No Longer Children, Not Yet Adults: adolescence in the fiction of L. M. Montgomery

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Main texts:
*Jane of Lantern Hill,* L. M. Montgomery. original date of publication: 1937
*Anne of Green Gables,* L. M. Montgomery. original date of publication: 1908
*The Blue Castle,* L. M. Montgomery. original date of publication: 1926

Scholarly essays (both in *Such a Simple Little Tale*):
Drain, Susan. "Community and the Individual in *Anne of Green Gables*: the Meaning of Belonging". This essay discusses Anne's entrance into the community.


Supplementary texts:

*Little Women,* Louisa May Alcott
AGG is considered a literary descendant of LW.

*An Old Fashioned-Girl,* Louisa May Alcott.
Not as well known as LW, but it has evidence of the 'formula of adolescence.' Polly chooses not to let Fanny call her "Marie;" she keeps the simple dresses that become her, rather than borrowing finery from her friend; she gains her own room when she returns to the city to teach. Polly's home is never seen, but it is clear that she has a true home, and that her parents support her in her search to find her own way.

*Huckleberry Finn,* Mark Twain.
This is considered a picture of a boy's adolescence, and there are striking differences when it is compared to Alcott or Montgomery. Huck doesn't worry about his name, he uses a new one every time he comes to a new place, even 'borrowing' Tom Sawyer's name and identity. He spends much of his time on the raft without any clothes on, and when he does wear clothes, puts on whatever he can find. He doesn't have a home, and doesn't miss it at all.

*Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm,* Kate Douglas Wiggin.
The other book that AGG is most often compared to. It was written before AGG, and Montgomery is assumed to have read it. I think it's inferior to AGG, though the structure (plot formula) is similar.
Lucy Maud Montgomery was born on Prince Edward Island, Canada, in 1874. She did not live there her whole life, but it held an important place in her life. The Island was a constant presence in her fiction, and only one of her 23 novels is set completely away from it. Montgomery has long been considered solely a children's writer, though two of her books were written for an adult audience, and the majority of her work holds appeal for a general audience. She remains largely unknown by scholars, but has come under some critical scrutiny with the recent growth in children's literature criticism. The critical studies focus on Anne of Green Gables as her best-known novel, treating it as a children's book, or domestic fiction, or sentimental fiction. There is no consensus as to category, for that book or her work in general. Nor is there consensus as to its worth. In many ways Montgomery is still on the fringe.

I was introduced to Montgomery when I was a teenager, and I have constantly reread her work over the last ten years. Most of her novels lend themselves to rereading; new layers of meaning are constantly revealed. I chose to study Montgomery because of these layers of meaning. I felt that in exploring her work in an academic framework I would be covering new ground, not just repeating the work of others. Reading her novels with a critical focus, I became aware that Montgomery is especially interested in describing adolescence. Montgomery emphasizes the potential within her adolescent heroines as they come to define their identity. She structures the experience of adolescence around a set of cultural markers which are the same from book to book, despite the differences in the heroines themselves. Her use of these markers is the focus of my study.

Adolescence, that murky time between childhood and adulthood, is not clearly defined in post-industrial cultures. Anthropologists see it as a liminal state, meaning that the person experiencing adolescence is temporarily without category, standing on the threshold (limen in Latin) of change. Liminal periods between stages of life
are easy to recognize in tribal cultures, where people go through elaborate rituals when they move from one state to another. Post-industrial cultures have lost these rites, but vestiges of liminality remain, especially in the time of coming of age. In much of the literature of the twentieth century that deals with adolescence, liminality is reflected in characters who feel that they don't belong anywhere, or that they will never find their place in the world. Montgomery's characters do not necessarily feel completely cut off from everyone, but they do go through a period of liminal existence. There is a time in the life of her heroines when they come to discover and define their identity without the constraints of a definite categorization. Montgomery may not have known the word 'adolescent,' but she was very aware that there is a time between childhood and adulthood when a person (or, more specifically in her work, a girl) comes to understand (and/or create) who she is, and where she belongs in the world. In Montgomery's eyes adolescence is a time of refining and becoming aware of one's personality. It is during adolescence that character becomes fully formed and a person comes to know who she is.

In three of her books, *Jane of Lantern Hill*, *Anne of Green Gables*, and *The Blue Castle*, the liminal aspects of adolescence are especially important. The heroines in these books (Jane, Anne, and Valancy) need the lack of restraint that comes from being in between categories in order to grow. These three books have at their base three different formulaic plots, though Montgomery moves away from pure formula in all of them. *Jane of Lantern Hill* (1937) was written late in Montgomery's career. Though Jane is the focus of the book, the basic plot involves her parents. Jane's parents have been separated since she was a baby, and she has had no contact with her father. He sends for her when she is 11, and she spends two summers with him on Prince Edward Island. Fearing that her father is getting a divorce, she travels back to see him in the early spring, falling ill upon her arrival. Her mother rushes to her bedside, and her parents are reunited. *Anne of Green*
Montgomery's first novel, *Gables* (1908), is probably the least formulaic of her entire body of work. It is the story of a young girl who is adopted by an elderly brother and sister. It starts when Anne first arrives at the Cuthbert farm when she is 11, and records her experiences with school, friends, and daily life, until she is 16, when she becomes a teacher at the village school. *The Blue Castle* (1926) has at its base romantic melodrama. The book spans one year, during which Valancy, believing that she has only a year to live, leaves her mother's home to nurse Cissy Gay, a former schoolmate. After Cissy dies, Valancy marries Barney Snaith. At the end of the year, Valancy learns that she is not dying, and leaves Barney, thinking that he married her only out of pity. Barney comes after her and declares his love for her, and they leave for Europe and a life of romance. These are three very different stories, but each of the heroines experiences a time of adolescence. Each of them is also at a different point in her life. Jane is just leaving behind her childhood, Anne is approaching adulthood, and Valancy is, by chronological age, an adult.

Montgomery started her writing career by writing short stories and poems for magazines in Canada and the United States. She learned to write what editors wanted, adjusting her style to fit the tone of a particular magazine. She would often rework a story that had been rejected by one magazine and submit it to another. All of this gave her a firm grounding in formulaic writing. She did not allow the formula to restrict her writing. She enhanced it with not only plot twists and unexpected characterizations, but also elements of realism. Her characters seem to be drawn from real life (none of them are perfect models of behavior,) her stories are set in specific places and times, and she makes use of details of daily living in framing her characters' actions. She describes modes of dress, and what children learn in school, for example, with such detail that the reader cannot help but be left with the impression that these people really lived. Her work is thus on the edge of social history.
Montgomery often uses symbols to trace a character's development. She takes an object or idea and develops it through the novel to parallel a character's changing viewpoint or personality. She will occasionally connect another similar object to another character who does not change, using the contrast between the objects to highlight the contrast between the characters. In describing adolescence, Montgomery takes elements of an adolescent girl's life and gives them symbolic significance.

Her background in formulaic writing can be seen in the way she uses these symbols. She creates a formula of adolescence that is centered around the heroine's defining her identity and gaining control over her environment. At the core of the formula are three symbolic elements: the heroine's name, clothing, and room. There are other elements of life that define adolescence, but these three lend themselves to becoming symbols. None of them are one-time events; they are markers that show progression through adolescence by an individual's control over or interest in them. I refer to these as markers, a term borrowed from anthropology, because they have a cultural resonance; they are part of an adolescent girl's life, not just a literary construct. A girl approaching adulthood, at least in our culture, does attach significance to her name, her clothing, and her room. It is a sign of her maturity when her mother allows her to buy her own clothing, whether the money she uses is part of an allowance or from her own earnings. One only has to bring to mind the vast numbers of images from popular culture to understand how an adolescent transforms a room into a statement of personality. And it is in the adolescent years that childhood nicknames are put aside. Though there has been little work done either in anthropology or sociology on the deeper significance of these markers in adolescence, evidence from popular culture and the media points to their place of importance in our culture.
These markers are inherently feminine. Montgomery describes female adolescence, which in part means she does not follow the literary formula for the coming-of-age novel, which is highly masculine. These markers are anchored in the home, and the domestic world of women. Montgomery's writing is similarly anchored in the domestic; what happens in the home and surrounding community is more important than what is happening in the wider world. Thus these markers are important as they affect the heroine and the way she is viewed by her surrounding community. There is no need for the heroine to become world famous; her highest aspiration is to be important to someone and she does not try to gain importance beyond her immediate surroundings. I am not entirely sure if Montgomery was fully aware that she was using cultural markers to create symbols, or if she knew that these symbols seen together create a formula of adolescence. It would be even more intriguing to me if she was not aware of this, for it would point towards an unconscious element of social history.

Montgomery's heroines progress from a point of having no control to a point of self-determination; from a partial sense of identity, or a knowledge of what they wished they had, to a secure sense of identity, and the self-assurance to acquire what they need. They start with a feeling of having no purpose, and no place in the world, and end with knowing where they belong, and having a clear sense of purpose. Before this process can truly begin, however, the heroine must be in a stable environment. She must have the support of her family and/or community, in order to feel that leaving childhood will not destroy her. This support and stability is symbolized by the home. While home is not a marker of adolescence, it is a prerequisite. It must be in place before the heroine can feel secure in her adolescence.

Adolescence is a time of stretching boundaries, of moving away from the child's state of being under the complete control of adults. Adulthood in
Montgomery's novels is seen as the achieving of control over one's personality and environment. This reflects the cultural view of an adult as an independent being, in control of his/her own destiny. Montgomery traces the progress of her heroine by having her gain control over her name, clothing, and room. Her use of these markers is consistent yet she never allows the character's individuality to be lost. She is not simply filling in a formulaic framework. For each heroine, the markers have a different significance, because for each of them, being an adult is important for a different reason. For Anne, the most important sign of adulthood is her leaving behind the world of fantasy, and coming into the real world. Each of the markers, then, points to her no longer wanting to live in fantasy, but being contented with what is around her. For Jane, it is all an issue of control. As a child, she is controlled by others in every aspect of her life; as she approaches adulthood, she wants to be in control of her own actions. Valancy is not passing through the 'natural' adolescence of her teen years. She reenters the liminal state in order to free herself from the constraints she has lived under and achieve full adulthood. Montgomery considers these markers so much a part of adolescence that she includes them in a story that is about, not a teenage girl, but a woman who is redefining herself much as an adolescent does.

I came to Montgomery's view of adolescence from inside the text. I was first drawn to the social history aspect of her work. As I traced her use of realistic details, I noticed the pattern formed by the markers. I then realized the use of these markers resulted in a formula for adolescence. This created a textual approach to looking at adolescence in Montgomery's fiction. In exploring and developing a definition for her formula of adolescence, I went to anthropological and sociological resources, as well as literary criticism, seeking a cultural correlation with the text. I found that little work had been done on these markers, though studies on
adolescence in literature abound. Montgomery's text is my only real authority in discussing the significance of the name, clothing, and room.

Though the markers all exist simultaneously, it is useful to consider them separately. I start with a discussion of the importance of home in each book, and how its existence gives the heroine the stability she needs to progress through adolescence. I then discuss each of the three markers in turn, starting with the most internal, the name, followed by clothing, and then the room, which combines elements of the other two markers. I then return in my conclusion to Montgomery's general concept of adolescence, and the way the books differ while still using the same symbolic structure.

The Security of Home

The home is one of the most important symbolic elements in Montgomery's work. It represents family and stability, and is the center of the heroine's life. Before the heroine can safely enter the liminal state, she needs the security of family and the stability of home behind her. She often does not start out with this, and must find a place where she belongs, where she is surrounded by people who love her and want her to grow. The heroine recognizes her home the moment she sees it, and miraculous things happen once it is found. Her self-confidence grows, her old insecurities falling away. The heroine's connection to her home, once it is made, remains stable as she progresses through adolescence; it does not function as a marker of progression. Montgomery is careful in her word choice: 'home' is differentiated from 'a house where one lives,' and it is obvious that the heroines are aware of, and make, this distinction. Montgomery often creates a contrast between dwelling places, the place where the heroine starts out, and the home she discovers. She gives the home a name, while other dwelling places are only given an address or description. The titles of these books are the first sign of the importance of home.
Anne of Green Gables and Jane of Lantern Hill from the very beginning define the heroines in terms of their homes. The Blue Castle at first seems to only refer to Valancy's daydreams, but when Valancy names the cabin where her husband lives the 'Blue Castle,' the full meaning of the title becomes clear: this is her home.4

In Jane of Lantern Hill, Montgomery constantly contrasts Jane's grandmother's house in Toronto (60 Gay) and the house Jane and her father buy on Prince Edward Island (Lantern Hill). Montgomery sometimes goes out of her way to avoid using 'home' to describe her grandmother's house. It is always 'the house' or '60 Gay,' to emphasize Jane's not feeling at home there. When she meets her father, she is given the chance to choose the house that will be her home. Both of them believe that "[y]ou want to feel that the house is yours before you buy it" (71), and that is exactly how they feel about the house at Lantern Hill. Montgomery emphasizes this at the same time as recalling Jane's feeling of not belonging at 60 Gay. "[Jane] had always wanted to 'belong' somewhere and she belonged here. At last she had a feeling of home" (76). Jane depends on that feeling of home throughout her adolescence. The security it gives her is what allows her to leave her childhood behind.

Jane's greatest fear (created by hints from her Aunt Irene) is that her father will remarry and bring another woman to Lantern Hill. That would utterly destroy the sanctity and very existence of her home. "If this hideous thing were true, she would never spend a summer at Lantern Hill again. Would they dare to live at Lantern Hill?" (210). The loss of this security would mean the loss of her very identity. She would also lose her father, the one member of her family who has fully supported her in her adolescence. She feels that there is nothing she can do to stop this from happening, but she can at least know if it will indeed happen. She travels to the Island alone, not eating or sleeping until she arrives. She quickly finds out that her father is not getting a divorce, and that the home is safe. Jane is safe as
well, as she "has come home" (214). She will be gaining another home in Toronto, another house that Jane recognized as a possible home the minute she saw it, but that is not as important as the continued presence of Lantern Hill, where they will live in the summer. Jane still has most of her adolescence before her, so it is fitting that the book ends with the image of her home, and its continuing presence in her life.

Green Gables transforms Anne's existence by giving her a place to belong and a family. The stability this provides allows her to discover her identity and purpose. Anne, orphaned when she was a baby, has always wanted a home, and tells Matthew, "I've never had a real home since I can remember. It gives me that pleasant ache again just to think of coming to a really truly home" (23). She may not be able to express what having a home means, but she knows it is important. For her it means stability, and being in a place where she is a member of the family.5 She also recognizes her home the minute she sees it. As they drive from the train station, Matthew starts to point it out to her, but she stops him.

"Let me guess. I'm sure I'll guess right."
She opened her eyes and looked about her. [...] Below was a little valley and beyond a long, gently-rising slope with snug farmsteads scattered along it. From one to another the child's eyes darted, eager and wistful. At last they lingered on one away to the left, far back from the road. [...] Over it, in the stainless southwest sky, a great crystal-white star was shining like a lamp of guidance and promise.6 "That's it, isn't it?" she said, pointing (25).7

When Anne learns that she probably will not stay, she refuses to learn to love Green Gables. She doesn't go outside to explore when Marilla gives her permission to, because she knows that will make leaving harder. She has yearned so much for a home, and wants to stay at Green Gables so intensely, that the disappointment is almost unbearable. Once she knows she is to stay, however, she embraces wholeheartedly the joy of having a home. "It's lovely to be going home and know it's
home," she says to Marilla. "I love Green Gables already, and I never loved any place before. No place ever seemed like home" (73-4).

Green Gables is so important to her that Anne is willing to give up her chance to go to college to keep it safe. After Matthew dies, and Marilla is faced with having to sell the farm, Anne decides to stay at home. She cannot let her home be sold. She tells Marilla, "nothing could be worse than giving up Green Gables [...] Nobody could love it as you and I do--so we must keep it" (277-8). Love of Green Gables is one thing they had in common from the beginning. Marilla, like Anne, can not imagine what life would be like without her home, yet she sees Anne's decision as a sacrifice. Anne sees it as simply necessary. She cannot lose the security and stability of having a home.

In *The Blue Castle*, Valancy uses the word 'home' to refer to her mother's house only until she leaves it. After that, "she never even [thinks] about it as 'home'" (102). She finds her true home almost at the end of her adolescence. She has defined herself without the security it provides. Roaring Abel's house, where she works as a housekeeper, serves as a temporary dwelling place as she searches for a home. One of her reasons for marrying Barney is that she knows his cabin can become her home. Hearing his descriptions of it cabin is enough for her to know that she will be happy and secure there. When she first sees the cabin, she calls it her 'Blue Castle,' believing that here all her dreams will be fulfilled.

No one disturbs the sanctity of their home; none of Valancy's relatives visit there. Valancy believes that they could destroy her home with a single glance or word, so she purposefully does not invite them to visit. She is not completely secure about her identity; without the home, she does not feel she has the strength to be herself. When she returns to her mother's house, wondering "if the Prodigal Son ever felt really at home again" (198), she feels as if she has left part of herself behind in the home she believes she can never return to. When Barney and Valancy are
reunited, though they plan to move to Montreal, Montgomery is careful to establish that they will spend their summers at the Blue Castle.

All three books end with the impression that the home will always be there, and that, therefore, the support the heroines depend on will always be there as well. Jane and Anne do not enter adolescence until the home is secure; Valancy does not become fully secure with her newfound independence until she has her Blue Castle. The sense of security they all find once the home is established is important in giving them the inner strength to progress towards adulthood.

Name as Identity

In literature, names are often symbolic. Authors are able to choose names for their characters based on the name's meaning. Montgomery does not do this, instead choosing names that would be expected to appear in the communities she describes, which is appropriate considering how closely her writing approaches social history. Each of her heroines considers her name to be very important; her name is who she is, it makes her an individual. As the heroine comes to clearly define her identity, her definition has at its core her name. The first (or given) name is the one used most often, but the last name (the family name), is important as well. It brings automatic inclusion into a community, the people who share that name. The people in the heroine's life who encourage her to explore and define her personality understand how name is tied to identity. Those who hold her back do not consider the heroine's choice of name to be important at all, and often do not accept what the heroine comes to see as her identity. This is the symbolic marker that is most consistent across the texts, and is the most important to Montgomery in defining identity.

At the beginning of *Jane of Lantern Hill*, Jane is not actually called 'Jane' by anyone, though she considers it to be her name. Everyone around her calls her
'Victoria.' "Jane hated to be called Victoria. Yet everybody called her that, except mother, who called her Jane Victoria. Jane knew [...] that for some reason unknown to her, grandmother hated the name of Jane. Jane liked it...always had liked it...always thought of herself as Jane" (4). But, though she thinks of herself as Jane, she is not allowed to use that name. She is not in control of even this basic aspect of her life. Jane is the name her father chose for her, which is why her grandmother does not like it. Jane's grandmother did not approve of her daughter's marriage, and almost completely succeeds in erasing Jane's father's existence. Jane doesn't even know he is alive until a schoolmate tells her. He is never completely eradicated from Jane's life or her mother's, because they still bear his last name. "All [Jane] knew about him was that his name must have been Andrew Stuart, because mother was Mrs. Andrew Stuart" (23). Jane wanting to be called 'Jane,' then, creates a link with her father that her grandmother will not allow. Jane does not know this, she only knows that it is the name that feels like hers.

Her rejection of 'Victoria' mirrors her dislike of her grandmother, and her wish to free herself from her grandmother's control. Her grandmother is named 'Victoria,' and by refusing to identify herself by the old woman's name, Jane removes herself from her and all she stands for. Jane does not feel that she can be 'Jane,' however. She does not have the self-assurance about her identity to demand that her family call her 'Jane'; they all use 'Victoria,' as grandmother wishes them to. Given a chance, she insists on being Jane. When she meets Jody, a girl her age who lives next door, she introduces herself as Jane. Jody "thought it was Victoria," but Jane repeats, "It's Jane [...] at least it's Jane Victoria but I am Jane" (17). This is the first sign that Jane is ready for adolescence, and the defining of her identity that comes with it.

When Jane arrives on the Island, she is for the first time completely free of her grandmother (if only for the summer) and thus is able to assert her identity. One
of her first acts is to discard 'Victoria.' Her Aunt Irene calls her "Jane Victoria," but Jane responds, "politely and distinctly," "Jane, if you please" (55). From that moment on, when she is on the Island, her name is Jane, and Victoria, and all the things associated with Victoria, are gone. She has taken the first step into adolescence, and has decided what her identity will be. Her father is immediately established as a person who will help her in defining herself. He does what no one (aside from Jody) had ever done, and asks her what she wants to be called.

"By the way, do you like to be Jane? I've always called you Jane but that may be just pure cussedness. You've a right to whatever name you like. But I want to know which name is the real you and which the shadowy little ghost" (62).

Indeed, 'Jane' is the 'real' person. Her father knows how a name connects to identity. He does not say 'do you like to be called Jane?' but 'do you like to be Jane?' He is in a sense asking her what she wants to be, and will allow her to be that, even if it's not what he has imagined.

She is 'Jane' to everyone on the Island; in fact, she insists on it. Here, she has control over her identity. And everyone accepts it, just as they accept her as herself. The reader, having seen both grandmother's and Aunt Irene's attitude to Jane and her name, is immediately aware that the people Jane meets in Queen's Shore are different.

"Jane Victoria Stuart?" said Mrs. Jimmy John with a questioning smile. "Jane!" said Jane, with [...] an intonation of triumph. [...] "Jane, of course," smiled Mrs. Jimmy John. Jane knew she was going to like Mrs. Jimmy John (87).

Jane always likes the people who understand her and accept who she is. These are the people who allow her to be herself in all she does, without imposing an identity on her. They do not deride her wishes to learn to cook and take care of a house, and they unquestioningly accept that her name is Jane. Once she knows that her identity is secure, she can explore what exactly her identity entails. Being allowed to be Jane gives her a sense of worth that erases her previous shyness and insecurity.
She is finally able to express herself, and to discover what she is capable of. The quiet, unsociable child, awkward because she was unsure of herself, is transformed into a confident girl who is willing to turn her hand to anything.

Jane at times is caught between two identities: her true self and the identity that her grandmother attempts to impose on her. In her mind, when she is allowed to be Jane, she is happy, when she is forced to be Victoria she is not. She sees the names as metaphorical garments, each with an identity attached, to be put on and off. At the end of the first summer, as she leaves the Island, she thinks to herself, "[a]nd now to be Victoria again!" (143). At the end of the second summer, she still feels that she "must put off Jane and put on Victoria" (196) when she returns to Gay. She wishes she could be Jane all the time, but she does not realize at first that she can remain true to herself and allow those around her to call her Victoria. Yet she has grown more confident and more sure of her identity, and is less concerned about losing that identity when she is called Victoria. She learns that she can be Jane no matter what she is called. She has internalized her sense of identity; it is no longer controlled by others. At the end of the book she is not yet Jane everywhere; her family in Toronto still call her Victoria. But internally, her identity as Jane is secure, and she can better tolerate being called by a different name.

As Anne of Green Gables begins, the identity of the child Matthew and Marilla are adopting is not known. When Matthew meets the girl on the train platform, he is too surprised, and too naturally shy, to ask her name, so she remains nameless until she is in the Green Gables kitchen, and Marilla asks for her name.

The child hesitated for a moment. "Will you please call me Cordelia?" she said eagerly. "Call you Cordelia! Is that your name?" "No-o-o, it's not exactly my name, but I would love to be called Cordelia. It's such a perfectly elegant name." "I don't know what on earth you mean. If Cordelia isn't your name, what is?" "Anne Shirley," reluctantly faltered forth the owner of that name, "but, oh, please do call me Cordelia. It can't matter much to you what you call me if
I'm only going to be here a little while, can it? And Anne is such an unromantic name."

"Unromantic fiddlesticks!" said the unsympathetic Marilla. "Anne is a real good plain sensible name. You've no need to be ashamed of it."

"Oh, I'm not ashamed of it," explained Anne, "only I like Cordelia better. I've always imagined that my name was Cordelia--at least, I always have of late years. When I was young I used to imagine it was Geraldine, but I like Cordelia better now. But if you call me Anne please call me Anne spelled with an e."

"What difference does it make how it's spelled?" asked Marilla with another rusty smile as she picked up the teapot.

"Oh, it makes such a difference. It looks so much nicer. When you hear a name pronounced can't you always see it in you mind, just as if it was printed out? I can; and A-n-n looks dreadful, but A-n-n-e looks so much more distinguished. If you'll only call me Anne spelled with an e I shall try to reconcile myself to not being called Cordelia" (27-8).

Though she is not ashamed of being Anne, when she asks to be called Cordelia she is trying to change her identity temporarily, and live in the dream world of romance for a while. But Marilla, who is comfortable with her own identity, and probably always was, does not allow Anne to simply abandon hers. Anne accepts this, as she is almost ready to leave behind the world of her imagination.

Anne's sense of identity rests on the e. Those who try to help her fulfill her potential understand its importance. Matthew, Marilla, and Mrs. Allen, the minister's wife, all want Anne to grow. Their understanding of the importance of the spelling of her name shows their understanding and acceptance of Anne's personality. In contrast are the people who aren't understanding or supportive. The most obvious is Anne's first teacher, Mr. Phillips. To punish her for breaking her slate over Gilbert's head, he makes her stand on the platform in front of the class, writing on the blackboard: "Ann Shirley has a very bad temper. Ann Shirley must learn to control her temper" (105). Anne is upset more from the 'Ann' than from the punishment itself, because the misspelling of her name brings her identity into question. The next year, Mr. Phillips is replaced, by Miss Stacy, who tries to guide all of her students through their adolescence. Anne tells Marilla that when Miss Stacy "pronounces my name I feel instinctively that she's spelling it with an e" (176). Miss
Stacy is soon proven to be one of Anne's most important supporters. It is she who suggests Anne join the Queen's class and go to Queen's Academy to train as a teacher.

Anne never takes the Cuthberts' name, instead keeping her parents' name of 'Shirley.' It is her only link to them and she does not want to abandon it. Matthew and Marilla understand that it is important to her, and do not expect her to want to change her name. Forming a link with her new family and community is also important to her. To do this, Anne starts to think of herself as 'Anne of Green Gables,' occasionally introducing herself as such:

"Who are you?" demanded Miss Josephine Barry without ceremony.
"I'm Anne of Green Gables" (147).9

This places her firmly within the community, and gives her a link to Matthew and Marilla, without leaving behind the memory of her parents.

Valancy, though she is 29, does not yet have a clear sense of her identity. Her family has never given her the space to discover who she is. This is a large part of her insecurity. Even her last name does not help her in defining her identity. Valancy is of 'the Deerwood Stirlings,' which means she is from a certain part of society. The Stirlings have many family functions to which all the family members come. Valancy feels out of place at these gatherings, and knows she is only there because of her family connection. She would not take part in these gatherings if she had a choice.

Her family does not treat her like an adult. In many ways they still see her as a child. They still use her childhood nickname of 'Doss,' which she hates.

She had endured [being called Doss] for twenty-nine years, and all at once she felt she could not endure it any longer. Her full name was Valancy Jane. Valancy Jane was rather terrible, but she liked Valancy, with its odd, outlandish tang. It was always a wonder to Valancy that the Stirlings had allowed her to be so christened. [...] the whole connection got out of the difficulty by nicknaming her Doss. She never got Valancy from any one but outsiders (15-6).
Her first move to independence is thus to ask her mother to stop calling her Doss. But, it does little good.

"Mother," she said timidly, "would you mind calling me Valancy after this? Doss seems so-so- I don't like it."

Mrs. Frederick looked at her daughter in astonishment. [...] "What is the matter with Doss?"
"It seems so childish." faltered Valancy. [...] "Well, it should suit you then. You are childish enough in all conscience, my dear child" (16).

Valancy's mother sees no need for Valancy to grow, as she sees no potential in her daughter. In order to move out of her child-like state, then, Valancy must find it within herself to leave behind the part of her identity that is attached to 'Doss.'

The thought that she is dying gives her the courage to do so. Letting her true identity express itself, she says out loud what she had before only thought, and she refuses to answer to Doss. She chooses to allow only the name she likes, leaving the childish nickname behind as she leaves all vestiges of her childhood behind. Her family continues to use 'Doss' even while acknowledging her new adulthood. When she returns home, they call her both Valancy and Doss, sometimes in the same breath: "Trust to me, Valancy. Everything will arrange itself. Tell me this Dossie" (201). It is a habit her family finds hard to break, no matter how much the name is now inappropriate. They still think of her as a child, so they have no problem using the child's name. They only start to think that they should stop calling her 'Doss' when they learn that she is married to the son of a millionaire. She has gained importance in their eyes. They realize that they "must get in the habit of calling her Valancy. She isn't a baby any longer" (204), but they cannot immediately accept her as an adult, since they did not witness much of her second adolescence. Outside of her family, however, things are different. She is Valancy to everyone. It is easy for her to immediately take on adult responsibility because the wider community sees her as an adult.
Valancy wants to separate herself from her family as much as possible. But her last name remains a connection, even after she has moved out. When she asks Barney to marry her, she is also asking him to serve as the agent of her ceremonial break from her family. Her married name 'Snaith' banishes (in her mind) her connection to the Stirlings. She never leaves her family behind completely, but she does remove herself from them when she changes her name. She can say that she is no longer 'of the Deerwood Stirlings,' since she does not share their name, and thus is fully free of their expectations and restraints.

Each of these heroines, then, is aware of the importance of her name and of its use by others. Valancy refuses to reply to her childhood nickname, which she has never liked, once she decides to take control over her life and to grow up. As she matures, Anne stops wanting to be called Cordelia, no longer wanting to be someone else. Jane seems to have left Victoria behind her, but she may come to accept both names as hers. We cannot tell, because she still has growing up ahead of her. What is certain is that she needed the freedom to discover for herself who she is. For each of them, a feeling of self identity is attached to her name. In Montgomery's eyes, what one is called is intrinsically connected to who one is, and adolescence is the time when this self-identity is clearly defined.

Clothing Choices

There has been a great deal of study in anthropology and sociology concerning the importance of clothing. But little, if any, emphasis has been placed on the importance of being able to choose what one wears. If, as cultural anthropologist E. Jean Langdon writes, "a person seeks to express his identity through the clothing he wears" (297), then surely control over what one wears is linked to control over one's perceived identity. Anthropologists concentrate on the significance of who wears what, and how the world perceives people through their clothes. Communities of
people often dress alike in order to show themselves as a community. Wearing what everyone else wears means a person fits in. Sociologists discuss clothing styles in relation to the structure of social groups in adolescence, but do not concern themselves with the issue of controlling what one wears. I would suggest that part of what defines adulthood is being able to decide on one's own clothing, and thus to be a part of (or separate from) the community. Montgomery almost always includes dress in her descriptions of characters, as if what they wear is important to who they are. Each of the three heroines in some way gains control over how she dresses as she approaches adulthood. Each of them goes from wearing what she is told to wear, clothing which is either made or bought by an adult, to wearing what she wants to wear, occasionally in defiance to the wishes of others.

Clothing is mentioned repeatedly in *Jane of Lantern Hill*, and is usually part of the issue of control. Jane's mother, especially, is described in terms of her clothes. Practically every scene she is in includes a description of her attire. Though she is an adult, she is still under her mother's control, and still wears what her mother chooses for her to wear.

Grandmother [...] picked out all her clothes for her...wonderful dresses and hats and wraps. Jane [...] had an idea that mother really liked simpler clothes and only pretended to like better the gorgeous things grandmother bought for her for fear of hurting grandmother's feelings (7).

Grandmother unsuccessfully tries for the same control over Jane. For Jane's first Island trip, her grandmother takes her to buy new clothes, "much nicer than she had ever had before." "She shall go fitted out properly," she says, "He shall not need to buy clothes for her, of that I shall make sure" (50). But, Jane soon realizes that "none of the clothes grandmother had bought for her would be of any use at Lantern Hill," so she goes with her father to buy "some gingham dresses and aprons" (79). This is mostly her practical side asserting itself, but it is also a sign of her grandmother's diminishing control over Jane. Jane's practical personality further
asserts itself when she actually destroys some of the things grandmother had bought, tearing up two undervests to serve as dishtowels (82). Jane is much more comfortable in her new clothing, partly because she had some say in it. She wears what she wants to wear, clothing that fits 'Jane,' but does not fit 'Victoria.' When she returns to Toronto, her grandmother remarks that none of her clothing seems to have been worn. This is the first sign to her that Jane is passing out of her control, and she immediately moves to restore that control, by 'suggesting' that Jane must be tired and should go to bed. Even that doesn't work, though, as Jane runs off to visit her friend Jody first.

The next summer, Jane picks out her own clothing, "things that would suit Lantern Hill and an Island summer" (166). Her control over her clothing has increased; she is not forced to abide by another's idea of the proper wardrobe. But she does not have complete control, for her mother insists on "some smart little knitted sweaters and one pretty dress of rose-pink organdy with delicious frills" (166). Jane likes the clothing her mother picks out for her, but she wants to fit in in the Island community, where such clothing is out of place. There is no mention of what she wears in Toronto, but it is easy to imagine that there her grandmother continues to hold some control, if only through Jane's mother. On the Island, Jane is in complete control over what she wears from day to day, as her father considers her old enough to know what is appropriate.

At the end of the novel, Jane's mother has not changed at all. The last description of one of her dresses is just like the first. Unlike Jane, she has never gained control over how she presents herself to the world. This makes Jane's independence all the more striking.

Anne goes from wearing a dress that is barely respectable, one that is cheap and provided to her by the orphanage, to having many dresses, made fashionably, that look like her friends' dresses. In the late 1800s, when *Anne of Green Gables*
takes place, clothing was still almost exclusively made at home, at least in rural communities. Anne is taught to sew, with the understanding that she will eventually be able to make her own clothes. When she is old enough to do so, she will be mature enough to have control over what she wears. Until then, however, the control rests in Marilla's hands.

The first description of Anne starts with her clothing: "A child of about eleven, garbed in a very short, very tight, very ugly dress of yellowish gray wincey" (15). This was the standard dress at the orphanage, and was made as cheaply as possible. Anne tells Matthew, as she describes her mortification at having to travel in her orphan clothes, "I do hope that some day I shall have a white dress. That is my highest ideal of earthly bliss. I just love pretty clothes. And I've never had a pretty dress in my life that I can remember" (18). Anne's first new dresses do not conform to her wishes, instead showing Marilla's practicality. Marilla makes her three new dresses for school, "all make alike--plain skirts fulled tightly to plain waists, with sleeves as plain as waist and skirt and tight as sleeves could be."

Marilla, with her strict Scots Presbyterian background, sees no need for "frills and furbelows," but Anne had hoped that "there would be a white one with puffed sleeves." All the other girls have puffed sleeves on their dresses, and Anne wants to look like everyone else and be part of the community. When Marilla says that the puffed sleeves are "ridiculous-looking things," Anne replies, "I'd rather look ridiculous when everybody else does than plain and sensible all by myself" (75-6).

Anne's wishes are answered when Matthew notices that Anne looks different from her friends.

The more Matthew thought about the matter the more he was convinced that Anne never had been dressed like the other girls. [...] Marilla kept her clothed in plain, dark dresses, all made after the same unvarying pattern. [...] He recalled the cluster of little girls he had seen around her that evening--all gay in waists of red and blue and pink and white--and he wondered why Marilla always kept her so plainly and soberly gowned (180).
Accordingly, he asks Mrs. Lynde to make a dress for Anne, in the latest fashion:

a lovely soft brown gloria with all the gloss of silk; a skirt with dainty frills and shirrings; a waist elaborately pintucked in the most fashionable way, with a little ruffle of filmy lace at the neck. But the sleeves—they were the crowning glory! Long elbow cuffs, and above them two beautiful puffs divided by rows of shirring and bows of brown silk ribbon (185).

The dress is still appropriate for the community, so Marilla cannot object too strongly. It is also a sign that Anne is growing up, as Mrs. Lynde made it a little too long, making Anne look older. Through the rest of the book, Anne still does not choose her own clothing, because she is still not doing her own sewing. The choice is not important in these circumstances; no one Anne's age is in complete control over her clothing. What is important is that Marilla make Anne's dresses like the other girls' dresses, to allow her to be a part of the community. Anne knows that Marilla is supporting her entrance into the community, and acknowledges it. She thanks Marilla for putting a flounce on one of her dresses: "it was so sweet of you to put on the flounce. I know it wasn't really necessary, but flounces are so stylish this fall [...] I know I'll be able to study better because of mine. I shall have such a comfortable feeling deep down in my mind about that flounce" (231-2).

Matthew continues to aid Anne in her quest for pretty dresses, even going so far as to buy her the material for the white dress she has dreamed of. Marilla once again disapproves, saying that "organdy's the most unserviceable stuff in the world" (245), but secretly she thinks that the dress is becoming. Marilla knows that Anne is growing up, and needs to be able to make her own choices. Making Anne's dresses 'fashionably' is her way of giving Anne some control while still retaining her own control as best she can. And, as Marilla comes to understand Anne, she accepts that Anne's choice of clothing is appropriate. She even goes so far as to buy Anne material for an 'evening dress' when she goes to Queen's, without Anne's having to ask for it. She tells Anne "I hear that Jane and Ruby and Josie have got 'evening dresses,' as they call them, and I don't mean you shall be behind them" (252). At the
end of the novel, the doctor has told Marilla to "give up all reading and sewing entirely" (275), and it is implied that Anne will now not only be making her own clothes, but Marilla's as well. Since she is at that point an adult, she is able to take on the responsibility.

The first description of Valancy's clothes emphasizes the drabness of her life: "Valancy took off and hung up in the closet her nightdress of coarse, unbleached cotton, with high neck and long, tight sleeves. She put on undergarments of a similar nature, a dress of brown gingham, thick, black stockings and rubber-heeled boots" (12). Valancy, at 29, is still not choosing her own clothes. Nor does she like the clothes she does wear. She wears dark, drab colors because "Aunt Isabel had decreed that Valancy should never wear colours. They did not become her. When she was young they allowed her to wear white, but that had been tacitly dropped for some years" (48). Valancy is not even allowed to decide what to wear on a particular day. Her mother directs her in what she should put on, as if she were incapable of the decision herself. Valancy obeys her mother as she does in everything, though she inwardly rebels. Her wishes are expressed in terms of what she had never had:

Valancy had never had a pink dress or worn flowers in her hair (28).

She had never had a dress with low neck and elbow sleeves, although they had been worn, even in Deerwood, for over a year (48).

She does not think that she will ever be in charge of her life, which is much like her clothing, drab and unexciting. But that changes when she finds the courage to seek out her independence.

When Valancy is paid her first month's wages by Roaring Abel, she immediately goes into town and spends every cent of it on clothes. She buys "a pretty green crêpe dress with a girdle of crimson beads [...] a pair of silk stockings to match, and a little crinkled green hat with a crimson rose in it. She even [buys] a foolish little beribboned and belaced nightgown" (102). But when she gets home and
tries the dress on, she cannot wear it. "She [feels] so miserably undressed in its low neck and short sleeves. And that low, crimson girdle around the hips [seems] positively indecent. [...] had been very becoming--she had seen so much in her one ashamed glance. Above it her eyes had looked like odd brown jewels and the girdle had given her flat figure an entirely different appearance" (102-3). Though she is now nominally in control of what she wears, her upbringing still has too strong a hold over her. She wants to wear the dress, but cannot at first find the courage to overcome her old inability to go against her family's decrees. She does overcome it when, faced with wearing the green dress or her old brown silk to a party, "a rage against the snuff-brown silk seized her," and she puts on the new dress. This dress is a symbol of her second adolescence; it is the "first time she had worn a pretty dress since the organdies of her early teens" (104). It is also an outward sign of her newfound courage to express herself. No one in her family would approve of the dress; it serves as a device of separation from her old life and community. Thus it is especially fitting that it is what she wears when she marries Barney.

After her marriage, Valancy uses her own money to buy an entire new wardrobe. She does not even allow her husband to pay for her new dresses, partly because she thinks Barney is poor, and can't afford it, but mostly because she needs to be in control of what she wears, as it now truly reflects her personality. Her new dresses belong to her in a way her old ones did not. Her entire wardrobe is now under her control; she no longer wears any of the clothes from her old life. She wears only what she wishes to wear, a sign of her independence from everything that kept her oppressed before. When Valancy returns to her mother's house, she leaves all her belongings behind, including her pretty dresses. Though the dresses belong to her, they do not belong in that house, or to the life she must lead there. She is reentering the world where she is not allowed to wear colors, and must try to readjust herself to the oppression that comes with it. Thus, when Barney comes after her, she meets
with him wearing "an ugly old brown-and-blue gingham" (208). Rather surprisingly, the only other mention of clothing at the end of The Blue Castle is of Barney's clothes. Olive, in her letter to Cecil, mentions that Barney now has "decent clothes" (217). One would expect Montgomery to at least mention that Valancy, when she leaves the Blue Castle, takes her dresses with her. Perhaps because she is obviously happy, Montgomery does not feel the need to emphasize that Valancy has returned to being independent, and wearing what she wishes to wear.

Each of the heroines wants to have control over what she wears for a different reason. Jane simply wants to be able to decide on her clothing herself. Anne wants to fit in, and Valancy wants to declare her independence from her mother and her family's expectations. One aspect of the use of clothing as a marker is consistent: Montgomery has each of the heroines slowly gain control over what they wear, in a progression that is parallel to the general process of growing up.

Her Own Room

An adolescent's room is one of the first places where she is allowed to have control over her environment. A young girl may not be allowed to decorate the parlor, or decide on the week's menu, but she can make curtains for her window, and decide which pictures to hang on her walls. The items she chooses to place there are often keys to her personality. Grace Loucks Elliott writes, in her 1930 book on adolescent girls,

It is interesting to note how the personality of the occupant is revealed by the furnishings of a girl's room; what pictures she chooses to put on her walls, what things she chooses to put on her dresser or table; what books she keeps near at hand; what colors she uses in even the simplest scarfs or draperies, in what order the whole is kept (109).

Montgomery combines this idea of self-expression with the idea of control. Her heroines do not start off being able to decide how their room looks; they do not even completely control when they can go there, or when others can enter.
heroines talk at first of not being 'allowed' to do things to their room, indicating that they still are in the subordinate position of children, and that the room is under the control of the adults. Over the course of the books, each heroine slowly gains more control over what her room looks like, until her room is as much an expression of her self as is her name. Thus the room combines the symbolic elements of name and clothing; it is where the heroine's newly defined identity and growing control over her life meet. Once the heroine is granted privacy, and allowed to retreat to her room it becomes a refuge and the manifestation of the symbolic space she is given to discover her identity.

As with the description of the houses Jane lives in, the descriptions of the rooms she sleeps in form a contrast between her life in Toronto, where she is forced to remain a child, and her life on the Island, where she is encouraged to grow towards adulthood. The first description of Jane's bedroom in Toronto does not even refer to it as 'her' room.

[S]he hated the bedroom where she had to sleep alone. [...] Jane thought she might have liked the room better if it had been smaller. She always felt lost in it. [...] It always seemed hostile, watchful, vindictive. And yet Jane always felt that if she were allowed to do things for it [...] she would begin to love it, huge as it was. Everything in it was huge...a huge black walnut wardrobe like a prison, a huge chest of drawers, a huge walnut bedstead, [...] except a tiny cradle which was always kept in the alcove by the fireplace...a cradle that grandmother had been rocked in (41-2).

This description reinforces Grandmother's power over the household and Jane's utter powerlessness. There is no room for her to grow in a room that is "hostile" and "vindictive." The room fits grandmother's personality rather than Jane's. Even in her room, she is not free of her grandmother's presence. And even if she were, there are portraits of "several old dead grands and greats hung on the walls" (42) to remind her of her family's expectations, which she does not feel capable of achieving.

At Aunt Irene's, Jane spends one night in a room that feels even less like it could be hers, that is once again a perfect fit to someone else's personality.
The room was very pretty, with [...] a silk-covered bed so smooth and sleek that it looked as if it had never been slept in [...] The bed lamp had a lampshade painted with roses with a bead fringe. For some reason, Jane couldn't endure that lampshade. It was too smooth and pretty, just like Aunt Irene (my emphasis, 57-8).

At every opportunity, Montgomery reminds the reader that Jane has not found where she belongs. When Jane gets up in the night, Aunt Irene immediately comes in, without knocking, to see why she is awake. There is no thought of giving Jane privacy, or of allowing her a mode of self-expression, either here or in 60 Gay.

Once she and her father meet however, she not only is allowed to decorate her room, she chooses which room will be hers. Her father offers her the "quite large [room]" with a view of the gulf, but she immediately answers, "No, I want this dear little one at the back. I want a little room, dad" (80). Her father wants her to grow, so he gives her the space she feels most comfortable in. From Jane's first night in this room, she has no feeling of not belonging, or of the room being a part of someone else's personality.

Jane looked about her tiny room, her heart swelling with satisfaction. There was as yet only the spool bed and a little table in it; the ceiling was stained with old leaks and the floor was slightly uneven. But this was the first room to be her very own, where she need never feel that someone was peeping at her through the keyhole (83).

She finally has the privacy she has desired. The decorations she eventually chooses connect her to the past, as the cradle and portraits did, but in a much different way. These relics of the past, the "delightful old framed motto worked in blue and crimson wool" that belonged to her grandmother Stuart and her father's Distinguished Service Medal from the Great War (93), are self-chosen. They reflect her domesticity and her pride in her father's accomplishments. This room reflects Jane's personality, and allows her to explore that personality, a necessary part of her adolescence.
Grandmother, in an attempt to regain control over Jane, redecorates her room during the second summer. The old dark furniture is removed, but the room is still more grandmother's idea of what a room should be than Jane's:

[...] a wonderful splendour of rose and grey, instead of the old gloom. Silvery carpet...shimmering curtains...chintz chairs...cream-tinted furniture...pink silk bedspread. The old bearskin rug...the only thing she had really liked...was gone. So was the cradle. The big mirror had been replaced by a round rimless one [...] Jane recalled her little room at Lantern Hill with its bare floor and sheepskin rug and white spool bed covered with its patchwork quilt (198).

Jane cannot feel that the room is hers, because she had no say in any part of its decoration. Grandmother cannot comprehend this, and does not understand why Jane does not like the new furnishings. Jane's room at Lantern Hill may be much smaller and simpler, but it has no touch of a controlling presence. Jane knows that she will never have control over her room at 60 Gay, so she does not try to change things there. She is still in the middle of her adolescence, and while her identity is clearly established, she has not grown enough to be able to always control her environment. The two rooms together serve as a definite indicator of her range of control.

The appearance of Anne's room symbolically reflects her settling in at Green Gables. As she becomes more and more a part of Green Gables, her room comes, bit by bit, to reflect her personality. When Anne first arrives, there is not even a room prepared for her. "Marilla had been wondering where Anne should be put to bed. She had prepared a couch in the kitchen chamber for the desired and expected boy. But, although it was neat and clean, it did not seem quite the thing to put a girl there somehow" (30). Marilla eventually decides to put Anne in the east gable room. The first description of the room emphasizes its plainness.

The whitewashed walls were so painfully bare and staring that [Anne] thought they must ache over their own bareness. [...] In one corner was the bed, a high, old-fashioned one, with four dark, low-turned posts. In the other corner was the aforesaid three-cornered table adorned with a fat, red velvet pincushion hard enough to turn the point of the most adventurous pin. Above
it hung a little six by eight mirror. Midway between table and bed was the window, with an icy white muslin frill over it, and opposite it was the washstand. The whole apartment was of a rigidity not to be described in words, but which sent a shiver to the very marrow of Anne's bones (30-1).

Anne is at first not allowed to alter her room or to add any decorations, though she wishes to. She asks to take a jug of appleblossoms to her room, "for company," but Marilla refuses: "No; you don't want your room cluttered up with flowers" (59). Actually, Marilla wouldn't want her room "cluttered up with flowers;" Anne would. Not being allowed the appleblossoms, Anne imagines what she would like her room to look like, with a child's devotion to excess.

I'm going to imagine things into this room so that they'll always stay imagined. The floor is covered with a white velvet carpet with pink roses all over it and there are pink silk curtains at the windows. The walls are hung with gold and silver brocade tapestry. The furniture is mahogany. I never saw any mahogany, but it does sound so luxurious. This is a couch all heaped with gorgeous silken cushions, pink and blue and crimson and gold, and I am reclining gracefully on it. I can see my reflection in that splendid big mirror hanging on the wall (60).

Anne is still very much a child at this point. She is not yet able to decide when she goes to her room, and is occasionally sent there as a punishment. During this time, the room is very much under Marilla's control. Once Anne has fully entered into adolescence, however, the room passes into her realm of control, and four months after her arrival, she has begun to transform it to represent her personality. Marilla allows this, though she voices her opinion. Marilla tells her "You clutter up your room entirely too much with out-of-doors stuff, Anne. Bedrooms are made to sleep in." Anne replies, "Oh, and dream in too, Marilla. And you know one can dream so much better in a room where there are pretty things" (113). Anne spends a lot of time in her room, visiting with friends or doing her schoolwork, or just daydreaming as she looks out the window. She wants to feel comfortable there, and needs 'pretty things' around her to do so. Her room is also a refuge from the world, for times such as when she dyes her hair green.
Montgomery describes Anne's room in detail several times, and each time the room grows closer to fully reflecting her personality. One the day of her one year anniversary at Green Gables,

[in] all essential respects the little gable chamber was unchanged. The walls were as white, the pincushion as hard, the chairs as stiffly and yellowly upright as ever. Yet the whole character of the room was altered. It was full of a new vital, pulsing personality that seemed to pervade it and to be quite independent of schoolgirl books and dresses and ribbons, and even of the cracked blue jug full of apple blossoms on the table. It was as if all the dreams, sleeping and waking, of its vivid occupant had taken a visible although immaterial form and had tapestried the bare room with splendid filmy tissues of rainbow and moonshine (151).

The appleblossoms that a year ago had to stay downstairs are now in her room, a sign that she has been given more control over this space. Much of the room remains unchanged, for Anne is not yet at the end of her adolescence, but her spirit has altered the feel of the room. Eventually she is able to physically alter the space as well, until the room fully reflects who she is.

The east gable was a very different place from what it had been on that night four years before [...] Changes had crept in, Marilla conniving at them resignedly, until it was as sweet and dainty a nest as a young girl could desire. The velvet carpet with the pink roses and the pink silk curtains of Anne's early visions had certainly never materialized; but her dreams had kept pace with her growth [...] The floor was covered with a pretty matting, and the curtains that softened the high window and fluttered in the vagrant breezes were of pale green art muslin. The walls, hung not with gold and silver brocade tapestry, but with a dainty apple-blossom paper, were adorned with a few good pictures given Anne by Mrs. Allan. [...] There was no "mahogany furniture," but there was a white-painted bookcase filled with books, a cushioned wicker rocker, a toilet-table befrilled with white muslin, a quaint, gilt-framed mirror with chubby pink cupids and purple grapes painted over its arched top, that used to hang in the spare room, and a low white bed (243).11

Montgomery carefully contrasts Anne's room with both its former state and Anne's old imagining, showing how far she's come. Before, when she had no place of her own, she dreamed about being the Lady Cordelia Fitzgerald, living in the lap of luxury. That was part of a child's imaginings, a part of her attempt to change her identity and escape the unwanted circumstances of her life. Now, near the end of her
adolescence and comfortable with being Anne Shirley of Green Gables, she has no need of such lofty dreams, and has allowed them to slip away. It was not actually the finery that Anne wanted after all, it was the feeling that the room is as she would have it be. Her dreams changed as she matured, until they could finally intersect with reality. She came to Green Gables with no control over any aspect of her environment or life. Now she has enough control to make the appleblossoms, the first thing she tried to bring into her room to personalize it, forever present in the wallpaper. Her room is even more of a refuge now that it is such an extension of her identity. It is important to her that she can be alone in her room when she needs to be. The night after Matthew's death, Diana offers to stay with her, but Anne prefers to be alone. It is also in the privacy of her room that she decides to give up her scholarship and stay at Green Gables.

Valancy's room is neither filled with dark imposing furniture nor spartan in its bareness. It is simply ugly, and after 29 years of inhabiting it, Valancy still does not feel as if it were her own.

She knew the ugliness of that room by heart--knew it and hated it. The yellow-painted floor, [...] the faded, dark-red paper; the ceiling discoloured by old leaks and crossed by cracks; [...] the spotted old looking-glass with the crack across it, [...] the shell-covered box, with one burst corner [...] the beaded pincushion with half its bead fringe gone; the one stiff, yellow chair; the faded old motto, "Gone but not forgotten," worked in coloured yarns about Great-grandmother Stirling's grim old face; the old photographs of ancient relatives long banished from the rooms below. There were only two pictures that were not of relatives. One, an old chromo of a puppy sitting on a rainy doorstep. [...] The other picture was a faded, passe-partouted engraving of Queen Louise coming down a stairway, which Aunt Wellington had lavishly given her on her tenth birthday. For nineteen years she had looked at it and hated it, beautiful, smug, self-satisfied Queen Louise. But she never dared destroy it or remove it. Mother and Cousin Stickles would have been aghast, or, as Valancy irreverently expressed it in her thoughts, would have had a fit (3).

Her room seems to serve as a dumping ground for things that are no longer needed. Like those things, Valancy has no purpose in the household.
Valancy wants more than anything to be able to be by herself. The only thing she likes about her room is the slight privacy it gives her; she can "be alone there at night to cry if she want[s] to." She had once tried to gain control over the room's appearance, but "her mother had negatived every timid suggestion and Valancy did not persist" (3). Now, she does not even dare to take down a picture that is hers. Since control over the appearance of the room seems impossible, privacy has become more important. When she first starts to rebel, she retreats to her room to be alone, and refuses to let her cousin sleep with her. She must forcefully protect her privacy; she locks her door to keep her cousin and mother out. As in all things, Valancy must work harder than Jane or Anne for independence. In order to find the freedom she needs to grow, and to gain control over her life, she must leave her house, completely on her own. Her growing up is also faster. She does not have the teen years to slowly gain control over her environment, so she learns to fulfill her needs in different ways. At Roaring Abel's, she sleeps in Cissy's room, in order to be able to help her in the night if she needs anything. When she marries Barney, they of course share a room. She finds privacy in the woods, where she spends much of her time. Having her own room is not necessary, as long as she can find a place to be alone.

The Blue Castle only has two rooms, the living room and the bedroom. The bedroom is so tiny that "the side of the bed had to be right against the window" (166), so there is little space for personal decorations. In the other books, Montgomery provides detailed descriptions of the heroines' rooms, and she describes Valancy's old room in detail, but the cabin bedroom is barely touched on. The living room is where Valancy spends her days, when she and Barney aren't out walking. It is therefore in this room that her personality is reflected.

The big living-room had three windows, all commanding exquisite views of exquisite Mistawis. The one in the end of the room was an oriel window. [...] There was a stone fireplace on the other side. [...] With a big grizzly bearskin
on the floor before it, and beside it a hideous red-plush sofa [...] But its ugliness was hidden by silver-grey timber wolf skins, and Valancy's cushions made it gay and comfortable. In a corner a nice, tall, lazy old clock ticked—the right kind of a clock. One that did not hurry the hours away but ticked them off deliberately. [...] There was a big glass case of stuffed owls and several deer heads [...] Some comfortable old chairs that asked to be sat upon. [...] One side of the wall was lined with rough, homemade book-shelves filled with books, and between the two side windows hung an old mirror in a faded gilt frame, with fat cupids gamboling in the panel over the glass (148-9).

Valancy and Barney both have control over the appearance of this room. There are no unwanted or useless objects. Their personalities come together and complement each other; creating a comfortable space for both of them.

The heroines use their rooms to further define their personalities. As they gain control over their rooms, they gain control over the expression of their identity. This gives them the chance to make the identity more secure. Having a place to retreat to also gives them the strength to face the larger world.

Conclusions

These three characters, like all of Montgomery's characters, want to be in control of their own destinies. As they progress towards adulthood, and the self-determination and independence that comes with it, they gain that control. Montgomery uses the symbolic markers of the heroine's name, clothes, and room to show how far she's come, and how far she has to go. These are things that would have been important to adolescent girls at the beginning of the century, and are still important today. Reflections of these markers can be found throughout popular culture. Still, they largely go unnoticed, because the progression is gradual. There are much more obvious markers of impending or arriving adulthood, such as marriage, graduation from college, or full employment. Montgomery focuses on the subtle aspects of growing up as being more important; she does not depend on these one-time events to show a character's development. After all, adolescence doesn't happen in a day; it is a gradual process.
Montgomery also does not allow the formula to overcome the themes of each book. The heroines remain individuals and do not experience adolescence in the same way. For each of them, one marker holds more significance than the others. Montgomery focuses on Jane's name as the clearest sign of her entrance into adolescence. When she is able to be Jane, she is able to leave childhood behind. *Jane of Lantern Hill* is very much a children's book. Montgomery may be using the formulaic plot of the reunited lovers, but told from the child's perspective. Jane, still in the midst of adolescence as the book ends, is not yet fully in control of what happens to her. She still has relatives who will call her 'Victoria,' since that's the only name they know. It is appropriate that Jane does not reach adulthood in the book, since this is by and large a book for children. *Anne of Green Gables* covers adolescence most thoroughly of the three books. Anne starts as a child. Her entry into adolescence is marked by the start of her control over her room. The descriptions of Anne's room clearly show her gradual maturity and increasing control. She leaves behind the fantasies of her childhood and becomes an adult at the end of the book, when she shoulders the responsibility of keeping Green Gables and gives up her chance to go the University. Almost more important than the act is the way it is done, without a sense of regret or resentment. In *The Blue Castle*, Valancy's adolescence is not as clearly delineated, because her position is so different. She cannot slowly progress towards adulthood as Anne and Jane do; she needs to be an adult the moment she leaves her mother's house. Valancy's green dress is the most distinct sign of her new independence. Once she finds the courage to wear it in public, the reader knows that she is secure with her new identity. This book was intended for an adult audience, and Montgomery did not think of it as a book about adolescence. Yet, to define her identity, and to become a productive adult, Valancy goes through much the same process as Montgomery's adolescent characters.
For Montgomery, the goal of adolescence is becoming a productive adult. Montgomery emphasizes that adolescence should be a time with lessening restrictions, to give the adolescent room to discover and define her identity. The liminal state the heroines enter gives them the freedom they need to grow. Liminality makes change easier, by removing the usual restrictions of strict categorization. Control can then leave the hands of the adults and pass to the adolescent. None of these heroines do anything spectacular, and their purpose in life, once discovered, is centered in the domestic world. This is in Montgomery's eyes worthwhile and important. Montgomery's view of adolescence is optimistic; she describes it as a time of great promise. Jane, Anne, and Valancy (once she has reentered adolescence), are seen as possessing great potential. No longer children, not yet adults, they stand on the edge of great possibilities.
Notes

1 The basic story is one Montgomery used repeatedly both in her short stories and in isolated episodes in her novels, the reunion of long-lost lovers. That element of the book is extremely formulaic.

2 This formula has at its core the epic journey and the need to leave home, and can be traced to the journey of Telēmakhos in Homer's *Odyssey*. One only has to look at a classic 'boys' book' to see the differences in how the adolescent experience is structured. The feminine markers are totally absent. For instance, Twain's Huck Finn has no use for a home, doesn't care what name people use (and in fact at one point borrows a friend's name), spends most of his time on the raft without any clothes on, and never has a room of his own that he decorates as he wishes. He does not need any of this in order to develop towards adulthood.

In our modern culture, however, there is evidence that the 'feminine' markers have become more universal. The popular media and the merchandising world especially emphasize the importance of personalizing one's room, for both boys and girls.

3 The exception to this is World War I. It affected Montgomery greatly, and is a constant presence in her writing during that time. As none of the novels in my study were written during the War, this move away from the domestic can be safely put aside.

4 This choice of names is also the symbolic meeting of Valancy's dreams with her reality. Barney had already entered the Blue Castle; the hero of her day dreams had changed to fit his description soon after she first saw him. Now, she enters his world, which he had created when he retreated from society. Barney's adoption of her name for his cabin shows his support of Valancy's dreams, and his understanding of his place in those dreams, as well as the coming together of their ideal worlds.

5 Anne is so ready for a real family, in fact, that she asks Marilla if she can call her 'Aunt Marilla.' Marilla says no, not being ready to accept the emotional bond.

6 The star of promise and its accompanying obvious connotations may be a bit over the top, but it does immediately establish the importance of Green Gables to Anne.

7 Because Montgomery makes liberal use of ellipsis in her work, I have used brackets to mark where the ellipsis are a result of my editing of passages. Those without brackets are part of the original text.

8 An exception to this is Valancy, whose name separates her from the community to a certain extent by its 'outlandishness.' See Gabriella Åhmannsson's essay on 'Textual/ Sexual Space in The Blue Castle' in *Harvesting Thistles* (Mary Henley Rubio, ed) for a discussion of her name's possible significance. For the sake of this study, it is enough to say that her name separates her from her community, a separation that she must make real in order to grow.

9 She most often calls herself 'Anne of Green Gables' to emphasize how glad she is to belong somewhere. For example:

"It's a million times nicer to be Anne of Green Gables than Anne of nowhere in particular" (60).

"I'd rather be Anne of Green Gables sewing patchwork than Anne of any other place with nothing to do but play" (87).

10 Sharing a room with a sibling would complicate the issue, of course. Montgomery structures her tales so that this complication does not appear. The lack of siblings also means that her heroines must look outside the family for companions close to their age.

11 This passage appears immediately after the reference to Anne's white dress. Her room and her clothing thus reach the ideal at the same time.
This is not surprising, considering that Montgomery never deals with the exact nature of their married relationship. She may touch on adult topics in the book, but the idea of sex is kept very much in the background. Describing the bedroom of a married couple would simply not be acceptable for her intended audience.
Works Consulted


