

Reviews / Comptes rendus

An Annotated *Anne*: The History and the Dream

The Annotated Anne of Green Gables. Edited by Wendy E. Barry, Margaret Anne Doody, Mary E. Doody Jones. New York: Oxford UP, 1997. 496 pp. \$39.95 cloth. ISBN 0-19-510428-5.

First it was Alice, then Lolita, and now, some ninety years after her first appearance, the adventures of another little girl have been annotated. It will come as no surprise to those who have read *Anne of Green Gables*, loved *Anne* and, of late, studied *Anne* (written 1905-6; published 1908), that L.M. Montgomery's most famous novel should merit such annotated attentions, however modest and erroneous the author's description of her work as "such a simple little tale" (*SJ I* [Oct. 15, 1908] 339). The overnight success and massive popularity of this tale of an orphan girl who "wasn't a boy" left Montgomery as "surprised" as the three principal adult protagonists in the novel itself, and, as that success became sequel-demanding, even more often "properly horrified"—especially since, as Montgomery says in her journals, it was written with "a juvenile audience in view" (*SJ I* 339).

As Margaret Anne Doody's introduction to *The Annotated Anne of Green Gables* reminds modern readers, the classification of *Anne* as a children's book was not contemporaneous with its publication. It was originally marketed at and read by a general audience, including "grown-ups" conversant with E. Nesbit, Mark Twain, and Kenneth Grahame (*Anne* 11). Judging from the size and the price (\$39.95 Cdn), this annotated version is also aimed at adults, not first-time and younger readers.

In truth *Anne of Green Gables* partly owes its publication to that appeal to adults. After her manuscript had been rejected by four publishing firms, Montgomery consigned the novel to "an old hat box in the clothes room" (*SJ I* 331), but unearthing it during a later rummage and turning the pages once more, she found it "rather interesting" and, as she wrote to her pen-friend Ephraim Weber, was thus "not without hope that adults may like it a little."¹ Indeed Montgomery was much less modest in describing her "best-seller" to the budding writer Weber (to whom, as well as to her Scots friend George Boyd MacMillan, she was always ready to impart advice on literary work). "Yes," she wrote, "I took a great deal of pains with my style. I revised and re-wrote and altered words until I nearly bewildered myself."²

Montgomery's bewilderment, like as it is to Alice's confusion over words in Looking-glass land, is not her only link with Carroll.³ *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865) broke with the convention of moralism in children's fiction in favour of entertainment. When Alice tumbles into Wonderland she recalls such pious tales and the "unpleasant" things that happen to the children therein

"all because they would not remember the simple rules their friends had taught them" (*Alice* 31), only to find out that these rules have very little bearing at the bottom of a burrow or through the looking glass of her next adventure. Anne, too, encounters and adapts to a new set of rules in Avonlea, just as the good Mrs. Rachel comes to understand that "[t]here was no ciphering [Anne] out by the rules that worked with other children" (*Anne* 325). As we learn in the introduction to *The Annotated Anne of Green Gables*, Montgomery's first published novel was written as a reaction to her truly "first" novel, *A Golden Carol*, modelled on the Pansy books of Isabella Alden and "intended ... for a 'Sunday School Library book'" (*SJ* III 240). It was rejected by two religious publishing houses and Montgomery burned the manuscript. Prof. Doody rightly attributes much of *Anne's* success to the fact that "it is not a work of shallow optimism or conventional piety" (*Anne* 11). Rather, through its heroine, *Anne* questions the very Sunday-school values upon which such works as *A Golden Carol* were founded.

Montgomery admired juvenile fiction which was "'fun for fun's sake' — with no insidious moral hidden away in it like a spoonful of jam" (*SJ* I 263). The fun in *Anne of Green Gables*, demonstrative of Montgomery's skills in storytelling and humour, is essential to the book's popularity. This is especially important with regard to annotation. Martin Gardner in his introduction to *The Annotated Alice* cites G.K. Chesterton's warning on the dangers of *Alice* scholarship: "[s]he has not only been caught and made to do lessons; she has been forced to inflict lessons on others. Alice is now not only a schoolgirl but a schoolmistress" (*Alice* 7). The annotator must therefore tread carefully, making the necessary explanations, for as Gardner writes, "no joke is funny unless you see the point of it" (7) but avoiding the distortion of "fun for fun's sake" into fact for fact's sake. (In one way the annotators of *Anne* have their task made easier. The reader already knows from *The Later Adventures of Anne* — as Montgomery wanted the sequel to be known — that Miss Shirley makes a charming school teacher.) *The Annotated Anne of Green Gables* will therefore stand or fall by how much the annotators add to the fun and how palatable their lessons are.

Unlike *The Annotated Alice*, *The Annotated Anne* offers more than just text-side notations for those who, like Davy Keith, "want to know." Under the direction of three editors (Margaret Anne Doody, Mary E. Doody Jones and Wendy E. Barry) the text of *Anne of Green Gables* has been revised, adjusting variants between the published editions of 1908 (American edition), 1925 (British edition) and 1942 (Canadian edition) and largely remaining faithful to Montgomery's hand-written manuscript. A chronology of the major events in L.M. Montgomery's life precedes the text, along with Professor Doody's introduction which describes the genesis of *Anne* and offers a stimulating analysis of the novel, in part expanding on ideas raised in her recent work, *The True Story of the Novel*. The story is followed by textual notes and short articles on topics which establish the socio-historic and material culture background of *Anne*. Essays on the role of elocution and use of literary allusion in the novel benefit from the inclusion of recitation pieces and songs, many of which would be unknown to modern readers and difficult to trace. Some early reviews of the

book, from the North American and British press, are also appended.

As if to answer Alice's query of "what is the use of a book ... without pictures or conversations?" *The Annotated Anne* is illustrated lavishly throughout with scenes from the novel (as conceived by artists of 1908, 1931 and 1933) in addition to photographs (many from Montgomery's personal collection held in the University of Guelph archives) and drawings which correlate to historical details and geographic settings. In their Preface the editors state their hope that through these various means the reader "will get a good idea of the world that Anne lived in, as well as a greater understanding of the book's nature and meaning. Above all, we want the reader to enjoy the encounter with Anne herself, and to feel the realities of Montgomery's imagined Avonlea" (*Anne* vii). In total, *The Annotated Anne of Green Gables* runs to nearly 500 pages, yet, astonishingly, lacks an index. What should be one of its merits — the distribution of information around the book so that the reader is like Mrs. Rachel, not overburdened with perception — becomes a deficiency, with this material becoming difficult to retrieve on subsequent readings.

The wisest decision that the editors of *The Annotated Anne* make is not to construct a precise dating structure for events in the novel. As Virginia Careless notes in her review-article, "The Hijacking of 'Anne'" (a sane and informative work from which *The Annotated Anne* draws wisely and well), although datable events are part of the narrative structure in the Anne series, often they are contradictory and inconsistent. Actual events such as the Liberal election victory in 1896 (*Anne's House of Dreams*) or World War One (*Rilla of Ingleside*) give conflicting "birth-dates" for Anne, themselves at odds with other details, such as clothing, hairstyles and so forth. In any case, as *Anne of Green Gables* was written as an isolated work, incidents in the later books are not indicative of the time-scale in the first. Virginia Careless (along, she writes, with Parks Canada) situates the events of the first *Anne* book largely in the 1880s: the editors of *The Annotated Anne* have stretched this forward to embrace an imagined setting of the 1890s. Although, as we learn from the essay on orphans, Marilla Cuthbert's casual word-of-mouth application for a boy could legally have been made only anterior to 1882 (*Anne* 428), such details as the visit of Premier Macdonald (1890), the electrification of Charlottetown (1885), harness racing at the Charlottetown exhibition (1890) and the telephone system on PEI (acts in 1885 and 1894) justify them in so doing.

Although this policy is not specifically referred to by the editors, the ethos behind it informs both the text-side notes and appended essays. This methodology performs two functions. Firstly, as Professor Doody notes in her essay on "Homemade Artifacts and Home Life," *Anne of Green Gables* "carefully registers a world in transition" (*Anne* 441):

On the one hand, [Montgomery] understood well the delightful effect that descriptions of the simple life might have on readers. Yet even though she was truly recording the life that she herself knew at the time of writing, and had known in girlhood, that life was already partaking of the appeal of the pastoral (*Anne* 442).

Unlike some of the “regional idylls” with which her work is compared, or the fiction of the Scottish kailyard school which she admired and was influenced by, Montgomery’s novels are realistic in their documentation of change.⁴ The cultural clash which stimulates much of the narrative in *Anne of Green Gables* is symbolised in the first chapter by Matthew Cuthbert’s horse-and-cart drive to collect the orphan who has arrived by rail. The commercialisation of Anne all too often ignores this realism in favour of the simple and the pastoral, a pitfall *The Annotated Anne* avoids. Secondly this technique, in preventing Anne from becoming too real, keeps Montgomery’s artistry alive. *The Annotated Anne* marries factual detail with symbolic meaning, from the choice of flowers in the Barry garden (red flowers for passion, white for purity and death) to the dishes that grace the supper table at Green Gables. Thus the reader, unlike Marilla, is drawn from the safe concrete into the “dubious” paths of the abstract, and is all the better for it.

There is unfortunately a great deal too much of the dubious in the abstract of Montgomery’s life which starts this volume. Some of these mistakes may be production errors with events filed under the wrong years: *Anne of the Island* was completed in 1914, not 1913; Ewan’s bad mental relapse, the completion of *Emily Climbs* and commencement of *The Blue Castle* belong to 1924 not 1925; *Pat of Silver Bush* was published in 1933 not 1932; the “talkie” of *Anne of Green Gables* was made in 1934 not 1936. Others may be typographic. The dates given for Maud’s arrival in and departure from Prince Albert, the birth of David Bruce Montgomery, the election of 1917 and the church union vote of 1925 all conflict with those recorded in Montgomery’s journals. The chronology is confused over Montgomery’s stories commissioned by *The Delineator*, making it unclear that the stories requested in 1924 were not those completed in 1925 nor those the ones rejected in 1927. The 1924 stories were about Emily, the 1925 stories about Marigold and it was a further set of Marigold stories that were returned by the new and more fashionable *Delineator* editor. Maud’s friendship with her cousin Frede Campbell (b. 1883) did not develop in 1892 but in 1902, as Montgomery (b. 1874) clearly states in her journal (*SJ* II 302). Montgomery began recopying these journals in 1919, not in 1930. The significant event of that later year was Montgomery’s trip west which is omitted from this list, as is the death of her beloved cat “Good Luck” in 1937. Friendships relevant to *Anne of Green Gables* are ignored: Nate Lockhart who “warbled the bars in a popular school song — and looked straight at me when he sang it!” (unpublished journal entry, February 11, 1932), cf. *Anne* 218, and the “kindred spirits” (*SJ* I 36), Will and Laura Pritchard. (Anne’s phrase “creepy crawly presentiment” [*Anne* 339] owes its origin to Laura Pritchard [*SJ* I 55]).

To turn to the text itself, the first difference that the readers of *Anne* will note is the split of the familiar one-sentence first paragraph into two sentences, in line, as a textual note confirms, with the original MS punctuation. Further to this note, there is no commentary on what amounts to a massive and, dare I say, retrograde, change. Although the editors note that for many of the variants between editions, the 1925 British edition agrees with the manuscript, and therefore Montgomery was probably involved in correcting the British proofs,

they do not posit the conclusion that she had approved this change, for the first paragraph appears as one sentence in the 1925 edition, as in all others published. Indeed, as Elizabeth Epperly notes, the first paragraph is a “lengthy imitation of the twists of road and stream it describes and also a mimicry of Rachel Lynde’s relentless questionings and vigilance” (*Fragrance* 19). To break this paragraph disturbs that flow.

Thankfully most alterations to the text as previously published are those of punctuation and hyphenation. No explanation of Montgomery’s notation and revision system is given, despite the fact that this system is constantly referred to, although readers are pointed in the direction of Epperly’s essay, “Approaching the Montgomery Manuscripts.” Space and common-sense disallow a complete delineation of additions to the first draft of the text, and the editors do well to focus much of their attention on additions covering many of the phrases that we now most associate with Anne, illustrating the development of her character in Montgomery’s mind over the course of the novel’s composition.⁵ Sadly, for what should be a definitive edition of the text, a couple of errors have crept in: Anne’s soul is reportedly “wondering,” not, as it should be, “wandering” (*Anne* 59); and Mrs. Spencer becomes Mr. Spencer (*Anne* 94) mid-scene.

As one would expect, the text-side notations cover points of historical interest, relate the fictional incidents to Montgomery’s life and the Prince Edward Island setting and explain words and expressions which may now be unfamiliar.⁶ The vast majority of these notes are informative and well-researched and therefore require no further comment from a reviewer, save to point out that the editors have particularly excelled in identifying Montgomery’s legion of literary quotations and allusions, expanding on the late Rea Wilmshurst’s initial paper on the subject.⁷ However, it is unfortunately incumbent on the reviewer to point out errors and in so doing, I wish to stress that with some 450 notations, mistakes are few and far between.

In attributing Mrs. Lynde’s statement, “A body can get used to anything, even to being hanged, as the Irishman said” to a proverb “about immunity to pain being based on proximity to it” depending on “a familiar prejudicial belief that the Irish are particularly prone to criminal activity” (*Anne* 42, n.11), the editors are doubtless identifying a common prejudice, but not one that is being expressed in this case. Mrs. Rachel’s statement is not a proverb but an example of an *Irish Bull*, that is, an oxymoronic statement, as the presence of the *Irishman* indicates.⁸ A body couldn’t get used to being hanged for obvious reasons.

Annotations covering the visit of John A. Macdonald (misspelled “MacDonald” in the notes) are muddled. Firstly, the editors cite Virginia Careless as their authority for dating this visit, ignoring Montgomery’s meeting with the Premier in that year (*SJI* [Aug. 11, 1890] 25). They fail to mention that Montgomery was, by inclination and by birth, on Mrs. Lynde’s side in politics (or rather Mrs. Lynde was on hers!) until Montgomery cast her first vote in 1917, pro-conscription and thus anti-Laurier. This rather contends with their claim

that “[m]ost of the English-speaking people of PEI would have been on the Premier’s side (i.e. Conservative) in political matters” (Anne 199, n.1), as do election figures from PEI, which, although obviously not divided along linguistic lines, show a pretty even split between those voting Conservative and Liberal.⁹ The derivation of the term “Grit” (Anne 202, n.9) is correctly attributed to the phrase “clear grit” but with no indication that the Clear Grits were a political party who, along with the Parti Rouge and the Reformers, were gradually drawn under the “Liberal” banner. The slang term “Grit” for Liberal thus has an earlier genesis than 1884.

Anne’s reference to fictional characters who “lose their hair in fevers or sell it to get money for some good deed” (Anne 291, n.10) is rightly annotated by a reference to Jo March in *Little Women* and interestingly by one to Pat Gardiner in Montgomery’s *Pat of Silver Bush*. Just as right would have been a reference to Montgomery’s short story “Her Pretty Golden Hair” (*Philadelphia Times* March, 1899) which draws heavily on the Alcott antecedent. A more interesting reference to a character who loses hair in a fever would have been to Montgomery’s “Mary Ethel’s Apology” (published in *Household Guest*, Dec. 5, 1909; date of composition unknown). A luckless red-haired hero, *Gilbert*, having first lost his girlfriend Mary Ethel because she hates his scarlet tresses, next loses his hair to a brain-fever. His near-death brings Mary Ethel to her senses and a realisation of her love. She apologises and marries Gilbert who, post-fever, now has auburn hair — although his mother won’t believe that the minx didn’t return purely because of this hair change, until Mary Ethel gives birth to a red-haired child! Of interest here is that a male character has the reviled red-hair. Montgomery had teased a Cavendish school boy (not a Prince of Wales College boy as noted in *The Annotated Anne* 29) named Austin Laird, about his red-hair, calling him “The Boy with the Auburn Hair” in verse and “Cavendish Carrots” in the school-yard (unpublished entry Feb. 17, 1893).¹⁰ In addition, Montgomery’s friend Will Pritchard had red hair. Given these male red-haired antecedents, we might once more ask of Anne Shirley why she wasn’t a boy.

The notes assert that the name of the Cuthbert’s hired boy, Jerry Buote, would be pronounced “Boot” by the English speakers of Avonlea (Anne 82). “Buote” was a surname among French-Canadians in the Cavendish area and Montgomery’s journals contain a specific reference to the phonetic pronunciation as “Be-ot,” just as Gautier [*sic*] was rendered “Goachy” and Blacquiére “Blackair” (unpublished entry March 1, 1925): the property map for Cavendish in 1880 (again reliant on phonetics) lists one Peter Beott.¹¹ The editors speculate that the area of French settlement near Avonlea, the Creek, may be based on French River near Clifton, PEI, without reference to “Toronto,” the French settlement near Cavendish, from where Montgomery hired Judy Gallant (“Gallong”) when she visited Boston in 1910.

While rightly drawing attention to the prejudices of the Scots in Avonlea toward their French neighbours (and that these were a reflection of attitudes in PEI), the editors offer an unsubstantiated claim that “[t]here is a long history of conflict between the French and Scottish settlers of Prince Edward Island” (Anne 45). This rather gives the impression of a series of running battles between the

two emigrant groups and that the Scots, Auld Alliance notwithstanding, were the worst of the British nations in the offence. (The one incident of "conflict" that comes to mind from PEI history was the Belfast Riot of 1847, a fight between Scots and Irish settlers.) In another case, the editors explain the term "high dudgeon" as meaning "very angry, offended, or resentful, from dudgeon, the handle of a knife or dagger, thus, to be 'in high dudgeon' is to be ready to draw your dagger" (*Anne* 128-9, n.5). This is to conflate two unrelated meanings of dudgeon which have different etymologies. Wendy Barry adds insult to injury by finding a home for this distorted meaning in "the Highland Scots' clannish and sometimes contentious culture" (*Anne* 420). Doubtless many high dudgeons were grasped in PEI when the Scots put the boot in the French.

The essays which follow the main text are, with one exception, informative, well-researched, nicely illustrated and with the inclusion of recipes, fun. Essays covering aspects of material culture such as food preparation, gardens, and homecraft are placed within a general context that embraces not only the Prince Edward Island setting but also the influences on the province from the eastern US seaboard and the British Isles. Others, as well as some textual notes, could have benefited from a closer examination of the Cavendish community where L.M. Montgomery was raised. The social mainstay (outside church) of Montgomery's teens and twenties, the Cavendish Literary Society (surely a base for the Avonlea Debating Society), passes without mention in favour of a mystifying reference to "brass bands, orchestras, step-dancing competitions, French ballads and toe-tapping fiddle playing" (*Anne* 452). Many of these activities would have been anathema to the Presbyterian residents of Cavendish: to the Baptists even worse.

It would have emphasised the importance of education to know that the first school was founded in Cavendish in 1814, only 24 years after the Scottish Simpson, Clark and Macneill families first cleared land for settlement. The essay on the "geography" of *Anne* comes without a map of the Island or of the Cavendish area. Montgomery's decision to create a religiously homogenous community when she came from one that was divided, often bitterly so, might have been addressed. (This may result from the same purpose that Mary E. Doody Jones identifies for the exclusion of pets and named animals in the book (*Anne* 424) — Montgomery's desire to focus reader attention on Anne.)

Another thing that should be noted about these essays is that each comes with a list of "Further Reading." This is a misnomer. Although these lists may reflect works consulted or cited, they are often comprised of inaccessible material (legislative acts, periodicals, out-of-print books) which would not qualify as "further reading" for the average, non-academic, reader. Sadly, they fail to list several useful and accessible books.

The exception to these generally informative essays relates to "The Settlers of PEI" The subtitle, "The Celtic Influence in Anne," is the first of many mistakes. What the author is actually alluding to is the Scottish influence in Anne, or at a stretch the Irish influence, not the Welsh, or Cornish, or Breton French influence, all of which are embraced by the term "Celtic." No distinction

is made between Highland and Lowland (or culturally between the Gaelic and non-Gaelic Scottish migrants. Although correct in stating that “[m]any factors contributed to the Scots’ departure from their homeland” (*Anne* 419), the author situates these reasons primarily in the Highland Clearances and the expulsion of a sick and poverty stricken tenantry whose culture had been systematically undermined. Firstly, Barry wrongly places the Highland Clearances solely in the late eighteenth century.

Secondly, such an analysis pays no heed to serious scholarly work on migration from Scotland to Canada and PEI. The early migrants (pre-1815), including L.M. Montgomery’s ancestors, were generally from the higher socio-economic groupings who were able to pay their own passage. (Legislative measures in 1803 from a home government fearful of depopulation greatly increased this cost.) To concentrate on a stereotype of victimised Highlanders is to ignore voluntary migration and research which shows the Gaels to be neither poor nor desperate, but making a positive rejection of social changes in Scotland in favour of continuing their traditional way of life in North America.¹² Widespread poverty and the largest clearances were a feature of post-1820 Scottish history.

The reason I stress this point is that the positive reasons for migration have to be recognised in order to understand the psychology both of Montgomery and her novels. The Murrays and the Lesleys consider themselves “chosen people” and among these fictional Scots there are levels of caste, dependent on wealth, “breeding,” and generational distance from the Old Land. The resulting frictions between families are part of the community structure of Blair Water and Glen St. Mary and of course Cavendish itself. When Anne Shirley arrives in Avonlea she enters a “chosen community,” self-appointed as superior to anything from the United States or Britain. But as the novel shows, in the stale religion and sour gossip, that community is limited. Matthew’s infirmity and Marilla’s failing eyesight are offset by the outsider Anne, not by caring friends. Far from representing “clannishness” (*Anne* 421), Matthew and Marilla have no family (until, that is, the appearance of the Keith twins in *Anne of Avonlea*). They are the last of their clan in Avonlea (as are the Lyndes and the Blythes) and the inter-familial squabbling rather puts pay to any wider definition of what constitutes “clan.”

Anne of Green Gables focuses on a child, yet conversely discusses the problems of growing old. Although Barry’s essay hints at Anne’s dual presence as a cultural complement to Avonlea as well as a cultural “other” (determining the novel’s eventual harmony as well as its battles), it is inserted in a fanciful commentary on Anne’s “Celtic” inheritance of a belief in the supernatural. (Incidentally, to call Anne a “changeling” is risky, given that the lore arises from the need to find cause for deformed or mentally defective children.)¹³ The role of the Scots in founding educational policy and the Scottish content of that curriculum is noted. One reason that Anne can belong in Avonlea is that the schools of her native Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island teach the same texts.¹⁴

Anne embodies a heritage that Avonlea has lost, not one that it has never known. This point is raised by Professor Doody in her introduction, when she writes that "Avonlea has partly lost sight of its own identity and inheritance, and thus some of its vision" (*Anne* 30).¹⁵ Anne's outbursts take Matthew and Marilla emotionally back to their childhood: her passionate conversation reminds Matthew of the merry-go-round ride of his "rash youth" (*Anne* 57); her volley of insults at Mrs. Lynde recalls to Marilla the sting of being called a "dark homely little thing" (*Anne* 117). The process of Anne's acceptance at Green Gables is complete when Marilla shares the story of her youthful romance with John Blythe. By focusing on the stereotypes of Anne's Scottish "otherworldliness" and its conflict with Marilla's Scottish "hardheaded practicality," the essay undermines this earlier observation. For example, this essay states that Marilla keeps her kitchen in the way of her Scottish-born mother and grandmother before her (*Anne* 421). Yet the text-side notes and other appended essays rightly show the twin influences of British and North American custom in the Green Gables kitchen. Matthew is more aware than Marilla of his cultural heritage (he loves their mother's Scotch rose-bush) and Anne is instantly accepted in his affections.¹⁶ Marilla is emotionally stifled and thus further removed from this heritage, which is why the novel focuses on her co-learning with Anne. If Anne's red-haired presence is indeed a hint that she is "fairy bred," then the distrust the Avonlea residents initially feel toward her is testament to their own belief in the supernatural, all good Scots knowing with Mrs. Anthony Mitchell that fairies are "pesky mischievous" (*Anne of Ingleside* 113).

To call for a more detailed analysis of Cavendish and its settlers may appear to contradict my earlier praise for the editorial decision to concentrate on the periodisation of historical detail. The editors are correct in so doing, for this general context keeps the fictional character Anne within the imaginary landscape. But the editors have also chosen, and again rightly so, to make links between the fictional world of Anne and L.M. Montgomery's life and background. With the publication of Montgomery's journals, interest in her life rivals interest in her heroines and although there are obvious dangers in too much biographic identification, this analysis can be worthwhile, productive and informative.

However, *The Annotated Anne* can be too selective in the information it presents. For example, several references are made to Montgomery's removal from school in Prince Albert, as this neatly fits into a discussion of how the education of boys was prioritised over that of girls. Conversely, her maternal grandparents are praised for their support of her education (thus Matthew and Marilla's support of Anne). Yet the Macneills had also withdrawn the young Maud from school, not because her help was needed in the home, but due to a petty and bitter feud with a Cavendish schoolteacher, Izzie Robinson.¹⁷ To include one example without the other is to distort Montgomery's life to consolidate a theory about her fiction.

Cavendish is Avonlea in more than geography. Much of Montgomery's success lies in her realistic portraits of both character and environment. Such skill is the product of careful observation and this book would have benefited

from a more specific look at the Cavendish Montgomery saw and fictionalised. Although strong on Montgomery's upbringing within the Macneill household, there is really very little of the Cavendish community in the references *The Annotated Anne* makes to Montgomery's life: the settlers, religions, ethnicity, and dynamics that influenced Montgomery's first novel. If Anne is of Green Gables, she is also of Avonlea.

In answer, then, to the aims stated in the Preface, the reader is perhaps lacking some of the realities of Montgomery's imagined Avonlea, but the editors have largely succeeded in the task of teaching about Anne's world without denuding it of romance. By such means as the identification of songs and thus Montgomery's ironic twists in contrasting Anne's style of rendition with the songs' subject matter, modern readers can fully appreciate, perhaps for the first time, Montgomery's literary skill. The joke has been explained and is funnier for the explanation.

Uncovering that the "physical" model for Anne was the scandal-surrounded chorus girl Evelyn Nesbit opens up a tantalising question: was Montgomery really ignorant as to identity of the girl in the picture? Largely, the notes and essays are deftly handled and should appeal to a broad audience, to fans of Anne and to scholars. In short, *The Annotated Anne* should ensure that *Anne of Green Gables* is never dismissed as a "simple tale" again. The marriage of the history and the dream — of Montgomery's realities and Anne's imagination — is reminiscent of Whittier's reflective poem "Snowbound" and his description of the aunt who:

Called up her girlhood memories,
The huskings and the apple-bees,
The sleigh rides and the summer sails.
Weaving through all the poor details
And homespun warp of circumstance
A golden woof-thread of romance.

Notes

- 1 Letter to Weber dated May 2, 1907 (Eggleston 51). Montgomery's description of the genesis of this novel bears more than a passing resemblance, perhaps suspiciously so, to Walter Scott's account of writing *Waverley*.
- 2 Letter to Weber dated September 10, 1908 (Eggleston 73).
- 3 The comparison of Marilla to the Duchess in Wonderland in her fondness for inculcating a moral (*Anne* 106) is the most obvious textual reference to Carroll's works in *Anne of Green Gables*, although, as the editors of *The Annotated Anne* note, the presence of Tiger-lilies in Diana's garden may in part owe their origin to *Through the Looking Glass* (*Anne* 138). Notably, Anne ignores Marilla's moral on Diana ("she is good and smart, which is better than being pretty") and tells instead of the mirror-girl, Katie Maurice, who she had hoped would lead her through the bookcase (Anne's bookish "looking-glass" conversely following Marilla's rule on smartness rather than the mere vanity of prettiness) "into a wonderful place, all flowers and sunshine and fairies" (*Anne* 107). Alice's dismissal of the wonderland characters with, "You're nothing but a pack of cards" (*Alice* 161) is echoed

in Anne's new-found (after Marilla tells her she can stay) inability to identify with another looking-glass alter-ego, Lady Cordelia Fitzgerald (both Alice and Anne like "pretending to be two people" [Alice 33]), "You're only Anne of Green Gables" (Anne 109). Although taken from the name of Montgomery's imaginary friend, Anne's looking-glass girl, Katie, neatly echoes Alice's Looking-Glass cat, Kitty: more to the point Anne's bosom-chum Diana echoes Alice's closest real-world friend, Dinah. Both little girls experience problems with bottles and cakes which contain curious ingredients. Both encounter contrary, if not contrariwise, twins. Both experience a world where one talks to flowers (and as the editors of *The Annotated Anne* deftly note, Mrs. Rachel's address to the wild-rose bushes in the first chapter of *Anne of Green Gables* is a neat link between the outwardly dissimilar matriarch and orphan [Anne 436].) Both girls have problems with Sir Isaac Watt's verses "Against Idleness" and "Mischief": Alice cannot remember the words and her "How doth the little crocodile" (Alice 38) is now more famous than the poem it parodies; when Anne imagines that she is a bumble bee, her goal is not to "improve each shining hour" but to drowse lazily in an apple blossom (Anne 108). Alice wonders what she'd look like as a snuffed out candle (Alice 32): Anne is compared to one (Anne 80). Both little girls get very angry when their hair is criticised, Alice's by the Mad Hatter (Alice 94), Anne's by Mrs. Rachel (Anne 114) and call their assailants "rude." Both *Anne of Green Gables* and *Through the Looking Glass* contain characters who get annoyed with others who won't argue back: Alice with her kittens, "How can you talk with a person if they always say the same thing" (Alice 341); Marilla with Matthew: "I wish he was like other men and would talk things out ... But what's to be done with a man who just looks?" (Anne 82). For links between Carroll's work and *Emily of New Moon* see Robin McGrath, "Alice of New Moon: The influence of Lewis Carroll on Emily Byrd Starr," in *Canadian Children's Literature* 65 (1992): 62-67.

- 4 "Kailyard" (meaning "cabbage-patch") is a term applied to a school of Scottish writers of the 1890s, including Ian Maclaren, S.R. Crockett and Sir James M. Barrie. Their frequently sentimental stories of small-town Scottish life were immensely, if briefly, popular, particularly in North America. Elizabeth Waterston, in her study *Kindling Spirit: L.M. Montgomery's "Anne of Green Gables"* (ECW Press, 1993) points out that the Cuthberts' white Scottish rose bush recalls the title of Ian Maclaren's kailyard novel, *Beside the Bonnie Briar Bush* (1894). Montgomery re-read this novel in November of 1905. Her choice of title, in format corresponding to earlier works such as *Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm* and *Mrs Wiggs of the Cabbage Patch*, may also be a conflation of Hawthorne's *The House of the Seven Gables* and George Douglas Brown's attack on the pastoralism of the Kailyard School, *The House with the Green Shutters* (1901). *The Annotated Anne of Green Gables*, while strongly defending the right of *Anne* to be regarded as a general rather than a children's book, does not contextualise the novel with the contemporaneous regional idylls (from both sides of the Atlantic) which were also intended for general circulation.
- 5 Margaret Anne Doody's introduction lists the additions "You could imagine you were dwelling in marble halls, couldn't you?"; "I've got all my worldly goods in it, but it isn't heavy" and "It wouldn't be half so interesting, there'd be no scope for imagination then, wouldn't there?" as examples of "Montgomery's growing recognition that it is a characteristic of Anne-speech to draw the interlocutor in with interrogatives asking for agreements at the end of sentences" (Anne 21).
- 6 As goes with the territory, some explanations seem unnecessary: the need to include the chemical formula for strychnine seems somewhat superfluous (47) — and worrisome too, lest any homicidally-inclined orphan girls be around, that's what! — and no great intelligence is required to work out that currant wine is wine made from currants (186), a carpet bag is a travelling bag made from carpet (52), or that a foreign missionary is one who missions in foreign lands (54).
- 7 Rea Wilmshurst. "L.M. Montgomery's Use of Quotations and Allusions in the 'Anne' books." *CCL* 56 (1989): 15-45. It is a testament to Montgomery's literary complexity rather than the editor's negligence that there are perhaps some twenty allusions not referred to in the annotations, e.g. Marilla looking "things not lawful to be uttered" (Anne 214. cf. II

Corinthians 12:4); Anne's vow "as long as the sun and moon should endure" (*Anne* 140. cf. Psalm 72:5); "the risk of dashing her brains out" (*Anne* 232. cf. William Shakespeare, *Macbeth* I.vii.58) and perhaps the chapter title "An Epoch in Anne's Life" finds its origin in *The Pickwick Papers* ch. 12 "Descriptive of a very important proceeding on the Part of Mr. Pickwick; no less an Epoch in his Life than in this History." (Montgomery re-read *Pickwick* in 1905.) Only one quotation (although I have my doubts as to whether the "tramp of alien feet" [*Anne* 362] has its origin in L. Morris's "An Ode to Free Rome") is wrongly attributed. The first two lines of the poem Julia Bell sends to Anne (*Anne* 194), identified as "probably a keepsake verse," are actually Mrs Child's (more famous) misquotation of a couplet from Macdonald Clarke's *Death in Disguise*: "Whilst Twilight's curtain, gathering far, / Is pinned with a single diamond star." [Eds. note: Rea Wilmshurst privately published a more extensive list of identified quotations before her death.]

- 8 See Maria Edgeworth's "An Essay on Irish Bulls." The OEC defines Irish Bull as "an expression containing a contradiction in terms or implying a ludicrous inconsistency. Often more fully 'Irish Bull.'"
- 9 In 1882 52% of the PEI electorate voted Liberal, 48% Conservative. These figures were replicated in 1891, the election year closest to John A. Macdonald's visit to PEI. Indeed, looking at voting figures from 1878 to 1900, the Conservatives only took a greater share of the vote in 1878 (57% to the Liberal 43%). Figures from Hugh G. Thorburn. *Party Politics in Canada*. (3rd ed.) Scarborough, ON: Prentice-Hall, 1972.
- 10 Elizabeth Waterston notes in *Kindling Spirit* that Austin Laird's father had reputedly been in love with Maud Montgomery's mother: "a base for the story of lost love told by Marilla" (46).
- 11 This map can be found in Harold H. Simpson's *Cavendish: Its History, Its People*. Published privately, 1973.
- 12 See J. M. Bumstead, *The People's Clearance 1770-1815: Highland Emigration to British North America*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 1982. Marianne McLean, *The People of Glengarry: Highlanders in Transition*, McGill-Queens UP, 1991. Mike Kennedy, *Is Leis an Tighearna An Talamh Agus An Lan (The Earth and All It Contains Belongs to God): The Scottish Gaelic Settlement History of Prince Edward Island*. (Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Edinburgh, 1995.)
- 13 Montgomery does use the term "changeling" with reference to two characters: Jims in *Rilla of Ingleside*, who is "scrawny, yellow and ugly" and Valancy in *The Blue Castle*, who is considered insane by her relatives.
- 14 The pupils of these schools would, unlike the editors of *The Annotated Anne* it seems, have known that Thomas Campbell's "Hohenlinden" takes a battle between the French and Austrians as its subject matter, not "the defeat and oppression the Scots suffered at the hands of the English" (*Anne* 457).
- 15 One scholar holds that Cavendish was settled mostly by Highland-Gaels (who may have known English), but that Gaelic culture was probably lost within two generations (Kennedy 168); at any rate, Montgomery describes the residents as Lowland Scots in a letter to MacMillan (*My Dear* 6).
- 16 This in itself argues for an interpretation of the novel wherein Matthew and Marilla are treated as separate people. Taking this back to Montgomery's life, *The Annotated Anne* (and they are not alone in this fault), classifies Alexander Macneill and Lucy Woolner as the "Calvinist" Macneills, emphasising their puritan "Scottish" traits. Lucy Woolner was of course English (she only left England when she was twelve) and Anglican by birth. We do not know the extent to which she embraced her husband's religion and should be wary of treating them as a unit in this respect.
- 17 This fight prejudiced Alexander Macneill against female teachers. He would not let Maud borrow a horse so she could attend interviews by school trustees when in search of a teaching post.

Works Cited

- Bolger, F.W.P., and Elizabeth R. Epperly, eds. *My Dear Mr. M: Letters to G.B. MacMillan*. Toronto: McGraw, 1980. Republished, Oxford UP, 1990.
- Careless, Virginia. "The Hijacking of 'Anne'." *Canadian Children's Literature* 67 (1992): 48-55. (Review of *The Anne of Green Gables Treasury*. Carolyn Collins and Christina Wyss Eriksson. Toronto: Viking, 1991.)
- Carroll, Lewis. *The Annotated Alice. Alice's Adventures in Wonderland and Through the Looking Glass*. Edited with an Introduction by Martin Gardner. London: Penguin, 1970 (Revised edition).
- Doody, Margaret Anne. *The True Story of the Novel*. New Brunswick: Rutgers UP, 1996.
- Eggleston, Wilfred, ed. *The Green Gables Letters from L.M. Montgomery to Ephraim Weber 1905-1909*. Toronto: Ryerson, 1960.
- Epperly, Elizabeth R. "Approaching the Montgomery Manuscripts." *Harvesting Thistles: The Textual Garden of L.M. Montgomery*. Guelph: Canadian Children's P, 1994: 74-83.
- Epperly, Elizabeth R. *The Fragrance of Sweet Grass: L.M. Montgomery's Heroines and the Pursuit of Romance*. Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1992.
- Kennedy, Mike. *Is Leis an Tighearna An Talamh Agus An Lan (The Earth and All It Contains Belongs to God): The Scottish Gaelic Settlement History of Prince Edward Island*. (Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Edinburgh, 1995.)
- Montgomery, L.M. *The Annotated Anne of Green Gables*. Edited by Margaret Anne Doody, Mary E. Doody Jones, and Wendy Barry. New York: Oxford UP, 1997.
- Montgomery, L.M. *Anne of Ingleside*. London: Harrap, 1949.
- Montgomery, L.M. *The Selected Journals of L.M. Montgomery. Volume I (1889-1910), Volume II (1910-1921), Volume III (1921-1929)*. Edited by Mary Rubio and Elizabeth Waterston. Don Mills, Ont.: Oxford UP, 1985, 1987, 1992.
- Montgomery, L.M. Unpublished journals. Ms XZ5 MS A001. L.M. Montgomery Collection. U of Guelph, Guelph, Ontario.
-
-

Jennifer H. Litster is writing her PhD Thesis on the Scottish context of L.M. Montgomery in the History Department at the University of Edinburgh. She and her thesis director, Owen Dudley Edwards, are preparing a joint essay on Montgomery for "Lucy Maud Montgomery and Canadian Culture," a collection of essays being prepared by Irene Gammel and Elizabeth Epperly to be published with the University of Toronto Press.

The Perfect Abuser

The Primrose Path. Carol Matas. Bain & Cox, 1995. 152 pp. \$9.95 paper. ISBN 0-921368-55-0.

This story for adolescents is certainly no "primrose path" but a slippery tunnel into the adult world of parental discord, religious fervour, and venal lust.

As in her previous books, Matas uses a young Jewish protagonist. Instead of a Holocaust theme she has a topical one — child abuse. Debbie's abuse is at the hands of her teacher, who is also the principal of the religious school she attends and the rabbi of the adjoining synagogue, as well as the father of one her classmates. This is strong stuff!

From the start we enter Debbie's world. Her parents are experiencing marital problems. Reluctantly she confides in her rabbi and receives kindly advice. Shortly after, her grandmother dies and the family experiences a