escape. "I was free from my bonds and torments and roamed in an ideal world" she says of her time at her desk, "coming back to reality at the end of my three hour's 'stint' with renewed courage and 'grit'" (*Selected journals*, III, 168). Of her journals she writes, "When I feel that I have come to 'the end of my rope' I write it here—and find at the close of writing that the rope has lengthened a little and I can go on" (170).

Montgomery's situation naturally presents itself as a chapter in the history of twentieth-century women. She and her heroines are liberated enough to rebel in spirit, but do not feel free to bolt from real-life conventions. Like some of the later novels, the journals suggest that as Montgomery aged she became socially conservative, sometimes finding comfort, almost fulfillment, in the routines of housekeeping. "I am keeping one eye on my writing and the other on the filling for my lemon pie" (18). But when she writes "sometimes it seems to me as if my life now were little else than a search for anodynes" (209), she is also hinting at a growing reliance on chemical opiates, mostly sleeping pills. Future volumes of the journals, and/or the official biography, will reveal the degree to which Montgomery shortened her life as a result of drug dependency. When we think of male authors whose messed-up lives also contrast with their beautiful literary creations we remember that the problems of the artistic spirit are not necessarily gender-based.

The selected journals come with very good introductions and critical notes by their highly-professional editors, one of whom is writing the Montgomery biography. There is little doubt that L.M. Montgomery pre-edited her diaries for literary effect and, possibly, for personal aggrandizement (she sometimes comes across as the all-knowing innocent victim surrounded by boors and dolts). Diarists necessarily distort reality. The webs of relationships between Montgomery's novels, her journals, and the life she really lived will bear much more critical scrutiny. There was more to Lucy Maud Montgomery than most readers and latter-day "fans" would suspect. If you like the novels, you'll have trouble putting the journals down.

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NODELMAN'S FIRST NOVEL

The same place but different. Perry Nodelman. Douglas and McIntyre, 1993. 159 pp., $7.95 paper. ISBN 0-88899-175-4.

Children forced to rely on their own untried and limited resources plus unexpected departures from an ordinary world of cause and effect are two devices regularly used by authors of children's literature to get things moving. Perry Nodelman in *The same place but different* shows that he is well aware of these conventional story-telling elements. In his novel set in Winnipeg (the ordinary)

and in the realm of the Strangers (the extraordinary—a realm that one reaches by passing through a storm sewer outlet in Winnipeg's Churchill Drive Park) we witness the remarkable adventures of Johnny Nesbit, an ordinary enough teenager who turns into a modern-day righter of wrongs, a slayer-of-dragons type called upon to (1) re-establish harmony in his family by retrieving his sister Andrea from the Strangers and driving out the changeling; (2) destroy the Hunter thereby releasing the Queen of the Strangers from her bondage; (3) release Mr. Rhymer from his incarceration in the world of Winnipeg (the ordinary) so that he can return to the land of the Strangers to be re-united with his Queen, herself recently set free by Johnny's actions.

These major challenges to Johnny's mettle are clearly significant, especially when we learn early in the novel that his schoolmates are contemptuous of him because of his refusal to play such machismo male sports as hockey. But Johnny is made of better stuff than his erstwhile jock buddies. Lacking his colleagues' interest in crushing body-checks, he nevertheless proves his superiority by clever use of his intelligence and wit to out-manoeuvre forces which, ostensibly at least, are far superior to him both physically and from the point of view of magical powers. Initially, he is assisted in his endeavours by a supportive—if rather peculiar and other-worldly—mate called Liam Green, but when this friend suddenly abandons him, Johnny is left entirely on his own to resolve the enormous challenges which will finally lead to the release of his sister from the world of the Strangers.

Nodelman writes an exciting enough story and is clearly aware of the various traditions from which he draws a good deal of his material. But having said this, I have to wonder to what extent he shows much originality in molding and shaping the traditional material with which he works. The broad strokes of Johnny Nesbit's life and adventures are like those of a myriad of other children's stories we have read. However, what saves the novel from becoming just one more fantasy-adventure children's tale is Nodelman's skilful use of language to enliven Johnny's character and to make him a character worthy of getting to know. Even though we can anticipate Johnny's adventures before he confronts them himself, we are encouraged to read on not to discover the outcome of his adventures but rather to delight in Johnny's own charming articulation of these experiences as he learns to recognize the existence of worlds within worlds.

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