frederick Philip Grove that he would write “the great Canadian novel”[28]. Therefore, it is not surprising that she made her most important heroine, Emily, aspire to be a truly Canadian author. The most important example of this is in *Emily Climbs,* where Emily receives a tempting offer from Janet Royal, an editor for a New York literary journal. She offers to take Emily to New York with her and help her in becoming a writer as soon as possible. To her surprise, Emily is unsure how to respond to this offer. The opportunities in New York are far better than in rural Blair Water or on Prince Edward Island in general – or indeed, anywhere in Canada. In New York, Emily could become a celebrated new artist at a very young age. Even if Aunt Elizabeth surprisingly tells her she can go, Emily feels she cannot leave her home in New Moon and Canada: “Some fountain of living water would dry up in my soul if I left the land I love” (EC 311). E. Holly Pike believes that this reflects Montgomery’s view of an author: “a writer needs to be insular, to be confined to his or her own time and place”[29]. This idea is clearly present in the views of Emily's teacher and mentor, Mr Carpenter. He says Janet is “Yankeefied” - that she is no longer truly Canadian: “that's what I wanted you to be – pure Canadian through and through, doing something as far as in you lay for the literature of your own country, keeping your Canadian tang

[27] Waterston, Elizabeth. *Children's Literature in Canada.* New York: Twayne Publishers, 1992, p. 123.

[28] Rubio 1994, p. 168.
[29] Pike 1999, p. 73.

and flavour"(EC 305-306). Faye Hammill[30] argues that Janet Royal is depicted as a traitor to Canadian literature, which does seem to be implied in what Mr Carpenter says. The novels do not offer any definition of what this Canadian "tang and flavour" in Emily's writing is, but Emily's success as an author seems to depend on it. When Emily publishes her first novel, Janet admits it could not have been written in New York: "You were right not to come to New York (...) You could never have written *The Moral of the Rose* here. Wild roses won't grow in city streets"(EQ 178). Montgomery is underlining the difference between not only American and Canadian literature, but also between big cities and small rural villages. This defence of the Canadian countryside as an inspirer of creation shows Montgomery's Romantic and nationalist thinking.

Northrop Frye argues that there is no unified Canadian nationality, but that the national feeling is tied to one's home region[31]. For Montgomery, this region was Prince Edward Island. She lived there until the age of 37, and even if she lived in Ontario later on, most of her works are set in PEI. The nationalism in the *Emily* novels is clearly related to Prince Edward Island. Janet warns Emily that she will never reach success there: "the big editors won't look farther than the address of PE Island on your manuscript" (EC 310). This almost comes true, as it takes a long time for Emily to be published, and even when her first novel is published, some of the critics show their ignorance of Prince Edward Island: they do not even know where it is, much less what the climate is like. One of them writes: "There are no orchards in Prince Edward Island. They are killed by the harsh, salt winds that blow across that narrow sandy strip" (EQ 180). This is a real quotation from a critic who reviewed Montgomery's *Kilmeny of the Orchard*. Emily herself finds PEI an inspirational place to live in and writes long

[30] Hammill, Faye. *Literary Culture and Female Authorship in Canada 1760-2000.* Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2003, p. 100.

[31] Frye 1971, p. ii.

passages in her diary about the nature there.

In the end, Emily succeeds in publishing a Canadian novel, and it is published by a great American publishing house. However, it takes her a long time to get there, and both her first novels are turned down several times. The publishers, almost all American, are not interested in publishing Canadian literature. Emily's own Canadian community also discourages her writing. Her family and particularly the head of her household, Elizabeth Murray, think that writing and reading novels is a sin. She sees Emily's poetry as a harmless phase, but she tries to make her stop writing stories. Hammill argues that as the Protestant interpretations of the Bible were so literal, Protestants believed that words could accurately depict reality, and this assigned words a dangerous power[32]. William New points out that this superstition regarding literature and theatre remains in Canada to this day[33]. The Canadian rural community is depicted as stifling and narrow-minded in most of Montgomery's novels, and she also discussed these attitudes in her diaries.

The idea of being normal and not trying to rise above the others is also an important reason for other people's dislike of Emily's writing. When Emily overhears two village women gossiping about her and Ilse, their comments are telling – they criticize Emily for using big words, borrowing quotations from others and claiming them as her own, and sneer at her dream of making her living by writing. Emily is shocked that other people see her in this way; in her view, she is simply being a genuine artist, but the villagers think she tries to be special. Janet Royal warns Emily of this when she rejects her offer: "if you do anything the people you went to school with can't do, some of them will never forgive you" (EC 310). Even if Emily does not deny this, she believes

[32] Hammill 2003, p. 100.

[33] New 2002, p. 1098.

she can find material for writing in rural Canada: “people *live* here just the same as anywhere else – suffer and enjoy and sin and aspire just as they do in New York” (ibid.) In the end, Emily’s sense of belonging to the Canadian community brings her inspiration, even if she has to struggle against its conventions. This shows Montgomery’s own ambivalent relationship with the Canadian society of her time. She believed in creating a Canadian literature out of Canadian elements, even if her own society was against her in this pursuit. The problems of the Canadian artist of the 1920’s are also clearly present in the *Emily* novels, but the final outcome of the novels suggests that staying in Canada and making Canadian art is worth it.

3. Artist Types in The *Emily* Novels

The depiction of Emily as an artist is made not only through descriptions of her, but also other artists in the text. The way in which the other characters relate to art highlights certain features of Emily's artistry and Montgomery's view of true artistry in general. Three artist types emerged in my reading: Oral folk tradition artists, Interpreting artists, Fake artists, and finally, "True" artists.

3.1. Oral Folk Tradition Artists: Cousin Jimmy and Margaret McIntyre

According to Rubio and Waterston Montgomery "learned her narrative skills from the traditional storytellers, male and female, of her clan"[34]. This tradition is visible in the *Emily* trilogy in two characters, one male and one female: Cousin Jimmy and Margaret McIntyre, "the woman who spanked the king". They are both part of Emily's "clan": Cousin Jimmy is a direct relative, while Mrs McIntyre, who is not related by blood, belongs to the same small local community.

The oral artists in the books create their own art rather than interpreting other people's words. Cousin Jimmy's art is his poetry, of which there are no examples in the text. Mrs McIntyre's artistic scope is more limited: she only has one story to tell, her memory of how she once spanked the king, but she can tell it in a captivating way. She is said to speak in an "unexpectedly rich, powerful voice, full of the delightful Highland accent"(EC 192). When she tells her story, both Emily and Ilse listen to her, captivated by her story. This is an important part of the art of the oral artists: their skill of reciting it in a way that captivates their listeners. Cousin Jimmy, too, comes to life when he is reciting his poetry. He is usually meek and people do not take notice of him, but when he recites his poetry to Emily and her friends, he becomes the centre of attention: "For

[34] Rubio and Waterston. *Writing a Life: L. M. Montgomery.* Toronto and Ontario: ECW Press, 1995, p. 18.

a little while he was strong and young and splendid and beautiful, accredited master of song to a listening, enraptured world" (ENM 142).

Perhaps because of this oral nature of their art, neither of the oral artists has published or even written down their work. Sharing their art, just like creating it, is instinctive for them. Cousin Jimmy only recites his poetry "when the spirit moves him", usually during the season when he is boiling potatoes for the pigs. It would seem from the text that Emily, Teddy, Ilse, and Perry are the only people ever to hear his poetry. The notion of being inspired only in the autumn and in night time can also be seen as a reference to artistic inspiration similar to that of some canonized artists, particularly John Milton. Barbara Lewalski mentions that Milton "found himself able to write poetry – or at least epic poetry – only during the winter months"[35]. Alastair Fowler, on the other hand, notes that "Milton was often inspired to compose during the night"[36].

Mrs McIntyre, on the other hand, has no annual cycle of creating art. She simply tells the people she knows will appreciate her story. Her son calls her "something of an ancient mariner" (EC 194), referring to Coleridge's poem about the old mariner who was cursed to repeat the story of his life over and over. Like Mrs McIntyre, the mariner lived in the past, and he knew instinctively who needed to hear the story.

Emily is involved in creating a new tradition of Canadian written art, but the oral artists are part of an older tradition. The narrator in *Emily's Quest* says of Emily: "Born thousands of years earlier, she would have sat in the circle around the fires of the tribe and enchanted her listeners" (EQ 2). This is exactly what Cousin Jimmy is doing. The narrator also remarks that Emily "belonged by right divine to the Ancient and Noble Order of Story-tellers" (ibid.). The old-fashioned way of reporting this is perhaps a nod

[35] Lewalski, Barbara K. *The Life of John Milton.* Oxford: Blackwell, 2000, p. 448.
[36] Carey, John & Fowler, Alastair (ed) *The Poems of John Milton*. London: Longman, 1968, p. 562.

to the style of storytellers in older times. In Emily's time, the oral folk tradition is being replaced by a new written tradition of storytellers and poets. Cousin Jimmy's poetry will die with him; he has no interest in writing it down, even if Emily suggests it to him. Mrs McIntyre's story will live on, but only because Emily writes and publishes it.

There is a mutual respect and support between Emily and the oral artists. In Emily, Jimmy has found someone who appreciates his art, someone he can share his moments of inspiration with. In him, Emily has found the only family member besides her father who always believes in and supports her work. This support is crucial for her, especially because Aunt Elizabeth is strictly against her writing, and Aunt Laura sees it as a harmless waste of time. Jimmy's support is very concrete, as he provides Emily with writing paper, the blank “Jimmy books” that she uses exclusively for years. Jimmy's understanding of Emily is instinctive: he knows when she needs a new book, and she never has to ask him for a new one. Jimmy is also involved in getting Emily's first novel published. When she has already lost hope in the rejected manuscript and abandons it, Cousin Jimmy finds it and sends it to a publisher that then publishes it.

Mrs McIntyre, on the other hand, provides Emily with an interesting story, which opens doors for her in many publications and also attracts Janet Royal's interest. Mrs McIntyre is good at telling her story, but not at writing, so Emily's skill complements her talent and allows for the story to live on in print. It also teaches Emily a lesson about originality. When Emily tells Mr Carpenter that she did not add anything substantial and the story is Mrs McIntyre's, he tells her that what makes the story her own was that she told it the way it was. She does not understand his words, but they could be read to mean that good art does not always have to be entirely original, and respecting the tradition of the older generation of artists is important. One can build from the elements others have given and yet find one’s own voice.

Judith Miller argues that "Cousin Jimmy would have been a poet if Aunt Elizabeth had not pushed him into the well when they were children"[37]. I do not see any indication in the text that Jimmy truly is simple. On the contrary, he is presented as wiser than many other people. "Simple" is the perception other people have of him; the well incident is used by others to define him and explain why he is different from his community, but the narrator constantly negates it. If anything, it would seem that the common sense of the other people in Blair Water is questioned in the text and Cousin Jimmy is seen as a free spirit who has the privilege of experiencing something greater: "Blair Water people thought Cousin Jimmy a failure and a mental weakling. But he dwelt in an ideal world of which none of them knew anything.[...] None of his prosperous, sensible Blair Water neighbours ever lived through such an hour"(ENM 142). Cousin Jimmy himself says he is seen as simple because he is a poet; he sees it as something he *is*, not something he would like to be if he were "normal". There is nothing stopping him from writing and publishing poetry, other than his own reluctance to do so. In my view, Cousin Jimmy is not a failed artist or an artist who never got a chance to show what he can do. He is an artist who never took the chance to publish his work, because he only wants to share it with a small circle of people who can understand it.

3.2. Interpreting artists: Douglas Starr, Janet Royal, and Ilse Burnley

The interpreting artists – a journalist, an editor, and an actress – all work with art, but they lack a certain creative power that Emily has. They cannot create new art, they can only interpret other people's words either by reciting or editing them. They are

[37] Miller, Judith. "Montgomery's Emily: Voices and Silences". In *Studies in Canadian Literature*, vol. 9, nr. 2, 1984, p. 7.

important supporters for Emily, and Janet Royal and Douglas Starr also function as her critics. They all recognize Emily's talent. They also recognize that they do not possess the same kind of talent. Therefore, they strengthen Emily's faith in herself without becoming her rivals and posing a threat to Emily's status as the most talented artist in the novels.

Unlike the oral folk tradition artists, the interpreting artists work in the public sphere, and they are a part of a new tradition of art. Janet Royal is the editor of a literary journal in New York, at the heart of new literary trends. Ilse becomes an actress and gets her training at an acting school, a fairly new phenomenon in Canada at the time. Emily's father, Douglas Starr, is the only one who has stepped aside from the world of writing, retiring because of consumption. He has, however, worked as a journalist and therefore been a part of the modern writing culture of Canada.

All of the interpreting artists face rejection from their community because of their personality and choices. Ilse Burnley is temperamental, daring, and mischievous and enjoys upsetting the narrow-minded women of Blair Water and Shrewsbury. Wild rumours circulate about her relationships with boys, even if she has not done anything with them. Her boldness annoys the people around her, and some of the town women see her as bad influence for their own daughters (EC 66). Douglas Starr is considered a failure, as he dies poor and lonely. Few people come to his funeral, none of them his relatives; he has alienated most people around him, perhaps because of his cynical outlook on life. He holds unorthodox religious beliefs and does not want to send Emily to school, and is not perceived to be quite sane. Janet Royal, on the other hand, is a success in New York, but it means nothing in Shrewsbury where she grew up. Like Douglas, she is seen as a failure. She no longer feels at home in Shrewsbury: “I detest living in a place where all they think is that I've played my cards badly, and lost the

matrimonial game"(EC 312).

Douglas Carr is the first critic Emily has. He reads everything she writes, encourages her to go on, and also makes some suggestions for improving her writing. He sees great promise in her: "You will live because there is something for you to do, I think. You have my gift – along with something I never had"(ENM 12). He understands Emily's character and appreciates her talent, because he himself has an artist's personality. Melissa Prycer calls Douglas "a teacher, a lover of books, and a dreamer – a typical 'Artistic Genius'"[38]. Prycer further argues that he is separated from others partly because of his illness (consumption) and partly because of his intelligence.

Making her living in the US and becoming known as an American writer, Janet Royal is like many women writers of Montgomery's time, for instance Sara Jeanette Duncan, who was Canadian but moved to the US and wrote mostly there. One of her best-known works was called *An American Girl in London* (1891) with a distinctly American protagonist[39]. Judith Miller finds that Janet is "shown as odd and rootless, with only the appearance of success" and that "Montgomery does not see Janet and her offer as appropriate models for Emily"[40]. I do not fully agree with this view. It would seem that Janet Royal has paid a certain price for her success with her "rootlessness" – she comes back to Blair Water only to find that the town women see her as a failure, and does not feel at home in the small rural community anymore. The rejection is mutual; she also dismisses the town with its petty attitudes and scant opportunities for an artist. However, her success is never questioned. She is portrayed as a strong, independent woman who could pull some strings to make Emily's career happen. As an

[38] Prycer, Melissa. "The Hectic Flush: The Fiction and Reality of Consumption in L.M. Montgomery's Life". In Gammel, Irene. (ed). *The Intimate Life of L.M.Montgomery*. Toronto, Buffalo, London: Toronto University Press, 2005, p. 268.
[39] Klinck, Carl F & Reginald E. Watters. (ed). *Canadian Anthology*. Revised Edition. Toronto: W. J. Gage, 1966, p. 142
[40] Miller 1984, p. 6.

editor at a literature journal, she has some power over what is published, and having this kind of power in a city like New York is significant. Emily herself openly admires her and aspires to be like her: “Oh, was it possible that some day she would be a brilliant, successful woman like Janet Royal?” (EC 288). Janet makes her own living; she is independent, strong, and does not believe in the definitions of others around her. The Blair Water women all think she has failed because she has no husband, but this definition is questioned – even her aunt says she is single because she is too intelligent. The only reason Mr Carpenter criticizes her is that she is un-Canadian (see 2.2.); the only reason she does not see herself as a success in the same way Emily could be a success is that she, by her own definition, lacks creative power: “you can create - I can only build with the materials others have made”(EC 301).

What, then, makes Janet lack creative power? She seems to have a personality very similar to Emily’s – complete with pride, creativity, and wit. Perhaps she lacks originality or a skill to create truly new ideas. On the other hand, if Montgomery believes that the power to create comes in part from one’s innate talent and in part from belonging and being tied to one’s own time and place (see 2.2.), Janet has perhaps lost her creative power by leaving her country. She has replaced her Canadian thinking with an American way of thinking and no longer has a home land, so where does she belong and what can she write about?

In a way, Ilse Burnley has the same rootlessness about her. Having grown up with a mostly uncaring father, Ilse is never really raised at all, which gives her a degree of freedom Emily and the other women in their society do not have. Ilse has no family to pressure her into an early marriage; her father does not try to wean acting and elocution out of her, like Elizabeth tries to do with Emily; she does not have a woman to teach her about family traditions and domestic life. As a result of this, Ilse is in some ways a

more liberating female role model than Emily herself. She is outspoken, untraditional, and free of the constraints and controversies Emily has to struggle with. Others judge her, but she does not care. Rubio and Waterston call Ilse Emily's "anarchic double who acts out her dreams of freedom from restraint instead of sublimating them, as Emily and her creator did, in creative writing"[41].

However, she does not seem to benefit from this freedom as an artist. Judith Miller points out that while Ilse uses language without limits, flinging colourful insults at her opponents in a fight, Emily fights with few chosen words and silences, which is much more effective[42]. In general, Emily's life and language are much more constrained than Ilse's. Emily, even if she is a complete orphan, has her family to both care for and restrain her. Ilse, on the other hand, has no one until she is 13. Emily's writing becomes more effective because of these constraints. When Aunt Elizabeth forbids Emily from writing anything that is not true for three years – the condition for her going to high school – Mr Carpenter is delighted to hear this. He believes it will teach her self discipline, the very thing Ilse lacks. Later on, Ilse implies that she cannot commit to her work like Emily can. She compares herself to Emily, who can sacrifice things for her art: "I'm of weaker clay. There are some things I couldn't give up – some things I *won't.* And as Old Kelly advises, if I can't get what I want – well, I'll want what I can get" (EQ 124). Ilse is implying that there is something missing from her life, but she will make do with what she can have. This is interesting, considering that she has a chance to make a career in the big world, something Emily does not have. Later on, she tells Emily: "There are times when I envy you fiercely, Emily – your New Moon quiet and peace and leisure – your absorption and satisfaction in your work – your singleness of purpose" (EQ 172). Emily has her base in New Moon, while Ilse needs to make a

[41] Rubio and Waterston 1995, p. 76.
[42] Miller 1984, p. 6.

living touring around and she cannot stay at home to find peace and quiet like Emily can.

Both Ilse and Janet Royal represent a woman who has gained a foothold in her profession outside of her home town, but lost her connection with her roots and family. This rootlessness might lead to a kind of artistic silence – the lack of a voice of their own, despite their talent and independent life. Perhaps Montgomery is saying that a female artist needs a sense of belonging as well as independence. Even if Emily's family is restraining to her as an artist, it also nurtures her identity as a member of her community.

Comparisons between Emily and Ilse's professions are made throughout the trilogy, and it seems clear which career Montgomery sees as the more satisfying and worthwhile. The first time Emily and Ilse meet, Ilse says she wants to become an “e-lo-cu-tion-ist”, a “woman who recites at concerts” (ENM 115). Emily does not react to this in any specific way; there is no implication that she is impressed by this choice of profession. When Emily says she wants to be a poetess and recites her “masterpiece”, Ilse is very impressed at her, declaring that she already is a poetess. Ilse is, in fact, the first person – apart from Emily’s father – to admit that Emily has talent. So in this first moment of pride for Emily, Ilse is already left in her shadow. Later on, when Emily is described as a “chaser of rainbows” (EQ 5), Ilse says her career is made of “butterfly projects and ambitions” (EQ 124). Like rainbows, her goals are fleeting, but they are at least attainable. However, butterflies die quickly, and a success in the acting world is soon forgotten, while a good book can outlast its writer by centuries.

In my research, I did not find accurate information on what Montgomery meant by “elocutionist”. In general, elocution referred to reciting things in a refined way. It was connected to the art of public speaking, mainly intended for ministers, politicians, and

teachers. This would be closer to something Perry Miller was doing when he won a speech contest in high school. I did not find any references that equate elocution with acting, which is what Ilse seems to be doing for a living. On the contrary, "actor" and "elocutionist" where separate professions, and there were differing views on whether actors needed elocution training. Some actors found elocution to be completely unnecessary, while others were well trained in it[43]. The only detail about Ilse's studies that is mentioned in the novels is the name of her school, The School of Literature and Expression in Montreal. I found no such school in my research, but there was a school called The Margaret Eaton School of Literature and Expression, which was located in Toronto. The school was founded in 1906, long before the *Emily* trilogy was written, and it seems likely that this is the school Montgomery was referring to. The famous alumni are all actresses[44]. It seems clear that this was an academy for actors, not elocutionists. Even if Ilse is never identified as an actress, her career choice is fairly obvious. "A woman who recites at concerts" simply sounds less intimidating than "actress". Acting in plays was still considered sinful by many Presbyterians – see, for example, Aunt Ruth's reaction when Emily tells her she is going to appear in a school play. Aunt Ruth had agreed for her to appear in it if it was only a "dialogue", but a "play" is too much for her: "Plays are wicked" (EC 138). As William New points out, the rise of the theatre in Canada at the end of the 18th century met with religious opposition, and the idea of theatre as something sinful has been tough in Canada and still exists to some extent[45].

From Ilse's own description of her work, it would seem like she is travelling around with a theatre group; when Emily envies her travelling opportunities, Ilse writes to her

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[43] Hodge, Francis. "The Private Theatre Schools in the Late Nineteenth Century". In Wallace, Karl R. (ed.) *History of the Speech Education in America*. New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1954, p. 554.
[44] The University of Guelph Website, http://www.canadianshakespeares.ca/essays/margareteaton.cfm
[45] New 2002, p. 1098.

that “rushing about from one place to another isn't travelling” (EQ 172). In the late 1800's and early 1900's, most actors in Canada were travelling around as groups, putting on shows in different cities. There were over 200 companies like this in Canada at the end of the 19th century[46]. Ilse's exhaustion with this life might reflect the conditions of an actor of the time; in the United States, according to Francis Hodge, “a competent beginner could play as many as one hundred bit roles in a season”[47]. Montgomery might be making commentary on the conditions actors had to work in.

Ilse is more educated than Emily. Yet, her education seems to have given her no deeper knowledge of famous works. In a letter to Emily, she uses a Bible quotation but cannot place it: “That’s either in the Bible of Shakespeare, but wherever it is, it’s true”(EQ 172). Later in the same letter, she quotes Wordsworth, but again is unable to locate the quote, calling it “somebody's line” (EQ 172). This implies that Ilse has not learned much from her education. Her job is mimicking others' words, and even if she does it skilfully, she does not have the same relationship with the texts that Emily has. Elocution or acting is presented as a stressful and shallow occupation that an actor is neither committed nor fully equipped to do. This might be Montgomery's commentary on the education of actors or even acting in general. Her journals reveal that she had some reservations about the teaching of elocution in public schools. In an entry written in May 1921, while she was working on the Emily novels, she describes a poetry recital she had organized: “I had arranged a good programme – but Lord ha' mercy! How those masterpieces were murdered by the readers thereof. It was agony to sit and listen. What are the public schools of Ontario about that they turn out such readers? The meaning of the poems was wholly lost”[48].

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[46] ibid.
[47] Hodge 1954, p. 555.
[48] Rubio, Mary & Waterston, Elizabeth (ed). *The Selected Journals of L. M. Montgomery, Volume III: 1921-1929.* Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1992, p. 7.

This view of elocution is also visible in a scene in *Emily of New Moon,* when Emily's teacher Miss Brownell recites *The Bugle Song* for the class. Emily is caught up in the poem, even if she should be doing her homework. When the poem is over, she begs to hear it again. Miss Brownell, who does not understand how strongly the poem has touched Emily, is irritated by her behaviour and punishes her. The narrator comments that Miss Brownell "was not without a superficial, elocutionary knack" (ENM 90). Again, elocution is a "knack", implying it is a skill that anyone can learn. Elocution is superficial, not something that requires a deeper knowledge or understanding of art. Just like Ilse can confuse Shakespeare and the Bible, Miss Brownell does not seem to understand that poetry can cause an experience of artistic rapture in a student. Emily's face is full of "divine vision", but Miss Brownell's only concern is the "long division" Emily is supposed to be doing (ENM 91). Despite her talent for elocution, Miss Brownell is a part of the ignorant village folk, not one of the artists in the text.

3. 3. Fake artists: Evelyn Blake, Perry Miller, and Mark Greaves

There are several characters in the *Emily* trilogy that can be categorized as fake artists. These characters are most prominently Emily's arch nemesis Evelyn Blake, her childhood friend Perry Miller, and a writer whose story she has to rewrite for the paper, Mark Greaves. What makes them fake is their lack of talent or originality in writing, as well as their attitude on art. They are not, like Emily, trying to give voice to an inner experience of beauty. Instead, they use art to attain more worldly goals, writing to gain fame and fortune or to win prizes. They all belittle Emily's talent in some way, but in the end, they are clearly the ones who lack the makings of a "true" artist. This might be

Montgomery's way of saying that while true artists like Emily are few and far between – really only three in Blair Water: Emily, Teddy and Cousin Jimmy –, fake artists are everywhere and often gain fame and fortune easily with their writing, while the true artist has to struggle to even get published.

All of the fake artists in the text get their text published. They have no problem in achieving this, especially compared to Emily's long struggle to find a publisher for her novels. Emily's promising first novel *A Seller of Dreams*, which is never published, is definitely depicted as more artistic and genuine than Mark Greaves' *The Royal Betrothal*. Her poetry, written out of inspiration, is often rejected, while Perry's ridiculous poems are published throughout the novels, if only in the humour column of the school paper or farming journals. Evelyn's poems, inferior to Emily's, are also published in the school paper, but perhaps mainly because she knows the editor. She also wins a poetry contest, but not by her own merits. She resorts to cheating, which further emphasizes the fake nature of her art. It also implies that the judges in the contest were unable to identify the true artist from the fake one. Perhaps the fake artists' success in getting their work published is Montgomery's way of criticizing the importance of relations in publishing and the tastes of the public, who would rather have something familiar or amusing to read than "serious" or innovative art. Montgomery herself suffered from being stuck in a rut, having to write literature that pleased the public.

Perry Miller is more practical-minded than the artistic Emily. He wants to reach political goals, and does. Starting out as a hired boy from the town's poor area, "Stovepipe Town", he works hard to become a successful politician. He is intelligent and talented, but his talent is not for art. When Emily recites her poem about new snow being like a bride, Perry immediately makes one of his own: "Mike has made a long

row/ of tracks across the snow" (ENM 156). This poem rhymes, but it lacks rhythm, poetic language and metaphors. His later poems do contain metaphors, but he mixes them, like in his patriotic poem: "Canada, like a maiden, welcoming back her sons" (EC 122). Perry simply writes to compete with Emily, not to express himself. The very first time he meets Emily and hears that she writes poetry, he says, "Golly. I'll write poetry too, then" (ENM 152). He also believes he can paint pictures like Teddy and recite as well as Ilse. He does not understand Emily's literary aspirations. When Emily says she wants to write books, he says, "What is the good of that sort of thing?" (EC 211) Perry is practical minded, goes after practical goals and takes failures with a calm attitude. His determination drives him to success, and his goals have to do with a career so practical it even makes the sensible Murrays appreciate him, even if he is of a lower social rank. However, Emily questions Perry's dream of becoming a great statesman. She thinks he is talented, but not talented enough to achieve what he wants. Perhaps Emily finds a career like Perry's less grand than her own art, and does not fully appreciate the idea that he can get wherever he wants with perseverance. Emily believes in being born to do something and perfecting that ability; Perry believes in attaining goals through hard work. That is why Perry cannot be an artist; he was not born to be one, and no matter how hard he tries, his poetry will never reach the level of Emily's. Perry sees poetry simply as a skill people can compete in and learn with time, not as something that rises from innate talent.

This attitude is shared by Evelyn Blake, who goes to high school with Emily. Evelyn and Emily hate each other. Evelyn is fake in every way, sweet-talking Emily to her face and gossiping behind her back. She wears expensive dresses like Ilse, but while they look good on Ilse, they make Evelyn seems like she is trying to impress others. Emily concludes that this is because Ilse dresses for herself, while Evelyn's

clothes are for other people. The same is true of her poetry. It is written to impress others, not to express her personal vision. Evelyn writes poems that are sometimes published in the school paper, but at least in Emily's opinion, the only reason they are published is that Evelyn knows the editor. When one of Emily's poems is rejected by the paper, Evelyn offers her condolences. Emily responds by mocking Evelyn's poem: "I'm not feeling badly. Why should I? I didn't make 'beam' rhyme with 'green' in *my* poem. If I had I'd be feeling badly indeed" (EC 172). According to E. Holly Pike, this shows Montgomery's romantic idea of poetry, which is based on that poems should rhyme[49]. Emily remarks on another poem of Evelyn's: "There has been quite an outbreak of spring poetry in High School. Evelyn has one in the May Quill on *Flowers.* Very wobbly rhymes" (EC 156). Evelyn is depicted as less talented than Emily both in technique and topics, and only writes poetry on fashionable topics like seasons – note that Emily also wrote a lot on the seasons when she was 13, something Mr Carpenter chastises her for in *Emily of New Moon.* It is clear that Evelyn is not writing out of inspiration, like Emily, but rather for the sake of being published and perhaps admired for it. Her claims that Emily copied her poetry somewhere also suggest that she feels envious of her talent.

The competition between Emily and Evelyn is acted out literally when there is a poetry contest at the high school. Evelyn wins, which seems to Emily like a great injustice. Later on, this is proven to be true: Emily finds out that Evelyn copied her winning poem from an old magazine clipping, only omitting a few verses – the best ones in Emily's opinion, further emphasizing that Evelyn not only stole poetry but did not even understand the merits of the poem she stole. Regarding the limitations on the length of poems in the contest, Emily wryly remarks: "Sounds as if a tape measure was

[49] Pike 2002, p. 53.

the first requisite" (EC 256), implying that the quality of the poems is not as important as their proper length and form. The value of the competition is further questioned by Mr Carpenter who, after reading the winning poem and Emily's poem, sends a greeting to the judges: "Give them my compliments and tell them they're asses" (EC 260). Mr Carpenter does not know Evelyn copied the poem, and he is critical of Emily's work, so his judgement is valid. He makes the competition seem ridiculous. This could be read as a criticism of poetry contests in general and the public's preference for inferior poetry – Montgomery's own collection of poetry, *The Watchman and Other Poems* (1916), was rejected by both the critics and her own public, being too serious for her usual readers and too light for the critics[50].

Evelyn eventually confesses to copying the poem because her father promised her a trip to Europe if she should win the contest. Evelyn uses poetry to gain material short-term goals. This makes her a lesser artist than Emily, and a dishonest one at that. Emily remains fair, assuring Evelyn that she has no desire to tell anyone. Her integrity lifts her above Evelyn. Emily is genuine, both as an artist and a person, while Evelyn is fake in every way.

In a chapter of *Emily's Quest*, Emily is asked to write an ending to a story in a magazine, as the editor has lost it. It is a lavish love story called "The Royal Bethrotal", written by Mark Greaves. Emily is soon visited by the furious author who feels she has butchered his story. However, he immediately falls in love with Emily and proposes to her. The whole scene is ridiculous and seems like a comic relief moment in an otherwise dark-toned book. However, looking closer, one can find commentary on literature and artistry.

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[50] Ferns, John & McCabe, Kevin (ed): *The Poetry of Lucy Maud Montgomery. Selected and Introduced by John Ferns and Kevin McCabe.* Ottawa: Fitzhenry and Whiteside, 1989, p. 9.

Mark Greaves embodies many characteristics of a fake artist: pretentious speech and clothing style – the narrator notes that "in a picture he would have looked quite romantic and handsome, but in the New Moon sitting room, he looked merely weird" (EQ 133). The way he speaks is full of pretence; the way he praises the name of the hotel he is staying in, says he is mystified by Emily's beauty, and immediately launches into a proposal, reveal him to be a con artist, someone who uses big words only to put on a performance and impress others, like Evelyn does. In the sensible Murray home, Mark Greaves looks like a fool. Next to Emily, the true artist who writes from the heart, he is nothing but a pompous fake. Greaves becomes a parody of lavish love stories with his clichés and overly romantic use of language. Falling in love with Emily as soon as he walks in, he becomes the stereotype of an unbelievable romance novel about two people so destined for each other that their souls recognize each other on first sight: "We have loved in another life, of course, and our love was a violent, gorgeous thing – a love of eternity." (EQ 135)

Mark Greaves is mad at Emily because she wrote a happy ending to his story; to him, a happy ending can never be artistic. Margaret Atwood notes that Canadians feel that failure is the only true ending, and when the ending seems forced, it is much more likely to be an unhappy ending than a happy one[51].Greaves is the embodiment of this idea – he tells Emily: "I will teach you the beauty and artistry of sorrow and incompleteness" (EQ 135). This can only be sarcasm – the fake artist believes he can teach her how to be a true artist. Instead of writing from the heart, Mark Greaves writes what he knows the audience will see as an artistic, moving story. His example shows that writing to please the critics or the literary trends of the moment does not guarantee great art.

[51] Atwood 1991, pp.34-35.

Mark Greaves breaks all the rules Emily has been given about good writing. He writes lavishly about kings and queens, but the editor scoffs that he probably never saw one in his life. Mr Carpenter tells Emily never to write about things she does not know about, and to write only to please herself, never for other people. Greaves writes to please other people and get praised by them. Like Evelyn, he searches for short-term rewards, not higher artistic goals like Emily. His success is also debatable: he is a famous author, rich and celebrated, but the only reason his story is published by the local paper is that it has the right length. This implies that his readership consists of people who do not select their reading very carefully and are therefore not apt to judge genuine art from fake art.

The fake artists serve two purposes in the text: to highlight the genuine nature of Emily's art and how rare that is, and to criticize the inability of the public, publishers, and critics to recognize genuine art from an imitation written only to impress others.

3.4.1. Emily as a "True" Artist

Emily is destined to become a writer and poet from the very beginning. The first time she identifies herself as a poet is on her first day of school in Blair Water. The other girls taunt her for not knowing how to cook, sew, or sing. When they ask her what she can do, she says, to her own surprise, that she can write poetry. She suddenly simply knows she can do it, even if she never tried to write any. From that moment on, it seems that fate plays an important part in her work. Her visions that, in the end, save her career, are something she cannot understand or control. When she first arrives in New Moon, she has no writing paper (this was before the "Jimmy books" discussed 3.1). One day, she happens to see Laura throwing out old letters and gets these letters to write on. The narrator remarks that "destiny stepped in" (ENM 92) and Emily can

write again, first letters to her deceased father, later poems and even small novels. Even if Emily works hard to achieve her goals, it seems that in the end, becoming a writer is simply fulfilling her destiny. She is born to write, and things happen to give her the possibility to do that. The element of fate is so strong that one might argue that Montgomery is belittling the amount of work and luck needed for becoming an author. There are failed artists in the novels – most notably Mr Carpenter and Emily's father – but it never seems like this could happen to Emily, even when she herself gives up writing. Her supernatural experiences ensure that she does not marry Dean and stop writing.

In *Emily of New Moon,* Emily's talent is still hidden under childish imitation of famous writers and themes – for example, Father Cassidy impresses Emily by guessing the plot of her epic, derived directly from *Romeo and Juliet*. However, her talent is already visible in her work. Both Father Cassidy and Mr Carpenter see it from a few lines of poetry. As Mr Carpenter puts it, “Ten good lines out of four hundred ... and all the rest balderdash” (ENM 335). It hardly sounds like a compliment, and Emily bursts into tears thinking he is saying her poetry is trash. But he tells her that if she can write ten good lines at the age of 13, she can write a hundred ten years later. Even if he warns her against thinking that she is a genius, he seems to believe she has an unusual talent that many people, including himself, strive for: “This child has – what I have never had and would have made any sacrifice to have. But 'the gods don't allow us to be in their debt' – she will pay for it – she will pay” (ENM 338). Similarly, Emily's father believes she will “love deeply”, “suffer terribly”, and “have glorious moments to compensate” (ENM 18). It is not only Emily's writing, but her whole personality that seems to suggest she is destined to be a poet and writer.

Emily's personality and artistic talent is clearly constructed along the lines of

Romantic ideals. One of Montgomery's greatest influences was William Wordsworth, who defined his own ideal of what a poet should be in *Preface to Lyrical Ballads* (1802). To him, a poet is someone who has "more lively sensibility, more enthusiasm and tenderness, who has a greater knowledge of human nature, and a more comprehensive soul, than are supposed to be common among mankind"[52]. Montgomery has given Emily these qualities. She has a great sensibility and enthusiasm for her work. She is lively - "one of those vital creatures, of whom, when they do die, we say it feels impossible that they can be dead" (EQ 5). There is something special about her, which is often alluded to in the text. She is described as an unforgettable person who "shone like a diamond flame" (EQ 5) among her family and the people around her. Many characters see something unusual about her. Even the people who do not like Emily or understand her talent sense something different about her. For example, Miss Brownell, Emily's first teacher, enjoys taunting her because she senses something in Emily's soul that is unlike her own. Rather than making Emily a character that is universally liked by everybody, Montgomery has made her someone who divides opinions, which is perhaps a more effective way of showing that she is special and different from everyone else. She stands out in her society, but also stands alone because of her "special" personality. Only few people can understand her, and she has few friends she can truly confide in.

Emily also has a deep knowledge of human nature. At funerals and church meetings, she enjoys watching people and feels like she is seeing into their minds: "At times it seemed veritably to her that it was more than guessing – that in some intense moments she could pass into their souls and read therein hidden motives and passions that were, perhaps, a mystery even to their possessors" (EC 39). Emily seems to possess an almost

[52] Wordsworth, *Preface to Lyrical Ballads* in Abrams, M. H. & Greenblatt, Stephen (ed): *The Norton Anthology of English Literature.*New York and London: W. W. Norton, 2001, p. 1443

supernatural skill for this at a very young age. Mr Carpenter is amazed to read a description of himself, where 13-year-old Emily accurately describes that he wears a black robe on Mondays to forget he has been drunk over the weekend (ENM 350). There is no way that a young girl living a sheltered life would know this much about human nature. It is never explained how Emily knows these things – it remains a mystery to herself, adding to the idea that she is special and possesses some kind of intuitive understanding of life that is linked to her artistic talent. Mr Carpenter calls her analysis of him "literature" in itself, even if she has written these observations only for her own amusement. Her deep understanding of human nature is what makes her writing literature.

Beauty plays an important part in Emily's view of art. The beauty of nature, language – Emily likes to underline her favourite words in books and reads the dictionary for fun – and life itself inspire Emily. She experiences beauty and ugliness deeply, the former bringing her inspiration and joy, the latter disgust and anxiety. Emily herself is not beautiful, but she has a kind of inner beauty that shines through, something Dean compliments her on: "You aren't really very pretty... but your face makes people think of beautiful things – and that is a far rarer gift than mere beauty" (EC 215). Even the fake artist Mark Greaves tells her right away: "You do not commit the crime of ugliness" (EQ 133). Kevin McCabe sees this celebration of beauty as a feature of the Late Romantic poetry movement, which Montgomery's own poetry also belonged to. The Late Romantics valued beauty above all other things and tended to divide everything into either "beautiful, poetical, spiritual, and intellectual" or "ugly, commonplace, materialistic, and stupid"[53]. Most things, including most people and institutions, fell into the latter category, which was bound to create a rather negative

[53] Ferns & McCabe 1989, p. 7.

perception of society. This attitude is certainly visible in the *Emily* novels. Emily has an inner world of beauty and art where the people around her cannot follow her. Emily seems to be the only person in Blair Water with a powerful imagination like this, with the exception of Teddy and Cousin Jimmy. The Blair Water women look down on Emily and gossip about her, thinking she only wants to seem smarter than others. They do not understand that someone can have higher goals and ambitions than them. Likewise, Emily sees them as mundane and boring and goes against their conventions. A part of Emily's experience of beauty is what she calls "the flash", a feeling of complete beauty that makes her feel a veil is lifted from her eyes and she sees into another world. Elizabeth Epperly argues that Montgomery describes the flash as a gift, but "a gift that Emily half creates because she is able to experience it"[54]. The other people in Blair Water are left outside of this kind of experience and only see the physical world around them. The depiction of Emily as someone who can transcend everyday life seems quite idealistic. McCabe points out that this view of artistry easily led to a form of snobbish, "self-indulgent escapism"[55], something Emily can certainly be accused of. In her diary, Emily remarks: "I have a habit, when I'm bored or disgusted with people, of stepping suddenly into my own world and shutting the door" (EC 72). It is telling that she chooses words like *bored* and *disgusted*. The ugly and practical everyday life of the Blair Water people bores Emily, who can see into a more beautiful reality. Her ability to experience the flash lifts her above other people.

This kind of depiction can be read as an ideal that art should somehow transcend everyday life, or that art is somewhere outside of human experience and talent – like Mr Carpenter tells Emily, "Something is trying to speak through you" (ENM 335). Dean quotes a poem by Emerson that describes gods talking in the pines and "the poet

[54] Epperly, Elizabeth R. "The Visual Imagination of L. M. Montgomery". In Gammel, Irene (ed). *Making Avonlea: L. M. Montgomery and Popular Culture.* University of Toronto Press, 2002, p. 87
[55] Ferns & McCabe 1989, p. 7.

who overhears one random word they say" (EC 10). It is unclear what Dean means to say with this quotation – Epperly thinks he might be telling Emily that even good poets can reach only a random word[56] - but in my view, Montgomery seems to be using the poem to show that Emily can hear something beyond everyday life that others, including Dean, cannot hear. Emily herself seems to believe in the existence of this type of "random word", and even if she complains that it keeps escaping her, she believes it is something she can achieve one day. McCabe remarks that Montgomery saw writing poetry as "almost a form of Holy Communion"[57]. Indeed, Emily's ideal of art is linked to an almost religious worship of beauty: "High priestess of beauty – yes, she would serve at no other shrine!" (EC 178) Even Mr Carpenter calls art as a goddess, a jealous one who never lets go of her worshippers (ENM 336).

Emily's view of religion is also affected by her need for everything to be beautiful. It leads to a kind of pantheism, which is close to the way Montgomery herself understood religion. She was critical of the Christian faith and saw nature as a part of God. It is visible in the way she despises a minister, thinking to herself: "You make God ugly, and He's beautiful. I hate you for making God ugly, you fat little man" (EC 42). The minister's own ugliness is a part of his crime against beauty. Another minister, in *Emily of New Moon,* has a more aesthetic understanding of faith. When Emily asks him if it is a sin to love something more than God, like the beauty of nature and the Wind Woman, he replies, "But they are just a part of God, Emily – every beautiful thing is" (ENM 185).

Disappointed in the society around her, Emily finds a refuge in nature and feels a connection with it – another Romantic ideal. Northrop Frye argues that Romantic poets saw a separation of one's consciousness from nature as an inferior way of thinking and

[56] Epperly 1992, p. 102.
[57] Ferns & McCabe 1989, p. 4.

believed the artist should seek a union with nature[58]. Emily identifies with nature throughout her life, and it is most often in nature that she experiences the flash. She personifies the nature around her and sees the trees and the wind as her friends. For example, she never finds trees disappointing: "trees, unlike so many humans, always improve on acquaintance" (EC 249). Mr Carpenter sees her talent in terms of the forces of nature: "Wind – and flame – and sea!" he muttered. "Nature is always taking us by surprise" (ENM 338). Emily's artistic nature and the nature around her become inseparable. As Epperly writes: "We are never to forget with Emily that she is a worshipper of nature and literature – but a worshipper who also creates"[59].

Emily's teacher, Mr Carpenter, talks about realism on his deathbed: "Don't – be led away – by those howls of realism. Remember – pine woods – are just as real as pigsties – and a darn sight pleasanter to be in" (EQ 24). In her journals, Montgomery criticized the realism of her time. After reading a novel by Morley Callaghan in 1928, she wrote:

> We have a latrine in our backyard. I see it when I look that way – and I also see before it a garden of colour and perfume – over it a blue sky – behind it a velvety pine caressing crystal air […] These things are as 'real' as the latrine and can all be seen at the same time. Callaghan sees nothing but the latrine and insists blatantly that you see nothing else also. If you insist on seeing the sky and river and pine you are a 'sentimentalist' and the truth is not in you[60].

This passage was written a year after *Emily's Quest* was published. Mr Carpenter's words were very similar to her own. The quotation from Mr Carpenter, then, serves two purposes: to give voice to Montgomery's own thoughts on realism and to show that he wants Emily to keep her own voice, not write what everyone else is writing. By following this advice, Emily succeeds in being a true artist, true to her own voice and inspiration.

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[58] Frye, Northrop: *A Study of English Romanticism.* Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1982, p. 12

[59] Epperly 1992, p. 200.

[60] Rubio & Waterston (ed): *Selected Journals of L. M. Montgomery, vol. III: 1921-1929.* 1987, p.387.

3.4.2. Emily and Teddy

The only character in the novels that compares to Emily in being a "true" artist is her friend and later husband Teddy Kent. Teddy is a painter. He shares the same talent and ambition as Emily, as well as the same pursuit for beauty. Teddy understands Emily. They feel the same triumph when something is published or sold, and sometimes they feel the same agony at 3 o'clock in the morning, when nothing seems worthwhile. His talent, unlike Emily's, is never questioned by anyone. Even Mr Carpenter, who gives harshly honest criticism to Emily, says Teddy has "genius". Teddy leaves Blair Water to study art, first in Toronto, then in Paris. He becomes an instant success, without the struggles Emily has to go through to be published. Perhaps Montgomery is implying that it is much easier for a painter, and a male one at that, to become a success than for a female writer. However, Teddy has to travel to Europe to perfect his art, which implies that there were not a lot of opportunities to develop one's skills in Canada at the time (see 2.1.).

As a character, Teddy is very vague. Despite his close connection with Emily, few of their dialogues are included in the text. He is also absent throughout most of EQ. While Emily's other friends are frequently quoted in her journals and her letters to her father in the first novel, there are hardly any quotes from Teddy. Almost all mentions of him change topic to his possessive mother who tries to stop him from having Emily, art, or anything that she thinks he loves more than her. It seems like Montgomery was unable to create the character of Teddy credibly, because their partnership was happy and equal – Epperly notes that jealousy and possessiveness are much more interesting writing material for the genre of romance novels[61]. This might explain why Dean is so much more powerful as a character, even if he is stifling to Emily as an author.

[61] Epperly 1992, p. 178.

Teddy is the perfect match for Emily, because while he is her intellectual equal and as talented as she is, he is not in the same field of art. As a painter, he does not threaten Emily's status as the most talented writer in the novels, and perhaps more importantly, Emily does not threaten his status as the most talented painter. There is no envy between them, so they are free to support each other with their respective careers. If they were both in the same profession, Emily would by default be the more talented one and that might be too much for Teddy, even if he saw her as an equal partner in other ways.

EQ ends with Emily and Teddy getting married, but only after a long period of misunderstandings and separation. This was very typical of Montgomery's fiction; the same thing happened with Anne and Gilbert, for example. In her reading of Montgomery's short stories, Rea Wilmhurst concludes that "Montgomery believed, in her fiction at least, that love could last for years with no communication, that lovers could remain true to a precious memory, that it was better not to marry at all than to enter into a loveless marriage"[62]. This is exactly what happens with Emily and Teddy. As EQ ends, the reader is left knowing nothing about Emily's future as a married woman. This leaves some room for speculation, and critics have disagreed on whether Emily writes again after marrying Teddy. Elizabeth Epperly argues that she does; Marie Campbell argues that she does not. Epperly finds that Montgomery keeps Emily and Teddy separated for so long "because both still have so much to learn about their respective gifts"[63]. If Emily had married Teddy as soon as they were 18, she would not have had time to find herself as an artist or create a name for herself as something other than Mrs Teddy Kent, wife of the famous painter. Emily publishes at least two novels –

[62] Wilmshurst, Rea (ed.): *After Many Days – Tales of Time Passed by L. M. Montgomery*. Toronto and Ontario: McClelland & Stewart, 1991, p.11
[63] Epperly 1992, p. 90.

more are hinted at – before she marries Teddy, and starts her career without him. Campbell argues that in Montgomery's time, a woman was expected to give up her own identity when she married[64]. However, this was changing, and Montgomery herself was against it, as we can see from her diary entry from April 1922 where she criticizes her husband's "mediaeval feeling that a woman has no business to have any separate individuality in name or attainment from her lord and Master"[65]. It is unlikely that she would have written a story where a woman completely loses her identity in marriage. While Dean definitely believed that Emily should belong to him (see 4.2.2.), it does not seem to apply to Teddy.

Emily and Teddy are united, after years of separation and misunderstandings, by a vision Emily has of Teddy at a boat terminal. She appears to Teddy, who is purchasing a ticket to a ship that will sink. Emily saves Teddy's life, which makes her realize she belongs to him. Campbell finds this a boring and clichéd way of uniting the lovers[66], while I agree with Epperly that the psychic gift Emily possesses is connected with her talent as an artist, and this event links her artistry with her love life[67]. The psychic experiences can be seen as a stronger form of "the flash" (see 3.4.1). They come in specific points of Emily's life where she is growing out of a phase as a person and artist and entering a new one. In *Emily Climbs,* the narrator clearly states that the night Emily called out to Teddy from the locked church was the night that childhood left her for good (EC 37). In this event, Emily calls out to Teddy and he hears her from miles away. Kate Lawson draws a parallel between this scene and the scene in *Jane Eyre*

[64] Campell, Marie. "Wedding Bells and Death Knells: The Writer as Bride in the Emily Trilogy". In Rubio, Mary Henley (ed). *Harvesting Thistles: The Textual Garden of L. M. Montgomery*. University of Guelph: Canadian Children's Press, 1994, p.139
[65] Rubio & Waterston: *The Selected Journals, Part III,* p. 52.
[66] Campbell 1994, p. 142.
[67] Epperly 1992, p. 190.

where Rochester calls out to Jane just as she's about to marry St John Rivers[68]. Later on, when Emily appears to Teddy and saves his life, the event sets her free of an engagement to Dean that would have stifled not only her feelings of love for Teddy, but also her artistic talent. This enables her to write again, and she gets a novel published. Both of these scenes seem to be referring to the scene in *Jane Eyre*. Epperly points out many other similarities between *Emily of New Moon* and *Jane Eyre*, particularly the similarity between Dean Priest and Edward Rochester (see 4.3.2). She argues that the power of Dean and the expectations of Emily's culture are so strong that "only a vision can break the spell literature and imaginative traditions have cast over her"[69].

Early on, Emily and Teddy inspire each other. In ENM, Teddy paints a picture of Emily, which he later expands to a world-famous painting in EQ. Emily's smile in the painting is even compared to Mona Lisa's. Both Dean and Ilse jealously complain that Teddy paints Emily's face into every picture. It is more than her face, however – it is the look on her face, which Ilse describes as Emily knowing something others do not know. Teddy has captured her soul in his paintings, which shows that he understands her on a deep level. The idea of the woman as a male artist's muse is turned around when Teddy inspires Emily to write her first novel, *Seller of Dreams.* The idea comes from something Teddy says as a joke, and years later, Emily is able to use it for her first and best novel. Even if this novel is never published, Emily puts all of her creative power into it, and the inspiration comes from Teddy. Epperly believes this is because "the two greatest creative forces – art and love – come from the same well-spring. Where Teddy (or hopeful thought of Teddy) is, there also will be inspiration"[70] Campbell, on the other hand, believes the book's title is meant to be a hint about what

[68] Lawson, Kate. "The Alien At Home: Hearing Voices in L. M. Montgomery's Emily Climbs and F. W. H. Myers". In *Gothic Studies*, Volume 4 Issue 2, November 2002, p. 161.
[69] Epperly 1992, p. 156.
[70] Epperly 1992, p. 184.

happens to Emily: “In accepting romance and its eventual conclusion in marriage, Emily does sell her dreams – of autonomy, of independent action and creation”[71]. However, I do not see anything in the text to really support this view. If the *Emily* trilogy is a Bildungsroman about a young author, why would it end with Emily essentially killing her art at the altar of marriage? Considering Montgomery's own view of possessive husbands presented above and the fact that she made a career as an author despite being married (to an old-fashioned man, no less) and having children, why should Emily be unable to do the same? Even if Montgomery does not describe Emily's life as a married woman and thus evades writing about the sacrifices she has to make to keep her husband happy, I would conclude, like Epperly, that “love in any of its positive and liberating forms is a good thing, provided one has found one's true self and voice (and work) first”[72].

[71] Campbell 1994, p. 142.
[72] Epperly 1992, p. 206.

4. The Female Artist

4.l. The Position of the Female Artist

4.1.1. Emily as an Independent Female Artist

How independent is Emily as a female artist? She has a lot of trust in her male critics and sometimes loses faith in her own voice. Is she a suitable role model for female writers today? Emily can be read as a brave independent author who works hard to gain a better position in society or a traditional woman who sacrifices her independence and for a role in the domestic sphere. Both views are present in the anthology of Finnish readers. Outi Rantanen writes: ”Minulle *Runotyttö* on myös edustanut jonkinlaista esifeminismiä. Naisen pitää seurata omaa kutsumustaan. Pitää pyrkiä henkiseen ja fyysiseen itsenäisyyteen. Pitää olla oma työ ja oma huone. Naimisiinmeno ei ole elämän tarkoitus (vaikka tosirakkauden löytäminen ehkä onkin!)”[73]. In Tuija Tiihonen’s view, ”Emilia on aikansa maailmassa niin rohkea, ennakkoluuloton ja työn tai vaivan määrää pelkäämätön hahmo, että hän on edelleen varsin ihailtava”[74]. Riina Katajavuori, on the other hand, sees Emily as a traditional female character who stays pure and sacrifices her own career in the face of other people’s opinions: “Hän myös polttaa hyväksi tietämänsä käsikirjoituksen vain kateellisen miehen tuomion tähden. Ja esikoisteoskin näkee päivänvalon viime kädessä yksinomaan Jimmy-serkun omatoimisuuden ansiosta”[75].

Why do female readers vary so much in their responses to Emily's independence? A part of the answer might be found in the emergence of Modernism (see 2.1.), where feminist views were presented openly, not in a hidden way like in Montgomery's work. Jennie Rubio points out that “feminist critics often distrust this kind of women's fiction,

[73] Rantanen, Outi. “Minun Kaunis Emiliani”. In Ahola and Koskimies 2005, p.117
[74] Tiihonen, Tuija. “Emilia opetti tunteiden kieltä” in Ahonen and Koskimies 2005, p.150
[75] Katajavuori, Riina. “Emiliat on yli-ihania” in Ahonen and Koskimies 2005, pp. 131-132

preferring writing which explicitly rejects partiarchal reactions"[76]. A feminist reader like Katajavuori might not be comparing Emily's emancipation to the women in her own time and genre, but rather to more progressive modern female authors. On the other hand, some readers might seek safety and conformity in Montgomery's novels. Epperly wonders if even modern readers "want the flouting of authority and the established rules to be subliminal – indirect – so that they can enjoy it without having to think about its implications for their own life"[77].

The *Emily* novels depict the position of a female artist as a difficult one. Emily faces a lot of pressure from her society for making the unusual choice of wanting a career, and an artistic one at that. As Epperly writes, "we can see how the culture around conspires to silence the woman writer"[78]. Interestingly, most of the oppression comes from other women – Aunt Elizabeth, Aunt Ruth, even the loving Aunt Laura are uninterested in her talent and only want to teach her domestic chores and family traditions to prepare her for a life in the domestic sphere. The women outside her family are not any more understanding. Emily hears town women gossiping behind her back and laughing at her: "I hear Emily is going to make a living writing stories – not only a living but a fortune, I believe" (EC 64). The idea is ridiculous to the town women, who have never aspired to be anything but good wives and mothers. In Blair Water, a woman is not respected or admired for having a career, only if she marries well. Janet Royal complains: "I detest living in a place where all they think is that I've played my cards badly, and lost the matrimonial game" (EC 312). For a woman who wants to be respected as an individual with ambitions of her own, a small rural community like Blair Water is an oppressive place to live. Interestingly, when Emily's family discusses

[76] Rubio 1994, p. 167.
[77] Epperly 1992, p. 9.
[78] ibid., p. 173.

letting Emily go to New York, Uncle Wallace says: “Janet Royal has done well, they say” (EQ 304). He seems to acknowledge Janet's success in a way that the women do not. Similarly, Emily receives encouragement and tutoring from men (Cousin Jimmy, Mr Carpenter, and her father). They do not have a problem with her becoming an author, and they are proud of her when she succeeds. The only women to support Emily's career are Ilse and Janet Royal – two women who also made a career outside the domestic sphere. Throughout the novels, Emily lacks female mentors and critics. Ilse is not a writer and her dedication to art is lower than Emily's, so she cannot act as her mentor. Miss Royal is the only one suitable for the role, but she lives far away in New York and only visits Emily once during the novels. Even if she sends Emily letters that contain criticism of her work, her role in Emily's writing is nowhere near as important as that of Mr Carpenter.

Miss Royal never marries and is scorned for that in Blair Water. Ilse, on the other hand, remarks that she will get married when she gets tired of working. This highlights the problematic relationship between the desired female role of wife and mother and the role of a career woman or female artist that these women have adopted. Emily, too, stays single for a long time (she is 27 when she marries Teddy). The women of her community treat successful women with a kind of condescension. When Janet Royal tells Aunt Elizabeth that lots of women are working outside the house, Elizabeth responds with: “I suppose it's alright for them if they don't get married” (EC 303). Marriage and being supported by a man or by one's family is seen as the appropriate female role, one which Emily rebels against when she says she will be “wedded to her art”, an ideal she later abandons when she finds true love with Teddy.

Interestingly, no mention is made here of the fact that Elizabeth herself is unmarried. This issue is hardly discussed at all in the novels, apart from Douglas Starr’s remark

that Elizabeth and Laura “could not find anyone good enough for a Murray, so it used to be said” (ENM 14). This implies that there is something more important for a woman than marriage, and that is the honour of her family. Emily's mother, Juliet Murray, elopes with Douglas, who does not get her family's approval because he is only a poor journalist. Even if she is everyone's pet before the marriage, the Murrays never talk to Juliet again. For them, pride goes before everything else. The “Murray pride” is famous; they are known as “the chosen people” (ENM 13). Emily herself has a great deal of Murray pride, which, ironically, helps her to continue writing despite her family's opposition. Love and pride are often depicted as opposite forces in the trilogy: Juliet Murray chooses love for her husband, but loses the love of her family, because they prefer their pride; Elizabeth and Laura keep their pride, but lose their chance to love; and Emily's pride almost causes her to lose Teddy in EQ, when she does not meet him when he calls her. Near the end of EQ, the Murrays discuss the fact that Emily is unmarried:

> It was becoming an accepted thing in the clan that Emily would not marry.
> “Another old maid at New Moon,” said Uncle Wallace gracefully.
> “And to think of all the men she might have had,” said Aunt Elizabeth bitterly. “My Wallace – Aylmer Vincent – Andrew...”
> “But if she didn't – love – them,” faltered Aunt Laura.
> “Laura, you need not be indelicate.” (EQ 221)

Laura, who looks like Juliet and is the mother figure to Emily, is the only one who believes in love. However, she does not have much authority in the Murray circles. By the time Emily is 16, the Murrays have already chosen a suitable husband for her: her cousin Andrew Murray. It is meant to ensure that she does not elope and marries a respectable boy. However, Emily finds him very boring and coldly rejects him when he

proposes to her a few years later. A life with Andrew would have been the life of a respectable Murray woman who does not work for her living and has no aspirations of her own – a completely unsuitable life for Emily. Even if Andrew is not as strong-willed and powerful as Dean, a marriage with him would have strengthened the family's influence on Emily's behaviour. Therefore, by rejecting Andrew, Emily rejects her family's expectations and chooses a more independent lifestyle.

As discussed above in 2.2, the attitudes of Emily's family against her writing are in part due to religion. However, they are also affected by the patriarchal idea of women staying at home and not working. Emily, an orphan brought up by her relatives, has her pride; she would like to be able to make her own living. However, the women in her family are against this idea. Uncle Wallace wants to send Emily to study further and become a teacher, something Emily herself wants. Aunt Elizabeth, however, turns down the offer, telling Wallace that New Moon women never had to work for a living. Elizabeth's pride over this fact implies that she sees work outside the home as something only poor women do if they must, not as something a woman could aspire to do and be proud of. Another event from *Emily of New Moon* offers an even better example of this attitude: Mr Carpenter insists that Emily be allowed to study further, but Elizabeth will not budge from her position: a girl's place is at home. However, when Perry wants to get an education, Elizabeth is willing to support his ambition, even though he is only the hired boy at New Moon. Mr Carpenter is always willing to tutor a talented student, whether male or female, while Elizabeth thinks education is worthwhile only for a boy. By making the female characters resist women's education and independence, Montgomery may be showing that it is not always men who stand in the way of women's rights. On the other hand, making the matriarch Elizabeth value traditional gender roles over modern ones might be a part of what Mary Rubio calls

making typical male behaviour “grotesque” by having a woman exhibit it is. This, according to Rubio, is one of Montgomery's strategies of adding social commentary to her stories. She uses matriarchs to criticize the behaviour of men towards women[79]. From this point of view, Elizabeth's old-fashioned views may be seen as a criticism of the patriarchal attitudes of men towards women.

Emily is confined to the domestic sphere, but in the end, she finds her voice and expression there. The main reason Emily rejects Miss Royal’s offer (see 2.2. and 3.2.) is that she feels she belongs in Prince Edward Island and New Moon. In a way, she chooses her own confinement, but it also gives her a sense of belonging, which is beneficial for her writing. When Elizabeth finally accepts Emily’s writing, she says it is because Emily can “earn a living in a very ladylike way” (EQ 49). Emily has combined staying at home and fulfilling her duties as a Murray woman with writing and pursuing her dreams. In Faye Hammill’s view, the domestic sphere acts as an inspiration to Emily’s work, not only as a confinement. She argues that the Murray traditions sustain Emily, because she has not allowed them to define her[80]. She can accept some of the traditions without following Elizabeth and Laura's example of a woman's life. She feels a pride for being a woman of her family, which gives her a sense of worth and belonging: “I feel that it is quite wonderful to belong to a family like this. (..) I feel that I must live up to the traditions of my family” (EC 16). However, when her family’s ideas of proper female conduct stand in the way of her work, she will not abide. When Elizabeth wants Emily to stop writing stories, she is respectful but firm in her own conviction:

> “I’m not arguing – only explaining.’ Emily was exasperatingly respectful. ‘I just want you to understand how it is that I *have* to go on writing stories, even though I am so very sorry you don’t approve.” (ENM 306)

[79] Rubio, Mary 1989, quoted in Epperly 1992, 7
[80] Hammill 2003, p. 105.

For Emily, her ambition as a writer is always more important than the traditions of her family. Therefore, she is not a role model that simply fulfils other people's expectations for a good woman. Instead, she shows the example of believing in her own choices.

E. Holly Pike sees a similarity between Emily and the chracter of Jo in Louisa May Alcott's *Little Women.* Like Emily, Jo writes, and her novels are written for her family, like Emily's *The Moral of the Rose.* Both heroines echo the careers of their authors. Pike argues that both Montgomery and Alcott are using these characters to show that women should stay in the domestic sphere and write for their families, rather than gaining an independent status and entering the public sphere. Pike suggests that both Alcott and Montgomery are trying to say that "a woman's writing can be successful only when it is part of her general supportive work in the household"[81]. This is certainly true for Jo, whose family supports her and encourages her career, and she pays back by using her profits to buy things for the family. However, Emily writes throughout her childhood despite the negative feedback from her family and Aunt Elizabeth's firm belief that her writing is not useful work at all. Apart from her first published novel, her writing is not connected to her family, so *The Moral of the Rose* is the exception among her works, not a typical case like Pike seems to be saying. Moreover, writing does not define Jo like it defines Emily. Jo is first and foremost a daughter, sister, wife, and mother. Her rebellion against patriarchal conventions is short-lived and ineffectual. Writing is not the thing that defines her, like it is for Emily. She is defined by her connection with her family, and the writing is simply her own personal ambition that she abandons for a long time to raise a family of her own. When she starts writing again, her writing is still connected to her family, as she writes about her childhood in

[81] Pike, E. Holly. "The Heroine Who Writes and Her Creator." In Rubio 1994. p. 46.

order to make some money for the family. Montgomery purposely ends the *Emily* trilogy with Emily's marriage and never touches on the issue of what happens when and if Emily and Teddy have children. Therefore, the depiction of Emily can be seen as an idealized view of a female author who does not need to sacrifice her art to be a wife and mother. However, as discussed above in 3.4.2, Montgomery gives Emily a successful career before marriage, which is the opposite of what happens to Jo. Jo marries her Dean Priest, Mr Bhaer, the older man who wants to own her and stop her from writing (see 4.2.2). For both Emily and Jo, a home with an older man means becoming a wife and mother who belongs to her husband. By rejecting this destiny for Emily, Montgomery is giving her a degree of independence: she has time to develop her gift and acquire a status as a writer before she gets married.

The similarities between Jo and Emily are not as strong as Pike suggests. Perhaps she is finding connections between the two novels mainly because they are in the same genre, the romance novel, and not based on the individual features of the novels. Epperly has taken a wider perspective and compared the trilogy to literature from other, more respected genres. She has found allusions to both Brontë's *Jane Eyre* (discussed below in 4.2.2.) and Elizabeth Barrett Browning's *Aurora Leigh*. The similarities between Emily and Aurora are much stronger than those between Emily and Jo. Aurora's mother dies when she is four (Emily is the same age when she loses her mother) and her father dies when she is 13 (Emily's dies when she is 11); she is taken to another country and brought up by her father's sister, who is strict and cold, just like Aunt Elizabeth. Like Emily, Aurora becomes a poet. Her cousin, Romney Leigh, discusses literature with her; Romney, like Dean Priest, belittles Aurora's poetry. In the end, Aurora finds her voice as an author by turning down Romney's proposal, just like Emily regains her ambition in writing after breaking off the engagement with Dean.

Interestingly, Emily's cousin Andrew also proposes to her, which might be another allusion to *Aurora Leigh.* Andrew, however, is intellectually dull and uninterested in literature, so Dean is clearly the character who represents Romney. There is a direct quote from *Aurora Leigh* in EQ:

> I flung down my pen and bowed my head over my desk in utter thankfulness that I could work again .
>
> "Get leave to work -
> In this world 'tis the best you get at all,
> For God in cursing gives us better gifts
> Than men in benediction."
>
> So wrote Elizabeth Barrett Browning – and truly… the work for which we are fitted… What a blessing it is and what fullness of joy it holds. (EQ 102)

Many literary allusions in the trilogy are made without direct quotes and mentioning the writer. Montgomery seems to be nudging the reader to notice the allusions to *Aurora Leigh* and ponder on their meaning. Epperly argues that Montgomery uses *Aurora Leigh* references "to suggest both the determination of the female writer and the blessing of finding and using her own voice"[82].

Unlike both Montgomery and Alcott, Emily does not need to support herself or her family with her writing. Living in wealthy New Moon and denied education and work, Emily is free to write out of inspiration and ambition. For example, the money she makes with her writing is her own and she uses it on herself: "with the remaining five [dollars] she bought a set of Parkman. [...] Emily felt much prouder of it than if it had been the prize. After all, it was better to earn things for yourself" (EC 263). The Parkman is the book which is the prize for the poetry contest Evelyn wins (see 3.3), but Emily is happier to buy it with her own money. It gives her a degree of independence to be able to buy things Aunt Elizabeth would consider extravagant. A woman with money of her own is no more strictly in the domestic sphere, and Emily makes her own

[82] Epperly 1992, p. 192.

decisions on how to use her money.

Pike further argues that Emily's inability "to get the novel published herself points again to the interpretation of the proper feminine role as a passive, domestic one"[83]. This could be argued if Emily failed to get her novel published in the end and simply married Teddy without becoming an author. However, Cousin Jimmy does not rewrite Emily's novel to get it published, nor does he pull any strings in the publishing world. He simply sends her novel to the only publisher he knows, and they deem it worthy by its own merits. If anything, Emily could be accused of not believing in her work enough to send it to the largest company.

If Emily were simply a girl who dreams of writing, but learns to value a more traditional female role as a wife and mother, it would make the whole *Emily* trilogy pointless. Obviously, the aim of the trilogy is to outline the development of a young author. At the end of *Emily's Quest,* Emily has published several novels and made a name for herself as an author. By having novels published, she has broken out of the domestic sphere, even if she still physically lives there. She is known outside of her home region as an individual with her own merits rather than as a member of her family and community. Her work is out in the public sphere, and she has become a public person, a woman with a value of her own.

4.1.2. The Title 'Runotyttö' and its Connotations in Finland

An example of others' belittling attitudes to the female author are the Finnish titles of the Emily books: *Pieni Runotyttö, Runotyttö maineen polulla* and *Runotyttö etsii tähteään*. The word *runotyttö* - poem girl – is never used to describe Emily in the books and is only found in the titles. But what does it imply? Is a poem girl a serious poet or

[83] Pike 1994, p. 54.

just a scribbler of pretty cobwebs? These titles may be fitting for a series of books marketed for a very young female audience, but they also limit the readers to only that group of people. It is clear that if a book is labeled 'klassinen tyttökirja' and especially if its title contains the word *tyttö,* few boys or men will have the interest or, indeed, courage to read it. The belittling nature of the words *Pieni Runotyttö* will give even the target audience certain assumptions about the quality of the book. Sari Puustinen describes the use of the title as a general insult against this type of book:

> Runotyttökirjallisuuden" harrastaminen on ollut ystäväpiirissäni välillä pilkan kohteena. Nimikkeellä kuvataan tyttökirjoja, joita voi vapaasti halveksua, mutta joita etenkään miehet eivät ole koskaan lukeneet.[84]

It is easy to make fun of books with a title that refers to something sentimental and romantic – what many people would consider "typically feminine".

The title gives a somewhat misleading idea of Emily. For example, at the beginning of EoNM, Emily is 11 years old. The words *pieni tyttö* bring the connotation of a girl of five or six. What does the word *pieni* refer to? Is it a reference to her size, her age, or her talent? Does it imply that the poetry she writes is just a silly little thing she does as a child? Continuing with similar titles when Emily grows up is even more misleading. When she makes her debut as a novelist, it seems particularly wrong to call her a 'poem girl'. The *Emily* trilogy relates the story of a girl who grows up to become an author. The Finnish titles seem to negate this idea – she remains *runotyttö,* a little girl dreaming of becoming a poet some day. The term *runotyttö* has also become a label for all female poets in Finland. Riina Katajavuori, a young Finnish poet, has suffered from this labeling: "Julkaisin oman esikoisrunokokoelmani 23-vuotiaana. Ilman muuta

[84] Puustinen, Sari. "Hyveen ja kauneuden jäljillä". in Ahonen & Koskimies 2005. p. 93.

minuakin kutsuttiin runotytöksi, ja leima pysyi pitkään"[85]. She points out that the label is not even tied to the poet's age: Marjatta Lintunen, who published her first book of poems at the age of 40, was also called *runotyttö*. Perhaps any woman who writes poetry is a *runotyttö* – not a serious grown up artist, but a girl scribbling pretty poetry?

Meanwhile, the term *runopoika* is never used for male poets. Leena Kanervo[86] points out that Eino Leino and Risto Rasa were only 17-18 years old when their first books of poems came out, but no one labeled them *runopoika*. Katajavuori[87] suggests that the term used for young male poets tends to be *vihainen nuori mies*. This label suggests that these men are creating something new and battling existing issues and ideas.

Katajavuori further wonders what the role of a *runotyttö* could be: "Voiko runotytön odottaa uudistavan kieltä tai ottavan kantaa? Osallistuuko runotyttö yhteiskunnalliseen keskusteluun?"[88]. One might ask the same thing about Montgomery. Can the writer of a book called *Pieni Runotyttö* discuss important issues? Can she or her books be taken seriously? What does a sentimental 'poem girl' do – does she do anything other than sit in her room daydreaming or wander around in nature and revelling in its beauty? What makes the issue even more problematic is that the above stereotype seems to apply to Emily. Emily is a somewhat idealistic character removed from societal issues. She stays in her own protected, beautiful world in New Moon. There is no social commentary on the treatment of different ethnicities or classes - if anything, the books seem to support a kind of class consciousness. However, Montgomery does discuss the position of a female writer and career woman in a patriarchal society. This is more than can be expected of a romantic writer of girl books, and Montgomery should not be dismissed

[85] Katajavuori 2005, p. 130.
[86] Kanervo quoted in Ahonen & Koskimies 2005, p. 132.
[87] Katajavuori 2005, p. 131.
[88] ibid.

entirely as a writer of sentimental girl books. Emily is much more than just a “poem girl”.

4.2. The Male Critics of Emily's Work

There are two moments in the text where Emily truly doubts her vocation. Both of the moments come from crushing criticism from male critics – the first one from Mr Carpenter, the second one from Dean Priest. Later on, both instances of critique are nullified: Dean was only lying because he was jealous of her art; Mr Carpenter meant his comment “ten good lines and the rest balderdash” (ENM 338) as a compliment - he goes on to say that if Sodom had had ten righteous men, it would have been spared. The power of the male critics on Emily is so strong that she is even willing to stop writing after enough rejection from both editors and Dean. This underlines the difficulty of a female author to believe in her own worth as a writer in a world dominated by male authors and critics. In this chapter, I will discuss the three most important male critics of Emily's work: Father Cassidy, Dean Priest, and Mr Carpenter.

4.2.1. Father Cassidy

Father Cassidy is a Catholic priest that Emily visits in ENM. Lofty John, the Murrays' Irish neighbour, has threatened to cut down his forest because of an argument with Aunt Elizabeth. Emily believes that a Catholic priest might be able to change John's mind, and she decides to go see Father Cassidy all by herself. She succeeds in her goal to save the forest, but the visit also becomes important for her as a writer.

Emily is nervous about meeting Father Cassidy, but he soon wins her over with his talk about fairies and elves. This is an ongoing theme with men who sympathise with her: her father calls her Elfkin, and when she moves to New Moon, Cousin Jimmy tells

her that their garden is full of fairies. Emily enjoys the company of an adult who can talk her language, and soon feels confident enough to recite one of her poems to him. The scene with Father Cassidy is similar to the ones with Dean and Mr Carpenter: Emily recites a poem, Father Cassidy at first seems to dislike it and then ends up making Emily feel validated in going on. Father Cassidy thinks, but does not say, that Emily's poem is “trash” (ENM 202). However, like Mr Carpenter, he tells her to continue because of one line that shows promise (for Mr Carpenter it was ten lines among a much larger collection of poems; see below in 4.3.3). Like both Mr Carpenter and Dean, Father Cassidy sees promise in Emily's future: “you'll be able to do something by and by. Something – I don't know how much – but keep on” (ENM 202). This is the first piece of encouragement Emily gets from an adult outside her family, and it becomes very important for her: “To the end of her struggle for recognition Emily never forgot Father Cassidy's 'Keep on' and the tone in which he said it” (ENM 202).

Epperly argues that Father Cassidy's behaviour foreshadows Dean's condescending attitude on Emily's writing: “we see that his patronizing is but a gentle prelude to the caressing contempt Dean himself will later show for Emily's 'pretty cobwebs'”[89]. Father Cassidy's reactions to Emily's poem mirror Dean's: first the thought that it is trash, a prolonged silence after reciting the poem, then the admission that after some time something might become of it. Emily also tells him about an epic she is writing, which he makes fun of in a seemingly kind way; Emily does not know how to respond to it and openly asks Father Cassidy if he is mocking her (ENM 198). His apparently gentle mocking is reminiscent of Dean's later comments about Emily's writing. Father Cassidy is a priest, which might be a nod to Dean's last name. Epperly thinks the

[89] Epperly 1992, p. 153.

Catholic priest is “emblematic of knowing, tolerant, amused male authority as it indulges the young female's vivacious ignorance”[90], as Dean does later with his promise to teach Emily how to write love scenes.

4.2.2. Dean Priest

Besides being a friend and love interest for Emily, Dean Priest is also a critic for her work. Perhaps more intelligent and educated than any other character in the books, Dean shares Emily's love for literature and poetry and introduces her to classical works she has never had a chance to read. He also travels a lot, which gives him knowledge about foreign cultures and traditions that no one in Blair Water has. Dean is a valuable friend for her, because he gives her access to a wider culture and literary tradition than what is available in New Moon and Blair Water, and is her intellectual equal unlike most people at Blair Water. Emily's intellect is what makes Dean fascinated with her. However, he does not encourage her writing. Unlike Mr Carpenter, who gives Emily constructive advice, Dean criticizes her text by withholding his comments about it. He would like her to believe that her text is not worth commenting on and she will never be a real writer. This is because he wants to own her, and her writing comes in the way of that.

Despite their age difference of over 20 years, Dean falls in love with Emily from their first meeting on. When 12-year-old Emily says she has trouble with writing love dialogue in her novels, he promises to teach her: “And don't go looking for another teacher, mind” (ENM 270). Emily takes this promise very literally, but it is obvious to the adult reader what Dean has in mind. The way they meet seems fateful – Dean rescues Emily from falling down a cliff. After this, he sees her life as his property. Even

[90] ibid.

if she does not understand the implications, Emily does not like the idea of being someone's property. She feels "as if a cobweb fetter had been flung round her" (ENM 271). Later on, Dean describes her writing as "pretty cobwebs" (EQ 30). For Dean, the cobwebs are something flimsy that he can brush aside with harsh criticism. For Emily, the cobweb fetter is something stronger that ties her down and tries to take away her independence as a woman. It is never truly lifted until she breaks off her engagement to Dean and he admits she can write.

After meeting Emily for the first time, Dean reads *Jane Eyre* and identifies with the passage where Rochester meets Jane. Epperly argues that while there are many other similarities between the childhoods of Emily and Jane, the comparison between Dean and Rochester is the strongest allusion to Brontë's novel: "He is the dark, passionate, self-destructive exile who can be redeemed only by the love of a woman powerful enough to fling her soul into the void between them"[91]. Epperly argues that this tradition of romance has been dominating for centuries, and that it has been expected of a woman to opt for love with a man like this. This presents a woman with a choice "between her own understanding of herself and what the traditions she has honoured tell her she should feel and choose"[92]. This is what Emily has to struggle with. The power of tradition is strong, but her ultimate dream of being a writer has to be sacrificed if she is to marry Dean. Dean is willing to destroy her faith in her own work to get her.

The first time they meet, Emily recites a poem of hers to Dean. From the start, he is careful not to offer too much encouragement:

> When she came to the two lines she liked best in it [...] she looked up sidewise to see if he admired them. But he was walking with eyes cast down and an absent expression on his face. She felt a little disappointed.(ENM 269-270)

[91] Epperly 1992, p. 155.
[92] Epperly 1992, p. 156.

Dean's body language shows that he does not 'admire' Emily's poetry. He is careful to appear absent-minded and unwilling to give any real commentary on the poem. He does, however, imply that she might be capable of something later on: "When you're ten years older I shouldn't wonder – but let's not think on" (ENM 270). This is the same thing Mr Carpenter says about her work. However, unlike Mr Carpenter, Dean does not want to think of the future. He would rather keep Emily the way she is: an innocent young girl who blindly trusts his judgement. Emily, who is too young to understand the implied compliment, pleads for a positive comment by telling Dean that Father Cassidy encouraged her to go on writing. Again, Dean evades the issue and refuses to comment on the poem. He says instead that Emily is going to write regardless, so she needs no encouragement. Even this comment sounds a bit negative, as if he is hoping that her need to write will go away with time. This evasive attitude is only strengthened as Emily begins to grow up. Dean, feeling more threatened by her work, laughs at it or refuses to comment on it. Even *The Woman Who Spanked the King*, which is widely published and admired, is dismissed by Dean as nothing but a decent school essay.

Emily is constantly disappointed by his responses to her writing and becomes desperate to get his approval, because "he *knows*" (EQ 16). However, as Epperly points out, "Dean's knowledge is useful to him only when he withholds it from her"[93]. Emily does not connect Dean's feelings for her to his attitude to her work. She naïvely believes that Dean will always tell her the truth, which leads her to burn her best novel and stop writing for a long time. Dean's power over her is strong; as Epperly points out, "the wonder is that Emily holds out so long, not that she capitulates eventually"[94]. To make Emily stop believing in her talent, all Dean needs to do is echo her own biggest fears: "How could you write a real story? You've never *lived*" (EQ 52). Dean uses Emily's

[93] Epperly 1992, p. 183.
[94] ibid., p. 184.

youth and sheltered life against her, knowing that these are the very things she feels insecure about. These are also the problems that most female writers of her time had to face: after a sheltered life in the domestic sphere, it is difficult to write something that would be considered important in the public sphere. Instead of offering Emily constructive criticism and encouragement, Dean convinces her that she is not a real writer. He has the same effect on her as the male editors who reject her work. In the end, Emily wins back her dignity and faith in herself, but only because Dean tells her the truth about her work. This is perhaps the clearest example in the novels of male oppression on the female writer, and shows that a part of Emily believes that her worth comes from how other people evaluate her. In the end, she needs to hear from Dean that she really is a real writer and her book was good. She finds her own voice back and regains her independence, but the fact that she stopped believing in herself shows a female writer's difficulty in believing in herself – taking herself seriously as an author, when male critics like Dean or Father Cassidy mock her writing.

4.2.3. Mr Carpenter

After the death of her father, Emily lacks an honest critic. Cousin Jimmy praises everything she writes, while the rest of the family is against her writing. To balance this, she needs someone who can give her unbiased feedback about what works and does not work in her writing. At age 13, she finds a critic in her new teacher, Mr Carpenter. Mr Carpenter is not afraid of saying that something does not work; he never "damns with faint praise". He has nothing to gain by crushing Emily's dreams, like Dean does. He is free to criticize Emily fairly. Neither the narrator nor Emily ever question his advice on her writing, or his authority in giving this advice. Mr Carpenter's admission that Emily has talent is the most important moment of triumph in the first

novel, perhaps in the whole trilogy. Even if he honestly tells her that most of her writing is still trash, he thinks she has something, and Emily knows he would not say this just to be polite, so it truly matters. Epperly writes: “She has asked validation from the (male) world and has received it”[95]. Ending the first novel with this validation, Montgomery foreshadows Emily's future success. Even if there are difficult years ahead, as Mr Carpenter warns Emily, she feels secure that when she has Mr Carpenter's acceptance, she will “never lose heart in the face of any future criticism” (ENM 330). This does not prove to be entirely true, but the faith Mr Carpenter has in Emily gives her the self-confidence she needs to continue writing. Later on, she shows him all kinds of writing, poetry as well as prose, and he dissects it with the same brutal honesty. Mr Carpenter's advice is not always easy to understand for young Emily. Epperly notes that “[a] good teacher, he frequently leaves Emily to figure out what he means, and she grows by searching”[96]. Like any good teacher, Mr Carpenter does not simply tell Emily what to do, but also challenges her to think for herself.

The first time they meet, Mr Carpenter tells Emily, “So you're the girl who writes poetry, eh? Better stick to your needle and duster” (ENM 291). Later on, when she writes something he thinks is not good enough, he says, “You write! Jade, get a spoon and learn to cook!” (EC 18). These gendered insults can be read in different ways. He seems to be warning Emily that a female writer will not be taken seriously. His comments could be read as a warning that life as a female writer is very difficult and she had better stay with more appropriate female roles, or he might be toughening her up to face future rejections and belittlement from male critics. The latter seems to be the more probable explanation. He might be testing her commitment to her art. The name Emily means “industrious”, “ambitious”, or “striving”. Mr Carpenter, who never calls

[95] Epperly 1992, p. 154.
[96] ibid., p. 70.

her Emily but instead uses the old-fashioned and possibly derogatory name Jade, might be testing her to see if she lives up to her name and is willing to work hard for her success.

Mr Carpenter dedicates so much time and effort in reading and criticizing Emily's work that it seems hard to believe he would truly want her to stay at home and cook. If anything, he seems more progressive about the roles of women than the women in Emily's family. He even tries to convince Aunt Elizabeth to let Emily study further, but she declines (see 4.1.). Some critics have, however, seen the character as an oppressive male critic. Judith Miller sees him as someone who tries to restrict Emily's voice as an author: "But we see clearly that Emily has a vital sense of words, of their aesthetic pleasure, and that her writing is most alive when it is flooded with italics and when it flows outside the rigid control which Mr. Carpenter advocates"[97]. Miller is referring to the beginning of *Emily Climbs*, where Emily is writing in her diary, trying to avoid the problems Mr Carpenter has spotted in her work and failing at it – for instance, she keeps using italics when she needs to stress an emotion: "I *love* reading the dictionary. (Yes, those italics are *necessary*, Mr Carpenter. An ordinary 'love' wouldn't express my feeling at all!)" (EC 4). Her text is still the overexcitable writing of a teenager, full of big fancy words, emotional adjectives, and, of course, italics. There are no excerpts from Emily's other writing, but I would imagine it is similar in style. For someone who aspires to be a serious writer, it would be unhealthy to have a critic who indulges all of her juvenile excesses. Some of Mr Carpenter's comments sound very valid – for example, he scolds her for putting three 'alas'es in one paragraph (EC 18). While I agree with Miller that Emily is shown to have a "vital sense of words", an overexcitable style might destroy the power of her text, and it seems right that Mr Carpenter tries to weed

[97] Miller 1984. p. 8.

that out of her. Miller seems to assume that female writing should be emotional and overflowing, a common stereotype of female literature. However, it does not seem from the text that Montgomery agrees with this view. Emily does not become an author by rejecting Mr Carpenter's advice, but rather by following it. When Dean criticizes Emily's text, he makes her stop writing. Mr Carpenter, on the other hand, encourages her to go on and helps her find a more effective way of using her talent.

A talented man who has failed in his own career, Mr Carpenter can be seen as the model of a failed artist, like Emily's father Douglas Starr (see 3.2). Mr Carpenter, too, is a cynical and lonely man who has alienated people around him, and it gets worse as he gets older. His problem is drinking, which he is unable to give up, a weakness that has cost him his academic career. Even if Mr Carpenter at first seems cynical about Emily's chances of achieving what he has failed at, he plays an important role in encouraging and criticizing Emily as well as Teddy, Perry, and Ilse. At first, Emily is confused because he seems to tell other girls their writings are “very pretty” and won't mark them with red ink, while Emily's work is harshly criticized. Later on, she learns to understand this behaviour: “The better my essays are the more he rages over them. But it makes him so angry and impatient to see I might have made it *still better* and didn't [..] And he can't tolerate a person who could do better and doesn't” (EC 18). Perhaps because of his own weakness, Mr Carpenter expects a lot from others. His harsh criticism makes Emily try harder and adds to her ambition of writing something truly good. Dean makes her desperate to prove herself, but Mr Carpenter challenges her in a more constructive way: by telling her the flaws of her writing and instructing her how to correct them.

Mr Carpenter dies early on in *Emily's Quest*, leaving her alone to face the rejection of publishers and Dean when she writes *A Seller of Dreams.* His last advice to Emily is to never write something to please anyone but herself. In the end, he is supporting

Emily's own voice as an author and hopes that she will keep it. It is understandable that Montgomery had a concern with this, as she herself was not able to write only to please herself. She had to support her family with her writing, and ended up writing in a tightly defined genre that sometimes felt suffocating to her. Like she wrote in her diary in 1925: “But the public... one of the Vanderbilts once said 'Damn the public'. [..] I can't afford to damn the public. I must cater to them for a while yet”[98].

Interestingly, when Emily writes a book that pleases her, *A Seller of Dreams,* it is not published and Dean uses it to convince her she cannot write. With *The Moral of the Rose,* Emily does not experience the same rapture of writing, and it is not clear if she ever feels it again. Does she learn to settle - to abide and write something that others can enjoy? If one reads *Emily's Quest* this way, it can be seen as a message that a female author must give up complete creative freedom if she wants to have her work published. The dilemma of a female writer to keep her own voice despite the influence of male critics and publishers is never truly solved in the trilogy. It is Emily's faith in the knowledge and authority in male critics that makes her burn her first novel. However, it is also her faith in the authority of Mr Carpenter that makes her believe in herself. Without Mr Carpenter, she might not have written *A Seller of Dreams* or *The Woman Who Spanked the King.* Perhaps the message here is that male critics can also act as a source of encouragement and support for a female author.

[98] Rubio, Mary & Waterston, Elizabeth (ed). *The Selected Journals of L. M. Montgomery, Volume III: 1921-1929.* Toronto: Oxford University Press 1992. p. 157

5. Conclusions

While it is difficult to define what makes literature truly Canadian, it is clear that Montgomery wanted to create a distinctly Canadian literature, a fairly common goal in the Canada of the 1920's. To depict Emily as a strongly Canadian author, Montgomery created the character of Janet Royal, who offers Emily an opportunity to move to New York, where she could have a better chance to create and publish her work. Emily decides to stay in Canada where she feels she belongs. Through this storyline, Montgomery shows she believes that staying loyal to Canada is important for the integrity of a Canadian author's own voice. Even if the rural Canadian village environment is depicted as judgemental, narrow-minded and stifling to an artistic woman, it also provides Emily with a sense of belonging that inspires her creativity and gives her material to write about.

The three other artist types help to draw out Emily as a true artist. The oral folk tradition artists share a skill for oral storytelling, a tradition important to Montgomery because of the storytellers in her family. However, the oral artists are shown to be a dying breed, one which does not write down its words but rather shares them with few chosen people. Therefore, their art will die with them, not live on like Emily's writing. The second group, the interpreting artists, lack Emily's skill of creating stories and poetry and rely on interpreting the words of others instead. Through these artists and particularly through Ilse Burnley, Emily's best friend and an actress, Montgomery shows that an education in the field of written art does not always produce a deep understanding of it. Journalism, acting, and editing others' works is depicted as inferior to creating words of one's own. The third group, the fake artists, represents people who use art to gain fame and fortune or simply respect from others, instead of achieving higher goals. For the fake artists, art is not a value in itself like it is for Emily.

Montgomery's Romantic ideals affected the way in which she described Emily as a true artist. Emily's love for nature and words, her sensitivity and deep knowledge of other people's emotions and thoughts mark her as a true artist after the Wordsworthian ideals. The depiction of Emily as an artist is often idealized and Montgomery clearly thinks Emily is above the other people in her community. Emily's success despite the lack of both education and reading material shows Montgomery's ideal that an artist should write out of sheer inspiration and talent, and that even those with better opportunities for making a career – like Janet Royal, for example – are not privileged compared to a truly talented artist who can create her own atmosphere and materials. However, she still needs to work hard to achieve success.

Teddy Kent is the only character whose artistry rises to the level of Emily's. Their connection is established through a shared ambition and mutual respect. They also inspire each other, as Teddy's most famous work is based on a drawing of Emily's face and Emily's best novel is based on an idea she gets from Teddy. Some critics have wanted to see Emily's marriage to Teddy as a failure to live as an independent female author, but I agree with Epperly's reading that Emily's love for Teddy serves as an inspiration to her art and ultimately allows for her to have a career of her own. The fact that Emily begins her career before the marriage speaks for this view. The supernatural visions that bring Emily and Teddy together also serve to liberate her from the possessive love of Dean Priest, and this also allows for her to continue writing and publish her first novel. The supernatural powers Emily has are tightly connected with her creativity, so their involvement in her marriage to Teddy point to a reading where art and love for Teddy are connected for Emily.

The depiction of Emily as a female artist who succeeds despite the expectations of her community is quite clear in my reading. However, some readers have found Emily

a disappointing role model, because she ultimately marries and stays in the domestic sphere. Montgomery had to write within the constraints of the romance novel genre and was not able to make Emily a character who completely rejects everyone's expectations and lives for herself. However, she made Emily a character who succeeds in her career despite the hostile attitude of her family and community, and ultimately breaks free from the power of Dean Priest's judgement of her work.

Dean Priest is the most obvious example of an oppressing male critic in the text. However, he also feeds Emily's talent by giving her reading materials and knowledge of the world that she would otherwise lack. As Emily grows up, Dean's influence becomes more and more important and his attitude on her work more and more discouraging. Emily's trust in his judgement shows the difficulty of a young female author to trust her own voice and talent as an author. Dean's condescending attitude is foreshadowed with the character of Father Cassidy, who mocks Emily's writing, but also encourages her to go on. Emily's teacher Mr Carpenter is her most important mentor, who both encourages her and challenges her to find her own voice as an author and stay true to it. Without Mr Carpenter, Emily would lack an important critic; without Dean, she would lack knowledge of the world and classical literature. The male critics, like the Canadian village environment, act to both nourish her work and suffocate her faith in herself.

Emily's success as a female author, then, requires four things: innate talent, hard work, a sense of belonging to her Canadian community, and faith in her own work. Throughout the trilogy, Emily struggles against both her own insecurities and the hostile attitudes from her society, family, and male critics. In the end, she is able to conquer them and be taken seriously as an artist.

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