

To “make things move, somewhere”: Mobility and the Public Roles of Girls and
Women in Popular Girls’ Novels, 1900-1920

by

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Abstract

This dissertation examines a number of popular girls' novels in relation to their time of publication in the early twentieth century, a time when women of Canada, Britain, and the United States were experiencing increased involvement in the public sphere; these novels are: *Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm* (1903); *A Little Princess* (1905); *The Secret Garden* (1911); the *Pearl Watson* trilogy (*Sowing Seeds in Danny* [1908], *The Second Chance* [1910], and *Purple Springs* [1921]); *Anne of Green Gables* (1908); *Anne of Avonlea* (1909); *Pollyanna* (1913); and *Pollyanna Grows Up* (1915). Drawing on theories of female mobility and feminist geographies, I explore the presentation of fictional girls and women in these novels as engaged in public matters. I argue that the novels depict them exploring and pushing the boundaries of what their roles in the public sphere could be while also delimiting the borders within which their involvement is acceptable. In chapter one, I establish physical mobility's integral role in constituting the model girl, a girl who can embody the qualities that make her a valuable member of the nation. Chapter two explores the girls' use of physical mobility to spread visions of national identity within local communities. The third chapter contrasts rural spaces with urban ones and links physical mobility with social mobility; girls' ability to promote domestic comfort through upward social mobility and easy physical movement is impinged in urban settings. Chapter four takes up the movement from girlhood to womanhood and the similarities in girls' narratives are juxtaposed with the varied unconventionalities and masculine powers available to women. In chapter five, I shift from the fictional to the historical to examine how two of the authors, Nellie L. McClung and L.M. Montgomery, navigated gender expectations and their own relationships to the public sphere, constructing personas that would circulate in public and moving between private and public spaces.

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Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to my parents, whose constant and unwavering support made it possible, and to my puppy Pistol, who was there for almost all of my extensive university career but could not quite make it to the end.

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Introduction: The Girl Question

Rebecca Randall, Sara Crewe, Anne Shirley, Pearl Watson, Mary Lennox, and Pollyanna Whittier are names that, for many, bring to mind old-fashioned girlhood, quaint and idyllic, as depicted in works of domestic fiction or girls' literature. This impression is rooted in the fact that these fictional girls act as carriers of cultural ideology, embodying values from the societies that form their historical context: the predominantly Anglo, white, and middle-class culture of Canada, Britain, and the United States in the early twentieth century. The novels featuring these girl protagonists reflect the concerns of their time, in particular what was known as "The Woman Question," a discourse "about the nature and role of woman" ("Woman"), stimulated by changes to women's positions in society throughout the nineteenth century. The widespread interest in what the proper role for girls and women might consist of manifested itself in a proliferation of cultural and literary figures during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, such as Eliza Lynn Linton's "Girl of the Period," the "New Woman," the "New Girl" that Sally Mitchell describes, and the "Flapper," as well as the female characters in novels like *Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm* and *Sowing Seeds in Danny*. While a wide variety of issues are encompassed within "The Woman Question," this dissertation takes as its focus, using the lens of mobility, the role of girls and women in the public sphere as imagined by women authors of popular girls' novels in the first two decades of the twentieth century. These novels are Kate Douglas Wiggin's *Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm* (1903); Frances Hodgson Burnett's *A Little Princess* (1905) and *The Secret Garden* (1911); Nellie L. McClung's *Pearl Watson* trilogy (*Sowing Seeds in Danny* [1908], *The Second Chance* [1910], and *Purple Springs* [1921]); L.M. Montgomery's *Anne of Green Gables* (1908) and *Anne of Avonlea* (1909); and Eleanor H. Porter's *Pollyanna* (1913) and *Pollyanna Grows Up* (1915).

Early twentieth-century gender roles continued to be influenced by the Victorian ideology of separate spheres that governed upper- and middle-class gender convention, divorcing private from public and feminine from masculine. Richard D. Altick describes the imagined feminine ideal as one constructed through the appropriate occupation of particular spaces: "Her place was in the home [...] and emphatically not in the [masculine] world of affairs" (54). But, to some degree, girls and women never stopped engaging in the "world of affairs" and by the time Wiggin, Burnett, Montgomery, McClung, and Porter wrote their best-selling novels, a number of

societal changes had taken place that made female involvement in the public sphere much more visible than in the previous century. Girls and women were entering in increasing numbers arenas considered public, such as institutions of higher education; taking up careers in a variety of new professions, such as office work; and participating in political campaigns for women's rights, including women's suffrage. In these campaigns, they could be seen in public spaces lecturing, protesting, and even proposing legislation. Eventually, unlike previous generations, the Anglo, white, middle-class girls of Canada, Britain, and the United States who read about their fictional counterparts in the early years of the twentieth century would, upon reaching adulthood, have the ability to vote in national elections, since the federal franchise was given to many women in these countries in 1918, 1918, and 1920 respectively.

However, a number of racialized groups of women would continue to be excluded from the franchise for several more decades. Voting restrictions also existed based on age, property ownership, and marital status, creating a female voting population that reflected dominant ideologies about who was an appropriate citizen or a member of the nation. Mallory Allyson Richard states that at this time "it was more common for the franchise to be viewed as a privilege, and all women and men needed to prove themselves worthy of it" (112). White, Anglo suffragists in Canada positioned themselves as "at least as deserving of the vote as some enfranchised males, and [...] *more* deserving than their fellow disenfranchised Canadians" who included Asian Canadians, First Nations peoples with Indian status, and "people serving time in prisons or mental institutions" (112-113). Such attitudes were also common amongst British and American suffragists, who used similar rhetoric in their campaigns. Allison Sneider observes that in the context of United States imperialism of the period, "Expansionist ambitions that held that 'uncivilized' races were unfit for self-government echoed assumptions about racial difference and racial hierarchy that justified disenfranchisement at home" (6). Voters within these countries thus needed to embody nationalist ideals about suitable race, ethnicity, language, and social status. The above novels, through their depictions of almost exclusively white, Anglo characters, mirror the attitudes of the time that maintained such distinctions with regard to who should participate in public matters, even while they present the possibility of new roles for women in the public sphere.

Girls took on a newly prominent role during this period of change in constructions of the female social role. Mitchell, in her foundational work on girlhood in this period *The New Girl*:

Girls' Culture in England, 1880-1915, observes the fascination with girlhood during this time, stating, “The word *girl* became dramatically visible about 1880” and noting that the word “was used for literally hundreds of books in the last quarter of the century” (6). Peter Stoneley sees the girl as “instrumental to articulating and assuaging the fear of social change” (2), ascribing to this instrumentality the significance of her increased presence during this historical period. Certainly, the girl protagonists mentioned above and the novels that featured them tended to garner a great deal of attention when they were published. These novels were lauded by literary celebrities, including Mark Twain and Jack London (Dawson 31; Hardy), and they found a wide audience amongst the reading public. Their high number of reprints in the first few years after publication, high sales figures, and presence on best-seller lists demonstrate their popularity and cultural visibility (Doody 10; Karr 54; Kokkola and Harde 3). The existence of sequels to many of these books also acts as evidence of popularity and high market demand.

Though these novels were enjoyed by many, girls were seen as the primary audience for them. Perry Nodelman gives them the designation of “the traditional novel *for* girls” (146; emphasis added). These books were about girls and had content that was tailored to appeal to girls’ interests at a time when girls were newly being seen by publishers as a distinct and profitable market demographic. Mary Cadogan and Patricia Craig, in their 1976 foundational work *You’re a Brick. Angela! A New Look at Girls’ Fiction from 1839-1975*, characterize girls’ fiction as a genre that “did not come into being until the end of the last century” because there was “a recognition of the particular nature and interests of young girls” (9). Carol Gerson describes this period as containing an “upsurge in Anglo-American stories for girls that offered readers [...] an array of appealing adolescent heroines” (18). Shirley Foster and Judy Simons identify these books as intended for girl audiences based on their “language register” and content. They assert that such texts “represent the youthful female experience either in the voice of the protagonist herself or via an adult voice which has deliberately accommodated itself to childish articulation” (11).

These books were and continue to be popular amongst the girls they have been marketed to; a pamphlet about Montgomery put out by her publisher L.C. Page quotes her as saying, “I think every red-haired girl in the world must have written to me” (qtd. in Lefebvre 212). Many of these books have never been out of print, which speaks to their enduring readership and cultural significance. Claudia Mills considers *Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm*, *Anne of Green Gables*, and

Pollyanna to be three “of the most famous orphan novels of all time” (228). Similarly, Doody calls Rebecca “one of literature’s most successful orphans” (12), though it should be noted that these novels not only stand out from the multitude of other orphan novels of the era but also among the much broader category of children’s literature in general. Granted, while Gretchen Gerzina asserts that *A Little Princess* had “outstanding popular recognition” both as a novel and in its previous iteration as a play, she observes that *The Secret Garden* was only “reasonably successful” (x) and “passed nearly unnoticed by critics and readers when it appeared in 1911” (xiv). Even so it too now “regularly tops lists of most influential books” (xiv). Foster and Simons posit some of these novels to be part of a “collective cultural inheritance” (ix) for female readers, particularly those who read them as girls. They also comment that these novels “still retain their place as standard items on the classics list of late-twentieth-century publishing houses, and sales figures confirm their continuing popularity with girl readers” (x) (markers of status that endure into the twenty-first century). Their observations prompt them to ask questions about how “‘classic’ books for girls promote significant aspects of women’s culture” and “to what extent can questioning of the age’s gender ideologies operate in such literature” (x). My examination of these popular girls’ novels follows this line of questioning.

It was at a formative time for the involvement of women in the public sphere that the above authors published their popular novels and presented various potential models of girlhood and womanhood to girl readers. I propose that the presentation of these fictional girls and women, as well as some of their authors, engaging in public matters depicted them exploring and pushing the boundaries of what their roles could be while also delimiting the borders within which such actions were acceptable. These representations, especially at this foundational historic moment, worked didactically to teach girl readers about appropriate female involvement in the public sphere. I read these popular girls’ novels as products of early twentieth-century society, with the historical reality determining the terms on which the texts were written, but allow for the possibility of the texts having an influence on cultural ideologies. In making this claim, I draw on Arlene Young’s argument about the ability of fiction to influence societal attitudes regarding gender: “Over the course of the Victorian period, ideals of middle-class womanhood, of what the Victorians would call ladies, changed—a change brought about by the manipulation of perceptions of femininity and respectability in media and in fictional treatments of women and work” (4). Keeping in mind the power of both fictional characters and popular

authors to act as models, I ask, what messages were these authors sending their audiences with regard to girls and women's roles in the public sphere?

In order to answer this question, with its inherent connection to gendered spaces, I turn to feminist geographies and mobilities in order to consider girls' and women's movements in relation to the public sphere. I argue that these authors' conceptions of girls' and women's potential for positive influence on public affairs is demonstrated through portrayals of their mobility. I examine mobility on multiple levels, including both the embodied movement of people and characters in physical space and more abstract forms of movement such as social mobility, as well as what I term circulation, as in the circulation of a celebrity persona amongst the public. Many of these forms of mobility are closely tied, as in the case of physical mobility and social mobility or physical mobility and circulation, which I see as each facilitating the other. Looking at mobility reveals the power dynamics at work within public spaces through girls and women's agency and autonomy, or lack of, with regard to movement. As movement is facilitated or limited so too is the power of girls and women because their ability to influence or to enact change in the world around them is tied to their mobility. While many of their actions might take place at a small scale, such as the personal, domestic, or local, such actions can also move up the scale to have national implications, in part because of the idea of the public's inherent variability and scalar fluidity. As Linda McDowell observes, "[P]laces are contested, fluid and uncertain. It is socio-spatial practices that define places" (*Gender* 4). The public sphere is just one such socio-spatial place, one that is, to use McDowell's words, "constituted and maintained by social relations of power and exclusion" (4). These spaces can move up and down the spatial scale, with localized spaces acting as representatives of larger ones. I make use of the term "public" in a number of senses, including that which is extra-domestic or conceived of as being so; that which pertains to politics and the state; and that which involves a large and general audience as in "the public." While public spaces can be both physical and abstract, I primarily use the idea of the public to make connections to the idea of the nation as a public space.

In this study of female mobilities and the public, I examine a number of novels and look at select authors. I have deliberately chosen these texts because their settings and places of publication take in Canada, England, and the United States, countries that share cultural sensibilities and have a similar history of women's suffrage. These works have been widely read, which means that their didactic lessons have been spread amongst a substantial audience. Such

readership across audiences widely separated by space and time suggests a high degree of influence over the social psyche and the potential acceptance or relevance of the values that they depict. That the books in this study are frequently labelled as “classics” speaks to the cultural capital that they hold, as they have been and continue to be recommended to girl readers as exemplars in the genre. The wide variety of girl and women characters, in a range of settings, portrayed in these texts also makes them a rich source for investigations into female mobility and public spaces. My work exploring the gendered power dynamics exhibited by the female characters in these novels will contribute to the growing body of scholarship exploring these popular, but sometimes overlooked, works of girls’ fiction and their place as both products of and contributors to the construction of cultural ideology.

While all of these works were authored by women, in looking at the experiences of the authors themselves, I have narrowed my focus to McClung and Montgomery. Their contemporaneous lives in the same country offer an interesting ground for comparison since they dealt with many similar issues and circumstances. They are notable for being, and continuing to be, seen as Canadian icons, suggesting that their involvement in public life has had a significant impact in the public space of the nation, although they are both associated with more localized regions, specifically the Canadian West and Prince Edward Island. In contrast, Wiggin and Porter, although well-known because of their fiction, do not have the same status as national icons in the United States. Burnett, perhaps the only author in this study whose writings have attained the same popularity and longevity as Montgomery’s, as an Anglo-American, has a far more muddled national identity, leaving her without a point of comparison in this study. While these three authors did participate in public life and, at times, engaged in work that can be seen as political, such as Wiggin’s work in the kindergarten movement, none of them have had the impact on women’s political issues that McClung is known for. There also exists extensive documentation of Montgomery’s and McClung’s public and private lives, in particular the Nellie McClung fonds at the BC Archives and the L.M. Montgomery Collection at the University of Guelph, as well as autobiographical material written by McClung and Montgomery. The celebrity of these two women authors is not unlike the fame of the books in this study: long lasting with significant national ideological implications.

Feminist geographies are a useful lens for exploring the political aspects of gendered space that are so prominent in these novels and in their authors’ lives, such as ideas about public

and private, especially as they relate to female mobility. This discipline recognizes the significance of looking at the small, the domestic, the local, spaces that have often been associated with femininity, without dissociating them from the regional, national, and global political scales. McDowell asserts this understanding of scalar fluidity when she states that

in defining places, distinguishing the difference between them by scale, does not imply that they are constituted by processes that operate at a single spatial scale. Thus a home, or a neighbourhood, is a locality that is bounded by scale—that is rules/power relations that keep others out—but its constitution is through the intersection of a range of factors that may coincide there but are not restricted to the local level in their operation. (*Gender* 4)

By thinking about space in this way, the microcosms of households and small towns that are so prominent in girls' literature become important spaces to investigate because they help promote the understanding of larger systems of political power. Lynn A. Staeheli and Eleonore Kofman draw attention to the problem of looking at political economy only from a large-scale perspective, focusing on a broad universalism rather than particularity and privileging elite perspectives and “formal institutional politics, particularly at the level of the state” (4) while ignoring “the ability of diverse subjects to act” (5). They explain that “the tendency to analyze issues at a macro level makes it difficult to undertake a detailed consideration of the ways in which gender relations are implicated in the contexts of politics and in the ideas about households, families, and the body that are critical in the development of ideas about space and spatialized politics” (5). Using this system to examine girls' novels and their authors, I analyze the ways in which arbitrary distinctions between public and private are challenged, which allows us to see the public implications of actions in spaces considered private and vice versa. Actions by private individuals, such as their movements, regardless of where these actions take place, are politicized.

My approach is also informed by Tim Cresswell's and Iris Young's work on mobility and female movement. Mobility, as Cresswell defines it, encompasses concrete and abstract ideas. Cresswell describes mobility “as socially produced motion” that is “understood through three relational moments”: “mobility as brute fact,” as something that can be observed and measured; representational mobility, in which mobility takes on a more abstract or ideological meaning; and embodied mobility, as it “is practiced, it is experienced” (3-4). It is the latter two that I deal with

here, examining the meanings that are contained within depictions of female mobility and the physical movement of girls and women, in particular how it is enabled and restricted. Notably, mobility is not gender-neutral. In discussing embodied mobility for girls and women, I. Young asserts that there is a “particular style of bodily comportment which is typical of feminine existence, and this style consists of particular *modalities* of the structures and conditions of the body’s existence in the world” (141). It is the female body in space and under particular politicized institutions in a specific historical moment that creates a distinct feminine movement. Cresswell also recognizes the particularity of female mobility and, in tying mobility to gendered spatial politics, makes a claim for the important role that it played historically with regard to women’s suffrage. He remarks, “The history of the suffrage movement’s progression from private to public space is well known. Less well known is the way a number of mobilities were entangled in the production of this shift. Mobility of all kinds was an important part of a transformation in the geography of expectations that surrounded men and women” (198). Sneider recognizes this claim when she connects mobilities to the issue of women’s suffrage while simultaneously raising the idea of nationhood and citizenship. She asserts, “The history of the U.S. woman suffrage movement is also inseparable from the history of U.S. expansion and the related question of political rights for potential new citizens that expansion inevitably raise” (5). While Cresswell takes two early-twentieth-century Boston suffragists as a case study in his examination of gender and mobility, his observations about the role of mobility in shaping conceptions of gendered space apply equally to fiction. In these novels for girls, movement into and through the public sphere is not just the autonomous movement of girls and women; it is also the complex construction of meaning as people, objects, and ideas move, are moved, or are prevented from moving through space that is informed by ideas of gender.

Girlhood studies as a field has greatly expanded in recent decades, and scholars have noted the importance of place, space, and mobility in our understanding of the figure of the girl, particularly her existence in the decades surrounding the turn of the twentieth century. However, defining who or what exactly the girl is is difficult. Michelle J. Smith describes the girl protagonists featured in girls’ literature of the period as “aged primarily from 11 to 18 years old” (7), but, agreeing with Mitchell, states that girlhood in general is a time “poised between childhood and adulthood” (6) and that the girl reader was “not equated with childhood or even adolescence, but could be aged anywhere from ten years old to her mid-twenties” (7). Mitchell

considers girlhood to be “a state of mind rather than a chronological or legal concept” because it “is culturally determined” (7), calling it a “period of transition between ‘child at home’ and the assumption of wholly adult responsibilities” (3). Catherine Driscoll posits, “Girls in the sense we now use the word—no specific age group but rather an idea of mobility preceding the fixity of womanhood and implying an unfinished process of personal development—are produced at a nexus of late modern ways of being in and knowing the world” (47). Girlhood is thus inherently linked to movement and change, and this connection is perhaps why the girl is so strongly tied to ideas of modernity. The premise of my study follows Driscoll’s thought when she asserts, “Across the broad span of modernity, girls and young women seem to have become increasingly visible in public life and taken increasingly diverse public roles” (2). With such a visible presence, the figure of the girl could take on greater societal meaning. Driscoll sees the girl in this period constructed as “a marker of cultural identity—the English or the American girl; the traditional or the modern girl—[which] also installs her as representative of the coherence of an historical period and as indicative of cultural differences and of transitions between periods” (15-16). The girl is able to embody cultural values and act as a symbol of the society in which she is created.

Girls in fiction, a subset of the societal construction of the girl, are bearers of meaning for their authors, and they have been seen as having cultural significance because of their intersections with a variety of different societal concerns. Stoneley links them to consumerism and modernity, Joe Sutliff Sanders ties them to discipline and “negotiations of gender and control” (3), and the scholars I discuss below examine them in conjunction with other issues pertinent to this study such as gender ideologies, nationalism, and mobility. While girlhood might be hard to define because of the girl’s indeterminate age and inherent mobility, a distinct type of girl does emerge in popular girls’ novels of this time. She is, as Nodelman humorously observes, “most likely eleven” and “probably has remarkable eyes” while also having “wonderful qualities [that] have remarkable effects on other people, who change miraculously” (146-147). Sanders also remarks on the similarities of girl protagonists in this era: “In these novels, an orphan girl enters [...] a home that is reluctant to accept her, and by the end of the novel she has worked her way into the hearts of the people who live there, transforming the children and adults until they love and even resemble her” (6). These descriptions of girl protagonists emphasize the power they hold: their ability to “change” and “transform” those

around them. But, I ask, how does this power function? In what arenas is it most effective? What are its limitations? And, a gender question, what makes this power specifically that of the girl? While I explore these questions in the following chapters, my interpretations are informed by scholarship on gender in popular girls' literature.

A great deal has been written on the gender ideologies depicted in the novels I study here, a recognition of the important role that gender constructions and expectations play in them. While some scholars have argued that they generally reinforce hegemonic patriarchal values (Rowbotham, Keyser), others see them as challenging these values (K. Sellers, Devereux "Writing," Robinson "Aggressive"), and some see them as doing both (Foster and Simons, McQuillan and Pfeiffer, Kornfeld and Jackson, Drain "Community"). Like these critics, I also see these novels as negotiating gender conventions, at times shoring them up and at other times questioning or even subverting them. In the following chapters, I examine how mobility intersects with gendered notions of model behaviour, civic duty, social work, class and socio-economic status, education, and domestic responsibilities. The gender ideologies and values presented in these novels reflects on the didactic function of girls' literature and children's literature more generally. Foster and Simons see girls' literature from this era as a means of teaching young female readers about dominant value systems, although such works may also present alternatives (9-11). Certainly, contemporaries were concerned about the possibly pernicious lessons that girls might learn from their reading practices (Foster and Simons 1). Thus, I propose that by reading these novels with gender ideology in mind, we can see what values regarding girls and women's place in public were prominent in the texts' historical moment and what alternatives authors might be presenting to their readers. It is through such investigations that the attitudes that seem to have the most widespread acceptance become evident, since they are repeatedly presented in the novels and, as I ultimately suggest, continue to hold cultural significance.

Such literature educated young readers not only about how to be properly gendered subjects, but also how to be properly gendered citizens. Scholars have noted the important role of nation and nationalism in children's literature in general as well as in girls' literature in particular; Christopher Kelen and Björn Sundmark unequivocally state, "Children's literature makes and educates future citizens" (1), and they call children's literature "a key instrument of culture connecting child and nation" (4). While *Anne of Green Gables* is a favourite text among

the novels of this study for scholars to look at in conjunction with the nation (Gammel and Epperly, Russell), Burnett's novels *A Little Princess* and *The Secret Garden*, with their depictions of imperialism, also draw critical attention (McGillis, Gubar), and academic work has also been done on *Pollyanna* and its connections to the nation and modernity (Karlin, Oman). Some scholars have taken a distinctly gendered approach to the nation in girls' literature. These include Cecily Devereux, who examines imperial motherhood in McClung's and Montgomery's works (*Growing*, "Writing"); Judith Rowbotham, who studies the depiction of robust, active, skilled, and capable girls and women in imperial literature from this era in *Good Girls Make Good Wives: Guidance for Girls in Victorian Fiction*; and Smith, who explores the figure of the imperial or colonial girl in *Empire in British Girls' Literature and Culture: Imperial Girls, 1880-1915*.¹ These scholars note the integral part that girls and women play in building and maintaining the nation in fiction, even when those roles are technically unofficial and informal because the actual status of girls and women disallowed them from voting or holding office. While my study, like theirs, looks at the influence of girls and women on the public sphere in their unofficial capacity in fiction, I also see these imaginings as having an impact on real-life ways of thinking about girls and women's roles in the public space of the nation. Benedict Anderson theorizes the nation as being "an imagined political community" (6) that links people through their shared imagining and their belief in this existing connection. The nations that are created within these novels are imagined communities, imagined by their authors, who create a shared vision amongst the fictional characters. But these authors are also, through the novels' dissemination, able to construct a vision shared by the reading audience of what the nation is, what it could be, or what it should be.

While a great deal of critical attention has been paid to space and place in popular girls' novels like *Anne of Green Gables* and *The Secret Garden*,² there has been less consideration of mobility by scholars, and much of what has been written takes a disability studies approach. Of particular note is Lois Keith's work *Take Up Thy Bed and Walk: Death, Disability and Cure in*

¹ For similar work by Smith, with Kristine Moruzi and Claire Bradford, see *From Colonial to Modern: Transnational Girlhood in Canadian, Australian, and New Zealand Children's Literature, 1840-1940*.

² See the special issue of *CREArTA* on "L.M. Montgomery's Interior and Exterior Landscapes," Paul Keen's "'So—So—Commonplace': Romancing the Local in *Anne of Green Gables* and *Aurora Leigh*," Katharine Slater's "Putting Down Routes: Translocal Place in *The Secret Garden*," and Sandra Dinter's "Spatial Inscriptions of Childhood: Transformations of the Victorian Garden in *The Secret Garden*, *Tom's Midnight Garden*, and *The Poison Garden*" for some examinations of space in these two texts.

Classic Fiction for Girls, which looks at the embodied aspect of mobility through an exploration of disability and illness in *The Secret Garden*, *Pollyanna*, and *Pollyanna Grows Up*.³ Texts like *The Secret Garden* and *Pollyanna*, which feature major characters dealing with a decreased or lost mobility as part of the narrative arc, are fertile ground for such studies, but in taking a broader view of mobility, I am able to explore a greater number of novels, all of which demonstrate the integral role that mobility plays in characters' interactions with the socio-spatial public sphere. Here I follow Laura M. Robinson, who links different types of mobility by remarking on the connection between physical mobility and "social mobility" in *Pollyanna*, "a novel that is all about mobility" ("Aggressive" 52). Actions as mundane as walking take on new significance when placed in conversation with the politics of who is able or allowed to walk, where people walk, and with whom they walk. Looking at mobility also highlights the interactions between the characters and the spaces that they inhabit. While I focus on public space, the definition of "public" can shift depending on how and why characters move into and out of different spaces. Exploring mobility more broadly thus opens up new ways of looking at these texts, while building on a substantial body of existing scholarship that addresses place and gender.

While I primarily deal with fictional texts, for the purposes of this study, much of the significance of these texts comes from their connection to their historical moment, which was experienced by their authors. Fiction allows us to see what the authors might have wished for, idealized visions, when dealing with less happy realities. This reading is suggested by the scholarship on classic girls' novels that frequently reads them as semi-autobiographical (Foster and Simons 26-27). While I do not wish to suggest that these novels are simple wish-fulfillment narratives righting the wrongs that their authors experienced, I propose that they achieve what Foster and Simons describe as allowing "the woman writer to work through her own dilemmas and preoccupations via imaginative constructs within a conventional format" (27). As Sanders observes, "These novels were a safe space in which their female authors could consider gendered privilege—how it should be defined, reshaped, and directed—and ways it could be used to deal with the cultural anxieties they loaded onto their imagined girls" (5). McClung and Montgomery,

³ Alexandra Valint's "'Wheel Me Over There!': Disability and Colin's Wheelchair in *The Secret Garden*" and Monika Elbert's "At Home in Nature: Negotiating Ecofeminist Politics in *Heidi* and *Pollyanna*" also look at disability in these novels.

in particular, recognized injustices in their own lives and, within their fiction, imagined spaces in which girls and women have the power to prevent or fix these wrongs. In looking at the lives of McClung and Montgomery, and their own interactions with the public sphere and the space of the nation, I am able to shed another light on the ways in which gendered mobilities could function at this time. While in their novels they had to be less overt in their depictions of political matters, ensuring that their work was acceptable and pleasing to both publishers and audiences by cohering to an already existing body of girls' literature that was generally ideologically conservative, such restrictions did not necessarily apply to them in real life, allowing them to engage directly in public issues.

In the following chapters, I examine constructions of girls and women in fiction and in real life as they engage with the public in a variety of ways and I explore how this participation interacts with mobility. I trace their ability to successfully navigate gender expectations and I observe where those conventions create borders around these girls and women, preventing them from moving outside certain bounds. I also look at the implications that these ideas of appropriate girlhood might have for the future of the girl as she moves into womanhood, how those boundaries might shift or change and, in doing so, affect the girl's mobility.

Chapter one foregrounds the importance of physical mobility, arguing for the political nature of having the ability to move, which in this period was linked to the eugenics movement and nationalist ideas about desirable qualities in girls, themes that were explored in literature. Through their embodied mobility, Mary Lennox and Pollyanna Whittier, the girl protagonists of *The Secret Garden* and *Pollyanna*, exemplify the feminine ideals of selflessness and caring. These ideals are promoted by physical movement and activity and are threatened by immobility and ill-health. I suggest that, while both Mary and Pollyanna share these feminized traits, they also exhibit idealized qualities particular to their own respective nations, Britain and the United States. Mary learns to act as an imperial girl by reinforcing class hierarchies and regenerating the masculine strength of a colonial nation, while Pollyanna promotes an ethic of care and morally upstanding governance that supports American Progressive Era reform aims while also attempting to negotiate fears associated with modernity and technological advancement. Mary is initially constructed as "deviant," both physically through her inactivity and physical weakness and psychologically through her selfishness and contrariness. She excises this deviance by becoming physically active and more thoughtful of others. Pollyanna, in effect an inverse of

Mary, shows the dangers attendant on losing mobility, that its loss might cause her to become self-centred and isolated from the community that she is supposed to help, an outcome that can only be avoided through cure. These girl protagonists, by shoring up value systems that strengthen the nation, demonstrate the power of model girlhood that acts on and through the girl and demonstrates the nation's reliance on her for perpetuation. At the same time the nation acts as a confining force through its need for her adherence to gender ideals.

In chapter two, I offer readings of *Pollyanna* and *Anne of Avonlea* that explore the use of physical mobility to promote visions of national identity within local communities. While *Pollyanna* acts as a domestic missionary in order to change the people of Beldingsville, making them more like herself and creating a sense of unity within the community, *Anne* works at altering the physical environment so that it appears more in keeping with her romantic ideal and at promoting public feeling and civic responsibility, both of which activities are informed by a Tennysonian Arthurian aesthetic. *Pollyanna* and *Anne Shirley* are depicted as generally successful in their endeavours because the small geographical space of the local community that forms the settings of these novels allows the girls to build relationships and to convey their visions personally to other community members. These localized spaces set the physical borders of the girl's influence and power, since they are places easily traversed on foot or by horse-drawn vehicle, the modes of transportation most readily available to the girl. However, the possibility for expansion, for their influence to move up the geographic scale to the nation, is also presented as possible as the vision is shared and spread by others.

The third chapter looks at the larger space of the city as a place in which both physical mobility and social mobility are inhibited and, as a result, the girl is a less powerful presence. I juxtapose depictions of urban living in *A Little Princess* and *Pollyanna Grows Up* with the rural setting of the *Pearl Watson* trilogy in order to show the difference that environment makes in girls' ability to carry out their work of social uplift and the promotion of middle-class domesticity. While all these novels see the nation as requiring this feminine intervention, the process is undermined by the socio-economic system entrenched in city life that enables stable social hierarchies and wealth acquisition. *Pearl Watson* is able to raise her and her family's social standing within their rural community, an achievement reflected by their increasingly middle-class home. In contrast, *Sara Crewe* and *Pollyanna* improve the lives of those around them by charitably sharing domestic comforts, but they cannot help people to reach a higher social class,

and Sara even temporarily deals with downward social mobility. I propose that the novels with urban settings cannot fully commit to the project of systemic social reform because it would destabilize social order in geographic areas that are important, because they are centres of commerce and population, for the nation's well-being. Instead, these novels advocate for limited improvements to deal with urban problems of poverty, sexual exploitation, and illness. They present personal acts of charitable giving, intended to give working-class people a moderate degree of middle-class comfort, as the only viable solution.

Chapter four takes up the mobility inherent in the transitional life stage of girlhood and challenges the supposed stasis of female adulthood with its ties to the domestic sphere. I argue that womanhood, as it is presented in *Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm* and *Anne of Green Gables*, is characterized by a different power from that exercised by girls, even though womanhood is often figured as a time of greater constriction because of increased domestic responsibilities. I propose that while girls like Rebecca Randall and Anne must follow a particular narrative trajectory moving them away from the home in pursuit of education, women are granted more variety. Rooted in the home that acts as a base of power, women are depicted as being able to exercise agency in public arenas and to hold power over mobility in a way that girls are unable to access. Often, in these texts, women's power involves taking on masculine privileges or prerogatives and using them in conjunction with domestic authority, a challenge to conventional womanhood as embodied by idealizations of the womanly woman or "angel in the house." Aunt Miranda Sawyer, Marilla Cuthbert, and Mrs. Rachel Lynde, situated firmly within the home, can use their domestic authority to leverage other forms of power, functioning as examples of the diversity that can exist when women choose to act in unconventional ways. Their influence in the domestic space takes the form of control over their own movements and that of others who pass in and out of or live within their homes, and their forays into public matters include law and politics, through actions such as creating a will or attending a political rally.

In chapter five, I shift from the fictional to the historical in order to examine how McClung and Montgomery could engage with the public sphere through the intensely public mode of celebrity and its intersection with political matters, such as gender, nationality, authorhood, and politics. Mobility, in this chapter, not only takes the form of the authors' actual physical movements, as they travelled in order to engage with political issues in the public realm; it also includes the circulation of the constructed public self or selves to a public that desired to

know more about the authors as private individuals. I explore the different strategies adopted by McClung and Montgomery in presenting themselves to the public and the public issues that they wished to associate themselves with. With greater domestic and social pressures to deal with than their fictional characters, McClung and Montgomery had to find ways of coping with the expectations that surrounded them as married women who were also mothers. I argue that McClung chose to present herself as someone who integrated both public and private, political and domestic, and used this persona successfully in order to promote her own political goals, while Montgomery preferred not only to attempt to maintain a separation between her private and public selves but also struggled to navigate multiple public selves—celebrity author and minister’s wife—that were in conflict with media representations of her, resulting in a fragmented and varied public persona.

The examination of the mobility of girls and women, both fictional and real, reveals important insights into how a gendered public life was imagined and constructed at a foundational moment in women’s history. I see these novels as presenting to girl readers constricting realities to be negotiated as well as new opportunities to be explored as girls entered into a new national political environment. And, ultimately, I gesture to the continued societal presence that many of the ideas presented in these novels have.

Chapter One

For the Good of the Nation: Mobile Model Girls in *The Secret Garden* and *Pollyanna*

The girl protagonist is not just a girl; instead, the early twentieth-century girl protagonist acts as an idealized model embodying the virtues valued by the dominant culture that produced her. This construction of girlhood might not reflect actual girlhood of the era, but it presented a model for real girl readers to aspire to by depicting proper and appropriate behaviours. Shirley Foster and Judy Simons note the didactic function of this genre: “It may be possible to argue that the main tendency of children’s writing is to accommodate the youthful reader to the cultural and social hegemony of the age and, at the same time, to define desirable value systems” (9). Popular works of girls’ fiction, like those studied by Foster and Simons, were able to reach large audiences and thus effectively disseminate such value systems. In a similar vein, Christopher Kelen and Björn Sundmark highlight the nationalistic usefulness of children’s literature, describing it as something that “makes and educates future citizens” (1). The cultural mores of the “social hegemony of the age” propagated by popular girls’ literature are also national values, traits that are desirable in future female citizens.

What are these lessons in gendered citizenship? What do these popular novels teach girls, in the words of Foster and Simons, “of the values considered intrinsic to the maintenance of social harmony—that is, women’s essentialist and subordinate role in the patriarchal order” (10)? Carol Dyhouse describes late-Victorian and Edwardian girlhood and how “the Victorian ideal of femininity [...] prescribed service and self-sacrifice as quintessential forms of ‘womanly’ behaviour” and notes that “[f]rom early childhood girls were encouraged to suppress (or conceal) ambition, intellectual courage or initiative—any desire for power or independence” (2). Such lessons in socialization and the privileging of others over the self are evident in the literature of the period. In her discussion of girls’ fiction from the era 1840-1905, Judith Rowbotham remarks, “Didactic fiction was fuelled by the wish to control as far as possible, if not stifle, *independent* feminine desires to create a role and power base in society *for themselves* outside the limits prescribed by established society” (12; emphasis added). Girls and women, both real and fictional, were expected to put others first. The early twentieth-century novels explored below, through their depictions of girl protagonists who “transform [others’] lives and make them happy” (Nodelman 146), valorize traits such as relationship-building, community-

mindedness, and the giving of oneself in order to benefit others rather than privileging girlhood independence and the pursuit of the girl's own individual goals and ambitions.

In this chapter, I will explore model girlhood in Frances Hodgson Burnett's *The Secret Garden* (1911) and Eleanor H. Porter's *Pollyanna* (1913) as it is embodied by the protagonists Mary Lennox and Pollyanna Whittier, respectively. While Mary's narrative is concerned with her development into a model girl through her increased health and activity, Pollyanna's story deals with maintaining her already existing model status, even when threatened by injury and immobility. I propose that Mary acts as an idealized British girl by acting as a regenerative influence within the metropole, shoring up class hierarchies that ensure the governance of the empire by the upper classes, and creating a possibility for a nurturing and caring imperialism. These acts are only possible with the obtainment of Mary's cure, her acquisition of good physical and emotional health, and the cure, which mirrors her own, that she effects in her cousin Colin. I further suggest that Pollyanna's model behaviour of helping others allows her to reform the running of the Vermont town she has come to by promoting an ethics of care and moral governance, in keeping with the Progressive Era aim to root out government corruption in the United States. At the same time, the narrative struggles to deal with the dangers and benefits attendant upon early twentieth-century modernity represented by both the automobile that inflicts Pollyanna's injury and the medical knowledge that cures it. Immobility endangers nation-building work by engendering isolation and individualism, traits that are at odds with the proper feminine duties of cultivating relationships and giving of oneself for the benefit of others. As a result, cure becomes a necessary component in these stories to reaffirm nationalist narratives of progress and the girl's model status, which is deeply intertwined with bodily health and normativity.

Because of its association with health, physical mobility and the threat of its absence take on a particular political significance in the decades surrounding the turn of the twentieth century with the prominence of eugenics in national discourse. Coined in 1883 by Francis Galton, "eugenics" is defined by him as "the science of improving stock, which is by no means confined to questions of judicious mating, but which, especially in the case of man, takes cognisance of all influences that tend in however remote a degree to give to the more suitable races or strains of blood a better chance of prevailing speedily over the less suitable than they otherwise would have had" (25). Cecily Devereux explains that eugenics was promoted by nationalists who

believed that it should be used so that “the quality of a nation’s people [...] could be improved, made individually and collectively stronger and healthier, and thus the nation itself would be made more powerful” (*Growing* 6). Hilary Marland notes that “spurred by anxieties about citizenship, Empire and eugenic thinking, anxieties about girls’ future roles as mothers also revived, particularly in the build up to the First World War” (7). Eugenics was linked to girls because it gave prominence to the role women would play in “bettering” the nation through their reproductive potential, part of which involved ensuring that their bodies were healthy and would produce healthy future citizens. The growing girl’s body drew especial attention, and debates around education and appropriate activities centred on whether or not they might damage the girl’s health and make her less suitable for becoming a mother. G. Stanley Hall’s foundational text *Adolescence* (1904) devotes only one chapter of its two volumes to female adolescence, but this chapter is almost exclusively concerned with the development of the body of the girl and the girl’s ability to participate in marriage and motherhood (561-647). While in this context girls’ reproductive function was seen as their most important quality, eugenic discourse also reinforced nineteenth- and early twentieth-century ideas of the girl’s body being at the disposal of others, that the girl should expect to give of herself as a matter of duty to society and, more specifically, the nation. Marland observes this connection between the healthy girl and service to others: “By the early twentieth century, female eugenicists, a small but arguably influential group, were producing a distinctive and complex analysis of the relationship between girlhood and health, which created a vision of the potential contributions of young, well-educated and energetic women to public life as well as private, family wellbeing” (13).

The state of girls’ bodies also had other societal implications that were considered relevant for national considerations. Galton’s eugenics tied physical health to other aspects of character important to social functioning; although he was interested especially in “the innate moral and intellectual faculties,” he saw them as “so closely bound up with the physical ones that these must be considered as well” (4). Physical characteristics, such as health and skin colour, were tied to cultural ideologies, such as gender, race, and morality. Mariana Valverde discusses the same connections within a Canadian context, but also notes that this Canadian discourse was heavily influenced by that of Britain and the United States. She states that “before the Great War [...], men and women engaged in ‘nation-building’ had stressed the need to conserve, preserve, and shape human life: to conserve its physical health, to preserve its moral purity, and to shape it

according to the optimistic vision shared by all political parties of what Canada would be in the twentieth century” (24). Physical health was thus both an indicator of and contributor to other traits deemed desirable by the dominant Anglo, white society.

By the time *The Secret Garden* and *Pollyanna* were published, good health was an integral characteristic of the model girl protagonist. Although Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar link Victorian patriarchal socialization of girls with debilitating illness—“any young girl [...] is likely to experience her education in docility, submissiveness, and selflessness as in some sense sickening” (54)—over time, changes in discourse advocated for a different kind of girl. Scholars have noted the increased prominence of the capable, active, and able-bodied girl in the literature and nationalist rhetoric of the decades surrounding the turn of the twentieth century. Rowbotham traces this change to the 1870s and 1880s with the literary transformation of the stereotypical “household fairy” or “angel in the house” into the “home goddess,” a figure that took on the domestic role in a professional or expert capacity. She observes that this move linked feminine moral fortitude with “physical robustness” and that “[a]uthors indicated that an ‘early Victorian invalidishness’ was neither attractive nor desirable nor even Christian in women” (36). Instead, in order to be a proper late-Victorian or Edwardian girl protagonist, one must exhibit a healthy and able body that can stand up to the physical demands of psychological selflessness. Rowbotham remarks, “Terms such as tall, well-grown, sturdy and resilient begin to be applied to the physical stature of model maidens” (34). As Rowbotham notes, while such girls had increased abilities and a wider range in which to exercise them than earlier protagonists, they were still expected to use them to “fulfil their duty to their families via the domestic role” (38) and, by extension, benefit their communities and nations.

Immobility, strongly linked to disability because of its concern with non-normative bodies, threatens what nationalist rhetoric presented as the essential role that girls would play within nation-building because it could reduce girls’ ability to devote themselves in service to others. Although immobility specifically has not often been a focus for scholars of early twentieth-century girls’ literature,⁴ much work has been done on disability in literature in this period and the previous century, including examinations of disability in *The Secret Garden* and *Pollyanna*. Children’s and girls’ fiction of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were

⁴ For a notable exception to this neglect see Lois Keith’s examination of “the interest in walking and not walking in these novels” (10) in *Take Up Thy Bed and Walk: Death, Disability and Cure in Classic Fiction for Girls*.

deeply invested in depicting disability; David T. Mitchell and Sharon L. Snyder note “the rampant representations of disability in nineteenth-century children’s literature” (26) and Keith comments on how “disability, illness (particularly paralysing illness) and cure are central to many of these stories” of classic girls’ fiction (4). The prominence of disability in literature speaks to a preoccupation with the presence of both healthy and unhealthy bodies and what they might signify.

Authors of fiction in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries explored issues of disability in relation to the role that disabled people could have within a society that privileged particular types of bodies. Martha Stoddard Holmes remarks on the way that disability troubled normative discourses in Victorian culture: “As non-literary texts engage disability in relation to the key concerns of reproduction and production, they grapple with the questions ‘Should disabled people marry?’ and ‘Can disabled people work?’” (26). She goes on to claim that these concerns manifested themselves in the fiction of the era, observing that “the tension and resolution in a fictional plot often only make sense as solutions to conflicts articulated elsewhere. Disabled women’s recurrent banishment from marriage plots [...] is completely legible only in the context of medical texts’ construction of them as dangerous mothers” (30). Non-normative bodies, such as those that are disabled or, as I argue, unhealthy or immobile, are problematic for nationalistic projects. Mitchell and Snyder explain that “physical or cognitive inferiority has historically characterized the means by which bodies have been constructed as ‘deviant’” (2). Bodies with less mobility than a ‘normal’ body in these texts are considered ‘inferior,’ ‘deviant,’ and morally or intellectually suspect. ‘Normal’ bodies, within this context, are superior; they are the sort of healthy bodies that are desirable within eugenic discourse and the type of capable and robust physical bodies that girls need to carry out their expected behaviour of being at the service of others.

In these novels, the girl’s troublingly unhealthy and immobile body becomes a societal problem in need of, often literally, cure. Cure allows for the escape from a disruptive and threatening immobility and becomes the means of a reassertion of societal norms. Maria H. Frawley observes that some literary critics argue “that sickness provided Victorian writers with a narrative means to enact crisis and to imaginatively represent resolution of personal and social conflicts,” an argument that connects “recovery and resolution” (4) and, by implication, illness with conflict. Cure also reinforces a narrative of national progress. As Frawley states,

[T]he invalid figure more generally, garnered all the symbolic power (and agency) implied in the verb form of the term [immobile]. To immobilize is, after all, to prevent—that is, to will away—freedom of movement (or progress), to reduce or eliminate motion (or change), and to withhold from circulation, an especially significant dimension of meaning when viewed in light of the proliferation of invalid narratives at a time when industrialism so depended on the circulation of goods and capital. (250)

Frawley goes on to discuss invalid narratives in the context of “the inability of nineteenth-century society to reconcile its expectation of progress with evidence of degeneration” (251). Immobility is linked to both a lack of progress and degeneration, leaving cure to be connected with progress and improvement. Cure, with its ability to resolve and erase the troubling threat of illness, becomes the “happy ending” for many narratives. For the girl to remain uncured is a narrative impossibility if she is to remain an idealized figure. Keith asserts that from the 1850s onward, “there were only two possible ways for writers to resolve the problem of their characters’ inability to walk: cure or death” (5). With regard to the novels she examines, Keith also notes how they tie the cure of the disabled girl, specifically, to a happy ending “by hearth and home” (14), reinforcing the connection between the “normal” body and the proper feminine social role. Cure, however, is equally important for boy and girl characters because of their link to the future of the nation. Their health, strength, and ability stand in for the continuation of these characteristics in the nation moving forward.

Characteristics that are valued in model girls, such as caring and selflessness, are generally similar in Britain and the United States, but the motivations that prompt the valorization of these traits and the expected use value of them differ. Britain, viewed not just as a nation, but as an empire forms the point of reference for the construction of the model girl in *The Secret Garden*. As Michelle J. Smith observes, the late-Victorian and Edwardian periods are “the high point of the so-called New Imperialism, in which the acquisition of further territory for Britain and the growth of existing colonial settlements were supported at home by a web of rhetoric that combined the ideologies of imperialism, national degeneration, racial superiority, and patriotism” (2). Lisa Chilton similarly notes, “In public discourses of white superiority in colonial contexts, women—as mothers of the race and as keepers of the home—carried the burden and the honour of appropriately acculturating colonials and colonized peoples. In [a number of] colonies, understanding of femininity, domesticity, civilization, and British culture

were inextricably intertwined” (5). This rhetoric promoted the construction of girls as mothers in training because, as Smith points out, “conceptions of racial motherhood invested maternity with power to make or break the physical strength of a nation” (10). Too young to become actual mothers, girls were expected to cultivate the skills and traits that would allow them to be good mothers in the future, women who could both give birth to strong, healthy children and instill in them proper British values. Mary must learn to become a good imperial girl by shedding the morally and physically degenerate trait of laziness along with its accompanying selfishness, both developed during her time in India. By acquiring virtues portrayed in the text as appropriate for a British girl, such as caring and selflessness, she can partake in the work of “mothering” the nation in Britain.

In contrast, during this same period in the United States, Progressive Era reform was the dominant political agenda as the country dealt with rapid modernization. Charles McCutcheon characterizes the Progressive movement as “The quest for social justice [...] and the health and welfare of working people and the disadvantaged” (457), while James Marten describes it as “a collection of nonpartisan efforts [promoted by the middle class] that sought to find systemic, comprehensive solutions to the problems caused by industrialization, urbanization, immigration, and other conditions of modernization” (9). Summarizing Robert Wiebe, Marten also notes the conception of Progressive Era reform as seeking “to overcome the disorder in modern America by instilling rationality in politics and the economy through the use of scientific methods, professional experts, and well-managed bureaucracies” (2). The emphasis was on reforming an uncaring government and helping those who are vulnerable in the face of the problems associated with a modern and industrialized world. While Pollyanna does not participate in actual political reform, she is, through her perpetuation of an ethic of care, a personification of the spirit of Progressive Era reform. Pollyanna, in order to maintain her status as a model girl, must manage and navigate the threat of modernization embodied in the automobile that causes her partial paralysis and the moral threat of selfishness that her immobility fosters. In *The Secret Garden* and *Pollyanna*, we see the girl protagonists using their power, although often indirectly, in order to forward the aims of their respective nations.

Mary Becomes a Model Girl

The Secret Garden traces the development of Mary Lennox from a selfish, sickly girl into a selfless, healthy one, a trajectory that is grounded in Mary’s education in physical movement.

Mary's move to British soil as well as her movements on and even in the soil are part of a mutually regenerative project in which Mary is repatriated into a model British girl and she reinvigorates the land and the governing bodies of the metropole (in the form of her cousin Colin and his relationship with his father), the health of both of which are closely tied together. The novel opens with Mary about to leave India, where she has lived a sedentary life primarily confined to her imperialist father's bungalow. She is described as having been "a sickly, fretful, ugly little baby" who continued to be "sickly" growing up, with a "little thin face and a little thin body" and always "ill in one way or another" (Burnett, *Secret* 5). With no medical explanation given for her sickness, the implication is that it results from her colonial life. Georgina Gowans notes that "India's physical environment, moral atmosphere and transient lifestyle were held responsible for 'a whole range of nagging and insalubrious ailments and impediments [...]" and continues, "Unless a child had been subject to ill-health, 7 was considered the latest 'safe' age for transportation to Britain [...]. Staying in India beyond this time was considered simply to be delaying the inevitable, and was seen as increasing the likelihood of the child's impairment" (430). Ten-year-old Mary has remained in India far longer than the recommended time and, although this prolonged stay might be excused because of her ill health, her time spent in India is also a contributor to it.

Mary is characterized by a physical inactivity that is tied to mental stagnation. In the Indian climate she feels "hot and too languid to care much about anything" (Burnett, *Secret* 24). She avoids the kind of movement associated with basic life skills, satisfied to simply "stand and allow herself to be dressed like a doll" (16) by her Ayah rather than doing anything for herself. Mary is, ultimately, lazy, a characteristic that Smith calls one of the "greatest social fears connected with imperial maintenance" (46). Inactive and apathetic, Mary is described by the narrator as a "disagreeable" child and earns the nickname "Mistress Mary Quite Contrary" (Burnett, *Secret* 8) from some other child characters. Rowbotham points out that in fiction, "Much shorter shrift is given to the girls who, with no such excuse [of genuinely delicate health], wilfully betray their God-given femininity by retreating into invalidism" (37). There is no physical reason that Mary should be "sickly" or immobile, in the sense that she has suffered no injury or illness, but she has succumbed to the dangers of colonial living, resulting in the troubling languidness and apathy that characterize her at the beginning of the novel.

Mary's physical and psychological sickliness stems not just from her colonial environment but also from her neglect and social isolation in India. Since she was born, Mary has been kept "out of sight as much as possible" (Burnett, *Secret* 5), and thus she never develops any familial relationships or friendships. After her parents die from cholera, one of the soldiers exploring the house that they believe is completely abandoned states, "I heard there was a child, though no one ever saw her" (7). Mary has been so well hidden away that her very existence is in question. Mary's response to the cholera outbreak is one of further isolation within the house, "[hiding] herself in the nursery" (6), as well as one of immobility, sleeping in her bed after drinking some scavenged wine while others around her are dying. As a result of this isolation, Mary has little to no interaction with those of her race or social class, those who should be educating her in British values. This lack is undoubtedly an issue when considered in the context of imperialism, where race and class as well as physical health are privileged. We are told, "She never remembered seeing familiarly anything but the dark faces of her Ayah and the other native servants" (5). As Keith observes of both Mary and Charlotte Brontë's Jane Eyre, "they have been ignored and have learnt how to be solitary rather than sociable" (123), a problem because, as Keith points out, a girl's success depends upon her finding a place within a social unit like the family (121) or, in other words, the measure of a girl is her ability to form relationships with others. Poorly socialized and inactive, Mary ends her time in India completely alone; her parents are dead and even her Ayah has died in the cholera epidemic. She not only has nobody who cares for her, but also lacks anyone for her to care about, one problem stemming from the other: "She was not an affectionate child and had never cared much for any one" (Burnett, *Secret* 6). Her lack of proper imperial socialization, being isolated with only racialized servants rather than more "appropriate" racial and social equals for company, leads to her selfishness.

At the opening of the novel, Mary seems to lack the potential for caring and selflessness that would make her a model girl. Unhealthy and hidden away in the confined space of the bungalow, she thinks only of herself and expects others to do the same. The narrator goes so far as to call her "as tyrannical and selfish a little pig as ever lived" (Burnett, *Secret* 5). After losing her parents, we are told, "She did not miss her [mother] at all, in fact, and as she was a self-absorbed child she gave her entire thought to herself, as she had always done" (7), and she hopes that she will go "to nice people, who would be polite to her and give her her own way" (8). In addition to being a poor candidate for model girlhood, she is further portrayed as deviant and

neglectful of proper gender roles in the way she takes on a masculine prerogative in thinking herself constantly in need of, and deserving of, the care of those around her. Frawley states that invalids in the nineteenth century, confined to their sickrooms, “exerted their own pressures on the household” (207), recounting how many male invalids enjoyed privileged treatment from those around them, including careful attendance from caregivers and wives who kept away potential disturbances to the peace and quiet of the sickroom, such as children. The gender of these invalids seems to be significant since these carefully tended patients are men, whereas women, by contrast, are the ones providing care.

Mary’s transformation from sickly to healthy involves her learning how to move, which facilitates her learning how to give her attention to others rather than herself. Cured and mobile and no longer the focus of herself and others, Mary can take up her role as model girl. In Mary, the novel connects physical health (the ability to move and be active) with psychological or emotional health (caring about others). While Keith sees Mary’s emotional health enabling her physical health, stating that “as soon as she is able to look beyond herself and make good relationships with others, she becomes physically stronger” (126), Smith implies the opposite correlation, writing, “The alteration in Mary’s physical well-being is associated with an improvement in her character” (122). I see the two as having a mutually reinforcing effect, with mobility as the original source of Mary’s improvement. The narrator asserts that replacing old, bad thoughts with new, healthy ones has a positive effect on physical health (Burnett, *Secret* 123-124). But Mary begins her transformation with a move from India to Misselthwaite Manor in England, an escape from the supposedly degenerating effects of the Indian climate and the psychologically damaging social isolation, and it is this move that exposes her to new ways of thinking and moving. She begins a new relationship with the land, the physical form of the country, by being physically active on her first day at the Manor. She goes out on the grounds and “when she began to walk quickly or even run [...] she was stirring her slow blood and making herself stronger” and “the big breaths of rough fresh air [...] filled her lungs with something which was good for her whole thin body” (22-23). Simply moving around the British landscape has an invigorating effect on Mary’s physical self, improving her bodily health and opening doors to other positive changes.

Soon after her running around starts to take effect on her body, she also starts to build personal relationships, making friends with a robin, the gardener Ben Weatherstaff, and the

housemaid Martha Sowerby, as well as learning to like people she has yet to meet, like Martha's brother Dickon and their mother. The narrator describes the connection between interest in others and health: "So she began to feel a slight interest in Dickon, and as she had never before been interested in any one but herself, it was the dawning of a healthy sentiment" (17). She spends her whole first day at Misselthwaite outside and that evening is filled with new feelings that connect her to other people: "She did not feel cross when Martha chattered away. She felt as if she rather liked to hear her" (24). By the time she meets Dickon she is able to tell him, "I like you, and you make the fifth person. I never thought I should like five people" (50). Mary's relationships grow exponentially and they are much deeper than the tyrannical master-servant relationships that she was used to in India. While racial difference is an obvious reason for this altered relationship dynamic, I would posit the Britishness of those that Mary befriends as a significant contributing factor. Unlike the "natives" of India, the servants at Misselthwaite and even, I would argue, the robin are quintessentially British and tied to the land, the physical space that enables regeneration. The servants are also a fundamental part of the solid social foundation that allows for British imperialism. As such, they are suitable companions for Mary to befriend as she learns how to be a proper British imperial girl, because they teach her lessons from a space inaccessible to a colonist in a foreign land.

Healthier because more mobile, Mary's whole perspective on her interactions with people changes, with her gaining empathy and considering what other people might want or need. She learns how to dress herself so that she will not be thought "silly and stupid" (27), showing a new interest in other people's opinions. More selflessly motivated, on hearing that Martha's family likes to listen to stories about her life in India, Mary tells Martha, "I'll tell you a great deal more before your next day out [...] so that you will have more to talk about. I dare say they would like to hear about riding on elephants and camels, and about the officers going to hunt tigers" (33). Mary empathizes with the Sowerby family, thinking of what they might be interested in and being willing to contribute to their enjoyment. Mary is even prepared to act in ways that are uncomfortable for her. Recognizing that the skipping rope that she is given from Mrs. Sowerby actually comes from Martha's wages, she not only thanks Martha when she is "not used to thanking people or noticing that they did things for her," she also considers giving her a kiss when she learns that Martha's sister would do so, looking "stiffer than ever" and asking "Do you want me to kiss you?" (34-35). With a good British girl like Martha's sister before her as an

example, Mary thinks about what might be appropriate behaviour for a girl receiving a gift rather than her own inclinations. The now-mobile Mary has also become someone who is not wrapped up in herself the individual, but instead sees herself in relation to other people; she is focused on them, and, as a result, is able to serve them.

Mary's service to others, a part of her carrying out her proper feminine duties, also involves the curing of others, namely her cousin Colin Craven. Rowbotham notes that "women were expected to teach men, from boyhood, the qualities for moral and spiritual development" (190) and that a good male citizen of an imperialist nation would "have been well taught by his mother or some other female the early character lessons of patriotism and conformity that would fit him for military service" (192). Girls could have an integral role in teaching boys how to be properly masculine leaders of the nation, equal but different partners of giving and selfless girls. An excess of a problematic masculinity was one societal issue that girls and women were expected to correct. Devereux remarks on the popular maternal feminist idea of this era that feminine political activity and influence were necessary in order to fix "the social and political spheres where men had been dominant and, feminists held, too often destructive" (*Growing* 55). Mary enacts her status as a model girl, in part, by teaching Colin how to be a model boy, a caring member of the ruling classes who is also physically fit. In addition to this work, Mary also remedies the estranged relationship between Colin and his father Archibald Craven, who is rarely at Misselthwaite because he cannot bear to be around the son whom he believes will be physically disabled. In bringing them together, Mary not only fixes their broken familial bond but also ensures that the British estate of Misselthwaite will be properly governed by its male proprietor.

Such work is imagined in conjunction with the construction of the girl as a regenerative influence, one who is able to encourage the nation's progress. Devereux describes the construction of the maternalistic girl in Nellie L. McClung's fiction as "the primary agent in reform and regeneration" and observes McClung's "sustained narrative of imperial regeneration through women's moral and Christianizing work" (*Growing* 72). Girls like those in McClung's fiction and like Mary were expected to regenerate the imperial nation, refining and improving it. Nodelman also notes the prominence of such roles for girls in "the traditional novel for girls" (146). He describes how girl protagonists like Pollyanna "have remarkable effects on other people, who change miraculously" (147). Girls are agents of beneficial change in these novels

when they are working for the cause of others. They improve both the places and people around them, restoring them to youthfulness (Nodelman 147) and health. As Nodelman remarks, “The process is carried to the extreme in *The Secret Garden*. Not only does the coming of spring and the resurrection of the garden change a desolate and decaying place into a lovely one; it also seems to cause human beings to spring up from nowhere, almost as if they had been hibernating” (148). Mary is both a regenerative influence and a potentially generative one; her ability to improve herself and bring the garden to life foreshadows her maternal future, with her body mirroring the fertile land that benefits from her maternal care.

Mary shows an inclination to participate in this regenerative work from the beginning of the novel, even before her cure. Elizabeth Lennox Keyser notes Mary’s predilection for constructing pretend gardens in the dirt even in India, “her attempt, literally and metaphorically, to make something grow from barren ground” and “her persistent efforts to bring forth life” (3). India, however, is significantly less responsive than Britain; the flourishing of life the Mary creates in the secret garden speaks to the mutually beneficial relationship that she has with Britain as they help heal each other. She seems to come to this role naturally, if rather unusually, a portrayal that privileges essentialist notions of femininity. It is as though her maternal nature acts as the driving force behind her desire to create gardens, spaces of fertile land. When she finally finds the secret garden, she is able to begin gardening and helping the plants to grow in spite of the fact that “She did not know anything about gardening” (Burnett, *Secret* 37). Her knowledge of helping and healing is depicted as an inherent part of her nature, even though it has lain dormant as a result of her immobility. Her transplantation from India to England, the “proper” growing environment, helps heal her body, allowing her to become a better maternal and caring figure with a beneficial influence not just on the garden but also on her cousin. Foster and Simons note the connection between the two: “The parallel movements of the restoration of the garden to a flower-filled paradise and the recovery of Colin to full health form the main narrative thrust of the book, informing Mary’s process of self-discovery as she becomes the agent of this dual regeneration” (173). The ability to cure, to regenerate, is an essential part of Mary’s character and is a significant part of what makes her a model girl.

Colin, like Mary, starts out in the novel as far from ideal, characterized by a troubling lack of mobility that makes him both unhealthy and feminine, when the social order requires him to be able-bodied and masculine. His immobility is problematic for some of the same reasons

that Mary's was. His sickly and weak body is constructed as a deviant one, undesirable for a nation that needs strong, healthy citizens to carry out the imperial project. However, there is a distinct gendered difference between Mary and Colin that stresses other necessary results from his cure than the selflessness that is so important for Mary, because he must, as a male, be able to lead and govern carefully and rationally. As Alexandra Valint recognizes, for Colin to take up his proper place in the world as an upper-class, white male he must "be able-bodied, handsome, masculine, and regal" (264). As an immobile body, in contrast, Colin is "weak, excessively emotional, and feminine" (268). Keith also links Colin's state of ill-health with femininity: "His illness feminises him and makes him petulant and subject to passionate but useless outbursts [...]. Throughout the period of Colin's illness his appearance is feminine and romantic" (137). Colin's immobility, tied to feminized illness, disrupts the social order. Feminine when he needs to be masculine, he also demonstrates a negative femininity, hysterical and self-centred, thus embodying a sort of double deviance. He is too similar to Mary when they need to have distinct identities and carry out separate, but complementary roles. Also, with these negative feminine characteristics, he cannot properly rule over others, the role that is given to him by his birth as the heir to Misselthwaite. It is only through Mary's cure of him that he is able to take on a proper masculine role.

Mary's important influence on Colin is characterized by proper feminine, even maternal, behaviour; she nurtures, disciplines, and guides him in order to rid him of his deviance. Smith observes, "Mary's support and guidance allows Colin to flourish and eventually to develop sufficient strength of body and character to indicate that he will be able to become the ruler of Misselthwaite as an adult" (126). She behaves in a caring and maternal way, singing him to sleep (Burnett, *Secret* 62), and she offers emotional support as she empathizes with Colin and his fears about finding a lump in his back (78). She also puts a stop to his tantrums, ridding him of his "feminine" tendency to hysteria, although she must yell at him angrily to do so, which seems like behaviour far from model femininity (80). However, telling him the truth that "There's nothing the wrong with [his] horrid back—nothing but hysterics!" (79) fits in with her larger project of regeneration, to "Put him in the humor [of living]" (67). Mary's scolding also has a disciplinary effect, something that is necessary "for this hysterical boy whom no one had ever dared to *restrain* or contradict" (79; emphasis added). In the absence of adults willing to do their duty in properly raising Colin, Mary has to take on the role of caregiver and instructor or mother and, to

some degree, father. She is teaching him how to behave appropriately, fulfilling her role as a good girl by using the influence that she has over him to improve him (Rowbotham 190, 192).

After Mary brings Colin into the garden, the site of regeneration, Colin is able to take on the traits of proper British masculinity, including the ability to govern. Where Mary and Dickon once worked cooperatively at their gardening, Colin instead gives orders, telling Mary to “Go and make one of the men servants bring some [food] in a basket [...]. And then you and Dickon can bring it here” (Burnett, *Secret* 97). When they are interrupted by Ben Weatherstaff and Colin stands to prove that he is “not a cripple,” the exchange ends with Colin asserting, “I’m your master [...] when my father is away. And you are to obey me. This is my garden” (99-100). And, as Keith notes, “This walking because of hurt pride is the first ‘step’ in Colin’s important journey towards a state of ‘upright’ masculinity” (137). Colin claims his ownership of the space through his exhibition of physical ability and masculinity. When he stands and works in the garden for the first time, he also plants a rose, holding it in the earth “same as th’ king does when he goes to a new place” (Burnett, *Secret* 102) as Ben Weatherstaff tells him. He plants a rose as an action of colonization, with himself as a ruler, but the beautiful setting of the garden softens this image, figuring him as benevolent and part of a regenerative, rather than violent, process.

Under the influence of Mary, Colin also learns to be a better governor of Misselthwaite, a preparation for his future role as an upper-class male. Earlier in the novel, Colin is tyrannical, exercising his authority over the servants in a high-handed way, often threatening them with the loss of their jobs if they do not obey his commands. The housekeeper claims, “[W]e’ve had to let him trample all over every one of us ever since he had feet and he thinks that’s what folks was born for” (92). After his first day in the garden, Mary makes a point of bringing Colin’s attention to his manners, which she realizes are what hers were once like and which the narrator describes in a rather understated way as “not [...] of the kind which is usual or popular” (103). Their discussion results in Colin’s resolution to stop being “queer” (104), a deviant characteristic that Mary associates with not liking people in the time before she found the garden. Less queer and more considerate, they also “send some of their shillings” (113) to Dickon’s mother in an act of noblesse oblige after she begins supplying them with food, recognizing that she might not be able to afford it when she has her own family to feed. With Mary a model girl and able to guide Colin’s moral actions, both act as benevolent governors of the estate (though with Mary in an

appropriately secondary supporting role, acting behind the scenes), opening up the possibility of a future of appropriate social order.

Ultimately, however, Mary can only completely cure Colin and attain for him the status of model boy through the culmination of her own journey of becoming a model girl, predicated on her complete self-effacement. Smith explains, “By assisting Colin to full strength, she uses an autonomous but altruistic form of femininity to raise him to his ‘rightful’ position” (126). Daphne M. Kutzer similarly asserts, “Burnett means the reader to understand that nurturing Colin helps Mary nurture herself, helps her become less self-involved, but this is a lesson not so much in self-fulfillment as in self-denial” (62). Jane H. Hunter documents the presence in fiction, advice manuals, and girls’ diaries of “the norms of denial and repression for [Victorian] girls” that encouraged “self-repression and negation” (49-50). The autonomous altruism that Smith perceives at work in *The Secret Garden*, with Mary’s self-negation as she helps Colin to heal, follows the trend of feminine “self-repression” that Hunter sees as so prominent in Victorian discourse. Many scholars have noted how Mary’s presence in the novel lessens as the narrative progresses. Valint states, “Dickon and Mary are ghostly presences in the final scene” (275), while Keyser remarks on how Colin has “already run away with, or been allowed to dominate, the final third of the book” (2), and Foster and Simons observe that “Mary, the prime mover of his recovery, is significantly absent from the closing tableau” (189). As Foster and Simons assert, “[A]lthough the secret garden is the site of Mary’s growth to self-assurance and provides her with the opportunity to exercise initiative and application, it simultaneously becomes the locus of her cultural imprisonment” (189).

Even though Foster and Simons see Mary’s subjugation to patriarchal norms in the “division between male and female spheres of experience” (189) that marks the end of the text, I propose that Mary’s self-effacement begins much earlier, when she shares the garden with Colin and he takes ownership; she relinquishes the physical space in favour of a male heir. Mary is granted proprietorship of the garden when she asks Archibald Craven for “a bit of earth” and is told that she “can have as much earth as [she] want[s]” (Burnett, *Secret* 54), although she has, in her words, “stolen” it earlier claiming, “It isn’t anybody’s” (46). Before taking Colin to the garden, it is hers; she acts as the gatekeeper, only allowing those she thinks worthy, like Dickon, into the secret. Once Colin has entered the garden, a moment that creates a “pink glow” of health over his body, his first words are tied to ownership and claiming: “‘Does tha’ think,’ said Colin

with dreamy carefulness, ‘as happen it was made loike this ’ere all o’ purpose for me?’” (95). Colin’s question centers him within creation, as though the springtime and the garden might exist only for him and to contribute to his cure, the position that Mary is eventually put into. In contrast with Colin’s assertion of self-centredness, Mary’s speech during Colin’s first day in the garden turns into a babble intended to work “Magic” for Colin, as she repeats over and over again that he “can do it” (101) when he stands up and walks. Although Mary is described as “not a self-sacrificing person” (74), she quickly becomes one as she instigates changes in Colin’s routine that help him become healthy. Mary’s actions become directed toward helping Colin, rather than continuing her self-interested, introspective behaviour and her solitary explorations of house and garden in the earlier portions of the novel.

Mary’s complete transformation into an ideal girl and Colin’s assertion of himself over Mary are cemented by the footrace at the end of the novel, in which Colin races Mary and Dickon and wins. Mary, healthy and active enough to participate in an energetic footrace, is also finally virtuous enough to embody the ideal of selflessness, becoming almost a nonentity as a result and ceding the narrative space to Colin, who is depicted as physically superior. Valint observes, “Colin specifically links his acquisition of health to his defeat of Mary, as if one depends on the other: ‘I’m well, I can beat Mary in a race’ (Burnett, *Secret* 253)” (275). Colin also speaks for Mary, as Valint notes (275), telling his father who has just returned that “Mary thought [that the garden might be dead] at first” (Burnett, *Secret* 130). Mary is both silenced and rendered physically inferior in these pages. Keyser states that “in the final chapter Colin’s ascendancy suggests that if he becomes a ‘mon’ as Ben predicts, then Mary will have to become a woman—quiet, passive, subordinate, and self-effacing” (10) and Mary does. She no longer speaks for herself and her increasingly strong body is not the one that the narrative focuses on any longer, nor does she assert herself over Colin, even for his own good, as she did during his tantrum. Keyser proposes, “By idealizing Colin at the expense of Mary [Burnett] seems to be affirming male supremacy, and the final version of the master of Misselthwaite with his son, Master Colin, further suggests a defense of patriarchal authority” (12). Mary’s transformation into a model girl is thus complete; her power, the regenerative power of the girl protagonist, is shown at its peak through the completeness of her self-effacement and the promotion of patriarchal power, in the form of the now healthy body of Colin.

At the end of the novel, Colin, dominant over his female cousin and physically able, is an ideal boy citizen on the cusp of manhood. Valint notes the link between his healthy body and his masculinity, just as his illness was tied to a negative femininity: “The text and characters associate Colin with a weak female body; it therefore follows that when he dramatically stands up from the chair, he claims and proves his manliness” (270). Valint asserts, “Standing up and separating himself from the wheelchair mark Colin’s arrival as a man” (271). This masculinity is not only compassed in having a healthy body but also in the activities that Colin sees his healthy body as capable of performing. He asserts, “I shall find out about people and creatures and everything that grows,” a mission in keeping with what the narrator calls his “exploring mind” (Burnett, *Secret* 119-120). Keith observes, “He imagines all sorts of possibilities and adventures for himself: ‘Athlete, Lecturer, Scientific Discoverer’—all manly, ambitious, non-domestic pursuits which will take him outwards into the world” (139). Colin’s journey to cure leaves him ready, grown up enough and physically able enough, to take on adult male duties of governing the nation. His role as an able-bodied member of the ruling class is reinforced by his reunion with his estranged father, which occurs at the moment that he wins the footrace. Keith recognizes the link between wellness and patrilineal bonds, claiming that “from the moment he stands up, he begins to become the ‘real boy’ his father never thought he could be” (137). The benevolent patriarchal authority that closes out the novel is explicitly tied to mobility as Colin and his father walk to the house together under the approving eyes of the servants.

The novel ends with the unspoken expectation that Mary and Colin will be more successful at maintaining the British Empire, both at home and abroad, than their parents have been. Colin, having been cured by Mary and been brought to an acknowledgement about his proper governing role at Misselthwaite, will not repeat the mistake of his father when “He had forgotten and deserted his home and his duties” (Burnett, *Secret* 124). In his imagined future, Colin will have the ability to carry out the work of British imperialism, by being equally capable of governing the metropole or spreading an active, caring British masculinity around the globe, like a king who “goes to a new place” and plants a rose (102). Likewise, Mary will avoid growing up to be like her own mother, who “cared only to go to parties and amuse herself with gay people” and “had not wanted a little girl at all” (5). Having stopped thinking about amusing only herself and having learned how to help and nurture others, Mary will be able to act as a proper mother who can guide and raise model future citizens. As such, she is set to become a

proper imperial woman, whether that entails remaining in England at Misselthwaite or, if called to it, living in colonial settlements abroad.

Pollyanna Retains her Model Status

The beginning of Pollyanna's story mirrors Mary's: newly orphaned, the girl moves from a colonial outpost to the metropole to be taken in by a relative, in Pollyanna's case from the American West to a small New England town in Vermont to be adopted by her Aunt Polly. Pollyanna, however, is a very different girl protagonist from Mary in that she is a model girl from the start of the novel. Raised under the Christian influence of her missionary father, with some input from well-meaning, if at times less-than-ideal, women from the Ladies' Aid, Pollyanna is caring and active. She is happy to go out into the world in order to meet people and bring sunshine into their lives by teaching them the "glad game" of looking for something to be "glad" about in every situation and creating the "light" in "darkness" that Keith describes (97). Teaching the "game" also brings "order" of the sort that Marten discusses by promoting social harmony and an ethics of care, since characters who learn the "glad game" are better able to get along with and happier to do more for their neighbours. Pollyanna spends much of her time enriching the lives of those around her in this manner, but tragedy strikes at the climax of the novel when she is rendered immobile after being hit by an automobile. With her legs paralyzed, Pollyanna's virtue is put to the test as she is isolated from her community and the sickroom becomes a place where she can wield power that rewards her individual desires.

Immobility, which confines Pollyanna to her bed, isolates her and prevents her from going out into her community and, as a result, inhibits her ability to carry out her duty as a model girl. Interestingly, the confined space of the home was, throughout the nineteenth century, seen as the proper place for girls and women, even while it could be associated with ill bodies. Gilbert and Gubar comment on the connection between nineteenth-century women and agoraphobia and state that "it seems inevitable that women reared for, and conditioned to, lives of privacy, reticence, domesticity, might develop pathological fears of public places and unconfined spaces" (54). While such a limited sphere might have been socially sanctioned for a physically delicate "household fairy," over time it became less appropriate for the strong and active "home goddess," to use the terms of Rowbotham, who "demonstrated a capacity to deal with outside or wider interests at the same time as maintaining her full range of primary home and family responsibilities to a high standard" (38). Tucked away within the home and cut off from wider

society, the girl's ability to help and serve others becomes compromised, a severe problem for this later, more active conception of ideal girlhood.

The sickroom, which was also often the bedroom, is a place where the girl is isolated from the household as well as society. Frawley observes that many Victorian texts dealing with "life in the sickroom" place an "extraordinary emphasis on the solitude of the sickroom and the obliviousness of the invalid within it to life beyond the sickroom's walls" (202). The immobile invalid is not only confined to one room, but also, because of her invalid condition, considered too delicate to be involved in normal household life, including receiving visitors and participating in the day-to-day business of running the household that a girl would have participated in. The bedroom, where the girl would retreat to in illness, becomes a space of ideological conflict in this context, since, as Sonya Sawyer Fritz points out in relation to her exploration of Charlotte Yonge's *The Daisy Chain* (1856), as a sickroom it was a place of isolation and retreat, but as a *girl's* bedroom it was considered a space of permeable borders, where the girl could still be accessed in order to be at the service of others in spite of the conception of the bedroom as a private space (45). While the girl ought to be at the disposal of others, the solitude of the sickroom challenges, and could potentially override, this expectation, endangering the girl's ability to carry out her feminine duties.

Pollyanna clearly demonstrates the way in which the girl's retreat into the confines of the home inhibits her ability to engage with others, whom she has a social duty to benefit or help. When she hears that she will never walk again, Pollyanna exclaims to her nurse, "Why, Miss Hunt, how am I going to school, or to see Mr. Pendleton, or Mrs. Snow, or—or anybody?" (Porter, *Pollyanna* 225). Pollyanna associates immobility with an inability to see her schoolfellows and the other members of her community that she has befriended. Even when she is well enough to receive visitors, she only sees them "occasionally" and must often be satisfied instead with "loving messages from those she could not see" (253-254). While remaining in bed, Pollyanna must forgo her community engagement, and she is left unable to spread the social benefit of the "glad game" as she is wont to do. As both Keith and Foster and Simons note about such episodes of temporary immobility, Pollyanna and her near-contemporary Anne from L.M. Montgomery's *Anne of Green Gables* (1908) are not injured in order to learn a moral lesson to forward their development and maturation, as Katy is in Susan Coolidge's *What Katy Did* (Keith

149; Foster and Simons 156). Instead, they exemplify a lesson for the reader: for girls, immobility necessitates an undesirable retreat from society.⁵

Segregated from a wider society, Pollyanna's model status is threatened by the possibility that she will turn her thoughts toward herself and her own individual desires. In order to avoid this threat, Pollyanna must ensure that she continues to care for others, working to serve them, rather than herself. The ability to safeguard against the abandonment of feminine duty in spite of being confined to the sickroom is seen in various invalid narratives, with girls and women privileging their gender identity over their invalid status. Frawley describes the "'modification' of duty" that invalid women promoted in their narratives from the early part of the nineteenth century, "narratives of domestic work that enabled them both to achieve their goals of spiritual and moral education and, less directly to compensate for their own debility" (48). Fritz notes a similar dynamic in *The Daisy Chain*, in which the invalid Margaret May finds her sickroom becoming "a center for fulfilling domestic obligations" with Margaret "making herself available to the other family members whenever they want her" (44-45) so that she can fill the maternal domestic role after the death of her mother. While feminine duties could be modified in order to accommodate the female invalid, they could not be done away with altogether without the girl or woman being seen as failing to fulfill her proper role.

Having lost her ability to walk and believing it to be permanent, Pollyanna is in danger of allowing her invalid condition to override her sense of proper feminine duty, because she can no longer play the "glad game," the mechanism through which she works for and serves others. The housemaid Nancy describes the effect of this news on the townspeople: "Now, since she's hurt, ev'rybody feels so bad—specially when they heard how bad *she* feels 'cause she can't find anythin' ter be glad about. An' so they've been comin' ev'ry day ter tell her how glad she's made *them*, hopin' that'll help some" (Porter, *Pollyanna* 249). Pollyanna has become the focus of the town's activity. Although her neighbours cannot see her personally because of her physical infirmity, they swarm about her home, making her the centre of their attention and attempting to make her glad. This refocusing of attention upends the 'proper' social order in which Pollyanna should be out working to ensure the gladness of others, not lying in her room

⁵ Similarly, Anne sees breaking her ankle as cutting her off from community life. Although she receives many visitors, she is prevented from going out "for six or seven weeks" and complains, "I'll miss the new lady teacher. She won't be new any more by the time I'm able to go to school" (187).

wallowing in her own lack of gladness. In this way, Pollyanna grows more like Mary at the beginning of *The Secret Garden*: she stops looking outward at others and instead looks inward at herself, caring primarily about her own situation and believing herself entitled to the attention of others. However, this is only the beginning of the threat to Pollyanna's model femininity.

Perhaps even more insidious than self-focus is the possibility that Pollyanna could take up the power that immobility in illness could give a girl, power that was considered illicit for early twentieth-century girls because it was both self-serving and subversive to traditional patriarchal power structures. As stated above, Dyhouse notes that girls were expected to abstain from "any desire for power" (2) and Rowbotham links this lesson to didactic fiction that was meant to curtail girls' interest in creating a "power base in society for themselves" (12). However, as Frawley points out, the female invalid who was not isolated from others could take on a position of power over them. Ellen Chadwick, the well-known "Manchester Invalid" of the second half of the nineteenth century, is presented by Frawley as an example of the female invalid's taking on traditionally masculine power:

Ellen Chadwick nevertheless usurped control of spiritual encounters in her sickroom, not simply by taking the lead in making decisions about which hymn to sing or what or whom to pray for, but also, more generally, by imbuing the sick role with characteristics more traditionally associated with preacher and prophet. (195)

Chadwick's assumption of the role of "preacher and prophet" links her with roles that are conventionally masculine. Although the invalid is in a physically passive position, seemingly giving up power along with mobility and health, she can still take on a leadership role, even dictating to those "who did not usually submit to others" (Harrison qtd. in Frawley 195).

Other disabled women also attempted to gain power, although in a more politically overt way, such as suffragists Rosa May Billinghurst and Eliza Adelaide Knight. Billinghurst had been paralyzed as a result of a childhood illness and was known popularly as the "cripple suffragette," and Knight had been injured in childhood and needed the aid of "crutches or a stick for the rest of her life, and endured repeated poor health" ("Adelaide"). Not confined to the sickroom, both actively campaigned for women's enfranchisement and were arrested and imprisoned by police, acts of restraint that attempted to further immobilize and, by extension, contain them. These historical figures show that immobility, disability, or invalidism do not preclude the ability of women to take up power for themselves and, in fact, at times might actually facilitate this

acquisition of power because of the privileged subject position created by illness, as in the fictional case of Pollyanna. Being an invalid could thus offer a girl power that she might not be able to assume otherwise and that would not be considered appropriate according to societal mores, because it gratified the female individual by putting her into a position of power over others and by privileging her own desires.

Invalidated Pollyanna can, after working for others throughout the novel, finally gain a reward for herself, but it requires the mechanism of the paralyzing injury, which focuses community attention on her and places her in a privileged position of being in need of care. As stated above, Pollyanna's story is not one of transformation into an idealized state and she does not need to overcome injury in order to learn a moral lesson, leading Keith to question Porter's motivations for injuring and immobilizing Pollyanna:

[W]hen almost all the unhappy citizens of Beldingsville are now as glad as can be, Pollyanna falls in front of a car and loses the power of her legs. The reasons for this are not immediately clear. Pollyanna, who her creator saw as loveable, charming, good and sweet in every way, did not need to be taught a lesson in unselfishness and humility, and [...] paralysis followed by cure was not exactly an original plot device. It is true that there is still some unfinished business in the story which the accident helps to reconcile: Pollyanna still has to initiate her frosty aunt into the pleasures of the 'Glad Game' [...], John Pendleton has not yet made the final decision to give a home to orphaned Jimmy Bean, and romance must be rekindled between Aunt Polly and Dr. Chiltern [sic]. But it hardly seemed necessary to put Pollyanna flat on her back to do this. (149)

Keith eventually settles on dramatic effect and the need for some darkness in an "otherwise very light tale" (149) as the reason for including Pollyanna's paralysis in the story. I propose, however, that Pollyanna's injury allows the narrative to have Pollyanna's desires granted without the loss of her position as a model girl.

Only while an invalid is Pollyanna able to be selfish, not playing the "glad game" that helps others, instead having others gratify her wishes. It is also the time, as Keith observes, that the "unfinished business" of her aunt's playing of the "glad game," the adoption of Jimmy Bean, and the reconciliation between Aunt Polly and Dr. Chilton occur. What Keith does not notice, though, is that these are all things that Pollyanna herself has been wanting and hoping for, but was unable to effect while healthy and mobile. When Aunt Polly tells Pollyanna that she will

play the game, Pollyanna responds, “I’m so glad! You see, I’ve really wanted you most of anybody, all the time” (Porter, *Pollyanna* 251). Similarly, when she learns that Mr. Pendleton will adopt Jimmy Bean, she exclaims, “I am glad! Oh, Aunt Polly, I’ve so wanted to find a place for Jimmy” (234). Also, before she hears that she will not walk again, she tells Aunt Polly that she wants Dr. Chilton to attend her and later says to the specialist who comes to examine her, “You see, *I* wanted Dr. Chilton all the time, but Aunt Polly wanted you” (222). Pollyanna’s words emphasize the fact that it is *her* wishes that are granted, that what *she* has been wanting for so long comes to pass. When ill, she no longer has to consider the desires of others: Aunt Polly’s dictum that Pollyanna not talk about father and, by extension, the “glad game” that he created; whether or not Mr. Pendleton even wants Jimmy Bean (he has been reluctant to adopt him up to this point, preferring Pollyanna herself); or which doctor Aunt Polly wants in her house (avoiding Dr. Chilton because of their past romance). All of these considerations become unimportant and Pollyanna gets to have her way, conveniently, without having to lift an unfeminine finger when doing so would compromise her status as model girl.

The power over others that allows her to get her own way is undeniable, but is complicated by the narrative’s need to maintain the perception of Pollyanna as a model girl, one who is giving and does not seek power for herself. In order to cope with this issue, Pollyanna’s bedridden state creates the veneer of passivity, of not working toward the satisfaction of her own desires. Mitchell and Snyder observe, “Culturally, we imagine agency to be precluded by the fact of a disability—one is transformed into the principle of passivity where agency is only a longed-for ideal available to the normative inhabitant of an intact body” (127). Although agency and power are clearly available to the invalid, the prone position of the immobile body seems to imply inactivity and helplessness. This narrative sleight of hand allows the story to fulfill Pollyanna’s desires, which the narrative shows that she is deserving of because of her already established virtue, but keeps Pollyanna from being the agent in their fulfillment. She might have expressed her wishes and, in the case of Jimmy Bean, even worked to make them come true, but the consummation of them is deferred until she is physically incapacitated. Pollyanna might have private hopes, but she cannot expect to gratify them herself and still be a model, selfless girl.

It is helpful to the maintenance of Pollyanna’s model status that her desires are in keeping with Progressive-Era values. With Aunt Polly playing the “glad game” and Mr. Pendleton adopting Jimmy Bean, two of Beldingsville’s leading citizens, who have previously been known

for their lack of interest in others in spite of their powerful positions as wealthy members of the community, are brought to a better understanding of their duty to others. Their alteration represents a reform in the highest echelon of Beldingsville society, much like the work of Progressives, which attempted to reform a corrupt government that was “being run by unscrupulous politicians and powerful corporate interests” (McCutcheon 456). Heretofore, Aunt Polly has been solitary and given to helping others only out of a shallow, unfeeling sense of “duty” (Porter, *Pollyanna* 6), while Mr. Pendleton has been known for being “miserly and supremely selfish” (234). Aunt Polly and Mr. Pendleton’s change in attitude also reflects the Progressive movement’s concern with children. Marten explains that, amongst the variety of “different political and reform traditions” that made up the Progressives, “most could agree that one of the nation’s top priorities should be its children and youth, who, they believed, suffered more from the disorder plaguing the rapidly growing nation than any other group” (9). The community shows itself to neglect its proper civic duty to care for vulnerable children. Leading members of Beldingsville, such as Aunt Polly, Mr. Pendleton, and the Ladies’ Aid, have allowed a child like Jimmy Bean to become “a small, ragged boy” (Porter, *Pollyanna* 95) living in an overcrowded “Orphans’ Home” where he is unwanted (97) and relegated Pollyanna to a “little attic room” in Aunt Polly’s large, beautiful home because her aunt wants “to get her niece as far away as possible from herself, and at the same time place her where her childish heedlessness would not destroy valuable furnishings” (26). Aunt Polly’s new attitude toward Pollyanna and Jimmy Bean’s adoption ensure that both children will be well cared for and have loving homes.

Child neglect and the abandonment of proper Progressive-Era principles is also visible in the fateful automobile that causes Pollyanna’s accident and acts as a symbol of modernity’s threat to national values. The automobile is a marker of technological advancement in this period; Marten notes the dramatic change in transportation within the forty years surrounding the turn of the century at the same time that he links modern mobility with childhood, stating, “A child living in 1880 would have gotten around largely with various forms of horsepower—on horseback, in buggies, or in horse-drawn omnibuses—while a child living in 1920, depending on where he or she lived, could have traveled via automobile or even subway” (5). The “swiftly approaching motor-car” (Porter, *Pollyanna* 200) that causes Pollyanna’s partial paralysis seems to signify a faceless modernity that has no consideration for the citizens of the nation, including vulnerable children.

Pollyanna's cure is able to counteract the threatening modernity associated with the automobile, simultaneously mitigating the degree of danger that the automobile poses and subsuming, through her embodiment of the medical cure, the idea of technological progress in service of the nation. As Keith remarks, the cure is positioned as the "happy ending" (151), in which "The wheelchair is literally or symbolically discarded, the character gets up and walks, and all is well in the world" (6). Cure resolves narrative tensions and functions as a mechanism with which to shore up gendered ideologies as well as national narratives. With a healthy, mobile body Pollyanna can regain the ability to give of herself to others, to rid herself of her self-involvement and self-serving power. She can also reinforce narratives of progress associated with cure, allowing the narrative of the novel to move to a happy conclusion. Pollyanna's medical cure also acts as evidence of national progress with the United States positioned as a space in which doctors use technological development in order to help the vulnerable and injured. Although, her accident, as noted by Keith, is caused by the modern technology of the motor car (144), "cars and carriages" will also take Pollyanna to the place where she will be cured (Porter, *Pollyanna* 267). The benefits of scientific medicine, a form of technological progress, resolve the ambivalence toward modern technology embodied by the car. Keith comments on the vagueness of the medical details involved in Pollyanna's cure, claiming that the doctor's "medical skill seemed to be confined to smiling a lot" (153), and that her cure is a "miracle cure" rather than one grounded in real medical science (150). But I disagree because the novel frames Pollyanna's restoration of health in medical terms rather than, say, spiritual ones. It is significant that she is cured by a doctor, a college friend of Dr. Chilton's, who has "For years [...] been making this sort of thing a special study" (257). The doctor's medical work, which will heal Pollyanna, is depicted as a process of improvement and study over time. Pollyanna's cure acts as a symbol of the benefits of modernity that can be harnessed by good citizens who practice an ethic of care and uphold Progressive Era values. Cured and able to play and, more importantly, share the "glad game" once more, Pollyanna is successfully brought through the trial of her model status, which tempted her to be self-serving and self-involved.

Foster and Simons note that many of the texts they examine, from the period 1850-1920, have a narrative that "finally validates acceptance of a dominant moral order or social order, even though it may at the same time express coded alternative meanings" (11). *The Secret Garden* and *Pollyanna*, with their moments of troubling immobility, resolve with cure and the

valorization of the model girl who acts for the good of others. But the shadow of the immobile girl lingers. Frawley describes a feminist “image of the nineteenth-century woman”: “She is bedridden, enraged, and powerfully subversive despite her submissive posture in the sickroom, a space memorably described in Gilman’s text [“The Yellow Wallpaper”] as both prison and nursery” (198-199). And Linda McDowell writes of the “sick” body being “both a site of oppression and a site of resistance” (*Gender* 61). In unmoving ill-health, the girl can be a dangerously alluring and powerful figure, a girl who is able to think of herself and her own wants and desires, especially disturbing for the time of *The Secret Garden* and *Pollyanna*’s publication when girls were repeatedly encouraged to be unselfish or selfless. Small wonder then that Keyser claims that Mary is “too attractive in her disagreeableness” and that as she “becomes less agreeable, she becomes [...] less interesting” (3), and that Pollyanna, the model girl who never loses her model status in spite of the seductive power of immobility, has had her name become a term with “pejorative connotations,” acting “as a metaphor for undue optimism” (Kokkola and Harde 13). There is something compelling about a girl who asserts her individualism and refuses to conform to societal dictates of appropriate feminine behaviour.

Such a girl needs to be undermined, cast as a problem child, in order to uphold a nation and social system that needs her to forgo thinking of herself in favour others. The girl’s power is at work on behalf of the nation, especially in *The Secret Garden* and *Pollyanna*, when it involves reinforcing the foundations that allow that nation to flourish, whether that means promoting imperialism or Progressive Era reform. The model girl is not revolutionary, although she may be a reformer; she betters the status quo, bringing it to its own ideal form, rather than creating a new social order. Mary heals the rifts of the masculine ruling class, performing the work of a maternal, imperialist girl who will help maintain the hold of Britain over her colonies by nurturing the men who will carry out the imperial project. And Pollyanna is lauded for helping people become more generous versions of themselves who are willing to protect vulnerable children, without displacing those people from the positions of eminence they already hold. The model girl, influential and beloved by those around her, is a powerful character; she finds happiness in her ability to help others and in enjoying the good health that allows her to do so. Her happiness might veil the sacrifices that enable her selflessness, reward and punishment so deeply intertwined as to appear almost the same at times, but the novel assures us that her

goodness is its own reward, that her service to others, the community and its citizens, is ultimately fulfilling for the girl, although we, as readers, may remain unconvinced.

Chapter Two

Promoting a Shared Vision: Localized Movement in *Pollyanna* and *Anne of Avonlea*

The nation, as theorized by Benedict Anderson, is “an imagined political community” and individual “Communities are to be distinguished [...] by the style in which they are imagined” (6). Nations are thus formed by a vision that is shared by a critical mass of people who agree, although not necessarily completely, upon particular values and conceptions of the nation, such as the physical borders that define it. However, the construction of the nation, how it is seen in the imaginations of people, is not restricted to its delineation on a map. Linda McDowell notes that “what have been termed relational places – locales constructed through social relations between groups and individuals – slip up and down the spatial scale as it were, as particular sets of social practices connect the local to the regional, or to the national and the global in different ways for different inhabitants” (*Gender* 5). The social space of the nation, imagined by people through their interactions with each other, can be represented at other scales, including the regional, local, and domestic, and this scalar fluidity features in discourse in the early years of the twentieth century that tied the domestic to the national. Cecily Devereux observes that the family was seen “as the representative unity of the national community” (*Growing* 13) and Michelle J. Smith remarks on the rhetoric of the time that compared “the running of the home with the running of the [British] Empire” (11).

Messages about the nation feature prominently in children’s and, more specifically girls’, literature. The didactic function of children’s literature is well-established, and Christopher Kelen and Björn Sundmark remark on the way in which such fiction functions to “build character and nation and turn children into citizens” (5). Former Canadian Governor General Adrienne Clarkson discusses her own experiences as a refugee from Hong Kong learning lessons in Canadian citizenship from girls’ fiction in her foreword to Irene Gammel and Elizabeth Epperly’s *L.M. Montgomery and Canadian Culture*. She remarks, “L.M. Montgomery in all her books gave me a profound understanding of what Canada is. Through the particularity and peculiarities of Prince Edward Island and these girls’ fictional lives, I became a Canadian” (ix). Clarkson goes on to explain in more detail that “L.M. Montgomery’s world [...] taught me about the rivalries of Tory and Grit, Protestant and Catholic, in a highly sophisticated micro-cosmic way” (x). She characterizes the Canada presented by Montgomery as “rural, rooted, and white—

a world to which I would never have had access in any other way” because it was “a reality that only fiction could convey” (x). Similarly, Dorothy Karlin sees *Pollyanna* as a piece of “politically purposeful literature” like other written works during the Progressive Era, intended to promote “an idea of America based in rural New England” (157). Lessons about national culture are to be found within geographically limited and localized settings, raising questions of exactly what lessons are being taught and how they are conveyed. In the previous chapter, I established some of the benefits that the model girl can provide for the nation and how her idealized position is dependent upon mobility. In this chapter, I explore how girl protagonists can use their mobility to facilitate their actions in the local sphere and the implications that their local activities can have on a wider national scale.

I propose that shifts in scale are present in Eleanor H. Porter’s *Pollyanna* (1913) and L.M. Montgomery’s *Anne of Avonlea* (1909), novels that focus on the local and are often categorized as domestic fiction, but that also present ideas that can be scaled up to effect change at a regional or national level. I argue that *Pollyanna* and *Anne*’s mobility, their physical movement throughout the local community, allows them to disseminate an idealized vision of the nation as they come into contact with various members of their communities, Beldingsville and Avonlea respectively. Movement helps them bring their vision, to create unified communities, into fruition. *Pollyanna* and *Anne*, with their different national origins in the United States and Canada respectively, do not share the same national vision; *Pollyanna* acts as a domestic missionary spreading a unified Christian vision of the nation, while *Anne* promotes a romantic, fairy-tale vision of the nation that is often challenged by a prosaic reality, a nod to her position as an older and more mature girl than *Pollyanna*. The results of their work are equally different: *Pollyanna* changes the perspective of her Beldingsville neighbours to a more outward-looking and generous vision like hers, while *Anne* is able to effect changes in the physical environment of Avonlea in addition to gaining her community’s support for, though not necessarily its understanding of, her vision. Both versions of this narrative of the girl’s community influence, however, present the girl protagonist as highly mobile within the local space, showing her moving throughout her community environs in order to utilize her power as a force of beneficial improvement for the nation through the building of a unified community identity.

The respective visions of these two girl protagonists reflect their national values and contemporary ideas about national identity. Rather than working on the national stage, however,

Pollyanna and Anne carry out their work in the local community. Through their local efforts they display the immense influence that girls in girls' literature were depicted as being capable of in the service of the nation. However, as will be explored in more detail in chapter three, because influence is tied to the girl's mobility, girls' ability to exercise their power fully is limited to places where they are most mobile, like the local community. While Perry Nodelman opens his essay on classic stories about girls with the phrase "A solitary young girl is traveling" (146), a recognition of the prominent and nearly ubiquitous place an introductory journey has in these works, little critical attention has been given to the physical movements of Pollyanna and Anne and the significant role that movement plays in their stories. In this chapter, I draw attention to Pollyanna and Anne's movements in these novels because it is through walking, wandering, and driving that they are brought into personal contact with members of their communities and are able to share their vision, whether Christian or romantic, most effectively with the citizens who make up the imagined nation.

Christianity was an important part of both the United States' self-imagining and the social development of American girls when *Pollyanna* was published. Ashley N. Reese remarks on the continued popularity of Protestantism specifically in the United States from the early nineteenth century onward. She states, "Protestantism's claims to validity lay with its strong ties to nationalism" and to national identity: "Many felt that to be Protestant was to be American, and vice versa" (126). The prominent role that religion plays in American national identity is mirrored by its significant role in the creation of American girls' identities. In her examination of American girls' diaries, Jane H. Hunter observes, "The religious quest of late Victorianism was a responsibility of the teen years, increasing in intensity as girls approached the age of twenty" (147), highlighting the importance of religion in the life of girls in the United States. Girls were expected to have a religious or spiritual life and, according to Hunter, this life was also meant to be enacted publicly, with the girl involved in community church life (146) and the expectation that girls "verbalize their feelings to parents, ministers, and congregations" (148).

Pollyanna's religious practices are equally as public as the experiences of real American girls described by Hunter, but they also take on a form inherently tied to mobility: missionary work. Reese explains that the importance of Protestantism in national life prompted missionaries to travel and propagate their religion (126). Missionary work, whether foreign or domestic, could be seen as a suitable activity for girls and women to participate in because it related to the

maternal and moral work that they were expected to carry out.⁶ Reese sees Pollyanna as carrying out “domestic missionary work” (128) through her perpetuation of “the social gospel” of doing good works and helping those in need (125). I would like to extend Reese’s idea of Pollyanna’s social gospel work to her ability to alter people’s perspective and help them see her own Christian vision. The work that gets accomplished, specifically both the increased generosity and caring of the people of Beldingsville and the widespread playing of the “glad game” that follows the biblical example of exhorting people to rejoice, is the result of their shared Christian ideology.

A different historical context informs *Anne of Avonlea*, with Canadian, and by extension British, government and society imagined in romantic terms, as part of a Victorian and Edwardian Arthurian Revival. This connection is particularly evident in the architecture and ornamentation of Canada’s Parliament Buildings. As Laurel Ryan states, “The Gothic Revival architecture of Canada’s Parliament Buildings displays an institutional fascination with the relationship between medieval history and power” (137). However, this historical interest was not strictly factual; the appeal of the British medieval tradition was tied up with “Arthur’s paradoxical status as a mythical and historical figure” (Bryden 4). Although Inga Bryden asserts that, in Britain, “the *fin-de-siècle* [...] abandons the use of Arthurianism as a mode of discussing national, religious and domestic identities” (3), the Canadian Parliament Buildings show a continued use of Arthurian symbolism well into the twentieth century, which tied Canada to a complex British mythical history. Future prime minister William Lyon Mackenzie King had the Harper Memorial, a monument to commemorate the death of his friend Henry Albert Harper in the act of saving a drowning woman, built in the form of a statue of Sir Galahad in 1905. Ryan sees the erection of this monument as “a public act rather than a private memorial” and “as a reminder to politicians of the virtue of sacrifice for the good of the public” (144). After a fire destroyed the Centre Block in 1916, the new building included frescoes in the office of the Leader of the Opposition (King) that were “allegorical scenes of chivalric life” representing virtues (146), in keeping with King’s belief “that the physical structures of power do not just

⁶ Pollyanna’s literary predecessor Rebecca, from Kate Douglas Wiggin’s *Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm* (1903), meets foreign missionaries and considers foreign missions a potential career path for herself. Anne flirts with the idea of becoming a foreign missionary’s wife in absence of anyone else willing to marry her in *Anne of Green Gables* (1908).

reflect but also shape the priorities of the government” (157). Arthurian symbolism could provide inspiring visuals for federal politicians to prompt them into virtuous behaviour.

Perhaps more germane to the Anne series is the connection between Arthurian Revivalism and government that appears in Alfred Tennyson’s *Idylls of the King* (1859-1885). Steven G. Kellman asserts, “Tennyson intended *Idylls of the King* to be both a commentary on contemporary society and a kind of allegory about the human spirit warring against the fleshly side of humanity’s nature” (2570). *Idylls of the King* provides a depiction of government and society in a romanticized poetic form that was widely read, especially by girls. Kelly Blewett remarks, “In a survey of girl’s reading practices in England in 1906, just two years before the publication of *Anne of Green Gables*, Tennyson was voted to be the favorite poet of the young girls of England, and *Idylls of the King* [...] to be the favorite work” (280). Tennyson’s work, as part of the romantic chivalric tradition and Arthurian revival, thus creates a link between girls, who lacked any sort of official political role, and a larger political society, whether contemporary society in general or the Canadian politicians at work in Parliament.

Tennyson’s poetry plays a prominent role in Montgomery’s Anne books, including *Anne of Avonlea*,⁷ but most famously in the *Anne of Green Gables* chapter in which Anne pretends to be Elaine floating down to Camelot. Reflecting Kellman’s claim that “The central theme of the poem is that devotion to such high ideals is nearly impossible in a world beset with materialism” (2570), Anne’s journey down the pond in a dory is, to quote Julie A. Sellers, “a decided flop.” Anne is unable to “emulate[e] the honour, beauty, and drama of romantic literature” (J. Sellers), and the dory sinks halfway through the trip, leaving Anne clutching a bridge pile before she is ignominiously rescued by Gilbert Blythe. Two things of significance for my claims about Anne’s work in *Anne of Avonlea* are present in this episode. First, Anne’s desire to play Elaine is bound up in her imagining the space around her in romantic and fairy-tale-like terms; Anne sees the world through romance-coloured glasses. As Blewett observes, “Because of her romantic sentimentality, Anne is drawn to the high drama of chivalric romance. Chivalric romance is the ‘ideal’ with which she is seeking to assimilate her ‘real’” (277). Secondly, Anne’s attempt to play the passive Elaine is a failure. Floating on the current she is moved, rather than moving. Drawing on Margaret Anne Doody and Wendy E. Barry’s claim that “Anne’s venture into

⁷ Rea Wilmshurst’s comprehensive survey of literary references in the *Anne* books notes that Tennyson’s “Morte D’Arthur” is quoted in Chapter 30 in *Anne of Avonlea* (21-22).

Tennysonian story is an implicit critique of Tennyson” and “the roles of silence, reclusiveness, and self-repression that Tennyson seems to value in Elaine” (460), I propose that Anne needs to take on the role of questing knight or prince, one that is associated with active movement, in order to make her romantic vision become a part of reality, even though it pushes her to confront unpleasant realities in the form of her neighbours’ pettiness and corruption. And, while she does take on this role to some degree in *Anne of Green Gables*, it is only in *Anne of Avonlea* that her knightly activity associates chivalric romance with national import.

Pollyanna’s Unified Christian Community

When bedridden Pollyanna learns that the whole town of Beldingsville is playing the “glad game,” she tells her Aunt Polly Harrington, “I can be glad I’ve *had* my legs, anyway—else I couldn’t have done—that!” (Porter, *Pollyanna* 252). Pollyanna’s ability to walk around the local space is directly connected to her ability to improve the community; her rambles throughout Beldingsville bring her into contact with a diverse cast of characters whom she teaches her father’s “glad game,” a game that involves finding something to be glad about in any circumstance. As Lois Keith observes,

Pollyanna needs the freedom to roam not just because it gives her the space to be happy, but because her function in the story is to transform the lives of others. Until the point of her accident three-quarters of the way through the book, the novel is a series of encounters with strangers: the sick, poor, lonely or misguided, who all discover how to play the ‘Glad Game’. The stories of these encounters run through the novel, overlapping each other until everyone is a little more reconciled to their place in life and everyone has become a devoted member of the unofficial Pollyanna fan club. (146)

While Pollyanna’s debilitating accident may be the dramatic climax of the novel, as Keith has noted, much of the novel is actually concerned with Pollyanna’s community-building activities when she is walking around Beldingsville. Spreading the good word of the “glad game” like a missionary, Pollyanna eventually convinces her entire community to take up playing it, their collective action a symbol of their unified outlook.

The “glad game” is not just a way of spreading happiness, but a powerful tool that alters how people look at the world around them and, by extension, the reality of that world. By teaching people the “glad game,” Pollyanna brings the various members of her community into a shared vision, one that promotes her Christian agenda of helping others. But Pollyanna does

more than simply change their outlook. As Janet Wesselius observes, Pollyanna both spreads a vision and is able to bring it to fruition, causing other people to align themselves with her perspective: “Pollyanna acts on her beliefs [...] and her actions bring about the reality. For example, she believes that Aunt Polly loves her and wants Pollyanna to live with her; through her sincere actions based on this belief, it indeed becomes the case that Aunt Polly does love Pollyanna” (144). The transformative power that Pollyanna wields through her dissemination of the “glad game” is extraordinary. In the sequel to *Pollyanna*, *Pollyanna Grows Up*, Dr. Chilton remarks, “Think of Mrs Snow and John Pendleton, and quantities of others—why, they’re not the same people at all that they used to be [...]. And Pollyanna did do it.” His comment is a response to Pollyanna’s aunt’s suggestion that Pollyanna could be something “like a cure-all for poor, sick, suffering humanity” (Porter, *Grows* 162). With such power, Pollyanna can strengthen the bonds not only of her own local community but also, through the high degree of influence that she has over others, a much larger community, perhaps even the entire nation if she can be brought into contact with them. To that end, though, Pollyanna must first work her influence on those who are around her, at the local and domestic level because, as Karlin points out, “the family is the nation’s strength: private is public” (163).

Before Pollyanna’s arrival, Beldingsville is a fragmented community. Community members are at odds and prefer to keep away from each other, whether because of personal dislike or socio-economic differences. Even worse, the Christian community has lost its way. The Ladies’ Aid is unwilling to give their aid to members of their own community, preferring to “send all their money to bring up the little India boys than to save enough to bring up one little boy in their own town” (Porter, *Pollyanna* 111), something Pollyanna learns when she tries to enlist their assistance in adopting her newfound friend Jimmy Bean. And the congregation, led by Rev. Ford, is plagued by “wrangling, backbiting, scandal, and jealousy” (187). Such dysfunction is depicted as a problem not just for the community but also for the nation. While Karlin describes how Pollyanna reveals the hypocrisy of the Ladies’ Aid and its “focus on evangelism overseas” (167) instead of on its own neighbourhood, I suggest that the Ladies’ Aid’s focus on improvement abroad speaks to a neglect of their own nation. They contribute financial resources to help the children of foreign countries instead of investing in their own future citizens, like Jimmy Bean. Pollyanna combats this domestic neglect with her focus on her own community, the part of the nation to which she has immediate access. As Karlin observes,

“Instead of sending money abroad, she advocates a healing of local conflicts through local aid” (167). When Pollyanna wanders through the environs of Beldingsville, she meets a number of such individuals, people who neglect or ignore their fellow community members. Pollyanna’s work consists of repairing fractured households and relationships as well as reorienting the perspective of community members so that they do see themselves as a part of a larger community and are willing to be caring and generous toward each other. These efforts involve Aunt Polly, the Paysons, Mrs. Snow, and Rev. Ford and his congregation. Through this work, Pollyanna strengthens the local community of Beldingsville, ensuring that they share her unifying vision, the type of shared vision that allows people to become an “imagined community.”

Pollyanna’s Aunt Polly is the character most in need of Pollyanna’s influence; as a leading citizen in Beldingsville, she should be setting an example of proper community behaviour, but she falls far short of the Christian ideal that would make her a good citizen. At the opening of the novel, Aunt Polly is described in unflattering terms:

She was forty now, and quite alone in the world. Father, mother, sisters—all were dead. For years now, she had been sole mistress of the house and of the thousands left her by her father. There were people who had openly pitied her lonely life, and who had urged her to have some friend or companion to live with her; but she had not welcomed either their sympathy or their advice. She was not lonely, she said. She liked being by herself.

(Porter, *Pollyanna* 6)

Aunt Polly’s broken romance is posited as one reason for her distance from the community. Old Tom the gardener claims that “it seems as if she’d been feedin’ on wormwood an’ thistles ever since” the “trouble with her lover” (10), who is eventually revealed to be Dr. Chilton. Aunt Polly is not only isolated from her community, separated by a lack of relationships as well as by socio-economic difference, but she enjoys her isolation and wants to maintain it, a feeling that is obviously misguided in a novel that advocates for the creation of relationships and a nation whose existence relies on its citizens’ sense of community. It is Pollyanna’s initial journey, her move into the Harrington house, that forces Aunt Polly to become more involved with her neighbours and to reconcile with Dr. Chilton.

Aunt Polly initially adopts Pollyanna out of a sense of duty, which she construes as Christian. She takes in Pollyanna because she believes herself to be “a good woman” who “not

only knew her duty, but had sufficient strength of character to perform it” (6). However, Aunt Polly exhibits little real Christian feeling. She treats Pollyanna as a poor relation, relegating her to a stuffy, ugly attic room and only allowing her the freedom to go out and enjoy herself because she finds Pollyanna’s presence onerous. Over time, though, Pollyanna’s influence takes effect on Aunt Polly. Pollyanna manages to get her aunt to adopt a stray cat and a stray dog by treating her as though she were a “kind of protector and an angel of mercy—a role that Pollyanna so unhesitatingly thrust upon her as a matter of course” (95). Pollyanna unintentionally pushes Aunt Polly to act like a Christian benefactor by assuming that Aunt Polly herself wants to act so. Aunt Polly’s transformation happens incrementally, with her learning to care more about Pollyanna’s wellbeing and comfort. She sends her maid Nancy after Pollyanna with an umbrella when it looks like rain and changes Pollyanna’s room to a pretty one, in addition to treating Nancy more kindly (180). Nancy sees these changes and describes it as Aunt Polly “at last getting’ down somewheres near human—like folks” (179). She becomes more like other people, including, most importantly, more like Pollyanna, who embodies Christian values through her enjoyment of doing things for others.

When Pollyanna loses the use of her legs after being hit by an automobile, Aunt Polly not only changes to be more “like folks” but also learns how to interact with them on equal terms, a reflection of democratic Christian and American principles. She is confronted by the larger community in the form of people that Pollyanna has met on her wanderings around Beldingsville and forced to let them into her home, where once she lived so reclusively, when they come to tell of Pollyanna’s influence in making them glad. The novel tells how “the mistress of the Harrington homestead, greatly to her surprise, began to receive calls: calls from people she knew, and people she did not know; calls from men, women and children—many of whom Miss Polly had not supposed that her niece knew at all” (231). Many of these people, like Milly Snow, “had never before been to the Harrington homestead” (237). While these visitors come, ostensibly, to see Pollyanna, they end up speaking to and interacting with Aunt Polly instead. She is forced to forget about the class differences and her own personal preference for solitude in receiving these visitors. She speaks politely and kindly to them, some of whom she is surprised to see and one even “angrily amazed to meet beneath the roof of the Harrington homestead” (243). And, because they come with the aim of consoling Pollyanna, she is far more open to their presence than she would be otherwise. She learns to see them as individuals in need of her

kindness, as in the case of the disreputable Mrs. Payson, from whom she initially recoils, but ends by offering her hand. The culmination of Aunt Polly's conversion, her ability to become a domestic missionary like Pollyanna and play the "glad game," is contingent on her acting like a true Christian, with an open heart and house, and allowing the people of her community to inform her of the existence of the "glad game."

At the same time, Aunt Polly mends her splintered relationship with Dr. Chilton, fully engaging with the community and doing away with her isolation. Dr. Chilton is not somebody that Pollyanna meets while out walking, but she does meet him because of her walks. When she is rambling through the woods, she comes across an injured Mr. Pendleton and Dr. Chilton is called to doctor him, forging a friendship between the girl and the doctor in spite of Aunt Polly's aversion to him. Although Aunt Polly and Dr. Chilton have been able to get by living in the same town by avoiding each other, their broken relationship becomes a problem for the larger community after Pollyanna's accident because it prevents Pollyanna's cure and return to her influential walks in the community. Dr. Chilton believes that if he has the opportunity to examine Pollyanna, he can send her to a colleague who will be able to cure her. However, he cannot enter the Harrington house until invited by Aunt Polly because years earlier she declared that if she ever invited him into the house it would mean that "she was begging [his] pardon, and that all would be as before—which mean that she'd marry [him]" (255). Pollyanna's cure is thus directly linked to the reinstatement of Aunt Polly and Dr. Chilton's romantic relationship. Luckily, Jimmy Bean, who has also been befriended by Pollyanna on one of her walks, overhears Dr. Chilton telling Mr. Pendleton about the possibility of Pollyanna's cure and carries the information to Aunt Polly. For the sake of Pollyanna, Aunt Polly is finally willing to let Dr. Chilton re-enter the Harrington house and they reconcile, repairing their broken romance and precipitating their marriage. This reunion is described by Dr. Chilton as "one of the very gladdest jobs [Pollyanna] ever did" (265) and it results in Pollyanna recovering the ability to walk and carry on her community-benefiting work.

Supporting marriage is one way that Pollyanna promotes a strengthening of communal bonds that has national implications because of the important role that marriage has within the imagining of the nation. Karlin remarks on the way in which *Pollyanna* "deploys a gentle national allegory to create an ideal domestic space (referring both to the individual home and the political sphere)" (158). Though she claims that marriage has a "tangential role" in *Pollyanna*, I

see marriage in the novel as functioning in the same way that Karlin argues it plays out in other, earlier texts: “With marriage comes an idealized notion of nation, and these novels use satisfied desire to promote national unity, providing lessons in heteronormativity and patriotism to their young audience” (161). In Karlin’s terms, then, an ideal nation, whether imagined or real, enables unity, the joining together of individuals in marriage or in community spirit. Aunt Polly and Dr. Chilton’s marriage is one example of both of these types of union. More interesting, though, is the marriage of the Paysons, who are on the cusp of divorce, the antithesis to union. Pollyanna’s influence in the Payson household is noteworthy because it shows Pollyanna venturing out of the upper-middle-class sphere that dominates much of the novel. The Paysons are poor, and Mrs. Payson has a bad reputation. Mrs. Payson describes the family’s situation to Aunt Polly and how Pollyanna got involved with them:

We live on the Pendleton Hill road, and she used to go by often—only she didn’t always *go by*. She came in and played with the kids and talked to me—and my man, when he was home. She seemed to like it, and to like us. She didn’t know, I suspect, that her kind of folks don’t generally call on my kind. (Porter, *Pollyanna* 244)

Pollyanna walks around the neighbourhood, creating relationships indiscriminately, without regard for social class. Porter presents the Paysons, poor and morally suspect, as both worthy of Pollyanna’s help and an important part of the imagined community of Beldingsville and, by extension, the nation. They are not only a married couple, but also have two children; their union is productive of new citizens, unlike Aunt Polly and Dr. Chilton’s marriage. The threat of divorce, which the Paysons had nearly decided upon, would break up the family unit: “Mr. Payson would go ’way off, and maybe the children, too” (250). Pollyanna’s influence, walking over to visit and teaching them the “glad game,” preserves the integrity of the family. When they learn that Pollyanna has been hurt and unable to walk, Mr. and Mrs. Payson decide to give their marriage another chance and use the “glad game” to help them in their relationship. While Mrs. Payson is unsure about how it will help them, it seems safe for us to assume that they will also benefit from its virtues considering the influence that it has had on so many others.

Pollyanna’s visits also have effects that reach beyond the domestic sphere into the larger local community. In the cases of Mrs. Snow and Rev. Ford, the “glad game” has a trickle-down effect, with Mrs. Snow carrying out charitable work and Rev. Ford sharing its message with his congregation. Pollyanna causes them to stop thinking about their personal troubles, the

dissatisfactions that they have with life and those around them, and to refocus their attentions outward to the benefits that they are able to confer on others. Karlin observes Pollyanna's influence in this way, remarking on its Christian overtones: "Spreading her father's optimistic gospel, she teaches everyone to change their outlooks and rethink their dissatisfactions" (167). By redirecting people's perspective outward and sharing her Christian vision of rejoicing, Pollyanna encourages the creation of new and better relationships between community members.

Mrs. Snow, a bedridden invalid, lives in the isolation of the sickroom. She is described as being "poor, sick, and a member of the church" (Porter, *Pollyanna* 65). Although being a church member forces a connection between her and the other congregants, who feel obligated to help her, Mrs. Snow has poor relationships with the other inhabitants of Beldingsville. Nancy explains that nobody wants to visit Mrs. Snow, because she is "cantankerous" (65), which manifests in her extreme dissatisfaction with everything. However, Pollyanna is happy to take the weekly charitable visit upon herself and venture to Mrs. Snow's. Pollyanna begins her transformation of Mrs. Snow's character with an alteration to Mrs. Snow's physical appearance, giving her something positive and different to think about rather than her unhappiness over how things are. Pollyanna tells Mrs. Snow that she's "pretty" (68) and does her hair then makes her look into a hand mirror to see the effect. This change, both in how she looks and how she sees herself, foreshadows the greater change in perspective to come. She cries when Pollyanna tells her the story of the "glad game": "Mrs. Snow's eyes were closed. But Milly, whose eyes were wide open with surprise, saw that there were tears on the wasted cheeks" (86). Mrs. Snow's misguided way of looking at the world is washed away with her tears, and her closed eyes signal an interior searching. By the end of the novel, Mrs. Snow has become a beneficial influence within the community. Milly tells Aunt Polly of Mrs. Snow's complete transformation, of "how different she is" because of her "interest in things" and her gladness at being able to "knit little things—reins and baby blankets for fairs and hospitals" (238-239). Mrs. Snow stops looking inward at her dissatisfactions and, instead, looks outward at what she can do for other people. Her hands and arms are still able and, with her new outlook, she quickly puts them to work for charitable causes. The positive effects of this can also be seen when Mrs. Snow's changed outlook is taken on by Pollyanna who, once reconciled to the fact that she is disabled, also takes up knitting and being glad that her hands and arms work "like Mrs. Snow" (253). Mrs. Snow herself has become

a Pollyanna-like influence on others, creating a positive feedback loop as characters perpetuate the “glad game” and its workings.

Pollyanna’s effect on Rev. Ford works in a similar way, although it takes in even more members of the community since Rev. Ford, unlike Mrs. Snow, comes in contact with a large number of people: his congregation. The fractured church of Beldingsville is a problem that Porter presents as having far-reaching consequences. She writes, “Rev. Paul Ford understood very well that he (God’s minister), the church, the town, and *even Christianity itself* was suffering” (188; emphasis added) because of the “wrangling, back-biting, scandal, and jealousy” (189) plaguing his congregation. The effects are not localized, but are related to an entire Christian community. Rev. Ford, a relative newcomer to the community, has been unable to fix things, having “argued, pleaded, rebuked, and ignored” these issues in vain (187). It is not until Pollyanna comes along, meeting him in the woods where he has gone to reflect, that he begins to see a way of reconciling his parishioners. Pollyanna tells him not only of the struggles that her father faced as a minister, but also how he coped with them by remembering the “rejoicing texts” that are in the Bible, specifically the eight hundred texts “that told you to rejoice and be glad” (192). Under the influence of this new way of thinking, Rev. Ford also reads a magazine article that tells him, “What men and women need is encouragement. [...] Instead of always harping on a man’s faults, tell him of his virtues. [...] The influence of a beautiful, helpful, hopeful character is contagious, and may revolutionize a whole town” (195). Not only does this article show Rev. Ford a different way of interacting with his parishioners, it also describes Pollyanna’s own way of influencing people. Rev. Ford ends up giving a sermon that begins with one of the “rejoicing texts” and that calls for his fellow community members to act in their best, most virtuous ways, in essence, for everyone to be Pollyannas.

It is significant that Rev. Ford gives this sermon in the chapter immediately preceding Pollyanna’s accident, since it seems to have the desired effect on the people of Beldingsville of making them more like Pollyanna. Certainly, when Aunt Polly tells Pollyanna, “The whole town is playing the game, and the whole town is wonderfully happier” (252) because of her, Aunt Polly links it to her conversation with Rev. Ford about the “rejoicing texts.” Rev. Ford’s sermon encouraging people to be virtuous influences the people of the Beldingsville community to come together to help Pollyanna. They are no longer a squabbling bunch, but a united group in their desire to help Pollyanna to play the “glad game” again. And they are successful. Pollyanna, after

receiving a multitude of nearly identical messages from the members of her community, is able to be “so glad” that she “*had* [her] legs, anyway” (252). With her legs, her movement in and around Beldingsville, Pollyanna has been able to create a united community that is able to harness the power of the “glad game” and use it to benefit Pollyanna. Beldingsville’s inhabitants become a model imagined community, a strong one in which every member shares the same vision and values about what that space should be like: truly Christian and glad about it.

Anne’s Quest for a Romantic Aesthetic

In contrast with Pollyanna’s Christian vision, Anne’s is primarily a romantic one, grounded in her fondness for literary romanticism and the chivalric tradition. While in *Anne of Green Gables* this romantic vision was personal and private, centred on her own playful and imaginative activities such as playing Elaine the Lily Maid or imagining various spectres in the Haunted Wood, it moves outward as Anne matures, taking in the community in *Anne of Avonlea*. Anne’s fondness for romanticism shapes her ideas of civic and national duty, in particular how she founds and participates in the Avonlea Village Improvement Society (AVIS). Tara K. Parmiter points out the confluence of Anne’s maturation and her greater community involvement, claiming, “Grounding herself in a home place [as she does in *Anne of Green Gables*] is an important step in Anne Shirley’s development; but as she grows older, it is even more important that she step outside of her home to forge a stronger connection with the people of her community” (186). The romantic perspective is as an integral part of Anne’s character as the “glad game” is of Pollyanna’s. J. Sellers states, “Anne’s attempts to inscribe the physical world with the romance of fiction flavour her speech and consciously and subconsciously inform her actions.” However, Anne is less successful than Pollyanna at convincing others of her vision and, unlike Pollyanna, must often engage in prosaic matters and, at times, a rather unpleasant realism in order to be effective at enacting the desired changes in the community, a reflection of the increased complexity of the more adult world that Anne inhabits as an older girl than Pollyanna.

Anne’s age, however, does not mean that she needs to give up on her romantic perspective of the world even if she must, at times, engage with a prosaic reality. In *Anne of Avonlea*, Montgomery makes clear that there is space for both romance and reality or, as she terms it in a chapter title, “Poetry and Prose.” This chapter has Anne recounting the course of events that have led to the reunion and impending marriage between Miss Lavendar and Stephen

Irving, beginning with Anne's having "taken the wrong path" and meeting Miss Lavendar for the first time (263). She considers all the coincidences and lucky chances that happened along the way to be "very romantic," but Marilla initially disagrees, going over the same progression of events with a different perspective and causing Anne to gasp "rather as if somebody had thrown cold water over her" and admit that "that's how it looks in prose" (264). Ultimately, however, the narrative and Marilla come down in favour of Anne's way of seeing the world:

Marilla glanced at the radiant young face and refrained from further sarcastic comments. Perhaps some realization came to her that after all it was better to have, like Anne, 'the vision and the faculty divine' . . . that gift which the world cannot bestow or take away, of looking at life through some transfiguring . . . or revealing? . . . medium, whereby everything seemed apparelled in celestial light, wearing a glory and a freshness not visible to those who, like herself [...], looked at things only through prose. (264)

Anne's vision, her ability to see an ideal, is privileged and is an integral part of what allows her to be so effective at transforming the world around her in this novel.

Anne, in contrast with Pollyanna, does not attempt to remake her community in her own image; instead, she promotes a vision of the physical environment that community members eventually support, although often in unexpected ways. This focus on the physical environment is a quality that is characterized by Danielle Russell as particularly Canadian. She considers Canadian children's literature to have "an emphasis on the importance of place—physical and emotional, literal and symbolic" (12). The physical space also ties in neatly with Anne's mobility, since she spends so much time moving around it, as she walks to her new job as a schoolteacher, wanders through the neighbourhood with her friends for a picnic, gets lost on the way to a visit and makes a new friend, and drives to canvass for funds to carry out civic projects. Such movement links her, often in somewhat mock-heroic terms, with the figure of the questing knight in the chivalric tradition that she envisions, although she never sees herself as such. In *Anne of Green Gables*, she is already shown as successful in this role. Mrs. Lynde remarks that under Anne's influence, Matthew, Anne's shy and kindly adoptive father, "is waking up after being asleep for over sixty years" (Montgomery 200). Anne is figured as a prince or knight who

breaks an enchantment and wakes a sleeping household.⁸ In *Anne of Avonlea*, however, this romanticized transformative power takes on more political significance as Anne's questing involves perpetuating her vision of the imagined community of Avonlea, an action that proves to reach well beyond Avonlea itself.

While Parmiter posits the necessity of Anne moving outward into the space of the community now that she is older and becoming an "active citizen" (186), Anne also sees herself as a participating member of the larger community, which includes the nation. About to start her first term as a school teacher, Anne dreams of "doing wonderful work, shaping the destinies of future statesmen, and inspiring youthful minds and hearts with high and lofty ambitions," even imagining her future self being thanked by a former student who is "a college president or a Canadian premier" who tells her "that all his success in life was due to the lessons she had instilled so long ago in Avonlea school" (Montgomery, *AoA* 1-2). Anne envisions the work that she does at the local level—the small town school—as having the potential to influence events at the national level—federal politics. It is notable, however, that this influence is imagined in a way that is heavily gendered, with Anne operating at the local level and her male student finding success in a wider venue. Anne's work as an educator also involves her in the settler-colonial project of educating future white, Anglo citizens as she carries out the didactic function that Clarkson attributes to Montgomery's novels of teaching national values (x).

This theme, the importance of local work to the wider nation, is even more evident in Anne's co-founding of, and participation in, the AVIS, a society that aims to improve the local environment by making Avonlea "prettier" (9). Parmiter explains, "AVIS [...] aims to bring the village together by repainting civic buildings, banishing unwanted commercial advertisements, and encouraging a commitment to preserving and cultivating public green spaces" (187). Such village improvement societies were popular in the decades surrounding the turn of the twentieth century. Elizabeth Waterston observes, "The dream of changing and improving the environment was [...] a stylish contemporary concept on rural and village beautification" that was promoted in popular magazines, including "the journals that [Montgomery] read and wrote for" (24).

⁸ Margaret Anne Doody and Wendy E. Barry also see Matthew as "a humble knight on a quest whose action of generosity toward a person apparently commonplace is foreshadowed by the active event of charity in Lowell's poem ["The Vision of Sir Launfal"]" (459).

Rather than considering village improvement as just a fashionable trend, Parmiter also links improvement societies to civic duty:

[T]hrough planting trees and laying out public gardens, lobbying for level roads and suitable sidewalks, insisting on clean water and sanitation, clearing public grounds along the streets and in cemeteries, and encouraging individual townfolk to maintain their own yards, these societies cultivated the idea that the maintenance of the village landscape was a communal responsibility and source of public pride. (188)

Anne of Avonlea depicts the local work of AVIS as having wider implications, with connections to the provincial and the national. With the improvements started by AVIS, Avonlea is set to become “the prettiest settlement in the province” (Montgomery, *AoA* 169). And the neighbouring town, White Sands, plans to emulate their example and start their own improvement society, showing AVIS to be promoting beautification throughout the province. Such improvements also have significance at the national level when they are noted by “the Americans from the hotel” (169). The identification of the tourists as “American” sets them up as outsiders in the Canadian setting of Avonlea. Canadian Avonlea, for the American visitors, acts as a national representative of environmental beauty.

Anne, with the assistance of Gilbert Blythe, acts as the driving force behind the AVIS, promoting their vision of an ideal Avonlea to their neighbours. The narrative states, “As for what the ‘improvements’ were to be, nobody had any very clear idea except Anne and Gilbert. They had talked them over and planned them out until an ideal Avonlea existed in their minds, if nowhere else” (10). Anne attempts to implement an idea of the neighbourhood that she has had a significant role in crafting. This agency contrasts with the disastrous Lily Maid episode, in which she attempted to put herself into Tennyson’s vision of womanhood, passive and silent. In her work with the AVIS, Anne is vigorously active, both sharing her vision with others and doing the legwork that will allow it to become a reality. Parmiter claims that the creation of the AVIS is a sign of “Anne’s increasing willingness to think of imagining as a communal rather than an individual act” (189), since it involves creating a shared vision [hers and Gilbert’s]. Even so, Anne’s primary role in the AVIS is still privileged by the narrative, in part because the book is about her and so we see more of her thoughts and actions on behalf of the AVIS than, say, Gilbert’s. But she is also the one to suggest the formation of the group to begin with, and her

generation of unexpected ideas is in accordance with her characterization as more imaginative than other people in Avonlea.

Anne's vision for Avonlea is two-fold and grounded in her romantic perspective; she wishes to improve the aesthetics of Avonlea and the community spirit of its residents. Anne's romanticism always has a strong visual component. When Stephen Irving returns to Avonlea, Anne is relieved that he is handsome with "just the face for a hero of romance" because she would think it "dreadful if the object of Miss Lavendar's romance had not looked the part" (Montgomery, *AoA* 254).⁹ Romance, for Anne, involves conforming to a particular visual aesthetic. Thus, she wants to work to make Avonlea "prettier" (9), rather than to improve infrastructure like sanitation or roads that Parmiter also lists under improvement societies' purview. Although she claims that the AVIS is "not going to try to improve the *people*" (9), she does plan to "educate public sentiment" (11), which can be construed as an "improvement" of the people. Anne wants her neighbours to become more public-spirited, for them to care more about the appearance of Avonlea and to work to improve it. I posit that she has an Arthurian vision of Avonlea of the sort described in Tennyson's "Morte d'Arthur": "When every morning brought a noble chance, / And every chance brought out a noble knight." She hopes to turn the people of Avonlea into "noble knights" like herself who will take advantage of the "noble chances" offered to them to improve the neighbourhood. Such improvements can only be accomplished, as Parmiter observes, "with the support and contributions of her friends and neighbours" (190). In order to generate this support, Anne must move through the community, talking to her neighbours about the AVIS's aims as she canvasses for funds and attempts to convince them to see with her own idealizing vision.

First, however, Anne must create a 'fellowship' or 'Round Table' of knights who will endeavour to carry out the improvements to Avonlea. While the AVIS is composed of members of both genders—a fact that causes one skeptical neighbour to claim it should be called the "Courting Club" (Montgomery, *AoA* 41)—the involvement of female participants seems to create some controversy because they step outside of traditional gender roles. At one meeting, they decide to paint the town hall, a decision that involves the active participation of a number of

⁹ Similarly, her qualm that it is "so ridiculous to have a redheaded Elaine" (*AoGG* 220) exemplifies her conscientiousness with regard to the visual aesthetics of chivalric romance, what the narrative terms her "artistic sense of fitness" (222).

female members of the community in a political fashion with members chairing, moving, and seconding motions. Jane Andrews is chair of the committee that will raise the funds and Julia Bell seconds Oliver Sloane's motion that they paint the town hall "with an uneasy feeling that she was doing something not exactly ladylike" (42). There is a tension between, on the one hand, the public and political activities of the AVIS carried out by the girls and, on the other hand, the gendered expectations that are signalled by the word "ladylike." Through their active participation in the AVIS, the young women of Avonlea are, like Anne, rejecting romantic conventions of passive femininity, such as the damsel in distress or the sleeping princess, a role that Miss Lavendar takes on. Instead, they are taking up the more active romantic role of the questing knight or fairy tale prince, someone involved in the political workings of the kingdom with the agency to move around freely.

In order to accomplish their first aim, painting the town hall, several of the members of the AVIS go canvassing for funds to pay for the paint and labour. Anne drives through Avonlea with Diana, having volunteered to canvass the road with the most difficult people because, as she states, "I feel myself responsible for the A. V. I. S., since I was the first to suggest it, and it seems to me that I ought to do the most disagreeable things" (40). The people Anne must deal with are less easily convinced than her fellow AVIS members of Anne's way of seeing Avonlea's needed improvements. Many people refuse to subscribe money and Eliza Andrews asserts that the hall is "no benefit to the settlement . . . just a place for young folks to meet and carry on when they's better be home in their beds" (43). Even those who do give financial support do not seem particularly enthusiastic about the project. One neighbour gives a substantial amount only because Anne and Diana help him bake a cake in his wife's absence (46). And the other generous subscriber is carried away by his excitement at having a son after seven daughters. Anne shrewdly observes, "Lorenzo White is dreadfully mean but he will subscribe to *anything* just now. We mustn't let such a golden opportunity slip" (48). Only Eliza's sister Catherine expresses any real interest in renovating the hall, and her interest is not a result of Anne's intervention, but merely a determination to maintain optimism in the face of her sister's pessimism. Anne's efforts at educating public sentiment by going from house to house seem a failure.

This failure appears to be compounded when the hall is accidentally painted an ugly shade of blue instead of the planned green. While Parmiter reads this misfortune as a sign that

Anne's "ideal dreams are not always meant to be met in reality" (190), I would contend that what actually occurs is that Anne's goal of improving the aesthetics in Avonlea is sacrificed by the narrative in order to forward her goal of increasing public spirit, which is perhaps more important because she needs community support in order to make Avonlea more beautiful. The mistake is actually a fortunate one that brings the majority of the community together: "The Avonlea people did not laugh; they were too angry. *Their* money had gone to paint the hall and consequently *they* felt themselves bitterly aggrieved by the mistake. Public indignation centered on the Pyses" (Montgomery, *AoA* 71). And the people of Avonlea are, through their outrage, aligned with AVIS members, who are equally upset. While the AVIS previously generated little interest from the community, aside from occasional ridicule, after the mishap with the town hall, "public sympathy veered around in their favor. People thought the eager, enthusiastic little band who had worked so hard for their object had been badly used" (71). They acknowledge the legwork that Anne and the AVIS have put in, their movements around the community to gather subscriptions. And although Anne's romantic visual ideals hit a stumbling block, a more practical objective is carried out. As Mr. Harrison points out to Anne, even though the hall might look ugly, "the roof is shingled and painted all right" and "Folks will be able to sit in the hall after this without being leaked on" (72). Anne's desire for a sort of 'Round Table,' a place for people to gather and promote community spirit, is ultimately fulfilled, even if it does not conform to her aesthetic vision.

When it comes to accomplishing her goals in the community, Anne must learn to compromise, unlike Pollyanna, who manages to convert her neighbours wholesale to her point of view. Susan Drain describes Anne's integration into Avonlea in *Anne of Green Gables* as "a mutual one, in which both the stranger and the community are changed by their contact with each other" ("Community" 15). In *Anne of Avonlea*, this process takes on a different aspect: while Anne gains adherents to her ideal vision, she also must at times sacrifice or compromise her ideals. Anne occasionally becomes disillusioned by this process of dealing with a flawed reality, in spite of the positive outcomes that result, but the narrative seems to insist on this process as part of Anne's maturation. *Anne of Avonlea* opens with the acknowledgment of Anne's disinclination to deal with prosaic reality: "To be sure, if you came down to harsh facts . . . which, it must be confessed, Anne seldom did until she had to" (1). She must learn to deal with the uncertainty and lack of idealism in the world in order to be effective. In her role as an

educator in the community, she faces just such a challenge with Anthony Pye. Anthony is the only student at Avonlea who has not succumbed to Anne's charm and conformed to her vision of a school governed by affection (27); instead, because he prefers male teachers, he only obeys her "with a scornful air of toleration as if it wasn't worthwhile disputing the point or he would" (51). When she finally loses her temper and whips him, she considers herself to have relinquished her ideals, claiming, "I'm so ashamed of myself. [...] I feel that I have humiliated myself to the very dust" (98). However, in an unexpected turn of events, it is this whipping that finally gains Anthony's respect and liking, because he considers her whipping equal to that which a man would give him, leaving Anne "feeling that her ideals had played her false somewhere" (100). What Anne does not realize is that she cannot maintain her ideals in a flawed and materialistic world, and this lesson carries over to her work with the community in the AVIS's activities.

Anne and the AVIS have a victory when they prevent Judson Parker from renting out his fence to a medicine company for advertising space, but the episode emphasizes the conflict between idealism and reality with an added dimension of national politics. Parker personifies the opposite of Anne's ideal vision; Jane Andrews remarks of him, "He'd do *anything* for money. He hasn't a *spark* of public spirit or *any* sense of the beautiful" (118). His decision to allow a patent medicine company to paint advertisements on his fence will ruin "the prettiest part of the Newbridge road" (120), foiling Anne and the AVIS's plans for aesthetic improvement through his lack of public spirit. He refuses their request that he not rent out his fence though, as the narrator explains, "Public opinion was certainly down on Judson Parker when the facts became known" (120). It is only by a lucky coincidence, born of Anne's mobility in the form of her frequent walks throughout the neighbourhood, that she is able to get Parker to change his mind. When walking home on a day when "Canada was on the eve of a general election," she stumbles in on a conversation between Parker and Jerry Corcoran, a disreputable man who is described as having "a finger . . . some people said *all* his fingers . . . in every political pie that was cooked" (121). She overhears Parker agreeing to "sell his vote" (123) in exchange for a note on some farming equipment that he owes. Worried that Anne will tell other people that he accepted a bribe for his vote and ruin his chances at a prosperous marriage, Parker tells her that he has changed his mind about renting out his fence as an act of *quid pro quo* in exchange for her silence. As a result of her "popping out of beechwoods where [she] had no business to be" (122)

as Parker terms it in his thoughts, Anne and the AVIS's aesthetic aims are fulfilled, but not Anne's desire to spread noble community-minded thinking.

In this interaction between Anne and Parker, not only does she fail to fulfill both of the terms of her romantic vision, but she also finds herself forced to engage with morally suspect dealings, affronting the purity of her idealism with an unsavoury realism. Anne's work with the AVIS mirrors the impossibility of adhering to an ideal vision that Kellman sees in Tennyson's *Idylls of the King*. In order to effect even one of her aims, to preserve and improve the aesthetic qualities of Avonlea, she must, in this case, participate in a corrupt materialist system. Although Anne and the narrator insist that "she would have seen every fence in Avonlea painted with advertisements before she would have stooped to bargain with a man who would sell his vote" and that she "wouldn't have mentioned the disgraceful thing to a soul anyhow" (123), Parker's belief in her complicity is what allows the exchange to end favourably for Anne and the AVIS. Anne is left at a loss by the situation; she remarks, "I really don't know who or what is to be thanked for this. *I* did nothing to bring it about, and it's hard to believe that Providence ever works by means of the kind of politics men like Judson Parker and Jerry Corcoran have" (123). Anne's small foray into Canadian politics is not suffused with the high-minded ideals associated with chivalric romanticism, even though she does seem to prevent political corruption. Instead, her involvement in political matters is perceived as blackmail by the (far from model) voting citizen that she interacts with.

Even so, by the end of the novel, Anne's vision for Avonlea, of a beautiful place made more beautiful by its community-minded inhabitants, looks to be completely fulfilled in spite of previous setbacks. When Diana voices her concern that "the Improvement Society will go down" after Anne and Gilbert leave for college, Anne replies, "It is too firmly established for that, especially since the older people are becoming so enthusiastic about it. Look what they are doing this summer for their lawns and lanes" (234). Anne has been able to share her vision, and, although the novel foregrounds the partial nature of her successes, she is nearly as successful as Pollyanna in gaining support for it.

The stories of Pollyanna and Anne show the extensive influence that they have in their local communities. Pollyanna alters Beldingsville so that it becomes a reflection of her ideals, a united Christian community. While Anne's effect on Avonlea allows for more heterogeneity among its inhabitants, although this variety is not always positive as in the case of Judson Parker,

her romantic vision of an aesthetically beautiful landscape and citizens who work to make it so does become almost universally accepted amongst her neighbours. They might not act and think like Anne, but they learn to hold the same aims. The implication that these novels present is that, using unfettered mobility, Pollyanna and Anne should be able to continue spreading their vision. Such depictions present girls as valuable tools to stabilize and strengthen nations through the promulgation of a coherent identity and shared vision within the communities that make up the nation. While girls can be imagined as especially efficient at gaining adherents to a particular ideal, as Pollyanna is, they can also, like Anne, be considered as important contributors to the creation of a beneficial national vision that is implemented and carried on by others.

Chapter Three

Home Creation and Urban Critique: Mobile Domesticity in the *Pearl Watson* trilogy, *A Little Princess*, and *Pollyanna Grows Up*

A refrain in *Pollyanna* asserts, “It takes a woman’s hand and heart, or a child’s presence, to make a home” (Porter 167). Without these influences, a house becomes “just rooms” (197). Girls, transitioning from childhood to womanhood and so sharing traits from both, are ideally situated to make homes out of places that would otherwise be meaningless spaces. Certainly, the centrality of homes and their associated domestic matters to works of girls’ literature is evident; the novels are often designated “domestic fiction” and titles such as *Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm* (1903), *Anne of Green Gables* (1908), and *The Secret Garden* (1911) emphasize the significance of home spaces, their locations and the security that they provide, in these texts. The prominence of the domestic in these novels reflects the importance that society placed on girls and women carrying out domestic roles, a society that saw these roles as integral to the functioning of society at large.

Domesticity has traditionally been, and continues to be, considered foundational to conceptions of the nation (Devereux, *Growing* 13; Oropeza 88). Building on nineteenth-century ideals linking domesticity and femininity, much of the early twentieth-century discourse around the female role in nation-building in Britain, Canada, and the United States centred around girls and women’s domestic capacities, such as their presumed moral superiority and inherent maternalism (Devereux, *Growing* 20). Of equal importance was girls and women’s ability to spread and promote a particular kind of domesticity: middle-class or upper-middle-class, white, and, usually, Protestant (Devereux, *Growing* 11; Oropeza 94). Ellen Joyce, the head of the British Women’s Emigration Association from 1901 to 1919, claimed, “English women make homes wherever they settle all the world over” (qtd. in Hammerton 174), emphasizing the idea that a nation’s female population could perpetuate the nation, both physically and ideologically, through the creation of homes, no matter the place. While girls’ fiction seems to replicate this narrative, depicting idealized girl protagonists as excelling at making mere houses into homes both by transforming the lives of the inhabitants (Nodelman 146-147) and through the comfort and good-feeling that she creates, certain settings are more congenial to the girl’s domestic influence than others.

Figured as having the inherent ability of being able to create homes “wherever,” the girls in these novels are constructed as workers in what I term “mobile domesticity”: the creation of stable, comfortable middle- or upper-middle-class home spaces by girls and women that is enabled by voluntary and deliberate movement. I argue that Frances Hodgson Burnett’s *A Little Princess* (1905) and Eleanor H. Porter’s *Pollyanna Grows Up* (1915) present urban spaces as preventing girls from reaching their full potential in mobile domesticity because of the size (both geographic and demographic) and entrenched social stratification of cities, in the case of these novels, of London and Boston. The rural, in contrast, is depicted as the ideal space for middle-class homes because that environment is seen as more healthful than the crowded city and as having less disparity in socioeconomic status, which facilitates upward social mobility, as exemplified in Nellie McClung’s *Pearl Watson* trilogy (1908-1921). In addition, I suggest that these novels present the urban as a space in need of girls’ domestic influence in order to confer the national benefits of stability and comfort seen in rural spaces on urban dwellers, but that ultimately the novels cannot fully commit to the systemic social reformation that such an improvement would entail. The previous chapter examined girl protagonists who use their mobility to spread a national ideology, showing them to have extraordinary power as purveyors of a vision in the local space, an ability that was presented as distinct from their domestic capacities. This chapter instead explores the limits that urban spaces place on physical and social mobility. These limits are depicted as existing in spite of the fact that these novels emphasize the desirability of girls’ domestic function, which relies on free physical movement and the possibility of upward social mobility, for improving city dwellers and, thus, strengthening the nation.

The role of domesticity in nation-building during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was often associated with imperialism and colonialism. While men were seen as expanding the boundaries of the nation through exploration and conquest, women were seen as reinforcing those borders by building stable and settled homes for settler-colonists (C. Hall 47). But the need for domestic work was not limited to the borders of the nation; domesticity was seen as equally as important within the nation’s inner regions, such as urban centres. The high populations of working class people and recent immigrants in cities like London and Boston turned these places into spaces that, in part, were conceived of as correlating to colonial outposts, an effect augmented by their geographic divisions based on race and class. Judith Walkowitz

notes, “The opposition of [impoverished] East and [wealthier] West increasingly took on imperial and racial dimensions, as the two parts of London imaginatively doubled for England and its Empire” (26). Similarly, Sarah Deutsch remarks on the way in which “elite Bostonians” were concerned about the number of immigrants, rather than “Americans,” in their city. She uses Henry James’s account of an experience of walking on Boston Common as an example, in which he asserts that he heard no “American speech” there and only saw “gross aliens” (7). Mariana Valverde also observes that “in the late nineteenth century, [...] the problem of the city was transformed by being intertwined with the fears about racial, moral, and social degeneration” (130). Racialized and impoverished Others were seen as threatening a national identity based in middle-class whiteness, but these same communities also furnished an opportunity for women to engage in public service.

Social work done by women allowed them to take what was considered domestic and private into the public sphere of the urban while also giving women an avenue for legitimizing their involvement in political matters. Deutsch explores the way in which women placed domesticity within the public sphere through the institution of settlement houses. She proposes that “The settlement house used a domestic form to create a public, urban institution,” and she notes that this kind of housing was able to “eradicate the bounds between public and private—eradicate the notion of home as refuge from the world outside it and of women as limited in their proper sphere to the space within four walls” (13-14). Scholars see this use of the domestic to create a space for women operating in various urban contexts. Deutsch asserts that middle-class and elite women in the United States “based their claims to a new role in municipal governance in the purported superior morality of the domestic spaces they created” (5). And Helen Meller remarks on the political implications urban social work had for women in England:

Undertaking ‘good works,’ caring for the poor of particular urban localities or whole cities and encouraging support for wholesome influences, especially cultural activities such as music, literature and art, were socially acceptable roles for women. They took to such labours in droves. It offered social status and gave women a public role that could be defined as citizenship. Citizenship became a loaded word, imbued with a meaning covering both concern for the public sphere and altruistic concern for society’s well-being. (14)

This ‘raising up’ was seen as feminine and domestic, rather than strictly economic, work, because poverty was considered, at least in part, a failing in morality and breeding (Walkowitz 30-31), areas that were considered part of the feminine purview. Domestic improvement and social uplift were not only the duty of women but also could be carried out by girls. Michelle J. Smith notes, “While girls could be constructed as civilisers in imperial locations, they could also channel their improving abilities toward the working classes at home” (9). For women and girls, being a good citizen and creating a stable and unified nation involved perpetuating middle-class and elite domestic values and “improving” racialized and impoverished Others.

While those who carried out such “civilizing” work gained the status contained in the word “citizenship,” citizenship was an equally important consideration for those who were being “improved.” Lorena Orpeza describes the way in which urban reform carried out by—aptly named—settlement workers could turn foreign immigrants living in urban centres into “proper” domestic citizens:

These educated single women assumed that immigrants could cross over from foreign to domestic and become ‘good Americans’ if only they had the opportunity to learn how. At hundreds of settlement houses in major cities throughout the United States, settlement house women offered classes in everything from learning English to keeping house according to white middle-class Protestant standards. (99)

Smith also observes the way in which “the working classes” were suitable candidates for both middle-class and elite girls and women to exert domestic influence over, by attempting to instill them with white, middle-class, British values (3). By perpetuating the values of dominant society, girls and women could help to strengthen the nation by ridding it of supposedly undesirable elements, leading to a more unified national identity, not unlike the work seen in the previous chapter with Pollyanna and Anne promoting particular value systems to create more cohesive communities.

Urban geography also mapped out distinctions between desirable middle-class and, more importantly for this chapter, elite citizenry and Others in need of domestic intervention and social uplift. Elite and middle-class home spaces were portrayed in discourse from the era as bastions of proper domesticity segregated from the dangers associated with the urban environment, with the wealthy elite living in protected pockets within the city and the middle classes commonly moving outward to the suburbs. Charles Booth’s work on “the social

geography of London” portrayed it as “a series of concentric rings around the City as the center” with the inner ring depicting “severe overcrowding and extensive poverty” in most of London and a trend of increasing wealth as one moved away from the centre, with the wealthy west remaining an exception (Walkowitz 31). Mobility has a role in perpetuating this social segregation through the differing degrees of control over movement by different social groups. Walkowitz states, “Booth formulated a theory of successive migration: overcrowding in the center forced the poor to move out to other neighbourhoods, thus precipitating a flight of respectable residents to the suburbs and more outlying areas” (31-32); the poor are “forced” to move, the respectable middle class chooses to flee, while the wealthy can afford to stay, to mark out a space for themselves in the overcrowded centre. Deutsch perceives a similar socioeconomic geography in late-nineteenth-century Boston predicated on movement, in which “[i]mpoverished immigrants continued to flock to the North and West Ends” while “those workers who could afford to flee the city” moved “to the suburbs” (6). Deutsch also observes that the elite could afford to maintain a stronghold within the city, a contained space not unlike the West End of London. She states, “So successfully did these elite neighbourhoods fend off commercial encroachment that their inhabitants remained anomalously, stubbornly anchored as the rest of Boston swirled about them. In the 1890s, four-fifths of the city’s rich still lived in the city; cousins crisscrossed the tree-lined streets of the Back Bay” (6). Wealth provided agency over mobility and over the location of domestic spaces.

Urban geography and the relocation of different social classes were also informed by gender. Middle-class and elite domestic life was seen as being in need of protection from what Pamela Horn calls the Victorian belief in “[t]he contaminating influence of the urban environment” (21). Carol Dyhouse notes the way in which the middle-class separation of gendered labour contributed to segregation of an economically threatening urban from a safeguarded, domestic suburban. She states that in England, “following the establishment of a railway system, urban growth had taken a distinct form which emphasised the sexual division of labour by widening the physical gap between home and workplace. Well-to-do, middle-class businessmen [...] travelled into work on commuter trains, leaving their women-folk and children stranded in suburbia” (4). The urban is characterized as a distinctly masculine space, at least in regards to the middle classes, though working-class women might be expected to live and move within the confines of the city. Deutsch similarly sees Boston as “a city neither designed for nor

controlled by women” (6), with the city containing “spatial divisions” such as “working-class and elite territories, men’s and women’s spaces, public and domestic arenas” (4). Mobile domesticity, then, involves sheltering in select feminine domains away from areas characterized as masculine or working-class as well as movements back into these unfeminine, working-class spaces in order to carry out domestic improvement, with social class and financial wealth providing the resources that make such control over movement possible.

While novels like *A Little Princess* and *Pollyanna Grows Up* depict wealthy urban pockets as providing a base for elite women from which to make forays into the urban centre and carry out domestic work, portrayals of the rural (the antithesis of the urban) in the *Pearl Watson* books, represent the country as a space of greater opportunity for domestic improvement. The city, with its dangers of poverty and sexual exploitation that undermine comfortable domestic life, provides a profound contrast with the rural, which acts as an idealized space for girls to carry out mobile domesticity and have the benefits of upward social mobility. These novels provide various models for girls, showing them how to enact mobile domesticity in different circumstances, while simultaneously critiquing the urban conditions that make it so difficult. In urban settings, girl characters who are best able to create stable homes imbued with middle-class values are those with free and easy physical mobility and who already belong to the elite or middle classes. And, in cities, girls are often thwarted in the creation of homelike domestic spaces because they lack agency with regard to their physical mobility and are simultaneously threatened with downward social mobility. Urban girls lack the upward social mobility available to girls in rural spaces, however, and tend to reinforce class hierarchies through their occupations and behaviours. While McClung’s novels present the idealized rural as a space in which citizens can experience social betterment to create a better nation through an improved national people, *A Little Princess* and *Pollyanna Grows Up* privilege social hierarchies in order to fortify national stability and strength.

Uplift in the Canadian West

The story of Pearl Watson and her family is a narrative of domestic improvement that begins in *Sowing Seeds in Danny* (1908) and proceeds through the two sequels, *The Second Chance* (1910) and *Purple Springs* (1921). This progress reflects McClung’s idealized vision, presented in her 1915 polemic *In Times Like These*, of the Canadian Prairies as “the Land of the Second Chance” and “the Land of Beginning Again.” She claims that, “in a country as big as

ours,” “it does not seem too ideal or visionary that these broad sunlit spaces may be the homes of countless thousands of happy and contented people” and that the “wide uncultivated prairie seems to open its welcoming arms to the land-hungry, homeless dwellers of the cities” (97). While McClung’s description is meant to characterize Canada as an entire nation, clearly the space she imagines as this wondrous land of domestic opportunity is Western—a point that Randi Warne also notes (202)—and, more particularly, rural. Veronica Strong-Boag and Michelle Lynn Rosa remark on McClung’s vision of an ideal nation was tied to her rural perspective. They state, “[McClung] remained in thrall to the possibilities of neighbourhood rooted in an idealized farm and rural life” (11). As Warne observes, McClung saw “the Prairie West” as a “land of opportunity and rich resources waiting only for energetic, hardworking effort to turn it into a welcoming, just, and life-affirming home” (201). This perspective partakes in the common belief of the time in “a mythology of the countryside as healthy” (Valverde 130). The rural is presented as an ideal space for home creation and strengthening the nation. Janice Fiamengo explains that McClung believed “that one of the keys to Canada’s prosperity was a return to the countryside” (“Nellie” 206).

In contrast, the city is a place of “homeless dwellers” (McClung, *Times* 97) who lack the domestic happiness to be found in the country. Through this portrayal, McClung adheres to Canadian perceptions of the city as problematic at a time that saw Canadians increasingly becoming urban-dwellers. Carolyn Strange states, “Reports of crime, poverty, and immorality in the industrial cities of England and the United States hinted that urbanization and industrialization were likely to be mixed blessings in Canada as well” (4). Pearl, through her movements, creates an increasing domestic stability within the rural environment by changing her family’s home from a cobbled-together assortment of train cars in town to a stable and established country farm, a move that is accompanied by an upward social mobility as Pearl and her siblings become more educated and gain social opportunities. Misao Dean explains that, within a nineteenth-century colonial context, “Femininity was reconstituted as consisting of the virtues which were instrumental to class mobility: primarily, a woman’s ability to create domestic comfort and well-being wholly by her own labour” (12). Pearl embodies the ideal of the colonial female through her mobile domesticity in the rural environment.

Pearl’s family, the Watsons, start out in circumstances that seem overly mobile for the desirable sort of stable domesticity that these novels promote. Originally Irish immigrants, the

Watsons move “from the Ottawa Valley” to the West (McClung, *Sowing* 8). Moving to Canada and then the West, the impoverished Watson family participates in the colonial project in their attempts to settle and create a permanent, as well as Anglo and white, domestic space.¹⁰ The Watsons’ are initially rather unsuccessful, since they only have an insecure dwelling in town: “C.P.R. box-car No. 722,” which is later enlarged “by adding to it other car-roofed shanties” (8). Such a house, built of railcars, lacks permanency, in particular because of the association of the railcars with mobility, but also because the Watsons do not have an uncontested claim to the box-car. When the ownership of the “house” is called into question because ten dollars is still owing in the payment from the Watsons to the Motherwells for the car, Pearl is the one who must move to hold on to the place for her family, to keep it a settled habitation in the frontier space of the West. She goes to the Motherwells’ in order to “work off the caboose debt” and “wipe the stain off [her] house once and forever” (117-118). Her work there is domestic, not only because it is to ensure the ownership of the Watson house but also because it involves work within the Motherwell house. She has to be physically active to carry out her chores, and her quick and agile movements around the farm are depicted as she runs to get wood chips for the fire and runs to bring in the cattle (126-127). Her able body serves her well, and she is eventually successful in working off the debt and asserting the Watson family’s ownership over their habitation. But they do not remain in the caboose long after. Instead, the full ownership over the caboose is merely the first step on an increasing upward social and domestic trajectory.

The Watsons cannot, under McClung’s valuation of the countryside as the desirable home setting, have an idealized permanent home while still living in town. Town, with its temptations of idleness and alcohol, is figured as a dangerous place to attempt to raise a family, though perhaps to a lesser degree than a large city. Pearl’s brothers show “signs of the contamination of the world” (*Second* 64)—if only mildly, their “contamination” correlating in size to the urban space—because of their time spent in town. One wants to be a drayman or hotel-keeper rather than a missionary, another steals rides on trains, the youngest brother speaks slang to Mrs. Watson, and yet another brother fails to condemn immoral behaviour in others (64-65). Pearl’s maternal instincts and domestic ability are evident in her desire to raise up the boys

¹⁰ It is worth noting that McClung herself was a part of this project. She and her family moved to Manitoba in 1880, after it became a province of Canada and, as Strong-Boag and Rosa remark “one year after the disappearance of the buffalo, an even causally observed by [McClung] but catastrophic for the prairie tribes” (10).

of her family and improve the family circumstances, which prompt her to take action. Michelle J. Smith, Kristine Moruzi, and Clare Bradford note, “Pearl acknowledges that living in an urban centre is a bad influence on her brothers. She proposes to her father that they move out to a farm so the boys will have more to do” (213). The move is instigated by Pearl, who “decide[s] in her own mind that they would get a farm” (McClung, *Second* 65) so that they can “better their circumstances and give the boys a chance to grow up decent” (71). As Pearl asserts, this move is one of choice, rather than necessity because it signifies the Watsons upward mobility: “But there’s nothin’ sad about this movin’. We’re not goin’ because we can’t pay the rent” (71). They move away not only from the moral dangers of urban living, but also from the poverty that was a part of their living in town.

Pearl helps fund the move, with money that she acquired as a reward at the end of *Sowing Seeds in Danny* for saving the life of a new immigrant, the Englishman Arthur Wemyss, who is learning to farm from the Motherwells. We can read this financial gift as Pearl’s reward, not only for being caring toward others, but also for promoting the settler-colonial project by preserving the life of a white, Anglo, Protestant man who, like the Watsons, has come to create a permanent settlement in the West. Acknowledging her intervention, Arthur’s wealthy English relatives send her a gift of a “£120, nearly \$600” (*Sowing* 304). It is not a fortune, but it marks a change in the social status of the Watsons, as evidenced by the household changes described in the chapter entitled “The Rising Watsons”: Mrs. Watson no longer has to go out to wash for her neighbours and the children are all dressed in new clothing to enable them to go to Sunday-school, church, and school (*Second* 13). This money is also used to pay “[f]or seed grain and anything else that was needed” (71) for the new farm, which is paid for with the proceeds from the sale of their old property. The farm represents the move away from tenuous domestic arrangements in a home “stragglng and stamped with poverty” (67) to settled, middle-class property ownership and eventual prosperity on the farm. By the third novel, *Purple Springs*, they have developed their farm into a stable and comfortable home as well as a successful financial venture. Pearl takes a moment to reflect that “she had seen that it could be made into a home of comfort and prosperity, and now the dream had come true. The Watson family were thriving; their farm had not failed them; comforts, and even a few luxuries were theirs” (*Purple* 313). Pearl’s activity in the rural space has enabled not only her own upward social mobility but also that of her whole family, as is reflected by their improved domestic situation.

For Pearl and her family, the rural environment is the ideal place to raise a family and establish an upwardly socially mobile domestic space, by implication reinforcing the binary ideology that links urban spaces with precarity. *A Little Princess* and *Pollyanna Grows Up* make a similar point though from the opposite direction, with their urban settings showing the dangers that can arise for those without the resources and stability provided by a middle-class home. However, their depiction differs in that they show how girls and women can potentially have a beneficial impact on the urban space through mobile domesticity, which can alleviate the social ills of poverty and exploitation by providing safe and stable homes to protect vulnerable populations. But such positive domestic effects are seen as possible only through the reallocation of financial resources, often by girls and women, primarily through charitable giving, a solution that is difficult to enact in the urban space, which usually figured as “a male world of public events and finance” (Dyhouse 7). Capitalist economic systems privilege the acquisition of wealth rather than the distribution of it. Compounding the problem, *A Little Princess* and *Pollyanna Grows Up*, though they promote social uplift, are ultimately unwilling to enact measures, such as widespread wealth redistribution, that would truly address the wealth disparities that create subpar domestic spaces to begin with, preferring instead to promote more limited means of improvement like individual charitable acts.

London Discomforts

Burnett sets *A Little Princess* in London, peopling it with girl characters from a wide range of social classes and linking ease of and agency over mobility, qualities necessary for mobile domesticity, with higher social status. As a result, the ability of girls (and, at times, women) to establish home spaces that contain recognizably middle-class and elite characteristics—stability, safety, and physical as well as emotional comfort—is given to those significant financial resources to draw on. Girls with financial backing and class status have the greatest potential for initiating domestic change, not only because they can make their own living spaces home-like, but because they have the means to move easily and promote middle-class domesticity beyond their own homes, including working-class spaces. However, many of the girl characters in *A Little Princess* live under perilous living conditions without the possibility of the upward social mobility and increasingly stable domesticity that is available to Pearl in McClung’s trilogy. Class-consciousness is far more deeply engrained in Burnett’s London. Marked by differences in activities, dress, and speech, the working- and lower-class characters

never make the full transformation into the middle class, with its associated signifiers, that Pearl does when she goes to school, wears new silk clothes, and loses her Irish accent. This class difference does not exclude girls of the lower classes from making domestic contributions to places in the city, but they never achieve the degree of domestic influence that the wealthy protagonist, with her greater resources and her unaccented English,¹¹ does. Instead, their vulnerable position within the urban environment, subject to a capitalist system that is only interested in their labour value, inhibits their domestic abilities. Two lower-class girls, Becky and Anne, play significant roles in *A Little Princess* by acting as a focus for urban critique, while Sara Crewe, the protagonist, functions as an upper-middle-class model for girls by persisting in attempting to carry out mobile domesticity, even when circumstances make it difficult.

Sara begins the novel as the wealthiest pupil in Miss Minchin's Seminary with all the social privileges attached to such status. As a wealthy girl, she is expected to be a part of the ruling class when she is an adult, with even greater funds at her disposal. Miss Minchin makes a comment to this effect in her speech on Sara's birthday: "When she is older she will be heiress to a large fortune, which it will be her duty to spend in a meritorious manner" (Burnett, *Little* 74). In Sara's thinking, this "meritorious manner" involves benefitting or raising up "the populace," the working-class and lower-class children she sees as she moves effortlessly through London, whether in a cab with her father (1) or in her own carriage (8). Smith observes, "The idea of being a princess, as referred to in the novel's title, is related to a middle-class appropriation of the aristocratic principle of *noblesse oblige*, in which the middle classes may assume the role of 'missionaries' at home by educating and raising up the lower classes" (128). Although, presumably, Sara must have seen lower-class people in India, they seem only to make an impression on her when she is in London. This attention to poverty in London underlines the social issues attached to the British urban space and the novel's insistence upon the need for feminine intervention alleviate them. The financial resources that facilitate Sara's mobility allow her to carry out this mission with ease.

Sara engages in her easy mobile domesticity by acting as a nurturing influence and giving gifts of food to the hungry. Food, with its associations of home comfort and maternal sustenance,

¹¹ While she is working for her living, Sara wonders, "I wonder if I could QUITE forget and begin to drop my H's" (99). Of course Burnett never lets such a thing happen, and Sara maintains the verbal signifiers of her social status throughout the novel in spite of her increasingly shabby appearance, evidence that she is innately the titular "Little Princess."

acts as a physical manifestation of what the novel presents as Sara's inherent aptitude for domestic cultivation, which is frequently tied to movement in the novel. When she is able to help others by feeding them and comforting them, Sara is, to some degree, fulfilling what is constructed as her biological and social destiny and acting as a beneficial influence:

Sara—who was only doing what she unconsciously liked better than anything else, Nature having made her for a giver—had not the least idea [...] how wonderful a benefactor she seemed. If Nature has made you for a giver, your hands are born open, and so is your heart; and though there may be times when your hands are empty, your heart is always full, and you can give things out of that—warm things, kind things, sweet things—help and comfort and laughter [...]. (Burnett, *Little* 66)

On her first occasion feeding Becky, the ill-treated scullery maid of Miss Minchin's Seminary, Sara floats into the room with dancing steps to find Becky in a chair asleep from the exhaustion of her labours (51). Sara's light, graceful movement reflects the ease with which she plays the hostess, offering Becky "a thick slice of cake" that is "devoured in hungry bites" (54). It is this first act, along with the offer to tell Becky her fairy story, that inspires Sara to pretend to be a princess "scatter[ing] largess to the populace" (56). Thus Sara associates class status with giving domestic comfort. In her role as a privileged Lady Bountiful, Sara moves through the city with the same ease that she has in the school: "When she drove or walked out, she used to look into shop windows eagerly. The first time it occurred to her to bring home two or three little meat pies, she felt that she had hit upon a discovery. When she exhibited them, Becky's eyes quite sparkled" (65). Sara moves through London with impunity as a wealthy consumer. She does not need to worry about the deleterious effects of city living and she can carry out her charitable work without obstructions, window shopping to find her "largess."

In contrast, as a working-class girl Becky lacks Sara's agency over and freedom of mobility. Needing to work for a living, she is at the beck and call of everyone in the seminary, including the other servants, and this vulnerability keeps her in a constant state of motion but also in a constant state of fear lest she lose her job. She is frequently described in ways that link movement with fear: "carrying things up or down stairs on several occasions, she always seemed in such a hurry and so afraid of being seen" (49). Becky is so aware that her movements are watched and under the strict control of others that she has internalized the policing of her movements. When caught looking at Sara, Becky "dodge[s] out of sight like a Jack-in-the-box

and scurrie[s] back into the kitchen” (46). Her almost frantic physical movement is tied to her strenuous physical labour. She lacks the leisure and ease of the other girls who live at Miss Minchin’s. Her work is varied and arduous: “She blacked boots and grates, and carried heavy coal-scuttles up and down stairs, and scrubbed floors and cleaned windows, and was ordered about by everybody” (48-49).

Becky’s social class undermines her identity as a girl, allowing others to see her as a commodity instead of a person. As a result, she lacks the ability to locate herself within a stable domestic space. Miss Minchin claims that scullery maids like Becky “are not little girls” but “machines who [carry] coal scuttles and [make] fires” (73). Within the business-minded system of the city, in which Miss Minchin participates avariciously, Becky is expendable and, consequently, vulnerable. Miss Minchin threatens her more than once with unemployment, warning that Becky will have to “leave [her] place” (88) or “leave the house” (205), which would leave Becky homeless if carried out. It is only by reinforcing her own disempowered status as a commodity, a thing that might have market value, that Becky can hold on to a place to live. As the narrator explains, after she gets into trouble with Miss Minchin, “Becky would have been packed out of the house before breakfast, but that a scullery maid could not be dispensed with at once. The servants knew that she was allowed to stay because Miss Minchin could not easily find another creature helpless and humble enough to work like a bounden slave for so few shillings a week” (215). However, what Miss Minchin does not realize, with her focus on capitalist economic values to the exclusion of domestic feminine ones, is that what she commodifies in Becky is actually a quality of idealized girlhood: the ability to make and improve home spaces.

Becky, as both Sara and the story remind us, is a girl—though of a very different social status than Sara—and she too is depicted as having an innate capacity for domestic usefulness, which in this case takes the form of domestic labour, an occupation in keeping with her social class. Although the narrator states that “Sara seemed as much unlike her as if she were a creature from another world,” this impression is, in some important ways, only seeming (51). Sara tells Becky, “Why [...] we are just the same—I am only a little girl like you” (53). Their similarities include acting in caring ways and trying to improve the spaces and circumstances of those around them. But Becky’s work at Miss Minchin’s, unlike Sara’s, makes the Seminary a more comfortable, home-like space by keeping it clean and warm. She “put[s] the bedrooms in order”

(50) and “makes the fires” (48), contributing to the comfort of the middle-class and upper-middle-class pupils who are accustomed to such things in their domestic spaces, comforts that Becky herself does not enjoy. She shows the same giving nature as Sara, making Sara a present of a pincushion (a feminine and domestic item) made from old flannel on her birthday (68). Becky also offers emotional support and almost maternal care when Sara faces hard times. She helps Sara to “button her dress and give[s] her such help as she required before she went downstairs to light the kitchen fire” (102). Becky demonstrates that she has the ability to promote domestic comfort, but that her means and ways are limited by her social status. Her domestic work is confined to the space of the school, where she holds on to her position tenuously, and her gifts, though heartwarming, are less physically nurturing than gifts of food, which are beyond Becky’s financial ability to provide. Becky’s role is not one of uplift of the working classes, like Sara’s, but of maintenance of already existing social strata, giving comfort to those who are used to it and continuing to do without herself. This is a social system that also keeps Becky in her “helpless and humble” state (215), moving under the direction of others in order to avoid homelessness and ensuring that her domestic work is limited and in keeping with her humble class status.

When Sara loses her father and, seemingly, her fortune, she is placed into a social position akin to Becky’s, which impinges on her ability to enact mobile domesticity. Movement, without money to smooth the way, immediately becomes arduous. Removed from her luxurious suite of rooms to an attic beside Becky’s, Sara’s first journey to the attic is described in detail as a move not only to a new space but to a new identity: “She felt as if she were walking away and leaving far behind her the world in which that other child, who no longer seemed herself, had lived. This child, in her short, tight old frock, climbing the stairs to the attic, was quite a different creature” (94). Emotionally trying at first, the walk later transforms into a physically demanding activity: “Really it was hard for the child to climb the three long flights of stairs leading to her attic. She often found them long and steep when she was tired; but tonight it seemed as if she would never reach the top. Several times she was obliged to stop to rest” (184). While she once danced through the boarding school, she is now forced by hunger and exhaustion to slowly trudge.

The attic becomes a domestic space in which Sara repeatedly attempts to assert her domestic abilities while the negative implications of her new working-class status constantly

thwart her efforts. Unlike her old bedroom, which Sara constructed as a space of domestic succour for Becky and the other students, the attic space is unwelcoming and lacking in the comforts associated with middle-class homes. The attic is described as “another world” from the well-appointed lower floors occupied by the pupils, where the whitewash is “dingy,” the bed is “hard,” and the furniture is comprised of pieces “too much worn to be used downstairs” (94). Sara has to work hard to make it seem home-like at all, and she struggles to keep up the domestic illusion. Primarily she imagines the space as a prison, the Bastille, but occasionally she attempts to pretend it is a nice place to live, telling her pretend adopted daughter Lottie, a younger pupil, that “it’s really a beautiful little room” because the skylight provides a unique view and because it could be furnished with nice things like a “soft blue Indian rug” and “a soft little sofa” (115). But after Lottie leaves and Sara looks around the attic again, the narrator tells us that the “enchantment of her imaginings for Lottie had died away” and it becomes “a lonely place, [...] the loneliest place in the world” (116). The precarity of the domesticity of the living space is especially evident in the episode in which Sara’s best friend Ermengarde brings her gifts of food and books to the attic so they can pretend to have a banquet with Becky, but they are found out by Miss Minchin. Even the three girls combined, backed by Ermengarde’s material goods, cannot create a stable domestic space in the city attic of the impoverished girls.¹²

Such difficulties carry over to Sara’s mission of domestic uplift in the city with acts of charitable giving also becoming a struggle as Sara must battle difficult conditions caused by her impoverished status that adversely affect her ability to move through London. As a servant, Sara must walk in the streets carrying out errands that she is sent on by others. While she goes out on “several long and tiresome errands,” getting “sent out again and again, until her shabby clothes were damp through,” she is not able to “save herself much” as she “pick[s] her way carefully” through the mud on the streets that “squelche[s] through her broken shoes” (165-66). It is a far cry from her travels in a cab or carriage. When she finds “a fourpenny piece” (166) while slogging through the muddy street, she uses it to buy some buns from a baker, which she shares with a homeless girl who sits on the baker’s steps. But her charitable giving is not so easy as it

¹² It is only through Mr. Carrisford’s wealth and Ram Dass’s physical agility that the attic space is able to become a place of domestic comfort, when their combined efforts refurbish Sara’s room and provide her and Becky with food. Significantly, these are both male characters, but their statuses as an almost hysterical, passive invalid and an “Oriental” servant, respectively, characterize them as feminized in nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century terms. Although these are negative signifiers of their feminization, the caring and maternalism that they exhibit in providing domestic comforts are positive feminized traits.

once was. Sara struggles, not only to move through the streets, but also to carry out her role as princess scattering largess. Now hungry herself, she becomes almost reluctant to give up the food to the other girl. She must remind herself that the girl “is hungrier than I am” (170) in order to finally give up all of the buns but one for herself, an act in keeping with her own ideals about her proper behaviour as “a little princess.” Where once she gave out food with a free and easy hand, as with Becky, she must now wrestle with her own hunger and need in order to satisfy her conception of self as a middle-class creator of domestic comfort.

The girl Sara feeds, Anne, acts as an example of the effects of extreme poverty on mobility and domesticity. As Roderick McGillis observes, “The experience of London’s poor reveals how confining the city can be” (75). Anne is forced to be constantly on the move but without any place to go. Lacking the stability of any sort of home or employment, she begs to survive in the streets of London. This existence far from middle-class domesticity has dehumanized her, and the narrator describes her as a “little ravening London savage” and “a poor little wild animal” instead of a girl (Burnett, *Little* 170), a characterization that aligns impoverished Anne with a racialized Other in a colonial space, a ‘wild savage’ in need of ‘civilizing.’ When Sara encounters Anne sitting on the step of the baker’s shop, Anne “shuffle[s] herself aside a little, so as to give her room to pass. She was used to being made to give room to everybody” (167). Like Becky, whose movements are at the command of everybody else and who has learned to police her own movements, Anne also structures her movements around others, acting as though she is undeserving of taking up space. She is powerless in a social system structured to deny her needs, a fact acknowledged by her as she tries to take shelter on the baker’s step: “She knew that if a policeman chanced to see her he would tell her to ‘move on’” (167). Anne, without any stable domestic space, is pushed into a state constantly threatened by mobility, but also lacks the agency or financial resources to move out of the dangerous environment of London.

Becky and Anne are eventually granted the comfort of a stable domestic existence, but it is gained passively, through the charity of others, rather than through their own actions, this in contrast with the hard work of Pearl in her bootstrap narrative. In spite of their social improvement, they also never achieve the rise in social status that Pearl does. They are the beneficiaries of charitable giving, a movement of financial wealth that does nothing to fundamentally alter social inequalities. Instead, working-class people are “raised up” just enough

to be at ease and satisfied in their working-class roles, with some of the stability and comfort of a middle-class home available to them but with little of the power that being solidly middle-class or higher on the social scale could confer. Becky and Anne are depicted as inherently deserving of a comfortable and happy life because they are girls, but they are not given the opportunity ever to reach the social heights of Sara, who not only regains her fortune but has it returned to her with exponential interest as a result of the success of her late father's diamond mine speculations. Sara as princess, an inherited title, is a dispenser of charity while girls like Becky and Anne are recipients.¹³ As Daphne M. Kutzer notes, "Becky is destined to always be a member of the working class, although one hopes she finds a better domestic empire in which to serve" (52).

Becky gains a comfortable existence as Sara's attendant when Sara goes to live with Mr. Carrisford. Her improved domestic conditions are attested to by her newly acquired "pink, round face" (Burnett, *Little* 263). But Becky continues to serve and maintain her social status as working class. She follows Sara to her carriage bearing her "wraps and belongings" (263). Her burdened movement underscores Becky's role as a working-class girl. However, Becky is not unhappy or merely subsisting in this role. She is described as the "delighted attendant" of Sara, a girl happy to uphold the social hierarchy that exists and who is now healthy enough to carry out her work with ease (263). Anne ends in a similar situation to Becky by being taken in and given a home by the baker, Mrs. Brown. Mrs. Brown tells Anne, "[W]hen you are hard up for a bit of bread, you can come in here and ask for it" (172), giving Anne a destination to which she can direct her movements, rather than a command to "move on." By the end of the novel, Anne is established in the back room of the bakeshop "an' has been for a month" (265). Anne has a home and regains her identity as a girl, rather than "a savage" (265), as a result. Mrs. Brown tells Sara, "I've given her a place an' a home, and she helps me, an' behaves well, an' is as thankful as a girl can be" (265). Anne is "improved" by the charity given to her by Mrs. Brown, becoming 'civilized,' well-behaved, and "thankful," a model member of the urban working classes.

¹³ It is notable that the majority of the middle-class domesticity in the novel is financed by male wealth obtained from the colonies. Sara's father and Mr. Carrisford are the providers of wealth that make possible both comfortable homes and charitable giving. By limiting the uplift of the working classes, they are able to reinforce the capitalist economic system and social hierarchies that allow them to make their fortunes, while sidestepping the censure attached to pushing vulnerable girls into domestic precarity. Their marginal improvements at home mirror the sort of uplift that British imperialists were also supposed to be offering to the "natives" of the colonies, in which "the natives have their standard of living raised somewhat" while "the imperialists gain more than the natives in terms of material goods" (Kutzer 56).

When Sara's fortune is restored to her, her ability to play 'Lady Bountiful' with ease is restored as well. She is once again able to take a carriage through the streets of London and give "largess" to "the populace" (56). McGillis notes that "it is significant that the book ends not in Mr. Carrisford's house but with Sara's trip to the bakeshop and her meeting with Anne," emphasizing Sara's "desire to transform the mean streets of London" (75). She drives to the baker's shop in "[t]he Indian gentleman's carriage, with its tall horses" (Burnett, *Little* 263), reminiscent of her earlier trips through the city looking for food to give to Becky. Her plan of city-wide social improvement relies on her fortune and when she speaks to Mr. Carrisford about it she says,

[Y]ou say I have so much money—I was wondering if I could go to see the bun-woman, and tell her that if, when hungry children—particularly on those dreadful days— come and sit on the steps, or look in at the window, she would just call them in and give themselves something to eat, she might send the bills to me. (262)

While Mrs. Brown has already turned her bakeshop into a home for Anne, Sara takes this further by turning it into a potential domestic space for all homeless and transient children in London. They may not be able to stay there, but they can be "called in" and given food and benefit from Sara's maternal inclinations as she funds the venture. Mrs. Brown has helped Anne to stop being "a savage" (265) and Sara's plan will give that opportunity to others. The narrative implies that Sara will continue to carry out her mission of social improvement by acting as a princess. Her comfortable drive away from Mrs. Brown's seems to guarantee that she will continue to use her fortune to dispense charity and to "raise up" the impoverished children of London. The novel treats the domestic improvements of Becky and Anne and the reestablishment of Sara as a "princess" as a sufficiently happy ending, not looking for any greater social change.

The Trouble with Boston

Where *A Little Princess* takes an optimistic view of the benefits of charity, ending with a sense of having solved the problem of urban poverty, Porter's *Pollyanna Grows Up* expresses greater unease with urban social inequalities and leaves issues of mobility, domesticity, and wealth unresolved. Pollyanna is in unfamiliar territory when she makes a visit to Boston in the first part of the novel; she is confronted with the danger of extreme poverty and the threat of sexual exploitation (albeit unknowingly) as well as the loneliness and isolation that also frequently make the urban experience distant from the middle-class domestic ideal of comfort

and stability. The novel does not present the easy solutions seen in *A Little Princess*, but instead takes a critical view of the benefits that can be conferred by charity. The geography of the city also takes on a significant role in *Pollyanna Grows Up*, as it constructs social boundaries that determine who has access to middle-class domesticity and separate out urban mansions from inner-city tenement housing. And the sheer size of the urban space, which Pollyanna finds bewildering after the closeness of her hometown of rural Beldingsville, allows for the physical distance between housing and mirrors the social distance between living spaces.

Although Pollyanna seems to have almost unlimited power to create and to improve the home lives of others in Porter's first *Pollyanna* novel (as discussed in the previous chapter), this sequel curtails that power while also putting limits on Pollyanna's mobility. *Pollyanna Grows Up* juxtaposes two very different locations: on the one hand, rural Beldingsville with its strong sense of community and relationship-building and, on the other hand, urban Boston, specifically Mrs. Carew's mansion on wealthy Commonwealth Avenue where Pollyanna is staying on her visit and where she becomes socially isolated.¹⁴ This juxtaposition is framed in terms of Pollyanna's experience of mobility: "Her first and always her supreme delight in Beldingsville [...] had been her long rambles about the town and the charming visits with the new friends she made" (Porter, *Grows* 61). Treating Boston as a larger Beldingsville, Pollyanna embarks on an exploratory walk "with a little whirl and skip of pure joy" (58), but is soon disabused of her conception of Boston as simply a bigger version of a small town. After a bewildering walk in the Public Garden where she struggles to make friends with anyone, she gets lost in some slums before being returned to Mrs. Carew's by a working-class boy named Jerry. As a result of her geographical transgression, moving from the isolated, wealthy urban neighbourhood of Commonwealth Avenue to the working-class slum inhabited by 'foreigners' who speak languages other than English and impoverished people who live in tenements, Pollyanna is placed under restrictions to her mobility. The narrator notes, "Apparently she was as free as before, but in reality she was surrounded by a high stone wall of regulations. She must not talk to strange men or women; she must not play with strange children; and under no circumstances must she step foot outside the Garden except to come home" (86). The dangers of the city make it untenable for Pollyanna to freely move about the environment as well as unable to interact

¹⁴ Commonwealth Avenue is located in the Back Bay area of Boston, one of the places that Deutsch notes as a stronghold of the elite within the rapidly changing urban space of the turn of the century (6).

with others. She is confined to a particular socio-economic area, away from the problem areas of the various impoverished inhabitants of the city, secluded from the very people whom it is her domestic mission to “raise up” and help.

While Pollyanna is able to make her way back to the urban slums, she is unable to make use of her domestic powers; the problem of urban poverty is too big even for her seemingly endless optimism and beneficial influence. In her interactions with Jerry and his adopted brother Jamie,¹⁵ Pollyanna learns about the degree of poverty that exists in the city, a stark contrast to the sort of genteel poverty that she was used to with her father while living in the rural West. When she hears that Jamie often goes hungry, she declares, “I never *heard* of anybody who didn’t have *anything* to eat [...]. Of course father and I were poor, and we had to eat beans and fish balls when we wanted turkey. But we had *something*” (94). Pollyanna is faced more directly with the sort of poverty that she cannot imagine when she convinces Mrs. Carew to take her to visit Jamie in Murphy’s Alley because he is ill and he may be Mrs. Carew’s long-lost nephew. Pollyanna is finally able to move into the space where she can do good, but her visit is only made possible by the power of Mrs. Carew’s wealth, the thing that perpetuates the social divide. “With the opulent purr that seems to be peculiar to luxurious limousines” (112), Pollyanna and Mrs. Carew arrive at “a shabby doorway in a narrow, dirty alley” and Pollyanna’s “eyes [widen] with amazement and distress as she look[s] about her” at “the filth, the sordidness, and the ragged children” (112). The socioeconomic disparity that divides Pollyanna and Mrs. Carew from Jerry and Jamie is painted in extreme terms through this movement from the “luxurious” limousine into the tenement.

Pollyanna is left at a loss by urban poverty, not only the conditions that it engenders but also her inability to alleviate it:

Pollyanna was puzzled. She was filled with questionings and unrest. For the first time in her life Pollyanna had come face to face with real poverty. [...] Her first impulse, of course, had been ‘to help’. With Mrs Carew she made two visits to Jamie, and greatly did she rejoice at the changed conditions she found there after [the agent, at the secret promptings of Mrs. Carew, who actually owns the tenement,] had ‘tended to things’. But

¹⁵ Jamie is depicted as experiencing a restricted physical mobility that is linked to his poverty. The family that he lives with cannot afford to send him to the Dr. Ames who was able to cure Pollyanna or get him any other kind of treatment, and the wheelchair he uses was a charitable gift.

this, to Pollyanna, was a mere drop in the bucket. There were yet all those other sick-looking men, unhappy-looking women, and ragged children out in the street. (125-126)

Pollyanna learns of the widespread problem of poverty and does not understand how such a situation has come to pass, how such a socioeconomic system could be created. She states that “it doesn’t seem right that *we* should have such a lot of nice things, and that *they* shouldn’t have anything, hardly” and we are told that “this feeling on the part of Pollyanna increased rather than diminished” (127). Even the “glad game,” that special mechanism of Pollyanna’s to spread light and comfort, cannot help Pollyanna. Without being able to help others, she can find nothing to be glad about in their impoverished situation (128). Pollyanna’s mobility, which has always helped her to come into contact with people and beneficially influence them through personal interaction, is now limited, and she can persuade Mrs. Carew to give assistance only to Jamie and his family, neglecting the rest of the people whom Pollyanna sees in Murphy’s Alley. Pollyanna regrets not being rich “so [she] could help, too” (126), differing from Sara in *A Little Princess* in that she lacks the wealth that would allow her to give any sort of material domestic comfort, no matter how limited, although the two girl protagonists share the same impulse to help.

Pollyanna is not the only girl in the novel to face such limitations, desiring to enact mobile domesticity but being unable to afford it; Sadie Dean, a girl on her own in Boston whom Pollyanna befriends, deals with restrictions related to both money and mobility. Although she is, like Pollyanna, a minister’s daughter, she lacks the status that Pollyanna is able to obtain from her blue-blooded Beldingsville relatives. Sadie’s occupation makes this social divide evident, since she works in a department store rather than enjoying Pollyanna’s leisure, and her mobility issues reflect their social difference. On her feet and tied to a counter all day, she comes to the point during the Christmas rush that her feet are so blistered she is “hobbled,” and she spends all of Christmas in bed with her “feet done up in rags” (136). She lacks the financial means to move to a better situation, not unlike Becky in *A Little Princess*. And her urban home life is equally unpleasant: “a little back room up three flights [...] like a furnace in the summer and an icebox in the winter” (70) that she is supposed to stay in when not at work. In these circumstances, Sadie is lonely and yearns for domestic comfort. She tells Mrs. Carew about the walks she would take with her friend, “huntin’ for windows where the curtains were up, and we could look in [...] to see homes with folks, and lamps on the centre-tables, and children playin’ games” (146).

However, once Sadie finds herself in Mrs. Carew's home, within the stability of a wealthy domestic space like those she used to only look at, she demonstrates that she has the ability to create comfort and good feeling herself. At the New Year's Eve party that Pollyanna throws at Mrs. Carew's, Sadie is one of the most important factors in making it a success. She, along with Jamie and Jerry, "[vie] with each other in amusing the more diffident guests" and "Sadie Dean, much to the others' surprise—and perhaps to her own—disclosed an intimate knowledge of the most fascinating games" which keep "everyone in gales of laughter until supper" (142). Sadie shows that she has the potential to brighten up a house and create a real home, even though circumstances do not allow her to do so while she is stuck in the department store. But a lack of opportunity to create domestic comfort because of her limited finances and the constraints on her mobility is not Sadie's only problem in the urban environment.

Living alone in a city means that Sadie must also deal with the threat of sexual vulnerability, a social issue that was prominent in urban discourse of the era. Walkowitz remarks that urban sexual danger was constructed as a "national issue" (84) in an 1885 issue of the *Pall Mall Gazette* and that awareness of this danger influenced policy-making regarding prostitution as well as "grass-roots political activity" (82). Horn notes that Victorian girls in the city "were felt to be sexually endangered unless they were protected by their family or some external organization" (180). Deutsch observes a similar attitude held by middle- and upper-class women in late-nineteenth and early-twentieth-century Boston, explaining that "middle-class and elite matrons had grounds for their anxiety on behalf of the working girls they increasingly saw on Boston's streets. Hours were long, wages were low, work was unsteady, and temptations were many" (79). The historical situation that Deutsch describes is mirrored by the position of Sadie, who is living away from her middle-class parents while she works. Finding that "the loneliest place in all the world is in a crowd in a big city" (Porter, *Grows* 69), Sadie hopes to alleviate that lonesomeness by having an assignation with a young man whom she describes as "[s]omeone that hadn't ought to notice" her but who notices "too much" (69).

Significantly, Sadie's interactions with the young man and her eventual rejection of his implied sexual advances are framed in terms of mobility. She is to meet him in the Public Garden, one of the few places she can go for leisure, during her last half-holiday of the year, a short period of time when she is not tied to the department store counter. After encountering Pollyanna and conversing with her, Sadie decides against going off with the young man, an

assertion of agency over her movements, despite the temptations he offers. She links her refusal to go with the stability and stasis of Pollyanna, saying to her, “See here, kiddie, for just a minute don’t you leave me. [...] Stay right where you are! There’s a man comin’; but no matter what he says [...] *don’t you go*. I’m goin’ to stay with *you*” (72). Going would constitute passivity and giving into temptation, while choosing to stay signifies virtue. When she tells the young man that she is refusing his advances, she states emphatically, “I tell you I had *not* rather go. I’m not going” and she “turn[s] away resolutely” (73). Although the man finally leaves, Sadie leaves the Public Garden soon after in fear that he might return and she will not be able to resist him a second time. But it is unclear where she goes that could be considered safe from the inappropriate attentions of men.

Sadie’s vulnerability is characterized as a domestic problem: the lack of comfortable domestic spaces for virtuous, middle-class girls to go when lonely. And it highlights a problem of hypocrisy in urban charity: that such spaces are available to fallen women who have already transgressed, rather than girls like Sadie who are struggling to maintain their virtue. Sadie is limited in the number of places that she is able to go to: work, the unhomelike home, the “old library” (70), the potentially dangerous Public Garden, and the mysterious place where the young man would take her and where she would become a ‘fallen woman.’ None of these locations are particularly safe or stable; they lack the comfort and security of a real domestic space. The “settlement-houses” that are available to girls like Sadie, though not described in any explicit terms, are also presented as unpleasant places. Having tried to spend time in one, she asserts vaguely that “there was an air about it—somehow I felt—” (148) before giving up trying to explain to Mrs. Carew what they are like, but leaving the reader with a sense of unease about the places. Certainly, the settlement-houses are not the sort of domestic spaces that she craves. Without homelike comfort, girls are left vulnerable to sexual temptations and, only after their fall, become candidates for rescue homes.

The novel presents rescue homes as much-needed domestic spaces to help girls who have gone wrong, but also as providing services that would be equally as useful for girls like Sadie, whom they ignore. The rescue homes are filled with domestic comforts; one is described, unlike the settlement-house, as a “lovely place” with “soft rugs, fine pictures, plants, flowers, and books, a piano, a beautiful room” (146); it contains all the signifiers of a wealthy, middle-class home, including people who are “wonderfully good” and who “showed they wanted to help”

(147). Sadie gives voice to a scathing critique of the rescue work that seemingly rewards bad behaviour rather than encouraging good behaviour, work done by women like Mrs. Carew, who can afford to give to charitable causes. She scornfully remarks, “I wonder there don’t some of ’em think of helpin’ the girls *before* they go wrong. Why don’t they give *good* girls pretty homes with books and pictures and soft carpets and music, and somebody ’round ’em to care?” (138). She also recounts the story of her friend who eventually ends up in a rescue home and who tells her, “Sadie, if they’d taken one half the pains to show me they cared and wanted to help long ago when I was an honest, self-respectin’, hard-workin’ homesick girl—I wouldn’t have been here for them to help now” (147). The power and importance of domestic spaces, as places that could promote desirable social behaviours, is made clear.

The novel presents a critique of what it means to help others in the urban space, how properly giving help relies on personal intervention rather than simple charitable giving. While giving money to a baker to hand out bread to children is enough for a happy ending in *A Little Princess*, more is asked for from wealthy people in *Pollyanna Grows Up*. Pollyanna, with her deep enjoyment of building relationships and her emphasis on helping people personally, is dismayed to learn that Mrs. Carew is satisfied simply to give money “frequently and liberally” to charitable institutions who carry out the work of social uplift (126). And Sadie criticizes the behaviour of women who only donate money to social projects like working-girls’ homes and settlement-houses “and have never seen the inside of one of them” (147). The novel promotes firsthand involvement in social projects as well as creating connections between people in order to exhibit real caring. Jerry and Jamie’s mother refuses financial assistance from Mrs. Carew because it comes as charity, a form of hypocritical monetary giving that maintains social segregation and distance between classes rather than eliminating them. When Mrs. Carew protests that Mrs. Murphy accepts charity from her neighbour, she counters, “Mrs Dolan is my *friend*. She knows *I’d* do *her* a good turn just as quick—I have done ’em for her in times past. Help from *friends* ain’t charity. They *care*” (118). Emotional investment is presented as equally, if not more, important than financial investment and is shown as only possible when wealthy people actually move in circles outside of their own, visiting places like the settlement-homes to see how their money is being used and learning to be friends with people who live in tenements. However, the need for such relationships, which involve individuals connecting and creating personal relationships, also ensures that widespread social change to correct urban poverty will

not occur. The large population of urban centres like Boston makes such a plan simply impracticable.

Perhaps what is most remarkable about *Pollyanna Grows Up* is that no satisfactory resolutions are achieved for urban social problems. Although improvements are suggested, the novel also seems to explain that in order to truly solve the problems of the city radical changes are needed and that people, as a whole, are ultimately unwilling to make those changes. When Pollyanna posits the social benefits of wealthy people knowing impoverished people “so that the rich people could give the poor people part of their money,” her friend Mr. Pendleton replies, “My dear child, did it ever occur to you that these people don’t *care* to know each other?” and jokes that she is on her way to becoming a “rabid little socialist” (153-154). Ultimately, Pollyanna is forced to admit that people generally are less willing than herself to give, that they refuse to participate in the “wholesale distribution of wealth” because it would “pauperise [them] and be indiscriminate and pernicious” (154). But this answer leaves her unhappy and unsatisfied, and she asserts, “I *don’t* understand why some folks should have such a lot, and other folks shouldn’t have anything; and I *don’t* like it” (154-155). The Boston episode is left as an unsettling experience for Pollyanna and urban poverty is a problem without a workable solution. The novel, however, is not completely pessimistic about remedying widespread social issues and presents a possible solution that is divorced from financial concerns.

Institutional change is depicted as possible with the involvement of women who become engaged in policy-making. In a small, but significant, anecdote, Pollyanna relates the important influence that a blind female friend has had on lawmaking that benefits those who are visually disabled. Pollyanna states how “she had [her husband] ask for [a law] that would help blind people, ’specially little babies. And she went herself and talked and told those men how it felt to be blind. And they made it—that law” (66). Credit is given specifically to the woman, with the lawmakers saying “that she did more than anybody else, even her husband, to help make it, and that they didn’t believe there would have been any law at all if it hadn’t been for her” (66). Her intervention in the political arena, her visit to policy makers in person, helped to benefit society as a whole. Although Pollyanna’s story about the woman is not connected to the urban environment specifically, the ill-health that is depicted throughout the novel is presented as a problem of urban poverty that could be improved through the upholding of and making of better laws. When Mrs. Carew sees the state of the tenement housing that the Murphys live in, she

exclaims, “It’s shameful! What’s more, I think it’s a clear case of violation of the law” (119). It is Mrs. Carew’s neglect of the law, in addition to her lack of interest in where her money goes, that has allowed the apartment to get into such a “shameful” state, since she is the owner. The novel advocates for an active engagement by women in public policy, a form of mobile domesticity requiring women to move into places that they would not normally go, whether tenements or law courts, to improve the living conditions and homes of others.

In these texts, the city is a threat to the proper ordering of the nation, filled with urban problems of poverty, sexual exploitation, and illness, which are in direct opposition to the sort of middle-class and elite domestic values prized by girls’ novels. While McClung’s trilogy posits the movement away from urban spaces as the way to deal with this issue, Burnett’s and Porter’s novels promote the need for an increased ease of mobility for girls and women in urban spaces in order to facilitate mobile domesticity. Such mobility is also shown by Burnett and Porter to be only made possible through financial means, which enable mobility and ideally allow girls and women to bring domestic benefits to people, especially through acts of personal charity. The economic systems and the social hierarchies that are so fixed within urban spaces, however, prevent any sort of widespread improvement in the urban space.

As I state in chapter one, the model girl protagonist is not meant to revolutionize the social order, merely to take the status quo to its ideal form. At most, what is allowed is the limited uplift of working-class individuals into a more comfortable working-class situation, rather than any movement across class lines, such as that which Pearl is able to achieve. While this social uplift solves the elite and middle-class unease with the needy poor, it does not offer any substantial opportunities to the working classes themselves. The city, without allowing the upward social mobility that Pearl experiences, thus becomes a place of restriction for the girl who straddles the line between middle class and working class, girls like Sadie and, to some degree, Pollyanna, who could offer so much more in the way of social and domestic improvement if they were given greater means. Pollyanna would even carry out the “wholesale distribution of wealth” (154) that would truly make a difference to impoverished urban dwellers if able. But the novels cannot quite bring themselves to this point, preferring to uphold the supremacy of those who are, at minimum, firmly middle-class and avoiding the possible national instability of drastic social transformation.

The public space of the urban environment holds an important place in the nation, as a centre of commerce and population as well as a place in which important political activity, such as law-making, occurs. The good, although limited, domestic work carried out by the girls and women of *A Little Princess* and *Pollyanna Grows Up* demonstrates the need for more feminine involvement in these spaces. Although the urban may never reach the ideal of the rural, these novels show that the city can be improved and made a more stable, comfortable, and, perhaps most importantly, home-like place.

Chapter Four

Growing Up and Being Grown Up: Freedom, Power, and Mobility in *Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm* and *Anne of Green Gables*

Girlhood is a transitional period during which the child transforms into a woman, a temporary phase of life, especially when compared to the much longer phase of womanhood. Catherine Driscoll observes that within late modern culture, “Girlhood and daughterhood are consistently articulated in relation to a future role—who or what the girl will be or do as a woman” (108). Criticism has often depicted the narrative of growing up female in the early twentieth century as one of decreasing freedom; Sally Mitchell considers the girl to occupy culturally “a provisional free space” (3) and Shirley Foster and Judy Simons describe the transformation from girl to woman as a move into “the more restricted sphere of young womanhood” (16). Scholars also link such restriction to the domestic sphere; Mitchell calls family life “enclosed” (3), Kelli Sellers characterizes “the limited domestic sphere” of women as a place separate from the “public, working lives” of “independent” men (113), and Eve Kornfeld and Susan Jackson consider the domestic life of women as something in need of “subversion,” an “alternative to domesticity” (74). But does growing up always have to have such negative connotations for girls?

A narrative of increasing restriction does not have to be imposed on the depiction of growing up and being a woman, and womanhood, instead, can be a time of greater independence and agency, as shown by Kate Douglas Wiggin’s *Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm* (1903) and L.M. Montgomery’s *Anne of Green Gables* (1908), novels that end with the maturation of their girl protagonists, Rebecca Randall and Anne Shirley. Significantly, these endings act as a dramatic climax in which the protagonist chooses the home over opportunities farther afield, a choice that, unlike the dominant narrative that equates growing up with greater confinement, is constructed as opening up new possibilities of freedom as well as connections to the wider world and power in it. The adult women characters that are included in these novels also often emphasize the positive options that are open to girls after they choose domestic womanhood, whether through property ownership, as in *Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm*, or public engagement and an increased flexibility in gender roles, as in *Anne of Green Gables*. Though the last chapter dealt with domestic qualities that could be perpetuated in different environments, this chapter focuses on

the actual physical space of the home as a foundational site of women's mobility and female power, both of which can be extended outside the domestic sphere. I argue that *Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm* and *Anne of Green Gables* depict women as having access to different forms of power and influence than girls and that this access is created by their strong connections to homes. Women's power, as it is presented in these novels, entails increased power over mobility—both their own and others'—as well as, at times, the manifestation of potentially subversive qualities such as being unlikeable, queering gender conventions, and participating in public and political activity.

While the difference between girlhood and womanhood in this era is often conceived of in terms of the girl's relative freedom from the home, it is also constructed as differing in terms of physical freedom and mobility. The figure of the tomboy, as described by Judith Halberstam, provides a useful example of the connection between girlhood and greater mobility, as it plays out in modern society, that is equally applicable to the early twentieth century when girls were often encouraged to be physically active: "Tomboyism tends to be associated with a 'natural' desire for the greater freedoms and mobilities enjoyed by boys. Very often it is read as a sign of independence and self-motivation, and tomboyism may even be encouraged to the extent that it remains comfortably linked to a stable sense of a *girl* identity" (6; emphasis added). Tomboyism is a temporary state, belonging to girls and expected to be put aside as girls take on adult female roles that reinforce gendered dichotomies. Although Iris Young recognizes the ways in which the girl is taught to restrict her movements, she also asserts that "she develops a bodily timidity which increases with age" and "that it is in the process of growing up as a girl that the modalities of feminine bodily comportment, motility, and spatiality make their appearance" (153).¹⁶ While gender conventions might produce expectations of deeply engrained restriction of mobility in women, there is evidence that women of the era pushed back against such expectations. Wendy Rouse and Beth Slutsky examine the way in which women of the Progressive Era were "pursuing boxing and jiu-jitsu as a means not only of self-defence but also of expressing their personal and political power," actions that mirrored those of Britain's militant suffragists who "used their bodies in order to convey their discontent and resist oppression through marches,

¹⁶ Although I. Young is careful to clarify that her remarks apply specifically to "women situated in contemporary advanced industrial, urban, and commercial society" (140) "where the model of the Bourgeois woman has been extended to most women" (143n10), such descriptors imply the applicability of her observations to the middle-class patriarchal world of the early twentieth century that are represented in the novels I examine.

pickets, and hunger strikes” (473-474). Control over mobility, especially one’s own movements, thus becomes an important way of exerting power.

In this period, education was seen as a mechanism that gave girls increased freedom, both ideological and physical, because of its distance from home life, a characteristic that also created controversy in its connection with the girl’s future as a woman. G. Stanley Hall’s only chapter on female adolescence is tellingly called “Adolescent Girls and their Education.” It explores the supposedly negative impact that education could have on girls’ reproductive systems (561-647). K. Sellers observes the widely held belief that “[f]ormal education led [...] to profession and liberation from the home” (113). Liberated and away from the home, girls could engage in freer physical movement. As Jane H. Hunter notes, the very process of “[g]oing to school in the nineteenth century usually meant walking to school, often in company with friends and classmates” (266). Such freedom was limited to girlhood, before the onset of the restraint of womanhood as well as its associated domesticity; Hunter states, “In some sense, the freedom of teenage girls in the streets [walking to school] was a prolonging of a sanctioned childhood status. Before they reached puberty, girls as well as boys of the middle classes were urged outside to play robust, healthy games” (262). The expectation was that girls would enjoy a temporary period of relative freedom from the home as they gained their education, but that this period would end with the coming of young womanhood and graduation.

Graduation acts as a symbol of the transition into young womanhood, a tangible marker of moving into adulthood. Hunter calls it “a rite of passage—from girlhood to the responsibilities and restrictions of womanhood” (315). She also notes that it “certified academic accomplishment but increasingly also bore symbolic significance as the celebration of middle-class girls’ coming of age, the end of a girlhood moratorium on women’s role, and the ‘commencement’ of a life defined by bifurcated gender expectations” (315). After graduation, girls usually returned to their primarily domestic life, a move that Hunter constructs as one from activity to “relative passivity” (334). However, new options were open to young women during this period and, as with education, these options were matters of societal discussion. Naomi Lesley describes how Rebecca’s story mirrors “early-twentieth-century debates over appropriate futures for educated female adolescents as graduates negotiated conflicting pressures to return to domestic life, to contribute to literary and cultural spheres, and to improve their families’ economic opportunities” (42). Class prophecies that students of this period came up with for their

graduating peers projected future roles for girls that were “as professionally varied and glamorous as those for boys” (Hunter 380), including as doctors, women’s rights activists, and politicians, both mayors and governors. Hunter notes that these futures were imagined in spite of “the inability of any actual high school class from the 1890s to elect a girl as its president” (382). Girls at school are all students, but young women graduates could be imagined as taking on a much wider variety of roles.

Girl protagonists in popular early twentieth century girls’ novels are compelling, but, as many scholars have noticed, their characterizations and stories are remarkably similar, including those of Rebecca and Anne (Dawson 30-31). Perry Nodelman observes, “They all live the same story, and they come to seem like variations of an ideal of female childhood that transcends national boundaries, and even the boundaries of time—for we still find the story enticing” (146). The idealization of the girl, her conformity to particular values such as being likeable and sweet and nurturing, results in sameness.¹⁷ These girl protagonists have the power to influence others and spread domestic qualities through the visions they present and the relationships they create (as I discuss in earlier chapters), but they are also tied to a similar narrative, unable to break from the conventions that make them so “ideal” and “enticing.” Rebecca and Anne’s story of growing up follows an almost identical path of movement into a new home, education that takes her outside of the home, and an eventual return to the home upon reaching young womanhood. Though the details differ, their stories speak to a widely held societal expectation about what girls should be and do.

Adult female characters, in contrast, are able to exist in greater variability and, one might argue, complexity because they are not confined by the limitations of upholding the idealized role of the girl protagonist. In particular, *Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm* and *Anne of Green Gables*, with their Cranford-like, female-dominated societies, present a large number of women characters, good and bad, happy and unhappy, strong and weak, likeable and unlikeable. Perhaps most notable are the prominent and rather unconventional women characters, those who act in ways out of keeping with traditional gender norms, such as Aunt Miranda Sawyer, Marilla Cuthbert, and Mrs. Rachel Lynde. Gail Cuthbert Brandt et al. note the dangers of nonconformity

¹⁷ Elizabeth Lennox Keyser explores the appeal of a girl protagonist who does not at first have such qualities in her essay “‘Quite Contrary’: Frances Hodgson Burnett’s *The Secret Garden*,” which begins by noting the unusualness of such a character.

for real women in late-Victorian Canada: “a woman outside what was considered her place was a woman who had placed herself in danger—or a woman who did not deserve protection and invited ridicule” (185). Such unconventional living could even be construed as threatening the security of the nation, since, as Sarah Carter points out, “The health and wealth [...] of the entire nation, was seen as dependent on the establishment of the Christian, monogamous, and lifelong model of marriage and family” (8), and that by the late-nineteenth century this model was entrenched in both Canada and the United States. However, in fiction, Wiggin and Montgomery can portray unconventional women in positive ways, without appearing to threaten social norms while still calling them into question. Miranda and Marilla are both unmarried in a time when the expected path for a middle-class woman was marriage, and Kornfeld and Jackson remark on “[t]he vital and interesting role of the spinster in these novels,” claiming that this portrayal “indicates to the reader that a single woman can have a fulfilling life” (72). Such women can find fulfillment in exercising power rather than in the comfort of conformity.

Women’s power also finds an outlet in a wider range of forms that are not available to the girl because of her age, such as property ownership and the assertion of authority over others, traits which are also often associated with masculinity. Halberstam states,

Masculinity in this society inevitably conjures up notions of power and legitimacy and privilege; it often symbolically refers to the power of the state and to uneven distributions of wealth. Masculinity seems to extend outward into patriarchy and inward into the family; masculinity represents the power of inheritance, the consequences of the traffic in women, and the promise of social privilege. (2)

Women characters might become masculine, as the concept is described by Halberstam, in order to gain the resulting societal benefits for themselves. The idea of “masculine women” is useful for characterizing many of the unconventional women in these novels, because it can encompass a variety of fluid or nonnormative behaviours without pushing women into a specific role as simply a male substitute. As Halberstam points out, “The masculine heterosexual woman [...] may merely be a woman who rejects the strictures of femininity” (59), which many of these women characters do as they engage in behaviours and take on roles that are not considered traditionally feminine. While not all of these women act as models for the girl protagonist, who must remain idealized, they do present models to the girl reader of the various ways that womanhood can be enacted, even if that womanhood remains a domestic one.

Homes play an ideologically laden role in both girls' fiction and the lives of women in this era. They are sites that function as sources for women of authority and a way into political engagement. Home is a place of association through acquiescence for girls, a place to belong to or be subsumed under, to be *of* (whether Sunnybrook Farm or Green Gables), as per Rebecca's move to her aunts' being "the making" of her (Wiggin 15) or Anne's declaration to Marilla that "I'll try to do and be anything you want me, if you'll only keep me" (Montgomery, *AoGG* 47). In contrast, for women of the era, home could be "a base of power and influence" (Brandt et al. 185) because it was so dominated by women and seen as their domain. Their authority came from the culture's conception of the female gender as biologically predisposed to be domestic. In the home, it was socially acceptable for women to be the decision makers, using their nature as justification, and to impose their own will over the space and the people in it. Powerful domestic women are frequently depicted in these novels; Shirley Foster and Judy Simons note that as classic girls' fiction changed throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries there was a corresponding "emphasis on mothers or mother-figures, who have significant power, at least within the domestic environment" (7); Jackie E. Stallcup observes, "Although Montgomery does not advocate that women become empowered through breaking free of domestic entanglements, she does establish the domestic space as one in which women are figures of authority and power" (122). Such power is also transferable, not limited within the confines of the domestic space even though based on women's position in it. Through their importance in the home, women could lay legitimate claim to participation in public life. Feminism of the early twentieth century makes this point, linking domestic government to political government. A pamphlet from 1910 published by the National American Woman Suffrage Association asserts the need for women to have the vote in order to ensure the high quality of their domain, in areas such as food safety and sanitation. But it also claims a benefit for government specifically because of the domestic strengths of women: "Women are, by nature and training, housekeepers. Let them have a hand in the city's housekeeping, even if they introduce an occasional house-cleaning."¹⁸ The home is a "base of power" from which to launch campaigns in the wider world.

¹⁸ As Cecily Devereux notes, antisuffragist arguments also tied together women's domestic role and national well-being. She takes Sir Almroth Wright as her example, with his claims "that the stability of the Empire could only be ensured through the proper ordering of the domestic microcosm" ("New" 176). In spite of the opposition on the issue of women's suffrage, this position still allots political power to women through their connection to domesticity.

Keeping these ideas in mind, this chapter looks at girls and women's movement in, out, and away from their homes in *Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm* and *Anne of Green Gables* in order to examine how they exercise power—over themselves and others—and navigate gender conventions in adulthood. I propose that identification with the home is constructed as a means of conferring power, in *Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm* because of the conception of the home as property and in *Anne of Green Gables* because the home is a place where gendered boundaries are flexible and fluid. I will examine Rebecca's and Anne's similar educations and how they are constructed as a move out of the home, although domesticity remains an important part of the girls' lives. I will also look at their graduations as moments of maturation into womanhood. This maturation takes the form of their decisions to forgo further education and, instead, remain in the home. Finally, I will explore these novels' depictions of adult women who act as examples of the variety of options that are open to girls as they become young women, with special attention given to Miranda, Marilla, and Mrs. Lynde as examples of unconventional, powerful women with strong connections to their homes.

The Trajectory of Girlhood

Rebecca and Anne share a nearly identical story of education; reflecting contemporary discourse that constructed school as a space of freedom outside the home, they both pursue education that takes them away from their adopted homes and that is figured as opening new horizons. As a marker of their increased maturity near the end of the novels, Rebecca and Anne attend secondary schools; Rebecca goes to Wareham Academy and Anne attends Queen's Academy. This education presents new opportunities for the girls to pursue in the future, such as employment and continued education, paths that will continue to keep the girls at a distance from the domestic sphere. However, depictions of education in these novels do not entirely do away with the importance of domestic life for girls, and home and homelike spaces are shown to play a significant role in these girls' lives even while they explore other options. Although both the culture of the period and literary criticism often construct the home as place for ambitious and intelligent girls like Rebecca and Anne to avoid, the novels maintain a degree of idealism in their portrayals of home as a place capable of providing emotional satisfaction. Interestingly, while adulthood approaches, Rebecca and Anne often picture their future selves in situations that take them far afield, mirroring the trajectory that girlhood seems to take as a movement away from their homes, even though domestic life was the expected future for middle-class girls.

Ultimately, however, neither novel ends with the girl carrying out her expected plans for the future. Instead, graduation coincides with tragedy and precipitates a need to confront impending adulthood. For both of the girls, this transformation into women involves a reaffirmation of their ties to the home, a move that is figured as simultaneously both limiting and freeing.

The beginning of Rebecca's career at Wareham is recounted in a chapter entitled "The Sky Line Widens," characterizing the increased intellectual horizons through a spatial metaphor linking Rebecca's new vistas with a change of scenery from the everyday sight of the brick house in Riverboro, where she lives with her aunts. Her time at Wareham also involves physical movement away from home; she travels every day to school by train until winter when she boards in Wareham (Wiggin 211-212). While she is taking her course, she seems to be free from the sort of domestic work that she was expected to learn and carry out while living with her aunts; K. Sellers notes that Rebecca's "formal education [...] removes her from the home and allows her to escape, at least for a short time, the domestic sphere for which adult women were destined" (116). Designating Wareham as an "escape" from the domestic sphere, however, is not quite accurate. Rebecca gets a taste of the domestic future that K. Sellers sees in store for her when rooming with her best friend Emma Jane. They enjoy furnishing their new space, making it "pretty and homelike," and "they declared that it was all quite as much fun as being married and going to housekeeping" (Wiggin 231). The novel depicts the intellectual benefits of getting away from home at the same time that it endorses domestic life and its own particular "fun."

While Rebecca enjoys home life, it does not preclude her from imagining herself in non-domestic circumstances in the future, situations that rely on her potential careers as a woman and that take her far from home. She contemplates careers that are associated with travel, such as being a painter and being a foreign missionary. If she became "a painter like Miss Ross [a former visitor]" (15), she could go to Paris, a place Miss Ross has been. Foreign missions would take her even farther afield, since the missionaries who visit at the brick house, the Burches, are based in Syria and "are always coaxing" Rebecca to join them, and this occupation would give her the opportunity "to do something for somebody and make things move" (250). While both of these career options fall by the wayside, Rebecca's more probable career path is still one that keeps her away from the brick house. When graduation comes, Rebecca is offered two different positions of employment that she is suited to because of the education she has from Wareham: "one in which she would play for singing and calisthenics, and superintend the piano practice of the

younger girls in a boarding school; the other an assistant's place in the Edgewood High School. Both were very modest as to salary, but the former included educational advantages that Miss Maxwell [her teacher] thought might be valuable" (286). It is notable that while the Edgewood High School position would keep her close to her home, allowing her, as she tells Miranda, to "be here [at the brick house] nights and Sundays to help," Miranda insists that she take the other job in Augusta instead, "for that's a hundred dollars more, with music lessons and other things beside" (301). Career opportunities, like education, seem offer the most when they involve moving away from the domestic sphere.

For Rebecca, graduation constitutes a move into adulthood, a transition that brings mixed feelings with it. Regina Puleo claims, "She recognizes her certain adulthood on her graduation day" (355). Rebecca uses a metaphor of restriction, of closing off, in order to describe the approach of her adulthood, telling her friend Emma Jane that she can "almost see [the gates of childhood] swing; almost hear them clang" (Wiggin 287). Small wonder, then, that Rebecca is earlier depicted as feeling ambivalent about growing up. As Barbara A. White observes, "Although she looks forward to finishing school and earning money, she hates being called 'grown-up' at fourteen" (39). Although Rebecca's outlook as she approaches graduation is wide, with many opportunities available to her, the narrowness of reality soon sets in. The narrative warns of "'th' inevitable yoke' that the years are so surely bringing [the graduates]" (Wiggin 289).

In Rebecca's case "'th' inevitable yoke" involves her returning to both of her homes, the brick house and Sunnybrook Farm. At the brick house, Miranda has had a stroke the day before commencement exercises and Rebecca must go there to "settle down to housework again, and to the nursing of that poor, sick, cross old aunt" (296), as her teacher Miss Maxwell puts it. A further misfortune, in the form of an injury to her mother, Aurelia, takes Rebecca back to Sunnybrook Farm and causes her to forego her employment opportunities. There, Rebecca is plunged into the heavy responsibilities of adult womanhood, which includes running the farm: "two months of steady, fagging work; of cooking, washing, ironing; of mending and caring for three children [...]. They were months in which there had been many a weary night of watching by Aurelia's bedside; of soothing and bandaging and rubbing; of reading and nursing, even of feeding and bathing" (306). Scholars note the narrowness of Rebecca's life taking care of the home and her family, especially in contrast with the freedom she has experienced previously.

Kornfeld and Jackson equate her “‘grown-up’ life of housewifery” with the “drudgery of housework” (73) and K. Sellers claims that, “Having been educated and shown the ‘world outside,’ Rebecca is no longer content inside the home. She knows she is made for greater things and longs for the ‘freedom’ of which she has learned” (123). There is no freedom of mobility; Rebecca’s mother calls her “tied hand and foot” by her domestic duties to her aunt and her mother as well as her siblings (Wiggin 318). The transition into adulthood brings with it the burden of domestic duty, the yoke that restricts Rebecca’s movement to a difficult and narrow domestic path.

Growing up, Anne also experiences the opportunities granted by education before having to limit herself to an adulthood in the home. Anne’s career at Queen’s links the process of growing up to going away from home. Her preparations for leaving, culminating in dressing up and performing a poem for her adoptive parents Marilla and Matthew, leave Marilla in tears, saying, “I was wishing you could have stayed a little girl [...]. You’ve grown up now and you’re going away” (Montgomery, *AoGG* 276). Like Rebecca, Anne must journey away in order to attend the Academy, first being driven by Matthew to Charlottetown and later taking the train back on weekend visits before winter sets in (282). Her change in domestic arrangements, however, is less satisfactory than Rebecca’s. She does not create a new home, but instead is homesick living in a “narrow little room” in a genteel boarding house (279). For Anne, school involves distance not only from her home at Green Gables but also homey spaces in general. Her homesickness is only alleviated by her weekend visits back to Avonlea, the place that fulfills her emotional needs for family and social connections.

Despite her longing for home, Anne, like Rebecca, considers career paths that are extra-domestic and that would allow her to distinguish herself. She tells Marilla, “I think when I grow up I’ll be a trained nurse and go with the Red Crosses to the field of battle as a messenger of mercy. That is, if I don’t go out as a foreign missionary” (192). Anne pictures herself in exciting places that are far from the familiar, rural Maritimes in which she has spent her life. Education, however, allows Anne to gain a vision of broadened horizons that are a little closer to home. Learning that she will have the opportunity to try for an Avery scholarship at Queen’s, which supplies “two hundred and fifty dollars a year for four years at Redmond College,” Anne dreams of continuing her education in a way that would take her further from home than Queen’s at the same time that it would give her new intellectual opportunities:

Anne felt her heart beat more quickly, and the horizons of her ambition shifted and broadened as if by magic. Before Josie had told the news Anne's highest pinnacle of aspiration had been a teacher's provincial licence, Class First, at the end of the year, and perhaps the medal! But now in one moment Anne saw herself winning the Avery scholarship, taking an Arts course at Redmond College, and graduating in a gown and mortar-board, all before the echo of Josie's words had died away. (281)

Anne's continued education is described in geographic terms: her "horizons" are expanded and the "pinnacle of aspiration" is moved to a higher spot. Teaching would keep Anne close to Green Gables, but a college education after Queen's would take her out of province.

However, Anne is willing to reconsider her ambitions and reaffirm her connection to Green Gables when the home space is endangered. Anne, as the winner of the Avery scholarship, expects to continue her education by going to Redmond College in the fall, but is happy to return to Green Gables after commencement exercises. This return to the home involves a voluntary resumption of household duties for the summer. She plans to give herself "one day off to visit all the dear old spots" and then "it will be [Marilla's] turn to be lazy while [Anne] does all the work" (290). While this period of domestic life is supposed to be temporary, it turns into Anne's permanent situation with the sudden death of Matthew soon after her return. Matthew's death ushers Anne into adulthood, acting as a turning point, for, as the narrator states, "no life is ever quite the same again when that cold, sanctifying touch has been laid upon it" (292). His death, along with the Cuthberts' financial loss with the failure of the bank and Marilla's potential loss of eyesight, means that Green Gables will have to be sold because there is nobody left to run the farm with Anne going to college, so Anne makes the decision to stay at Green Gables, her home.

Many critics see Anne's choice of the domestic space over the wider world of continued education as a troubling one. Laura M. Robinson states, "Anne's self-sacrifice also reveals the conflicting ideological movements between conformity and agency. [...] Superficially Anne appears to have given in to community pressure—not only is she more demure but she will not go away to school. She has conformed to the domestic ideal" ("Pruned" 216). Similarly, Kornfeld and Jackson describe Anne's decision in terms of domestic oppression, claiming,

The boundaries of the feminine utopia can become oppressive after the girl heroine has passed through adolescence. Although she can dream as much as she wants, duty to her family must be her first concern, even if it gets in the way of her own plans. Anne's

ambition leads her to desire entrance into the traditionally male world of the university. This desire cannot be realized until she has done her duty in the matriarchal world. And even then, Anne cannot leave home. (74)

Domestic duty interrupts the girl's outward trajectory for Anne, in much the same way as for Rebecca. The novel also seems to present Anne's new future as one of restriction, with the narrative stating that "Anne's horizons had closed in" and that she must remain on a "narrow" path with only "flowers of quiet happiness to bloom along it" (Montgomery, *AoGG* 307).

While the entrance into adulthood seems to entail a closing down of possibilities for Rebecca and Anne, their stories are actually left open-ended, leaving new opportunities available for the young women. Puleo sees *Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm*'s ending in this way, stating, "Wiggin's deliberate open ending allowed Rebecca and her child readers, unlike their mothers before them, not to envision adulthood as the ending of freedoms but rather as brimming with an array of exciting possibilities" (375). After Miranda's death and learning that she has inherited the brick house, Rebecca thinks of her future as "close-folded still; folded and hidden in beautiful mists" and whispers the final words of the novel, "God bless the brick house that is to be!" (Wiggin 327). With the added financial benefits to be received by the sale of Sunnybrook Farm to a railroad company, Rebecca's domestic future is bright, even though unknown and very different from what she had expected when graduating. Her ties to the home are further strengthened by ownership, but they are portrayed as a benefit rather than a burden and as something that will be a resource in the mysterious future to come. Anne's future is also unclear, even though it will be confined to the home for the time being. Montgomery allows for the possibility of new opportunities and goals when Anne frames her decision to stay at Green Gables instead of going to Redmond College as a change in ambitions, not as giving them up. She asserts to Marilla, "I'm just as ambitious as ever. Only, I've changed the object of my ambitions. I'm going to be a good teacher—and I'm going to save your eyesight" (Montgomery, *AoGG* 303). These goals do not mean that Anne's future is overdetermined; she tells Marilla, "When I left Queen's my future seemed to stretch out before me like a straight road. [...] Now there is a bend in it. I don't know what lies around the bend, but I'm going to believe that the best does. It has a fascination of its own, that bend, Marilla. I wonder how the road beyond it goes— [...] what curves and hills and valleys further on" (303). While Montgomery raises the idea of the "narrow path" closer to the end of the novel, the penultimate sentence refers back to

“the bend in the road,” a symbol of the unknown future that will be travelled by the young woman, a story that is not as clear and straight as girlhood’s as can be seen in the novel’s portrayal of women.¹⁹

The Variety of Unconventional Womanhood

While women are depicted in these novels as more tightly tied to the home than girls, that depiction does not necessarily denote increased restriction; rather, I propose that such portrayals present women as having greater domestic responsibilities and often, because of the significance of this role societally, greater power, especially over mobility. Women are shown running and owning their own homes, representations that put them in a position of authority. Such authority is not accessible to the girl, who is too young to carry out such duties or take up such property ownership. Although these home responsibilities can be onerous, with all the associated domestic “drudgery” (Kornfeld and Jackson 73) and financial cares, the power conferred through such an important domestic role acts as a compensation. Rebecca, when running Sunnybrook Farm realizes this: “Then there was the satisfaction of being mistress of the poor domain; of planning, governing, deciding; of bringing order out of chaos; of implanting gayety in the place of inert resignation to the inevitable” (Wiggin 308). As “mistress,” Rebecca is able to direct the home rather than being directed while in it. In these novels, this empowerment is accessible only to women.

Frequently, the women who wield this power are demonstrably individualistic, differing both from their counterparts in other novels, unlike idealized girl protagonists, and from their peers within the world of each novel. Characters such as Miranda in *Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm* and Marilla and Mrs. Lynde in *Anne of Green Gables* each have their own particular narrative trajectory and show themselves to be unconventional and masculine as well as, at times, not especially likeable. This masculinity takes different forms, including making use of the privileges of masculinity, such as property ownership, and departing from “the strictures of femininity” (Halberstam 59), such as the expectation of marriage. In spite of, or perhaps because of, these deviations from idealized characteristics, Miranda, Marilla, and Mrs. Lynde are all portrayed with a degree of sympathy that still acknowledges their shortcomings, adding to the complexity of their portrayals. Drain observes, “Marilla and Mrs. Lynde are strong, individual

¹⁹ Drain also sees the bend in the road metaphor as something that “helps the reader as well as Anne to resist premature closure” (“Feminine” 47).

and vital. They have their weaknesses, but they are all of a piece, and undeniably real” (“Feminine” 45). She also calls Mrs. Lynde “the most individual, fully realized character in the book” (47). In the exercise of their power, they can be overbearing or unnecessarily strict, carrying their authority to extremes in their direction of others. Although often less comfortable and endearing than the idealized girl protagonist, unconventional and masculine women hold equally important and powerful roles in their homes, in their communities, and in the novels as they move through them.

The title of *Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm* is misleading, since the primary home in the novel is actually the brick house in Riverboro, the ancestral home of Rebecca’s maternal family, which is owned by Miranda, placing her in a position of prominence and authority within the family unit. Her role as head of the family comes from the stability of her placement within the home, the permanency with which the Sawyers, but especially Miranda, occupy the space of the brick house. In the short passage that introduces and describes Miranda’s character, she is presented as not having followed the standard girl’s trajectory of moving away from the home for education because, we are told, “her desires and ambitions had all pointed to the management of the house, the farm, and the dairy” (Wiggin 33). It is her sisters, Jane and Aurelia, who have “gone to an academy, and also to a boarding-school for young ladies” (33). Miranda’s focus on the home is characterized as an “ambition,” though a different one from the academic dreams of girls like Rebecca and Anne, and it is notable that her ambition involves a desire for authority, to manage. The novel is critical of Miranda in this passage, giving her lack of education as part of the reason for Miranda’s possession of only the “chilly virtues” of being “just, conscientious, economical, industrious,” along with a deficiency of emotional generosity (33). However, there is no doubt that Miranda has attained her personal ambition of managing the house and that she seems satisfied enough with this course of events, a notable contrast from the rather unfulfilling lives of her more educated sisters, who might have lived more emotionally open lives, but have been left unhappy.

As manager of the brick house, Miranda exercises her authority over the home, not just through agency over her own movements, but through directing the movements of others, in particular by determining who is allowed to enter the space. She polices the borders of the house assiduously, and others are allowed to enter only with her acquiescence. Perhaps the most momentous decision she makes in this vein is allowing one of her nieces to come live in the

house with her and her sister Jane. The invitation is framed as coming from both sisters, but the narrative makes it evident that Miranda is the one who is making decisions about the household. She says to Jane, “You’re soft [...]. If’t wa’n’t for me keeping you stiffened up, I b’lieve you’d leak out o’ the house into the dooryard” (35). Miranda’s sternness and uncompromising nature regulate the tone of the household and without her, or at least so she believes, the integrity of the home would fall apart, with Jane “leaking” out of it. Upon Rebecca’s entrance into the home, Miranda applies her characteristic authority to her niece also. She ushers in Rebecca, telling her to “[s]hut the mosquito nettin’ door tight behind you, so’s to keep the flies out” and to “take your passel along with ye and then you won’t have to come down for it; always make your head save your heels. Rub your feet on that braided rug; hang your hat and cape in the entry there as you go past” (37). Miranda instantly takes control of Rebecca’s movements, telling her where to go and what to do and, through this command of Rebecca’s mobility, even how to think. While Miranda’s rule over the household is somewhat tyrannical and overbearing, as evidenced by these two examples, nevertheless, her power is accepted by others as being legitimate.

Part of Miranda’s authority within the home space is grounded in her domestic excellence, her undeniable capability in running the household, even if it is not necessarily pleasant for the other inhabitants. While the property has been home only to the two sisters for some time, Miranda’s running of it has kept them in financially comfortable circumstances. Miranda is clearly able to maintain the agricultural property, even without the help of a man in the management of it. Miranda is shown as equally capable, if not more so, in carrying out traditionally feminine household work. When sudden guests are set to arrive, having been unexpectedly invited by Rebecca, Miranda does not have to worry about the state of her house, even though they have not “had any company for twenty years,” because it is always properly composed (191). Miranda tells Rebecca, “[I]t only shows the good of havin’ a clean house, with every room in order, whether open or shut, and enough victuals cooked so’t you can’t be surprised and belittled by anybody, whatever happens” (194). Having a poorly run house would undermine her authority, leaving her open to being “belittled.” She certainly belittles Aurelia when she tells Jane that she needed to buy a great deal of material to outfit Rebecca, justifying the purchase by stating, “I’ve seen her house” and, she goes on to say, the disorganized sartorial state of its inhabitants (32). In such a place, Miranda believes that nobody could learn the proper domestic skills that she so excels at, and so she is also determined to pass on her knowledge to

Rebecca. Puleo makes clear that Miranda is able to teach both masculine and feminine lessons about home management because of her competence in them. She teaches Rebecca “domestic lessons” like sewing and cleaning as well as lessons in “education and financial solvency” and “[s]kill in managing money,” which Puleo characterizes as “typically a male attribute” (357). Miranda’s running of the house shows off both her masculine and feminine abilities.

Miranda is also constructed as having legitimate power in the brick house because of her legal ownership of the property, which she holds outright and singly as an unmarried woman. Ruth Freeman and Patricia Klaus discuss the circumstances of the spinster in the years surrounding the turn of the century, noting that although women’s “position in nineteenth-century England and America improved as legislatures enacted reforms in property and divorce laws, education, and local suffrage” there were still a number of “demands, restrictions, and inequalities of middle-class marriage” that spinsters could avoid by remaining unmarried (395). The shift in societal attitudes toward the figure of the spinster that Freeman and Klaus see as occurring during this period, a perception of her greater freedoms especially when juxtaposed with the increasingly less sanguine views of marriage, are mirrored in literature. Kornfeld and Jackson describe the depiction of unmarried women in novels like *Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm* and *Anne of Green Gables*: “[T]he spinsters are portrayed quite differently than in American culture in general: not bitter, disillusioned, or unfulfilled, spinsters in these female utopias are independent financially and mentally” (72). While Miranda’s portrayal is not quite “utopian,” she certainly is depicted as “independent financially and mentally” because of her sole ownership of the brick house. With her financial and domestic stability, she presents a marked contrast to married women in the novel like Aurelia and Mrs. Simpson, who both find themselves in financially insecure and even itinerant circumstances because of their husbands’ mismanagement of property. Married women in the text conform to the prevailing view of the time “that a woman’s place was with her husband and her identity was defined by her husband’s” (Brandt et al. 184). Lorenzo Randall’s unsuccessful investments and Mr. Simpson’s “swapping” of other people’s goods push both their wives into enforced mobility and poverty as they move into increasingly impoverished circumstances. It is only when Aurelia takes control of Sunnybrook Farm, Lorenzo’s last investment, that the family’s situation improves at all: “Aurelia managed this herself, and so it proved a home at least, and a place for the unsuccessful Lorenzo to die and be buried from, a duty somewhat too long deferred, many thought” (Wiggin 25).

Miranda avoids such issues by remaining unmarried, holding her property securely under her own management. Even when the bankruptcy of a business that she has invested in causes the Sawyers to lose one hundred dollars of their annual income, pushing them from living in “comfort” to “self-denial,” they are still able to keep their home and put Rebecca through school (243). Much like Miranda’s philosophy of keeping a clean house at all times stands them in good stead when unexpected visitors arrive, her economic management allows them to weather times of sudden financial hardship. As a result, she is, at the end of the novel, able to leave the property to Rebecca.

Miranda, by willing the house to Rebecca, carries on her complex wielding of typically masculine power through legal actions relating to property inheritance, inheriting and passing on the patriarchal authority embodied in home ownership. Patriarchal power, in the novel, is passed down not linearly from father to son but in a much more fluid way from father to daughter to niece. Joe Sutliff Sanders links ownership, including home ownership, to individualism and legal rights (20). Miranda becomes the individual that she is through her own inheritance of the house because it grants her an identity and community status. It was left to her by her father Deacon Israel Sawyer—note the biblical connotations of the name Israel, which was the name given to the patriarch Jacob—, and this inheritance assures her identity as patriarch of the Sawyer clan, which extends to the Randall family matrilineally. As head of the family, she has a say, not only in what is done in her own house, but also in the home of her sister, as when she invites her niece to live with them and be educated by them. Miranda’s community identity also is tied to her home ownership. When Aurelia asks the coach driver taking Rebecca to Riverboro if he knows her sisters, she qualifies the question by stating, “They live in the brick house” (5). It is implied that the stable presence of Miranda and Jane in the patriarchal home grants them prominence in the community; they *should* be known by other inhabitants of Riverboro *because* they “live in the brick house.”

Miranda’s authority is conferred on Rebecca through terms that the novel presents as masculine and patriarchal, like her inheritance of the house and familial role. When Rebecca goes to a missionary meeting and later invites the missionary, who knew Israel Sawyer, and the missionary’s family to stay, it is done with authority granted to her by Miranda and, by extension, Israel Sawyer, though unintentionally. Stuck at home with a cold, Miranda tells Rebecca, “[Y]ou must just go and represent the family” (181). It is in her capacity as family

representative that Rebecca extends her invitation: “My aunts, Miss Miranda and Miss Jane Sawyer, would be very happy to have you visit them at the brick house, as the ministers always used to do when their father was alive. They sent their respects by me.” The narrative emphasizes the civic tone of Rebecca’s speech, stating, “The ‘respects’ might have been the freedom of the city, or an equestrian statue, when presented in this way” (186). When upset at learning about these unexpected guests, Miranda reasserts her status as the home owner in control of the borders of the home, exclaiming, “Then you can explain, if you can, who gave you any authority to invite a passel of strangers to stop here over night, when you know we ain’t had any company for twenty years, and don’t intend to have any for another twenty,—or at any rate while I’m the head of the house” (191). But Rebecca’s right to a share of the power in the house is made clear to both Miranda and the reader by Rebecca’s being seen as, as the chapter title states, “Deacon Israel’s Successor.” Miranda is eventually “mollified” because “Rebecca had comported herself as the granddaughter of Deacon Israel Sawyer should” (194) by extending the hospitality of the house in the same manner as her grandfather. Home ownership and control are depicted in this way as masculine inheritances that can be coopted by female characters.

Miranda’s creation of a will in order to legally pass on the house and its associated power to Rebecca can also be seen as a taking on of masculine privilege, because it involves making use of the law and the authority granted to it by the state, purviews considered masculine. When Miranda tells Jane about her plans for after her death, she does so in a way that emphasizes both control over the movement of people into, out of, and within the brick house and the legal aspect of her actions. She says to Jane,

Don’t tell Rebecca I’ve willed her the brick house. She won’t git it till I’m gone, and I want to take my time ’bout dyin’ and not be hurried off by them that’s goin’ to profit by it; nor I don’t want to be thanked, neither. I s’pose she’ll use the front stairs as common as the back and like as not have water brought into the kitchen, but mebbe when I’ve been dead a few years I shan’t mind. She sets such store by you, she’ll want you to have your home here as long’s you live, but anyway I’ve wrote it down that way; though Lawyer Burns’s wills don’t hold more’n half the time. He’s cheaper, but I guess it comes out jest the same in the end. I wan’t goin’ to have the fust man Rebecca picks up for a husband turnin’ you ou’doors. (304)

Through her process of passing on property, Miranda both worries over and accepts the movements that she might not be able to control, such as which people will be allowed to stay or be asked to leave the home. She ensures the feminine control over the space by taking legal means to make sure that Rebecca's hypothetical future husband cannot take over the power that Miranda wills to Rebecca. Much of her concern is related to the possibility of a male presence in the house. The idea of a boy in the house is disturbing to her, and when she tells Jane that Aurelia and the children can move into the brick house after her death, she asserts at first, "I won't have Mark" (304). Eventually she relents on the grounds that "it's a terrible risk splittin' up families [...]; they'd never come to no good, an' everybody would keep rememberin' their mother was a Sawyer" (305). As the patriarch, Miranda feels it is her duty to maintain domestic integrity, both of the family unity and the dignity of the patronymic. Although Miranda passes out of the novel with her death, her power over the house and family has a lingering presence, and Miranda makes it available for Rebecca to wield as she sees fit.

Montgomery's depiction of women characters also involves a mixing of masculine and feminine traits and prerogatives, with the women asserting authority through their connections to the home, though in different, and overall more kindly, ways from those portrayed by Wiggin in *Miranda*. Marilla, in her interactions with Matthew in the running of *Green Gables* and with the community of Avonlea, demonstrates a fine balance between dominance and compromise, acquiescence and independence that speaks to the complexity of her character. Mrs. Lynde, in contrast, is a far more assertive personality, particularly in her home, but she holds a prominent position in the community and is characterized as someone whose beneficial power could have an even further reach. While they excel in domestic work, they are also shown to be interested in less traditionally feminine fields such as politics, an interest that none of Wiggin's adult female characters seem to have. The agency that they exercise over their movement, as they move in and out of their homes, mirrors the independence with which they live their lives, an independence that does not always make them popular amongst their peers and sometimes appears as a character flaw to the reader, although not one that overshadows their good qualities. Drain remarks on how other, more idealized women characters like Mrs. Allan and Miss Stacy, "moral and intellectual ideals," are less "believable" ("Feminine" 45). Similarly, Gillian Thomas sees the more idealized Anne's movement into adulthood as a "decline" from "a spirited individualist" to a "dreary conformist" (24). In contrast, Marilla and Mrs. Lynde, with all their

faults, are vivid presences in *Anne of Green Gables*, frequently intervening directly in the action of the novel, and they exhibit forms of a compelling empowerment that involves a refusal to slavishly follow convention as well as a fluid mixing of femininity and masculinity.

The initial description of Marilla as “a woman of narrow experience and rigid conscience” while also having “a saving something about her mouth which, if it had been ever so slightly developed, might have been considered indicative of a sense of humor” (Montgomery, *AoGG* 5) exemplifies the balancing act that I propose is characteristic of Marilla: she is able to embody more than one quality at one time, even when these qualities are somewhat at odds. Marilla possesses many of the conventional attributes of a middle-class Avonlea woman, while also exercising her individualism and independence by departing from them when she chooses. Emily Cardinali Cormier recognizes that Marilla is not a “household drudge” and “does not express resentment about her position in the household or society—quite the opposite—she is proud of her housekeeping skills” (207-208). Her feminine domestic skills are made evident from the beginning when she is introduced concurrently with Green Gables, the descriptions reinforcing the characteristics of each other and emphasizing the connection between Marilla and her home. The spotless yard illustrates Marilla’s conscientious housekeeping, though the out-of-the-way location of the house is tied, at least in Mrs. Lynde’s opinion, to Marilla and her brother being “a little odd” (Montgomery, *AoGG* 3). What this oddness consists of is never made clear, but Marilla’s willingness to be unconventional is evident throughout the text.

Sanders describes the home as a place “which allows security, which allows possession, which allows individualism” (20), and Marilla, as a comfortable co-owner of the house with her brother, uses it as a space to exercise her individualism. There she asserts her identity to Anne through her name, telling Anne that she cannot call her “Aunt Marilla” or “Miss Cuthbert,” but must call her “just plain Marilla” (Montgomery, *AoGG* 54). She states, “Everybody, young and old, in Avonlea calls me Marilla except the minister. He says Miss Cuthbert—when he thinks of it” (54). Rather than a title that defines her in relation to others, such as Aunt, or a title that marks her marital status, titles that seem to be used with almost all other women, Marilla affirms her identity as an individual, sufficient unto herself and also different from others like Mrs. Lynde, Mrs. Allan, and Miss Stacy. She also departs from conservative values in her housekeeping when she likes, choosing to hold on to the “currant wine for which she was celebrated in Avonlea, although certain of the stricter sort [...] disapproved strongly of it” (127). While she has stopped

making it, knowing that the minister also disapproves, she does not remove it from the home, keeping it instead “for sickness” (128). Exercising authority over the movements of people and objects in and out of the home, like Miranda, Marilla is less strict in her use of this power and allows for innovation. When she invites the new minister and his wife, Mr. and Mrs. Allan, over for tea, she makes sure to have a splendid variety of food to offer in order “not to be eclipsed by any of the Avonlea housekeepers” (171-72), a comparison showing that this type of gastronomical display is the convention in the rural town. However, she also allows Anne to decorate the table with flowers and greenery, an occurrence that is depicted as much rarer, since Marilla initially feels it unnecessary and the decoration at Mrs. Barry’s table is seen as worthy of comment by Mr. Allan (174). While Marilla enjoys holding ultimate agency over the movement of objects into and out of her home, she is also willing to temper her authority by considering the opinions of others before exercising her independence.

Perhaps the greatest departure from convention that Marilla makes about the permeability of the border of her home is her adoption of Anne, by which she assumes the role of motherhood without any attempt at wifedom. When Marilla tells Mrs. Lynde that she and Matthew have decided to adopt a child, it is described as “an unheard of innovation” (5). Through this decision, Marilla not only brings a new member within the bounds of the home, but also brings a new member into the community of Avonlea. Her unmarried status makes her an unusual mother in Avonlea, but she is determined to take on the raising of Anne and to do so in her own way, rarely accepting advice from either Matthew, with whom she is co-parenting, or Mrs. Lynde, who is her friend as well as an experienced mother. Marilla’s decision to become a mother seems to reinforce traditional notions of essentialized traits equating womanhood with an inborn maternalism. Marilla asserts her greater suitability for raising a child compared to Matthew by saying, “Perhaps an old maid doesn’t know much about bringing up a child, but I guess she knows more than an old bachelor” (47-48). However, Monika Hilder sees the two adoptive parents as carrying out a gendered role reversal: “‘Just like a woman,’ Matthew is a gentle listener who is emotionally attuned to Anne. And Marilla, ‘just like a patriarch,’ sometimes disparages his emotional connection with Anne” (218).²⁰

²⁰ For more on the push and pull of radicalism and conservatism in adoption narratives from this period, see Claudia Nelson’s “Nontraditional Adoption in Progressive-Era Orphan Narratives.” Nelson argues that these stories “evince considerable willingness to separate parenthood from (hetero)sexuality,” reflecting real-life “non-traditional adoption,” which “could challenge both the patriarchal family and heterosexist reproductive norms” (182-183).

At Green Gables, Marilla helps construct an environment that rejects strict gendered norms and promotes instead a cooperative household in which each member takes on an equal role without much regard for what is conventionally gender appropriate. Marilla has an equal say to Matthew with regard to how Green Gables is run. When Anne is mistakenly sent to them after they request a boy orphan to help Matthew with farm work, Marilla has the final say on whether or not Anne will stay; Matthew tells her, “Well now, it’s just as you say, of course, Marilla” (Montgomery, *AoGG* 29), even while Marilla values Matthew’s opinion. She is unable to dismiss his desire to keep Anne, eventually saying to him, “[S]ince you seem to want her, I suppose I’m willing—or have to be. I’ve been thinking over the idea until I’ve got kind of used to it” (47). When bad-tempered and demanding Mrs. Blewett wants to take Anne into her home, Marilla puts off making a decision in the moment by telling her,

I didn’t say that Matthew and I had absolutely decided that we wouldn’t keep her. In fact, I may say that Matthew is disposed to keep her. I just came over to find out how the mistake had occurred. I think I’d better take her home again and talk it over with Matthew. I feel that I oughtn’t to decide on anything without consulting him. If we make up our mind not to keep her we’ll bring or send her over to you tomorrow night. (46)

Marilla, using terms like “we” and “us,” emphasizes the communal decision making that takes place at Green Gables.

Labour is also split up without strict policing of gendered work. Cormier notes that although Anne is not thought of as suitable for particular types of farm work, she clearly does labour on the farm that is not specifically thought of as feminine, as evidenced by Anne’s chores being done by Matthew when she is too tired to do them. Cormier observes that this shows “both that her farm responsibilities were vital to Green Gables, and that the farm chores are gender-flexible, to some degree. After all, if the gender structure were inflexible, then Anne’s chores would have been picked up by Marilla, not Matthew” (208-209). The ease with which Marilla and Matthew move between conventionally gendered roles is mirrored by their free movements in and around Green Gables. Matthew might do the farming and move awkwardly about the house—we are told that “he had never been upstairs in his own house since the spring he helped Marilla paper the spare bedroom, and that was four years ago”—but he still spends his time in the house moving “between the kitchen and the little bedroom off the hall” rather than in any particular masculine apartment (Montgomery, *AoGG* 71). Conversely, Marilla, rather than

remaining cloistered in the house, goes out to “bring the cows from the back pasture” (71) and takes the “mare and buggy” to go to White Sands (35), movements that are treated as regular occurrences.

Mrs. Lynde, like Miranda, is a dominant authority in her home, because she is an exemplary housekeeper. But she also wields her universally acknowledged housekeeping abilities as justification for her involvement in a wide variety of other, more public, fields. As Drain notes, “She combines an inexhaustible domestic energy with insatiable curiosity and decided views about the community in which she is an active participant (some would say busybody) and about the larger world, too” (“Feminine” 47). Her mere presence seems to be enough to exert control over others, including her husband, Thomas Lynde, who is “a meek little man whom Avonlea people called ‘Rachel Lynde’s husband’” (Montgomery, *AoGG* 2). Even the brook that runs past her house is “a quiet, well-conducted little stream, for not even a brook could run past Mrs. Rachel Lynde’s door without due regard for decency and decorum” (1). However, she does not restrict her influence to only her own household. Mrs. Lynde is established at the beginning of the novel as “one of those capable creatures who can manage their own concerns and those of other folks into the bargain. She was a notable housewife; her work was always done and well done” (1). Her domestic excellence is noted both by the narrator as well as by other Avonlea housewives, who are in awe of the number of “‘cotton warp’ quilts” she has knitted while sitting at her window (2). Her reputation for capability and domestic skill seems to justify her involvement in other matters of the community outside of her own home. She certainly holds such a belief, as indicated by her assertion that it is “good housekeeping” that makes a minister’s wife suited for public service (170). Mrs. Lynde has an integral role in all the feminine community groups: “she ‘ran’ the Sewing Circle, helped run the Sunday-school, and was the strongest prop of the Church Aid Society and Foreign Missions Auxiliary” (1). All this activity demonstrates the way in which she excels at traditionally feminine tasks both inside and outside the home.

However, Mrs. Lynde is also a prominent presence in Avonlea in areas that are not strictly feminine, in part because of the situation of her home, which is placed on the main road into Avonlea so that “anybody who went out of it or into it had to [...] run the unseen gauntlet of Mrs. Rachel’s all-seeing eye” (2). Mrs. Lynde promotes the movement of people and information through her conveniently situated home, making it function as a space that mixes both public and

private communications and events. Lynde's Hollow thus does away with the private/public dichotomy that is supposed to keep the feminine home distinct and separate from the masculine public sphere. Mrs. Lynde sits "at her window, keeping a sharp eye on everything that passed, from brooks and children up" (1), demonstrating the connection of her home to the wider community, as she keeps an eye on all the business off the community without ever leaving her home. She has Mr. and Mrs. Allan, important community figures as the minister and his wife, boarding at her house when they first arrive in Avonlea. Their presence encourages even more people to come to her home as various curious neighbours come for a glimpse of the newcomers (168-69). On another occasion, when Anne gets in trouble at school, Marilla goes to Mrs. Lynde, confident that she will both be aware of what has occurred and that she will be able to dispense useful parenting advice. True to form, Mrs. Lynde already knows all about the situation because "Tillie Boulter was in on her way home from school and told [her] about it" (117) and gives Marilla sound advice that she gratefully, and rather uncharacteristically, accepts. People and information move freely into Mrs. Lynde's house, and this influx gives her prominence in the community as she takes charge of various Avonlea matters, mingling public and private through the space of her home.

While the outside world frequently comes to her, Mrs. Lynde is not a static presence remaining in her home; she also ventures out of the ideological space of domestic affairs and the physical space of the home in order to engage in whatever interests her, including typically masculine pursuits like the marketplace and politics, but without ever jeopardizing her status as a proper housewife and housekeeper. Drain observes this aspect of her character, saying, "For Mrs. Lynde, woman's true sphere includes national politics and an up-to-date knowledge of all the disasters that happen outside Avonlea" ("Feminine" 47). Mrs. Lynde's knowledge of the marketplace involves both financial investing and the manufacture of foodstuffs. She warns the Cuthberts about the insecurity of the Abbey Bank having heard "some talk about it" (Montgomery, *AoGG* 291). Once again, her sources of information are reliable and the Abbey Bank soon fails. While her opinion on food manufacture has less of a direct impact on those around her, it takes on an interesting political element that links her with contemporary suffrage ideologies. Anne, when baking a cake for Mr. and Mrs. Allan's visit, recounts Mrs. Lynde's opinions about baking powder: "Mrs. Lynde says you can never be sure of getting good baking powder nowadays when everything is so adulterated. Mrs. Lynde says the Government ought to

take the matter up, but she says we'll never see the day when a Tory Government will do it" (173). Mrs. Lynde's political interest in food echoes real life suffrage movements of the time. Jessica Derleth explains that "suffragists utilized widespread fears about unreliable food manufacturing to argue for their cause" (438) and argued that enfranchisement would allow women to have a greater say in food legislation and the safety of food that they were feeding their families. Here, Mrs. Lynde aligns herself (if perhaps unintentionally) with contemporary suffragist politics that made use of traditional gender ideologies linking women and the home while arguing for political progressivism.

Perhaps one of the most surprising and unconventional sides of Mrs. Lynde's character is her deep investment in politics, in spite of her outspoken opposition to women's involvement in a wide range of fields that she considers exclusively the domain of men. She worries about the first female teacher in Avonlea being "a dangerous innovation" (Montgomery, *AoGG* 182), claims that she does not "believe in girls going to college with the men and cramming their heads full of Latin and Greek and all that nonsense" (304), and considers it to "be a scandalous thing" for women to be ministers (251). However, as Drain suggests, "the reader and Anne would do well to judge by Mrs. Lynde's practice rather than by her words" ("Feminine" 47). Mrs. Lynde's actions show a disregard for traditional gender roles, especially as they concern politics. She leaves home to go to a political rally in Charlottetown featuring the Prime Minister, and she is described as "a red-hot politician" who "couldn't have believed that the political rally could be carried through without her, although she was on the opposite side of politics" (Montgomery, *AoGG* 138) and has no legal right to vote in federal elections. She is the driving force behind attending the rally with Marilla, bringing her husband along only because he "would be useful in looking after the horse" (138).²¹ Mrs. Lynde is outspoken in her political beliefs: Anne tells Matthew, "Mrs. Lynde says Canada is going to the dogs the way things are being run at Ottawa, and that it's an awful warning to the electors. She says if women were allowed to vote we would soon see a blessed change" (140). The woman who believes that female teachers might be "a dangerous innovation" at a time when teaching was considered "one of the few professions

²¹ Mrs. Lynde is not alone as a woman with political interest. The novel states that "nearly all the men and a goodly proportion of the women" of Avonlea also attend the rally, and Marilla is described as having "a sneaking interest in politics herself" (138). In another gender reversal, Matthew stays home with Anne to "keep house" (138). Anne, in contrast with the women, seems to have little real engagement with politics. She affiliates with the political party of her household (Conservative) just because it is their party. Her interest in the matter primarily lies in the fact that it is different from Gilbert Blythe's political party (140).

deemed appropriate for women as it was seen to tap into their innate maternal instincts” (Galletly 28) is also convinced that women should have the vote in order to improve the nation’s governance. Mrs. Lynde takes a position that is controversial and somewhat radical for both the setting of the novel as well as the year in which it was published, since Canadian women were still nearly ten years away from the beginning of federal enfranchisement.

Parliament is not the only arena that Mrs. Lynde sees herself as being qualified to move into, and other characters also imagine Mrs. Lynde in unconventional roles. These speculations echo the real-life graduation predictions made by students for their peers, and they show that new and unusual opportunities can be equally as open to mature women as young ones. The narrator pictures Mrs. Lynde involved in provincial politics when she comments on Avonlea school and Mr. Phillips’s questionable teaching: she “shook her head, as much as to say if she were only at the head of the educational system of the Province things would be much better managed” (Montgomery, *AoGG* 118). Mrs. Lynde correctly values her management skills and sees them, in the same way that suffragists did, as being transferrable from the home to the public sphere. Anne observes the capacity of women in general and Mrs. Lynde in particular to fill positions that they are not currently allowed to hold, while also linking domestic ability to other public work. Responding to Mrs. Lynde’s typical response to the idea of female ministers, that such a thing would be “scandalous,” Anne tells Marilla, “I think women would make splendid ministers. When there is a social to be got up or a church tea of anything else to raise money the women have to turn to and do the work. I’m sure Mrs. Lynde can pray every bit as well as Superintendent Bell and I’ve no doubt she could preach too with a little practice” (251). Although Marilla replies sardonically that Mrs. Lynde “does plenty of unofficial preaching as it is” (251) and that “she’d have more of an influence for good [...] if she didn’t keep nagging people to do right” (252), Marilla also admits, “I shouldn’t talk so. Rachel is a good Christian woman and she means well. There isn’t a kinder soul in Avonlea and she never shirks her share of work” (252). Mrs. Lynde, with her outspoken opinions and way of moving out of her household into the business of others, is often an uncomfortable and irritating presence for others, but she is also recognized as an especially valuable one.

Adult women like Mrs. Lynde, Miranda, and Marilla are situated closely to the home, but their power and authority in those spaces can give them the agency to do as they like when, and how, they like, without considering others. Not all women are so lucky, and disappointing

romances are often the cause of unfulfilling adult lives, but women with authority in their homes, whether through legal means or ideological ones such as domestic excellence or cooperative housekeeping, can leverage that authority in other areas of their lives. In contrast, while idealized girl protagonists move outward from the home pursuing the benefits of education, their ability to influence others is based on their powers of persuasion. As such, they need to be “remarkable and winning” (Wiggin 151) like Rebecca and Anne and have “wonderful eyes” (152) that convince others to do what they usually would not; they cannot enjoy the freedom of being unlikeable if they want to exert power. The freedom that these women have to carry out their own wills speaks to an optimism in these novels about the options available to mature women; they acknowledge that opportunities might close down as girls enter womanhood but that new, and possibly better, ones can arise.

Involvement in public matters, such as the law, the marketplace, or the political arena, areas that are typically considered masculine, is depicted as acceptable for mature women. Though their involvement in these fields is not idealized—Miranda’s decision to create a will is nearly as despotic as the way she runs the brick house throughout the novel, and Mrs. Lynde’s interest in politics is almost comically illogical at times—they are still depicted as actively engaging in these issues. The outcomes of their involvement act as a justification for this involvement in areas traditionally deemed under masculine purview: Rebecca’s inheritance of the brick house will allow her family to live there in comfort and financial security, and Marilla and Mrs. Lynde are proven right in their suspicions about the Abbey Bank and following their inclinations would have saved the Green Gables household from a great deal of hardship. These novels suggest that mature women not only can participate in public issues but that they should, and that their experience and knowledge are of particular value to society.

Chapter Five

The Public Lives of Nellie L. McClung and L.M. Montgomery

Born only a year apart, in 1873 and 1874 respectively, Nellie L. McClung and L.M. Montgomery shared a remarkable number of similarities throughout their lives. They were both raised on rural farms, McClung in Ontario and later Manitoba and Montgomery on Prince Edward Island, in families of Scottish descent (or, in McClung's case, Scotch-Irish). They also left their rural homes as young women in order to pursue educational opportunities in urban centres. And they both spent time teaching in rural schools before marrying into families with religious connections; McClung's father-in-law was a minister, as was Montgomery's husband. Most significantly for this study, in 1908 they both published their first novels, *Sowing Seeds in Danny* and *Anne of Green Gables*, which quickly became bestsellers, launching their authors into celebrity and public life. What did this change mean for them, this transformation from private individuals into public figures? In spite of all their similarities, McClung and Montgomery chose very different strategies to deal with their celebrity. And, as a result, the lasting image of these two women is profoundly different: McClung is primarily remembered as a politician and member of the Famous Five (the successful petitioners in appealing the Persons Case), while Montgomery continues to be best known as the author of *Anne of Green Gables* and other girls' novels.

In previous chapters, I have explored how girls and women were imagined as engaging with the public sphere, whether through village improvement, social work, or political activity. Within the carefully constructed world of the novel, authors have control over the actions and reactions of the characters and the situations in which they are placed, but such complete control is unattainable in the real world. This chapter takes as its focus the public personas that McClung and Montgomery constructed in the early years of their celebrity and how the authors navigated the real world conventions, expectations, and opportunities that they were faced with. I argue that McClung chose to present a unified public self that was deeply rooted in her seemingly private role of wife and mother, successfully leveraging this role as well as her literary celebrity to facilitate her work as a political activist, in particular during the provincial campaigning that took place in the 1914 election year. In contrast, Montgomery attempted to maintain a separation between, on the one hand, her public roles as celebrity author and minister's wife and, on the

other hand, what she thought of as her private self. She did this while simultaneously dealing with media representations of her that frequently competed with or contradicted the personas she presented. The result was an eventual privileging by the public of an idealized, domestic version of her that downplayed her political activism. I propose that differences between the two authors' experiences are made evident through their uses of mobility, both their physical movements as embodied individuals as they travelled and the circulation of their public image through various print media.

The creation of a literary celebrity, like McClung or Montgomery, involves the use of media to circulate an image of the author to the public for consumption, resulting in a complex interaction between the author, the media, and the public. Anders Ohlsson et al. consider a celebrity to be someone who is well-known to the general public and whose visibility is “due to intense media representation” (34-35). In addition, Rebecca Braun and Emily Spiers see literary celebrity as part of “a process”; they add that “the authors would not be widely visible without the process” (451). Circulation of the persona of the author is necessary for the existence of any sort of public presence, and this circulation is only possible through the process of media distribution. A wide variety of media, including public appearances, newspaper and magazine articles, memoirs, photographic images, and even, to some degree, their fiction, which was often read as autobiographical, presented the celebrity personas of McClung and Montgomery to the public. However, as Braun and Spiers go on to point out, “[L]iterary celebrities should not be seen as merely the passive construction of interpretive forces or the market result of celebrity processes” (451), because authors often “also knowingly construct themselves in their own texts” (450). Authors may be able to exercise a degree of agency over their representation, even while it is influenced by other, sometimes competing, public images. McClung and Montgomery both clearly had some sort of idea about the public persona that they wished to convey, as evidenced by their publication of memoirs and the fairly consistent selves that they presented in interviews, but it was not always the one promoted by publishers, print media publications, or audiences, who had their own agendas and motivations. All these groups demonstrated interest in giving access to the public of the private author.

Celebrity, as a process or mechanism, both makes evident and muddles the public-private divide. Chris Rojek, drawing on George Herbert Mead, delineates the difference between “the *I* (the ‘veridical’ self) and the *Me* (the self as seen by others)” (11) that is highlighted by

celebrities. Stella Tillyard remarks on the historical beginnings of celebrity and public interest in celebrities' private lives, stating, "Celebrity was born at the moment private life became a tradeable commodity" (25). For this commoditization to occur, there must be a perception of a separation of private and public, such that the private can be made public. The celebrity, or commoditized private individual, located at this junction, is accessed by the general public through something that Joseph Roach calls "public intimacy," which is "the illusion of availability" (3). Public intimacy allows the celebrity to seem "at once touchable and transcendent" (Roach 16), blurring the line between the private and the public while simultaneously reinforcing it. As bestselling authors, McClung and Montgomery gained the elevated status associated with celebrity, acquiring some of the "transcendent" quality that Roach describes while also creating a desire amongst an audience or marketplace for more of the private individual, to make the author "touchable" or, to use Tillyard's words, "a tradeable commodity." McClung and Montgomery thus needed to curate the part of them that would become commoditized and that would move from the private domain of their selves into the public realm, a decision that was especially fraught because they were women.

McClung and Montgomery had to negotiate gender conventions associating the feminine with the private and the domestic that affected them as middle-class women while still successfully maintaining their roles as public figures. Tillyard comments on the role of gender in celebrity: "[Celebrity] had, and still has, a more feminine face than fame, because private life, and the kind of virtue around which reputations could pivot, were both seen to reside in femininity and women" (25). Lorraine York observes something similar when she remarks, "For women writers in particular, the performance [of celebrity] may involve handling prurient curiosity about the terms of their private domestic situations" (4). For McClung and Montgomery, celebrity reinforced an already existing ideology of separate spheres that they had grown up with. Helen Jones notes that even with all the changes in gender prescriptions for women of the late-nineteenth century, "it was not easy for women to step outside nineteenth-century middle-class culture with its artificially devised ideal public and paid world of men, and private and unpaid world of women" (9). Gail Cuthbert Brandt et al. also describe the continued domestic role of women at this time: "For most married women the centre of the world was indeed the home" (185). While Montgomery was not married at the time of *Anne of Green Gables*'s publication, she married Ewen Macdonald soon after, in 1911; McClung had been

married many years by the time she published *Sowing Seeds in Danny*. Managing their homes and caring for their families were important concerns for both of them and ones that they attempted, not always successfully, to balance with their public activities, whether writing for pay or travelling for lecture tours. This balancing act, however, does not mean that they kept their domestic existence segregated from the public. Instead, McClung and Montgomery used select aspects of their private lives to cultivate their desired public selves.

Part of their public identities that was inextricably tied to their private selves was their national identity as Canadians, a quality that had prominence because the settings of their popular novels were also Canadian. York explores the link between literary celebrity and nationality, stating, “If celebrity marks the uneasy space wherein the single, special individual and the group demographic both meet and separate, then citizenship, as a condition wherein the individual and the group mutually define each other, is a prime expression of that uneasy space” (5). McClung and Montgomery existed at the intersection of these two uneasy spaces, attempting to define themselves as Canadian women authors while also helping define what that meant in and of itself, what a Canadian woman author was, at a moment in history that Cecily Devereux calls “the beginning of a nationalist ‘Renaissance’ in English Canada” (“Writing” 261), which included a resurgence of interest in Canadian literature (259).²² In part, for them as well as their public, being a Canadian woman author meant getting involved with Canadian political issues, including attempts to define national identity and literature, the campaign for women’s enfranchisement, and the First World War. Their stances on these issues were informed by their identities as white, Anglo Canadian women authors who saw the national identifier of ‘Canadian’ as denoting other people like themselves, and they believed that it was these people who should have a role in the literature and politics of the nation.

McClung and Montgomery did not simply promote their own particular political views, although McClung did when she gave political speeches; the public also sought their opinions on these issues and cared about how these literary women felt about current events. As a result, McClung and Montgomery had to determine how many of their personal political values they

²² They were not alone in this endeavour; popular Canadian writers such as E. Pauline Johnson and Marshall Saunders were contemporaries. They are excluded from this study because Johnson did not write domestic fiction and Saunders has not enjoyed the same longevity in the national consciousness as McClung and Montgomery. It is worth noting, however, that McClung may have been influenced by Johnson. She saw Johnson perform and was greatly impressed, calling on Johnson afterward, having her over for dinner, and later carrying on a correspondence with her (*Stream* 338-339).

were willing to share with the public and consider how such disclosures might affect their public images. Several newspaper and magazine articles attest to the public interest in McClung's and Montgomery's political views on current issues such as national identity and literature, women's rights, and the Great War, often with similar questions being asked of the authors by different publications. But McClung and Montgomery could also be proactive in sharing their political stances, especially since the widespread reach that celebrities have, their recognition by a large public, gave them a venue in which to dispense political views and be heard by a large audience. McClung certainly made canny use of her literary celebrity in order to create a platform for her political agenda at the beginning of her involvement in politics. She also published a political polemic, *In Times Like These*, in 1915, which addressed women's political role and the War. The fiction of both of the authors— in particular Montgomery's *Rilla of Ingleside* and McClung's *Purple Springs*, both of which were published in 1921— also contains political views about these women's roles and the War. McClung and Montgomery, as women sharing political views with the public, crossed ideological borders separating private from public, regardless of whether their motivation was to satisfy their publics or to promote their own agendas.

Mobility is an integral part of the celebrity process or mechanism, and this mobility takes different forms that occur simultaneously. There is the movement of information about the celebrity from private life to public display. There is also the physical movement of the celebrity body into public spaces as the celebrity makes public appearances. Lastly, there is the circulation of the celebrity persona in different forms of media, such as photographs, interviews, and memoirs. McClung and Montgomery frequently travelled in their capacity as public figures, most often to give speeches and make public appearances. While McClung entered unambiguously public spaces like the Manitoba Legislature and the stages of theatres in order to carry out political aims, Montgomery made personal visits to stay with friends, visits that also included attending public events, such as luncheons and committee meetings, blending the private and the public. Their presence in public spaces allowed them to be seen, to make them literally “touchable” (Roach 16) in their physical manifestation. The presence of the person in addition to the persona creates a convergence of the public and the private within a singular moment that involves the public, an experience that cannot be replicated in other mediums like printed interviews or photographs.

A more amorphous form of celebrity mobility involves the circulation of personas in print media, personas that other authors could have a hand in constructing. Circulating a public persona in print form, especially for authors who are known initially to their audiences by their writing, becomes a complex negotiation of control as depictions of the celebrity by various authors come into play. Autobiographical and self-authored material, like the six-part memoir that Montgomery wrote for *Everywoman's World* (*The Alpine Path: The Story of My Career* [1917]) or the diaries that she kept throughout her life—which she would copy, revise, and alter—and expected to have published eventually, seem to offer the most control to the author over her public presentation. They were curated by the author herself, and she could choose to include, or exclude, what she wished to circulate amongst her public.²³ Accounts written by others, such as newspaper and magazine articles, although they might include interviews with the author or direct quotations from the author, challenge the exclusive agency of the celebrity author to construct her own persona by, in some cases, creating competing personas for public consumption. (Even articles that directly quote the author could be framed in ways that distort the author's original meaning.) These coexisting personas could become a particularly pernicious problem because of the habit of publications of the time of recycling material from other publications, perpetuating the circulation of a persona that was created outside of the celebrity author's control. McClung and her family were careful about what fodder they might provide for the Conservative press (McClung, *Stream* 407), which often tried to undermine the integrity of McClung's carefully cultivated public persona. Montgomery was also portrayed by the media in ways that, perhaps more insidiously than in McClung's case, undermined her self-presentation, as I explore in more detail below.

In this study of McClung's and Montgomery's celebrity personas, I examine the way in which these public personas operate at the intersection of various aspects of their identities: gender, nationality, authorhood, and politics. In particular, I look at the period of 1908-1915 for McClung and 1908-1921 for Montgomery, when these authors were first coming to terms with their new status as celebrities and formulating their public selves, within the context of national issues of the time. I will first examine their move into public life, focusing on how their literary

²³ McClung also published an autobiography in two parts, *Clearing in the West* (1935) and *The Stream Runs Fast* (1945), but at a later time than I deal with here, although I examine some of the incidents that she writes about that do fall in the appropriate time frame, primarily concerning her Manitoba political campaign in 1914. The integrity of McClung's autobiographies as factual accounts has also been called into question (Fiamengo, "Legacy" 78).

celebrity pushed them from being private individuals into being public figures. I will also explore the role of gender in the construction of a public self, how McClung and Montgomery presented themselves as women who were also literary celebrities. My focus, however, will primarily be on their engagement with public life as it concerns political matters, and the very different ways in which McClung and Montgomery grappled with gender and national issues, including women's suffrage, the First World War, and national literature and identity, and their self-presentation in relation to these issues. I will look at their physical movements, such as McClung's time on the campaign trail and Montgomery's first visit to Boston, as formative moments in the construction of their public personas, personas that would continue to circulate in various forms in print media. I also give special attention to how McClung and Montgomery moved outside the home, leaving the domestic sphere for the public, and how they attempted to navigate the ideological implications of such a movement by using strategies that relied on conventional ideas of femininity.

McClung the Woman

Upon entering the public realm of politics, McClung was remarkably consistent in her self-presentation to the public as a capable and devoted family woman whose political activities were simply an extension of familial duty, her life a cohesive union of the seemingly separate ideological spheres of private and public. McClung leveraged her identities as woman and political activist in such a way as to have them mutually supporting each other: she made a good politician, she claimed, because she was a woman and to be a good woman she needed to be a politician. In simultaneously asserting her identities as a domestic woman and as a public woman, specifically as a combination of author and political activist, McClung presented herself as unified, as the same person regardless of whether she is in the home or in Parliament. As a celebrity who is perpetually "touchable" or present, with her public persona overlapping her private self at all times, she epitomizes a sort of mastery over Roach's idea of public intimacy. It is this perpetual reinforcement of a singular public identity, by McClung as well as others, that I propose was integral to McClung's success as a public figure as well as the longevity of her public persona, which is still remembered today. Although best known now as a political activist—an MLA, one of the Famous Five, an active member in the Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU), and a founder of the Political Equality League—her literary work formed the foundation for her status as a celebrity.

McClung saw her entrance into public life as a metaphorical journey, but it also involved her physical travel to different locations, sometimes far from home. She saw her engagement in public life, particularly public speaking, as tied to movement, comparing herself, when she saw the impact that she could have as a speaker influencing others, to a “traveller who sees through the mist the towers of the great city” (*Stream* 358). McClung also linked her literary career to her active participation in political causes, seeing that her popularity as an author gave her a platform for promoting social change; in her 1945 autobiography *The Stream Runs Fast*, she remembers that “in 1908 *Sowing Seeds in Danny* appeared, and became the best seller of the year in Canada, and did very well in the U.S.A. too” and that the book’s popularity “led [her] into a new field of adventure” of doing a public reading in Winnipeg to raise money for the WCTU Home for Friendless Girls (370-371). Prior to this public reading, she had only made one public speech for a WCTU Convention in 1907. Other engagements quickly followed the Winnipeg reading; Linda McDowell asserts that she had “100 readings in Manitoba in 1911” and that she could command audiences of “as many as 3 000 people out in Brandon” (“Political”). The chronology of these events reveals that McClung’s initial draw was her popularity as a novelist, that her literary celebrity prompted people to want to get close to her and hear her personally speak her words.

Although she continued to be a popular author throughout her life, McClung gained even greater fame through her political work, particularly on the issue of women’s suffrage. This increased celebrity was noted by Mary Josephine Trotter, who, in an article on “Prominent Women” from August 1914, states, “This political fame of Mrs. McClung’s is a recent acquisition. Her reputation throughout the Dominion was originally that of writer” (6). Janice Fiamengo sees “the 1914 campaign” as “a decisive moment for Canadian politics and for McClung, establishing her on the national and international stages as an invaluable political ally and a formidable opponent” (“Nellie” 193). While her novel’s reception by the public provided the impetus for her celebrity, it was really her presentation of self as someone on view and speaking for women’s causes, like temperance, that developed the public persona that she would be known for: the womanly Canadian political activist.

McClung was careful to cultivate a feminine image when she performed in public, a strategic move that not only made her attractive to look at but could also make her more acceptable to the public as she presented her controversial agenda. Clarence Karr observes, “Viewing the outward appearance as a mirror of the inner self, McClung dressed smartly and,

with the wealth of authorship, treated herself to shoeshines, face massages, and fresh flowers in winter” (118). She purchased new dresses when she was going to speak in public, and she records the dresses that she bought for her first public address at the WCTU Convention in Manitou (McClung, *Stream* 356) and her first public reading from *Sowing Seeds in Danny*, stating, “I got a new dress, a soft blue; I had my hair done at a hairdressers [sic], and a manicure and facial. My first excursion into the aromatic world of Applied Beauty! I even had a little rouge to tone up my pale complexion. The operator put it on, without bothering to ask me [...]. I was learning” (371). What McClung was learning were professional techniques for putting on a public face with the “Applied Beauty” acting as a thin veneer separating the previous McClung, who was a private individual and author, to the soon-to-be McClung, who was also a literary celebrity doing a reading of her bestselling novel for an audience. One of her motivations for taking such pains with her appearance was that she “was determined to be as easy as possible on the eye” (356), a desire, in other words, to adhere to conventional feminine beauty standards.

Maintaining a feminine appearance was also important because it allowed McClung to lay claim to the moral superiority associated with middle-class femininity at the time and disassociated her from denigrating accusations of masculinity or of being a virago. Rojek notes the importance of maintaining an appropriate “public face” for celebrities, since “[f]acial muscles, hair, make-up and clothing establish a personal front that conveys social competence” (102-103), and McClung was clearly cognizant of this idea. A train traveller once disparaged her to a woman who was sitting near him, neither of them noticing that McClung was a fellow passenger; he included an unattractive (and fictitious) account of her appearance as part of his criticism of her, saying, “She’s a big woman, [...] badly dressed, with a high-pitched and strident voice, a regular rabble-rouser, the rough and tumble type. Irish, you know; Shanty Irish” (McClung, *Stream* 408). His critique ties together poor dressing with poor behaviour as well as negative class and ethnic stereotypes. McClung’s carefully constructed appearance seems to be specifically designed to deal with just such criticism. The woman listening to the man pulled out a newspaper containing a notice for the talk McClung was on her way to give as well as a picture of McClung in order to tell him, “She looks very neat and tailored to me. [...] There’s nothing wrong with her clothes, or her face either” (408). This rebuttal relies on McClung’s ladylike public appearance, which is circulated in the form of the photograph; the woman can defend

McClung easily because she looks a particular part, someone very different from a “rough” “rabble-rouser.”

It was not only through appearance that McClung presented herself as appropriately feminine; she carefully cultivated through her words and behaviours a persona of gentle femininity that enabled her to equate herself with a feminine ideal. As Fiamengo observes, McClung’s reputation for being womanly had already partially been created through media reports following the publication of *Sowing Seeds in Danny*: “Enthusiastic reviews of the book and of the author established them as sweet, wholesome products of the Canadian West” (“Nellie” 182). She presented herself while campaigning for the Liberals in 1914 as, in Fiamengo’s words, “a woman of earnestness, kind heart, generosity, and integrity” (190). By highlighting these qualities, McClung could embody a likeable femininity, one that would gain her support from a wide audience. Fiamengo states, “[McClung] was well aware that her opponents tried to paint her as an unnatural and disgruntled woman who neglected her children, disliked men, and sought to usurp male power; she was vulnerable if she made any statement that could be interpreted as a blanket condemnation of men or as betraying a desire to reverse a social hierarchy to women’s advantage” (191). While conforming to a feminine ideal, McClung could avoid criticism from others and increase her legitimacy in the public eye.

McClung was equally proactive in asserting her femininity through advertising her conscientious and skillful performance of maternal and wifely actions. In doing so, she leveraged beliefs equating domestic skill with moral superiority and political usefulness, as she also did when she made assertions about women’s ability to carry out political housecleaning (McClung, *Times* 48).²⁴ McClung routinely mentioned her performance of domestic duties when she gave public speeches, an action that allowed her to reinforce her capability in carrying out domestic as well as political tasks in addition to breaking down the divide between perceived private/domestic and public/political. As Candace Savage notes in her biography of McClung, “[S]he never tired of reminding reporters, she had five fine children to her credit and a stable home” (79). In a 1915 *Maclean’s* article, McClung states, “I wish you could see the proportion of mail that tells me to go home and darn my husband’s socks. I never would have believed one man’s hosiery could excite the amount of interest those socks do—and yet, do you know, they

²⁴ Fiamengo notes that for McClung, “the morality of the Finns was proved by their passion for cleanliness” (“Legacy” 70).

are always darned!” (qtd. in Savage 98). She acknowledges the inevitability that the public, especially her opponents, will be interested in her private life. And, while she uses humour to undermine the significance of this interest, she is also careful to include a mention of her fulfillment of wifely duties to further undercut the legitimacy of the critique, essentially saying that her opponents not only *should* not be writing about her household affairs because they are irrelevant for the issue at hand but also that the critics *need* not because they are always in good order. Her domestic competency frees her to become involved in politics at the same time that it shows her suited for politics. Choosing to talk about her family in public contexts allowed her to share her domestic life with the public, permeating ideological barriers that separated public and private. This strategy makes particular sense given her political aim “to make the world a more homelike place to live in” (Savage 80), an aim that she believed would be carried out through women’s suffrage.

Like other suffrage feminists who used rhetoric of “white women’s superior morality and natural inclination to clean—their societies as well as their homes” (Devereux “Writing” 265), McClung tied the nation to the (white, middle-class, Protestant) home, justifying women’s involvement in politics by claiming that politics was a domestic matter and thus an appropriate place for women to intervene.²⁵ In this way she undermined the ideology of separate spheres, mixing public and private, even though she simultaneously reinforced the gendered distinction that underpins it. In a speech on “The Social Responsibilities of Women,” she lays out this link between the home and the larger political arena:

Now politics is only public affairs, yours and mine, as well as other people’s. You and I are affected by what goes on outside of the four walls of home,—the home has expanded now until it has become the whole state. The work has gone out of the home and women have had to follow it,—you have to be interested in things outside of your home if you would be faithful to your home’s highest interests. [...] If politics are corrupt, it is all the more reason that a new element should be introduced. Women will I

²⁵ Mariana Valverde explains, “The housecleaning metaphors utilized by maternal feminists such as Nellie McClung did not only seek to legitimize women’s entry into the public sphere by comparing politics to a house in need of spring cleaning; they also established a parallel between what was known as ‘political purity’ and personal hygiene” (28). Such purity and hygiene were linked to whiteness, with the rhetoric “signalling a belief in the nation’s need for specifically *moral* subjects” (28), subjects who were simultaneously cast as white, Anglo, Protestant, and middle-class. The creation of these subjects was also seen as women’s work through their ability to “‘mother’ the race” (Fiamengo, “Nellie” 178).

believe supply that new element, that purifying influence. Men and women were intended to work together, and will work more ideally together, than apart, and just as the mother's influence as well as the father's is needed in the bringing up of children and in the affairs of the home, so are they needed in the larger home,—the state. (qtd. in Savage 82-83)

Through such rhetoric, McClung frames political and domestic work as equivalent and also posits the need for male and female participation in both spheres, which are, under her terms, really one. In an undated article in the *Regina Leader*, she further intertwines national politics and the home when she claims that women are “asking to be taken as partners in the task of making a national home, and their place is just as important in the national home as in the family circle” (qtd. in Fiamengo, “Nellie” 197). She paints this mutual involvement of the two genders in political and domestic life as an ideal, but one that could be attained in real life, as in the case of her own household.

McClung mobilized the image of her family in the home to present them as public figures that supported her political involvement, a concrete example of her political ideal. She presented her husband to the public as supporting her choices, as being a good man, and as having a good relationship with her, even though she was “leaving her home” “to take part in public matters”: “I try to explain, as clearly as I can, that he is rather an exceptional sport of a man, and he believes a woman has a distinct right to live her own life as she sees it, and that though he does not like to have me away from home, he believes I have a real work to do” (qtd. in Savage 99). Such a representation, much like her carefully constructed appearance, counteracts the idea that McClung is unfeminine, that she might be inappropriately masculine in domestic life because she engages in the contestably male purview of politics. Fiamengo claims that McClung used these type of domestic and casual comments in order “to establish herself as trustworthy and unthreatening” (“Nellie” 184). McClung also frequently used the picture of her supportive and happy family at home in her public speeches, an idyllic representation that acted as evidence for the collaborative relationships she had at home. McClung explains, for example, that during her campaigning for the Liberal opposition party during the 1914 election year, “I telephoned home each night just before I went to the meeting, and often began my address by saying: ‘Settle down now and don't worry about my children. They are all well and happy, clothed and fed. The baby is in bed and all is well [...]’” (*Stream* 407). With her family life integrated into her public persona in such a positive way, her position as a political activist could be strengthened because

she was freer to engage in politics, and she did not have to worry about her family life undermining her political message.

The support McClung received from her family was integral to McClung on a personal level because it enabled her successful travel away from home; as she says, “With all this background of loyalty, I was able to speak and write, catch trains at any hour, answer criticism, with a minimum of fatigue, for my mind was at ease and my heart was light” (*Stream* 407). McClung was frequently on the move during the 1914 campaign; Fiamengo states, “Her strategy was to shadow the premier on the campaign trail: when he spoke in a particular town, McClung spoke there a few days later” (“Nellie” 182). Supported by her family, McClung also could take the position that she would be better serving the public good as well as her own home by moving away from it, in spite of conventional wisdom stating that a woman’s place was *in* the home. A newspaper article from 1914 shared McClung opinion regarding the necessity of physically leaving behind the space of the home in order to serve it politically:

To those who were [...] saying she ought to be at home minding her children she sent the message that her children are all very well, thank you. [...] If her visit to a place could secure a vote against the bar, the protection thus gained for her children would far outclass the good she could accomplish were she at home rocking a cradle with one hand, holding a child on her knee, and at the same time darning a stocking. (qtd. in Savage 98)

McClung opposes remaining physically within the home when her actions outside can improve the domestic space more effectively. She even claimed that domestic stability and comfort were reasons *for* leaving the home, stating that “the fact that I have a good man and a good family lays a responsibility on me” because “[t]he broken-hearted, embittered woman cannot do anything to help anyone else” (*Stream* 465). McClung portrayed herself as being needed by the public more than by her household and depicted her political actions as necessary for her to remain what one newspaper called her: “a big-hearted woman” (qtd. in Savage 1). In these ways, she shored up her position as a morally upright, feminine woman who should be actively mobile in participating in the public sphere.

Speaking in public spaces highlights McClung’s agency over both her celebrity and her mobility as she leveraged her power as a literary celebrity in order to forward her own political causes. In demand for readings from her books, McClung made her own use of the venues that she was invited to. When asked to a location to recite, she would tell the person making the

request, “I shall be pleased to come [...] if after I conclude the recital you will allow me to discuss the political situation for the next hour” (qtd. in Savage 78). The public’s desire for McClung allowed her to set a high price on her commodified self and suit her own needs. And a refusal on the part of the applicant never stopped McClung from carrying out her own agenda: “If [they refused], I hired the hall myself for the hour succeeding the meeting, and, when I was through with the first part of the program, I’d announce that, my contract with the ladies having been carried out, I now invited the audience to remain as my guests while we talked politics” (qtd. in Savage 78). In this way, McClung undercuts applicants’ perceived control over the space of the hall; they might wish and expect her to leave, but she is going to stay until she has carried out her work.

McClung’s most successful intervention in the physical public space was perhaps her role in “The Women’s Parliament” put on by the Political Equality League in 1914, which skyrocketed her to political fame and placed her in unusual spaces for a middle-class woman: the real space of the theatrical stage and the imagined space of Parliament. A delegation of women, including McClung, went to the Legislative Assembly to petition Conservative Premier Sir Rodmond Roblin’s government for the vote the day before the performance. McClung burlesqued his refusal the following day as she took on the role of premier in the women’s parliament. Karr sees this moment as foundational in the creation of McClung’s public persona:

When the Equality League staged a gender-reversed mock parliament in the Walker Theatre, it propelled McClung, who played the premier, into instant political stardom. Now ‘Calamity Nell’ or ‘Windy Nellie’ of the political cartoons, she embarked on the campaign trail in the 1914 political election, speaking more than sixty times. While audiences flocked to hear her devastating wit, ridicule, and satire, Roblin’s team scrambled. (119)

McClung notes the widespread popularity of the event, which was performed “twice in Winnipeg and once in Brandon, and had crowded houses on all occasions,” and she claims that “it was such a factor in the advancement of women and attracted notice all over Canada” (*Stream* 398). The attention that McClung garnered augmented her public visibility, creating a new venue (politics rather than literature) for audiences to access her celebrity. And it certainly it had a lasting impact on McClung’s celebrity image; *Historica Canada’s* Heritage Minute of McClung from

1991 dramatizes the mock parliament (“Heritage Minutes: Nellie”), a choice that speaks to the integral role that the event has had in the construction of McClung’s public persona.

Taking to the stage and presenting herself in a fictional role, McClung was able to make use of her visibility and influence over an audience to facilitate dramatic, real-life political changes. The mock parliament placed McClung in a different kind of space from the lecture halls that she usually occupied because the place represented on stage could only be imagined: “a replica of the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba, made up entirely of women” that McClung calls “a land of fancy” because “only women voted and only women sat in Parliament” (*Stream* 396). It is “a land of fancy” not only because it is a fictional space in a play, but also because it is a space in which women have an official and legal place in politics and men do not. On this stage, McClung takes on a different public identity, that of the woman premier. *The Winnipeg Telegram* reporting on the event states, “The women who portrayed the characters of politicians both in and out of office appeared to take quite naturally to their parts; in fact, it might be said that they actually revelled in their pretence of holding office and that the secret ambition they all shared is undoubtedly accountable for the great success of the entire program” (qtd. in McClung, *Stream* 399). The imagined construction is not merely idle “fancy”; it is a “secret ambition” that the women involved hope to turn into reality. By presenting herself as a fictional premier on stage, McClung paves the way for a future career in a parliamentary or some other government position in the imaginations of her audience members. She states that in 1914, “I knew [...] that the women would be given the vote and that I could be elected quite easily to the Legislative Assembly. There had been predictions that I would be invited into the Cabinet, and probably be made Minister of Education” (*Stream* 419). McClung’s movement into an unconventional space, the theatre stage, promotes the acceptance of women entering other unconventional spaces, like parliament or the legislature.

McClung constructed a public self that leveraged ideas of conventional femininity while simultaneously containing arguments for political change that challenged that same conventional femininity, a feat accomplished through her thorough integration of the two and use of each one to bolster the other. McClung fashioned a version of her private self for public consumption, a self that included her feminine appearance and her family life, creating a perception of seamlessness between the public and private McClung. Although initially known by the public as an author, she soon shifted to become a political celebrity, the public persona that has been the

most lasting. Fiamengo remarks on “her recognition in opinion polls, journalism and other mainstream sources as an undisputed Canadian hero” (“Legacy” 71) for her political work. Her writing also became subsumed under her political agenda, further unifying her persona, with her ultimately stating, “I have never worried about my art. I have written as clearly as I could, never idly or dishonestly, and if some of my stories are [...] sermons in disguise, my earnest hope is that the disguise did not obscure the sermon” (*Stream* 364). In contrast, McClung’s contemporary, Montgomery, frequently “worried about [her] art,” never making such a decisive movement into the political arena at the expense of her literary reputation. Montgomery represents a very different version of celebrity and public womanhood than McClung, one that focuses far more on separations and boundaries than integration and permeability.

Many Montgomerys

Montgomery’s creation of a public self was contingent not only on her literary celebrity but also on her acquisition of the role of minister’s wife upon her marriage in 1911. Thus it makes more sense in this context to talk about Montgomery’s public *selves*, which she strove to differentiate from a conception of a separate private self, the “veridical self” discussed by Rojek (11). Rojek notes that “the split between the I and the Me is often disturbing. So much so, that celebrities frequently complain of identity confusion and the colonization of the veridical self by the public face” (11). Certainly Montgomery found it difficult to navigate this division between private individual and public author, which many scholars have noted she desired to maintain. Katja Lee claims that “Montgomery never quite shook her reluctance to render up her private life for mass consumption” (184) and York states, “Montgomery wished to rely upon a simple, pragmatic division between the public product, the writing, and the private entity, the writer, but the celebrity culture that was taking shape in North America during the years she experienced her success militated against any such easy division” (84). In order to deal with the public demand for information about her private life while still maintaining that privacy, Montgomery presented a limited amount of private information to the public. However, the media was happy to give the public more information about Montgomery, creating competing personas outside of her control that often varied in their basis in fact. Montgomery attempted to compartmentalize her many private and public selves as well as negotiate the image of her constructed by the media. At the same time, she struggled to deal with the pressures placed upon her by her different publics: her reading audience and her husband’s parishioners. Obligated to cope with so

many different selves and expectations, Montgomery was unable to maintain any sort of unified, singular public persona, which allowed persistent media representations to take precedence.

Within her self-construction as a literary celebrity, Montgomery seems to have wanted to present her public self as primarily a Canadian author, subordinating her feminine identity when possible. Hiding her gender was impossible when she appeared in public. However, in the early days of her fame, her ability to travel was curtailed by her lack of access to transportation and her need to stay home to take care of her grandmother, so she had little opportunity for public appearances. Media access to her was also limited; the personal information that she gave out to the press was minimal enough that one newspaper editor even thought she was a man, titling a 1908 article “Author Tells How He Wrote His Story” (Lefebvre 33). Montgomery also attempted to avoid discussing topics that were strongly tied to her gender, including her romantic life. After submitting *The Alpine Path* to *Everywoman’s World*, the editor wrote back asking Montgomery, “Will [she] not write an additional thousand words and tell [her] ‘adoring Canadian girls’ of [her] pangs and passions” (Montgomery, *SJLMM II* 201). Montgomery describes her response to the editor’s request: “The dear public must get along without this particular tid-bit. I have snubbed that editor very unmistakably, telling him that I am not one of those who throw open the portals of sacred shrines to the gaze of the crowd” (202).²⁶ As Lee notes, “Wherever possible, Montgomery attempted to keep the gaze on her writing” (186). The literary celebrity L.M. Montgomery was, in Montgomery’s estimation, to be thought of as a serious author known only through the mediation of her writing; the private, female self was to be kept separate.

In addition to the authorial public version of Montgomery, there was also Mrs. Ewan Macdonald, minister’s wife, an identity in which the private married woman converged with the public ministerial supporting role. Montgomery was determined to present herself as capable in this public yet domestic role; in her journal she wrote,

I have never thought it a very enviable lot to marry a minister but when I did it I made up my mind to perform as best I could such duties as are commonly expected of a minister’s wife. Of these ‘visiting’ is one. Then there are three Missionary Societies here—the Foreign Missions, The Home Missions, and the Mission Band. I am expected to attend all these of course, and I do it—but!!!” (*SJLMM II* 91).

²⁶ Montgomery complicates this firm refusal by going on to recount all her love affairs in her journal, which, though ostensibly private, she eventually intended to have published after her death.

Her use of the word “perform” emphasizes the public nature of her work as a minister’s wife, which necessitated putting herself repeatedly and frequently on public display in the community. Montgomery’s performance in this capacity reflected on her private relationships, since her success as a minister’s wife was inextricably tied to her success in marriage in general. Montgomery was expected and expected herself to be able to deal with household responsibilities as well as parish responsibilities and to keep up her writing. She did not receive the same sort of familial support that McClung did, which so facilitated McClung’s public life. Certainly, in early twentieth-century terms, Montgomery’s career demands, such as time for writing and making public appearances, and self-care could be construed as selfish, since they were divorced from domestic concerns, like family, and lacked the domestic reasons that McClung promoted as being integrally linked to her political work. Ewan Macdonald seems to have been happy having Montgomery participate in local public life, a role that was centred around him as the minister, but he was less enthusiastic about her fame as an author. Mary Henley Rubio claims, “He was annoyed when Maud received fan letters addressed to ‘L.M. Montgomery,’ rather than to ‘Mrs. Ewan Macdonald’” (175); she adds that Montgomery “felt that Ewan was jealous of her work” (294). The celebrity author took time and attention away from the public minister’s wife, with negative consequences for the person that we might consider Montgomery the individual in her personal relationship with her husband.

Montgomery attempted to navigate her different, sometimes conflicting, roles and struggled to perform them all successfully. As York asserts, “Even Lucy Maud Montgomery, though she ostensibly played the unchanging role of a dutiful minister’s wife in Ontario during the same years that an international readership eagerly awaited her next book, was riven by the doubleness of her identity as L.M. Montgomery and Mrs. Ewan Macdonald” (33). And York notes “the confusion that reigned [...] when a ‘Miss L.M. Montgomery’ who writes books had to be reconciled with a Mrs Macdonald who raises children” (87). L.M. Montgomery could at times overshadow and dominate Mrs. Macdonald the minister’s wife. When public life intersected with gender conventions, Montgomery was often put out. Montgomery resented the time required to carry out her expected duties of paying social calls and participating in societies in her husband’s parishes, which took away from the time she needed to write. She writes in her journal in 1913, having just finished writing *The Golden Road*, “I have not enjoyed writing it. I have been too

hurried and stinted for time. I have had to write it at high pressure, all the time nervously expecting some interruption—which all too surely came nine times out of ten” (*SJLMM II* 119).

Managing her public roles also left her little time for a private, domestic life. She was subjected to what she called “tea-martyrdom” and complained in her journal, “Oh, the precious time I have to waste utterly, going out to tea!” (*SJLMM II* 120). Montgomery’s preoccupation with time wasting reflects the many demands that were placed on her, and that she also placed on herself, to perform a number of roles simultaneously, carrying out parish duties while keeping up with her writing on top of doing housework. There was often a competition for time and energy between public demands and private and personal concerns, as when, early in her marriage, Montgomery was asked by many societies to give addresses. She records in her journal, “But they might have had sufficient common sense to realize that when I was just home from my wedding trip, with all the work of ‘getting settled’ on my hands, I would certainly have no time or strength to career around the country giving ‘addresses’” (91). York observes, “Montgomery worked hard to fulfill all of the roles that she felt she was given in her life” (86). She goes on to state, “As a result, what we have [...] is the effect of celebrity on negotiations of women’s roles, as traditionally defined” (86), with Montgomery’s celebrity needing to accommodate a wide range of other, feminine roles. Such roles included the domestically minded woman that McClung was so savvy at performing to curry favour for her political agenda. For Montgomery, however, a woman’s role seemed more to involve a selflessness and availability to others, whether her family and home, her husband’s parish, or her fans, a demanding role that is relentless regardless of its public or private nature.

While Montgomery might have preferred to keep much of her gendered and domestic self out of the public eye, she was forced to deal with what it meant to be a public woman when femininity was so often equated with privacy. The private side of Montgomery is also the one that the public wanted to know more about, and this demand created pressure for her to share her domestic life with them, to circulate the private in the public sphere. Although initially reluctant to give out any personal information to the public, as Lee states, “After 1911, we see media articles foregrounding Montgomery’s domestic identity [...], and some even printed Montgomery’s personal family photographs and signalled an intimate familiarity with the details of Montgomery’s home.” As Lee goes on to note, “an idealized portrait of her life in the private sphere was becoming a strategic part of her public identity” (187). The public domestic

Montgomery, unlike the private domestic one, is an ideal, cultivated by both the press and Montgomery herself. Montgomery was careful about the inclusion of personal and private material that was released to the public, never airing any of her personal hardships or difficulties. Montgomery's conscientiousness paid off, and it was not until her journals were published decades after her death that her domestic circumstances were revealed to a shocked public, causing what Irene Gammel calls "the effect of the proverbial bombshell" as readers learned "that their beloved Montgomery had never loved her husband [and] had hated her social duties as minister's wife" (4). Such was the distance between public image and private reality.

Montgomery's complex relationship with the press and the presentation of herself to the public really begins, I would argue, with her visit to Boston in 1910, which was the first occasion that she appeared as a public figure and the media was given extensive access to her. Articles documenting Montgomery's trip reveal the fraught duality of public and private that she experienced and highlight the conflict between the persona that Montgomery wished to construct and that created by others. For Montgomery, being a celebrity author was intertwined with travel. In 1909, after *Anne of Green Gables* was clearly shown to be a success, she was invited by a journalist to "read a paper before the International Council of Women" in Toronto. She declined, writing in her journal, "The honour is to my book, of course. I cannot go" (*CJLMM 1901-1911* 221). Montgomery's personal and domestic duties, caring for her grandmother and managing the house, as well as her own depressed psychological state, curtailed her ability to travel, but she felt that it was an important part of being a popular author. Such reasons also nearly prevented her from going to Boston when invited by her publisher Lewis Page, but a sudden impulse prompted her to accept the invitation. She framed the trip as a business one to her grandmother, since she was planning to discuss the terms of her contract with Page, but part of her trip was also clearly personal: she travelled with her cousin Stella Campbell and they stayed for the first part of the time in Boston in the home of another relative, and it was not until later in the trip that Montgomery went to stay with Page and his wife.

It was on this trip that Montgomery began to fully realize the implications of her success as an author and what it would mean to be a public personage. Recounting her trip in her journal, Montgomery states, "Hitherto my literary success has brought me some money, some pleasant letters and an increase of worries and secret mortifications. I had experienced only the seamy side of fame. But now I was to see the other side. I was to find everything made easy and

pleasant for me” (*CJLMM 1901-1911* 321). While Montgomery was able to enjoy some of the benefits of the elevated status of celebrities, with travel and engagements arranged for her once she’d arrived in Boston, not all of it was “easy and pleasant” since Montgomery soon had to take up her public obligations. The very day that she moved from the private space of her cousin’s home into her publisher’s an announcement was made in the *Herald* that Montgomery was in Boston and, in Montgomery’s words, “thenceforth I was besieged with invitations and telephone calls” (*CJLMM 1901-1911* 326). The private part of her trip was over and the public part began. She attended a number of events, at some of which she was the guest of honour, and gave several interviews. That this trip, her first as a literary celebrity, was significant to Montgomery is made evident by her extensive coverage of it in her journal and the inclusion of newspaper clippings and other souvenirs from her visit in her scrapbook. The media raced to report on her visit to Boston and the foundations of several hallmarks of her public personas were laid at this time, in particular Montgomery’s desire to avoid discussion about private matters, especially those related to her gender, and the press’s insistence in depicting Montgomery as politically conservative and domestic.

Montgomery was not the only one involved in crafting her public persona; competing versions of the authorial L.M. Montgomery were created by both her publishers and the media, who were determined to put a seemingly private version of her into the public eye and cast her as an idealized feminine rural woman. It was in the media’s self-interest to put their construction of Montgomery before a public that clamoured for more information about the private woman, like the “adoring Canadian girls” who wanted to know about Montgomery’s love life (Montgomery *SJLMM II* 201). Greater publicity ensured greater sales of both print media and Montgomery’s books. E. Holly Pike proposes that “the publicity surrounding Montgomery’s home in Prince Edward Island and the creation of a suitable authorial persona to market the books – were a deliberate choice of Montgomery’s publishers based on the demands of mass marketing” (239); she observes “that the advertising surrounding Montgomery consistently focuses on the pastoral aspects of her work and life, her dainty physical appearance, and her domesticity” (245).²⁷

²⁷The popularization of sites connected to Montgomery in Prince Edward Island later in Montgomery’s career acts as a fascinating example of the domestic fantasy effectively sold to the public, one that pictured Montgomery as somehow living inside the homey, romanticized settings of her novels. This publicity strategy was so effective that the sites continue to be popular tourist attractions that conflate Montgomery with the fictional and idealized Anne. See Carol Gerson’s “Seven Milestones: How *Anne of Green Gables* Became a Canadian Icon” and Alexander

Articles documenting her trip to Boston give a great deal of attention to Montgomery's appearance, often characterizing her as ladylike and imaginative, in keeping with the image projected by Montgomery's books. One journalist stated that "we could not imagine her as a 'woman of affairs' or aught but the modest, quiet little gentle woman of the warm heart and vigorous, creative brain that she is" (qtd. in Montgomery, *CJLMM 1901-1911* 329). The author, in these accounts, is never simply an author, but always a ladylike and domestic one promoting an authorial persona of idealized middle-class femininity.

As Pike notes, however, "Montgomery was aware of the disparity between the marketing persona and herself" (244). In one instance, describing her attendance at a Boston event, Montgomery remarks on the difference between how she saw herself, in a "quiet little old-rose frock," and the account given by a reporter, who paints her in rather glamorous terms as wearing a gown that "shimmered and dazzled" (*CJLMM 1901-1911* 328). While Montgomery might picture herself as both containing the "veridical" *I* and the public *Me*, the public persona presented in the accounts of others, which emphasize her idealization as the imaginative author while also stressing her embodiment as a delicate and gentle woman, is at odds with Montgomery's self-representation. A rather egregious example from much later can be found in a tribute to Montgomery following her death in 1942 written by R. Cameron, who attended the funeral. The newspaper clipping, which is intriguingly located in one of McClung's personal scrapbooks without any contextualization (even the name of the paper has been cut off), not only spells Montgomery's name incorrectly, as Maude with an 'e,' but also conflates her with her most popular character, stating "'Anne Comes Home to Green Gables' For Last Time." A slippage occurs between the real Montgomery and her fictional character, leaving this public persona of Montgomery unable to escape the rural and domestic idyll of her novels.

Although Lee characterizes Montgomery's literary public persona as "conservative, domestic, and feminine" (184), which is in many ways the persona promoted by the media, I would challenge this characterization by drawing attention to the political side of Montgomery's public persona as it appears in the first decade or so after her rise to fame. Montgomery's engagement with political issues reveals her own public assertion of interest in concerns that are far from traditionally "domestic" or "feminine." Both the media and Montgomery herself were

Macleod's "On the Road from Bright River: Shifting Social Space in *Anne of Green Gables*" for more information about Green Gables Heritage Place and its connections to Montgomery and her celebrity image.

invested in presenting the public with Montgomery's political opinions. York states that Montgomery's "fame brought expanded possibilities to make contact with major political figures and to intervene in some of the most pressing social questions of the day. [...] Her opinion was sought, published, and listened to, on questions like Canadian publishing policy, women's suffrage, and the world wars" (89). York also remarks on Montgomery's ease in presenting her opinions publicly:

When one reads through these lively interviews on matters of public policy, cultural trends, and politics, the overwhelming impression is of a woman who is entirely comfortable with her own ability to speak on a national stage about a wide range of subjects. For all of the private tension and public scepticism about her role as a public Canadian, Montgomery performed it with a sense of utter entitlement. (90)

The media was often insistent in asking Montgomery about issues perceived as specific to women, primarily women's suffrage. However, unlike McClung, Montgomery is almost dismissive in addressing them, even though she held rather progressive and, notably, realistic opinions about women's suffrage. Instead, she seems to have preferred to direct attention to, and to give her opinion on, issues that had a national, less gendered significance, such as the First World War and the support of Canadian authors. This is not to say that Montgomery at times did not also present herself as "conservative, domestic, and feminine," but to propose that Montgomery preferred both to direct attention to a less gendered version of her public self and to emphasize her role as a Canadian author.

Montgomery showed herself to be just as progressive as, if less enthusiastic than, McClung regarding her belief that women should have the vote. She writes in a 1910 article for the *Boston Herald* in reply to the question "What do you think of woman suffrage?":

I do not think very much about it at all. I think women should be allowed to vote, if they wish it, and I think they soon will vote; but I question if it will make such a change in anything as both its champions and its opponents imagine that it will in everything. I do not think it will add much to the sum total of human happiness, and therefore I frankly confess that it does not seem to me worth while to worry about it. (*Red Scrapbook No. 1* 31)

She tells another reporter, "I have never written suffrage stories [...]. As everyone does, I can see the truth of the arguments, but I am not at all ardent about it" (*Red Scrapbook No. 1* 18). A small

section cut out from a newspaper article that has been pasted into one of McClung's scrapbooks also lists Montgomery—along with McClung—as one of the signatories of a petition for women's suffrage in the United States (McClung, "Work").²⁸ She is unequivocal about her opinion that women should be allowed to vote and even voted herself when able to; her voter registration card from 1918 is in one of her scrapbooks (*Red Scrapbook No. 2* 43), her preservation of it speaking to the significance that the act held for her.²⁹ However, she also exhibits apathy toward the issue. The explanation that she gives in her journal for her indifference, which she writes about after having voted for the first time, is that it might be a result of a previous lack of enfranchisement when "a woman could take only a theoretical interest anyhow" (*SJLMM II* 234). While this might account for her personal feelings, I would suggest that Montgomery's public display of indifference is tied to her resistance to discussing women's issues in public venues. Much like she avoided including accounts of her past loves in *The Alpine Path*, a request which was clearly gendered since it was prompted by a desire to increase the publication's appeal to her young, female readers, Montgomery also attempts to evade getting caught up in the gendered issue of women's enfranchisement.

Press coverage preferred to present Montgomery as conforming closely to more traditional ideas about women's roles, this in spite of the fact that Montgomery often gave answers that could be considered politically progressive when asked about her views on women's suffrage. This dissonance creates a conflicting message about Montgomery's publicly asserted political beliefs that has often led scholars to call Montgomery politically conservative. York claims that "Montgomery struck a much less conservative note than usual" when she asserted that "the women who bear and train the nation's sons should have some voice in the political issues that may send those sons to die on battlefields" (89-90). Interestingly, Devereux also calls Montgomery and McClung "politically disparate," although she observes that their fiction "demonstrate[s] that the two writers are not quite as far apart on questions of gender and ideology as their different points of view with regard to female enfranchisement seem to

²⁸ The clipping is not labelled, but it comes from a scrapbook that the BC Archives dates as being created 1909-1911.

²⁹ Montgomery's belief that she, and women like her, should have the vote was coloured by common ideas of the time concerning ethnic superiority as well as social status. In a letter to Ephraim Weber, she wrote, "I *do* believe that a woman with property of her own should have a voice in making the laws. Am I not as intelligent and capable of voting for my country's good as the Frenchman who chops my wood for me, and who may be able to tell his left hand from his right, but cannot read or write?" (*Green* 71)

indicate” (“Writing” 261-262). But I would argue that Montgomery’s statements in support of women’s suffrage are evidence that she was less conservative than she has been portrayed and that she agreed with McClung, in a broad sense, on the issue of women’s enfranchisement.

It is the authors of the articles about Montgomery who frame her comments as anti-suffragist. Lee observes that “although she rarely offered explicit narratives of her life as wife and mother, she was routinely quoted or summarized as espousing that a woman’s primary place is in the home” (187). Such quotations, along with Montgomery’s own apathy toward the issue, allowed journalists to construct her image as more conservative regarding gender roles than her opinions on women’s suffrage might suggest. Newspaper interviews from her 1910 trip to Boston demonstrate the conservative bent that the media gave to her image, as in the case of this headline from a *Boston Post* article, which states, “Says Woman’s Place Is Home” with a subtitle of “Authoress Gives Views on Suffrage” (Montgomery, *Red Scrapbook No. 1* 18). The implication of the headline is that Montgomery was opposed to suffrage, but the article reveals a much more complex stance: “No I am not a suffragette. [...] I am a quiet, plain sort of person, and while I believe a woman, if intelligent, should be allowed to vote, I would have no use for suffrage myself. I have no aspirations to become a politician. I believe a woman’s place is in the home.” Another Boston article, published in *The Republic*, even more noticeably misconstrues Montgomery’s thoughts on votes for women, claiming, “She has no favor for woman suffrage; she believes in the home-loving woman” (Montgomery, *Red Scrapbook No. 1* 18). In constructing the home as a place distinct from politics, Montgomery allows reporters to construe her love of home and privacy as a rejection of women’s suffrage. But careful reading of Montgomery’s words reveals her lack of interest in actively pursuing politics as well as her enjoyment of a private (domestic) life, rather than a stance against women voting. Montgomery does not seem to have had any problems with this framing of her viewpoints; she states in her journal that she liked the article in *The Republic* “better than any of the others” because it “was written seriously and not in the ‘smart,’ flippant style which the younger generation of journalists seem to affect” (*CJLMM 1901-1911* 329). Montgomery’s general indifference to the issue of women’s suffrage allowed the media construction to take precedence.

If Montgomery was rather reticent about discussing women’s suffrage, she was far more outspoken on other Canadian issues, such as the First World War and the Canadian book market, that were more distant from her identity as a woman. In an article in *Everywoman’s World* from

1915 asking Montgomery, along with eleven other prominent Canadian women, what she “as a woman hope[s] to see as the outcome of the war: (1) for the world at large, (2) for women in particular,” Montgomery was quite voluble and passionate in her answer to the first part of her question, in which she states her hopes “that the heroism and fortitude evoked may leave a rich legacy of character to races yet unborn; and [...] that a great awakening to high issues, moral, spiritual and intellectual, may follow the agony of conflict” (*Red Scrapbook No. 2* 8). But the second, much shorter, part of her answer has a very different tone and reads as though it were merely tacked on: “In regard to women, I do not expect that the war and its outcome will affect their interests, apart from the general influence upon the race.” Montgomery’s fiction also reflects her willingness to promote particular political agendas with regard to the war. Her novels *Rainbow Valley* (1919) and *Rilla of Ingleside* (1921) are, to some degree, war propaganda and promote nationalistic attitudes about the war and the need for sacrifice on the part of Canada’s citizens in order to win the war and make fighting it worthwhile. While, as Erika Rothwell points out, maternal feminism plays an important role in *Rilla of Ingleside* in particular, the issue of women’s rights is dealt with almost entirely indirectly, with the exception of the “limited suffrage [that] was granted to Canadian women by the Wartime Elections Act of 1917” (137). Montgomery appears much more interested in publicly delving into questions relating to the state of the nation during and after the war than in emphasizing her connection as a woman to specifically gendered issues.

Montgomery also chose to downplay her gender in the public work that she did with regard to Canadian publishing and the book market, promoting Canadian authors and Canadian literature with enthusiasm. As with the development of Montgomery’s public persona, travel was an important component in this area of her life. Montgomery frequently travelled to Toronto to advocate for Canadian authors in a variety of ways, including encouraging readers to buy their books. Through her trips there, Montgomery came into contact with a number of associations, such as the Women’s Canadian Club (Clement 244) and the Toronto Women’s Press Club, and frequently acted as a guest speaker as well as serving, in 1935, as second vice president of the Canadian Authors Association (Sutherland 223). In November 1921, Montgomery spent twelve days in Toronto (Clement 248-249), during which time she spoke at the Canadian Business and Professional Women’s Club along with noted suffragist Emmeline Pankhurst. While Pankhurst spoke on health reform, an issue associated with maternal feminism, Montgomery aimed “to

encourage young Canadian writers” by telling her audience, “In every three books you buy, let one be Canadian [...] and then the young writer will not be faced with the alternative of starving or going to the United States” (Montgomery, *Red Scrapbook No. 2* 56). Through her pleas, Montgomery hoped both to alter the disadvantageous market affecting the mobility of Canadian authors, who felt compelled to move to the United States for their careers, and to gain for them the financial stability that allowed her to remain a fixture of Canadian culture.

Montgomery’s desire to promote Canadian authors to Canadians was not only an effort to help others who were struggling in their early writing careers, as she had, but also an attempt to establish a national literature based in ideas of national identity. When asked by the *Toronto Globe* in 1910 about her “views on ‘Canadian Literature’,” she linked the literature with the state of the nation stating, “I do not think our literature is an expression of our national life as a whole. I think this is because we have only very recently—as time goes in the making of nations—had any real national life. [...] I do not believe that the great Canadian novel or poem will ever be written until we have had some kind of baptism by fire” (*SJLMM II* 339-340). Later on she made claims for the existence of a particular, if vague, Canadian quality to Canadian literature, as she continued to campaign to keep Canadian authors in Canada, believing that doing so somehow maintained the Canadian identity of both author and writing. She elaborates on this opinion in a 1924 article published in *Bookseller and Stationer*, stating,

We would like our Canadian authors to remain Canadians in atmosphere and in flavor. When they go to the United States, however, they lose something they can never regain. They become somewhat Americanized, but we want them to be Canadians. The one way in which we can keep them home is to support them. [...] Every time you buy, beg, borrow, or steal books, see that one of three is by a Canadian author. In this way you are helping your own people, and you will keep your Canadian authors here. (qtd. in Lefebvre 200)

Here, she formulates Canadian identity in opposition to being American, but she would also draw on other nationalities to define Canadian-ness. In a 1921 article from an unidentified source, Montgomery also characterized Canadians or, as she also called them, “my people”: “the fire and romance of the Celt, the canny common sense of the Lowlander, the thrift of the English, the wit of the Irish, all beginning to be blended into something that is proud to call itself Canadian” (qtd. in Lefebvre 183), a characterization that notably, as Benjamin Lefebvre

observes, “exclud[ed] the French, Aboriginal, and black populations of Prince Edward Island” (182). While she might claim a desire not to be involved in politics, her campaign for Canadian authors reveals an interest in national culture, identity, and citizenship that is decidedly politicized. Through such activities, Montgomery constructed for herself an identity as a Canadian author proudly advocating for a particular kind of Canadian literature.

Montgomery seems to have been most comfortable with this public persona, acting as a champion for Canadian authors and literary culture, but this persona is not the one that has had the greatest longevity. The imaginative and ladylike author, the minister’s wife, her fictional character Anne, and the seemingly private Montgomery contained in the journals have all gained precedence over this public persona, possibly because of shifts since Montgomery’s time in societal attitudes about canonical literature and Canadian culture. A Heritage Minute on Montgomery that was released in 2018 emphasizes what we might like to think of as Montgomery’s private self by discussing her emotional struggles, describing her as a woman who “battled depression, rejection, and sexism to become known around the world for Anne of Green Gables and 19 other novels” (“Heritage Minutes: Lucy”). The video also reinforces earlier media portrayals of her as the “gentle woman” with the “creative brain” (Montgomery, *CJLMM 1901-1911* 329) by bringing up Montgomery’s love of “daydreaming” and inability to “contain [her] imagination” as well as depicting her both in the picturesque rural environs of Prince Edward Island that feature so prominently in her books and in a Victorian-looking domestic space (“Heritage Minutes: Lucy”). And the Heritage Minute echoes Cameron’s tribute conflating Montgomery with Anne by claiming that Anne’s vivid characterization is due to Montgomery’s bestowing her own traits on Anne (“Heritage Minutes: Lucy”). The Heritage Minute demonstrates the endurance of the Montgomery personas at the same time that it reflects current public desires for a particular kind of Montgomery. While some of the aspects of the public Montgomerys presented by the media have altered over time to engage both with the individual that was revealed in the now-published journals and with modern changes in societal attitudes like feminism, many are not so different from those that Montgomery struggled to navigate in her own lifetime.

The parallels often drawn between the authors and their fictional characters are not without justification, including in respect of the authors’ actions in the public sphere. McClung puts her protagonist Pearlie on the stage in a mock parliament in *Purple Springs* (1921), the same

place that McClung established her political fame. And Montgomery's work promoting national feeling mirrors Anne's work in *Anne of Avonlea* (1909) spreading a shared vision of the nation that citizens can work toward, as discussed in chapter two of this study. But the authors seem less able to channel their adult fictional counterparts, the women who act in unconventional and masculine ways that I examine in chapter four. Leveraging her housekeeping capabilities as justification for political engagement, McClung is something of a real-life version of Mrs. Rachel Lynde, presenting herself as "one of those capable creatures who can manage their own concerns and those of other folks into the bargain" (Montgomery, *AOGG* 1), but she seems compelled to construct her public self as more likeable and less domineering than Mrs. Lynde. In her depiction of her husband, she guards against the possibility of being seen as overbearing in her family life and avoids turning him into a "Thomas Lynde—a meek little man whom Avonlea called 'Rachel Lynde's husband'" (2). Her frequent use of humour also strategically acts as a way of being charming and less aggressive in her opposition to political adversaries. Montgomery is certainly never cast as a Mrs. Lynde or a Marilla in her public presentations, neither desiring to be nor being seen as officious, outspoken, stern, or unimaginative. When Montgomery does have a famous woman author in *Anne of Avonlea* in the form of Miss Morgan, this character reads like a cross between Montgomery's own self-presentation and that of the media, being of "somewhat disappointing" appearance, but also a "delightful conversationalist" and possessed of "true, womanly sympathy and kindheartedness" (178). What stands out in the public presentations of the real women when compared their fictional creations is the presence of likeable femininity, a characteristic that is notably prominent in girl protagonists but less common in important adult women characters. It is this trait that distinguishes between what women authors were able to imagine women doing and their lived experience navigating the expectations of their society and audiences.

On entering the public sphere, McClung and Montgomery took different paths to deal with their celebrity, each marking out a particular space for herself in the public imagination. The ways in which they curated public versions of themselves and interacted with media representations of themselves had such a lasting impact that their choices still affect how we see them today: McClung as a political activist and Montgomery as an imaginative author of domestic romance. Through their participation in public affairs, we gain a picture of the scope with which celebrity authors in general, but women authors in particular, could engage with

political issues, often with the support of their reading public. We observe that the public did not only want to know more about the private lives of authors whose work they enjoyed, but that they also wanted to see these authors as members of a larger national community dealing with shared issues like women's suffrage, the First World War, and national culture, enlarging the authors' public roles. And, in taking on these roles, McClung and Montgomery could appear closer to their audiences, more "touchable" and relatable, while their public prominence could simultaneously maintain their elevated status, their "transcendence."

By examining how McClung and Montgomery managed their literary celebrity, we can see the foundations they laid and possibilities they explored for future Canadian women authors. The strategies that they employed to deal with their celebrity are still in use by well-known Canadian woman authors today; McClung's use of literature to engage with and promote political agendas echoes in the work, both literary and political, of Margaret Atwood and Montgomery's desire for privacy is mirrored in Alice Munro's decision to limit her public appearances. Such similarities might speak to a limited number of acceptable options for Canadian female literary celebrities who must continue to navigate societal expectations about privacy and femininity, but they might also imply the effectiveness of the choices that McClung and Montgomery made, that such strategies are useful for coping with the pressures and demands of celebrity.

Conclusion: The Afterlife of Early Twentieth-Century Gender Ideologies

Both Nellie L. McClung and L.M. Montgomery saw most Canadian women gain the national franchise in 1918, as British women did in 1918 and American women did in 1920, which granted a formal role in national politics to many women. However, this change was, at times, more dramatic in theory than in practice, giving credence to Montgomery's claim in her *Boston Herald* article from 1910 that giving women the vote would not "make such a change in anything as both its champions and opponents imagine that it will in everything" (*Red Scrapbook No. 1* 31). Women who attempted to exercise their official role in politics were confronted with many limitations pertaining to their gender, with these restrictions echoing many of the lessons about proper feminine public intervention seen in the fiction of the early twentieth century examined in the previous chapters. One example is the ruling of the Supreme Court of Canada in 1928 that women were not "persons" under the *British North America Act* and thus could not be members of the Senate. Although outcome of the Persons Case carried out by the "Famous Five" (including McClung) successfully appealed this ruling, this case implies a reluctance on the part of institutions to allow women to exercise the full extent of their official capacities, to change from being "women" to "persons." This hesitancy also seems to inform Julia Bell's "uneasy feeling that she was doing something not exactly ladylike" (42) when she seconds a motion at a meeting of Anne's "improvement society" in Montgomery's *Anne of Avonlea*. Ladies, those idealized women of the middle classes, are perhaps no longer able to lay claim to that status, with all its association of gendered propriety, once they involve themselves in politics.

Early twentieth-century attitudes about femininity and governance continue to have a hold in the present day, including expectations that women who participate in the public sphere exhibit a likeable femininity, much like that expected of McClung and Montgomery. A 2004 study found that women who are successful in traditionally masculine fields are less liked (Heilman et al.), and these results are certainly applicable when women participate in the male-dominated arena of politics. While this bias was in evidence in the campaign of unsuccessful United States presidential candidate Hillary Clinton, the more recent campaign for the Democratic presidential nomination of Elizabeth Warren also emphasizes the unrealistic standards that women in politics are held to, specifically because they are women. In an article entitled "Elizabeth Warren Endured Sexism at Every Step of her Campaign," Moira Donegan

makes claims about the impossibility of Warren, or any woman candidate really, meeting the criteria that would allow her to gain widespread acceptance amongst a diverse voting population: “She had to be competent but not condescending, cheery but not pandering, maternal but not frumpy, smart but not haughty.” These words underline the way in which Warren has been constructed as a specifically feminine political candidate, emphasizing her appearance and her maternalism. And her likeability is what is at stake, Warren’s need to avoid becoming a Mrs. Lynde-type, who might be eminently capable, compassionate, and morally upstanding but who is also seen as “nagging” (Montgomery, *AoGG* 252) and “meddlesome” (70). Donegan also notes that “women are viewed more negatively simply by seeking office” and that “[t]his is the fate of a lot of women who come close to attaining power.” Such comments echo the story of Pollyanna, in which, as I argue in chapter one, Eleanor H. Porter needs to avoid having Pollyanna seen as using her power over others to actively pursue her own desires and so places her in a physically passive position before granting those desires. Allowing Pollyanna be aware of the power that she holds, Aunt Polly asserts in *Pollyanna Grows Up*, would make Pollyanna “spoiled” and “impossible” because it is only “her unconsciousness that saves the whole thing” (29-30). To remain “likeable,” a woman or fictional girl must somehow mitigate or disguise the fact that she seeks to obtain power over others or take on a position of authority within a male-dominated field.

Women aspiring to the role of United States president are not the only examples of the way in which, when women enter public life, especially at the national level, their femininity is brought to the forefront. As Montgomery found when she became a public person and attempted to privilege her identity as an author over her identity as a woman, such a shift in focus is untenable and attention is consistently given to how well the public woman performs femininity. News coverage of Ukrainian politician Yulia Tymoshenko often makes much of her braided hairstyle, which is seen as a politically savvy fashion choice. In a CNN segment, Nadia Bilchik examines how it was used to “transform the image of a tough businesswoman into a prime ministerial candidate” (“More”). This transformation involved feminizing her, associating her with “innocence, patriotism, royalty, and tradition” and making “her look more like a country schoolteacher.” Through these changes Tymoshenko becomes a persona who draws on the same qualities that characterize Montgomery’s idealized characters Anne and Miss Stacy, country schoolteachers who act in caring and maternal ways. Carmen Neithammer brings up a similar

example of the focus on the specifically feminine appearance of political women when she notes that “some (mainstream) media coverage commented on the looks of the new Finnish Prime Minister [Sanna Marin],” citing a German example describing her as “beautiful & young.” Women in politics are never just politicians; the trappings of their femininity are inescapable.

Girls seem to fare better than their adult counterparts in negotiating gender conventions when they engage in high-profile political matters, with less media attention paid to how well they conform to traditional standards of femininity. Girl political activists like Malala Yousafzai and Greta Thunberg have promoted their causes, girls’ education and the remediation of the climate crisis respectively, to international audiences and recognition has come in the forms of a Nobel Peace Prize for Yousafzai and being voted *Time* “Person of the Year” for Thunberg. Through these girls, one can see echoes of the more positive aspects of fictional girls’ influence and power; like Pollyanna and Anne, they share a vision, although in their case it is not limited to the space of the nation, but extends to a larger global community. Able to promote their political platforms through the internet and social media as well as through more traditional forms of media like news outlets, Yousafzai and Thunberg can reach people with their messages at a scale that Pollyanna and Anne, restricted to local engagement, simply could not.

Thunberg and Yousafzai manage their mobility, which continues to play an important role in girls’ participation in the public sphere, in order to forward their causes in ways that often echo early twentieth-century girls’ novels. Thunberg’s stance on climate change means that she has placed limits on the forms of transportation that she is willing to take, in some ways making her modes of transport very similar to those that would have been available to Pollyanna, Anne, and other (fictional) girls of the early twentieth century, since Thunberg avoids fossil fuel emissions. Media coverage made much of Thunberg’s decision to sail, rather than fly, to North America to attend a number of climate change events in 2019, including the United Nations Climate Action Summit. Yet Thunberg’s choice to use limited modes of transportation has a different effect from those that result from Pollyanna’s and Anne’s necessarily limited transportation options; Pollyanna and Anne can only engage with local audiences, but Thunberg’s decision to restrict her transportation options gains her publicity and the attention of a much greater audience. Yousafzai’s interest in girls’ education also sounds a familiar note for girls’ narratives, like those of Anne and Rebecca that I explore in chapter four: the journey for education and opportunities stemming from education. Yousafzai is quoted on her funding

website as saying, “I tell my story not because it is unique, but because it is the story of many girls” (“Malala’s”). While her comment applies to the prevention of girls in many parts of the world from receiving an education, her words can also refer to the pursuit of education that many girls have carried out, in both reality and fiction. Having left behind her home in Pakistan, Yousafzai now studies abroad at the University of Oxford and she travels “to many countries to meet girls fighting poverty, wars, child marriage and gender discrimination to go to school.” Her educational endeavours are inextricably tied to movement. Unlike the narratives in girls’ literature, however, Yousafzai presents education as a path to political leadership, stating, “Together, we can create a world where all girls can learn and lead.”

Real girls in the last hundred years have taken on a significant place in political activism, but fictional girls also continue to be popular bearers of political ideologies. Notably, most of the fictional girls who have followed in the footsteps of the early twentieth-century girls in this study, having won a place of prominence similar to their literary predecessors, have been American, perhaps because these girl protagonists continue to embody messages about national identity and culture. The twentieth century saw the decline of the British Empire as countries such as India declared their independence. At the same time, Canada, historically riven by both its settler-colonial history of violence toward Canada’s Indigenous peoples and dual French-English founding as well as East versus West antagonism, struggled to create a defined, singular national identity.³⁰ Even the *Canadian Encyclopedia* states that “Canadians have never reached a consensus on a single, unified conception of the country” and that debates over Canadian identity continue to occur (Blattberg). Girl protagonists of these nations thus encounter obstacles to acting as bearers of strong or unified ideologies that might find widespread acceptance. In contrast, works such as Laura Ingalls Wilder’s *Little House* series of the 1930s and 1940s, the *Nancy Drew* series (first conceived of in 1930 then repeatedly reimagined ever since), and *The Hunger Games* trilogy from 2008-2010 show a sustained interest in the gendered and politicized, if not overtly political, roles played by girls in shaping shifting concepts of an American national ideology. They also demonstrate the flexibility and usefulness of the figure of the girl in fiction,

³⁰ McClung experienced some of the fallout of this historical conflict, particularly the 1885 Resistance in Saskatchewan. She records her experience as a Manitoban of this event in the neighbouring province in her autobiography (*Clearing* 159-169). She also remarks on “the ill feeling between the East and the West” in her autobiography (99). Montgomery is only able to define Canadian identity in a way that is clearly exclusionary (as Scotch-English-Irish), a characterization at odds with the increasing recognition throughout the twentieth century of the plurality of the peoples that make up Canada (Lefebvre 183).

as these girl protagonists represent America as it was, as it is, and as it might be, while also reflecting the societal concerns and values of the time of their original publication.

Wilder presents a particular type of nation within the book with herself and her family as a particular type of citizens living in and helping to build that nation. Throughout the books, Holly Blackford observes, Laura learns to “become more autonomous,” a development linked to “the growth of America” (155) that turns Laura into a sort of allegorical American girl representing the nation itself. She is also figured as embodying national identity for audiences, grounded in the American frontier and an “ideology of Emersonian self-reliance” (149). While this vision is partially nostalgic and backward-looking, it also looks forward to the reader’s present, showing where the nation and its girls and women can and will go. Ann Romines sees the depiction of Laura and her sister’s education in consumer culture as a lesson in gender and space ideologies in transition: “They will come of age in a world where the doctrine of separate spheres no longer prevails and will have to work out a more mobile, flexible, permeable relation between ‘home’ and ‘world’” (118). Laura points the way forward to a more public life for girls and women, by acting as a model for how to navigate this transition.

This idea of adaptability is even more pertinent to the case of Nancy Drew. The repeated ‘updates’ made to Nancy’s character throughout the years in and of themselves imply a desire on the part of publishers or producers to ensure that she always embodies the values of the current generation about what a girl should be. An especially notable example is the character alteration that occurred in Nancy’s 1959 revision. Diana Beeson describes the changes, placing them in a socio-historical context:

The character created by Mildred Benson in 1930 reflects the changing status of American women during the first half of the twentieth century. Nancy Drew is a child of the Nineteenth Amendment. [...] She is portrayed as an independent young woman who actively challenges the role of women in American society. [...] Beginning in 1959, 34 of the Nancy Drew mysteries were simplified and plots were redesigned, presumably to appeal to more contemporary audiences. [...] Nancy’s independent character is softened and, in these newer texts she relies much more heavily upon others for help and guidance. [...] In the 1959 edition, none of the characters challenges societal norms; this reflects a post-war emphasis on conformity. (38)

Nancy's perpetual reimagining speaks to the fruitfulness and convenience of constructions of girlhood as relatable carriers of cultural values. The girl can be remade over and over again to suit audiences' needs and, as time has passed, can feature in a variety of media. Much like interviews, articles, and autobiographical materials enable celebrities to circulate their personas in the absence of their physical selves, different forms of media allow for the more widespread dispersal of the ideologies that the girl embodies. Nancy and the gender values that she represents have not remained tied to the page; like many of her girl protagonist compatriots,³¹ she has gained a presence in film and television, a further indication of girls' usefulness as a representative of cultural values that can be repeatedly adapted to suit new audiences.

Girl protagonists continue to be created by women authors, who continue to use those characters to promote political messages about girls' position in society, although these messages have with time become more overt, perhaps reflecting contemporary societal understandings of literature as shaping political attitudes. Lisa Manter and Lauren Francis remark on the concern amongst both readers and critics as to whether Suzanne Collins's Katniss Everdeen is able to, "as a heroine of a dystopian text for adolescents, provide a positive enough role model for female (and male) readers?" (286). The fact that Katniss represents politicized ideology is taken for granted, while what that ideology consists of is open to a wide range of interpretation. The girl protagonist's political meaning has become paramount in societal understandings and even enjoyment of girls' literature. The power of the girl to embody and convey ideology has become a matter of mainstream interest and discussion. Sometimes, as in the case of the "Bosom Friends affair" (the debate over Anne's sexuality sparked by Laura M. Robinson's presentation on "Lesbian Desire in L.M. Montgomery's Anne Books"), it is a discussion that is incredibly fraught, as ideas about what girls should—and should not—represent clash.

In spite of the different settings of these books—with *The Hunger Games* set in an imagined future United States, the *Little House* books being a portrait of late-nineteenth-century America, and Nancy Drew filling the space in between—continuity can be seen between these books and their predecessors such as *Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm*, *Anne of Green Gables*, and

³¹ Anne is a particular favourite character for adaptation, having featured in a variety of television shows, movies, and plays, but Rebecca has also appeared in film as have Mary, Sara, and Pollyanna, often played by notable actresses such as Mary Pickford and Shirley Temple. Their literary predecessors, the March sisters of *Little Women*, are also remarkably popular for film portrayals, with three *Little Women* adaptations in the last three years (2017, 2018, and 2019).

The Secret Garden. Particular themes appear again and again in different guises. Nancy and Katniss, with their missing parents, follow in the footsteps of their frequently orphaned predecessors. Mobility also plays an important role, whether it is Laura travelling in a covered wagon across the American West, Nancy racing around in her blue roadster, or Katniss running around the arena in which the Games take place.³² The girl is expected to bring order into the fictional public spaces that she occupies, regardless of if she does it through colonial settlement, solving crime mysteries, or leading a revolt against an unjust and tyrannical government. She also has domestic and maternal inclinations, expressed through her participation in the creation of a succession of “little houses,” helping people in need, or protecting family members and the space of the home by volunteering as “tribute.” Such similarities should not, perhaps, be surprising considering the fact that most of the texts in this study, with their sustained popularity, continue to be read and enjoyed by the same audiences. A girl reader of today may find pleasure in reading both *The Hunger Games* and *Anne of Green Gables* because they engage with similar, familiar ideologies in spite of vastly different settings and plots.³³

Through the continued relevance of early twentieth-century gender ideologies, the afterlife of the popular girls’ novels examined in this study is visible. Ideals of femininity that are found in the novels examined in this study are, as discussed above, still prominent in the discourse surrounding girls’ and women’s activities in the public sphere. However, these feminine ideals are not all negative; the above novels present both a dark and a light side of femininity in a variety of ways, arguing for the benefits of femininity not only through its prominence but also its positive portrayal. Femininity often stands in for capability: as Anne observes, “When there is a social to be got up or a church tea or anything else to raise money the women have to turn to and do the work” (Montgomery, *AoGG* 251). Femininity is also frequently associated with the freedom of an unconventional lifestyle, as demonstrated by the unconventional women discussed in chapter four. Yet another unconventional woman character is *Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm*’s Miss Ross, the artist friend who gives Rebecca the feminine

³² Molly Young sees mobility as being of the utmost importance to the character of Nancy Drew, asserting that it is the key to her appeal: “Her glamour isn’t to be found in her adjectives—tactful, cordial, serious—but in her verbs. She’s constantly jumping, springing, racing, clambering, scrambling, darting after shadowy crooks, and zooming away in the blue convertible.”

³³ Unlike the girl protagonist, adult female characters have not held on to their essential and vital roles in popular girls’ novels. Instead, they tend to stand for ideological conservatism, as in the case of Ma Ingalls, or are largely absent or relegated to less prominent roles, like Nancy’s nonexistent mother or housekeeper Hanna Gruen or Katniss’s unnamed mother.

articles of a pink parasol and beaded purse. Miss Ross had travelled to Paris to practice her craft, which is also where she bought the parasol and purse. Through her unusual occupation, her extensive travel, and her appreciation of pretty accessories, Miss Ross's character brings together unconventionality, a high level of agency over mobility (higher than anyone else in the novel), and femininity (Wiggin 26). Femininity is even radical at times, as when Pollyanna privileges her feminine ethic of care over masculine capitalist considerations by suggesting a wholesale redistribution of wealth in order to remedy urban poverty (Porter, *Grows* 154), or when characters use it to break down traditional binaries of public/private and masculine/feminine, as Aunt Miranda does when she uses legal means to maintain feminine authority in the house (Wiggin 304). And femininity is not limited to the female characters; although Colin's feminized hysteria is constructed as deviant, the maternalism of male characters such as Dickon and Matthew Cuthbert is valorized. Messages both overt and coded teach complex lessons about how girls and women should and can participate in things conceived of as public. While these novels can figure proper femininity as being limiting or constricting at times, they also present a wide variety of different types of appropriate femininity that refuse to be confined by strict gender conventions through their expansive range of female characters and those characters' interactions with mobility.

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