

## ABSTRACT

“A woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised”: An Ethical-Critical Analysis of Theological Rogues in Mark Twain’s *Personal Recollections of Joan of Arc* and L. M. Montgomery’s *Anne of Green Gables* Series

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This thesis uses ethical criticism to examine the transformative nature of the interaction between authors, characters, and readers, focusing on Mark Twain’s *Personal Recollections of Joan of Arc* and L.M. Montgomery’s *Anne of Green Gables* series. By presenting socially transgressive figures in a sympathetic manner, Twain and Montgomery encourage a reevaluation of cultural and religious standards. The authors accomplish their goals by utilizing the form of Sunday school books while drastically altering the content, challenging readers’ expectations and urging ethical reform within the texts, as well as within the various historical audiences.

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Theological Rogues in Mark Twain’s *Personal Recollections of Joan of Arc* and  
L. M. Montgomery’s *Anne of Green Gables* Series

by

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A Thesis

Approved by the Department of English

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## DEDICATION

To my parents, Bob and Dorothy Terry

who instilled in me a passion for learning  
and who loved me enough to give me both roots and wings

## CHAPTER ONE

### Introduction

Mark Twain and L.M. (Maud) Montgomery may share readers, but they rarely share critics. This seems rather odd, given the fact that both authors wrote many books for children and shared similar visions of an “ideal” child-life. Their careers overlapped at the turn of the century, and they shared cultural and literary influences. Both were Presbyterian, but neither was wholly satisfied with the denomination. Certain aspects of Calvinism rankled each of them, yet neither would condone forays into less-structured branches of Christianity. Both held Christian Scientists in contempt, and both retained strong anti-Catholic sentiment until death. The two authors enjoyed reading children’s literature, sharing a passion for the work of Louisa May Alcott, Lewis Carroll, and George MacDonald, among others, and both were familiar with T. De Witt Talmage’s sermons, which neither of them liked as adults. Twain and Montgomery experienced extreme suffering in life, often related to their family situations. During their active writing careers, both Twain and Montgomery suffered the death of a child, the experience of which changed the authors’ lives forever, and not for the better: both are described by biographers as being depressed at the end of their lives. They read each other’s work, to some extent: Twain went so far as to send a congratulatory letter to Montgomery for her success in creating the inimitable Anne Shirley, and his family’s library included the first two Anne books; Montgomery mentions Twain’s *More Tramps Abroad* in her journal, citing her love of the book (Montgomery I: 242). Most importantly, both authors were

concerned about finding and using the correct form for each story that they wrote, and especially for the two stories being examined in this thesis: *Personal Recollections of Joan of Arc* and the *Anne of Green Gables* series.

Twain put ample thought into the forms of his stories, even though he wrote about the topic with his typical sarcastic humor. He also criticized the forms of other peoples' work. Twain especially disliked certain forms, such as that of Sunday school books. As Joe B. Fulton notes, "Twain burlesques [Sunday school books], criticizing them as aesthetically bad in part because they were ethically and theologically wrong" (*Reverend Mark Twain* 44). The Sunday school books, which include extreme polarizations of child behavior and a twisted presentation of Calvin's idea of Providence, utilize fancy language and episodic narration while always rewarding the "good" child (the model of Calvinistic repentance and proselytization) and condemning the "bad" child. This form, along with traditional hagiography, were among those that Twain hated most. In his autobiography, Twain discusses form for three paragraphs, and the only one of his novels that he references is *Personal Recollections of Joan of Arc*. Regarding form in general, Twain claims:

There are some books that refuse to be written. They stand their ground year after year and will not be persuaded. It isn't because the book is not there and worth being written—it is only because the right form for the story does not present itself. There is only one right form for a story and if you fail to find that form the story will not tell itself. (267)

He then explains how he tried six times to write about Joan before he finally discovered the appropriate form. Twain also wrote about how the various sections of the novel presented him with differing levels of difficulty: "I judged that the end of this book would be hard work, and it turned out so. [. . .] The first two-thirds of the book were

easy; for I only needed to keep my historical road straight” (*Letters* 2: 624). Twain did not want his name to mar readers’ reception of the novel, so instead he first published it, under the pseudonym of Sieur Louis de Conte, in a magazine as a serial. Only the most perceptive readers may have guessed that the shared initials (SLC) signaled whose work *Personal Recollections* really was. And, though the novel is a retelling of a saint’s life, it does not conform to the genre standards, as explained by Fulton (*Reverend Mark Twain* 105-139). Twain tweaks traditional hagiography to suit his own purposes and to showcase Joan’s various traits. Form, therefore, matters for both the manner of telling the story and the manner of presenting that telling to the audience.

Similarly, Montgomery was concerned about the form for the story of Anne. Originally, Montgomery had considered writing the story for a Sunday school serial magazine. She had recorded an entry in her journal about a mail-order orphan mix-up, but she did not take any further action with it until 1905. At that time, she decided to develop the story line, choosing to turn it into a novel instead of a Sunday school serial. Montgomery did not enjoy writing things to order or to fit a form dictated by somebody else (Montgomery 1: 303). Like Twain, she also had a disdain for the typical Sunday school books and magazines, including the serials. When writing about the experience of composing *Anne of Green Gables*, which was to be her favorite creation for several years, later taking second place behind *The Story Girl*, Montgomery claimed, “nothing I have ever written gave me so much pleasure to write. I cast ‘moral’ and ‘Sunday school’ ideals to the winds and made my ‘Anne’ a real human girl” (331). Montgomery’s hatred for those “Sunday school ideals” embodied in texts came from her own negative experiences of them. She often feared, as a child, for her salvation, and when she had

“conscience spells” she read only the Bible, a book of Talmage’s sermons, and *The Memoir of Anzonetta Peters* (376). These works were the only ones deemed appropriate for Sunday reading by Montgomery’s family when she was a child, and though, like Twain, she hated Talmage, she took some small amusement from his writings when she had to read them as a child. Writing of Anzonetta’s memoir in her journal, Montgomery recalls its impact on her, as well as her impression of the genre: “It belonged to a type now vanished from the earth fortunately—but much in vogue at that time. [. . .] I must have read that book a score of times if I did once. I don’t think it had a good effect on me” (Montgomery 1: 376). As many of her early publications were either verses or short stories that appeared in magazines, including those of the Sunday school ilk, the freedom that came with writing *Anne of Green Gables* invigorated Montgomery. Here was a story of her own making, designed to fit the form that she—not an editor—had chosen. Here, too, was the chance to comment on society, religion, imagination, and ethics, though not pedantically.

Ethical criticism, which deals specifically with the way in which interaction with literature affects the reader’s character, is the term that may best explain the approach taken in this thesis. Wayne C. Booth’s article, “Why Banning Ethical Criticism is a Serious Mistake,” discusses the characteristics of ethical criticism. He argues that in ethical criticism, as he understands it, the word “ethical” is meant “in the classical sense [. . .] the whole range of human qualities good and bad: the virtues, the powers, the habits of mind and heart” (375). Booth also notes that “whenever we engage with such characters, whether we see them as ‘better’ or ‘worse,’ we are caught up into ethical judgment” (376). However, this type of criticism is far from being perfectly conclusive.

In *The Company We Keep: An Ethics of Fiction*, Booth examines the complexities of ethical engagement with texts and the characters that populate them. “People generally assumed as a corollary that anyone’s character could be genuinely corrupted or improved through contact with literary characters,” he explains (230). He goes on to discuss the various types of literature that have been expressly utilized for the purpose of improving character, from hagiographies to books of manners to the pious fictions found in Sunday school literature (231). Booth also notes the necessity of engaging both sides of the debate centered on ethical criticism, finally suggesting that “the only fully general advice inherent in all this is that by taking thought about *who* and *where we are*, and about *when it is*, we may improve our chances of finding and dwelling with those others who are in fact our true friends” (488-9). This reasonable bit of advice serves as a good guide in approaching Twain and Montgomery’s works, so that the reader may see the ethical possibilities inherent in their interaction with the texts. Also, as neither Twain nor Montgomery cared for specifically didactic literature and both enjoyed story for story’s sake, this approach allows a reading of their texts as composing or affecting ethical foundations in the reader. However, it does not insist that such a reading was demanded by either author. Finally, as the authors successfully create figures that critique blind submission to social and religious restrictions, this ethical approach allows readers to understand how the authors, by breaking conventions of their eras, are able to achieve what the conventional literature of the time attempted to do: create a chain of behavioral reactions that would alter society in a positive way.

In this sense, texts allow readers to engage in reflective morality. Jim Garrison’s article “Prophetic Epideictic Rhetoric: Poetic Education Beyond Good and Evil”

examines John Dewey's distinctions between customary and reflective morality and how the latter influences the acquisition of virtue, especially when encountering prophetic figures through literature. Garrison quotes Dewey as writing, "the intellectual distinction between customary and reflective morality is clearly marked. The former places the standard and rules of conduct in ancestral habit; the latter appeals to conscience, reason, or to some principle which includes thought" (224). Garrison argues that a culture's customs "provide the constant and often unconscious moral education of a society" (224). Figures, such as prophets, that transgress cultural customs and norms force those around them to reconsider the received tradition, evaluating whether or not it remains a solid bastion of morality. Garrison notes that prophetic figures often face censure for breaking away from the norms (225). However, if the figures are presented sympathetically, playing on both emotion and reason within the reader, the transgressor can become the model of behavior or the new standard. This is what happens in Twain's presentation of Joan of Arc and Montgomery's presentation of Anne Shirley Blythe.

The Sunday school book genre that both Twain and Montgomery hated provided them with a form for their stories, even though they drastically altered the content expected in such a story. The authors did not, perhaps, consciously conceive of their books as being revisions of the Sunday school genre, though Twain had intentionally burlesqued the genre in earlier works, but the narration in the books, as well as the specific characterization surrounding the heroines, clearly references the earlier, odious form. Sunday school books attempted to inculcate morals into children by presenting models of behavior. However, these morals or virtues were merely reinforcements of cultural and religious tradition, to which children were urged to submit blindly. In Twain

and Montgomery's stories, the heroines are presented sympathetically, so that readers will identify with them and seek to emulate them. However, the behavior exhibited by these females is anything but traditional. They are women who fear the Lord, and thus ought to be praised, as suggested in Proverbs 31.30, but they do not win this praise by blind conformity. Because Joan and Anne transgress the expectations for women and children within their own cultures and the cultures that first read their tales, the characters force the readers to reflect on received morality and behaviors. This creates a possibility for social change within the fictional communities constructed by the authors, as well as the actual communities in which readers reside. Even the authors may be changed during the writing process as they encounter these transgressive figures in the realm of the imagination before the characters materialize on the page. As these texts specifically deal with Christian characters who transgress the accepted norms of behavior and belief within their respective communities, this analysis moves away from the general "classical" definition of "ethical," as explained by Booth. Instead, it turns to a more narrowly defined reading that uses a Christian understanding of ethics to explore the theological significance and behavioral impact of these transgressive figures. This thesis also examines the implications of the parallels between God and humans as creators, as well as the connections of Christ as God's Word made flesh within time and space and characters as the authors' words made flesh within a fictional world that operates on the same ideas of time and space.

The following chapters will develop these ideas, beginning with Twain's Joan, moving on to Montgomery's Anne, and ending with a discussion of the author-character-reader interplay of ethics and imagination.

## CHAPTER TWO

### Non-Conformity and “Good Girls” in Mark Twain’s Fiction

*There was a little girl,  
Who had a little curl,  
Right in the middle of her forehead.  
And when she was good,  
She was very good indeed,  
And when she was bad she was horrid.  
~ Henry Wadsworth Longfellow*

During the earlier half of his career, the American master of parody and burlesque, Mark Twain, wrote several advice pieces to boys and girls in which he advocates less-than-laudable behavior. His most famous child-characters, Tom Sawyer and Huckleberry Finn, practically define the label “bad boys” according to the behavioral standards of the day. After all, Twain’s society viewed children in a very simplistic manner: good or bad. No intermediate area existed, just as the nursery rhyme by Longfellow presents a polarized view of the curly-headed girl. Other childish characters written by Twain, including Jacob Blivens, Jim, Mamie Grant, Little Bessie, and Becky Thatcher, appear in various places along the behavior spectrum, embodying “good” and “bad” characteristics in their own unique ways. However, it is Twain’s Joan of Arc, rebel and martyr, who best represents a “good” child, especially a “good girl,” as defined by Twain’s burlesques, parodies, and negative opinions about rigid social and religious structures. For Twain, a child’s goodness relies on native wonder and awe, the propensity to think things through for oneself, a healthy faith life, strict adherence to one’s conscience and goals, and refusing to conform completely to society’s demands and examples. The ideal “good” child should also be attractive to others, displaying a

mystique or charm that naturally and unconsciously emanates from his or her approach to life. This definition of a “good” child is synonymous with behaviors viewed as transgressive and destructive by the culture at large.

The religious overtones inherent to the nineteenth century contributed to expectations surrounding conduct and behavior. America’s Calvinist roots may take credit for this: the idea of total depravity and the need for constant reformation popularized notions of simple living, industry, and a joyless (or at least humorless) lifestyle to help control the strong human tendency to sin. Furthermore, missionary zeal swept through the country, feeding anti-Catholic prejudices, constantly reminding people of the poor “people in darkness” who needed Christian charity, and sustaining religious talk in all corners of the land. Even those not affiliated with Calvinistic branches of Christianity, such as Roman Catholics, possessed traditions and standards of behavior according to their denomination’s beliefs about the nature of man, the grace of God, and what was fitting conduct for a Christian.

In her book *Learning to Behave: A Guide to American Conduct Books Before 1900*, Sarah Newton discusses the types of activities and attitudes that were expected of men, women, and children. Children were urged to read their Bibles, learn their catechisms, acquire “useful” skills (domestic prowess for girls, academic and athletic abilities for boys), and generally be seen and not heard. As the nineteenth century progressed, authors of deportment books became slightly more approving of play within a child’s daily routine, though many of the more puritanical sources continued to disparage imaginative play in favor of mini-enactments of the gender-specific roles occupied by adults (29-31). As with the Sunday school story books parodied by Twain,

some of these books were written as narratives of “good” or “bad” little children who either did or did not fulfill the story’s featured virtues, while others appeared in epistolary formats (35). “Goodness” in children equated with minding one’s manners and being pious little Protestants.

Women were expected to act much in the same way as children, according to Newton. Citing Cotton Mather’s book, Newton writes that the model woman was “marked by purity, modesty, piety, chastity, and industry” (64). Additionally, women were expected to submit to their husbands completely as part of the religious ethos of the day (67). As Cogan notes, marriage was the norm for women, and “good” women often engaged in charitable or domestic work, though some single women achieved paid employment without losing their reputations as “good” Christians and Americans (200-1). Fancy or overly-educated language was discouraged and labeled as a sign of vanity; any formal education that women received was not meant to be exhibited in the presence of mixed company. Rather, it was hidden so that the males present would appear to be masters of the conversation and the attendant women would function as mere spectators or pleasant facilitators (Newton 68, 75). Newton points out that some critics and composers of the conduct books believed women to be inferior physically, spiritually, and mentally, thereby influencing the language of and emphasis on submission (73). The ideal woman of the day should master the arts of running a household, raising children, and creating a tranquil home environment. Besides being prototypical Martha Stewarts or June Cleavers, women were expected to be paragons of simple, delicate beauty. The corseted, pale women often appearing in stories from the Gilded Age radiate the external form of the nineteenth century’s notion of pure femininity. This pinched existence was

not unique to American women; rather, from as early as the 1850s to as late as the end of the Victorian period, British women and girls were also expected to endure whalebone corsets and stays to modify their figures. . .and the higher the class, the more often the woman was thus tortured (Perkin 93-5). Laced up, expected to be demure and docile, and looked down upon by men and women alike for breaches of accepted social conduct, most women were essentially trapped into conforming to the demands of a patriarchal society. Throughout her book, Cogan discusses doctors, conduct book writers, and others who suggested that this ideal amounted to nonsense and urged women to take better care of themselves physically and mentally by performing specific regimens of hygiene, education, diet, and exercise. Nevertheless, the chorus that demanded women occupy an innocuous and nearly powerless position in society drowned out these dissenting voices.

Such societal strictures and forces lend themselves to burlesque and critique when examined by discerning minds. Twain's radical differences in opinions from these accepted mores should come as no surprise to readers and scholars. In light of the recommended conduct for women and children (especially young girls), the suffragettes and activists of the middle and late nineteenth century stand out as heroic and daring examples of nonconformity. Twain was personally acquainted with forward-thinking and activist women, courtesy of Olivia, his wife, and her circle of friends (Skandera-Trombley 131-54). His own daughters gave him feedback for his books as he wrote them at Quarry Farm, and the master humorist read not only his own books but other works of literature to his daughters (25-6). This suggests that he did not share the culture's views that children should be seen and not heard or that girls should not be educated in non-domestic subjects. Furthermore, Albert E. Stone writes that Twain "accepted the organic

unity of the Christian family, and he regarded Susy, Clara, Jean, and their friends as full-fledged members of the social body. To accord children this status hardly seems noteworthy today, but in the 1870s it was a necessary prelude to writing fiction for them and about them” (10-1). Although it is the *narrator* Twain who is most important to this analysis, the *human* Twain’s outlook and practices contribute some insight into the texts in question.

Twain was not fond of large, widespread denominations that employ uniform creeds and worship styles, and he often portrayed them as full of superstitions and passive, almost wooden believers who accepted whatever the preacher said without stopping to consider what it meant. No denomination was exempt from Twain’s biting critiques. Readers may find anti-Catholic passages in nearly all of Twain’s travel narratives; *Roughing It* also contains a few anecdotal tall tales about Mormons and their signature oddity, polygamy (96-106). Christian Science? That unique belief system did not have a prayer once Twain took his mighty pen into battle against it. Yet Twain’s criticism of religion included even his own denomination. In *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur’s Court*, Hank Morgan muses that any church that becomes the sole propagator of religion is necessarily bad and corrupt, even if that church is the Presbyterian church (81). The Presbyterian minister who uses fancy language and cannot minister to his western flock serves as an object of ridicule in *Roughing It*, winning only one convert in his entire tenure (316). Twain also made caustic remarks about the doctrine of infant damnation, then on its way out of popularity, in “Aix-les-Baines” (4). In his book, *The Innocent Eye: Childhood in the Imagination of Mark Twain*, Stone notes that Twain found infant damnation “repugnant” and held “a fascinated loathing for

Calvinist doctrines of sin and damnation” (6-7). However horrible gloom-and-doom sects and international churches appeared to Twain, the wildcat religions he writes of in *Roughing It* receive the worst press. The wildcat churches are the opposite of the large denominations Twain criticized, for they employed no creeds and the worship style was certainly not uniform or regulated. In *Roughing It* and some of his other works, Twain paints the wildcat churches as anarchical bodies that are dangerous to society. Thus, Twain calls neither for the abolishment of all established churches in favor of total individualistic religion nor for the establishment of any one church for all to join. Rather, he (or at least his narrative self) yearns for a balance between alliance with a (preferably Protestant) denomination while retaining an individualized approach to the experiential, spiritual sides of religious experience. How to achieve that balance is unclear, but Twain’s differences from the accepted religious fervor of the day stand out in stark relief.

Twain’s definition of a “good” child is drawn from his short pieces “Advice for Good Little Boys,” “Advice for Good Little Girls,” and “Advice to Youth.” In these short burlesques, Twain encourages his audience of young readers to pull pranks, act up, disobey their parents after promising to be obedient, tell lies (but only when the children are unlikely to be caught, and only when the truth will not answer as well), and to further disrupt the delicate balance of social customs and ‘proper’ behaviors expected of children. For instance, “You ought never to take your little brother’s ‘chewing gum’ away from him by force—it is better to rope him in with the promise of the first two dollars and a half you find floating down the river on a grindstone,” Twain writes (“Good Little Girls” 164). Twain instructs the boys, “You ought never to knock your little sister down with a club. It is better to use a cat, which is soft. In doing this you must be

careful to take the cat by the tail, in such a manner that she cannot scratch you” (“Good Little Boys” 163). The tone and language of the pieces parody those of the conduct books children read during this time period. Twain effectively criticizes the restraints put on normal childish behavior by suggesting to his readers that they act according to their natures, or “better judgment” (“Girls” 164). By forcing children to conform to unnatural standards of deportment, adults deprived children of nearly all outlets for creative energy. The seemingly-subversive measures suggested by Twain cannot be harmful to children, for these hijinks and shenanigans are merely those that children could conceive of themselves. The naughty behaviors are examples of how fledgling human nature learns to interact with other members of the species, how to communicate, and how to work through base desires in acceptable ways. After all, Twain writes, “Build your character thoughtfully and painstakingly upon these precepts; and by and by, when you have got it built, you will be surprised and gratified to see how nicely and sharply it resembles everybody else’s” (“Youth” 803). As a parent, Twain was surely aware of the trial-and-error method of learning that so many children engage in; as an author, he knew how flat and one-dimensional any character would be if made to conform to a single, overriding societal idea of acceptable conduct and expression. Yet the cultural climate of America, Canada, and England in the nineteenth century demanded that every member of the human family do just that: conform to rigid class-, gender-, and age-specific models of living or else be labeled as deficient, bad, immoral, ungodly, or degenerate.

Twain burlesques the elaborate rules of etiquette devised for every possible situation and the correlating trivial details surrounding even physical objects in the 1881 piece entitled “Etiquette.” Using the ludicrous fictional example of how a young man

and woman are to act in the event of a house fire, Twain mimics etiquette books' overly-formal language suggested for use by said parties, as well as the concurrent attention that is to be accorded to differences in social standings, during this process and other interactions. For example, Twain devises an entire speech to be delivered by a young gentleman to a young woman, not of his acquaintance, in the event that he must rescue her from a burning building. Twain then goes on to say, "should she accept, the young gentleman should offer his arm—bowing, and observing 'Permit me' [the speech]—and so escort her to the fire escape and deposit her in (being extremely careful, if she have no clothes on but her night dress, not to seem to notice the irregularity)" (787). The social commentary inherent in the satirical remarks readily reveals such stiff and unnatural behavior for what it is while hinting that natural behaviors are preferable despite the fact that they are unrepressed and socially unacceptable.

Twain satirizes unnatural behaviors centered on religious observances in several short burlesques that appeared between 1852 and 1890. One of these, "The Story of the Good Little Boy Who Did Not Prosper," recounts the story of one Jacob Blivens, a boy whose dearest wish is to be immortalized in a Sunday school book. "He knew it was not healthy to be good. He knew it was more fatal than consumption to be so supernaturally good as the boys in the books were," quips the narrator (375). While Blivens' concern is for physical health—he must attain a Protestant sainthood at an early age, for all the "good" boys in the Sunday school books die young—the narrator's tone implies that this impetus for perfect behavior is unhealthy in other ways as well. Blivens' every thought revolves around his fevered quest in an obsessive-compulsive framework: he lacks mental health. He wishes to be in one of the books for the honor of the distinction (and

for the glorious illustrations he imagines), not for having given honor and glory to God: he lacks spiritual health. But most of all, the boy lacks imaginative health: he never once plays or even slightly deviates from his neurotic notions and compulsive conduct. As far as he embodies the nineteenth century's ideals for childhood piety and deportment, Blivens shines forth. . .but readers may notice that this distinction is anything but positive.

Despite the cheerless existence promised to children in the time's socio-religious standards of behavior, a curious sense of nostalgia for childhood reared its head in the nineteenth century and continues to appear in depictions of youth. Gillian Brown discusses this phenomenon in her article "Child's Play," and Steven Mintz writes, "A series of myths have clouded public thinking about the history of American childhood. One is the myth of a carefree childhood. We cling to a fantasy that once upon a time childhood and youth were years of carefree adventure, despite the fact that for most young people in the past, growing up was anything but easy" (para. 4). M. L. Rosenthal discusses *Alice in Wonderland*, *Pinocchio*, and *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, noting that the language used in these books "is a pang of regret for the lost freedom of unselfconscious childhood" (para. 12). The unselfconscious childhood, a natural state of being, is exactly what Twain championed in his "good" child-characters, those, like Tom Sawyer and Huck Finn, at whom society would frown. Due to the nostalgia for childhood that was prevalent during his lifetime, Twain had a ready-made audience for his social critiques of the limitations put on normal childish behavior. The narrative format of his burlesques helps to let the readers' guards down, so to speak, so that they are primed to accept what is presented at face value, never suspecting that they are

internalizing ‘subversive’ themes. A “naughty” or non-conforming child in a story who has innocently gotten into trouble or broken the quintessential rules of etiquette is attractive, funny, and non-threatening to the reader and society because the child is only a fiction. However, by accepting and approving of these behaviors because of their naturalness and attractiveness, the reader unconsciously takes part in the social criticism propagated by Twain. This in turn undermines the reader’s assumptions and engenders a more positive attitude towards real children who exhibit these behaviors.

Admiration for exceptional children—that is, for those who are exceptions to the rules of the day—defined at least part of Twain’s personal preferences in the children’s literature his family possessed. The chronicles of the March family, the *Alice* books, and the first two *Anne* books were included in the Clemens family’s personal library (Gribben 14, 198-9, 480). In Louisa May Alcott’s *Little Women* and *Little Men*, readers encounter the March sisters, who normally follow tomboy Jo’s lead in theatrical antics and unorthodox meetings with the neighbor boy, Laurie. The literary heroine of the first novel goes on to become a successful writer as an adult and eventually opens a boys’ school for troubled orphans which she runs in conjunction with her husband—both odd occupations for a *married* woman in late nineteenth-century America. However, Jo never fully conforms to what society dictates as right: she acts on her own convictions (and occasionally her parents’ guidance) which serves her well in the end, though she suffers several heartbreaks—and the loss of a coveted European tour—in the process. Her frank, funny approach to life has made her a favorite character for countless readers.

Similarly, Lewis Carroll’s “immortal Alice” (the epithet afforded her by Twain in a letter to Francis Wilson), flaunts good behavior and breeding more than once during her

topsy-turvy adventures in Wonderland. The precocious child sasses the authority figures she meets (the Duchess, the Queen of Hearts, the judge), shows a healthy appetite for labeled food and drink, actively fights back when attacked first by the White Rabbit's neighbors and then by the pack of cards at the court, all before waking up to tell her sister of these adventures (7-8, 27, 34; 31-2, 102). Surprisingly, Alice's stories are not treated as "falsehoods" or as dangerous threats to her moral character, but this may be due to the fact that it is her sister (a non-parental figure) who hears the fantastic report. Once she steps through the looking-glass for her second round of adventures, Alice serves as the only bastion of sense in the mirror-world. Her appraisals of the arguments and advice given her by the Red and White Queens during the "examination" suggest that a child's straightforward and simple view of the world is more practical to live by than the adults' confusing and complicated rigmarole (184-90). Furthermore, Alice's natural, uninhibited behaviors and comments contrast vividly with the social norms and mores of the Looking-glass creatures, just as they (presumably) would in her own strait-laced Victorian England. She is a refreshing breath of air in an otherwise stale environment. Yet neither Jo March nor Alice shed as much light on Twain's "good girl" ideal as does Anne Shirley, the charming red-head from Prince Edward Island.

L.M. Montgomery's child heroine nearly debuted serially in a Sunday school circular in Canada before the 1908 publication of the novel *Anne of Green Gables*. Fortunately, Montgomery refrained from relegating Anne to that genre. Twain was so taken with the character that he wrote to his friend, the actor Francis Wilson, that Anne was "the dearest and most delightful child since the immortal Alice" (Gribben 480). Furthermore, he praised the literary quality of the book when he sent a copy of it to

Frances Nunnally, claiming that “Anne is a very pleasant child to know” and explaining the package thus: “It came two days after you went away, & I was to read it & give it to Frances Wilson; but I was at once so taken with it that I thought I would send it to you & get another copy for him” (480). Twain’s secretary even copied the praise out of the Wilson letter and sent a copy of it to L.M. Montgomery who, as a Twain fan, was no doubt quite pleased. Why is Anne such a special character for Twain? What qualities won adulation from the depressed, seventy-eight year old author?

Though Twain does not specifically spell out the qualities in his letters, Anne’s most winning characteristics (in light of Twain’s work) probably include her inherent curiosity, unabated wonder at and appreciation of the world, life-like temperament, ability to think for herself, and her continued tendencies not to fully conform to society’s expectations. After all, this is the orphan who makes up a confession so that she may go to a picnic, despite the fact that she is innocent of all accusations; the child who accidentally gets her best friend, Diana, drunk in the excitement of hosting a tea party but manages later to save a dangerously ill baby; the girl who smashes her slate over an admirer’s head when he teases her about her hair; the upstart that unexpectedly puts the local gossip, Mrs. Rachel Lynde, in her place with a few well-chosen and passionate words (Montgomery 96-103, 126-8, 143, 111-2, 64-5). Anne seems to have read Twain’s address, for he told girls, “You ought never to ‘sass’ old people—unless they ‘sass’ you first” (“Girls” 165). Anne also exhibits an overly-healthy appetite for playing outside, at least by some nineteenth-century estimations of “normal” girlhood recreation. No matter what Anne sets her mind to do, she accomplishes it—from walking a ridge pole to coming in first in her class, from taking a two-year teacher’s license in one year to getting

a significant portion of her writings published (though only in later chronicles of her life, one of which Twain did read) (Montgomery 185; 289). Treasuring a belief in fairies and dryads, nurturing a love of all things Romantic (until she nearly drowns while portraying the Lily Maid), and recognizing Diana's loss of opportunities that accompany the higher education denied her by her parents, Anne is as forward-thinking yet whimsical and unique a character as one could hope to find in all literature (173, 220-8, 243-4). She makes friends everywhere she goes, charming them with her ways and bringing laughter even to grim spinster Marilla Cuthbert.

But it is Anne's approach to religion that is most telling. In her article, "That Unholy Tendency to Laughter": L. M. Montgomery's Iconoclastic Affirmation of Faith in *Anne of Green Gables*," Monika B. Hilder argues that Marilla Cuthbert's gradual acceptance of Anne's faith and behaviors, as evidenced by laughter over the child's zany antics, reveals Montgomery's affirmation of a partially non-conformist view of religion. Hilder claims that "Montgomery shatters the idolatrous image of a socially restrictive and repressive Christianity in order to create an icon of or window on the intrinsic orthodoxy (rightness) of a profoundly vivid faith" (36). Anne, like Montgomery and Twain, is a practicing Presbyterian, but she goes beyond the repetitive memorized prayers and liturgies of that denomination to encounter God and speak to Him in her own way. Anne would rather pray in a field than on her knees by the bed, and she is unafraid to criticize both the pastor and the Sunday school superintendent for being less than inspiring and overly melancholy: such behavior and opinions were certainly out of the ordinary for a child in the late nineteenth century. . . especially a child that wished dearly to be a "good girl" (Montgomery 49-52, 81-3). Hilder quotes Shirley Foster and Judy Simons as

“regard[ing] Anne in the role of ‘the pious child as moral instructor’ who ‘overthrow[s] the dominant social and moral orders’” (40). Furthermore, “Anne’s honest observations about adult religious hypocrisy educate Marilla toward distinguishing between social conformity to the appearance of reverence. . .and the genuine, personal quest for faith” (49). In this way, Anne essentially fulfills Twain’s vision of the “good girl” as well as his own paragon, Joan of Arc, and she illuminates Twain’s characters Mamie Grant, Becky Thatcher, and Little Bessie on the good/bad continuum. If the character is as lovable, impetuous, and honestly natural as Anne or Joan, she is a “good girl;” anything short of that will not do.

Minute missionary Mamie Grant “early [came] to know the comfort and joy of true religion,” thereby damning her, in Twain’s short story, “The Story of Mamie Grant, the Child-Missionary,” to a position of rigid conformity in both social and religious outlook and practice (262). Every event that occurs during the day prompts Mamie to recite from the Sunday school texts she adores, and no person may dissuade her from her chosen monologues. Unable to understand subtle and overt social cues alike, Mamie does not realize that she alienates the very people she believes she is saving, even when they retreat rapidly from her presence. Unlike the Sunday school heroes and heroines she emulates, Mamie succeeds only in financially ruining her aunt and uncle (268). Like Twain’s Jacob Blivens, the repugnant Mamie is a caricature of society’s ideal “good” child. While her hands are idle, revealing that she has not learned to be industrious, she clearly has studied her Bible and the Sunday school books and strives to be a pious little Protestant. She is a Baptist, perhaps, if the comments made to the paper boy are telling: she wants him to fold her tracts into the paper, so that it may be “a Baptist benediction at

every fireside” (264). Her faith sounds pre-packaged and shallow, offensive in its very determination never to deviate from or develop beyond the norm presented at church. Mamie’s failure to be deferential to her elders, evidenced by her willful deafness to their queries, comes not from lack of social conformity or free-thinking on her own part, but rather from an imbalance in lauded childhood virtues. Though she resembles a Sunday school heroine, the proud and unlovable little brat evokes neither piety nor admiration in readers, dealing a deadly blow to the culturally-correct picture of child-life presented by the nineteenth century. Thus, Twain offers up this nearly-grotesque child on the altar of placid conformity. Mamie’s last hope for redemption (in the eyes of the narrator and audience) lies in an unlikely transformation into a society-deemed “bad” girl capable of engaging in conversation with other human beings and thinking outside of the proverbial box. However, as the story ends with Mamie wishing to be immortalized in a marble-backed Sunday school book, such a transformation may only occur in the reader’s imagination.

Becky Thatcher, Tom Sawyer’s young love interest, is a “good girl” in society’s eyes, although she falls short of the mark by Twain’s standards. Nevertheless, a seed of Twain’s ideals resides within Becky. A blond-haired, blue-eyed, pale and thin maiden, Becky embodies the nineteenth century’s ideals of what a girl should look like. Obedient almost to a fault, the only instance of Becky’s daring comes from her perusal of the teacher’s anatomy book and her accidental ripping of the frontispiece (*Tom* 114). The native curiosity she exhibits suggests that she does not perfectly fit the mold of society’s darling, but her other behaviors in the novel—speaking respectfully to her parents, obeying their requests, attending Sunday school dutifully, and blindly relying fully on the

authority of others for information and experience—reveal her as no more than a foil for good-bad boy Tom. Becky’s actions and words cannot compare to Mamie Grant’s thick-headed, rote mission-appeals and denials of the importance of daily “worldly” tasks, but Miss Thatcher’s overall conformity to society’s demands and expectations bars her from reaching Joan’s level of goodness as defined by Twain (and the Church).

Little Bessie, the protagonist of Twain’s short story by the same name, enjoys thinking things through, though her three year-old mind is overly influenced by the opinions and heretical musings of one Mr. Hollister. Bessie receives the label “good” from the narrator, who further describes her as “not shallow, not frivolous, but meditative and thoughtful” (“Bessie” 864). So far, so good: this introduction intimates Bessie’s conformity to society’s expectations of a model toddler and suggests that her character is more developed than Mamie’s. However, Bessie, presumably too young actually to have studied a catechism or to have learned how to become useful, catechizes her mother in Hollister-esque religion, utilizing the question-and-answer format with which Twain was so familiar. The little instructress manipulates logic to prove that God is the only “Criminal” and to dismantle accepted truths of Christianity (868). This unnatural expression of a child’s natural curiosity shocks the reader. Bessie balks the social standard of acting meekly and deferentially to her mother by prattling on even when asked to stop, and she flies in the face of accepted mainstream Protestantism. The three year-old portrays a negative but nearly complete version of Twain’s “good girl:” while she thinks for herself (at least partially), exhibits curiosity, ignores conventions, and adheres to her goals, Bessie is unlovable. As with Mamie, no trait endears Bessie to readers. Rather, her behaviors simply function as warnings to those who dictate how

children “ought” to act and appear. When society removes the imagination and play from a child, treats him or her like a mini-adult *sans* rights and opinions, and demands uniform behaviors at all times, unnatural little monsters are produced. Though some of the Calvinistic members of the population surely had no quarrels with the results (considering their emphasis on total depravity and the need for strict discipline to work alongside grace), Twain’s ultimate “good girl,” Joan of Arc, demonstrates how non-conformity is healthy, normal, and attractive in children.

Before examining Joan, who is seventeen at the beginning of her military campaign, Twain’s other teenage dynamo, Hellfire Hotchkiss, must be considered. Created after Joan, Hellfire, protagonist of a short story that bears her name, exhibits some of the traits lauded by Twain, though she does not fare as well in her society as would be ideal (*Nancy Jackson* 43). Hellfire breaks many social norms, from going about “bareheaded and riding bareback and astride” to her other many accomplishments, including hunting, trapping, boating, fishing and fighting, which “were taboo” (54, 64). She also breaks horses and serves the community as a fireman (67). All of this gives her a “perfect conflagration of a reputation” (63-4). Like Joan, Hellfire thinks things through for herself: “She’s the only person that had enough presence of mind to come fixed to *do* something in case there was a chance” comments another character (56). The local judge recognizes in Hellfire a good business head, and the narrator characterizes her as having “good judgment and coolness in danger” (60, 64). Hellfire follows her own conscience in all things, the funniest example of which is her decision to “whip” the Stover boys “for a higher motive—a higher motive and in every way a worthier one” (69). She also resolves to outwardly change so that she can continue being inwardly rebellious and non-

conformist (69). However, unlike Joan, Hellfire loses some of her status in the community when tongues start to wag (66-7). Though she “was a favorite” according to the narrator, Hellfire’s wild behavior makes the fifteen year-old seem older than her actual age, as well as possibly familiar with ‘adult’ matters, negating the innocence she might otherwise still possess. As John Cooley notes in the introduction to his book of Mark Twain’s “angelfish” correspondence, “Clemens’s repeated concern for the innocence of his angelfish suggests that he believed young women became spoiled or perhaps corrupted once they entered the age of sexual activity” (xxiii-xxiv). This led Twain to alter or stop communication with his young female friends once they arrived at the age of sixteen (2). So Hellfire’s seeming older than her actual age is definitely problematic. Furthermore, some portions of the text suggest that Hellfire is not completely innocent. As her tale was never completed, readers will never know whether Hellfire would have recovered her reputation or if she would have conformed to society’s standards. Also, the narrator does not convey many of Hellfire’s thoughts on religion. She does not like going to church, but will attend services because it is her duty: a fact made funny because Hellfire is the preacher’s daughter (69, 61). However, another of her nicknames, Wildcat, brings with it negative connotations when considered in the light of Twain’s body of works. If Hellfire is a “Wildcat” religionist, then she falls short of Twain’s ideal of girlhood, as well as his ideal female character, Joan of Arc.

Twain’s characterization of Joan is what sets her apart from her Sunday school book counterparts. When picking up *Personal Recollections of Joan of Arc*, readers may be tricked into thinking that they are about to read a typical Sunday school book, along the lines of those parodied by Twain in his piece about Mamie Grant. As with the

Sunday school books, the titular character (Joan) is the heroine, the model of “good” behavior for the readers to emulate. However, everything about Joan contradicts the Calvinistic Sunday school books and their specific moral focus. By their standards, Joan would be a very bad girl indeed. Yet Twain intends for the reader to view Joan in a positive way, making the rogue attractive and relatable to readers. Joan succeeds as a “good” girl in the novel because she espouses the behaviors and characteristics normally labeled “bad,” and the truly wicked characters, such as Cauchon (whose name sounds the same as “cochon,” the French word for “pig”), embody those ideals that Sunday school books present as “good.” When readers connect with Joan, prizing the martyr’s actions, they engage the text as Sunday school authors wish for readers to do, but with very different results: transgressive behaviors, not social and religious norms, are reinforced. In this way, Twain and Joan turn the Sunday school book genre upside down.

Joan of Arc, that peerless paragon of purity and perseverance under pressure and pyrotechnics, completely fulfills all of the necessary components of Twain’s idea of a “good girl,” beginning with wonder and awe. The most notable and explicit instance of this characteristic is Joan’s sensitivity to the presence of the archangel Michael in the forest, kneeling as soon as she hears the birds burst into song (*Personal* 74). The humble girl falls under the “awful splendor,” and “her face, only humanly beautiful before, became divine; flooded with the transforming glory her mean peasant habit was become like to the raiment of the sun-clothed children of God as we see them thronging the terraces of the Throne in our dreams and imaginings” (74). Yet though she is transformed, she is unaware of it, so natural is this communion. The narrator, Sieur Louis de Conte, is scared of even the idea of the archangel and marvels that Joan is not;

she tells him “I was afraid the first time,” indicating to the reader that Joan has acquired this fearlessness, normally not associated with the theological concept of wonder and awe, over time (76). Like her playmates, Joan holds the national war heroes in high esteem, and she and the other village children speculate what the men must be like, dreaming about someday meeting them (64-5). “I could count myself honored past all deserving if I might be allowed but the privilege of looking upon them once—at a distance, I mean, for it would not become one of my degree to approach them too near” says Joan (65). Additionally, Joan exhibits curiosity about the Dwarf when she sees him fettered. The simple explanations given to her by the officer in charge fail to answer her inquisitiveness, so she talks to the Dwarf to get the full story (177-80). When she finds that he has come back of his own free will to the army that he deserted, which now wishes to kill him, Joan exclaims, “*He* a deserter! Name of God! Bring him to me!” (178). This natural, simple way of discovering the truth contrasts with all of the formalities of military procedure and socially-constructed mores, and Twain presents it as a praiseworthy trait, for these actions win Joan a loyal and talented soldier for future battles.

Joan’s cognitive abilities outstrip those of her comrades from Domremy, many of the military minds she meets, some representatives of the Church, and even trained lawyers. “Joan had a cool head—the only cool head there—and she took command and brought order out of that chaos,” de Conte claims, remembering how the Maid of Orleans handled the nighttime raid of the village of Domremy (62). A mere girl of sixteen, Joan organizes a (presumably large) group of her peasant neighbors, keeping them safe until the morning comes and they are able to return home. Though the village had previously

escaped attacks, most of the inhabitants would have been older than Joan and in possession of more life experience, rendering her impromptu leadership an unexpected anomaly. Earlier in the story, Joan argues with the parish priest about his banishment of the fairies from their tree-home in the forest, trumping the man in logic and Christian charity. She is only a small child at that time, yet her view of the fairies as worthy of pity is reached completely on her own, and it convinces the man who has the most power in the village (45). Joan receives no formal education; her cleverness and solid logic are inborn. She uses these same skills and gifts to defend her honor during the trial at Toul (83). Despite the Paladin's best efforts to make her his wife, despite even the fact that she has no familiarity with the law and accepts no legal counsel, Joan deconstructs the scenario he puts forth and unmasks the witnesses as "vague, confused, and of no force" (82-3).

Later in the story, several of the commanders marvel at Joan's ability to understand the game of war (162). Though led by her Voices, Joan's military successes partially depend on her knack of inspiring the troops and confusing the enemy. A particularly fine example of this ability comes early in the story, when Joan encounters the enemy's leaders in the midst of the forest. Without lying, she is able to convince the men that she has seen Joan of Arc's camp and that she will destroy the bridge. Of course, she has seen Joan of Arc's camp, and she does destroy the bridge, but her ability to play off of the enemy's complacency while simultaneously ensuring her troops' safety is what sets her apart from the other military commanders of her time (103-5). As the narrator quips, "I cannot describe what I felt [after destroying the bridge]. One has to feel it himself in order to know what it is like" (105). This indescribable feeling, along with the

obliquely described shame felt by the enemy who was fooled by Joan, indicate the implications of such qualities in a leader. Finally, Joan's clear thinking serves her well during the long heresy trials. Her answers to Cauchon's barbed inquiries neither distort the truth nor implicate her in any heterodox dealings, much to the bishop's chagrin. Only when illness and exhaustion set in are her mental faculties impaired, leaving her defenseless and leading to her false confession (403-14). "Joan's spirit had as yet suffered no decay, it was sublime and masterful as ever," claims the narrator, "but her body's forces had been steadily wasting away in those last ten days, and a strong mind needs a healthy body for its rightful support" (404). Joan's forced abjuration comes in front of a crowd that knows she has been bullied and tortured into submission.

They gave her no time to reconsider—they knew the peril of that. The moment the words were out of her mouth Massieu was reading to her the abjuration, and she was repeating the words after him mechanically, unconsciously—and *smiling*; for her wandering mind was far away in some happier world. (413)

Twain's heroine has done what no woman in fifteenth-century France or nineteenth-century America ought to do: she has publicly proved herself intellectually superior to men—men in power—who deal her a death blow only once she reaches her lowest point. The blatant cruelty and inhumanity of their actions underscore their prejudices toward this intelligent and vocal woman. Though she perishes, the last laugh is Joan's: she is exonerated in later years and eventually becomes a saint, while her persecutors go down in history as bigoted bullies.

Joan exhibits a faith life that balances adherence to organized religion while allowing for non-traditional spirituality. "She was deeply religious," says de Conte, "and this is a thing which sometimes gives a melancholy cast to a person's countenance, but it

was not so in her case. Her religion made her inwardly content and joyous; and if she was troubled at times, and showed the pain of it in her face and bearing, it came of distress for her country; no part of it was chargeable to her religion” (63). Joan dislikes the idea that people do not believe in her claim of faith. When the governor orders Joan to be exorcised, the act is performed, which “hurt Joan’s feelings and offended her piety without need” (92). When some of the cross-examining priests confuse Joan with theological problems, leading up to the question of whether she believes in God, Joan makes the saucy reply, “Oh, well, yes—better than you, it is likely” (139). With her army, Joan attends daily Mass and prayers. She forbids anyone to participate if they do not truly believe what they are doing—no wooden, empty, and blind interactions accepted—but sincerely wishes for all of her soldiers to be in a state of grace and in communion with the Church (154-5). Joan’s vibrant faith, lived out publicly, draws others to Christ as Mamie Grant’s nagging never could. Joan’s transgressions of religious norms are what make her faith so vibrant. Of course, readers expect a book about a saint to include a standard, safe model of behavior, not a transgressive model. Yet, because they expect to like, accept, and look up to Joan, readers are forced to view this transgression in a positive manner.

Joan’s concern for people knows no boundaries, causing her to minister to beggars, madmen, and enemy soldiers in addition to her own friends and family. Yet this Catholic claims a charism that to this day can be unsettling to many people: direct, face-to-face communication with God and multiple saints. The Church treats such claims with caution, carefully investigating the person and the nature of the communication or apparitions before coming to a conclusion about the truth of the report. Joan seems like a

‘wildcat’ religionist because of her claim. However, her reliance on the Sacraments and the Church prove otherwise. When questioned about theological matters before she may go to work freeing France, Joan loses her temper and tells the priests that their concerns, in relation to the mandate of almighty God, are “of no consequence!” (137). She accepts the pontiff as the supreme head of the Church, but when his brother bishop Cauchon attempts to trap her into blaspheming her guiding Voices, Joan insists on remaining true to that portion of her spiritual life even though she is concerned about being excommunicated and dying without the Sacraments. To heighten the contrast between Joan and Cauchon, the narrator comments, “What should *he* [Cauchon] do in heaven? he did not know anybody there” (401). Little peasant Joan knows her Voices (St. Catherine and St. Margaret) and the archangel Michael as well as God, whereas the man of the cloth knows nobody: a stronger comment against blind adherence to religious hierarchy does not exist in the novel. Twain’s undefined, possibly unreplicable, ideal of religion works itself out in Joan’s character. True, this experiment in religion costs Joan her life, but it also reveals the preferable nature of this state of worshipping and living out one’s faith in opposition to both anarchy-filled wildcat religions and restraints imposed by corrupt factions of organized churches.

Here, the false separation of these characteristics becomes more apparent, for in examining Joan’s strict adherence to the dictates of her own conscience and to her goals, readers begin to see how this and the other traits are as interconnected as the strands in the Gordian knot. Joan’s determination to see the fairies vindicated, refusal to abandon her Voices, and resolve to help such unfortunates as the beggar and madman—all used previously as evidence for her other strengths—reflect her obedience to her conscience.

Joan devises a way to get to Vancouleurs although her parents would not consent to her plan if they knew about it; when accused of lying by omission, Joan expresses her sorrow in causing her parents pain, but says that she would do it again: conscience trumps even parental authority (107). The priests and theologians cannot stop her; her fortitude under pressure amazes the townspeople and wins their respect. Joan's earnest desire to have La Hire in her army aids her in gaining his alliance and in converting him to the faith (156). Again, had she been a lesser person, Joan could have accepted him into the army and allowed him to practice a dummy-religion, yet her moral uprightness and willpower serve as powerful forces in this difficult task. Nothing can sway her to change her mind about a reward for services rendered to the crown; no amount of trouble or persuasion can stop her on her way to victory. Through it all, though her actions will allow for the renewal of society, Joan refuses to be defined solely by even her beloved France.

In all of her characteristics, Joan fails to conform to society, but there are several specific instances in which her non-conformity is most obvious and apparent. She treats the madman as a human, not an animal, repeatedly tending to his wounds; everyone else views him as a menace, locking him up in an iron cage and leaving him to his own devices (57-60). Joan ministers to an English prisoner who is abused by French soldiers, cradling his head and arranging for him to see a priest before he perishes from his wounds (245-50). Such behavior, such mercy, does not appear on the battlefield often. Joan's confrontation of governor Robert de Baudricourt exemplifies her willingness to fly in the face of convention (91-5). In an age when women and children were deemed unimportant and were often banned from "bothering" officials with their concerns, Joan's insistence on seeing the governor is unique, but the outcome of the interview is

outstanding. Of course, fighting and wearing armor set Joan apart from all the other women and children: men alone were expected to defend the homeland in battle. The Maid of Orleans did not do these things to gain notoriety or to effect a revolutionary change in women's eligibility to become military personnel; rather, they were part of her divinely ordained calling, from which she would not swerve. Nevertheless, her uncompromising manner of carrying out her mission suggests that she cares not a bit for social scorn or disapproval. Joan puts on armor/male clothes, though it means death to her, once the prison guards have stolen her dress (419-21). This refusal of what society wants—i.e., to make her a laughingstock and to shame her in her nakedness—demonstrates Joan's sense of the total importance of the mandates of God in opposition to the utterly ephemeral whims of man, even when those whims are widely accepted. Modesty is virtuous; the type of covering used to preserve one's modesty is a mere trifle. This scene echoes Huck Finn's willingness to be damned for protecting Jim and helping him to escape slavery. Both Huck and Joan realize that society often loses sight of truly important things and places too much weight on man's opinions of himself and his neighbor. These examples contrast Joan's behaviors with those of an entire culture, but her deeds also stand alone when compared with those of individuals.

Highly-regulated conduct, like overly-rigid religion, betrays a self-centered and insecure need to assert humanity's pitiful power. The corrupt bishop Cauchon cannot accept the idea that Joan's Voices come from God because they are a threat to his power; they do not conform to his idea of Christianity's components. "Is it not possible your pretended saints and angels are but those fairies?" Cauchon asks, for if Joan affirms this, then she will prove herself to be under the direction of the fiend's kinsmen (353).

Though he threatens Joan with excommunication and tries to trick her into making heretical statements, she remains firm in her belief that the Voices are good and that she is still allied to the Pope (373). For Twain's society, such a child (or woman) who acts and speaks impulsively is automatically seen as dangerous. This fear has its roots in Calvin's notion that children are "seed bed[s] of sin," as he famously wrote in *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (217). Yet despite the fact that normally such behavior would be censured and stopped immediately, the readers are continuously urged to view Joan as the positive figure, the model of behavior, in this scene. The narrator comments on the bishop's change of expression and his frustration with Joan at this juncture. "She had lodged a mine under this black conspiracy able to blow the Bishop's schemes to the four winds of heaven, and she didn't know it," comments de Conte (373). He continues, "So there she sat, once more Joan of Arc the Victorious, but all unconscious of it" (373). She is victorious not only in her routing of the bishop, but also in her ability to be unconventional and transgressive while receiving the praise of the peasants in the story and of the reading audience. The bishop's refusal to answer Joan's request for the Pope to hear her case reveals the fullness of Cauchon's corruption, making him a perfect foil to her. Because Joan's faith is authentic, she is allied to the Pope and the rest of the Church Universal, whereas Cauchon's concern for status and power effectively remove him from communion with the mystical body of Christ. The bishop's outer appearance of holiness, conforming to standards in much the same way as do Mamie Grant or Jacob Blivens' "Christian" witness, leads only to death. Joan's unconventional experiences of faith constitute true holiness, proving the adage that "appearances can be deceiving." Though she yearns for the outer assurance of her continued relation with the Church and the

means to assure her that her soul is in a state of grace—being allowed to receive the Sacraments and not being excommunicated—Joan refuses to kowtow to the corrupt faction of the Church. Most people in her situation would have felt the pressure to do this and would have recanted whatever they had said in order to restore their good names, and Cauchon relies on that trend in his verbal abuse. Consider this passage:

Joan[. . .]said: “I seem to be in danger of death from this malady; if it be the pleasure of God that I die here, I beg that I may be heard in confession and also receive my Saviour; and that I may be buried in consecrated ground.” Cauchon thought he saw his opportunity at last; this weakened body had the fear of an unblest death before it and the pains of hell to follow [. . .] Cauchon’s temper was stirred, and he raised his voice threateningly. . .and again he refused the things she begged for unless she would submit to the Church. Joan said—“If I die in this prison I beg you to have me buried in holy ground; if you will not, I cast myself upon my Saviour.” (386)

Joan acknowledges that ultimately God, not society or a corrupt member of the Church, will determine her eternal residence. Her situation is unique; God in His mercy and wisdom will act accordingly. Thus, nonconformity to society’s norms is absolutely necessary for “good” human life: blind and total conformity refuses to acknowledge the uniqueness with which humans are all endowed and is thus an effrontery to God.

Joan’s attractiveness, ignored only by fools such as Cauchon, has both physical and spiritual manifestations. De Conte claims that she was such a pretty girl that words cannot do her justice; her beauty was “so extraordinary that I might allow myself any extravagance of language in describing it and yet have no fear of going beyond truth” (62). Joan’s joyful personality also received notice from those around her: “All through her childhood and up to the middle of her fourteenth year, Joan had been the most light-hearted creature and the merriest in the village, with a hop-skip-and-jump gait and a happy and catching laugh; and this disposition, supplemented by her warm and

sympathetic nature and frank and winning ways, had made her everybody's pet" (69). She was "of the people" and thus loved by them (258). Though she appears as a teenager during most of the narrative, Joan is childlike in both body and spirit. Stone discusses Twain's preoccupation with the fact that Joan never menstruated, and quoting Twain's marginalia in Michelet's book ("the higher life absorbed her & suppressed her physical [sexual] development"), muses that, "the notion that the Maid was believed to have remained a child in body as well as in spirit must have pleased him and added force to his iterations of her immaculate girliness" (209). As Cooley notes, "[Joan] came closest of any of [Twain's] characters to representing perfection in a corrupt world" (*Aquarium* xxiv). Her spiritual beauty is such that de Conte cannot bear to lie to "one so snow-pure" and Joan's gentle manners and spirited patriotism win her the immediate allegiance of both La Hire and the Dwarf. Joan is meek yet bold, gentle but fierce: a veritable little Christ before a medieval Sanhedrin.

To view Joan as a "little Christ," one has to consider the transgressive acts and opinions expressed by Christ in the Gospels. Though the Sunday school books focus on the "tender and mild" Jesus of Christmas carols and quiet miracles, another side of the Savior exists and is equally important. Jesus goes into the temple and destroys the money changers' tables because they are profaning the house of God (Matthew 21.12-13). Joan's unintentional exposé of the corrupt churchmen, led by Cauchon, is directly analogous to this. Jesus makes friends with women and children, treating the marginalized members of society with respect (Luke 8.1-3; Luke 10.38-39; Matthew 18.1-5; Matthew 19.13-15). This ties in with His ministry to the lepers and the Samaritan woman as well (Luke 17.11-19; John 4.7-42). Joan transgresses in the same way as her

Lord, as discussed earlier and again in chapter three. Jesus refuses to answer Pilate in a way that will ease the man's conscience; so too does Joan refuse to give in to Cauchon and allow him to appear correct for even one moment of the trials. Even the way in which Christ came as the Messiah directly contradicted what the Jews had expected from their encounters with Hebraic versions of Sunday school stories (the imagery in the psalms and the prophets). He does not come as a martial King, born into privilege and ready to wreak revenge on the Jews' oppressors, intent on gaining worldly riches and land. Instead, He comes as a poor man, a member of the working class, a veritable pauper who preaches more about spiritual warfare than situations dealing with physical combat. He shows deep love for His friends and family, and He weeps for sorrow over peoples' ignorance and sin. However, Christ is not the pale, soft-spoken, one-dimensional figure that the Sunday school books and their characters would imagine Him to be; rather, He is a multi-dimensional, complex, behaviorally transgressive figure who would not rank highly in nineteenth century social circles, should He happen to appear there. After all, the Sermon on the Mount (especially the Beatitudes) is only one of many passages in the Gospels that could be seen as incendiary. Joan, as a true follower of Christ, must necessarily also throw off social and religious restrictions.

Joan does not seem inhuman in her goodness and beauty; rather, the sorrow she experiences over others' deaths and the tears she sheds at the sight of her own blood underscore her humanity. Joan always identifies with others in their sorrow and her own, using her imagination to understand what they might be feeling. The thought of leaving her mother and father at such a young age bothers Joan greatly; her care for them causes her to forewarn them of her injury and assure them that all will be well (*Personal 74*,

200-3). Joan's inability to personally bid farewell to Haumette ("I could not bear it, knowing I should never look upon her face again," she weeps) is very natural and charming: here is a human girl in need of understanding and comfort, but she is placed in a position that will allow her to receive neither (88). Joan forgives the Paladin for his earlier attempts to force her hand in marriage and even promotes him within her army: an attractive woman indeed (147-8)! She quickly makes friends with Catherine Boucher. For the Dwarf, Joan is France, which is the only reason he has to continue living after his wife has died (180). The list of examples of Joan's utter magnetism to all her fellow creatures could easily be longer. Yet though Joan was so attractive to them, it was not because she was like them: it was because of her difference, her exceptionality, her non-conformity.

The story of Joan of Arc draws in the readers and automatically allies them with Joan by revealing the many positive qualities embodied by the maid (patriotism, a good sense of humor, honesty, etc.) while condemning the actions of her enemies. At the same time, Twain's proposed qualities for "good" girls (native wonder and awe, the propensity to think things through for oneself, a healthy faith life, strict adherence to one's conscience and goals, refusing to conform completely to society's demands and examples, attractiveness to others, etc.) fly under the radar of social mores and roost within the reader's mind and heart. This teaching-through-storytelling and critiquing fact via fictions effects change in perceptions of conformity. Albert E. Stone writes:

Intellectually, Joan of Arc attracted Twain because she epitomized an age-old struggle of common folk against the twin institutions of cruelty and oppression, the Crown and the Church. [ . . . ] In Twain's eyes, Joan was the incarnation of youth and purity and power. She was the unique instance in history of the young girl whose innocence not merely *existed* but *acted* in the gross world of adult affairs. She was the peerless human

being, and it was of the utmost importance that she remain eternally a young girl. (207)

In the novel, Twain preserves the image of Joan of Arc as mighty girl-warrior and favored saint while using her story as a vehicle for social change. The impact she has on France's history is undeniable, and Twain presents Joan in such a way as to suggest that her influence on all whom she met is equally irrefutable. Readers may pick up the book expecting something more along the lines of "Mamie Grant" or of another Sunday school-type heroine, but that is not what they find in Twain's novel.

Joan of Arc never conforms to society and suffers death as a result; Anne Shirley (in the initial novel) eventually conforms in some capacities yet loses her beloved guardian Matthew to a heart attack. These are two "good little girls" who do not prosper in the eyes of the world, but what they gain through their experiences goes beyond the ken of conformist clones and drones. Joan enters into life eternal, is exonerated and remembered fondly by her entire country, and receives the highest honor afforded to any Catholic: canonization. Anne finds a home, discovers how to love, grows and matures into an unconventionally exhilarating young woman, and eventually shares her experiences and insights with many other children, including two special young orphans and her own six offspring. Montgomery and Twain's social critiques, smuggled to readers through these fantastic characters, suggest that, like conforming to socio-religious norms, conforming to society's idea of success is futile and unfulfilling.

Twain considered *Personal Recollections of Joan of Arc* to be his best book (Cooley 205; *Ethical Realism* 108). While he could not take credit for the historical Joan, he ensured that his fictional version would embody all that he saw as best in human nature and what he saw as lacking in both his day and her own. Thus, an understanding

of Joan in light of Twain's shorter pieces and the children's literature he admired helps readers to understand his most important and iconoclastic social critiques.

## CHAPTER THREE

### Imagination and Religious Non-Conformity in L.M. Montgomery's Novels

*"Our discerning extraordinary observer might have concluded that no commonplace soul inhabited the body of this stray woman-child." Anne of Green Gables 11*

In the third chapter of L.M. Montgomery's *Anne of Green Gables*, the titular character asks, "If I was very beautiful and had nut-brown hair would you keep me?" Though expressive of Anne's desire for a family and a permanent home, this particular query also exposes Anne's ability to imagine other possibilities while showing the girl to be anything but the ordinary Victorian child. Possessed of red hair and an extremely active imagination, the captivating young orphan claims to yearn for all of the normal trappings of her society. However, Anne is much more of a non-conformist at heart than she realizes. This sets her apart from many of the child-heroines of her [author's] day, for many of them merely reinforced religious and behavioral norms typical of Sunday school book examples. Yet within the fictional world of L.M. Montgomery, Anne is the first among many such non-conformist female child protagonists. Each of these strong figures—Anne Shirley, Emily Byrd Starr (from Montgomery's *Emily* trilogy), and Sara Stanley (from Montgomery's *The Story Girl* and *The Golden Road*)—radiates a sense of wonder and awe for the natural world, has the ability to reason for herself, demonstrates a healthy (though non-conformist) faith life, and diligently follows the law of her conscience. Moreover, they manage to bend or break societal norms without permanently losing status in their communities, all while remaining enigmatic yet

attractive to other people and employing, to their benefit, the imaginations that set them apart.

Though Anne is the first among many, Sara Stanley provides a helpful introduction to Montgomery's notion of a "good" child. Sara, the "Story Girl" and fourteen-year-old daughter of an artist, is staying with her large extended family in Prince Edward Island when two more cousins come to visit. One of the brothers, Bev, acts as the book's narrator, and, during the narratorial interjections, his tone clearly implies that many days have passed since any of the cousins could be called a child. Bev's brother, Felix, and the other King children—Dan, Felicity, and Cecily—all find themselves under the spell of Sara's voice every time that she opens her mouth to tell a story. But her leadership does not stop there; the girl lands the faithful family group and their two playmates, Peter Craig and Sara Ray, in various mischievous pranks and scrapes during the years they share. Whether it is a sermon-preaching contest on Sundays or a visit to the neighboring witch to get a cure for a sick cat, the Story Girl heads up all of their adventures.

Though the King family children are fond of nature, Sara aligns herself with it to a greater extent than any of her cousins. Sara dresses herself with wreaths of flowers, berries, and leaves during their play outings in the family orchard, an activity that the other girls avoid (*Story* 142, 215, 220). Her botanically-adorned appearance is so striking that her cousins later picture her, hair and dress covered with roses, when they study Tennyson in college (134). Sara's proclivity to wear these accessories sets her apart from the other children, but the narrator suggests that they also reveal part of her personality:

The Story Girl generally had her head garlanded with [spruce] leaves. They became her vastly. Neither Felicity nor Cecily could have worn

them. Those two girls were of a domestic type that assorted ill with the wildfire in Nature's veins. But when the Story Girl wreathed her nut brown tresses with crimson leaves it seemed, as Peter said, that they grew on her—as if the gold and flame of her spirit had broken out in a coronal, as much a part of her as the pale halo seems a part of the Madonna it encircles. (220)

Sara also uses nature imagery to describe certain people. For example, according to Sara, Aunt Olivia is “just like a pansy—all velvety and purply and goldy” (10). Apart from the Story Girl, only the narrator, grown-up Beverly King, uses such terms to describe people. And though all of the children appreciate the orchard's comfort and bounty, Sara speaks more about trees and the joy they bring to her than do any of her cousins. “I always feel so *satisfied* in the woods [. . .] Trees seem such friendly things,” she claims (*Golden* 188). Sara also has a sense that the beauties of nature and religion are not mutually exclusive, and like Anne Shirley, Sara wishes that the two could be joined more often. “I wish we could have the service outside in the summer,” she says, because she would “feel ever so much more religious outside than in” (138). This statement typifies how Sara's reason influences every aspect of her life.

Sara's powers of reason surpass those of her cousins, and they influence her religious beliefs and understanding of church-related subjects. Felicity, Sara's cousin, is absolutely certain that only what adults have told her about religion can be true. However, Sara thinks for herself about the subject a great deal. When Peter claims, to Felicity's indignation, that God must pay more attention to his prayers because they are infrequent, the Story Girl “looked as if she thought there might be something to it,” whereas to Felicity “this was rank heresy” (*Story* 21). The Story Girl herself comes up with stranger ideas, such as the notion that weeds will be flowers in heaven, or that once she has died, she will not feel dead in the spring of the year (*Story* 42; *Golden* 75). She

reaches these conclusions by using her logic, which affects her ability to discern the truth. Once, when Sara goes away for a visit, the King children buy what they believe is an accurate picture of God, but the horrific engraving upsets them terribly. Sara, upon her return, remarks scornfully, “‘Surely you don’t believe God looks like that [. . .] He doesn’t—He couldn’t. He is wonderful and beautiful. I’m surprised at you. *That* is nothing but the picture of a cross old man” (62). Sara is so sure of this that she tells the still-doubtful Felix to ask the minister his opinion, and the minister agrees with what Sara said (63). Later, the children call on Sara’s logical prowess when they fear that the Judgment Day will come on a certain Sunday; Felicity is so afraid of the idea that she appeals to Sara in hopes that her cousin’s logic will prove that it will not be the Judgment Day (*Story* 143-4). However, Felicity does not always appreciate Sara’s logical views of faith. Instead of ascribing to a belief in eternal harp-playing and angelic choir practice, Sara claims that she will tell stories, even in heaven, much to the consternation of her coterie (154). And, when Peter is in danger of death, Sara states her belief that he would go to heaven if he died, but that she would rather have him stay with the rest of the children on earth. When Felicity objects to this, Sara witheringly points out that Felicity, too, would rather stay than go (230). After the boys have engaged in an apple-eating contest, which consequently also turns into a praying contest of sorts, Sara explains to her cousins why certain prayers may or may not be answered, suggesting that unselfish prayers that do not hurt people are preferable (215).

Sara’s answer is not drawn from what she has learned in Sunday school or at the Presbyterian worship services that the family attends, but rather from her rational dissection of each boy’s prayer and motive. Sara thus sets herself up as an authority

figure, placing herself outside of socially accepted boundaries. Sara essentially usurps the position of power that would normally belong to a grown man. Her playmates accept this supplanting of accepted norms and warmly welcome such behavior as beneficial to them all. By reporting this, the narrator suggests that Sara's spirituality trumps conventional spirituality. Sara's rational approach to religion is not as dangerous as cousin Dan's pessimistic views—his sister Cecily fears what he may come to believe later in life—but it is nothing like that of the other children, who had a “very firm and simple faith that grown people knew much more than we did,” especially about such matters (143). Felicity, the perfect foil to Sara, even discourages Peter from asking the minister what separates Methodists from Presbyterians, saying that the minister is too busy, it would be inappropriate, and she thinks that “children can't understand such things. There must be a great deal of difference, of course, if we only knew what it was,” which is followed by her assertion that “anyhow, *I* am a Presbyterian, and I'm glad of it” (38). Though Sara differs from her cousins in her approach to faith, she is never castigated for the difference. Aside from Peter, who makes a few humorous statements about religion, only Sara dares to think for herself about the matter.

Sara's thoughts on religion shape her conscience more than anything else, possibly excepting her love of literature. After persuading Sara Ray to disobey her mother and attend a Magic Lantern show with the King cousins, the Story Girl feels a tiny bit distressed. Her worry turns into sincere misery, however, when Sara Ray supposedly comes down with measles, as her mother feared she would; the Story Girl then imposes on herself the strongest forms of penance that she can devise. She wears a thistle next to her skin; partakes of only bread, water, and Mexican Tea for a day; works

buttonholes endlessly on a piece of old cloth; and dresses so shabbily that Aunt Janet is scandalized (85-7). Felicity, who objects to the whole penance process from the beginning (“I don’t believe Presbyterians ever do penance [. . .] I never heard of one doing it,” she says), believes, like her mother, that Sara is crazy for doing this (84). When Sara Ray’s illness is revealed as a mere cold, Felicity claims that the Story Girl’s penance “was wasted,” to which the girl replies, “I feel better since I punished myself,” which is a fitting answer, given that her earlier justification for the penance was that “[her] conscience will feel better” (87, 84). The other children have consciences, too, but they are much more influenced by the social mores and standards of the day than by their own understanding of the world.

While her cousins and playmates happily follow the social customs of the day, Sara holds such practices in disdain. Unlike Felicity and Cecily, whose behavior sounds much like that described in Newton’s book on conduct literature, Sara does not remain quiet and demure upon first acquaintances. Instead of meekly speaking to her cousins when she meets them, Sara “[shook their] hands with an air of frank comradeship,” suggesting that elaborately constructed, socially acceptable behaviors are trivial to her (10). Sara balks other behavioral norms as well, suggesting that they are arbitrary and sometimes repressive. After telling a story about a woman who asked a man to marry her, Sara tells the others that if she were in a similar situation, she would also do the asking (161). This strikes horror into Felicity and Cecily’s hearts, because such an action is not ‘ladylike.’ But Sara is not upset by this; as the narrator says, “the Story Girl never held the *Family Guide* in such reverence as did Felicity and Cecily” (162). Just as she is a theological rogue, Sara shows that she is a cultural rogue, too. The Story Girl is upset

by the idea that she will always have to wear shoes when she is grown, for they will cover up one of her best features: her feet (75-6). When Felicity protests, the Story Girl acts as though she will go bare-footed to the Magic Lantern show, claiming that bare feet are no more offensive than bare hands or bare heads, so long as they are clean. Sara seems like a budding anthropologist, because she realizes that a respectable presentation of self does not rely on one's fine attire. In a society obsessed with fashion and covering up all skin, Sara's willingness to acknowledge the shallowness of this obsession makes her stand out as a transgressor of norms. While Sara refrains from appearing without shoes, she does go to church in her old clothes to give moral support to Cecily, who is similarly attired in an attempt to raise funds for Korean children (*Golden* 155-6). As Bev notes, "The Story Girl did not care a whit," despite the fact that she stood out so much from everyone else (156). When she does dress up, however, Sara still manages to break with societal norms. She has, in the course of two books, two red silk dresses, in the "days when a feminine creature got one silk dress in her lifetime, and seldom more than one" (16). The dresses, along with the little satin slippers and other luxurious clothing the Story Girl's father sends her, cause Aunt Janet much anger and even "horror"; the colors and materials, completely out of keeping with Victorian children's wear, are just to Sara's taste. Sara's father is an artist, one of those strange, gypsy-like personages on the fringes of "respectable" society. His daughter's oratorical gifts, like her preference for fine fabrics, make her a dangerous figure: her ability to attract and enchant with words and appearance reveal her as a subversive figure capable of turning social order on its head. Sara's taste in storytelling leads her into some murky waters as far as certain cousins are concerned; the tales that she tells of the devil win her more censure from

Felicity (*Story* 114, 248). However, Sara later points out that “mischief is interesting,” even when it comes from the devil, however unladylike that may be (*Golden* 91).

Despite her flaunting of various codes set out by society, Sara manages to stay in the good graces of her family and community, even though her cousins are a bit jealous.

Sara’s cousins envy and emulate her for her ability to be “interesting,” by which they mean the ability to tell stories. Sara cannot cook or bake or do many of the domestic things expected of Victorian women, unlike Felicity, but she can tell stories—original or borrowed—in such a manner as to make everyone near her forget everything but her voice. At times, Sara sees this as a huge downfall, saying that “it’s better to be useful than interesting,” to which the narrator replies, “and Felicity, who was useful, would, in her secret soul, have given anything to be interesting” (*Story* 98). Though Bev says of the Story Girl, “we did not think her pretty,” her appearance, though not ugly, is quickly forgotten by all who hear her voice, which “made words live” (9). At one point, an old man asks Sara to recite the multiplication table, only to claim that she makes it “charming” (56). Even her aunts and uncles call her talent “genius,” despite the old adage of a prophet never being welcome at home. They get so wrapped up in the Story Girl’s tale of a serpent woman that they become frightened; only when Aunt Janet says, “little girls shouldn’t tell such horrible stories,” do the others come back to their senses (179). Though Sara has just broken another taboo—that of speaking of ‘unmentionable’ topics or ideas—she remains the darling of the gathering. When she is later teased for a domestic mishap, she threatens to never tell another story again if she hears any more of the sawdust pudding, and the teasing promptly stops (130). Sara even sneaks out of the house and back to the school one evening to save her precious coral necklace, which she

had left there by accident; unchaperoned moonlit prowls break with Victorian tradition, surely, but Sara acts on common sense, not convention (*Golden* 127-9). Sara realizes that taboos are social constructions, as are stories, so she uses her imagination to navigate both.

Sara's imagination is more developed than those of her peers. She cannot believe in fairies as she did as a child, due to the Rev. Uncle Edward's solemn pronouncement against pixies, and she is unable to view her uncle in the same light because of this (*Story* 39). This scene echoes Joan of Arc's interaction with her parish priest, who banishes the fairies from the Fairy Tree, altering his relationship with Joan (*Personal* 41-5). Though Sara cannot believe in fairies, she still describes fairyland to her cousins, and she expresses a desire for fairyland that, the narrator explains, is more than a mere wish to see fluttering wings and magic dust. Montgomery neatly connects Sara's insistence in some sort of fairyland existing—if not fairies themselves—and her ambition to find it with her ability to tell stories and to remember (once she is grown) what it was like to be a child: “Only a few, who remain children at heart, can ever find that fair, lost path again [. . .] the world calls them its singers and poets and artists and story-tellers; but they are just people who have never forgotten the way to fairyland” (*Story* 121). Sara alone tells stories convincingly to her peers, and she has a sense of the proper ending point for stories, which arouses her scorn for Sara Ray, who always wants to be told what happened after the story (162). So not only is the Story Girl able to indulge in fantasies and bring others into them as well, she is also able to critically judge the fitness of the form that a tale takes, echoing Montgomery's concern about form.

Although Sara Stanley is akin to Anne Shirley in many ways, she is not quite a perfect representation of Montgomery's ideal girl. Sara is attractive to other people without using artifice, and she uses her reason and her imagination in ways that her playmates do not. She manages to break societal norms, but despite this, her flights of fancy, and her slightly unorthodox views of seemingly-closed religious topics, Sara does not stand out from her cousins as a literary construction. Sara is the only child who sees the potential in the uncomfortable scene in which the town "witch" shares a church pew with the children. Though Sara's reactions and thoughts provide the humor here, Montgomery often uses Sara to set up for many of the funniest and sharpest comments in the books but allows one of the other children to make the comments. For instance, Sara tells stories about ministers, but Peter makes the comment that humorous stories are always funnier when a minister functions as the main character (*Story* 199). Montgomery creates an enchanting character in Sara, but the Story Girl remains one of an ensemble cast of characters in these books whereas Anne takes center stage. Furthermore, the stories surrounding the King family and their friends are more like idyllic representations of childhood, especially echoing Kenneth Grahame's *The Golden Age*, as argued by Jennifer Litster in her article "'The Golden Road of Youth': L. M. Montgomery and British Children's Books." Emily Byrd Starr of the *Emily* trilogy provides the link between Sara and Anne, functioning as more of a stand-out spitfire than Sara but not quite as much the loveable enigma as Anne.

The subject of three of Montgomery's novels, Emily, an orphan who is sent to live with her elderly aunts and a cousin at New Moon farm, expresses her appreciation of nature by making friends with trees and playing with the "Wind Woman." Before her

father dies, Emily names four special trees at their home, and to these and her spruce barrens she bids farewell with more love and affection than she does the maid, Ellen Greene (*New Moon* 48-9). Once she moves to New Moon she falls in love with the little old orchard and the piece of land called “Lofty John’s Bush.” Her love of the bush is so great, in fact, that when she hears that Lofty John intends to cut down all of the trees there, she promptly goes to implore the help of a stranger, the only person to whom Lofty John will listen (*New Moon* 193). When she is older and has earned a fair amount of money, Emily buys the bush for herself so that it will never be destroyed (*Quest* 157). Even then, at twenty-three, she claims that “the wind is my comrade and the evening star my friend,” suggesting that her old fancies of the Wind Woman are, though perhaps changed, not forgotten despite Emily’s growth and maturation (*Quest* 157, *Climbs* 48). Emily believes that she can see the Wind Woman, especially in the spruce barrens of her childhood home (*New Moon* 6). There, where Emily first encounters her extended family (the Murrays), she also learns to use her powers of reason.

Emily uses her powers of reasoning to determine many things, ranging from how genuine people are, to explaining why her unorthodox ideas actually make perfect sense, and to finding a way to get some of the education she wants. When her father dies, Emily discovers that nobody in her extended family wants to take her into their homes. Her first introduction to them tells her as much as she needs to know about them, so when she refuses to shake cold Aunt Ruth’s hand on principle—and not out of bad manners, as Ruth claims—and then meets Aunt Elizabeth’s eyes with a piercing gaze of her own, Emily makes them feel as ill at ease as they make her (*New Moon* 28). Two years later, Emily begins writing sketches of all of the people that she meets, complete with

descriptions of their characters and what made them come to act as they do. These sketches are very accurate, as her second teacher informs her, for upon reading her description of him, “he saw himself as in a glass and the artistry of it pleased him so that he cared for nothing else” (337). Emily links Mr. Carpenter’s odd habits and gestures in the schoolroom to his earlier miseries in life and to his suspected drinking binges on the weekend, causing him to wonder “who or what had taught the little jade these things?” (337). The “little jade” has taught herself much and cannot understand why others wish to hinder her learning. Any of the epithet’s possible meanings—a woman with a jaded palate, a minx, or a hussy—could be implied from Mr. Carpenter’s tone in the book: he is shocked at the talent he finds in Emily, but he also realizes how much more she needs to develop as a writer, despite her biting word choices and somewhat-advanced syntax. Emily writes in a seemingly-indecant way, for her subject matter and form are not standard for Victorian children (or women) to use. Likewise, Emily is interested in banned books. When her aunts are appalled to hear that Emily has been studying one of Dr. Burnley’s anatomy books, she justifies her action by claiming that she has “heart and lungs—and stomach” (224). This, of course, echoes the scene from *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* in which Becky Thatcher indulges her curiosity and peeps in the teacher’s anatomy book, firmly placing Emily in a tradition of child protagonists who transgress socially-constructed boundaries. And when Emily surprises Father Cassidy with the information that she and Ilse have created their own language, she calmly explains that this is to get back at the French boys who laughingly speak their native tongue in front of her, and that it is fun (200-1). Aware of the importance of education, Emily wants to go to Queen’s Academy to take a teacher’s license, expressing her interest in being able to

support herself and pay back her family for their charity towards her; however, this matter-of-fact explanation fails to persuade her aunts (299). However, Emily finds a way to learn material that she would otherwise miss. . .she tutors and drills the hired boy, Perry, as he studies for his entrance examination to the teacher's course (300-1). Later, when Emily is given the chance to go to high school, she accepts Aunt Elizabeth's bargain—that Emily may go only if she writes no more fiction—because she knows that this education is her one chance to make something of herself (*Climbs* 85). Emily's desperate desire to achieve her goals must follow some of the prescribed notions of her society and her family, but her philosophy of life, like her religion, does not fit the proverbial mold.

Emily ascribes to Christianity and believes in God, but her understanding of Him would upset her aunts. Her true beliefs transgress all of the norms that are so important to her aunts and extended family. Emily comes to believe that there are many Gods when she is young, especially distinguishing between the God of her father and the God of their maid (23). Later on, in a conversation with the sometimes-atheist Ilse Burnley, Emily again suggests that there are many Gods because each person she knows who believes in Him seems to understand and relate to Him differently (114). Echoing Sara Stanley and her beliefs, Emily's own idea of God is quite unlike anything taught in a Presbyterian church: “I think that God is just like my flash, only *it* lasts only a second and He lasts always” (158). (Her mystical “flash,” a seeming insight into a spirit-world, carries her into inner ecstasies that no respectable inhabitant of New Moon would dream of having, but it enriches her spirituality and her imagination.) Emily also believes that her father is able to delay his entrance into Heaven so that she will not have to make the journey alone

someday. She clings to the notion that he is waiting for her on the Road to Heaven, so much so that she eventually writes letters to him, addressing them, “Mr. Douglas Starr, the Road to Heaven” (35, 93). This outpouring of herself and her grief allows Emily to express her very natural feelings and fears. Shortly after Emily begins writing these letters, Montgomery uses Emily to illustrate the utterly ridiculous religious literature thrust upon Victorian children by having her mimic the speech of a child missionary whose story is deemed “appropriate” reading by Aunt Elizabeth. When Emily answers a question with a verse taken from the hymn “Jesus, Thy Blood and Righteousness,” “Aunt Laura said was [she] crazy and Aunt Elizabeth said [she] was irreverent” (100). However, it was Aunt Elizabeth who had previously told Emily that she should try to behave like Anzonetta Peters, the missionary child in the book. Thus, Aunt Elizabeth displays the common belief that books can impact the morals and ethics of readers. The way in which Montgomery presents this scene reveals her implicit argument that a character must be believable to make an impact on a person. This makes Montgomery the polar opposite of the Sunday school book authors. Anzonetta Peters, the perfect little “good girl” in the memoir, cannot actually teach Emily anything, because the flat character of the child convert merely models superficial behavior, not true virtues. Whether Aunt Elizabeth realizes it or not, she provides further censure of the Sunday school book genre by pointing out the absurdity of behaving exactly like the heroines of such literature. Thus, the traditional Sunday school book form is revealed as a failure. In a far more “irreverent” context, Dean Priest teaches Emily the idea of the transmigration of souls, and she is fascinated by it (276). This idea reoccurs in their later conversations, and she claims that she likes the idea of a succession of lives (*Climbs* 26, 74). And

despite the Murrays' Calvinist roots, Emily wants to discover if good exists in Buddhism and “Popery” (18-9). Emily willingly indulges in fantasies of Paganism, imagining herself to be a Druid priestess or dryad, and writes that she regards trees with “worship” (247 & 249).

Emily’s family will not allow her to transgress openly the accepted rules of religion, but the girl continues to hold firm to her personal beliefs even while she outwardly must conform to some extent. She attends the Presbyterian services and prayer meetings diligently, despite her pantheistic desires. Emily fearlessly critiques those who lead her church; she refuses to listen to a traveling preacher because “giving God good advice, and abusing the devil isn’t praying” (38). Emily has her own interpretation of Biblical passages, interpretations that would not be considered orthodox by those preaching at her or those raising her (41). In her third year of high school, Emily publishes reports on prospective new preachers for the Presbyterian church in Shrewsbury. In one of her analyses, which she actually never meant to have published, she ruthlessly rips apart the sermon, and it is just that report that appears in the newspaper, much to the horror of her kinfolk (245). By going against the “sacrosanct” grain of Presbyterianism in her approach to preachers and scripture, Emily seemingly throws off all of the normal signs of a healthy or orthodox faith life for one who is part of a Scots-Presbyterian culture. However, when her friends speak against God or suggest that they are in despair, Emily quickly persuades them to think differently. She will not tolerate the idea that God causes suffering (181). Similarly, she will not accept the idea of God taking no interest in humankind (*Quest* 58-9). So despite Emily’s desires to run free in the woods and treat the balsam firs as a cathedral, her innermost concepts of God

are positive and inspiring, even though they are not strictly Calvinist in nature. Though she often jokes about foreordination, Emily looks more to her own free will as explanation for what she does, and that free will is governed by her strong conscience.

Emily follows her conscience wherever it leads her, which is normally into trouble. To discover her fate after her father's death, Emily hides beneath a table to hear the adults' conversation. When they find out that she is there, she freely explains why she was there and that she had also made faces at those aunts and uncles who had said cruel or untrue things about her and her father (40-1). Shortly after she arrives at New Moon, Emily decides to go against Aunt Elizabeth's wishes and cuts a bang. However, the girl immediately cuts the bang off because she is ashamed of having done this deed; the whole episode leads to a confession of her snippings and of other sundry missteps, though it will only lead to a severer punishment for her (*New Moon* 223-4). Emily also decides to take the less pleasant alternative of pleasing Aunt Elizabeth by wearing boots to town instead of accepting Aunt Laura's idea of sneaking around this requirement. When asked why she will continue to wear the boots, Emily says, "that would be nice, but I don't mean to do it any more. I guess I must obey Aunt Elizabeth because she's the head of the family" (117). This answer confuses Aunt Laura, who asks why Emily thinks that. Emily replies that "[she] got it out of [her] head." Befriending Ilse Burnley, the daughter of the town's controversial doctor, is another act of conscience for Emily. Later, when the girls are at school, Emily refuses to let Ilse take the blame for a prank pulled by another student. Accordingly, when Emily discovers that the other student had cheated in a literary contest—and won—she uses the evidence to have the girl exonerate Ilse, though Emily refuses to expose the girl's lie about the contest to the entire student

body (*Climbs* 275). The only time that Emily does not act in accord with her conscience is when she agrees to marry Dean Priest. From the very beginning of their engagement, Emily knows that her heart still belongs to her childhood sweetheart, but she goes along with wedding and housing plans anyway. When she finally reveals this to Dean, it frees Emily to once again take up the writing that she so loves (*Quest* 94). However, her writing forms only part of her flaunting of societal norms.

Emily manages to break many of the social rules of her day throughout the course of three books. She begins with small infractions, like sassing her Aunt Ruth, refusing to wear boots to town, and reading material that is not deemed appropriate for little girls. The nature of these infractions is that sort that children and parents understand from Sunday school books as bad. Calvin was quick to call children “seed bed[s] of sin,” and these behaviors of Emily’s would merely reinforce that idea for her aunts (Calvin 217). Yet these same behaviors indicate that Emily is actually a normal child, doing what comes naturally to her—and to any person—who is incessantly bossed and even derided for expressing curiosity or discomfort. These tiny transgressions begin to grow into greater departures from the norm, however. When playing with Ilse one day, Emily decides that she would rather be Frances Willard than Joan of Arc, simply because Frances is still alive (*New Moon* 156). This choice of role models may not seem out of the ordinary to twenty-first century readers, but Willard, a pioneer of the women’s suffrage movement, would certainly not have fit the ideal mold of role model for any one, real or fictional, who was truly as conventional as the Murray clan. Joan of Arc would not be much better, for she was Catholic—tainted with “Popery”—and engaged in the unladylike profession of soldiering. Though the aunts likely do not know of this role

model discussion, they usually express mixed opinions about Emily's friendship with Ilse, for they see it as a boon to Ilse but a possible problem for Emily. But, as this friendship with Ilse brings her to New Moon, the chatelaines of the farm have an easier time of helping the doctor's wild, motherless daughter, so they allow Emily to continue associating with Ilse. Emily clearly feels the unfairness of the double standard that women are held to in her society; one of her favorite ways to play is to pretend that she is a female Member of Parliament, lecturing crowds in the fashion of William Pitt, but targeting sexism instead of ageism (317).

Emily refuses to let either her age or her gender hinder her in her goals. This firmly aligns Emily with suffragettes, those women whose actions to change society earned them labels such as dangerous and immoral. After living at New Moon for a year, to save the beloved grove of trees known as "Lofty John's bush," Emily walks several miles to the Catholic rectory, just to ask the priest to intervene on her behalf, for she has been told that Catholics must do whatever their priests say (190). Father Cassidy does speak to Lofty John, and when Emily asks her neighbor once and for all to not clear the trees, the bush is saved (205). Aunt Elizabeth is horrified to find what her niece has done, but she is so relieved at the bush being spared that she does not scold Emily at all. Children were not often commended for such pluckiness or for meeting with unfamiliar adult figures for any reason, yet Emily succeeds in doing just that. Long walks, unchaperoned and taken for odd reasons, become a bit of a theme with Emily, who walks the seven miles home from Shrewsbury one midnight in protest of Aunt Ruth's strange rules (*Climbs* 140-1). Despite this seemingly rash act, Emily does not lose any standing in her family. Rather, it brings her appreciation from Aunt Ruth, who is thrilled to see

the girl come back the next morning (153). Emily and Ilse go swimming without bathing suits one evening, but the most trouble this causes them is some teasing from their schoolmates and a few inhabitants of Shrewsbury (121). That escapade brings Emily less headache than her chosen profession of writing. Her aunts try to stop her from writing, but Emily will not comply with their wishes. They are not the only ones who think that writing is an inappropriate and useless profession for a woman: everyone in Blair Water whispers about this scandal (*Quest* 1). However, after many years of struggle and strife, Emily publishes a novel, that most wicked form of all books. . .to the delight of her own family! (170-1, 178) However, all of the neighbors believe themselves to be the subject of the book, so they are upset. Yet in the end, this works in Emily's favor, for most people begin to speak of her as a novelist and are careful to treat her with respect so that she will refrain from putting them into books (212). Furthermore, Emily rejects at least half a dozen proposals of marriage before finally marrying Teddy Kent. Such behavior in Victorian times—or even today—is hardly the norm. Yet the adjective “normal” could not be applied to Emily in any situation. After all, this is the girl who claimed that “prudence is such a shoddy virtue at times” and cried “I hate to go mincing through life, afraid to take a single long step for fear somebody is watching” (*Climbs* 242). So she does not go mincing about, especially when her imagination or second sight are concerned.

The combination of Emily's imagination and second sight sets her apart from her entire family and her closest friends. Her love of fairy stories and poetry is inextricably linked to her strange second sight, which she most often experiences in “the flash.” Though she tells her friends of the Wind Woman and has many pretend games with them,

they never fully understand or enter into the fantasies that she spins. They also find it hard to accept Emily's uncanny "psychic" spasms. With the help of her second sight, Emily solves a twelve-year-old mystery, restoring Ilse's mother's name and reputation in Blair Water (*New Moon* 324). Emily's feverish discovery even returns the godless Dr. Burnley to an orthodox Presbyterian faith. Later, Emily worries about another lost soul, a young boy who has been missing for a week. She mulls over the facts of the case and her recent excursions in the countryside so much that, in her sleep, she discerns where the boy is and draws a map out for the rescuers (*Climbs* 204-5). Emily has two other notable experiences of her second sight, both involving young Teddy Kent, but in one instance he rescues her and in the other she rescues him (*Climbs* 52 and *Quest* 88-9). Out of Montgomery's heroines, Emily publishes the most pieces of work. The Murray clan prides itself on Emily's renown, but they cannot understand her craft as she does. She is successful because she writes her characters as she knows them, and she refuses to change even the tiniest detail to suit another person's taste. The Murrays believe that Emily bases some of her characters off of their neighbors and are offended when she explains to them the characters' true natures. As with Montgomery's own family, Emily's family is unable to imagine the writing process and thus identify with her in her proudest moment, so even in her success Emily experiences separation.

Emily, who was written after both Anne and Sara, is not as believable or complete a character as the redhead. Most scholars recognize the fact that Emily's story is at least partially influenced by Montgomery's own unhappy childhood, and this influence certainly keeps Emily from the whimsy and light-heartedness available to Anne. Unlike Sara, Emily does not act as a member of an ensemble cast. Instead, she stands out starkly

from all of the other characters in the book. Montgomery wished for the Emily books to be “a psychological study of one human being’s life” (Montgomery 2: 390). Because Montgomery uses the form of Emily’s letters and diary entries to narrate much of the action in the first two Emily books, the distance between Emily and the other characters appears to be very great. This sense of distance continues in the third novel, for Emily’s childhood playmates no longer live nearby, and the majority of her time is spent at home, writing. While Emily provides an interesting picture of a woman struggling against all odds to pursue her dream of authorship, she does not have much effect on anyone younger than herself, or even on her own peers. Both Sara and Anne use their gifts of imagination for themselves and for others, especially in their relations with children. And while Sara gets to set up punch lines for her friends, and Anne is often on the receiving end of a friendly joke, Emily has no one to laugh with her. She is too alone to be Montgomery’s ideal child creation, and as Montgomery wanted Emily to be the subject of a psychological study of one person’s development—not the ideal or perfect person’s development—one could not argue that Emily is the standard by which to measure Montgomery’s conceptions of childhood.

Anne is Montgomery’s ideal “good girl”: she is subversive to the accepted social order, yet she is enigmatic and charming, causing nearly everyone to love her. A theological rogue and behavioral deviant, Anne remains the darling of her Prince Edward Island towns because of her candour and loyalty to friends. Anne’s twin loves of nature and literature feed her soul and help her to be something of a Renaissance woman as she grows older and juggles multiple responsibilities. Her wild imagination, which most of the characters in the series finally accept, is her best and most dangerous characteristic.

Imagination is what causes Anne to yearn for God and not let her spirituality be solely dictated by others' forms and patterns. Because of it, Anne is able to understand people's motives and needs with greater clarity than can her peers, which in turn allows her to make friends so easily. It is what makes her embrace education, which eventually leads her to have an impact on other people in the various communities in which she lives, especially in Summerside, where she serves as principal; Avonlea, where she is the main teacher; and Glen St. Mary, where she guides her own children's educational and psychological development. Anne's imagination enables her to accomplish great things against the odds: she dreams of teaching school in Avonlea while simultaneously running Green Gables for Marilla and keeping up her own studies. . .and she manages to do all three things well. Finally, Anne's imagination is the source of her subversive nature. She subverts social order—unintentionally as a child, but intentionally as an adult—because she can imagine and identify with other possible realities. Because Montgomery presents Anne sympathetically, she thus encourages children to be subversive, albeit in constructive ways. Anne's fresh approaches to old problems, coupled with her fearlessness and frankness, showcase her as Montgomery's ideal child creation.

Love of the natural world is as much a part of Anne Shirley as her red hair. When she arrives at Bright River, she makes up her mind to sleep in a wild cherry tree if Matthew Cuthbert does not arrive to take her to Green Gables (*Green Gables* 12). Anne punctuates the drive to Green Gables with gasps of delight and adjective-filled names she invents for the lovely vistas that she sees for the first time (12-22). As with her other heroines, Montgomery places a deep love of trees within Anne's heart. From the Snow

Queen, a cherry tree that grows outside of Anne's room at Green Gables, to the Haunted Woods where Anne nearly scares herself silly with ghost stories of her own invention, to the abandoned garden of Hester Gray where Anne picnics with her friends, to the wild apple tree that Gilbert shows her, to the lombardy poplars that grace the house where she boards when she is principal of Summerside High, Anne's girlhood and early adult life are filled with trees. From the great trees in the garden of Anne's house of dreams, to the wooded property of Ingleside and the adjoining copses of Rainbow Valley, to the pine trees where Anne loves to walk and pray, Anne's love of trees and nature abides. On days when she can wander through the woods, Anne's adoration of trees is most apparent. She hugs (and kisses) trees on at least one occasion, calling them her "sisters," and she enjoys imagining herself as a dryad or a wood elf (*Avonlea* 74). She imagines that the smell of dying fir trees is their souls, though "practical Diana" Barry sets the record straight by pointing out that trees have no souls (40). She also suggests to Anne that she ought to make a cushion filled with fir needles, which reawakens Anne's dream of being a dryad. Anne even anthropomorphizes the trees in the Green Gables orchard, telling Marilla, "why, the thing[s] [are] human" (208). But Anne's love of natural things does not stop there.

Unsatisfied with merely frolicking among the trees and using flowers and boughs to decorate her room, Anne appropriates Avonlea flora as part of her costume. Anne, like Sara Stanley, dons wreaths of flowers in her hair and on her hat, even though such doings are considered to be exceedingly strange. Buttercups and roses adorn Anne's hat when she first attends church in Avonlea; rice lilies grace her tresses when she arrives late to school and is made to sit with Gilbert Blythe; Mayflowers crown her head as she enjoys

her first full spring in Avonlea (*Green Gables* 84, 114, 161). As she ages, Anne continues to implement floral hair decorations when she dresses up for fancy occasions, including her best friend Diana's wedding (*Island* 181). Others view her as being flower-like; Gilbert Blythe imagines Anne as a white iris just before he wonders if he can ever win her love (*Island* 16). And though Anne is a practicing Presbyterian for the majority of her life, some of her comments seem almost pagan: "It seems to me, Marilla, that a pearl of a day like this, when the blossoms are out and the winds don't know where to blow from next for sheer crazy delight must be pretty near as good as heaven" (206). However, Anne's love of nature and her appreciation for green, growing things actually ties into her faith in a positive way. The affirmation of creation as a good (but not perfect) thing indirectly praises God, the Creator. Though Anne never verbalizes this connection, her flights of fancy in which she links heaven and nature-imagery strongly suggest that she makes this connection internally nevertheless. For Anne imagines that heaven will include all of the seasons, and she enjoys the idea of souls looking like flowers, going so far as to assign a different representative blossom to each of her friends (*Avonlea* 105-6, 110). Imagination, love, reason—for Anne, all of these must be cultivated continuously in order to avoid stagnation and to retain a fresh view of life.

Though Anne easily engages in the life of the imagination, her reasoning capabilities are well-developed even at a young age. Marilla declares that Anne cannot go to the Sunday school picnic until she has confessed that she took Marilla's prized amethyst brooch; Anne, who did not take the brooch but can see no other way of getting to the picnic, accordingly fabricates a story worthy of belief. This earns her the promise of a prolonged punishment instead of the desired picnic treat. When Marilla later finds

the brooch (caught on her own lace shawl), she questions Anne about the lie: “Why, you said you’d keep me here until I confessed. . .and so I decided to confess because I was bound to get to the picnic” (*Green Gables* 103). Anne’s reasoning, though perhaps morally unstable, is sound in principle: she came up with a plan that would satisfy everyone involved. Anne’s reasoning grows as quickly as she does throughout the series. When Diana Barry rushes into the kitchen at Green Gables, searching out help for her little sister, Minnie May, who has the croup, Anne quickly takes charge of the situation. She takes the ipecac bottle from Green Gables, telling Diana, “you mayn’t have any at your house,” and then proceeds to arrange matters once she arrives at the Barry’s farm house. Anne doses Minnie May with the ipecac several times, finally achieving the result that she had hoped for: Minnie May coughs up the phlegm and can breathe easily once more (142-3). Young Mary Joe, the French girl who had been babysitting Diana and Minnie May, had had no idea of how to care for the sick child, and once Matthew Cuthbert finally arrives with the Spencervale doctor in tow, Anne merits praise from all involved. “She seems to have a skill and presence of mind perfectly wonderful in a child of her age,” claims the doctor, who also notes that he would have been too late to save Minnie May’s life (143). In a culture where children should be seen and not heard—let alone be allowed to act without an adult’s direct supervision—even this salvific deed transgresses society’s rules and norms. Anne’s biting commentaries on the school teacher, Sunday school superintendent, and preacher reveal her ability to evaluate the performance and demeanor of other people. While other children might speak of the sternness or disciplinary policies of such authority figures in simplistic terms, Anne notices foibles, such as lack of sincerity and conviction, that more closely resemble an

adult's critique of a colleague than a child's observation of her elders. By speaking in this manner, Anne reveals a sense of the authority of her own opinion, as well as her right to verbalize these thoughts to an authority figure. Even in today's society, such open criticism from a child would not be well received by most authority figures, let alone taken seriously. These comments upset Marilla a bit, and she suggests that Anne needs to bite her tongue. Though she often gets censured, Anne takes comfort in the fact that she never makes the same mistake twice because, as she informs Marilla, there must be a limited number of mistakes to be made. Thus, Anne will eventually reach the end of making them (176-7). Anne's idea that her own trial and error will be the singular cure of her faults flies in the face of the strictly Calvinistic Avonlea Presbyterians. Once again, Anne transgresses the norms. While the notion of eradicating all errors could hardly come to pass for as impetuous a character as Anne, she has used her powers of reason to search for a good outcome despite bad events.

As Anne matures, she develops her powers of reasoning, allowing her to help Marilla parent two orphans and to conduct certain business affairs that come up unexpectedly, all of which sharpen her wit and wisdom in preparation for her college days. During her time as a high school principal, Anne quickly finds a way to rescue a threatened theatrical performance: she has tutored a student to be the understudy to the lead role, and she has the presence of mind to substitute that young lady when the lead actress calls in sick (*Poplars* 43). Everyone had discouraged Anne from allowing the student to take part in the drama club, but Anne's belligerence saves both the production and the fund-raising drive behind it. Anne's powers of reasoning do not stand out as much when she is a wife and mother—the other adults in the story who serve as her foils

are usually equally logical though unequally imaginative— but they continue to be a part of her, influencing the various aspects of her life, including her faith.

Anne's faith life is anything but ordinary when she arrives at Green Gables, and various comments throughout the rest of the series suggest that Anne retains a portion of her extraordinary views even once she has become an active part of the local Presbyterian church. In the article, "From Pagan to Christian: The Symbolic Journey of Anne of Green Gables," John R. Sorfleet argues that Anne is a pagan when she comes to Green Gables. This is mistaken: Anne knows about God and believes in Christ; she just is not fond of the Christianity she has been shown and taught. When Marilla asks Anne to say her prayers, Anne claims that she never says them and that she has no use for God because He made her hair red (50). However, it quickly becomes obvious that Anne is not an anti-theist; rather, she is simply a vain little girl who has mixed up her emotions about her appearance with her understanding of the tid-bits of religion given to her by the unloving families with whom she has previously lived. In fact, Anne displays a great deal of desire for God. However, her desires take unconventional forms, thus transgressing the norms and expectations held by Marilla and the other staunch Avonlea Presbyterians. The adults simply do not recognize Anne's faith as such. Marilla finds Anne gazing at a picture of Christ blessing children, and the narrator describes Anne as bathed in light which "fell over the rapt little figure with a half-unearthly radiance" (*Green Gables* 56). Anne is imagining herself as the girl in the background of the picture, explaining to Marilla that "He would look at her and put His hand on her hair and oh, such a thrill of joy as would run over her!" (56). So, in her own imaginative and transgressive way, Anne longs for communion with God. Moreover, the narrator

presents Anne in terms that could easily be used to describe a saint in ecstasy. Anne clearly believes that Christ exists and is divine; she wishes that depictions of Him were not so sad because “[she doesn’t] believe that He could really have looked so sad or the children would have been afraid of Him” (56). This comment reveals the fact that the orphan has paid attention to religious artwork and has thought about what Christ must be like: she may behave as though she is “next door to a perfect heathen,” but her thoughts probe real theological questions and concerns. Marilla’s shocked reaction to Anne’s imaginative discourse fits her character perfectly, but her observation that Anne is being “irreverent,” though well-intentioned, could not be further from the truth. Anne, whom the narrator has described as a “freckled witch of a girl who knew and cared nothing about God’s love, since she had never had it translated to her through the medium of human love,” imagines Christ in these terms in an attempt to experience spiritual satisfaction (51). Already, she reaches out to God, though not in a conventional way.

Anne’s methods of relating to God certainly do not fit society’s standards any more than do her ideas about God. Anne has no objections to praying — it will be “interesting,” she says — but her ideas about prayer differ widely from those of staid church-member Marilla. Anne questions the need for kneeling during prayer and tells Marilla that she would rather go out into a field, look up at the sky, and “feel a prayer” (51). Indeed, Anne’s “feeling” a prayer contrasts with the asylum’s Sunday school superintendent (his rendering of the Lord’s Prayer is mournful, causing Anne to think that he conceived of prayer as a duty) and with Mr. Bell’s prayer at Avonlea’s Sunday school (57). “He didn’t seem to be very much interested in it,” Anne proclaims to Marilla (81). Anne also critiques the minister’s lack of imagination because his sermon was so boring

(83). Anne, inexperienced as she is, has some inkling that prayer does not have to be boring, dry, or disinterested; she wants an interactive faith life. During the dull experience, Anne thanks God for the beautiful natural scene just outside the church's windows: for her, faith is not fettered by walls or formulaic expressions. "I always feel so near Him when I walk among the pines," Anne later says (*Island* 171). This is not to say that Anne espouses what Mark Twain called a "wildcat" religion; neither does she merely exhibit a pantheistic faith throughout her life, though throughout the series Anne continues to link prayer with an outdoors setting and makes whimsical remarks about the souls of flowers. (Interestingly, Montgomery's narrator never tells readers that Anne has become a member of the church, though the audience finds out that Anne's son, Walter, is a member.) No, Anne conceives of faith as a dialogic experience in which God and human each have a part to play. Anne speaks of this when she retells the story of how she was nearly drowned in the Barry's sinking flat; she prayed to God and knew that He wanted her to "do [her] part" to ensure her survival (*Green Gables* 223).

Even eternal life looks more like an interactive adventure than an everlasting sermon from Anne's point of view, which clashes with the accepted views of the other Avonlea Presbyterians. For that matter, Anne's ideas completely contradict Calvinism's conceptions of Heaven. In the Westminster Larger Catechism, the answer to question 90 ("What shall be done to the righteous at the day of judgment?") presents a heaven in which believers seem to have little to agency of their own. God will set the righteous at his right hand, and they "shall be fully and forever freed from all sin and misery; filled with inconceivable joy; made perfectly holy and happy both in body and soul, in the company of innumerable saints and holy angels," as well as the Trinity (192). Anne, on

the other hand, dreams of the different landscapes and seasons she could encounter in heaven, but her friends are less certain about the appropriateness of such conjectures, only responding to Anne's ideas with great reluctance:

“I . . . I don't know,” said Jane uncomfortably. Jane was a good girl, a member of the church, who tried conscientiously to live up to her profession [teaching] and believed everything that she had been taught. But she never thought about heaven any more than she could help, for all that. (*Avonlea* 105)

Jane Andrews, like Anne's other friends, serves as an excellent, lady-like foil to the harum-scarum orphan girl. The narrator even makes a point of calling Jane a “good girl,” implying that perhaps Anne could not be considered “good” in the same way. But though Anne's ideas are out of the ordinary, she at least thinks about the eternal things: the other girls, who are far more reserved and by-the-book, avoid them as much as possible. Such is the case with Ruby Gillis, who confesses to Anne that she is afraid of dying because heaven will be unlike anything she has ever really known and loved (*Island* 106). Anne speaks to Ruby about heaven, but what she says certainly does not come out of a Presbyterian catechism, and neither is it a rote recitation of Scripture. “It was difficult for Anne to speak to any one of the deepest thoughts of her heart, or the new ideas that had vaguely begun to shape themselves in her mind, concerning the great mysteries of life here and hereafter,” says the narrator, but this is exactly what Anne does, suggesting to Ruby that perhaps human conceptions of heaven are “very mistaken” (105). So, Anne's experiences of the divine have schooled her heart and mind to realize that there are some things that cannot be fully understood, even in the light of doctrine and tradition. Later, once Ruby has died, Anne reassures little Davy Keith that Ruby will laugh in Heaven, saying, “Heaven won't be like church—all the time” (*Island* 109-10). Anne sees faith as

something compatible with laughter, joy, and fun. . .something which Mrs. Lynde and Marilla cannot understand. Some twenty years after Ruby's death, Anne muses about meeting another friend in heaven, who will also laugh there (*Rainbow* 104). "A good laugh is as good as a prayer sometimes—only sometimes," she remarks many years later to one of her grown children (*Rilla* 104). This sense of connection between faith and comedy may appear to be terribly unorthodox and almost sacrilegious (as it undoubtedly did to some of the characters in the books), but a closer examination of this relationship reveals an awareness of something very orthodox and extremely important. The Christian story of the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ is the greatest comedy of all time; Anne, though perhaps not thinking in terms of Dante and other literature, bears this reality to those she meets, both through her example and her funny-sounding comments. Anne's faith is sorely tested in later years — her firstborn daughter dies less than twenty-four hours after she is born, and one of Anne's sons is killed in action during World War I—but she retains it nevertheless. To the end of the series, Anne's faith remains healthy but unlike that of those around her.

Throughout the series, Montgomery presents Anne as one who follows the law of her own conscience in all things. After Anne accidentally gets Diana Barry drunk, the orphan approaches Mrs. Barry to apologize and explain what happened, despite Marilla's suggestion that such a conversation will only make matters worse (*Green Gables* 129-30). Later, when Diana and Anne jump onto the Barry's spare room bed, landing on top of unsuspecting Aunt Josephine Barry, Anne confronts the old lady and begs her not to withdraw her offer of music lessons for Diana (157-8). This episode surprises Miss Barry, and understandably so: not only would society have expected Anne to merely

apologize, the orphan's spunk in the confrontation outrages every rule of good childhood behavior. During Anne's days as the Avonlea schoolmistress, she refuses to whip any of her students, choosing instead to win them over with kindness, because she believes whipping any child to be intolerably cruel (*Avonlea* 26-7). What about Calvin's "seed beds of sin"? Clearly, Anne holds her own ideas about human nature and child rearing in more regard than Calvin's dire visions. The children Anne teaches—some of them only a few years younger than she—have likewise been subjected to Sunday-school-book genre and the strict Presbyterian culture in Avonlea. Perhaps this is why her students bemoan Anne's leaving: the transgressive redhead has treated them like people—worthwhile people at that—in opposition to their usual subjugation and castigation as small Satans. Though Anne resorts to corporal punishment once in her two years of teaching in Avonlea, it is against her better judgment, and she looks back on the moment with sadness and distress for weeks (100). The first three books of the series, in which Anne is a little girl and then an unengaged young woman, especially highlight how following her own conscience often leads Anne into awkward situations at odds with societal norms.

The later books still feature Anne following the laws of her own conscience—and, as part of their inheritance from her, her children do the same thing, with comic results—but in more conventional ways. As a married woman, Anne takes it upon herself to shoo away a visitor who has a crush on the married next-door neighbor (*House* 150-2). She also reaches out and mothers not only her own brood of six but also the four Meredith children, whose widowed father seems so detached from the world that he never notices what they are doing. As Faith Meredith notes, "[Mrs. Blythe] always

understands—she never laughs at us” (*Rainbow* 134). Everyone else in the community derides the children for their behavior and appearance, but once again Anne follows her conscience and does everything in her power to gladden their lives. But breaking societal norms, whether on purpose or by accident, is a habit with Anne.

From the reader’s introduction to Anne through the entirety of the series, Anne has no trouble breaking societal norms. She talks incessantly, pitting her against a society where children are supposed to be seen and not heard. She boldly launches her opinions at her elders, most notably Mrs. Rachel Lynde, whom she calls rude and fat in return for her remarks about Anne’s red hair (*Green Gables* 64-5). Such behavior essentially marks Anne as a totally degenerate being, yet the narrator (and Marilla) speak sympathetically about the incident, suggesting that the connotations of ‘degenerate’ child behavior are, perhaps, too extreme. The apology that Anne manufactures does not fit any normal standards of behavior, appearing far too dramatic, yet it wins over Mrs. Lynde’s heart (74). Anne smashes her slate on Gilbert Blythe’s head, refuses to attend school when the schoolmaster offends her, and dyes her hair an unearthly shade of green (111-2, 116-7, 216). These offenses, which are really outworkings of a child’s temper and desires, place Anne as the polar opposite of the meek, obedient, humble children presented in Sunday school books and conduct manuals. . .yet she remains the heroine and the leader of her peers. In later years, Anne acts as a matchmaker for one of her student’s fathers, and she rejects multiple offers of marriage herself before accepting Gilbert’s proposal (*Avonlea* 256-7; *Island* 59, 63, 199, 224, 241). Anne is the first Avonlea girl to go to college, as Gilbert notes, and as the general opinion of the islanders is that women do not belong at University alongside men, it is both an accomplishment

for and a censure of Anne that she chooses to go (*Island* 11-3). After her earlier transgressions, however, this one is easier for Anne, for she treasures education and knows that her break from tradition truly enriches her life. Anne has no trouble in convincing another young lady to elope and in persuading a father to come back and take care of his daughter, whisking her away from her loveless old grandmother (*Poplars* 221, 251). Of course, elopements were not strictly honorable things; encouraging them was almost unthinkable, yet Anne did just that. Meddling in other people's parenting choices also subverts the Prince Edward Island community's expectations.

Anne reaches out to the marginalized—from Katherine Brooke, an ill-tempered teacher with no family, to the orphaned Keith twins that Marilla adopts, to Leslie Moore, whose ruined marriage and mentally-disturbed husband make her life miserable, to other various unhappy young men and women—on her own terms, choosing to work not only through the Ladies' Aid Society but also on an individual, personal basis. This individualistic approach is yet another way that Anne stands out from the rest of her community. She transgresses the norms by breaking boundaries and working outside of the prescribed channels. When the people of Glen St. Mary speak disparagingly of the Meredith children and their hijinks, Anne claims that she would like to take charge of the situation and call a meeting of all the townspeople, just so she could give them a piece of her mind and make them think about the consequences of their comments. When this strikes fear in her friends' hearts, Anne says, rather deprecatingly, "I shan't do it, of course [. . .] it would be too unconventional, and we must be conventional or die, after we reach what is supposed to be a dignified age" (*Rainbow* 183). Anne may have conformed on the outside, at least partially, to get along in life, but her hot temper remains and spills

over into everyday life. And although other mothers and grown women in the books do not admit to having imaginations, Anne refers to her habit of imagining things before she goes to sleep, even after the first World War has broken out, taking away her sons (*Rilla* 93). In a society where imaginative play in children comes under scrutiny from church and community authorities, her admission of continuing to imagine things reveals her lack of concern for the social consequences of questioning the accepted order of things. Anne's willingness to value poetry and imagination as much as work set her at odds with her culture. Anne retains one other constant habit that sets her apart from the other respectable women in society: she writes stories and sketches for children (*Island* 210, *House* 106, *Ingleside* 115, *Rainbow* 124). Although her admirers seem to think very highly of this, her detractors—including the neighboring children that bully Anne's son Walter—clearly view this as odd (*Rainbow* 120). Yet write she will.

Though Anne breaks societal norms, she is well-loved by nearly all who know her. When she has been at Green Gables for several months, Anne shocks the local gossips with her popularity among the school children. Marilla and Matthew grow to love her as well: from becoming “fond” of her to liking Anne's chatter, from trusting her with preparing meals for guests to the tears that Marilla weeps when Anne leaves for her year at Queen's Academy, the elderly siblings finally cannot imagine what their lives would have been like without Anne (*Green Gables* 89, 219, 248, 277). Even Mrs. Lynde admires Anne, though she continues to question the girl's decisions until Anne finally marries Gilbert. Anne manages to win over the entire town of Summerside by proving that she has no ill-will toward them (a fault they always assumed in outsiders), and her days in college are filled with friends and male admirers. Gilbert steadfastly worships at

Anne's altar, so to speak, from the first time he sees her in school, and as his wife she makes hosts of new friends in Glen St. Mary. Diana, who was shocked by Anne's use of the word "swear" the first time that they met, treasures her unique friend and her shocking statements as the girls grow into women (*Green Gables* 87). "Diana [. . .] did not mind 'devilish' as she would if anybody but Anne used it. Everybody knew Anne didn't really mean things like that. It was just her way," claims the narrator (*Ingleside* 6).

However, the fact that people have managed to accept Anne and "her way," no matter how shocking or unusual it is, reveals how much Anne is loved by her community: they no longer expect her to conform to the standards that apply to everyone else. "There are times, Anne dearie, when I know by your eyes that *your* soberness is put on like a garment and you're really aching to do something wild and young again," muses Anne's friend, Miss Cornelia (*Rainbow* 86). But perhaps the best gage of how much Anne is loved, despite her "freaks" of behavior and outlook, is how Marilla views her life in relation to Anne's arrival at Green Gables: "Marilla felt that out of her sixty years, she had *lived* only the nine that had followed the advent of Anne" (*Island* 148). Anne brings life to her communities, due in part to her imagination.

Anne employs her imagination to her benefit during her entire life. In her pre-Green Gables days, she used her imagination to make life bearable, first with two mentally-abusive foster-families and then in the orphanage. Imagination also provides Anne with cheap entertainment; when she discovers that Marilla never imagines anything, Anne cries out, "Oh, Miss—Marilla, how much you miss!" (*Green Gables* 55). This sense of imagination opening up life always remains with Anne, and when she finds fault with other people, such as the Sunday school superintendent, she often links their

shortcomings with their lack of imagination. At Green Gables, Anne's imaginative approach to life and learning help her to gain friendship with the other girls in her class. Anne suggests that they enact the story of the Lily Maid, though it nearly causes her to drown; Anne also suggests that the girls begin a story club to amuse themselves (221, 210). Imagination gives Anne a method of encouraging her students, especially Paul Irving, who grows up to be a famed poet. Anne uses her imagination to identify with other people and their plights, which enables her to mother her children so effectively. She recalls the days when people laughed at her flights of fancy and avoids making the same mistake with her brood. This outreach-related function of her imagination also appears in her friendships with Katherine Brook, Leslie Moore, Captain Jim, and countless others who populate the novels' pages. Finally, Anne links her imagination with hope; she dreams of future things to come every evening when she goes to bed, even when such visions are difficult to sustain because of the dreariness of reality (*Avonlea* 41; *Rilla* 91). Anne's imagination could help her out of any quandary that her other qualities could not solve. Out of all Montgomery's imaginative heroines, Anne alone uses her imagination for diversion, survival, and to aid other people. She is the ideal girl figure within Montgomery's female-rich fictive world.

What is Montgomery doing in creating these similar yet distinct characters? Besides pleasing her fans with tales that always end on a positive note—if not with a complete “happily ever after”—she also provides a critique of child life, social standards, and religious taboos, and she accomplishes this subversion surreptitiously. In a society that wished for women and children to be seen and not heard, Montgomery's heroines make their voices ring out in protest. Their choice of professions and hobbies sets an

example for the readers of her day: a female's role in society did not have to be dictated to her by her male family members, her country, or her church. She also conveys the message that girls can be leaders, even in a patriarchal society, as much in spite of their backgrounds and social standing as of their gender. Out of all of her novels, only two are voiced by a (definitely) male narrator—*The Story Girl* and *The Golden Road*—and he has been strongly influenced by the main female in the story that he presents. Only three young male characters approach a three-dimensional development: Bev King, Gilbert Blythe, and Davy Keith. All of the others function at a one or two-dimensional level. So the females take charge and instigate action; the females set out to make some changes and keep other traditions as they are; the females create and transmit nearly all of the stories. Although the books could be looked on as simple *bildungsroman* tales written to please the girls of Montgomery's day, the stories go beyond that. For modern readers, the messages of a healthy balance of nonconformity and reverence for tradition serve as a guard against ageism and a blind absorption of contemporary ideals. The ideas of past generations and those championed by our own cannot be valued according to age; rather, their value comes from their positive or negative influence on people's lives, which means the ideas must be under constant scrutiny. The stories also suggest that the girls and women of the past were not all mere puppets controlled by the boys and men: imagination, ambition, and talent belonged to the females of bygone eras as much as they do to the women of today. And for both the readers of yesterday and today, the emphasis that Montgomery places on the importance of story and imagination in a young person's life affirms her audience members for embracing stories and encourages them to go out and create their own. Most importantly, Montgomery provides a new model of behavior

for her readers to supplant and subvert the models in the Sunday school books. She also moves beyond the genre of the Sunday school books, writing novels populated by multifaceted characters. This echoes an earlier movement in literature in which spiritual autobiographies gave way to novels, suggesting that both form and content will continue to change as authors continue to seek to convey important ideas about ethics.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### Imagination and Incarnation: The Interplay of Author, Character, and Reader

*“Whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God.” ~ Ruth 1.16*

Both Mark Twain and L.M. Montgomery possessed vibrant imaginations, and many of their best-loved characters also have this great gift. Joan and Anne are no exceptions; these subversive, non-conformist women would not be able to accomplish anything or set themselves apart from their respective milieus if they did not have and employ their imaginations. Readers, by the very nature of their relationship with texts, constantly employ their imaginations while reading. But what service, exactly, does an imagination provide? For authors, characters, and readers, the imagination enables empathetic identification with the Other. This identification allows for an incarnation to take place: by it, authors descend into their characters during the process of writing (or creation), suggesting a separate but dependent existence of their characters; by it, characters such as Joan and Anne become story incarnate and are able to offer compassionate assistance to other characters; by it, readers are transformed through their acceptance of the characters, equipping them to change society. Thus, the reader follows the characters’ examples, just as Ruth followed Naomi in the Bible, but instead of claiming a new tribal identity or religion, readers may adopt the ethics displayed by the characters. This interplay of author, text, and reader has far-reaching implications. In the Twain and Montgomery texts used in this study, the sympathetic portrayal of controversial figures encourages readers to support subversion, or at the very least to

increase acceptance of those who are subversive, marginalized, or misunderstood. The texts are constructive criticisms of society's foibles, and both Anne and Joan utilize their subversions for the greater good. Ironically, their subversive behaviors reinforce the positive norms in organized religion and society, even as they correct the perversions of or obsessions with those norms. As these religious and societal standards often provoked strong opinions in Twain and Montgomery, their appearance in the two authors' work is fitting.

Serious readers of Twain's fiction cannot deny the importance of authenticity to Twain. From the multiple distinct dialects present in Twain's *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* to the careful parody of Sunday school morality tales in "The Story of the Good Little Boy Who Did Not Prosper" to the twelve years of research Twain completed before writing *Personal Recollections of Joan of Arc*, the author's attempts at accurately capturing and portraying people and situations appear throughout the work. This obsession with authenticity and accuracy carried over into Twain's approach to understanding his characters. Joe B. Fulton notes that Twain wrote to his wife, Livy, about his attempt "to identify imaginatively with the others in whom books reside," especially with a young African American male named Jimmy (*Ethical Realism* 58). "By assuming the same [physical] position Jimmy does, Twain attempts to 'live into' his experience, almost as if literally putting himself in the boy's place," writes Fulton (59). He also argues that "just as God incarnated himself as Christ to engage with humankind, the author leaves his or her rightful place as prime aesthetic mover to engage with the hero" (15). Although Fulton's argument for Twain's "living into" his characters is appealing and applicable for many—if not most—of Twain's creations, it must be

amended in the case of Twain's Joan of Arc. Twain himself called Joan "the most extraordinary person the human race has ever produced" ("Joan" 452). He also called *Personal Recollections* his "most important work" (*Ethical Realism* 108). In a letter to Margaret Blackmer, Twain listed his personal favorite books of his own writing thus: "Joan of Arc; Prince and Pauper; Huck Finn; Tom Sawyer" (Cooley 205). So, Joan held a special place in Twain's heart, suggesting that his treatment of her might differ from his dealings with his other characters. While Twain lived into Joan during the creation of the novel, he also lives *alongside* Joan through the narrator that he creates, Sieur Louis de Conte, Joan's life-long friend and page. Perhaps this is due to Twain's reluctance to employ a female narratorial voice; perhaps it is due to his extreme admiration for the historical Joan of Arc. By creating a narrator who is intimately familiar with Joan and her past, Twain may present the saint and her thoughts clearly while retaining enough distance to not mar Joan or cause her to appear less than he esteems her to be. As it is, Twain creates a fictional version of the historical person, Joan of Arc, and then interacts with her, via the narrator, in the narrator's memory. Thus, there is a dual engagement of Joan: as character and as companion. As created character, Joan bears some resemblance to Twain—she appears more Protestant than Catholic to some readers and critics because of her statements about the Bible, and her version of patriotism sounds more American than French. As a companion, Joan's incredible genius and example have the capacity to transform Twain: his admiration of her affects how he shapes the narrative, which means that she has changed him as a writer. Mere "living into" will not do for Joan; Twain must also live and work beside her. When he finished writing the novel, he noted in a letter that "at 6 minutes past 7, yesterday evening, Joan of Arc was

burned at the stake” (*Letters* Vol. 2, 624). This simple little sentence betrays how corporeal Joan seemed to Twain: though the historical Joan was dead long before Twain lived, the fictional Joan lived and breathed alongside the author until his pen dictated her death.

Similarly, L.M. Montgomery and Anne Shirley seemed to live alongside each other. L.M. Montgomery may have viewed Anne Shirley as being completely separate from herself, but in truth the author took many of her own childhood experiences and dreams and wove them into Anne’s story. The museum/shrines in Prince Edward Island combine Anne and Montgomery, presenting them as equally real and historical, as explained by Cecily Devereux in her article, “‘See my Journal for the full story’: Fictions of Truth in *Anne of Green Gables* and L.M. Montgomery’s Journals” (248-9). Anne is, in many respects, an incarnation of Montgomery’s re-imagined childhood. From her “window-friend” Katie Maurice to the various stories that Anne writes, from the lovely Avonlea spots with extravagant names to the liniment cake episode, Montgomery liberally placed events from her own experience in her first novel and those that followed, especially in the *Anne* series, the *Emily* trilogy, and, to a lesser extent, the books featuring the Story Girl (*Alpine Path* 72-5). Even though Montgomery endowed Anne with literary exploits and imaginings that were once her own, the author viewed her little red-headed orphan as a totally separate entity.

Anne—she was not so named of malice aforethought, but flashed into my fancy already christened, even to the all important “e”—began to expand in such a fashion that she soon seemed very real to me and took possession of me to an unusual extent. She appealed to me, and I thought it rather a shame to waste her on an ephemeral little serial. (72)

The idea of Anne appealing to Montgomery is important, for the character has made an impression on the author, suggesting an interplay of author and character similar to Twain's idea of "living into" one of his characters so that he could write them correctly. Interestingly, Montgomery writes of Anne's being *incarnate*. When the original manuscript was rejected several times in 1905, Montgomery "put Anne away in an old hat-box in the clothes room, resolving that some day when [she] had time [she] would take her and reduce her to the original seven-chapters of her first incarnation" (*Alpine Path* 75-6). She goes on to say that "everything in the world that is born of true love has life in it, as nothing constructed for mercenary ends can ever have." Montgomery's journals suggest a dual understanding of Anne, however. "To breathe the breath of life into those dry bones and make them *live* imparts the joy of creation. Anne is as real to me as if I had given her birth—as real and as dear" she writes in the 9 October 1907 entry (Montgomery 1: 332). So Anne is both a creation into which Montgomery breathed life, and a fully-developed incarnate being who came to Montgomery as is, on whom Montgomery placed some of her own ideas and adventures. Montgomery's phrase "born of true love" is reminiscent of Twain's feelings for his Joan, and the idea of a book that has "life in it" again underscores Montgomery's willingness to see Anne as more than a static character: the red-head *lives* in the pages of Montgomery's work, just as Twain's Joan lives in the fictionalized memoirs of Sieur Louis de Conte.

Twain links imagination, faith, and ethics throughout *Personal Recollections of Joan of Arc*, beginning in the second chapter. Narrator Louis de Conte begins the chapter with a description of the dragon that lived near the town, segueing into a long passage about the Fairy Tree. The children of Domremy who play under the tree and act as

friends to the fairies—whom they never actually see—are granted a vision later in life that prepares them for death, and that vision is of the Tree. This link between the physical location where the children’s imaginations were developed and the metaphysical destination of their souls argues that in some way the imagination prepares people for a life of faith. Joan of Arc is no exception to this. She employs her imagination at a young age, normally in an attempt to aid someone other than herself, and her first action in the novel is to argue with the parish priest on behalf of the fairies, who have lately been banished from their tree-abode. Joan sets up a comparison of humans and fairies in her dialogue with Père Front, forging a parallel of basic rights due to both groups (41). In other words, she is able to imaginatively identify with the fairies, and because of this she pities them and how they have been denied just treatment. This causes the priest to see his error, but he attempts to make Joan see his point of view, leading him into a trap of his own making. He asks her what she has lost by the banishment of the fairies, since she did not honor them as did the other children. “Could he never get the simple fact into his head that the sure way and the only way to rouse her up and set her on fire was to show her where some *other* person was going to suffer wrong or hurt or loss?” exclaims the narrator (44).

Joan’s reaction befuddles the priest, who then must listen as she continues to explain the error of his newest line of argument. This entire scene burlesques Sunday school book standards, for the Sunday school heroine might explain the error of someone’s ways, but that someone would certainly not be the local minister, and the situation certainly could not include the defense of anything unorthodox. Joan cannot understand why people “can pity a Christian’s child, and yet can’t pity a devil’s child,

that a thousand times more *needs* it,” showing that while a person’s heritage may affect his social standing, it should not interfere with his basic needs and rights (45).

Then she finished with a blast at the idea that fairy kinsmen of the Fiend ought to be shunned and denied human sympathy and friendship because salvation was barred against them. She said that for that very *reason* people ought to pity them, and do every humane and loving thing they could to make them forget the hard fate that had been put upon them by accident of birth and no fault of their own. (45)

The narrator’s words here are exceedingly important. In a world where communion with the Church is so extraordinarily important and is so heavily emphasized, remaining outside the Church equals both social and spiritual death. Joan’s argument on the fairies’ behalf claims that sympathy should be given to the marginalized *because* they make up the fringes of society. Later, on her God-given mission to save France, Joan will continue to pity the marginalized because she can identify with them through her imagination and her faith. The narrator, who knew Joan from her earliest days, could easily have begun his story with a different childhood anecdote, but he chooses to recall the Fairy Tree episode. Undoubtedly, Twain directs his narrator to do this so that the reader will notice this idea’s recurrence within the novel. While this will continue to be a theme with Joan throughout her entire life, this earliest appearance of her imagination-fueled empathy is significant in three ways. First, it reveals the importance of story for the imagination: Joan had only been told of the fairies and had never seen them, yet her understanding of these legendary creatures schools her imagination in ethics. Second, it reveals the transforming power of the imagination: Joan identifies with these creatures solely through her imagination of their suffering (placing herself within the Other) and then acts charitably because of this identification. Third, the impact that imagination has on ethics can cause social change: the priest, who exhibits a parental love for Joan and

worries about her reaction to the fairies' banishment, is transformed through his discussion with Joan, and he leaves sincerely sorrowful for his earlier actions against the fairies. De Conte quickly moves from his narration of Joan and the Fairy Tree incident to other examples of her imaginative identification with the marginalized.

Joan's outreach to and sympathetic treatment of all people draws upon her faith, imagination, and ethics. As a child and young woman, she spent her winters listening to stories told by the villagers; her faith, nourished by participation in church activities, "made her inwardly content and joyous" (46, 63). Thus, a pattern of simultaneous growth in faith, imagination, and ethics appears. When a beggar comes to the d'Arc household, Joan quickly gives him her porridge because she is moved by how pitiful he looks and how hungry he seems (48, 51). He rewards her by singing the Song of Roland to her, which de Conte then uses to set up Joan's lifelong patriotism (52). The legendary ballad fuels Joan's imaginative fires and personal convictions; de Conte carefully reports Joan's nicknames ("*the Patriot*" and "the Brave") immediately after the scene with the beggar. Later, Joan saves her friends from the local lunatic, Benoist, who has escaped from his cage. Although she puts herself at risk by confronting him, she says that she did it so that he would not hurt anyone and then be imperiled himself. Her motivation for helping Benoist—preventing him from coming to greater harm—indicates her awareness of the harm that he has already suffered and that which he will face for having escaped his cage: she has identified with him through her imagination. Joan claims that it was not a heroic deed. "I know him, and have known him long; and he knows me, and likes me. I have fed him through the bars of his cage many times; and last December when they chopped off two of his fingers to remind him to stop seizing and wounding people

passing by, I dressed his hand ever day till it was well again,” she explains. So Joan has already made a practice of assisting the marginalized long before she wins any martial victories. During her military campaign, Joan shows mercy to her prisoners and enemies despite the practices of the time, which allowed for murder and plundering of such people. She pities a large man, called the Dwarf, whom she sees tied up and condemned to death. Joan cuts his bonds, treats his wounds, and asks for his story: only after she has heard his background and shared his sorrow through imaginative identification does she decide to forgive his desertion and adopt him into her personal unit (177-81). On the battlefield, Joan witnesses her soldiers wound an English captive who could not pay a ransom, and de Conte recounts Joan’s outpouring of sympathy to the man. “[She] had galloped to the place and sent for a priest, and now she was holding the head of her dying enemy in her lap, and easing him to his death with comforting soft words, just as his sister might have done,” he writes (250). Joan therefore appears as a person with whom the reader can identify. In the Sunday school genre, identification with the character so one could imitate his or her behavior was ideal—in fact, that was part of the genre’s purpose. But that identification was based more on a sense of shared sin and the need for Christ’s grace than on a sense that this character, as is, relates to the reader, as is. Thus, Twain connects his book to the purpose of the Sunday school genre while changing the form as well as the model and definitions of “good” behavior.

Joan, who has seen the horrors of war and has brothers of her own, can easily identify with the man, and the tears that she weeps while tending to him will be echoed by his family members once they are told of his death, so Joan identifies imaginatively with them as well. Even as the English carry Joan to her death, she continues to identify

with those who are suffering, including Loyseleur, whose treacherous behaviors earned Joan the death sentence. “And Joan forgave him; forgave him out of a heart that knew nothing but forgiveness, nothing but compassion, nothing but pity for all that suffer, let their offence be what it might,” explains de Conte (431). He continues his narration of the scene, saying, “she had no word of reproach for this poor wretch who had wrought day and night with deceits and treacheries and hypocrisies to betray her to her death” (431). But this is not her last identification with a person in trouble. As Joan begins to burn at the stake, she begs the friar to move out of harm’s way, even though he is holding up a cross for her to see (434). So, from her earliest days until her last breath, Joan of Arc identifies imaginatively with other people, especially the marginalized and the suffering. Many (if not most) of the Sunday school book heroes and heroines perished peacefully, which Twain burlesques in “The Story of the Good Little Boy Who Did Not Prosper.” Joan’s mode of death breaks from the Sunday school genre’s form, yet there is no question that she remains heroic and holy even in death. While she transgresses the normal expectations readers have of such a heroine, Joan continues to set an example that the audience is urged to applaud. Though audiences do not read of Anne Shirley Blythe’s death, they read of how she, too, identifies imaginatively with other people from her childhood until middle age.

Montgomery, like Twain, links imagination, ethics, and faith as she details Anne’s development. Anne’s conversation with Matthew during their drive to Green Gables is peppered with her fanciful descriptions of nature. Some of Anne’s terminology sounds reminiscent of imagery found in Romantic poetry and popular novels, from “dwelling in marble halls” to “alabaster brow” (*Green Gables* 12, 16). Her vocabulary

could also be viewed as a commentary on the diction used by Sunday school heroines, whose elevated level of speech causes them to stand out from their surroundings. Anne, like the Sunday school heroines, occasionally seems odd because of her speech, but her use of words and phrases is sweet and attractive because it enriches her experience of life instead of browbeating other characters or the reader into conformity. Anne's limited exposure to literature in school has helped to shape her imagination and her methods of vocal expression. By placing herself within imaginary marble halls and dreaming of looking and acting like the heroines she admires, Anne effectively identifies with the settings and characters she encounters on the printed page and in her mind's eye. As discussed in chapter two of this thesis, Anne imaginatively identifies with the girl in the picture of Christ blessing the children, and she imagines what it would be like to interact with Him, to be loved and treated with respect. Anne hopes that other people can identify with her imaginatively, but even when she comes to Green Gables that hope remains unfulfilled. Upon hearing that she will be sent back to the orphanage, Anne cannot eat. Marilla questions Anne as to her lack of appetite, and Anne replies, "I'm in the depths of despair. Can you eat when you are in the depths of despair?" (26). Marilla claims to have never been there, and when Anne asks Marilla if she could imagine herself there, only to receive a negative answer, Anne says, "Then I don't think you can understand what it's like" (26). By voicing despair, Anne places herself apart from the Sunday school book heroines, yet this transgression of expectations makes Anne more relatable for the reader. Despair is a very real problem for people of faith, and Anne's inquiries suggest that even if it has not been experienced first hand, then at least imagining the experience of it would allow a person to understand someone who has experienced it.

The logical conclusion of Anne's thinking is that that if Marilla could understand, via experience or imagination, what Anne is going through, then perhaps she would not subject the girl to a return to the orphanage: there would be a change in the handling of the situation. Building on this expectation of imaginative identification, Anne connects with the children she teaches and mothers, as well as the adults with whom she interacts, and this affects her treatment of them.

Anne's interaction with all people draws on her imagination, faith, and ethics. When Marilla decides to adopt six-year-old twin orphans Davy and Dora Keith, she asks Anne to help her bring them up. Anne, remembering her own childish troubles with prayer and theology, demonstrates extreme sensitivity to the questions and qualms that Davy vocalizes to her over the course of his first two years at Green Gables. For example, Davy fears that Anne prefers one of her pupils, Paul Irving, to him; Anne helps him to understand that she likes them equally well, but in different ways, asking Davy to compare how he likes his sister Dora to how he likes Anne. This analogy makes sense to the lad, who then ceases to worry about the imagined rivalry with Paul (*Avonlea* 166-7). Montgomery makes Anne transgress the Sunday school book norms by doing this, for instead of preaching at the boy and making him feel like the "seed bed of sin" that Calvin speaks of, Anne uses an approach akin to relationship therapy. No conversions ensue: only compassion and congeniality. Anne also feels compelled to help little Elizabeth Grayson, the unloved child who lives next door to Anne's temporary home in Summerside. "I can never forget what my own life was before I came to Green Gables," Anne writes to Gilbert (*Windy Poplars* 23). Anne does everything in her power to help the child develop her imagination, from drawing a map of fairyland to sharing the girl's

stories, and to showing her kindness and love. While a typical Sunday school heroine would be expected to show kindness and love towards those around her, she would not do so by engaging their imaginations. Instead, she would try to convert them. Once more, Montgomery has utilized the form of the Sunday school genre while altering the content. Years later, Anne's own children have a knack for trouble, just as their mother had: when Nan finds that Thomasine Fair, who lives on the hill, is a good person and not a witch, she nearly makes herself sick with the loss of the story she had concocted. Nan turns to her mother for comfort, and Anne, "remember[ing] the Haunted Wood and two small girls who had been terribly frightened by their own pretending [. . .] knew the dreadful bitterness of losing a dream" (*Ingleside* 241). Anne handles the situation seriously, despite a strong temptation to laugh. Little Nan also believes that she has cheated God by not keeping up her end of a bargain that she has made with Him, and Anne responds with tenderness and wisdom to her daughter's worries. "Anne always had contrived to keep a straight face when a straight face was indicated, no matter how crazily she might laugh it over with Gilbert afterwards. She knew Nan's worry was real and dreadful to her," Montgomery's narrator continues (149). Anne's compassionate handling of the situation and her desire to laugh mark her departure from the Sunday school norms yet again.

Anne similarly deals with adults' concerns. When she teaches school for the first time and is confronted by a mother who is angered over the mispronunciation of her son's last name, Anne recalls how much she hated to have her name misspelled, and manages to speak calmly with the woman, all while "choking back a wild desire to laugh" (*Avonlea* 35). Anne pities Pauline Gibson so much that she helps the middle-aged

spinster escape the clutches of her elderly mother for one glorious day-long visit at a cousin's anniversary celebration. The woman's cheerless existence resembles Anne's own miserable early years, which were full of hard work, ill-fitting garments, and the constant burden of sarcastic comments made by her elders. Anne, writing to Gilbert, notes that Mrs. Gibson had tried to win her sympathy by describing her pains, but Anne "knew that Mrs. Gibson didn't suffer at all now, so [she] didn't try to be sympathetic" (*Windy Poplars* 81). Montgomery here burlesques the Sunday school genre's expectations for a heroine: little old ladies that complain should be pitied and treated with deference by the young heroine, but Anne, while respectful, is anything other than deferential. Anne also refrains from preaching at the woman, the natural course of action for a Sunday-school heroine. Like Twain, Montgomery utilizes some of the forms of the Sunday school books while altering the content and the definition of "good" behavior. Anne wins Captain Jim's confidence soon after she moves to Glen St. Mary with her husband, but only after her first child has died does Anne hear the seaman's tragic story. He intuits that Anne's sorrow has prepared her to receive his story as nobody else could, and he charges her with keeping his drowned sweetheart's memory alive after he shall die (*House* 120-1). The fact that Anne loses a child and questions God's will during the following months makes her a dangerous and transgressive figure, yet as demonstrated by Captain Jim and other characters, Anne is viewed with even more esteem than before the tragedy. The narrator suggests through all eight novels in the *Anne* series that this sensitivity truly sets Anne apart from everyone else in her community, adding to her appeal for the reader.

While the author shapes and may be shaped by the narrative, and while the reader absorbs the narrative and may be transformed by interacting with it, the characters themselves have the privilege of becoming story incarnate within their fictional worlds. As Tolkien claimed, “Fantasy [here, fiction may be used instead] remains a human right: we make in our measure and in our derivative mode, because we are made: and not only made, but made in the image and likeness of a Maker” (“On Fairy Stories” 75). Thus, the characters, made in the image of their makers, take on human characteristics, even as humans take on divine characteristics through their interaction with God made flesh, Christ. This incarnation of story is a mirroring of Christ’s incarnation: the Word of God became Man, descending into the flesh; the words of the author become characters, descending into literary form. Furthermore, just as Christ fulfilled ancient Jewish prophecies and as stories of His work spread throughout the land, so too may fictional characters appear as the fulfillment of prophecies (made by other fictional characters within that same fictive world) and stories of their deeds may permeate the lives of the other characters present in the narrative. The characters may also parallel Christ in their outreach to the forgotten and the marginalized, and they have the power or influence necessary to inspire social change within their fictional worlds. Christ was aware of His mission and His particular place in history; He knew how He fulfilled the law and the prophets.

Like Christ, who knew that He was the Word incarnate, Joan and Anne are both aware of being incarnate story, and they use this knowledge as they interact with other characters. This incarnational aspect cannot exist with a flat character—multidimensionality is needed for incarnation—so this characteristic given to Joan and

Anne truly separates them from the traditional Sunday school heroines. Joan of Arc, as presented by Twain, is incarnated story in at least three senses. First, she is the fulfillment of a prophecy. The narrator explains that the peasantry viewed Joan as the heroine foretold by Merlin. The prophecy, “more than eight hundred years old, [. . .] said that in a far future time France would be lost by a woman and restored by a woman,” he says (*Personal* 89). Since Isabel of Bavaria, France’s queen, is at the center of the current problems with the English, “doubtless this fair and pure young girl was commissioned of Heaven to complete the prophecy” (89). Whether or not readers believe that Merlin existed, the peasantry in the novel accepts not only his existence but also his prophecy: the ancient story has inspired them to view Joan as the heroine, which in turn causes them to support and aid her and to claim that her mission is divine. Thus, Joan is prophecy in the flesh. Prophecy allows for the transformation of social and religious norms so that renewal may occur for the people who receive it. Although prophecy addresses a specific culture and may additionally be applicable to other cultures, it does not come from that original culture but is born outside of it. So, prophecy serves as an authority outside of the received tradition, allowing for deviations from the accepted rules, and it may be incorporated into the tradition. Twain was always fascinated by Joan of Arc’s development and abilities, none of which could be explained by her upbringing or her social status. He viewed her as being great in spite of (not due to) her peasant background. Joan’s greatness, then, comes from outside of her family and country, as proper prophecy should. In turn, this helps to validate her transgressive nature, which both prophets and prophecy share.

Joan also makes her own prophecies, dealing with the future of her family, friends, country, and self. Every one of them comes to pass, so Joan, in living out the prophecies she makes of her future, is once again prophecy incarnate. As Garrison writes, "Prophets [. . .] are often tricksters whose outlaw antics we should praise" (221). His approach to understanding prophets, heavily influenced by the ethics of John Dewey, clearly outlines those characteristics that make prophets such unwelcome presences to guardians of the accepted social order:

Prophets have the capacity to penetrate the veneer of supposedly fixed and final actuality. They name what oppresses us. They expose the aesthetic and moral possibilities that lie beyond knowledge and established rules and laws. Their poetry, prose, and parables are a criticism of life. They go beyond the confines of even reflective inquiry. They know that to free us from oppressive institutions, we sometimes must go beyond all available evidence, backing, and warrant. [. . .] Faith can sometimes take us where knowledge alone could never go. (235)

Joan certainly goes beyond reflective inquiry and relies on faith alone in her quest to free France from English oppression and to extricate herself from the tangled web woven by Cauchon. Her piercing inquiries and biting comments to the corrupt churchmen she encounters reveal just how they oppress the people. Joan's first prophecy deals with the way in which her brothers and playmates will join the war effort; later, once she leaves Domremy forever, the males fulfill the prophecy and join Joan's march in the order she foretold (*Personal* 66; 95-6). Catherine Boucher hears Joan speak of the wounds she will receive in battle, a full day before she suffers them (205). She also hears Joan forecast both France's victory and the cruel death that Joan will suffer within two years (239). De Conte, who is with Joan when she makes that prophecy, recalls the one she made about the boys going to war, and, recognizing the similarities in Joan's demeanor and delivery of the prophecy, realizes that again what she has said will come to pass (240). Joan's

predictions about battles come to pass as well: she knows that her work will be undone by Tremouille, and when she vocalizes that prediction she also assures the king of how long it will take him to gain control over all France if he does not let her do her work (290). De Conte, wanting to exonerate Joan, notes that these prophecies are both fulfilled in their entirety within the time frame Joan set forth (295, 351). Noting the fact that many fulfilled prophecies have dubious origins, De Conte stresses the importance of the prophecy being in the court records, which serve as proof that Joan could not have faked anything (352).

In addition to being the fulfillment of a prophecy, Joan also functions as a living legend throughout the novel. Her status as embodied prophecy affirms Joan's violation of normal behavior, thereby allowing her to be a living legend without changing her nature. Joan's existence is storied from the time that she sets forth on her mission to free France from the English. People begin flocking to her village and to her uncle's house in hopes that they will see her or even her family (89-90). When the governor goes to visit Joan, the rumor (or story) of it spreads throughout the town (91). When Joan wins permanent remission of taxes for her village of Domremy, her father and uncle, who are in Rheims at the time of the coronation, cannot wait to return home to report the news of Joan's deed and its happy consequences for the peasants. "*They* waste the glory of being the first to carry the great news to Domremy [. . .] Oh, not they," recalls de Conte (292-3). So even Joan's father views her as a legend and takes stories of her back home to continue building up the canon of true stories surrounding Joan. As Joan moves from being an unknown peasant girl to becoming a national hero, the people continuously talk about her. "From Gien the news had spread to Orleans that the peasant Maid of

Vancouleurs was on her way, divinely commissioned to raise the siege,” recalls de Conte (112). The people, then, spread the news of Joan but also give her a title: this, indeed, is a mark of her status as a living legend. As time progresses, her titles multiply and the peasantry and uncorrupted churchmen increasingly honor her as a heroic figure, comparing her to saints and Biblical figures (213, 266). Additionally, Joan is a living legend in another sense: while the Paladin is alive, he presents her deeds (and his own) as larger than life. So, as he embellishes the details of her dialogues and battle moves, Joan becomes a character of the Paladin’s making within the story recounted by de Conte, which is authored by Twain. Paladin first uses his narratorial gifts after Joan rightly identifies the camouflaged king, and his retelling of the story turns Joan into a nobler, more dramatic version of the actual Joan presented by de Conte (*Personal* 131-2). “Thematically, the complex structure [of Paladin’s storytelling and the novel] intimates that just as Joan of Arc is no common saint, she is an atypical warrior as well,” comments Fulton (*Reverend Mark Twain* 129). Joan has surpassed the glory of her childhood military heroes, by which a part of her living legend status may be measured. Like their exploits, hers are talked about, but unlike the men, Joan can actually set France free, winning her a permanent place in the history of her beloved nation.

The third way in which Joan becomes story incarnate is in the telling of her story, from beginning to end, by Sieur Louis de Conte. De Conte, who knew Joan for her entire life, was especially moved by the testimony presented at her rehabilitation trial.

It was beautiful to hear the Duke d’Alençon praise Joan’s splendid capacities as a general, and to hear the Bastard indorse these praises with his eloquent tongue and then go on and tell how sweet and good Joan was, and how full of pluck and fire and impetuosity, and mischief, and mirthfulness, and tenderness, and compassion, and everything that was

pure and fine and noble and lovely. He made her live again before me,  
and wrung my heart. (437)

In this passage, de Conte claims that hearing Joan's story at the trial made her live for him again. Then, he turns around and does the same exact thing, for the novel is supposedly written after the rehabilitation trials are complete: he tells Joan's story, complete with the praises and the descriptions of her good qualities, making her live for the readers and wringing their hearts. Joan lives for de Conte's nieces and nephews, his intended audience, but she also lives for each person who picks up the novel and reads it. By preserving Joan's story, de Conte preserves her, too: she will now always exist as story, and because that story was wrought by one who knew her, it is Joan herself, and not merely a legendary version of her, that the audience is meant to encounter in the novel. As Andrew Tadie suggests, "Twain created de Conte as his fictional narrator to convince his readers about the truth of certain aspects of Joan of Arc's life" (16). He notes that "[de Conte's] memoir was written for his closest relatives, those to whom he is most interested in telling the truth; he wants them to understand the truth about past events which at the time he writes have begun to become matter for legends" (16). So, this third manner of incarnation of story may be called a re-incarnation of story, because Joan, who had a life and a physical body and died a gruesome death, lives *again* through de Conte's narrative. Furthermore, if readers may glean something new from a text each time they read it because their conversation with it is in a continual state of flux, then Joan may be said to be re-incarnated every time a reader returns to the novel. Or, to put it in more orthodox terms, as Christ the Word of God continues to live both in Heaven and in the pages of Scripture, so too does Joan the saint live both in Heaven and in the pages of Twain's novel.

The narrator presents Joan as one who realizes her effect on other people and uses it to her advantage. Joan talks with the generals one to one when she wishes to influence their behavior; she watches over her former playmates and assists them in becoming responsible, heroic young men about whom France can boast. As Joan's friend Noël says, Joan has "the creating mouth as well as the seeing eye! Ah yes, that is the thing. France was cowed and a coward; Joan of Arc has spoken, and France is marching, with her head up!" (151). Joan sees people for who and what they truly are, intuiting their strengths and weaknesses, their loyalties and divisions, their abilities and handicaps. That is her "seeing eye." She brings about growth and development in people that help them fulfill their potential and release their hidden qualities: this is her creating mouth. Her ability to do this while remaining true to herself and to God attracts others to her. This allure enables her to change people and society for the better. Christ, the Word of God incarnate, came to redeem and renew the world; Joan of Arc, story incarnate, redeems her particular society and renews the people around her. In this sense, the theological rogue functions as the most orthodox of Christians; she truly acts as a "little Christ." Joan relates to those around her by finding what they have in common with her. When around peasants, she relates to them as a peasant—de Conte makes much of Joan's being of "the people"—and when she deals with soldiers, she relates to them as a soldier (258, 232). She calls upon a shared love of France to win over the loyal French people, and she appeals to the recognition of a shared religious leader—the Pope—in an attempt to attain justice from Cauchon, who shares nothing else with the young woman (202, 373). In short, Joan searches for the qualities or sympathies that make people "kindred spirits," to use one of Montgomery's phrases.

Likewise, Anne appears as story incarnate in at least three ways, and the first, as with Joan, is as prophecy incarnate. Mrs. Rachel Lynde, the town busybody, loudly expresses her horror when Marilla Cuthbert explains that she and Matthew will be adopting an orphan. Mrs. Lynde quickly begins to tell Marilla all of the terrible stories she has ever heard about orphans, including how they burn down houses and suck eggs (*Green Gables* 7). Mrs. Lynde ends her tirade with a tale of how a girl orphan poisoned an entire family in New Brunswick with strychnine. Marilla quells this fear by explaining that they are adopting a boy (7-8). However, after Mrs. Lynde has left, the gossip predicts that the orphan will meet with strange expectations at Green Gables (“they’ll expect him to be wiser and steadier than his own grandfather”) and persists in her belief that the arrangement will come to no good (8). Truly enough, Anne fulfills Mrs. Lynde’s nightmarish view of orphans when she flies at the woman for twitting her about her looks (64-5). Yet this instance of improper behavior causes Mrs. Lynde to reconsider her actions, at least momentarily, which is what prophecy is meant to do. Anne also contends with many odd ideas at Green Gables: Marilla does not know how much time the girl should have to play, believes she should be dressed plainly and not as the other children are attired, and so forth. However, after Anne fulfills Mrs. Lynde’s prophecy, she turns it around, eventually earning Mrs. Lynde’s praise for herself and a re-evaluation of Marilla’s fitness for relating to children. Mrs. Lynde tells her husband, “Marilla Cuthbert has got *mellow*,” insinuating that this change is Anne’s doing (247, 306). Anne has a positive influence on Avonlea, even though most of the people in the village do not deviate from the norm after having encountered Anne. However, her transgressions make the villagers more aware of their behavioral patterns, which in turn

provides them the opportunity to reevaluate the validity of their customs. But prophecies are not the only genre that Anne embodies.

Anne also functions as the embodiment of fairy tales and tragic romances during her youth. As one infatuated with literature, Anne channels her imaginative powers by dreaming that she has taken on the identity of various heroines. Sometimes these heroines come from classic literature, as with Anne's portrayal of Elaine, the lily maid, which nearly drowns the redheaded scamp (221-5). When her friends voice their nervousness at acting out a story—"Mrs. Lynde says that all playacting is abominably wicked"—Anne erases this doubt by pointing out that Elaine lived hundreds of years before Mrs. Lynde (222). In other words, while the girls will be living out the story, Anne believes that external influences should not dictate conduct or anything else. Apart from her friends, Anne mimics the leading ladies of romance novels that she has read. For instance, she tries to envision herself as a woman who has golden hair and an "alabaster brow," despite not knowing what an alabaster brow is! (16) Even as a grown lady and high school teacher, Anne dreams of being like the characters she loves and performing the same fairy-tale actions that they do. "I've always envied the boy who flew with the north wind in that lovely old story of George MacDonald's. Some night, Gilbert, I'll open my tower casement and just step into the arms of the wind," Anne says (*Windy Poplars* 13).

Poetry and song appeal to Anne nearly as much as stories do, and this influence is especially strong during her youth. The end of *Green Gables* is a quote from Browning's "Pippa Passes;" in *Windy Poplars*, Anne identifies herself with the character from an old Avonlea school song, simply because the character lived in a tower, and Anne's boarding

house room is in a tower (11). Though she does not aspire to be a poet, Anne creates stories of her own and lives them out so fully that her real life suffers. For instance, Anne manages to leave the flour out of a cake that she is mixing up because she loses herself in the story she simultaneously concocts. “The last time I made a cake I forgot to put the flour in. I was thinking the loveliest story about you and me, Diana [. . .]it was such a pathetic tale, Diana. The tears just rained down over my cheeks while I mixed the cake. But I forgot the flour and the cake was a dismal failure” (*Green Gables* 124). Anne’s imagination ruins at least one other dessert, a plum pudding with sauce.

I meant to cover it just as much as could be, Diana, but when I carried it in I was imagining I was a nun—of course I’m a Protestant but I imagined I was a Catholic—taking the veil to bury a broken heart in cloistered seclusion; and I forgot all about covering the pudding sauce. I thought of it next morning and ran to the pantry. Diana, fancy if you can my extreme horror at finding a mouse drowned in that pudding sauce! (125)

Here, Anne appeals to Diana’s ability to identify imaginatively with her. Anne’s reverie, while full of religious imagery, could not be farther from the values professed in the Sunday school books. Anne finishes her explanation by saying that she had meant to tell Marilla about it, “but when she did come in I was imagining that I was a frost fairy going through the woods turning the trees red and yellow” (125). Anne’s mistake finally surfaces at dinner, just before the pudding sauce is served to the guests. While Anne recounts these stories to Diana, she is making the tragic tea that the girls never consume, for Diana is quickly getting drunk from what both suppose to be raspberry cordial. So, both the original embodiment of her stories and the recounting of those embodiments bring Anne trouble. A year or so after the drunken Diana episode, Anne and her chums decide to form a Story Club, for which they write tales laden with pathos. As each girl must read her weekly creation aloud, and as Anne is so given to dramatic flair, one may

guess that she lived through her characters in these weekly meetings. Marilla claims that this endeavor is “the foolishness yet [. . .] reading stories is bad enough but writing them is worse” (210). That does not prevent Anne from writing and dreaming, however; instead, they prepare her to be a sympathetic and understanding teacher and mother of similarly imaginative and curious children. When she teaches at the Avonlea school, Anne reads fairy tales to her students, encouraging them to engage in similar flights of fancy (*Avonlea* 52). So, she attempts to build up both their scholarly knowledge and their imaginative capacity. This wins Anne infamy among the extreme conservatives of Avonlea, but their wagging tongues only build up the legends around Anne.

Like Joan, Anne serves as a living legend in her community. While Joan received this distinction because of her military prowess, Anne receives it because of her bizarre non-conformity. Anne’s odd behavior and hijinks in childhood earn her the attention of all the wagging tongues in Avonlea. From the incident of Anne's cracking a slate over Gilbert Blythe’s head, tales of which cover Avonlea by that evening, to the scene in which Anne dyes and then shingles her hair, to wearing flowers on her hat to church, the entire town keeps talking about Anne and her deeds. As she ages, Anne draws attention for other reasons: she is the first Avonlea girl to go to college; she begins to publish her little works of fiction; she turns down multiple suitors; she interacts with those whom society either forgets or discards. As a married woman, Anne lets Susan Baker, her hired help, eat with the family—a grave social trespass to Aunt Mary Maria Blythe and others in the Glen St. Mary community, especially Anne’s friend Miss Cornelia. Anne’s methods of child-rearing are talked about, as well as her opinions regarding the fitness of exposing certain topics to children (*Ingleside* 237, 209). Anne holds legendary status

among her friends and family, as the shining example of success. In Summerside, where there are two kinds of people—Pringles and non-Pringles—Anne wins over the entire clan by an act of kindness which they misinterpret. After finding a journal that records a Pringle relative's adventures at sea, including an act of cannibalism, Anne offers the book to the matriarchs of the Pringle clan. Even though Anne explains her actual motives to them (she thought that they would like to know the hardships their ancestor overcame while at sea), they treat her deferentially from that point forward, at first out of fear and then later through true admiration. This coup, previously unimaginable by non-Pringles, receives much attention, for “nobody outside of the Pringles knew why, but Summerside people understood that Miss Shirley, single-handed, had, in some mysterious way, routed the whole clan, who ate out of her hand from then on” (*Windy Poplars* 58). Even Anne’s success as a social reformer follows her throughout her life: after she marries, the A.V.I.S. (Avonlea Village Improvement Society) dies out, proving that all of the organization’s good works and accomplishments really depended on Anne’s presence and leadership, which cannot be replaced by anyone else (*Ingleside* 8). Anne’s sympathy wins her renown as well: John Meredith, the widower and Presbyterian preacher in Glen St. Mary, goes to talk with Anne when he cannot decide how to handle his children. “She was always so sympathetic and refreshing,” he muses, unlike the other women in the community who sneer at his attempts to be a good father (*Rainbow Valley* 100). Anne is not spoiled by her status as a living legend, however.

Montgomery’s unnamed narrator presents Anne as a person who is aware of her influence on other people and uses this to bring about positive change. Anne, like Joan, may be said to have the “seeing eye” and the “creating mouth.” Anne, always

discovering “kindred spirits,” even amongst people who seem to have nothing in common with her, manages to see beneath the surface and find the qualities that humanize even the tersest, prickliest individuals. Noël Rangussen and Sieur Louis de Conte speak of how Joan’s eye, when cast on someone, causes that person to act more nobly than before; Anne, too has this quality. “Laws, but your eyes is like your ma’s. *She could just about talk with hers,*” says the woman who owns the house in which Anne was born (*Island* 146; my italics). Those talking eyes, in combination with the sweet spirit and talented tongue that accompany them, persuade even the hardest of hearts. Anne, in her attempt to befriend Katherine Brooke, persuades the young lady’s boarding house manager to break the rules and allow Katherine to have a dog. “There was always something about Anne Shirley’s eyes when she said ‘please’ that people found hard to resist,” explains the narrator (*Windy Poplars* 141). Though Montgomery’s narrator refrains from consciously connecting Anne’s eyes and her persuasive nature as often as de Conte speaks of Joan’s, the sheer number of descriptions of Anne’s eyes that appear in scenes where she pleads with and wins over someone suggests that the connection exists nonetheless. Anne’s “creating mouth” comes into play less with her published stories than with her effect on the children in her life: by reinforcing their curiosity and their flights of fancy, Anne gives them permission to be themselves. This permission, in turn, makes them love her all the more, causing them to strive for excellence in all that they do. Ironically, this reinforcement and permission comes to the reader as well through the author’s presentation of the characters and the subsequent exchange of ideas between reader and text.

The form of the story—its manner of presentation—is extremely important for the interaction of author, text, and reader. Andrew Tadie’s introduction to *Personal Recollections of Joan of Arc* examines Twain’s three levels of narration and how this affects readers, whether fictional, historical, or modern. Bringing all three types of readers together, Tadie claims that “our appreciation for Twain’s story is dependent upon our ability to imagine ourselves as de Conte’s young relatives; it is dependent, therefore, upon the degree of respect, patience, and indulgence we are able to give an old uncle who wants to tell an edifying story about himself when he was young” (17). Readers are more apt to identify with life-like characters who have flaws and emotions, whereas flat characters, like those in the Sunday school books, do not encourage this identification. Aristotle argues that there should be four defining characteristics of characters, namely that they are good (insofar as their morals are concerned), appropriate, reminiscent of reality, and consistent (*Poetics* 643). He also suggests that the character with the tragic flaw is the one with whom the audience may identify fully, and whose behavior within the text will bring about catharsis for the audience (640). In other words, Aristotle believes that imaginative identification with and imitation of a character could only take place if the character is believable and life-like. Traditional Sunday school book characters are anything but believable and life-like. Similarly, in *Aspects of the Novel*, E.M. Forster discusses how flat characters function in literature, suggesting that they may each be summed up in one sentence and their chief virtues are that they are easily recognized and remembered by readers (68-9). He writes, “a serious or tragic flat character is apt to be a bore. Each time he enters crying ‘Revenge!’ or ‘My heart bleeds for humanity!’ or whatever his formula is, our hearts sink,” (73). Traditional Sunday

school characters are completely flat, and while they are memorable and easily recognizable, they are not people that readers seek to emulate. As Joan and Anne are not flat characters, readers may engage and imitate them, which is why Twain and Montgomery's stories are effective. Readers must have an imaginative concept of themselves if they are to engage the text fully and enjoy it. Twain causes his narrator to address the audiences, both the constructed audience (Louis de Conte's nieces and nephews) and the actual reading public, which helps readers with the imaginative identification process. "[Joan] stood for France, indeed she *was* France for both sides— whichever won her won France, *and could keep it forever*," claims de Conte (207). Joan, therefore, is the embodiment of the country: its ideals, its beliefs, its history, and its future. De Conte continues this line of narration of Joan and the battle of Orleans:

Whenever you read in histories about hours or days or weeks in which the fate of one or another nation hung in the balance, do not you fail to remember, nor your French hearts to beat the quicker for the remembrance, the ten minutes that France, called otherwise Joan of Arc, lay bleeding in the fosse that day, with two nations struggling over her for her possession. (208)

By placing this injunction to remember Joan of Arc and the most famous of her battles, Twain, through the narrator, is forcing the reader to identify imaginatively with Joan and with all of France. De Conte addresses the audience several other times as well, urging his readers to use their imaginations. "You shall imagine for yourselves what the excitement was like and how it expressed itself, when Joan rode out at the head of the host with her banner floating above her," he writes. De Conte does not claim that his is the only version of the story, nor does he want to limit the readers' views of the narrative. Rather, by asking them to imagine themselves into the various scenes, he suggests a possible interplay of reader and text, an interplay that will allow the reader to create

mental images of the celebratory nature of the battle march that are equally valid to de Conte's memories of the historical situation. He has schooled the readers by describing previous scenes with more detail, and now he expects that they will be able to manufacture an image that fits with the historical account but is uniquely their own. This kind of interaction of text and reader differs dramatically from the Sunday school books, where readers were only supposed to see and think about the issues at hand in the same manner as the narrator. The interplay of text and reader has further-reaching implications, however.

This imaginative identification process that the reader must engage in forms the final portion of the author-character-reader relationship, which may affect the reader's ethics. The characters model imaginative identification, which readers may then adopt more fully than they had previously. In this way, specific behaviors and ethics are acquired through reading a text. This effect is what the Sunday school authors sought but did not achieve, and what Twain and Montgomery accomplish with Joan and Anne. As Fulton notes in his book *Mark Twain's Ethical Realism*, "the most important 'switch' in Twain's fiction is the shift in the reader as he or she enters a milieu populated by people who occupy the 'other' side of race, class, or gender lines [. . .] even as we are drawn into another life, we engage in an 'insideness' that offers a fresh perspective on our own life" (145). He goes on to argue that "the evanescent act of 'going inside' is far less important than the ongoing relationship it engenders, and the ethical acts that follow" (145-6). If the process of identifying imaginatively with a character creates a relationship and causes the reader to act more ethically in the future, then literature serves as a vehicle for social change that begins within reading individuals and then spreads to those with whom the

readers have contact. So, imaginative identification begets reflective morality, to use Dewey's terminology. Of course, this is not limited to Twain's fiction alone; rather, any story can bring about change, so long as the story's main character is sympathetically portrayed and/or the character's ethical choices evoke a change of ethics in the reader's real-life experiences and relationships. Readers may reflect on morality after reading any text, if it challenges an unthinking acceptance of the status quo. Anne and Joan typify characters whom readers might seek to emulate: indeed, many young women view themselves as Anne-ish, giving rise to large numbers of fan clubs around the world and even to several groups on internet social networking sites such as Facebook, and countless other young women have sought to mirror Joan of Arc's heroism and spirit in their own lives, often represented by their seeking her patronage at Confirmation. As these young women think of themselves in relation to Anne and Joan, they model their behavior—and possibly their ethical or moral convictions—on what they have witnessed Anne and Joan do. Other characters, such as Josie Pye (one of Anne's antagonists) or Bishop Cauchon (the "pig" bishop), represent the converse of ethical mimicking. Most readers would not seek to emulate a haughty, narrow-minded, waspish young woman or a lying, cheating, hypocritical churchman. Instead, readers who are offended by such characters would be more likely to search their own lives and aim at obliterating similar traits or behaviors they might find there.

The way in which authors choose to portray various figures determines, then, how the audience could (or should) react to that character. Essentially, if the author presents a character sympathetically, this evokes a sense of being a "kindred spirit" in the reader—kindred to the character. If the character takes a strong moral stance on any issue during

the course of the novel, then the reader, who has identified with the character, will be more likely to view that issue from the character's point of view, even if only for a short period of time, because of that imaginative identification. Thus, readers have the ability to absorb or incarnate the character's convictions by making them their own. If readers make any changes whatsoever to their ethical convictions or interpersonal relations because of an interaction with the text, a practical application of the altered ethics is both possible and probable. In this way, the author is able to write social change into narratives and thus shape the course of the future, both for individuals and for nations. Interestingly, this is exactly what the Victorian Sunday school book and magazine authors sought to do. However, the unrealistic presentation of flat characters exemplified in those tales could not achieve what Twain and Montgomery do in their narratives. The reader cannot fully identify with the Other in a flat character. The flat, caricatural Sunday school story heroes and heroines do not have enough depth to produce a true dialogic encounter with the reader. Flat characters are more like symbols than real people, and one cannot have a dialogue with a symbol. Thus, the Sunday school stories have less potential for actually producing a lasting social effect than do well-developed novels. And, as authors do not write in vacuums, any social change that occurs as a result of the interaction of text and reader will necessarily have an effect on the authors, provided they are still living at the time of the social change. In this way, the author-text interchange discussed in the first section of this chapter comes full circle, as the author will bring existing texts into conversation with new texts that will similarly employ a dialogic model.

In this way, critics may understand the author, characters, and readers as all possessing and employing a “seeing eye” and a “creating mouth.” The authors see the potential in their creations and place them in a setting that showcases the characters’ worth. For instance, Twain “at once makes Joan of Arc’s story believable, without making it a matter of belief,” by utilizing three forms of story to create his hagiography, which signals to readers the nature of their imaginative identification with Joan (*Reverend Mark Twain* 139). Montgomery openly admitted to endowing Matthew and Marilla with their shyness and dryness, respectively, so that they would make more of a contrast to Anne (Montgomery 2: 38-9). Simultaneously, the authors create a feeling of the readers being “kindred spirits” with the characters by presenting them sympathetically. For example, Twain’s Joan becomes something of a saint for all denominations, appearing more Protestant than Catholic at times, yet appealing to all (*Reverend Mark Twain* 123). Montgomery’s Anne sparked interest with everyone from young men headed off to World War I, as Montgomery noted in her journals, to Japanese school girls in the late twentieth century, as investigated by Calvin Trillin. The characters have an impact on their fictional fellows and on the readers, challenging assumptions and encouraging exploration of the “other.” The readers may then see the potential not only in the characters but in the living, breathing people that surround them. At that point, if the interaction with the characters was successful, readers may go forth and change current situations or events dealing with those living people. Perhaps after encountering a fictional orphan who does not purposefully wreak havoc, readers might change their opinions of or assumptions about orphans; perhaps they might even be more open to adopting one after hearing of the deplorable conditions in orphan asylums. After

encountering a medieval French patriot in print, perhaps readers will take a greater interest in history or in defending their own country. The specific details of how the reader reacts or changes ethically, however, should not take the main focus; rather, the fact that there is a change at all is what is important. As Wayne Booth writes, “a kind of play-acting with characters, or characteristics, a kind of *faking* of characters, is one of the main ways that we build what becomes our character [moral or ethical fiber]” (252).

Mrs. Rachel Lynde would certainly be shocked by this: her attitude, and the attitudes of her cronies in Avonlea, is that all play-acting is wicked. Even Anne, who loves literature, makes an effort to read only “good” books that will help form her character correctly, during her time as Miss Stacy’s student. Joan draws strength from the *Song of Roland*, which then has an effect on her leadership style. And de Conte’s lament for Joan’s inability to read even a simple note that would tell her how to best Cauchon also echoes this idea of reading having an influence on character and actions. Thus, the trinity of author, reader, and character enables a dialogic conversation about ethics to continue perpetually. Rather than claiming only one specific way in which to interpret a text’s ethical claims, approaching them through reflective morality allows for a constant renewal of thought and behavior, especially within the texts of the readers’ lives.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### Conclusion

In both *Personal Recollections of Joan of Arc* and the *Anne of Green Gables* series, the authors glorify subversion that benefits the greater good within the fictional worlds that they have created. Their presentation of this subversion, which may then inspire similar transgressive actions within the lives of readers, is essential to the books' receptions. Within the fictional societies, subversion that benefits the good of all cannot be frightening or damaging. As Garrison notes, "[prophets] must always think of the good of the larger community," which both Anne and Joan do as they interact with their fellow characters (241). Subversion for subversion's sake, however, would automatically be deemed dangerous and then be derided and banished along with its proponents, rather like an echo of Merlin's dislike for Hank Morgan in *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*. However, the loving portrayals of the young French saint and the equally youthful Canadian orphan prevent any thinking individual from misinterpreting these females and their unique places in literary history.

Those loving depictions will forever set these books apart within their respective author's body of work. Many of the pieces that Twain wrote were means to support his family, as well as his non-literary business endeavors. *Personal Recollections of Joan of Arc*, however, was different. In a letter, Twain claims that "possibly the book may not sell, but that is nothing—it was written for love" (*Letters* Vol. 2, 624). The book was more like a child than a business venture. Similarly, Montgomery saved her pitifully

small income—only ten percent of the profit during the many years she was under contract with L.C. Page—from her books so that her children would be provided for if anything ever happened to her. She detested writing the Anne sequels that followed *Anne of Avonlea*: the publisher wanted the money they would bring, and Montgomery hated writing anything to order. But for Montgomery, *Anne of Green Gables* always retained the special charm that she wrote of in her journal after she received the notice of acceptance for publication: “the book may or may not sell well. I wrote it for love, not money” (Montgomery 1: 331). Love, not money: this is the key. Twain and Montgomery both took joy from writing these stories, and in subverting the Sunday school books that they believed to be damaging, they sought a greater good for their readers.

In some respects, Twain and Montgomery could be viewed as prophetic, insofar as they provide a specific critique to the Sunday school genre and then present a revision of it to the culture that lauded it. The retention of the form provides the authors with a framework that the readers will recognize. The alteration in content enables the authors to shock the readers out of an unthinking acceptance of cultural habits, social standards, and received morality. *Personal Recollections of Joan of Arc* and the *Anne of Green Gables* series may thus be seen as the ultimate Sunday school books, because they encourage a radically free, completely transformative approach to ethics. They are not Sunday school books in the usual sense, however, because they are novels. This mirrors how Christ fulfilled the prophets and the Mosaic law, but not as His society expected Him to do. His lowly status and plain appearance made Him seem to be a pauper to His earthly contemporaries, not a king, yet He is the King of Kings. The original Sunday

school books were viewed as instructional-devotional literature that would make children better Christians, but only within the confines of convention. *Personal Recollections* and the *Anne* series instead present the possibility for readers to become more Christ-like, but only after the pattern of His transgressions of repressive conventional morality.

Therefore, while Anne and Joan are better models of behavior than the Sunday school heroines, further development and re-envisioning of such models should continue in the future as more authors, characters, and readers share ethical interactions.

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