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‘Little houses lovable’: The portrayal of houses and homes in selected novels by L.M. Montgomery

by

Jeanne-Marie van Heerden

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Full name:	Jeanne-Marie van Heerden
Student Number:	10626299
Degree/Qualification:	MA (English)
Title of thesis:	'Little houses lovable': The portrayal of houses and homes in selected novels by L.M. Montgomery

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Abstract

Houses in literature are an important signifier, and for Canadian author L.M. Montgomery, places and especially houses were deeply meaningful. This study explores the portrayal of houses and homes in a selection of L.M. Montgomery's novels: *Anne of Green Gables* (1908), *Anne of Avonlea* (1909), *Anne of the Island* (1915), *Anne's House of Dreams* (1917), *Emily of New Moon* (1923), *The Blue Castle* (1926), *Emily Climbs* (1927), *Emily's Quest* (1928), *A Tangled Web* (1931), *Pat of Silver Bush* (1933), *Mistress Pat* (1935), *Anne of Windy Willows* (1936), and *Jane of Lantern Hill* (1937). Montgomery's own attachment to houses and places is evident from *The Selected Journals of L.M. Montgomery*, *Volumes 1-5* (1985-2004), Mary Rubio's biography, *Lucy Maud Montgomery: The Gift of Wings* (2008) and Montgomery's letters, *My Dear Mr. M: Letters to G.B. MacMillan from L.M. Montgomery* (1980). This study argues that, given Montgomery's emphasis on the physical environment of her own life, the environment which surrounds the characters of her novels is equally important for deciphering meanings conveyed in her books. Therefore, the study attempts to ascertain what houses in Montgomery's fiction communicate, drawing on theories of place attachment and emotional relationships with places to explain the significance of the houses in these novels and Montgomery's depiction of them and their relation to the characters. Research on place attachment and the meaning of home helps to clarify the significance of houses in these novels. Prior analysis of Montgomery's novels is also taken into account, as well as studies on the house in other fiction. The study shows that the houses in Montgomery's fiction often function as a symbol for the self. They also facilitate or prevent actions or events which involve the characters, and fulfil the needs of the characters, whether these needs be physical or emotional. I use these functions as an interpretive lens through which I attempt to illuminate aspects of Montgomery's depiction of houses in these novels as dream houses, haunted houses, houses of nostalgia or escape. Montgomery uses houses to situate the characters in her novels, both physically and emotionally. Close analysis of the passages relating to houses in these novels reveals the depth of detail, the imagery and symbolism, and Montgomery's careful selection of words and phrases.

Key words: L.M. Montgomery, house in fiction, home, place attachment, *Anne of Green Gables*, *Emily of New Moon*, *The Blue Castle*, *A Tangled Web*, *Pat of Silver Bush*, *Jane of Lantern Hill*, dream houses, haunted houses, nostalgia, escape

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List of Abbreviations

AA: *Anne of Avonlea*

AGG: *Anne of Green Gables*

AHD: *Anne's House of Dreams*

AIn: *Anne of Ingleside*

AIs: *Anne of the Island*

AWW: *Anne of Windy Willows* (used in this study) / *AWP: Anne of Windy Poplars*

BC: *The Blue Castle*

BQ: *The Blythes Are Quoted*

CA: *Chronicles of Avonlea*

EC: *Emily Climbs*

ENM: *Emily of New Moon*

EQ: *Emily's Quest*

FCA: *Further Chronicles of Avonlea*

GR: *The Golden Road*

JLH: *Jane of Lantern Hill*

MM: *Magic for Marigold*

MP: *Mistress Pat*

PSB: *Pat of Silver Bush*

RI: *Rilla of Ingleside*

RV: *Rainbow Valley*

TW: *A Tangled Web*

Life-Writing

SJ: *Selected Journals*

Published Letters

MDMM: My Dear Mr. M.: Letters from L.M. Montgomery to G.B. MacMillan.

Chapter 1:
Introduction

I always hate to leave a house where I have been happy…
(Sunday, November 12, 1932, *SJ*, *Vol. 4*, 204)[1]

Canadian author L.M. Montgomery had a marked affection for places and homes. After she had lived in any house for an extended period, it would become a place of emotional significance to her. On leaving one of her homes, she wrote on April 24, 1935:

> This time tomorrow night the cold windows will shine no more with welcoming lights. All will be dark and still. We shall be gone and the closed doors and empty rooms will be left to the ghosts of our pains and pleasures. I have written "The Manse, Norval" at the head of an entry for the last time. (*SJ*, *Vol. 4*, 373)

She wrote repeatedly with a deep sense of nostalgia about places where she experienced emotional upliftment or upheaval – it is as though these places became to her an extension of herself. For example, on Sunday, August 25, 1934, she described looking at an old photograph of the place where she grew up:

> This is 9.30 and I have just lifted my eyes to a picture of the old home at Cavendish hanging on the wall—my old window—the old orchards—the birches holding their slim white arms up to the blue sky. A sickening longing to "get back into it" for a moment almost swept me off my feet. I re-read Sheila Kaye-Smith's *The House of Alard* today. It is a sad book. But I understand the great love of a *place* as the author evidently doesn't. (*SJ*, *Vol. 5*, 32)

Thus, for Montgomery, a place seemed to be forever linked with the emotions she had experienced there and her need for recollection and remembrance. Similarly, most of her novels' titles connect her characters to specific places and homes, suggesting the importance of place and home in these novels.

Mary Rubio (2008:287) writes in her biography, *Lucy Maud Montgomery: The Gift of Wings*, that L.M. Montgomery was a person 'deeply attached to homes and places'. This facet of Montgomery's life is reflected very clearly in the houses that she depicts in her novels, and elicits a variety of questions. The houses in her novels appear to figure

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[1] In this study, I use the short form *SJ* and a volume number to refer to the *Selected Journals of L.M. Montgomery, Vols. 1-5*, edited by Mary Rubio and Elizabeth Waterson, published from 1985 to 2004. I refer to (Lucy) Maud Montgomery as L.M. Montgomery, as this was the form of her name she preferred on her book covers.

significantly in the narrative in different ways, for example, as Waterston (2008:217) suggests, '[h]ouses may be beloved and welcoming, or disappointed and menacing; at worst, they burn to the ground.'

In this study, I explore the portrayal of houses and homes in a selection of L.M. Montgomery's novels. Some of the questions I try to answer in this study are: How does Montgomery describe houses and their interiors in the selected novels? Why does she include such detailed descriptions of houses and their interiors in these texts? What do these details communicate? How do the houses themselves influence the narrative and the development of characters in these novels?

First, I consider the 'Anne' novels, focusing on *Anne of Green Gables* (1908), *Anne of Avonlea* (1909), *Anne of the Island* (1915), *Anne's House of Dreams* (1917), *Anne of Windy Willows* (1936)[2] and *Anne of Ingleside* (1939). Next, I examine the 'Emily' trilogy, *Emily of New Moon* (1923), *Emily Climbs* (1927), *and Emily's Quest* (1928). Then the investigation shifts to the 'Pat' novels, *Pat of Silver Bush* (1933) and *Mistress Pat* (1935), and finally, I turn to *Jane of Lantern Hill* (1937), *The Blue Castle* (1926) and *A Tangled Web* (1931).

In order to answer the research questions, I have undertaken a close reading of the novels, drawing on theories of place attachment and emotional relationships with places to explain the significance of the houses in these novels and Montgomery's depiction of them and their relation to the characters. I have focused on the three central functions of the house or home (which I introduce below) in Montgomery's fiction as an interpretive lens through which I have attempted to illuminate aspects of Montgomery's depiction of houses in these novels. These functions are closely intertwined. I have shown how the houses in her fiction function as a symbol for the self, and provide for the needs of the characters, whether these needs be psychological or physiological, and then I considered how the houses facilitate or prevent actions or events which involve the characters, in other words, alter the course of the narrative as a construction. I have also taken into account biographical and autobiographical information about Montgomery, prior criticism of Montgomery's novels, as well as aspects of the novels' historical, social and cultural context to interpret the significance of houses in these novels.

[2] As I live in South Africa, the edition I worked with was the British edition, rather than the American and Canadian edition, *Anne of Windy Poplars*.

Although one might be tempted to dismiss Montgomery's passages describing her characters' dwellings and the objects within their fictional interiors as trivial asides, the author's decisions about inserting certain details into the text should be interpreted carefully. Because houses are often mentioned and described in great detail in Montgomery's novels, I argue that they are significant markers of meaning in these novels. Below, I establish that it is accepted that architecture in general communicates meaning, and then I identify some ways in which the house as an entity can function to convey meaning and significance in texts such as Montgomery's novels. Finally, I apply these ideas to an analysis of the texts dealt with in this study. By analysing the descriptions and discussions of houses in her novels, I show how these novels can be better understood and which new perspectives may be gained on her novels as well as on Montgomery's life and concerns. Research on these issues can provide new insights into and perspectives on some of her novels.

Montgomery's narratives offer various messages, and the portrayals of the houses in the novels and their interiors, embedded in these narratives, are communicative in various ways. Umberto Eco (quoted in Jencks, 1980:12) asserts that '"a phenomenological consideration of our relationship with architectural objects tells us that we commonly do experience architecture as communication, even while recognizing its functionality"'. The communication of the narrative could thus be construed as running parallel with that which is communicated by the significant images located on and in the houses portrayed in the story. In the case of Montgomery's novels, these architectural details inform the reader of noteworthy details about the characters and their predicaments, both physical and emotional. This communication is not restricted to the house itself, but extends to the contents of the house, because, according to Daniel Roche (2000:174), '[f]urniture reveals to us a state of society through its significance, giving material form to needs and referring to the silent language of symbols'. Thus it is not only the building which can be a vehicle for images – the furniture and personal items within the building can function similarly, extending the symbolism and personal significance found within the dwelling even further.

I have identified three major functions that houses fulfil in Montgomery's fiction. Firstly, the house appears to function as a symbol for the self, or an extension of the identity of either the house's owner, or its inhabitants. The second function of houses in her fiction is closely related to the first – if a house is so intimately connected with the self, it can meet (or deny) the physiological and psychological needs of the self. A third function of houses in Montgomery's fiction is to facilitate or hinder certain events, social or familial bonds, and

actions on the parts of the characters. Houses therefore act as a catalyst for certain events in the overall narrative structure, and as a hindrance for others, usually depending on the owners of the house itself.

I examine how Montgomery uses houses and their interiors to mirror or echo the personalities and predicaments of her characters. Shelley Mallet's (2004) article 'Understanding home: a critical review of the literature', and Lynne C. Manzo's (2003) article 'Beyond house and haven: towards a revisioning of emotional relationship with places' both examine the house or home as a symbol of the self, and how this affects a person's attachment to place, and specifically to the home. For characters in Montgomery's novels, places are often what Manzo (2003:48) calls 'a source of rootedness, belonging and comfort'. Additionally, they are 'a source of identity and meaning in the world' (Mallett, 2004:82). This is already evident in the titles of many of the novels, such as *Anne of Green Gables*, *Emily of New Moon*, or *Pat of Silver Bush*.

Mallet (2004:81) emphasises the importance of emotion in what she calls 'the discursive construction of the meaning of home', and advances the idea that the home is a symbol for the self. She states:

> Some claim for example that the home, which they typically conflate with house, is an *expression* or *symbol* of the self. Accordingly the house itself, the interior design of the house, and the decoration and use of space all reflect the occupant's sense of self. (Mallet, 2004:82; Mallet's emphases)

Sandy G. Smith (1994:32) demonstrates 'the history of the home as being symbolic of the self, drawing correspondences between the building and the body' and 'the symbolic function of the home in representing aspects of the self'. Mallet (2004:82) confirms this idea when she writes that 'the free-standing house on the ground, is a frequent symbol of self'.

In their article, 'Place and Identity Processes', Clare L. Twigger-Ross and David L. Uzzell (1996) also argue that places are inextricably linked to notions of identity. They maintain that 'the use of the physical environment as a strategy for the maintenance of self has been accepted in the psychological literature' (Twigger-Ross & Uzzell, 1996:206). This notion is confirmed by their research, which reveals that

> …the symbolic role of the local environment was highly salient for many inhabitants. This was exemplified in the tendency of inhabitants to equate the physical relocation with a psychological relocation. Both attached and non-attached residents expressed the significance of their residential environment to their self-concepts. (Twigger-Ross & Uzzell, 1996:215)

It is possible to maintain that 'the significance of' a 'residential environment' is as important to the 'self-concept' of a character in a novel as it is to real people.

The reader is subtly made aware of different facets of each character through detailed depictions of the environments in which characters find themselves. Charles Jencks (1980:7) writes in the Introduction to *Signs, Symbols and Architecture*:

> Meaning in the environment is inescapable, even for those who would deny or deplore it. Everything that can be seen or thought about takes on a meaning, or position within a signifying system, even the recurrent attempts to escape from this omnipresent signification.

According to Thomas H. Pauly (1976:273), there was a 'large group of nineteenth-century writers whom Gaston Bachelard saw to be using "the house as a tool for analysis of the human soul"'. This is similar to the idea put forward by Charlotte Grant, that the house in fiction is used to depict human interiority. This idea can be extended to include the house and its interior's being used as a symbol for the self, which Pauly (1976:271) declares was common in nineteenth-century fiction:

> Whether or not Curtis was familiar with A.J. Downing's recently published *The Architecture of Country Houses*, he, along with Hawthorne and his readers, would have agreed with Downing's assertion that "much of the character of every man may be read in his house".

In her novels, Montgomery continues these traditions of nineteenth-century fiction, which Pauly (1976:271-271) describes as follows:

> As a building [the house][…] presented a structured enclosure which brought its owner into a distinctive relationship with space, time, and society. As a home, it represented the potential for familial happiness and domestic tranquillity as well as providing a cherished refuge from the turbulent forces of commerce and industrialization.

The idea of the house being linked to the identity of its owner or resident seems to be widely accepted, as Jan Cohn (1973:538) explains in her article on Howells's novel *The Rise of Silas Lapham*: 'The substitute myth, the rationalization, developed the concept of the house which, whoever actually constructed it, organically expressed the man who owned it, preferably the man who ordered it built.'

Elizabeth Rollins Epperly (1992:211) echoes this idea when she writes that Montgomery used nineteenth century novelists' 'device of suggesting character traits through houses – both in giving houses personalities of their own and in using descriptions of houses to characterize the people who live in them'. Montgomery's fiction often uses a house as an

extension of its inhabitant, and even subtly equates the house, or a particular room, with its inhabitant or owner. An example of this is Valancy's mother's house in *The Blue Castle*, 'an ugly red brick box of a home' (*BC*, 4) with 'the desolate, barren peace of an old house whose life is lived' (*BC*, 20). This house corresponds to the 'desolate' life of Valancy's widowed mother, who tries to 'box' Valancy into an emotionally barren existence. By contrast, Valancy's dream home turns out to be a unique cottage on an island on Lake Mistawis. This cottage exemplifies who Valancy really is – both how she sees herself and how she wants others to see her. Hazel Easthope (2004:130), quoting G. Rose (1995:89), describes this property of houses by saying that 'a sense of place forms out of a feeling that you belong to a particular place and feel comfortable there "because part of how you define yourself is symbolized by certain qualities of that place"'.

Grant (2005) examines houses in fiction in her article 'Reading the house of fiction: from object to interior 1720-1920'. In her discussion, she includes the novels of various authors, among them Jane Austen, the Brontës, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Charles Dickens and Edith Wharton. All of these authors wrote at least one novel in which a fictional house plays a significant part. Grant asserts that portrayals of houses became prevalent in fiction as realism, as well as the novel as a genre, became more and more popular from the eighteenth century onward. She writes:

> Descriptions of houses, their interiors, and the objects found in them, feature with varying degrees of detail from the early prose fiction of the eighteenth century through to contemporary novels. Clearly different depictions are used to different rhetorical effect, and their function depends on the many particular circumstances of each individual novel, author, and reader. It is perhaps in the nineteenth century that such depictions are most prevalent. (Grant, 2005:234)

Grant's (2005:248) scrutiny of houses in fiction focuses especially on portrayals of interiors. She links the description of interiors to authors' portrayals of characters' thoughts and feelings, or what she calls 'psychological truth, or interiority'. Ann Jacobsen (2015:517) demonstrates this by asserting that Edith Wharton used architecture and fictional houses and rooms 'to depict human interiority' and that Wharton believed that '[w]riting offers access to the inner world, but when readers encounter a house or room, they are moving into deeper levels of interiority still'. This view of Wharton's technique is one I believe can be applied equally to Montgomery, whose characters' inner thoughts and feelings as well as their true selves are revealed by the places which they inhabit. In *Emily of New Moon*, for example, the reader even becomes more aware of Emily's personality, as well as her desire

to become a writer at the point when Emily moves into a bedroom of her own, which is described in great detail. The interior of this room is referred to more than once, and often representations of this room are linked to Emily's writing. Grant's (2005:248) argument is persuasive:

> This extended period of the novel's development broadly sees a shift from the depiction of objects and experience in a search for the truth offered by realism to the inclusion of detailed depictions of the interior as the norm and towards a return to abstraction. In each era, the search to represent psychological truth, or interiority, seems in these narratives, bound up with depictions of the interior.

Montgomery's novels, written in the early twentieth century, thus seem to be carrying on the eighteenth and nineteenth century tradition of using the house and both its interior and exterior as a metaphor. Grant scrutinizes novels in which women are the central protagonists, such as Jane Austen's *Mansfield Park*. Grant (2005:248) stresses that 'in novels which focus on women's experience, houses often play a key role in the narrative, and serve as indicators of past experience (childhood, for example) as well as offering clues to a series of potential futures'. This is a statement that can be applied equally to Montgomery's novels, all of which feature a female protagonist, and all of which feature at least one house, to a greater or lesser degree.

In view of Grant's contention, it is useful to consider Susan van Zanten Gallagher's discussion of the female protagonist in what she calls domestic novels. In a study of Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The House of the Seven Gables*, Gallagher (1989:3) avers that '[d]omestic novels typically focus on the growth and development of a female protagonist' and that 'the setting of the domestic novel most frequently is that of a house, and the novelists carefully describe the interiors and exteriors of the physical building'. Because Montgomery's novels also focus on a female protagonist and carefully describe the homes of her characters, Montgomery's novels could also be called domestic novels. Furthermore, in most cases, Montgomery's plotlines correspond to the domestic novel in the sense that, similar to Hawthorne's novel, her stories 'embod[y] the primary ideology of the cult of domesticity: the value of love and human relationships as opposed to materialism and self-centeredness' (Gallagher, 1989:5). Although Montgomery's heroines usually exhibit a strong sense of self, they are never truly self-centred, because, as Idette Noomé points out in her article, 'Shaping the self: A *Bildungsroman* for girls?' (2004), their personal growth always involves other people, whom they love and with whom they create lives and living spaces.

According to Marilyn R. Chandler (1991:156), the interiors of the homes of fictional characters serve as 'introductions to [the] characters and as indices of their tastes, values, and habits as well as of their place in a complex network of social relations'. In a study reported in her article 'The essential qualities of a home', Smith (1994:33) found that 'subjects could accurately predict the self-concept of others when shown photographs of their homes', while these sources seem to suggest that using one's possessions and external environment as a means of self-disclosure is quite successful. Smith (1994:33) confirms 'the function of the home and its objects as a form of presentation of the self'. This presentation of the self extends to a person's values and ideals. If one accepts this argument, it is essential to consider Montgomery's references to houses and her own homes in her very carefully constructed and edited presentation of her 'self' in her journals and letters.

In her extensive journals, Montgomery writes at length about her homes and the places that she loves. Elizabeth Waterston (2008:77) comments:

> For every human, particularly for every female human, the choice and adorning of a particular home is deeply individual and tense-making. [...] Like most women of her time and class, Montgomery had a sense of her home as being both a private haven and also a public demonstration of her personality.

Rubio (2008:162) explains that in the culture of rural Canada in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, when Montgomery wrote, a 'woman could prove she was refined, a cut above the "common herd," if her home was attractively appointed' and that 'most women in Maud's era lived their lives predominantly in their homes, with little real power outside them'. Montgomery was influenced by and participated in a culture in which women were encouraged to be 'house-proud'. According to Waterston (2008:77), '[b]eing "house proud" meant being proud of one's attitudes and taste'. This meant that in that time and place, a woman's home was one of the ways in which she proclaimed her personality, status and influence to the world. Rubio (2008:192) writes that for Montgomery and women like her,

> …[t]he decoration of their house – their one sphere of influence – was a major focus, satisfying their aesthetic needs. In a society not yet driven by consumerism, there was little money available for decorative frills in the home. Young women from cultured families used their leisure time to learn needlework and other artistic skills. Magazines were available to them in the new world of print culture: new ideas and fashions, patterns, and materials to order. For more than twenty years, Maud had been laying up her handmade items in her hope chest: crazy quilts, knitted afghans, fancy pillows, crocheted antimacassars and doilies, and fancy embroidered linens. (Rubio, 2008:162)

Alexa Griffith Winton (2013:46) points out that one's 'desired image can be located directly in one's individual possessions and the environment they create'. According to Carl F. Graumann (1983:314), what 'people esteem highly and […] feel to be personified or objectified in their objects of identification' *are* their values. These arguments are borne out in Montgomery's journals, where she chooses to focus on certain details in her descriptions of the personal interiors she loves or dislikes. Similarly, in her description of Anne and Gilbert's living room in *Anne's House of Dreams*, she includes details of the objects in the room – books, a sewing basket, flowers, Anne's china dogs as guardians of the hearth – each symbolising something about either Anne or Gilbert or their life together. Significantly, Alexa Griffith Winton (2013:43) maintains that the 'role of domestic privacy and the extent to which the interior can signify its inhabitant are recurring themes across a wide cross section of disciplines'.

Pauly (1976:271), in his article 'Hawthorne's houses of fiction', asserts that 'knowledge of an author's immediate environment enriched one's appreciation of his writing'. In the study, I therefore show how this argument can be applied to Montgomery's immediate environment and appreciation of her fictional houses (just as Pauly applies it to Hawthorne's fictional houses). Patterns concerning homes and houses in Montgomery's life and thoughts seem to emerge if one considers her novels alongside her journals and other biographical information. Montgomery's love for places and settings was also closely linked to her need for recollection and remembrance, and, as I have shown above and expand on below, she often mentions the houses she loves in her journals.

After she had lived in any house for an extended period, it would become a place of emotional significance to Montgomery, as the epigraph to my introductory chapter suggests. Additionally, these places seem to be linked to her sense of her identity. According to Twigger-Ross and Uzzell (1996:207), research suggests that 'places act as referents to past selves and actions and that for some people, maintenance of a link with that place provides a sense of continuity to their identity'. Similarly, Easthope (2004:137) argues that the 'concept of place irrevocably ties the physical world with the social, cultural and emotive worlds of people'. In Montgomery's journals, long passages are devoted to recounting people and events from the past, as well as noting places which had special significance to her in her life. Returning to places where she had lived before would lead to her writing pages of reminiscences in her journal, often including an assessment of other people's reactions to places. For example, Montgomery wrote in her journal that Frede, her cousin and closest

friend, 'loved her home with the same passion I had for mine' (Tuesday, August 1, 1922, *SJ*, *Vol. 4*, 227).

Montgomery took many photographs of the elements in her homes that appealed to her. Rubio (2008:163) mentions that Montgomery 'described each room of the house lovingly in her diary and pasted in photographs of the furniture, the family heirlooms, and her own household "gods"'. She grew up, for the most part, in her grandparents' home in Prince Edward Island, a place for which she had great affection. She often wrote about this home in her journal, and the descriptions of this home can be linked to many descriptions of houses in her novels, such as Green Gables. When she visited the site of her grandparents' house (which had been demolished) many years after leaving Prince Edward Island, she wrote:

> In the afternoon I went over the fields to the old home. It is a terribly jungly sort of place now. And yet it is and ever must be hallowed ground to me. Everything I looked on had some memory of pleasure or pain. That old farm is very eloquent… I am glad the old house is gone. It can never be degraded to the uses of a tea-room. It is mine—*mine*. I can see every room and line of it, every picture, every stick of furniture… (*SJ*, *Vol. 4*, 11; Montgomery's emphasis)

According to Rosemary Ross Johnston (2005:27), Montgomery's journal entries (like her fiction), reveal that '[l]andscape is "read" by Montgomery, and then "written" by her, as being interior and exterior; relational; a powerful dimension of home; the representation and consolation and edification of inner secret space; and profoundly spiritual'.

A house in Cavendish which had significance for Montgomery, since it had been the model for Green Gables in Anne of Green Gables, was turned into a tea-room in her lifetime:

> In the 1920s, Ernest and Myrtle Webb began operating a tearoom and tourist home in "Green Gables." Maud felt pride that her books had made the Island a tourist spot, but she also felt terrible sorrow that her old haunts, so private and peaceful, were now overrun with tourists. (Rubio, 2008:485)

Another house that had significance for Montgomery, especially during her childhood, was Park Corner, the Prince Edward Island farm where her relatives, the Campbells, lived (and still live). She spent a lot of time in this house as a child, and later she got married there. Reading the descriptions of this house in the *Selected Journals* is often suggestive of Silver Bush in *Pat of Silver Bush* and *Mistress Pat*, and also of Anne's Ingleside, which Amy Tector (2003:74) discusses:

> The time at Ingleside prior to the war is idyllic, as Montgomery strives to convey the sense of an Edwardian Summer before the conflict tears the world apart. The title of the

> first chapter, "Glen 'Notes' and Other Matters," emphasizes the commonplace hominess of Ingleside.

Reminiscing in her journal on March, 2, 1901, Montgomery wrote: 'From my earliest recollection a visit to Park Corner was the greatest treat in the world. Each room has its memories' (*SJ*, *Vol. 1*, 257).

The first house where she lived after her marriage to Reverend Ewan McDonald was the manse in Leaskdale. In her book *Magic Island: The Fictions of L.M. Montgomery*, Waterston (2008:77) notes that Montgomery 'photographed and carefully described almost every room in the little house'. When she had to leave the manse at Leaskdale, she expressed her emotions in her journal: '…how I love this old manse where my children were born and where I have tasted such rapturous happiness and endured so much hideous agony' (Thursday, November 5, 1925, *SJ*, *Vol. 3*, 259-260). She again writes about her love for the house later on Tuesday, January 12, 1926: 'This old manse hurts me. I love its very uglinesses and inconveniences as well as its virtues, just as one likes better the wrinkled face of an old friend than the smooth face of a stranger' (*SJ*, *Vol. 3*, 269).

On Wednesday, February 13, 1935, she contrasts her emotions about the houses where she has lived to the apparent stoicism of her husband, deprecating his apparent indifference: 'Ewan did not mind at all leaving Norval or the manse. He never had the slightest attachment to places or houses. But it nearly broke my heart' (*SJ*, *Vol. 4*, 345). Montgomery writes again similarly on Wednesday, April 24, 1935: '[Ewan] has absolutely no "feeling" for places, no matter how long he has lived in them. I would not be like this for the world. I "love" to love places' (*SJ*, *Vol. 5*, 5).

In this love, Montgomery resembles nearly all of her heroines, especially Pat, who is most vocal about her love for her home, Silver Bush. Montgomery also reiterates this idea in a letter to her Scottish correspondent, Georg Boyd MacMillan, to whom she writes in 1907: 'Of course broadly speaking love is the most important element in anyone's life—man or woman,—love for home' (*MDMM*, 33). In another letter written to MacMillan in 1911, Montgomery describes her departure from her childhood home at Cavendish and the resulting homesickness she experiences:

> Then family reasons necessitated the breaking up and departure from my old home and haunts. This was—and is—such an anguish to me that I cannot write of it.… I do get so horribly lonely and homesick at times especially at night. When these long beautiful spring evenings come it seems to me that I shall die if I cannot go to Lover's Lane and wander through it, going home by starlight over the hill, to see the old home gleaming

> from the trees as it gleamed for over eighty years. It hurts me so to think of the old house left desolate and forsaken, with no life in its rooms, no fire glowing on its hearth.[3] (*MDMM*, 55-56)

This anguish she experiences is similar to the kind which she attributes to so many of her heroines – Jane feels the same way when separated from Lantern Hill; Emily's experiences acute homesickness first for 'the House in the Hollow' and then later for New Moon. Cecily Devereux (2005:253) asserts that 'in her journal and memoir, Montgomery herself compellingly linked her novels to her own experience' and also points out that

> …[u]ltimately Montgomery's assembling of her life story in her journals has produced a compelling 'real-life' system within which Montgomery, her imagined heroine, her novel, and the geo-physical space of childhood all signify in relation to one another. (Devereux, 2005:254-255)

Similarly, Rita Bode and Lesley D. Clement (2015:14-15) suggest that Montgomery's journals are a meticulously crafted presentation of herself and her physical environment. There are therefore some subtle parallels to Montgomery's fiction in Montgomery's journals, as recounted in *Magic Island* (2008). She discusses these with the *caveat* that (auto)biography

> …does not explain the alchemy of art. Readers recognize much more than confession or auto-therapy in the Montgomery novels. They find, for one thing, deep symbolic meditations on art and life, male and female, home and away. Such wisdom is surely not attributable simply to an individual's mood shifts. (Waterston, 2008:221)

Nevertheless, Waterston's book demonstrates that much of Montgomery's personal life spilled over into her fiction, making for some interesting comparisons and interpretations. I consider some of these interfaces in my discussion of the novels.

Laura Higgins (1994:107) also considers the journals as a consciously constructed version of Montgomery's self, and of the places and houses of her life:

> It is certain that Montgomery, when transcribing and illustrating her journals, recognized that she was constructing a document which would represent her "self" after her death…. Because they would eventually be read by the public, Montgomery wanted to be sure that they contained certain messages about herself and her beliefs. Her repetitive use of the photographs of her room was one strategy for conveying these messages to her readers.

[3] This journal entry was written before the demolition of the house took place, and it seems to display many of the characteristics of Emily's Disappointed House, which is also 'left desolate and forsaken, with no life in its rooms, no fire glowing on its hearth' (*MDMM,* 55-56).

That the photographs of her room, as well as detailed descriptions of her living space are included in her journals seems to allow room for the interpretation that she considered a person's dwelling an important illustration of who the person is. Lawson (2007:233-234) suggests that '[r]ooted in the visionary imagination, strong idealism employs symbols, metaphors, and abstractions to express deep cultural and personal truths, while mere sentimentality tends to soften and simplify experience and to render it conventional'.

The details of Montgomery's rooms – her real rooms, as recorded in descriptions in her journals and illustrated by her photographs, as well as the fictional rooms in her novels, are images which 'express deep cultural and personal truths' that can be deciphered by the reader. I therefore argue that the details in the journals which have been noted by many critics are just as important when transcribed into her fiction as when they are found in her ostensibly non-fictional journals. Since Montgomery placed such a great emphasis on the physical environment of her own life, the environment which surrounds the characters of her novels is equally important in deciphering meanings that are conveyed in her books. In this regard, Devereux (2005:254) claims:

> Montgomery saw herself as emotionally and intellectually like Anne […]. Autobiography […] is more than a history of the past, and more than a book currently circulating in the world […]. Metaphor of self aptly describes the ways in which Montgomery represented herself in all her writing through carefully established continuities and connections.

It could be argued that in Montgomery's own life – as she describes it in her journals – and in the fictional lives of her characters, the houses and rooms they inhabit, as well as the colours, furnishings and domestic arrangements in their dwellings, are not coincidental, trivial detail, but important ways to convey meaning.

The significance of a place to an individual is not based solely on interpersonal relationships that are linked with the people who dwell in a house, but is usually extended to more personal matters, especially related to emotional needs. Per Gustafson's (2001) article 'Meanings of place: everyday experience and theoretical conceptualizations' discusses meanings of place with reference to empirical analyses: 'Places often become meaningful because of the respondents' relations with people living there – friends, acquaintances, relatives – and the sense of community that such social relations create' (Gustafson, 2001:9). Images embedded in the houses in these novels often denote the emotions of prominent characters and the relationships they have with themselves and with other people. Gustafson (2001:9) also comments:

> Places often have highly personal meanings. An important theme here is the life path of the individual […] Another theme of meaning is emotion. In particular, many respondents associate their place of residence with security and a sense of home. […] places are also described as a source of self-identification.

A house can function as a haven for the genuine self. Alain de Botton, in his book *The Architecture of Happiness* (2008) posits that a house can provide a means of expression, and not merely serve a utilitarian function as a form of shelter. De Botton (2008:107) postulates that we 'look to our buildings to hold us, like a kind of psychological mould, to a helpful vision of ourselves'. De Botton (2008:107) adds that we 'need a refuge to shore up our states of mind, because so much of the world is opposed to our allegiances. We need our rooms to align us to desirable versions of ourselves and to keep alive the important, evanescent sides of us'. Emily's room at her Aunt Ruth Dutton's house in *Emily's Quest*, for example, shows Emily's struggle with dwelling in a room that is the very opposite of a 'desirable version' of herself and seems to suppress the 'important, evanescent side' of her. A house and its interior showcase what its occupants value and in many cases it is a way of expressing their identity. De Botton (2008:126) explains that 'the architectural impulse seems connected to a longing for communication and commemoration, a longing to declare ourselves to the world […] an ambition to let others know who we are – and, in the process, to remind ourselves'. In this way the house meets the need to reflect, or extend the self. A person's or character's dwelling, its exterior as well as its interior organization and the objects within it can provide an index to the person's identity and sense of self.

Rosemary Ross Johnston (2005:15), discussing 'Landscape as palimpsest, pimento, epiphany: Lucy Maud Montgomery's interiorisation of the exterior, exteriorisation of the interior' explains that

> …Montgomery's landscapes […] have as their central locus the idea of home, and the powerful associations of coming home, finding home, and making home are part of her ideology of home as ontological beingness. Home is the centre from which the perceiving subject connects or is connected to, in varying degrees, a wider context; it is a concept of space and relationship. At the core of the idea of "home" is a moral expectation of personal significance and care, a reinforcement of the integrity of subjectivity.

This idea of 'home as the centre' suggests that the home fulfils a need for some characters. This role and the fact that the core of home constitutes 'a moral expectation of personal significance and care' is particularly important in Montgomery's *Pat of Silver Bush* and *Mistress Pat*. Pat is focused on home to the extent that it becomes her identity, but this is

mainly because, for Pat, and according to Johnston, for Montgomery, caring for oneself and others is part of making a home. This reinforces the fact that home can be essential to one's sense of identity and belonging. Johnston (2005:18) expands this idea further to insist that '[a]t the centre of Montgomery's relational landscapes is "home", and home is the pivot of identity and of relationship with the world for Anne, Emily, Jane, Pat – part of their sense of selfhood and becoming'. Engaging in this relationship with the self and the world thus fulfils a human need for Montgomery's characters.

In *The House and the Art of Its Design* (1953), Robert Woods Kennedy discusses the symbolism found in the house as an object at great length, suggesting a human desire for status met by houses. Kennedy (1953:12) explains:

> The upper-middle class house is a visible symbol of economic power. A symbol is like a word. One must know what it means, and that can only be done through memory. Thus the house, as symbol, must be in a known style with known connotations.

In Montgomery's novels, the houses are often connected to a cultural heritage, economic power and families' social standing. Some of the 'old' family homes in the novels, such as Green Gables, New Moon and Silver Bush, tie the characters to their family's heritage and social standing, and position their inhabitants in a specific way. By contrast, the acquisition of a house or moving house may indicate a change in economic power and even emancipation – this is most notable in *A Tangled Web*, where an inheritance unexpectedly enables Margaret Penhallow to purchase the home of her dreams, Whispering Winds. The ability to purchase houses in these instances empowers the characters to live independently if they so wish, and symbolise their emancipation from different kinds of suppression. This also evident in *Jane of Lantern Hill*, when Jane's father purchases Lantern Hill for their family, effectively emancipating them all from the manipulative control of Jane's domineering maternal grandmother.

Many of the houses in Montgomery's fiction become havens for her protagonists, where their needs, whether physical, intellectual, relational or emotional, can be met. Sometimes, houses can even function as placeholders for significant people who should have fulfilled these needs, and replace these attachments.

The ways in which house design is influenced by culture is examined by Marjorie Branin Keiser (1978) in *Housing: an Environment for Living*. Keiser (1978:31) asserts that 'a constructed environment reflects the civilization that planned and built it and, in turn,

influences the future development of that society'. This seems to confirm the idea that the house interrelates with the people who build it and with those for whom it is built. Although the house is created for and by its inhabitants, it in turn shapes the people.

Smith (1994:33), referring to empirical research, argues that 'the act of dwelling is an integral part of human experience and that the home is a significant place for most people'. It seems reasonable to suppose that one of the reasons why the house is significant for most people is that it assists in providing for the human needs included in 'human experience'. I argue that this is one of the functions of houses in Montgomery's fiction. Some of these needs are 'continuity, privacy, self-expression, social relationships, warmth, and the physical structure' (Smith, 1994:45). Easthope (2004:134) confirms this when she writes that

> …the home provides humans with all the satisfactions that territory provides to many species of animal, namely identity, security and the stimulation of its occupants. […] Personalization of one's home promotes security and identity, while the defence and modification of one's home promotes stimulation.

Easthope seems to imply that what she means by 'the satisfactions that territory provides' can also be interpreted as the *needs*, both physiological and psychological, that territory provides. Jeanne Moore (2002:210) also explores this idea, arguing that '*home* provides psychological comfort, social needs as well as physiological needs' (Moore's emphasis). Smith (1994:31) also asserts that '[t]he nature of the relationship between people and their physical environment has been shown to parallel interpersonal relationships particularly in the phenomenon of attachment'. It appears that the house can, in certain instances, replace interpersonal relationships by providing some needs which are usually provided by other people – for example, comfort, attachment, protection and other emotional or physical needs. According to John C. Stott and Charlotte Doyle Francis (1993:223), this is a common aspect of children's literature:

> [W]hile story settings in children's literature are varied and diverse […] they all can be categorized in terms of the relationship of the main character to two places: "home" and "not home." "Home" to a child is not merely a dwelling place but also an attitude. For a real child or a fictional character, it is a place of comfort, security, and acceptance, a place which meets both physical and emotional needs. Conversely, "not home" is a place where needs are not met, for any of several reasons.

This idea is particularly obvious in *Jane of Lantern Hill*, where Jane feels 'not home' in her emotionally abusive grandmother's old Victorian mansion. Her physical needs are properly met in this house, but her emotional needs are either neglected or need to hidden. By

contrast, the house at Lantern Hill where Jane lives with her father during the summer, 'is a place of comfort, security and acceptance, a place which meets both physical and emotional needs' (Stott & Francis, 1993:223). In fact, according to Stott and Francis (1993:223), in many children's novels 'the action in each novel concerns the characters' effort to get out of their hostile environments into more receptive ones'. This is also a focus in Montgomery's *The Blue Castle* and *A Tangled Web*, neither of which is considered to be a novel for children. Leaving 'hostile environments' for 'more receptive ones' is what Anne accomplishes in *Anne of Green Gables*. Catherine Sheldrick Ross (1994:25) explains that in 'this first book, Montgomery sets the pattern for her later books by foregrounding the house as a place of safe retreat in which the imagination can dream'.

Ross links the house in the novel with Montgomery's own home in Cavendish, thereby suggesting that when Montgomery's own needs for security where being threatened, she seemed to find a sense of comfort in providing security for her heroine(s). Montgomery seemed to grasp that

> …[f]amilies and other households have similar goals. They all seek an environment in which the group can thrive. A household is a place for seclusion, solace, and companionship. Within this protection, the group maintains its identity and sense of place. The size of the group and the values, ages, and occupations of its members, influence the physical structure and its location. (Keiser, 1978:31)

However, in the case of Anne and the protagonists of Montgomery's other novels, the focus is not on a group that seeks 'a place for seclusion, solace and companionship' or 'an environment in which […to] thrive', but rather on an individual, and usually a girl or a woman. Most of Montgomery's houses are havens for their occupants, a kind of 'bounded space' which Stacy Alaimo (2007:153) describes: '…the home – with walls, floors, and ceilings – is a bounded space, existing to keep the outdoors, precisely, out of doors, defining the human as that which is protected within'. Protection is an important need which the house provides – not only physical protection, but also protection for the inner self.

Walter Benjamin (2002:220) states:

> In the most extreme instance, the dwelling becomes a shell. The nineteenth century, like no other century, was addicted to dwelling. It conceived the residence as a receptacle for the person, and it encased him with all his appurtenances so deeply within the dwelling's interior that one might be reminded of the inside of a compass case, where the instrument with all its accessories lies embedded in deep, usually violet folds of velvet.

It seems that Montgomery, who was born in the nineteenth century, in many of her novels did indeed 'conceive the residence as a receptacle for the person' and a 'shell'. For example, in *Anne's House of Dreams*, the house of title is described as 'a big, creamy sea-shell stranded on the harbour shore' (*AHD*, 29).

According to Robert Bruce Hay (1998:6),

> A sense of place, if allowed to fully develop, can provide feelings of security, belonging and stability, similar to the feelings that arise from a fully developed pair bond. As a person matures, so does the ability to form mature relationships, with these relationships the building blocks of one's life.

The idea that a place can provide for emotional needs, relational needs as well as physiological needs such as bodily comfort and protection is echoed by Manzo (2005:74):

> Significant places reflect people's evolving identity; provide opportunities for privacy, introspection and reflection; serve as transitional markers as well as bridges to the past; and reflect the salience of safety, threat and belonging which are fundamentally connected to socially constructed identities.

Montgomery's novels are not strictly children's novels, but most of the novels were marketed for children and were indeed read by children. Therefore, some critics' analyses and discussions of home(s) in children's fiction may also be applicable to much of Montgomery's fiction. According to Virginia L. Wolf (1990:54), 'home is the dominant place in children's literature. [And] the house is the chief form it takes'. Wolf (1990:54) comments:

> Whereas much adult literature laments our homelessness and reflects the fragmentation or loss of myth, most children's literature celebrates home and affirms belief in myth. Images of home abound in children's literature, not only in houses, such as the little house in the big woods, but in a variety of other places.

Montgomery's fiction, with its rich descriptions of the home and characters' rootedness in their homes, thus has much in common with many children's novels such as Kenneth Graham's *The Wind in the Willows*, Laura Ingalls Wilder's 'Little House' books, or Louisa May Alcott's *Little Women.* In her article 'Home in Children's Literature,' Lucy Waddey (1983:13) also writes about the home in children's fiction and maintains that

> …[a]lthough so deep and subtle a subject as home eludes any final categories, the artistic use of home as both a setting and theme in children's fiction falls into three basic patterns: home as a frame, home as a focus, and home as an evolving reflection of the protagonist.

Some of the novels I scrutinize in this study reveal these three different patterns, especially the Pat novels, because all three of these categories are at work in these novels at the same time: 'home as a frame, home as a focus, and home as an evolving reflection of the protagonist'. Montgomery's 'Pat novels', *Pat of Silver Bush* and *Mistress Pat*, are both very focused on houses, especially on Silver Bush, Pat's family home. Ann Alston (2005:16) links this idea to children's literature when she explains that

> … [t]o understand the centrality of the home to children's literature, it is necessary to consider the importance of home to our adult sense of identity and security. Homes are invested with a strong sense of nostalgia. The house in which we live is not just a shell. The way we organise it, the possessions we place in it, and the memories we attach to previous houses emphasise the importance laid on the places we inhabit.

Waddey (1983:14) describes how the 'Promethean pattern' in children's books works:

> The fire which Prometheus stole for men gave them power over their environment, power to create, and build, and prosper. The main characters in books with the Promethean pattern discover their own creative powers, and in doing so acknowledge the kinship of all natural things. Such psychic growth is not just a natural and suspenseful structural device in these books, but a rich theme.

Both *Jane of Lantern Hill* and *Emily of New Moon* are excellent examples of this theme of the discovery of creative powers leading to inner growth. In these novels, Jane discovers her creative powers as a housekeeper and cook, while Emily discovers herself as a writer, and in both cases, their dwellings have a material influence on their growth. Montgomery's depictions of Emily's artistic aspirations seem to echo much of her own experiences, as shown in her journals as well as Rubio's biography.

The third function I identified and explore in the selected novels is that houses in the novels can prevent, or else facilitate, certain events, social and familial bonds, or actions. At the very least, then, the houses become catalysts in the events or in protagonists' growth. Even more – in effect, the houses themselves become protagonists in the novels. Moore (2000:212) asserts that home and 'its particular physical form are embodied with emotional, social, physical and symbolic significance through patterns of interaction over time'. The patterns of interaction between the inhabitants of a house, as well as the patterns that are shaped by the house itself are eventually permeated with significance. Because of the setting, size and design of a house, and the furniture found in its rooms, a house can encourage certain actions, or discourage others. In that way it interacts with the inhabitants and visitors.

Kennedy (1953:105) explains this:

> A house is, first and foremost, an attempt to influence benignly its tenants' living patterns. It can foster or inhibit relationships within and between subgroups. Its power to do this lies in the fact that its plan has a great effect on the amount of privacy the family can attain, and on the ease with which its various members can get together.

The house serves as an area which excludes and includes different patterns of behaviour. Tessie Agan and Elaine Luchsinger (1965) in *The House: Principles, Resources, Dynamics* theorise that houses interact with their inhabitants by facilitating and shaping the activities of their inhabitants and also emphasise the complexity of the family dwelling:

> The houses in which we all live and which we all probably take very much for granted actually exert a powerful, if unconscious, influence on our everyday experience of family living. The house profoundly affects not only the family's activities, but its relationships and its satisfactions from family life. (Agan & Luchsinger, 1965:3)

These ideas influence my analysis of the interactions between the characters in Montgomery's novels and the houses which they inhabit, and indeed, how the houses inhabit and affect the novels themselves. In this regard, Grant (2005:248) comments:

> There does seem to be an affinity between the novel and the house, and the novel, through its formal qualities and distinctive narrative techniques is one very successful home for literary representations of the home. The "house of fiction" proves not to be an empty metaphor, rather a complex and suggestive image which reflects the multiplicity of different engagements of the novel with representations of the domestic interior.

Liisa Stephenson (2010:1097), discussing Edith Wharton's fiction, along with her book on interior design, *The Decoration of Houses*, writes that '[j]ust as a well-designed house reflects the architectural principles on which it was founded, the novel is constructed according to theories of design that reflect the author's aesthetic principles'. In Montgomery's novels, the characters inhabit the narrative which she has constructed, just as they inhabit their fictional houses. Usually, but not always, houses in Montgomery's fiction are emblems of comfort and beauty, while the narratives are similarly constructed to be both beautiful and comforting in their own way. A good example of this is Silver Bush in the Pat novels, which, according the Pat, epitomizes loveliness and comfort.

Ellen Eve Frank (1979:259) points out that

> …architecture is the only art object we actually live in. However, we live in another construction – we do not commonly call it art – also of our own making: consciousness. Literary architecture is a gesture toward that.

It could be argued that the house in fiction can thus also function as an extension of a novel's narrative through the symbolic statement which the house makes. Montgomery's literary and fictional architecture is a construction that includes the dwellings of her protagonists. The protagonists may leave a house which is a symbol of oppression or of sorrow in order to find a house which more closely reflects their true sense of self, as for example, in *The Blue Castle* or *Jane of Lantern Hill* and they often associate themselves with a particular house. As Anne exclaims in *Anne of Green Gables*, 'it's a million times nicer to be Anne of Green Gables than Anne of nowhere in particular' (*AGG*, 56). This leaving of a place and finding a home in another place is part of the actual narrative – the literary art object. The literary architecture of the novel is echoed by the detailed descriptions of the architecture of the fictional homes.

Therefore it can be demonstrated that, in many cases, a house in literature *communicates*. Grant (2005:235) affirms that for some writers (such as Henry James in her example), '[f]iction then does not merely depict houses and their interiors, it is, for [the author] itself a house'. If architecture (for example, a building such as a house) communicates, and it communicates various things such as ideas, culture, aesthetic values, meaning, and so on, then it could be inferred that the house in literature communicates as well. It is also true that for Montgomery, places, and especially houses were deeply meaningful. Therefore it seems reasonable to posit that, since Montgomery placed such emphasis on the physical environment of her own life, the environment which surrounds the characters of her novels is equally important in deciphering meanings conveyed in her books, as I show in this study.

A house is not necessarily the same thing as a home, and not all people feel at home in their own houses, or in any houses, but, for the purposes of this study, I use the terms 'house' and 'home' as interchangeable. I draw on the broader definition of a house or home offered in the *Oxford English Dictionary*, which states that a house is 'a building for human habitation'. The reason for using these terms as synonyms is that in this study, the assumed function of the built house is its use as a home, which is defined by the *Oxford English Dictionary* as 'the place where one lives permanently, especially as a member of a family or household'. That is the only context in which I investigate the house or the concept of a home in this study. In making this choice, I also drew on Easthope's discussion of the idea of a link between place and emotion:

> In understanding home as a significant type of place we are no longer limited to a false dichotomy of "house" as a physical structure and "home" as a social, cultural and

> emotive construct. The concept of place irrevocably ties the physical world with the social, cultural and emotive worlds of people. (Easthope, 2004:137)

I start my analysis of the houses in Montgomery's 'Anne' books with *Anne of Green Gables* and Matthew and Marilla's house, Green Gables. I discuss houses inhabited or visited by Anne in the sequels, including Echo Lodge in *Anne of Avonlea*, Patty's Place in *Anne of the Island*, Windy Willows in *Anne of Windy Willows*, the 'House of Dreams' in *Anne's House of Dreams*, and Ingleside in *Anne of Ingleside*, briefly mentioning *Rainbow Valley* and *Rilla of Ingleside*. There seems to be a clear intersection between Anne's needs and her dreams of home. Anne's imaginative space is echoed by the houses in which she lives, and I examine her romantic ideals with specific reference to Anne's various homes by drawing on Epperly's (1992) chapter 'Romancing the Home' in *The Fragrance of Sweet Grass: L.M. Montgomery's Heroines and the Pursuit of Romance*. However, while Epperly focuses on romance in Montgomery's fiction, my discussion of Anne's homes goes further in order to examine the way Montgomery uses houses as metaphors to amplify and clarify her characters and their situations in these novels. The descriptions of houses in these novels contribute to creating a sense of homecoming, belonging, and identity for Anne, as well as other characters.

In the chapter concerning Montgomery's 'Emily' trilogy, I scrutinize the many descriptions of houses in these novels, including the empty or abandoned houses. The prominence of an empty, half-built house called 'The Disappointed House' throughout the trilogy provides for interesting speculation on the function of houses in these novels. Rubio's biography of Montgomery, *Lucy Maud Montgomery: The Gift of Wings*, comments on the impression of many readers that, in a sense, Emily Byrd Starr is the heroine who is the most like her creator, Maud Montgomery, especially in her ambition to become a writer (Rubio, 2005:273).[4] Emily's ambivalence towards marriage and pride in her family are both echoed in Montgomery's own experience, and I show how these feelings are subtly revealed in the houses which feature in these novels – New Moon, Wyther Grange, the Tansy Patch, and, most significantly, the Disappointed House. The 'Emily' trilogy, *Emily of New Moon* (1923), *Emily Climbs* (1925) and *Emily's Quest* (1927), also seems to be in some measure inspired by some of the Gothic elements found in Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* as well as Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights*, as Epperly (1992:149-167) points out in her study *The*

[4] 'We see almost no self-conscious comment about what part of her life each novel reflects. And sometimes she denies a connection between herself and her heroines which is clearly there' (Rubio, 2005:273)

Fragrance of Sweet Grass: L.M. Montgomery's Heroines and the Pursuit of Romance. Emily's tower room, great-aunt Nancy Priest's home (Wyther Grange), as well as the near-death escapes experienced by Emily all seem to hint at the Brontës' famous books and the association with Gothic romance which provide another interesting perspective in my analysis of these novels. However, my focus, unlike Epperly's, is neither the Gothic, nor romance, but the house itself (Gothic or otherwise) as an element in the novels.

The novels *Pat of Silver Bush* and *Mistress Pat* are the most house-focused of all Montgomery's novels. Pat's connection to Silver Bush and the idea of house and home are intertwined with a central concern in the novels, namely Pat's aversion to change of any kind. It is interesting to compare the emotions evinced by the characters of both Pat Gardiner and Hilary Gordon to Montgomery's own emotional reaction to this topic and her possible reasons for making the house such a powerful theme in this novel. The preoccupation with dwelling and domesticity is emphasised by a character – the orphan Hilary and his passion for designing houses, which leads him to study architecture and fuels his desire to create houses that can become homes and places of belonging. The prominence of this theme in the novel is studied in light of the details of Montgomery's life as shown in her journals and letters. A comparison of Montgomery's personal life and the events of the time, including world events such as the Depression, the aftermath of the First World War and the lead-up to the Second World War, enhances our understanding of the themes of home, houses, and dwelling in these novels. Waterston's *Magic Island* (2008), which examines Montgomery's novels in relation to her journals and what they reveal about her inner life, informs my discussion of these novels as well as the application of theories of place attachment to the significant motifs.

My consideration of *The Blue Castle*, *A Tangled Web* and *Jane of Lantern Hill* focuses on the characters in these novels who manage to escape from stifling houses and situations. The theme of escape is enhanced by the contrasts between the houses from which these characters escape, and the houses to which they flee. The houses they escape from are cold, and fail to function as true homes, while descriptions of the houses in which these characters find refuge are replete with details of creature comforts (and animals), a sense of cosiness and warmth, as well as features which emphasise the individuality of the characters. The situations which these characters escape from are often excellently illustrated principally by the descriptions of the houses involved. Montgomery's *Selected Journals*, edited by Rubio and Waterston (1985-2013), provide glimpses into the life of the author, and some of the

confining situations of her own life can be interpreted as parallels to those in which the protagonists of these novels find themselves. Elizabeth Waterston's (2008) *Magic Island* discusses these parallels, but my discussion focuses on the way the houses in these novels are used as metaphors of the situations of the characters, and the possible reasons Montgomery used houses as symbolic devices. I examine how these effects are created and attempt to interpret the significance of these elements in the novels. Additionally, my analysis of these novels relies on theories of place attachment and the ways in which homes are used as markers of identity and means for self-expression, drawing on articles on these topics by Smith (1994), Moore (2000), Manzo (2003) and Mallett (2004).

The portrayal of houses in novels by L.M. Montgomery is a topic that very few critics seem to have looked at in detail so far, although it is a significant feature in many of her novels, as reflected in many of the titles themselves. Various critics have touched on this (for example, Elizabeth Rollins Epperly, Elizabeth Waterston, and Gabriella Åhmansson), but no extended or systematic study of the houses in L.M. Montgomery's work has been published. However, Epperly's chapter 'Romancing the Home' in *The Fragrance of Sweet Grass* (1992) is a very important foundation for my theories and discussion of the houses in Montgomery's fiction. Epperly's (1992:12) focus is 'on the heroines, and on their struggles with self and celebrations of home… [connected]…with the overt and covert assumptions about romance'. She (1992:12) explores 'the romanticized interconnections between self and home'. My focus is similar, and an expansion on Epperly's study. An important difference between my work and Epperly's is that I link psychological and sociological research on theories of dwelling, place and identity, and the meaning of home, while her focus is exclusively on Montgomery. Furthermore, my research excludes 'romance' as a topic, focusing instead on the functions of the home. Åhmansson discusses Valancy's room in *The Blue Castle* in great detail. I draw on her ideas, but my approach is not a feminist one such as Åhmansson's is. Instead, I examine the rooms in Montgomery's fiction in line with other ideas in literature and psychology which posit that the house and its rooms are a symbol for the self. Furthermore, my research also takes into account the symbolism and meaning which are displayed by both interior and exterior architecture, and the effect of this on the interpretation of the novels.

T.D. MacLulich's articles 'Anne of Green Gables and the regional idyll' (1983) and 'L.M. Montgomery's portraits of the artist: Realism, idealism, and the domestic imagination' (1992) assert that Montgomery's perspective, while focusing on community with a domestic

orientation, nevertheless displays a true understanding of human emotional needs and examines an 'element of wishful self-portraiture in Montgomery's portrayals of most of her young heroines' (MacLulich, 1985:465). This perspective provides insight into the genres of domestic romance and local colour with which Montgomery's fiction can be associated. These views provide a reference point for my own exploration of the houses and homes in Montgomery's fiction and inform my methods in analysing and interpreting the use of houses and homes in Montgomery's fiction. My work is the first extended study on this concept in Montgomery's work.

In order to interpret the novels I refer to *The Selected Journals of L.M. Montgomery*, edited by Rubio and Waterston (1985-2013), as well as the author's letters as edited by Francis Bolger and Elizabeth R. Epperly (1980) in *My Dear Mr. M: Letters to G.B. MacMillan from L.M. Montgomery*. I also make use of Mary Rubio's comprehensive biography, *Lucy Maud Montgomery: The Gift of Wings* (2008). I selectively draw on Montgomery's own revelations about what houses meant to her by considering the large body of biographical and autobiographical material available on the author. For example, Elizabeth Waterston's (2008) book *Magic Island* discusses Montgomery's novels in the context of her journal entries and the possible motivations and inspirations for much of her work. I use her work as a starting point to inform my own interpretation of how Montgomery's personal feelings and emotions, as revealed in her journals, influence her depiction of homes and houses in her novels.

The Selected Journals of L.M. Montgomery, edited by Rubio and Waterston (1985-2004), and *My Dear Mr. M: Letters to G.B. MacMillan from L.M. Montgomery*, edited by Bolger and Epperly (1980) provide for fascinating glimpses into Montgomery's opinions, ideas, as well as the events of her life and her view of them. This perspective on the author is helpful in forming an accurate picture of the different themes in her work and their significance, as well as assisting in interpretations of these themes. Rubio's (2008) biography *Lucy Maud Montgomery: The Gift of Wings* provides details and historical context of Montgomery's life also assists my analysis of her novels and the meaning embedded in them. *The Intimate Life of L.M. Montgomery*, edited by Irene Gammel (2005) provides additional insights into Montgomery's private life and personal writing, which augments my interpretation of the underlying narratives and meanings in Montgomery's fiction.

Chapter 2:
Dream Houses? The 'Anne' books

I "love" to love places (*SJ*, *Vol. 5*, 5).

In the novels I discuss in this chapter – *Anne of Green Gables* (1908), *Anne of Avonlea* (1909), *Anne of the Island* (1915), *Anne of Windy Willows* (1936), *Anne's House of Dreams* (1917) and *Anne of Ingleside* (1939)[5] – Anne dreams of the houses she has inhabited, those which she inhabits, and those which she hopes to inhabit someday. Houses play an important role in these novels as well as in the progression of Anne's life, alerting readers to characters' personality traits and predicaments, and punctuating pivotal periods of Anne's life.

I argue that the dwellings Anne inhabits are all linked with dreaming. According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, one meaning of the word 'dream' is to 'indulge in daydreams or fantasies about something greatly desired'. Anne continually daydreams and fantasises about what she greatly desires – belonging, acceptance, to be someone who is valued, and, above all, to have a home of her own, which is intimately related to her other dreams. Ross (1994:25) rightly asserts that in her first book, *Anne of Green Gables*, 'Montgomery sets the pattern for her later books by foregrounding the house as a place of safe retreat in which the imagination can dream'. 'Dreaming' thus becomes a synonym for Anne's flights of imagination. Usually, Anne daydreams about the future while she is in the present, hoping that the future will be in some way different from the past. In the later novels, the houses are linked to romance, as in the House of Dreams of the title of *Anne's House of Dreams*, which is the house where she spends the first years of her marriage to Gilbert Blythe. This house is the fruition of her and Gilbert's hopes.

Kennedy (1953:28) argues that the 'themes of living are love, sociability, privacy, self-expression, comfort, belongingness, and the like', and that these themes 'will suffuse a good house, i.e. a house willing to be suffused, with meaning'. For Anne, her houses are such willing 'receptacle[s] to receive' the themes of her life, as I show in this chapter.

[5] In this chapter, I discuss the houses as they appear in the chronology of Anne's story, rather than the chronology of Montgomery's writing of the novels.

Green Gables, Anne's home in the first Anne book, *Anne of Green Gables* (1908), is the first in a series of houses that Anne loves. Montgomery refers back to it frequently throughout the series of novels as the quintessential symbol of home and belonging in Anne's life. It is the first place where Anne is truly secure and which she makes her own. In turn, each of the houses which she loves and inhabits (Green Gables, Patty's Place, Windy Willows, the House of Dreams, and Ingleside) takes on different meanings for Anne, and becomes emblematic of both the inward and outward events of her life. Bode (2018, in press) explains that in Montgomery's fiction,

> Both the exteriors and interiors of literary houses express the themes and intents of their fictions. Anne recognizes Green Gables at first glance – "just as soon as I saw it I felt it was home," she declares to Matthew in their buggy ride from the station – affirming not only her strong need to belong but also her conviction that she belongs to Green Gables and all that she intuitively knows it represents. She is not proven wrong. Interior spaces, moreover, are also significant for Montgomery's fictional characters as they were for her own writing life.

In *The Fragrance of Sweet Grass*, Elizabeth Epperly (1992:211) writes of Montgomery's novels and the houses in them:

> All Montgomery's heroines experience powerful love of the physical home – sometimes, as with Anne, several homes. Following the best of nineteenth-century tradition, Montgomery enshrines home as a sacred centre for family and the developing of self. She also borrowed from nineteenth-century novelists the device of suggesting character traits through houses – both in giving houses personalities of their own and in using descriptions of houses to characterize the people who live in them. […] [S]omething about the very structure of each house reflects an important aspect of Anne's life and changes.

As Epperly points out, for Anne, the houses she lives in 'characterize' her, and are a 'sacred centre' for Anne and her 'developing self'. Anne's homes assist in her development by facilitating personal growth, providing for her psychological and physical needs, and serving as reflections and reassurances of who she is and where she belongs. Anne is alive to beauty: the houses she sees are more than dwelling places to her. They are symbols of beauty, and repositories of love, belonging, and acceptance. Spiritually, Anne is nurtured by the beauty of her new home and its surroundings, as well as by the kindness and love which Matthew, and eventually Marilla also, give her.

Anne returns and refers to Green Gables often over the course of the novels, just as Montgomery often returned to visit the homes of her youth on Prince Edward Island.

According to Manzo (2003:53),

> …places become meaningful as transitional markers or symbols of critical life events, such as a benchmark in a significant relationship (either positive or negative), as well as in simpler moments of reflection. These places are consciously valued as deeply meaningful. They are often places to which people intentionally return because of the events that they symbolize and the meaning that they hold.

Green Gables is significant as the home associated with the beginning of her new life with Marilla and Matthew. Each of the houses in which she lives embodies something slightly different in her life story, but in all of them, the central themes of Anne's life – belonging, the imagination, dreams – remain crucial.

MacLulich (1983:493-494) explains that in Anne, Montgomery has created 'an outcast child who happily acquires the secure home and the loving guardians she feared she had lost forever when her parents died'. Montgomery's own loss of her parents – her mother as a result of death, her father as a result of his absence – is reflected in Anne's being an orphan. MacLulich (1983:490) rightly suggests that in *Anne of Green Gables*, Montgomery 'recreate[s] a simple rural world…a heightened version of the author's childhood environment', suggesting that Avonlea is an idealized version of the Cavendish of Montgomery's childhood. Her suggestion that the novel is an idealization implies the difficulties of Montgomery's childhood, which, however, MacLulich does not discuss further. Rea Wilmshurst's introduction to an anthology of Montgomery's short stories, *Akin to Anne* (1995), argues that Montgomery's short stories also reveal a personal projection into or connection with the orphan theme. It seems possible that Montgomery used her narratives to comfort herself when, for various reasons, she herself experienced difficulty and depression at times as a result of her own home situation and felt baulked in her personal quest for belonging and security.

Green Gables is the house where Anne flourishes at last, after years of struggle and privation. Green Gables, the house, is presented to readers before Anne herself sees it. It is described as a 'big, rambling, orchard-embowered house' (*AGG*, 9). Anne herself recognises Green Gables at first sight, as she says:

> "[J]ust as soon as I saw it I felt it was home. Oh, it seems as if I must be in a dream […] even supposing it was a only a dream I'd better go on dreaming as long as I could […] But it *is* real, and we're nearly home." (*AGG*, 24; Montgomery's emphasis)

From the start, for Anne a true home is equated with dreaming and with dreams fulfilled, and Green Gables is, from the start, a *home* to her, and not just another house.

Marilla is a stern figure and is strict in enforcing acceptable behaviour in Anne – nevertheless, it is still her home which becomes Anne's beloved home of her own. Marilla's personality is indicated to the reader early on in the novel, when Mrs. Rachel Lynde goes to 'pay a call' on her, and Marilla's kitchen is described. This description of the kitchen at Green Gables before Anne's coming is meant to provide the reader with clues about the house and the person of Marilla to whom Anne is introduced to in the coming chapters.

> The kitchen at Green Gables was a cheerful apartment—or would have been cheerful if it had not been so painfully clean as to give it something of the appearance of an unused parlour. Its windows looked east and west; through the west one, looking out on the back yard, came a flood of mellow June sunlight; but the east one, whence you got a glimpse of the bloom-white cherry trees in the left orchard and nodding, slender birches down in the hollow by the brook, was greened over by a tangle of vines. Here sat Marilla Cuthbert when she sat at all, always slightly distrustful of sunshine. (*AGG*, 9)

Marilla's character is similar to her kitchen – she could be, or might become, cheerful, if she were not 'so painfully neat'. Like the unused parlour, Marilla's life is 'unused', or rather empty, because she has no child, no husband, and no close relative of her own, except her quiet brother Matthew. Montgomery seems to be implying that she has not yet lived fully. The windows in the kitchen with their glimpses of nature seem to indicate that the 'eyes' of Marilla's soul are not without a kind of vision and that Marilla has a potentially open mind, although it might be, metaphorically, hidden 'by a tangle of vines', as is the east window of the kitchen. MacLulich (1983:494) comments that the 'strength of Montgomery's novel comes from […] the psychological insight she displays in constructing her characters and her story. *Anne of Green Gables* is built on compassionate understanding of human emotional needs'.

Waterston (2008:76) asserts that the 'first house of Anne Shirley's dreams was Green Gables. Rigidly neat on the outside, it had a space within for a room of Anne's own, where she could dream'. The room to which Marilla takes Anne on her first night at Green Gables is indeed the first room which Anne has had to herself, although it does not, at first glance, seem like a place that would encourage the imagination or daydreams. The depiction of this room at Green Gables is at first indicative of both Anne's lot in life, and Marilla's initial reaction to her. Grant (2005:238) explains that in 'depictions of the interior, the drive to represent the real is paralleled by a desire for insight into characters' minds'. There are two descriptions of this room – one when Anne arrives at Green Gables, and another a few years later when Anne has been at Green Gables for some time, and many things in her life, as

well as in Marilla's and Matthew's, have changed a great deal. The portrayals of these interiors alert the reader to these changes in the characters.

When Anne first enters her bedroom, it is uninviting: '…the whitewashed walls were so painfully bare and staring that she thought they must ache over their bareness…[t]he floor was bare too, except for a round braided mat in the middle such as Anne had never seen before' (*AGG*, 29). The bareness of the walls and the floor in this room imply the lack of care and affection which Anne has experienced throughout her life, and which Marilla is, at this point, continuing to show her, at least emotionally. In one corner of the room, the 'high, old-fashioned [bed] with four dark, low-turned posts' seems inaccessible to an eleven-year-old child and the 'dark, low-turned posts' do not imply cosiness or comfort (*AGG*, 29). The other corner of the room contains a 'three-cornered table adorned with a fat, red velvet pincushion hard enough to turn the point of the most adventurous pin' (*AGG*, 29). The table's three corners, along with all the mention of 'corners' in the room, draw attention both to Marilla's unbending sternness and Anne's hitherto difficult life. The repellent pincushion, which should have been soft enough for a pin, is a parallel image. The 'little six-by-eight mirror' that hangs above the 'three-cornered table' reminds the reader that vanity, or even any adequate self-perception is discouraged by the society in which Anne finds herself. The singular frill of 'icy white muslin' on the window does not help to soften the other harsh lines in the room. The narrator reaches a conclusion concerning this room at the end of the passage: 'The whole apartment was of a rigidity not to be described in words, but which sent a shiver to the very marrow of Anne's bones' (*AGG*, 29).

Although Anne eventually finds a safe refuge at Green Gables with Marilla and Matthew, this is not the immediate state of affairs, but rather a gradual change that creeps across the house and its inhabitants. Anne 'makes' her home with the force of her personality, it is not immediately given to her. This change becomes apparent towards the end of the novel – this 'bare' room has changed and the entirely different description of it confirms to the reader that Anne is now beloved, accepted and at home in Green Gables.

> The east gable was a very different place from what it had been on that night four years before, when Anne had felt its bareness penetrate to the marrow of her spirit with its inhospitable chill. Changes had crept in, Marilla conniving at them resignedly, until it was as sweet and dainty a nest as a young girl could desire. (*AGG*, 222)

This detailed description of Anne's bedroom is not accidental. The previously bare floor and window are now covered respectively with 'a pretty matting, and the curtains that softened

the high window and fluttered in the vagrant breezes were of pale green art muslin', effectively warming the room with softness and a hint of both art and nature. The presence of these two elements is confirmed by the 'dainty apple-blossom paper' and the 'spike of white lilies faintly [perfuming] the room like the dream of a fragrance'. The 'white-painted bookcase filled with books' as well as the pictures on the walls, given to Anne by the minister's wife who has become a loving mentor, indicates a new intellectual and spiritual vision which has been vouchsafed to Anne. The 'dainty apple-blossom paper' brings inside for all seasons the glory of the 'Snow Queen', as Anne refers to the blossoming apple tree that grows outside her window, and that she names on her first day at Green Gables. The white lilies not only decorate and perfume the room but also refer to Anne's youth and virginity, as does the 'low white bed' – the inclusion of flowers in décor indoors are an innovation Anne introduces to Green Gables. The 'cushioned wicker rocker' indicates that while comfort was absent from the room in the past, things are now very different. The new 'toilet-table, be-frilled with white muslin', as well as the 'quaint, gilt-framed mirror with chubby pink cupids', reveal that care of the self, as well as a good self-perception, is now encouraged in Anne instead of being brushed aside as vanity. The fact that Anne's mirror used to hang in the spare-room, a sacred apartment in those days for which only the best furnishings were reserved, seem to imply that Anne is now a welcome resident in the home, just as an invited guest would be, instead of being allowed in on sufferance. It is telling that the description of the east gable near the end of *Anne of Green Gables* is similar to photographs of Montgomery's own bedroom in her grandparents' house in Cavendish, PEI, included by the editors in the selected journals (*SJ*, *Vol. 1*, 244, 367).

In *Anne of Ingleside* (1939), Anne returns briefly to her old gable room as a married woman and mother of children, when she visits Marilla and Mrs. Lynde at Green Gables and finds that the 'Anne-who-used-to-be was waiting there for her'. This is a source of delight to her, as '[d]eep, dear old gladnesses stirred in her heart. The gable room was putting its arms around her, enclosing her, enveloping her' (*AIn*, 5).

Anne's attachment to her gable room at Green Gables is an affection which Montgomery repeats for characters in other stories. Steffler (2010:153) notes that 'Anne [becomes] loyal to Avonlea, asserting allegiance and identity in the formation of and attachment to home'.

As the novel progresses, Marilla is shown as having a love for her house similar to Anne's, and Montgomery anthropomorphises Green Gables to make it seem as though it can respond

to emotions: 'Her [Marilla's] eyes dwelt affectionately on Green Gables, peering through its network of trees and reflecting the sunlight back from its windows in several coruscations of glory' (*AGG*, 179). Without Marilla's stern kindness the house would not have become Anne's refuge. Anne acknowledges this and repays Marilla's kindness when she later agrees to stay with Marilla so that she does not have to leave her home when Matthew dies. Eventually Mrs Rachel Lynde takes Anne's place and comes to stay with Marilla so that Anne can leave for college, but throughout the Anne books it is made clear that Green Gables has been Anne's salvation in life just as she is Green Gables' salvation.

Agan and Luchsinger (1965:3) claim that 'not only does man react specifically to the influence of the house in which he lives, but the house in turn "reacts" in a similar manner to its inhabitants'. Green Gables is a safe haven and a nurturing space for Anne, facilitating her development into a strong, articulate, well-educated young woman, and in turn, Anne the imaginative child and compassionate woman, returns the kindness by bringing life to the old house and love to Marilla and Matthew's commonplace lives. Johnston (2005:21) describes this change at Green Gables:

> Montgomery's houses are always figuratively significant. […] Marilla has kept life and the messiness of flowers outside, but from the moment on that first morning when Anne pushes up the window – which 'went up stiffly and creakily, as if it hadn't been opened for a long time' (p.31) – Anne begins to break down any barrier between outside and inside. Anne at her window is Anne in the security of home; in the famous example at the end of the first book there is a looking outwards that constitutes a deep looking inwards, and a deep peace related to a decision about home.

When Katherine Brooke, Anne's schoolteacher friend in *Anne of Windy Willows* (1936) visits Green Gables with her, Montgomery makes much of the friendliness and cosiness of Green Gables. The house's 'lighted windows…beckon' to them, while the trees around the house seem 'to welcome [Anne] back' (*AWW*, 130). When the house's door opens, Marilla's kitchen smells delectable and there are 'hugs and exclamations and laughter' (*AWW*, 130-131). Katherine and Anne are spoiled and surrounded with creature comforts by Marilla and Mrs Rachel Lynde, who has 'set her cherished parlour lamp on the supper table', which cast 'a warm, rosy, becoming light […] over everything!' (*AWW*, 131). At this point in the 'Anne' books, the motherliness of both Marilla and Mrs Lynde seem to have become intertwined with the house, Green Gables as Anne and Katherine stand quietly, 'looking at the brooding, motherly old house seen dimly through its veil of tress. How beautiful Green Gables was in a winter night!' (*AWW*, 132).

At the time of writing *Anne of Green Gables* and *Anne of Avonlea*, Montgomery was still living with her grandmother on a farm in a rural area of Prince Edward Island. This was the farm on which Montgomery had grown up, but she was frustrated. Waterston (2008:24) explains that

> … [o]ne source of this depression was frustration at her grandmother's refusal to allow any changes in the old home. Working on her new novel, while waiting for the arrival of the published copy of *Anne of Green Gables*, Montgomery fumed, "There are six unused rooms in the house and there is no good reason why I should not have one fitted up and warmed as a library – no reason except the all potent one that grandmother would not hear of such a plan for a moment. (January 12, 1908).

Another reason for Montgomery's frustration was that she would have to leave her childhood home at Cavendish as soon as her elderly grandmother died, as the house would belong to her cousin then. Montgomery's thoughts about her home seem to intersect at certain points with her protagonist's.[6] Ross (1994:25) affirms that 'Montgomery has made sure that her fictional character could stay on "at dear Green Gables" at a time when she herself was increasingly worried about losing the house in Cavendish', and thus confirms MacLulich's (1983:490) contention that the novel idealizes Montgomery's own situation at the time. Additionally, Montgomery stayed with her grandmother out of a sense of duty, just as Anne elects to stay with Marilla at Green Gables at the end of the novel: 'Anne's concern over her domestic duty reflects the circumstances that Virginia Woolf would later enumerate in *A Room of One's Own*' (Waterston, 2008:26), and Montgomery's longing for a warm room of her own to write in is also echoed by Virginia Woolf in *A Room of One's Own* (1929).[7]

In spite of her deep love for Green Gables, in *Anne of Avonlea* (1909), Anne's life is depicted as becoming increasingly prosaic as she does her work as a schoolteacher and helps Marilla with the housekeeping and the raising of the adopted twins, Davy and Dora. Into this humdrum life Montgomery weaves the romantic story of Miss Lavendar with a sad, romantic past and her little stone house, Echo Lodge, as an antidote.[8] Echo Lodge is a last

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[6] This is also significant in the Pat novels, *Pat of Silver Bush* and *Mistress Pat*. These novels seem to hint at Montgomery's own longing for homes in her past, and Silver Bush, the main house in these texts, is possibly a house that symbolises everything that Montgomery herself loved in a house.

[7] Mary Rubio focuses on this idea in her article 'Textual/sexual space in *The Blue Castle*: Valancy Stirling's "room of her own"', and Gabriella Åhmansson also mentions this idea in *A Life and Its Mirrors: A Feminist Reading of L.M. Montgomery's Fiction* (1991).

[8] In *Anne of Windy Willows*, Anne adores another 'old stone house' – the summer home of the Nelson family. Anne visits it when she acts as bridesmaid to one of the Nelson daughters one summer. This stone house is described as a 'big rambling house […] built among spruces on a long point, with the bay on both sides and stretch of golden-breasted dunes beyond that knew all there was to be known about winds […]. An old stone

bulwark of romance in Anne's increasingly sensible life. Frivolity and creature comforts (often in the form of food) are the order of the day there. Waterston (2008:27) emphasises that Miss Lavendar is one of Anne's 'kindred spirits' – someone who also uses her imagination to brighten up the disappointments and dullness of everyday life. Miss Lavendar of Echo Lodge 'echoes' Anne's own opinions, and the friendship between them, facilitated by Miss Lavendar's 'little stone house' provides Anne's need for an outlet for her romantic imagination. Anne and Diana discover Miss Lavendar's house accidentally when they take a wrong turn. What Diana merely describes merely as 'a romantic spot', Anne calls 'the sweetest, prettiest little place I ever saw or imagined. [...] It looks like a bit out of a story book or a dream' and later refers to as 'an enchanted palace' (*AA*, 169). Echo Lodge is also a place where Anne's own penchant for dreams, romance and imagination is affirmed and even exulted in. Montgomery uses the house as a way to keep fairy tale and imagination a part of Anne's life:

> The house was a low-eaved structure built of undressed blocks of red Island sandstone, with a little peaked roof out of which peered two dormer windows, with quaint wooden hoods over them, and two great chimneys. The whole house was covered with a luxuriant growth of ivy, finding easy foothold on the rough stonework and turned by autumn frosts to most beautiful bronze and wine-red tints. Before the house was an oblong garden into which the lane gate where the girls were standing opened. (*AA*, 169)

The description of the house with its 'little peaked roof' and 'luxuriant growth of ivy' all hint at a fairy tale setting similar to that of Rapunzel. This impression is further enhanced by Montgomery's description of Miss Lavendar's household help, a fourteen-year-old girl called Charlotta who 'looked like a messenger from pixy-land' (*AA*, 170), as well as the picture painted of the house inside:

> The interior of this wonderful little house was quite as interesting as its exterior. The room had a low ceiling and two square, small-paned windows, curtained with muslin frills. All the furnishings were old-fashioned, but so well and daintily kept that the effect was delicious [...] The spare room, [was] an apartment as white as its door, lighted by the ivy-hung dormer window and looking, Anne said, like the place where happy dreams grew. (*AA*, 170, 172)

This romantic setting and Miss Lavendar's flights of the imagination satisfy Anne's longing for beauty and excitement – on the day that Anne and Diana meet Miss Lavendar, she is pretending to be expecting company to tea, and has prepared a tea table with real food and dressed up in honour of the occasion, thus acting upon her day-dreams. Anne becomes firm

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house always looks reposeful and dignified. It fears not what rain or wind or changing fashion can do' (*AWW*, 94). As with the other houses Anne has loved, she 'like[s] it the moment she saw it' (*AWW*, 94)

friends with Miss Lavendar, and even has a hand in helping Miss Lavendar reunite with the lost love of her youth, now a middle-aged widower with a little son, Paul, who, like Anne and Miss Lavendar, is also a dreamer and later becomes a poet.

Anne of Avonlea's final paragraph is a description of the same stone house after Miss Lavendar, now Mrs. Irving, has married:

> Behind them in the garden the little stone house brooded among the shadows. It was lonely but not forsaken. It had not yet done with the dreams and laughter and the joy of life; there were to be future summers for the little stone house; meanwhile, it could wait. And over the river in purple durance the echoes bided their time. (*AA*, 252)

In this novel, Echo Lodge symbolises love and romance lying dormant both in Anne's life, and in Miss Lavendar's. Just before this paragraph, Anna has a brief encounter with Gilbert Blythe, and although this marriage is not to take place until after the next novel, Montgomery uses the house with the implication of Miss Lavendar's extended love story to foreshadow Anne's current loneliness and eventual future happiness with Gilbert Blythe.

In each of the books about Anne, Montgomery introduces a special house with unique signification for the particular 'epoch' in Anne's life. Ross (1994:26) confirms this, writing that 'in almost every book, there is one house in which the heroine feels magically at home'. In *Anne of the Island* (1915), this house is Patty's Place, which Anne and her friends rent to live in together while they study at Redmond College. One of Anne's friends, Stella, introduces them to her Aunt Jamesina, who comes to help the girls keep house, and is 'the sweetest aunt that ever lived, in spite of her name' (*AIs*, 67).

Anne is first introduced to Patty's Place by her friend and later housemate, Philippa Gordon. Philippa calls it 'a perfectly killing little place…It *did* grow, it wasn't built. […] [T]his little spot is a dream' (*AIs*, 48). Patty's Place is one of Montgomery's little white houses and another of Anne's houses to dream in:

> …a little white frame house with groups of pines on either side of it, stretching their arms protectingly over its low roof. It was covered with red and gold vines, through which its green shuttered windows peeped. Before it was a tiny garden, surrounded by a low stone wall…the garden was still very sweet with dear, old-fashioned, unworldly flowers and shrubs—sweet may, southern-wood, lemon verbena, alyssum, petunias, marigold and chrysanthemums. A tiny brick walk, in herring-bone pattern, led from the gate to the front porch. The whole place might have been transplanted from some remote country village; yet there was something about it that made its nearest neighbour, the big lawn-encircled palace of a tobacco king, look exceedingly crude by contrast […] There [was] and apple orchard behind the house in place of a back yard. (*AIs*, 48, 49)

The aesthetic sense embodied by this house is one that readers immediately associate with Anne. It is painted white with green shutters, reminding us of Green Gables. Anne adores trees. The garden surrounding Patty's Place, the vines that cover it and the apple orchard behind it further cement the house's link with nature. The pines' arms stretched 'protectingly over… [Patty's Place's]…low roof' confirm that the little house is a safe place. Anne's reaction to the house is that it is '"the dearest place I ever saw…It gives me one of my old, delightful, funny aches…It's dearer and quainter than even Miss Lavendar's stone house"' (*AIs*, 48). Like Emily's father house and Lantern Hill, it has an organic quality: it *did* grow.

A focal point of Patty's Place is the large living room. Anne's first glimpse of this room reveals 'a cheery little fire' which is flanked by two 'large white china dog[s], with round green spots all over…green nose[s] and green ears…they seemed like the twin guardian deities of Patty's Place' (*AIs*, 71). On her honeymoon in Scotland in 1911, Montgomery purchased the originals of these two dogs and they always had pride of place in her house. They seemed to embody to her a sense of old-world stability, good breeding and culture which she wanted to add to her own home (Rubio, 2008:161-162). When Anne marries Gilbert, Montgomery has the two ladies of Patty's Place send the china dogs to Anne as a wedding gift. Waterston (2008:76-77) explains:

> Like most women of her time and class, Montgomery had a sense of her home being both a private haven and also a public demonstration of her personality. In Montgomery's case, the house she now occupied in Leaskdale, Ontario, certainly made manifest her inner life. There was no fireplace or hearthside in the manse, so Gog and Magog, the large china dogs she had purchased (in duplicate) on her honeymoon had to be placed on either side of her bookcase.

The living room in Patty's Place certainly 'manifests' Anne's 'inner life'. In this novel, Anne is a single young woman, but she allows into her inner circle a few woman friends who supply her emotional needs, much as Montgomery's cousin and cherished friend, Frederica Campbell, was for Montgomery an emotional support and dear companion. The living room at Patty's Place, that 'dear place', is described in great detail:

> Another door opened out of it directly into the pine grove and the robins came boldly up on the very step. The floor was spotted with round, braided mats, such as Marilla made at Green Gables, but which were considered out of date everywhere else, even in Avonlea. […] A big, polished grandfather's clock ticked loudly and solemnly in a corner. There were delightful little cupboards over the mantelpiece, behind whose glass doors gleamed quaint bits of china. The walls were hung with old prints and silhouettes.

> In one corner the stairs went up, and at the first low turn was a long window with an inviting seat. (*AIs*, 71)

As with the exterior, the interior of Patty's Place echoes Green Gables both in the 'round, braided mats' like Marilla's and the old-fashioned domesticity to which readers of *Anne of Green Gables* and *Anne of Avonlea* had become accustomed. The ticking of the grandfather clock as well as the inferred clinking of the 'quaint bits of china' provide the imaginative reader with a sensory experience of sound as well as sight. The 'polished' clock and the 'gleaming' china suggest that the two owners of Patty's Place are meticulous housekeepers. The 'old prints and silhouettes' on the walls hint at an interest in art and the beautiful. The 'inviting seat' on the staircase's landing is an image of the welcoming atmosphere which the entire house projects.

Winton (2013:45) claims that 'functional and symbolic objects located within [the interior of a house] collaborate with the spatial construct of the interior and together work to define the space and its inhabitants'. The objects described in Patty's Place signify, first, the owner of Patty's Place, and then Anne's penchant for beauty in the home and its comforts. The rest of the Patty's Place's interior is described as follows:

> Besides the big living-room, there was a kitchen and a small bedroom downstairs. Upstairs were three rooms, one large and two small. Anne took an especial fancy to one of the small ones, looking out into the big pines, and hoped it would be hers. It was papered in pale blue and had a little, old-timey toilet table with sconces for candles. There was a diamond-paned window with a window seat under the blue muslin frills that would be a satisfying spot for studying or *dreaming*. (*AIs*, 74-75; my emphasis)

The 'diamond-shaped window' in Anne's pale blue room, which looks out over the pines, indicates Anne's romantic, imaginative view of life, while the window seat, with its 'satisfying spot for studying or dreaming' facilitates her intellectual growth as well as her vision for her future. Anne's previous room at Green Gables was green, pink, and white. This room is pale blue and presumably white, if one takes into consideration the candles. The 'little, old-timey toilet table' as well as the mention of 'blue muslin frills' allude to Anne's own dainty beauty and femininity. Her room in Patty's Place is a representation of Anne's inner self, and the house embodies and delivers the satisfaction of both Anne's and her friends' emotional and physical needs. The room of her own she acquires here still offers her a 'nest', a refuge, but is a space she occupies while growing away from Green Gables, which changes while she is away, culminating in the loss of the Snow Queen, which falls in a storm near the end of the novel.

Throughout *Anne of the Island*, Anne and her friends, along with Aunt Jamesina¸ gather in the living room of Patty's Place to discuss matters that are important to them, to reminisce about significant social gatherings, to meet would-be lovers and their relatives, or to prepare to go out to socialise. Epperly (2007:101) describes how 'Montgomery's houses have personalities all their own, and they reflect and sometimes shape the personalities within them. Most often, Montgomery uses house as healing places and sites of love'.

For some of the girls living in Patty's Place, it is a site of love in the sense that they dream of and discuss their lovers and possible husbands. In the garden of Patty's Place, Anne receives her first proposal from Gilbert. Anne is living in Patty's Place during Roy Gardner's courtship of her. Philippa Gordon, one of Anne's friends and housemates, also lives in Patty's Place during her courtship.

Patty's Place shows the contrast between being out in the world to fend for yourself, and having a 'band of sisters', or 'four laughing, chattering girls' (*AIs*, 204-205) gathered together in a cosy home who support each other. Stella, one of Anne's friends who lives in Patty's Place, puts this into words by contrasting the 'jolly little nest' they have together at the little house with 'the cruel world of boarding houses' (*AIs*, 172). Frequently, Anne is pictured in the living-room of Patty's Place, 'curled up on the hearth rug' (*AIs*, 136), 'looking from the window' and describing the enjoyments of 'a cosy fire' with 'two impeccable china dogs' as 'domestic joys' (*AIs*, 162). Waterston (2008:72) emphasizes how,

> …in the warm domesticity of this "homiest spot," four young women sit by the fireside with their comfortable chaperone, three purring cats, two china dogs, and a bowl of chrysanthemums that shine "through the golden gloom like creamy moons." The sounds and the brush strokes of colour and shape offer perfect satisfaction. Four college friends can make a comfortable nest for themselves.

The first time that all the inhabitants of Patty's Place are described as being 'assembled at twilight in the big living-room', Philippa Gordon exclaims: '"It's the homiest spot I ever saw – it's homier than home"' (*AIs*, 117). Mallet (2004:31) emphasises that we

> …make our homes. Not necessarily by constructing them, although some people do that. We build the intimate shell of our lives by the organization and furnishing of the space in which we live. How we function as persons is linked to how we make ourselves at home.

The work of 'organizing and furnishing' the 'intimate shell of our lives' – the dwelling – is repeatedly accentuated by Montgomery (*AIs*, 119) as she focuses on the domesticity of Patty's Place:

> How those girls enjoyed putting their nest in order! As Phil said, it was almost as good as getting married. You had the fun of homemaking without the bother of a husband. All brought something with them to adorn or make comfortable the little house…Pris and Phil and Stella had knick-knacks and pictures galore…Diana had given Anne a pine needle cushion…Marilla had sent a big box of preserves, and darkly hinted at a hamper for Thanksgiving, and Mrs. Lynde gave Anne a patchwork quilt and loaned her five more.

The 'fun of homemaking' which Anne and her friends indulge in is indication to the reader of how Anne and her friends 'function as persons' in this novel (Mallett, 2004:31). Patty's Place grounds Anne in the worship of home, of place, and of belonging, when she is moving gradually away from Green Gables as she matures. At the same time, the gifts from home are a tangible reminder of the continued love of family and friends, and the potential for returning 'home' remains as a safety net, while Anne and her friends stretch their wings in the safety of friendship and under the nominal protection of a kindly chaperone.

This house Anne lives in during her years at Redmond College is significant and harks back to her roots at Green Gables. It is as though the warmth and simplicity, as well as the 'old-fashionedness' of the house reminds her of her true self when she is about to make the mistake of accepting Roy Gardener, a wealthy and glamourous suitor, who is nevertheless incompatible with her inner life.

In *Anne of the Island*, Montgomery venerates the warmth, kindness and support found in friendship and companionship between women. Patty's Place becomes such an important part of Anne's life that she misses it when visiting Green Gables for Christmas:

> Anne, despite her love of and loyalty to Green Gables, could not help thinking longingly of Patty's Place, its cosy open fire, Aunt Jamesina's mirthful eyes, the three cats, the merry chatter of the girls, the pleasantness of Friday evenings when college friends dropped in to talk of grace and gay. Anne was lonely. (*AIs*, 131)

Anne has outgrown Green Gables to a certain extent and needs things that a secluded life at Green Gables cannot supply, such as the friendship and support of other women in her own stage of life. This is what Patty's Place facilitates and symbolises in *Anne of the Island.* In Patty's Place, a house inhabited entirely by single women, men are very much on the periphery, encroaching only on this female world as potential suitors or possibly in the form

of dreams of the future. This female household provides Anne with comradery and the shared wisdom of friends as she prepares herself for her future.

Windy Willows, the house of the title in *Anne of Windy Willows* (1936), pictures another all-female household.[9] It is also an old-fashioned kind of a home with its two prim widows and their eccentric housekeeper, Rebecca Dew. Waterston (2008:193) explains that when Montgomery started this novel, she 'was leaving Norval, leaving the last of the church-owned manses, which had never been her own'. Montgomery chose to move Anne away from Avonlea during this time, and place her in an entirely new setting with scope for new characters and plots. Montgomery herself had just moved to an entirely new setting – a new house she called 'Journey's End' in Toronto. Twigger-Ross and Uzzell (1996:217) claim that there is 'evidence for the establishment and use of place to create, symbolize and establish new selves'. By moving Anne to a new place, Montgomery is using the opportunity to expand and develop some aspects of Anne's story. Montgomery started writing *Anne of Windy Willows* in 1935, and the novel is full of nostalgia for a lost world which had been changed irrevocably by World War I and the Great Depression. However, more than homesickness for a lost world and time, *Anne of Windy Willows* also refers back to *Anne of Green Gables* by including little sparks of fantasy and romance amidst the various comic descriptions of the widows, Rebecca Dew, and Anne's encounters with the people in the town of Summerside.

When Anne first describes Windy Willows in a letter to her fiancé, Gilbert, she says that it 'has something of the flavour of Green Gables about it' (*AWW*, 10). *Anne of Windy Willows* was written close to the end of Montgomery's life. In this book she tried to regain access to the world of Anne, and it seems likely that this allusion to Green Gables early in the novel helps to link these two books, written more than three decades apart. Chronologically, *Anne of Windy Willows* fills the three-year gap between *Anne of the Island* (1915), in which Anne attends college and eventually becomes engaged to marry Gilbert Blythe, and *Anne's House of Dreams* (1917), in which Anne marries Gilbert and goes to live in Four Winds. During this time, she works as the principal of a school in Summerside on Prince Edward Island. Anne's bedroom in this novel is set in a small tower and may allude to the idea that, like Rapunzel or the Sleeping Beauty, she will soon be rescued by her prince. Waterston

[9] Outside of Canada and the United States, *Anne of Windy Poplars* was published as *Anne of Windy Willows* and the name of the house changed accordingly. As a reader in South Africa, I had become acquainted with the novel as *Anne of Windy Willows*, and have therefore decided to use that title in this study.

(2008:191) emphasizes that, in this novel, 'Montgomery's magic touch describing houses, gardens and rooms is revived' and indicates that '"Windy Poplars" presents a typical Prince Edward Island picture'. The house, Windy Willows, extends the idea of another dream setting for a romantic imagination with its quaint furniture, which had been collected by one of the widows' husbands, a sea captain, in faraway lands.[10] Anne also remarks that she 'never saw a house with so many mysterious cupboards' (*AWW*, 22), which further develops the idea of Windy Willows as a fascinating and unusual place.[11]

One of the characters in this novel is the house itself, Windy Willows, where Anne lives as a boarder during the three years. As is usual for most of Montgomery's literary houses, the house is white, but the most significant aspect of it is what Anne calls its 'delightful personality' which she 'fell in love with […] at once' (*AWW*, 10). Anne describes the house as 'a white frame house—very white—with green shutters—very green—with a 'tower' in the corner and a dormer window on either side, a low stone wall dividing it from the street, with willows growing at intervals along it, and a big garden at the back' (*AWW*, 10). Anne also states that the house has charm and impresses her 'at first sight for some reason [she] can hardly define' (*AWW*, 10).

Anne, in her letter to Gilbert, describes the interior of the house, mainly the parlour and her bedroom. The parlour and its furnishing communicate the personalities and situations of the people who inhabit it:

> It was a rather nice little room, a bit cluttered up with antimacassars, but with a quiet, friendly atmosphere about it that I liked. Every bit of furniture had its own particular place which it had occupied for years. How that furniture shone! No bought polish ever produced that mirror-like gloss. I knew it was Rebecca Dew's [the housekeeper] elbow-grease. There was a full-rigged ship in a bottle on the mantelpiece. (*AWW*, 12-13)

The 'nice little room, a bit cluttered up with antimacassars, but with a quiet, friendly atmosphere' echoes the personality of Aunt Chatty ('short and thin and grey and a little wistful'), one of the widows who live in the house (*AWW*, 12-13). The gleaming furniture and Anne's comment about it evidently reveal one of Rebecca Dew's personality traits – industriousness, while Aunt Kate, the other widow living in Windy Willows, in some ways

[10] The sea captains in *Anne of Windy Willows* and *Anne's House of Dreams* and the lighthouse near the House of Dreams hints at Prince Edward Island's historical connection to the sea as one of Canada's Maritime Provinces.

[11] Noomé calls Montgomery's description of little cupboards in her novels a 'fascination with cupboards as miniature places of possibility', noting that such little cupboards are also featured in *Jane of Lantern Hill* and *Emily of New Moon*, where Emily has quaint little cupboards above the mantelpiece in her tower bedroom (Noomé, 2017: pers. comm.).

resembles the full-rigged ship in the bottle. She is 'tall and thin and grey and a little austere' and 'does not waste words' (*AWW*, 13). Later in the novel, Anne again equates the actual house of Windy Willows with its inmates. She writes to Gilbert:

> I'm so glad I like Windy Willows. It would be dreadful to live in a place I didn't like, that didn't seem friendly to me, that didn't say, "I'm glad you're back." Windy Willows does. It's a bit old-fashioned and prim, but it likes me. (*AWW*, 142)

In this passage, it can be inferred that the friendliness, old-fashioned ideas and primness can all be applied to the inmates of the house, from whence the house receives its character. Anne implies in a fanciful way that she and the people of Windy Willow, 'old-fashioned and prim' as they are, are on very good terms. This applies especially to Rebecca Dew, the housekeeper, who after Anne's arrival, insists on making her feel at home by finding for her 'a comfortable old wing chair of faded brocade that just fits [Anne's] kinks' (*AWW*, 22). Similarly, in the winter Rebecca Dew puts up in Anne's room 'a small, chubby, oblong wood-stove' which 'blooms rosy red and throws a wonderful heat' and 'always has the fire lit [...] in it' when Anne comes home from her work as a school principal (*AWW*, 37). This stove, which warms her room and upon which she puts her feet, shows how Anne warms herself at Rebecca Dew's kind good nature, admiration and physical care.

The two widows' as well as Rebecca Dew's love and kindness are also evident in other tangible comforts that are depicted in Anne's bedroom. There is 'a dear little corner cupboard with shelves trimmed with white scalloped paper' (similar to Jane's dear little cupboards at Lantern Hill), a window seat with a cushion on it that looks 'like a fat blue doughnut', a floor 'covered with round braided rugs', a big bed with 'a canopy top and a "wild-goose" quilt', 'a sweet washstand with…a basin and a jug of robin's egg blue', and 'a little brass-handled drawer full of towels' (*AWW*, 14). Epperly (1992:141) states:

> Even though the pace and tone in these later Anne books differ from those in the original series, we do find the familiar preoccupation with the individual's search for and celebration of (a much romanticized) home. Anne looks for a home away from home in Summerside and finds the cheery tower room and Rebecca Dew; frequent reminders of Green Gables assure us that its hearth can furnish many others.

The detailed description of Anne's bedroom discloses significant details about Anne state of mind, as well as foreshadows the themes of the novel. The description of the room is resplendent with details that hint at fairy tale romance and seems to set Anne as a character in a story or poem. She writes to Gilbert:

> I knew I would love the room; the very name "tower room" thrilled me. I felt as if we were living in that old song we used to sing in Avonlea school about the maiden who "dwelt in a high tower beside a grey sea." It proved to be the dearest place. (*AWW*, 14)

There are two sets of steps mentioned in the description of the room. The first is a set of steps through which one enters the room, 'a little flight of corner steps leading up from the stair landing'. The second set of steps are used to climb into bed, which Anne describes as being '"so high that I have to climb into it by a funny little moveable set of steps which in the daytime are stowed away under it"' (*AWW*, 14). This ascension seems to refer to the way that Anne ascends to a higher, dream world through her imagination. This impression is further strengthened by the following passage:

> The whole place was engoldened by the light that came through the corn-coloured curtains, and there was the rarest tapestry on the whitewashed walls where the shadow patterns of the willows outside fell – living tapestry, always changing and quivering. Somehow it seemed such a *happy* room. (*AWW*, 14)

The windows in Anne's room are again significant, and they seem to be connected with her imaginative vision. This motif is repeated in other Anne novels, and I again discuss this in the section about *Anne's House of Dreams.* There are three windows in the room, and the one is 'in the corner formed by the tower…with casements opening outward' (*AWW*, 14). The mention of casements could remind the reader of Keats's 'Charm'd magic casements, opening on the foam/Of perilous seas, in faery lands forlorn'. This line from 'Ode to a Nightingale' recurs in Montgomery's work.

From Anne's bedroom, she can look out upon the town of Summerside, 'from the left window in the tower' (*AWW*, 16). This may imply that, intellectually, Anne has a unique vantage point from which she can view the people of the town, whose stories (past, present and future) are told in the narrative, while the other views from her window are a view of 'the old graveyard, which is surrounded by a row of dark fir-trees and reached by a winding, dike bordered lane' (*AWW*, 15), which is likewise connected, in the path of life, with the past (the dead), the present (the living) and the future (those who will die and those who will survive them). This view foreshadows some of the darker characters and their stories which Anne encounters in *Anne of Windy Willows*, such as Katherine Brooke and Miss Minerva Tomgallon.

The view from Anne's west window allows her to 'see all over the harbour to distant, misty shores […] and the ships outward bound "for ports unknown"—fascinating phrase' (*AWW*,

15). To Anne, this view symbolises her 'scope for imagination' and Montgomery uses this description to firmly connect this older Anne with the younger version of her in *Anne of Green Gables*, *Anne of Avonlea*, and *Anne of the Island*. The view from this window also foreshadows events in the novel, specifically, Anne's friendship with 'Little Elizabeth' who lives next door and has a dream world of her own, and whose father Anne effectually summons from across the sea in Boston to come and fetch Little Elizabeth away from her cold and harsh Grandmother. This motif is also repeated by Montgomery in *Jane of Lantern Hill*, in which Jane, the protagonist's estranged father brings her to Prince Edward Island from Toronto where she lives with an emotionally abusive grandmother in a large, cold house. It is telling that these novels were written and published only two years apart.

After a two month summer vacation at Green Gables, Anne admits to Gilbert that 'there has been a good deal of pleasure in coming back to Windy Willows—to my own private tower and my own special chair and my own lofty bed' (*AWW*, 110). In this novel, Montgomery has expanded Anne's personality (and even her career) to include and love more than only Green Gables and her gable room there. Anne's affection for Windy Willows and her room there is what Moore (2000:210) calls an 'affective bond' with a place that has 'in part to do with satisfaction, but also to do with evaluation, and more identity related aspects as well as objective criteria such as length of stay, involvement in the local area, social networks etc.'. Anne's attachment to the house and the room signal to the reader that her identity has expanded to include a conception of herself as a resident of Summerside and that she feels a connection with the people as well as the place. Anne's love for the tower-room in Windy Willows is not without a pragmatic love for the creature comforts she enjoys there. She thinks about 'how lovely it was to wake up in the night and hear the first snowstorm of the winter round your tower, and then snuggle down in your blankets and drift into dreamland again' (*AWW*, 53).

At the end of the novel, when Anne is about to leave Windy Willows forever, she writes to Gilbert about her love for the room: 'I've loved it here—loved my cool morning hours at my window, loved my bed into which I have veritably climbed every night, loved my blue doughnut cushion, loved all the winds that blew' (*AWW*, 221).

In a journal entry in which she mentions with sorrow her imminent departure from her old home in Cavendish, Montgomery mourns that 'It is terrible to love things—and people—as I do!' (*SJ*, *Vol. 1*, 351). She also recounts her affection for the home. She writes: 'It is at

such moments that I realize how deeply rooted and strong is my love for this old place' (*SJ, Vol. 1*, 351). Similar to Anne in this instance, Montgomery has the expectation of marriage and a home of her own to temper the loss. Evidently her own attachment to places and dislike of leaving those to which she had become attached is reflected in depictions of Anne's emotions. In this novel, Anne's attachment to her bedroom in the tower illustrates that

> …[s]ignificant places reflect people's evolving identity; provide opportunities for privacy, introspection and reflection; serve as transitional markers as well as bridges to the past; and reflect the salience of safety, threat and belonging which are fundamentally connected to socially constructed identities. (Manzo, 2005:74)

The tower room at Windy Willows and the house itself work as 'transitional markers as well as bridges to the past' for Anne, since her time at Windy Willows fills in the gap between Anne's years at college and her marriage to Gilbert Blythe, described in *Anne's House of Dreams*. The warmth, comfort, and security implied in the descriptions of Anne's room all 'reflect the salience of safety' and of 'belonging' to Anne, while also 'providing opportunities for privacy, introspection and reflection'. Montgomery's creation of this house and this room facilitate an expanded version of Anne as a professional, mature adult woman, but one who has not left behind her imaginative self and capacity to dream.

The House of Dreams in *Anne's House of Dreams* (1917) is the culmination of all the dream houses in the Anne books. Interestingly, this is the only house which Anne inhabits that does not have a name. This might be attributable to the fact that this house is supposed to be the culmination of every dream of home which Anne has ever cherished. So because it is to Anne the quintessence of home and all that it means, it needs no other designation than that it is the House of Dreams.

Three Prince Edward Island houses feature strongly in *Anne's House of Dreams* (1917). The first of these is the 'House of Dreams' belonging to the newlywed Anne and her husband Gilbert. Two other central houses are Miss Cornelia's neat but garishly painted green house (a very un-dreamy house), and Leslie Moore's old grey farmhouse. Leslie's house is not a house of dreams, but rather a house of nightmares. Her dream is to escape from the house which imprisons her. The nearby lighthouse, occupied by Captain Jim, is another inhabited space that casts, quite literally, a particular light on its environment and the story. The three different houses in this novel, Anne's cosy cottage, Miss Cornelia's startlingly green farmhouse, and Leslie's house hidden among weeping willows, all contribute to the

atmosphere of the novel and Montgomery's portrayal of the characters. Åhmansson (1991:149) notes:

> The text features three important houses. All three houses are or have been owned by women, an unusual state of affairs. Just as in some of the short stories mentioned earlier, these houses reflect their respective owners' personality, or to be more specific, are extended metaphors of the three women living in each house.

The different habitations aside from Anne's home create a contrast to the idyllic house of dreams, throwing it into relief. I focus on the House of Dreams as pivotal to the story, but briefly discuss some of the other houses which appear on the periphery of the narrative.

Anne's House of Dreams follows Anne Shirley as she marries Gilbert Blythe and moves to Four Winds, where she meets new neighbours and makes new friends, particularly Leslie Moore, Miss Cornelia, Captain Jim, who keeps the nearby lighthouse, and Susan, Anne's live-in household help. In this novel, the houses in which different characters live form a part of the background and are used as a descriptive mechanism to shape the narrative.

In discussing the different houses that Anne lives in over the course of the Anne books, Epperly (1992:211) states that 'something about the very structure of each house reflects an important aspect of Anne's life and changes [...]. The physical house reifies [her] perception of beauty, honour of tradition, and sense of self'. The house of the novel's title, the House of Dreams, is the first home she lives in as a married woman. This house functions in narrative as an emblem of love fulfilled, and in so doing, facilitates another love story – the one between Anne's friend Leslie Moore and Owen Ford.

Before Anne gets married, she tells her dearest friend Diana: '"I've been building dream-houses all my life, and now one of them is going to come true"' (*AWW*, 220). At the beginning of the novel Anne describes her as yet unknown house to Diana as '"a little house o' dreams all furnished in my imagination—a tiny, delightful castle in Spain"' (*AHD*, 10). This statement signals the romantic implications of this house. Montgomery has finally brought the popular and idealistic protagonist of three previously written novels to the point of matrimony, and the description of her marriage, life as a newlywed, and her first home should be appropriately romantic. When Gilbert describes the house to Anne, he mentions that there is 'some romantic story connected with its building' (*AHD*, 16). This 'romantic story' – later recounted by Captain Jim – further embeds this novel in the realms of sentimental romance, and the stories about previous inhabitants of the little house exert a

strong influence over Anne's imagination. These stories imbue the atmosphere of the house with a certain sense of nostalgia, drama and history.

Gilbert first describes the house to Anne as 'a little white house on the harbour shore'. He adds that 'the situation is beautiful', it 'looks to the sunset', and is 'well built', and 'old-fashioned' (*AHD*, 15-16). He describes the garden as 'very delightful', with 'a big grove of fir-trees', 'a ring of white birches', 'a little gate hung between two firs' with boughs that arch overhead, and 'a brook…that cuts across one corner of the garden' (*AHD*, 16-17). The words 'little' and 'white' are repeated in these descriptions, and they imply intimacy, a sense of cosiness, and purity as well as simplicity. The inclusion of words such as 'beautiful', 'sunset' and 'delightful' as well as 'grove' and 'ring' create a sense of romance, while the descriptor 'well built' denotes stability, and the adjective 'old-fashioned' roots the house in the past, adding a sense of history and continuity. The first time that Anne sees her new home, Montgomery uses the image of 'a big, creamy sea-shell stranded on the harbour shore' to describe Anne's first impression of it (*AHD*, 29).[12] This image has a mythological connotation, and the shell seems to set a tone of romantic love. The idea of a shell also connotes safety and protection which this dream house provides for its inhabitants and visitors. As I indicated in Chapter 1, Walter Benjamin (2002:220) describes a house as an enclosure representing safety, stating that '[i]n the most extreme instance, the dwelling becomes a shell'. The House of Dreams is indeed a safe place for love to dwell in various forms – romantic love between the young couple, maturing into a deeper relationship, and parental love for the two babies born in the House of Dreams, little Joyce and Jem. It also eventually provides Leslie Moore, whose life is one of suffering, with a safe refuge.

This house is clearly marked as a setting for romance, a theme thoroughly explored by Epperly in *The Fragrance of Sweet Grass: L.M. Montgomery's Heroines and the Pursuit of Romance*, in a chapter entitled 'This Enchanted Shore': *Anne's House of Dreams*. This is doubly true when the romance of Leslie and Owen Ford later transpires here as well. When Anne and Gilbert approach the house for the first time,

> …[t]he door of the little house opened, and a warm glow of firelight flickered out into the dusk. Gilbert lifted Anne from the buggy and led her into the garden, through the little gate between the ruddy-tipped firs, up the trim red path to the sandstone step. (*AHD*, 30)

[12] Montgomery had created a similar house to the House of Dreams in her short story, 'Her Father's Daughter', which was published in *Further Chronicles of Avonlea* (1920). In it, a little girl, entirely unbeknownst to herself, visits her estranged father in his 'queer little house close down to the sands, like a big shell tossed up by the waves' (*FCA*, 43).

The colour red pervades this description – 'firelight', 'ruddy' and 'red', which works with the word 'warm' in the first line to imply warmth and with that, the comforts of home. These colours mark a distinct change from the colours associated with Anne in the earlier novels such as *Anne of Green Gables* and *Anne of the Island*. In these novels Anne's rooms are characterised by pale blues, greens, and virginal white – colours linked to nature and her girlish youth. From the House of Dreams onward to Ingleside, the colours of Anne's dwellings become warmer, and are linked to light and fire. The word 'trim', which describes the 'red path' (an unpaved path with the typically red soil of Prince Edward Island), seems to imply a sense of orderliness as it leads up to the entrance to the house. The garden through which they walk as they enter the house, as well as the firwood behind it, introduces nature as an outward embellishment and an extension of the house. The firwood is described as 'forever green and staunch,' symbolising a certain stability and enduring sense of life and growth in the house behind which it stands as a guardian (*AHD*, 88).

Anne 'liked the appearance of her new home very much' (*AHD*, 30). The primary reason given for Anne's liking of her new home is that it 'seemed to have the atmosphere of Green Gables and the flavour of her old traditions' (*AHD*, 30). This reason links Anne's emotions about her new home with her past and with what is familiar and important to her. Although here Anne is starting out a new chapter in her life, this signals to the reader that those qualities which have made Green Gables dear to her in previous novels are included again. Anne's old joys and values are re-echoed in this new house, perhaps in their most ideal forms. The implication is that ideals which, until now, Anne has often only dreamt of come to full fruition in this house, and in this novel. This reference to her life at Green Gables and its values and traditions resonate again later in the novel with reference to the domestic skills which Anne learnt under Marilla's tutelage: 'Anne had her little domain in the speckless order one would expect of anyone brought up by Marilla Cuthbert, and felt that she could gad shoreward with a clear conscience' (*AHD*, 65). Montgomery's journals make frequent reference to her own household tasks, both cleaning, cooking, tidying and decoration. Her attitude to these tasks is one of satisfaction and pride in her skills. A few pages on, Anne expresses her satisfaction with the house: '"Oh, Gilbert, this little house is all I've *dreamed* it. And I'm so glad that we are not the first who have kept bridal tryst here!"' (*AHD*, 44; my emphasis). It is indicated that all the ideals of home which Anne has cherished are fulfilled by this house, and that the remainder of the novel illustrates this.

According to Waterston (2008:76), as I already mentioned in the introductory chapter, Montgomery emphasises 'the connection between houses and dreams' and '[n]est-building', which for 'every female human' involves 'the choice and adorning of a particular home' in a way that is 'deeply individual'. Anne, along with most of Montgomery's other heroines, finds a special joy in 'nest-building', and the adornment of her rooms and homes is part of her creative expression.

Anne's sitting room, or living room, in the House of Dreams is the only room in the house that is described in much detail. Always included in any mention of it is fire and light:

> The firelight flickered from point to point, gleaming on the white and green coats of Gog and Magog, on the sleek, brown head of the beautiful setter basking on the rug, on the picture frames on the walls, on the vaseful of daffodils from the window garden, on Anne herself, sitting by her little table, with her sewing beside her and her hands clasped over her knee while she traced out pictures in the fire—Castles in Spain whose airy turrets pierced moonlit cloud and sunset bar—ships sailing from the Haven of Good Hopes straight to Four Winds Harbour with precious burthen. (*AHD*, 165)

Included in this descriptive passage are various details that show the kind of people who live in this room. Firelight is the first element that characterises this room, and it affects all the other elements as its flickering light falls on the Anne and the contents of the room. Gog and Magog the matching china dogs, have a special significance here. They are connected with Patty's Place, the house where Anne lived in her college days in *Anne of the Island*. These objects seem to represent their owner's identity as someone of good taste as well as a connection with the past. Here they feature in Anne's living room and are mentioned more than once. The 'beautiful setter basking on the rug' (another splash of red in the room), a Christmas present from Anne to Gilbert, is the third dog in the room.

The picture frames on the walls speak of aesthetic beauty and the owners of the home wanting to decorate their walls with images of that which is beautiful and valuable to them. The vaseful of daffodils is another aesthetic touch, and signifies that Anne and her husband have an affinity for natural beauty, as well as art. The daffodils themselves are symbols of spring, and by extension, of new life, in keeping with the mention of Anne's own 'precious burden', as she is pregnant with her first child at this point. The yellow and green daffodils also hark back to Anne's past, where her rooms where full of the colours of nature – green, yellow, pale blue and white. Grant (2005:244) discusses the house in the novel with references to Ruskin's ideas about the interior. These ideas seem illustrated by this passage depicting Anne's living room:

> Ruskin renders his interior sacred, its physical characteristics of roof and hearth elevated to ideal and symbolic function […] reducing the idea of home to its central metonymic components of "roof" and "hearth." His idealization, which enlists classical authority and the "Household Gods," simultaneously evokes a Biblical, and by implication, Christian, world view, where "roof and fire" are "types" of "a nobler shade and light".

The flickering firelight (the hearth) that falls on elements in Anne's living room (under her roof) highlights the decorative elements in the room and indicates their importance as signifiers, while Gog and Magog flanking the hearth, are the 'Household Gods' in this picture. This passage in the novel seems to illustrate Alain de Botton's (2008:124) assertion that '[o]ur domestic fittings, too, are memorials to identity'.

The romantic story connected with the house (which Gilbert mentions to Anne at the beginning of the novel) is told to them (*AHD*, 38-42) by Captain Jim, the keeper of the lighthouse at Four Winds point. Captain Jim knew the man (a schoolmaster) who built and furnished the house for his bride, as well as the newly-married couple, the Russells, who lived in the little house after the schoolmaster. After telling the romantic story to Anne and Gilbert on their first night in their own home, Captain Jim says to Anne: '"The walls of this house must be sorter *soaked* with laughing and good times. You're the third bride I've seen come here, Mistress Blythe—and the handsomest"' (*AHD*, 42; Montgomery's emphasis). Captain Jim's story and his concluding statement to Anne set the tone of the novel and the atmosphere of the little house as one of love triumphant, as well as of complete happiness. The previous inhabitants of the house of dreams become familiar to Anne and because they are so alive in her imagination, they are to her still hauntingly present in the house. They become to her the ghosts of the past that live in the house with her, and although their presence is not sinister or threatening, they do exert an influence over Anne's experience of the house. In the following extract Anne expresses her impressions:

> "This is such a *ghostly* night […] I feel as if it concealed innumerable mysteries—as if I were surrounded by the wraiths of old generations of Four Winds people peering at me through that gray veil. If ever the dear dead ladies of this little house came back to revisit it they would come on just such a night as this. If I sit here any longer I'll see one of them there opposite me in Gilbert's chair. This place isn't exactly canny tonight. Even Gog and Magog have an air of pricking up their ears to hear the footsteps of unseen guests […] I'll leave my house of dreams to welcome back its old inhabitants. My fire will give them my good-will and greeting—they will be gone before I come back, and my house will be mine once more. Tonight I am sure it is keeping a tryst with the past." (*AHD*, 84; Montgomery's emphasis)

When Anne peoples the House of Dreams with spectres from the past, she shows her desire to connect her own life in the house with the previous dwellers' positive experience there, implying that in some way the house has been imbued with traditions of love and fulfilment. Later in the novel, Owen Ford, grandson of the schoolmaster who built and first lived in the house of dreams, says to Leslie: '"There should be a lot of friendly ghosts about this little house…this house was builded and consecrated by love…. Such houses must exert an influence over those who live in them"' (*AHD*, 209-210). The ghosts in the house are the inhabitants' awareness of the house's history and the events which have taken place there in the past. The joy which others have experienced in this house, and the fulfilment of the schoolmaster's dreams and hopes, seem to provide a base for hope that good things will happen to anyone involved with the house. The little house seems to absorb and safeguard the experiences and emotions of its previous occupants, thereby enriching its atmosphere to the benefit of subsequent inhabitants. Anne, having what Epperly (1992:85) calls a 'domestic bias in this home-celebrating novel', endows the house with a character of its own, believing that it influences her moods and in some uncanny way is filled with different ghosts. These ghosts fill both the house and the story surrounding it with many characters which influence the narrative without being present in the flesh.

While the house reveals much of the past, it also facilitates the fulfilment of dreams of the future. One of these future dreams is the birth of two of Anne and Gilbert's children, one of whom survives. The various houses in the novel are described in a group in this passage, quite late in the novel, which subtly describes the birth of Anne and Gilbert's second child, Jem:

> The big, white light-house on the red sandstone cliff had its good points; but no stork possessed of any gumption would leave a new, velvet baby there. An old grey house, surrounded by willows, in a blossomy brook valley, looked more promising, but did not seem quite the thing either. The staring green abode further on was manifestly out of the question. Then the stork brightened up. He had caught sight of the very place—a little white house nestled against a big, whispering firwood, with a spiral of blue smoke winding up from its kitchen chimney—a house which just looked as if it were meant for babies. The stork gave a sigh of satisfaction, and softly alighted on the ridge-pole. (*AHD*, 187)

In this passage, Anne's house is firmly established as a home where life is welcome and where conditions are favourable for growth. The 'big, whispering firwood' acts as a kind of primeval guardian and the 'spiral of blue smoke winding up from its kitchen chimney' signals the presence of both warmth and sustenance. The 'big, white light-house,' the 'old

grey house' and the 'staring green abode' here create a contrast with the 'little white house', which implies the manifold advantages and near perfection that the House of Dreams possesses.

Higgins (1994:105), discussing Montgomery's own room in Cavendish which is described in her journal, claims that 'each picture in Montgomery's room was a window which opened onto another world'. For Montgomery, the window was an access point into reverie, one of her 'passports to fairyland'. Kennedy (1953:511) confirms this idea, stating that 'windows are holes out of, that is eyes'. Montgomery wrote her poetry, novels, and journals at her window, moving through the window into imaginative activity. Windows have a special significance in Montgomery's novels. They function as the eyes of the house, both as a means through which to look outward, revealing the surrounding area to the inmates of the house, and also, to allow the ingress of events and moods around the house. The House of Dreams' windows only allow in certain things – the beauty of nature to enrich the inner life of the house, light from the sun, moon or stars to transform or illuminate that which is inside the house, or the sea, which creates a sense of adventure on the periphery of the novel. Towards the beginning of the novel, windows are linked with the magic, romance and adventure that are part of the atmosphere of the House of Dreams and its surrounds. As in *Anne of Windy Willows*, Anne quotes a passage from Keats' 'Ode to a Nightingale' when she enters her room and looks from its windows:

> There were two windows in it; the dormer one looked out on the lower harbour and the sand-bar and the Four Winds light.
>
> "A magic casement opening on the foam
> Of perilous seas in fairy lands forlorn,"
>
> quoted Anne softly. The gable window gave a view of a little harvest-hued valley through which a brook ran. (*AHD*, 30-31)

The refrain of 'perilous seas in fairy lands forlorn' is echoed again when Montgomery portrays the effect of the sea on Anne's life in her House of Dreams. Anne is able to see 'some varying aspect' of the sea from 'every window in her new home,' and this 'intimacy' with the sea gives 'a certain tang of romance and adventure in the atmosphere of their new home' (*AHD*, 45). In this case it is again the windows of the house that help to construct this mood in the novel.

When Leslie Moore is finally free to marry the handsome stranger Owen Ford, she sits at a window in Anne's house, overwhelmed by meeting him again after his absence. She is

shown seated at 'the dormer window of her room', where the window lets in 'the rhythmic thunder of the sea' and 'the misty moonshine' which is shining down on Leslie through the window (*AHD*, 204). Epperly (1992:79) explains that 'Montgomery uses colour and the sea to make Leslie an intricate, passionate expression of Four Winds life. Romantic setting and colouring reflect romantic intensity'. Here the sound of the sea and the silvery moonlight add drama and enhance the scene to depict Leslie's emotion more adequately.

In *Anne's House of Dreams*, light in its various forms is associated with houses. Epperly (1992:86-87) confirms the importance of light in this novel when she writes: 'Throughout the novel light plays an important part, and Montgomery […] uses the light itself, the lighthouse "star", stars, and firelight to suggest the various symbolic interpretations of illumination in the darkness'. Anne herself mentions light when she returns home to the House of Dreams with Gilbert one night. She says '"Oh, look, Gilbert; there is our [homelight]. I'm so glad we left it burning. I hate to come home to a dark house. Our homelight, Gilbert! Isn't it lovely to see?"' (*AHD*, 90).

Light in the form of the fire is also significant in the novel. Red light symbolises warmth and comfort in its obvious implication with firelight, while light and fire are also associated with dreams and hopes, longing, desire. The next passage illustrates this, especially in the relationship between Leslie and Anne:

> [Anne and Gilbert] had risen and stood together in the firelight's glow. Leslie looked at them—youthful, hopeful, happy, typifying all she had missed and must forever miss. The light went out of her face and eyes; the girl vanished; it was the sorrowful, cheated woman who answered the invitation almost coldly and got herself away with a pitiful haste. Anne watched her until she was lost in the shadows of the chill and misty night. Then she turned slowly back to the glow of her own radiant hearthstone. (*AHD*, 82-83)

In this passage, Leslie is associated with 'shadows' and 'the chill and misty night,' while Anne is associated with words that describe light and warmth: 'glow,' 'radiant' and 'hearthstone' (*AHD*, 83). The significance of the firelight and the hearth is explained by Jeanne Moore (2000:208):

> One of the oldest references [to home] was in relation to Hestia, the Greek goddess of the hearth, at the centre of family life, and of household economy in the broadest sense. To invoke Hestia was to invoke a presence of dwelling and home within the living quarters.

The opposition between Anne and Leslie in this passage is created to a large extent by the background effect of the house and its comforts. While the warmth of a home and hearth

belong to Anne, a happily married woman settled into a life that promises to be joyful, Leslie is literally outside in the cold, unable to enter this kind of a life except as a visitor and spectator. It is only later in the novel, once Leslie's relationship with Owen Ford comes into existence and is solidified, that she also becomes associated with light. Often when Montgomery describes Leslie, she mentions that Leslie is wearing something red, for example: 'her lips were as crimson as the bunch of blood-red poppies she wore at her belt' (*AHD*, 29). This warmth of colour, the touch of red, is the symbol of her personality and its characteristic vivacity. However, it is confined and restrained by the sad circumstances of her life, which are like the grey house in which she lives with her supposed husband, mentally disturbed Dick Moore. However, the House of Dreams is not only the outward manifestation of Anne and Gilbert's happiness and fulfilment, it is shown to exert an influence over those who come into contact with it, functioning as a protagonist in the novel. Ultimately, it is the setting where Leslie's own dreams materialize. Not much of the action of the novel takes place at Leslie's 'old grey house', while the House of Dreams is a spot for joy and happiness for all who enter it.

In the depictions of Leslie Moore's house, Montgomery also uses what Epperly (1992:211) calls nineteenth century novelists' 'device of suggesting character traits through houses – both in giving houses personalities of their own and in using descriptions of houses to characterize the people who live in them'. The first mention of Leslie's house gives clues about her personality as well as the way she is imprisoned by her circumstances: 'Half a mile up the brook was the only house in sight—an old, rambling grey one surrounded by huge willows through which its windows peered, like shy, seeking eyes, into the dusk' (*AHD*, 31). The house itself indicates the outward circumstances of Leslie's life, but when the windows of Leslie's house are characterised as having 'shy, seeking eyes' that 'peer…into the dusk', this points to Leslie's personal predicament. Her pride and sorrow make her reticent, but at the same time her lonely, empty life results in such a deep longing for companionship and friendship in her that she accepts Anne's friendship in spite of herself.

When Leslie's house is mentioned again later in the novel, it is in the light of the setting sun:

> …the red light of the sunset […] fell on the old house among the willows up the brook, and gave it for a fleeting space casements more splendid than those of an old cathedral.

> They glowed out of its quiet and greyness like the throbbing, blood-red thoughts of a vivid soul imprisoned in a dull husk of environment. (*AHD*, 56)

This extract is another example of Montgomery's using the house as a descriptive mechanism to indicate the inhabitant's state of mind. The mention of 'casements more splendid than those of a cathedral' suggests romance, but also grandeur. The 'quiet' 'greyness' of the house is a metaphor for Leslie's outward life and demeanour, while the red light of the sunset reflected on the windows of the house that seems to have the effect of shining out of the house, is a metaphor for Leslie's inner life, which Montgomery describes as 'imprisoned in a dull husk of environment'. Here the house is the embodiment of the depressing reality of Leslie's life.[13] Epperly (1992:80) comments on this passage by stating that this 'use of the house to suggest Leslie's passion prepares us to accept and be intrigued by the mysterious woman, who is so unlike, and yet drawn to, the often ethereal Anne'. Her lodger Owen Ford is the man whom Leslie has fallen in love with, but is unable to marry at this point in the novel, and when he leaves Four Winds, the house is again a means by which Montgomery conveys Leslie's condition – her feelings of hopelessness and desperation:

> Owen Ford left Four Winds the next morning. In the evening Anne went over to see Leslie, but found nobody. The house was locked and there was no light in any window. It looked like a home left soulless. (*AHD*, 153)

Miss Cornelia, a middle-aged spinster neighbour of Anne and Gilbert, is introduced to the narrative by describing her house as Anne and Gilbert see it for the first time. In this description of Miss Cornelia's house at the beginning of the novel, Montgomery is using '[t]he association of home and character [which] may, by the end of the nineteenth century have been] novelistic, even a cultural, given' (Grant, 2005:246). Miss Cornelia's house is outwardly prosperous, well-to-do and in good order. It is described as 'large' and 'substantial,' a 'whole establishment' that includes 'house, barns, orchard, garden, lawn and lane' (*AHD*, 28). There is a suggestion of stability, generosity and magnanimity in this description, but at the same time the impression is created that Miss Cornelia's domain is somewhat lacking in comfort. The barns, orchard, and 'nicely kept lawn' symbolise fruitfulness and abundant growth. However, this fruitfulness is qualified by the assertion that 'there was a certain bareness about it'. Also, the word 'neat' is repeated excessively in

[13] Leslie is coerced into marriage with a brutal man, who is returned from an accident on a voyage with brain damage, but she cannot escape from this marriage. Later, it turns out that Dick Moore is dead, and that the man believed to be Dick is not her husband, but a cousin who closely resembles him, and Leslie is freed.

different forms: 'neatness,' 'starkly neat,' 'neatness,' and 'neater'. This description of Miss Cornelia's house may remind the reader of Marilla Cuthbert's house before Anne bursts upon the scene in *Anne of Green Gables*. For example, Marilla's kitchen is described as 'painfully clean' and as having 'something of the appearance of an unused parlour' (*AGG*, 10). The material comfort that Miss Cornelia's house represents is restrained and so tightly controlled that it becomes both strangely comfortless and unnatural, as indicated by the 'vivid green' paint of the house, which has the effect of making 'the landscape [seem] quite faded by contrast' (*AHD*, 28). The house with its unusually bright paint does not blend into nature around it, but overawes and intimidates the natural colours of trees and grass. Clearly, Miss Cornelia is not concerned with aesthetics, but rather with frugality and economic prosperity, and her 'no nonsense' approach to life is evidenced by her choice of paint and the lack of comfort which her home seems to imply. Here there is a grounded focus on the present rather than on the past or the future. The colour of the house, which does not blend into its surroundings, echoes Miss Cornelia herself, who is unapologetically individualistic and unconventional. In *Rainbow Valley* (1919) the original startling green colour of Miss Cornelia's house has 'mellowed down to an agreeable greenish gray' (*RV*, 91), echoing the changes which later life as well as marriage have brought in her character.

The final pages of *Anne's House of Dreams* show a 'passionate celebration of home and love' (Epperly, 1992:75) in the portrayal of Anne's sadness at the imminent loss of her little house, the house in which her first child, Joyce, dies within her first hours, and where her son Jem is born. It has become necessary for the Blythe family to move to a larger house, and Anne grieves for her house, as she grieved at leaving her previous homes. She sobs: '"It will be just like tearing something out of my life"' (*AHD*, 222). She fears that she may not be able to find the same kind of happiness in another house. She enumerates the things that she loves about the house of dreams:

> …the garden she had tended, and which so many women had tended before her—the gleam and sparkle of the little brook that crept so roguishly across the corner—the gate between the creaking fir trees—the old red sandstone step—the stately Lombardies—the two tiny quaint glass cupboards over the chimney-piece in the living-room—the crooked pantry door in the kitchen—the two funny dormer windows upstairs—the little jog in the staircase—why, these things were a part of her! How could she leave them? (*AHD*, 220)

Anne's attachment to the house signals that she has, similar to Montgomery 'a sense of her home being both a private haven and also a public demonstration of her personality'

(Waterston, 2008:76). Anne goes on to recount the events that have taken place in her life while living in this house:

> …this little house, consecrated aforetime by love and joy, had been re-consecrated for her by her happiness and sorrow! Here she had spent her bridal moon; here wee Joyce had lived her one brief day; here the sweetness of motherhood had come again with Little Jem; here she had heard the exquisite music of her baby's cooing laughter; here beloved friends had sat by her fireside. Joy and grief, birth and death, had made sacred forever this little house of dreams… (*AHD*, 221)

When Anne links the physical aspects of the house with the life experiences that have taken place in the house, there seems to be an indication that the house itself, with all its quirks and quaintness, has become beloved to her because of their association with treasured moments in her life. Finally, the concluding pages of the novel echo and confirm what Epperly (1992:85) describes as 'the praise to home and love that Montgomery depicts throughout'.

The final home in which Anne dwells is Ingleside. This house is also the culmination of dreams, but this culmination is interrupted by the Great War depicted in *Rilla of Ingleside*, and by the unsettling realities of the post-World War I world in *The Blythes are Quoted* (2009).

Ingleside means quite literally, 'by the hearth, or by the domestic fire', or as Waterston (2008:221) puts it, '"Ingleside" in the other final Anne title means hearthside and enclosed safety'. The hearth is the quintessential symbol of home – a place where people of the same tribe or family gather to warm themselves, to cook and eat food, and to socialize. As Gallagher (1989:8), writing about Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The House of the Seven Gables* (1851), points out – and this could equally apply to Montgomery's handling of Anne's houses: 'Domestic warmth and security, as again epitomized in the hearth, represent the ideal.'

Ingleside symbolizes the warmth of Anne's personality and the home she creates for her children, fulfilling their emotional needs for love and attention and their physical needs for food, shelter, and security. The house, along with the House of Dreams in *Anne's House of Dreams*, symbolizes the fulfilment of Anne and Gilbert's dreams in *Anne of the Island* (1915). It is significant that Gilbert's second proposal to Anne, the one which she accepts, is couched in terms of his own dream of a particular kind of house:

> "I have a dream," he said slowly… "I dream of a home with a hearth-fire in it, a cat and dog, the footsteps of friends—and *you*!" Anne wanted to speak but she could find no words. Happiness was breaking over her like a wave. (*AIs*, 242)

The warmth of Ingleside also radiates to non-family members who live with the Blythes, such as the housekeeper, Susan Baker (who becomes more and more associated with the house), or Miss Oliver, the schoolteacher who boards at Ingleside in *Rilla of Ingleside* (1921), as well as outsiders such Rosemary West, Miss Cornelia, and the Reverend John Meredith and his children. Early in *Anne of Ingleside* (1939), Anne explains to her childhood friend, Diana, that they 'had quite a time deciding on a name. We tried out several, but they didn't seem to *belong*. But when we thought of Ingleside we knew it was the right one' (*AIn*, 13-14).

Although Anne is originally not enamoured of Ingleside at the end of *Anne's House of Dreams*, by the end of *Rainbow Valley*, she says to Susan: '"Do you remember how badly I felt when I left our little House of Dreams, Susan? I thought I could never love Ingleside so well. But I do. I love every inch of the ground and every stick and stone on it"' (*AHD*, 271). When Anne returns to Ingleside after a visit to Green Gables, Montgomery describes Ingleside anthropomorphically, giving the house human emotions to which Anne responds:

> Her heart sang all the way because she was going home to a joyous house, a house where every one who crossed its threshold knew it was a *home*, a house that was filled all the time with laughter and silver mugs and snapshots and babies… and rooms that would welcome her… where the chairs waited patiently and the dresses in her closet were expecting her. (*AIn*, 16)

This passage seems to highlight Ingleside's function as a co-worker with Anne in creating a home for her family. The objects in the house (silver mugs, snapshots, babies), relate to children and family. The laughter, welcome and expectation that are part of the description of this 'joyous house' imply that the family which inhabits it is a family full of love. Ross (1994:24) writes that '[t]he elements at the very centre of Montgomery's work' are 'female authority, the child, the sentimental, the protected space of the house'. All these are abundantly part of the author's portrayals of Ingleside, which is indeed depicted as 'a protected space'.

Sadly, when Montgomery wrote this novel, her own family was in disarray. She was living in a lovely home, the first that the Macdonalds actually owned and which she called Journey's End, in a pleasant suburb of Toronto, but her personal life did not echo Anne's. Both Rubio and Waterston (2008:208) describe her depression, her husband's illness and

her difficulties with her eldest son at this time. Most of Montgomery's personal problems do not spill over into her description of Ingleside as a home, although there are some hints of them. As when Anne experiences brief disappointment with her life and her marriage, Ingleside 'seemed whispering tonight…whispering sinisterly, as if it were no longer her friend' (*AIn*, 246). In the same way, while in this mood, Anne sees 'an old, deserted house with sad, broken windows that had once danced with light' and immediately she uses the house as a metaphor for her own situation: '"Just like my life," thought Anne' (*AIn*, 246).

Throughout the 'Anne' novels, it becomes clear that Anne's perceptions of houses are extremely subjective. They often mirror her moods. Johnson (2005:28) asserts that in Montgomery's 'later life, as in Anne's earlier life, it was the world of people that let her down. It is only landscape, and the memory of one landscape in particular, that remain faithful'. Anne discusses her love for her house with her old friend:

> It isn't too old a house … too old houses are sad. And it isn't too young… too young houses are crude. It's just mellow. I love every room in it. Every one has some fault, but also some virtue, something that distinguishes it from all the others, gives it a personality… every time I go upstairs I stop on the landing... you know that quaint window on the landing with the broad, deep seat… and sit there looking out for a moment. (*AIn*, 13)

In this passage, it is clear that for Anne, the house is loved by her because she feels it has certain unique characteristics – 'some fault[s]' and also 'some virtue[s]'. The 'quaint window on the landing' reiterates the house's distinctive 'personality'. The word 'mellow', which Anne uses to describe the house, as well as 'the broad, deep seat', develops the ideal of comfort which the house seems to be an illustration of.

An important feature of Ingleside that is frequently the setting for significant interaction between the characters is 'the big veranda'. This is a place where social engagement is enjoyed and, among other things, a good gossip with friends and neighbours such as Miss Cornelia. It is also a place which allows the beauties of nature, such as 'the sweetness of sleepy robins whistling among the twilit maples, and the dance of a gusty group of daffodils blowing against the old, mellow brick wall of the lawn' (*RV*, 2) to be appreciated. In *Rainbow Valley*, it is the place where Susan knits and Shirley and Rilla 'con their primers' under Susan's watchful eye (*RV*, 272-273). The veranda is also the setting for a quilting party highlighting gossip and horror stories in *Anne of Ingleside* (1939), where the quilts in their frames are described as 'set up on the broad veranda' where everyone is 'busy with fingers and tongue' (*AIn*, 182).

In *Rilla of Ingleside*, Ingleside's living room becomes the scene of Red Cross Meetings as well as the preparation of sheets and wound dressings for the wounded soldiers of the Great War: 'The big living room at Ingleside was snowed over with drifts of white cotton. Word had come from Red Cross headquarters that sheets and bandages would be required' (*RI*, 52). According to Tector (2003:74), 'the commonplace hominess of Ingleside' is emphasised in the first chapter of *Rilla of Ingleside*, providing a kind of counterpoint to the war that is about to erupt. McKenzie (2008:100) emphasises another outlook on the home which Rilla, living and working in Ingleside during the First World War illustrates: 'The world lies in the home, with the young women who will mother the coming generations; the future is their responsibility. If each individual does her part, then each home will contribute to Canada, and Canada can contribute to humankind.'

The lights and the hearth of Ingleside are essential to the house, and these are often referred to: '[t]he big fireplace was the centre of the home…It was the high spot of the day when they gathered around it after supper' (*AIn*, 144). Ingleside's lights and hearth are also described to the reader through the eyes of the Reverend Mr. Meredith, who sees the '…[l]ights of Ingleside gleam[ing] through the maple grove with the genial lure and invitation which seems always to glow in the beacons of a home where we know there is love and good-cheer and a welcome for all kin, whether of flesh or spirit' and who goes in to spend 'an evening arguing with the doctor by the drift wood fire, where the famous china dogs of Ingleside kept ceaseless watch and ward, as became deities of the hearth' (*RV*, 216). In Montgomery's descriptions of Ingleside, as in most of her novels, the fire equals nurture and comfort for the house's residents and those who visit it. Kennedy (1953:192) claims that 'The equation "fire + hearth = home" needs no proving…Fire satisfies us in too many ways, on too many levels, to be easily cast out of the house.' Montgomery paints Ingleside as the ideal home with the ideal family in spite of their quirks, and in this description, Ingleside is juxtaposed with the harsh outside world, emphasising Ingleside's ideal qualities: 'The dark hills, with the darker spruces marching over them, looked grim on early falling nights, but Ingleside bloomed with firelight and laughter, though the winds came in from the Atlantic singing of mournful things' (*AIn*, 59).

It seems that it was important to Montgomery in her books about Anne especially, to reassure both herself and the reader that, in spite of the darkness and sorrow in life, there does exist some kind of safe refuge in the form of a home, if only a fictional one. The final page of *Anne of Ingleside* repeats this idea:

> [S]oon the sharper, cooler nights of autumn would come; then the deep snow… the deep white snow… the deep cold snow of winter… nights wild with wind and storm. But who would care? There would be the magic of firelight in gracious rooms […]. They would glorify the grey days that were bound to come. What would matter drifted snow and biting wind, when love burned clear and bright, with spring beyond? (*AIn*, 252)

Montgomery, and by extension, Anne, seem to be well aware of the difficulties and harshness of life. This passage repeatedly emphasises the cold, wind, snow and storm, as well as that these are inevitable. However, the 'magic of firelight in gracious rooms' are seen as an antidote for these, even if they exist only in imagination. After all, Anne is a champion of the imagination – in the 'Anne' novels, as Ross (1994:26) explains, 'Montgomery invented the magic island on which is found the gabled house, encircled in trees, that cradles the dreaming child'.

Chapter 3:
Haunted Houses: The 'Emily' books

> …one evening in the dusk I went to a hill that commanded a view of it and looked down upon it—and I saw it, and the window of my old room where I once sat and dreamed and wrote, and I saw the old orchards and the old lane and the old woods I loved. And I went back from that pilgrimage to shrines forsaken and altars overthrown with a very full heart. (*MDMM*, 69)

Montgomery's Emily trilogy, *Emily of New Moon* (1923), *Emily Climbs* (1927) and *Emily's Quest* (1928), like her 'Anne' books, feature different houses and they are intimately connected to Emily's growth and development into a woman and into a successful writer. These houses all become so much part of Emily's emotional and mental landscape that they can be said to haunt her heart and mind, and help to shape her life story.

Manzo (2003:57) maintains that 'people's emotional relationships can be part of a conscious process where people interact with the physical environment to suit their needs, express themselves and develop their self-concept'. I argue that in the Emily trilogy, Emily does exactly this, as she interacts in turn with her father's 'House in the Hollow', the farm house at New Moon, as well as her friend Teddy Kent's house at the Tansy Patch, her Great-Aunt Nancy's house (Wyther Grange), and Aunt Ruth Dutton's house in Shrewsbury. She engages significantly with a little house in Malvern and the 'Disappointed House', which is often used to express Emily's emotional state. All of these houses function in different ways to provide for Emily's needs – either psychological or physiological – to facilitate her growth and development both as a person and as a writer, and also to assist Emily's developing self-concept and give her a way to express herself.

As I explained in Chapter 1, in Montgomery's work, houses are often metaphors for their owners, and rooms often signify their inhabitants and these inhabitants' emotional circumstances. The aesthetic qualities of the houses, as well as their interior features and some literary associations, all work to create for the readers a picture of the characters involved, and help readers to interpret the actions and feelings of the characters which inhabit these spaces.

The 'House in the Hollow' is the small brown house where Emily is born and from which she emerges, as from a protective little nutshell, into the world of New Moon and the Disappointed House. This house represents the kind of 'bounded space' that Alaimo (2007:153) posits, which is designed to 'keep the outdoors' out, and 'defining the human as that which is protected within'. Thus, the contrast between the protected space in which Emily has dwelt until the events that occur at the start of the novel, and the new, strange world of New Moon to which she is moved without any say in the matter, emphasises Emily's vulnerability.

In the details about the house and its surrounds, Montgomery portrays a unique setting in which Emily is born and where she spends her childhood. By implication, such an unusual place must produce an unusual person. The house is described as being situated in a 'hollow', 'a mile from anywhere', 'almost hidden' and 'encircl[ed]' by trees (*ENM*, 1). Montgomery seems to imply that this little house and its inmates are hidden away in a secret world – a kind of 'fairy's hollow'. This idea is strengthened by the fact that '[n]o other house could be seen from' the House in the Hollow and it can only be 'reached by a long, green lane' (*ENM*, 1). It is suggested that the house is an unusual structure because it looks 'as if it had never been built like other houses but had grown up there like a big, brown mushroom' (*ENM*, 1).

The window in Emily's room at the House in the Hollow is an essential part of Montgomery's depiction of her. This is similar to the many significant windows in the Anne novels, as well as the lookout window in the bedroom into which Emily moves toward the end of *Emily of New Moon*. From the beginning, Montgomery is indicating to the reader that this child, Emily, has substantial artistic vision which is signified by the window and Emily's attachment to it. This window opens 'on a world of wonder' and it encourages her to practice her creative powers by writing a description of the view from it 'of which she was especially proud' (*ENM*, 48). It facilitates her imagination and spirituality: 'She had sat there and dreamed; at night she used to kneel there and say her little prayers' (*ENM*, 49). In a sense, the 'big, brown' (*ENM*, 1) house is an extension of her father's love and care, which reinforces his encouragement of her creative mind. Rita Bode (2008:51), in her article 'L.M. Montgomery and the anguish of mother loss', claims that '[b]oth her journal and fiction writings indicate that Montgomery's awareness of maternal loss informed her entire life' –

similarly, it seems that in the 'Emily novels', Emily's awareness of 'father loss' informs *her* entire life.[14]

When Emily has to leave the House in the Hollow after her father passes away, she says 'good-bye to everything'. Similar to Montgomery's other heroines, Emily projects her own emotions onto inanimate objects – both in nature and in her home – which have value to her: '"[T]hey'll miss me so when I'm gone; there won't be any one here to love them," she said wistfully' (*ENM*, 48-49). Each of these is mentioned: 'the rooster pine', 'the spider crack in the kitchen window', 'the old wing-chair', 'the bed of striped grass', 'the silver birch-ladies', 'the window of her own old room', 'the green hill she had loved, to her fairy-haunted barrens', and 'little Emily-in-the-glass' – a similar figure to Anne's 'Katie Maurice' (*ENM*, 48-49). This projection extends to the house itself ('the old, brown house in the hollow'), which Emily, anthropomorphising the house, feels has 'a brokenhearted look'. She longs 'to run back and comfort it', whereas it is in fact she herself who is in need of comfort after her father dies and she has to move away to live with strange relatives in a new place (*ENM*, 50).

Emily's loss of her father and loss of her home are described together, as all of a piece. Her grief at losing her father is doubled by the loss of the only home she has ever known, catapulting her into another existence. Twigger-Ross and Uzzell (1996:208) explain that 'unwanted and personally uncontrollable change in the physical environment, resulting in the loss of the principle of continuity, may cause a grief or loss reaction. Such grieving can be long term'. The loss of Emily's father is very poignantly described in a passage about Emily's first night at New Moon:

> Oh, for her little bed at home—oh, for Father's soft breathing in the room—oh, for the dancing friendliness of well-known stars shining down through her open window! She *must* go back—she couldn't stay here—she would never be happy here! But there wasn't any "back" to go to—no home—no father—. A great sob burst from her—another followed and then another. It was no use to clench her hands and set her teeth—and chew the inside of her cheeks—nature conquered pride and determination and had her way […] "It —it wasn't as elegant—as New Moon," sobbed Emily, "but—Father was there. I guess I'm Fathersick, Aunt Elizabeth. Didn't you feel awfully lonely when your father died?" (*ENM*, 57-58)

[14] Her memory of her mother is fainter, although she gradually comes to know more about her mother at New Moon, especially after she is given her mother's room when she is a little older, upon her return from Wyther Grange.

The passage starts with Emily's awareness of a specific place, of home; it ends with a particularly telling word, which Emily coins – for her, being 'homesick' is inextricably bound up with being 'Fathersick'. Throughout *Emily of New Moon*, the loss of Emily's father and her home with him 'haunts' her. In a sense this sense of unresolved grief permeates all three of the 'Emily novels', and seem to be part of the driving force behind Emily's dreams of being a great writer, as her imagination and creative gift were fostered by her father.

New Moon, the house Emily moves to, is explicitly symbolic of the Murray family. Both New Moon, which initially does not feel like home, and the Murray clan, which does not at first feel like family, gradually becomes a refuge for the orphaned Emily. New Moon as an 'elegant' and gracious space, and Aunt Laura and Cousin Jimmy provide the comfort Emily needs as she grieves the loss of her father. Being at New Moon grants her a new sense of self-esteem as a member of an interesting and important extended family. It also facilitates her development as a writer by giving her space to write in privacy (first in the attic, then eventually in her own room), in the notebooks she calls 'Jimmy books', bought for her by Cousin Jimmy. Later, she expresses herself as being as attached to the house as her Murray relatives are (*ENM*, 68-69). In *Emily Climbs*, the affection for the house haunts her to such an extent that she decides to continue living at New Moon while pursuing her ambitions to become a published author, instead of leaving her home for the excitement of working as a journalist in New York. This decision suggests that New Moon too becomes so much part of the fabric of her life that it is, in a positive way, something that haunts her judgement of all other houses and ways of life.

The house at New Moon acts as a social marker for Emily, as it does for all the Murrays.[15] This setting satisfies her longing to be someone of significance. Emily is 'delight[ed]' by the 'quite splendid' house with its 'big front porch with Grecian columns' and says that '"It's a noble house"', subtly revealing a sense of pride in it. The narrator indicates the Murrays' social standing with the statement that the Grecian columns of the house 'were thought very elegant in Blair Water' and that 'a schoolmaster had said they gave the house a classical air' (*ENM*, 68-69). According to the narrator, these features of the house 'went far to justify the Murray pride', implying that the Murrays are right to feel themselves superior to the

[15] Wyther Grange, which belongs to another member of the Murray family, Great-Aunt Nancy, who married into the Priest family, reinforces the sense of social standing in Emily. I discuss Wyther Grange in more detail later in the chapter.

common horde in Blair Water, on account of their 'elegant' house (*ENM*, 68-69). However, the Murrays, in spite of their social aspirations, are part of a hardworking farming community, and their daily activities, such as the dairy work (the daily straining and skimming of milk, and regular cheese-making) and Cousin Jimmy's annual boiling of the pigs' potatoes, confirm this. The New Moon farmhouse is a confirmation of Emily's status as part of an upper middle-class family that owns and has owned its own farm land for many years, as opposed to merely being tenants.

Warner and Lunt (1941:107) posit that many houses

> …may be said to possess lineages of their own. Those which do not, have less value, however old or beautiful they may be. A house with a distinguished lineage is concrete evidence of upper-class status. Although the spatial arrangements of the rooms and their specialization of function help to impress an elaborate ritual on the occupants, the spiritual presence of the ancestors, as experienced through the use of ancestral rooms and furniture, is more important in maintaining a disciplined continuity in the minds of the inhabitants.

Although the family at New Moon do most of their own house and farm work, New Moon has precisely such a 'distinguished lineage' (albeit only within the relatively short colonial period). It is signified by such things as the Grecian columns on the porch and, perhaps more overtly, parlour walls which are all 'hung over with pictures of our ancestors' (although as Emily thinks, 'not one good-looking person among them except Grandfather Murray who looks handsome but very cross' (*ENM*, 97-98). Emily's awareness of her ancestors is realized through rooms such as the parlour and the spare room, as well as, more significantly, Emily's mother's room, which eventually becomes her own. The 'spiritual presence of the ancestors, as experienced through the use of ancestral rooms and furniture' that maintains 'a disciplined continuity in the minds of the inhabitants' is most obvious in Emily's Aunt Elizabeth, who holds serious family conclaves or metes out punishments in the dimly lit parlour while 'sitting bolt upright in Grandfather Murray's black horsehair chair' (*ENM*, 310). In this way, Grandfather Murray's spirit lives on through his daughter who sits in his chair and carries on his family's traditions.[16] Interestingly, in a sense Emily also harbours a piece of her Grandfather Murray's nature. When she is particularly set on something, her face takes on an expression which uncannily reminds her Murray relatives of their father's face. They call this the 'Murray look'. When Emily has the 'Murray look' on her face (a look which, oddly, she cannot summon at will, but seems to creep up on her),

[16]However, although Emily's Aunt Elizabeth Murray seems to respect her father's memory and carry on the patriarchal traditions, her veneration is motivated by fear and not by affection.

Aunt Elizabeth is so disturbed by this haunting reminder of her father that she gives in to Emily (McMaster, 2008:50-74; Sutherland, 2018, in press).

New Moon and the spatial arrangements of the house and its ancillary buildings do indeed boast many of its own 'elaborate rituals' which Emily takes part in as she helps her aunts around the house. For example, both in *Emily of New Moon* and *Emily Climbs* there are references to sanding the kitchen floor, using only candles in the house as a Murray tradition, and in *Emily Climbs*, preparing the house for Sunday in a series of Saturday morning routines.

The description of New Moon, with its solid social standing and uncompromising standards, appears to be informed by some of Montgomery's own childhood experiences, which remained with her throughout her life. Similarities between Montgomery's heroines and herself have been pointed out by different critics. For example, MacLulich (1985:465) notes:

> In much of her fiction, then, Montgomery drew on her own experiences to depict the lot of an emotional and articulate young person set down amid people who are taciturn and undemonstrative. There is, therefore, and element of wishful self-portraiture in Montgomery's portrayals of most of her young heroines.

This description might be tailor-made for Emily. When Emily is forced to go and live at New Moon farm with her two maternal aunts and cousin, most notably Aunt Elizabeth, who is the elder sister at New Moon and the person in charge, is particularly 'taciturn and undemonstrative'. Aunt Laura, Emily's other aunt at New Moon, is gentle and offers friendly physical contact when her strict sister's penetrating gaze is averted, but she is prevented from nurturing Emily as much as she would like because of her sister Elizabeth's possibly well-meant but nevertheless harsh tyranny.[17] Emily is both 'emotional and articulate' – probably more so than any of Montgomery's other protagonists, excepting perhaps Sara Stanley, 'the Story Girl' of *The Story Girl* and *The Golden Road*. Waterston (2008:119) points out that Emily particularly reflects many of Montgomery's own experiences:

> Emily, in fact, looks just like Maud Montgomery in many ways other than family heritage and personal independence. Both scrambled to find paper and a place to write. Each of them lacked models to follow, as well as living (or near-by) parents to foster their talents. In both cases there was no memory of a nurturing mother; in both,

[17] Like Marilla Cuthbert, Elizabeth Murray does not believe in spoiling children, but unlike Marilla, she lacks the saving grace of a sense of humour.

> although a father was alive during the child's first phase, the emotional core was a feeling of orphanhood, a sense of being unimportant and unwanted. While writing about Emily, Montgomery confided poignantly to her diary how much she regretted knowing so little about her mother…

The farmhouse at New Moon also seems, in many ways, to mirror Montgomery's childhood home with her grandparents in Cavendish. It seems that in these three novels, Montgomery has 'written out' many of her own feelings, aspirations, and struggles.

New Moon offers Emily a challenging combination of positive and negative aspects. Some of the more negative aspects may be considered somewhat Gothic. Grant (2005:240) asserts that

> …if we look for sustained descriptions of the interior, one genre in particular, the Gothic novel, stands out. Gothic themes of incarceration, familial disharmony and dynastic secrets are frequently played out against detailed evocations of interior spaces.

Montgomery's novels, with their often house-focused titles, and especially the 'Emily' books, carry on one of the traditions of the Gothic novel, which according to Pritchard (1991:434),

> …much more commonly than any other types of fiction were titled with the name of a house, castle, or abbey, from Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* (1765) to Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* (1847) and Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The House of the Seven Gables* (1851).

Vidler (1987:7), discussing Gothic houses in 'The Architecture of the Uncanny', writes:

> The slow realization that these were properties of the *house*, embedded in the very stones, which possessed fatality in themselves, that the *house was itself* an uncanny power, came unwillingly, against all reason, and was the more disquieting for the absolute normality of the setting, its absence of overt terror. The effect was one of the disturbing unfamiliarity of the evidently familiar. (my emphases)

The 'Emily' trilogy contains some of the few instances in Montgomery's work in which the houses or the furniture become menacing or are used as a means of oppression. Wyther Grange (discussed more fully later in the chapter) is one of these houses, but New Moon itself has some darker aspects.[18] Vidler's study of the Gothic house in literature suggests that the house itself can be a kind of brooding presence which impacts the narrative in and of itself. He also implies that, because a house is usually associated with shelter, protection,

[18]Another Gothic house in Montgomery's fiction which seems to be 'itself an uncanny power', is Jane's grandmother's house in Toronto, the house at 60 Gay Street, in *Jane of Lantern Hill*. The house seems to unite with Jane's grandmother to imprison and overawe both Jane and her mother, as discussed more fully in Chapter 5.

and comfort, it is all the more disturbing when a house becomes an instrument of fear, as is common in Gothic literature.

Pritchard (1991:434), in his article 'The urban Gothic of *Bleak House*' (1991), maintains that '[a]s the convention of naming books for buildings suggests, in Gothic fiction the setting is so prominent that the house or castle often becomes the real protagonist'. Montgomery's novels do not feature Gothic houses in their titles, but rather the houses or places where her heroines find safety, belonging, or independence. Nevertheless, the houses in her fiction share this with Gothic fiction – the house acts as a protagonist by shaping the activities of its inhabitant. Wyther Grange functions this way, and the two rooms at New Moon which primarily function this way are the parlour and the spare room.

Instead of being instruments of comfort and stability, they are tools of coercion in the hands of those people who are inimical either to Emily herself, or else to Emily's gifts as a writer. Emily writes, in a letter to her dead father:

> Aunt Elizabeth said I was never to go into the parlour again without permission but I don't want to. I am afraid of the parlour. All the walls are hung over with pictures of our ancestors and there is not one good-looking person among them except Grand-father Murray who looks handsome but very cross. The spare-room is upstairs and is just as gloomy as the parlour. (*ENM*, 97-98).

Eventually, when Emily is terrified when she is locked in the semi-dark spare room as punishment by Aunt Elizabeth, who 'physically incarcerates Emily in [the] terrifying death-filled spare room (an echo of many readings of the second chapter of *Jane Eyre*, perhaps)' (Waterston, 2008:114), it justifies her dread of the room.

One of these 'Gothic themes of incarceration, familial disharmony and dynastic secrets' (Grant, 2005:240), is the story of Emily's mother, Juliet Murray, who eloped with Emily's father, thus incurring Grandfather's Murray's wrath. His reaction to his daughter's elopement is to lock her bedroom – the 'lookout room'. This room is only unlocked long after Juliet's death, when Emily is given her room, thus laying the ghosts of the 'incarcerations' and 'familial disharmonies'.

Diane Tye (1993:130) writes that the 'family narratives aid [Emily's] assimilation into the new household' at New Moon. These family narratives are most often communicated by Cousin Jimmy Murray, who runs the farm for Emily's two unmarried aunts. He shows her the house, the outbuildings, the garden and the farms, all the while telling her fascinating

stories about the place and its inhabitants, both former and current. Once Emily has settled in at New Moon, she not only admires the house and feels pride in it, but starts to love it passionately:

> Emily had lived long enough at New Moon for it to get pretty thoroughly into her blood. Perhaps it [Emily's affection for the house] had even been born there. At any rate, when she came to it she fitted into its atmosphere as a hand into a glove. She loved it as well as if she had lived there all her short life—loved every stick and stone and tree and blade of grass about it—every nail in the old, kitchen floor, every cushion of green moss on the dairy roof, every pink and white columbine that grew in the old orchard, every "tradition" of its history. (*ENM*, 188)

The loss of her parents, and with that, the loss of any seeming stability in her life, could be making her cling all the more passionately to anything which provides her with significance, continuity and stability. After her return from a visit to her Great-Aunt Nancy's house, Wyther Grange, Emily reasserts her attachment to the house: 'It was very good to be home again. "There is no place just like dear New Moon," thought Emily' (*ENM*, 282-283).

Smith (1994:32) stresses that empirical studies demonstrate that people's homes are 'closely related to their self-identity, and [serves] as a symbol of both how they saw themselves, and how they wanted others to see them'. Although Emily sees herself primarily as a writer, she is nevertheless not hostile to the Murray family traditions, which identify her with a good family. The 'immaculate housekeeping' which her aunts value and pass on to her is part of the 'elaborate ritual' of this house with 'a distinguished lineage' (Warner & Lunt, 1941:107). Some of these household rituals of New Moon are implied in *Emily Climbs* as follows: '…the hours passed by in the commonplace fashion of Saturday hours at New Moon—busy hours in which the house was made immaculate for Sunday, and the pantry replenished' (*EC*, 82). A positive attitude towards housekeeping is prevalent throughout Montgomery's novels, and housekeeping is only denigrated when it is used as a means to control others, as in *The Blue Castle*. Stallcup (2001:126) assures us that,

> … [a]lthough Montgomery rejects rigid scheduling, she neither rejects all household rituals nor denigrates housekeeping duties […] which is meaningful work that provides solace and comfort for herself and others. In fact, for Montgomery, this work can forge connections rather than sever them, as she links household rituals and duties to female communities both past and present. […] In the Emily series, many of the household rituals, such as the sanding of the floors and the use of candles, are linked to a specifically female past, as is the importance of Emily's education (*EC* 60 and 145). Far from simply consuming time and controlling women's lives, these tasks engage women in significant female interrelationships.

Stallcup emphasises the way that housekeeping – taking care of the house in order to provide 'solace and comfort' for the people who live in it – can be used to as a means to create a sense of community among women. It is a way to care for and honour people whom you love. This is a way in which Emily's aunts obliquely communicate their affection for the people in their household, including Emily.

Emily struggles to recognise the nurture she receives from her relatives, because she often disagrees with them – especially with her Aunt Elizabeth. This is illustrated, for example, when Emily arrives at New Moon, and she does not 'know whether she liked the New Moon kitchen or not. It was an interesting place' (*ENM*, 54). The kitchen, which should be a place of nourishment and comfort, does not at first appear to be that to Emily. This may imply her distrust of her two unmarried aunts' abilities to meet her needs as well as her father did in the House in the Hollow. However, when Aunt Laura treats her 'kindly' and invites her into the sitting room, where Cousin 'Jimmy has kindled a fire in the stove' she feels less uncertain:

> It was much more cheerful than the kitchen. The floor was covered with gay-striped homespun, the table had a bright crimson cloth, the walls were hung with pretty, diamond-patterned paper, the curtains were of wonderful pale-red damask with a design of white ferns scattered all over them. They looked very rich and imposing and Murray-like. Emily had never seen such curtains before. But best of all were the friendly gleams and flickers from the jolly hardwood fire in the open stove that mellowed the ghostly candlelight with something warm and rosy-golden. Emily toasted her toes before it and felt reviving interest in her surroundings. What lovely little leaded glass doors closed the china closets on either side of the high, black, polished mantel! What a funny, delightful shadow the carved ornament on the sideboard cast on the wall behind it—just like a negro's side-face, Emily decided. What mysteries might lurk behind the chintz-lined glass doors of the bookcase! (*ENM*, 54)

In this passage, the words 'cheerful', 'gay', 'bright', 'jolly', 'friendly', 'funny' and 'delightful' mark a shift in the narrative to a happier world for Emily, where she will eventually move beyond her loss. Throughout the 'Emily' trilogy, Emily is associated with the colour red, with candle light and with firelight (unlike Anne, who is mostly linked to blue, green, and white). The 'crimson cloth' on the table, 'pale red damask' curtains and the 'rosy-golden' candlelight along with the flickering fire display this. The damask curtains and 'diamond-patterned paper' which help to make the room look 'very rich and imposing and Murray-like' help to confirm the Murrays as a well-to-do family. The china closets and ornamented sideboard hint at shared meals at the table, signifying physical nourishment. The bookcase, inside which 'mysteries might lurk', is an image of intellectual nourishment.

This passage demonstrates the ways in which the house at New Moon will facilitate Emily's growth and development.

According to Marilyn R. Chandler (1991:156), the interiors of the homes of fictional characters serve as 'introductions to [the] characters and as indices of their tastes, values, and habits as well as of their place in a complex network of social relations'. As the reader is introduced to New Moon and eventually Emily's own room in it, a clear picture is communicated of the Murray family and of Emily herself. In spite of her initial wariness, Emily becomes attached to New Moon and learns to love it, probably because of the love and care she experiences from her aunts and Cousin Jimmy, as symbolized by the house. Eventually Emily writes:

> I like the kitchen in daytime, and the garret and the cook-house and the sitting-room and the hall because of the lovely red front door and I love the dairy, but I don't like the other New Moon rooms. Oh, I forgot the cellar cubbord. I love to go down there and look at the beautiful rows of jam and jelly pots. Cousin Jimmy says it is a New Moon tradishun that the jam pots must never be empty. What a lot of tradishuns New Moon has. (*ENM*, 97-98)

Again, Emily is associated with the colour red, especially since she likes the hall '*because of* the lovely red front door' (my emphasis). The mention of the 'cellar cubbord', the 'beautiful rows of jam and jelly pots', as well as the New Moon traditions imply that the house is a place of abundance, nourishment and long-term continuity and stability. The house provides Emily with both aesthetic stimulation such as the 'lovely red door' and the 'beautiful rows of jam and jelly', and also with physical sustenance, facilitating her growth, both physical and intellectual. There is a clear link between the nurturing care of Emily's family and her ability to develop as a person and a writer. This nurture is extended to the house, which acts as a kind of extension for the care and affection of her relatives. Interestingly, Emily seems to displace her love onto the house, professing attachment to it, more than to her relatives. After a particularly bitter conflict she muses:

> Aunt Elizabeth would not keep her at New Moon after a poisonous quarrel like this. She would send her away, of course. Emily believed this. Nothing was too horrible to believe just then. How could she live away from dear New Moon? "And I may have to live eighty years," Emily moaned. (*ENM*, 312)

It appears that Emily is less disturbed by the conflict itself than by the threat of being separated from her beloved home. Emily interacts with her dwelling spaces as if they were people with the ability to react to her in their own ways, as her response in *Emily Climbs* shows:

> Emily wrote a poem that night—Farewell to New Moon—and shed tears over it. She felt every line of it. It was all very well to be going to school—but to leave dear New Moon! Everything at New Moon was linked with her life and thoughts—was a part of her. "It's not only that I love my room and trees and hills—they love me," she thought. (*EC*, 95).

After she goes away to school, she reiterates: 'Every week-end I come home to New Moon these things seem dearer to me—more a part of me. I love things just as much as people' (*EC*, 207).

Emily's identity as a writer is closely bound up with New Moon, the house. When Emily, towards the end of her teens, has the opportunity to leave New Moon in order to go work in New York with a journalist, she at first dithers, and then finds herself unable, unwilling even, to accept what should have been a brilliant opportunity for a young woman with writing aspirations. Montgomery seems to be making the point that Emily the artist is so much connected to the place, it has got so 'thoroughly into her blood' (*ENM*, 188), that she would cease to exist as an artist if she could not exist and work there. Thus her final success as a novelist is achieved with a novel infused with New Moon – a positive haunting of sorts. Similarly, Montgomery's own writing is closely connected to Prince Edward Island, the place, as evidenced by her novels – all her novels except *The Blue Castle* are set mainly on Prince Edward Island, although most of her books were not written there.

When Emily is trying to decide whether she should leave New Moon for New York, she goes 'home in the twilight' and walks 'restlessly all over the house', all the while taking note of the features of the house which appeal to her (*EC*, 300). This preoccupation with the family home and its interior, as well as the reluctance to leave it, is reflected in Montgomery's later novels, *Pat of Silver Bush* and *Mistress Pat*, where there are similar lists of home's delights as here in *Emily Climbs*:

> What charm and dignity and fineness the old rooms had, with their candles and their ladder-backed chairs and their braided rugs! How dear and entreating was her own little room with its diamond paper and its guardian angel, its fat black rose-jar and its funny, kinky window-pane… (*EC*, 300).

Emily's final decision is stay at New Moon: '"I belong to New Moon—I stay among my own people"' (*EC*, 300). A few pages on she repeats her conviction about her home: '"I can't leave New Moon—I love it too much—it means too much to me"' (*EC*, 302). Much like Pat, once Emily decides to stay at New Moon, she feels herself to be at peace and is also reconciled with the house: 'A deep, inner contentment possessed her as she went up the

walk and into the old house which no longer looked reproachfully at her' (*EC*, 300). The narrator goes on to assure the reader that Emily has not been mistaken, something which is confirmed in the final novel of the series, *Emily's Quest*, when Emily finally writes and publishes her first successful novel while living at New Moon, just as Montgomery published her own first and highly successful novel, *Anne of Green Gables*, while living in her childhood home on her grandparents' farm.

Emily's sense of belonging and her identity are confirmed by her home at New Moon, and it is implied in the trilogy that this sense of place is essential to her writing, and not an obstruction to it:

> [New Moon was a]n old house that had lived its life long ago and so was very quiet and wise and a little mysterious. Also a little austere, but very kind. Some of the Blair Water and Shrewsbury people thought it was a dull place and outlook for a young girl and said she had been very foolish to refuse Miss Royal's offer of "a position on a magazine" in New York. Throwing away such a good chance to make something of herself! But Emily, who had very clear-cut ideas of what she was going to make of herself, did not think life would be dull at New Moon or that she had lost her chance of Alpine climbing because she had elected to stay there.[19] (*EQ*, 1-2)

Emily is similar to Pat in *Pat of Silver Bush* in that she does not feel that life at her family's home is dull, limiting or uninspiring. Rather, she sees her home as an essential part of who she is.

Grant (2005:235) explains that

> … [i]f fiction figures as a house, then its interior frequently figures interiority. Again, is this more than linguistic felicity? The association between the representation in fiction of a character's internal mental state, self-awareness or interiority, and a focus on the interior, specifically the domestic interior, appears pervasive and sustained.

It seems that the houses in these novels, as well as scenes of nature connected to it, are mirrors that magnify Emily's own emotions and provides the reader with a clearer indication of Emily's inner self. This is particularly so when it comes to Emily's bedroom. Emily's bedroom is an echo of Montgomery's own room in her grandparents' house in Cavendish on Prince Edward Island. MacLulich (1985:465) notes:

> In much of her fiction, then, Montgomery drew on her own experiences to depict the lot of an emotional and articulate young person set down amid people who are taciturn and

[19]Montgomery herself wrote a short memoir which she called *The Alpine Path: the story of my career*, which was originally published in a Toronto magazine, *Everywoman's World* in 1917. The reference in the title is to a poem describing the climb of the ambitious towards the heights of attainment. It is telling that she attributes to Emily, a writer like herself, her own ambition, expressed in similar words.

> undemonstrative. There is, therefore, and element of wishful self-portraiture in Montgomery's portrayals of most of her young heroines.

The self-portraiture extends to Montgomery's bedroom. Emily writes in her diary of her 'own dear room, with a fire in my little fireplace… [her cat] Daff's purr there on my rug', that she loves 'to be alone in my room like this' and that she gets 'so much pleasure out of all my little belongings', which 'have a meaning' for her which 'they have for no one else' (*EC*, 216).[20] The similarities between Emily and Montgomery seem unmistakeable in these portions of the text. Laura Higgins (1994:107) describes Montgomery's own journals, assuring readers that

> …[i]t is certain that Montgomery, when transcribing and illustrating her journals, recognized that she was constructing a document which would represent her "self" after her death. […] Because they would eventually be read by the public, Montgomery wanted to be sure that they contained certain messages about herself and her beliefs. Her repetitive use of the photographs of her room was one strategy for conveying these messages to her readers.

Arguably, in the 'Emily' books, she was 'constructing' another document to 'represent her "self". Since 'Montgomery in her journal repetitively used 'the photographs of her room' as 'one strategy of conveying [...] certain messages about herself and her beliefs…to her readers' (Higgins, 1994:107), it seems that the repetitive descriptions of Emily's room are a similar strategy, conveying messages about Emily's interiority to readers of the novels. The affection which Emily exhibits for her room and the connection which it seems to give her to her mother can be seen as echoes of Montgomery's own experiences.[21]

Emily's loss of her mother contributes to her sense of herself as an essentially tragic figure. This also, however, increases her perception of herself as the tragic artist, with a unique vision. This aspect of Emily is symbolised in the novels by her bedroom, which was her mother's room before her. This room is kept locked by Emily's grandfather after her mother Juliet elopes with Emily's father. Only once Emily has become an accepted member of the family at New Moon is this room unlocked and given to her to be used as her own space.

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[20]Montgomery herself had a grey cat called Daffy. Writing in her journal about her home she mentions him:

> I was suddenly glad to be back— to be home! Glad to see again my garden, […] gray Daffy, my books and pictures, my own comfortable room. My house looked pretty nice to me. I saw it with a stranger's eye after my absence and when my impression of it was not blurred by familiarity, I liked it! Yes, it was good to be home again among all my own household gods. (*SJ*, *Vol. 2*, 132)

[21]The descriptions of Emily's room are similar to those of Anne's room, in that these descriptions are important markers of the growth which the heroines experience, and indicate their emotional states, as well as their personal taste.

This also helps her to grow as a writer because it gives her the privacy she needs to stay up late into the night writing. Waterston (2008:150) comments:

> In her portrait of Emily, Montgomery might have explored the more general truth about the double quest of the artist and woman with the honesty and practicality demonstrated in Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own*, published in 1929, not long after *Emily's Quest*.

The narrator of *Emily of New Moon* describes Emily's first glimpse of the room with careful attention to detail. For Emily the room is a special revelation of her mother:

> Emily felt it all over her as she flitted about examining everything. This was her room—she loved it already—she felt perfectly at home. "I belong here," she breathed happily. She felt deliciously near to her mother—as if Juliet Starr had suddenly become real to her. It thrilled her to think that her mother had probably crocheted the lace cover on the round pincushion on the table. And that flat, black jar of pot-pourri on the mantel—her mother must have compounded it. When Emily lifted the lid a faint spicy odour floated out.[22] (*ENM*, 284-286)

The objects in the room all convey messages to her. The 'pretty homespun carpet', 'round braided rugs', 'fat feather bed', 'Irish chain quilt' and 'faded ottoman with woollen roses cross-stitched over it' all seem to provide a sense of comfort. The walls are 'papered with a design of slender gilt diamonds enclosing golden stars' and seem already to associate Emily with the constellations (such as Vega of the Lyre) that feature in *Emily's Quest*. The 'oval mirror in a tarnished gilt frame hung above the table' gives Emily a glimpse of herself and the fact that 'Emily was delighted to find she could see herself' and that 'it doesn't twist [her] face or turn [her] complexion green' suggests that Emily will from now on be able to find a more accurate self-image (*ENM*, 284-286). However, the 'high black bedstead with carved posts' and the 'high-backed, black chairs with horsehair seats' imply the rigidity of the Murray household in which Emily's mother grew up and which Emily is now experiencing (albeit to a lesser extent, since Grandfather Murray is no longer alive). A softer version of the Murrays represented by the picture of Emily's mother 'hanging over the mantel' and at which Emily looks 'lovingly' completes Emily's sense of getting to know her mother better. She feels that '[t]his picture, in her bedroom, of the golden-haired rose-cheeked girl, was all her own'. For the first time she has a connection with her mother which is not mediated by either her father or her aunts. Johnston (2005:21) emphasises that in this novel, one can see 'the centrality of home – she is in the room that used to belong to

[22]The description of this jar is strikingly different from that of 'the jar of ancient potpourri made by her mother in her mythical honeymoon' (*BC,* 2) in Valancy's room in *The Blue Castle*, and which she throws out of the window with such vigour later, saying, '"I'm sick of fragrance of dead things"'(*BC,* 46).

her mother, she has been reunited with her history'. This enables her to feel that she can communicate directly with her mother: 'She could look at it—talk to it at will. "Oh, Mother," she said, "what did you think of when you were a little girl here like me? I wish I could have known you then"' (*ENM*, 284-286).

When Emily exclaims, '"I belong here!"' she illustrates De Botton's (2008:119) assertion that

> … [t]he materials around us will speak to us of the highest hopes that we have for ourselves. In this setting, we can come close to a state of mind marked by integrity and vitality. We can feel inwardly liberated. We can, in a profound sense, return home.

Emily's bedroom is called 'the lookout', because it is built high up in the old farmhouse, like a kind of a tower. The elevation of her room again confirms Emily's special sense of being able to see things from a different perspective than the people around her, and in so doing, this empowers her in a special way both as a woman and as a writer. The windows in Emily's room, like other windows in Montgomery's work, are often emblematic of this artistic perspective. For example, the first time Emily sees her room, she notices 'the window, which was curtained with muslin frills; one of the window-panes contorted the landscape funnily, making a hill where no hill was'. This unusual window emphasises Emily's unique vision: 'Emily liked this—she couldn't have told why, but it was really because it gave the pane an individuality of its own' (*ENM*, 284). Often, as in the Anne novels, the view from Emily's windows is also mentioned:

> "I'm sitting on the sill of my open window in my own dear room. It's so lovely to get back to it every now and then. Out there, over Lofty John's bush, is a soft yellow sky and one very white little star is just visible where the pale yellow shades off into paler green. Far off, down in the south 'in regions mild of calm and serene air' are great cloud-palaces of rosy marble. Leaning over the fence is a choke-cherry tree that is a mass of blossoms like creamy caterpillars. Everything is so lovely." (*EC*, 160)

Usually, the view from Emily's window is one of natural beauty. Like all of Montgomery's heroines, Emily is sensitive to beauty of any kind, and the window of her room is used as a kind of portal to the world of natural beauty: '"I watched the storm from my window until darkness fell. There is a singular charm in snow coming gently down in slanting lines against dark trees. I wrote a description of it in my Jimmy-book as I watched"' (*EC*, 216).

One can trace the connection between Emily and Montgomery's own vision of herself by comparing these passages in the Emily trilogy to the deductions which researchers such as Higgins (1994:105) make from Montgomery's journals:

> Each picture in Montgomery's room was a window which opened onto another world. For Montgomery, the window was an access point into reverie, one of her "passports to fairyland." Montgomery wrote her poetry, novels, and journals here, moving through the window into imaginative activity.

The 'dear little window of the kinky panes' in Emily's 'dear old room' with its 'dear books and dear pictures' is part of a setting that functions as a friend and companion to her, echoing her loves and joys (*EQ*, 110). Additionally, it is a place where she feels entirely at home and also able to be entirely herself. The room seems to work to affirm who she is and that she is appropriate to the world:

> The room was full of that indefinable charm found in all rooms where the pieces of furniture, whether old or new, are well acquainted with each other and the walls and floors are on good terms. Emily felt it all over her as she flitted about examining everything. This was her room—she loved it already—she felt perfectly at home.
> "I belong here," she breathed happily. (*ENM*, 285)

This is important for Emily, because, much as her father's books provide a connection to him, her bedroom, the room which used to be her mother's provides a connection to her mother and works to console her. Montgomery felt similarly about her own room: 'Her room was the central space in her life and a symbol of stability, order and comfort' (Higgins, 1994:103). Once Emily is settled into her own room, 'her own dear lookout', she no longer needs to find other 'hidey-holes' in the garret 'to read or write or dream' to protect the sense of individuality which she expresses through her writing. Instead, her own 'quaint, little old room' now provides that for her, becoming 'almost like a living thing to her—a sharer in gladness—a comforter in sorrow' (*ENM*, 315-316).

Additionally, the comfort she finds in her own room links her even more irrevocably to the world of New Moon, because she feels that she has her own place in it. The affection she feels for her room extends out toward New Moon, the house, the farm, and the surrounding area. Only once, when she burns her first book after receiving a negative criticism about it from her well-educated friend Dean Priest, is the room unable to comfort her: '…her little room, generally so dear and beloved and cosy, seemed like a prison' (*EQ*, 56).

In an interesting letter to her pen friend George Boyd MacMillan, Montgomery describes revisiting her own room where she grew up in a particularly haunting passage:

> I went up the dark stairs. I stood on the threshold of my old room—the old small illimitable kingdom where I had written my books long ago. But I did not go in. The window was boarded up and the room was as dark as midnight. Somehow I could not enter it. It was too full of old ghosts—lonely, hungry ghosts. They would have pulled

> me in among them and kept me. I would have disappeared forever from the land of living men and nobody would ever have known what had become of me! (*MDMM*, 89)

Both for Montgomery and for her heroine, Emily, their rooms are linked both to writing and to the past. Frequently, when Emily is pictured in her room, she has a fire burning in 'a small fireplace' with its 'lovable little cupboards with leaded glass doors' above it (*ENM*, 285). Additionally, the room is furnished with 'old-time furniture' and special mention is made of the 'deep-set, wide-silled windows' (*EC*, 9). Having the luxury of a fire to herself in her own room seems to imply the fire of her genius burning in this 'room of her own'. In *Emily Climbs*, the fire is described as

> …burning brightly and showering a red-golden light over the small, immaculate room, with its old-time furniture and deep-set, wide-silled windows, to whose frosted, blue-white panes the snowflakes clung in little wreaths. It lent depth and mystery to the mirror on the wall which reflected Emily as she sat coiled on the ottoman before the fire, writing, by the light of two tall, white candles. [23] (*EC*, 9)

The fire and the candles seem to be connected with her act of creation – writing – and when she, instead of creating, destroys her first book by burning it as mentioned above, the associated metaphor is that there was '[n]othing left but ashes' (*EQ*, 56). The fire lit in this room seems to reflect some wishful thinking on Montgomery's part, as her grandmother refused to let her light a fire in a room to write in.

If Emily's bedroom at New Moon fosters her artistic development, her bedroom at her Aunt Ruth Dutton's house in Shrewsbury discourages it. In her teens, Emily goes to live with her maternal aunt, Ruth Dutton, in the town of Shrewsbury to attend the high school there. This house and her room in it function as signifiers of her struggles against the people who discourage her ambitions as a writer and who are so enveloped in conventionality that they are unable to see any talent or unique abilities in her. Interestingly, Aunt Ruth's house is not named. It is too much an extension of her personality to have an identity of its own. Emily, in her journal, strengthens this impression by writing that she has '"never for one moment felt at home in my room at Aunt Ruth's"', while her room at New Moon makes her feel as if she 'enter[s] into [her] kingdom'. She goes on to write about her room at New Moon that '"I love to read here—dream here—sit by the window and shape some airy fancy into verse"' (*EC*, 216). Emily's room at Aunt Ruth's house is a symbol of oppression and suffocation.

[23]This reflection of Emily is a gentle precursor to her reflection in the gazing ball in the 'Disappointed House' many years later.

The house itself, along with its owner, is used to magnify Emily's sense of being misunderstood.

From the start, Emily's sense of beauty is at odds with the house, as well as with Aunt Ruth and the inhabitants of Shrewsbury. This is illustrated by the contrasts between Emily's opinion of Aunt Ruth's house and the opinion of the general population of Shrewsbury:

> Aunt Ruth's house was at the end of a residential side street—almost out in the country. Emily thought it a very ugly house, covered as it was with gingerbread-work of various kinds. But a house with white wooden lace on its roof and its bay windows was the last word of elegance in Shrewsbury. There was no garden—nothing but a bare, prim, little lawn. (*EC*, 96)

Furthermore, when Emily moves into her room in this house, she hates it 'at sight'. The rest of the passage lists every offending detail in the room. 'The door [that] wouldn't shut tight' hints at Emily's lack of privacy in a house which the owner feels that all the details of the inhabitants' lives are her business and property as a matter of course. 'The slanting ceiling', which 'was rain stained…came down so close to the bed that she could touch it with her hand', creates a sense of oppression in the mind of a reader who could imagine Emily lying in bed with the ceiling centimetres from her face. The fact that she is relegated to a room which is patently neglected is similar to the experience of Valancy in her mother's house in Elm Street. The only decorative elements in the room are either violent colours or items that seem entirely inappropriate and out of tune with Emily's ideas of beauty or harmony. The colours in the room are 'a crude, glaring scarlet', 'militant orange', 'violent green', purple, blue, and 'hideous chocolate brown'. Although scarlet and orange could be warm, comforting colours, in this room they become instead 'crude', 'glaring', and 'militant', in line with Aunt Ruth's attitudes and behaviour. While green and brown are usually associated with nature, as in the peaceful and beautiful descriptions of the pastoral views from Emily's room at New Moon, in this room, they are 'violent' and 'hideous'.

The pictures are listed as 'a chromo of Queen Alexandra, gorgeously bedizened with jewels, hung at such an angle that it seemed the royal lady must certainly fall over on her face'(*EC*, 98), and one of Lord Byron 'on his death-bed at Missolonghi' (*EC*, 103). The furniture is called 'unfriendly' (*EC*, 132). The narrator implies that these pictures are somehow in bad taste, contrasting with the description of the elegant living room at New Moon and Emily's own 'look-out' bedroom there. Emily, seeking to align herself with a more artistic and well-cultured aesthetic, has brought a picture of her own of 'the Lady Giovanna' (a gift from her

wealthy and well-travelled friend, Dean Priest), which she says rightly '"belongs in my room at New Moon. She has always seemed like an exile here"' (*EC*, 316). De Botton (2008:121) argues that a 'painting would act as the guardian of the mood', and this idea is richly illustrated in Emily's reactions to the pictures in the room. The room's colours symbolise Aunt Ruth's (and, by extension, Shrewsbury's) hostility toward Emily, the artist. The pictures, which are chosen by Aunt Ruth and which Emily may not remove, symbolise Emily's feeling of being out of keeping with the people and atmosphere around her.

Emily comes to the conclusion that 'this room is unfriendly—it—doesn't want me—I can never feel at home here', while admitting that she is

> …horribly homesick. She wanted the New Moon candle-lights shining out on the birch-trees—the scent of hop-vines in the dew—her purring pussy cats—her own dear room, full of dreams—the silences and shadows of the old garden—the grand anthems of wind and billow in the gulf—that sonorous old music she missed so much in this inland silence. She missed even the little graveyard where slept the New Moon dead. (*EC*, 99)

This description of her home focuses on the comforting warmth of candle-light (and its associated inspiration) and the beauty and calm of nature as symbolised by the birch-trees, the vines growing up the sides of the house, blending it with nature, the old garden, the wind, the dew and the gulf, as well as Emily's pets, the cats. The other joys of home which are enumerated are Emily's 'own dear room, full of dreams' (like Anne's), and 'the little graveyard where slept the New Moon dead'. The mention of the graveyard indicates not that Emily is morbid, but rather that she is attached to her extended family – both those living and dead – and what they symbolize.

Appropriately, this room's only redeeming virtue is the view from its *window* from which Emily can see a plantation of firs which she calls 'the Land of Uprightness', as well as a little 'pearly pool' and the surrounding countryside (*EC*, 316-317). Susan Meyer (2008:213) discusses the windows in the 'Emily' trilogy:

> Despite the attempt by both Aunt Elizabeth and, more perniciously, Aunt Ruth, to restrict Emily's access to windows and to keep them sealed and "shrouded" (*ENM* 56), Emily's writing is strongly associated with windows: she often writes sitting by them or inspired by what she sees through them. […] Windows prove aesthetically as well as physically vitalizing throughout these novels, as do Emily's experiences outdoors at night in the "night air".

This window and its view reveal that although Emily's circumstances are restrictive, she is nevertheless not without her vision, which continues to sustain her both as a person and as an artist.

Emily's room and her aunt's house do not grow on her. Later she writes in her journal:

> …I shall never like Aunt Ruth's house. It has a disagreeable personality. Houses are like people—some you like and some you don't like—and once in a while there is one you love. Outside, this house is covered with frippery. I feel like getting a broom and sweeping it off. Inside, its rooms are all square and proper and soulless. Nothing you could put into them would ever seem to belong to them. There are no nice romantic corners in it, as there are at New Moon. My room hasn't improved on acquaintance, either. (*EC*, 103-104)

Aunt Ruth's house, 'covered with frippery' (clearly an abiding dislike of Montgomery herself, as her dismissal of such architectural features in several books suggest) which Emily would like to 'sweep off' symbolises both a lack of good taste on the part of her aunt and her neighbours, but perhaps more importantly, the facades and the implied deceit and hypocrisy that go with that. Emily unconsciously equates the house with her aunt, and firmly states that '"it has a disagreeable personality"', neglecting to add: just like Aunt Ruth Dutton. When De Botton (2008:126) writes that 'the architectural impulse seems connected to a longing for communication and commemoration, a longing to declare ourselves to the world…an ambition to let others know who we are – and, in the process, to remind ourselves', it may be interpreted as mainly a positive thing – the 'longing to declare' yourself 'to the world.' However, in this instance, Emily intuitively knows that Aunt Ruth's 'ambition to let others know who' she is sadly is not authentic, but rather ostentatious. Emily adds: 'The ceiling oppresses me—it comes down so low over my bed—and Aunt Ruth won't let me move the bed. She looked amazed when I suggested it' (*EC*, 103-104).[24] Because Aunt Ruth does not allow Emily to alter things in the room, Emily is never able to take full possession of the room and make it a place of her own. In spite of this, she manages to do much of her writing and studying while she is living in the room, but mainly because she is able to escape to the fir trees behind the house in order to refresh her spirit periodically, either by physically going out or by looking out at the trees: "Emily could not remain in that dark little room with its oppressive ceiling and unfriendly furniture. Lord Byron's funereal expression was an insult to her happiness. She threw on her wraps and hurried out to the Land of Uprightness (*EC*, 132).

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[24]Again this is similar to Valancy's position, and one of Valancy's first acts of rebellion is to move her bed.

This room does not support Emily's conception of herself nor her artistic endeavours as her 'look-out' room at New Moon does. The effect that the room has on her which can be explained to some extent by Alain de Botton's argument in *The Architecture of Happiness* (2008:106):

> Unfortunately, the self… the elusively authentic, creative and spontaneous side of our character, is not ours to summon at will. Our access to it is, to a humbling extent, determined by the places we happen to be in, by the colour of the bricks, the height of the ceiling, the height of the ceilings and the layout of the streets.

The other main houses in the Emily trilogy are the Tansy Patch, Wyther Grange, the little house at Malvern and the Disappointed House, all of which have haunting elements. If 'people's emotional relationships can be part of a conscious process where people interact with the physical environment to suit their needs, express themselves and develop their self-concept' (Manzo, 2003:57), then each of these houses either function to 'suit' Emily's needs, support Emily's expression of who she is, or contribute to the development of Emily's self-concept. I would argue that these other houses each signify a different process. The Tansy Patch provides Emily's need for support, Wyther Grange develops Emily's self-concept, and the Disappointed House (assisted by the incident with the little house at Malvern), expresses who Emily is, especially as she grows older.

The Tansy Patch is the childhood home of Emily's close friend, Teddy Kent, whom she eventually marries. The Tansy Patch facilitates Emily's social interaction with a kindred spirit who, like Emily, also has a burning ambition – to become a famous artist. However, from Emily's first acquaintance with Teddy, there are hints that Emily is not welcome at the Tansy Patch, and her friendship with Teddy is complicated by his jealous and unhappy mother. One possible Victorian meaning for the tansy flower is 'wild resistance, I declare against you' (Language of Flowers, n.d.), which is a meaning that aligns well with Mrs Kent's reaction to Emily and her love for and friendship with her son. However, the house itself is 'fascinating' to Emily (*ENM*, 122). The house indicates Teddy's situation:

> The Tansy Patch was east of the Disappointed House, between the Blair Water and the sand-dunes. Most people considered it a bare, lonely, neglected place, but Emily thought it was fascinating. The little clap-boarded house topped a small hill, over which tansy grew in a hard, flaunting, aromatic luxuriance, rising steeply and abruptly from a main road. A straggling rail fence, almost smothered in wild rosebushes, bounded the domain, and a sagging, ill-used little gate gave ingress from the road. Stones were let into the side of the hill for steps up to the front door. Behind the house was a tumbledown little barn, and a field of flowering buckwheat, creamy green, sloping

> down to the Blair Water. In front was a crazy veranda around which a brilliant band of red poppies held up their enchanted cups. (*ENM*, 122)

The bareness and loneliness of the house with its 'straggling rail fence', 'sagging' gate and 'tumbledown little barn' hints at Teddy's isolated and impoverished life with his widowed mother, without explicitly stating it. The fact that the house is on top of a hill hints at Teddy's artistic vision (similar to Emily's room in a high 'tower' and Anne's room at Windy Willows), as does the 'field of flowering buckwheat, creamy green' which slopes toward a nearby pond, while the 'brilliant band of red poppies' which have 'enchanted cups' further cements this impression by connecting his home to nature and beauty.

Although Emily spends 'pleasant hours' at the Tansy Patch in which her need for sympathetic companionship is met, she is still somewhat repelled by Teddy's strange mother, with her haunted eyes, who 'never joined them, though Emily had a creepy conviction that she was watching them stealthily from behind the kitchen blind' (*ENM*, 123). Mrs. Kent succeeds in temporarily separating Emily from Teddy, who (Montgomery seems to imply) is Emily's true soulmate.[25] Epperly (1992:152) makes the intriguing point that

> …[w]hen Teddy and the sunny Tansy Patch are inaccessible to Emily she mistakes Dean Priest's shadowy world of art for the rightful home of the artist spirit. To burst into sunlight – so simple in this early (disrupted) echo of Brontë's red-room episode – becomes the most difficult of Emily's challenges.

Eventually, once both Emily and Teddy have reached their artistic ambitions, they are able to reunite and actively support each other again, as they once did at the Tansy Patch.

In *Emily of New Moon*, Montgomery includes an almost Gothic episode when Emily goes to visit her strange Great-Aunt Nancy at an unwholesomely Gothic house, Wyther Grange. Epperly (1992:159) discusses the Gothic at length, noting that 'Emily has been indulging in too much Gothic-horror reading, and the narrator interprets her responses to the rooms of Wyther Grange'.

Wyther Grange belongs to a member of the Murray clan, Great-Aunt Nancy, who married into the Priest family. It helps to establish a conviction in Emily that she belongs to an important family with a rich past. Emily writes in one of her (somewhat misspelled) 'Dear

[25]Toward the end of *Emily's Quest*, Emily and Mrs. Kent come to an understanding of each other in their united love for and anxiety over Teddy. Emily finds a letter in a book which Mrs. Kent lends her which puts to rest Mrs. Kent's past with the sorrows which haunted her for so long.

Father' letters, which function like a kind of diary: '"There are many interesting things in this house. I love to look at them"' (*ENM*, 249). She goes on to describe the items that appeal most to her for a variety of different reasons. There is '"a Jakobite glass"' which '"an old ancester of the Priests had long ago in Scotland and it has a thistle and a rose on it and they used it to drink Prince Charlie's health with and for no other purpose"' and '"a framed wreath made out of the hair of all the dead Priests and lots of old dagerrotipes"' (*ENM*, 249-250).[26] This is considered '"a very valewable airloom"' which '"Aunt Nancy prizes […] highly"' (*ENM*, 249-250). There is also '"a great silvery shining ball hanging from the lamp in the parlour"' which '"reflects everything like a little fairy world"' as well as, among other things, and a '"chessy-cat door knocker and […] gold ear-rings"' which Emily will all inherit, since they '"are Murray airlooms"' (*ENM*, 249-250). The fact that Emily is told that she is to inherit the Murray heirlooms from Great-Aunt Nancy help to make her feel that she is accepted and belongs in the Murray tribe, even though her surname is different from theirs. Eventually, the silver 'gazing ball' is to play an important role in her story. However, the house and Emily's visit there have disturbing overtones.

Epperly (1992:155, 157) notes that 'Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* shapes much of *Emily of New Moon*', and that 'we hear in Montgomery's lines echoes of Brontë's famous passages'. This influence is particularly remarkable in the chapters and passages focusing on Wyther Grange. In these chapters, Emily becomes the heroine in her own Gothic drama of near death escapes and hints of doom as Dean Priest casts a shadow over her life and intimidating Great-Aunt Nancy confirms her sense of being part of an important family, as well as magnifying her own flair for drama. Wyther Grange creates a sharp contrast with the relatively wholesome life Emily experiences at New Moon. However, it is as though Montgomery needs another setting to introduce and develop another more dramatic aspect of Emily's character which cannot emerge at New Moon in the more down-to-earth house and its people.

Vidler (1987:6) writes that '[t]he house provides an especially favoured locus for uncanny disturbances: its apparent domesticity, its residue of family history and nostalgia, its role as the last and most intimate shelter of private comfort sharpened by contrast the terror of invasion by alien spirits'. This statement is particularly applicable to Great-Aunt Nancy's house at Priest Pond, where Emily seems to have fallen into a darker world and is exposed

[26] When Emily accidentally breaks this family heirloom it can be seen as a metaphor for the way in which she 'breaks the mold' in her family with her fierce individualism and her aspirations of becoming an author.

to the uncanny in various ways. Wyther Grange is described in Emily's thoughts as a 'quaint, old house at Priest Pond with…famous stone dogs on the gate-posts' (*ENM*, 232). The house is made even more 'quaint' by its strange inhabitants, Emily's Great-Aunt Nancy and the relative-through-marriage who lives with her, Caroline Priest, about whom Emily concludes: '"You may be a witch," thought Emily, "but I think I can manage you"' (*ENM*, 238). The strangeness of the house at first overawes Emily. Emily arrives at Wyther Grange in the twilight after driving along a 'sequestered side road, fringed thickly with young maples and birches' and is led into the house by 'a little old woman' (*ENM*, 237-238). Once inside the house, she recalls her reading of *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794) and *The Romance of the Forest* (1791), linking this chapter to Gothic narratives, especially as it is explicitly stated that Emily feels herself to be 'one of the heroines in Gothic romance, wandering at midnight through a subterranean dungeon, with some unholy guide' (*ENM*, 238). The descriptions of the house along with those of Great-Aunt Nancy and Caroline heighten this effect. Epperly (1992:159) discusses this at length:

> The name "Wyther Grange" is itself reminiscent of Thrushcross Grange and Wuthering Heights in Emily Bronte's *Wuthering Heights*, and it is Gothic horror Emily thinks of when she first enters the old house. The Pink Room episode is Montgomery's miniature parody of Gothic terror and Gothic novels. Emily's over-fed imagination brings to mind not only *Jane Eyre* but also Catherine Morland, Jane Austen's heroine of *Northanger Abbey*, the novel-length joke about Gothic thrillers, especially Mrs Radcliffe's. (Epperly, 1992:159)

The 'Pink Room episode' Epperly refers to is the passage in which Emily is nearly frightened to death on her first night at Wyther Grange. The narrator asserts that 'to the end of her life Emily never forgot that first horrible night at Wyther Grange' (*ENM*, 245). The 'panicked horror' which awakens her every few minutes and makes the night so unbearable is a 'rustling and muffled moans' in the wall behind her bed. Emily bitterly regrets all the Gothic novels which she has read and which fill her imagination with all sorts of terrifying ideas:[27]

> Every ghost and groan, every tortured spirit and bleeding nun of the books she had read came into her mind. "Aunt Elizabeth was right—novels aren't fit to read," she thought. "Oh, I will die here—of fright—I know I will. I know I'm a coward—I can't be brave." (*ENM*, 246)

[27] Emily's imagination seems to be primarily shaped by her reading, contrasting with Anne, who creates the somewhat original Haunted Wood which seems to be only partially based on what she has read.

The room itself is described as containing ‘an embroidered ottoman’, curtains of ‘faded pink brocade’, ‘pink [wall]paper decorated with diamonds of rose chains’, and ‘a green carpet…lavishly splashed with big pink roses’ (*ENM*, 244). While Emily at first feels ‘that the room was a very splendid one’, her feelings of the room, as well as its ‘lavish’ decorations contrast even more sharply with horror in the night and makes the whole experience all the more terrible. So, to quote Vidler (1987:6) again, this house becomes a ‘locus for uncanny disturbances’ when its ‘apparent domesticity, its residue of family history and nostalgia, its role as the last and most intimate shelter of private comfort’ is made terrifying by ‘the terror of invasion by alien spirits’. The faded but pretty and femininely comforting details of the room – carpets, roses, brocade, embroidery, ottoman, the colours pink and green – contrast strongly with Emily’s emotional ordeal and seem to parallel Emily’s Great-Aunt Nancy – a once beautiful woman, wife and mother, who now, instead of nurturing Emily, fills her mind with horrible ideas and truly awful narratives about all sorts of people, some of them dead. Her surroundings, Great-Aunt Nancy’s tales, and her already overwhelmed young imagination combine to leave her ‘cold with real terror’:

> Before, her fright had been only on the surface—she had *known* there was nothing to fear, even while she feared. Something in her braced her to endure. But *this* was no mistake—no imagination. The rustles and flutterings and cries and moans were all too real. Wyther Grange suddenly became a dreadful, uncanny place. Ilse was right— it *was* haunted. And she was all alone here, with miles of rooms and halls between her and any human being. It was cruel of Aunt Nancy to put her in a haunted room. Aunt Nancy must have known it was haunted—cruel old Aunt Nancy with her ghoulish pride in men who had killed themselves for her. Oh, if she were back in dear New Moon, with Aunt Elizabeth beside her. Aunt Elizabeth was not an ideal bedfellow but she was flesh-and-blood. And if the windows were hermetically sealed they kept out spooks as well as night air. (*ENM*, 245-246; Montgomery’s emphasis)

The next morning, Emily finds out that the terrible ‘moans and muffles’ she heard were merely the sound of pigeons nesting in the chimney, suggesting that ignorance of the facts paired with an overactive imagination can create real suffering, and in this case, the ordeal is one which the narrator states will haunt Emily all her life.

This experience of Emily as a kind of parody of Gothic horror can be compared to Jane and her mother’s everyday experience in Old Mrs Kennedy’s (Jane’s grandmother) large old mansion, where they are kept separated from Jane’s father because of the old woman’s cruel possessiveness. Jane’s story also includes a large and equally ‘splendid’ pink room used to try to manipulate Jane. If, as Rives’s (2006:8) describes it, ‘Gothic fiction[is] a genre

centred on the lack of privacy, freedom, and safety for women in an isolated, gloomy mansion that harbors malevolent violence', then both *Emily of New Moon* and *Jane of Lantern Hill* contain elements that are excellent examples of this. Emily, although she experiences a degree of freedom at Wyther Grange which has she has not been allowed at New Moon, nevertheless is not allowed any privacy at Wyther Grange and her safety is obviously in jeopardy, in more ways than one. Caroline Priest, Great-Aunt Nancy's relative, meddles with Emily's things thus violating her privacy and Great-Aunt Nancy interrogates her and comments upon her personal appearance in a way that makes Emily uncomfortable, also threatening her.

From Emily's arrival, there are hints that she is in peril, including the subtle threats uttered by Caroline, who says to Emily, referring to 'an immense black grandfather's clock reaching almost to the ceiling: '"We shut little girls up in that when they're bad"' (*ENM*, 238).

Her safety is also compromised by her being left alone to wander along the bay shore, where she slips and nearly falls to her death. In addition to this, Emily's emotional safety is subtly undermined by the malicious and at times horrific gossip (including the gossip about the mother of Emily's friend, Ilse) which Great-Aunt Nancy and Caroline repeat in her hearing, with no regard for the ramifications of exposing her young mind to such information.

The omniscient narrator enters the narrative to inform the reader that the 'flavour of hidden secrets' which 'the beautiful old house', Wyther Grange possesses is 'wholly a trick of its architecture, for there had never been anything in it but the simple tale of births and deaths and marriages and everyday living that most houses have' (*ENM*, 277). This 'trick of its architecture' which Montgomery refers to is believable to the reader because the descriptions of the house emphasise this. First there is 'the spacious hall', then 'glimpses' of 'large, dim, splendid rooms', 'an odd little back hall' that is 'long, narrow, and dark' with 'a row of four, square, small-paned windows' and cupboards 'reaching from floor to ceiling, with doors of black shining wood'. Emily enjoys all this, of course ('It was awful but interesting', she says), because the house appeals to her imagination and makes her feel as though she is inside a romantic novel. Everywhere there are steps, 'a flight of four steps up

to a door', and four steps that lead down into Great-Aunt Nancy's boudoir-like bedroom, which is the room where she spends most of her life (*ENM*, 238-239).[28]

Montgomery uses the experiences that Emily has at Wyther Grange to portray her developing imagination, and also her ability (and at times, inability) to handle more adult information. Emily's sojourn at Wyther Grange changes her in some inexplicable way: 'Emily had grown, taller and older, in soul, if not in body' (*ENM*, 282). The atmosphere of the house and its inhabitants impact and enrich Emily's perceptions in a way that would have been impossible at New Moon.

The 'little house at Malvern' is one of the uncanny houses of the Emily trilogy, associated with imprisonment as well as a haunting quality, which is all 'the more disquieting for the absolute normality of the setting, its absence of overt terror. The effect [is] one of the disturbing unfamiliarity of the evidently familiar' (Vidler 1987:7).The 'uncanny power' of this house in *Emily Climbs* is emphasised by Emily, who, when she first sees the house, exclaims: 'That house belongs to me' (*EC*, 179).

This also alerts the reader that Emily has an unusual ability to see things that are hidden to other people. Also, because she intuitively 'owns' the house on first sight, her later supernatural revelation about the accidental imprisonment of the little boy, Allan Bradshaw, in the newly-built house seems all the more believable. The little house at Malvern is described in an isolated setting, much like Emily's little brown House in the Hollow, where she was born and spent her early childhood with her father. It is 'a little house built in the cup of a tiny bay…no other house was in sight' and '[a]ll about it was a lovely autumnal solitude' (*EC*, 179).

This isolation as well as its size hints at the fascination it holds for Emily, who asserts emphatically that '"It's hard for a big house to have any personality […] But little houses almost always have. That house is full of it"' (*EC*, 180). Throughout her fiction, Montgomery seems to prefer small houses to larger ones, excepting only Ingleside. Wyther Grange is a large house, as is Jane's grandmother, Old Mrs Kennedy's house at 60 Gay Street in Toronto. Jane and her mother both eventually leave this house for the little cottage at Lantern Hill or the family-sized (but still) cosy house at Lakeside Gardens. Perhaps this

[28] In this, Great-Aunt Nancy is very similar to Aunt Becky, the spider-like old matriarch in *A Tangled Web,* who spends most of her time not only in a bedroom, but in bed. Like Great-Aunt Nancy, 'When she wanted to say a thing she said it', no matter what anyone else felt about it (*TW,* 2). In *Magic for Marigold,* Marigold's sharp-witted 'Old Grandmother' is also bed-bound, ruling the household by her caustic remarks. She only leaves her bedroom for a short while on the eve of her death.

preference for smaller homes is an unconscious association on Montgomery's part with comfort. In the days before efficient heating and electricity, large houses could be cold and draughty and therefore incredibly uncomfortable in Canada's harsh winters. Also, before the advent of dishwashers, vacuum cleaners, and laundry washing machines, it could be a Sisyphean task to keep a large house clean enough to be pleasant, while a small house would be easier to heat up and more manageable to keep clean and comfortable.

The little house at Malvern is interesting because it is used to showcase Emily's abilities as a 'seer', or her possession of a kind of 'sixth sense'. After Emily ascertains the location of the little lost boy in a dream (he is trapped in a closet in this house), the house's significance to the reader increases. When she first comes across the house, Emily also tells her friend Ilse that she feels as though the house is 'calling' her. Additionally, she affirms the ability of the house to communicate to her, and, that she herself is able to understand what it is saying and so respond to it:

> "There isn't a line or a corner that isn't eloquent, and those casement windows are lovable—especially that little one high up under the eaves over the front door. It's absolutely smiling at me. Look at it glowing like a jewel in the sunshine out of the dark shingle setting. The little house is greeting us. You dear friendly thing, I love you—I understand you… I hate to leave it. I have the oddest feeling, Ilse, that it's calling to me—that I ought to go back to it." (*EC*, 179-180)

This house seems somehow to become one with the little boy who is 'calling' to be rescued. Emily's poetic ability to infuse inanimate objects with life and meaning helps her, in this case, to reveal the location of the boy who is trapped in this house. The narrator uses this episode to depict Emily's gift to see beyond the surface and intuitively reveal the truth.

As Epperly (1992:169) reminds us, in each of the 'Emily' books, Emily undergoes a psychic experience:

> …in *Emily Climbs*, the major psychic experience comes just over half-way through the book. The experience itself makes exciting reading, but it is important in our understanding of Emily for the literary gift it brings for her. This time Emily's vision saves a little boy's life

Twice, these psychic experiences involve a house. In *Emily Climbs*, the psychic experience involves the little house at Malvern. In *Emily's Quest*, this experience involves the Disappointed House, where Emily has a vision in which she sees Teddy Kent and calls him away from an ocean voyage which would have led to his death.

In the 'Emily' trilogy, it is patently obvious that the Disappointed House is one of the houses whose hearts have been broken.[29] In these novels, Montgomery is subtly aligning Emily with this house, and letting the reader know that it is not in fact the house's, but rather Emily's heart which has been broken. This is similar to Emily's transposing her own feelings onto the little brown House in the Hollow early in *Emily of New Moon* when she is broken-hearted at leaving. Epperly (1992:211) states that for Emily, New Moon and then the Disappointed House 'express who and what she is. The physical house reifies each heroine's perception of beauty, honour and tradition, and sense of self'. In the 'Emily' novels, there is a curious undertone of heartbreak and disillusionment, which constantly alerts the reader that Emily, just like the 'little grey' Disappointed House, is ill-fated.

Montgomery uses the image of the house to symbolise the absence of love in Emily's life, that is no doubt a result of the loss of her parents and the nurturing they should have provided, had they been present in her life. Waterston (2008:113) claims that Montgomery depicts a parallel between Emily's emotional needs and those of Montgomery herself:

> Montgomery found a source for both major elements in *Emily of New Moon* – the minutiae of adult powers ranged against a child, and the power to withstand through imaginative escape – in her journals. Those diaries reminded her that "Materially, I was well cared for […] It was emotionally and socially that my nature was starved and restricted" (January 7, 1910). Re-reading her journals, she also recalled her childhood discovery of a countervailing ability "to live that strange inner life of fancy which had always existed side by side with my outer life—a life into which I have so often escaped from the dull or painful real." (January 7, 1910)

It is only at the end of the third novel, *Emily's Quest*, when Emily finally marries Teddy Kent and Dean Priest gives the Disappointed House to them as a wedding gift, that Montgomery writes: 'Before her on the dark hill, against the sunset, was the little beloved grey house that was to be disappointed no longer' (*EQ*, 241). Unfortunately, by that time the reader may struggle to believe that either the Disappointed House or Emily is 'to be disappointed no longer'. Throughout the novels, with the last two, *Emily Climbs* and *Emily's Quest*, especially, the idea that Emily is one of those people doomed to be unhappy in one way or another has been reiterated constantly. This was an idea which haunted Montgomery herself, especially toward the end of her life, and was involved with the sad loss of her parents and her own perception of herself as living an essentially tragic life, which is a theme evidenced by her journals. In one of these journals, Montgomery writes: 'I

[29] In *Magic for Marigold* (1929), Marigold's 'Old Grandmother' informs Marigold: '"Places know when they're loved, same as people. I've seen houses whose hearts were actually broken. This house and I have always been good friends. I've always loved it from the day I came here as a bride"' (*MM,* 75).

feel a great and awful weariness—not of body or brain, but of feeling, coupled with a heavy dread of the future—any future, even a happy one', and later 'I seem to be haunted by a vague, teasing dread of impending evil' (*SJ*, *Vol. 1*, 333, 340). Fiamengo (2005:171, 172) confirms this idea, suggesting that '[d]epression was a fact of life for Montgomery, but it also became an important discourse through which she created her life narrative', and '[p]eriods of deep unhappiness are a feature of Montgomery's journals'. In their introduction to *L.M. Montgomery's Rainbow Valleys: The Ontario Years*, *1911-1942*, Rita Bode and Lesley D. Clement (2015:14-15) confirm that

> …Montgomery's engagement with theatrical productions, most notably G.B. Shaw's *Saint Joan*, turns her from the self-fashioning that her journals regularly evince to self-dramatization in which she emerges at the centre of a tragic narrative that both sustains and dooms her.

Emily's narrative is similar to Montgomery's, and focuses her sense of personal tragedy and of being thwarted at every turn, onto the little and characteristically grey, Disappointed House, using it to express these emotions. During her childhood at New Moon, Emily, after naming the unfinished house near New Moon 'the Disappointed House', links it with her and her dreams. She furnishes it in her imagination, asserts that 'it wants to be' finished, and determines that it will be the first thing she buys once she is a famous author (*ENM*, 65, 73-74, 213). On one occasion, she slips into the house with her friend Teddy, and together they kindle a fire in the 'dear little fireplace', dreaming about making a home in the house together where 'Teddy will paint pictures' and Emily 'will write poetry' (*ENM*, 287-288). For Emily, who has lost her own true home with her father – 'The House in the Hollow' – the Disappointed House symbolises her feelings of being left homeless and incomplete by her father's death. The Disappointed House does not merely evoke a dwelling to Emily, but with it, all that goes with a home and what that means. When Emily plans to buy the Disappointed House by means of becoming a rich and famous author (*ENM*, 213), she indicates that being a successful writer is for her a means of recapturing that part of her which has been abandoned by the loss of her family of origin. She wants to recapture not only a home, but also a sense of being valuable and secure. Becoming an important writer who earns enough money to buy her own home promises this to her. Gerson (1995:29) confirms this idea when she states that

> Unmarried women, like Pat of Silver Bush and Emily's aunts, may be in danger of losing their beloved homes because property is inherited through the men in their families (replicating the plight of Montgomery's widowed grandmother); property is therefore Emily's first major purchase with her earnings as a writer.

The Disappointed House is for Emily also inextricably bound up with Teddy Kent, with whom she has 'made a fire in the fireplace and […] planned out [their] lives' when they would both be successful in their chosen careers (*EQ*, 18). Later, she has a vision or psychic experience in the Disappointed House which 'seemed to be vacant, waiting for her', in which she rescues Teddy from certain death (*EQ*, 90-93). When Emily's perception of her life being a tragedy so clouds her reason that she agrees to marry Dean Priest, he buys the Disappointed House for her and they furnish it together. It is only because Emily is convinced that her love for Teddy will be unrequited, that she can allow Dean to buy this house for them to live in after their marriage (which does not take place after all). The description of Emily's furnishing the house with Dean's assistance is spread over many pages, and according to Waterston (2008:144-145), 'reflects Montgomery's excitement at the time of writing this book', as she was preparing to move her family to Norval and she 'enjoyed deploying her belongings, both the books and pictures and ornaments […] and also the elegant new furniture'. Dean is a member of the Priest clan, and is linked to Wyther Grange and Great-Aunt Nancy, as Emily meets him during her first visit to Wyther Grange. There are similarities between Dean's influence on Emily and the gruesome gossip and terror which Emily experiences at Wyther Grange. Much older than Emily, he is possessive and jealous of her creative powers and her ambition. Just as the Disappointed House is doomed to disappointment, so Dean is doomed. After Emily breaks off her engagement with him, he states: '"So this is still to be the Disappointed House. Verily, there is a doom on it. Houses, like people, can't escape their doom, it seems"' (*EQ*, 102). But Emily also sees herself as doomed. Her vision and rescue of Teddy renders her incapable of continuing her engagement with Dean: 'Emily averted her gaze from the little house she had loved—still loved. It would never be hers now. It was still to be haunted by the ghosts of things that never happened' (*EQ*, 102). Montgomery uses the Disappointed House in the Emily books as a metaphor to express a deep truth about not only Emily, but perhaps also about herself. This novel could be interpreted as subtly implying Montgomery's qualms about her own happiness as Emily communicates constant doubts that she will never find happiness. Fittingly, the narrator uses the image of a house for Emily to express this idea in her journal:

> My dear little house! And it is never to be a home. I feel as I felt that evening years ago when I followed the rainbow—and lost it. "There will be other rainbows" I said then. But will there be? (*EQ*, 107)

According to Waterston (2008:12), the houses in the Emily trilogy are 'haunting'. Emily's consciousness seems to be permeated by the houses she has dwelt in, and which her parents

and ancestors have dwelt in. These spaces are infused with meaning – the family pride of the Murrays, Emily's ambitions to become a writer, her inevitable experiences of disappointment and disillusionment, but most of all by loss – the loss of Emily's, and subliminally, Montgomery's parents. They shape Emily's self and punctuate the trajectory of her life; some fulfil her needs, but, unlike the houses in many of Montgomery's other books, even the houses Emily most love do not always fulfil her complex needs.

Chapter 4:
The House of Nostalgia: Pat and Silver Bush

> I went over the fields to the old home. It […] is and ever must be hallowed ground to me. Everything I looked on had some memory of pleasure or pain. That old farm is very eloquent […] It is mine—*mine*. I can see every room and line of it, every picture, every stick of furniture. (*SJ*, *Vol. 4*, 11; Montgomery's emphasis)

The Pat novels follow Pat Gardiner as she grows up living in her family home, Silver Bush, to which she has a fierce attachment. This chapter about *Pat of Silver Bush* (1933) and *Mistress Pat* (1935) discusses the idea that two of the themes underlying these novels are what Rita Bode calls the 'anguish of mother loss' and, linked to that, nostalgia and a longing for the home of one's childhood. In both novels, Pat's resistance to change of any kind and her affection for her home remain constant. Her affection outlasts her early childhood, and remains a shaping influence in her young adult years. For her, Silver Bush is inextricably connected to her identity, because it fulfils various needs, and she cannot imagine a life without it.

In *Pat of Silver Bush*, Pat expresses her love for the Gardiner family's home: 'I love the very walls of it' (*PSB*, 73). Silver Bush, the house, and Judy, the housekeeper who inhabits, rules and embodies the generous protectiveness of Silver Bush, provide Pat, her brothers and sisters, and her friend Jingle (Hilary Gordon), with every possible creature comfort: food, warmth and shelter. Silver Bush offers both its inhabitants and its readers a seductive rural domestic idyll, inviting nostalgia for an ideal of comfort and security.

Curiously, unlike the homes in most of Montgomery's other books, Silver Bush, the house, is not described at length in *Pat of Silver Bush* and only slightly more in *Mistress Pat*. To readers already initiated into Montgomery's writing, Silver Bush seems to be the quintessential home which Montgomery so often describes in her novels, but the very vagueness of the details allows readers to add their own ideals into the picture. Outwardly, the farm house is 'painted white and has bottlegreen shutters' (*MP*, 372). It is described as a beautiful house, 'even on [a] dour November day' Silver Bush looked beautiful, and surrounded by 'sheltering trees' (*MP*, 365). For Pat, it is characterised by 'peace and dignity and beauty' which seem to 'envelop her like a charm' (*MP*, 212). The house creates the

impression that '[n]othing very terrible could happen there... (*MP*, 212). Pat often reflects wonderingly on Silver Bush on the way home from seeing friends or from a walk:

> [I]t seemed especially beautiful, making an incredibly delicate picture with its dark background of silver birches and dim, dreaming winter fields…A warm golden light was gleaming out of the kitchen window...the light of home. It was fascinating to look at the door and realise that by just opening it one could step into beauty and light and love. (*MP*, 243)

The laughter in Silver Bush is symbolic of the companionship of family and friends which the house facilitates. The people who live in it are welcoming.

> Every room in it meant something...had some vital message for her. It had the look that houses wear when they have been loved for years. It was a house where nobody ever seemed to be in a hurry...a house from which nobody ever went away without feeling better in some way...a house in which there was always laughter. There had been so much laughter at Silver Bush that the very walls seemed soaked in it. It was a house where you felt welcome the moment you stepped into it. It took you in...rested you. The very chairs clamoured to be sat upon, so hospitable was it. (*MP*, 4-5)

The narrator describes Pat's affection for the house and attachment to it, anthropomorphising it and its contents by insisting that even the chairs 'clamoured to be sat upon' and later that the house 'seemed breathing softly and contentedly in its sleep' (*MP*, 45).

Important features of Silver Bush are the trees surrounding it, the light that shines from it, and the laughter which fills it. The trees around the house symbolise that it is a cosy, protected place. The light shining from it symbolises the warmth and nourishment which it provides. Often the light is specifically linked to the kitchen and to Judy within it, preparing meals or 'liddle' snacks for members of the family and their friends:

> The light shone out from the door and windows of the kitchen where Judy would be preparing supper. […] The colour of home on an autumn dusk was an exquisite thing. The trees all around it seemed to love it. The house belonged to them and to the garden and the green hill and the orchard and they to it. (*MP*, 21-22)

The fulfilment of physical needs are symbolized by a comfortable house – Silver Bush, in this case. Judy's kitchen is the heart of Silver Bush, and it is described over and over again as a setting for comfort and nourishment. The kitchen is the setting of meals with Judy:

> It was such fun to have breakfast there with Judy and have the milk poured over their porridge out of her "cream cow" [...] that little old brown jug in the shape of a cow, with her tail curled up in a most un-cowlike fashion for a handle and her mouth for a spout. (*PSB*, 38).

The focus on the delights of the meal and the crockery used provide a mental feast for the reader, and work to establish the idea that it is at home, in the kitchen, where there is comfort and happiness.

The first description of the kitchen, early in *Pat of Silver Bush*, focuses in detail on the interior and the various items in it. The room is characterised as 'a cheery place', 'tidy and spotless', featuring white and blue, with touches of warm colours: 'The walls were whitewashed snowily: the stove shone: Judy's blue and white jugs on the scoured dresser sparkled in the rays of the rising sun. Judy's geraniums bloomed in the windows' (*PSB*, 38). The extreme cleanliness implied by the words 'tidy', 'spotless', 'whitewashed snowily', 'shone', 'scoured' and 'sparkled', and the mention of the porridge and the 'cream cow' symbolise creature comforts, while the rays of the sun and the geraniums provide a hint of connection with nature and a sense of rootedness. The mention of white or light colours – 'snowily', 'white' and 'cream' suggest the innocence and simplicity, but also the richness of a protected childhood. The various quaint decorations in the kitchen provide a homelike atmosphere, where aesthetics are not scorned but are necessarily secondary to comfort and cheer. Not least of the décor is the emphasis on cats:[30]

> The space between stove and table was covered by a big, dark-red rug with three black cats hooked in it. The cats had eyes of yellow wool which were still quite bright and catty in spite of the fact that they had been trodden over for many years [...] there were three marvellous kittens in a picture on the wall...Judy's picture, likewise brought out from Ireland. Three white kittens with blue eyes, playing with a ball of silk thread gloriously entangled. Cats and kittens might come and go at Silver Bush, but Judy's kittens were eternally young and frisky. This was a comfort to Pat. (*PSB*, 39)

Not all the pictorial elements feature cats, although these are mentioned only after the description of the items closer to Judy's heart, reminding her of her country of origin. There are also other pictures, 'Queen Victoria at her coronation and King William riding his white horse over the Boyne' (*PSB*, 39). The pictures of Queen Victoria and King William link Pat's family to their British ancestry, while a marble cross and a huge open Bible establish the Gardiners as being a Christian family. Motivational texts also feature, 'mottoes worked in wool...*Home Sweet Home*...*Upwards and Onwards* [...] [Pat]...liked them on the walls of Judy's kitchen. It wouldn't have been quite the same without them (*PSB*, 39-40). The motto worked in wool, 'Home Sweet Home', is emblematic of Pat's sense of Silver Bush.

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[30] Noomé (2018, in press) discusses cats in Montgomery's novels in detail, including the cats at Silver Bush.

To Pat, the most important of all is the sense of changelessness and implied stability of this kitchen:

> It wouldn't have been quite the same without them. It was lovely, Pat thought as she ate her toast, that everything was just the same. She had had a secret, dreadful fear that she would find everything changed and different and heart-breaking. (*PSB*, 40)

It is noticeable that in this kitchen, many items are not merely associated with Judy (who is truly an integral member of the household, rather than a mere employee) – the items actually *belong* to Judy, who brought them with her from Ireland, for example, her cream-cow, cat picture and copper candlestick. Throughout the novels Judy and her kitchen are the essence of comfort, homeliness and cheer:

> Judy had set her little copper candlestick, saucer-shaped with a curly handle, on the window-sill for welcome, and they had smelt her salt pork frying half way through the bush. Then the warm kitchen, full of delicious smells, and Judy's delight and welcome, and the supper of fried salt pork and potatoes baked in their jackets. […] After supper Pat and Hilary went down into the big, mysterious cellar, spooky with giant shadows, for apples, and then they all sat around the stove that was as good as a fireplace, with its doors that slid so far back, and talked things over. It was lovely to sit there, so cosy and warm, with that eerie wind moaning without. (*PSB*, 104)

Judy and Silver Bush are inextricably connected in Pat and the readers' minds: 'Judy's delight and welcome', as well as the 'delicious' meal she prepares for them, confirms to Pat and Hilary that they are in a place where they are wanted and accepted. The contrast provided by 'the big, mysterious cellar, spooky with giant shadows' and the 'eerie wind moaning without' enhances the charm and delight of the setting. Because Hilary has lost his parents, and Pat possibly feels threatened by her mother's ill-health, this feeling of being nurtured and nourished is especially important to both of them. However, for Pat it is a treasured experience which she accepts as normal, while for Hilary it is unusual and all the more wonderful for that:

> "I'm so glad it's got cold enough to have a fire in the evenings," said Pat. "And in winter it'll be even nicer. One can be so cosy in winter."
>
> Hilary said nothing. His idea of winter evenings was very different. A cold, dirty kitchen...a smoking coal oil lamp...a bed in the unfinished loft. But just now he…was perfectly happy. To sit here and munch apples with Pat while Judy thumped and kneaded her bread was all he asked. (*PSB*, 104)

The mention of the copper candlestick and the fire calls to mind bright, warm colours – red, orange, yellow – and heat. Kennedy (1953:193) explains the importance of fire as a house-related motif:

> The essential quality of fire is perhaps its element of mystery. Children are particularly involved in this aspect of it. […] But the significance of the fire would by no means seem to end here. In fundamental terms the house is a symbol of women, hollow, womb-like, commodious, and warm. It is also run, managed, cleaned, and tended by women[31].

Later in the novel, Pat joins Judy in her work of running Silver Bush, the house, and participates in the symbolism which Judy represents as keeper of the Silver Bush hearth.

Surprisingly, Pat's own bedroom is never described in great detail, as Anne, Emily, Valancy, and Jane's rooms are. Perhaps that is because Pat, unlike most of Montgomery's other heroines, is part of a large family and shares a room with her sister, Rae. However, it is more likely that Pat's love for the house, in its entirety, prevents her from being excessively fond of a single room. The fullest description of this room occurs in *Mistress Pat*, when the narrator prepares the reader for the destruction of Silver Bush, describing Pat's last night in her room (where at this time she sleeps alone, as her sister has married and left home), but even here, the interior of the room is not described in any detail:

> Thus was passed her last night in that beloved old room where she had dreamed her dreams of girlhood and suffered the heartaches of womanhood, where she had endured her defeats and exulted over her victories. Never again was she to lay her head on its pillow...never again waken to see the morning sunshine gleaming in at her vine-hung window. She had looked from that window on spring blossom and summer greenness, on autumn fields and winter snows. She had seen star-shine and sunrise from it. She had knelt there in keen happiness and bitter sorrow. And now that was all finished. (*MP*, 364).

The main focus in this paragraph is not on the room's physical characteristics, but on the room's function as a setting for Pat's emotional experiences and thoughts. Further, the narrator's tone is elegiac, pre-emptively nostalgic, already mourning the loss of this setting for Pat and all that it entails. Only brief mention is made of the room in relation to Pat's sister, Rae, who dresses in this room on the day she gets married, another sad occasion. Rae 'found it hard to keep back her tears when she turned at the door of her room for a farewell look. […] Now she was going, never to come back' (*MP*, 336). This sorrowful tone is in keeping with the rest of the two novels, with their focus on change and the loss of what went before.

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[31] This theme of women and housekeeping is particularly prominent in the Pat novels, in *Anne's House of Dreams*, in *Jane of Lantern Hill* and in *The Blue Castle*.

Like Pat, Judy also implies that Silver Bush has human emotions, projecting her own subconscious ideas onto the house. Manzo (2005:75) explains that some people use 'anthropomorphic terms' in 'describing particularly strong, positive relationships to places'. When Judy sets off on a trip to Ireland, only to return to Silver Bush, homesick before her boat has even sailed, she says to Rae, Pat's younger sister:

> "I do be just where I want to be […] faling rale high and hilarious. Sure and I do be good frinds wid Silver Bush agin. It's been looking at me reproachful-like for a long time. I'm knowing now I cud niver be laving it." (*MP*, 194)

When Pat, as a little girl, goes up the stairs to Judy's room above the kitchen, she always stops on the landing to look out through 'her favourite window, opening outward like the porthole of a ship' (*PSB*, 16). Pat uses this window as a vantage point from which she surveys the place she loves – Silver Bush Farm. To Pat, the view from this window holds special delights: 'Dear little fitful breezes came to that window that never came anywhere else and you saw such lovely things out of it' (*PSB*, 16). This passage implies that Pat has a unique way of looking at Silver Bush, just as the window is unusual.

Pat's adoration of her home is similar to that felt for a beloved family member. She sees the house not as a physical space, but as a participator in the creation of her family's life: 'She looked with eyes of love at the old, snow-roofed house drawing its cloak of trees around it in the still mild winter evening. Even in winter Silver Bush was lovely because of what it sheltered and hoped for' (*PSB*, 121). Understanding Silver Bush, the house, helps us to understand Pat herself, especially as '[a] household is a place for seclusion, solace, and companionship. Within this protection, the group maintains its identity and sense of place' (Keiser, 1978:31). Pat expresses her secure attachment to her family: '"Isn't a family one of the loveliest things in the world, Judy?"' (*PSB*, 121). For Pat, it is all-important to help her family maintain its identity by protecting 'the seclusion, solace, and companionship' found in the household: '"Isn't it nice just to be here by ourselves and no outsiders?" she said to Judy as they sat on the steps' (*PSB*, 203).

Pat often expresses her intention to protect Silver Bush to Judy when she is about to leave home for a time to attend Queen's College:

> "You wouldn't think a house could be so nice as Silver Bush is in so many different ways, Judy. And the pieces of furniture in it don't seem like furniture. They're *persons*, Judy. That old chair that was Great-grandfather Nehemiah's…when I sit in it it just puts its arms around me, Judy. I feel it. And all the chairs just *want* to be sat in. […] I guess I'm hopelessly Victorian, Judy. […] I really don't want to do anything in the world but

> stay on here at Silver Bush and love it and take care of the things in it and plan for it." (*PSB*, 269-270)

The Silver Bush of Pat's childhood facilitates family life and attachment because it draws on its nostalgic and thus idealising love for the Gardiners' past, and excludes outsiders – it is a protected environment which might only be entered by invitation, as Hilary does. The house and its furniture participate in the life of the family by influencing its residents and shaping their interactions with each other.

Thus Silver Bush and Judy Plum provide Pat with the comfort she needs to manage her daily life and emotional reactions. Hilary Gordon – a fatherless boy and Pat's dearest friend – also finds comfort in visiting Silver Bush and Pat. But changes come, inevitably, to Silver Bush and the family that live there. First, Pat's aunt and later her two sisters leave home after getting married. The poor health of Mrs. Gardiner, Pat's mother, results in Pat's eventually taking over her mother's role in the management of the house at Silver Bush, further cementing her attachment to the home and all it signifies. Her oldest brother leaves home to become a sailor; her brother, Sid, marries Pat's arch-enemy, May Binnie; friends come and go, and the family experiences financial trials. Even Hilary later leaves to pursue a career in architecture. Worst of all, Judy Plum dies, and Silver Bush burns down.

According to Hay (1998:6),

> If a person resides in a place for many years, particularly if that person is raised there, then he or she often develops a 'sense of place', feeling at home and secure there, with feelings of belonging for the place being one anchor for his or her identity.

In a similar way, the 'anchor' for Pat's identity is Silver Bush, where she has lived for most of her life and where she feels safe and fulfilled. Pat's greatest fear is that Silver Bush will change and she will not be able to do something to prevent it. Her very identity is threatened by change at Silver Bush.

When Pat's Aunt Hazel gets married at Silver Bush, the house is spruced up for the wedding in a variety of ways, all of which distress Pat to a greater or lesser extent because they change the way things used to be, and are precursors of the coming change when Aunt Hazel will no longer live at Silver Bush. The changes and preparations before the wedding as well as the chaos and empty house after the wedding disturb her equilibrium:

> Pat turned away and wandered dismally through the empty rooms. With everything so upset and disarranged upstairs and down Silver Bush wasn't like home at all. Even the new lace curtains seemed part of the strangeness. The table, that had been so pretty,

> looked terrible...untidy...crumby...messy...with Aunt Hazel's chair pushed rakily aside just as she had risen from it. Pat's brown eyes were drowned again. (*PSB*, 64)

These changes threaten her security, because for Pat especially, 'home [is] a place where one feels ontologically secure' and provides 'the "satisfactions" of identity and security and, to a lesser extent, stimulation' (Easthope, 2004:134). After the wedding, her greatest joy is restoring the house to its previous state with Judy's help:

> Somehow it would be a comfort to have the sideboard and the old parlour rocker that had been put out of sight as too shabby, and the vases of pampas grass that had been condemned as old-fashioned, back again where they belonged. (*PSB*, 64)

Pat's emotional well-being is very dependent on her personal environment, and putting everything back in its place restores her sense of personal equilibrium.

With keen insight, Epperly (1992:8) asserts that, in Montgomery's novels, 'love of place is a way of celebrating the centred, whole personality. For Montgomery's heroines 'home' includes an awareness of the centred self; 'home' is an attitude as well as a place.' Pat is an example of this, because, to her, Silver Bush is the place that makes her feel centred and whole. After festivities at Silver Bush, such as weddings or Christmas celebrations, Pat's perception is that '[t]he house, after all the revel and excitement, had a dishevelled, cynical, ashamed look' and her chief longing is 'to fall upon it and restore it to serenity and self-respect', and in so doing, restore her own serenity (*MP*, 65). After her sister, Winnie's wedding, it is the same story – a house 'always looked very pathetic and unfriended on a dawn after a festivity. Pat found happiness and comfort in restoring it all from cellar to garret' (*PSB*, 314). When Silver Bush is out of order, she seems to experience herself as being off-balance and lost. Silver Bush, ordered to her liking, provides her with comfort that is essential to her inner serenity. And when Silver Bush burns down, she desperately needs another place on which to centre herself. This desperate need allows her finally to embrace Hilary Gordon and the home he has built for her.

Towards the end of *Pat of Silver Bush*, after Winnie gets married, Pat is established as the housekeeper at Silver Bush. One of the Gardiner daughters has to take on this role because their mother's ill-health prevents her from doing so herself. This is what Pat has always longed to do. In her mid-teens, Pat is already expressing this desire: '"I don't want to go to college. I'm just going to stay at Silver Bush and help Judy"' (*PSB*, 175).

When Pat experiences a loss of any kind she turns with renewed passion to Silver Bush for comfort and purpose. After her dear childhood friend, Bets, dies, she asserts that 'Silver

Bush was all her comfort now. Her love for it seemed the only solid thing under her feet. Insensibly she drew comfort and strength from its old, patient, familiar acres' (*PSB*, 267). When Pat becomes aware that Rae, her sister, 'had some secret trouble...for the first time an unshared trouble', Pat is reassured because 'Silver Bush made everything bearable' and

> Pat loved it more with every passing year and all the little household rites that meant so much to her. Always when she came home to Silver Bush its peace and dignity and beauty seemed to envelop her like a charm. Nothing very terrible could happen there. (*MP*, 212)

When her sister, Rae, eventually marries and goes to live in China, 'Pat cried herself to sleep for several nights, and then devoted herself to Silver Bush more passionately than ever.' (*MP*, 183). When Hilary's and Pat's dog, McGinty, dies, she writes to Hilary that 'life seems to be just change...change...change. Everything changes but Silver Bush. It is always the same and I love it more every day of my life' (*MP*, 187).

Pat's home is threatened by a variety of different changes – family members leave to attend college or to marry, her brother Joe leaves home to become a sailor, her frequently ill mother has to have a life-threatening operation. However, the greatest threat she encounters is the threat of having her home changed irrevocably by someone who, as an interloper, becomes part of the family, someone whom Pat experiences as hostile to her own values and standards – May Binnie, a childhood schoolmate and enemy of Pat. Out of the blue, Pat's brother, Sid, marries May Binnie and brings her to Silver Bush to live, to the consternation not only of Pat but also of the rest of the Gardiner family, who regard May and her family as hopelessly 'common'.[32] Pat and Judy's only consolation is that they've 'got to be saving Silver Bush from her' (*MP*, 266).

The passages depicting the hostility between Pat and May Binnie – who insults Silver Bush on various occasions, thereby insulting Pat herself – may mirror events in Montgomery's own life at the time when she was writing *Mistress Pat*. Montgomery's elder son, Chester, married a girl called Luella Reid, someone Montgomery felt was beneath him socially. Too soon after, they had a child. The circumstances of her son's marriage and the ensuing scandal in the parish were a terrible shock and embarrassment for both Montgomery herself and her husband, a minister. Waterston (2008:183) explains how these events in Montgomery's life are echoed in *Mistress Pat*:

[32] The Binnies clearly fall into the same category of Philistines as the Pyes and the Sloanes, and the Pringles in the 'Anne' books.

> The main difference from the situation Montgomery faced vis-à-vis Chester and Luella is that the focus in *Mistress Pat* is not on ensuing scandal but on intrusion into the home place. May Binnie is a completely wrong type of person to treasure and enhance Silver Bush. Even Judy Plum is crushed.

Sid's marriage devastates Pat, who is sure that May 'would get Silver Bush by hook or crook. Already at times she assumed sly airs of mistress-ship' (*MP*, 286). Pat seems convinced that she will not be up to the task of protecting her home and her family from May's familiarity and devaluation of what Pat and the other Gardiners hold dear. Mallet's (2004:82) comment on the value of home to an individual sheds some light on the Gardiners' response:

> Home as privacy means a space where one has the capacity to establish and control personal boundaries. The term roots denotes home as a source of identity and meaning in the world and finally paradise refers to a constellation of positive idealized notions of home, evident in but not confined to the other key signifiers.

When May comes to live at Silver Bush, Pat loses her 'capacity to establish and control personal boundaries'. Because of this, Pat experiences fear and loss because her needs may not be met and her identity is threatened. Indeed, in the end, Pat is forced to leave Silver Bush as a result of May's negligence: Silver Bush burns down because May is careless with a woodstove.

Twigger-Ross and Uzzell (1996:208) assert that 'place is inextricably linked with the development and maintenance of continuity of self. Furthermore, the self can be threatened by unwanted interruptions to emotionally salient places'. Pat's self is threatened by the unwanted interruption of May Binnie into her beloved home. Pat is like her younger sister Rae, who returning home after an absence says: '"It's lovely to be home again. […] I had a splendid time at Guelph. […] But […] there is no place like Silver Bush. It must do something to people who live in it"', although May seems to be immune to its charm and influence (*MP*, 226).

One of May Binnie's greatest sins in Pat's eyes, is that she wants to change to Silver Bush: '"If I were you," she would remark airily to Pat, "I'd make a few changes round here"' (*MP*, 276). For her, the house holds no memories, and offers no nostalgic reasons to preserve anything about it. Pat replies 'stiffly' to May's suggestions: '"Silver Bush suits *us* as it is"' (*MP*, 276). In private she complains to her sister Rae: "She would do nothing but patch and change and tear up if she could have her way here," Pat told Rae viciously' (*MP*, 276). Pat's most scathing exchanges with May always involve Silver Bush, as though the house is a

part of Pat. When May goes home for the day it seems to Pat that 'even the house seemed to draw a breath of relief. It had never got used to May' (*MP*, 282).

An underlying fact which Pat does not at first articulate, but May does, is that it is not only Pat's home and therefore her sense of self that is threatened by May's arrival, but Pat's vocation as the family's housekeeper, a position she takes because of her mother's illness. May is overheard haranguing Sid:

> "You told me when you persuaded me to marry you that we would live at Silver Bush. And I'm going to...and it won't be under the thumb of your old-maid sister either. She's nothing but a parasite...living off your father when there's nothing now to prevent her from going away and earning her own living when I'm here to run things." (*MP*, 284)

Sid will inherit the farm from their father, and now that he has a wife to do the family housekeeping, Pat is no longer necessary. Practically, her place in the household is now filled and the work she loves could be stolen from her.

For Pat, who 'loves everything in this house *terribly*' and to whom 'Silver Bush means everything' and 'seems to mean more every year of [her] life', this is no hardship (*MP*, 43). On the contrary, in a rapturous passage full of domestic details and descriptions of family heirlooms and other furnishings, each with a history of its own, Montgomery describes Pat as being in 'the seventh heaven':

> She loved everything about the house more than ever. The fine hemstitched tablecloths…Judy's hooked rugs…the monogrammed sheets…the cedar chest full of blankets…the embroidered centrepieces…the lace doilies…the dear old blue willow-ware plates…Grandmother Selby's silver tea service…the old mirrors that had stolen a bit of loveliness from every fair face that had ever looked into them…Every window was loved for some special bit of beauty to be seen from it. (*PSB*, 294)

Holly Pike, in her article 'Sisterhood is fearful: Female friendship in L.M. Montgomery', suggests that both 'Alcott and Montgomery depict the woman artist as rooted in domesticity and present her work as part of her domestic role' (Pike, 1994:51). Pat is not an artist in the same sense as Emily or as Anne – instead, Silver Bush facilitates Pat's creative expression through her vocation as 'chatelaine of Silver Bush' or housekeeper,[33] work which she loves because it supports her emotional relationships with her family. To express this form of creativity, it is interesting that she needs the full canvas of Silver Bush, more than a 'room of her own' in which to write. Silver Bush provides Pat with an identity and a sense of significance because she feels that the work she does in and for Silver Bush, which she

[33] This is similar to Jane in *Jane of Lantern Hill*, and Valancy in *The Blue Castle,* as discussed in Chapter 5.

loves 'with a passion' (*MP*, 4) is what gives her life meaning. She works for her family. In the first few pages of *Mistress Pat*, Pat's overarching interests in life are summarised: 'All she really wanted, or seemed to want, was to "run" Silver Bush and take care of mother...who was a bit of an invalid...and see that as few changes as possible came into existence there' (*MP*, 4).

Pat displays what Manzo (2003:47) calls 'place attachment', namely 'the bonding of people to places', as well as 'place dependence' which is 'described as the perceived strength of association between a person and specific places'.

MacLulich (1985:464) explains this interest and delight in household tasks in the novels by referring to Montgomery's own life experience:

> Montgomery's life and art were both shaped by an outlook that exalted the household and the local community as the embodiment of the highest good to which women could aspire. From her family and from her childhood community, Montgomery acquired what can only be called a thoroughly domestic imagination. In her own life she repeatedly adopted traditional women's roles, ministering to others...

Thus, when Montgomery's describes Pat taking part and enjoying various domestic rituals which are all part of taking care of one's family, she is communicating what was a natural and honoured part of middle-class women's work in farming communities during her lifetime.

For Pat, keeping house symbolises taking care of people she loves: 'She loved to think of weary and lonely people coming to Silver Bush for rest and food and love' (*PSB*, 296). She is encouraged to do so by her mother and Judy, her role models, who both dedicate themselves to the Gardiner household. Pat's mother especially encourages her rapturous domesticity:

> "I *had* pretty hands, Pat. But I didn't mind spoiling them for Silver Bush. I've loved it as you do. Every room in it has always been a friend of mine…had a life of its own for me. How I loved to wake up in the night and feel that my husband and my children were well and safe and warm, sleeping peacefully." (*PSB*, 292)

Pat's attachment to her home and family becomes a way of emulating her mother. Pat, like Montgomery's other home-loving heroine, Jane, delights in all the practical aspects of housekeeping, 'cleaning in general and the garret in particular', making Silver Bush 'as clean and sweet as the spring…a new curtain here…a new wall-paper there…a spot of paint where it would do most good' (*MP*, 69) and 'dozens of delightful little things like that to be attended to' (*MP*, 122). Even as a child, Pat already experiences household tasks as a joy,

and finds happiness in 'little, homely services for the dear house. To dust and polish and bake and run errands' (*PSB*, 113). These tasks are, significantly, associated with creating beauty, again suggesting that Pat's artistic canvas is the domestic sphere, as she is allowed to 'help get out mother's wedding set of fluted china with the gold pansy on the side of the cups and in the centre of the plates' (*PSB*, 113), and she and her sister Winnie 'fix up the Poet's Room and make the bed a thing of beauty with a lace spread and cushions like flowers' (*PSB*, 113).

Part of the reason that Pat, even as a child, enjoys housework so much is that she has an ability to permeate even the simplest tasks, like washing the dishes, with delight by using her imagination. Like some of Montgomery's other heroines do in their domestic life, for example Anne and Jane, Pat ascribes human emotions to inanimate objects around the house and is sensitive to what she imagines their feelings to be:

> She liked to wash pretty dishes. Pat loved everything about the house but she loved the dishes particularly. It was such fun to make them clean and shining in the hot soapy water. She always washed her favourites first. The dishes she didn't like had just to wait until she was good and ready for them and it was fun to picture their dumb, glowering wrath as they waited and waited and saw the others preferred before them. That hideous old brown plate with the chipped edges...how furious it got! "It's my turn now...I'm an old family plate...I won't be treated like this...I've been at Silver Bush for fifty years...that stuck-up thing with the forget-me-nots on the rim has only been here for a year." But it always had to wait until the very last in spite of its howls. To-night Pat washed it first. Poor thing, it couldn't help being ugly. (*PSB*, 165)

Johnston (2005:16) discusses the kind of delight in the material objects of the home which is prominent in these novels, arguing that '[w]ith this appreciation of the everyday, comes the appreciation of domestic landscapes and the small things associated with them'.

Pat's home is not only a sanctuary to her, but it also provides her with the scope to do work which she genuinely enjoys, presenting the house in the best light at all times, and at the same time engaging with the nostalgic glory of the 'best Gardiner tradition': 'She loved the shining surfaces...the flowers in bowls all over the house...the glitter of glass and silver in the dining-room...everything in the best Gardiner tradition (*MP*, 162). The narrator mocks her happiness in the home lightly, linking her to many other house-proud women, pointing out that 'Pat had always been conscious of a sneaking sympathy with Martha' (*MP*, 162). However, Johnston (2005:16) argues that '"Thisness" is a principle of individuation, a celebration of the exquisite particularity of small things, of both their common unity and their formal distinctiveness'. Pat is particularly adept at celebrating 'the exquisite

particularity of small things', thus richly illustrating Johnston's 'thisness', or 'priniciple of individuation'.

Pat was a heroine who was close to Montgomery's heart. Cecily Devereux (2005:253) confirms this by saying that 'in her journal and memoir, Montgomery herself compellingly linked her novel to her own experience'. Waterston (2008:177) explains that '[o]n December 3, 1932, Montgomery wrote in her journal, "Today I finished *Pat of Silver Bush*." She added, "It has a setting after my own heart and 'Pat' is more myself than any of my heroines"'.

It is indisputable that what we know about Montgomery through her journals and biographies such as Mary Rubio's *Lucy Maud Montgomery: the Gift of Wings* influences our understanding and interpretation of the content of her novels. Although Waterston (2008:221) explains that '[r]eaders recognize much more than confession or auto-therapy in the Montgomery novels' and that Montgomery's novels also contain 'deep symbolic meditations on art and life, male and female, home and away', it is nevertheless interesting and informative to take note of the links between Montgomery's life and art. Devereux (2005:254-255) comments:

> Ultimately Montgomery's assembling of her life story in her journals has produced a compelling 'real-life' system within which Montgomery, her imagined heroine, her novel, and the geo-physical space of childhood all signify in relation to one another.

Rita Bode (2008:52) argues that Montgomery's 'journal entries speak strongly to mother loss as a source of both profound anguish and conflict for Montgomery'. This then suggests that Montgomery's perception was that losing her mother was like losing the keystone of a bridge, and that this loss made the whole structure of her life disintegrate. The childhood and youth Montgomery describes in her journals is shadowed by the loss of her mother, and this loss was complicated by the absence of her father from her life. Montgomery's father, Hugh, had left her to be raised by her maternal grandparents and she rarely saw him or heard from him. Nevertheless, Bode (2008:52) posits that Montgomery's loss of her mother was central to her creativity:

> Her father's and grandparents' inability to meet fully Montgomery's strong emotional needs seems to have increased the motherless daughter's longings for the absent parent and intensified the dead mother's appeal as an endlessly stimulating focus for her vivid imagination.

In effect, Bode implies, Montgomery continually mourns the loss of both her parents, even though her father only died when she was an adult. If it is true that, as Bode suggests (2008:55), the 'search for the lost mother, the attempt to locate her emotionally, psychologically, and physically, haunts Montgomery's fiction as it does throughout her writing life' and that her 'fiction explores the expressions and meaning of intimate daily mothering and the implications of its presence or absence', then I would argue that one could interpret the anxiety and fear of change that Montgomery depicts in Pat throughout the two novels as partly connected not only, as Rubio suggests, to the *Zeitgeist* of the 1930s and Montgomery's nostalgia for her past homes on Prince Edward Island, especially Park Corner where her cousins the Campbells lived, but also to the loss of her mother. Pat's compulsion to take care of Silver Bush and her panic whenever anything changes or even threatens to change could be connected to the loss of stability that the potential absence of her mother creates. These threats of change offer a contrast to the depictions of comfort which Silver Bush, the house, provides. This makes Pat's 'nostalgia' pre-emptive – she is fully aware that her home and the idyll it represents are under constant threat.

Bode (2008:52) asserts that Montgomery's experience of losing her mother at an early age had an impact not only on Montgomery herself, but also on her fiction: 'The very early occurrence of Montgomery's loss only intensified the effect of her mother's death as a defining element in her sense of personal identity.' Bode (2008:58) points out that in 'both the Anne and the Pat books, two women, Susan Baker and Judy Plum, respectively, function in the maternal role more prominently than do the adult Anne and Pat's mother'. Gallagher (1989:8) notes that in novels with a domestic focus, such as the Pat novels, '[c]omfort is the key', and 'comfort includes, in the domestic sense, loving human interactions'. These loving human interactions include the maternal role, which is not limited to the housekeeper, but can be extended to the house itself functioning as a provider of maternal love and stability. Silver Bush, the house, makes Pat feel 'as if its arms were around her protectingly as she drifted into dreamland' (*PSB*, 84).

When Judy, Silver Bush's faithful old housekeeper and its true maternal figure is about to die, Pat is overwhelmed by the idea of Silver Bush without Judy: 'Pat did not often break down but there were times when she could not help it [...] "[H]owever can I...however can Silver Bush get along without you?"' (*MP*, 353). Nevertheless, Pat finds comfort in working for Silver Bush, as Judy always did: '"Everything is going to be kept at Silver Bush just as you left it"' she insists just before Judy dies (*MP*, 354). After Judy's death, Pat is shown, for

the first and only time in the novels, seeking comfort from her mother, who finally has stepped into a maternal role now that Judy is no longer there:

> …Pat, wondering how she could bear the dull, dead ache in her heart […] went to the kitchen expecting to find it a tragedy of emptiness. But mother was there in Judy's place, with a chairful of cats beside her. Pat buried her head in mother's lap and cried out all the tears she had wanted to cry out since Judy was stricken down. "Oh, mother... mother... I've nothing but you and Silver Bush left now." (*MP*, 357-358)

Pat's mother is a shadowy figure in the background of her life, while her dear friend Hilary Gordon's mother is completely absent, except for one poignant chapter, when her devastating emotional absence changes the boy Jingle, dreaming of a loving mother, into Hilary, disillusioned, who has to redefine himself. Both of these mothers are present in one sense, but entirely absent in another. Both are alive, but nevertheless, due to illness or absence, neither takes an active role in their children's lives. Rita Bode (2008:58) asserts that most of the mothers in Montgomery's writing either are not three-dimensional characters because they tend to fade into the background, or else they are in fact absent through death: 'Indeed, biological mothers in Montgomery do not fare well. Many of them in one way or another are inadequate.' In the later Anne novels, such as *Anne of Ingleside* and *Rainbow Valley*, Susan Baker in many instances seems to have as much of a role in the active parenting of the children as Anne herself has. Susan Baker is also a more three-dimensional, colourful character than Anne is in these novels. This is similar to the way that Judy Plum seems to substitute for Pat's mother in both *Pat of Silver Bush* and *Mistress Pat*. She is a character who plays a full part in these novels, while the reader is only barely made aware of Mrs Gardiner, Pat's mother.[34] When in need of comfort, Pat retreats to the kitchen and Judy, not to her mother:

> When Pat crept into the kitchen at dusk she found Judy sitting by a fire she had kindled…Pat sat down beside her on the floor, resting her head in Judy's lap and pulling Judy's arm around her. They sat so in silence for a long time, listening to the pleasant snap of the starting fire and the vociferous purring of the kitten Judy had snuggled at her side. Judy had always known how to make little creatures happy. (*MP*, 336-337)

Significantly, it is Judy, the Gardiner family's old Irish housekeeper who knows 'how to make little creatures happy', not Pat's mother. Additionally, Judy is often associated with the warmth of the kitchen and a fire, hinting at her role as an unlikely kind of goddess of the

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[34] *Magic for Marigold* (1929) has a similar pattern of a mother who is in the background – she pales in comparison to the more overbearing characters such as Old Grandmother and Young Grandmother. Both of the grandmothers are foregrounded in the narrative.

hearth. It seems that although Montgomery often depicts women who are not mothers themselves taking on the task of parenting difficult or unusual children, such as Marilla with Anne, Judy Plum with Pat, or Susan Baker with the Ingleside children; she seems to struggle to incorporate full pictures of mothers into much of her work. Janet King (*The Story Girl* [1911], *The Golden Road* [1913]) and Anne Blythe may be exceptions to the rule, but once again, they are often background figures in novels where Uncle Roger and Aunt Olivia (*The Story Girl* [1911], *The Golden Road* [1913]) or Susan Baker in the Anne novels seem to take centre stage when the children interact with adults in the narrative. In the 'Emily' trilogy as well as the 'Anne' novels, the main characters' mothers have died when they were very young, like Montgomery's own mother. The one mother depicted in the 'Emily' trilogy novels is Teddy Kent's mother – an embittered woman who is possessive of her child. She is hardly a typical mother figure.

Waterston (2008:172) recognises that nostalgia underlies the Pat novels:

> Memories of the Campbell home in Park Corner[35] gave Montgomery an avenue into a new book. In July 1931, "rummaging through an old notebook to find an idea for a story," she was swept back to the winter of 1892 and a perfect moment of waiting for one of Aunt Annie's suppers while looking out the window to spruce-dotted hills. […] She began to brood up a story about a girl with equal or greater adherence to the world she grew up in.

Rubio (2008:423) discusses a similar idea, mentioning a short story by Montgomery called 'The House', which could be a precursor to the Pat novels:

> The heroine is a lonely, dreamy, plain child – as Maud envisioned in her own childhood self – and this child fixes her love on a house. The story grows out of Maud's love for places and homes, like the home of the Campbells in Park Corner, where she had felt so welcome in her Aunt Annie's unconditional love, and where everything always seemed joyously the same.

The theme of this short story is very similar to the theme in *Pat of Silver Bush* and *Mistress Pat*, and the Campbell's house at Park Corner seems be the inspiration for Silver Bush as well. In 1901, Montgomery had written about Park Corner a paragraph that could be equally applicable to Silver Bush:

> This is certainly the greatest house in the world for fun. We have had so many jolly rackets here that the very walls seem to be permeated with the essence of "good times". From my earliest recollection a visit to Park Corner was the greatest treat in the world. Each room has its memories—the kitchen where we toasted our toes at the glowing old

[35] Park Corner was the home of Montgomery's maternal aunt, Annie Campbell, and her family. Montgomery experienced many happy visits at this house.

> "Waterloo", the front rooms where we spent so many jolly evenings, the big bedrooms upstairs where we slept and talked; and best of all, that famous old pantry, stored with good things, into which it was our habit to crowd at bedtime and gnaw bones, crunch fruitcake and scream with laughter. That pantry is historical. (*SJ*, *Vol. 1*, 257)

Domesticity as denoted by a house and its interior can be a symbol of comfort to those who have lost or are in fear of losing their security. When the home you have is insecure (it is threatened by death or change, or else you are unwanted or unaccepted for some or other reason) then you will grasp it all the more firmly, lyricize and rhapsodize about the home which you desire, where you are comforted and welcomed. Coles (1985:x), in his foreword to Charles Strickland's *Victorian Domesticity: Families in the life and art of Louisa May Alcott* points out that there are 'some tensions which are utterly human, are embedded in the very nature of the human creature, hence change only in this respect, or that one – in their form but not in their essence as a continuous aspect of existence'.

Pat's love for her home, which makes her feel 'as if its arms were around her protectingly as she drifted into dreamland' (*PSB*, 84) is a love which is 'embedded in the very nature of the human creature'. Silver Bush provides for the psychological needs (comfort, identity, stability, beauty) of both Pat, whose mother is perpetually in poor health, and Pat's friend Hilary Gordon, whose father had died and whose mother had abandoned him. Judy, as the housekeeper, functions as an extension of Silver Bush, the house, providing the same needs. Johnston (2005:27) discusses how and why this need for comfort may have been so important to Montgomery when she wrote *Mistress Pat*:

> I am saddened by the problems Montgomery faced in what was surely a 'dissatisfying social world' – tensions in the family and church, terrible world events, and dubious medical practices. Yet I believe that the Journals are not an intertext but a hypertext, a non-linear commentary that gives another side of the picture but not the whole picture. Read the fourth volume against *Mistress Pat* (1935), where there is a sense of time weariness even in the chapter headings. [...] but where there is also humour, delight in character and cheerful perception of human foible. There is, too, a brooding delight in landscapes of home.

The repeated depictions of home in the Pat novels are so poignant precisely because they provide an essential counterpoint to the harsh realities outside of the home, enabling readers to indulge in nostalgia for a real or imaginary idyll, but also because readers' ideal worlds are under subtle threat, like Pat's. In spite of the problems encountered by Montgomery and her fictional characters, the 'humour, delight in character' and 'brooding delight in landscapes of home' which Johnston notes are also present, perhaps precisely because of the

outside threats. Waterston (2008:178) confirms that 'passion for home and celebration of friendly love might counteract what is clearly a more depressive tone in *Pat of Silver Bush* than in any of the earlier work'. Also, Waterston (2008:178) again insists that Montgomery depicts in these novels 'nostalgia for the Island home'.

Perhaps Montgomery's 'love for places and homes' is also linked to the loss of her mother, her abandonment by her father, and the subsequent loss of a home with her parents. It appears that this is an important theme in the 'Pat' novels and helps to explain Pat's passion for Silver Bush and the prominence of other houses in the novels, such as the Long, Lonely House and the houses which Hilary Gordon designs first as a child and later as an architect.

It is only after Pat loses the mother figures in the novel – Judy and the house Silver Bush, that she is able to move on to a marriage and home of her own, with Hilary Gordon: 'The sequence of losses follows thick and fast, culminating in the death of Judy Plum. This loss of a mother-type is closely followed by the stunning climax for which the reader is not prepared – Silver Bush burns down!' (Doody, 2008:46).

Hilary is a character who also explores the 'anguish of mother loss'. When Hilary as a young boy meets his long absent mother after twelve years, she does not match his expectations of what a mother should be in any way. He has been living with an aunt and uncle who neglect him shamefully, and in his mother's absence, he has built many fantasies about how good, kind and beautiful she is. However, for her, the experience of seeing him again is 'dreadful', and so 'awkward' and a 'duty' (*PSB*, 214). This chapter in the novel is particularly heart-breaking. However, Hilary's traumatic meeting with his estranged mother helps to crystalize his vision for his life – to become a successful architect:

> Hilary stood up; he looked older: there was a stern set to his jaw, a new ring in his voice, as one who had put away childish things. "And now, well, I'm going to college…and I'm going to be an architect…and I'm going to succeed." (*PSB*, 218)

It is as though the realization that his mother will never be part of his life and does not truly love him gives him a determination to build a home of his own – the home which she has declined to provide for him, although that is ostensibly her 'natural' role. Rubio (2008:425) comments on this episode by saying '[t]hat a parent may not love its child at all is a devastating recognition for a young person, and it is powerfully portrayed in this novel'.

Hilary's obsession with building houses and with architecture is linked to the loss of his mother and his longing for love. He builds little imitation houses using bark, first for his

mother and later for Pat. To him, building a house is finding a way to make love part of his life, and to belong somewhere with someone – to be wanted and accepted. It is a way to keep a beloved person with him, especially since first his mother, and later, Pat for a while, refuse to share a home with him. Love does not exist in a vacuum but needs an environment in which to flourish. Pat helps Hilary feel loved and 'at home'. In the Silver Bush novels, he is the homeless character who remains essentially homeless until Pat decides to help him make a home for himself. As long as she remains at Silver Bush, Hilary is homeless.

Doody (2008:47) aptly summarizes Hilary Gordon's predicament: he is 'a personage in emotional difficulties. An abandoned and ill-used child, he grows up and creates houses or homes in compensation for what he needed and did not have'. He leaves Prince Edward Island and Pat to become an architect but, in the end, it is clear that the houses he creates are incomplete for him without Pat there to create the home he longs for so desperately. He designs and builds a home especially for her and comes to fetch her to it after Silver Bush has burnt down. Hilary attempts to convince Pat: '"I've built the house, Pat. [...] I've provided the body but you must provide the soul. […] You could make any place home-like, Pat. [...] we'll go home"' (*MP*, 372). Hilary knows Pat well enough to make sure that the house which he has built for them bears more than a passing resemblance to Silver Bush, since, as Twigger-Ross and Uzzell (1996:208) explain, 'a person may seek a place felt to be congruent with his/her settlement identification […] in order to preserve continuity of self as a specific type of person. That is, people will look for places in which to live that seem to represent their values'. Any home that Pat lives in and loves must be represent her values – and Silver Bush, the house where she grew up, is her ideal of what a home should be and of what she loves.

Hilary, an orphan like Montgomery, often asserts what makes a house good, and what in a house's structure makes that house fail to function as it should. Hilary Gordon's fascination with houses – both building and designing them – are used in the novel to provide an illustration of the desperation which 'homelessness' (in the emotional, not literal sense), creates. When Hilary wants to show Pat his favourite house in the town where they are both studying in their late teens, Pat is able to guess which one it is without his help:

> Pat had kept out a keen eye for Hilary's house. She had thought several of the new ones might be it. But when she saw it she knew it. A little house nestled in a hollow half-way up the hill. Its upper windows looked right out on the top of the hill. Its very chimneys smacked of romance. A tremendous maple-tree bent over it. The tree was so enormous and the house so small. (*PSB*, 284)

The house bears a resemblance to Silver Bush with a hill behind it and a tree over it. The fact that Pat can recognise this house as Hilary's favourite and loves it the way he does, are a way to remind the reader of the fact that Pat and Hilary are soulmates. Hilary, like Pat, has a passion for houses. However his passion is more general while Pat's is focused specifically on Silver Bush and somewhat on the other houses belonging to the Gardiner family. When Hilary is helping an uncle of his build a house, 'the task delight[s]' him and has 'an ideal quality for him'. This is because he has decided early in his life that he would become an architect and 'he wanted to know all about building them, from the ground up' (*PSB*, 290).

From the beginning of their friendship, Hilary is 'thinking of the house he would build for Pat' (*PSB*, 319). When Hilary later describes the house he has built for Pat, he emphasises that the 'new, far, unseen home would be as full of laughter as Silver Bush had been' (*MP*, 372). He knows how much Pat values that aspect of Silver Bush. When Hilary writes to Pat, he includes 'beautiful little pencil sketches of the houses he was going to design' (*MP*, 327). He also encloses 'a sketch of his prize design for a house on the side of a hill', which has 'something about it faintly reminiscent of Silver Bush' (*MP*, 81). To Hilary, Pat and Silver Bush is inextricably bound up with his passion for designing and building houses. When he comes to visit Pat after a long absence studying to be an architect in Toronto, he 'gazes about him greedily', and affirms:

> I've seen many wonderful abodes since I went away, Pat...palaces and castles galore...but I've never seen any place so absolutely *right* as Silver Bush. It's good to be here again and find it so unchanged. (*MP*, 319)

Pat symbolises home to him, and unless she joins him in making a home, he will forever be 'homeless'. 'Wherever *you* are, Pat, will always be home to me' he states (*PSB*, 318). In spite of Hilary's affection for Silver Bush, he finds himself almost hating Silver Bush because 'it was the only rival he feared' (*PSB*, 3129). Unlike Pat, until later, he is able to separate Silver Bush the place and the concept of home from each other and can envision that he and Pat could be happy together in another house.

The other houses in the novels – Swallowfield, the Bay Shore Farm, and the Long, Lonely house – function as settings for social interactions with Pat's relatives and friends, facilitating these relationships. The houses are often like their inhabitants or can symbolize their inhabitants' predicaments.

Swallowfield, Pat's Uncle Tom's house, is an alternative refuge to Silver Bush. It is the house where Pat stays on the night when her younger sister, Rae, is born, and to which the Gardiner family retreats when Silver Bush burns down. The descriptions of this house seem to signify its inhabitants: Pat's Uncle Tom, Aunt Edith and Aunt Barbara. For Pat, a house's exterior is associated with its inhabitants:

> Uncle Tom's house was an old one, with two wide, low windows that looked like eyes on either side of a balcony that was like a nose. It was a prim and dignified house but all its primness couldn't resist its own red front door which was just like an impish tongue sticking out of its face. Pat always felt as if the house was chuckling to itself over some joke nobody but itself knew, and she liked the mystery. She wouldn't have liked Silver Bush to be like that: Silver Bush mustn't have secrets from her: but it was all right in Swallowfield. (*PSB*, 34-35)

The 'two wide, low windows that look […] like eyes' are like Pat's two sharp aunts, Aunt Edith and Aunt Barbara. The red front door with its 'impish tongue' is like Pat's Uncle Tom, who is himself impish and full of jokes, just like his house. Pat's attachment to Swallowfield, the house, can be equated to her attachment to her relatives. Gallagher (1989:2) notes that the 'cult of domesticity taught that the structures of human relationships, particularly as found in the home, gave both men and women the greatest happiness and fulfilment', including 'consideration of others' needs and mutual, loving support'. Pat values these relationships 'found in the home' deeply, and the 'consideration of others' needs and mutual loving support' that these valued relationships entail include not only the people who live in her home, but also her relatives nearby.

The house at the Bay Shore farm is another house of which Pat is fond and which is important to her sense of family history. It is the house where her mother grew up, and Pat and her brother, Sidney, call this house 'the Don't-touch-it-House', albeit only 'guiltily, to themselves' (*PSB*, 70-71). This seems to echo Pat's mother is fragility because of her poor health. However, Pat still believes the house should be seen with affection:

> There was a blue, waiting sea at the end and an old grey house fronting the sunset, so close to the purring waves that in storms their spray dashed over its very doorstep...a wise old house that knew many things, as Pat always felt. Mother's old home and therefore to be loved, whether one could love the people in it or not. (*PSB*, 75)

The wisdom and age of the house seem to associate it with Pat's mother, who is often in the novels obliquely referred to as a source of gentle wisdom. Pat identifies herself with her mother, who 'loved Bay Shore almost as well as she, Pat, loved Silver Bush' (*PSB*, 84). Along with Silver Bush and Swallowfield, the Bay Shore Farm provides Pat with a sense of

stability and continuity. To her, it is a place 'where nothing had changed [...] "a world where all things always seemed the same"' which she comes to love 'for that very changelessness…it seemed the one place you could depend on in a changing world' (*PSB*, 224).

Just as New Moon does for Emily, the house at the Bay Shore Farm helps to cement Pat's feeling of being important and belonging to a fine old family with tradition and good breeding behind it. The parlour of the house is filled with curios and family heirlooms such as 'the little procession of six white ivory elephants marching along the black mantel', 'the famous vase, full of peacock feathers, that had made a face at Sarah Jenkins', 'grand and splendid furniture', 'a big, polished brass door-handle' and 'deep Battenberg lace scallops on the window shades' (*PSB*, 77-78).

Another significant house nearby is a farmhouse which Pat calls 'the Long Lonely House'. This house facilitates the provision of Pat's social needs – companionship and camaraderie, and when the house stands empty, it symbolises her loneliness. In both *Pat of Silver Bush* and *Mistress Pat*, the Long Lonely House is first empty, becomes the home of Bets Wilcox in *Pat of Silver Bush*, and a brother and sister, David and Suzanne Kirk in *Mistress Pat*, and then becomes empty again, resulting in the loss of the friendship. In both of the novels, the friendship she finds through this house does not last. It is, in many ways, another 'Disappointed House'.

Although Pat loves Silver Bush best of all, '[t]here was something about the long, low-eaved house, with the dormer windows in its roof, that pleased Pat', and she often expresses a fondness for the Long, Lonely House (*PSB*, 140). At first, the house saddens her because it is empty and she, imbuing the house with human emotions, is convinced that it 'feels' lonely. Then, when a girl of her own age named Bets moves into the house and becomes her dearest friend, the house is for her associated with Bets and friendship:

> And Bets' room was a delightful one with two dormers along its side and one at each end. It was very grand, Pat told Judy, with a real "set of furniture" and a long mirror in which the delighted girls could see themselves from top to toe. The west window was covered with vines, leafless now but a green dappled curtain in summer, and the east looked right out into a big apple tree. (*PSB*, 140)

Bets's room with its many windows symbolises the visions of youth, while the long mirror can be seen as symbolic of the self-centredness of youth. From the windows can be seen

vines that form a 'green dappled curtain in summer' and a big apple tree, reminding the reader of how nature is often emblematic of childhood and innocence.

When in *Mistress Pat*, a brother and sister, Suzanne and David Kirk, come to live at the Long Lonely House, Pat discovers in Suzanne a kindred spirit, although it takes her some time to recognise this. Suzanne discusses the Long, Lonely House where she and her brother have come to live with Pat:

> "It took all our spare cash to buy the house but we don't grudge it. The minute we saw that house I knew we must have it. It is a house of delightful personality, don't you think…I knew it had been loved the moment I saw it. I think you can always tell when a house has been loved. But it's been asleep for so long. And lonely. It always hurts me to see a house lonely. I felt that I must bring it back to life and chum with it. I *know* it feels happy because we are going to fix it up."
> Pat felt the cockles of her heart warming. Houses meant to this girl what they meant to herself...creatures, not things. (*MP*, 135-136; Montgomery's emphasis)

For both Pat and Suzanne Kirk, houses are like people, not merely places. After a misunderstanding about Silver Bush, Pat is offended by Suzanne, and their friendship is only renewed after a chance meeting, when Suzanne eventually breaks through Pat's reserve. The Long, Lonely House forms a bond between them, as well as their mutual enjoyment of housekeeping. Suzanne enthuses with Pat: 'I love keeping house…it's really a lovely phrase, isn't it? Keeping it…holding it fast against the world, against all the forces trying to tear it open' (*MP*, 148).

Assessments of Pat's attachment to Silver Bush have often been negative. MacLulich (1985:471) asserts that '[t]he two books about Pat Gardiner […] portray a heroine whose attachment to the family home borders on a morbid resistance to all change', and Ross (1994:27) suggests that 'Pat of Silver Bush, with her terror of change, seems to represent the pathological extreme of Montgomery's own identification of safety and comfort with physical place'. Some critics consider this 'morbid resistance to change' part of the overwhelming anxiety many people, including Montgomery herself, felt in the era in which she was writing these novels. For example, Rubio's (2008:425) perspective is that

> …Pat's emotional makeup seems highly neurotic, like Barrie's Peter Pan. Maud's sense of being disoriented by the ceaseless post-war change was shared by many adults, but when transplanted into the emotions of a small child who is strikingly articulate about her hatred of change, it seems oddly pathological. However, the novel does catch the Zeitgeist of the era, as experienced by many adults.

I would argue that it is possible to sympathize with Pat's love for her home when one has personally experienced the insecurity and anxiety caused by great upheaval, as many in the 1930s did. This was not only generally true of the 1930s as an era. In Montgomery's personal life the changes were even more pronounced. Heidi MacDonald (2008:155) suggests that

> Pat's unhealthy obsession with Silver Bush, her phobia about change, and the weight put on how the two sons in the family ruin the goodness of Silver Bush provide stronger evidence that Montgomery based much of the Pat novels, unconsciously or not, on the very difficulties and frustrations she experienced while writing them in the early 1930s.

Critics have suggested Pat's adoration of her home in these novels is related to the intense nostalgia experienced by Montgomery and her contemporaries. Rubio (2008:440) comments that for both Montgomery and the people around her, '[t]he old secure world was gone, like Pat's home' and 'Maud's readers quite understood Pat's grief in watching helplessly while her beloved home – the symbol of peace, happiness, and security, burned to the ground.' Waterston (2008:172-173) explains that although 'Pat has an almost pathological dread of change', that 'dread echoed Montgomery's own'. Waterston implies that Montgomery's envy of previous generations is a kind of nostalgia for a lost world, 'an "apparently changeless world…And my generation!...Everything we once thought immoveable wrenched from its pedestal and hurled to ruins…before us nothing but a welter of doubt and confusion and uncertainty" (January 24, 1932)' (Waterston, 2008:172-173).

That Pat's 'obsession' with Silver Bush is 'unhealthy' as MacDonald and others suggest may be a moot point. Emily Byrd Starr of Montgomery's Emily trilogy also elects to remain at her cherished childhood home, although she has the opportunity to leave for New York, but her love for and dependence on her home is not considered unhealthy or morbid by critics, perhaps because they idealise Emily authorial creativity over Pat's 'domestic' form of creativity.

If the loss of Silver Bush and Judy are indicative of losses which Montgomery and her contemporaries experienced as they lived through the social and economic changes brought by the First World War and the Great Depression, the new house which Hilary builds for him and Pat to live in together gives hope that, in spite of the loss of the old, well-known and loved home, there are new possibilities. At the end of *Mistress Pat*, after Silver Bush burns down, Pat's mother inherits the Bay Shore farm and returns to the home of her childhood. This return echoes her return to health which occurs gradually toward the end of

Mistress Pat, and coincides with Pat's equally gradual realization that she would not always be indispensable at Silver Bush as she had been in earlier years. This realization only crystallizes once Silver Bush burns down:

> She felt horribly old. Her love for Silver Bush had kept her young...and now it was gone. Nothing was left...there was only a dreadful, unbearable emptiness…this heart-break could never fade. Everything had fallen into ruins around her. She could never fit into the life at the Bay Shore. She had a terrible feeling that she did not belong anywhere...or to anybody...in this new sad lonely world. (*MP*, 367-368)

Because Mother is taken care of by the inheritance of her childhood home at the Bay Shore, Pat feels superfluous, and being literally homeless, she is finally able to leave Prince Edward Island and the Gardiner family. In that sense, the tragic destruction of Silver Bush is absolutely essential to the narrative.

It is only after Silver Bush has burnt down – '[w]here Silver Bush had been was only a yawning cellar full of ashes and charred beams' – and Hilary Gordon returns to her that Pat is able to admit that she loves him enough to marry him (*MP*, 368). Fortunately, Hilary is able to provide Pat with an alternative Silver Bush, a home 'by another sea' where Pat and Hilary will work together to 'build up a new life' (*MP*, 370). According to Johnston (2005:27), the burning of Silver Bush is 'a symbolic purification by fire' – the tragedy leads to something better. Johnston confirms this idea, explaining that after the burning of Silver Bush, Pat can learn to build a home that looks to the future, instead of nostalgically looking back, while honouring the past in its very structure and in the art of mothering that she brings into it.

Chapter 5:
Houses of Escape in *Jane of Lantern Hill*, *The Blue Castle*, and *A Tangled Web*

> …it is very delightful to own one's own home and feel free to do just as one pleases in and about it. […] And our house being new is very convenient. We have two fireplaces, three bathrooms and all kinds of electrical "plugs" for sweeping, ironing, washing etc. Housework is really a pleasure. (*MDMM*, 175)

This chapter discusses some of the houses in three of Montgomery's other novels, *Jane of Lantern Hill* (1937), *The Blue Castle* (1926), and *A Tangled Web* (1931). As I have mentioned before, Stott and Francis (1993:223) describe as a motif central to many children's novels (as it is in Gothic novels) – escape from a limiting environment,[36] 'the characters' efforts to get out of their hostile environments and into more receptive ones'.

I argue that the three novels discussed in this chapter all illustrate this motif. *Jane of Lantern Hill*, which features a child protagonist, could be categorised as a children's novel, but *The Blue Castle* focuses on a woman in her twenties, and the dark and often hostile interactions of *A Tangled Web*, with its largely adult characters, is definitely not a children's book. Nevertheless, all three novels feature the motif of escaping from 'hostile environments', and the search for and finding of 'more receptive' or 'friendly surroundings' to facilitate a heroine's personal growth, independence and self-esteem, in line with my premise that houses in Montgomery's works fulfil the functions of reflecting the self, fulfilling needs, and shaping the trajectory of the protagonists' lives. Stott and Francis (1993:223) describe the contrasting environments of the houses the protagonists wish to inhabit as '"home"' (associated with 'comfort, security, and acceptance'), and those that they need to escape from as '"not home"' (associated with 'a place where needs are not met'). Readers are interested in this motif because these categories hold for both the 'real child or a fictional character' (Stott & Francis, 1993:223). The three novels discussed in this chapter all depict heroines who initially find themselves in a house that is certainly 'not home'. In order to

[36] As I already noted in Chapter 3, in discussing the 'Emily' novels, incarceration and escape are also a feature of Gothic novels. In this chapter, I do consider Gothic aspects, but my focus is on the more positive aspect of escape, rather than only on incarceration.

meet their emotional needs for 'comfort, security and acceptance', they move on toward a true home.

The house in which each protagonist lives at the beginning of the novel is symbolic of her unfulfilled needs. As their narratives develop, they grow and develop the strength to find a way to have their most important needs met and achieve self-fulfilment. Manzo (2005:75) explains that for most people it is

> …very important to have places where they could be themselves and explore who they are. […][C]ertain experiences made places salient, particularly the processes of reflection, introspection, self-understanding and personal growth, which may be seen as identity issues. [… People's] relationships to places are a way of working out their identity in the world. [… A] particular place "made them who they are" […] their understanding of themselves [is] changed through their relationship with that place.

For Jane in *Jane of Lantern Hill*, Valancy in *The Blue Castle*, and Margaret Penhallow, who figures in a minor narrative in *A Tangled Web*, the significant places which they inhabit 'are a way of working out their identity in the world'.

Jane of Lantern Hill (1937), like *Anne's House of Dreams*, features three houses that, in different ways, have an impact on the narrative. Epperly (1992:223) has already recognised that these houses 'contribute to Jane's understanding of herself and home'. The first of these houses (not a home) is 60 Gay Street in Toronto (referred to in the novel as '60 Gay'), the house where Jane lives with her grandmother, her aunt, and her mother, who has been estranged from Jane's father for many years. The second and central house is the house of the title, Lantern Hill, a little house on Prince Edward Island near the seashore. The third house is also in Toronto, but it is new, small (like Lantern Hill,) and is situated in a leafy suburb with a country atmosphere.

Similar to Jane's story of escape from a harsh environment to one where growth and self-fulfilment is possible, there is Valancy's escape to a cottage on an island in *The Blue Castle* (1926), as well as the story of Margaret's finding a home of her own, which is one of the narrative threads in Montgomery's adult novel, *A Tangled Web* (1931). Jane, Valancy and Margaret all exhibit what Lucy Waddey (1983:14) calls the 'Promethean pattern' of home in children's literature:

> These characters must create homes for themselves, and, as they do, they become more fond of what they have created and more defined by it. Their home becomes their alter ego. We may call this the Promethean pattern, for the characters have left one home

> and, usually through a good deal of work, create another. This pattern is obvious in literature of physical survival, but is present also in stories of psychic survival…

For all three of the characters and their homes which I will be discussing, the creation of the home which 'becomes their alter ego' is patently essential for their 'psychic survival'. All three experience repressive situations where they are unable to express themselves or receive emotional nurturing, because they are controlled, and indeed psychologically abused, by others. Twigger-Ross and Uzzell (1996:208) state that there is '[e]vidence that having control, or not, over the maintenance of continuity of place is important for psychological well-being'. Neither Jane, Valancy nor Margaret has any control over her surroundings, and this result in varied degrees of psychological distress for all of three. Jane has no self-esteem and is afraid of other people, and both Valancy and Margaret are perceptibly depressed to varying degrees, Valancy perhaps more obviously so.

Twigger-Ross and Uzzell (1996:207-208) also affirm that

> …choosing to move can represent a self-concept change with the old place becoming a symbol of the old self and the new place representing an opportunity to develop new identities. In both of these examples place is considered to be an active part of the construction of a person's identity, representing continuity and change.

When Jane, Valancy and Margaret move to different homes, they create new selves in the process, and unearth parts of themselves that have never seen the light before. Their new homes facilitate their need 'to develop new identities' as different people who are no longer abused or repressed by other people or other circumstances. In Smith's article, 'The essential qualities of home', which relies on empirical research to inform her discussion of what people consider to be indispensable characteristics of the home, Smith (1994:33) avers that 'the physical dimensions of the meaning of home…are important in that they afford behavioural options which are salient for the individual, and which contribute to the feelings of comfort and satisfaction'. This confirms my argument that one of the functions of a physical house is to shape the lives of its inhabitants and in so doing impact them emotionally.

Like Valancy and especially like Margaret, Montgomery did not have a home of her own until later in her adult life. As a young adult, she lived with her grandmother, and after she married, she lived with her husband in a series of parish-owned manses with her husband, who was a minister. As Johnston (2005:27) explains, 'Montgomery's life circumstances meant that she was always, until the purchase of 'Journey's End', dependent for the space of

her living on others (grandmother, stepmother briefly, the parishes of Leaskdale and Norval)'. When her husband was forced to retire as a result of his ill-health, she could at last buy a home of her own. Rubio (2008:446) states that Montgomery

> …had become deeply attached to every place they had lived, putting down "deep roots." But she had been a transient sojourner in all her homes. Now she was going to a home of her own. No one could cast her out. She prayed that it would be a permanent and happy home. It would be her last "new beginning." She would call the house "Journey's End."

The three different houses of *Jane of Lantern Hill* provide changing background settings for the events of the novel which Montgomery uses as markers of what is happening emotionally to the characters involved. The protagonist of the novel, Jane, is most closely identified with the second house, Lantern Hill, where she lives with her father, and comes into her own. By contrast, the first house where she is forced to live, her grandmother's house at 60 Gay Street in Toronto, is used to set the atmosphere of repression and control, and is reflective of Jane's past, and what she leaves behind her when she escapes to the island. The third house is prophetic of Jane's future, and creates a feeling of hope and joy for the end of the novel. According to Johnston (2005:27), '[i]t is no surprise that *Jane of Lantern Hill*, written in 1937, is about finding a house and making a home (on the Island of course)' because Montgomery herself was 'a multi-faceted, complex artistic personality who, I think, above all craved the disposition of her own space. This is much more than a room of one's own; it is much more than space for the artist'. By implication, it is a room for the self – or in Jane (and Valancy and Margaret's case) a whole house for the self.

From the opening of the novel, the house in which Jane lives seems to be a marker of her situation, both physically and emotionally. Houses, in this novel, symbolize nurturing (or a lack of it), and the physical entity of the house is indicative of how well the care and nurturing of the individual characters that inhabit the house is accomplished. Right at the beginning of the novel, houses are characterised and almost personified. Jane laments that the houses on the street where she lives in Toronto, Gay Street, are not 'gay, friendly' houses and that they do not cry 'out "How do you do?" as you passed them, with trees that waved hands at you and windows that winked at you in the twilights' (*JLH*, 5). Immediately, the reader is alerted to Jane's situation: she lives in a street that is called and therefore 'should be a gay street' (*JLH*, 5), but is not, and instead is

> …dark and dingy, lined with forbidding, old-fashioned brick houses, grimy with age, whose tall, shuttered, blinded windows could never have thought of winking at

> anybody. The trees that lined Gay Street were so old and huge and stately that it was difficult to think of them as trees at all. (*JLH*, 5)

In Montgomery's writing, as I have already indicated in my discussions of the 'Anne' and 'Emily' books in Chapters 2 and 3, windows are significant markers of insight, and like eyes, or by extension, the mind, they hint at intellectual or spiritual enlightenment. In this case, the 'shuttered, blinded windows' show the condition of the inhabitants, or especially the owner of the house, and indicate a kind of closed-mindedness, even a sense of moral decrepitude. Also in the passage, the situation in which Jane finds herself is hinted at in broad terms. The words 'dark,' 'dingy,' 'forbidding,' 'old-fashioned,' 'grimy,' 'age', 'shuttered,' 'blinded windows,' 'huge,' and 'stately' create an image of a place that is decaying with age, while also being overawing. This image is further reinforced by the next paragraph, which mentions 'a high iron fence, with wrought-iron gates', which are 'closed and locked' (*JLH*, 5). Jane's feelings about this are clearly indicated, as the gate's being locked gives 'Jane a very nasty feeling that she was a prisoner being locked in' (*JLH*, 6). The description of the house as 'stately' and 'forbidding' may illustrate the findings of research done by Twigger-Ross and Uzzell (1996:208):

> Living in a manageable environment means that a person feels self-efficacious with respect to their daily functioning in that environment. That is, they believe that they are able to carry out their chosen activities in that environment. We suggest that when an environment is perceived as unmanageable it constitutes a threat to self-efficacy.

Jane's grandmother's overawing house at 60 Gay poses 'a threat' to both Jane and her mother's self-efficacy, not only because the house is controlled by Old Mrs Kennedy, but also because the house is so large and so old that it is 'an environment' which 'is perceived as unmanageable' to them. Possibly that is why Jane's ideal homes, Lantern Hill and the house at Lakeside Gardens, are both smaller houses – the little houses are manageable, while the bigger houses are overwhelming.

When Gay Street, and particularly 60 Gay Street (where Jane lives), are described, the person immediately mentioned in connection with this setting is 'Grandmother', Jane's maternal grandmother, who, the first time she appears in the novel, is 'furious' (*JLH*, 5). This, we find out, is characteristic for her, and she is established, along with the street and house where Jane lives, as a menacing presence from the past. 'Grandmother', or 'Old Mrs Kennedy', is linked with the house in more than one way. Moore (2000:210) writes that 'home is viewed as a symbol of the self, based on Jung's theory of the collective unconscious' and here, 60 Gay is indeed used to represent Jane's grandmother's self. The

house itself belongs to her, and like she herself, is 'hopelessly out of date'. Although the taxes on the house are 'ruinous' (*JLH*, 6), she refuses to leave the house, and smiles 'contemptuously' at anyone who suggests that she move. Grandmother is 'perfectly satisfied with 60 Gay' in spite of its declining state, and states that she has 'lived there for forty-five years and she would live there the rest of her life. Those who did not like it need not stay there' (*JLH*, 6). Gustafson (2001:10) states:

> Places may also be associated with "others" without reference to any social relations or encounters. In these cases, places are attributed meaning through the perceived characteristics, traits and behaviours of their inhabitants.

Throughout the novel it is made clear that the house, with its forbidding atmosphere, is associated with Grandmother and her approach to life. Just as the house is a forbidding presence in the book, Grandmother is a forbidding presence in Jane's life.[37] Smith (1994:31) explains that '[t]he nature of the relationship between people and their physical environment has been shown to parallel interpersonal relationships particularly in the phenomenon of attachment', and in this case it can be demonstrated that Jane's attitude toward her Grandmother's house mirrors Jane's relationship with her Grandmother.

Montgomery uses a dialogue between two strangers concerning the house to reinforce the idea of the repressive setting. Jane overhears the conversation, which includes descriptions of the house as a 'dead house', which 'died thirty years ago', 'that castle' and 'worse than dead, decayed' and finally 'shabby-genteel' (*JLH*, 6). Sheckels (2003:31) writes the following about the opening parts of *Jane of Lantern Hill*:

> This Toronto household at 60 Gay Street is depicted in Montgomery's novel as horribly oppressive. […] The house itself is described as having "towers and turrets wherever a tower or turret could be wedged in" and "surrounded by a high iron fence with wrought-iron gates". It looks like an old castle in which Jane had "a very nasty feeling that she was a prisoner". In this environment, daughter Robin is also trapped. In fact, it seems as if this entrapment is precisely what Mrs. Kennedy wants. […] 60 Gay Street is so strictly ordered that imagination is suppressed and joy is denied there.

In *Jane of Lantern Hill*, housekeeping is equated both with a personal power to act in one's own capacity, as well as a function of nurturing, comforting, and experiencing a closeness to others. Agan and Luchsinger (1965:5) explain that

> … [k]eeping the home going in the aspects of preparing food, cleaning, organizing, and decorating can be a creative experience. When competence in these duties is shared by

[37] Noomé (2018, in press) argues that the patterns of control Grandmother uses mimic those of abusive men towards women and children, and that Robin Stuart and Jane are in fact trapped in an abusive situation.

> the homemaker with the other member of the family, the result can be a broadening experience for all concerned. To be deprived of the opportunity to function in this area is a major handicap.

Being able to do housework in and for a house that one loves is like being able to exert control over the portion of the world which matters the most to you, as well as the people who live with you in that portion of the world. In 60 Gay, Grandmother controls the housekeeping, not by doing it herself, but by delegating it to those in her power, such as her unmarried daughter from her first marriage, Aunt Gertrude (*JLH*, 15-17). Jane and her mother, Robin, are not allowed any housekeeping duties in the house. By excluding them from the practical function of the household in which they live, Grandmother effectively 'handicaps' them – she disempowers and disables them. Neither of them is allowed to act in matters which have to do with the functioning of the household, nor are they allowed to make any decisions about the aesthetics that pertain to the house. In effect they cannot do anything about their physical lives and the environment in which they exist from day to day, and this powerlessness spills over to influence their emotional and mental well-being.

In this novel, cooking meals, in particular, is connected with this control over the nexus of power in the household. Jane is not allowed to prepare food to nourish the bodies of the people she loves – her family. Grandmother also implies Jane's desire to cook marks her as being of a lower class (like her estranged father). At the same time Jane's grandmother implies that Jane does not possess enough skill to accomplish the necessary task of preparing meals. According to Epperly (1992:212),

> …Grandmother makes it clear to Jane that any leanings she has to the domestic are signs of her father's low blood. In this repressive atmosphere, the domestic becomes powerful; it symbolizes freedom and autonomy. Jane finds both – on Prince Edward Island.

Grandmother seems to disapprove of comforting and nurturing those one loves if it includes anything remotely domestic. She equates Jane's interest in domestic tasks and cooking in particular with being worthless at the most important things in her estimation – social skills, as well as physical attractiveness, which Jane's mother possesses, but Jane does not.[38] The housekeeping at 60 Gay is 'attended to' by Jane's Aunt Gertrude, her mother's half-sister. Aunt Gertrude acts like a second-in-command to Grandmother, and her position of relative power (as contrasted to the absolute control which is exerted over Jane and her mother) is reflected by her household activities. Her rigid approach to housekeeping is in line with the

[38] Grandmother also denigrates Jane's academic skills, and compares her unfavourably to her cousin, Phyllis.

atmosphere of the house (but is, as Jane later acknowledges, a way for Aunt Gertrude to assert a little of herself within the limitation of her mother's household).

When Jane returns to Toronto and the house at 60 Gay Street after spending the summer with her father, the contrast between the two houses becomes painfully clear:

> Jane was horribly homesick as she climbed the soft-carpeted stairway to bed. If she were only skipping up the bare, painted steps at Lantern Hill! Her old room had not grown any friendlier. She ran to the window, opened it and gazed out…but not on starry hills and the moon shining on woodland fields. The clamour of Bloor Street assailed her ears. The huge old trees about 60 Gay were sufficient unto themselves…they were not her friendly birches and spruces. A wind was trying to blow…Jane felt sorry for it…checked here, thwarted there. But it was blowing from the west. Would it blow right down to the Island …to the velvety black night starred with harbour lights beyond Lantern Hill? Jane leaned out of the window and sent a kiss to Dad on it. (*JLH*, 183-184)

The house at 60 Gay Street is emphasised here as being inimical to Jane. This is done by means of the phrase 'checked here, thwarted there'. Jane transposes her own feelings of being thwarted onto the wind, but interestingly she no longer feels sorry for herself, but for the wind. This house functions similarly to a house in Gothic fiction, which, as Rives (2006:8) describes it, is 'a genre centred on the lack of privacy, freedom, and safety for women in an isolated, gloomy mansion that harbors malevolent violence'. As I indicated in Chapter 3, a key motif in Gothic literature is 'incarceration', often associated with 'familial disharmony and dynastic secrets' (Grant, 2005:240). All of these elements are found in this novel. The house functions as an agent of repression, acting as an extension of its owner, who is Jane's Grandmother. Smith (1994:33) maintains that 'the home is generally regarded as the setting for the enhancement and support of a range of interpersonal relationships', but in this house, there is neither the 'enhancement' nor the 'support' that is necessary for healthy family relationships. Thus for Jane, the house cannot be regarded as home in the way that Lantern Hill is regarded as home.

The opposition between the country setting of Lantern Hill and the city setting of 60 Gay in Toronto is also emphasised by the descriptions of nature in this passage: '[S]tarry hills and the moon shining on woodland fields', 'her friendly birches and spruces', and 'the velvety black night starred with harbour lights beyond Lantern Hill'. The only aspects of nature pertaining to Toronto described here are the 'huge old trees about 60 Gay' which are 'sufficient unto themselves' and a wind which is 'trying to blow . . . checked here, thwarted there'. The aspects of nature which can be found in Toronto is either so old that they are

remote and unfriendly, or, like the wind, they are constrained and fettered by hard and cold buildings. While Lantern Hill is associated with nature as an emblem of freedom, individuality, and wholeness, 60 Gay Street's only association with nature is either one of repression and imprisonment or else enmity to Jane. The scene ends with an assertion by Jane of her unfettered self – she opens a window, and reaches out beyond 60 Gay Street: 'Jane *leaned out* of the window' (*JLH*, 184; my emphasis), and characteristically physical, practical and hopeful in her small rebellion, 'sent a kiss to Dad' (*JLH*, 184) on the wind blowing towards the Island.

In the novel, Jane's absences from Lantern Hill and her homesickness for it and all it embodies is a way for Montgomery to emphasise the differences between Jane's life at Lantern Hill and her life in Toronto at 60 Gay Street. '[O]ur concept of home gains meaning through journeys away. Through the absence of home, home itself gains meaning', as Moore (2000:211) explains. So Jane's enforced absence from Lantern Hill intensifies her love for it and highlights the lack of 'psychological comfort, social needs as well as physiological needs' at 60 Gay Street, which home is supposed to provide (Moore, 2000:210).

When Jane returns to her mother and the house at 60 Gay Street after visiting her father at Lantern Hill on Prince Edward Island, Jane finds that Mrs Kennedy has redecorated her granddaughter's room. The aesthetics of the newly-decorated room, with its rugs and pink satin bedspread (what Anne as a little girl desires, and similar to what Emily finds in the Wyther Grange spare bedroom), do not, however, help it to compare positively to 'her little room at Lantern Hill with its bare floor and sheepskin rug and white spool bed covered with its patchwork quilt' (*JLH*, 248-249). The difference between the two rooms is that the one at Lantern Hill 'signifies its inhabitant' (Winton, 2013:43), while the other does not. Jane's room at Lantern Hill is a means of self-expression to her. Smith (1994:32) writes that 'an important quality of a home was concerned with self-expression and personal identity. The importance of the physical environment in assisting individual development of the self, especially during childhood, was elaborated'. Jane's grandmother never gives Jane any opportunity to express herself or her identity through the room at 60 Gay. This denial of

self-expression is used as a means to indicate the repression of an individual identity for Jane.[39]

Things are different at Lantern Hill. When Jane's father unexpectedly demands to see his daughter and sends for her to come to visit him over the summer, she finds that she adores him, in spite of her own expectations to the contrary. Together, they go house-hunting for a place to stay for the summer, and choose Lantern Hill. The description of Lantern Hill is important in this novel, because 'Montgomery's houses have personalities all their own, and they reflect and sometimes shape the personalities within them. Most often, Montgomery uses houses as healing places and sites of love' (Epperly, 2007:101). In *Jane of Lantern Hill*, Lantern Hill functions in that way for Jane. Jane's desire for a 'little room' implies a need for comfort and cosiness, something which is entirely missing in the house at 60 Gay Street in Toronto (*JLH*, 102-107).

When Jane says that she wants 'to do everything for' the house at Lantern Hill, she shows her desire to be an active agent in creating the atmosphere around her and the environment in which she lives. In cleaning and taking care of the house, her presence in the home becomes both desirable and valuable, and her worth as a person is confirmed in her ability to accomplish practical matters in an efficient and pleasant way. Jane's joy in various homemaking duties and her bustling activity show her satisfaction in being able to act freely, and to do the things she enjoys. In Toronto, all her actions are controlled by Grandmother, and her desires and natural impulses are restrained by Grandmother. Now, with her father in Prince Edward Island, she can obey her impulses, without fear of being ridiculed or punished. And in this case, many of Jane's impulses lean toward the domestic. The love of home and all things domestic displayed in this novel are, according to Epperly (1992:222), 'all the homey things Montgomery herself loved, as she described them over the years in her letters and journal'.

The house at Lantern Hill with all its trappings sets a scene of cheerful, quaint efficiency combined with the requisite creature comforts. From the name of the house's previous owner, Aunt Matilda Jolly, down to the name which Jane gives to one of the cooking pots

[39] The idea of a room of her own resonates the call in Virginia Woolf's essay 'A room of her own' (1929) for a personal space for a woman to express her creativity in, although Jane is not an aspiring writer, unlike at least two of Montgomery's protagonists, Anne and Emily. Jane's creativity takes a different turn, and when the opportunity arises, she unhesitatingly makes an additional room her own to express that – her kitchen, which becomes a space for experimentation, which sometimes ends in inedible failures, but more often becomes a source of joy, nurture and triumph.

and the warm colour which she decides to paint the door, all the aspects of the house depict a warmth and jollity which gives a particular atmosphere to Jane's experience of life with her father on Prince Edward Island.

As Gallagher (1989:6) explains, detailed descriptions of a house 'echo those of the domestic novel. We know exactly how the house looks. [...] The particular details of the domestic setting give rise to [...] development of the hearth imagery'. Epperly (1992:221) calls this book, with what Waddey (1983:14) refers to as a 'Promethean pattern', 'an unblushing celebration of domesticity'. She adds, using more appropriately female metaphors:

> Montgomery is not praising domesticity for its own sake, but for what it represents to Jane: discovery of her own powers of creativity and control. Jane, a true *Hestian* female, learns that tending the *hearth* is for her tantamount to keeping the *heart* beating. (my emphases)

When her paternal aunt, Aunt Irene, speaks patronizingly of the household items and domestic activities that Jane finds joy in, Aunt Irene in effect diminishes Jane's individuality and her abilities to create an atmosphere of comfort and love by her homemaking activities (*JLH*, 124). According to Epperly (1992:212), '[f]or Jane Stuart, the Lantern Hill house becomes an instrument for autonomy – in her happy story, domesticity deals with an old theme in strikingly different ways'. The house, exterior and interior, symbolizes the way in which Jane can take charge of her own emotional and physical nurturing, as well as that of others. Instead of being held captive by the neglect she has experienced in 60 Gay, she is able to change her life, including her way of seeing herself, by being given the freedom to change her outward life in the shape of the place where she lives.

If 'personal objects communicate information about their owner(s), and [...] such a display communicates individual self-identity and self-esteem' (Smith, 1994:33), then the household items of Lantern Hill are an expression of Jane as an individual with the ability to take care of herself and also of others. Jane's domesticity is an illustration of how, 'as some critics have argued, Montgomery's work partakes of a domestic or maternal feminism that focuses on the power that women can accrue within the domestic space' (Stallcup, 2001:121).

When Jane realizes that she has to leave Lantern Hill and return to Toronto soon, she almost compulsively throws herself into housekeeping for the last while before she has to leave. These housekeeping tasks signify her own capabilities and although Aunt Irene tries to

prevent Jane from exercising her new-found abilities, she now has the personal strength to resist her as she has never been able to stand up to her grandmother. Jean Little (1975:79) describes the emotional shift that Jane has made:

> Jane wins no love from her antagonists nor does she want to, since they are essentially evil rather than merely old-fashioned and strong-willed. Instead Jane becomes strong enough to be herself in spite of them. As she gains self-confidence, her grandmother and her Aunt Irene lose much of their power to hurt her but they are, in no way, redeemed, nor are they reconciled to her as Jane. She is still unacceptable [to them] at the end of the book, but their acceptance has become of no importance to her. She has outgrown them.

In the new environment at Lantern Hill, Jane can now act as an autonomous person with the ability to make her own choices and effect changes on the environment around her, which is the house where she and her father live, and which, to her, symbolizes both safety and comfort (*JLH*, 177).

For Jane, home is more than a house – she also feels at home in nature, and literally immerses herself in it, as her father once immersed his tiny daughter in the waves.[40] Jane's feelings of home are often associated with nature, especially the sea: 'A little house looking seaward', with a 'a white gull' and 'ships going up and down', situated in the 'spruce woods' and 'misty barrens', with 'salt air cold from leagues of gulf'. It is characterised by quiet. 'That was home … the only home she knew'. The emphasis here is on a home, not merely a house. This home's 'looking seaward' symbolizes the openness and outward focus of the life she experiences in the physical environment of Lantern Hill (*JLH*, 188-189). Epperly (2007:88) explains:

> All of Montgomery's landscapes offer intimate views of a Nature that is vast in its power and beauty; all of Montgomery's depicted homes are intimate with landscape. Looking at the houses of home, in their natural settings, reveals many ways Montgomery encourages the reader to perceive metaphor, to engage spirit through place.

In Jane's room at Lantern Hill, nature extends into her bedroom, 'her own dear room where a young birch was fairly poking an arm in through the window from the steep hill-side'. The atmosphere at Lantern Hill reflects a unity with nature and with it the symbolism which is associated with nature: freedom, individuality, wholeness (*JLH*, 216-217). As already mentioned, often in Montgomery's writing, windows have special significance and function as 'magic portals to bring the outdoors indoors and take the dreamer into and beyond the

[40] And, like the young Anne, she brings nature into the home in the form of flowers and other natural objects.

landscape' (Epperly, 2007:88). This works to create an effect where '[h]ouses live as intimately with the land as characters live in their dreaming spaces (Epperly, 2007:88).

As the novel progresses, Jane returns to her father and Lantern Hill at the beginning of the next summer, where she feverishly wants to make sure that all the little items in the house are still in their original places. Her anxiety in this regard indicates a fear that the 'magic' of Lantern Hill, and all that it meant to her the previous summer, has changed and that it will no longer be available to her. When things are unchanged, she feels relief and can start another summer of freedom and joy. Jane's assertion, at the start of the second summer there with her father, that 'the house is glad to see us…glad to be lived in again […the] chairs just want someone to sit on them' is a projection of her own feelings onto the house, and her own desire to be wanted and welcomed. The house at Lantern Hill, with its contents, enables what Smith (1994:33) calls 'the creation of physical settings as being instrumental in providing opportunities for people to act out certain social roles and perhaps future roles'. Whereas Jane's physical setting in Toronto makes it difficult for her to act out the role of an independent, valuable person, the situation at Lantern Hill supports her in becoming a healthy person, as well as having a healthy family relationship between Jane and her father. Smith (1994:33) adds that 'the physical structure of the home [is] an important aspect of its meaning'. It seems as though Jane's delight in the physical structure of the house, with its furnishing and all the various aspects of domesticity, is a means to express her joy at finding her father's love and his confirmation of her identity as a valuable person.

Waterston (2008:202) notes:

> Young Jane puts on Prince Edward Island overalls, weeds her garden, and bakes a perfect pie for her father. Feminists might deplore the implication of domestic subservience as happiness. But Jane – and many of her readers – accepts the idea of nurturing as a new part of her destiny.

In loving every detail of the house which he has bought for them, and in 'housecleaning furiously', she shows her love for her father and her satisfaction in the new life and identity which were previously unavailable to her. At 60 Gay she is not allowed to express affection for her mother openly in any way, whether it is through physical care or any kind of emotional interaction. Such expressions of affection anger her jealous grandmother. Since open displays of affection are something she has had to repress while living in her Grandmother's house in Toronto, she sublimates this emotional energy into the nurturing

aspects of homemaking and housekeeping, and uses that as an outlet for the love which she wants to express to her parents (*JLH*, 213-214).

Hazel Easthope (2004:134) asserts:

> The home provides humans with all the satisfactions that territory provides to many species of animal, namely identity, security and the stimulation of its occupants. […] Personalization of one's home promotes security and identity, while the defence and modification of one's home promotes stimulation.

At first, Jane experiences this 'security' and 'identity' only on Prince Edward Island, but once these are firmly established, it eventually becomes possible for her to experience both security and identity in Toronto, as well as in Prince Edward Island. When she eventually reunites her parents and finds a house in Toronto which seems to echo Lantern Hill's 'magic', she finds that lasting happiness in Toronto, as well as in Prince Edward Island, becomes a real possibility.

When Jane goes with her mother to visit a friend in a Toronto suburb, Lakeside Gardens, she discovers the third house important in this novel, a house with all the same characteristics of home that Lantern Hill possesses. This house is immediately indicated as being akin to Lantern Hill, and brings with it a host of associations and assumptions. Evidently, this house is a place with potential for happiness and freedom. Epperly (1992:223) writes of Jane and her instantaneous love for this house:

> Jane's love of home is really an uncomplicated delight in her individual expression of domestic worship. Jane will, no doubt, go on to love many, many houses. Her talent is in recognizing magic and going to work to create home comforts around it.

This house is 'small,' implying that it is manageable, cosy and comforting, and that it is 'built of grey stone,' associates it with nature. '[C]asement windows…some of them beautifully unexpected' (*JLH*, 207) bring to mind the same passage from Tennyson quoted in *Anne of Windy Willows* and *Anne's House of Dreams*:

> A magic casement opening on the foam
> Of perilous seas in fairy lands forlorn…

This seems to indicate an association with magic and fairytale, an association which is confirmed by Epperly (1992:229) when she asserts that *Jane of Lantern Hill* has a 'fairytale pattern'. This house, in Lakeside Gardens, makes possible the conclusion of the novel, which Waterston (2008:206) describes as follows:

> The Island ideal and the Toronto reality can be melded, reconciled, in this fabulous happy ending. Jane can live in Prince Edward Island and also in Toronto, in the house that is an idealized version of 'Journey's End', Montgomery's own house in Toronto, the last home she lived in.

When Jane's future happiness, with her parents reunited and living together in Toronto, is secured, the immediate question in her mind is the house where they would live together, and her main concern is that it should not be 60 Gay: 'We…we won't have to live at 60 Gay?' she asks her father (*JLH*, 271). '[T]he little stone house in Lakeside Gardens' is immediately in her thoughts. With all that has already been shown in the novel about Jane and her impressions of the 'little stone house', it becomes evident, when Jane immediately thinks of this house, what the future of the protagonists will be like: 'It would live…they would give it life. Its cold windows would shine with welcoming lights' (*JLH*, 271). Waterston (2008:203) writes that

> Jane can survive Toronto, because she has her creator's power to live an inner life on her island. Because she has internalized the Island, Jane can now find, at the western edge of Toronto, a perfect house overlooking the Humber River ravine. Just as Montgomery had described it, (March 12, 1935), Jane's find has "casement windows…some of them beautifully unexpected…It was built right on the edge of the ravine over-looking the tree-tops, with five great pines just behind it.

The personification of the house as a living creature with a part to play in the narrative cements the concept of the nurturing role the house has in this novel. The characterization of the house in this passage as a living being with a heart which can 'ache with the cold' is an indication of the significance of the house as an entity in its being capable of action and therefore, of effecting the narrative of the story. The existence of a house such as this in Toronto shows that the wholeness and satisfaction which Jane has experienced in Prince Edward Island is not only possible in Toronto, but probable. Although '[p]eople who could live in Lakeside Gardens wanted bigger houses,' and 'the builder had decided that he had made a mistake when he built a little house in Lakeside Gardens', thus indicating the relative rarity of finding a home life such as the one Jane craves in Toronto, nevertheless it is not entirely impossible. The inclusion of the descriptions of nature in this passage ('How the dead brown leaves still clinging to the oaks rustled in the windy night! How the lights along the lake shore twinkled through the trees of the ravine!') as well as the mention of lights show the identification of this 'little stone house' with the other house which Jane loves, Lantern Hill (*JLH*, 250-251).

In *The Blue Castle*, a repressed young woman, Valancy, is prodded to action by the news that she will die within a year of heart disease. Her dormant instincts for self-preservation and self-fulfilment come to life and lead her to flee her emotionally abusive mother's house. Her desire to escape is strong enough for her to ask for work as a housekeeper and companion to Cissy Gay, a girl dying of tuberculosis, and Cissy's disreputable father. After Cissy dies, Valancy proposes to Barney Snaith, an unconventional man with a cynical air and a mysterious past, and goes to live with him in his cottage on an island in Lake Mistawis – her first true home of her own. Like Jane, Valancy is shown escaping from a house with an atmosphere of repression where the family members are cold, remote and disapproving, to a little house on an island where she experiences love and acceptance and discovers autonomy and self-fulfilment.

Valancy's own mother's house is the house from where she escapes. It is 'an ugly red brick box of a home' (*BC*, 4) and '[t]oo high for its breadth, and made still higher by a bulbous glass cupola on top' (*BC*, 20). Like Grandmother's house in *Jane of Lantern Hill*, it is on an 'ugly, prim, respectable street' and has 'the desolate, barren peace of an old house whose life is lived' (*BC*, 20). The house's ugliness echoes Valancy's feelings (at the beginning of the novel) of being entirely unattractive.

Åhmansson (1994:146,147) also recognises the connection between the interior of the house, in particular, Valancy's room, and Valancy herself, commenting that 'Valancy's state of mind as well as her physical appearance is transmitted through a detailed description of her room' and '[i]n all these respects Valancy and her room are in total agreement with each other'. Valancy's own room especially emphasises the ugliness Valancy experiences both in herself and her life: 'She knew the ugliness of that room by heart – knew it and hated it' (*BC*, 4). Valancy's bedroom is described in painstaking detail, and these details work to create an impression that Valancy's life is as old, faded, broken and ugly as her room, and that she is highly aware of this state of affairs and dissatisfied with it.

As a marker of the self, the room, described in the first chapter, is a particularly bleak symbol of the self. That her life is bare of beauty is emphasised by a yellow-painted floor, the 'hideous' hooked rug with a 'grotesque' hooked dog pictured on it 'always grinning at her when she awoke' (*BC*, 2), and the brown-paper lambrequin with purple roses on it. The things in her room are old, broken or too small, and shockingly neglected, in the home of one of the town's foremost families. There is faded, depressingly dark red wallpaper. The

ceiling is discoloured by old leaks and crossed by cracks. The furnishings are cast-offs: a narrow, pinched little washstand, a spotted old looking-glass with the crack across it, an inadequate dressing table, a jar of ancient pot-pourri, a shell-covered box with one burst corner, a beaded pincushion with half of its fringe gone. Her rigidly uncomfortable lot in life is aggravated by a stiff yellow chair (*BC*, 2).

The view from a window, as I have already shown, is often significant in Montgomery's work, and the view from Valancy's window in her mother's house is predictably disappointing, highlighting Valancy's gloomy outlook on her life:

> The ugliness of the view struck her like a blow; the ragged fence, the tumble-down old carriage-shop in the next lot, plastered with crude, violently coloured advertisements;[41] the grimy railway station beyond, with the awful derelicts that were always hanging around it even at this early hour. In the pouring rain everything looked worse than usual. (*BC*, 14)

The pouring rain in this passage mirrors Valancy's tears of disappointment over her life. Later when Valancy finally has a little house of her own, she gazes out of her bedroom window at a very different scene – 'through the big pine boughs' at the lake, at the night sky with its 'dear starlight' (*BC*, 167).

One of the few pictures in her room is a chromo of a puppy sitting on a rainy doorstep which distresses Valancy. The picture as well as Valancy's habitual reaction to it ('That forlorn little dog crouched on the doorstep in the driving rain! Why didn't *some one* open the door and let him in?') shows Valancy's feeling of being coldly left out of the warmth and love that life has to offer (*BC*, 2-3). Although Valancy is living in her mother's house, usually meant to be a place of belonging and security, that is not what she experiences at any point in her childhood, girlhood, or (now much rubbed-in) spinsterhood. Manzo (2005:69) points out that 'in looking holistically at place experience and meaning, we can see that experiences of belonging exist alongside experiences of alienation, that identity exists within the context of difference and that dwelling includes movement and change'. As Manzo explains, it is possible to feel both 'at home' and 'not at home' at the same time. In this sense, Valancy feels accustomed to her mother's house and the way she has been brought up. She is in a sense at home in these circumstances, which is why, up to this point

[41] Although Valancy's mother's house is obviously respectable, the view from Valancy's room reminds the reader of the 'Valley of Ashes' scene in F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* (1925), published the year before *The Blue Castle.* In a certain sense, Valancy's rebellion could be similar to the daring of the flappers, with her 'shingled' hair and sleeveless new green dress with the low-slung crimson belt.

in her life, she has meekly accepted the role which her mother and extended family have given her. However, Valancy's true personality asserts itself once she is faced with what she believes is the prospect of her certain death within a year. This is the catalyst which makes her desire outward change. She wants her outward life, and the place she lives in, to match her perception of her true inner self, instead of feeling that there is a discord between the two.

The effect of Valancy's environment on her psyche could be suggested by De Botton's (2008:106) telling question: 'Why are we vulnerable, so inconveniently vulnerable, to what the places we inhabit are saying?' The details of Valancy's bedroom all work to show the reader that Valancy is not only unhappy with her life, but past the first bloom of youth and getting older. Moreover, she is powerless: 'Valancy sometimes felt that she could have done something for her room herself, even without money, if she were permitted. But her mother had negatived every timid suggestion and Valancy did not persist. Valancy never persisted. She was afraid to' (*BC*, 3). She is aware of how ugly her room is, deeply unhappy about its ugliness, and yet unable to do anything to change things.

Twigger-Ross and Uzzell (1996:207) explain that the 'desire to preserve continuity of the self-concept is a second motivator of action'. It seems likely that Valancy's dissatisfaction with her room correlates with her feelings that her circumstances in life are not congruent with her 'self-concept'. When Valancy gets a letter meant for someone else, containing the doctor's note that she has only a year to live, this becomes a catalyst for change. Her decisions to make a new life for herself are caused by the knowledge that she has only a short time left to live, and are also linked with her desire to modify her physical environment, which is something people do 'in order to represent present selves and to present a new self' (Twigger-Ross & Uzzell, 1996:208). Twigger-Ross and Uzzell (1996:208) elaborate on this idea: 'The absences of place-congruent continuity can lead to general dissatisfaction and possibly a desire to leave an area to find another place to live which is congruent with self.'

Early in the novel, we are introduced to one of Valancy's deepest longings: '"Oh, if I could only have a house of my own – ever so poor, so tiny – but my own!"' (*BC*, 20). The house that provokes this utterance is that of a young bride-to-be – Jennie Lloyd. Valancy thinks to herself that '"I don't envy Jennie the man….but I do envy her the house. It's such a nice young house' (*BC*, 20). Montgomery describes some of the furnishings of 'this delightful

house': 'the nicest little Wedgwood teacups…an open fireplace…monogrammed linen…hemstitched tablecloths…and china-closets' (*BC*, 21). Valancy delights in these domestic details and her simmering inner rebellion against her lot in life is indicated in her exclamation just after these descriptions – 'Why did *everything* come to some girls and *nothing* to others? It wasn't fair' (*BC*, 21).

According to Epperly (1992:236) 'Valancy's rebellion is not really against morality or the established order but against the petty corruption of the values of the old order. Valancy wants marriage and a home life and the security of a husband'. Waterston (2008:133-134) describes how Montgomery's own experiences as a young adult living with older relatives and feeling trapped by circumstances are echoed in her portrayal of Valancy:

> In early sections of her journal (which she no doubt checked during the period of composition), she could find other sources for Valancy's initial characterization. In 1905 she had confessed, "There isn't the least likelihood I ever shall have a house of my own" (November 24, 1905). Next page: "I know how I would like to be married – and never will be." Long dreary passages penned around 1905 provide parallels to Valancy's ennui, depression, anxiety and worry.

Valancy feels weighted down by the sheer ugliness of the houses of her relatives, for example, her uncle's home, which she attacks with surprising vigour at the start of her rebellion, once the 'shackles had been stricken off her soul' (*BC*, 52):

> By this time they had reached Maple Avenue and Uncle Herbert's house, a large, pretentious structure peppered with meaningless bay windows and excrescent porches. A house that always looked like a stupid, prosperous, self-satisfied man with warts on his face.
>
> "A house like that," said Valancy solemnly, "is a blasphemy." (*BC*, 50)

In *Jane of Lantern Hill*, Jane Stuart goes on 'moon sprees' where she imagines herself cleaning and scrubbing the full moon in an effort to escape from her powerless, dreary existence. Valancy similarly attempts to escape from her life, through a 'dream spree', where she imagines herself a 'lovely woman…for whose glance men died' and living in her 'Blue Castle in Spain…with its turrets and banners on the pine-clad mountain height, wrapped in its faint, blue loveliness, against the sunset skies of a fair and unknown land' (*BC*, 4). To Valancy, the little cottage on the island where she goes to live after marrying Barney Snaith *is* her 'Blue Castle' – the realization of her daydreams of a house of her own and an independent identity and life of her own. When Barney first takes her to the house after their quick, unconventional wedding, this is the description of the humble dwelling, 'Barney's shack', which she has agreed to live in:

> Valancy looked—and looked—and looked again. There was a diaphanous, lilac mist on the lake, shrouding the island. Through it the two enormous pine-trees that clasped hands over Barney's shack loomed out like dark turrets. Behind them was a sky still rose-hued in the afterlight, and a pale young moon.
> Valancy shivered like a tree the wind stirs suddenly. Something seemed to sweep over her soul.
> "My Blue Castle!" she said. "Oh, my Blue Castle!" (*BC*, 134)[42]

Valancy enjoys taking care of the little house because it her *own* place. She is not merely obeying her mother's orders in doing housework. Early on she tells Barney that '"I *have* to be tidy. I don't really *want* to be. But untidiness hurts me. Yes, I'll have to tidy up your shack"' (*BC*, 132). Similar to Jane, Valancy turns out to be a good cook:

> She cooked all their meals on a coal-oil stove, performing all her little domestic rites carefully and exultingly, and they ate out on the verandah that almost overhung the lake. […] Valancy, amid all the romance of Mistawis, never forgot that men had stomachs. Barney paid her no end of compliments on her cooking. (*BC*, 151)

Also like Jane, Valancy's household possessions, though quaint and mismatched, delight her (and presumably the author) no end. Her tea pot is a 'little battered old pewter teapot of incredible age', her dishes are all 'mismatched chipped bits', and special mention is made of a 'dear, big, pobby old jug of robin's-egg blue' (*BC*, 151). As for Jane, the household tasks have what Epperly (1992:221) refers to as a 'Hestian' quality – they are 'little domestic rites' (*BC*, 151), and so it is not surprising that Valancy experiences a sense of almost religious ecstasy in her home, and when the sun shines in, 'Valancy's whole being knelt in prayer as if in some great cathedral' (*BC*, 148).[43]

Like most of Montgomery's heroines, Valancy prefers a small house. When Barney asks her whether she would like to live in one of the large millionaires' houses surrounding them on the lake, she says that she wants a small house: '"I like a house I can love and cuddle and boss. Just like ours here"' (*BC*, 152).

The description of the Valancy's home in two different chapters of the novel emphasise its uniqueness. Just after they are married, Barney describes it to Valancy:

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[42] Valancy is not Montgomery's only character who has a rich dream life with a theme of blue. In *The Golden Road*, the quiet and extremely reserved farmer, Jasper Dale, has a dream lover with 'a pale, very sweet face, with large dark eyes and a wistful expression under masses of black, lustrous hair' (*GR,* 171). He secretly and lavishly furnishes the west gable room of his lonely house for her and in this room '…a woman's dress was hanging over a chair before the mirror – a pale blue, silken affair. And on the floor beside it were two little blue satin slippers!'(*GR,* 172).

[43] As already discussed in Chapter 2, Jeanne Moore (2000:208) also relates the home to 'Hestia, the Greek goddess of the hearth, at the centre of family life, and of household economy in the broadest sense'.

> "There's not much of it – just one big living-room and one small bedroom. Well-built, though. Old Tom loved his job. The beams of our house are cedar and its rafters fir. Our living room windows face west and east. It's wonderful to have a room where you can see both sunrise and sunset…." (*BC*, 133)

According to Sixsmith (1986:291), 'the home, in terms of the kind of opportunities it affords people for personal and social action and how these enable self-impression and expression is one profound centre of significance contributing to a sense of place identity.' This is demonstrated in *The Blue Castle* by the interior of the house to which Valancy escapes, a description of which I have already partially quoted above:

> The big living-room had three windows, all commanding exquisite view of exquisite Mistawis. The one in the end of the room was an oriel window – which Tom MacMurray, Barney explained, had got out of some little old "up back" church that had been sold. It faced the west and when the sunsets flooded it Valancy's whole being knelt in prayer as if in some great cathedral. (*BC*, 148)

It is an unconventional kind of home and this quality in the house is important because it signifies Valancy's own departure from the straitlaced and repressive community where she lived with her with her mother and relatives. The house echoes Valancy's new identity as an unusual – indeed unique – but nevertheless valuable individual. Epperly (2007:153) writes of Valancy's home in Montgomery's *The Blue Castle* that the 'house of home in a perfectly lovely world is filled with creature comforts and poetry'. The creature comforts are symbolised by a stone fireplace,

> …[n]o desecrating gas imitation but a real fireplace where you could burn real logs. With a big grizzly bearskin on the floor before it, and beside it a hideous red-plush sofa…But its ugliness was hidden by silver-gray timber wolf skins, and Valancy's cushions made it gay and comfortable. (*BC*, 148-149)

The hearth is an emblem of comfort, and the detailed explanation that it is a real fireplace and not a gas imitation of one suggests that similarly, Valancy's comfort in this house as well as her relationship with the man who lives in it with her is authentic and truly meets her needs. Gallagher (1989:4) notes that the 'social significance of the open hearth suggests the primary theme of the domestic novel: the importance of personal interactions and shared experiences.' Although Valancy's sofa is 'hideous', it is made 'gay and comfortable' by the addition of the beautiful wolf skins and Valancy's colourful cushions. Sixsmith (1986:282) explains this comfort by suggesting that personal 'choice of house and areas to live in' is the main factor that makes a house a home, and that by means of 'personalization […] of these

in terms of façade, décor, furnishings, etc. […] the house may psychologically be transformed into a home'.

According to De Botton (2008:119), 'our aim is to identify objects and decorative features which will correlate with certain salutary inner states and encourage us to foster them within ourselves.' Some of the objects which Barney has chosen and that Valancy loves are described in this passage:

> In a corner a nice, tall, lazy old clock ticked – the right kind of a clock… A fat, corpulent clock with a great, round, man's face painted on it, the hands stretching out of its nose and the hours encircling it like a halo. There was a big glass case of stuffed owls and several deer heads…Some comfortable old chairs that asked to be sat upon. A squat little chair with a cushion on it…One side of the wall was lined with rough, homemade book-shelves filled with books, and between the two side windows hung an old mirror in a faded gilt frame, with fat cupids gambolling in the panel over the glass…Valancy thought she was almost pretty in that mirror… (*BC*, 148-149)

The unconventionality of the house and its unusual furniture and decorations echo both Valancy and Barney's personalities. Just as Valancy loves her new life with Barney and the person she has become since leaving her mother's house, so she loves her house, which is an emblem of it: 'Valancy loved her Blue Castle and was completely satisfied with it' (*BC*, 148).

According to Manzo (2003:53), 'relationships to places reflect the on-going process of how people (re)make their identity, it also illustrates how development includes challenges and struggles, which then lead people to seek places where they can find succor and restoration…' The contrast between the description of the room Valancy leaves behind her in her mother's house at the beginning of the novel and the description of her new home towards the end of the novel indicate to the reader the emotional shift that Valancy has made. Epperly (1992:236) affirms that 'Valancy, we are assured, has been looking for genuine (read that as traditional but not necessarily always conventional) romance and beauty, and she has been heroic enough to recognize them when they were magically disguised in a homespun shirt or log house'.

A Tangled Web (1931) is one of Montgomery's less well-known novels, and it is quite different from most of her novels. One of the ways in which it differs from the other novels I have discussed is that it does not focus on one character, but instead shows a group of different people, each with a different story. The link between these different people is that they all belong to the Dark and Penhallow clan, and that they are (mostly) all in the running

to possibly inherit a valuable family heirloom from their caustic Great-Aunt Becky who 'controls her family by keeping her will a mystery, a theme that recalls Charles Dickens' *Bleak House*' (Waterston, 2008:163).

Early in the novel, Montgomery introduces the reader to a character, who, like Jane and Valancy, is living a stifled life in a house where she is not welcome. 'Old Margaret Penhallow' is an unmarried dressmaker forced to live with her brother and his family due to her financial position. Her brother and his family put up with her for the sake of appearances, but she is very much in the way in their house, where, due to space constraints, she has to share a room with her adolescent niece, Gladys.

Like Valancy, Margaret is described as a person who is deeply sensitive to beauty, and almost physically hurt by ugliness. She enjoys creating beauty in the form of the clothes she makes for the other members of her clan. At a gathering of the Dark-Penhallow clan early in the novel, Margaret is thinking about her deepest, unspoken longings – Margaret wants to be married, because, '[i]f you were married you were somebody. If not, you were nobody. In the Dark and Penhallow clan, anyhow' (*TW*, 19). Margaret's disempowerment as an unmarried woman is clear, as Valancy's is, in a community where being thought sufficiently desirable to get a husband conveys status. However, the truth lies a little deeper than that, because immediately after, Margaret further admits to herself that she really wants a space of her own, and acknowledges her maternal longings:

> She wanted a dear little homey place to call her own; and she wanted to adopt a baby. […] All her love was centred in her imaginary baby and imaginary house—which was not quite as imaginary as the baby, if truth were known. Yet she had no real hope of ever owning the house. (*TW*, 19)

Waterston (2008:164) suggests that in this novel, 'Montgomery lets slip secrets about her own nature. Old-maid Margaret with her lustrous eyes and her longing for a baby and a home of her own – these seem like tiny bits of autobiography'. As the novel progresses, it becomes clear that Margaret does not really want to be married after all, at least not nearly as much as she wants a place of her own. Margaret also wants the family heirloom around which the plot of *A Tangled* Web pivots – the old Dark jug, but only because she longs for 'a room of her own'. Her thoughts reveal this:

> Margaret felt that she ought to have the jug—must have the jug. Momentarily, she hated every other claimant in the room. She knew if she had the jug she could make Mrs. Denzil [the sister-in-law in whose house she was forced to live] give her a room to herself in return for the concession of allowing the jug to be put on the parlor

> mantelpiece. A room to herself! It sounded heavenly. She knew she could never have her little dream-house…but surely she might have a room to herself… (*TW*, 20)

When Margaret's dream of owning a house is realized, it is not because of marriage, but because of money – she inherits a copy of the *Pilgrim's Progress* from her Great-Aunt Becky and sells it for a fabulous sum when it is discovered to be very valuable. The money enables her to buy her dream home and offer a home to another unwanted person, Brian – a little orphan boy who is a relative of hers. Epperly (1992:245) calls this 'a wonderful departure from the usual conventions of romance…Margaret, in other words, suggests that the loving, maternal spirit has other ways to fulfil itself than through marriage'.

In some ways, Margaret's struggle is the fact that she does not have a place of her own in the world – figuratively or literally. She is of no account. Furthermore, her family are entirely unsympathetic toward her – they cannot envision that she may be unhappy with her lot. Margaret's problem is that she 'had no money to buy anything and would have been hooted at if it were as much as suspected that she wanted to buy a house' (*TW*, 83). She realizes that her relatives would not understand her desire for a place of her own. She knows what their reaction would be if she wanted to buy a house of her own: 'Hadn't she a perfectly good, ungrudged home with her brother? What in the world would *she* want with a house?' (*TW*, 83).

The house on which Margaret fixates all her dissatisfaction with her life and her longing after another kind of life is described as 'a little house on the Bay Silver side road. […] It was for sale but nobody wanted to buy it – nobody, that is, except Margaret' (*TW*, 83). Twigger-Ross and Uzzell (1996:208) assert that a 'person gains a boost to his/her self-esteem from the qualities of the place'. This house – which Margaret has secretly named 'Whispering Winds' – possesses qualities which give Margaret's self-esteem a boost. Whispering Winds is 'the small secret which made Margaret's life endurable. It wound in and out of her drab life like a ribbon of rainbows' (*TW*, 83). The house suggests an entirely differently kind of life to Margaret – a life that was not 'drab' and not just 'endurable', and she is described as dreaming 'all kinds of foolish, sweet dreams about it' (*TW*, 84). This links it to the dream houses I discussed in Chapter 2.

Margaret's attachment to 'Whispering Winds' demonstrates De Botton's (2008:123) assertion that 'what we call a home is merely any place that succeeds in making more consistently available to us the truths which the wider world ignores, or which our distracted

and irresolute selves have trouble holding on to'. Whispering Winds is surrounded by beautiful trees, fields and an old garden: 'an old, old lane, grassy and deep-rutted', 'clumps of birches', 'young spruces growing up quickly', 'tossing young maples whitening in the wind', 'an apple tree spilling blossoms over it', 'a little field' that is 'cool and inviting', 'the shadow of a spruce wood' and the scent of clover (*TW*, 84). To Margaret, the house has a character of its own, like a person, and the fields and the garden surrounding it are an extension of the house, helping to communicate the house's character to the reader, and to show what kind of a house Margaret finds delightful:

> …the little house, once white, now […] gray […] There it was, basking in the late sun – smiling at her with its twinkling windows. […] Whispering Winds was one of those houses you loved the minute you saw them, without being in the least able to tell why—perhaps because its roof-line was so lovely against the green hill. She loved it so. (*TW*, 84)

Margaret's love for the house is echoed by the garden's seeming affection for the house around which it grows, a projection of Margaret's own love for the house:

> She walked about the old garden, that was beginning to have such a look of neglect. She longed to prune it and weed it and dress it up. That delightful big bed of striped grass was encroaching on the path, those forget-me-nots were simply running wild. They and the house were just crying out for someone to take care of them. The house and the garden belonged to each other some way—you couldn't have separated them. The house seemed to grow out of the garden. The shrubs and vines reached up around it to hold it and caress it. (*TW*, 84)

Part of the tragedy of her life is that there is no one to whom she is indispensable, no where she is needed, no one who desires her presence. A part of the reason for Margaret's love for the house is thus a desire to take care of something – to be needed and wanted (as for Valancy, this is a deep-seated need). She can take care of the house and the garden – whitewash the house again so that it would be white as it had once been, and tidy the garden, 'prune it and weed it and dress it up'. Gustafson (2011:11) explains:

> Meanings of place may also concern the relationship between self and environment…A related theme concerns the shaping of the physical environment by the interviewees themselves, e.g. by building or repairing the houses they live in or by cultivating their land. In addition, the environment is often perceived as being meaningful because it offers the respondents various kinds of opportunities – opportunities to perform certain activities, to feel or experience something desirable, opportunities for personal development. The opposite, i.e. places regarded as constraining and lacking in opportunities, also exists.

She loves the house because she can take care of it – it needs her. It provides Margaret with ‘various kinds of opportunities’. This contrasts with her life in her brother’s house, where she is unwanted, has no voice and no decision-making opportunity – it is a place ‘regarded as constraining and lacking in opportunities’.

Like herself, Whispering Winds is lonely and unwanted, and thus the house functions as a symbol of herself. Her young relatives’ various love affairs intrigue her, but her significant comment, castigating herself, is: ‘There you go again. Love going to waste all around you and you starving for a little’ (*TW*, 86). Margaret’s deepest longing is to love and to be loved, to be significant and valued. It seems that the only thing she can find to love her is a house which she imaginatively endows with a life and character of its own. Margaret ‘never want[s] to go away from home. What she wanted was a place where she could put down roots and grow old quietly’ (*TW*, 86).

The description of ‘Whispering Winds’ is in stark contrast to the description of Margaret’s brother’s house and the room in it that she shares with a teenage niece. The house is a ‘square bare house in a treeless yard’ where she shares a ‘hideous little room looking out on the hen-yard’. The room is ‘always noisy […] there were never any quiet moments’ (*TW*, 85). The house offers no communion with nature and no possibilities of solitude either. Its unforgiving shape and lack of decorative elements make it seem inhospitable, stark and cold. Instead of the ‘glimpse of purple valley’ that one can see from Whispering Winds, her room looks out on a most prosaic sight – the hen-yard. Moore (2000:211) asserts that ‘[t]hrough the absence of home, home itself gains meaning’. It is precisely because Margaret has never had a home of her own that the idea of Whispering Winds and all it symbolizes to her take such strong possession of her.

Although at the beginning of the novel Margaret thinks that she wants to be married, she finds it difficult to accept Pennycuik ‘Dandy’ Dark’s surprising marriage proposal – to her, the abstract idea of marriage is a different matter from an actual marriage proposal made by a real man. Montgomery describes her as feeling that ‘[i]n spite of her desire for marriage in the abstract she found that in the concrete, as represented by little dapper ‘Dandy’ Dark, it was not wholly desirable’ (*TW*, 217). The implication in this passage seems to be that, although Margaret longs for a home of her own, she does not want it badly enough to give herself up to a man whom she does not respect or even really like. Interesting also is that one of her reasons for not wanting to marry him is that ‘she didn’t like his fussy, lace-

trimmed house' because it had '[t]oo many jigarees on it' and was too 'different from little gray Whispering Winds, veiled in trees' (*TW*, 217). It seems that, to Margaret, Pennycuik is a lot like his house – fussy, lace-trimmed, with too many 'jigarees', while Margaret in some ways feels herself similar to Whispering Winds and therefore too different from Pennycuik to find any kind of lasting happiness with him. In this regard, Agan and Luchsinger (1965:4) make an interesting comment on the association between relationships and houses:

> The most important influences in life are shaped by intimate relationships. The home, because it fosters such relationships between its members, is the prime conditioner of our way of life. It supplies potential for resourceful living and self-fulfilment, creating channels for finding satisfaction in meaningful pursuits.

Pennycuik 'Dandy' Dark's house is not satisfactory to Margaret as a 'prime conditioner' of her 'way of life', just as she intuitively recognizes that an 'intimate relationship' with him would also not be satisfactory to her. Neither he nor his house exhibit the qualities she realises would supply her with 'potential for resourceful living and self-fulfilment, creating channels for finding satisfaction in meaningful pursuits'. As a result, Margaret feels 'positive anguish' at the thought of giving up 'all the mystery and music and magic that was Whispering Winds. […she] could never again nourish a dear, absurd little hope that it might sometime be hers' (*TW*, 217). To Margaret, giving up Whispering Winds is like having to give up her true self. After much deliberation Margaret decides to marry Pennycuik after all, spurred on mainly by the possibility of inheriting the family heirloom – Great-Aunt Becky's jug – if she is no longer a spinster (*TW*, 218). However, her engagement offers her no satisfaction, because her longing for Whispering Winds and all that it means to her do not go away.

Twigger-Ross and Uzzell (1996:208) suggest that 'favourite environments can support self-esteem' and that empirical research reveals that children 'described the sense of positive self-esteem they gained from being in their own rooms during times of distress'. Similarly, when Margaret finds herself upset after agreeing to the engagement, the thing that soothes her is going to see Whispering Winds: 'She went to see Whispering Winds and walked about it until midnight to recover her serenity. But she was now resigned to being Mrs. Pennycuik Dark' (*TW*, 218). Her truest self and most cherished dreams are signified by the little white house, but she decides to give up the dream of a home of her own for the certainty of marriage. She is aware that marriage would entitle her to respect from her family and others in her community, something she has never experienced.

While Margaret is engaged to Pennycuik, she is anything but excited about her future as a married woman. Instead, she goes to see Whispering Winds more often, because 'she knew that she would never see it again once she was married to Penny' (*TW*, 243). In this passage, which describes Margaret's visit to Whispering Winds and her wandering around its old, rambling garden, her blissful enjoyment of the garden and the solitude it offers is compared with her attitude towards her diamond engagement ring: 'She loathed the sparkle of Penny's ring on her hand…Margaret had once thought it would be a wonderful thing to have a diamond engagement-ring. But now it was only a fetter' (*TW*, 243). Instead of being happy about her marriage, she tearfully wanders around the garden of the house she loves better than her fiancé:

> That night she had hung an old iron pot on a tree and filled it with water for the birds. The little garden was very sweet, with the perfume of young wild ferns growing along the sagging fence. The peace and dignity and beauty of it seemed to envelop her like a charm. She wanted to stay there forever, alone with the happy thoughts that came to her among its flowers and grasses. Tears came into her eyes. (*TW*, 243)

The independence and solitude that the house and garden represent to Margaret are more precious to her than the conventional symbols of love and commitment that she has been given by her fiancé. Having her own house would allow her to express her individuality in a way that she has never been allowed to do. Clearly, Margaret is disillusioned, even repelled, by the idea of marriage to a person who does not understand her.

When Margaret is eventually released from her promise to marry Pennycuik Dark, she bursts into tears – but *not* because she is no longer getting married:

> She had not been crying because she was going to marry Penny exactly—she had been crying because suddenly, unbelievably, magically, a darling dream could have come true if she did not get married. And now that the marriage was off, the dream *could* come true. (*TW*, 273)

Montgomery shows her readers an alternative to wedded bliss which is the norm for the endings of most novels. Instead of marriage being Margaret's greatest wish, her true dream is to have a home of her own – a place of her own, chosen by her, to live out her life in her own way. Manzo (2003:54) confirms that

> … [p]eople choose environments that are congruent with their self-concept, modifying settings to better represent themselves, or moving to find places which are more congruent with their sense of self. […] people are active shapers of their environments, and their interaction with the world around them is part of a conscious process.

Whispering Winds is Margaret's chosen environment because is echoes her self-concept and allows her to interact with her environment on her own terms, experiencing personal growth in the process. Margaret gets a pretty home – the house of her dreams – but unlike Valancy in *The Blue Castle* and another character in *A Tangled Web*, Gay Penhallow, who marries a man who builds a pretty bungalow for her, Margaret does not have to get married in order to get a home of her own.

After Margaret decides to buy Whispering Winds for herself, she goes to see it again. Once more, the house is anthropomorphised into a living, breathing thing with feelings, qualities and needs of its own. It is 'dear friendly Whispering Winds', with 'lonesome things in its garden' that Margaret plans to tend and love (*TW*, 273). It is one of Montgomery's small white literary houses, and its very whiteness will require Margaret's loving care: 'The little house should be whitewashed twice every year so that it would always be white as a pearl' (*TW*, 273). It is a shell for Margaret and also her greatest treasure, a 'pearl'.

A great part of Margaret's attraction to Whispering Winds is the possibilities it presents for her to be alone, quiet, and be able to do what *she* wants to do, not what others want her to do or what is expected of her. She dreams of its being 'so deliciously quiet; nobody could open her door without knocking. She would be alone with her dreams. She could cry and laugh and—and—*swear* when she wanted to' (*TW*, 273). To Margaret, a home of her own signifies autonomy – being in control of her own life and being able to make her own choices. This does not, however, mean that she wants to be lonely – instead, she plans to adopt a child: 'A baby with dimples and sweet, perfumed creases and blue eyes and golden curls. There must be such a baby somewhere, just waiting to be cuddled' (*TW*, 273). Margaret does adopt a child, but not such a baby as she has described. Instead she adopts an abused, unwanted child, Brian,[44] and offers him a home where he is very much wanted. For him the story ends similarly to that of Anne Shirley. Montgomery's final words in *A Tangled Web* concerning Margaret and her adopted child Brian are that they are 'nested in Whispering Winds' (*TW*, 294).

In *Jane of Lantern Hill*, *The Blue Castle*, and *A Tangled Web* there is an escape from stifling houses to homes where Jane, Valancy and Margaret Penhallow respectively are valued and free to be their true selves, fulfilling the need for self and taking control of their own stories.

[44] Noomé (2018, in press) discusses this orphaned child and his predicament in detail in her chapter, 'The nature of the beast: Pets and people in L.M. Montgomery's fiction'.

In this, they follow the pattern, as I indicated at the start of this chapter, of many children's stories, where the sense of homecoming offers the reader closure and security. Stott and Francis (1992:224) assert:

> [T]his concern with home which is so much a part of children's lives exhibits itself in particular story structures in children's literature. Very often, the action of the story is directed by the character's feelings toward the setting and traces character growth and conflict as the leading character proceeds from a setting which is "not home" to one which is "home".

The theme of escape from difficult circumstances seems to be one that Montgomery found intriguing, as circumstances in her own life were often far from ideal. Waterston (2008:201) describes some instances of this, especially later in her life, and particularly when she was writing *Jane of Lantern Hill*: 'In the month when she first names "Jane", Montgomery was locked into despair […]. In October her spirits recuperated through a trip to Prince Edward Island, the first in four years.' Waterston (2008:205) notes that 'On February 1, 1937, she tried to write, "but couldn't do it." Nevertheless, on February 3 she "managed to write the last chapter of *Jane of Lantern Hill*, my heart bleeding at every word"'. One might therefore speculate that, in her novels, Montgomery often uses houses to depict both the difficult circumstances her protagonists escape from, and the refuges to which they escape, as she herself might have wished to escape.

Jane of Lantern Hill especially indicates a very significant longing in Montgomery's own life – to escape from a place where she felt misunderstood and stifled in order to be reunited with her idealized father. Rubio (2008:499) explains that Montgomery

> …had gone through life feeling deserted and disappointed. All the men in her life had essentially failed her, whether through failure to love and value her as child, to help her get an education as a young woman, to take her seriously as a writer when she became a best-selling author, to share her joy in accomplishment, or to offer intellectual companionship. […] Deprived of a parent's unconditional love and support, she had spent her entire life longing for her father's love (since he seemed more real to her than her mother, whom she could not remember).

Epperly (1992:225) also notices this theme in *Jane of Lantern Hill*, describing this aspect of the novel as 'the dream fulfilment, perhaps, of Montgomery's own childhood yearning for her father and her abiding passions for Prince Edward Island and domesticity'. According to her biographer, Rubio (2008:499), Montgomery's 'books are all about young people who want a home and loving parents – and who suffer fear and loneliness until they find them. These were her deepest levels of longing.' In the three novels discussed in this chapter, this

longing is not restricted to the young. Jane is a child seeking her true home; Valancy is a woman of twenty-nine and 'on the shelf', on the same quest for her 'Blue Castle'; and Margaret Penhallow continues the search. And to the satisfaction of the reader, each of the three succeeds, finding a home (in the case of Jane, two homes) that honours her soul, a house that needs the love she wishes to pour out on it in abundance, and that changes her fate.

Chapter 6:
Conclusion

> This time tomorrow night the cold windows will shine no more with welcoming lights. All will be dark and still. We shall be gone and the closed doors and empty rooms will be left to the ghosts of our pains and pleasures. I have written "The Manse, Norval" at the head of an entry for the last time. (*SJ*, *Vol. 4*, 373)

Montgomery drew on her own love for and experience of various homes in which she lived in her description of the houses in her novels. These houses are important markers of meaning. As I have argued in this dissertation, when the significance of the houses in each novel is explored, the narrative is illuminated. The houses subtly or overtly affect the narrative and our perceptions of characters, their desires and needs. Wherever the characters in these novels come from, in the end, the novels celebrate the protagonist's being wanted, welcomed, cherished and nourished in a significant house (or more than one).

In this study, I have examined the depiction of houses in a selection of Montgomery's novels, considering place attachment to houses by key characters and its significance in these novels. My discussion was informed by evidence for Montgomery's own feelings about houses and homes in her journals and letters, and in other biographical information. In my analysis of some of the 'Anne' novels, the 'Emily' trilogy, the 'Pat' books, *Jane of Lantern Hill*, *The Blue Castle* and Margaret Penhallow's story in *The Tangled Web*, I have applied theories of place attachment and theories of the meaning and significance of houses and homes.

I explored possible reasons why Montgomery writes about houses as she does, and why the characters in her novels exhibit noteworthy place attachment and unfailingly confer significance on places. This study has discussed the different and often interrelated ways in which houses in the selected novels figure as representations of characters or their feelings, ways in which houses provide characters with either physical or emotional needs or sometimes with both, and ways in which houses facilitate or prevent certain actions, relationships, or states of being. I also scrutinized houses as important motifs which elicit emotions and actions to Montgomery's novels. In this concluding chapter, I reflect briefly

on my conclusions regarding houses in the novels that I have considered, the limitations of the study and make some suggestions for future research.

The houses that feature most prominently in the various novels I have discussed share several characteristics which I examined in my detailed analysis of passages from these novels. In all the novels, Montgomery's fictional houses are linked to the emotional lives of those who dwell in them in significant ways. She thus implies that the physical surroundings in which a person finds him- or herself have a dramatic influence on a person,[45] for better or worse, and that this influence is particularly strong for women. The houses and spaces in Montgomery's work represent a 'room of her own' for her major characters – sometimes literally one special room, and at other times, a whole house. These spaces are the outward manifestations of the inward truths of each of these characters. Often, as the characters affect or change the spaces where they live, they also take ownership of their own identities and reshape them. In these novels, buildings and spaces are realms of possibility, which, as they shape and are shaped by their owners or inhabitants, help them to live their unique destiny. The categories into which I have placed the different novels in the chapters are arguably somewhat artificial, since in each instance there are overlapping areas.

In the 'Anne' novels, home is mostly a frame for Anne's life and dreams. The houses she lives in and encounters are not only the background setting in which she expands and develops as the reader observes her. They are also nurturing structures which enable her to blossom into the person she is meant to be. Green Gables is the haven of security which Marilla and Matthew grant her, and the home she has with them effectively empowers her to develop into a strong, caring and healthy person, with a strong identity and sense of values, integrated into her community.[46] In *Anne of Avonlea*, Miss Lavendar's house, Echo Lodge, reaffirms Anne's imagination and her penchant for romance. In *Anne of the Island*, Patty's

[45] In *Chronicles of Avonlea* (1912), the short story 'The Quarantine at Alexander Abrahams' illustrates this in an entertaining way. A woman finds herself unexpectedly quarantined in the house of a grumpy bachelor whom she dislikes and who is, incidentally, incapable of keeping a clean, pleasant house – she immediately puts things in order, with comical but excellent results for those concerned. Montgomery lets the reader in on the heroine's thoughts concerning the house and its occupant: 'The place was awful beyond description, and for the first time a vague sentiment of pity for Alexander Abrahams glimmered in my breast. When a man had to live in such surroundings the wonder was, not that he hated women, but that he didn't hate the whole human race' (*CA,* 174).

[46] In her discussion of the possibility of a *Bildungsroman* for girls, Noomé (2004:146) notes that the 'interest or "conflict" in these novels lies, to a large extent, in the tensions between an emerging selfhood and the socialisation of these protagonists. The books…are also part of a literature that has been and continues to be involved in shaping the…reader's self'. She concludes that, if such a 'female' genre exists, the process of achieving *Bildung* often covers a series of books rather than a single novel, and that it alters the traditionally male genre in significant ways, by reshaping the form of self-actualization to a more socially engaged integration of the protagonist than is usual in the 'male' *Bildungsroman*.

Place with its female friendship and support offers as an emotional anchor for Anne as she faces life decisions, such as whom to marry. Windy Willows in *Anne of Windy Willows* echoes Green Gables in many ways, and the house is another haven of security for Anne in the years intervening between her college experiences and her marriage to Gilbert Blythe.

Epperly (1992:248) points out that in Montgomery's novels, '[r]omance is inevitably bound up with finding or establishing a home, and home is a tangible link with the clan as well as an emotional centre for the individual', and also that 'each heroine learns to love and create a home for herself. In discovering or appreciating or creating "home," the heroines are creating or strengthening interconnections between themselves and the value or beauties of the spiritual or material culture around them' (Epperly, 1992:7). This combination of romance and the creation of a home are particularly strong in *Anne's House of Dreams*. The House of Dreams becomes a means to portray Anne's new circumstances as a married woman, but more importantly, it expresses the love and acceptance which is part of her life with Gilbert Blythe. This expression of her ideals and dreams becomes tangible in the house that she inhabits, the House of Dreams.

Two houses that contrast with the House of Dreams highlight Anne's personality and good fortune – the eccentric looking green house inhabited by the equally eccentric Miss Cornelia, and the nightmarish old grey house in which Leslie Moore lives. The house where Leslie Moore lives in *Anne's House of Dreams* is not directly expressive of her true self; rather, it is a prison for her true self. Its bleakness constitutes a cry for help and expresses that all is not as it should be with her. The contrast between her beauty and passionate personality and the kind of house where she lives intensifies the impression created that she is trapped by her circumstances in a life which is stifling her. The House of Dreams becomes a refuge for Leslie. Whereas the old farmhouse where she lives is a prison reminiscent of past tragedies, as well as present and future miseries (picking up the motif of incarceration I also noted in the 'Emily' books, *Jane of Lantern Hill*, *The Blue Castle* and *The Tangled Web*), the House of Dreams is a place of both dreaming and escape for Leslie. When she visits Anne and Gilbert at their house, Leslie is able, for that short time, to exist as her true self, in spite of her sad circumstances. It is at the House of Dreams that Leslie Moore's friendship with Owen Ford unfolds – a person with whom she feels a genuine companionship (unlike her relationship with Dick Moore). Their friendship becomes possible because she can interact with him at the House of Dreams in a way that she could not in the dejected atmosphere of the house where she lives.

The houses in the 'Anne novels' all work to give the reader certain impressions of the people who inhabit them. The aesthetic influence of the House of Dreams is to provide the kind of setting which is a harbour for romantic love. For example, this house of Anne's dreams is also a necessary part of creating the happy ending for Anne and Gilbert's romance. It offers a characteristic setting which reflects Anne's personality and the married life which readers expect of her. It is the house, with its physical characteristics, that intensifies the atmosphere of a happy, stable romantic love in the case of Anne and Gilbert. According to Makrancy (2015:s.p.), 'Montgomery reveals that Anne's imagination is a powerful entity that is intricately connected to place; as a result, Anne is able to reconfigure the physical world that she sees until it reflects her idealistic imaginings'. This atmosphere extends to include the relationship between Leslie and Owen Ford, which unfolds as the novel progresses and culminates in the garden of the house of dreams.

When Anne moves to Ingleside, the house provides the background setting for *Anne of Ingleside* and *Rainbow Valley.* Ingleside is portrayed as an emblem of the dwelling place of a happy family. This idea is also reflected in *Rilla of Ingleside*, where the security of the family home is contrasted with the instability and horrors of war.

In the 'Emily' trilogy, houses also function 'as an evolving reflection of the protagonist' (Waddey, 1983:13). These houses, each harbouring its own lingering spirit, contribute to her development from girlhood into womanhood and as an artist, haunting her in helpful or hindering ways.[47] First, the House in the Hollow represents Emily's sanctuary with her loving and sympathetic but dying father, who nurtures her imagination and embryonic artistic abilities. Then, the farmhouse at New Moon provides Emily with a new stable setting to grow and develop as a writer, connecting her in many ways with Montgomery's own growth as an author. This home with her two spinster aunts and Cousin Jimmy gradually establishes Emily's awareness of herself as a valued member of a respected family and reconnects her with the memory of her dead mother, who grew up at New Moon. The connection with her relatives grounds her, but her own imagination, nurtured by her father, enables her to dream, especially in her mother's room, which becomes her own room with a view.

[47] In many ways, the 'Emily' novels are perhaps the closest that Montgomery comes to writing a *Bildungsroman*, indeed, a *Künstlerroman,* following the 'male' pattern, albeit in the form of a trilogy, not a single volume.

Other houses in the novels also have important roles in the development of Emily's identity as a person and a writer. The Tansy Patch provides Emily with companionship in Teddy Kent, her soulmate. At Wyther Grange, Emily develops her personal flair for drama while also learning the dangers of this when it is taken too far. Emily's experience with the little house at Malvern confirms her psychic powers. Nearby, the unfinished Disappointed House signifies Emily's perception of herself as person with a tragic life, and continues to do so throughout the three novels, until at last Emily's marriage to her childhood friend, Teddy Kent, seems to overturn this fate, and they receive the Disappointed House as a wedding gift.

Montgomery's 'Pat' novels, *Pat of Silver Bush* and *Mistress Pat*, are focused almost exclusively on Silver Bush, Pat's family home, and what it represents of and to Pat, and it shapes Pat's life in every respect. In the background of these novels, Pat's mother hovers as a dream-like figure who struggles with ill-health and who, at least once, nearly dies. Drawing on Bode's argument around Montgomery's anxiety about 'mother loss', I posit that this potential threat is part of the reason why Pat is so intensely anxious about Silver Bush – she preserves her home as a way to create some kind of a nurturing sanctuary since her mother's presence in her life seems threatened. On the one hand, her persistent aversion to change of any kind and nostalgia for the security of her early childhood, before change came to Silver Bush, and her haunting need to keep things the same are a strong creative force for Pat's construction of a domestic idyll. But, on the other, they also become a prison from which Pat is only able to escape when, at the end of the second novel, the house itself burns down.

Nearby, a house which is inhabited only intermittently is named by Pat the 'Long, Lonely House'. The house is an emblem of Pat's loneliness, and houses some of Pat's closest friends for short times. An interesting character in these novels, who broadens the house focus, is Pat's friend, an orphan boy named Hilary Gordon, who has a passion for designing houses and becomes an architect. Hilary grows up essentially 'homeless', living with relatives who take no care of him and show no interest in him, while his distant and loveless mother merely sends money for his support and education. Hilary turns to Pat for love and nurturing, and although Pat, bound to Silver Bush, refuses for eleven years to marry him, Hilary builds her a home of her own, reminiscent of Silver Bush, and comes to take her to it when Silver Bush has burned down. *Pat of Silver Bush* and *Mistress Pat* seem to express the lack of security that Montgomery experienced both in her orphaned childhood and, at the

time of the writing of these novels, in the 1930s when financial and other woes continually threatened to unsettle her life. The intense house focus of these novels seems to imply that to both Montgomery herself and to her heroines, their homes are essential to their identities. According to De Botton (2008:107),

> We look to our buildings to hold us, like a kind of psychological mould, to a helpful vision of ourselves. We arrange around us material forms which communicate to us what we need – but are at constant risk of forgetting what we need – within. We turn to wallpaper, benches, paintings and streets to staunch the disappearance of our true selves.

This is what a reader can observe repeatedly in these novels.

Waddey's (1983:13) attempt at categorising 'the artistic use of home as both a setting and theme in children's fiction…into three basic patterns' (which I discussed in detail in relation to Lantern Hill, Valancy's Blue Castle and Whispering Winds), is applicable to the 'Pat' novels as well, particularly because all three of these categories are at work in these novels at the same time: 'home as a frame, home as a focus, and home as an evolving reflection of the protagonist'. Silver Bush is both a frame and a focus for Pat, who tries to keep Silver Bush as a stable anchor in a changing world as, through the course of the two novels, she grows from a young child to a woman just over thirty. Equally, Pat, as a creative and nurturing homemaker, lives out the 'Promethean' pattern (Waddey, 1983:14) and the 'Hestian' patterns (Epperly, 1992:221) noted in several of the other novels.

Jane's house at Lantern Hill is a very clear depiction of Jane's expression of herself, not only as she is, but as she desires to be. The house at Lantern Hill also functions as a haven for Jane's genuine self in the sense that she is able to speak and act in accordance with her natural impulses, without continual self-repression in accordance with Grandmother's wishes. In Grandmother's house at 60 Gay Street, everything must be said and done in the way that Grandmother chooses. Grandmother's wants, as well as her fluctuating temper, are symbolised by the old house and its gates and Gothically incarcerating barred windows. At Lantern Hill, she experiences freedom from this fear of her grandmother. Jane's father, Andrew Stuart, is a very different person from both her mother and her grandmother, and when she lives with him at the house at Lantern Hill, other rules apply. She feels freedom to act and react naturally, without fearing the disapproval or silent anger of Grandmother.

It is at Lantern Hill that Jane is for the first time fully able to express her impulses for nurturing, for creating order and stability, and for the efficient accomplishment of tasks.

Similarly, she is able to take agency over her life, and it is the house that gives her the opportunity to make her own choices. Not only does she choose the house at Lantern Hill, but she also selects furnishings, meals, the plants in the garden, and decorations. The house is, in some ways, symbolic of the possibilities that are created in her as a result of her renewed relationship with her father. Because he accepts her and affirms her individual abilities, her personality can flourish, and the house with its accompanying domesticity is symbolic of this. This allows Jane to leave behind the stifling imprisonment of life in Grandmother's house, and she is able to become the catalyst for her parents' reunion, resolving the crisis of both 'mother loss' and 'father loss' and ensuring her family's future together in a happy home.

Jane's house at Lantern Hill is a very important hinge upon which many things in her story turn. Because of the kind of house it is, and the environment in which it is set, Jane's individual personality and natural abilities can unfold. It is of course, also her good fortune to have a father whose natural bent is not towards control or interference, and who seems to be both realistic and whimsical. The cosiness of the house and the friendliness of its atmosphere also create a unique setting which provides an opportunity for Jane's relationship with 'Dad' to develop in a positive way. This domestic, friendly and completely unthreatening atmosphere provides the natural setting in which Jane comes to her full self. She is not afraid to cut up her vests for dish cloths, and she is not afraid to use old pots and pans which belonged to the previous owner of the house, Aunt Matilda Jolly, while experimenting as a cook. Jane's actions and cheerful 'take-charge' attitude are made completely plausible by the small and quaint setting in which she finds herself. The house with everything about it that is domestic and old-fashioned is pleasant and 'magical' without being pretentious or overawing – instead of invoking nostalgia for what was (or never was, in Jane's case), the house and its simple appurtenances become a powerful force for living in the present and moving forward, not to a nostalgic idyll, but to a vibrant future, in a new home at the end of the novel.

In *A Tangled Web* and *The Blue Castle*, two other heroines need to leave their present dwellings to find homes which are more in line with their true selves. In unorthodox ways, Margaret finds Whispering Winds and Valancy finds the cabin on the island in Mistawis. Valancy leaves her mother's house to find love in a unique wooden cottage on an island. Margaret, unexpectedly made financially independent by a strange inheritance, buys a little cottage which symbolises individuality and comfort to her.

Epperly (2007:88) observes that 'Montgomery's fictional homes are sources of inspiration and nurture. They befriend those who can read them and they reveal the imagination of their builders and inhabitants'. Montgomery uses houses to situate the characters in her novels, both physically and emotionally. The descriptions of the houses in these passages are all such that they work to illuminate certain aspects of the story without the author having to spell everything out. Grant (2005:246) explains:

> It is of course, not merely that descriptions tell us about a character's environment, and by extension, socio-economic status and aesthetic concerns, it is, as I've suggested, a spectacularly rich vein for revealing a protagonist's response to others.

Certain impressions are created for the reader by these descriptions, and they work to further delineate the characters in these novels. The houses influence the narrative and the development of the characters. The central houses are often friendly, and the contrast between them and those houses which are menacing or somehow lacking is telling. Close analysis of the passages relating to houses in these novels has revealed the depth of detail, the imagery and symbolism, and the carefully selected words and phrases which Montgomery used in her work to make the houses of her novels 'symbolic physical places and states of mind' (Epperly, 2007:86).

In this study of the portrayal of house in selected novels by Montgomery, I was compelled by limits of space and time to omit some interesting houses which would have further enhanced the study, such as Hugh and Joscelyn Dark's Treewoofe in *A Tangled Web* or the farmhouse in *The Story Girl* and *The Golden Road*. It might also have been rewarding to extend the study to include the portrayal of housekeeping, cooking and other household rites in Montgomery's novels. The short story mentioned in this chapter, 'The Quarantine at Alexander Abrahams', offers interesting details of housekeeping, and the way in which John Meredith's house, the manse in Glen St. Mary, is *not* kept up adequately in *Rainbow Valley* also continues this theme, among others, in Montgomery's writing. In many of the novels cooking is a refrain. This is particularly so in *Jane of Lantern Hill*, but there are many other parts of novels and short stories in which cooking and food is prominent, such as the meal which Anne and Diana prepare for Mrs Charlotte E. Morgan, the writer whom they idolise. In *The Story Girl* and *The Golden Road*, Felicity's aptitude for cooking and the snacks she prepares for the children, Sara Stanley's struggles with cooking, and Cecily's experiences of being excluded from the kitchen by her mother and sister all provide interesting episodes. It is also noticeable in Montgomery's journals that she often includes mention of cleaning and

household arrangements as well as cooking. It might have been interesting and enlightening to add these aspects of a household to a study of houses in Montgomery's writing.

Bode (2018, in press) makes the important point that

> Montgomery's interest, however, extended beyond exteriors and interiors to the house as the physical structure that encompasses these elements. While her fictional houses are the metaphorical and symbolical expressions of her story's meanings, they are also a pronounced physical, material presence, both objects and subjects in their own right.

This implies that Montgomery's fictional houses, embedded in the novels as constructed spaces, tell us about who, in their heart of hearts, her characters are, what they need, and how their spaces affect their lives. Johnston (2005:22) declares that the houses in Montgomery's novels 'are carefully observed images of the capacity of real life, ordinary life, to contain beauty'. Gammel (2008:165) also notes that 'Maud's longing for home and community was emblematic of a nostalgic undercurrent rippling through an entire era of transition from the Victorian to the modern'. It seems that the nostalgia is not confined to that era, as Steffler (2010:153) suggests that for those of us reading the novels today, '[r]eadings of Montgomery's novel evoke nostalgic ideas in and ideals of home in the context of the growing fluidity and nomadism of nation and home-place in the twenty-first century'. For readers when Montgomery's novels first appeared and today, Montgomery presents the house and the domesticity that is created by the people within it as an antidote for loneliness and insecurity, lack of belonging, and loss of some kind or another, and in this way, her houses also call constructively on who we are, our desires, and where we want to go.

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