Re-visioning ***Emily of New Moon****: Family Melodrama for the Nation*

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Résumé: *L'article analyse la problématique de l'adaptation télévisuelle de l'oeuvre littéraire de L.M. Montgomery dans le contexte de l'élaboration de la culture nationale au Canada anglais: dans l'ensemble, les adaptations pour la télévision valorisent cet écrivain en tant que figure d'une culture populaire compatible avec la perception actuelle de l'identité canadienne.*

Summary: *Drawing on theories of culture, communication, nation and melodrama, this essay engages the problematic of adaptation from the literary to the televisual within the context of contemporary national culture. The paper suggests that producers of a contemporary national culture work to rehabilitate L.M. Montgomery as a national popular culture icon compatible with late-twentieth century Canadian imaginings of nation.*

Move over Anne, Emily has arrived. While images of the eponymous character of Lucy Maud Montgomery's *Anne of Green Gables* are impressed upon Prince Edward Island license plates, and while Anne is described by Canadian pop culture gurus Geoff Pevere and Greig Dymond as a Canadian "Mickey Mouse" at the nexus of a multimillion-dollar tourist trade, over the past year Emily Byrd Starr has received more media attention than her red-haired counterpart (Pevere and Dymond 13). The reason for this interest is, of course, the most recent commodification of Montgomery's work, the $13 million, thirteen-episode, Salter Street/CINAR co-production of the 1925 novel *Emily of New Moon*[1] broadcast on CBC from January to April of 1998. Anne herself has been the subject of two American-made feature films (1919, 1934) and in 1985, a four-hour CBC television adaptation viewed by just under six million Canadians (Pevere and Dymond 13). The success of Prince Edward Island as an international tourist destination is due largely to the attractions of Anne Shirley and Montgomery's global readership. Japanese travel agencies alone book 10,000 trips to the island annually (13). Given the economic viability

of Montgomery's characters for the province, it is not surprising that the provincial government invested $1.9 million in the production of *Emily of New Moon*. PEI Minister of Economic Development and Tourism Wes MacAleer suggests that the series could generate up to $15 million in jobs and tourism revenue.[2] Drawing an average audience of 843,000 viewers per episode, *Emily of New Moon* was the only one of ten new CBC shows to capture an average audience of more than 500,000.[3] With this kind of success, and a second season of *Emily* in post-production, it will not be long before Emily dolls are stocked alongside Anne dolls in the tourist shops of Charlottetown.[4]

However, the series was not a success for devoted Montgomery readers who have a strong identification with the *Emily* books, as this excerpt from disgruntled viewer Barbara Lord's letter to the *Globe and Mail* indicates:

> Are there others who share my outrage at the travesty the writers have made of the memorable characters created by Lucy Maud? New ones have been introduced and old ones completely altered. Goodness knows what nonsense is to come. (D7)

Lord touches on the crux of my present analysis, the problematic of adaptation, the translation of a literary source text into a visual medium, the political re-visioning of a melodramatic novel into a national televisual melodrama. National cultures are dependent upon the circulation of national icons like Montgomery; however, Montgomery's caricatures of Irish difference in the *Emily* books and her absenting of Micmacs from the social terrain of the trilogy conflicts with contemporary imaginings of a racially diversified nation. Therefore, producers of a contemporary national culture — Salter Street/CINAR — work to rehabilitate the national icon so that it is compatible with late twentieth-century Canadian imaginings of nation, hence the alterations that outrage Lord.

Lord is not alone. The informal response of Montgomery scholars to the series has not been overwhelmingly positive. Privately, some complain about the televised version's lack of subtlety, and its indulgence in melodramatic excesses, "melodramatic" here being used not as a critical term but as a pejorative, marking "an exaggerated rise-and-fall pattern in human actions and emotional responses, a from-the-sublime-to-the-ridiculous movement" (Elaesser 521).[5] I discussed the challenge of adaptation with the series' supervising producer and main writer, Marlene Matthews, as she was shooting the second series and months before the first series went to air. Matthews is negotiating at least two dynamics: translation from the written word to the televisual sign, and her desire to re-vision Montgomery's late nineteenth-century story for a late twentieth-century Canadian audience.[6] In response to my questions about adaptation, and difference from the source text, Matthews outlines one of the practical problems she encountered:

> There's never enough in a novel to sustain thirteen hours of television, and so far we've done twenty-six hours; so you do have to take certain liberties, and the key is to be true to the spirit of the author.

What is striking about Matthews's comments is the desire to provide authenticity for the viewer, something Lord feels is missing from the production. Borrowing from Walter Benjamin's argument for linguistic translation, I would suggest that the act of bridging a gap between two seemingly incommensurable systems, whether linguistic, or visual, necessarily creates a new text (73). Benjamin says of the translation: "For in its afterlife — which could not be called that if it were not a transformation and a renewal of something living — the original undergoes a change" (73). Now, in translating across the linguistic screen of conceptual apprehension to the direct perception of the moving image, in exchanging the linguistic trope for the televisual sign, shifts in plot and inventions of character are affected by Matthews in the name of historical authenticity.[7] In an effort to map the processes of adaptation at work here, I would like to begin by examining the technical and artistic challenge of translating a written narrative about the development of a writer into a visual and spoken narrative for television. The second part of my discussion will take up Matthews's attempts to re-vision the books as a national televisual family melodrama.

The novels' dominant trope signifying Emily's intense and visionary relationship to the spiritual and imaginative realms is the "flash." As Montgomery constructs it, the flash permits Emily in her waking hours fleeting access to "a world of wonderful beauty," "an enchanting realm beyond" (7). To communicate this concept, Matthews cannot draw solely on linguistic tropes like Montgomery:

> Between [the world of wonderful beauty] and herself hung only a thin curtain; she could never draw the curtain aside — but sometimes, just for a moment, a wind fluttered it and then it was as if she caught a glimpse of the enchanting realm beyond — only a glimpse — and heard a note of unearthly music. (7)

Instead, from the source material she must create a televisual code that transmits a sense of this experience to the viewer. Matthews sets about this task by collapsing the closely related, but separate second-sight episodes Emily experiences while sleeping or during illness into the "flash" experiences. All second-sight and flash episodes in the television series are colour coded. As Matthews explains,

> the flash takes form in Emily's visions and what we've done there is that when she sees, when she has this moment of inspiration, and sees something that others don't see, we will see it on the screen as a vision of hers and we differentiate it from real life by showing these visions in primary colours so that they're a hyped reality.

This exemplifies what I have been referring to as a televisual code. Matthews's sustained use of the flash code increases the probability that it will be decoded similarly by different receivers (Fiske and Hartley 63).

In addition to technical televisual codes, such as the flash code, televisual representation is also dependent upon the transmission of cultural codes such as dress, language, and economics that establish the norms and conventions of a given society. Our perception of reality is, as John Fiske and John Hartley postulate, "always mediated through the codes with which our culture organizes it, categorizes its significant elements or semes into paradigms" (65-66). For example, the pregnancy of a single woman in North-American white invader-settler culture has been coded historically as a spectre of shame, through the linguistic marker of "fallen woman" and through the economic deprivation and social marginalization of such women. Matthews elects to communicate this historical and gendered reality in the story of Maida Flynn, a character and scenario absent from Montgomery's books. In the television episode entitled "Falling Angels," Maida is shunned by polite society, abandoned by her lover, fired from her job and expelled from her father's home because of her pregnancy.

The television series must also communicate the writing process, an activity coded historically as a vocation for men and, as the influential work of Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar (1979) indicates, a pathology for women. While Montgomery inserts excerpts from Emily's writing into the novels, complete with spelling errors, purple prose, and trial and error searches for the right turn of phrase, Matthews is dependent on the codes of television to signify the metamorphoses of Emily's innermost thoughts into the written word. A medium shot of Emily writing cuts to a close up of the pen inscribing letters onto paper, and is accompanied by a voice-over track of what is being transferred to the page; this becomes the televisual code for literary production in the CBC series. At the beginning and end of every episode Emily is seen and heard "writing" in her journal. This device marks another "liberty" taken with the novels or another translation from the novels to the small screen. In the novels, Emily, although she writes letters to her deceased father, does not start keeping a diary until the end of *Emily of New Moon*. However, in the series, Matthews sustains the device of Emily writing to her father "on the road to heaven," for a very long time as a "way for the audience to know [Emily's] inner thoughts." The act of writing is central to both the novels and the television series; writing facilitates Emily's self-expression and empowerment. Initially, it is a covert practice that must be hidden from Elizabeth Murray who seeks to withhold the pen from Emily as a means of socializing her charge. A single woman in a man's world, Elizabeth has internalized patriarchal values, the dominant phallocentric Presbyterian codes of what it means to be a socially acceptable girl/woman in nineteenth-century Prince Edward Island. Withholding the pen from woman is tantamount to denying woman access to knowledge, and communication; it is an action perpetuating inequity. Elizabeth acts as an agent of the patriarchy to ensure

From the Salter Street/CINAR co-production of ***Emily of New Moon****, with Martha MacIsaac as Emily, Susan Clark as Elizabeth, Sheila McCarthy as Laura and Stephen McHattie as Jimmy*

that Emily is contained within the status quo, to ensure that Emily becomes a "lady" who will not "waste" her time on any activity that is not utilitarian and that might mark her difference from mainstream society. However, when she sees that Emily can earn money through her work, Elizabeth softens.

Although three men — Douglas Starr, Jimmy Murray and Mr. Carpenter — are instrumental in inspiring and supporting Emily's literary endeavours, Starr and Carpenter are both progressives, and perceived as socially unacceptable to the Murrays, while Jimmy is regarded by the community at large as a mental defective. These men exist outside the Presbyterian patriarchy as Wallace Murray represents it in the novels and the series. As the foregoing illustrates, representations of life in the novel and television are indeed mediated through cultural codes, in these cases the cultural value assigned to gender and other formations of social difference by a dominant social group. The television series and the novel may be read profitably through the genre of the family melodrama, of which gender, generational and cultural conflict are but three characteristics (Gledhill, "An Investigation" 9, 37).

Montgomery's *Emily* novels are written in the melodramatic tradition of the late nineteenth century. Melodrama is a large and unwieldy category, its roots in Greek tragedy, the bourgeois sentimental novel, Italian opera and Victorian stage melodrama contribute to what Christine Gledhill describes as the confusion surrounding its generic definition (Gledhill,

"Melodrama" 73). Traditionally, melodramatic plots revolve around the powerless and their victimization by a corrupt social system as this is represented through family relationships (Elsaesser 514-515). In Thomas Elsaesser's conceptualization of melodrama, Charles Dickens' *Oliver Twist* and Victor Hugo's *Les Misérables* are paradigmatic texts. The story of orphaned Emily's life reflects this paradigm to a limited degree; however, the realpolitik of earlier melodramas by Dickens and Hugo is diluted in Montgomery, replaced by the struggles of an orphan against a repressive family and community regime. Martha Vicinus's characterization of the melodrama as a genre that "always sides with the powerless" (qtd. in Gledhill, "Melodrama" 14) needs to be qualified with reference to Emily.

As a white female orphan under the rule of New Moon, Emily's power is restricted; however, a position of powerlessness is compromised by the social standing of her Murray family as part of a landholding Presbyterian elite. Emily's powerlessness is relative to the socioeconomic position of Perry Miller in the novels and television series, and Little Fox, the Micmac boy invented for the television series. However, Montgomery's and Matthews's figuring of Emily as an outsider to the Blair Water community by virtue of her artistic sensibility, writing, and orphan status grants her access to, and community with other outsiders, such as Ilse, Perry, and Lofty John in the novel and Father Ducharme, Maida Flynn and Little Fox in the television series. A central cultural paradigm of the nineteenth century (5), the melodrama contributed to what Gledhill refers to as the "institutional and aesthetic formation of 'the popular'" (36), and thus was a logical choice for Montgomery whose nostalgic representations of the late nineteenth century became synonymous with middlebrow popular culture. Part of this aesthetic formation was the family melodrama, which was coded through the home, family relations, moral values, romance and fantasy, all essential ingredients in Montgomery's trilogy.

As Susan Hayward notes, in melodrama the family becomes the site of patriarchy and capital and therefore reproduces them (200). I have already discussed how the matriarchal Aunt Elizabeth reproduces patriarchy in the reconstituted family structure formed by herself, Laura, Jimmy and Emily. The bourgeois ideology of the Murrays is pronounced in Elizabeth's interactions with the working classes of Stovepipe Town as represented by Perry Miller, and the economics of Emily's welfare. Elizabeth, Ruth and Wallace Murray ensure that she is aware of the cost of maintaining her from the very beginning of the first novel. In the television series the best example of reproducing patriarchy and capital in the family is the Maida Flynn episode I referred to earlier where patriarchy and capital work together to forge mutually agreeable constructions of woman and woman as labour. When her pregnancy contravenes their image of woman, Wallace Murray, the father of Maida's lover, and the owner of the fishery where she works, fires her,

and her own father expels her from his house. Importantly, all of these elements place the novels and the television series squarely in the domain of the popular melodrama, an aesthetic that "facilitates conflict and negotiation between cultural identities" (Gledhill 37).

This conflict and negotiation between cultural identities is of course present in the novel in Murray and Blair Water society's interactions with working-class Perry Miller, and Irish Roman Catholic Lofty John. However, Matthews's re-visioning of Montgomery focuses on this element of melodrama as a coordinate for transforming Montgomery's source text into a more diverse and inclusive narrative of Canadian nation. For as Gledhill argues:

> melodrama only has power on the premise of a recognizable, socially constructed world. As the terms of this world shift so must the recognition of its changing audiences be re-solicited. As melodrama leaves the nineteenth century behind, whose moral outlook it materialised, these two levels diverge, and it becomes a site of struggle between atavistic symbols and the discourses that reclaim them for new constructions of reality. (37)

Re-soliciting the audience with a recognizable socially constructed world is precisely what Matthews is attempting. She rewrites the cultural differences Montgomery inscribed in the 1925 source text, in a script that engages the atavistic symbols of Roman Catholic, Irish, French-Canadian, and Micmac cultures as these conflict with the normative category of white Anglo-Celtic Protestant cultural hegemony. This conflict is structured by a camera eye that would re-vision it through a politics of difference and national pluralism, framing the cultural moment of the series' production in 1996. Like all historical novels or films, the CBC series reformulates the past, specifically Montgomery's representation of a Canadian past, based on present concerns about the injustices suffered by groups read by the dominant as other to the nation.[9] The television adaptation constitutes a melodramatic narration of nation as a family, an ideological allegory that would sew into the cultural fabric of the nation those who have been excluded from an historically white Protestant fictive ethnicity that came to signify Canada in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In his conceptualization of melodrama, Elsaesser explores this allegorical aspect of the genre that involves tailoring "ideological conflicts into emotionally charged family situations" (516).

Fiske's and Hartley's work on the relationship between the communicator of television's communicated message and the audience is useful in understanding the national inflection of the televisual *Emily*. Drawing on Umberto Eco's concept of aberrant decoding in mass media, that is the slim possibility of professional encoders like Matthews and her team of writers being decoded as intended by an undifferentiated mass audience, Fiske and Hartley argue that

> this very characteristic of the television communication imposes a discipline on the encoders which ensures that their messages are in touch with the central meaning systems of the culture, and that the codes in which the message is transmitted are widely available. (81)

Matthews taps into the central meaning systems of the culture by referencing the very debates about differences from a national identity — French-Canadian nationalism and Native land claims — that have become the dominant codes for Canadian nation, as these contemporary debates are figured, abstractly, in the characters of French-Canadian Father Ducharme, and Micmac Little Fox. Moreover, the significance of the CBC as a national broadcaster of the series and ideological state apparatus should not be underestimated. The CBC has a long history of representing Canada to Canadians, and as Richard Collins notes "since 1968 television drama has been defined as the strategic position on which the future of Canada's nationhood turns" (42).[11] Despite the problematic claim of such a sweeping statement, the nationalist thrust of the 1968 Broadcasting Act, and subsequent debates over Canadian content indicate that Canadian nation has, in part, been staked on the ability to represent the nation to the nation.[12] As a broadcasting institution that communicates the message of a television drama like *Emily*, the CBC is a transmitter of Canadian culture, or of what Raymond Williams would call "the *signifying system* through which a social order is communicated, reproduced, experienced and explored" (13).

I would like to focus on the processes of adaptation that render the television series an overt attempt to narrate the nation. In her representation of Irish Catholic difference, Montgomery is attempting to reproduce and explore a Canadian social order for her readers to experience. Irish Roman Catholics Lofty John Sullivan and Father Cassidy mark an ethnic and cultural difference to and a conflict with the hegemony of Anglo-Celtic Presbyterian society in the novel *Emily of New Moon*. The source text creates a fifty-year feud between the Scots-Presbyterian Murrays and the Irish-Catholic Sullivans over land purchased legally from Archibald Murray by Mike Sullivan, Lofty John's father. Due to a falling out between the two patriarchs, the families are not on friendly terms; Elizabeth Murray attempts to buy back the land, and Lofty John Sullivan refuses to sell it "for spite" (66). Emily describes Lofty John as "an enemy to my family" (130). The enmity between both families reaches a crisis point when Lofty John plays a cruel joke on Emily; he tells her that an apple she stole from him and ate, was poisoned. In response to Elizabeth's disciplining of him for this incident, Lofty John vows to cut down every tree on his tract of land that borders New Moon. Knowing that Sullivan is a devout Catholic, Emily visits the local Irish priest, Father Cassidy, and asks him to intercede. Despite her culturally-constructed anxieties about Catholicism and priests, Emily has a successful meeting with Cassidy who agrees to assist her. In the process she learns that no "mysteri-

ous ceremonies" are required for a meeting with a priest, nor is there anything "alarming or uncanny" about his abode or person (193). As much as Montgomery appears to be demystifying the spectre of Irish Roman Catholicism as it is constructed by its other, Scots-Presbyterianism, her chapter title "A Daughter of Eve" contextualizes Lofty John as the evil Irish Catholic serpent whose apple tempts the innocent Protestant Eve/Emily, and in this way reinscribes a prejudicial representation of Irish Catholics. Similarly, Montgomery's Father Cassidy is a figure of fun, a walking and talking stereotype or stage Irishman who blathers on about leprechauns and fairies to the delight of Emily (197). While this representation of Cassidy assists Montgomery in establishing an instant and magical rapport between the priest and the romantic Emily, it is a signification dependent upon a flattening out of Irishness into a cliché.

Although what Homi Bhabha refers to as the "ambivalent, and vacillating representation" of the nation's ethnography is visible in Montgomery's *Emily* books, Matthews's adaptation of Montgomery attempts to reveal "the possibility of other narratives of the people and their difference" (300). Exploiting the codes of melodrama, Jeremy Hole, a writer working under Matthews' supervision, makes a radical and significant departure from the source text. In Episode Five, entitled "Paradise Lost," the dispute between Lofty John and the Murrays is translated from interfamily rivalry to intrafamily rivalry: it is about legitimacy and contested membership in the family. Whereas Montgomery's source text figures the Sullivans and the Murrays as two discreet entities, genetically and culturally, Hole's script rewrites Lofty John as the illegitimate progeny of an adulterous affair between Lally Malloy and Alexander Murray. Here, Lofty John is given five acres of land by the Murrays to silence the story of his, in their view, scandalous relationship to their family. In Hole's and Matthews's hands the narrative shifts to become a story about difference in, and expulsion from the family, remedied by a healing acceptance of difference and movement towards an inclusion in the family and community. Hole's script underlines the pejorative construction of Irish Catholic difference that is at work in the Murray family and in the larger community of Blair Water. Laura Murray describes Lofty John as a "crazy old papist" who "worships false Gods and graven images" and, as Emily reports, school children say that he is "Old Nick, the Devil himself" ("Paradise Lost").

Similar to Montgomery's novel, Matthews and Hole represent the anxieties about and prejudices towards Catholicism in Emily's approach to the church and her visit with the priest. However, Hole and Matthews must translate the linguistic signs of Emily's prejudice into televisual signs. Significantly, this translation process shifts the message communicated in the book to a message in the CBC series that reveals how a young and imaginative mind internalizes and further exaggerates distorted social constructions

of otherness and how these fantasies are shattered. Subjective camera shots of her approach to and entry into the Catholic church grant the viewer agency to Emily's perspective. The exterior of the church is shown from a low-angled long shot, giving the impression of it looming up before the small figure of Emily. A soundtrack of sinister string music, tolling bells, and Latin chants accompanies a cut from the exterior to a subjective camera shot of what Emily sees when she enters the building. Catholic difference, as Emily has internalized it, is transmitted to the viewer through the televisual *mise en scene* of lighting, costumes and props. Emily's introjection of the nineteenth-century Gothic is projected onto Catholicism. Through subjective camera we see a darkened church, lit only by candles. The centre aisle is lined with hooded Franciscans waving incense burners, and as Emily travels down the aisle she collides with a statue of Mary that cries a tear of blood. Emily's fantasy is shattered by the voice of the priest whom she first perceives as one of the hooded Franciscans. The disruption of Emily's fantasy of difference is signalled by a cut from the image of the bleeding Virgin in the candlelit church to a low angled long shot of Emily and the priest in a light-filled white interior of the same building, sans incense-burning Franciscans, bleeding icons, and threatening sound track. In the television adaptation, Roman Catholicism is demystified by the priest's explanation of his religion in terms comprehensible to Emily: "The Pope is God's vicar on earth, and I am God's vicar in Blair Water" ("Paradise Lost"). Furthermore, the adaptation avoids the reinscription of Irish stereotypes present in the novel by substituting a French-Canadian priest, Father Ducharme, for the novel's Irish Father Cassidy. In avoiding the Irish stereotypes of the novel by inserting a French-Canadian priest, the adaptation elides the Irish prejudice of the source text and thus performs the political work of making Montgomery more consumable as a national icon compatible with the nation's late twentieth-century diversity and official policy of multiculturalism.

This substitution is central to the narrating of nation that I am arguing is taken up through the processes of adaptation to the televisual medium. By representing a non-Anglo-Celtic element of Canadian cultural identity as part of the community the CBC series "opens up the possibility of other narratives of the people and their difference" (Bhabha 300). Ducharme becomes more of a presence in the television version than Cassidy is in the source text. Not only does Ducharme attempt to talk to Lofty John, this French-Canadian becomes a mediator between the warring factions of the Anglo-Celtic family, paying a visit to New Moon and lobbying Elizabeth for the "protection of Lofty John's interests" ("Paradise Lost" 5). The Lofty John of the adaptation is going blind and accidentally sets fire to his barn. The entire New Moon household, alerted by Emily, rush out into the night to save Lofty John from the fire. Following the fire, Father Ducharme negotiates a deal with Elizabeth whereby the Murrays will farm Lofty John's land and donate

the revenue earned to his care in a Roman Catholic hospital. Ducharme mediates another crisis of illegitimacy in the Murray clan when Emily's cousin Oliver refuses to take responsibility for the pregnancy of Maida Flynn. Although Ducharme's intervention comes too late to integrate the "fallen" Maida back into the community, he ensures that Oliver accepts the baby into the Murray family as his own ("Falling Angels"). Despite the adaptation's attempts to integrate otherness into the national family, the role of mediator for different factions of an Anglo-Celtic family maintains Father Ducharme, and allegorically French Canada, as an outsider to the national family.

Perhaps the most striking evidence of Matthews' present re-visioning of a national past and transformation of the novel's negotiation of difference is the presence of the colonized other in the television program. The first episode, "Eye of Heaven," written by Marlene Matthews, introduces the Micmac character Little Fox into the adaptation, a character absent from the source text. Commenting on this aspect of the adaptation, Matthews explains:

> I felt that was important because the Micmacs were such an integral part of the fabric of the island and there was no mention of them in the novel, and then it occurred to me that if Douglas Starr was a teacher, Emily would have many of the same notions that he did about quality in the schools. And how Natives were treated in that period is a fact of life.

When Little Fox attempts to join classes at the local school house, he is beaten by the teacher, Mr. Morrison, who denigrates him as a dirty, nit-ridden "mangy little fox," projecting a white cultural construction of indigeneity onto the Aboriginal subject. He teaches his students that Aboriginal difference is synonymous with abjection and should be met with violence. Emily disrupts this lesson in colonial oppression by physically attacking the teacher who then turns his violence on her. Here we have contested membership to a larger national family, and an expulsion of First Nations from that community by the authoritarian sign of the teacher, standing in for the state. Following this incident, Little Fox and Emily become fast friends; she teaches him how to read and he teaches her the sweet grass ceremony. This cultural exchange could be read as assimilationist, with Emily acting as an agent for an education that would displace Micmac language, and values. However, the narrative preempts such an interpretation by having Little Fox depart to continue his education with his people. Emily's adaptation of the sweet grass ceremony to assist her father's recovery and later to beckon spirits to escort her father to heaven can be read as a healing acceptance of difference or alternatively as white appropriation of native culture diegetically by Emily, and extradiegetically by Matthews.

Although the addition of Little Fox to the televisual narrative is somewhat unstable as it risks exoticizing the aboriginal subject, it does attempt to facilitate a re-soliciting of a changing audience, and the shifting demographics

of nation by including other formations of difference outside of western European culture that are integral to any identification of a Canadian national narrative. However, non-Anglo-Celtic Canadians are being invited to identify as outsiders to the nation, as the others in the series are never part of the "family." Matthews's insertion of Little Fox also elides Montgomery's decision to absent the Micmacs — "an integral part of the fabric of the island" — from the *Emily* books. Moreover, the 1996 reformulation of the national past, while acknowledging the increasing autonomy of Aboriginal peoples in Little Fox's return to his culture also works to repress the horrors of residential schools that Little Fox is spared when he goes to learn from his people. With the insertion of Little Fox, the rehabilitation of Montgomery as a consumable national icon embracing French-Canadian and First Nations' differences is complete.

Matthews' re-visioning national televisual melodrama transmits an imagined community to a national television audience. Part of Matthews's work in adapting the novel for television is restoring what she perceives Montgomery removed from the social terrain — Micmacs, for example, and also the social conditions of women as these are referenced in the series by Maida Flynn's pregnancy and Laura Murray's addiction to laudanum. Speaking about the insertion of laudanum addiction into the adaptation, Matthews makes some telling comments about the influence pre-production research of the historical period had on the revisionist writing of the script:

> there are certain things we discovered in our research that would have to have been reflected if we're going to tell an honest story about what life is like at the time, and how women were treated medically was a very important factor.

Matthews's desire for a historical authenticity (acknowledging elements of the past that Montgomery chose not to negotiate) is in direct conflict with Barbara Lord's and Montgomery devotees' desire for a textual authenticity. Through her reworking of the melodramatic form and Montgomery's text Matthews tells a story that is self-consciously "national" in its inclusion of the two "founding nations" —French and Anglo Canadas — and the First Nations of Canada. This "national" story is also suffused with the ideological content of federal policy on national identity. Although not always successful, and despite a tendency to elide some historical truths in the process, the series' insertions of Little Fox and Father Ducharme reflect the 1988 Multiculturalism Act which recognizes and promotes "the understanding that multiculturalism is a fundamental characteristic of Canadian heritage and identity" (qtd. in Hutcheon and Richardson). Matthews works in the melodramatic tradition sketched out by Elsaesser where "ideological conflicts," manifest here in the layers of colonialism underpinned by French-Canadian and Native differences to Anglo-Celtic hegemony (the conflict of the colonized and the colonizers) are tailored "into emotionally charged family situations" (516).

Notes

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1 *Emily of New Moon* (1925) is the first novel in a trilogy that includes *Emily Climbs* (1925) and *Emily's Quest* (1927).

2 See Doucet.

3 See Atherton.

4 Linda Jackson of Salter Street productions informed me that an unlicensed Emily doll is already on the market.

5 As Christine Gledhill explains, melodrama has been conceived in "predominantly pejorative terms" from the turn of the century to the 1960s (5).

6 Unfortunately, due to time constraints, and CBC restrictions on accessing viewer mail, it was not possible to do a full-scale reception study of *Emily of New Moon*.

7 I am indebted to George Bluestone's discussion of the trope in language, and the limits of the novel and the film. See Bluestone (20).

8 For a more detailed discussion of the family and melodrama see Gledhill (12) and Hayward (200).

9 See Hayden White on historical pluralism/pan-textualism. White contends that

> for the pan-textualist, history appears either as a text subject to many different readings (like a novel, poem or play) or as an absent presence the nature of which is perceivable only by prior textualizations (documents and historical accounts) that must be read and rewritten, in response to present interests, concerns, desires, aspirations and the like. (485)

10 The term "fictive ethnicity" is Etienne Balibar's. Balibar argues that a nation does not possess an ethnic base naturally (96). On race, ethnicity and identity in Canada see Berger and McLaren.

11 Collins interrogates the validity of this commonly held belief, arguing that political institutions play a greater role than a national culture does in holding Canada together.

12 For a detailed discussion of the 1968 Broadcasting Act and its ramifications see Collins 66-104.

13 While these shifts in plot and inventions of character contribute to an ideological narrating of nation, they are also motivated by economics. If the series did not include a French Canadian in a recurring role, would French language CBC (Radio Canada) have been as quick to purchase the first thirteen episodes? Moreover, with sales of the series to over twenty international markets ranging from Denmark to Brunei, the production has to communicate Canada to a global audience through codes that are mutually agreed upon as constituting Canada, like the historically recognizable co-ordinates of French, Anglo and Native as markers of Canadian nation.

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