

Abominable Virtues and Cured Faults:  
Disability, Deviance, and the Double Voice in the Fiction of L.M. Montgomery

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## Abstract

This thesis examines the double-voiced representations of disability and illness in several works by Montgomery, the *Emily* trilogy (1923, 1925, 1927), the novel *The Blue Castle* (1926), the novella *Kilmeny of the Orchard* (1910), and two short stories, “The Tryst of the White Lady” (1922) and “Some Fools and a Saint” (published in 1931 but written in 1924). Although most of Montgomery’s fiction in some way discusses illness and disability, often through secondary characters with disabilities, these works in particular feature disability as a central issue and use their heroes’ and heroines’ disabilities to impel the plots. While with one voice these works comply with conventional uses of disability in the love story genre, with another they criticize those very conventions. Using disability theory to analyze the fiction’s double voice, my thesis reveals that the ambiguity created by the internal conflict in the texts evades reasserting the binary relationship which privileges ability and devalues disability.

This thesis uses disability theory to examine the double-voiced representation of disability in the fiction of L.M. Montgomery. Bakhtin describes the “double voice” as an utterance which has “two speakers at the same time and expresses simultaneously two different intentions: the direct intention of the character who is speaking and the refracted intention of the author” (324). In this thesis, however, I perceive the double voice not as the difference between the voices of the speaking character or narrator and of the author’s intention. Instead, I will approach the double voice as simultaneous expressions of conflicting representations, whether or not the author intends them. These voices within the double voice internally dialogue with

each other to reflect changing social attitudes toward disability. By applying disability theories, such as those by critics David Mitchell and Sharon Snyder, Susan Sontag, Martha Stoddard Holmes, and Rosemarie Garland Thomson, that assess how texts invoke disability as a literary technique, this thesis shows that the narrative structure of Montgomery's fiction promotes the use of disability as a literary and social construct, while its subtext challenges the investment of metaphoric meaning in disability.

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## Abbreviations

*BC* *The Blue Castle* (1926)

*EC* *Emily Climbs* (1924)

*ENM* *Emily of New Moon* (1923)

*EQ* *Emily's Quest* (1927)

*SJ III* Volume III of *The Selected Journals of L.M. Montgomery*

## Introduction: Disability Theory and Double Voice in Montgomery Studies

Although Canadian author L.M. Montgomery's writings have been analyzed from many theoretical positions, including those offered by feminism, queer theory, post-colonialism, and nationalism, for the most part the representations of disability in her work have not been analyzed from a disability theory perspective. Instead, disability in her fiction has usually been examined in ablist terms and as a by-product of other critical positions. While some scholars, such as Elizabeth Epperly, Irene Gammel, and Kate Lawson, briefly discuss issues of health, sickness, and disability in Montgomery's work, they generally do not recognize the social implications of using disability as a literary construct. For example, Lawson sees disability in the male characters of the *Emily* trilogy only as a sign of failure, but does not distinguish that the representation of disability also works to question the values by which failure is defined; nor does she question the social impact of reducing disability to a metaphor for defeat.<sup>1</sup> The lack of disability theory in Montgomery criticism is surprising, since every novel and nearly every short story by Montgomery has characters with illnesses and disabilities.<sup>2</sup> Because Montgomery's works are reflections of her cultural and

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<sup>1</sup> Dr. Shari Thurer notes that "the metaphoric use of disability" in literature has an "insidious effect" on people with disabilities. She argues, "Nothing is more punitive than giving a physical handicap a meaning" (12).

<sup>2</sup>The terms "disability" and "illness," refer to the social and physical experience of people whose bodies or minds are deemed abnormal or malfunctioning. Illness and disability differ from each other in that the physical aspect of illness is the quality of being "unhealthy" or of having malfunctioning organs due to infection, virus, etc., whereas the physical aspect of disability is generally seen as more permanent or as the disfigurement or failure of distinct parts of the body. Illness functions as disability because it is socially and physically debilitating and can lead to permanent or temporary disability. The terms "impairment" or "disease" refer to the physical evidence of disability and illness. However, these

literary climate, an analysis of their representation of disability reveals changing perceptions of illness and disability in early twentieth-century Canada. Using disability theory, this thesis adds to the dialogue in Montgomery studies about the body and to the discourse of Montgomery's subversive double-voiced technique by analyzing how her fiction uses disability as a symbol for social deviance while simultaneously exposing disability as a cultural construct used to control deviant bodies and behaviour.<sup>3</sup> This thesis also contributes to the on-going discussion and interpretations of the themes of heredity, art, culture, nature, and the supernatural that are ubiquitous in Montgomery's works and intrinsic to her representation of disability.

The discussion of Montgomery's writing has been primarily from a feminist point of view. Elizabeth Waterston's 1966 article on Montgomery, which appeared first in *The Clear Spirit: Twenty Canadian Women and Their Times* and was reprinted in the first volume of *Canadian Children's Literature (CCL)*, is generally acknowledged to be the first to take Montgomery's work seriously as being worthy of study and to bring to academia's attention the subtle subversions of and challenges to gender codes and structures throughout Montgomery's novels. In the 1970s and 80s, feminist re-readings of the *Anne* books, particularly *Anne of Green Gables*, further drew Montgomery from the margins of literary criticism and into the attention of scholars. Generally these interpretations use one of two types of arguments: they

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definitions are very problematic as they create a binary based "on assumptions about the normal human being" (Williams 128) and presume a fundamental physical difference, which is in reality an arbitrary division of a spectrum of varying degrees of ability.

<sup>3</sup> By "deviance," I refer to any behaviour outlined as socially abnormal or any physical or mental quality deemed different by the narrator or characters in Montgomery's works. The deviant behaviour ranges from the innocuous, such as being a single woman over twenty-five, to the malicious, such as murdering pets.

either contend that Montgomery's texts are in effect conformist to the patriarchy or declare that the works defy patriarchy. On one hand, Gillian Thomas argues in "The Decline of Anne: Matron vs. Child" that as Anne ages, she becomes "a willing victim of social convention" (38), and that the later books in the *Anne* series are weaker than the first because of "the social limitations on Anne Blythe" (41). Even Mary Rubio in her 1985 article "*Anne of Green Gables: The Architect of Adolescence*" argues that *Green Gables* is about the "need to move from excess of rebellion and nonconformity towards acceptance of societal expectations" (71). On the other hand, Eve Kornfeld and Susan Jackson in "The Female Bildungsroman in Nineteenth-Century America: Parameters of a Vision" discuss how the female utopia of the *Anne* series undermines patriarchal power (141-51). And both Temma Berg in "*Anne of Green Gables: A Girl's Reading*" and Janet Weiss-Townsend in "Sexism Down on the Farm?" argue that *Green Gables* is fundamentally subversive because it portrays an independent-spirited female who consistently challenges and questions authority.

Some early articles, however, argue that the texts can simultaneously conform and rebel, or are double-voiced, and that the conformity and rebellion are in dialogue with each other. In "Community and the Individual in *Anne of Green Gables: The Meaning of Belonging*," Susan Drain says that, in *Anne of Green Gables*, "the entrance of the stranger [Anne] is both a challenge and a contribution to Avonlea's intricate network of relations"(125). Thus, she argues that the novel is not a tale pitting deviance against conformity, but rather is a story of reciprocal modification of both the deviant and the conformed. In "Montgomery's Emily: Voices and Silences," Judith Miller asserts that Montgomery speaks "indirectly" in her works: "Her novel

[*Emily Climbs*] has the superficial appearance of an idyllic novel of girlhood, but a careful reader will see something else” (158). She argues that the “something else” that insightful readers can perceive is “the struggle of a woman . . . to find *her* voice” amidst the voices of the patriarchy (158). By the nineties, the main focus of Montgomery scholarship was on how Montgomery used the double voice technique in order to subvert gender expectations. Only a few articles and books that discuss the conflicting ideologies in Montgomery’s works, however, use the term “dialogue” or “double voice.” And only one, Theodore F. Sheckels’ “Anne in Hollywood: The Americanization of a Canadian Icon,” uses Bakhtin’s theory to explain the dual nature of Montgomery’s works (190).

Mikhail Bakhtin in his writings on the genre of the novel and on linguistics discusses a technique of writing or communicating called “double voice.” “Double voice” depicts how an utterance has “two speakers at the same time and expresses simultaneously two different intentions: the direct intention of the character who is speaking and the refracted intention of the author” (Bakhtin 324). Bakhtin argues that comic novels often use the commonly held “languages” or belief systems that the author wishes to criticize “to refract the author’s intentions”; by doing so, the systems “are unmasked and destroyed as something false, hypocritical, greedy, limited, narrowly rationalistic, [and] inadequate to reality” (Bakhtin 311-12). He also contends that using the double-voicing technique allows the author to appear “neutral with regard to language [or ideas],” or as “a third party in a quarrel between two people (although he might be a *biased* third party)” (Bakhtin 314). Bakhtin describes a narrative technique called “*hybrid construction*” as

an utterance that belongs, by its grammatical (syntactic) and compositional markers, to a single speaker, but that actually contains mixed within it two utterances, two speech manners, two styles, two 'languages,' two semantic and axiological belief systems. (304)

This is what I mean by “double voice” in Montgomery’s works. Her fiction, although a single utterance, speaks simultaneously in “two semantic and axiological belief systems” (Bakhtin 304).

While early articles such as Waterston’s “L.M. Montgomery” and Judith Miller’s “Voices and Silences” recognize that Montgomery’s novels appear in one way to be conformist, but contain elements of the subversive, the first book-length study of Montgomery, Gabriella Åhmansson’s *A Life and Its Mirrors*, published in 1991, posits that in *Anne’s House of Dreams*, Montgomery uses the voice of literary conventions and genres (in particular, the language of the sentimental novel and Romantic poets) to support the social structure of marriage, but hides within it a second voice that subverts the dicta of the first through comedy (147-168).

Åhmansson describes this as “two types of narrative, one realistic and one romantic, travelling side by side through the book” (*Life* 152). Though she does not use Bakhtin as a source for her argument, the position she takes is Bakhtinian.

One year later, Rubio published a very influential article, “Subverting the trite: L.M. Montgomery’s ‘room of her own,’” which argues a point similar to Åhmansson’s, but expands the idea of dual nature to include all of Montgomery’s texts. It states that using the romantic or sentimental genre and comedy are only two of numerous techniques of subversion hidden in the conforming narrative. Rubio also lists the use of secondary “unimportant characters” to voice the author’s sentiments (21), of comments by an “intrusive narrator” that sarcastically describe convention

(22), of “‘respectable’ characters” to reiterate the acceptable norm (23), of allusions to other literary works (24), and of conventional plots (21) as other ways Montgomery hides insurrection within convention. Although Rubio does not refer to Bakhtin, some of these techniques she describes are methods of the double voice Bakhtin also discusses. Rubio stresses that Montgomery intended to appear conformist while truly advocating an upheaval of patriarchal authority: “[Montgomery] was able to reinforce all the prevailing ideologies which her conventional readers expected while at the same time embedding a counter-text of rebellion for those who were clever enough to read between the lines” (8). This argument is further advanced in the 1994 book *Harvesting Thistles*, which Rubio edited; the collection is filled with essays that make similar arguments about the dual nature of Montgomery’s works.

Although these critics view Montgomery’s texts as double-voiced, they still perceive the works as being primarily subversive, or they consider the conventional and unconventional aspects to be warring against each other. But Bakhtin explains, “[N]ovelistic double-voicedness cannot be unfolded into logical contradictions or into purely dramatic contrasts” (356). He argues that double voice is “internally dialogized” and “fraught with dialogue” (330). Dialogue, in this sense, does not refer to literal dialogue between people or characters; rather, it implies negotiation or interaction between ideas or utterances. In a double-voiced utterance, two voices have dialogue within the single utterance. Critics Morson and Emerson explain that dialogue “cannot be equated with an argument,” nor is it necessarily “logical contradiction” (49); rather, it is the interaction of different ideas. To produce truth,

these different ideas do not combine or amalgamate, but rather “each retains its own unity and *open* totality, but they are mutually enriched [or affected]” (Bakhtin qtd. and trans. in Morson and Emerson 56). This, then, is what makes the double voice more than simple irony: in irony, the hidden meaning is held to be the “true” meaning,<sup>4</sup> but in double voice, neither voice is privileged, and each contributes to the meaning of the other. So, in a double-voiced utterance, two distinct ideas express themselves in a single utterance and dialogue with each other, mutually adding complexity and dimension to their expression. Therefore, in this thesis I view the double voice not as a matter of authorial intention or as two contradicting voices, but rather as an interaction between ideas within one utterance or text.<sup>5</sup>

In a 1995 paper, “Pruned Down and Branched Out: Embracing Contradiction in *Anne of Green Gables*,” Laura Robinson rejects the argument that the conformity and subversion in Montgomery’s works are in some way combating each other. Without citing Bakhtin, she argues that one “must work to integrate the two positions [of convention and subversion in *Anne of Green Gables*] . . . not by amalgamating them, but by holding them in dialogue with one another . . . without resolving or reconciling them” (35) and adds that “[b]oth narrative strains and their respective ideological messages remain in constant dialogue with one another” (39). She argues that the dialogue within the works allows for “negotiation of the conflicting ideological movements” which occurs in real life (36). Morson and Emerson write,

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<sup>4</sup> M.H. Abrams, in his definition of “irony” states, “In most modern critical uses of the term ‘irony,’ there remains the root sense of dissembling, or of hiding what is actually the case” (“Irony”).

<sup>5</sup> While Montgomery did intend to write fiction that complicated social norms and used double-voiced techniques to do so, untangling the intentional use of double voice from the unintentional would be impossible and immaterial. What matters is that, whether or not it is intended, the works are double-voiced and that these voices dialogue.

“Changing social attitudes (toward authority, toward other people, and toward received truths, for example) are always generating new varieties of double-voiced discourse, which are consequently an excellent document of that change” (150). Thus, the conflicting ideologies in the double-voiced representation of disability in Montgomery’s fiction are in a dialogue with each other that reflects the changing social attitudes toward disability in her time.

Since Robinson’s article, discussion of the double-voiced representations of gender in Montgomery’s texts has dwindled.<sup>6</sup> Instead, within the past ten years, Montgomery’s works have been studied from a cultural perspective. Her novels, stories, and journals are not only a part of Canadian popular literature and culture of the early twentieth century, but also have affected culture since the twentieth century. Movies, television shows, journals, books, and commercial items such as dolls and cookbooks, that are Montgomery “spin-offs” make her current cultural impact apparent. Thus, scholars have analyzed her role as an international icon and representation of Canada.<sup>7</sup> Recently, there have also been post-colonial and queer

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<sup>6</sup> “Why Anne Makes Us Dizzy: Reading *Anne of Green Gables* from a Gender Perspective” by Julia McQuillan and Julie Pfeiffer in 2000 and “‘Where Is the Boy?’ The Pleasures of Postponement in the *Anne of Green Gables* Series” by Marah Gubar in 2001 are recent articles that further question which side of the double-voice is more prominent.

<sup>7</sup> See Irene Gammel’s *Making Avonlea: L. M. Montgomery and Popular Culture* and Gammel and Elizabeth Epperly’s *L.M. Montgomery and Canadian Culture* for studies on the cultural impact of Montgomery’s texts.

theory readings of her novels.<sup>8</sup> Criticism within the past five years has also focused on Montgomery's role as a woman autobiographer and life-writer.<sup>9</sup>

The work on Montgomery's life writing, and the rising numbers of studies analyzing literature in its relation to medicine and medical history, has caused some analysis of the body's representation in Montgomery's works. Most recently, *The Intimate Life of L.M. Montgomery* discusses this issue, including a section on "Confessions and Body Writing" (127-186). Two essays deserving particular attention are Melissa Prycer's "The Hectic Flush: The Fiction and Reality of Consumption in L.M. Montgomery's Life" (258-272) and Janice Fiamengo's article "'... the refuge of my sick spirit . . .': L.M. Montgomery and the Shadows of Depression" (170-186). These two articles are the first to focus their discussion solely on representations of disability and illness in Montgomery's works. Prycer argues that as medical knowledge and social perceptions about tuberculosis changed, so did Montgomery's representation of consumptive characters. In "Shadows of Depression," Fiamengo views Montgomery's expression of neurosis and depression in life-writing "as a discourse rather than a biographical fact" (184) and demonstrates how Montgomery uses her own illness to align herself with the creative community, even while she dismisses her husband's similar illness as proof of his abnormality.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> For a post-colonial reading, see Laura M. Robinson's "'A Born Canadian': The Bonds of Communal Identity in *Anne of Green Gables* and *A Tangled Web*" and Cecily Devereux's "'Canadian Classic' and 'Commodity Export': The Nationalism of 'our' *Anne of Green Gables*." For queer theory readings, see Robinson's "Bosom Friends: Lesbian Desire in L.M. Montgomery's *Anne* Books," Cecily Devereux's "Anatomy of a 'National Icon': *Anne of Green Gables* and the 'Bosom Friends' Affair," and Benjamin Lefebvre's "Walter's Closet." I believe that there is still much more room for this type of criticism in Montgomery studies, and I assume there will be more.

<sup>9</sup> See Gammel's *The Intimate Life of L.M. Montgomery* for studies of Montgomery's life writing and its effects on her fiction.

<sup>10</sup> Many critics previous to this have accepted Montgomery's portrayal of her husband's illness unquestioningly, and Fiamengo warns against doing so (183).

These two essays are the first to read disability and illness in Montgomery's texts not only as metaphors for something abstract, but as changeable social constructs.

This is not to say, however, that these are the first to analyze the body in Montgomery's books. Many feminist readings discuss how Montgomery uses the body, especially the adolescent female body, to discuss social control of the female body. Juliet McMaster argues that although critics have interpreted Anne's red hair as a literary symbol of foreignness, *Anne of Green Gables* is a commentary on how communities improperly read hair as a visual symbol of personality because of its representation in literature ("Taking Control"). She and Irene Gammel both argue that the control of hair represents control over the body, its development, and its sensuality. Gammel also analyzes the ways in which Montgomery allows her heroines (particularly Emily) to have agency over their bodies, although other forces try to control them ("Adolescence" and "Safe Pleasures"). Åhmansson and Jackie Stallcup also analyze the body, medicine, and control in Montgomery's fiction. They both discuss the controlled body of *The Blue Castle's* heroine, Valancy, and how it expresses its repression through heart illness (Åhmansson "Textual/Sexual Space" 149, Stallcup 125-126). Neither of these articles recognizes, however, that illness itself is a cultural construct through which others control and account for Valancy's social deviance, nor does Gammel connect the Murrays' assumption that Emily is tubercular with their attempts to control her body.

Susan Sontag explains in *Illness as Metaphor* that western culture has consistently used illness as a metaphor for immoral social order (72) and that metaphorical thinking about illness translates itself into literature and negatively

affects the reality of those living with illness.<sup>11</sup> She argues that “disease [or physical evidence of disability] itself becomes a metaphor” (58) and that “[d]iseases—and patients—become subjects for decipherment” (45). Nearly twenty years later, disability theorist Rosemarie Garland Thomson adds that in literature, as in reality, “the physically disabled body becomes a repository for social anxieties about such troubling concerns as vulnerability, control, and identity” (6). In other words, literature uses the disabled body and mind to express issues of cultural apprehension.

Many Montgomery critics have interpreted the illnesses and disabilities of characters as being metaphors for problems of social tensions. Elizabeth Epperly sees the struggle between Emily and the hunch-backed, lame Dean Priest as “a triumph of the female artist over the crippled and crippling constraints of male authority and domination” (*Fragrance* 148). Many other critics, such as Mary Margaret Kempla, Mary Henley Rubio (“Subverting the Trite”), and Kate Lawson, also reduce Dean Priest and his disability to a symbol for cruel patriarchal rule.<sup>12</sup> Likewise, some see Emily’s long period of invalidism with the threat of leg amputation as a symbol for resignation to woman’s domestic state (Rubio “Trite” 30, Menzies 53). Lorna Drew perceives Mrs. Kent’s scar and Dean’s deformity as tropes from Gothic tradition representing respectively “the danger of over-investment in the feminine realm” (27) and “physically eroded masculinity” (26). Therefore, these critics read disability in Montgomery’s works as metaphorical symbols of the problem of power relations between the genders. Thomson notes that “when literary critics look at disabled

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<sup>11</sup> Sontag discusses literary representations of tuberculosis and social perceptions of cancer in particular.

<sup>12</sup> Many critics emulate the community who mocked him by referring to Dean by his cruel nick-name, “Jarback.”

characters, they often interpret them metaphorically or aesthetically, reading them without political awareness as conventional elements of sentimental, romantic, Gothic, or grotesque traditions” (9-10). Thus, Thomson’s readings of disability in literature examine the political and social repercussions of the narrative use of disability. The critics who have read the disabilities in Montgomery’s fiction as representative of social anxieties such as gender power struggles have done so without questioning the social consequences of objectifying disability thus.

In *Narrative Prosthesis*, Mitchell and Snyder argue that the disabled body in literature is often a “crutch upon which literary narratives lean for their representational power, disruptive potentiality, and analytical insight” (Mitchell and Snyder 49). Recognizing that literature uses disability as a metaphor, they investigate “disability within the domain of narrative theory” and “seek a finite series of strategies for theorizing the utility and appearance of disability in literary narratives” (1). They propose that disability’s role in narrative structure is to initiate and resolve the story while making a comment about particular social issues. Mitchell and Snyder discuss how narrative structure generally follows the same format: first, “a deviance or marked difference is exposed”; then, the story explicates “the deviation’s origins” and brings the deviance “to the center of the story”; then “the remainder of the story rehabilitates or fixes the deviance in some manner” (53). They go on to describe how narratives regularly rely upon disability or corporeal difference to symbolize the social deviance that the narrative must work to resolve (54). Thus, narratives often rely on disability “as the impetus that calls a story into being” (55). According to Mitchell and Snyder, generally in narrative, “[d]isability cannot be

accommodated within the ranks of the norm(als), and, thus, the options [sic] for dealing with difference that drives the story's plot is twofold: a disability is either left behind or punished for its lack of conformity" (56). Therefore, by working to resolve disability by either removing or disciplining it, narratives seek to normalize difference prosthetically. Mitchell and Snyder's theory of narrative prosthesis generates a way "for thinking about disability as an intellectual category of inquiry" (xiv): this theory posits that narratives themselves are "disabled" and require disability to prostheticize their deviance. As a person with one leg may use a prosthetic leg to conform to what is considered normal (i.e. two legs), so many narratives rely upon disability to normalize or erase the social anxieties expressed in them. Mitchell and Snyder's main goal in their analyses of the prosthetic use of disability in narratives is to expose "the ways in which the ruse of prosthesis fails in its primary objective: to return the incomplete body to the invisible status of a normative essence" (8). The purpose in analyzing narrative prosthesis is to "*make the prosthesis show, to flaunt its imperfect supplementation as an illusion*" (8).

A clear example of narrative prosthesis can be found in Montgomery's *The Blue Castle*, in which Valancy's heart illness is the impetus for the plot. As Åhmansson's and Stallcup note, Valancy's sickness stands as a metaphor for her sexual repression and as a symbol of the sexually constrictive society in which Valancy lives; Valancy's sexual repression as well as her health becomes resolved through the narrative as she marries Barney Snaith. The narrative of *The Blue Castle* relies on Valancy's heart troubles to propel the plot as well as represent the cultural issues of female sexuality and repression. Then, the narrative prosthetically

normalizes the cultural deviance by removing the physical difference of Valancy's heart disease. Åhmansson and Stallcup, however, view Valancy's disability as a symbol for cultural issues without recognizing the faultiness of turning disability into metaphor and without analyzing the social implications of infusing extra meaning into disability.

Although literary critics generally choose to read disability in literature as metaphors for larger social concerns, the disabilities in the texts have the potential to challenge the metaphors enforced upon them. Martha Stoddard Holmes indicates that critics of Victorian literature usually read disabled characters "as emotional props, plot stimulants whose ontological status is closer to scenery than character; or else such characters are read as metaphors for the situation of some other group within Victorian culture" ("Twins" 223-4); however, she also recognizes that representations of disability can challenge the preconceptions about disability, even while conforming to literary stereotypes. She argues that while Victorian melodramas may endorse the dichotomy of disability and ability, they also cause readers "to consider transgressing the boundary between them" (*Fictions of Affliction* 31) and thus encourage "more of our ongoing critical debates about whether melodrama is inherently conservative or subversive" (32). Like nineteenth-century melodrama, Montgomery's fiction incites controversy about whether it is "inherently conservative or subversive." However, as Diane Price Herndl applies Bakhtin's theories in her analysis of female disability in literature because "no representation of illness . . . is entirely clear in its ideological purpose" (15), I adapt Bakhtin's theory of double voice to analyze the conflicting representation of disability in Montgomery's fiction.

Because Montgomery's fiction represents disability in a double-voiced way, it cannot be interpreted solely as symbolic for social anxieties: Montgomery's double-voiced representations both establish and challenge the borders between disability and ability. As the theories of Sontag, Thomson, Mitchell and Snyder, and Holmes show, the narrative structure of Montgomery's texts uses disability as a metaphor of social problems and removes the disability within the resolution of the social conflict. Due to the double-voiced nature of disability in her fiction, however, the representations of disability also undermine the normalization of disability and challenge the metaphorical power of physical deviance by making the boundaries between disability and ability ambiguous.

Western culture constructs disability as a deviance from an imagined norm. In "The Birth of the Clinic," Michel Foucault explains that by the nineteenth century, medicine instituted the "study of *non-sick man* and a definition of the *model man*" (199). Thus, medicine "was regulated more in accordance with normality than with health" (200). According to Foucault, this created "*the medical bipolarity of the normal and the pathological*" ("The Birth of the Clinic" 200).<sup>13</sup> Because the emphasis in medicine has been placed on health as normality, illness and disability are seen as deviations from that normality. In *Extraordinary Bodies*, Thomson states that disability is "[c]onstructed as the embodiment of corporeal insufficiency and deviance" and "is the attribution of corporeal deviance—not so much a property of bodies as a product of cultural rules about what bodies should be or do" (6). In other

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<sup>13</sup> The word "pathological" carries with it the connotations "[r]elating to or dealing with disease" as well as "[g]rossly abnormal in properties or behaviour" ("Pathological"); thus it implies deviance both in health and behaviour.

words, disability is a socially constructed category that assumes a deviance from a presupposed idea of what a “normal” body should be.<sup>14</sup>

Because disability is viewed as “the unorthodox made flesh, refusing to be normalized, neutralized, or homogenized” (Thomson 24), it comes to encompass not only ideas of deviance from a physical norm, but also ideas of behavioural deviance as well. Thus, as indicated by Foucault, the body is a site in which a struggle for power occurs in order to control deviant behaviour: “power relations have an immediate hold upon [the body]; they invest it, mark it, train it, torture it, force it to carry out tasks, to perform ceremonies, to emit signs” (*Discipline and Punish* 25). Thomson explains that because disability is perceived as deviance, it translates into issues of social control: since “[b]odies that are disabled can also seem dangerous because they are perceived as out of control . . . they threaten to disrupt the ritualized behavior upon which social relations turn” (37). She argues that a body deemed physically deviant acts as a physical declaration that the controllability of identity is impossible (43). According to Mitchell and Snyder’s theory, narratives act prosthetically to control and hide deviance represented by the disability, while the label of disability acts as a prosthetic by returning supposedly deviant behaviour or physicality “to an acceptable degree of difference” (Mitchell and Snyder 7). The construct of disability itself is a matter of control because its purpose is to segregate the deviants from a supposed norm and to privilege the behaviours and bodies deemed able and controlled.

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<sup>14</sup> Of course, this is not to imply that people with disabilities only have a social experience or that there is no physical component to disability; rather, it is to say, as Maia Boswell does, that “the categories [of ability and disability] are arbitrary” and that one should “see ‘disability’ as a social construct, rather than as a given, biological situation” (227).

Montgomery's fiction regularly employs disability to represent and emphasize behavioural and social deviance. The characters who have or are thought to have disabilities are all intrinsically different from their small-town culture; "queer" is the word most commonly attached to them. To emphasize this distinction between "normal" and "queer," Montgomery regularly attaches imagery and allusions of nature, the supernatural, and creativity to the disabilities<sup>15</sup> and reiterates the commonness and artificial enculturation of the able body. But in her double-voiced representations of disability, one voice privileges normalization, culture, and the controlled body, while another either privileges deviation, nature, and the disabled body, or disassociates disability and deviance. To distinguish the voices, I have labelled the voice that moves toward closure through normalization "voice one" and the one that does not move toward closure through normalization as "voice two."<sup>16</sup> Generally, the outer plot is in voice one because it moves towards closure, while the subtext is in voice two because it undermines closure. The result of the double voice's internal dialogue is confusion of the distinction between normality and abnormality.

My thesis title refers to an instance in *Emily of New Moon* that demonstrates the double voice in Montgomery's narratives. In this situation, Emily hides under a table to eavesdrop on her family. Above the table, Emily's family discusses her misbehaviour and hopes that "with wise and careful training many of her faults may

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<sup>15</sup> See Janice Fiamengo's ". . . the refuge of my sick spirit . . .": L.M. Montgomery and the Shadows of Depression" for a discussion of the association of depression, art, and spirituality in Montgomery's journals.

<sup>16</sup> "One" and "two" are arbitrarily chosen and are not meant in any way to privilege the one over the other. Of course, splitting the double voice in this manner is perhaps a simplification of Bakhtin's theory; however, dividing the double voice suits the purposes of this thesis, which is to analyze the internal conflicts in Montgomery's representations of disability.

be cured” (39). Likewise, on the narratives’ surface, voice one of the texts uses the plot to “cure” deviance and disability: each narrative starts with deviant characters who through the events in the narrative eventually conform enough to fit in among the “normals,” though the fit is generally awkward and problematic. Below the table, Emily thinks, “I don’t *want* them cured! . . . I like *my* faults better than I do *your*—*your* . . . *abominable* virtues” (39). Likewise, underneath the plot, voice two undermines voice one, often by privileging disability and deviance, and challenges the classification of normality and difference. Although presenting the plot, which removes deviance, the narrator does not necessarily always speak in voice one, nor do the deviant or disabled characters always speak in voice two. The narrator, characters, and events can all speak in either voice and often speak in both at once.

Chapter one discusses the role of disability in an early novella, *Kilmeny of the Orchard*, and two short stories, “The Tryst of the White Lady” and “Some Fools and a Saint.” In voice one of *Kilmeny*, the narrative works to cure the muteness and social strangeness of Kilmeny Gordon, while the subtext privileges mute communication and questions the reliability of vocal normality. In “The Tryst of the White Lady,” voice one relies on the narrative to resolve the deviance of a hunch-backed hero and a deaf heroine, but voice two undermines the resolution by not removing disabilities and by establishing disability and ugliness as a norm rather than a deviance. Voice one of “Some Fools and a Saint” removes the deviance of its heroine, Alice Harper, while relying on literary stereotypes associated with scars, mental disability, insanity, and invalidism to create a gothic tone. Voice two, however, continually challenges and subverts the literary stereotypes, revealing the social construction of disability

and questioning the definition of disability. Similarly, voice two in *The Blue Castle* exposes the social construct of disability by twisting the literary stereotypes voice one uses to emphasize disability's association with deviance. In doing so, the double-voiced dialogue also discloses the changing nature of literary and medical conventions of disability and shows how the social and medical construct of disability normalizes deviance. The final chapter discusses disability and the double voice in the *Emily* series. Unlike the other works studied in this thesis, the *Emily* series has a dually layered, double-voiced dialogue. In the first layer, the double-voiced dialogue is between a voice one that privileges normality and a voice two that privileges disability and deviance. In the second layer, another voice disassociates disability and deviance and dialogues with the first layer's double voice, which equates disability with social deviance. The narrative structure of the *Emily* trilogy attempts to eliminate disabilities and deviances, but is essentially unable to remove or repress them completely.

## Chapter One

### A Mute Musician, A Deaf Ghost, and An Insane Invalid: Disability in An Early Novella and Two Short Stories

#### *Kilmeny of the Orchard*

Although *Kilmeny of the Orchard* was written well before any of the other novels and stories to be studied in this thesis,<sup>17</sup> it is important as an early example of Montgomery's treatment of disability in fiction. In the novella, the heroine, Kilmeny Gordon, is mysteriously mute. Her inability to speak vocally<sup>18</sup> is a mystery mainly because it is medically inexplicable and untreatable, but also because it is a result of her mother's silent rebellion and supposed sexual immorality, either as judgement for sin as Kilmeny's family and community believe, or as consequence of pre-natal psychological damage as a doctor eventually declares. In the end, Kilmeny's love for the novella's hero, Eric Marshall, causes her to gain her speaking voice: she shouts Eric's name to prevent her foster-brother and Eric's rival, Neil Gordon, from murdering him. Because the novella represents Kilmeny's disability as a result of female defiance and resolves her deviance through love for a man, a critic might be

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<sup>17</sup> After *Anne of Green Gables* and *Anne of Avonlea* had become so successful, L.M. Montgomery's publishers requested that she extend an old serial story, "Una of the Garden," originally written and published before *Anne*, into a novella re-titled *Kilmeny of the Orchard*.

<sup>18</sup> I use the term "speak vocally" to differentiate between vocal and non-vocal language. I feel this is necessary, because to presume that "speak" implies the use of vocal chords is to exclude the validity of non-vocal languages such as American Sign Language. See Lennard J. Davis' "Deafness and Insight: The Deafened Moment as a Critical Modality" for a discussion of the relationship between deafness, vocalization, and language. He writes, "deaf people experience life filled with speech. But what they speak is sign language" (893).

tempted to read her muteness as a silent feminist protest stifled by conformity, culture, and romantic love. However, I want to resist reducing Kilmeny's muteness to a symbol for deviance; to interpret the representation of disability only as a metaphor would be to ignore its double-voiced complexity. In the novella, voice one portrays the speaking voice as the best or "normal" mode of communication and depicts (patriarchal) culture, conformity, medicine, and cure as superior to (feminine) nature, abnormality, the supernatural, and disability. Voice two, however, inverts these binaries to privilege difference above all. While both of these voices rely on disability to value or devalue a particular ideology, textual ambiguities produced within their dialogue challenge the metaphoric and dichotomous use of disability and question eugenics and the nature of social control.

According to the theory of narrative prosthesis, in voice one of *Kilmeny of the Orchard*, disability is the deviance that ignites and drives the story-telling process until the narrative and deviance are mutually resolved (Mitchell and Snyder 53). Kilmeny's muteness represents the deviation that the narrative must make conformable. The moment she enters the story, even before her inability to speak vocally is made known, the novella associates Kilmeny with social abnormality and difference. She is first introduced through the description of an "uncanny," "unwholesome" (33), decaying orchard that is filled with "ghosts" of the past and the "haunting fragrance" of flowers (28). The orchard's supernatural disturbing force transfers to Kilmeny through her violin music, the second way the story introduces its heroine. The "elusive, haunting" music comes from "the soul of the unseen violinist" and turns Eric into "a man spellbound" (30). Kilmeny's physical body then appears

and is described in terms of celestial beauty and purity (31). Because the novella associates Kilmeny with uncontrolled nature (an orchard gone to seed) and with the supernatural before it reveals her complex personality, it reduces her to a symbol for difference and deviance from normality even before her disability is revealed.

When the narrative does reveal Kilmeny's disability and makes it the crux of the story, following the formula of narrative prosthesis (Mitchell and Snyder 53), her muteness becomes the symbol of her social deviance. When Eric asks his landlord, Mrs. Williamson, who the mysterious girl in the orchard is, her explanation emphasizes Kilmeny's difference and disability. Mrs. Williamson informs Eric that Kilmeny is a niece of the Gordon family, whom the community sees as "queer as Dick's hat-band" because they live sequestered from the community and raised an Italian gypsy orphan as a son (25). She tells Eric that Kilmeny has been raised in complete seclusion from the community because she is mute, and then relates to him the scandal surrounding Kilmeny's birth: Kilmeny's mother, Margaret, a provocative and stubborn woman, gave birth to her after discovering the man she had married was still married to his first wife (38-45). In telling the story, Mrs. Williamson implies that she feels Margaret's excessive sexual attractiveness and abnormal quasi-adulterous sexual deviance cause Kilmeny's muteness. Through Mrs. Williamson's story, voice one emphasizes disability's supernatural quality and associates disability with disobedience. Mrs. Williamson says to Eric, "[Margaret] gave [her husband] the worship it isn't right to give to anybody but God, Master, and I think that is always punished" (43). In this case, the implied punishment is Kilmeny's muteness. Thus all of Kilmeny's amplified oddness becomes concentrated into her disability, especially

as her disability is particularly odd since she can hear but cannot vocalize speech. According to Mrs. Williamson, ““That is the strangest part of it, if anything about her can be stranger than another”” (39). When the narrative introduces Kilmeny’s peculiar disability, it refocuses the representation of deviance onto her muteness. The rest of the narrative devotes itself to normalizing Kilmeny through enculturation of her behaviour by novels, poetry, and romantic love, and through the removal of her disability by medical and psychological labelling and miraculous cure.

Like voice one, voice two in *Kilmeny of the Orchard* uses disability as an indicator of deviance and as the impetus for a secondary plot. In the sub-narrative, the need for deviation is the drive behind the story-telling: the story exists because Eric has never done a single “crazy” thing and ought to in order to become a true romantic hero. Because Kilmeny’s disability does not enter until the thirtieth page, another deviance drives the narrative in the novella’s early pages. That deviance is Eric’s lack of deviance, as one of his professors indicates, saying, ““I am afraid Eric Marshall will never do one quixotic thing, . . . but if he ever does it will supply the one thing lacking in him”” (2). Thus, for Eric to be a normal and conventional romantic hero, he must behave abnormally. As the novella unfolds, Eric becomes more deviant as he associates and falls in love with Kilmeny. Therefore, through this sub-narrative, voice two privileges disability and deviance but still uses both as a prosthetic since abnormality normalizes Eric.

This sub-narrative uses an absent consumptive, Larry West, to set the plot in motion as well as to privilege disability and deviance. Through Larry, voice two emphasizes that disability and difference are exciting: upon reading the letter from

Larry about his illness, Eric's face changes from carrying "an absent look" to wearing "an expression of interest" (9). Even though Mr. West is only present through his letters, he is a much more dynamic and humorous character than Eric. Eric's first abnormal (and exciting) act is to take over Larry's teaching position rather than go into business with his father. His father calls the decision to teach "a freak of yours" (133). Therefore, by taking Larry's place as a teacher in the boring small town of Lindsay, Eric becomes more interesting. The final measure that resolves Eric's lack of deviance is his love for a woman with a disability and no cultural or inherited breeding. This love proves to his cousin David that Eric "left [his] common sense behind [him]" (116) and assures his father that he had become "a fool" (133). Although voice two privileges deviance, it still clearly associates deviance with disability.

Though both voices one and two rely on disability to signify deviance and provide the impetus for the story, the dialogue between the two voices produces ambiguity about the separation of deviance and normality. Because voice two claims Eric lacks deviance and is therefore imperfect (and thus deviant in his non-deviance), it dialogically challenges the assumption of the categories normal and abnormal. Voice two, therefore, subtly implies that those who are "queer," such as Kilmeny and the Gordon family, are actually normal because of their abnormalities. Peculiarities are not only the norm, but also the common denominator of all people, as the text's treatment of the gossipy Mr. Williamson conveys. In the chapter "A Tea Table Conversation," the narrator, without calling direct attention to Mr. Williamson's oddities, describes what a strange character he is by setting him in opposition to Eric:

in appearance, Mr. Williamson is “a small, lean old man, half lost in loose clothes that seemed far too large for him” and his voice is “as thin and squeaky as he appeared” (22). After the narrator’s description, Mr. Williamson launches into a two-page narrative about the people of Lindsay, describing disobedient children, stingy landladies, and misbehaving married men. This is spicy, interesting gossip. However, after he describes the “queer” Gordons and their foreign foster-son Neil, he insists, ““None of the rest of us are queer . . . . But, then, we’re mighty uninteresting”” (25). Mr. Williamson himself seems quite queer to Eric, and his gossip has proven that the people of the town are mighty interesting. These ambiguities uncovered by the dialogue within the double voice expose the pervasiveness of oddity, challenge the definition of queerness, and reveal the construct of normality.

The most prominent way in which the double voice in *Kilmeny of the Orchard* discusses conformity and deviance is through its representation of the ability or inability to use vocal speech. While in both the first and second voices the disability of muteness represents deviance, each voice differently presents the normality from which Kilmeny deviates. Voice one represents vocal speech positively as the normal and preferred mode of communication, while the second represents it negatively as a mode of social control and cultural artifice. Voice one reiterates the importance of vocal speech through responses to Kilmeny’s lack of vocal speech. Her muteness is constantly described as a “horrible” affliction that makes Kilmeny a “creature” (38) and “a child set apart from her fellow creatures by her sad defect” (49). And later in the story, when Eric proposes marriage to Kilmeny, the main impediment to their courtship is her disability. When he announces his intentions, his declaration is met

with astonishment by Mrs. Williamson, who says, “[Kilmeny] wouldn’t be a suitable wife for you—a girl that can’t speak” (73), and with disbelief by Kilmeny’s guardian, who says, “You can’t mean it, sir. Why, she is dumb” (88). Even Kilmeny believes that her disability is an unsurpassable barrier to courtship: she says to Eric, “I will never marry you, because I cannot speak” (104). These responses to Kilmeny’s disability show that voice one presents vocal speech as an absolute essential, not only for “normal” communication, but also for participating in social relationships such as marriage.

Yet, voice two recognizes that Kilmeny can and does speak in many ways. Not only does she communicate by writing on a slate tied to her waist, but also with “gestures,” “her eyes and smile [which] gave such expression” (51), and, above all, through her violin (50-51). All of these lead Eric to wonder, “[H]ow strangely little her dumbness seemed to matter after all! . . . [Her] voice was hardly missed” (51). When Eric first meets Kilmeny, her muteness certainly does not matter to her; she says that she does “not mind so very much not being able to speak” (58). In fact, voice two prefers Kilmeny’s means of communication to vocal speech because they are “as artless and unstudied as they were effective” (51). The purity, honesty, and frankness of her communication impress Eric every time he hears her play her violin or reads what she writes, and he sees this purity not only as a result of her secluded upbringing but also as an inborn quality inextricable from her disability (57). Only the setting, however, diminishes the difference between the vocal speech and non-vocal speech: solely in the wild orchard is Kilmeny’s muteness not truly disabling. Beyond the orchard, in the “great outer world” (51) that Kilmeny “did not regard . . . as

anything she might ever share herself' (52), her disability bars her from entrance. Even Kilmeny is aware of the distinction between her mode of speech and what is considered "normal": she asks Eric, "[W]ould you like me better if I could speak like other people?" (50). Although voice two recognizes Kilmeny's ability to speak, it also shows that only in an uncontrolled and natural environment do her muteness and mode of speech have worth.

On the other hand, voice two presents vocal speech as being essentially dishonest and artificial. For example, when Eric's cousin David tells him that he should be a lawyer because of his "glib tongue" (3), Eric defends his choice not to by describing the profession as "trying to make black seem white in a court of law" (4). He also believes that his chosen career, as one of action and "[doing] clean big things for the betterment of humanity," is much more noble than one of speech (4). Furthermore, when Kilmeny comes to desire vocal speech and feels that her form of communication is inadequate, she does so because she wishes to hide her love for Eric from him, and "speech . . . would conceal and protect where dangerous silence might betray" (104). Thus, vocal speech in *Kilmeny of the Orchard* represents the voice that is artificial, thus socially controlled and controllable, while the non-vocal voice (body language, poetry, and music) is true, frank, purely honest, and therefore socially dangerous and potent.

Although the double voice presupposes the difference in modes of speech between the vocally disabled and non-disabled, textual ambiguities reveal that Kilmeny does indeed "speak like other people do," or rather that people who are able to speak vocally also communicate as she does. Her Italian foster-brother Neil

similarly speaks to Kilmeny through the violin, but in a way that disturbs her (56). Often in the novella, people who speak the fewest words, such as Mrs. Williamson and the Gordons, communicate the most. Silence is the most powerful mode of communication in *Kilmeny*: Margaret's silence toward her father after he rebukes her for promiscuity clearly expresses revolt, resentment, and unforgiveness. She would not even speak to forgive him on his deathbed (112). Similarly, vocal speech is occasionally as deviant and wild as silent communication. Neil's "untrained" singing voice "dominated the singing [of the church choir,] and took the colour out of the weaker, more commonplace tones of the other singers" (35). Also, Mr. Williamson's gossip and Mrs. Williamson's and Janet Gordon's spooky tales are highly disturbing forces. Therefore, although the novella's double voice presumes a fundamental difference in speech between those with vocal disability and those without, and although the internal voices choose to privilege one or the other, these textual ambiguities challenge the separation of vocal and non-vocal speech.

By presenting eugenics as a way to control and normalize the deviance of disability, the novella's double-voiced dialogue about disability as deviance extends into dialogue about the degree to which biology affects behaviour. In discussing possible future wives for Eric, David, a medical doctor, rants about the need for good breeding: "If people worried a little more about their unborn children—at least, to the extent of providing a proper heritage, physically, mentally, and morally, for them—and then stopped worrying about them after they *are* born, this world would be a much pleasanter place to live in" (7).<sup>19</sup> The theme of David's "hobby of

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<sup>19</sup> In turn-of-the-century Canada, eugenics was becoming a much studied and debated science as a means of social control: it was argued that eugenics would solve problems such as poverty and crime,

heredity” (7) flows through voice one of the entire novella. Voice one implies that both Kilmeny’s behavioural deviance and her disability are caused by her mother’s deviation from the eugenic pattern David suggests. Margaret provides Kilmeny with an improper moral heritage by marrying a married man and by not forgiving her own father, and worries too much about Kilmeny after birth, falsely teaching her that she is ugly (66) and must avoid all men because they are evil (47). The result is that “the sins of the parents are visited on the children,” according to Kilmeny’s Aunt Janet (109), and Kilmeny is strange and cannot speak vocally.

The novella regularly presents heredity as the foundation of characters’ personalities. Eric’s ancestry is seen as the source of his obstinacy and potential deviance when David blames a Highland Scotch grandmother for Eric’s abnormal romantic behaviour (6), and as the source of his strength and sentiment when the narrator describes how Eric inherited these traits from his mother (12). Voice one repeatedly portrays Neil’s supposedly wild behaviour as being a result of his Italian heredity, despite his cultural upbringing. The narrator describes a bout of Neil’s rage as “the untamed fury of the Italian peasant thwarted in his heart’s desire” and says that his anger “overrode all the restraint of his training and environment” (83).<sup>20</sup> Although Kilmeny, Eric, and Neil cannot be blamed for their heredity, voice one suggests that had preventative measures been taken by using moral and medical

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partially because of the assumption that the “feeble-minded” were a source of those problems. Waterston in “Marigold and the Magic of Memory” notes that LMM was friends with Dr. Helen MacMurchy, a leading eugenicist in Canada and author of *The Almosts: A Study of the Feeble Minded* (“Memory” 156-7), and argues that *Magic for Marigold* is a discussion and spoof of eugenics (*Harvesting* 155-166). For more information on Canadian eugenics, read Angus McLaren’s *Our Own Master Race*. Of course, the issue of eugenics is resonant even today; see Shelley Tremain’s “Reproductive Freedom, Self-Regulation, and the Government of Impairment in Utero” for a discussion of prenatal screening as eugenicist.

<sup>20</sup> Neil’s biological parents are Italian peddlers. He is adopted by the Gordons after his mother dies giving birth to him in their home.

knowledge and eugenic thinking, future deviance could have been controlled.<sup>21</sup> More importantly, the theme of eugenics in voice one implies that deviant behaviour is inextricably tied to heredity and biology.

Drawing on voice one's assertion that heredity governs behaviour, Holly Pike suggests that in *Kilmeny*, "All aspects of human behaviour . . . are seen as part of a heritage, not as factors controlled by environment or companions" (4). Pike does not note, however, that the second-voiced elements of the novel challenge the concept that heredity and biology are entirely controlling factors in behaviour and personality. Though the narrator and the townspeople blame Neil's race for his temper, voice two hints that Neil's enculturation, not his nature, made him an angry man. When Mr. Williamson describes Neil to Eric, he describes the good qualities of Neil, calling him "smart and a great worker" but then adds that, since "what's bred in the bone is apt to come out in the flesh," if 'taint kept down pretty well," Neil is "awfully hot tempered" and once nearly choked a boy to death (24). The "bred in the bone" phrase, coupled with "kept down pretty well," plays a dual role in the text: its words support the theory voice one asserts, but it produces anxiety in Mrs. Williamson, causing her to defend Neil immediately and to point out that his rage in this case (and likely in others) was provoked by the cruelty of the community towards his foreignness (24). Thus, through Mrs. Williamson, voice two indicates that behaviour might be a result of cultural conditioning rather than of biology.

Similarly, the double voice also questions whether *Kilmeny's* personality is a biological result of her physical beauty and of her disability. The narrator describes

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<sup>21</sup> Of course, this is not to suggest that the primary voice of the text in the case of Neil would promote genocide, but rather that it would discourage miscegenation. Fear of inter-racial marriages appears often in Montgomery's short stories, as well as in the *Emily* series.

Kilmeny's "mind and heart" as "utterly unspoiled of the world" and "as beautiful as her face" because "[a]ll the ugliness of existence had passed her by, shrined in her double solitude of upbringing and muteness" (62). By presenting Kilmeny as completely separate from the world, her biology rather than enculturation seems doubly the source of her personality. However, the text also implies that her upbringing was not entirely free from the bad things in the world: it frequently refers to the unpleasant life Kilmeny lived with her mother and to how Kilmeny was shaped by it. One such instance occurs after Eric sees a picture of Margaret that prompts him to ponder the effect such a demanding woman would have had on Kilmeny: "Many things in Kilmeny's upbringing and temperament became clear to him" (86). Oddly, although Eric's conclusion implies that it has been Kilmeny's enculturation that has formed her personality, he comes to this conclusion by reading personality traits in the photographed physical characteristics of her mother (62). Here the novella's double-voicedness becomes particularly clear, or rather, particularly jumbled. The result of the dialogue is extreme uncertainty about whether or not, or to what degree, biology and physicality affect personality and behaviour.

The ambiguity of the connection between disability and deviance increases when an imagined and previously undisclosed disability enters the narrative. In the ninth chapter, Kilmeny reveals the main reason she has kept herself entirely secluded: "Mother told me that I was very ugly and that nobody would ever like to look at me" (66). Kilmeny, having only seen her reflection in a spoon, believes that her ugliness prevents her from participating in any social relations, especially that of love. A few chapters later, Eric shows her true reflection to her and tells her she is lovely

(100). Only after Kilmeny realizes that Eric finds her attractive does it enter her mind that she loves Eric (102): when the imagined disability is removed, the bar that she believed prevented her from being a part of a romantic relationship is removed as well. This plotline mirrors the larger plot in which her psychosomatic (and, thus, also illusory) disability obstructs Kilmeny from marriage until it is removed. The relation between disability and deviance is made ambiguous here because her ugliness is an imagined, unreal disability—it exists only because she has been told it does. Therefore, Kilmeny's behavioural deviance cannot be caused by the physical existence of her disability. This plotline also complicates the question of whether Kilmeny behaves as she does because she is beautiful: if her seclusion is a root of her personality, and her seclusion is due to imagined ugliness, how could beauty make her who she is? Since this is a mirror of the larger plot, the ambiguity is extendable to Kilmeny's inability to speak. Kilmeny's muteness is seen as disability and difference only because it is labelled as such; thus the categorization of disability is a construct, a function of language, rather than a biological truth.

Voice one also places implicit trust in medicine's control over disability and deviance by positing medicine as being able to cure and remove them. In Larry West's obedience to doctors' orders, Eric's belief in David's ability to find a cure for Kilmeny, and the removal of Kilmeny's disability after David's medical diagnosis, voice one implies that medicine has the power to remove difference and disability. In voice two, however, is an implied lack of trust in medicine and its ability to remove difference, and indications that medicine reinforces and emphasizes difference through labelling disease and disability. David's cold treatment of a patient with a

fatal and disabling throat illness shows how medicine can remove individuality and humanity from a person with a disability and emphasize the assumed difference between the abled and disabled (8). And, although Eric usually positively portrays medicine as able to bring cure, he also recognizes that it is a mode of social control. Near the beginning of the story, he describes medical research as ““discovering some new disease with a harrowing name to torment poor creatures who might otherwise die peacefully in blissful ignorance of what ailed them”” (4-5). This statement discloses the arbitrary nature of labelling disease and disability and assigns the destructive property to the name of the disease, as well as to those who name it, not to the disease itself. In other words, naming the disease makes it a disability and defines it as different. For example, the moment Eric begins to think about Kilmeny’s muteness from a medical point of view and calls it a “case” (59), her deviation from the supposed norm becomes emphasized: “the more he thought of it [the “case”], the stranger it seemed” (59). Therefore, although voice one portrays medicine as being able to fix and cure difference, voice two indicates that it controls difference by enhancing and even constructing difference.

Kilmeny’s diagnosis and “cure” are also strangely double-voiced in their relation to medicine. The first hint of the source’s actual diagnosis of Kilmeny’s muteness occurs in a conversation Eric has with Janet Gordon in which she discusses the disability in highly superstitious terms. In this conversation, Janet reveals what had previously been hidden: Margaret’s sin that causes Kilmeny’s muteness is not sexual immorality but unforgiveness, ““anger[,] rebellion[,] and defiance”” (110). This revelation both encourages the alignment of the supernatural with disability and

offers a possible medical, scientific, and biological explanation for Kilmeny's inability to speak vocally. While Janet Gordon feels the story of Margaret's rebellion and refusal to speak to or forgive her father proves "[i]t *was* a sin that made [Kilmeny] as she is" (109), Eric immediately latches on to this tale as perhaps being medical evidence (113). David, too, sees the tale medically and links it to eugenics and psychology: he claims that "pre-natal influences" likely caused the disability (116), and that the trouble is "psychological, not physical" (118). Through psychology, voice one knits together the supernatural and the scientific in Kilmeny's medical diagnosis and thus makes her disability a curable deviance.

Likewise, David's strange prescription fuses the medical, supernatural, and natural into the psychological, and it both gives credit to and discredits medicine. After diagnosing the problem as being psychological, David says, "Medical skill is helpless before [Kilmeny's muteness]" (118-9). But, he gives one hope of cure: "a sudden, vehement, passionate inrush of desire, physical, psychical, mental, all in one, mighty enough to rend asunder the invisible fetters that hold her speech in bondage" (119). When Kilmeny eventually does speak, the narrator associates her speech with the supernatural: Neil drops his axe in reaction to her speech "as if he had been checked in his murderous purpose by some supernatural interposition" (126). Even after Kilmeny is cured and Eric has given David the credit, Kilmeny's family still insists that it is "a miracle" and that "[God] has seen fit to remove his curse from the innocent" (127). The medical, scientific, and supernatural combine to make the cause of Kilmeny's disability entirely ambiguous.

Oddly, although medicine has been portrayed by both voices of the novella as controlling deviance, the medical remedy for Kilmeny's muteness is a lack of control over emotions. The key to removing Kilmeny's disability is extreme abnormality and unthinking passion. As Eric had to behave quixotically to become conventional, so Kilmeny has to behave irrationally to become normal, and the categories of abnormality and normality are made thoroughly ambiguous. Although at the novella's conclusion disability and deviance are supposedly weeded out for conformity to reign, the dialogue between the two voices of the text indicates that conformity only occurs through nonconformity, and that abnormality is normal.

Although in *Kilmeny of the Orchard*, the double voice uses disability as a literary sign for inherent biological, personality, and social difference, and although the narrative works to remove abnormality and deviance by removing disability, the dialogue produced between the voices reveals ambiguities that challenge the association of disability with difference and complicate the final normality the story reaches. The double voice of the novella presents differing and dialogic perspectives about medicine, eugenics, social control, conformity, and individuality; however, neither voice is the novella's true or intended voice. For that reason, neither is *Kilmeny* primarily conformist or subversive. Instead, the two voices work together, even while working against each other, challenging, questioning, and repositioning borders between normality and abnormality, difference and similarity.

“The Tryst of the White Lady”

In “The Tryst of the White Lady,” a short story published twenty years after *Kilmeny of the Orchard*, the disabilities of the hero and heroine are represented in a double voice. In this story about a hunchbacked farmer who thinks he has fallen in love with a ghost, voice one uses disability as a deviance to be resolved through the outcome of the narrative. Voice two, however, challenges voice one by consistently pointing out the weaknesses of the resolutions the narrative offers, especially their failure to remove the hero and heroine’s disabilities, and by showing that disability and ugliness are the norm while beauty and health are deviant.

In this story, the disability of the hero, Roger Temple, embodies the deviance that the narrative works to solve. The narrative problem that the first page of the story presents is that Roger wants to take part in the institution of marriage and courtship, but is excluded from it by his “slight limp,” crooked shoulder, ugliness, and poverty. ““Who’d have me . . . ?”” he asks his Aunt Catherine (267). She encourages Roger not to ““fly too high”” when looking for a mate (268), implying that the eventual solution to the problem is for him to marry someone equally unattractive or disabled who would be willing to “have” him. However, Roger desires to marry someone ideal, with ““grace and beauty and charm”” that even the pretty girls of his community could not equal (270). The narrative drive is the “rehabilitation” of the disability (Mitchell and Snyder 53): the story must either remove Roger’s disability so that he may marry someone beautiful, or accommodate it through “the revaluation of an alternative mode of being” (Mitchell and Snyder 54).

Because Roger is unwilling to change his criteria for a wife, the first solution to the dilemma that both the narrative and Roger seek is a supernatural, deviant, and disabled love. Roger is already “uncanny” to start with because of the “dreamy brilliance” of his eyes in his “dull face” (267); plus, according to the narrator, he has inherited a belief in superstitions. Therefore, because Roger believes he is unlikely to find someone who would both meet his ideals and “have him,” he chooses to fall in love with a ghost, his Aunt Isabel, who was shot by a scorned lover on the day she married Roger’s great-great-uncle. Since her death, Isabel has been haunting three generations of the men in his family. Each Temple man haunted by her fell in love with her and turned mad, or “[d]iff’rent” as Aunt Catherine puts it (270). Although Roger “gave up trying” to love someone in the real world, “he still longed to love” (272); to see Isabel would be a remedy to his predicament as it would allow him to turn mad and thus escape into a world where “[a]nything might happen – anything might be true” (273) and he could be free to love someone ideal.

When Roger finally sees what he believes is Isabel’s ghost, he falls in love, and, according to his aunt, becomes ““bewitched,”” ““like his uncle”” who also had seen the ghost and gone insane (275). Falling in love with a ghost and becoming “bewitched” increases Roger’s deviance, but also acts prosthetically to normalize him. In a way, being “mad in love” makes Roger equal to able-bodied men: “She was his – his in spite of his ugliness and his crooked shoulder. No man could ever take her from him” (277). In loving a ghost, Roger’s physical defects no longer are a disablement that bars him from romance, and able-bodied men cannot threaten his position as a lover. However, like actual prostheses, this narrative prosthesis “fails in

its first objective: to return the incomplete body to the invisible status of a normative essence,” and “[d]isability services an unsettling objective . . . by refusing its desired cultural return to the land of the normative” (Mitchell and Snyder 8). In other words, voice two of “Tryst of the White Lady” prevents voice one from completely resolving the narrative. Because Roger’s strange behaviour increases his deviance as well as normalizes it, the narrative needs another solution for his deviance.

The next plot development reveals that the ghost is not a ghost but a real woman. This both problematizes the first solution Roger sought and offers a new solution. Because the “Isabel” Roger had thought he saw is truly Lilith Barr, an eighteen-year old who recently moved into the neighbourhood, the resolution the narrative first offered dissolves. His object of love is no longer supernatural, and love seems impossible for Roger once again: “[Roger] knew he was a fool – [Lilith] would never look at him” (280). However, Lilith is also disabled and deviant: she is deaf, shy, and reclusive. Therefore, the resolution Aunt Catherine first suggested, that he marry someone equally disabled, becomes not only a possibility, but also the final restoration to normality the narrative offers.

The restitution the narrative’s ending provides is notably double-voiced in that, although it is a reinstatement of a mode of normalcy and an answer to the dilemma that Roger’s disability poses, it also challenges the assumptions that make this ending the only possible conclusion for Roger’s disability. The narrative’s double voice is especially clear in the speech made by Aunt Catherine near the story’s end:

“He ain’t for every market, as I’m bound to admit. Ef she wasn’t deaf she wouldn’t look at him, no doubt. But she’s scads of money – they won’t need to do a tap of work unless they like – . . . She’s pretty enough to suit him – he’s as particular as never was – and he wan’t crooked and she wan’t deaf

when they was born, so it's likely their children will be all right. I'm that proud when I think of the match." (283)

Here, voice one indicates that Roger and Lilith's marriage will normalize and control their disabilities and deviances because the couple has remained within their "market," will be financially stable (and thus not a burden to anyone), and will not add to the disabled population with their children. However, through Aunt Catherine's statement, voice two also indirectly points out not only the absurdity, but also the brutality, of what Catherine, and by extension voice one, implies. The narrator describes Catherine's commentary as spoken in a "horrible voice" with "horrible zest and satisfaction" and "horrible practicalities" (283). Thus, within Catherine's statement, voice two challenges what voice one directly says and points out the injustice of assuming that disability is a problem to be solved and that this ending has somehow solved it.

While the narrative prosthesis in voice one suggests that disability is a deviance that needs to be corrected, voice two indicates that the impairments of the hero and heroine are not intrinsically problematic, but rather the social environment creates problems that lead to their physical differences becoming disabilities. Roger and Lilith's marriage does not change or remove their disabilities: there is no indication that Roger is going to act as Lilith's "ears," nor will Lilith be the "good strong girl that ain't afraid of work" that Aunt Catherine prescribes to solve Roger's physical impairment (268). Also, voice two clarifies that the hero and heroine's disabilities are not as problematic as the Aunts and community feel. The impairments do not prevent Roger and Lilith from enjoying or experiencing life: although Lilith is deaf, she is able to communicate clearly (282), and although Roger cannot farm

successfully, he prefers “hanging over a book” (267). And, even after the resolution through marriage, Roger and Lilith will still have to cope with people like Roger’s Aunt Catherine and Lilith’s aunt, Mrs. Barr, who assume that disability is ““a terrible drawback”” (281). Through exposing the weakness of the resolution, voice two in the narrative challenges the assumption that disability is inherently a problem and questions the narrative’s ability to remove the deviance or to solve the actual difficulties that disability presents.

Voice two also reveals that disability is normal by making the “ideal” body a supernatural one, and by showing that true love is plain and realistic. Voice one of “The Tryst of the White Lady” associates the supernatural with disability: haunted men turn “*fey*” (280), a deformed man seeks and appears to find a ghost-lover, and the ghost-lover is a deaf woman with a “haunting” face (282). However, through Roger, voice two discloses that in the “real world,” ugliness is the standard since “[m]ost people, he thought, were ugly – though not so ugly as he was” (272). To find the ideal beauty “he had not found nor could hope to find in his real world,” Roger must seek “a world of dreams” (271). The few beautiful women mentioned in the story are either invalids (268), have ugly voices, or are lack an indefinable “something” (272). Even when Roger thinks he has found the ideal woman in Isabel, she is actually the imperfect Lilith. And the love that he thought he had with Isabel, the “searing, torturing, intolerably sweet thing” that was “beautiful – and dreadful – and wonderful – and exquisite” beyond “[m]ortal love” (276), is an unreal illusion, like ideal health and beauty. The love he has with Lilith, however, is “a homelier happiness with its feet on the earth” (282). Significantly, the word “homelier”

connotes both ugliness and “home” or “familiar” (“Homely” *OED*). Therefore, the normal, familiar, and non-deviant are the ugly, sick, or disabled. Thus voice two demonstrates how the able-bodied ideal is an illusion and how the imperfect body or mind is a universal reality.

In “The Tryst of the White Lady,” voice one relies upon disability as a narrative prosthesis that presents the problem of the narrative that needs to be solved. It also relies on disability to prosthetically normalize the difference presented: Roger’s disability is normalized through marriage, but only to a person with another disability. However, voice two regularly interrupts the closure voice one seeks through prosthesis. Voice one and narrative pattern may present disability as requiring a solution or normalization, but voice two presents disability as ordinary and not innately problematic. Unlike voice two in many of the texts in this thesis, voice two in this story does not privilege difference and disability; but neither does it privilege normality and health. Instead, it indicates that normality is an imaginary and unreachable ideal and that difference is universal and disability average.

“Some Fools and a Saint”

“Some Fools and a Saint,” a short story that Montgomery wrote within a few years of writing “The Tryst of the White Lady” but did not publish until 1931, gives a representation of disability that is very different from that in the romantic tale of Roger and Lilith. In this frightening story, disability is sinister and deviance terrifying. Voice one relies heavily upon the presumed differences between ability and disability to provide the story with atmosphere, gothic red herrings, and stock-

characterization. Voice two, however, contests the literary stereotypes of disability. It reveals the inadequacy and faultiness of reading disability according to literary stereotypes and shows that the category of disability is a constructed one.

In “Some Fools and a Saint,” the main narrative problem is a haunted house owned by a respectable family in a small town. To resolve this problem, the hero of the story, the town’s new preacher, Curtis Burns, must find the source of the deviance and expurgate it so that normality can be restored, and so that he can marry Lucia, the sister of the house’s owner, Alec Field. Very early in the story, the supernatural deviance of haunting is associated with disability. When Curtis first hears that the house at which he is boarding is pestered by poltergeist-like pranks such as eerie, unidentified, violin playing; disembodied, maniacal laughter; and mysterious bloody footprints, he assumes that the house’s disabled staff are to blame. He says, ““a half-wit, and a girl from a degenerate family! I don’t think your ghosts should be very hard to locate”” (225). Typically, Montgomery reinforces the association of disability and the supernatural through the descriptions of scenery. The narrator’s first depiction of the house describes ordered beds of flowers and clam-shell bordered paths and states that the home has “[n]othing spookish about it” (229); however, the narrator also describes the house as having “phantom-like globes of dandelions” mingled among the order. This presence of a wild and natural “phantom-like” flower signifies the supernatural, while the nature that is controlled and organized into beds indicates the mundane. Similarly, Curtis chooses to read the wild and uncontrolled body of Jock, the “half-wit” as being “disagreeable” and revealing “Puck-like malice” (231). He also sees the crimson scar of the maid, Julia Marsh, as “sinister,” and compares

her mood-swings to devil possession (230). Jock and Julia's perceived malevolent creepiness appears throughout the story to continually keep the two as usual suspects, even though their innocence is already virtually proven. By the seventh page of the story, the former minister, Mr. Sheldon, explains to Curtis that the tricks still occur when Jock is locked in his room and when Julia is out of town (225). Thus, voice one, presented to readers mainly through the voice of Curtis, presents the uncontrolled bodies and minds as indicators of social deviance and supernatural qualities.

Voice one uses disability to signify not only hostile deviance and mystery, but also benign difference and spiritualism. Maria H. Frawley explains that in the nineteenth century, because evangelism conceived of affliction as "an essential part of God's order" and as something "for which to be grateful" (Frawley 158), many believed that invalidism "conferred on the sufferer . . . the status that came with the priceless opportunity to experience and exhibit grace" (Frawley 157-8). Alice Harper, the invalid cousin living in the Field home, embodies a privileged social deviance and supernaturalism. The community sees Alice as having more purity, more endurance, more insight, and more spirituality than the able-bodied people in the town. Voice one, significantly through Alice's words, presents these noble qualities as being a direct result of her disability. Alice claims that her spirituality was learned "in a hard school" (238), implying that her invalidism was the teacher. And the town, which sees her as "an inspiration" and "angel" who "wields [influence] from [her] bed of helplessness," helping and advising the entire community (221), also indicates that Alice's disability is the source of her sainthood. When Mr. Sheldon tells Alice's

story, he also notes that before the accident that left her paralyzed Alice was very different: she was an ineffectual, unnoticeable girl who kept to herself and to the “background” (222). Thus, although voice one indicates that Alice’s disability is a positive power in the community, it nonetheless reinforces the concept that her difference is due to her disability and widens the gulf between ability and disability.

Through the character of Alice, however, voice two in “Some Fools and A Saint” strongly mocks the reading of disability and shows that categorizing disability as inherently different is a social construction. While describing the Field house as having “[n]othing spooky about it,” the narrator contradicts its insistence on the house’s banality by noting “a peculiar strangeness about the dormer windows” that “gave the roof an individuality” (229). By pointing out the manufactured strangeness of the supposedly normal home, the narrative’s second voice indicates the possibility of deviance and even disability being similarly manufactured. This possibility is then completely disclosed when the story reveals that Alice is not at all physically an invalid, but rather has adopted that pose to gain the status and power conferred on the identity of invalidism and to hide her role as the “ghost” of the Field house. By falsely assuming the constructed identity of an invalid, Alice manipulates people through their assumptions about invalidism. In the end, Alice’s role as an invalid is double-voiced because it reinforces the difference between the abled and disabled while revealing the constructed nature of the disability.

As this plot twist reveals that the identity of invalidism is constructed, it also exposes the falsity of investing meaning in other disabilities and mocks the literary stereotypes surrounding disabilities. The revelation that Alice’s invalidism did not

ensure her innocence reemphasizes that Julia and Jock's disabilities in no way could guarantee their guilt. Jock and Julia were proven innocent at the beginning but presumed guilty, and Alice was presumed innocent but proven guilty. Both presumptions were entirely based upon interpretations of disabilities rather than on actual facts. The plot twist also bleeds back into the statements Alice made as an invalid, revealing their double-voiced nature. Her health suddenly shows that the sentimental language she uses throughout the story is a hollow mockery of the literary stereotypes of invalids. Her speeches, such as, "I've looked death too long in the face to be afraid of it, . . . life holds nothing for me" (237), and "I don't like moonlight. It always reminds me of things I want to forget"<sup>22</sup> (237-38), are clearly hackneyed. The removal of Alice's disability mocks the narrative use of disability as a sign of certain social behaviours and as a literary tool to create mood.

Although voice two uses Alice's physical well-being to reveal the constructed nature of invalidism and to challenge reading disability metaphorically, voice one relies on another disability, insanity, and its literary metaphors to explain her deviant behaviour. The determining factor for Alice's strange and even terrifying behaviour, from breaking plates to killing pets, is insanity inherited from a "dipsomaniac" father and grandfather (262). Through the origin of Alice's insanity, voice one relies upon Romantic literary constructs of female insanity. Philip W. Martin, in *Mad Women in Romantic Writing*, notes that in Romantic literature "woman's madness, hysteria and abnormality are the result of the deprivation of male company" (Martin 16). Alice believes that the way her family treated her as a charity case prevented her from

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<sup>22</sup> This was a phrase that Montgomery also used in *A Tangled Web* to ridicule overly-dramatic war widows. It indicates falseness, superficiality, and theatrics.

marrying and explains how their mistreatment of her is the source of her desire to punish them (“Some Fools” 256). After Curtis hears about Alice’s resentment at being the bridesmaid for the man she loved instead of his bride, he sees it as the instigation of her insanity: ““The shock of repressed feeling at the wedding of the man she loved evidently played havoc with her soul”” (262). Because Curtis deduces that Alice’s sexual frustration is the cause of her insanity, voice one of “Some Fools and a Saint” relies on the literary construct of feminine insanity to explain the haunting of the Field house.

Similarly, the resolution of Alice’s insanity relies upon Romantic literary constructs that voice one uses to reiterate the inherent connection between disability and deviance. Martin explains that in Romantic medicine and literature the resolution of female insanity was achieved “by finding ways of redressing the equilibrium by changing the environment” (Martin 3). When the story removes Alice’s deviance by marrying her to millionaire Henry Kildare, who with Curtis discovers that she is the Field “ghost,” her environment is changed: she will no longer rely upon her cousins for money, and she will now have the male company she lacked. When Mr. Sheldon implies that marriage and wealth ““may have a very salutary effect on her mind”” (262), voice one of the text indicates that health, which returns to Alice on principles derived from literary representations of female mental illness, will remove her deviant behaviour.

Through the story’s resolution, voice one also indicates that Alice’s disabilities “represent a dangerous force unleashed on the social order” (Thomson 36). With the conclusion, the voice reveals that Alice has used both invalidism and

insanity to gain power over her family and community, and to disrupt the social order that subjugated her because of her heredity and poverty. She uses her invalid body to control the healthy bodies of her cousins, pretending to be in pain whenever she felt they needed “discipline” (257). In her insanity, she concocts ghostly tricks that not only control the emotional state of her cousins, but also prevent them from marrying. The ending of the story has Alice “hysterically laughing”: “Oh, I’ve ruled them – from my sickbed I’ve ruled them . . . I was the most important person in the house now” (254 & 256). Thus, the story presents disability as a social as well as biological deviance that overturns social order.

Conversely, the health restored to Alice by the story’s resolution confiscates her autonomy and reinstates the low status she held before her disability. Although she will be wealthy, and thus gain social eminence, she will be subordinate to her husband, Henry. When he proposes to her, he demands, “There’s to be no tricks. . . no more tricks with Henry Kildare. Understand?” and she meekly responds, “I . . . understand” (261). Thus, Curtis and Mr. Shepherd can know that Henry will “manage her” (262), and her deviances will be resolved. However, in this resolution, voice two simultaneously indicates that health is not a matter of biology, but of social control. When Alice and her body are not complying with social control and are acting freely, they are perceived as being disabled: she is either a helpless invalid or a hysterical “devil” (253). But when both are under the control of Henry Kildare, Curtis and Mr. Sheldon assume that she will be healthy. No biological change takes place whatsoever—she is still a child and grandchild of “dipsomaniacs,” and “[y]ou can’t reform your ancestors [or biological

inheritance]” (262); the changes have occurred only in social order and in people’s perceptions.

Although voice one presents disability as a clear indicator of personality and behaviour, voice two reveals that these things cannot be inferred from a person’s biology. Strangely, Curtis, the character who most frequently speaks in voice one, makes the most openly second-voiced statement. When Mr. Sheldon accuses Alice of hypocrisy, Curtis defends her, saying that her service to the community and the church ““may not have been hypocrisy”” but ““may have been a real side of her nature”” (262). The story also supports Curtis’s statement: even when Alice’s lie is exposed, she admits that she truly likes Curtis and enjoyed the time she spent with him (260). This implies that the parts of Alice’s identity, her goodness and purity, which voice one had presented as being connected with her invalid body, were true aspects of her personality, regardless of the state of her body or mind. However, shortly after Curtis defends her, he speaks in voice one to explain how she might have good as well as evil in her: ““Nothing is incredible with abnormality. Remember, you cannot judge her as you would a normal person”” (262). He then accredits her abnormality to her ancestry. Therefore, in the dénouement of the story, the intertwined double voice complicates the reading of disability as biological or social.

In “Some Fools and a Saint,” voice two aggressively questions the stereotypical readings and representations of disability that voice one supports. Although the story’s voice one relies on literary tropes of disability to create and resolve the narrative situation, voice two reveals the construction of disability and weakens the connection between social deviance and physical disability. Like “Some

Fools and a Saint,” L.M. Montgomery’s 1926 novel, *The Blue Castle*, contains a voice two that reveals the social construct of disability by undermining literary conventions surrounding disability and by exposing the mistakenness of the heroines’ illnesses. And, as in the novella and short stories studied in this chapter, voice one of *The Blue Castle* uses narrative prosthesis to remove disability and deviance.

## Chapter Two

### False Fatal Illness and Patent Purple Pills: Disability in *The Blue Castle*

The first novel Montgomery ever wrote solely for an adult audience, *The Blue Castle*, is arguably her most subversive work. Published in the twenties but set at the turn of the century, it describes what happens to a twenty-nine year-old spinster, Valancy Stirling, who discovers that she is dying. The heroine's illness prompts her to live the rest of her life unfettered by conformity or the dominant rule of her family. She leaves her home to care for a dying consumptive, Cissy, and a social pariah, Abel, and then falls in love with and marries the town villain, Barney. In the end, Valancy discovers that she was misinformed about her illness; not only is it not fatal, but it also has healed by itself. She then becomes reconciled to her family once they learn that her husband is an acclaimed nature writer, John Foster, and the formerly estranged son of a millionaire, Dr. Redfern.

This novel is a scathing satire: it uses biting humour to criticize small-town society, community hierarchies, family clans, and social conventions; but most markedly, it criticizes medical and literary stereotypes of disability. The novel makes this critique in a particularly double-voiced way. The satirical comments generally are from "the back of Valancy's mind," but are concealed by her proper behaviour (124, 186), or are spoken in hybrid construction or in double voice by the narrator in free

indirect discourse<sup>23</sup> to adopt momentarily the words of the characters being satirized. Although the satire is pungent, Montgomery nonetheless presents it through an outer narrative that conforms to the very things the novel critiques. Like the other stories and novels analyzed here, voice one of *The Blue Castle* equates disability with deviance and privileges normality over difference, and voice two favours difference and deviant behaviour over conformity. But unlike most of the other works in this study, voice two of *The Blue Castle* does not associate disability with difference. Instead, voice two ridicules those who read disability as deviance or interpret difference as disability and shows how disability and illness are social constructs used for social control and as a normalizing prosthesis.

#### Double Voice, Disability, and Deviance

Voice one of *The Blue Castle* expresses the cultural unease about the place of unmarried women through Valancy's disabled body, which represents the problem that the plot must resolve. Within the first page, the story identifies the narrative dilemma: the heroine suffers from "attack[s] of pain around the heart" and is "unmarried in a community and connection where the unmarried are simply those who have failed to get a man" (1). Valancy also experiences horrible recurrent colds and bronchitis (15), has "sallow skin" (6), and is physically "delicate" (11). Valancy's illnesses and her unmarried state are connected throughout the text. At family

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<sup>23</sup> By "free indirect discourse," I am referring to the narration technique in which the narrator speaks in the voice of particular characters without using punctuation or pronouns to indicate a change in voice. Abrams describes it as the mode in which the speech and thoughts of a character "shift in pronouns, adverbs, tense, and grammatical mode, as we move—or sometimes hover—between the direct narrated representation of these events as they occur to the character and the indirect representation of such events by the narrator of the story" ("Narration, Grammar of"). In *The Blue Castle*, the narrator frequently employs free indirect discourse to mock the characters whose thoughts and speech are being indirectly represented.

reunions, Valancy is simultaneously teased about being unmarried and about being skinny (6-7). Valancy's mother, Mrs. Frederick, finds sneezing and thinking about men equally unladylike and will not allow Valancy to do either (2, 30). Even the townspeople stigmatize female singleness using medical language: when a new clerk at a store hears that Valancy is "one of the Deerwood old maids," he asks if she is "[c]urable or incurable?" (22). The narrative solves both of Valancy's issues together: after Valancy gets married, her health improves; she has a healthier complexion, is "no longer skinny," and "[h]er heart bother[s] her very little" (150). Therefore, voice one equates Valancy's social deviance, female singleness, with her invalid-like body.

Voice one in *The Blue Castle* uses Valancy's heart disease and illness not only to represent Valancy's deviant old-maidhood, but also her sexual frustration. Thus, the voice makes her unmarried status an issue of sexual health rather than one of social situation.<sup>24</sup> Åhmansson surmises that celibacy causes the heroine's heart problem, since Valancy's "greatest grievance is not primarily that she is not married, but that she is 'twenty-nine and unsought by any man'" ("Textual/Sexual Space" 148-9). She goes on to say that Valancy is "looking for sexual fulfilment" in her marriage of convenience to Barney ("Textual/Sexual Space" 151). Unfortunately, Åhmansson falsely assumes that Montgomery uses Valancy's illness to satirize early twentieth-century repression of sexuality and to warn against the health-risks of sexual

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<sup>24</sup> Jane Wood discusses the precedent for viewing the problem of unmarried women as medical rather than social in *Passion and Pathology in Victorian Fiction*, saying that in the nineteenth century, women "who were simply overlooked in the marriage markets, were generally regarded not just as a social problem, but as a sexual anomaly which only the physician was qualified to interpret" (23). In her book, Wood studies numerous Victorian medical and literary texts to analyze the relationship between their representations and interpretations of neurasthenia.

abstinence. She errs by stating that women, until the twentieth century, were generally believed not to experience sexual feelings and by saying that the notion that women “suffer [in health] from the effects of sexual abstinence is not very old” (149). Philip Martin, however, finds roots of associating female madness with abstinence as early as in the medical writings of ancient Greece (16) and scholars such as Lorraine DiCicco and Bonnie Blackwell analyse the eighteenth-century and nineteenth-century medical and historical context of literary representations of “greensickness” or “chlorosis,” a female psychosomatic illness thought to be caused by sexual frustration and cured by marriage. Nonetheless, Åhmansson’s conclusion that sexual frustration is linked to Valancy’s illness in the text is convincing (“Textual/Sexual Space” 150-151). Valancy’s worst attacks of pain occur when she thinks about her lack of companionship and one happens after she reflects that “[p]eople knew *she* couldn’t be fast if she tried” (BC 45).

The final diagnosis from Dr. Trent emphasizes the connection between Valancy’s sexual frustration and heart illness. He claims she has pseudo-angina,<sup>25</sup> which he says is cured by “a shock of joy” (182).<sup>26</sup> Because the prescription sounds strangely sexual, especially when one considers that the “shock of joy” Valancy receives is Barney’s return to her after a blizzard (182), the diagnosis implies that

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<sup>25</sup> *Stedman’s Medical Dictionary* describes pseudoangina as heart attacks “in which the breast pain is comparatively slight, but pallor followed by cyanosis, and coldness and numbness of the extremities are marked” (“Angina pectoris vasomotoria”). Valancy’s symptoms are chest pain, dizziness, “shortness of breath” (BC 9), and sallow skin. *Taber’s Cyclopedic Medical Dictionary* describes pseudoangina as “Chest pain in patients who have healthy coronary arteries” and adds that it is “caused by esophageal, peptic, gallbladder, musculoskeletal, pulmonary, pleural, or psychogenic illnesses” (“Pseudoangina”). In Valancy’s case, the psychogenic cause is most likely as the cure is an emotional not medical one.

<sup>26</sup> Montgomery similarly believed that her husband’s religious melancholia could be cured by a “shock of joy.” In a journal entry written three months before she began planning *The Blue Castle* (SJ III 56), she writes: “if Ewan ‘got a call’ to a nice place the pleasant sensation might cure his malady. He has really been much better this winter and a ‘shock of joy’ I verily believe might complete the cure and render it permanent” (SJ III 40). Perhaps Montgomery saw a parallel between her husband’s mental illness and Valancy’s psychosomatic heart pains.

sexual fulfillment, or at least male presence, is the resolution of Valancy's ill health. The emotional or psychological roots of Valancy's heart problems also comply with the literary stereotype of female madness discussed, that "woman's madness, hysteria and abnormality are the result of the deprivation of male company" (Martin 16). Thus, by linking female sexuality, social status, and health, voice one of *The Blue Castle* uses physical and psychological illness according to literary and medical conventions as manifestations of deviations from socially acceptable female sexuality.

Voice two of *The Blue Castle*, however, challenges the conventions of viewing disability as a symptom of social deviance by caricaturing the Stirling family. The Stirlings continually interpret illness, judging its causes and condemning those who are ill. They even view Valancy's colds and headaches as grounds for inquisition and placing blame: Mrs. Frederick insists "that if a person makes up her mind *not* to have colds, she will not *have* colds" (15) and Cousin Stickles demands to know what causes Valancy's headaches (36). In free indirect discourse, the narrator ironically adopts the Stirlings' point of view and states that recurrent illness "was all Valancy's own fault" (15) and that Valancy "could not be allowed to have headaches without interference" (36). Valancy also adopts her family's perspective with irony when contemplating their possible reaction to her heart disease: "Uncle Wellington would take it as a personal insult, when 'no other Stirling had heart disease before'" (10). Later, she imagines that their reaction to her diagnosis of angina pectoris "would be indignation . . . on the part of Uncle James because she had gone to a doctor . . . without consulting HIM [and i]ndignation on the part of her mother for being so sly

and deceitful—‘to [her] own mother’” (38). The indignation the family would feel, and the belief that sickness is a “fault” and an “insult,” replicates the connection voice one makes between illness and social deviance. However, Valancy and the narrator assume the Stirlings’ voices in a manner that robs the statements of credibility and undermines the presumed connection. Thus, voice two through satirical humour reveals the irrationality of interpreting illness as a sign of deviant behaviour and challenges the presumption that Valancy’s illness is a result of her celibacy and social difference.

Voice two’s subversion of the connection between social deviance and disability also affects voice one’s contention that singleness and sexual frustration cause Valancy’s illness. When Valancy first begins to act outside the norms of the Stirling family and increases her social deviance from being unmarried to being unmarried and outspoken, Mrs. Frederick thinks, “Valancy had always been a disappointment to her. Now she was a disgrace” (61). The “disappointment” Mrs. Frederick feels is tied to both her daughter’s illness and unattractiveness: she “bemoan[s] herself of a delicate child” (25) and is “so disappointed that [Valancy] was not a boy—or at least, a pretty girl” (39). The types of sickness and deviance Valancy had before she decided to rebel openly were merely “disappointing” because being single and having colds, although frowned on, are at least socially acceptable. But when she begins to behave with uncontrolled defiance, speaking her mind at an anniversary dinner and working out as a housekeeper, the Stirlings presume the sickness is insanity, and both the behaviour and illness become a “disgrace.” The family assumes that her extremely uncontrolled behaviour is likewise a result of her

single status. Valancy's Uncle Benjamin explains, "Old maids are apt to fly off at a tangent like that. If she had been married when she should have been she wouldn't have got like this" (68). Although critic Muriel Whitaker agrees with Benjamin and states that Valancy's "state of sexual frustration" would lead her to "become completely unhinged" (54), clearly voice two, by placing this sentiment in the mouth of Valancy's ridiculous, riddle-telling uncle, mocks the belief that old maidenhood and celibacy can cause ill health and insanity.

Voice two of *The Blue Castle* also challenges how voice one uses disability as a signal of deviance by ridiculing the Stirlings' assumption that physical illness causes Valancy's unusual behaviour. From the first moment that Valancy begins to behave defiantly, Cousin Stickles is sure "she [Valancy] *must* be feverish" (37), Uncle Herbert asks if her "stomach seems a little out of order" (61), and they all suggest doctors, medicine, and thermometers to solve the problem of her misbehaviour (67-68). And this is only when her deviances are minor offences such as sliding down a banister (47), reading on Sunday (47), and being honest about the taste of salad dressing (66). Even something as tame but unconventional as enjoying oneself is aligned by the Stirlings with illness: when Valancy says she is going to have a "little fun," Mrs. Frederick responds "as if Valancy had said she was going to have a little tuberculosis" (72). The Stirlings' assumption that deviation from social propriety must be caused or equated with physical illness is made ridiculous, and thus voice two undermines voice one's assertion that the social deviance of Valancy's singleness causes her invalidism.

Voice two also mocks the reading of socially deviant behaviour as insanity. When Valancy's misbehaviour merely involves calling an aunt fat (60), defending the town's social rejects (62-65), and stating that to sneeze in public is the "greatest happiness" (59), the Stirling family decides that her actions are evidence that she is "mildly insane," "slightly deranged," "dippy," (46) or mentally "unbalanced" (68). However, when Valancy's misdemeanours escalate to leaving home to work for the disreputable Abel and Cissy Gay, her social revolt becomes extreme in the eyes of her family and small town, who are fully convinced that she is insane. In her family's eyes, her lack of "regard for [her] reputation and [her] family's standing . . . [or] for [her mother's] feelings," are proof of mental illness since "[i]nsane people never *do* have any regard for other people's feelings. . . . That's one of the symptoms" (82). Of course, none of Valancy's behaviour is truly abnormal; Dr. Ambrose "point[s] out to irate Uncle James . . . that Valancy ha[s] not, as yet, really done or said anything that could be constructed as proof of lunacy" (73-74). The narrator, humorously assuming James's words, adds "and without proof you cannot lock people up in this degenerate age" (74). And, as Elizabeth Epperly indicates, even Valancy's deviant behaviour is still "largely conformist" (*Fragrance* 236): in her rebellion, Valancy acts as a nurturer and housekeeper and desires a heterosexual romance consecrated by a protestant religious ceremony. Therefore, voice two uses the caricatured Stirlings' voices to exaggerate the ludicrousness of reading Valancy's slightly deviant behaviour as mental illness and thus undercuts how voice one represents Valancy's deviant behaviour as a result of psychosomatic illness.

## Minor Characters and Changing Literary and Medical Conventions

Relying on Victorian literary conventions of disability, voice one emphasizes the relationship between social difference and disability through the illnesses of minor characters in the novel. Diane Price Herndl argues that literature often depicts the invalid as either “a figure with no power” or “a figure with enormous power” (4). In *The Blue Castle*, the secondary characters Cousin Gladys and Cissy Gay embody these poles of formulaic representation of the female invalid. Cousin Gladys is the manifestation of the stereotypical Victorian wealthy invalid who uses her disability for power, recalling characters such as *Pride and Prejudice*’s Mrs. Bennet or *Little Women*’s Aunt March. She, like Mrs. Bennet, suffers from a neurosis that “jump[s] from one part of her body to another” according to where it would be most useful (52-53). Because “for nineteenth-century women, illness represented feminine refinement, wealth, and leisure” (Herndl 152), the narrator and Valancy see Gladys as using illness “to keep up with Victorian traditions” (*BC* 141). Gladys’s neurosis serves to convey that Gladys is, and represents herself as, wealthy, feminine, refined, and thus as different. Yet, it also reveals that Gladys is a silly woman; the medical doctors tell her that the neuritis is “entirely imaginary and that she had it because she liked to have it” (25). The doctors and narrator in voice one thus place all the physical symptoms Gladys either feels or thinks she feels onto her social behaviour: her refinement and desire for power. Therefore, voice one relies upon the literary tradition of the imaginary invalid to reinforce that social difference displays itself through biological difference.

Similarly, voice one relies on stereotypical representations of the powerless female invalid to stress the connection between social behaviour and disability. As Gladys recalls the power-hungry invalid, so Cissy evokes the typical nineteenth-century consumptive invalid who is powerless and an angel/whore. Repeatedly treated as a child by the characters and narrator of *The Blue Castle*, Cissy falls into the Victorian literary convention that prescribes that “victims” of tuberculosis be “children, . . . overgrown children, [or] crypto-children” (Caldwell 60). Cissy also complies with the nineteenth-century literary tradition in which the origin of tuberculosis is “thwarted” or “blighted” “passionate feeling which provokes, which expresses itself in, a bout of TB” (Sontag 22). Cissy’s consumption is intrinsically tied to passionate sexual, romantic, and maternal feelings: her illness begins after the death of her illegitimate child (*BC* 77) and the community assumes it is the expression of and punishment for her love affair gone bad (65). Although Melissa Prycer notes that Cissy’s grief is over the death of her baby and not over its birth and thus challenges Victorian literary tradition (270), Cissy’s illness nonetheless follows that tradition because it is tied to passionate feelings and unsanctioned sexuality and maternity. Like Valancy’s heart illness, Cissy’s consumption is a site of anxiety about female sexuality. Cissy explains that she became pregnant because she ““didn’t know—some things,”” perhaps implying that her lover took advantage of her lack of knowledge (*BC* 120). Sontag explains that in literature consumption is “a way of describing sensuality and promoting the claims of passion and a way of describing repression” (Sontag 25); thus, Cissy’s illness and death are a literary construct representing the effects of both sexual passion and repression.

In voice one, the conventional representation of Cissy's consumptive death reinforces the connection between social deviance and disability. Susan Sontag notes that in the nineteenth-century novel "TB remained the preferred way of giving death a meaning [and was used as] an edifying, refined disease" (16). She also observes that the tubercular deaths in Victorian novels are "almost symptomless, unfrightened, beatific" (16) and "redemptive" (41). Although Prycer argues that "the disease is not credited with changing or redeeming Cissy" (270) and points out that Cissy is described as having "'always been a good little girl'" (*BC* 122), Cissy's illness and death are nonetheless exaggeratedly edifying and symptomless. The death scene is lit by an "inglorious gibbous moon" and "spectral light," and in it Cissy is a "frail and lovely and incredibly young . . . child" who explains "the passion and pain and shame of her story" (119). Symptoms are almost nonexistent, except when coughing increases for the sake of drama and mystery. As Cissy dies, she smilingly peers past Valancy into the eternal (121), and death makes her body free from "the lines of shame and pain" (122). In the description of Cissy's illness and death, voice one relies heavily on Victorian literary conventions about the nature of tuberculosis, which unite social deviance, in the form of sexual or illegitimate maternal passion, and ephemeral spirituality with the physical symptoms of consumption.<sup>27</sup>

Voice one also reveals the early twentieth-century variations of nineteenth-century literary conventions and medical philosophy about female invalidism.

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<sup>27</sup> For a discussion of the role of consumption and female sexuality in Victorian operas such as *La Bohème* and *La Traviata*, see Linda and Michael Hutcheon's *Opera: Desire, Disease, Death*. They note that in the nineteenth century, "tuberculosis was a disease of multiple, even contradictory connotations—an affliction of the sensual decadent as much as of the disembodied, spiritualized woman" and that the tubercular heroines of these operas, like Cissy, "[manage] to be sinner and saint in one" (43).

Although Cousin Gladys and Cissy are primarily nineteenth-century stock characters, Cissy's representation illustrates the effect of twentieth-century views of illness on the literary conventions. Mark Caldwell notes that as more scientific and medical discoveries were made about the tubercular bacilli and how the disease spreads, tuberculosis became seen more as "an urban disease, a product of crowding, filth, poverty, and overwork" (48) rather than one of refinement, and thus the "fight" against the disease also became a battle against poverty (33-34). Although Cissy is a part of a rural community and lives in a house distanced from other houses, her illness is tied to her poverty and to the lack of cleanliness of her home, "a faded dreary old place, with a leprous, patched roof . . . [and] a listless air, as if tired of life" (84). And, as Prycer points out (269-70), the idea of contagion also enters the disease's description: "Nobody went to see [Cissy]. . . [but] two or three disreputable housekeepers—the only kind who could be prevailed upon to go to a house where a girl was dying of consumption" (*BC* 77-78). Although Prycer thinks that recognizing the contagiousness of tuberculosis "demystifies consumption as romantic literary metaphor" (269), the new social understanding of and responses to the disease heighten the romance and drama, increasing Cissy's ostracism and emphasizing her social errors. Mark Caldwell also states that twentieth-century explanations for the causes of tuberculosis still attributed the illness to the patient's "constitutional weakness" or "a genetic inferiority" and "an unwillingness or inborn inability to seek the conditions and perform the actions that might ward sickness off" (35). Although voice one links Cissy's illness to her passions gone awry, the connection of her disease to resignation to her environment and poverty reveals how voice one's

description of Cissy's illness is in transition between the two representations of consumption.

Because Gladys and Cissy's illnesses are primarily rooted in nineteenth-century conventions, they are also foils to Valancy's twentieth-century illness and cure. Herndl observes that the concept of self-healing emerged at the turn of the century alongside "New Thought" theories, which "emphasized the power of the individual rather than the normative power of society, so that illness became a mark of individual, not social, failure" (113). She also says that "[t]he most significant aspect of all the cures . . . [of New Thought] was a confidence that nervous illness was a matter of *intent* to be ill, that if the patient decided to be well, she could be" (119). By the twentieth century, illness was seen as "something that not only should be avoided but, with the right products and attention to her health, could be" (Herndl 153). In *The Blue Castle*, voice one presents the illnesses of each female invalid (Gladys, Cissy, and Valancy) as originating within themselves and as a choice. Gladys's neurosis is "imaginary and she enjoyed it" (10); Cissy chooses not to get better because death will provide her rest (89); the disease Valancy truly has is the psychosomatic pseudo-angina. Only Valancy becomes well, however, because she chooses to live an "active" healthy life (Stallcup 125). Thus, through the representation of the illnesses of these three characters, voice one expresses the idea that disability is the result of the individual's deviant response to her environment, and through Valancy's cure reveals the changing nature of the concept of illness.

Voice two, however, undermines the conventional Victorian representations of illness through the minor characters. In "The Twin Structure" and *Fictions of*

*Affliction*, Martha Stoddard Holmes describes how Victorian “courtship” fiction pairs the able-bodied heroine with a disabled-bodied heroine to emphasize the “very different physical, emotional, and sexual roles” the two types of women play (“Twin” 222). Generally the able-bodied character achieves a resolved romance, and the disabled-bodied heroine “suffers, feels unsatisfied longings, and expresses her emotions in a public and prolonged fashion before she is assigned a role outside the world of courtship and marriage” (“Twin” 222-223). *The Blue Castle* makes use of this “twin structuring” dialogically through multiple sets of “twins” of which Valancy is always a member. At first, Valancy sees herself as playing the role of the disabled twin to an able-bodied heroine: her beautiful, rich, and “disgustingly healthy” (10) cousin, Olive, to whom the Stirlings regularly compared her (54). “I was an excellent foil for her,” Valancy says to herself (42). And for the novel’s first quarter, Valancy does play the role of the disabled heroine, feeling “unsatisfied longings” and eventually expressing her emotions publicly at an anniversary dinner. However, Valancy *isn’t* “assigned a role outside the world of courtship and marriage” (“Twin” 223): she marries Barney halfway through the text. In fact, her disability aids rather than hampers her courtship process as it inspires her to propose marriage to him. And it is her health, not her illness, that impedes her courtship after she discovers that she is not really dying.<sup>28</sup> Thus, voice two challenges the twin-structure that is set up with the romantically successful Olive, and perhaps even mocks the twin-structure, as Olive’s letter to her fiancé indicates that Valancy is given a greater and happier matrimonial role than Olive (*BC* 217-218).

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<sup>28</sup> Once Valancy discovers she is healthy, she becomes certain that Barney will think she “tricked him” into marrying her (179) and leaves him.

However, voice one complicates the subversion through a second twinning, that of Valancy as the non-disabled heroine and Cissy as the disabled one. Cissy's romantic disappointment and disability are much more publicly known and drawn out than those of Valancy, and she *is* rejected from the matrimonial and romantic sphere. Also, Cissy's sexual passion "is deployed within the 'safe' context of parent-child relations; and it is transformed into properly moderated womanly feeling" (Holmes *Fictions of Affliction* 62). Cissy's passion for her lover becomes focused on their illegitimate child. Valancy, on the other hand, eventually becomes not only married and happy in love, but also healthy: all physical manifestations of her romantic dissatisfaction disappear in the story's resolution. Yet, even this twinning is ambiguous and double-voiced: Cissy's love for her child is still deviant because the child is illegitimate, and Valancy only fulfills the role of the able-bodied heroine within the novel's last pages; for the rest of the novel, she either is or believes herself to be ill.

Cissy and Valancy's "twin" relationship is complicated by another literary convention pairing disabled heroines. Rosemarie Garland Thomson in *Extraordinary Bodies* describes a convention in which an ethereal-bodied heroine is a "maternal benefactress" to a corporeal-bodied "marginalized female figure" (82).<sup>29</sup> Generally, the maternal benefactress, who "prevail[s] or even triumph[s]" within narratives, is physically and spiritually pure, while her disabled counterpart, who is "ultimately sacrificed to the social problems the novels assail," is impure (82). Valancy and Cissy are a strange mix of these conventions. Valancy plays the role of the saviour to the

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<sup>29</sup> Thomson uses characters such as Eva and Prue from *Uncle Tom's Cabin* as examples of paired women in "benevolent maternalism" (82).

invalid Cissy, and Cissy is “sacrificed to the social problems” critiqued by *The Blue Castle*, namely small-town prejudice and community hierarchies. Yet, Valancy’s disability is portrayed as the more corporeal and Cissy’s as the more ethereal of the two. Also, the issue of their purity is complicated as well: Valancy is sexually pristine, but entertains impure thoughts about Barney (94-95) and understands the mechanics of sex (65), while Cissy is sexually impure, yet purified by her consumption and her sexual ignorance. Thus, voice two of *The Blue Castle* complicates the Victorian conventions of the maternal benefactress and twin structure through Valancy and Cissy.

Voice one’s ultimate resolution to the novel presents a third set of twins, that of Valancy and Miss Sterling. In the novel’s conclusion, Valancy, after nearly being hit by a train, returns to Dr. Trent to inquire why she did not have a heart attack from shock. He reveals that she does not have a fatal case of “angina pectoris” and never had it but only suffered from a psychosomatic disease, “pseudo-angina.” The woman who really had heart failure was an old woman named “Miss Jane Sterling.” Due to misaddressing of envelopes, Miss Sterling’s diagnosis was sent to Valancy in the mail and Valancy’s to Miss Sterling. Dr. Trent explains that Miss Sterling, whose only companion was a live-in servant, died only two months after Valancy received the incorrect diagnosis. Through this resolution, Valancy and Miss Sterling fulfill the roles of the “twin structure”: of the two, the non-disabled heroine, although she had for most of the novel believed she was disabled, is courted and married, while her disabled counterpart, who for her last two months believed she was able-bodied, or at least not fatally ill, remains alone and marginalized. Nonetheless, although voice one

supports the literary conventions that separate the disabled from the social realm of the able-bodied, voice two complicates and undermines those conventions, making their underlying presumptions about disability ambiguous.

#### Disability, Normalization, and Conformity

While the double-voiced dialogue creates ambiguity through literary conventions, it also creates ambiguity through its portrayal of disability as a prosthetic to normalize social difference. Voice one emphasizes the connection between deviance and disability by using illness as a normalizing prosthetic for Valancy's conscious social deviances, which include working out of the home, associating with such social rejects as a drunkard and his consumptive "bad girl" daughter, and loving and marrying a supposed criminal. Narratives frequently use disability as a prosthetic to "return one to an acceptable degree of difference" (Mitchell and Snyder 7). After Valancy receives the false fatal diagnosis, she spends a night remembering every mean thing done to her and every time that she unfairly submitted to her family. The reminiscing ends with one of her "attacks of pain" (45). After the attack, and implicitly because of it, Valancy chooses to keep her illness a secret and says, "I've been trying to please other people all my life and failed . . . . After this I shall please myself. I shall never pretend anything again. . . . I won't do another thing that I don't want to do" (45-46). Although Valancy's rebellion functions in voice two to critique social conventions and to reveal the community's hypocrisy, voice one uses Valancy's heart problem to provide a reason as well as an impetus for her deviance. If Valancy were "normal" bodied, her actions would be

inexcusable and unintelligible. While her family and town do not know that she is ill, they cannot understand or forgive her rebellion. And, when Valancy learns that she has not been ill, her opinion of her insurrection changes. She returns to her family repentant for much of her rebellious behaviour, specifically for her marriage, and compares herself to the Prodigal Son (198). She feels that her “unashamed love for Barney” becomes “only sordid” (185) once she does not have impending death as an excuse for it. Thus voice one normalizes Valancy’s behaviour by using illness as its impetus and excuse.

Through the Stirlings’ assumption that Valancy is insane, however, voice two mocks the family’s use of disability as a normalizing prosthetic in response to Valancy’s rebellious behaviour. To the Stirlings, insanity, although a “disgrace,” is an excusable reason for choosing to behave in a socially unacceptable way. Although voice one asserts that Valancy’s heart illness is the actual cause of her deviance, voice two shows how her reasons are noble, courageous, and even “Christian” (79). But Valancy’s rebellion is incomprehensible to the Stirlings because it does not conform to their value system, which focuses on fulfilling social norms. After Uncle James asks Valancy, ““Have you no sense of shame?”” she responds, ““Oh, yes. But the things *I* am ashamed of are not the things *you* are ashamed of”” (96). Because her family cannot understand her personal values, like Dr. Stalling, who “[w]hen he could not understand a thing he straightaway condemned it” (100), they assume that her behaviour is condemnable. Therefore, to make Valancy’s defiant and unorthodox rebellion a more “acceptable degree of difference” (Mitchell and Snyder 7), the Stirlings believe that Valancy is mentally ill. Valancy explains to Barney, ““[I]t’s a

comfort to them. They'd rather think me mad than bad. There's no other alternative” (113). Although voice one uses Valancy's heart disease to explain and excuse rebellion, voice two recognizes that Valancy's behaviour is not truly “bad” but merely conforms to a different code of ethics, one which does not judge entirely by community values but instead by individual ideals. By recognizing the merit of Valancy's deviant actions, voice two makes the Stirlings' use of mental illness to normalize Valancy's behaviour ridiculous and contests voice one's use of Valancy's heart disease as a normalizing prosthetic to justify her behaviour.

Voice two also mocks the literary convention that uses consumption to spiritually redeem and thus normalize those characters who die from it. Although Cissy's death greatly relies on the standard Victorian representation of death from tuberculosis as purification, voice two caustically mocks the societal redemption Cissy receives through death. With a sardonic tone, the narrator notes that the community “forgave Cissy splendidly at last” (122) and says, “Death, the miracle worker, suddenly made the thing quite respectable. . . . Society was forgetting all Cecilia's wicked doings and remembering what a pretty, modest little thing she had been” (123). The narrator also notes that at “the back of Valancy's mind” she “was hating the funeral—hating the people who came to stare with curiosity . . .—hating the smugness—hating the dragging, melancholy singing—hating [the minister's] cautious platitudes” (124). Although voice one dramatically and passionately relies on the implications of purity and edification that Cissy's tuberculosis gives to her, voice two, both of the narrative and of Valancy herself, rejects and criticizes Cissy's normalization through illness with equal or even greater vehemence.

Oddly, although voice two challenges how disability is used for normalization, it also associates disability with normality, or at least with conformity, rather than with deviance. In the novel, voice two reverses voice one's assertion that health is normal and disability deviant. Instead, voice two equates health with rebellion and disability with compliance. Primarily, voice two indicates that health signifies rebellion by equating health to nature, which Montgomery always associates with the supernatural and with deviance. In the novel, nature indicates a separation from society, and thus from its rules. Valancy's Blue Castle with Barney is on a secluded island, miles from civilization. The novel always describes the island and its surrounding wilderness in supernatural terms; it is a "realm of mystery and enchantment where anything might happen" (134) and a "fairylane," whereas the town is "reality" (175). Because Barney and Valancy are secluded from the town and from culture's conformity, they claim, "[W]e are outlaws, . . . . We bow to no decrees. We acknowledge no sovereignty" (173). Unlike in the *Emily* series, in *The Blue Castle* nature also indicates health. Barney's persona, nature writer John Foster, describes "nature in opposition to civilization" (Åhmansson "Textual/Sexual" 153), and posits that nature brings life and health to those who are in tune with it. As Foster, Barney writes, "the immortal heart of the woods will beat against ours and its subtle life will steal into our veins" (18). Therefore, voice two associates nature with separation from normality and with healthy life.

This association of health with nature, the supernatural, and deviance is then displayed through Valancy's body. According to Jackie E. Stallcup, it is by being in nature and by breaking from repressive constraints that Valancy becomes healed: she

becomes well by “active” living in a healthy environment (125). Also, Valancy is aligned with both nature and the supernatural the more she rebels and the healthier she becomes. By the time Valancy is fully a part of the Mistawis wilderness and has a healthier weight and complexion, Valancy is “the type [of beauty] that looks its best in the woods—elfin—mocking” (*BC* 150). Her beauty inspires Barney to call her ““elf maiden”” and ““wood sprite”” and to say, ““You belong to the woods”” (157). Thus, Valancy becomes more natural and supernatural in her rebellion, and in rebellion and nature she becomes healthier.

Likewise, Valancy is at her sickest when she is conforming to the constrictive rules of her clan and community. Unfortunately, this has problematic implications about the nature of illness. The narrator describes one winter in which Mrs. Frederick and Cousin Stickles attempted to prevent Valancy’s yearly cold by keeping her in the house all winter; the result was that “Valancy took cold after cold and ended up with bronchitis in June” (15). Later, Valancy notes, ““I haven’t had a cold since I came to Mr. Gay’s—though I’ve done the foolishest things”” (114). It seems then that conformity and social repression cause Valancy’s ill health, and freedom heals it. Thus, Jackie E. Stallcup believes that “[i]t is no accident that Montgomery gives Valancy ‘heart trouble’; the severe and debilitating heart pains that Valancy conceals from her family are both caused by and symbolic of the family’s emotional dysfunction” (125). Similarly, Åhmansson believes that Montgomery makes Valancy’s illness a direct result of the sexual repression her family forces upon her in order to satirize repressive Scottish-Presbyterian society (“Textual/Sexual Space” 149-151). Here lies the problem with this aspect of voice two. While Åhmansson and

Stallcup both recognize that the heart illness is a metaphor for sexual repression and for the Stirling family's tyranny over Valancy, neither sees anything wrong with this representation of illness; they seem to think that it is an appropriate way to encourage female freedom, because, to them, health implies or is equivalent to liberty. As in voice two Valancy's illness correlates with conformity and thus normality, it also indicates that the disabled person is somehow at fault for her illness. In the end, this viewpoint suggests that illness is a punishment for compliance rather than deviance and that it occurs because the ill person accepts her social situation. Although the reversed associations of disability with normality and health with rebellion challenge the conventional portrayal of disability in literature, illness nonetheless seems to be devalued by voice two.

However, the dialogue produced between the two voices reveals that it is not the materiality of disability that is either deviant or normalizing, but rather that the *social construct* of disability acts either as a deviance or a normalization. The main way the novel reveals this is through the diagnoses that Valancy receives. Through most of the novel, Valancy experiences the *illness* or *disability* of "angina pectoris . . . complicated with an aneurism" (34), even though her *biological* or *psychological disease* is pseudo-angina. Because Valancy believes the first diagnosis she receives from her doctor, her social experience of illness is that of having a fatal heart disease. S. Kay Toombs explains that in the social experience of sickness, the "significance of past, present and future may change" and that "[i]n the case of life-threatening disorders, the future disappears" (69). After Valancy is diagnosed with a fatal illness, she realizes that she no longer need fear future poverty, age, or old-maidhood (*BC*

37), and so chooses to live every moment in “[o]nly this rapturous present” (*BC* 153). Not until she receives the correct diagnosis and discovers she is not dying do thoughts of the future re-enter her life. Also, the Stirlings’ attempts at prosthetizing her behaviour by reading it as insanity cause Valancy to experience partially the social construct of mental illness. The constructed disability of insanity forced upon Valancy works both to normalize her, as discussed earlier, and to emphasize her behavioural difference. Valancy’s biological or psychological impairments have only a little bearing on the effect of the socially constructed and experienced disability. Thus, although voice two seems to equate biological sickness with social compliance, the dialogue reveals that disability is a social construct used to create or remove deviance and to privilege the norm.

#### Medicalization, Social Control, and Pervasive Illness

Because voice two reveals that disability is a social construct, it also reveals a critique of the medicalization of disability. In her article “Expert Advice and Women’s Authority,” Stallcup analyzes how Montgomery viewed medical advancements, particularly in raising children. She concludes that while Montgomery “does not reject the scientific approach” (123), she treats medicine suspiciously because it concentrates on the “physical issues” and ignores the “emotional or psychological needs” of the patients (124). While voice one’s emphasis on Dr. Trent’s specialization and authority on heart disease implies a confidence in medicine, it is tempered with voice two’s poignant distrust of doctors. Valancy does not like Dr. Ambrose, fears Dr. Trent, and recognizes Dr. Redfern as the fraud that he

is. Also, Dr. Trent's error in sending the wrong diagnoses to the wrong patients and his lack of guilt about it reveal how the medicalized view of disability completely disregards the social aspect of disability. When Dr. Trent discovers that he sent Valancy and Miss Sterling the wrong letter of diagnosis, he dismisses how the note would have affected the dying woman: "Well, well, it couldn't have made any difference. Her case was hopeless. Nothing that she could have done or left undone could have made any difference" (182-183). Because one has just read how great a difference the diagnosis made in Valancy's life—learning of her impending death changed the way she viewed herself and her community and transformed her character and behaviour—one knows that Dr. Trent is wrong. The letter may have made a great difference in Miss Sterling's life, even if the information it held would not have prevented her death. Therefore, voice two criticizes the medicalization of the disability and emphasizes the social nature of disability.

Also, because voice two reveals that disability is a social construct used for social control, it also shows how the battle for control takes place through Valancy's body. Valancy first rebels by taking control of her biological illness and wrenching it from the realm of social construct. Her first act of rebellion is to consult secretly a doctor of whom her family disapproves. Then, after she receives the fatal diagnosis, Valancy chooses to keep the medical definition of her body from entering the social realm; to prevent the "indignation," "solicitude," judgement, advice, and inspection that would result in revealing her diagnosis (37-8), she decides to keep her disease to herself. Although Valancy has some of the social experience of angina pectoris as the social and even literary construct of those experiencing fatal illnesses affect her

behaviour,<sup>30</sup> she still does not experience the whole social construct of fatal illness that would have been inflicted upon her by her community had they known of her medical diagnosis. By keeping her illness a secret, as well as in refusing to see more doctors, Valancy takes control of her medical diagnosis and thus rebels against social readings of her body.

Through Valancy's humorous acts of autonomy, voice two criticizes how voice one entangles Valancy's sexuality and sickness when her sexuality is really an issue of power, not of health. Valancy's first acts of post-diagnosis deviance have to do with claiming control of her own body in a sexualized way: she slides (possibly astride) down a banister (47), she loosens her hair from its tight pompadour (48), and then purchases a daring colourful dress that accentuates her figure and bares her arms and neck in a way that makes her feel "indecent" and "undressed" (102-03). When she wears the dress in public, the narrator again adopts the Stirling voice for the purpose of humour: "She would certainly come down with bronchitis—and die at Roaring Abel's" (118). Through the ironic tone in the narrator's aside, voice two disassembles the association of female sexuality and disability and reveals how the social construct of disability arbitrarily normalizes or explains female sexuality.

Voice two also challenges the association of health with normality and disability with difference by making sickness and disability completely pervasive. *The Blue Castle* is stocked with characters who are smearing Redfern's Liniment, popping Purple Pills and Bitters, and forever seeing doctors. Nearly everyone in the

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<sup>30</sup> Valancy's reaction to her diagnosis is not unlike that of the legendary "Doc Holliday" or that of George Monroe (Kevin Kline) in *Life as a House* (2001), Ann (Sarah Polley) in *My Life Without Me* (2003), George Bird (Alec Guinness) in *Last Holiday* (1950) or Georgia Byrd (Queen Latifah) in *Last Holiday* (2006).

novel is ill at one time or another without any special meaning being attached to his or her temporary sickness. Even Barney Snaith, whom one would expect to be a pillar of health because of the alignment of health with nature and deviance, has a terrible bout of sickness that almost develops into pneumonia. His father, the Dr. Redfern who invented the medicines every character is swallowing and spreading, also complains of having rheumatism. Yet, voice one presents the major illnesses (Valancy's heart disease and Cissy's consumption): "as isolated cases" (Mitchell and Snyder 29). But voice two mocks the suppression of sickness: "Once Valancy sneezed. Now, in the Stirling code, it was very bad form to sneeze in public" (30). To say "Once Valancy sneezed," to pretend that sneezing is a rare occasion and that Valancy alone has committed the socially unacceptable act of sneezing, further clarifies the foolishness of viewing sickness as "isolated cases": most people sneeze. Viewing Valancy and Cissy as enigmas because of their illnesses is made ludicrous since nearly every character has some kind of sickness for some amount of time. As Lennard J. Davis says, "Impairment is the rule, and normalcy is the fantasy" (*Bending Over Backwards* 31); because sickness is so pervasive in the novel, the dialogue produced between voices one and two proves that disability and deviance are reality, and that normality and health are fiction.

Throughout *The Blue Castle*, most everyone is sick, and there is a focus on cure; however, the impossibility, silliness, and temporality of remedy are always apparent. Cousin Stickles' back never improves, no matter how much she spreads liniment on it. Dr. Redfern, inventor of an anti-baldness remedy, is hairless. Even Barney cannot escape ill health. Disability is constant and ineradicable from this novel.

And the feebleness of every cure in the novel discloses the tenuousness of the narrative's "cure." Although the narrative's final resolution attempts to find an acceptable balance between social deviance and normality by reuniting Barney and Valancy with each other and with their families, and by having them split their time between the city and Mistawis, this ending feels false, trite, and brittle. Lennard J. Davis in discussing the theory of narrative prosthesis notices the frailty of the resolutions of stories about disability:

[T]he quick fix, the cure, has to be repeated endlessly, like a patent medicine, because it actually cures nothing. Novels have to tell this story over and over again, as do films and television, since the patient never stays cured and the disabled, cured individually, refuse to stop reappearing as a group. (*Bending Over Backwards* 99)

Therefore, by simultaneously aligning both deviance and normality with disability and health, the dialogue produced by the double voice of *The Blue Castle* above all reveals the open-endedness of its own discourse, "like a spring of dialogism that never runs dry" (Bakhtin 330). Although the narrative structure of *The Blue Castle* works through voice one to prostheticize and solve disability, voice two, or "authorial imp," reveals the frailty of its narrative prosthesis by undermining voice one's fundamental preconception that health implies normality and that disability indicates deviance. Like *The Blue Castle*, in the three novels of the *Emily* series, *Emily of New Moon*, *Emily Climbs*, and *Emily's Quest*, disability and deviance are only superficially removed. Both disability and deviance continue to reappear in the *Emily* trilogy, defying the narrative quick fixes intended to subdue them.

### Chapter Three

#### Queer Elves and Consumptive Poets: Disability in the *Emily* Trilogy

The *Emily* trilogy poses a quandary for the critics studying it, primarily because of the extreme difference in the tone, outlook, and narrative style between the third novel, *Emily's Quest*, and the earlier two novels, *Emily of New Moon* and *Emily Climbs*. Most critics suggest that the last novel is “completely at odds with the narrative drive of the first two novels” (Campbell 137), and is an abandonment of the subversion and female autonomy so prevalent in the rest of the series. Three scholars, Mary Henley Rubio, Marie Campbell, and Mary Margaret Kempla grapple with the change in *Emily's Quest* by including *The Blue Castle* as a part of the *Emily* books, saying that it is a rebellion against the courtship plot formula (“Subverting” 31-32, Campbell 143) and a contrast to the unhappy tone in *Emily's Quest* (Kempla 86). Others approach each novel as a separate part of a whole to account for or explain away the difference in *Emily's Quest*. Elizabeth Epperley, in *The Fragrance of Sweet Grass*, argues that although *Emily's Quest* relies on “versions of [romantic] formulae,” it nonetheless uses allusions to *Jane Eyre*, *Aurora Leigh*, and *The Story of an African Farm* to subvert the limitations placed on the courtship genre (205-6). Likewise, Gwendolyn Ann Guth in *Interplay in the “Emily” Trilogy* argues that *Emily's Quest* does not undermine the subversion of the earlier texts; she claims that by marrying Teddy, Emily is able to have sexual and artistic fulfillment that will not supersede her individuality (109).

While I agree with the critics that the tone, the feel, and even the double-voiced dialogue of the final *Emily* book are entirely different from that of the first two books, I nonetheless argue that the trilogy is a complete and fluid work, and that the difference is due to each novel's respective role in the narrative prosthesis of the whole series.<sup>31</sup> The major narrative role of *Emily of New Moon* is to accomplish the first task of narrative prosthesis, the exposition of the heroine's deviance. Each secondary character introduced and each episodic chapter in this novel serves to increase or expose Emily's difference, which is that she is a writer with tubercular tendencies. *Emily Climbs* explicates the origin of Emily's physical and social deviation, making it the crux of the narrative and the main concern of Emily's adoptive family. The novel explains that Emily's mother is the source of her social deviance, and the narrative focus is the fear of her maternally inherited sexuality. And finally, the role of *Emily's Quest* is to remove and rehabilitate the social deviances and the physical disabilities that represent them, resolving the narrative according to the courtship formula. Thus, all disabled and deviant characters either die or fade from the narrative, and Emily's deviances are remedied through her romantic relationships: in the end, she chooses a partner who is partially socially deviant because he is an artist, yet is "normal" enough, both physically and socially, for a complete resolution of deviance.

Although the final resolution does not come until the third book, the first two novels can also stand as complete works because of their episodic nature. The narrative structure *Emily of New Moon* and *Emily Climbs* consists of chapters with

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<sup>31</sup> See pages 12 and 13 of Chapter one for the explanation of the steps of Mitchell and Snyder's theory of narrative prosthesis.

titles, such as “Trial By Fire” or “Check for Miss Brownell,” that describe the particular situation that the chapter resolves. The episodes within the chapters follow the same pattern of prosthesis—exposition, explanation, and then resolution of deviance. The episodic nature of the first two novels gives a feeling of closure to each book as the episodes remove or at least prosthetically hide minor deviances within their conclusions and even rely upon disability to do so. However, the overall plot structures in the first two novels do not seek to resolve deviance or disability; rather they seek to first expose it in *Emily of New Moon* and next to explain it in *Emily Climbs*. *Emily’s Quest*, however, has untitled chapters broken into numbered sections, not necessarily by the events described in the story, but rather according to tone shifts or passage of time. Montgomery drops the episodic structure in *Emily’s Quest* because episodes are no longer needed to create a feeling of closure. Instead, in the series’ finale, closure is reached when Emily’s major deviances are removed or normalized, along with most of the deviances and disabilities of the secondary characters.

In the *Emily* books, there are layers of double voice that complicate the dialogue about disability. Bakhtin notes that “[t]he ambiguity of double-voiced discourse is internally dialogized, fraught with dialogue, and may in fact even give birth to dialogues comprised of truly separate voices” (330). The double voice in the *Emily* series is dually-layered. The series’ double-voice consists of one voice in which disability signifies deviance and another that breaks down the association of deviance with disability. However, the voice that links disability and deviance is also double-voiced, with one voice privileging control and conformity, and another

privileging abnormality and deviance. To simplify the labelling of these voices, I will call the voice that privileges normality “voice one,” the voice that privileges deviance “voice two,” and the voice that undermines the presumption of that disability signifies deviance “voice three,” even though it acts as a voice two to the double voice of voices one and two. There are two layers of double-voiced dialogue: one in which voices one and two dialogue about whether to place privilege upon normality or deviance, and another in which voice three dialogues with the double voice of the first two about whether deviance and disability are inherently connected. Voice one, which views disability as a solvable difficulty and privileges normality and health, works through the series’ plot structure as a whole to remove deviance and disability from the narrative. Voice two, which privileges disability and deviance and disdains normality and convention, challenges voice one through the subtext of the novels and through the lack of resolution of the heroine’s deviance in the first two novels. Then, voice three subverts the premise that disability is equal to deviance by challenging literary metaphors and by implying that disability is a social construct. This dually-layered, double-voiced dialogue produces an unending “spring of dialogism” (Bakhtin 330) that makes the distinction between disability and normality ambiguous.

### *Emily of New Moon*

Mitchell and Snyder explain in *Narrative Prosthesis* that the first step in narrative structure is always to identify “a deviance or marked difference” (53), and that stories regularly express the social deviation through “textually marked bodies” (54). In the *Emily* trilogy, this first step is *Emily of New Moon*’s main role: the deviance of the heroine, Emily Byrd Starr, is exposed within the first page, expanded

on throughout the text, and reemphasized on the last page. Throughout the first novel, her deviance is associated with her paternal inheritance, which is deeply linked with tuberculosis.<sup>32</sup> A host of deviant and disabled secondary characters pervades the narrative, and voices one and two use it to reaffirm Emily's deviance and to emphasize the link between disability and social difference. Voice three, however, indicates how the non-deviant body can be used to express social deviance, revealing that disability is a social construct. Although this novel primarily fulfills the first step of narrative prosthesis, the conclusion relies upon Emily's measles to resolve the deviance of a family of secondary characters, the Burnleys.

There are four main ways in which Emily is socially deviant: social separation or isolation, inappropriate speech and rebellious behaviour, supernatural experiences, and art. These four routes of Emily's deviation are all tied to the signs of tuberculosis that mark her body. Emily's tubercular tendencies, which are never openly stated (except by speculating family members) but are constantly implied in descriptions of her "pale" and "delicate" face (5), mark her as separate, first from the community, and secondly from her maternal family, the Murrays. When they first see her after her father's death, they note her pallor and discuss how she is physically unlike their family, all the while implying that her behaviour is equally disparate (29). While the Murrays raise Emily, they treat her as different because of her health. Aunt Elizabeth forces her to eat well and drink only cambric tea because, as Emily writes in letters to

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<sup>32</sup> Although *Emily of New Moon* was written when it was accepted that tuberculosis was contagious, the setting of the story is before the turn of the century, when inheritance was still considered by the public, if not by medicine, a major factor in contracting the disease. According to Caldwell, even after the public accepted the germ theory, inheritance was often considered to affect one's chance of catching the disease (35). For further analysis on the changing cultural and medical context of tuberculosis, see Mark Caldwell's *The Last Crusade: The War on Consumption 1862-1951*, F.B. Smith's *The Retreat of Tuberculosis 1850-1950*, and Rene and Jean Dubois's *The White Plague*.

her dead father, “it is best for [her] health” since she is “threatened with consumption” (252). The narrator describes Emily’s socially deviant passion in terms of consumption; her emotional deviance makes her “cheeks crimson” (40) and complexion “pale as the dead” (136). The Murrays associate her vocal deviance and unruly behaviour with her paternal inheritance (which always implicitly includes the inheritance of consumption) in phrases such as “There’s the Starr blood coming out” (40). Emily’s main connection to the supernatural, “the flash,” a brief but recurring experience in which Emily views “the enchanting realm beyond” (7), further segregates her from normality. The flash, too, is described in terms that are both erotic and tubercular: it makes her “breathless” (7), leaves her “tingling all over” (53), and causes her “soul . . . to cast aside the bonds of flesh” (80).<sup>33</sup> The narrator also depicts the heroine’s writing, another deviation from the norms of the Murrays and Blair Water, in terms of tuberculosis: Emily writes “feverishly” (93), while “her cheeks flushed and her eyes shone” (41). Each aspect of Emily’s deviance is linked to her marked body, which others describe and read as tubercular.

Although in *Emily of New Moon* the Murray family tends to speak in voice one, privileging normality and viewing disability and deviance as problems to be solved, voice two concludes that disability and deviance are both nobler and more interesting than normality. While the Murrays believe and hope that “[w]ith wise and careful training, [Emily’s] faults may be cured” (39), Emily, along with voice two, firmly declares: “I like *my* faults better than I do *your* . . . your *abominable* virtues”

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<sup>33</sup>Of course, the association of sex and consumption has a long history. See Sontag’s *Illness as Metaphor* (25), Linda and Michael Hutcheons’s “Famous Last Breaths: The Tubercular Heroine in Opera” (6), and F.B. Smith’s *The Retreat of Tuberculosis* (223-31). For a further discussion of the erotic nature of “the flash,” see Gammel’s “Safe Pleasures” (115-116, 121) and “Dis/Pleasure in L.M. Montgomery” (44-45).

(39). Voice two privileges Emily's vocal transgressions and presents them as humorous, true, and often very profound. The narrator, using voice two, regularly comments on and takes pleasure in the lack of punishment or prosthesis of Emily's behavioural deviance: "in a proper yarn Emily should either have been found out and punished for disobedience or been driven by an uneasy conscience to confess; but I am sorry—or ought to be—to have to state that Emily's conscience never worried her about the matter at all" (133-4). While the statement "I am sorry" seems to be speaking from voice one's point of view, the interjection "or ought to be" is clearly voice two presenting the possibility of privileging deviance.

Another way voice two privileges deviance and disability is through the disabled secondary characters that play a paternal role in Emily's life. Douglas Starr, a journalist with tuberculosis, Cousin Jimmy, a poet with acquired brain injuries, and Dean Priest, a highly literate man with a hunchback and lame leg, are all fatherly mentors that inspire and encourage Emily in her social deviance and writing.<sup>34</sup> Like Emily, these men are socially deviant due to isolation, abnormal or rebellious speech and behaviour, connections to the supernatural, and artistry in words. And, like Emily, their social deviances correlate with their disabilities according to cultural and literary stereotypes. Although voice one views the disabilities and deviances of the secondary characters as hindrances both to themselves and to Emily's normality,<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Mr. Carpenter, an alcoholic failed-poet-turned-teacher, could likely be added to this list. He reads Emily's writing in the final chapter of *New Moon* and plays a role as a mentor and editor in the next two novels. However, I am choosing to leave him out of the discussion of this novel as I will focus more on his role in the discussion of *Emily's Quest*.

<sup>35</sup> Some critics, such as Kate Lawson and Judith Miller, read the disabilities of the paternal characters solely in this way. Kate Lawson says, "the adult males . . . [are] systematically shown to be weak or impaired or marginal. Emily's beloved father, Douglas Starr, is consumptive . . . Cousin Jimmy is loving but 'a bit simple' . . . Mr. Carpenter, is a drunk and a failure. . . . Finally, 'Jarback' Priest, the most troubling of Emily's adult male acquaintances, is physically deformed" (25).

voice two privileges these characters and their disabilities. Just as Emily and Cousin Jimmy prefer the old orchard, where “trees had come up at their own sweet will, and grown into individual shapes and sizes” (63), over the new one, “a rather commonplace spot . . . cultivated . . . in [the] most up-to-date fashion” (62), so voice two prefers the uncontrolled and uncontrollable bodies and personalities to the “commonplace” socially cultivated ones.

Although he dies of consumption in the novel’s third chapter, Douglas Starr is a constant source of deviant inspiration and influence for Emily through the letters she writes him in *Emily of New Moon*. He also sets the precedent for the reception and comprehension of Emily’s tubercular tendencies. Douglas, “separated from the community by both his intelligence and his illness” (Prycer 268), fulfills the ““Artistic Genius”” stereotype that links creative genius to consumption (Prycer 264). In the nineteenth century, consumption was associated with “qualities assigned to the lungs” of spirituality and ethereality (Sontag 17). His tuberculosis also connects him to an ethereal spirituality, which the narrator describes as “love . . . breathed out from some great, invisible, hovering Tenderness” (*ENM* 18). Emily and Douglas’s last name, “Starr,” further emphasizes their tubercular ethereality: as Dean explains to Emily, ““Starr should have been your first name[; y]ou look like a star—you have a radiant sort of personality shining through you”” (267). Douglas’s verbal deviance, which Emily often gets into trouble for quoting, his social deviance, which is mainly that he is ““a poor young journalist”” (14), and his disease, tuberculosis, are all infused into how the text portrays and the Murrays read Emily. Emily’s paternal inheritance increases her queerness, and though voice one, spoken by the authoritative Murrays,

presents her oddity as something to overcome, voice two valorizes her deviant paternal heritage.

The second paternal mentor introduced to Emily is Cousin Jimmy, her mother's cousin who composes poetry he never writes down and whom the town calls "simple" because of brain injuries acquired from being pushed down a well in his childhood by the novel's authoritarian figure, Aunt Elizabeth. Cousin Jimmy represents another literary stereotype of privileged disability, that of the "fool." The literary fool "see[s] the underside and the falseness of every situation" (Bakhtin 159), has "wisdom beyond madness" (Martin 14), and is known for "unselfish simplicity and his healthy failure to understand" (Bakhtin 162). Cousin Jimmy is always able to perceive truth that others cannot and regularly solves complex situations by speaking wise adages viewed by the other characters as having their source in his mental disability (171, 323).<sup>36</sup> Voices one and two also present Jimmy's disability as the root of his poetry and of his connection with the supernatural. It is in Cousin Jimmy's "queer spells," or as he puts it, "'when the spirit moves [him]'" (67), that he is most poetic, and looks most "like some old gnome or troll" (142). The narrator emphasizes even his physical abnormalities when describing his poetry: "He was an odd, ridiculous figure enough, bent and wrinkled and unkempt, gesticulating awkwardly as he recited" (142). Although his "spells" can frighten Emily (69, 99), they also appeal to her and connect him to her through his poetry, making the two poets "an odd

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<sup>36</sup> This "uncanny" ability of Jimmy's to solve or appraise problems with wise sayings comes into play in *Emily Climbs* as well. In this way, Jimmy's disability acts prosthetically to the narratives of a number of episodes in the first two novels. By *Emily's Quest*, however, Jimmy's almost supernatural intelligence is all but gone.

couple” (142). Similarly, although Cousin Jimmy’s disability is represented by voice one as deficient, it remains privileged by voice two as a disturbing creative force.

The third disabled father figure that Emily gains in *New Moon* is Dean Priest, her father’s college friend, known as “Jarback” to the rest of the community because “one shoulder was a trifle higher than the other” (263). Dean is probably the most socially as well as the most physically transgressive character in the series. He is known for “his ironic tongue” and for being a “cynic” (265), believes in “the transmigration of souls” (275), and throughout is associated with foreignness because of his travels and literary knowledge. Voices one and two connect Dean’s physical deviation with both his foreign supernaturality and his verbal artistry. Irene Gammel calls Dean “a lame Hephaestus figure, deformed and exiled, yet able to win the heart of a beautiful woman by dressing and caressing her body with artful verbal webs and chains” (“Eros”109). Dean evokes the literary figure Hephaestus not only through his limp and back, but also through the Greek myths he tells Emily about constellations (*ENM* 329) and by the “cobweb fetter” he throws over her (271), which recall Hephaestus’s chains, made “like fine webs of a spider, that nobody would notice” (Homer 8.280), in order to imprison his wife Aphrodite and her lover Ares. Because Hephaestus is the god of craftsmanship, Dean’s body is connected to his artful language, the material that builds the “cobweb fetter” and takes Emily into “wonderlands of fancy” (*ENM* 272). Just as Emily is with Cousin Jimmy’s oddity, so she is both intimidated by and attracted to the differences that Dean encapsulates. Because of their “common ‘queerness’” (Gammel “Eros” 109), Emily is able to deduce immediately that “Dean Priest was sealed of her tribe” and thus shares her

poetry with him (*ENM* 269). While recurrent warnings that Emily “never marry a Priest”<sup>37</sup> and Aunt Elizabeth’s mistrust of Dean express voice one, voice two privileges his difference as it enhances Emily’s.

While voices one and two rely on literary stereotypes of disability to emphasize difference, voice three within the novel ridicules and challenges those stereotypes. Voice three mocks the connection between artistic genius and consumption in a double-voiced statement made by Emily. She says, “I hope also that I will be silph-like. A poetess should be silph-like” (99). In her sincere wish to fulfill the literary stereotype of the consumptive poet, Emily unconsciously indicates how feeble and silly is the connection voices one and two make between physical waning and poetry. The spelling error and the sentimentality make the link even more laughable. Voice three also mocks the connection of spirituality and invalidism through the reference to *The Memoirs of Anzonetta B. Peters*, a story of an invalid child converted to Christianity. Emily is admonished by her Aunt Elizabeth to be like Anzonetta (in other words, to behave properly), but when she speaks in hymns, attempting to conform to the stereotype Anzonetta portrays, she is misunderstood. Thus, the impracticality and foolishness of the link between spirituality and illness become clear (100). Father Cassidy, another brief paternal mentor for Emily, also mocks the literary stereotypes of disability in a double-voiced manner. While pretending to help Emily with her epic poem, *Child of the Sea*, he mocks how literature uses scars and birthmarks as indicators of heredity, personality, back-story, and as the prosthetic to solve or tie up the story: “And now her lover comes back very much alive, although covered with Paynim scars, and the secret av her birth is

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<sup>37</sup> Dean does eventually become a plausible lover for Emily in the latter books.

discovered through the dying confession av the old nurse and the birthmark on her arm” (199). His mock-seriousness and Irish accent serve to undermine the literary conventions. By ridiculing the literary stereotypes that rely upon disability to emphasize difference, voice three dialogically challenges the connection between disability and deviance in the double voice of voices one and two.

Voice three also diminishes the correlation of disability and deviance by depicting how able bodies can also be used to express deviance. Three of the novel’s most socially deviant characters, Dr. Burnley, Ilse, and Perry, are embodiments of health.<sup>38</sup> Dr. Burnley and his daughter, Ilse, are known for going into venomous rages and saying outrageous and inappropriate things. Perry, the Murray’s hired boy, deviates from social norms by verbally defying authorities, making absurd jokes, and acting presumptuously above his social class. The excuse for or source of Perry and the Burnleys’ deviance is usually seen as social rather than biological. Dr. Burnley is warped because he believes his wife left him for her cousin; Ilse is wild because of a lack of parental supervision, and Perry because he was raised in the slum, Stovepipe Town. Nonetheless, the normal bodies of the Burnleys and Perry express deviance. They are all exceptionally active bodies, and their very mobility is deviant. Ilse is “vivid and mobile” (81), moves “with a bound” (82), and uses her able body to emphasize her abnormality by wearing short hair, bare feet, and ragged old dresses.<sup>39</sup> Perry enters the story as “a sturdy body dashing past [Emily]” (150), and later uses

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<sup>38</sup> There is one brief spell in which Perry nearly dies of measles, but one effect of this is to reveal how his deviance is appreciated and missed even by the authoritative Elizabeth (328).

<sup>39</sup> Also, in *Emily Climbs*, when Ilse is being criticized for not upholding her social role as a female through accomplishment in baking and embroidery, she lifts one foot level with her eyes to show what she *can* accomplish (*EC* 66). Here Ilse flagrantly uses her able body to reveal her deviance (as well as her undergarments—she would, of course, have been wearing a skirt).

his naked body to rebel against social convention while simultaneously obeying a command (170). Emily's description of Dr. Burnley's rages reveals that his healthy body is actively deviant: "His big yellow eyes blazed and he tore about and kicked over a chair and threw a mat at the wall and fired a vase out of the window and said *terrible things*" (127). By showing how able bodies can be deviant ones as well, voice three challenges the assumption in voices one and two that deviance and disability are equivalent.

The deviance of these able bodies, however, is also as privileged by voice two as that of the deviant bodies. Emily cannot "drag her fascinated eyes from [Ilse's face]" (81), sits gawking at Dr. Burnley's rage "like one fassinated [sic]" (127), and sees in Perry's appearance "a certain forceful attraction of his own" (150). Yet, Emily describes being "disappointed because [Dr. Burnley] looks just like other people" (96). Although this statement seems to support the inference that ability is normality, and disability an exciting other, her belief that "a man who didn't believe in God would look queer in some way" (95) is comical, and the mocking undertone of the statement makes the future association of Dean's disabled body with his agnosticism less credible. In this way, Dr. Burnley's able body and deviant actions challenge the literary convention of disabled bodies reflecting abnormal behaviour. Although voice two still privileges the deviance of able bodies, voice three uses the abnormality of able-bodied characters to challenge the association of deviance and disability.

Voice three not only weakens the connection between deviance and disability, but also indicates that disability is primarily a social construct used for social control. It does this mainly through Cousin Jimmy's view of the community's interpretation

of his brain injuries. Although there is a physical reason for his deviance, Jimmy believes that his difference is purely social. He says, “Folks say that I’ve never been quite right since [falling down the well]—but they only say that because I’m a poet, and because nothing ever worries me. Poets are so scarce in Blair Water folks don’t understand them, and most people worry so much, they think you’re not right if you don’t worry” (67).<sup>40</sup> Jimmy also recognizes that his label of “simple” allows those who are considered normal to have a control over him. He explains that since he gave his first month’s wages away to a beggar, his finances are taken over by Elizabeth, the woman deemed responsible for his disability as well as for his wellbeing (67-68). In voice three, the narrator refers to Jimmy’s disability in a vague way that supports Jimmy’s own reading of his disability as a social construct, saying, “Blair Water people *thought* Cousin Jimmy a failure and a mental weakling” (142 emphasis added), and that had he not been pushed into a well, he “might have stood in the presence of kings”<sup>41</sup> (142-143). Voice one complicates voice three’s representation of Jimmy as socially disabled when he notes that the community does not label Dr. Burnley’s social deviance as disability: “[Dr. Burnley]’s a good doctor but an odd stick—odder by far than I am, Emily, and yet nobody ever says he’s not all there” (74). His question to Emily, “Can you account for that?” (74), has double-voiced answers. Voices one and two indicate that Jimmy’s past physical injuries “account” for his labelling. However, voice three indicates that it is because Burnley is a “good

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<sup>40</sup>In Montgomery’s journals, this was a major complaint about her husband’s mental illness: “But Ewan never worries over *anything*, except the things normal people do *not* worry over. . . . Any normal person worries a little over real difficulties” (*SJ* III 90-91).

<sup>41</sup> Montgomery similarly describes her great uncle, James MacNeil, who composed and recited great poetry, but never wrote it down. In *The Alpine Path*, she says, “Circumstances compelled him to spend his life on a remote Prince Edward Island farm; had he had the advantages of education that are within reach of any schoolboy to-day, I am convinced he would have been neither mute nor inglorious” (15).

doctor,” or rather because he has a respectable and valued profession, he is considered able-minded. Jimmy’s poetry, flower-gardening, and lack of property (the farm belongs to Elizabeth), are the reasons he is considered “not all there.”<sup>42</sup> Although voices one and two rely on literary stereotypes to valorize Jimmy’s disability and difference, voice three indicates that Jimmy’s disability is a social construct created to explain and understand his deviance.

Like Jimmy, Emily regularly fights how her body is read according to literary and cultural stereotypes, even though voices one and two associate her marked body and biology with her deviance. Through her protestations, voice three discloses the weakness of the link between deviance and disability and reveals how the Murrays attempt to curb Emily’s behaviour by controlling her body. Although Emily originally loves being called “elfkin” by her father (34), she comes to dislike strongly how people repeatedly read her pointed ears as indicators of a connection to the supernatural realm (250, 267) or how people view her face as being ethereal like a star (333). She especially contests being read as consumptive and having her behaviour read as connected to her body. Aunt Ruth attacks Emily with criticisms of her consumptive height, pride, pale face and dark hair, saying, “‘I’m telling you your faults so you may correct them’” (297). But Emily objects to the mixing of her body and her behaviour: “‘It *isn’t* my fault that my face is pale and my hair black. . . . I can’t correct that’” (297). Emily also refuses to allow her body to be controlled when

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<sup>42</sup> Ian Menzies also argues that Jimmy’s disability is a social construct for the purposes of social control, saying, “Under the disclaimer that cousin Jimmy is odd because of childhood brain trauma . . . he loses his inheritance and is denied access to the owning of money, thereby the right to decision making” (50). But Menzies argues that this differentiation has to do with expectations of gender that decree, “men who write poetry must be considered to have failed to grow up” (50). However, throughout the series there is equal concern about Emily’s writing being equivalent or leading to insanity or mental disability. The main problem with Jimmy’s writing is that it does not produce money, and thus is seen as a waste, whereas Emily’s eventually becomes profitable.

Aunt Elizabeth attempts to cut Emily's hair to cure abnormal behaviour of "languor" and "mop[ing]" (105). Instead, Emily changes her behaviour without changing her body: after refusing to have her hair cut, she recognizes that the dissolution of her friendship with Rhoda, the reason for her sadness, was inconsequential and she moves on. Through these examples of Emily's rebellion, voice three advocates the separation of the body from behaviour and points out how deviance is read as disability in order to punish and control it.

For most of *Emily of New Moon*, the Murrays and the narrator associate Emily's deviance with her paternal inheritance. However, as the novel draws to a close, Emily's maternal inheritance becomes the main concern as the source of Emily's deviance.<sup>43</sup> From the beginning there are hints that sexual deviance from Emily's maternal inheritance is a matter of apprehension for the Murrays: the two physical features she has inherited from her mother, Juliet, are her smile (5) and lengthy eye-lashes (29), the sexual potential of which are regularly commented on by the narrator and secondary characters such as Jock Kelly or Aunt Nancy.<sup>44</sup> But it is not until the third last chapter that the fear of maternally inherited aberration and the need to control it is directly stated: "Emily was on the verge of beginning to grow up . . . Emily must not be allowed to get out of hand now, lest later on she make shipwreck as her mother had done—or as Elizabeth Murray firmly believed she had done. There were, in short, to be no more elopements from New Moon" (304).

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<sup>43</sup> Emily's mother is deviant because, while attending school, she eloped with Douglas Starr against the wishes of her family. This deviance is also tied to consumption: Juliet dies from an illness that goes unnamed until it is identified as consumption in *Emily's Quest*.

<sup>44</sup> Kate Lawson argues that Elizabeth and Laura's control of Emily's developing body occurs earlier in the novel when they force her to wear a "baby-apron" and disapprove of her association with Teddy Kent (32).

Strangely, the “alien growth” which Elizabeth feels she must snip from Emily in order to prevent future elopement is her writing (305), which has hitherto been associated with the consumptive inheritance from Douglas. Suddenly, Emily’s major source of deviance, her writing, is disassociated from her father and realigned with her mother.<sup>45</sup> In revealing this, the novel begins the process of explaining the origin of Emily’s deviance and of making it the crux of the story.

While presenting maternal inheritance as the perceived origin of Emily’s deviance suggests the next step of narrative prosthesis, which is the explication of the origin of the heroine’s deviance, voice one uses maternal inheritance in *Emily of New Moon* to prostheticize the deviance of the Burnley family. At the novel’s conclusion, Emily has a vision in a measles-induced fever that leads to the discovery of the body of Dr. Burnley’s wife, Beatrice, proving that she had not left him and Ilse for another man, but had fallen down a well and never been found. Disability and maternal inheritance play a double role in this story as a scar marks Beatrice Burnley’s face and Emily’s feverish vision is associated with her maternal great-grandmother’s “second sight.” Kate Lawson explains that “[t]he story of Ilse’s mother, and in particular Emily’s Gothicized hallucination of [Beatrice’s] death, becomes the reservoir into which Emily’s anxieties concerning sexual maturity and the relation to the maternal are displaced” (34). Anxieties that Emily and her community feel about socially deviant sexuality are expressed through Beatrice’s body. Before Mrs.

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<sup>45</sup> Lawson notes that while the Murrays “are at first fearful that Emily will ‘take after’ her father—that is, will be consumptive[, t]hey soon put aside this worry, however, and instead closely monitor her behaviour for signs that she ‘takes after’ her mother, that is, that her mother’s sexually rebellious personality is emerging” (31). However, Lawson does not comment on the fact that consumption is very much tied to the concept of Emily’s sexuality, nor does she note how writing is strongly tied with both her consumptive tendencies and her sexuality.

Burnley's innocence is proven, her heart-shaped birthmark supersedes and prescribes her identity, classifying her as a sexually expressive: Emily's Aunt Nancy explains that she "never could see anything but that mark," and that Beatrice and her birthmark are interchangeably called "The Ace of Hearts" because she is known for being "a flirt" (257). Emily's maternal inheritance of deviance becomes entangled with Beatrice's physically marked body through Emily's apprehension about maternal sexuality and through her maternally inherited clairvoyance.

But before the origin of Emily's difference via maternal inheritance can be expanded on, Emily's fever prosthetically resolves the sexual difference that Beatrice Burnley represented and thus provides the prosthetic ending for the novel. It reinstates the misrepresented woman's reputation and memory to the Burnley family, restores Dr. Burnley's faith in God, and encourages Dr. Burnley and Ilse to behave more socially acceptably, thus reaffirming voice one's privilege of normality. Nonetheless, the situation still has elements of voice three that challenge the connection of disability and deviance and question the effectiveness of the prosthesis. After Emily's vision of Beatrice's death proves her innocence, the community recognizes that they have misread Beatrice's body as flirtatious and recasts it as "bright, beautiful, [and] merry," saying, "For twelve years we have wronged the dead" (326). Though the ending indicates a resolution of Ilse and Dr. Burnley's difference by her curbing of name-calling (330) and his church attendance (327), their deviance is still present and in some ways increased in the next two novels of the trilogy, proving the recurring nature of deviance. While this episode provides a removal of deviance and thus a narrative ending for the first novel in the *Emily*

trilogy, Emily's last words of the novel, in which she says, "I am going to write a diary, that it may be published when I die" (339), reemphasize Emily's deviant writing and reiterate her anxieties about her possibly precarious health.

### *Emily Climbs*

The second novel in the *Emily* series, then, expands and investigates the second step of narrative prosthesis: the explication of the origin of Emily's deviance. *Emily Climbs* continues where *Emily of New Moon* left off, further analyzing Emily's deviant maternal inheritance and its associations with her quasi-tubercular body and her writing. Because Emily's late adolescence and boarding school days are the focus in *Emily Climbs*, maternal heredity is a particular concern: Emily's mother, Juliet, eloped with Douglas Starr while attending boarding school, and in post-adolescence Emily's sexuality and romances are burgeoning and potentially dangerous due to her increasing independence. In this novel, Emily's writing, consumption, and maternally inherited sexuality are repeatedly connected by voices one and two and disassociated by voice three.

As the middle text in the trilogy, *Emily Climbs* allows more room for open subversion of the association of deviance with disability because it is not concerned either with identifying and valorizing deviance, as is *Emily of New Moon*, or with removing and censoring deviance, as is *Emily's Quest*. Yet, in balance with voice three, voice one is strongly present through Aunt Ruth and Elizabeth's voices and through a Gothic-like episode with scarred secondary characters, as is voice two in positive descriptions of Emily's writing associating her deviance with tuberculosis.

The final episode that brings closure to the novel, however, complicates the categories of deviance and normality.

Very early in the novel, voice one uses the Gothic conventions of disability in an episodic manner to reassert the dangers of deviant sexuality inherited from Emily's mother.<sup>46</sup> In this Gothic episode, Emily is locked in a church after prayer meeting with Mad Mr. Morrison, a man whom Emily fears because his right hand "is a deep blood-red all over" (12) and because he chases girls whom he believes are his dead wife. Teddy saves her, and they share a romantic moment until his mother, Mrs. Kent, interrupts it and accuses Emily of stealing her son (55).<sup>47</sup> The narrator prefaces the story with a note that the events that occur cause Emily to pass "from childhood to girlhood" (37). Although Gwendolyn Ann Guth believes that the chase scene with Mad Mr. Morrison is a symbol of Emily's first menstruation (73), I am more inclined to agree with Irene Gammel that the night in the "Pink Room" at Wyther Grange in *Emily of New Moon* describes that particular rite of passage ("Safe Pleasures" 122-24). Instead, I would argue that the milestone Emily passes in this case is an introduction to heterosexual relations, and how dangerous they can be.<sup>48</sup> In an unpublished graduate essay, Tunde Nemeth, noting how penile Mr. Morrison's "gray head thrust forward" and "blood-red hand" are, argues that this scene is an account of "near-rape" (qtd in Guth 74).<sup>49</sup> This episode then uses Mr. Morrison's disabilities,

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<sup>46</sup> Of course, sexual deviance in the *Emily* books is nothing worse than elopement or stolen kisses past curfew.

<sup>47</sup> In the *Emily* series, Mrs. Kent plays the role of the jealous madwoman. The primary and secondary voices use her throughout to reiterate the notion of abnormal behaviour and spirituality being written on the body: her "queerness" and "mysteriousness" are always tied to the scar that runs across her face.

<sup>48</sup> I am in no way implying that any actual sexual intercourse has taken place, but rather that Emily has been introduced to the knowledge of the existence and possibility of heterosexual intercourse.

<sup>49</sup> Comments made in Montgomery's journal also support this reading. Montgomery received a letter informing her that the letter-writer's granddaughters were no longer permitted to read her works and

madness and a birthmark, to reiterate the danger of the heterosexual world that Emily, as a post-adolescent girl with a sexually deviant maternal inheritance, is entering.

Even in the more innocent and less frightening exchange that occurs between Teddy and Emily after he saves her from Mr. Morrison, disabilities of mental illness and stigmatic scarring still warn of the danger of deviant sexuality. Teddy and Emily by being alone together after dark are breaking social norms of courting that require supervision to prevent any unsanctioned sexual activity. Their exchange is the sensual equivalent to Emily's spiritual "flash" (55), and before it is interrupted, Teddy is about to give Emily a kiss. However, their socially deviant romantic interaction is disrupted, or "blotched" as Emily significantly puts it (59), by Mrs. Kent and her "scarred face" (55). Mrs. Kent's presence not only terminates the potential sexual deviance, but also prosthetically accentuates it, making "what had been so beautiful one moment" look "so absurd the next" (55). Here, Mrs. Kent's disabilities emphasize the danger and aberrance of deviant sexuality, in this case, kissing after curfew.

Voice one also presents itself through the voices of Emily's Aunts Ruth and Elizabeth, who desire to prevent and cure Emily's deviances. The Aunts link Emily's potentially dangerous and maternally inherited sexuality to her writing and to her consumptive body. Therefore, they try to restrain and stifle the first by controlling the latter two. Elizabeth allows Emily to go to Shrewsbury High School only on the condition that she give up writing fiction and board with the doubly strict Aunt Ruth. Elizabeth thinks of Juliet before announcing her intentions to Emily, but "shut[s] off

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berating her use of birthmarks in her stories, particularly in the incident of Mad Mr. Morrison. In response, Montgomery retorts "She'd better stop reading my books and give her granddaughters *Simon Called Peter* and *Flaming Youth*" (SJ III 292), two books known for their overt and shocking sexuality.

her thoughts with a click” (80) and proceeds to prohibit what she feels will lead Emily to elopement: attending Queen’s Academy and writing. While boarding with Aunt Ruth, Emily is treated like a consumptive: she complains that Ruth won’t allow the windows to be open (97), “doses [her] with cod-liver oil” (146), makes her retire early because ““consumptives should never be out after eight o’clock”” (146), and regularly tells her to put on flannel or extra petticoats. The extra petticoats and the early hours reflect the fear of potential sexuality; the surplus underwear adds modesty as well as warmth, and the curfew not only gives the ““great deal of sleep”” that Ruth feels ““people who are threatened with consumption require”” (107) but also guarantees that no late-night elopements occur.<sup>50</sup> Because Aunt Ruth and Aunt Elizabeth attempt to curb Emily’s sexuality by controlling her writing and body, they convey voices one and two’s association of disability with deviance and require the removal or normalization of both.

Voice two also juxtaposes Emily’s sexuality and writing, describing both in terms of consumption. The two most sexually transgressive scenes in the novel are connected to illness and writing. The first occurs between Dean and Emily: they are discussing literature, Emily’s writings in particular, and she reminds him of a promise he made in *Emily of New Moon* to teach her how to write “love talk” in her stories (*ENM* 270). Although an undercurrent of sexuality is present in his promise in *New Moon*, here it is overt. In her journal, Emily records how she asks him flirtatiously to ““teach [her] how to make love artistically”” (*EC* 216); taking it seriously, he asks, ““Are you ready for the teaching?”” and leans in as though for a kiss (217). At this

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<sup>50</sup>Episodes in which scandal and public speculation occur over rumours of Emily and Ilse swimming in their petticoats (75) and meeting or staying out with Teddy and Perry past midnight (217-18, 276-281) emphasize the sexual connotations of petticoats and night time.

point, Emily pulls away, and Aunt Elizabeth interrupts, reminding Emily to put on her rubber boots, and thus reminding her of the dangers of consumption.<sup>51</sup> As Juliet McMaster notes, in this scene, “[w]riting [about the sexual act] and doing it are seen as perilously close” (“Virginal Representations” 302).

In the second incident, however, when Emily is caught in a snowstorm with Teddy, Ilse, Perry, and no parental supervision, there is no peril in the proximity between sexuality and writing. Instead, the situation that has the most potential for sexual deviance inspires writing. In the house they hide in for protection from the storm, Teddy and Emily share an intimate glance (269), and Emily realizes she might be falling in love with him. As with Dean, Emily pulls back from her emotions and insists that she will not fall in love with him (270). The romantic and sexual energies stirred then express themselves in creation, or as Gammel puts it, “The potential sexual lover is transformed into an erotic muse” (“Dis/Pleasure” 44); a joke Teddy tells inspires Emily to plan a novel. The narrator then expresses the creative writing process in sexual, spiritual, and tubercular terms: “Her cheeks burned, her heart beat, she tingled from head to foot with the keen rapture of creation—a joy that sprang fountain-like from the depths of being and seemed independent of earthly things” (*EC* 271). In these situations, voice two unites Emily’s illness, sexuality, and writing, but in a way that privileges deviance because it is an attractive other.

However, voice three resists the association of writing, sexuality, and disability, and it does so especially clearly through the voice of Emily. From the beginning of the novel, Emily rejects her Aunt Elizabeth’s belief that she will inherit her mother’s

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<sup>51</sup> Although Emily, who narrates this section of the story, does not state that her Aunt interrupts on purpose, there is little doubt that Elizabeth intended her reminder to have the squelching effect it does on the sexual tension between Dean and Emily.

deviance, and insists that writing will actually prevent any sexual danger: “She [Elizabeth] feels she can’t trust me out of her sight because my mother eloped. But she need not be afraid I will ever elope. . . . I shall be *wedded to my art*” (6). Later, when Emily is living under Ruth’s supervision, she often adopts Aunt Ruth’s words in free indirect discourse to mock their sentiment that associates consumption with social deviance and sexuality. She even humorously uses her consumption to disentangle herself from possibly deviant romantic encounters. To avoid having her prosaic cousin Andrew propose marriage to her in the overly romantic Land of Uprightness, she complains that “it [is] too damp for a person with a tendency to consumption” and takes him back to the parlour at home (314). She also mingles the humorous and the serious in her critique of aligning tuberculosis with sexuality. For example, in describing a “scandal” that ensues because she and Ilse bump into Perry and Teddy after dark, Emily writes, “I should have come right home to bed, like any good consumptive” (217). In writing this, Emily implies that by partaking in the socially prescribed role of consumptive, she would have been obedient, conformist, and normative. Yet, she also mocks the idea that she is tubercular or had done anything truly deviant: the couples only walked across the bridge, and she “was in bed and asleep by 10 o’clock” (218). Aunt Ruth, however, believes that by meeting the boys at night Emily is “treading in [her] mother’s footsteps” (219). In her response, “Suppose we leave my mother out of the question—she’s dead” (219), Emily insists that maternal inheritance of sexuality or illness has no bearing on her behaviour and speaks in voice three strongly and overtly, not under the cover of

humour. Thus Emily expresses voice three through both her derisive adoption of and unconcealed contempt for the association of disability, sexuality, and writing.

Voice three also communicates through the narrator's scoffing presentation of the outlook of town gossips, who speak in voice one. In the chapter "As Ithers See Us," Emily overhears two busybodies maligning her by commenting on her sexuality, writing, and illness. They say they would like to "cure" Emily's rebellion and writing (64, 66) and assume that she will have inherited her mother's sexuality because she "mak[es] eyes at everyone" (65). Then, after listing all of Emily's abnormalities, social deviances, and faults, they end their disparagement by excusing and dismissing her behaviour in her disability. They say, "But then she probably won't live through her teens. She looks very consumptive" (68). Voice three thoroughly undermines their opinions: the two women are cast as malicious gossips, and Emily in her journal goes on to prove the falseness of all of their accusations. The narrator also adopts the words of the Shrewsbury gossips' slanderous allegations about Emily, Ilse, Perry, and Teddy in the snowstorm to criticize their belief that maternal inheritance and deviant bodies cause sexually deviant behaviour:

People remembered that old Nancy Priest [Emily's Aunt] had been a wild thing seventy years ago—and hadn't there been some scandal about Mrs. Dutton [Aunt Ruth] herself in girlhood? What's bred in the bone, you understand. Her mother had eloped, hadn't she? And Ilse's mother? Of course, she had been killed by falling into the old Lee well, but who knew what she would have done if she hadn't? . . . In short, you didn't see ankles like Emily's on proper girls. They simply didn't have them. (277-278)

The narrator adopts the gossips' voice to articulate voice three; although "you understand" implies there is logic behind the proverb "bred in the bone," the tone of the comment and the innocence of Emily and Ilse doubly points out the error of

placing the source of the girls' deviances in their inherited biological bodies. Voice three dialogises with the first level of double-voiced dialogue by using and recasting the association of illness and deviance presented in voices one and two.

In *Emily Climbs*, voice three also works to disassociate disability from deviance by presenting disability as normal and banal. Writing in her journal, Emily often favours Cousin Jimmy's difference and disability and places it in the literary context of wise foolishness. In voice two, she describes how "Cousin Jimmy is so different," but like her because of his art, and says that "if you could put his clever spots together there isn't anybody in Blair Water has half as much cleverness as he has . . . . The trouble is you can't put his clever spots together," and that is why "people call him simple" (11). Likewise, voice one continues to use Jimmy in the simple sage role to solve narrative problems in chapter episodes. However, unlike in *Emily of New Moon*, *Emily Climbs* integrates the banality or ordinariness of Jimmy's presumed difference into the story. In one of her journal entries, Emily says, "Cousin Jimmy wasn't quite so nice this week-end as he usually is. He had several of his queer spells and was a bit grumpy" (153-4). Through the casual, off-hand manner in which she mentions his disability, not as an extreme difference but as a part of everyday life, voice three challenges the valorization or vilification of difference due to disability. In this light, voice three presents disability and difference as a norm.

Voice three also reveals the pervasiveness of difference and disability through setting. Just as the old orchard in *Emily of New Moon* is the main setting that reflects the spirit of privileging disability as deviance in the novel, so the grove that Emily calls "The Land of Uprightness" reflects *Emily Climbs*' spirit of exposing the

normality of deviance. Emily describes the trees in “The Land of Uprightness” as having ““as much individuality as human beings”” and explains that, as with people, “[t]here is always some kink or curve or bend of bough to single each one out from its fellows”” (249). Although Emily goes on to distinguish between different types of trees and upholds the ones ““who choose to stand apart in solitary state”” (249), there is a clear recognition in her portrayal of trees that normality does not exist: only twisting and curving deviations. She applies this theory to people early in the book, saying, ““I don’t *like* everyone but I find everyone interesting”” (25). Thus, *Emily Climbs* complicates the separation of normality and deviance by showing the ubiquity of difference and individuality.

Similarly, the final episode of *Emily Climbs* blurs the distinction between normality and abnormality, even though it creates a feeling of narrative closure to the novel. In it, Emily has the opportunity to move to New York with Janet Royal, a successful woman working in the publishing industry, but she chooses to remain at New Moon to write. In one light, this choice is one of normality and conformity over exciting deviance. Janet is ““odd as Dick’s hatband”” (288) and an unmarried woman living a public life, encouraging Emily to live similarly. New Moon is ““cramped”” (311) and boring, ““like reading a book for the twentieth time”” (310-11). Emily’s choice to stay in New Moon is in many ways the decision to remain in a domestic, dull environment. Yet, in a way, Emily has chosen deviance. In every novel and story examined in this study, nature implies deviance and culture implies conformity. In New York, Emily would acquire the ““training [and thus cultural normalization] that only a great city can give”” (299), whereas in New Moon, which is ““full of poetry

and steeped in romance” (299), Emily’s writing would have “Canadian tang and flavour” (306). In choosing to be deviant in her own terms, Emily points out the prevalence of deviance everywhere: “people *live* here just the same as anywhere else—suffer and enjoy and sin and aspire just as they do in New York” (310). Therefore, although this ending appears to be a domestication of Emily’s difference, it also obscures the classification of difference and normality and reiterates the ubiquity of deviance.

As the closing of *Emily of New Moon* begins to indicate the next step of narrative prosthesis that its successor investigates, so the final pages of *Emily Climbs* reveal the final step *Emily’s Quest* will portray, removal and normalization of deviance. Before *Emily Climbs* ends, Emily records in her journal a dream she has about Dean and Teddy. In it, she is chasing a setting star; Dean joins her, so she slows her pace to match his “because he was lame and could not go fast” and she feels she “could not leave Dean” (322). But she abandons Dean to go to Teddy when he appears; the star sets, and she wakes up (322). This dream essentially foreshadows the action of *Emily’s Quest* in which she becomes engaged to Dean, but breaks the engagement when she realizes that she still is in love with Teddy. It also reflects that Emily and the narrative will eventually choose normality and ability, and deviance and disability will in effect disappear.

### *Emily’s Quest*

As the final novel of the *Emily* series, *Emily’s Quest* completes the pattern of narrative prosthesis and “rehabilitates or fixes the deviance” that has been brought to

the centre of the story (Mitchell and Snyder 53). For Emily, the deviances that the narrative's prosthesis must control are her writing, her sexuality, and her tubercular or ill body. Because the main narrative goal of this novel is to remove the heroine's disability and deviance in its resolution, voice one is the most noticeable voice of the novel. Although voice two is still present to privilege abnormality, the novel's overall tone overtly presents physical and mental disability as an undesirable difference. The narrative begins to eliminate the deviances, predominantly the disabled minor characters who have supported and encouraged Emily's peculiarity throughout the series. The narrative usually accomplishes this removal by relying on increased difference or disability. The final prostheticization of Emily's difference occurs through her courtships. This is suitable, of course, since her deviant body and writing are tied to the threat of her inherited deviant sexuality. When she is "safely" married, her deviant body and behaviour are finally controllable, or at least within acceptable social boundaries. Yet, within this prostheticization, voice three blurs the distinction between normality, deviance, and disability. In the end, although the narrative works to remove Emily's deviance through courtship, it only succeeds in accommodating or hiding it.

Voice one works in *Emily's Quest* to resolve deviance within the narrative by weakening the influence of deviant minor characters upon the text. The minor characters who support and emphasize Emily's difference begin to fade away; they are either removed completely from the story, as Mr. Carpenter, Dean Priest, and Mrs. Kent are, or the threatening verve of their deviance is diluted, as Cousin Jimmy's is. Oddly, the narrative often executes this removal of difference by

increasing the gulf between normality and deviance and by making the deviance of these minor characters greater, and in some cases, more stereotypical.

The first to be removed from the narrative, Mr. Carpenter, is also the latest to enter. He initially appears at the end of *New Moon* to evaluate and encourage Emily's writing. Throughout the series, he oscillates between promoting deviance and insisting upon control within Emily's writing: for example, in *Emily Climbs*, within one paragraph he tells her that her story "Something Different" is good, but chides her use of italics, saying that her "'imagination needs a curb when [she] get[s] away from realism'" (92). The story's title indicates that he admires her difference, but his reprimand indicates that he also believes deviance needs to be tempered with discipline. As a social maverick and a raging alcoholic, however, Mr. Carpenter is a highly deviant personality, and so voice one of *Emily's Quest* takes action to remove his deviance from the narrative. The narrative resolves Mr. Carpenter's deviance by giving him a mysterious, rheumatism-related illness, and by using literary stereotypes about illness. Because "he had burned up most of his constitution in a wild youth," Mr. Carpenter has "'[gone] down' rapidly" since his wife's death (23). This increase in Mr. Carpenter's physical deviance ultimately causes his removal from the text through death. Yet, although voice one uses this event to erase deviance, voice two uses it to endorse deviant behaviour. Mr. Carpenter's death is very double-voiced: on one hand, he and Emily sit together, sharing "cheerful, Puckish, deathbed smiles" (24); yet, on the other, he stereotypically dies with the turning of the tide (30). His last words are extremely double-voiced: he warns Emily to "Beware—of—italics" (30), repeating and yet mocking his edict to control excess difference. The passing of

Mr. Carpenter is the first indicator of the tidal turn in the narrative towards resolution of deviance in the trilogy, and it does not take long to see this process begin to work in Emily herself.

At the start of *Emily's Quest*, as in the other novels, voice two positively associates Emily's deviant writing and potentially deviant sexuality with her deviant body. But shortly into the novel, voice one more overtly represents the connection of her physical and social deviance as negatively harmful. The opening description of Emily reminds readers that she is different, "a diamond flame" who stands out from her "sensible clan" (6). It also reiterates that her difference is due to her sexuality, consumptive body, and writing: Emily has "[p]urplish-grey eyes, with violet shadows under them that always seemed darker and more alluring after [she] had sat up to some unholy and un-Elizabethan hour completing a story or working out the skeleton of a plot" (5) and has "[f]aint stains of rose in her rounded cheeks that sometimes suddenly deepened to crimson" (5). Here, voice two privileges her deviance; but soon, voice one stresses the danger in Emily's deviance. When Emily begins to write her first novel, *A Seller of Dreams*, the writing causes "the purple stains [to deepen] under her eyes and the rose stains [to fade] out of her cheeks," which cause "Aunt Elizabeth [to think] she was killing herself" (53). Here, Emily's deviance is destructive. Although voice two portrays Emily's deviances of writing and consumption as attractive, voice one soon portrays them as dangerous, and the outer-narrative begins to work to remove her deviance.

As with the removal of Mr. Carpenter, the narrative attempts in voice one to eliminate Emily's difference by increasing it to an unacceptable level through illness

and impairment. Disliking the amount of time and energy Emily has put into her novel, Dean tells her that her writing is substandard. In despair at hearing this, Emily burns her book and then falls down a flight of stairs. She impales her leg on Aunt Laura's sewing scissors and spends several months battling fever and blood-poisoning. Critics have made much of the scissors, saying that they symbolize feminine "domesticity" (Menzies 53, Rubio "Trite" 30) and "symbolically cut her off from her artistic self" (Guth 104); but perhaps it is more important to note that the scissors are for "mending," and had just been used to mend "stockings" (*EQ* 62). Stockings in the *Emily* series have frequently been used to represent controlled or deviant sexuality. Emily's thick woollen ones are the modest foil to Ilse's "immoral" silk ones (1). The narrative presents this accident to "mend" Emily's deviance: the piercing of Emily's foot and the "threat" of amputation or lameness removes value from disability and deviance and restores privilege to ability and health. Speaking in voice one, the narrator explains, "It was worth while to have been ill to realise the savour of returning health and well-being" (66). After Emily's fall, voice one takes control of the narrative and stresses the evils of disability: amputation is "scarcely less terrible" than death, and lameness not much better (63). The fall also temporarily halts Emily's supernatural and artistic deviance: "She could never write again[, and t]he 'flash' never came" (65). Thus, voice one uses disability as prosthesis: it begins to eradicate Emily's social deviance by increasing her physical difference and presenting it as deficient.

Nonetheless, at this point when voice one begins to remove Emily's difference, voices two and three still remain. The normalization, which is an act of

voice one, has consequences in voice three: when Emily is most ill, she is least socially deviant; thus, voice three weakens the connection between disability and deviance. Although Emily's physical disability subdues her social difference by disconnecting her from what voice one presents as her disturbing and dangerous creativity, it also increases her social deviance because it connects her further to the eccentric and disabled Dean Priest: "In that winter of pain [Emily] seemed to herself to grow so old and wise that they [she and Dean] met on equal ground at last" (66). She and Dean become engaged, and the definition of normal and deviant becomes even more confused. Because Dean is a highly deviant character himself, Emily's engagement to him increases her deviance. To Emily, and to voice two, this deviance is an attractive promise that Dean makes to her: "You and I, Star, are going to live unto ourselves. We are not going to walk or talk or think or breathe according to any clan standard, be it Priest or Murray" (72). While a marriage to Dean would increase Emily's deviance, her family recognizes its normalizing effects as well: they feel that "[a]fter all, there would be a certain relief in seeing Emily safely married" (79). However, they also begin to question Emily's newly acquired normality and perceive it as difference as well. Aunt Laura believes that Dean and the fall cause "the change in Emily," which is that her laughter is no longer spontaneous and that she has stopped writing (96). Elizabeth, who has been trying to get Emily to quit writing for years, believes that quitting writing is another symptom of inherited deviance: "the Star fickleness, you see" (97). Thus, although Emily's illness has a normalizing effect on Emily, it leads to her engagement to Dean, which has the ambiguous result

of both increasing her difference and renegotiating what can be considered “different” and “normal.”

Therefore, the narrative must then remove Dean in order to remove the deviance and blurring of boundaries that his presence causes. First, the text begins to vilify Dean and his difference. Dean’s possessiveness and jealousy hinted at in the earlier novels become abundantly clear in *Emily’s Quest* when he lies to Emily about her writing abilities.<sup>52</sup> Elizabeth Epperly ties Dean’s disability to his jealous control over Emily and believes that the removal of Dean from the narrative is a “triumph of the female artist over the *crippled* and *cripling* constraints of male authority and domination” (148 emphasis added). She and many other critics, such as Kempla (61) and Menzies (51), believe that Dean’s body and name turn him into a symbol for “the collective weight of male privilege and authority” (Epperly 148). But this seems a strange conclusion to come to when, thus far, Dean has consistently exemplified resistance to authority and orthodoxy, not compliance. Although Epperly suggests that by removing Dean *Emily’s Quest* supports an ideology of feminist subversion of male authority, it is clearly not only Dean’s male dominance that makes him a threat to Emily, but also his physical and social deviation from normality and his rejection of social authority. While Dean’s desire to possess Emily does smother her, the intensity of his difference and foreignness frightens her. Halfway through their engagement, Emily remembers with a chill the rumour that Dean “had seen the Black Mass celebrated” (*EQ* 78). The narrator then states that Dean’s mysterious knowledge “had been part of the distinct fascination he had always had for Emily[; b]ut now it

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<sup>52</sup> The novel connects Dean’s vices to his disability in the same way that the series repeatedly connects Mrs. Kent’s jealousy to her scar.

frightened her” (78). Emily then thinks of her future life with Dean as “a crippled, broken-winged happiness” and bemoans that it will not be “the wild free-flying happiness she had dreamed of” (80). Here, Emily perceives Dean only in voice one; she sees his difference as excessive, and thus dangerous and threatening.

Dean’s disability and difference threaten normalization most profoundly by nearly entering the socially normal and valued institution of marriage and family.<sup>53</sup> Dean and Emily’s engagement opens up the opportunity for the extremely different to be a part of the norm. As Dean and Emily work to furnish a house together, they partake of social norms—having the right number of cupboards and doilies—yet they do so in direct opposition to social rules and the wishes of Emily’s guardians by decorating the house unchaperoned and well before they are married (85). Also, while the house contains Murray-inherited furniture, it also holds souvenirs of travels to the orient, visual reminders of Dean’s physical and social deviance. What is so unsettling about the engagement is that it produces the possibility of deviance, particularly extreme physical deviance, blending with and complicating normality: it is both the ““earthlier, homelier music”” of a robin’s egg, and the ““music of the moon”” (92). Thus, for voice one to restore the border between difference and normality, the narrative removes Dean from the story. As Waterston significantly notes, “‘Jarback Priest,’ after threatening to become a distinct person, diminishes and fades as conventional poetic romance takes over” (“L.M. Montgomery” 21). In the conventionally romantic plot, Emily realizes she still loves Teddy after she has a

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<sup>53</sup> Here, we see the themes of the story of Dean’s prototype, Roger Temple, being reworked and approached from a different angle. Whereas Roger and Lilith can marry because both are disabled and thus their marriage still remains in the realm of acceptable difference, Emily and Dean cannot marry because their union would be unacceptably different.

vision in which she supernaturally keeps Teddy from sailing on a ship that sinks. She breaks off her engagement with Dean, who then moves west and virtually disappears from the story, causing a restoration of normality.

To fulfill the narrative prosthesis of Emily's deviance, the narrative also relies upon the resolution of the mystery behind Mrs. Kent's scar. Throughout the trilogy, Emily and Teddy regularly wish they knew why Mrs. Kent behaves so strangely and how she received her scar. Their curiosity tends to make a connection between the behaviour and the mark; when Teddy discusses Mrs. Kent's strange behaviour with Emily, he immediately states that he does not know what caused the scar on her face, nor does he know anything about his father (*EC* 78, *EQ* 133). In *Emily's Quest*, voice one uses the literary conventions to make the connection between Mrs. Kent's scar, behaviour, and husband clear. Mrs. Kent fulfills the role of the standard madwoman: the cause of her derangement is "an obsession with past happiness or promises, perhaps excessive desire for the lost object of her love" (Martin 1) and the cure for it is "redressing the equilibrium by changing the environment" (Martin 3). Emily returns a borrowed copy of *The South African Farm* to Mrs. Kent, along with a sealed letter that she found inside. After Mrs. Kent reads the letter, she tells Emily the story of the scar and of Teddy's father. Early in her marriage, after a kerosene lamp burned her face, she behaved jealously because she felt that her disfiguration would cause her husband to stop loving her. Then, following a fight in which she told her husband that she "hoped [she] would never see his face again" (226), he left on a business trip and died. The letter Emily found was one Mr. Kent wrote before dying in which he forgives his wife and asks for her forgiveness. With this forgiveness, Mrs. Kent

believes ““The [emotional] wound will heal now”” (229); the resolution of her story subdues or “heals” her deviance.

The removal of Mrs. Kent’s deviance also eradicates the obstacle that she represented in the Emily-Teddy love plot. After telling Emily the story of the scar, she also confesses that she burned a letter in which Teddy admits his love to Emily. In this confession, Mrs. Kent fulfills her role as a blocking character in the narrative: her mad jealousy related to her scar has stood in the way of Emily and Teddy’s romance, and the removal of her madness opens the door for a resolution in the love plot, which will eliminate the threat of Emily’s deviance. Because Mrs. Kent fulfills her role, she is removed quickly from the text, dying a few months after her confession.

Yet, amidst the eradication of difference, disability, and deviance, the privileging of disability and difference still expresses itself through lamenting the unavoidable removal of deviance from the narrative. The moment Emily gives Dean’s emerald engagement ring back to him, she feels “regret” at the termination of the vivid relationship she had with Dean (112). Although breaking her engagement means “freedom” to Emily, knowing that her bond of deviance with Dean is broken makes that freedom “bitter” (112). After this, voice two frequently grieves over loss of deviance, yet recognizes the inevitability of the change. Emily overhears Andrew and his father discuss plans to prune and modernize New Moon and to cut down the old orchard, which in *Emily of New Moon* represents valorized deviant bodies and behaviour. Emily’s response is heartbreak: to have her “beloved trees cut down” and the “spruce field where wild strawberries grew improved out of existence” would be

an “unbearable” sacrilege (173). Yet, Emily also recognizes that the change is inescapable. When Elizabeth reminds her that had she married Andrew she would have also inherited New Moon, Emily points out that ““the changes would have come just the same”” (173). In a way, much of *Emily’s Quest* is a lament for the removal of deviance. Just as the orchard will be removed to repair New Moon, the disabled characters will be effaced to repair deviance in the narrative. Even the deviance of non-disabled characters must be suppressed, and voice two presents this as a sad fate, too. Perry now obeys the “fundamental rules of social etiquette,” but misses his rebellious behaviour from the “old times” (229). And the edict that Ilse too must “settl[e] down” in marriage prompts Cousin Jimmy to “inexplainably [sic]” say “Poor Ilse” (195). Thus, in *Emily’s Quest*, voice two mourns the dissolution of disability and deviance from the narrative.

On the other hand, voice three aggressively presents its argument to question the connection between, and to recognize the social construction of, deviance and disability. Like voice two, voice three uses nature to express its concept of disability, deviance, and normality. Shortly after Dean’s departure from the novel, Emily describes how she and Cousin Jimmy pull up saplings that have sprung up wildly around the new, regulated orchard. Jimmy draws the parallel between the trees and disability and says to Emily, ““I sometimes think . . . that it’s wrong to prevent anything from growing. *I* never grew-up—not in my head”” (118). While this is also a lament about uprooting things that are deviant, it is also an inference that disability is a result of social pruning, and that Jimmy was prevented from “growing up” because of his deviance, not his disability. The incident causes Emily to have a dream

of being chased by “indignant young maple-tree ghosts” (118), which in turn inspires Emily to write story called “The Vengeance of the Tree” (119). The incident, dream, and short story all suggest that disability is impossible to quash through narrative control. As every spring wild maple saplings come back, even though they were pruned the year before, so disability will continue to reappear regardless of the prosthetic solution that conceals them. Even while in voice one the narrative works to remove deviance and disability from the story, neither voice two or three is completely suppressed.

Although Dean’s disappearance from the story appears to be entirely in voice one because it results in the removal of deviance, it is double-voiced: saplings of disability and deviance still spring up. Just before Dean vanishes, he again encourages Emily to write, and thus to re-embrace the deviance that her illness was supposed to have eradicated. He tells her that the novel she had burned was “very good,” although “emotional” and “overstrained” (110), and that it is both “out of the ordinary” and “[n]atural” (111). But he also says, “You still need pruning—restraint” (110), equating her text with her person and encouraging a control of deviance. Thus, like Mr. Carpenter, Dean here both encourages her deviance and advises her to keep it in check. Here, Emily’s writing and creative process is described once more in voice two’s tubercular terms: Dean’s encouragement causes “a hot flush suddenly [to stain] the pallor of her tortured little face” (111). After the first time she writes since burning *Seller of Dreams*, Emily fondly describes writing as “the old fever [that] burned in my finger-tips” (117). Yet, speaking in voice three, Emily also mocks the association of her emotions and writing with tuberculosis,

recognizing that the association is socially constructed. She says, “I know Aunt Laura thought I was going into consumption [during the preceding autumn of writing and heartbreak]. Not I. That would be too Victorian” (145). Thus, although Dean’s departure disposes of his difference, it promotes Emily’s former deviance and both glorifies and challenges deviance’s association with disability.

The broken engagement to Dean also inspires a key way in which voice two mocks the association of biology and behaviour. While marrying Dean is deviant according to the Murray clan, breaking the engagement is even more so (112-13). They accuse Emily of “Starr fickleness” (112), and use the word “temperamental” to explain not only the broken engagement, but also all of her social abnormalities (113). The word “temperamental” refers to people “liable to peculiar moods, having or giving way to an erratic or neurotic temperament” (*OED* “Temperamental”) and carries with it the connotation of “depending upon or connected with physical constitution [or] natural disposition” (*OED* “Temperament”). Thus, by calling her “temperamental,” the Murrays describe both her behaviour and her biology. Throughout the rest of the novel, the narrator regularly uses voice two to ridicule the clan’s use of “temperamental,” similarly to the way Emily mocks consumption in *Emily Climbs*. Although expurgating Dean from the narrative is chiefly a deed of voice one, the result is continued dialogue with voices two and three in the novel.

Before the conclusion of *Emily’s Quest* controls and resolves Emily’s deviance, an insubordinate sapling in the form of Perry and Ilse’s screwball courtship springs up amid the cultivated textual normalization. Ilse on the day of her wedding to Teddy plays the role of “runaway bride,” leaving Teddy at the altar for Perry,

whom she believes has been killed in a car accident but has only been injured. When Ilse returns to Blair Water, she announces that Perry and she are now engaged. Rubio suggests that in Perry and Ilse's romance, the novel slips into "pure slapstick" in order to place the institution of marriage "into a farcical context" and to undermine Emily and Teddy's marriage and the normalization that would occur from it (29-30). But the story does not make a mockery of romance and marriage as Rubio suggests; Ilse and Perry reject the social prescription around marriage, the "rose-point veils and Oriental trains and clan weddings" (*EQ* 253), not the wedding vows. Instead, by using deviant behaviour to partake of a normalizing institution, Perry and Ilse's courtship is a reminder that normality and deviance are truly indistinguishable. Their romance also serves as a reminder that healthy bodies can be deviant spectacles and that disability need not be tied to social aberrance. As she did in the earlier two novels, Ilse uses her able body to express and emphasize her deviance. She describes to Emily how she arrived at the hospital and "fell on [Perry's] neck and kissed him" while she was still wearing a wedding dress, with the train "stream[ing] magnificently over the floor" (251). Her clothing and able-bodied mobility together convey her deviant social behaviour. Moreover, the scandal that occurs from Ilse leaving Teddy for Perry is greater not only than that of Emily leaving Dean, but even more than that of Juliet's elopement with Douglas (246). Thus, Ilse and Perry's romance subverts the concept that Juliet and Douglas's sexual deviance is inextricable from their consumption. By overtly reiterating the synthesis of normality, deviance, and ability, Ilse and Perry's courtship operates as a reassertion of voices two and three before the narrative normalization is complete.

Even in the resolution of Emily's difference through marriage, voice three twists the definitions of difference and normality and questions how disability and inherited biology affect them. In *Emily's Quest*, a number of men flow in and out of the story as realistic and unrealistic suitors for Emily. With each of them, the Murrays' main concern is that Emily get herself "safely" married, implying not only that the marriage not be an elopement but also that her husband would be "normal." But Emily continually rejects her potential lovers for being either too normal or too deviant. Those whom the Murrays see as "safe," such as the Rev. James Wallace, Emily spurns, pretending her reason for doing so is his biological deviance: she says, "I really couldn't risk having my children inherit ears like that" (43). Then, there are those whom the clan perceives as deviant: a fiddler who looks like "poet gone to seed," a religiously-confused man whose "great-uncle was a religious maniac," and a man whose father broke a social code by letting cows pasture in a graveyard (149). Emily refuses them, not because of their deviance, but because they are not deviant enough. One she thinks is "too prim and bandboxy" (180) and another she feels would be "the kind of man who would give his wife a vacuum cleaner for a Christmas present" (150). With all of these suitors, including the mundane and controlling option of Andrew Murray and the dangerous and strange alternative of Dean Priest, voice three reveals that normality and deviance are not absolute terms.

Therefore, to resolve Emily's deviances, the narrative needs to renegotiate the delineation of deviance and normality. Mitchell and Snyder explain that "[t]o prostheticize, in a sense, is to institute a notion of the body within a regime of tolerable deviance" and that because prosthesis is incapable of fully eradicating

difference, “the minimal goal is to return one to an acceptable degree of difference” (6-7). In a way, this is what is produced by the dialogue between voice three and the double voice of voices one and two: a renegotiation of deviance that makes it “tolerable” or “acceptable” in order to bring conclusion to the narrative. After Emily has started writing again, voice one of the narrative needs somehow to accommodate her artistic difference. An increase of Emily’s disability failed to remove her creative ability fully and only complicated and increased her social deviance instead.

Therefore, the narrative increases the deviance of the main authoritative figure who associates Emily’s writing with social aberrance. Aunt Elizabeth falls and breaks her leg, and Emily writes a domestic novel called *The Applegaths* to amuse her during convalescence. While this tumble de-sensationalizes Emily’s earlier fall, it also serves to increase Elizabeth’s deviance and to decrease the deviance of Emily’s writing.

Giving Aunt Elizabeth the experience of physical deviance (although temporary) allows her to be able to appreciate Emily’s writing, not only its economic worth but also its entertainment value. But Elizabeth’s fall also normalizes Emily’s writing.

Emily does not write *The Applegaths* in fevered passion; all mention of her pallor and flushed cheeks ceases half-way through the book as her family’s concern turns from her “consumption” to her “temperamental” nature. Instead, Emily writes the novel for her Aunt gradually, in a controlled way, and with a domestic goal and topic. *The Applegaths* is “[n]ot like *A Seller of Dreams*” (167); it is not a “fiery, delicate tale, instinct with romance, pathos, [and] humour” that is written in “rapture” (56). Rather, it is “a witty, sparkling rill of human comedy” written ““a chapter everyday”” (167). Thus, as Emily’s writing is disassociated from passion and from consumption and

becomes something that is curative (for Elizabeth) and domestic: it becomes prostheticized by voice one to reach “an acceptable degree of difference” (Mitchell and Snyder 7). Voice two, however, still laments the lack of deviance, saying, “But oh, for her unborn *Seller of Dreams!*” (196).

Although voice one succeeds in causing Emily’s writing to reach a passable amount of deviance by disassociating it from her passion and consumption, her “temperamental” nature and potential sexual deviance still need to be resolved. To do this, the classification of deviance and normality in her suitors also needs to be renegotiated. Emily clearly states this need for compromise as she turns aside one suitor after another. After rejecting Jasper Frost for being “too prim and bandboxy,” she realizes that neither would she want a “slovenly beau,” as Elizabeth suggests. In frustration, Emily wails, “Surely there’s a happy medium” (180). And it is a “happy medium” that the narrative is forced to seek since, for Emily, to marry someone completely “normal,” such as Andrew Murray, would be abnormal, but to marry someone as different Dean would be too dangerously deviant. Therefore her eventual choice, Teddy, is the most obvious: he is just deviant enough—physically and socially “normal,” but still an artist. Thus, when Emily and Teddy become engaged, the Murrays can feel glad, “[a]fter all their anxieties over Emily’s love-affairs, to see her ‘settled’ so respectably with a ‘boy’ well known to them, who had, so far as they knew at least, no bad habits and no disgraceful antecedents[ , a]nd who was doing pretty well in the business of picture-painting” (261).<sup>54</sup> Thus, because Teddy has a tolerable amount of both deviance and normality, voice one can use him

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<sup>54</sup> This statement also reveals how Teddy’s art, like Emily’s, is normalized by treating it as an economic endeavour rather than a creative one.

to remove Emily's deviance. Married to Teddy, Emily would no longer be seen as "temperamental," nor would the threat of elopement or a "bad" marriage remain.

Yet, the dialogue among the voices of the text still continues. The word "settled" is in scare quotes, implying that Emily will not *truly* be settled. Dean pops up in the narrative once more by mailing Emily the deed for the house they had furnished together while they were engaged. To her he writes, "I claim my old corner in your house of friendship now and then" (261). His claim of his "old corner," along with the numerous foreign knick-knacks he left behind in the home, are reminders from voices two and three that disability and deviance can, and perhaps should, never be fully eradicated.

*Emily's Quest* completes the process of narrative prosthesis that the first two novels of the *Emily* series began. After *Emily of New Moon* exposes Emily's deviance and *Emily Climbs* analyses its source, *Emily's Quest* accommodates, changes, erases, and suppresses her deviance until it is acceptable. To do this, voice one nearly eliminates disability from the text. However, voices two and three that were so prevalent in the first two books of the series still remain, subtly valorizing or disconnecting disability and deviance. Yet, while the series ends in a renegotiation of deviance and normality, for the most part disability is left out of this renegotiation: "If disability falls too far from an acceptable norm, a prosthetic intervention seeks to accomplish an erasure of difference all together" (Mitchell and Snyder 7). It seems that in the *Emily* series, disability ends up falling too far from the acceptable norm, and thus is erased: Dean disappears, Mrs. Kent dies, Jimmy fades away, and Emily's precarious health is silently dropped from the narrative. By the end, disability is

consistently seen as too different and essentially vanishes from the story.

Nonetheless, through the faint repetitions of voices two and three, the existence and valorization of disability continue to sprout like the incipient maple saplings.

## Conclusion

Mitchell and Snyder's aim in *Narrative Prosthesis* is to "make narratives of disability a visceral language that significantly impacts our ability to imagine the lives of contemporary disabled populations" (xiv). By applying the theory of narrative prosthesis to Montgomery's fiction, this thesis not only discloses how her narratives depend on disability both to signify and to normalize difference in narrative, but also demonstrates how disability in her fiction undermines its metaphors and refuses to be wholly normalized. Thus, although Montgomery's narratives regularly use literary stereotypes of disability, they are nonetheless a "visceral language" that affects our capacity "to imagine the lives of contemporary disabled populations." Through the double-voiced dialogues in *Kilmeny of the Orchard*, "The Tryst of the White Lady," "Some Fools and A Saint," *The Blue Castle*, and the *Emily* trilogy, one is able to comprehend a contemporary disabled population that contests the reduction of their lived experiences to metaphors or sweeping tropes and will not allow the denigration of their corporeal and social existence.

In Montgomery's early novella, *Kilmeny of the Orchard*, the double voice uses the heroine's muteness to represent social deviance. Voice one presents Kilmeny's disability as a problem or "sad defect" that causes as well as symbolizes the social deviance that makes her "set apart from her fellow creatures" (49). Thus, the narrative structure works to eradicate Kilmeny's difference through psychological cure. Voice two of the novella, however, venerates her social and physical difference,

lauding its honesty and disruptive power and undermining the medicalized categorization that censures it. Through the sub-plot of the hero Eric's need for deviance, voice two also indicates that deviance is not only a desirable state, but also a universal one, and thus it challenges and confuses the distinction between normality and deviance. The dialogue between the voices in *Kilmeny of the Orchard* reflects the complexity of the social reality of disability by addressing the metaphorical implications of disability while revealing its social construction.

The two short stories, "The Tryst of the White Lady" and "Some Fools and a Saint," represent disability in a double voice to renegotiate the boundaries of normality and difference. In "The Tryst of the White Lady," each attempt of the narrative to "solve" the disability of the hunch-backed hero, Roger, falls short: even the final solution, marriage to a beautiful deaf woman, fails to eradicate either character's disability. In the end, voice two shows that the division of disability from normality is not only cruel, but also groundless since normality is an impossible ideal and disability and difference are the norm. In "Some Fools and a Saint," voice one uses the disabilities of three characters as literary tropes to create a narrative problem and establish setting and mood. Voice two, however, discloses how unfounded the metaphorical inferences about disability are and shows that disability is a social construct used to confer or deny social power. Thus, the internal dialogue of both stories challenges the dichotomy of disability and ability.

The double voice in Montgomery's novel *The Blue Castle* reflects the changing social perception of disability and relies on, alters, and often challenges the literary metaphors and medicalization of disability. Voice one of the novel depends

on the literary conventions of disability to create and solve the narrative problems of the text. To emphasize the connection between disability and deviance, voice one uses the invalidism of the heroine, Valancy, and of two minor characters, Gladys and Cissy, to represent in a stereotypical way repressed or excess sexuality and different social and economic status. However, their illnesses also reflect the effects of the twentieth century on the literary metaphor of the female invalid: the metaphors include turn-of-the-century concepts which present health as obtainable through labour, activity, wealth, and cleanliness. Voice two of the novel then subverts the literary metaphors by revealing that disability is a social construct and a social experience rather than a corporeal reality. It also subverts the resolutions the narrative offers and undermines the association of disability with deviance by making illness pervasive and by exposing the unfeasibility of the quick-fix cure. Thus the double-voiced dialogue within *The Blue Castle* displays the inefficiency of attempting to eliminate corporeal deviance by identifying, condemning, and then removing it, because “the patient never stays cured and the disabled, cured individually, refuse to stop reappearing as a group” (Davis *Bending Over Backwards* 99).

In the *Emily* trilogy, there are two double-voiced dialogues. One of the double-voiced dialogues is between voice one, which portrays disability as a harmful deviance to be resolved, and voice two, which values the deviance and difference of disability. The other double-voiced dialogue is between the first double voice, which presumes that disabled bodies and minds are intrinsically deviant, and voice three, which exposes the deviance of able bodies and the normality of disabled bodies. In the trilogy, each novel undertakes specific steps of the narrative prosthesis of the

whole story: *Emily of New Moon* identifies and exposes the physical and social deviance of the heroine, Emily; *Emily Climbs* explicates the source of her deviance, making it the central concern of the story, and *Emily's Quest* removes and resolves the deviances of the heroine and minor characters. While the prosthetic reliance upon disability for narrative impetus and solution is in voice one, allocating the different steps to the different novels in the trilogy allows the voices that challenge voice one's presumptions to be more open in the first two novels, because they do not need to concentrate on removing or resolving deviance. Thus, because the first novel identifies the heroine's deviance and disability, its clearest voice is voice two, which lauds deviance and disability for being poetic, mysterious, and fascinating. In the second novel, voice three is most noticeable as the narrative purpose is to expose the origin of the heroine's deviance. Emily herself continually undermines the narrative purpose by disassociating her deviance from her disability and by challenging the belief that her biological inheritance causes her deviant behaviour. Because the third novel's chief goal is to resolve the heroine's deviance, voice one is most perceptible as it removes and silences each disabled and deviant minor character. Nonetheless, in each novel, the less noticeable voices continue in dialogue challenging the more overt voice. The result of the *Emily* trilogy's double-voiced dialogues is the disclosure that, although the subjugation of deviance and disability is the inevitable product of the conventional courtship plot's narrative drive, the resolution must be reached through renegotiation of the boundaries of normality and deviance.

Examining disability's role in the narrative structure of Montgomery's fiction opens the discourse about disability in Montgomery, revealing that it functions as

more than a metaphor for male authority or female repression, and adds to the discussion of Montgomery's double voice. To argue that Montgomery is primarily seditious in her writing and only relies on convention and conformity as a screen for her subversion is to oversimplify her writing and to rob it of credibility and complexity. By investigating the double-voiced representation of disability, this thesis argues that, instead of supposing Montgomery uses conventions in her fiction to subvert authority secretly, one must recognize that the text has a multiplicity of internally dialogized nuances. As Bakhtin explains,

The author is not to be found in the language of the narrator, not in the normal literary language to which the story opposes itself . . . –but rather, the author utilizes now one language, now another, in order to avoid giving himself up wholly to either of them; he makes use of this verbal give-and-take, this dialogue of languages at every point in his work, in order that he himself might remain as it were neutral with regard to language, a third party in a quarrel between two people (although he might be a *biased* third party). (314)

Thus, in her fiction, Montgomery uses the double voice, not solely to subvert authority, but to reveal the complexity and mutability of social situations and power relations in gender, class, race, and ability.

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