

impression conveyed by the body of the book that Quigley is more comfortable describing novels than discussing their philosophical and literary dimensions. Despite their importance in shaping English- and French-Canadian conceptions of the child, neither Freud or Sade is so much as mentioned by Professor Quigley, and when a gloss on the symbol of the horse in Anne Hébert's *Le Torrent* is required it comes from Jung by way of J.E. Cirlot (33). This lack of intellectual and critical sophistication sometimes draws *The child hero in the Canadian novel* towards banality, but it also serves as another indication that Professor Quigley's book is written from the heart as well as the mind.

With its striking cover from Len Gibbs' *Tadpoles*, *The child hero in the Canadian novel* is an attractive book whose clear style is matched by an equally readable typeface. It contains a useful "Bibliography" and a helpful "Index," as well as a thoughtful appendix on "French-Canadian novels in English translation."

D.M.R. Bentley is a professor of English at The University of Western Ontario. He has published widely in the fields of Victorian and Canadian literature, most recently on Dante Gabriel Rossetti in the Dalhousie review and Thomas Chandler Haliburton in Canadian poetry: Studies, documents, reviews.

A SUCCESSFUL MONTGOMERY

L.M. Montgomery. Genevieve Wiggins. Twayne's World Authors Series. New York: Twayne Publishers, 1992. 191 pp., cloth. ISBN 0-8057-3980-7.

It is certainly a mark of Montgomery's continuing popularity and growing critical reputation that Genevieve Wiggins' is the third full-length study of Montgomery's writing to appear in two years: one from Sweden (*A life and its mirrors: a feminist reading of L.M. Montgomery's fiction*, Gabriella Ahmanson), one from Canada (*The fragrance of sweet-grass: L.M. Montgomery's heroines and the pursuit of romance*, Elizabeth Rollins Epperly), and now one from the U.S. As a volume in the Children's Literature section of the Twayne World Authors Series, Wiggins' study is meant to examine Montgomery's writing in light of other successful children's writers' works and to give a brief account of the author's life and accomplishments. Wiggins offers a fair summary of Montgomery's life and a compact discussion of Montgomery's twenty novels, seven volumes of short stories, and two volumes of verse. She draws conscientiously and sensitively from Montgomery's letters, journals, and autobiographical *Alpine path* and gives a clear overview of the criticism. This is a good, solid piece of work and will be invaluable to those wanting a guide to Montgomery studies up to 1990.

I am, however, disappointed that Wiggins' study may help to perpetuate the view of Montgomery as a victim of an "obsessive desire to please" (171).

Montgomery's desire was to reap the benefits of success, not necessarily to please; there is a significant difference. The truth is that Montgomery was not a gambler: she conformed outwardly to social pressures and dictates, and chose to write within the safe and respectable conventions of children's fiction and domestic romance. She may have been obsessed with success—and may have had an insecure, semi-orphaned child's determination to have material comfort—but the conscious compromises for this material success are a long way from the pathetic "desire to please [that] prompted her to write what she believed would gain the approval of her relatives, her associates, her husband's parishioners, her editors, and her reading public" (171).

Montgomery's novels still live because she often subverted cultural codes even while apparently endorsing them. Wiggins does just mention the "subversive" (27) in *Anne of Green Gables*, but by the time she gets to the Emily books—that trilogy rich with inversion and subversion of genre—Wiggins subordinates discussion of the power and wry irony behind the very existence of Emily to this conventional judgment: "Perhaps Emily continued to write only to please herself, but her creator too often bowed to public taste and the requests of editors" (103). Surely the point is that Emily does exist and through her Montgomery questions herself and the reader.

Since the two critical books immediately preceding Wiggins' (and unfortunately unavailable to her while she was writing hers) examine in detail both feminism and romance in Montgomery's novels and treat her as a writer for adults as well as children, Wiggins' study may not persuade readers to see a disempowered "pleasing" Montgomery.

Except for this one thread, pulled out and tied into an unfortunately conspicuous bow in the Afterword, Wiggins' book is often shrewd and enjoyable. I would cheerfully hand this volume to students, to colleagues, and to friends, with this request: "Begin here; then, let's talk."

Elizabeth R. Epperly teaches English at the University of Prince Edward Island. Her most recent book is *The fragrance of sweet-grass: L.M. Montgomery's heroines and the pursuit of romance* (University of Toronto Press, 1992). She is currently helping to organize the L.M. Montgomery Institute at U.P.E.I.