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Living In an Unidyllic Idyll:
The Worlds of Anne and Heidi.

A comparison between Johanna Spyri's *Heidi* and L. M. Montgomery's *Anne of Green Gables.*

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Abriß

Das Hauptziel dieser M.A. These ist es, eine komparatistische Analyse von *Heidi* und *Anne of Green Gables* darzulegen; nämlich: 1. Eine literarische und soziale Untersuchung der düsteren Seiten dieser beiden Romane zu beschreiben. 2. Die vieldimensionalen Eigenschaften der Figuren zu untersuchen. 3. Die möglichen Gründe für die mystischen und legendenhaften Ausmaße dieser Dichtungen zu ergründen. Mit dieser analytischen Betrachtungsweise hoffe ich, die falsche Auffassung zu berichtigen, daß beide Romane als Kinderbücher nur einen idealistischen und unbeschwerten Stoff behandeln. Ich möchte weiterhin zum Teil erklären, warum diese Geschichten zweier Waisenkinder für so lange Zeit universell populär geblieben sind, im Gegensatz zu anderen ähnlichen Kinderbüchern. Vor allem aber hoffe ich zu beweisen, daß die Kinderliteratur einen bedeutenden literarischen Wert inne hat, der einer akademischen Analyse würdig ist.

Abstract

The primary objective of this M. A. Thesis is to provide an in-depth comparison of *Heidi* and *Anne of Green Gables* by: 1. revealing through a literary and social analysis, the more somber aspects of these novels. 2. examining the multi-dimensionality of the characters found therein and 3. investigating the possible reasons for the mythical and legendary proportions of these tales. In doing so, I hope to clarify the misconception that these novels, as children's books, are based solely on idealistic and light-hearted themes. Further, I would like to answer, in part, why these two orphan tales have remained so universally popular for so long, whereas other similar books have not. But most of all, I hope to prove that children's literature has significant literary merit, worthy of academic interest and investigation.

Sommaire

L'objectif principal de cette thèse est de comparer en profondeur les œuvres *Heidi* et *Anne of Green Gables* en : 1. révélant par étude littéraire et sociale les aspects plus sombres des deux romans. 2. examinant les traits multidimensionnelles de ces personnages 3. scrutant les raisons probables pour les qualités mystiques et légendaires de ces contes. Par cette étude j'espère de clarifier le malentendu que ces romans comme livres pour enfants se basent seulement sur des sujets idéalistes ou plaisants. En plus, j'aimerais résoudre en partie pourquoi ces deux histoires d'orpheline sont restées universellement populaires pour si longtemps, tandis que plusieurs autres livres similaires ne les sont pas. Mais pour la plupart j'espère démontrer que la littérature de jeunesse porte un mérite littéraire considérable digne de l'intérêt et de l'étude académique.

Acknowledgements

My sincerest thanks goes to my thesis supervisor, Professor Joseph Schmidt, whose enthusiastic support and constructive criticism of my work, even at the most inconvenient times, made the completion of this thesis possible.

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To my parents,
husband,
and son Kieran

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Preface

Children's Literature: Real Literature?

When my professor suggested I do a comparative study on *Anne of Green Gables* and *Heidi*, my initial response was that of excitement. Having adored these books as a child and adolescent, I couldn't believe my luck that I could actually write my thesis on them. But then almost immediately doubts started creeping in - a master's thesis on *children's* books? How scholarly was that? What literary merit did *Heidi* have alongside works by such great German masters as Goethe and Schiller? Reassuringly my professor told me that the study of children's and juvenile literature was a growing field and that my thesis would indeed have academic merit.

My professor was right. The more I researched, the more I realized what many valuable gems lay hidden in these two classics. In fact, I was amazed that so much had escaped me when I had read them as a child. Their multi-layerdness and the subtle satirical wit woven into them helped me gain a better understanding of their enduring international appeal and a deeper appreciation for their skillfully written narrative. So imagine my annoyance when an acquaintance of mine casually remarked upon learning of my thesis choice as follows: "Anne of Green Gables and Heidi? But those are just children's books."

I could not believe my ears. *Just* children's books??

After I regained my composure, I started thinking about why my friend had replied as she did. Did she not know how loved these books were by both old and young alike? That they had been translated into many languages? That they had never been out

of print since their publication over/nearly[1] a hundred years ago? I was disheartened. I knew she knew the answers to these questions. Nevertheless, I could not blame her - she was merely voicing the opinion of the general public.

And sadly enough, of the mainstream university populace too.

Ever since its emergence in mid-seventeenth century,[2] children's literature has never been regarded as true literature. Throughout the past three centuries literary critics hardly gave these books a second glance, always heaping them in the same pile as that of trivial and popular literature, a category deemed insignificant. Children's books were meant only for little people with little minds and came likewise from people with little talent. To spend energy on such simple, inferior tales was surely a waste of time. Up till now.

With a caveat however. Though children's literature has been gaining ground in academia since the 1970's, this interest has been for the most part in the educational or psychology disciplines. In comparison, little has been written on its value as a literary genre. Instead the focus has been on how good a book is for the child and if it helps them "understand themselves as well as other people and the world in which they live."[3]

Nonetheless, it's worth mentioning that such periodicals as *The Lion and the Unicorn* and *Children's Literature* and the organization Children's Literature Association have elevated the status of children's literature considerably by strongly encouraging literary criticism. If we look at the list of contributors in the twenty-ninth volume of

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[1] *Anne of Green Gables* (1908), *Heidi's Lehr- und Wanderjahre* (Part I, 1880), *Heidi kann brauchen*, was *es gelernt hat* (Part II, 1881).

[2] According to Hürlimann (*Three Centuries of Children's Books in Europe*), the first children's book was a latin picture book *Orbis sensualium pictus* (1658) by Jan Amos Komensky, published in Nuremberg.

literary criticism. If we look at the list of contributors in the twenty-ninth volume of *Children's Literature*[4] for example, we see that the vast majority of authors are professors coming from English, French, and Comparitive Studies departments.

Then how come the "snubbery" from the other literary critics still? The answer is plain and simple as Hunt puts it:

> The conventional literary system is, after all, very like the traditional family: adult male literature dominates, women's literature is secondary (and grudingly recognized) (Spender 1989), while children's literature is ... at the bottom of the heap...[5]

Further he mentions how

> [j]ust as the literatures of colonized countries have had to fight against the dominant culture, so children's literature (as a concept) has had to fight against the academy hegemony of 'Eng. Lit.' to gain any recognition. As a body of texts, as well as a body of criticism, it does not fit into the dominant system's hierarchies or classifications, and consequently, like colonial or feminist literatures, it has presented an irritant to established thinking.[6]

Another reason that children's literature's relationship with the other literatures is so irritating, lies in its very perplexing and ambiguous nature. Its literary critics, even its writers have trouble pinpointing exactly what children's literature is. Is it only for children? Can adults enjoy it as much as children do? Is it books with simple language only? Is it always idealistic?

As for the answer to the first question, I think I have answered it through my thesis as it applies specifically to the two classics. To the second question, we need only look at the recent popularity of the Harry Potter books among adults as well, (of course adults will only buy it as long as the adult version has a more subdued cover and costs a bit

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[4] *Children's Literature*, New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2001, Vol. 29.
[5] Hunt, P., *Literature for Children*, New York: Routledge, 1992, p.2.
[6] Ibid.

more). For the rest of the answers, which are too lengthy to discuss them here, I suggest a reading of Peter Hunt's book *Criticism, Theory, & Children's Literature.*[7] Among other things, he investigates the stigma attached to children's literature and clarifies what children's literature entails.

Hunt raises up another interesting point about children's literature: it's eclectic appeal to a diversity of disciplines. He comments that this strength is what gives children's literature its distinctive voice and states further that the power play between the children's literary critic and the educator can't afford to go on any longer. Ignoring "the findings and practice of each other", he says, would be "at their peril."[8]

Conversely, I believe this strength of children's literature is at the same time it's weakness in terms of its meritabilty among the other literature genres. Since its strength is divided up among several "masters", its capacity for each individual "master" is therefore reduced. In addition, as Hunt says, English departments tend to be "suspicious of educationalists and librarians dealing with literary matters."[9]

So is children's literature real literature then? Well, the academia as a whole is not sure...yet.

What it really all boils down to is how one views literature. If one defines the different literary genres as "differences among degrees and not in kind"[10] as I do, then the answer would be a resounding yes. But to the next most important question, if it will ever be on an equal footing as the other "greats" of literature, I must realistically answer,

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[7] See footnote eight for full reference.I would suggest other books, but his is one of the very few around...
[8] Hunt, P., *Criticism, Theory, & Children's Literature*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell Ltd., 1991, p.10.
[9] Ibid., p.22.

very well one day arrive close to being as valued as other literature, but I don't believe it will ever be regarded as completely equal to it. Nevertheless, in the meantime it still needs to make great strides in the academic world. And I shall do my share to elevate its status by writing about it.

[10] as quoted in Hunt, p. 43.

Chapter One

Orphans With Many Faces

"Anne spelled with an e," insists Anne several times in L.M. Montgomery's well-beloved classic. When I first started to read *Anne of Green Gables* at eleven years of age, having never before heard of either Anne or its author, little did I realize into what kind of world I would be stepping into. Like many others, my heart has been captivated time and time again by the adventures of this determined red-headed chatterbox. As Margaret Atwood remarks, *Anne of Green Gables* is a book that you almost feel guilty liking because of its popularity - if it is that popular, it certainly cannot be that good or good for you. She admits, however, and so do I, that *Anne of Green Gables* is one of those few books that you never tire of, even as an adult.[1] And throughout generations, I might add.

Literary critics as well have increasingly recognized the value and depth of this book, as ever more of them research the whys and hows of the appeal of this simple little story, that has become a hallmark in Canadian literature and culture.

So what is it about Anne that has not only Canadians, but many others world-wide visiting Anne's home in P.E.I, year after year? Part of the answer lies in Anne's irresistible character. According to Waterston, Anne offers four gifts to the reader, the first one being the gift of story coming from the surprising, suspenseful situations and resolutions she creates, as well as coming from Anne's own knack at story-telling which heightens the reader's pleasure in the narrative. The second gift is Anne herself, "imaginative, rambunctious, articulate...intense in her responses to

[1] Atwood, M., "Afterword," in Montgomery, L.M., *Anne of Green Gables*, Toronto: McClelland & Stewart Inc., 1992, p.331.

nature, to ideas, to books. ...Response to Anne releases fears and desires within the reader and aids the accommodation of egotism and the pressure of social norms." The third gift is her keen eye for beauty, especially in nature, while the last gift make readers "aware of the constrictions on feminine experience."[2]

Likewise is the appeal of that young prancing mountain girl Heidi upon humankind, just as intense, though albeit different. Being younger, she is also more pure and innocent. Similarly to Anne, she is a life-bringer, but unlike her red-headed sister she has a mystical aura about her as Fräulein Rottenmeier so eloquently puts it: "..nur Gutes und Edles.....eines jener Wesen.. von denen ich schon oft gelesen, welche, der reinen Bergluft entsprossen, sozusagen, ohne die Erde zu berühren, durch das Leben gehen...die wie ein idealer Hauch an uns vorüberziehen". (H., p.118)/ *"good and noble...such a person I had often read about - one who, sprung up in the pure mountain air, so to speak, goes through life without touching the earth...who pass by us like an ideal breath." (He., p.101)*

So why is it that Canada and Switzerland have integrated these orphans as part of their national identity? How did these orphan children become mothers to their nation's psyche and then in turn adopted so many others throughout the world?

In Canada's case, part of the answer is in the historical timing of these books. Canada was still a new land shaping its identity. Many fluxes of immigrants were coming in, doing their share to develop the land. These people came to Canada in search for a better place, a place where at least some of their dreams could come true. Anne's tale represented the hoped for outcome of their immigrant experiences. Anne, as a newcomer to Avonlea, realizes her dream of safely belonging to somebody, nevertheless, she has to go through many trials in order to be accepted

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[2] Waterston, E., *Kindling Spirit: L.M. Montgomery's Anne of Green Gables*, Toronto: ECW Press, p.15.

and adapt to the different customs of her new home. Even today the appeal of this modern fairytale still holds for countless of immigrants entering Canada, to which our Governor General Adrienne Clarkson can attest:

> Being orphaned or losing a parent, which is such a Montgomery theme, was correlated in my mind to my experience as a refugee, arriving in Canada with my parents and one suitcase each. So when Anne is found by Matthew on the railway siding, sitting on her suitcase, to me that wasn't a fictional situation. That was my situation. And Matthew and Marilla were like the safe haven that Canada was for me. In many ways they represent Canadians at their most characteristic - repressed, silent, and structured, but decent, open-hearted, and capable of adapting to circumstances. They were a traditional bachelor and spinster and suddenly they became parents, they became loved by someone outside of their 'family'. [3]

On the other hand, *Heidi* was written in a land already several centuries old, being overshadowed by the dark powers of industrialization. In Spyri's time, the villains poverty and sickness were rampant in the city, with more and more people still coming in from the country side and the mountains, blindly hoping to bank in on the promises of capitalism. *Heidi* was one of many books at that time whose message was a plea to return back to nature and health-promoting habits. One of these other popular books was the medical handbook *Die Frau als Hausärtztin/ The Woman as Housedoctor* by A. Fischer-Dückelmann. In it she expounds the prevention of disease rather than the cure. For example, she underlines the great importance of fresh air, sunshine, goat's milk and good activities such as mountain-hiking.[4]

Heidi therefore, in its nature context, is also a great health awareness story. But Spyri brought the nature dimension of her story to a higher level, in that nature cannot only prevent sickness, it can also heal physical, as well as spiritual illness.

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[3] Clarkson, A., "Foreword." In: *L.M. Montgomery and Canadian Culture*, Gammel, I., Epperly, E., eds., Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999, p.5.

[4] as discussed by Leimgruber, W., "Heidi- Wesen und Wandel eines medialen Erfolges." In: *Heidi- Karrieren einer Figur*, Halter, E., ed., Zürich: Offizin Zürich Verlags-AG, 2001, p.179.

Both *Anne of Green Gables* and *Heidi* were written at a time when orphan books were hugely popular, two of the best known authors of these kind of books being Charles Dickens and Mark Twain. Though as well liked such classics as *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* and *Oliver Twist* may be, they have never reached the mythical and legendary proportions that L.M. Montgomery's and Spyri's novels have. There are no "pilgrimages" to Dickens's, Twain's or to any of their invented characters' homes. That is because it cannot be so: the strongest determining factor of the treatment of Anne or Heidi as a myth or a legend is due to the connection of the orphan with its sense of home. Herein lies the universal appeal of these books.

One can imagine Huck or Oliver living happily anywhere, as long as they are loved and treated well. But Anne or Heidi living somewhere else besides their respective environments? To sever the orphan from her environment is like tearing a clinging child away from its mother, an action that only brings with it dire consequences. We saw this in the case of Heidi, when she was living in Frankfurt, who despite the companionship of Klara and loving words from Grandmother Sesemann, was dying a slow death.

Frye says in his book *The Educated Imagination* that the "loss and regaining of identity is...the framework of all literature."[5] Coupling this thought with Jungian theory of the collective unconscious and archetypal universal symbols, the metaphor in these two books are clear to see: Anne and Heidi represent the notion of humankind as the eternal wanderers, the orphans on earth in search for their Espherides or Garden of Eden.

This invitation of coming home strikes a strong cord among readers and has much to do with the success of these two novels. Moreover, Anne and Heidi not only teach that home is an idyllic place but that it is an attitude also.

Home can mean different things depending on the individual. To illustrate these differences, I shall use the word "Heimat," the German definition for home, which has greater scope and breadth in meaning. "Heimat" is a sense of belonging and security, be it either with a geographical area, such as the physical home, country etc., or with a group of people with whom you identify with. In traditional Christianity, "Heimat" is the eternal home of the next life. To the modern spiritualist, home is a journey inwards, to a state of balance and harmony within oneself.[6] Similar to naturalist philosophers such as Thoreau, home means being in harmony with nature. Further, the loss or distance away from one's "Heimat" can result in a whole array of symptoms associated with homesickness, from sadness to actual physical illness. That is what Swiss soldiers experienced in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Their symptoms became so acute that their homesickness was given the name "la maladie suisse."

What makes Anne and Heidi even more special though is that they take their home quest even further. They do not only succeed in finding their home, but bring other "orphans" along with them. In essence, *Anne of Green Gables* and *Heidi* are stories of several emotional, social and physical mishaps, such as Marilla and Matthew Cuthbert, Klara Sesemann and Öhi to name just a few. These "orphans" are transported "home" by their "motherly" orphans almost unknowingly and effortlessly, whether it be in Anne's case to the imaginary and theosophic [7] world or in Heidi's case the natural, primitive and religious world. This is done through the unique capabilities of each orphan.

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[5] Frye, N., *The Educated Imagination*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1964, p.55.
[6] Jäschke, E., *Das Bild der Heimat bei Johanna Spyri*, Münster, Germany: Pädagogische Hochschule Westfalen-Lippe, 1976, p.22. (student university paper)
[7] The theosophic world is discussed in chapter 3, pp.45-46.

The orphan Heidi

It is apparent right from the beginning of Spyri's novel, that Heidi is no ordinary girl. Not only is she extremely sweet and pure, she appears to have no fear of anything whether in nature or of man. This is pretty astounding considering the fact that mountain hiking is entirely new to her. High cliffs do not daunt her, instead she hops merrily to and fro with her best friends, the goats. Neither is she in the least bit phased with her grandfather's silent and awkward ways. When Öhi stares at her through unflinching eyes upon first meeting her, she calmly stares back at him.

She is also keenly aware of housekeeping duties. When she first enters Öhi's home, instead of wanting to play and explore, she conscientiously goes about examining her future home and organizing her things and bed. The grandfather notices her competence and intelligence right from the start. Throughout the book whenever Heidi is indoors, she is found doing meticulously little household chores such as setting the table or sweeping the floor.

As can be seen by the above descriptions Heidi is more than a child. She is a woman-child,[8] meaning though physically a child, she is wise and mature beyond her years. This is revealed in her speech which at times sounds very adult-like. She is direct, logical and convincing when she tells Öhi that Peter's grandmother's roof needs repairing:

> "Großvater, morgen müssen wir den Hammer und die großen Nägel mitnehmen und den Laden festschlagen bei der Großmutter und sonst noch viele Nägel einschlagen, denn es kracht und klappert alles bei ihr."
> "Müssen wir? So, das müssen wir? Wer hat dir das gesagt?" fragte der Großvater.
> "Das hat mir kein Mensch gesagt, ich weiß es sonst", entgegnete Heidi, "denn es hält alles nicht mehr fest, und es ist der Großmutter angst und bang, wenn sie nicht schlafen kann und es so tut, und sie denkt: 'jetzt fällt alles ein und gerade auf unsere Köpfe'; und der Großmutter kann man gar nicht mehr hell machen, sie weiß gar nicht, wie man es könnte, aber du kannst es schon, Großvater. Denk nur, wie traurig es ist, wenn sie immer im Dunkeln ist und es ihr dann noch angst und bang ist, und es kann ihr kein Mensch helfen als du! Morgen wollen wir gehen und ihr helfen; gelt Großvater, wir wollen?" (H., p.62)

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[8] Berke, J., "'Mother I can do it myself': The self-sufficient heroine in popular girls' fiction." In: *Women's Studies*, New York: Gordon and Breach Science Publishers, 1979, vol. 6, p.190.

"Grandfather, tomorrow we must take the hammer and the big nails and fasten the shutter at the grandmother's house, and drive a good many more nails; for everything creaks and rattles there."
"We must? We must do so? Who told you that?" asked the grandfather.
"Nobody told me so; I knew it without," replied Heidi, "for everything is loose and it makes the grandmother anxious and afraid when the wind blows; and she can't sleep. She thinks: 'Now everything will fall down on our heads.' And nobody can make it light any more for the grandmother! She doesn't know how anyone can. But you can surely, grandfather! Only think how sad it is for her to be always in the dark! And nobody can help her but you! Tomorrow we will go; won't we, grandfather?" (He., p.48)

Berke also calls Heidi a "trained psychologist,"[9] especially in how she deals with her grandfather in the following example: After Dete, her aunt, leaves, Heidi lets her grandfather ignore her for a while. Heidi simply busies herself while Öhi stunned at his imposed responsibility, stares at the floor. After a little while Heidi deposits herself right in front of him and gazes at him unwaveringly until he feels compelled to speak.

Heidi displays many maternal qualities as well, mostly towards nature. This is evident in her association with the goats. When Peter wants to punish a goat because of disobedience, Heidi quickly comes to its aid and wraps a protective arm around it. In other instances in the book we also see Heidi scolding and disciplining the goats.

Furthermore, just like a mother she knows all of her "children" individually. On the first goat-herding outing with Peter, by midday, Heidi knows all of the goats' names and each of their character traits thoroughly. Heidi has become the personified earth mother figure who nurtures and nourishes the creatures connected to her, including humans. We see this through Heidi's innate quality of bringing light and joy to others. As Earth Mother, she serves as a life-bringer, who gives a rebirth, a second chance in life to all those who come into contact with her. However, she works hand in hand with the Patriarchal God in bringing this about. Joseph Campbell in his book *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* links the mother universe myth with her Christian

personification as the primal element described in the second verse of Genesis: "the spirit of God moved upon the face of *the waters*," the spirit of God signifying the world-generating spirit of the father.[10] This same symbolism is reflected in the treatment of Heidi as myth.

In 1953 a Heidi well was erected in the heart of the old Christian town of Maienfeld. Since then, thousands on their pilgrimage up the "sacred Heidi mountain" have stopped by this Heidi well to drink and refresh themselves from its living waters. Therefore, the setting of *Heidi* in the mountains not only symbolizes proximity to Heaven and so to God, but more precisely signifies Heidi's direct partnership with God.

The divine orphan

If Heidi were a fantasy fairytale, Öhi could be easily represented as an evil dragon. Everyone fears and abhors him, even "witches" such as Aunt Dete flee before him. Nobody can stand him except for the child who can see right through to his heart. This child untiring fearless, entirely obedient, leads the life of the dragon and many others to a higher plane. Heidi seems to be heaven sent. She is a type of divine child.

In *Essays on a Science of Mythology,*[11] Kerényi describes how the divine child myth is perpetuated among legends of different cultures. He recounts several stories of how the divine child usually brings about a miracle or is the result of a miracle.[12] Such is the case with Heidi. The biggest miracle she propagates, though indirectly, is Klara's healing. The line "and He caused the

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[9] Ibid., p.191.
[10] Campbell, J., *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, New York: Princeton University Press, 1949, p.297.
[11] Jung, C., & Kerényi, C.,(trans. by Hull, R.), *Essays on a Science of Mythology*, New York: Bollingen Foundation, 1959.
[12] Ibid., pp.25-29.

lame to walk and the blind to see" comes to mind here, linking Heidi to the most popular Divine Being of all. Though Heidi does not restore or heal Peter's grandmother's sight, she does bring "light" and joy to her soul. As a divine child, it is normal then that instead of playing, Heidi would rather sit and converse with the immobile aging woman hours on end, in order to bring some happiness into her life. Heidi is also referred to by the grandmother mostly as "das Kind"/ *the child*, rendering Heidi sexless and thereby mystical, suggesting perhaps the eternal nature of her childhood.

The neglected and problematic orphan

All of these divine and pristine qualities of Heidi seem to take a 180 degree turn once she enters the city world. Heidi is greeted by Fräulein Rottenmeier with lashings such as "[d]em Wesen fehlen alle Urbegriffe", (H., p. 86)/ *The creature lacks the most basic concepts,* "Heidi... ist kein christlicher Name",(H., p.81)/ "*Heidi... is no Christian name," (He., p. 66)* and later on with exclamations over Heidi's mannerless, illiterate state. Even Heidi's physique is unique as is stated by soft-spoken Klara: "Ich habe aber auch nie ein Kind gesehen, das so aussieht wie du. Hast du immer nur so kurzes krauses Haar gehabt?" (H., p.83)/ "*...I have never seen a child before that looks like you. Have you always only had such short, curly hair?" (He., p.68)*

Had the reader not met Heidi before this chapter, an image of a lone barbaric child would dominate the reader's perception of Heidi. However as Heidi's full name Adelheid denotes, meaning "nobility" in old German, this simple innocent girl of the mountains, strikes a strong resemblance to Rousseau's noble savage myth. The term noble savage is designated to those

individuals who live and thrive in the wilderness, who because they are free from civilization, live in an innocent natural state knowing neither good nor evil.

Nevertheless having such a strong connection with nature as Heidi does, raises a definite warning signal. From a psychological point of view, Heidi's rapture and infatuation with her natural surroundings borders on the extreme. Heidi is a very sensitive child. We see many instances of this character trait throughout the book, for example when she bursts into unconsoling tears because of her discovery of Peter's grandmother's blindness just minutes upon meeting her, or her exasperation over the fading away of the sun over the mountains.

Grossly to blame for Heidi's mood swings is her prior upbringing with Aunt Dete. It is evident that Heidi had a miserable life after her mother died. Heidi, upon waking up the first morning in her grandfather's house is relieved to find herself there instead of "bei der alten Ursel, die fasts nichts mehr hörte und meistens fror, so daß sie immer am Küchenfeuer oder am Stubenofen gesessen hatte, wo dann auch Heidi hatte verweilen müssen, oder doch ganz in der Nähe, damit die Alte sehen konnte, wo es war, weil sie es nicht hören konnte. Da war es dem Heidi manchmal zu eng drinnen, und es wäre lieber hinausgelaufen". (H., p.35)/ "*Ursel was always cold, so that she liked to sit by the kitchen fire or by the stove in her chamber. Heidi had been obliged to stay very near, so that the old woman could see where she was, because she was deaf and could not hear her. This had often been stifling to Heidi, who longed to run outside.*" *(He., p.23)*

Further, Dete's actions and words detail how loveless those first important impressionable years must have been for Heidi. Dete does not care a whit for her niece as is clear to see when she says to the grandfather: "...Ihr seid der Nächste am Kind. Wenn Ihr's nicht haben könnt, so macht mit ihm, was Ihr wollt, dann habt Ihr's zu verantworten, wenn's verdirbt, und Ihr werdet wohl

nicht nötig haben, noch etwas aufzuladen". (H., p.22)/ "*...you are next of kin to the child. If you can't have her, do what you please with her; you will have to answer for her, if she comes to any harm. You don't want to have anything more laid to your charge." (He., p.12)*

In addition, physical neglect is apparent in the opening scene of the book: in the sweltering mid-summer's heat, Heidi has to walk uphill two hours with two or three layers of clothing, just so that Dete is relieved from the burden of carrying them.

Moreover, it is peculiar that Heidi should be so adamantly insistent to Peter that he not whip the misbehaving goat or any other goat for as long as he lives. Is Heidi harrowing up something from her past?

If Heidi had suffered neglect or abuse in the past, how is it that she turned out so sweet? She is either beyond any effect of emotional or physical neglect as a divine child or she has buried her insecurities and resentment so deep inside her that it lays forgotten as she yields her troubled soul to the soothing powers of her beautiful surroundings.

Considering Heidi's delicate nature and sad past, it is hence logical that Heidi cooped up in Frankfurt should act out her desperation for her beloved mountain home through sleepwalking. Thankfully for the doctor's rapid assessment of her condition, Heidi was able to go home just a few hours after she was discovered sleepwalking one night. But was the doctor really solely concerned over Heidi's health deterioration? He had seen her many times before. Why did he so rashly demand that she be sent back home immediately? Herr Doktor no doubt knew about the accumulating findings that were circulating about in scholarly circles, which linked homesickness with violence.

In Karl Jaspers'1909 Heidelberger dissertation, he recounts examples of young girls mostly from the Alps, who because they got so psychologically unbalanced from homesickness, eventually became murderers and arsonists:

> Das Kind ist wie der Naturmensch ganz eins mit seiner Umgebung....Reisst man es aus dieser Umgebung heraus, so verliert es möglicherweise allen Halt. Es wird dann bereit sein, alles, was einer Rückkehr in die Heimat im Wege steht, zu vernichten, zum Beispiel das Haus abzubrennen, das seiner Pflege anvertraute Stadtkind zu töten. Gemeinsam sei den Heimwehverbrecherinnen die Herkunft aus "bornierten Ortsverhältnissen und Beschäftigungen". Zum Verbrechen seien sie durch den "Stumpfsinn" eines isolierten Lebens" disponiert. Natürlich würden alle Menschen bis zu einem gewissen Grade das Gefühl des Heimwehs kennen, aber wer zu einem "geistig freien selbstätigen Leben erwacht" sei, werde "überall auf der Welt seine eigene Existenz mit der Umgebung in Einklang" bringen können. Wer aber "zu solcher Selbsttätigkeit nicht gelangt" sei, verlöre mit seiner Heimat "gleichsam die Hälfte seines Ichs.[13]
> */The child is like the man of nature who is at one with his environment....If one tears the child out of its environment, then it will most likely lose all of its stability. The child will then be prepared to destroy everything that stands in its way from returning back home, for example, burning the house down, killing the city child under his care. The homesick female criminals have the common background of a narrow-minded and hum-drum existence and occupation. The dullness of an isolated life also causes them to commit these crimes. Naturally, anybody in such a situation would feel homesick to a certain degree, however anyone who has progressed to an intellectual, independent and self-assured life would be able to harmonize anywhere in the world, his own existence with his altered environment. But if he has not reached this spontaneous self-assurance of his own worth, he loses along with his home, half of his sense of identity.*

So it seems that by sending Heidi home immediately, the doctor was not only preventing any further deterioration in Heidi, but protecting the Sesemann household as well.

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Mountain relationships

The reader breathes a sigh of relief to see Heidi safely back home after her Frankfurt nightmare. She can now live happily ever after among the animals and mountains. On second thought though, she will obviously be the last person to live among her idyllic mountains, since there is no apparent sign of sexuality among the characters. The characters represented in the

[13] Paraphrased by: Leimgruber, W., "Heidi-Wesen und Wandel eines medialen Erfolges." In: *Heidi - Karrieren einer Figur*, Halter, E., ed., Zürich: Offizin Zürich Verlags-AG, 2001, p.174.

book are either single, old or too young. What use are the healing properties of the mountains if the human race will die out in one generation? Even Heidi's words illustrate this underlying mentality. When Peter tells Heidi that the sad-looking goat is missing his mother who was recently sold, Heidi's next question is not the whereabouts of its father. Instead she asks where its grandmother and grandfather are. Apparently even the animals are devoid of sexuality.

According to Meienberg, such a lack of normal sexuality in this society is replaced by that of a sick and twisted kind, namely incest:

> Ein knorriger Alp-öhi mit dem gluschtigen, anmächeligen Maitli allein in der Hütte, und was hat man sich dabei gedacht? So ein zutraulich Kind, so ein allein stehender Mann, es webt die Sympathie ihre unsichtbaren Fäden zwischen den beiden, und ein bisschen wird man sich wohl noch streicheln dürfen, und das Kind sitzt am Abend doch sicher ein wenig auf den Knien des Alten.[14] /A *gnarled Alp-Öhi alone in the hut with the a sweet, innocent, little girl., what would that concote? A trusting child and a single man, the weaving together of their invisible threads of sympathy will surely allow for a little bit of stroking between them, and the child will most certainly sit in the evening for a little while on the knees of the old man.*

His proof of such a statement lies in the following paragraph:

> Heidi erwachte am frühen Morgen an einem lauten Pfiff, und als es die Augen aufschlug, kam ein ***goldener*** Schein durch das runde ***Loch*** hereingeflossen auf sein Lager und auf das Heu daneben, daß alles golden leuchtete ringsherum. Heidi schaute erstaunt um sich und wußte durchaus nicht, wo es war.....Heidi sprang eilig aus seinem Bett und hatte in wenigen Minuten alles wieder angezogen, was es gestern getragen hatte, ***denn es war sehr wenig***".[15] (H.,p.35)/ *Heidi was awakened early in the morning by a loud whistle; and when she opened her eyes, a flood of sunshine was pouring through the* **round** *window on her bed and the hay close by, so that everything about shone like* **gold**. *Heidi looked round her in amazement and did not know where she was...Heidi jumped quickly out of bed and in a few minutes had put on all that she wore the day before;* **it was very little.** *(He., p.23)*

For me however, this above quoted passage has an altogether different meaning which I will illustrate in chapter two.

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[14] As quoted in Leimgruber, p.180.
[15] Ibid., p.180.

The orphan Anne

The world of Anne on the other hand is the archaic story of the initiation of a hero, more specifically the female hero. Her quest to be accepted in Avonlea is basically an assertion of her validity as a female orphan. As she grows up into womanhood, she proves to Avonlea and Marilla and Matthew that not being a boy was the best mistake that ever happened to them. Consequently, feminists applaud her determination and vivaciousness for competing against Gilbert and speaking out her mind.

Like Heidi, though in a less dramatic way, she touches and transforms the lives of the people she meets. She is, as Margaret Doody points out, an anti-Andromeda, a rescuer.[16]

Also, dissimilar to Heidi, Anne's refuge throughout the book is her mind. Anne invites whoever she comes into contact with, readers included, to have more "scope for the imagination." She responds to Marilla with "how much you miss" after the latter tells her she never tries to imagine things differently than what they are. This orphan teaches throughout the book how the power of the imagination helps you get through life's situations while on the quest for self-fulfillment, for smaller struggles like asking forgiveness to people like Mrs. Lynde, and to the life-threatening circumstances, such as when Diana's little sister falls gravely ill: "First we must have lots of hot water...Mary Joe,...I don't want to hurt your feelings, but it seems to me you might have thought of this before if you'd any imagination."(A., p.158)

However, most of all, the greatest attraction of Anne's imagination, I believe, is summed up by another character found in L. M. Montgomery's book *The Story Girl*: "I think there is such

[16] Doody, M., "Introduction." In: *The Annotated Anne of Green Gables*, Barry, W., Doody, M., Jones, M., eds., Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997, p.12.

a place as fairyland - in spite of Uncle Edward" said the Story Girl dreamily, "and I think there is a way of getting there too, if we could only find it."[17]

It is through Anne that the reader is shown the way to fairyland or the realm of the mind. Her speech both reinforces the creativity of the child-reader and invites the adult-reader to (re)discover his/her creativity long unstirred. Even so, not everyone is able to tap into this "creative world" as is evidenced by the several characters in *Anne of Green Gables* that Anne just doesn't seem to get through to (i.e. Mrs. Lynde, Mr. Phillips). The narrator in *The Story Girl* comments on this problem as a follow-up to the Story Girl's above remarks:

> Well, the Story Girl was right. There is such a place as fairyland - but only children can find the way to it. And they do not know that it is fairyland until they have grown so old that they may forget the way. One bitter day, when they seek it and cannot find it, they realize what they have lost and that is the tragedy of life. On that day the gates of Eden are shut behind them and the age of gold is over. Henceforth they must dwell in the common light of the common day. Only a few, who remain children at heart, can ever find that fair, lost path again, and blessed are they above mortals. They, and only they, can bring us tidings from that dear country where once we sojourned and from which we must evermore be exiles. The world calls them its singers and poets and artists and story-tellers; but they are just people who have never forgotten the way to fairyland.[18]

Nonetheless, even though Anne has easy access to fairyland, we realize by probing a little deeper, that she is in fact not so "blessed...above mortals" as she first may seem.

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[17] as quoted by Fredeman, J., "The Land of Lost Content: The Use of Fantasy in L. M. Montgomery's Novels." In: *Canadian Children's Literature*, Guelph: Canadian Children's Press, vol. 3, p.60.

[18] Ibid., p.60.

The exceptional orphan

When Rachel Lynde expresses shock at Marilla and Matthew's decision to adopt an orphan, she is simply stating an opinion of her times. The fate of an orphan at that time whether in Canada or abroad was sad. They were shunned by society, often thought as the offspring of criminals or immoral women. Further, they were treated as third class citizens, as a source of cheap labour for heavy work on farms or as child care-takers. Anne echoes this as she relates to Marilla her responsibilities in her former home: "I like babies in moderation, but twins three times in succession is *too much.*" (A., p.48) Often these orphans were abused, neglected, raped and in the worst case scenario, even killed.

In *Little Immigrants*, we read about the infamous Ontario murder trial in the late nineteenth century charging Helen Findlay with the murder of an English orphan named George Green. Helen Findlay and her brother had been living together on the family farm many years after their parents had died. When Helen's brother suddenly died, she decided to get an orphan seeing that she could not operate the large farm all by herself. After six months he was dead. At the trial it was revealed that he was physically abused, overworked and starved to death. The Coroner that had found the boy's body, testified that

> ...the condition of the room in which George Green spent his last days...smelled more like a privy than anything else...In the corner there was a straw mattress with a large hole in the centre-about ten inches deep...like a nest into which someone had burrowed in order to keep warm. The hole was caked with excrement. The room was dirty in the extreme, with excrement that had been there for many days creating an atmosphere so foul that he could recall nothing in his career that would even approach it.[19]

[19] Paraphrased by Bagnell, K., *The Little Immigrants*, Toronto: MacMillan, 1980, p.66.

So Anne is indeed very lucky that the sister and brother pair that adopted her, though odd in many ways, had a kind heart. Unfortunately, we don't know enough of Anne's past to know exactly what her experiences in the other homes were, but we can speculate that if for the first eleven years of her life she stayed in alcohol-torn homes such as that of the Thomas's (see A., pp.49,66) conditions for abuse were ripe.

Orphanages, or asylums to use the nineteenth century term, were not very safe either. Disease and cramped quarters with other outcasts of society such as the mentally ill were the norm. If there was any education provided, only the very rudimentary basics were taught. Anne turned out exceptionally bright, considering her limited schooling. To have "Bernard Shaw's vocabulary,"[20] as a reviewer in the *New York Times* once noted about the red-headed heroine, with only four months of schooling under her belt, and at the same time to come out of that system healthy, optimistic and outgoing is truly unusual.

The odd orphan

Despite her past environment, Anne seems to have remained unscathed from her experience except on one point - her over-active imagination. Though as charming as Anne may be, her valuable gift is used in excess for a good three quarters of the book. Only a few weeks after she arrives, she is already known as strange, having an awful temper, and a crazy girl who talks all the time to herself or to the trees and flowers. From a psychological point of view, she would be regarded as an over-articulate hallucinating orphan, desperate for attention. We see

[20] Jones, M., "The Exceptional Orphan Anne." In: *The Annotated Anne of Green Gables*, Barry, W., Doody, M., Jones, M., eds., Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997, p.427.

evidence of Anne's unhealthy imagination several times throughout the novel. The first time we are aware that she perhaps needs "professional help" is when she mentions to Marilla her imaginary bookcase friends she left behind whom she loved and misses very much. Marilla, taken aback by Anne's strangeness, quickly tells her she won't be needing them anymore, that instead she should perhaps get acquainted with the girl that lives next door, namely Diana Barry. Anne's countless hours with Diana seems to be the remedy that she needs. Still, it does not work entirely. She has other battles with her over-active imagination, the worst bout being the experience she has in the "haunted woods." When Anne tells Marilla of the haunted woods, Marilla is shocked and asks Anne if she's crazy. Further on she tells Anne: "I never want to hear you talking in this fashion again. I've had my doubts about that imagination of yours right along" (A., p.180). Marilla then forces Anne to cross the woods. Through this event Anne is cured, yet to consider her imagination as completely normal from then on, would be false.

The bewitched orphan

As an outsider, in order for Anne to be completely accepted in Avonlea, she must get rid of certain enigmas imposed upon her by this closed-knit society. Some of these are the labels "witch" or "heathen," which describe Anne frequently throughout the book: "Matthew Cuthbert, I believe that child has bewitched you!" (A., p.37), "She's next door to a perfect heathen" (A., p.60), "She'll be casting a spell over me too." (A., p.43) However is there some truth to these accusations?

There is if we look at the role Diana plays in the novel. Diana is Anne's "kindred spirit"[21] and true bosom friend. Even the name Di-ana suggest that Anne and her form an entity. As Waterston points out this is consequently so, as Diana is Anne's ideal counterpart.[22] In Jungian terms Diana represents Anne's second more positive anima that brings warmth and goodness. Anne, on the other hand, with her flaming red hair resembling a witch, struggles throughout the book with the evil side of the anima. This is reflected in her careless/subconscious attempt to poison others (e.g. Diana and Mrs. Allan) Other milder forms of the anima's negative side such as vanity, moodiness and sensitivity to hurt feelings are also manifest: such as her intense touchiness over being called carrots, her long held grudge towards Gilbert, or her obsession at imagining herself being beautiful. Anne tries to get rid of her evilness through imagining her name away, changing her hair colour till finally through hard work and controlling her daydreaming mind (by internalizing her emotions, she nurtures her animus side and thereby creates a more stable psyche), she matures into the more positive side of the anima. As a result, Anne at the end of the book, has become much more subdued and her hair has changed into a "definite auburn."

Conclusion

Anne's and Heidi's joy and enthusiasm for life is but one side of their personalities. As readers we must not forget that there are many somber realities and dilemmas to being an orphan, even in picturesque surroundings. But at least now that they have found their home, the healing process may finally take place - although very slowly. For as inspiring the new environments may

[21] See chapter 5, p.89 for more on kindred spirits.
[22] Waterston, E., *Kindling Spirit: L.M. Montgomery's Anne of Green Gables*, Toronto: ECW Press, 1993, p.43.

be to the orphans, I question the plausibility of such ideal homes. In my opinion, their idyllic places sound just a little too good to be true…

Chapter Two

Lands of Sour Milk

I remember my excitement as I stood as a nineteen year old on the ferry making its way towards P.E.I. Finally, it was my turn to step on the soil of this magical land of beauty and fairies that I'd read so much about. To my great delight, everything on the island matched L.M. Montgomery's descriptions exactly: the amber-hued sandhills, the snowy blooming apple orchards and the deep red cliffs. The proof was final - L.M. Montgomery had not lied. My childhood fantasies became a reality as I joined thousands of others to embrace the spirit of the place.

Similarly, my trek to Heidiland last summer was equally rewarding. Taking along with me a mental picture of simmering sunsets and prancing goats, I made my pilgrimage up the Heidi mountain trail. My efforts were recompensed tenfold as I rested my weary feet and gazed upon the rejuvenating view of these natural majestic giants. I could now exclaim as Klara did to Heidi "dass es so auf der Alp sein könnte!"/ *"how beautiful it is here!"*

Obviously, Anne and Heidi are inextricably linked to the natural settings of their respective homes. This sixth "nature sense" of theirs permeates to the very core of their beings, so much so that they would cease to exist without their beloved environments. Though very different landscapes, P.E.I. and the Alps provide their respective daughters the best they have to offer: a place of beauty, healing, growth and power.

Eudora Welty says this of the importance of setting in a novel: "When we consider what good writing may be, place can be seen, in her own way, to have a great deal to do with that goodness, if not to be responsible for it."[1] Such is the case with *Anne of Green Gables* and *Heidi*. The setting provides the foundation that gives these novels their strength and lasting appeal, whereas their heroines are its cornerstones who hold it all together through their charm and insight. Just like the foundation of a building, the setting was there first. In other words no P.E.I.- no Anne , no mountains - no Heidi, because it is the setting that gave them birth.

The tremendous appeal of the nature descriptions in the two novels exists because it primarily evokes a pastoral myth setting. This is due to the narrator and the heroine's passionate nature descriptions. The elaborate description of sunshine, warbling birds, milk and flowers and so forth, help Avonlea and the Alps transcend into this green-world archetype or like in Christian theology, a type of Eden. But as I shall hope to illustrate, even fresh creamy milk can get sour when left in the sun for too long.

Hence, my objective of this chapter is to deconstruct the various idyllic and unidyllic elements that contribute to the heroines' settings. Because of limited space in this thesis, in *Heidi* I shall dwell mostly on the natural elements and in *Anne of Green Gables* on the social aspects only.

[1] As cited by: Solt, M., "The Uses of Setting in *Anne of Green Gable.*" In: *Such a Simple Little Tale*, Reimer, M., ed., Metuchen, N. J.: Scarecrow Press Inc., 1992, p.58.

The Alps

"Maiden! Now take flight; - inherit

Alps or andes, they are thine...

For the power of hills is on thee,..."[2]

These lines by Wordsworth though written for someone else, are just as fitting for Heidi. In fact, similar words were penned about our heroine in the refrain of a children's song : "Heidi, deine Welt sind die Berge!"/ "*Heidi, the mountains are your world!*"

Evidently, Heidi is not the first mountain female to be extolled, however during Wordsworth's time lauding females and esteeming them with the beauty and glorious powers of mountains, was a rather recent thought. In the first seventeen centuries A.D., an opposite view of mountains had pervaded human thinking, which Nicolson labels as mountain gloom in her book.[3] During this period, mountains were described neutrally at best ("rocky, craggy, climbing" [4]), and with disgust and fear ("Earth's Dugs, Risings, Tumors, Blisters...Warts" [5]) at its worst.

Spyri's *Heidi*, a product of this mountain glory thinking or in Escher's words "Erhabenheitsästhetik"[6]/ *aesthetics of the sublime*, is practically saturated with mountain

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[2] Nicolson, M. H., *Mountain Gloom and Mountain Glory*. Cornell: Cornell University Press, 1959, p.2.
[3] Ibid.
[4] Ibid., p.35.
[5] Ibid.
[6] Escher, G. „Berge heissen nicht." In: *Heidi - Karrieren einer Figur*, Halter, E., ed., Zürich: Offizin Zürich Verlags-AG, 2001, p.281.

splendor and shine brimming with qualities such as purity, innocence and healing. Spyri highlights the innocence of the Alps through the constant portrayal of animals such as the goats and the birds with all their happiness and frolicking. As well, as mentioned in the previous chapter, the lack of sexuality throughout the book gives the novel a squeaky clean feel, though ironically an unnatural one.

Moreover, elements such as air, milk and cheese are described in such a manner as to convey such a tremendous purity, that they seem to have an almost supernatural ability to rejuvenate the physical body and soul: "...und nun erfaßte es sein Schüsselchen und trank mit einer Begierde, als wäre etwas so Köstliches noch nie in seinen Bereich gekommen...". (H., p.174)/ *" ...and then grasped her little bowl and drank as eagerly as if she had never had anything so precious within her reach before...." (He., pp.154-155)*

However, the most powerful testimony of the Alp's healing powers and purity is Klara's miracle. That simply the breathtaking view of flowers coupled with the energizing nutrients of fresh herbs and goat's milk makes Klara walk again does not seem out of place in Heidi's world. It is almost expected.

Spyri has used likewise for our heroine several elements of nature to confirm her role as inheritor of this alpen glory, the most vivid attestation being the following, found in chapter three: "Heidi erwachte am frühen Morgen...und als es die Augen aufschlug, kam ein goldener Schein durch das runde Loch hereingeflossen auf sein Lager und auf das Heu daneben, daß alles golden leuchtete ringsherum". (H., p.35)/ *''Heidi was awakened early in the morning...and when she opened her eyes, a flood of sunshine was pouring through the round window on her bed and the hay close by, so that everything*

about shone like gold." (He., p.23) Unlike Meienberg's interpretation,[7] I believe this passage accentuates Heidi's direct link to the divine: the light creates a halo effect upon Heidi which when coupled with the bed of hay, evokes images of the Christian story of the first Christmas.

The king of the mountains

Often when Heidi is in quiet moments of reflection in her mountains, a bird seems to appear. We are told it is a bird of prey and more specifically "the" bird of prey, thereby strengthening its role as a character in this modern fairy tale. Most likely the feathered animal is an eagle or a hawk which are the more commonly seen birds of prey in the Alps.

The bird is first seen in chapter two, interrupting Heidi's reverie of her surrounding beauty, with a piercing cry, circling right above Heidi's head. Heidi's manner and tone in how she introduces the bird vocally is paramount, as it identifies the aura the animal carries for her throughout the novel. "Peter! Peter! Erwache!" rief Heidi laut "Sieh, der Raubvogel ist da, sieh!sieh!" (H., p.40)/ *"Peter! Peter! Wake up!" cried Heidi at the top of her voice. "See, there is the bird of prey! See! See!"(He., p.27)* is Heidi's reaction, indicating a sense of awe, a recognition of power the bird holds. The urgency of her cry advocates the honour attached to such a sight - Peter does not need to partake of a most inspiring nature portrait that Heidi sees moments earlier, but the appearance of a single drab-coloured fowl is something he just can not miss.

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[7] See chapter 1., p.13.

Why would Spyri have Heidi pay so much attention upon a lone bird? The bird of prey is even personified through the grandfather at one point.[8] Part of the reason is because, as Escher states, the bird of prey stands as a symbol for "die wilde, von Menschenhand unberührte Natur ...[die] immer ausserhalb der Reichweite der Protagonisten [bleibt]".[9]/ *the wild nature, untouched by humanity...that always remains outside of the protagonist's reach.* I suggest however, that because of the bird's appearance at key reflecting moments and its particular attraction to Heidi, a greater importance should be attributed to its role in the story.

According to Henderson,[10] birds stand as the most common archetypal symbol for transcendence. He defines transcendence as a man's release from "any confining pattern of existence, as he moves toward a superior or more mature stage in his development."[11] Further he recounts a young man's dream where the birds symbolized the man's desire for greater spiritual achievement.[12] In another source,[13] Ingersoll states how the eagle has been viewed throughout history as an emblem of supreme power and nobility, and in ancient cultures as a divine bird of the sun, able to gaze directly into it.

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[8] see chapter 5, p.81.
[9] Escher, p.280.
[10] Henderson, J. L. „Ancient myths and modern man." In: *Man and his Symbols*, Jung. C., ed., London: Aldus Books Limited, 1964, p.151.
[11] Ibid, p.149.
[12] Ibid, pp.153-154.
[13] Ingersoll, E., *Birds in Legend, Fable and Folklore*, New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1923., pp. 68-69.

Hence by taking these symbolisms of birds and the eagle into account, Heidi's role in the story becomes magnified. Birds as symbol of transcendence is fitting for Heidi then - she is even labeled by Gros as "Traegerin von Mut, Guete und Transzendenz"[14]/ *bearer of courage, goodness and transcendence* - because even though she does not feel confined in her beloved Alps, her "mission" as maiden of the mountain is not complete until she reaches a higher spiritual plane through the healing of others. In addition, Heidi as a child of light, shows others how to look unwaveringly at the source of all spiritual light. Appropriately, the first song that Heidi chooses to read to the old blind grandmother, deals metaphorically with the sun and gazing into the heavens as spiritual refuge.

Along those lines, it is therefore not surprising, that Heidi longs to go home to the bird's nest up high in the uppermost reaches of the mountain, where earth meets sky. Heidi is after all, not quite human. She is however, held back by earth-bound Peter, who warns her of the dangers of doing so. Not even the goats are capable of climbing up those treacherous cliffs, he says. Heidi obeys, yet her desire is never fully quenched as is manifested by her dream a few years later when she hears the bird of prey beckoning to her "Kommt! Kommt! Kommt!" (H., p.291)/ *Come! Come! Come!* This time her subconscious has transformed the mountain-goddess-in-the-making's yearning to a higher level. The great bird's call is not anymore an invitation to his physical home but a beckoning to the maturation of Heidi's own spiritual power. Interestingly, Heidi's dream occurs the night before Klara's miracle.

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[14] Gros, C., "Heidi-die kleine Berggottheit." In: *Heidi-Karrieren einer Figur,* Halter, E., ed., Zürich: Offizin Zürich Verlags-AG, Zürich, p.118.

Decay, destitution and death

As successful as the Heidi novel may have become, it never became popular among the actual Alp goat-herders, simply because it did not reflect the real Alp life they knew. According to Gros, *Heidi* seems to be a "Herrschaftsinstrument von Eliten ...die den Traum nach einer Hirtenidylle und die Unterwerfung unter die Religion hochhalten."[15]/ *a tool of the elite who uphold the dream of the idyllic shepherd society and the supremacy of religion.* Further, he calls the novel a shepherd comedy that ignores such things as the festivities, customs and traditions and strong patriotism of the Maienfeld folk. True, not much is revealed in Spyri's novel about these things, however that is not the purpose of the book. Heidi was not meant to be a social study of Alp life, instead it is a simple tale about a girl's ability to show the way to individual self-fulfillment. The addition of such frills as Gros suggests, would only detract from the message of the book. Besides, there are more important, though less obvious, grey areas in Alp life that are subtly interwoven in Spyri's text which I will touch upon in the next two chapters.

Nonetheless, when it comes to nature, Spyri tends to beautify even the most potentially dangerous elements. Heidi's message is clear: Nature is man's best friend. However, Öhi, an experienced man of the mountains, would tell us otherwise. He knows firsthand that nature can also be man's worst enemy, especially the higher up we go. It is

from him that we learn of the dangers of the high mountain cliffs. Furthermore, the harsh elements of winter, heat and wind can be a serious threat to picturesque mountain living. If we delve deeper into *Heidi* we will see little hints sprinkled by Spyri here and there illuminating this reality.

In chapter three of part I of *Heidi,* Spyri describes the oncoming of winter as the following: "... auf einmal fiel über Nacht ein tiefer Schnee, und am Morgen war die ganze Alm schneeweiß...nun fing es wieder zu schneien an, und die dicken Flocken fielen fort und fort, bis der Schnee so hoch wurde..und dann noch höher..."(H., p.52)/ "*...for suddenly one night a deep snow fell. When the sun rose, the whole Alm was white....it was beginning to snow again; and big flakes fell thick and fast, until the snow came up to the window and then still higher...*" *(He., p.38)* Then, as is typical of Heidi, she flits from window to window delighted by the accumulating snow. Absolutely no sign of fear from this little girl. Fortunately, the Alphut does not get entirely covered by snow and the grandfather is able to shovel around his home so that at least the doors and windows will be accessible. (Though if an avalanche should come I don't think that shovel would do him any good anymore).

Spyri also mystifies some elements of nature, such as the wind. Often throughout the book, Heidi is lured outside by the "tiefes, geheimnisvolles Tosen" (H., p.52)/ *"deep, mysterious sound"* (He., p.38) of the pines in order to partake of its beauty. This is a completely different picture which we get from the 1955 Swiss Film version of Heidi, where Klara fights for her life through a wind-swept thunderstorm. We see some of this same wind danger only once in the book, at the end of chapter two, where the grandfather,

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[15] Gros, p.124.

not able to sleep because of the relentless howling and aggression of the wind, checks up on Heidi to see if she needs comforting. Needless to say, once again, Heidi remains untouched and undisturbed by the forces of nature, sleeping peacefully away in her hay bed.

As for Klara, though her legs have become mobile again, her lungs may be in danger of deteriorating, seeing that she is not used to the thin upper atmosphere. These and other health hazards of mountain living upon man, have been known for centuries.[16]

The scorching heat of summer, the harshness of winter, sickness - the Alps are definitely no paradise. My thoughts echoe the priest's words when he pays a visit to Öhi in the spring: "Wenn Euch einmal etwas zustoßen würde hier oben, wer würde Euch beistehen? Ich kann auch gar nicht begreifen, daß Ihr den Winter durch nicht halb erfriert in Eurer Hütte, und wie das zarte Kind es nur aushalten kann!" (H., pp.70-71)/ *"If anything should happen to you up here, who would help you? I cannot understand in the least why you are not half frozen all winter long in your hut, and how the delicate child can endure it!" (He., p.54)*

At seventy, Öhi is not a young man any more. Though strong, death is not an impossibility. What then of Heidi, especially if he dies during winter? She would have to

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[16] For example, Father Jose de Acosta, a Jesuit missionary to the New World wrote in his 1590 treatise *Historia natural y moral de las Indias,* that at high altitudes "the air is so subtle and so refined that it is unsuited to human respiration, which needs air that is thicker and more temperate..." As well, Pan Kou, a Chinese historian of the first century AD described the Karakoram mountain range in Central Asia as follows:
" It is necessary to cross two mountains, one large and one small, which makes the head ache. The earth lies naked there, on the scorching slopes, and the human body loses its colour because of the heat; the torrid sun causes headaches and nausea, and it has the same effect on the animals..."(Antesena, G., Paz-Zamora, M.,Vargas, E., "It's Tough at the Top." In: Unesco Courier 1987 (6), p.10)

do as was the norm back then for people living in the mountains as Adalbert Stifter explains in his novella *Bergkristall*: " Es gehören sogar noch weitere Hütten zu dem Dörfchen, ...die noch tiefer in den Gebirgen stecken, deren Bewohner...im Winter oft ihre Toten aufbewahren müssen, um sie nach dem Wegschmelzen des Schnees zum Begräbnisse bringen zu können."[17] / *There are more huts belonging to the tiny village that lie even more hidden in the mountains. Their occupants must often store their deceased during winter until the melting down of the snow, before they can bury them.* Fortunately, trapped in the same quarters with a frozen corpse is thankfully not Heidi's fate.

Evidently Spyri did not want to portray these particular horrendous possibilities of mountain life, instead she depicts the tranquility of the Alp winter in Öhi's house as a time of plenty revealed by the thick juicy slice of meat slabbed onto Peter's plate when he stays over for lunch at Öhi's one winter day.

However, Öhi's home is a stark contrast to the third world conditions Peter's household live in. Spyri uses Peter's family as an example of the destitute state of mountain people's existence. Hunger is the one mountain obstacle that Spyri openly portrays in her novel. Anytime Peter encounters an ample helping of food, he stands stupefied, rooted to the ground. In fact, his reactions lean towards the comical: "...er konnte nicht mehr weiter. Seine Blicke waren auf den Tisch gefallen, wo die Wurst lag, und der Anblick hatte ihn so überwältigt, daß er kein Wort mehr fand". (H., p.223)/ *"He*

[17] Stifter, A.,*Bergkristall,* Stuttgart: Phillip Reclam Jun., 1980, p.6. *Bergkristall* is the classical tale of a mountain idyll in 19th century realism.

could go no further. His eyes fell on the table where the sausage lay, and the sight of it so overcame him that he could not speak another word." (He., p.191)

Throughout the novel, the reader notices other signs of their poverty such as: the grandmother's remark of how she has hardly enough money to even buy the cheap hard bread she dislikes, Peter's winter hike up to Heidi's hut in a pair of worn out shoes, him clearing the piled up snow around his house with a broom, etc.

This begs the question, why would especially an old blind grandmother and a single mother with a sixteen year old teenager choose to live in an isolated shabby, run down hut up high in the alps? Wouldn't this make it much harder, especially in winter, for the close knit god-fearing community of Dörfli to help these fellow "brother and sisters" of theirs? I shall discuss more about this in the following chapter.

Avonlea

L.M. Montgomery loved her island as passionately as her red-haired heroine. She once wrote in an article about her dear home the following:

> The sons and daughters of Abegweit are a loyal folk. Once there was an old Scotch Islander in the West who was always talking of 'the Island.' 'What island do you mean?' he was asked. With ineffable disdain he answered - for all of us -'Why, Prince Edward Island, mon! What ither island is there?'[18]

[18] Montgomery, L. M. Abegweit, "I have come home. In: *The Lucy Montgomery Album*, Heilbron,A., ed., Toronto: Fitzhenry and Whiteside Limited, 1999.

For Anne and the rest of the Avonlea community there is no "ither" island either. Nothing can surpass the beauty of their "little Eden," as Anne consistently rhapsodizes throughout the novel. Even Anne's first impressions of the people and buildings that inhabit Avonlea complements the lush scenery she witnesses on her way to Green Gables. There are the "snug farmsteads," (A., p.28) and the church spire that rises "against a marigold sky," (A., p.28) and the people who delight in their cucumber beds (Matthew). The tranquil mood conveyed in chapter two is suggestive of the simple, duty-minded folk she will meet, who like the steady clip-clop of the horse's feet, are in tune with the daily rhythms of life.

For a little zest in this little close-webbed world, there are also picnics, church functions, teas, and most importantly gossip - with a dash of slandering thrown in. The reader soon finds out that a Pye will do something just because he is a Pye, and schoolchildren will harass each other only because their parents did so too. But in the end, everyone patches up or at least becomes civil with each other again and resumes the tasks of wholesome Island devotion once more.

Nevertheless there is a big price to pay for such a strong devotion to place that may not seem as evident at first in *Anne of Green Gables.* Avonlea expects of its people an absolute conformity to its rules and regulations. Several L. M. Montgomery scholars agree that the brook in the opening scene of the book, stands as a symbol for this conformity:

> ...the Avonlea main road dipped down into a little hollow, fringed with alders and ladies' eardrops and traversed by a brook that had its source away back in the woods of the old Cuthbert place; it was reputed to be an intricate, headlong brook in its earlier course through those woods, with dark secrets of pool and cascade; but by the time it reached Lynde's Hollow it was a quiet, well-conducted little stream, for not even a brook

coul run past Mrs. Rachel Lynde's door without due regard for decency and decorum...(A., p.7)

The brook points both to the possible mysteries lurking at Green Gables and the need for everyone in Avonlea to conform to the status quo as set by the likes of Mrs. Lynde. These constricting conformities of Avonlea that are placed upon Anne and others, unfortunately reflect the reality of small community living of that time period.

"Where the brook and river meet" (A., p.269)

Anne is like the brook at its onset, bouncy and happy, intricate and mysterious when she first comes to live with the slightly strange elderly siblings. The old maid Marilla with her rigid, practical outlook on life and Matthew, the silent bachelor with a phobia of girls, live at the furthermost edge of Avonlea as far away from the other homesteads as they possibly can without actually retreating into the woods. In Mrs. Lynde's opinion they are not living at all surrounded by all those trees, away from people, to her it is "just staying." (A., p.9)

For the first two thirds of the book, Anne becomes a life-bringer to them and shows them how to live, but before long she is lost in the strong currents of conformity of Avonlea. Like stated in the above title of the thirty-first chapter of the book, Avonlea becomes the forceful river that swallows the little brook. This gradual demise of Anne becomes apparent, through her actions and the subtle narrative undertones the author makes.

The first of Anne's descents is also a physical one, found in "An Unfortunate Lily Maid." In this chapter, Anne and her friends decide to reenact the romantic scene in Lady of Shallot where the dead Elaine floats downstream in a barge towards Camelot. While Anne as Elaine floats away, much to her dismay she finds herself facing her potentially watery grave when she discovers her boat has sprung a leak.

Anne's near drowning experience jolts her to the conclusion that "it's no use trying to be romantic in Avonlea." (A., p.247) Note that Anne's definition of romantic encompasses more than just romance. It includes the dramatic and the imaginative as well. Hence when Anne says that romance is not appreciated in Avonlea, this includes herself. No more do we hear any of Anne's soliloquies or her imaginative ideas after this incident. From this point on the reader loses the gift of imagination from Anne. Consequently, a few chapters later in "Where the Brook and River meet," Marilla tells Anne how much quieter she has become. Though a part of this loss is naturally due to growing up, another part of it is relenting compliance[19] as Anne implies: " It's nicer to think dear, pretty thoughts and keep them in one's heart, like treasures. I don't like to have them laughed at or wondered over." (A., p.274) She has finally realized that in order to belong in Avonlea, she must burrow her imaginations deep into her mind. When the barge went under, so did her imaginative freedom of expression.

Fortunately for Anne and the reader, Anne still has ambitions and an eye for beauty. After the drowning of her fictional imagination and her birth into the stark reality of constraint in Avonlea life, Anne becomes even more determined in her ambitions. This

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[19] See Epperly, E., *The Fragrance of Sweet-Grass,* Toronto: Toronto University Press, 1992, p.33-37.

is evidenced by the last third of the book's focus on Anne's climb toward academic accomplishment. As Anne gains success after success, leaving Avonlea becomes inevitable for her, if she wants to reach beyond the confinements of the community. Even Marilla realizes this and remarks to Anne before she goes to Queen's, how in her stylish, grown-up ways she seems as if she "didn't belong in Avonlea at all." (A., p.296) By now Anne has learned that home is an attitude and she need not conform in order to be loved by the people who matter most, namely Marilla and Matthew. She can be Anne of Green Gables without needing to be Anne *in* Green Gables: "It won't make a bit of difference where I go or how much I change outwardly; at heart I shall always be your little Anne..." (A., p.296)

However all her ambitions and plans go sour after Matthew dies, when Marilla tells her about the possible loss of her eyesight and her fear of loneliness. Anne, home for the summer, after having won the Avery scholarship at Queen's to go to Redmond University, makes the biggest decision of her life and decides to stay. I wonder too like so many other readers, if this was truly necessary. Surely there must have been an alternate way to help Marilla.

Furthermore, I question as well, if Anne would have to have "looked duty in the face" (A., p.322) if she were a boy. Another solution would definitively have been found if that were the case. The statement that Anne made at the beginning of the book "You don't want me because I'm not a boy"(A., p.31) resonates again at the end of the book but in inverted form this time, changed to something like: "I can't leave because I'm not a

boy." It is also interesting to note that L.M. Montgomery never intended to write another sequel to this novel, so Anne was indeed giving up her one and only chance.

In addition, whereas Anne prior to her departure for Queen's had reminded Marilla that she would always be their Anne-girl and love them and Green Gables no matter where she went, in the last chapter, her message, takes on a contrasting view, namely home is a physical place that you must not let go: "Nothing could be worse than giving up Green Gables - nothing could hurt me more. We must keep the dear old place." (A., p.324)

When Anne relinquishes the idea of going to university and patches up with Gilbert, she consciously takes on the "stereotypical image of womanhood that favours reserve, tolerance, self-sacrifice, domesticity, and dreamy-eyed abstraction."[20] Even the nature descriptions that L.M. Montgomery uses to describe Anne reflects this change in her. Whereas in the first two-thirds of the novel the flowers that always surround Anne are colorful and wild such as "a golden frenzy of wind-stirred buttercups and a glory of wild roses" (A., p. 89) - in keeping with her wild nature that mars the Avonlea community like a weed - Anne at the end of the book, resigns herself to a path lined up with duty and "quiet flowers of happiness." (A., p.330) Anne has become just another stereotypical woman in the bunch, as colorless and generic as these flowers.[21]

Clearly, though Anne may have overcome the insignia of being the orphan of Avonlea, she could not escape the late Victorian codes of female conduct. At the end of the novel we wonder what the destiny of Anne will be. Most likely, as Smith writes when

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[20] Epperly, *The Fragrance of Sweet-Grass*, p.37.

describing the choices allotted to women at that time, she will either "become the family servant while remaining single or... marry and become at least partially defined by [her] husband."[22]

Accordingly, we later see Anne in the sixth book of the Anne series, married to Gilbert, quiet and subdued, void of any literary ambitions.

The Other Canadians

Anne is not the only misunderstood outsider. Avonlea frowns also upon ethnic minorities, in particular the French-Canadians. The Island Acadians were the largest minority group on the island at that time and were regularly exploited as a source of cheap labour. They often served as hired boys and girls, as is reflected in the novel, and were for the most part illiterate.

At all times throughout the book, these hired boys and girls are portrayed as lower class, dumb and worthless as stated by Mrs. Lynde: "There's never anybody to be had but those stupid, half-grown little French boys; and as soon as you do get one broke in your ways and taught something he's up and off' (A., p.12) or by Marilla when Anne puts liniment in her cake by mistake : "Well, you'd better go and give that cake to the pigs. It

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[21] Waterston, E. "Flowers and L.M. Montgomery." In: *The Lucy Maud Montgomery Album*, Heilbron, A., ed., Toronto: Fitzhenry & Whiteside, 1999.
[22] Smith, E. K. "Lucy Maud Montgomery: Passionate Puritan." In: *The Lucy Maud Montgomery Album.*

isn't fit for any human to eat, not even Jerry Buote." (A., p.192) [23] The cutting remarks made about the Acadians in *Anne of Green Gables*, though sad and surprising, are nevertheless a reflection of the opinions of that century. The English observer Hill said about them in the 1830's:

> They are in fact a careless and light-hearted people, with the improvidence of Indians, ever preferring the passing enjoyments of the hour, to the solid pursuits of industry; so that, reckoning saints' days, on every one of which they make holyday, and the time they occupy in shooting and other amusements, they probably lose about a fifth of the year.[24]

The unfortunate thing about these outsiders though, is that unlike Anne, they were hardly ever given a chance to prove their worth.[25]

Conclusion

It seems like the "great crystal-white star [that] was shining like a lamp of guidance and promise" (A., p. 28) above Green Gables which Anne saw in chapter two, was perhaps only an optical illusion, or as would be more likely the case with Anne, a figment of her imagination. Though Anne did indeed aim for her dearest desires and ambitions, they were never quite within her reach as long as she was a member of the Avonlea society. Nonetheless, at the end of the novel, not all is lost, Anne realizes. Although the

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[23] Jerry Buote is the Cuthberts' French hired boy.

[24] As cited in: Arsenault, G.,(trans. by Ross, S.), *The Island Acadians*, Charlottetown, P.E.I.: Ragweed Press, 1989, p.95.

[25] Instead the French islanders experienced forced assimilation through the anglicization of their community and culture. Unfortunately, it has not been till the 1970's that great strides had been taken to reverse this process. (see chapter 5 in *The Island Acadians*)

"flowers" have acquired a distinct Avonlea scent, they can bring her relative happiness still.

Heidi however, is luckier than Anne. She is amazingly protected from the violent side of nature. But the reality of poverty and isolation is something that this Alp-girl cannot control nor transform. She's very fortunate that she had been promised by Herr Sesemann that she will never have to worry about making ends meet. Indeed, it would have been sad to one day see an elderly Heidi in the same state as the blind grandmother - sick, poor, and miserable.

Though the apparent vivid beauty of the orphans' lands described at the beginning may indicate that our neglected orphans will at last be able to bask in the milk of human kindness and plenty, such a hope we soon realize, is only superficial. In reality, their lands are full of sour milk.

Chapter Three

Lessons from Heathens

When it comes to attitude towards religion, Spyri and Montgomery stand isles apart. Spyri was a devout Protestant who wanted to repress evil through her writing, Montgomery was a doubting Presbyterian, who once pondered whether "religion has been a curse or a blessing to the world."[1] Spyri's favorite spot in her writings was "das Pfarrhaus"[2]/ *the pastor's house*, for Montgomery being a minister's wife was "respectable slavery."[3] Spyri's writing marks a definite line between good and evil, whereas in Montgomery's writing it is much more blurred. These differences are reflected in *Heidi* and *Anne of Green Gables* as well, however in Spyri's case to a much larger extent than Montgomery, who weaves in her controversial beliefs through ever so subtle ironic overtones.

Spyri's writing has been labeled as pious and moralizing in varying degrees depending on the book. Rutschmann states that if it weren't for *Heidi* - the least pious of Spyri's books - Spyri's literature would have been left behind and forgotten among the other devotional books of that period.[4] Even so, *Heidi* is filled with "sentimentale[r], unreflektierte[r] Religiosität"[5]/ *sentimental, unreflected religion* claims Doderer. I

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[1] As cited by: Rubio, M., "Satire, Realism, and Imagination in Anne of Green Gables." In: *L.M. Montgomery:An Assessment*, Sorfleet, J., ed., Guelph: Canadian Children's Press, 1976, p.28.
[2] See Schindler, R., "Form und Funktion Religiöser Elemente in Johanna Spyris Werken." In: *Nebenan. DerAnteil der Schweiz an der deutschsprachigen Kinder- und Jugendliteratur*, Rutschmann, V., ed., Zürich: Chronos, 1999, p.175.
[3] Smith, E., " Lucy Maud Montgomery: Passionate Puritan." In: *The Lucy Maud Montgomery Album*, Heilbron, A., ed.,Toronto: Fitzhenry & Whiteside, 1999, p.5.
[4] See Rutschmann, V. „Gott sitzt im Regimente und führet alles wohl." In: *Heidi-Karrieren einer Figur*, Halter, E., ed., Zürich: Offizin Zürich Verlags-AG, 2001, p.208.
[5] Schindler, p.179.

disagree. As I shall discuss in more detail later on, I believe that even though *Heidi* may carry religious connotations of what is proper Christian living and what is not, it is not the main focus; the healing power of nature is. (see p.45 of this chapter)

Conversely, Montgomery's red–headed heathen provides a realistic glimpse into a strong-willed child's assimilation with the Christian world. Anne's so called improvement through the reprimands of the oftentimes nearsighted and hypocritical adults, sheds some light on the plight of the unwanted child when confronted by duty-minded grown-ups set in their ways. Unlike Heidi who is lovingly taught into correct Christian comportment by her city grandmother, Anne is pressured several times into doing what's right. However, much to Marilla's and Rachel's horror, this "freckled witch of a girl" (A., p.59) can and will talk back.

Sensitive to their times, there is much positive about religion in these two novels. Notwithstanding, there is also some subtle satire expressed concerning religion practice, even in *Heidi*. Montgomery, by looking at religion through the eyes of the inquisitive red-head, is able to reveal humorously and inoffensively certain points of doctrine or religious customs that had perhaps become hollow and empty. On the other hand, Spyri produces religious irony in her story through the behavior of the villagers.

Therefore in this chapter I shall compare and examine the pros and cons of certain religious aspects as they arise in the novels. Particularly, I will look at how prayer, church and ministers are portrayed in these two texts.

God of love versus „der Polizisten-Gott"[6]/ *The Police-God*

Two elderly Islanders were once asked what the biggest change had been for them in their life-time in the past century. Surprisingly their response had to do with God: "There have been many great changes in my lifetime, but I do believe that the greatest change of all is the change that has come over God....when I was growin' up, God was something to be feared. Oh yes! The fear of God was drilled into us every chance they got.' The second one said likewise: 'I can tell you right now I didn't like Him [God] much. Who would? He seemed to disapprove of the very appetites He had put in us. Not only that, He watched all the time, every little misstep. And if you stumbled, He was right there, on the spot, to wag his big finger.'"[7]

Rubio states how both this "Old Testament God of retribution"[8] and a newer image of God as love, is reflected in Montgomery novels. In *Anne of Green Gables*, we find the former image of God. He is a stern and punishing God as Anne reveals: "People who haven't red hair don't know what trouble is. Mrs. Thomas told me that God made my hair red on *purpose*, and I've never cared about Him since." (A., p.58)

This comment by Anne, as well as others she makes throughout the novel, are the ones that were taught to her by adults. However, when Anne is allowed to express her own views, for instance when looking at the picture hanging on Marilla's wall entitled "Christ Blessing Little Children," she imagines a loving God, One who's gentle touch would give "such a thrill of joy." (A., p.64) Then, she dares to go on: "But I wish the

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[6] See Schindler p.178.
[7] See Rubio, M., "Scottish-Presbyterian Agency in Canadian Culture." In: *L.M. Montgomery and Canadian Culture,* Gammel, I., Epperly, E., ed., Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999, p.100.
[8] Ibid., p.99.

artist hadn't painted Him so sorrowful looking. All His pictures are like that, if you've noticed. But I don't believe He could have looked so sad or the children would have been afraid of Him."(A., p.64) This is quite an insightful comment by a "heathen" whom Marilla had labeled in the preceding chapter as a child "who knew and cared nothing about God's love." (A., p.59) Once again Anne proves that "they" (the adults) are wrong.

Moreover, Anne becomes their voice. The more the adults begin to trust this wild free spirit in their midst, the more they realize that Anne's words reflect their own deep inner thoughts, thoughts they can't express because they are bound by rules. Marilla is by far the most affected by this little revelator of thoughts:

> Marilla...was hampered by the undeniable fact that some of the things Anne had said, especially about the minister's sermons and Mr. Bell's prayers, were what she herself had really thought deep down in her heart for years, but had never given expression to. It almost seemed to her that those secret, unuttered, critical thoughts had suddenly taken visible and accusing shape and form in the person of this outspoken morsel of neglected humanity. (A., p.93)

As for the little Alp-girl, although she may not be outspoken, she becomes the voice of at least one other character in the novel, namely the blind grandmother. Her voice however is of a different resonance, she delivers the comforting word of God solely through song verse. Nevertheless, she had to find her voice from another life-bringer who teaches her how to read. Heidi would not have been able to touch the lives of the people to the depth that she did, if grandmother Sesemann hadn't taught her. Further, she teaches Heidi the newer, progressive loving God as opposed to the image of God that is displayed from the villagers - an unforgiving God who punishes men a whole lifetime just because of

the follies and immaturities committed during youth. It is ironic though, that Heidi as a child of light and nature should have learned the true nature of God from the city.

"Es nützt nichts, der liebe Gott hat nicht zugehört"(H., p.138)
"It's of no use; the dear Lord did not listen"(He., p.119)

In both novels, the issue of prayer serves as a climatic scene between adult and child. The scene starts off with the child balking at the thought of praying and then the adult correcting and teaching them about it. But at the same time, there is a great rift in the point of view of prayer in the two novels. Grandmother Sesemann stresses the prayer that comes from the heart, whereas Marilla emphasizes correct structure and memorization of prayer. This results in Heidi being the first heroine converted to the power of prayer, despite the grandmother's long winding monologue.

Conversely, even though Anne says her prayers, as Marilla had awkwardly taught her, the reader wonders if perhaps this passionate little red-head wouldn't still really prefer the other mode of praying that she relates to Marilla on her second night at Green Gables:

> Why must people kneel down to pray? If I really wanted to pray I'll tell you what I'd do. I'd go out into a great big field all alone or into the deep, deep woods, and I'd look up into the sky-up-up-up into that lovely blue sky that looks as if there was no end to its blueness. And then I'd just *feel* a prayer (A., pp.58-59).

DuVernet calls this religious attitude towards nature as theosophic thought. Theosophy, also known as natural religion is the creating of cosmic harmony between the individual and the world around them; or as DuVernet explains it: "an intuitive recognition of innate energy existing in everything. Everything is alive. This cosmic awareness ...

signifies the concept that everything, trees, animals, plants, and people are all part of a larger life which forms a joint energy pool of universalism."[9]

White[10] also identifies this religious feeling of union with nature in Montgomery's writing as transcendentalism. Closely related to theosophy, transcendentalism which was brought to the Maritimes from New England in the nineteenth century, carried the view that God was principally a creator and that the way to find Him was only through nature.

In *Anne of Green Gables* all these ideas translate into a clash between nature and church as is represented by Anne's first church-going experience in the novel. The Avonlea churchgoers receive quite a sensation when Anne marks her entrance with a generous wreath of wild bright flowers on her hat. This faux pas adds to the already long list of faults that she has.[11] Moreover, the contrast between the 'naturalness' of spirited Anne and the dogmas and creeds that the other girls adhere to, is further accentuated by the neat artificial corsages that are pinned on these little girls' hats. In addition, during opening exercises, instead of at least pretending to listen to the minister, Anne gazes outside and becomes moved by nature's own sermon as she later relates to Marilla:

> Mr. Bell made an awfully long prayer. I would have been dreadfully tired before he got through if I hadn't been sitting by that window. But it looked right out on the Lake of Shining Waters, so I just gazed at that and imagined all sorts of splendid things....There was a long row of white birches hanging over the lake and the sunshine fell down through them,...Oh Marilla, it was like a beautiful dream! It gave me a thrill and I just said, 'Thank you for it, God,' two or three times. (A., p.91)

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[9] DuVernet, S. *Theosophic Thoughts concerning L. M. Montgomery*, Toronto: Sylvia DuVernet, 1988, p.12.

[10] White, G. "The Religious Thought of L.M. Montgomery." In: *Harvesting Thistles*, Rubio, M., ed., Guelph:Canadian Children's Press, 1994, p.85.

[11] See chapter 1, p.17.

And lastly, when Anne comes home after church, she plops herself tiredly in a rocker, lovingly kisses a plant named Bonnie, then waves at another. Her explanation: they might have missed her!

Besides Anne's actions being signs of oddity, they also clearly show the differing perspectives of nature and religion in *Anne of Green Gables*, as well as the precedence that nature takes over religion. The gap between Avonlea's religion and Anne's religiosity towards nature narrows though, once the wonderful new minister and his wife arrive in town. (see p.54)

Unlike *Anne of Green Gables*, religion is for the most part positively portrayed in *Heidi*. However, to label it first and foremost a religious based story as most critics have, would mean, as Schindler puts it, that "es sich um einen Roman mit fast ausschliesslich religiöser Thematik handle, was eindeutig nicht zutrifft".[12]/ *it is a novel that deals almost exclusively with religious themes, which is definitively not the case here.* I also agree with Hurrelmann that this novel is essentially a "Seelengeschichte"[13]/ *story of soul*, which contains religious but primarily mystical elements therein and, I believe, with nature at its forefront. Even though there are several religious elements, like the minister, church and prayer, it is illustrated in such a way that it remains universally appealing enough, as Heer explains it:

> Es ist einfach ein reiner, aus tiefster Seele stammender Hauch von Religiösität...der durch die Spyrischen Erzählungen zieht. Selbst an solchen Stellen, wo das religiöse Moment scheinbar einen Augenblick das künstlerische überwiegt, löst sich das erstere wieder in so volle Akkorde rein menschlichen Fühlens auf, dass es den

[12] Schindler, p.179.
[13] Hurrelmann, B.," Mignons erlöste Schwester." In: *Klassiker der Kinder- und Jugendliteratur,* Hurrelmann, B., ed., Frankfurt am Main, 1995, p.193.

> Genuss des Lesers, welcher Weltanschauung er immer angehöre, nicht zu stören vermag..so finden wir...dass der religiöse Sinn der Spyrischen Schriften in ihrem innersten Zwecke liegt.[14]/ *It is simply a pure breath of religion, sprung from deep within the soul.....that flows through Spyri's stories. Even in those brief moments in the text when religion seems to outweigh art, the former will dissolve so rapidly in accordance with the realm of human feelings, that the enjoyment of the reader, no matter what his world-view, will not be destroyed...so we realize that the religious meaning of Spyri's writings, lie in its innermost purposes.*

Further, these religious elements are outweighed by the mystical events and emotions which transpire throughout the book, mostly through the power of nature, for example Klara's healing. Schindler calls this depiction of nature "Naturfrömmigkeit"/ *nature-piety.*[15] This is also manifested through Heidi's union and harmony with nature such as in the following passage: " Dem Heidi war es so schön zumut, wie in seinem Leben noch nie. Es trank das golden Sonnenlicht, die frischen Lüfte, den zarten Blumenduft in sich ein und begehrte gar nichts mehr, als so da zu bleiben immerzu".[16] / *Heidi had never felt so good inside in all her life. "She drank in the golden sunlight, the fresh air , the delicate fragrance of the flowers, and desired nothing more than to remain there forever. " (He., p.27)* Hurrelmann cites this as an example where "der ganze Mensch angesprochen [ist] und fühlt sich im religiösen Sinne als ganzer gemeint",[17]/ *the whole person is addressed and feels complete in the spiritual sense*, and where "[m]ystische Einheitsvorstellungen klingen an, ohne daß Religiöses genannt wird".[18]/ *mystical conceptions of unity are alluded to, without any direct religious connotations.*

Furthermore, such things as Heidi's retelling of the Prodigal Son bible story to her grandfather carries no missionary or preachy ring to it. For example, Schindler notes that

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[14] Schindler, p.175.
[15] Ibid., p. 189.
[16] Hurrelmann, p.206.
[17] Ibid.

instead of Spyri quoting such phrases as "Ich habe gesündigt"[19]/ *I have sinned*, she writes the phrase "Er hatte undankbar gehandelt"[20]/ *He behaved ungratefully*, which implies a moral weakness as opposed to the violation of a religious creed.

Hence, I agree with the aforementioned critics that it is because of the mystical and non-dogmatic treatment of the many religious elements and the transcendentalist-like qualities of nature, that Heidi cannot be called a religious-laden book. Instead, as a "Seelengeschichte" it portrays the inner emotional and spiritual development of several characters that Heidi touches, each in their own unique way. That is also why for example in the French and Japanese translations it was possible to omit the definitive orthodox religious content and still keep the essence of the book. Moreover, if this novel's prime quality really were "einfältige Religiösität, bis hin zu Frömmelei"[21]/ *simple-minded religion leaning towards bigotry* as Kaminski exclaims, then it could not have remained globally popular for so long.

The Church

The church in Spyri's and Montgomery's time was still very much the revolving force in small-town communities. Religion's influence was felt everywhere, whether in politics, education, social life or gossip - people's lives centered around the church either for better or for worse.

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[18] Ibid.
[19] Schindler, p.188.
[20] Ibid.
[21] As cited by Schindler., p.179.

In P.E.I. communities, just like elsewhere, rivalry among the sects of the dominant Protestant faith were the norm, but what was particularly fierce on this Canadian island, was the rivalry between the Catholics and non-Catholics. Apparently the rivalry became so acute in Montgomery's day that it was necessary to alternate people in some public office positions according to their religion, in order to appease the public.

Revival and prayer meetings were also popular in P.E.I., as well as spiritualism.[22] In Montgomery's journals we read how she and her friends became involved in the latter trend mostly through table rapping. Though Montgomery did not believe in spiritualism and considered it as just fun, she nonetheless inserted several psychic experiences for her main character in the Emily trilogy.

In contrast to Montgomery's experience, religion proved to be more dramatic during Spyri's childhood. In the late 1830's the Protestant church of Zürich was involved in a serious disagreement with the national government that eventually ended in bloodshed. It all started when the nine year-old liberal Regierungsrat voted David Friedrich Strauss to be the new church history and dogmatism professor at the recently founded Zürich University, thereby completely ignoring the church's opposition to his post. The Christian people throughout the area, already perturbed by the reformations this government had created, were incensed over this decision since they regarded this man to be the walking devil himself, because among other things he believed that Christ was not God's son, but rather a great man that was mythologized into that role. Fed through rumors, what first started as petitions by the people, escalated into burning demonstrations

and then finally into a revolt against the Zürich government, known since then as the 1839 "schmutzige Freitag"/ *dirty Friday*. For Johanna's family who was involved in these protests, it was, as her mother wrote, a time "der Tränen und des Gebets". [23]/ *of tears and prayer.*

As for the church's doctrine, Spyri's and Montgomery's era was also a time of fire and brimstone type preaching. According to Sellick,[24] the main reason for being good at that time was to avoid going to Hell. He says how the main purpose of preaching was to instill fear of damnation into its church-goers. In addition, in P.E.I in the prebysterian faith, there still lurked the notion of predestination, especially among the older generation. Most younger ministers didn't preach predestination anymore in the late nineteenth century, but as Rubio[25] recounts, some of the older ministers still flung predestination at their audience so as to appeal to the old-timers who still held the greater influence on the retention of ministers. Montgomery criticizes this doctrine in *Anne of Green Gables* through Anne's notion of being "naturally good." For instance, when Anne after a tea at the minister's home, totally enthralled by the new minister's wife, exclaims to Marilla how much she would love to be a minister's wife, she sadly comes to the conclusion that "[b]ut then of course one would have to be naturally good and I'll never be that, so I suppose there's no use in thinking about it. Some people are naturally good, you know, and others

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[22] Spiritualism, spurred on by the American Fox girls, was very much in vogue then with the late Victorians.

[23] see Villain, J., *Der erschriebene Himmel.* Zürich/Frauenfeld: Verlag Nagel & Kimche AG, 1997, chapter „Zeit der Aufregungen" for more details and see p.97 for quote.

[24] Sellick, L., *My Island Home.* Nova Scotia: Lancelot Press, 1973., p.37 Note: Though his remark is about P.E.I., it equally applies to Switzerland's Protestant doctrine as well.

are not. I'm one of the others, Mrs. Lynde says I'm full of original sin. No matter how hard I try to be good I can never make such a success of it as those who are naturally good...But don't you think the trying so hard ought to count for something?" (A., p.196)

Sadly enough, it is this same doctrine that plagued Montgomery's husband with severe mental illness in his later years which in turn caused Montgomery's eventual nervous breakdown.

Montgomery's sarcasm of religion doesn't end there though. A favourite strike of hers that turns up throughout her novels seems to be towards ministers. For example, in the *Story Girl* the manner in which ministers preach are mocked as follows: "Not a motion, or glance, or intonation escaped us. To be sure, none of us could remember the text when we got home; but we knew just how you should throw back your head and clutch the edge of the pulpit with both hands when you announced it."[26] More severe though is the critique found in Montgomery's novel *Emily Climbs*: "That sermon was a most inconsistent thing. Mr. Wickham contradicted himself half a dozen times. He mixed his metaphors - he attributed something to St. Paul that belonged to Shakespeare - he committed almost every conceivable literary sin, including the unpardonable one of being dull."[27]

In *Anne of Green Gables*, the ministers and laymen are also drones who seem to have lost their spirituality - Anne decribes to Marilla how at church Mr. Bell "was talking

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[25] Rubic, M. , "L.M. Montgomery: Scottisch-Presbyterian Agency in Canadian Culture." In: *L. M. Montgomery and Canadian Culture*, Gammel, I.,Epperly, E., eds., Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999.
[26] Rubio, p.96.
[27] Ibid.

to God and he didn't seem very much interested in it, either. I think he thought God was too far off to make it worth while." (A., p.91) As to be expected Anne's formula for successful sermons include "short, snappy" (A., p.93) texts and of course "enough imagination." (A., p.93)

But in Avonlea's brand of religion, imagination is frowned upon to the point that it is regarded as irreverent as Marilla says so to Anne when she imagines being one of the girls in the picture "Christ blessing the Chidren." Even worse though is Mrs. Lynde's doctrine as is related fearfully by Ruby Gillis, when Anne and her girlfriends decide to act out the scene of the Lady of Shallot: "Mrs. Lynde says all playacting is abominable wicked"(A., p.240). Apparently, old beliefs die hard in late nineteenth century P.E.I..

Montgomery also exaggerates certain credences or traditions to portray the pitfalls when taking things too far. For instance, the first of these exaggerations are the memorization of lessons, prayers and the like. We see this through Marilla's insistence that Anne learn the Lord's prayer so that she never has to hear Anne say such an improper one as she did on her second night there. When told that a good girl should never find it hard to say her prayers, Anne pinpoints the problem of her religious upbringing by answering "saying one's prayers isn't exactly the same thing as praying."(A., p.86) As well, this stern elderly woman drills the orphan so perfectly in her Sunday School lesson that during the actual lesson Anne knows all the right answers without a miss. However, we are told by the narrator that "it may be questioned if she understood very much about either question or answer." (A., p.91)

These examples strongly propose that though perhaps the adults' teaching is well-intended, they have unfortunately fallen into the trap of concentrating too much on the

letter of the law instead of the spirit of the law. This is also demonstrated through Marilla's cleanliness. Anne's first impression of the Cuthbert's home is that of "fearsomely clean." (A., p.35) Furthermore, the room that is to become hers has "whitewashed walls...so painfully bare and staring that she thought they must ache over their own bareness." (A., p.35) It is evident that Marilla is a staunch believer in the adage "cleanliness is next to godliness," however to the point that she has stripped her home from its beauty. Though the sore cleanliness of Marilla's home reflects also her personality,[28] it also symbolizes the senseless, overbearing rigidity of the adults that Anne will have to face in matters of both religion and correct behavior.

Fortunately, Montgomery does insert the potentially brighter side of religion by introducing the new young pleasant minister and his wife, Mr. And Mrs. Allan in the second half of the book: "I liked him because his sermon was interesting and he prayed as if he meant it and not just as if he did it because he was in the habit of it," (A., p.185) states Anne.

The energetic red-head is particularly enthralled by the minister's wife. In her, the orphan has found a role model and a kindred spirit. Moreover, it is through her that Anne discovers that religion is "such a cheerful thing"(A., p.186) and not "melancholy" (A., p.186) as she had previously thought.

Above all though, Anne is shown that religion can be practiced from the heart: "I'd like to be a Christian if I could be one like her...I can just feel she's glad she's a Christian and that she'd be one even if she could get to heaven without it." (A., p.186)

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[28] Rubio, M. "Satire, Realism, and Imagination in Anne of Green Gables", p.30.

Conversely in Heidi, none of the above mentioned fallacies are really evident, at least not superficially. Doderer[29] says that in this book, sin comes as a result from turning one's back against the community. The villagers and the pastor say so too. But this is a very one-sided interpretation, for the grandfather's version of the story is never revealed. Nevertheless, the narrator does leak out little signs, which demonstrate that all may not seem as it appears to be; it is evident that the grandfather's hermit-like existence is due to his bitterness and anger and probably guilt, but the question is never clearly answered, who pushed whom away? Perhaps through the grandfather's eyes, his story would be one of society's mistreatment and misunderstanding of an orphaned senior.

First of all, everything that we know about Öhi's past is what Aunt Dete tells Bärbel on her way up the mountain in chapter one. She is sure of only a few facts in his life, like his rebellious behavior during youth and his later participation in the army. But then the other parts of his life's story she recounts is rumor-based, such as he killed somebody in a brawl. Secondly, she also mentions how when he returned to his hometown nobody wanted anything to do with him, even his relatives closed their doors on him. It seems that not only did the older people not forget his behavior during youth, but they never gave him a second chance. Further, when the minister pays him a visit after Heidi had already been living with him for two years and makes the comment that he hasn't seen Öhi in a long time, the grandfather replies with "Ich den Herrn Pfarrer auch nicht". (H., p.68)/ *"Nor have I seen you, pastor." (He., p.52)* The minister must be extremely busy to not only not have visited Öhi, but, according to the villagers, his at-risk granddaughter as well. Furthermore, in the example of Bärbel we see that rumors get

[29] see Schindler, p.178.

passed down from one generation to the next without people really knowing why they treat people the way they do. And lastly, Öhi is not the only one that lies conveniently forgotten, tucked away "an den Rand der Zivilization".[30]/ *at the edge of civilization.*

This other case is that of the blind grandmother, Peter and his mother Brigitta. They have also been expelled from society, most likely not abused verbally, but neglected physically for certain. It is obvious to the reader that the three generations of half-orphans live in extreme poverty:

> Die Hütte... sah so baufällig und verfallen aus, daß es noch ein gefährliches Darinwohnen sein mußte, wenn der Föhnwind so mächtig über die Berge strich, daß an der Hütte klapperte, Türen und Fenster, und alle die morschen Balken zitterten und krachten. Hätte die Hütte an solchen Tagen oben auf der Alm gestanden, sie wäre unverzüglich ins Tal hinabgeweht worden. (H., p.18)/ *[the hut] looked so tumble-down and decayed that it would have been a dangerous dwelling when the mighty storm winds swept across the mountain, making everything in the hut, doors and windows, rattle, and all the worm-eaten rafters tremble and creak. On such days, if the hut had been up on the alm, it would certainly have been blown into the valley. (He., p.8)*

Evidently nobody in this household is able to fix the house, so help from anyone would be greatly appreciated. However, every day, Peter goes down among the villagers to gather the sheep, and no sign of help is sent on the way. Villagers drop their spinning jobs off regularly to Peter's mother and yet the house always remains the same. Brigitta, Peter and "Großmutter" all go to church faithfully every Sunday and still nothing changes. Then, only once little five year old Heidi has to come down to visit the blind grandmother and by the next day she gets the house fixed by none other than the "menschenfeindliche" (H., p.14)/ *people-hating* grandfather.

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[30] Escher, G. "Berge heissen nicht." In: *Heidi-Karrieren einer Figur,* Halter, E.,ed., Zürich: Offizin, 2001, p.280.

Two things come to the surface here: 1) there is neglect by the Christian community - if either intentionally or unintentionally we don't know - of the fatherless and the widows, and 2) the grandfather does not seem so heartless after all.

Perhaps there is some truth to Öhi's bird interpretation which he divulges to Heidi in chapter three : " Der [Vogel] höhnt die Leute aus dort unten, daß sie so viele zusammensitzen in den Dörfern und einander bös machen. Da höhnt er hinunter: `Würdet ihr auseinander gehen und jedes seinen Weg und auf eine Höhe steigen wie ich, so wär's euch wohler!' "(H., p.48)/ *"He is mocking at the people down below, because so many sit together in the villages and make one another wicked. So he mocks them: 'It would be much better for you to leave one another and let each go his own way and climb up to some mountaintop, as I do!' "(He., p.35)*

Reflective of those words, it is amusing how Spyri portrays the village people at the end of part one of Heidi, after having witnessed Öhi's entrance into the church. The church meeting is out and they all stand around gawking at Öhi go into the minister's house. Confused about the grandfather's appearance at church they debate back and forth about his motives in their little groups. It is only when they see the minister shake the grandfather's hand upon his departure, that the veil of negativity finally falls and the villagers can heartily extend their warm welcome into the community.

Hence, in my opinion the grand theme finale of the prodigal son returning home in part one, carries with it an underlying story, one that in religious terms would be termed as hypocritical.

Conclusion

Both authors were capable to criticize certain religious points in their writing through their use of irony and comical tension. By letting their orphans get into disgraceful yet innocent scrapes at church and letting them question their caretakers about various religious points, not only does the reader become more aware of the injustices of religion as seen through the eyes of the child, but shows also the hollowness of the adults' dumbfounded explanations that things are done the way they are *just because*. By giving their orphans a voice on such matters, Spyri and Montgomery were opening up a box of religious issues, rarely discussed in that manner before in children's literature. However, most importantly, they were showing how a child's experience in church or with religion, just like school, could either cause the development or diminution of their sense of self-worth.

Chapter Four

New Sights on the Abc's

It goes without saying that there hardly ever seems to be a classroom or study room scene in *Heidi* and *Anne of Green Gables*, that isn't filled with an eventful occurrence of some kind; whether it be Frau Rottenmeier flying off into hysterics at the mere sight of kittens, Heidi tripping over a carpet and making an awful mess or Anne breaking a slate over Gilbert's head, we as readers are delighted when a boring class turns into an exciting one. However, on the flip side, we become just as much annoyed, when situations turn awry for our heroines: we scorn at Mr. Phillips' injustice for singling Anne out for punishment, we feel for her when her geometry work is laughed at by the same said teacher, and we sigh at Herr Kandidat's inability to teach Heidi how to read.

Spyri and Montgomery, having been both students and teachers/tutors themselves, were well acquainted with nineteenth century classroom realities and reveal in their novels these many facets of school life. Their skillful portrayal of student-teacher relationships and the varying teaching methods and curricula used by the different teachers, reflect society's perception of childhood specific to their times.

The heroines' creators lived in an era of great changes in educational thought, the biggest change being a shift of focus towards the needs of the child. Whereas for centuries prior, the child

had been regarded as a miniature adult and as being born evil, in the late 1700's society began to realize that childhood was a stage important in itself, where if infused with proper care and nurturing, would develop out of children good, responsible adults. Such a change of view of the child, was propelled by philosophers and educators such as Rousseau, Pestalozzi and Froebel, who believed that the process of becoming an adult was just as important as the end-product, hence stressing that children should be loved and guided into adulthood rather than be whipped into it. This humanistic movement in child-rearing led to school reforms world-wide and laid the groundwork for modern education as we have it today.

Nonetheless at the time *Heidi* and *Anne of Green Gables* were published, there still lingered a considerable amount of Puritan ethic beliefs on how to raise children. In the schools it was likewise, particularly in small rural areas such as the ones that our heroines live in. Through Heidi and Anne, Spyri and Montgomery give us an insider's glance on how it felt to be a student in a world dominated by two opposing thoughts, and it is this tension that will be the object of this chapter. I shall proceed first with the general school atmosphere, then follow up with the methodology of teaching used within the novels.

Swiss Schools

During Spyri's childhood Switzerland was already advanced in matters of education: a system of popular schools, high schools in the cities, free education for all from the year 1848 on, major school reforms in 1833 for a more Pestalozzinian pedagogy;[1] however this existed more in

[1]These reformations were met with violent controversy. For more details see Villain, J.,*Der erschriebene Himmel. Spyri und ihre Zeit.* Zürich/Frauenfeld:Verlag Nagel & Kimche AG, 1997, pp.88-89.

theory than in practice, especially when it came to teachers. Teachers were a particular problem in smaller rural areas where "the education of all the poorer people was limited to that which could be given by uneducated teachers - nothing but the inculcation of passages from the bible."[2] Neither was it much better in Hirzel, where the school superintendents, desperate for a teacher, would settle for "ein[en] Knabe[n] zwischen 15 und 16 Jahren,...zwar noch bei keinem Kreislehrer gewesen, könnte also auch die Repetierschule noch nicht halten, kennt aber etwas die Grammatik, kann auch nicht übel lesen und schreiben, auch etwas rechnen..."[3]/ *a young lad between 15 and 16 years old...that had not been taught by any district teacher yet, so a boy with no advanced schooling, but who knows a little grammar, does not read or write so terribly, and also can do some arithmetic.* Evidently, though the1833 school reformations brought in new school materials and subjects, these remained useless without properly trained teachers.

In addition, the schools were often closed down for weeks during harsh winter weather. Fortunately, however, if the children did go to school on a winter day, lack of heat in the classrooms was apparently not an issue, because students in the village school were taught in classrooms so small "daß die Bänke ganz nahe zusammengerückt werden müssen, was den Vorteil hat, daß man sich im Winter gegenseitig warm hält".[4] / *that the benches always had to be moved together very closely, the advantage being that one could keep one another warm during winter.*

Above the classroom was the teacher's quarters that comprised of two rooms, and a

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[2]Boultwood, M., Curtis S., *A Short History of Educational Ideas.* London: University tutorial press LTD., 1965, p.319.

[3]Villain, J., *Der erschriebene Himmel. Johanna und ihre Zeit.* Zürich/Frauenfeld:Verlag Nagel & Kimche AG, 1997, p.81.

small kitchen. Under the kitchen was the notorious windowless "Strafloch"[5]/ *punishment hole*, where mischievous boys and girls would be locked in for a while till they came to their senses. Of course that was usually the last resort, otherwise the teacher was convinced "daß alle Mängel und Gebrechen der Schulkinder aus ihnen heraus und alle Fähigkeiten und guten Eigenschaften in sie hinein geprügelt werden koennen..., manchmal auch beide auf einmal".[6] / *that all inadequacies and flaws could be whipped out of the schoolchildren and that all good qualities and capabilities could be whipped into them...,sometimes both at the same time.* Fortunately we as readers are not told of any of these types of corporal punishment happening to Heidi. In fact, Spyri's description of Heidi's village schooling is very meager, she instead focuses on Heidi's educational development through other means.

Nature as teacher

Perhaps one of the reasons for Öhi's refusal to send Heidi to school, was because of the above explained conditions. Though not opposed to organized schooling as his conversation with the pastor reveals, Öhi believes that Heidi is much better off to grow and learn "mit den Geißen und den Vögeln, bei denen ist es ihm wohl, und es lernt nichts Böses von ihnen".(H., p.69)/ *"with the goats and the birds; she is well enough with them, and she learns no harm from them." (He.,p.53)* The grandfather's remarks have a definite Rousseauian flair, who through his well-known book *Émile*, illustrated the advantages of naturalism in education, i.e. to be educated by

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[4] Ibid., p.80.

[5]Ibid, p.81.

[6]Ibid, p.81.

life's own experiences and environment. Rousseau also believed that a child should "exercise his body, his limbs, his senses, his strength, but [should] keep his mind idle as long"[7] as possible, which is exactly what Öhi promotes.

Another one of Rousseau's proposed teaching methods is to let the child learn discipline through the consequences from his own actions. For instance if Émile breaks his bedroom window out of anger, he will learn not to do so again from the cold he'd receive from sleeping in a draughty room. This is where Öhi parts from Rousseau's thinking - before Heidi sets out on her first goat-herding trip with Peter, he asks Peter to make sure Heidi doesn't get too close to the dangerous cliffs. Other than that however, Heidi's education under the first two years of Öhi's care is pretty much left to wherever the wind blows.

What would have become out of Heidi then, if she hadn't gone to Frankfurt and learned how to read? Spyri provides us with the answer through the portrayal of Peter. Peter is a prototype of what Heidi could have become if her city experience had not intervened. The "[d]icht an der Grenze des Albernen"[8] / *borderline absurd* goatherd, has lived in the mountains all his life, his daily companions are goats and he rarely attends school. Such a lack of intellectual stimulation and constant isolation are the reasons for his instinctual reactions to circumstances (see H., p.231), his monosyllabic answers and grunts and his slow grasp at comprehending things. Sadly, it seems like the only way to reach him and make him understand anything at all is through fear for his life (see H., p.300). As the pastor replies to the grandfather, when the latter describes his upbringing methods for Heidi, nature as sole teacher is no good because "das Kind ist keine

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[7] See Boultwood and Curtis, p.279.

[8] As quoted in Rutschmann, V., "Gott sitzt im Regimente und führet alles wohl." In: *Heidi-Karrieren einer Figur*, Halter, E., ed., Zürich: Offizin Verlags-AG, p.210.

Geiß und kein Vogel, es ist ein Menschenkind. Wenn es nichts Böses lernt von diesen Kameraden, so lernt es auch sonst nichts von ihnen". (H., p.70)/ *"But the child is neither a goat or a bird; she is a human being. If she learns no harm from such companions, neither does she learn anything else." (He., p.53)* Truly, such is the consequence of any one-sided approach to learning, whether it be from nature or from closed-in quarters found in the city.

The city as teacher

When Heidi arrives in Frankfurt, her world becomes a prison. We read how on her first morning there, she flits to and fro once again from window to window straining to peer outside, this time however (see also H., p.52), evoking to the reader images of a trapped bird inside a cage. In addition to having to adjust to the culture/city shock and endure the emotional abuse by Frau Rottenmeier, another burden is placed upon Heidi when she is entrusted under the tutelage of Herr Kandidat. According to Klara, he never becomes angry and always explains everything, however here comes the downfall of his one-sided teaching: "Aber siehst du, wenn er etwas erklärt, dann verstehst du nichts davon; dann musst du nur warten und gar nichts sagen, sonst erklärt er dir noch vielmehr und du verstehst es noch weniger. Aber dann nachher, wenn du etwas gelernt hast und es weißt, dann verstehst du schon, was er gemeint".(H., p.84)/ *"But you see, when he explains anything, if you don't understand at all about it you must wait and say nothing, or else he will explain a great deal more and you will understand still less. But afterward, when you have learned something and know it, then you will understand what he meant." (He., p.69)* Even Frau Sesemann avoids having conversations with Herr Kandidat as far as possible, in order

to not become subjected to his pages-long soliloquies. (see H., p.129)

Klara's explanation of Herr Kandidat's teaching methods is similar to what Rousseau criticized in his remarks about teachers' over-reliance on verbalism in their teaching: "What do they teach?...Words, words, words...Among the various sciences they boast of teaching...they take good care never to choose those which might be really useful to them." [9]

So it is with relief that Frau Sesemann visits Frankfurt when she does - though she may not solve Heidi's sorrow, at least she postpones Heidi's decline. By utilizing psychology and focusing on Heidi's needs as an individual, she succeeds where Herr Kandidat had failed. She is able to stimulate Heidi both intellectually and spiritually, by teaching her how to read and how to relieve her burdens through prayer. Herr Kandidat on the other hand, had only intensified her homesickness by comparing letters to individual animal parts and then gave up her reading as hopeless, without the thought occurring to him that perhaps the problem lay with the teacher and not with the student as Frau Sesemann relates:

> Es geschehen viele wunderbare Dinge im Menschenleben....es können auch einmal zwei Dinge glücklich zusammentreffen, wie ein neuer Lerneifer und eine neue Lehrmethode, und beide können nichts schaden, Herr Kandidat". (H., p.133)/ *"A great many wonderful things happen in the course of one's life...Two things might happen fortunately; for instance, new interest in learning and a new method in teaching; and neither can do any harm, Herr Kandidat. Let us rejoice that the child has done so well, and let us hope for good progress. (He., pp.115-116)*

Frau Sesemann's teaching methodology, which includes teaching according to the student's pace and taking a more holistic teaching approach, reflect Pestalozzi's methods. Pestalozzi discouraged the learning of words or letters through rote and memorization, instead he

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[9]Rousseau, J., *Émile,* trans.by Foxley, B. London: J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd., 1911, pp.72-73.

stated that words should be taught by "connecting them ...with a clear idea of their meaning,"[10] an example being what Frau Sesemann does, namely teaching reading through the act of reading itself. Unlike his aforementioned predecessor, Pestalozzi aimed at reuniting "what Rousseau has separated,"[11] namely liberty and obedience, adding that Rousseau " has not remembered the limits of liberty."[12]

With that notion comes Pestalozzi's emphasis on moral education of children from early on, which should be provided primarily by the mother. She fulfills her duty of having virtuous feelings "engrafted on their hearts" through her "constant loving care, her firmness, her consistency, and her simple teaching about God." [13]

In this sense, Frau Sesemann through her displayment of these characteristics towards Heidi, becomes a type of mother figure for the deprived orphan. Heidi feels this bond almost instantly as she "guckte ihr...ganz ernsthaft in die Augen, denn da kam etwas so Herzliches heraus, daß es dem Heidi ganz wohl machte..."(H., p.127)/ *"Heidi looked very earnestly into her eyes, for they had such an expression of kindness that they made her feel quite at ease..." (He., p.108)*

Unfortunately, these feelings that spring within Heidi will not be reciprocated when she comes across the opportunity to teach later on.

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[10]See Boultwood and Curtis, p.322.

[11] Ibid.

[12]Ibid.

Education through Fear

For a child such as Heidi who was lovingly taught by her city grandmother, it comes as a surprise that she reverts to fear-instilling tactics when teaching Peter how to read upon her return back home. Partly to blame of course is the primer that is written in this way, which reveal a popular method of teaching children at that time. The primer is written in the style of "Abschreckpädagogik"[14] / *Fear-education* similar to that found in the popular German children's classic *Der Struwwelpeter* by Dr. Hoffmann, where for example a boy's fingers are cut off because he wouldn't stop sucking them. Still, Heidi carries the blame too. As a demanding tutor, not-so-sweet Heidi in this case "whips" Peter through her own fearful remarks such as when she foretells him the consequences for not reading (see H., p.252). Also, unlike Frau Sesemann's techniques who aroused in Heidi a love for reading, Heidi's methods prove to do the contrary. For Peter words are just words as his reading to his grandmother reveals. For, says the grandmother, when comparing his reading to Heidi, it seems "wie wenn es ganz andere Lieder läse". (H. p.260)/ *"...as if she read entirely different hymns." (He., p.224)* According to the narrator, the reason for this is the following, which at the same time shows the depth of Peter's ineptitude:

> Wenn ein Wort kam, das gar zu lang war oder sonst schlimm aussah, so ließ er es lieber ganz aus, denn er dachte, um drei oder vier Worte in einem Verse werde es der Großmutter wohl gleich sein, es kommen ja dann noch viele. So kam es, daß es fast keine Hauptwörter mehr hatte in den Liedern, die der Peter vorlas". (H., p.260)/ *If a word came that was too long or looked hard, he chose to leave it out, for he thought it would be all the same to the grandmother whether there were three or four words in a line. So it came about that there were hardly any nouns left in the hymns Peter read. (He., p.224)*

Nevertheless, although Peter remains hopelessly dumb, at least Heidi has achieved more through fear and force than through dullness (Herr Kandidat) and mildness (Dörfli teacher).

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[13]Ibid., p.339.

[14] Doderer, K., *Literarische Jugendkultur*. München: Juventa Verlag, 1992, p.69.

Education on the island

Despite its size, P.E.I. was also advanced in the field of education. Through the "Free School Act" in 1852, and "Public Schools' Act" in 1877, P.E.I. became the first settlement in the whole British empire to offer free public education for children between the ages of five and sixteen. This said, it was yet a far cry from today's public school system, in that it was only mandatory for children from eight to thirteen years old to attend school. In addition, because of farming demands, only a minimum of twelve weeks of schooling in the entire academic year was required, five of which had to be consecutive.

Unlike Switzerland, most rural children from P.E.I were taught primarily in one-room school houses, (the teacher having to board elsewhere), and were in much poorer conditions. Accounts of Canadian rural schools at that time sounded more like a health hazard than a place of learning: holes in the building were stuffed with rags, greased paper often substituted window panes, heat coming from the stovepipe dispersed smoke and soot all over the room, and dirt floors were so filthy that - as Montgomery relates from her school days - "a shovel would have been the best thing to tackle it with." [15]

Since educational reforms were much slower in coming to Canada, school supplies were limited throughout the nineteenth century. Often only a chalkboard, a few books and a map were at the teacher's disposal. To make matters worse, the only books used by students were readers,

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[15] as cited in Dutton, A., Gammel, I., "L..M. Montgomery and Early Schooling." In: *L.M.Montgomery and Canadian Culture*, Gammel, I., Epperly, E., eds.,Toronto: University of Toronto Press, p.117.

but often parents couldn't afford to buy one. Therefore students would bring to school old worn-out copies handed down from other family members, which resulted in a mismatch of readers between students of the same grade. When adding to these challenges a class beyond forty multi-graded students, Canadian teachers of that era certainly had their hands full.

These school conditions are opposite of what Montgomery writes in her novel, indeed with the description of the surrounding nature, her school almost sounds romantic:

> ...the Avonlea school was a whitewashed building low in the eaves and wide in the windows, furnished inside with comfortable substantial old-fashioned desks that opened and shut ...The schoolhouse was set back from the road and behind it was a dusky fir wood and a brook where all the children put their bottles of milk in the morning to keep cool and sweet until dinner hour (A., p.119).

This rosy-perfect school setting, in keeping with Anne's rapture of her surroundings, is however marred by a more realistic portrayal of Anne's schoolteacher, Mr. Phillips.

The courting teacher

Sadly enough, Montgomery's portrayal of Mr. Phillips reflects what was the norm of teaching at that time. Hired as the Avonlea school teacher, not through any merit of his own, but rather because his uncle was a school trustee, Mr. Phillips would be regarded as an incompetent teacher under any school system. To be fair though, knowledge-wise, he seems adequate, he teaches among other things geography, Canadian history as well as Latin to his oldest student, but in terms of class control he is greatly wanting: "...the scholars were doing pretty much as they pleased, eating green apples, whispering, drawing pictures on their slates, and driving crickets, harnessed to strings, up and down the aisle." (A., p.123) Usually a teacher will lose class

control, because of either carelessness, laziness or kindness without firmness, but in Mr. Phillips' case, the biggest reason is because, as Anne says, he is "dead-gone" (A., p.119) over beautiful sixteen year-old student Prissy Andrews. Montgomery depicts him as continually giving her his outmost attention, sitting at her side, causing an occasional blush and giggle to escape from her. The author isn't exaggerating too much here. In contrast with today's society, it was entirely accepted then for a male teacher to be interested in one of his pupils or to court her. Montgomery's stepmother even encouraged it.[16] [17]

It was natural for courtships between male teachers and students to occur because of the closeness of age between the two. The average teacher's age was between seventeen and twenty-three years old. Primarily this was because teaching was regarded as a low-paying, low-status profession, used by male teachers only as a temporary job to help finance their way to greater career aspirations. Such is Gilbert's desire when he discusses with Anne his future plans to go into the medical profession: "I want to do my share of honest, real work in the world...that is the only way a fellow can get square with his obligations to the race." (AoA., p.54) Those men who wished to remain in the education field, usually advanced up the ladder to such positions as principal or if interested in teaching, would seek employment in either a private or city school. Otherwise if a man did end up being just the local country schoolteacher, he was looked upon

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[16] Such was the experience of 15-year old Montgomery, who, while attending school in Prince Albert, Saskatchewan, was the recipient of the advances made to her by her school teacher Mr. Mustard. Evidently disgusted by the idea, Montgomery made every attempt to send a clear message that the feelings were not mutual. Her hints were apparently futile, for one day when Mr. Mustard came over to her father's house, he asked for her hand in marriage. Horror-stricken Montgomery wrote of that incident: "I just wanted to laugh...I am devoutly thankful that the dreaded ordeal is over."(As quoted by: Heilbron,A., "Maud's Beaux." In: *The Lucy Maud Montgomery Album*. Heilbron, A, ed., Toronto: Fitzhenry & Whiteside, 1999, p.122.)

[17] It is interesting to note that had Montgomery's teacher been female and she male, such an ensuing relationship would have been scandalous. This is well depicted in the literary relationship between female teacher Emilie and her male student in *Les Filles de Caleb* by Arlette Cousture.

with pity, and was most likely than not, to be a person "of a ship-wrecked character and blasted prospects in life for whom teaching was the "occupation of last resort."[18]

For women on the other hand, teaching was one of the few professions available to them that let them live independently before getting married and settling down. Further, female teachers were expected more so than their male counterparts to be prime examples of moral conduct. And once married, they were not allowed to teach any more. But male teachers as well had certain expectations to live up to. The following code of ethics gives us a good glimpse of the strict regulations that these teachers of the Victorian era were supposed to adhere by:

1. Teachers will fill the lamps and clean the chimney each day.
2. Each teacher will bring a bucket of water and a scuttle of coal for the day's session.
3. Make your pens carefully. You may whittle nibs to the individual tastes of the pupils.
4. Men teachers may take one evening each week for courting purposes, or two evenings a week if they go to church regularly.
5. After ten hours in school, the teachers may spend the remaining time reading the Bible or other good books.
6. Women teachers who marry or engage in improper conduct will be dismissed.
7. Every teacher should lay aside from each day's pay a goodly sum of his earnings. He should use his savings during his retirement years so that he will not become a burden on society.
8. Any teacher who smokes, uses liquor in any form, visits pool halls or public halls, or gets shaved in a barber shop, will give good reasons for people to suspect his worth, intentions, and honesty.
9. The teacher who performs his labor faithfully and without fault for five years will be given an increase of twenty-five cents per week in his pay.[19]

As is evidenced throughout Montgomery's works however, this code was, for some teachers, merely words on paper.

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[18] As quoted in Gammel,I. and Dutton, A., "L.M. Montgomery and Early Schooling." In: *L.M. Montgomery and Canadian Culture*, Gammel, I., Epperly, E., eds., Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999, p.108.

[19] Kalman, B., *Early Schools*. Toronto: Crabtree Publishing Company, 1982, p.42.

The disciplinary teacher

Men were often preferred over female teachers because it was believed that they could be better disciplinarians.[20] As for Mr. Phillips, although often sidetracked through his love-sickness, he proves to be a harsh disciplinarian once he is bolted out of his reverie with Prissy. For instance he whips Sam for "sassing" him and makes Anne write a line on the board one hundred times when she breaks her slate over Gilbert's head. Nevertheless a better teacher would have realized that Gilbert was partly to blame for Anne's outburst and would have punished him also, however minimally. But that cannot be expected from an unjust teacher who enjoys humiliating, laughing and destroying his students' morale. It is no wonder then that Mr. Phillips "was always whipping and he had no order at all." (AoA., p.28) Even with corporal punishment, students cannot respect a teacher who is always so "horrid and sarcastic" (A., p.182) towards them.

The ideal teacher

When the new schoolteacher Miss Stacy enters the Avonlea scene she is like a breath of fresh air when compared to her former colleague. She is described in a nutshell by the narrator as "a bright, sympathetic young woman with the happy gift of winning and holding the affections of her pupils and bringing out the best that was in them mentally and morally." (A., p.206) Although winning the affections of the rest of the Avonlea folk is not so immediate. Mrs. Lynde and Marilla hold out a watchful eye on Miss Stacy's as her teaching methods are entirely revolutionary for this community: besides the regular subjects such as mathematics, English

[20]This was especially important if the senior students were older than the teacher! Kalman gives us a humorous account in p.39 of his book of an incident where the older students bully a soft-spoken teacher till they run him right out of town.

literature, history and French, her lessons include field afternoons to study science and nature, recitation Fridays and daily physical exercise. This new teacher's pedagogy is yet another example of Pestalozzinian thought, one that fosters creativity and critical thinking through self-motivation.

Despite Marilla's response to Miss Stacy's pedagogy as nonsense, Anne is able to blossom under her guidance. As well, hearts of the Avonlea community are won at last when Miss Stacy and her pupils organize a Christmas concert - an undertaking which meets with some disfavour at first - where all the students are given a chance to shine. Love and respect from her students, discipline and academic excellence, Miss Stacy achieves her success without any whipping. Indeed, her discipline tactics are a complete turnaround from Mr. Phillips'. For example when Anne is caught reading *Ben Hur* during Canadian History class, Miss Stacy simply takes the book away and tells her to see her after class. No humiliation, no condescending comment.

Miss Stacy is definitely a teacher way ahead of her time, since being able to control a class as complex and varied as hers was, with no whipping whatsoever, was something unfathomable for that period. Even Anne who vows she will never use corporal punishment on a child, finds herself yielding to this method in her first year of teaching. (see AoA., ch. 12)

Conclusion

Notwithstanding that Anne and Heidi are intelligent orphans, they would not have reached the height of their success without the guidance and aid of good teachers who took a genuine interest in them. Their creators as teachers felt strongly about the educational issues of their day and through their writings, became among the first children's authors of their nations to cast a social critique upon them. By weaving in satire in this supposedly mini-utopian world for children's intellects and imaginations, they demonstrated that the school, just like the church, is really not such an idyllic place after all.

Chapter Five

Friends and Foes

Looking back on my readings of *Anne of Green Gables* and *Heidi* throughout the years, I can see how my view of these books has evolved as I have changed, especially in terms of the relationships portrayed therein. As a child and pre-adolescent, I remember well how fun I thought it would be to escape into the world of Heidi or Anne and relive all their exciting experiences as their best friend. Anne and Heidi were my literary heroes and I just adored them. As a teenager, not surprisingly, my focus in my reading was on any romance or possible romance to be found. I admit I would often skip to the parts that involved Anne and Gilbert and then - yes - read them over and over again.[1] Now as an adult and mother, I notice much more Anne's and Heidi's relationship with other characters in the novel, especially the adults and see more clearly their importance in the stories.

Curious to know if other people have had a similar experience I asked my friends if any of their opinions have changed in their rereadings of these books. One of them, who had not read *Anne of Green Gables* since being a teenager, didn't realize what a perceptive human being Matthew was. My friend had always seen him before as the weak brother pushed around by his bully sister. Perhaps that is why when we as adults read again good children's books such as *Heidi* or *Anne of Green Gables* to the next

[1] I'm sure if I had known about Charles Tritten's Heidi sequels, I would have been hooked on those books as well.

generation, we become pleasantly surprised to discover that there is more to them than previously realized and that our memories of them were only from a child's perspective.

Therefore, in my concluding chapter, I would like to take a closer look at some of the other characters in these two novels, by examining their relationships with the orphan, as well as the dynamics they play within the novel. By doing this I hope to reveal the richness of these texts and the reason for their appeal to so many people, to both big and small.

Heidi's friends and foes

In Heidi's world, even more so than in Anne's, we come across loner after loner, either through choice or circumstance. Everyone (including the goats) is either spouseless, fatherless or motherless. Moreover, everyone seems to be plagued either by health or emotional problems. For instance in the Alps we come across the blind sickly grandmother and Peter's feather-brained mother who seems as clueless as her son; in the city we meet the successful business man who deserts his daughter all the time for business trips, leaving her in the hands of a tyrannical governess and the grieving doctor who can heal others, but not his own heart.

Koppes criticizes that Heidi like the other characters "is not given enough personality traits to become more than a character type."[2] I agree that with several characters this is so, however contrary to what the tone of Koppes suggests, I do not see

this as a weakness of the novel. Rather I believe this quality only aids in developing the orphan story's mythological dimensions.

Koppes continues further by saying that because *Heidi* is an example of the literary form termed exemplum, everything, the setting, the characters are solely "devoted to the portrayal of ideals - ideals of conduct, of virtue, or of...salvation or conversion."[3] To a great extent *Heidi* is so, but on another level as I have discussed throughout my thesis thus far, *Heidi* isn't entirely what it seems. Hence, as a rebuttal to Koppes' statements, I have chosen to portray characters who either through their one-dimensionality further the cause of *Heidi* as myth or who through their multi-dimensionality display virtues that are not entirely ideal.

Herr Sesemann

Koppes discusses in her article about the different character groups found in the novel. She differentiates between those who are "responsive to the reviving effect of Nature" [4] (Öhi, Klara, Herr Sesemann, Herr Doktor, Frau Sesemann) and those that are not (Frau Rottenmeier, Tinette, Herr Kandidat, Sebastien). Further she describes how Frau Rottenmeier and Peter as objects of ridicule are counterbalanced by the insertion of Klara's father and grandmother who are "sensitive, kind and good."[5]

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[2] Koppes, P. "Spyri's Mountain Miracles: Exemplum and Romance in Heidi." In: *The Lion and the Unicorn*, Baltimore,MD.: John Hopkins University Press, vol. 3 (1), 1979, p.63.
[3] Ibid., p.64.
[4] Ibid., p.69.
[5] Ibid., p. 69.

I question however how sensitive Klara's father really is, especially towards his own daughter. All too often throughout the book we see Klara's disappointment at her father's broken promises, whether it be because of his repeated absences or his postponement of their Alp trip, Klara's sorrow is not really her physical handicap, it is the "langen, einsamen Stunden, die sie durchlebt"(H., p.207)/ *" long, lonely hours she... endures" (He., p.178)* that are painful. Trapped indoors in a wheelchair with a governess such as Frau Rottenmeier, who constantly gives her the distasteful cod-liver oil, Klara is as emotionally crippled as she is physically. Also, I cannot help in wondering if Frau Rottenmeier's behavior towards Heidi is but an extension of what has been happening to Klara for years, since abuse by nannies in nineteenth century middle class households occurred most easily in homes where nurseries were tucked away from the sight of the parents.[6] In *Heidi* the situation is worse, we have a father who is hardly ever home and lets his household to be run by a governess who besides being constantly demeaning, does not like being with children (see H., p.149), is willing to lock up Heidi in the rodent-infested basement for something the little girl had no control over and whose behavior causes even Herr Sesemann himself to question her sanity in one instance. (see H., p.119) If Frau Rottenmeier is abusing Klara, Herr Sesemann would unfortunately be too busy to notice anything and would only be able to lament after it was too late as he did at his discovery of Heidi's mistreatment: "...das alles in meinem Hause! und niemand sieht zu und weiß etwas davon!" (H., p.157)/ *"...all this in my house! And no one noticed it or knew anything about it!" (He., p.136)*

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[6] see Robertson, P. "Home As a Nest: Middle Class Childhood in Nineteenth Century Europe." In: DeMause, L., Ed., *The History of Childhood*, New York: The Psychhistory Press, 1974.

Frau Sesemann

Frau Sesemann is the only character in the book that commands respect and admiration from everyone. She is also the only one that does not seem to suffer from any malaise. Not only is she sensitive, kind and good and an excellent teacher, with her "alles [wird] gleich klar und einfach und kommt ins rechte Geleise."(H., p.204)/ *"...everything [becomes]... plain and simple and is made right." (He., p.176)* Though she only appears three times in the book, I believe that her influence and strength makes her the strongest character in the novel. If we could list her accomplishments beside Heidi's, hers would be just as astonishing as that of the Alp-child, in fact we come to realize that none of Heidi's "miracles" would have occurred without Heidi first having met the grandmother. Further, Grandmother Sesemann's generosity of her wealth at the end of the novel complements the emotional and physical transformations that had taken place on the mountain by giving such people as the blind grandmother a more complete joy. Contrary to what some *Heidi* critics say, poverty in the novel is neither extolled nor a requirement for goodness: Grandmother Sesemann is as much needed by the poverty-stricken characters in the book as she is by Heidi.

Gros in his list of symbolic representations found in *Heidi*, describes grandmother Sesemann as "Wärme, Zärtlichkeit, Nahrung, Führung der unter ihrer Verantwortung stehenden Menschen".[7]/ *warmth, tenderness, nourishment, leader for the people under*

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[7] see Gros, C., "Heidi - die kleine Berggottheit." In: *Heidi - Karrieren einer Figur*, Halter, E., ed., Zürich:

her care. Spyri however gives her an even greater significance by creating a mystical aura about her equal to that of the wind. We see this in the description of Heidi's first meeting with her:

> Sie hatte so schöne weiße Haare, und um den Kopf ging eine schöne Spitzenkrause, und zwei breite Bänder flatterten von der Haube weg und bewegten sich immer irgendwie, so als ob stets ein leichter Wind um die Großmama wehe, was das Heidi ganz besonders anmutete. (H., p.127)/ *She had such beautiful white hair, and round her head a lovely lace frill, and two broad strings fluttered from her cap, and moved continually as if a light breeze hovered the grandmamma; and this seemed to Heidi very peculiar. (He., p.108)*

Just like the orphan's attraction and fascination with the wind in the pinetrees, Heidi is likewise drawn to her Frankfurt grandmother, emphasizing again that the best of the city is just as important as the best of the Alps. Unlike literary critics such as Leimgruber, Dupont and Koppes who stress the dichotomy between the idealization of nature and the condemnation of modern civilization in *Heidi,* I believe that Spyri's insertion of grandmother Sesemann provides enough proof already to make such black and white interpretations appear too simplistic.

Dupont[8] also defines grandmother Sesemann as a representation of the Great Mother archetype. By agreeing with Dupont, I do not detract from what I've said in previous chapters about Heidi's role as Earth Mother or mountain goddess, because as the extended title of the novel implies (*Heidis Lehr-und Wanderjahre, Heidi kann brauchen was es gelernt hat./Heidi's Years of Learning and Travel/ Heidi Makes Use of What she Has Learned.*), Heidi is still learning and has not reached her full stature yet. This orphan

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Offizin Zürich Verlags-AG, p.118.

[8] Dupont, L., "Heidi et son grand-père." In : *La vouivre : cahiers romans de psychologie analytique*, Paris : Georg editeur S. A., 1991 (2), p.45.

is a mother in the making who must learn her most meaningful lessons from someone like Grandmother Sesemann who is older, wiser, and a greater mother than she is.

Öhi

As mentioned before, in the eyes of the villagers, Öhi is a man to be feared and shunned:

> Es weiß ja kein Mensch, was mit dem Alten da oben ist! Mit keinem Menschen will er etwas was zu tun haben....und wenn er mit seinem dicken Stock im Jahr einmal herunterkommt, so weicht ihm alles aus und muß sich vor ihm fürchten. Mit seinen dicken grauen Augenbrauen und dem furchtbaren Bart sieht er auch aus wie ein alter Heide und Indianer, daß man froh ist, wenn man ihm nicht allein begegnet (H., p.13)/ *Nobody knows what ails the old man up there. He will have nothing to do with a living soul...and if once in a twelvemonth he comes down with his thick staff, everyone keeps out of his way and is afraid of him. With his heavy gray eyebrows and his tremendous beard he looks like a heathen and a savage, and people are glad enough not to meet him alone. (He., p.3)*

On the other hand, in Heidi's eyes he is a man of many talents and qualities: a carpenter, a herbalist, a cheesemaker, an animal and nature lover.

According to Usrey, both of these contrasting views form the characteristics of a Byronic man. A Byronic man, she says, "lives alone because society condemns him, refuses to understand why he has sinned, and fails to be forgiving of his sins."[9] Furthermore, this romantic sinner who is close to his natural surroundings, is usually also identified with some aspect of nature. The reader sees this when Öhi's mannerisms and speech almost take on the shape and sound of the bird's cry that he is interpreting for Heidi "Der Großvater sagte diese Worte fast wild, so daß dem Heidi das Gekrächze des Raubvogels dadurch noch

[9] Usrey, M., "Johanna Spyri's Heidi: The conversion of a Byronic Hero." In *Touchstones: Reflections on the Best in Children's Literature, Volume One*, E., Nodelman, P., ed., West Lafayette, Indianapolis: ChLA Publishers, 1985, p.234.

eindrücklicher wurde...".(H., p.48) / *"The grandfather spoke these words so wildly that the bird of prey's screaming came back to Heidi's mind still more forcefully." (He., p.35)*

However, unlike Öhi, Usrey points out, Byronic heroes never reform or return to society.

But he does, and in the second part of Heidi, Öhi doesn't become merely a good man, he is transformed into a benevolent, wise patriarchal figure, a mountain guru of sorts,who is able to heal and edify through the power of nature all those who visit him. For example, when Herr Doktor visits the Swiss mountains, he is both uplifted by his conversations and walks with Öhi, and amazed at this man's thorough knowledge of his surroundings:

> Dem Herrn Doktor verging die Zeit auf diesen Wanderungen, er wußte gar nicht wie, und oftmals, wenn er am Abend dem Öhi herzlich die Hand zum Abschiede schüttelte, mußte er von neuem sagen: "Guter Freund, von Ihnen gehe ich nie fort, ohne wieder etwas gelernt zu haben". (H., p.233)/ *"The doctor did not know where the time went on these visits, and often at evening when he shook the uncle's* (i.e. the grandfather) *hand heartily at parting, he would say: "My good friend, I never go away from you without having learned something new." (He., p.201)*

Furthermore, Öhi also serves as the catalyst of Klara's healing through his careful nursing and wise application and concoctions of herbs. So it seems that the pastor was right when he said as he welcomed Öhi back to church, that nature had been the right church for him all along these years.

Peter

As I have reiterated in diverse ways throughout my thesis, Heidi stands as symbol for all that is good, pure and divine. But if we examine this mini Earth Mother's

relationship with Peter, all that changes. We discover that somewhere beneath her sweet, innocent nature lurks a more somber and manipulative streak.

As stated in chapter four, Heidi uses threatening tactics to pursue her goal in teaching Peter how to read. However, it does not end there. Almost every time when Heidi wants something to be done and is of need of Peter's help, she displays behavior as in the following example:

> Jetzt schaute das Heidi zu ihm auf.
> "Komm hier herunter, Peter!" rief es sehr bestimmt.
> "Komme nicht", rief er zurück.
> "Doch, du mußt; komm, ich kann es nicht allein machen, du mußt mir helfen; komm schnell!"drängte das Heidi.
> "Komme nicht," ertönte es wieder.
> Jetzt sprang das Heidi eine kleine Strecke den Berg hinan, dem Angeredeten entgegen.
> Da stand es mit flammenden Augen und rief hinauf: "Peter, wenn du nicht auf der Stelle kommst, so will ich dir auch etwas machen, das du dann gewiß nicht gern hast; das kannst du glauben!" (H., p.301)
>
> *Heidi looked up at him.*
> *"Come down here, Peter!" she called very decidedly.*
> *"Shan't come," he called back.*
> *"But you must! Come, I can't do it alone, and you must help me; come quick" urged Heidi.*
> *"Shan't come," he replied again.*
> *Then Heidi ran a little way up the mountain toward him. She stood there with flashing eyes and called out: "Peter, if you don't come here at once, I will do something to you that you won't like at all; you better believe it!." (He., p.262)*

Though Peter is six years her senior, Heidi easily dominates this Caliban figure,[10] thereby creating - to use another Shakespearean play here - a humorous inverted rendition of *Taming of the Shrew.*

Therefore I find it incredulous that Meienberg would suggest that Peter is sexually taking advantage of Heidi.[11]

Interestingly, Heidi's most manipulative behavior is after her return from Frankfurt, coinciding with the flowering of her spiritual powers. This is not surprising

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[10] Koppes, p. 69.

[11] See Schindler, R., "Mythos Heidi" in *Frauezitig*, Zürich: Frauenzitig, 1994/95, p.10.

since exposing such a sensitive motherless child as her to somebody like Frau Rottenmeier one would think would have some kind of negative affect upon her. Archetypically speaking though, Heidi as a mother archetype is simply showing signs of her duality as both the Great Mother and the Terrible Mother which Jung explains as a necessary component of the universal mother figure.

Anne's friends and foes

Unlike *Heidi*, *Anne of Green Gables* is not composed of unattached lonely individuals who are in search of healing, instead it depicts interdependent people quite satisfied with their existence and their role in their community. In *Heidi* we meet people who are literal outcasts of society, in *Anne of Green Gables*, the worst that happens to individuals in the community is to be branded as a little odd.

In addition, whereas in *Heidi* there is more of a balance between male and female characters (whether good or bad), in Avonlea everyday events and life are dominated by the female voice. More specifically the novel revolves around three distinct women: Rachel Lynde, Marilla Cuthbert and Anne Shirley, each representing respectively a married senior woman, an elderly spinster, and a girl whose future is still undetermined. The interplay between this womanly triad throughout the novel reveal the tension and growth of three very different temperaments.

Mrs. Rachel Lynde

At the helm of this trio and of the whole Avonlea clan is Mrs. Rachel Lynde. Appropriately, her name is the very first word of the novel. As described in chapter two she sets the status quo for the community and expects as much order and tradition from her neighbours as she does from her quilting. She is a busy and talented woman, a commited Christian:

> Mrs. Rachel Lynde was one of those capable creatures who can manage their own concerns and those of other folks into the bargain. She was a notable housewife; her work was always done and well done; she 'ran' the Sewing circle, helped run the Sunday school, and was the strongest prop of the Church Aid Society and Foreign Missions Auxiliary (A., p.7).

Doody also describes her as "a powerful figure of motherhood"[12] and as the embodiment of the Earth Mother. However, to think of Mrs. Lynde as the great Earth Mother is a stretch to me, because of her lack of nurturance and her pessimistic opinions of others. True, she has a pervading influence, her name comes up everywhere, in all aspects of community life - at play (see A., p.240), in religious and political affairs (see A., pp.184, 155), in commerce (see A., p.312) and in education (A., p. 207). But loving and nurturing as the Earth Mother is, she is not.

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[12] Doody, M., "Introduction." In: *The Annotated Anne of Green Gables,* Barry, W., Doody, M., Jones, M., eds., Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997, p.26.

More straightforward she is "an emblem....of female power, of femininity under the old law"[13] whose standards will be confronted by a starry-eyed girl who appears out of nowhere. Till then this woman was unchallenged, but with the intrusion of the wild freckled orphan, we see that her opinion of how things should be is as limited and boxed in as her view from her kitchen window.

Anne's apology to Rachel Lynde in chapter ten is symbolic of how their tug of "wills" between them is to be carried out throughout most of the novel: Anne's creative flowery speech comes not from heartfelt sorrow for sin, she does it only to remove the disgrace she put upon Marilla and Matthew's good name. Mrs. Lynde may have received from Anne what was the proper thing to do, but undoubtedly for the wrong reasons.

Nevertheless though Montgomery set Mrs. Lynde as Anne's antagonist, one who at the beginning of the novel tells Marilla "I don't envy you your job bringing *that* up," (A., p.74) even she is capable of softening up enough at the end to become the maker of Anne's dream-dress.

Marilla and Anne

Contrary to popular adolescent belief, the most important relationship in *Anne of Green Gables* is not between Gilbert and Anne, but between Marilla and Anne as Atwood states.[14] This relationship starts off with two very different personalities always at odds with one another and evolves near the end of the book with Anne giving up her college

[13] Ibid., p.26.
[14] Atwood, M., "Afterword." In: *Anne of Green Gables*, Montgomery, L., M., Toronto: McClelland & Stewart Inc., 1992, p.335.

dream for her and the mellowed - out Marilla declaring to the adolescent "that she is like her own flesh and blood now." (A., p.317)

Marilla, who didn't want to be even called Aunt Marilla by Anne eventually becomes a mother to her, a mother we slowly discover who underneath her rigid practicality resembles a lot like her "daughter." For instance we sense a suppressed desire to agree in Marilla when Anne voices her opinion about religion and we learn in chapter thirty that Marilla feels as strongly about education as the ambitious red-head does. Most alarming though is that we see history repeating itself - headstrong Anne holds on to her grudge against Gilbert as tenaciously as Marilla did when Gilbert's father was her beau a very long time ago. Marilla Cuthbert is therefore at the same time a warning to Anne what she could end becoming: an old spinster who spent most of her fertile years taking care of her parents. And Anne does begin to walk along that same path when she decides to give up her scholarship and help out Marilla. But thankfully to the relief of young teenage readers, Anne listens to her heart and patches up with Gilbert.[15]

Atwood writes that "Anne without Marilla would...be sadly one-dimensional, an overtalkative child whose precocious cuteness might very easily pall."[16] Indeed, the book couldn't be without Marilla - their relationship is at the very center of the book. However, when Atwood then adds that "*Anne of Green Gables* is not about Anne becoming a good little girl: it is about Marilla Cuthbert becoming a ..more complete... woman,"[17] I must disagree. Anne of Green Gables is about <u>both</u> love-ridden females coming gradually closer

[15] If Marilla had married Mr. Blythe, Anne would have been Gilbert's sister! As we know from the Anne sequels, Gilbert is the one that is exclusively destined to be with Anne, so what a strange turn of events if Marilla's history had been different and history had repeated itself. Would then Anne and Gilbert as siblings have repeated the same story of Matthew and Marilla?

[16] Atwood, p.335.

together in a dance of give and take, each one dependent on the other for her growth. At the end of their journey in the novel, Marilla learns what love is, Anne learns what it means to belong. Marilla, as "a woman of narrow experience and rigid conscience...[with] a saving something about her mouth which, if it had been ever so slightly developed, might have been considered indicative of a sense of humour," (A., p.11) has through Anne learned how to develop that smile.

Avonlea men versus Avonlea women

Conversely to the articulate women, the men are depicted in *Anne of Green Gables* as quiet, meek or of only secondary importance. We read of shy, comical Matthew, who is afraid of anything female, of Rachel Lynde's husband who she brings along at a political meeting simply because he'll "be useful in looking after the horse"(A., p.153) and we have Gilbert who fervently awaits Anne's expression of forgiveness. Yet by the end of the novel and its sequel *Anne of Avonlea*, we realize that the order of hierarchy is really turned around - we come to understand that though the women may have the louder voice, the men still have the greater power. Rachel, the most independent woman of all, loses her home after her husband dies and is almost forced in leaving the Avonlea community she had for so many years scrutinized with her "all-seeing eye." (A., p.8) And though Marilla warns Matthew to not "go interfering with [her] methods," (A., p.56) it turns out that it is really Matthew that understands Anne and uses the correct parental skill at the most crucial moments. (see pp.88-89) And as I mentioned in chapter two, it is

[17] Ibid., p.335.

Gilbert who ends up pursuing his career ambitions, while Anne settles in the role of domesticity.

So, in reality Avonlea is a matriarchal society controlled by patriarchal values. In fact, women are even ridiculed sublimely in the play that the Avonlea school children put on entitled *The Society for the Suppression of Gossip* (see A., p.209),[18] a popular play in Montgomery's time. In it the women who are forming a club for the elimination of gossip are portrayed as disorganized, proud, whose uncontrolling tongues lead them to a chaotic mess. This play is undoubtedly offensive to today's women. Figuratively though, the play delineates the exact same story of Anne as a female: Anne tries to rid herself of conventional female expectations but while striving for her goal, because she now belongs to a larger group and becomes affected by other people's decisions, she soon learns she must go with the flow. Nevertheless, Anne seen in the light of other nineteenth century literary orphan heroines such as Rebecca (*Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm*, 1903) or Pollyanna (*Pollyanna*, 1913) is in that respect progressive for her time, because she at least tries to break free from the status quo. Perhaps that is why *Anne of Green Gables* has endured while other similar books have not. Female readers of Anne can identify with her because her struggles are similar to the ones they go through as well.

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Kindred Spirits

This chapter would be missing a very important type of relationship if I did not include a section on Anne's favorite coined expression "kindred spirit." In chapter eight

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[18] The entire skit is reprinted in Barry, W., Doody, M., Jones, M., eds., *The Annotated Anne of Green Gables,* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997, p.477.

we learn that one of Anne's most hoped-for dreams is to have a bosom friend, a kindred spirit "to whom I can confide my inmost soul." (A., p.65) The orphaned red-head finds her wish instantly fulfilled in Diana, Matthew, Miss Stacy and Mrs. Allen. Her desire seems to stem from an extreme emotional need to fill a very empty void in her life. We can see this through her desire that Diana be her kindred spirit, for even before Anne meets her, she declares her love for her and fervently hopes that her love will be reciprocated. Further, so important is this for Anne that she literally trembles before she goes to Diana's house for the first time. Once there, so preoccupied is she with her dream being thwarted that the first thing that comes out of Anne's mouth, after a rare moment of silence, is the following whispered plea: "Oh, Diana, ...do you think - oh, do you think you can like me a little - enough to be my bosom friend?" (A., p.97) and then her second more forceful sentence to Diana: "Will you swear to be my friend for ever and ever?" (A., p.97) Normal girls don't do that upon first meeting other children. Diana recognizes this too but has a kind heart and answers: "You're a queer girl, Anne...But I believe I'm going to like you real well."(A., p.97) Diana's answer reveals a little more what the characteristics of a kindred spirit is - to love someone despite their differences.

Such is the kindred spirit relationship between Anne and Matthew as well. In spite of their enormous differences, their relationship is the closest one found in the book. Matthew who has always "dreaded ...woman" (A., p.16) becomes one of Anne's greatest admirers and her healing balm throughout her trials and disappointments. This is especially evident in contrast to Marilla's upbringing of the orphan. For instance after Anne's outstanding performance at the school concert, Marilla decides not to compliment her at all, Matthew on the other hand "was proud of her and...did tell her so." Or in chapter three

when the Cuthberts are contemplating whether to keep Anne, Marilla asks "What good would she be to us?" (A., p.37), Matthew perceptively replies with "We might be some good to her" (A., p.37). Matthew's expressions and actions are enlightening to Anne because they reflect modern educational thinking.[19]

In Jungian terms, one could say that Matthew's seemingly overdeveloped anima adds the softening touch to Anne's rebelliousness, as in the incident in chapter ten when Matthew convinces Anne to "smooth it over"(A., p.81) with Rachel Lynde. These two kindred spirits are the ideal psychological fit, so much so that they can at times read each others thoughts: "He's gone to harness the sorrel mare to go to Carmody for the doctor...I know it as well as if he'd said so. Matthew and I are such kindred spirits I can read his thoughts without words at all." (A., p.157)

When Matthew dies, Anne is of course devastated. But fortunately, the void left by the loss of her closest kindred spirit will not remain empty for too long as Montgomery hints in the last chapter. Upon Anne's return home from Matthew's grave, she meets Gilbert, who declares after they reconcile with one another: "We are going to be the best of friends." It's almost as if the closest man to her heart had to die in order to make room for the other one to step in.[20]

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[19] See chapter 4.

[20] Although it takes Gilbert's close call with death in *Anne of the Island* for Anne to finally realize and accept that Gilbert is her closest kindred spirit *and* has been all along.

Conclusion

It has been often said that Montgomery's later books in the Anne series fade in mediocrity in comparison to *Anne of Green Gables*. Our heroine becomes just a pale reflection of what she once was, while the other characters simply do not maintain any lasting appeal. Herein lies the difference with *Anne of Green Gables.* Anne, as well as the other characters, are people you can feel with, laugh with, get angry with....and grow with. I remember how when I was young I didn't like Marilla at all, I thought she was very mean and believed that Anne deserved better. Never would I have imagined that I'd end up liking her as I do now. Marilla, as well as the other characters, are not simply cardboard figures in a cute sentimental children's book. On the contrary, as I have shown throughout my thesis, this novel is packed with depth, meaning and social critique that have combined to make this book an enduring modern fairy-tale to all.

Similarly has my point of view changed with the Heidi novel. I had always considered the sweet mountain-girl as the epitome of innocence - today, I see her in a different light. She may walk above the ground, nonetheless not too high and with quite a limp. Yet, just like with *Anne of Green Gables*, it is this plight and quest of the orphan, along with the spirit of place that has elevated this tale to its mythical heights. Hence, these novels are not only good literature with multi-faceted qualities, but more precisely they are powerful myths. Thus their universal appeal. Yes, my childhood impressions of these novels have definitely changed. And to think that some people call *Anne of Green Gables* and *Heidi* just children's books! It's a good thing I read these books over again.

APPENDIX A. The Creators of Anne and Heidi

Now that we know all about Anne and Heidi, what about Johanna Spyri and L. M. Montgomery? What stood behind their names? As creators of two world-renowned beloved heroines and prolific writers of other delightful, heartwarming tales, they share also other things in common- most of their books have an orphan theme, both had unhappy marriages, suffered the loss of a child, were descendants of poets, suffered severe depression and were great lovers of nature - but other than that their similarities end there.

L. M. Montgomery

L.M. Montgomery or Maud Montgomery (but definitely not Lucy Maud Montgomery which she hated to be called) was born only three years after *Heidi* was first published. Because her mother soon died after birth and her father then moved out West in search of better employment a few years later, Maud's upbringing was turned over to her maternal grandparents, Lucy and Cavendish postmaster Alexander Macneill. Growing up with stern elderly grandparents was not easy for young sensitive Maud. She would later write in her journal:

> The older I grow the more I realize what a starved childhood mine was emotionally. I was brought up by two old people, neither of whom at their best were ever very sympathetic and who had already grown into set, intolerant ways. They seemed to cherish and act upon the contradictory opinions that a child of ten or a girl of fifteen was as old as themselves and as young as a baby- that is, she should have no wish or taste that they did not have, and yet she should have no more right to an independent existence than an infant.[1]

[1] Doody, M., "Introduction", in Montgomery, L.M., Eds. Barry, W., Doody, M., Jones, M., *The Annotated Anne of Green Gables*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997, p.17.

However her natural surroundings made up for it. The beauty of the P.E.I. meadows, woodlands and shore inspired and cultivated Maud's imagination. To her everything was "invested with a kind of fairy grace and charm,"[2] and just like Anne she loved naming trees and places. Also similarly to her red-headed heroine[3] she had window pane "friends" whom she chatted with when she was younger. As real friends though, she enjoyed the companionship of two young boys who boarded at her grandparent's house for three years, as well as her merry cousins whom she visited occasionally at the Campbell's home. Many of the experiences she had with these playmates as well as the tales she often heard in these homes from her story-telling gifted family would be later incorporated into her novels, most notably in *The Story Girl* and *The Golden Road.*

At school Maud was a studious and bright student who enjoyed scribbling from the time she was young. Her first piece of writing, a poem entitled *On Cape LeForce*, was published when she was fifteen while living in Saskatchewan with her father and stepmother. Maud was not sad when she returned to P.E.I a year later, not only because now at sixteen she could attend teacher's college, but she would leave her shallow cold stepmother behind. But Maud's hopes for a teacher's career were crushed by her grandfather who disliked woman teachers and therefore would not lend financial aid. Fortunately Maud's father and grandmother scraped by enough money to support Maud through the intensive year-long teacher's training program at Prince of Wales College. Maud wrote the entrance exams for the College and did almost as well as Anne: out of 264 candidates she placed fifth. Once there, her writing skills at the college did not go

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[2] Gillen, M.,*The Wheel of Things*, Toronto: Fitzhenry & Whiteside, 1975, p.5.
[3] Though Maud and Anne shared similar experiences, the author claimed it was the character Emily with whom she had more things in common with.

unnoticed - one of her professors who admired her writing asked her to write an essay for the Convocation Exercises, which she delivered with much success, having it (a study of Shakespeare's Portia) even printed and praised in the Charlottetown newspapers.

After college, Maud taught in Bideford which she thoroughly enjoyed, but after a year the twenty-one year-old decided she needed more education in order to improve her writing and enrolled in the English year-long program at Dalhousie University. During her course of study, Maud continued to publish articles and poetry, wrote for the university's newspaper *College Observer* and belonged to the university's literary society. She was known at the university as "the girl who writes stories and poems for the magazines and gets paid for them."[4] Maud's dearest ambition was slowly coming to fruition, she was finally receiving more acceptance than rejection slips, albeit with a price she realized:

> I write a lot of juvenile yarns. I like doing these but would like it better if I didn't have to lug a moral into most of them. They won't sell without it. The kind of juvenile story I like best to write...is a rattling good, jolly one - "art for art's sake" - or rather "fun for fun's sake" - with no insidious moral hidden away in it like a pill in a spoonful of jam.[5]

The following fourteen years of Maud's life would prove to be a monotonous, one plagued with bouts of depression despite her literary success. After Dalhousie, Maud began teaching at Belmont. Maud soon became miserable there. Not only did she find her job teaching the "stupid, ignorant, rough"[6] children unbearable but she was stuck in an engagement she no longer wanted. Her fiancé, Edwin Simpson would not let her break off

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[4] Gillen, M., p.40.
[5] Ibid., p.10.
[6] Wood, J., "The Teaching Years", in Ed. Heilbron, A., *The Lucy Maud Montgomery Album*, Toronto: Fitzhenry & Whiteside, 1999, p.102.

the engagement for some time which caused Maud to enter into her first of many severe depressions she would later endure throughout her life.

When Maud returned to Cavendish in March 1898 to attend her grandfather's funeral, her visit ensued a permanent one. For the next thirteen years, isolated, lonely Maud, would take care of her ailing grandmother and the household, as well as take on the role of assistant post-mistress. During this period Maud had three experiences that freed her from her miserable isolation: her temporary job as substitute proofreader for two of Halifax largest newspapers, her engagement to the Rev. Ewen MacDonald and the publication of *Anne of Green Gables*. Two of these events gave her much happiness, one of them, namely her engagement and subsequent marriage to Rev. MacDonald gave her much heartache. Though Maud considered Ewen pleasant and likeable, on her wedding day she was engulfed by waves of regrets from her decision:

> ..when it was all over and I found myself sitting there by my husband's side-*my husband!*-I felt a sudden horrible inrush of *rebellion* and *despair. I wanted to be free!* I felt like a prisoner-a hopeless prisoner. Something in me-something wild and free and untamed-something Ewan had not tamed-could never tame-something that did not acknowledge him as master-rose up in one frantic protest against the fetters which bound me. At that moment if I could have torn the wedding ring from my finger and so freed myself I would have done it! But it was too late-and the realization that it was too late fell over me like a black cloud of wretchedness. I sat at that gay bridal feast, in my white veil and orange blossoms, beside the man I had married-and I was as unhappy as I had ever been in my life.[7]

So why did Maud marry Ewen? One of the things Maud wanted most was a traditional family with a father and mother and children, something she never had. Probably also, Maud realized that at age thirty-six, her prospects for other marriage proposals, especially from well-educated, respectable men, were slim. So even though she never really loved Ewen as she confesses in her journal, duty-conscious Maud stayed

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[7] Eds., Rubio, M., Waterston, E., *The Selected Journals of L. M. Montgomery, Vol. II*, Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1987, p.68.

committed to her wedding vows and remained with Ewen even though his devastating sickness ended up pulling her down too.

At first though, everything in the MacDonald's home at the Leaksdale Manse was fine. Maud found the Ontario scenery pretty enough, was involved in several community and church affairs, was thoroughly enjoying motherhood with her two children Chester and Stuart and was working on her fifth novel, *The Golden Road.* However eight years into their marriage, Ewen's former trouble with depression had reoccurred, along with a nervous breakdown making it impossible for him to return to work for seven months. Ewen's health continued to deteriorate from that point on with an especially bad case of neurasthenia in 1934 where it was necessary for him to be hospitalized at a mental institution for some time.

Throughout all these years, Maud kept wearing her cheerful mask as she confesses in her journal, meeting her numerous obligations and churning out novels plus more Anne books when finances required it. Maud concealed Ewen's malady so well, that none of Ewen's congregations ever suspected it. Inwardly however, as her journals further reveal, Maud's spirit was slowly being quenched, the weight of her marital circumstances and the unwise decisions made by her oldest son brought her much despair and grief. Maud's last five years of her life was filled with nervous breakdowns and severe depressions, in the last three years she even lost her desire to write. Maud's demise and too early death at sixty-seven years old is a sad contrast to the happy endings of the optimistic stories she produced. Consequently the world would not have known the depths of Maud sorrows if

it had not been for her journals. In these, her "page[s] of grumbles,"[8] we discover an aching and critical woman worried over many things. Many biographers have remarked that Maud's novels and journals seem to have been written by two completely different women. Even Maud's son Stuart who was very close to his mother was surprised at the tone of her journals. Nevertheless, perhaps it is precisely because of Maud's life's low valleys that she yearned so passionately the heights beyond her reach. The lack of romance in her marriage, the strict expected duties and example of a minister's wife, the absence of her beloved P.E.I., the presence of boredom, melancholia and sickness throughout her different homes, all these things made her cling ever so more tightly to happy memories of yesteryear, of the magic of childhood that she so exquisitely illustrates. Of course, as I have described throughout my thesis, the injustices of childhood does rear its ugly head in her writing, but ultimately beauty and hope do prevail. And it is this beauty that Maud lived for, hoped for and so fervently wrote for that lures us readers to her work. How we thank her for it! Though life may too often have been as, Anne says, "a perfect graveyard of buried hopes" for her, we are so glad that she like Anne had the courage to cling on to "her ideal world of dreams."[9]

Johanna Spyri

Unlike Maud Montgomery, Johanna Spyri left no journals and hardly any letters behind. In fact, she destroyed most personal documents that described anything about her life. She made one attempt to write an autobiography at the request of a pestering

[8] Ballantyne, E., "A Page of Grumbles": L.M. Montgomery and her Journals, in Ed. Heilbron, A., *The Lucy Maud Montgomery Album*, Toronto: Fitzhenry & Whiteside, 1999, p.402
[9] Montgomery, L. M., *Anne of Green Gables*, Toronto: McClelland & Stewart Inc., 1992, p.330.

publisher, but she very soon gave it up, she just could not bring herself to do it: "Ich habe es nicht fertig gebracht. Wie könnte ich erzählen, was wahr ist? Wie könnte ich lügen? Nein es ist ein Greuel u. Unsinn"[10]/ *I could not finish it. How could I write what is true? How could I lie? No, to do such would be horrible and foolish.* Fortunately Spyri was not able to destroy all of her letters to and from such intimate friends as the Meyer or Kappeler family. Moreover, she admitted that in her over forty novels and short stories lie embedded "[s]oweit ich es für gut fand, mein eigenes Leben...Stücke einer Selbstbiographie"[11] / *my own life, fragments of my autobiography as far as I found it good to do so.* However this latter statement by Spyri was the cause for such early twentieth century misportrayals of Spyri as a reincarnated Heidi who constantly reminisced over her lovely childhood. Nothing could be further from the truth as more recent biographers have come to realize.

Johanna Spyri (nee Heusser) grew up in a little farming village in a family of thirteen: her three sisters and two brothers, her parents Johann Jakob and Meta Heusser, two aunts, two great-aunts and her maternal grandmother - they all lived together in the eight bedroom home. In these already tight quarters one of these bedrooms was reserved for guests, either Meta's intellectually-minded acquaintances or Johann's clinical "guests" who sometimes ended up staying for months on end. Johanna's father was a prominent surgeon and neurologist who housed many of his patients in his home or in an adjoining little house while they recuperated or were receiving treatment. Once a family of three whose father was suicidal even stayed in the Spyri's home for several years! So it was

[10] Escher, G., Strauss, M., *Johanna Spyri. Verklärt, vergessen, neu entdeckt*, Zürich: Verlag Neue Zürcher Zeitung, 2001, p.17.

that the Heusser children grew up alongside with the mentally ill, often reading or doing errands for them. Meta Heusser would later write of those experiences as follows:

> ... schwerer war es mit den vielen Geistes- und Gemütskranken, die auch immer häufiger dem 'Doktor im Hirzel' zuströmten. Gewiß[...] ist [...] die Aufnahme solcher Unglücklicher- noch dazu in so beschränkten Räumen - ganz dazu macht, ein Familienleben zu zerstören. Ich habe in mehr als einer Beziehung jahrelang schwer unter diesem Übelstand gelitten, und mein einziger Trost war es, dass sich wenigstens meine Kinder aus den Schauerszenen der Wahnsinnigen weg zu Tante Regula flüchten konnten, die dadurch vollends ganz ihre Mutter wurde.[12] /*...it was more difficult with the many mentally and emotionally ill that would increasingly flock to the "Hirzel doctor". Undoubtingly, the accomodation of such unlucky souls, especially in such confined quarters, would bring about the destruction of family life. Under these grievious circumstances have I suffered for years on end in more than one relationship. My only comfort was that at least my children could escape from these ghastly scenes of crazy people by fleeing to aunt Regula, which she thereby became entirely their mother.*

Spyri's early contact with the mentally and physically ill was undeniably one of the reasons for her numerous insertions of ill-afflicted characters into her books.

Because Spyri came from a privileged home where finances were concerned, she was able to receive after the six required school years, advanced schooling and private tutoring from the local pastor for two years. Spyri then joined her older sister in Zürich for further development in languages and music, followed by an almost two year stay in Yverdon to improve her French and society skills. Johanna's experience in Yverdon was significant in shaping her into a confident young woman with new close friends. So it is no wonder that Johanna reluctantly returned in 1845 to her parents home to tutor her younger sisters.

At age twenty-five, Johanna, still stuck in Hirzel, marries the six year older lawyer Johann Bernhard Spyri, not so much out of love, but similar to Montgomery, as an

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[11] Villain, J., *Der erschriebene Himmel. Johanna Spyri und ihre Zeit*, Zürich: Verlag Nagel & Kimche AG, 1997, p.11.
[12] Ibid., p.37.

opportunity to escape the responsibilities of her tedious life. The Spyri's set up house in Zürich, bringing Johanna Spyri closer to some of her friends, in particular, the Meyer family. While there, she also became acquainted with her husband's top idol Richard Wagner. His adulation for the upcoming composer kindled Johanna's enthusiasm as well and at the request of her husband who was also editor for the *Eidgenössische Zeitung*, Johanna wrote a powerful poem dedicated to Wagner.

The Spyris saw much of the controversial Wagner in the first three years of their marriage, Mr. Spyri being one of his most supporting critics in the newspaper. But then all of that changed in 1854. The bankruptcy of the Actien theatre whereWagner played, the misunderstanding between him and his supporters over his financial mismanagement, as well as the growing rumors over his extravagances and his constant affairs with woman, all these contributed to Wagner's increased disfavour amongst the Zürich people. While Mr. Spyri, along with other committed supporters, tried to solve Wagner's financial woes, Johanna was slowly slipping into a depression. Near the end of 1854 the twenty-seven year old finds out she is pregnant sending her depression into an all-time low. Wagner leaves Zürich shortly thereafter.

Johanna's depression only increased at the birth of her one and only son Berhard Johann. A few years later she would write to Betsy: "Der kleine Bernhard erbaut Eisenbahnen neben mir...Es ist alles grau, Himmel und Erde, und sehr traurig, aber auf den stillen Kirchhof niederzusehen, ist so beruhigend, auf all die Bettlein in der Erd"/ *Little Bernhard is building traintracks beside me...Everything is so gray, both heaven and earth, and so sad, but it is so soothing to look below upon the tiny beds that lie underneath the earth in the quiet church yard.* These feelings were also accompanied by

guilt that she had no motherly feelings for her son. It turned out to be ten long years before Johanna was able to pull herself out of her depressive condition. Partly to blame was her loveless relationship with her husband, who as a workaholic, spent most of his time working till late in the evening. In addition, Johanna Spyri suffered a severe blow when her close motherly friend Elisabeth Meyer-Ulrich committed suicide.

Fortunately Johanna's recovery was helped by her son and a change of location. As Berhard grew, so did Johanna's affection for her son. He was a smart, musically gifted child with a bright sense of humour. As the years wore on, Johanna became also increasingly more involved in her son's schooling and hobbies which helped fill her empty void. And when Bernhard was thirteen, his father was appointed as the city's scribe, necessitating the family to move into a different neighborhood and forcing Johanna Spyri as his wife to take on a very public role in the community.

Around this time also, at age forty-four, Spyri made her first serious attempts at writing, having before only dabbled sporadically in verse writing or the occasional book review for the *Eidgenössische Zeitung*. Her success was almost immediate. In 1871 Johanna's first book was published: *Ein Blatt auf Vrony's Grab / A Leaf on Vrony's Grave*. However, on the cover the author's name appeared only as J.S.. Johanna remained anonymous for the next ten years. Only with the publication of part two of *Heidi* did Johanna finally let her full name be printed.

Until her death in 1901, Johanna enjoyed much literary success and became an avid traveler in between novels, in the 1880's though for urgent reasons. In a desperate attempt to cure her son's tuberculosis, Johanna searched out doctors and healing resorts

throughout Europe. Johanna experienced a two year dry spell in her writing after her son died in early 1884 with her husband soon to follow only a few months later.

Though Spyri's books were very popular in her day and many of them were translated, she once lamented to Conrad Meyer: "Ränne mir Tinte in den Adern, so würde ich mich zu viel großartigeren literarischen Unternehmungen versteigen, als ich wirklich thue; daran hindert mich das einfache Blut, das mich durchrinnt."[13]/ *If ink flowed in my veins, then I would take on much greater literary pursuits, than I currently do, however the simple blood that flows through me hinders me from doing so.* I'm sure this most internationally renowned Swiss author would have thought otherwise about her literary talent, if she had known that people would still be writing about her and her work, more than one hundred years later.

[13] Strauss, M., Escher, G., p.81.

APPENDIX B. Chronology of Johanna Spyri's Life

1827- Johanna Heusser, the fourth child of Meta Schweizer and Johann Jacob Heusser is born on June 12th in Hirzel, Switzerland.

1833-Johanna attends elementary school for six years then receives additional tutoring from the community's pastor.

1842-Her parents send her to Zürich for further education in music and languages. She becomes close friends with the Meyer-Ulrich family, including the poet Conrad Ferdinand Meyer.

1845-Johanna returns to her parents' home after having lived one year in Yverdon to improve her French. She teaches her younger sisters Regula and Meta and helps run the house.

1852-Johanna becomes engaged to lawyer Johann Bernhard Spyri, her older brothers' friend and they marry in that self-same year, settling in Zürich.

1855-The Spyri's first son Bernhard Diethelm is born in late summer. Johanna's depression which had begun before her pregnancy, only becomes worse after her son is born.

1868-Johann Bernhard Spyri becomes the city scribe for Zürich.

1871-Johanna 's first book, an adult book, *Ein Blatt auf Vrony's Grab*, is published and becomes an instant success.

1872-The successful author of two more additional books, becomes a boardmember of the "höheren Töchterschule", a school of higher education for young women, for over twenty years.

1878-Spyri's first children's book is published, entitled *Heimathlos.*

1879-84-This is Spyri's most productive writing period, in which she has over twenty works published, including Heidi (Part I) in 1880 and Heidi (Part II) in 1881. The first Heidi book was written in only four weeks time.

1884-Bernhard Diethelm dies in early summer from tuberculosis at twenty nine years of age. Spyri's husband passes away six month later from a lung infection.

1901- The internationally renowned author of over forty eight works dies on July 7th at seventy four years of age.

Johanna Spyri's major published works:

1871-*Ein Blatt auf Vrony's Grab.*
1872-*Nach dem Vaterhause!*
1873-*Aus früheren Tagen.*
1873-*Verirrt und gefunden.*
1878-*Heimathlos.*
1879-*Aus Nah und Fern.*
1879-*Verschollen, nicht vergessen.*
1880-*Heidi's Lehr- und Wanderjahre.*
1880-*Im Rhonethal.*
1880-*Aus unserem Lande.*
1881-*Am Sonntag.*
1881-*Heidi kann brauchen, was es gelernt hat.*
1881-*Ein Landaufenthalt von Onkel Titus.*
1883-*Wo Gritlis Kinder hingekommen sind.*
1884-*Gritlis Kinder kommen weiter.*
1884-*Sina.*
1887-*Was soll den aus ihr werden?*
1888-*Arthur und Squirrel.*
1889-*Aus den Schweizer Bergen.*
1889-*Was aus ihr geworden ist.*
1890-*Cornelli wird erzogen.*
1892-*Schloß Wildenstein.*
1894-*Einer vom Hause Lesa.*
1901-*Die Stauffer-Mühle.*

APPENDIX C. Chronology of L. M. Montgomery's Life

1874-Lucy Maud Montgomery was born on November 30th in Clifton, P.E.I. to parents Clara Macneill Montgomery and storekeeper Hugh John Montgomery.

1876-Montgomery's mother dies of tuberculosis and her maternal grandparents, Alexander and Lucy Woolner Macneill of Cavendish, P.E.I., become her guardians. Her father begins a drifting life between eastern and western Canada and finally settles in Prince Albert, Saskatchewan when he remarries in 1887.

1890-Montgomery joins her father and stepmother for one year. She attends school there and has several articles and poems published in Prince Albert and Charlottetown newspapers.

1892-93-Montgomery completes her teacher's training course at Prince of Wales College, Charlottetown.

1894-95-She has an enjoyable time teaching in Bideford, P.E.I. and keeps on writing and publishing.

1895-96-She enrolls at Dalhousie University, Halifax for one year in a literature program.

1898-After having taught for two years in northern P.E.I., Montgomery has to return to her grandparent's home to take care of her grandmother after her grandfather dies.

1908-*Anne of Green Gables* is published.

1911-Montgomery marries Rev. Ewan MacDonald who had recently been the minister at Cavendish. The couple settles in Leaksdale, Ontario.

1912-Their firstborn son Chester Cameron is born.

1914-Montgomery gives birth to her stillborn son Hugh Alexander.

1915-A second healthy son, Ewan Stuart is born.

1927-Montgomery is presented in Toronto to three prominent fans of hers: the Prince of Wales, Prince George, and the British prime minister.

1930-Ewan suffers a nervous breakdown and spends several months at the Homewood mental institution in Guelph. Montgomery suffers one too later that year.

1935-Due to his illness, Ewan retires from the ministry. In the meantime, Montgomery receives two great honors: she is made a companion of the Order of the British Empire and a member of the Literary and Artistic Institute of France.

1938-Montgomery suffers her worst and last nervous collapse.

1942-L.M. Montgomery passes away on April 24th, 1942 and is buried in the Cavendish cemetery.

Montgomery's major published works:

1908-*Anne of Green Gables.*
1909-*Anne of Avonlea.*

1910-*Kilmeny of the Orchard.*
1911-*The Story Girl.*
1913-*The Golden Road.*
1915-*Anne of the Island.*
1917-*Anne's House of Dreams.*
1919-*Rainbow Valley.*
1920-*Rilla of Ingleside.*
1923-*Emily of New Moon.*
1925-*Emily Climbs.*
1926-*The Blue Castle.*
1927-*Emily's Quest.*
1929-*Magic for Marigold.*
1931-*A Tangled Web.*
1933-*Pat of Silver Bush.*
1935-*Mistress Pat.*
1936-*Anne of Windy Poplars.*
1937-*Jane of Lantern Hill.*
1939-*Anne of Ingleside.*

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