

“BORN ALOFT ON THE WINGS OF IMAGINATION”:
MODERN WOMEN OF GENIUS IN *ANNE OF GREEN GABLES*
AND THE WELL OF LONELINESS

by

CHRISTINA M. SINGLETARY

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Holly V. Blackford, PhD

and approved by

Dr. Holly V. Blackford

Dr. Carol Singley

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ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

“Born Aloft on The Wings of Imagination”:

Modern Women of Genius in *Anne of Green Gables* and *The Well of Loneliness*

By CHRISTINA M. SINGLETARY

Thesis Director:

Holly V. Blackford, PhD

On the surface, the two early twentieth century novels *Anne of Green Gables* and *The Well of Loneliness* do not appear to share much in common. However, the two books actually share striking similarities, particularly because the protagonists of both books – Anne and Stephen, respectively-can be read as homosexual characters. Although both characters display some masculine tendencies, their homosexuality is linked to a uniquely feminine imagination that leads to creative acts distinct from masculine creativity. Most frequently, their imaginations are depicted through nature, as Montgomery and Hall subtly argue that lesbianism is a natural part of the world. The feminine genius practiced by Anne and Stephen continues into adulthood and reflects the biographies of both Montgomery and Hall. Although Anne and Stephen’s genius initially begins out of their childhood isolation, their creative work actually develops as a highly social act distinct from both the non-empathetic and unemotional writing of male modernists and the female modernists (like Gertrude Stein) who mimic male modes of writing. Through their

characters, Montgomery and Hall argue for a decidedly female version of genius and at the same time respond to an inherent male bias in the definition of genius. More broadly, they also reinforce the idea that modernism was defined by a blurring of the lines that divided multiple dichotomies: namely, medicine versus art; child versus adult; nature versus self; and-most importantly, male versus female.

Introduction: The Modernist Marriage of Literature and Psychology Births a Distinctly Female Genius

L.M. Montgomery's *Anne of Green Gables* and Radclyffe Hall's *The Well of Loneliness* are not typically likened to one another. As Holly Blackford remarks, the light-heartedness and humor surrounding her character made the public “ready to embrace Anne with open arms” shortly after her creation. (xii). Conversely, Hall's book was denounced because many believed it lacked literary merit and was poorly received by many readers due to its controversial homosexual subject matter. If Anne has been praised for decades, so too has Hall's novel been criticized since it was written. Having once been banned for being taboo, the book is paradoxically rejected today for reinforcing dated stereotypes of lesbian relationships. One review from the year of its publication captures well its doubly rejected state: “That a large and increasing number of inverts in both sexes exists is an unfortunate fact; but what good can be done by writing a so-called novel about it?” (Rev 70).

The inclusion of the term “invert” in a review of Hall's novel is indicative of an increasing overlap among the fields of psychology, literature, and medicine. As Patrick McDonagh argues, “physicians were as influenced by cultural representations and popular stereotypes as novelists were knowledgeable about the findings of medical science” (101). The growth of modernism during the earlier part of the twentieth century combined with advances in the scientific study of the human mind enabled the two fields of medicine and literature to influence and reflect one another. In fact, an analysis of Montgomery and Hall's work through the lens of psychology reveals many more similarities than differences between the two novels.

For instance, Anne and Stephen share analogous positions in society, at least during their early childhoods. At a young age, both are alienated from other people and experience periods of extreme isolation, particularly during childhood. The image of Anne waiting for Matthew all alone save for her suitcase has, in fact, become an iconic representation of her character. Whereas Stephen's estrangement may be more explicit due to the blithe, light-hearted tone surrounding Anne's character, the loneliness Anne experiences early-on in her childhood is nonetheless quite real, and it is reasonable to assume that she experienced a tremendous amount of suffering during her years as what Val Czerny calls a "rejected orphan" (150). Both characters, therefore, suffer periods of intense loneliness.

Stephen's sexuality is explicitly the cause of her separation from others. Likewise, Anne's homosexuality accounts for at least part of her differences from other people once she arrives at Green Gables. In fact, representing another similarity between the two works, many critics have recently understood Anne as a lesbian character with homosexual desires for her childhood friend Diana (Robinson). Her close and often passionate relationship with Diana provides evidence of her homosexuality. Moreover, some critics, like Robinson, have also noted that Anne frequently demonstrates a marked disinterest in Gilbert, even while other girls her age are apparently enamored by him (Robinson 14). Biographical information regarding Montgomery and her relationship to other women in her life also makes a homosexual reading of Anne's character all the more persuasive. Thus, both Anne and Stephen are not only alienated from other people, but also share in common a desire for the same sex.

Such same-sex desire was increasingly believed to be an inborn trait during Montgomery and Hall's time period. Significantly, the invert also was believed to possess an inherent genius. The fact that creativity was inborn for the invert, however, did not necessarily mean that environmental circumstances did not also nourish the queer imagination. In fact, as a result of having to grapple with the lonely childhoods that result-at least partially-from their sexuality, Anne and Stephen continue to develop active imaginations. Nature, importantly, is one of the most prominent ways that imagination is depicted. In fact, Anne and Stephen's close relationships with nature are often strongest during the two characters' most isolated periods-perhaps because the social nature of the female invert's personality needed an outlet for interaction and nature could, in many ways, provide that outlet. Identification with natural space is indeed a salient feature of both novels. Thus, Montgomery and Hall depict Anne and Stephen's imagination through nature, and in doing so establish the argument that inversion is congenital, and further-that Anne and Stephen's congenital inversion contributes to their exceptionally intelligent minds. When Montgomery and Hall make use of Anne and Stephen's environments as a canvas for the imagination, they simultaneously provide natural spaces for the two protagonists' minds to project the psychological trauma they feel as a result of being outcast.

Hence, because they had to grapple with the lonely childhoods that result from their sexuality, Anne and Stephen develop active imaginations. Their prominent imaginations are significant because, as Blackford notes, the connection between imagination and intelligence was well established during the early twentieth century (xxvii). Thus, because both books portray sexual inversion as one precursor to the

development of imagination, they also share in common the idea that sexual inversion is tied to exceptional intelligence. Moreover, the particular imaginative intelligence the books depict as associated with female homosexuality differs greatly from the intelligence more commonly linked to male homosexuals. Significantly, in both novels, queer female imagination is depicted as distinct from the creativity associated with male homosexuals.

The differences between male and female intellect were believed to manifest beginning in early childhood, and changes contemporaneous with Hall's and Montgomery's novels had begun to emphasize the influence of childhood on the adult mind. As Carolyn Steedman asserts, psychology had already begun to change during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries in that it began to view the mind not only through detached sensory objectivity, but also as the product of a human and subjective interiority (1). The self was no longer understood as an isolated entity grounded solely in the present and distinct from its environment. Rather, the subjectivity and fluidity of the self also coincided with the belief that the adult human mind possesses strong childhood memories-whether conscious or not-and that those memories can influence a person's psychological development. Thus, because literature and psychology often overlapped, novels that follow a character's development from childhood into adulthood can allow us to see how the adult mind was believed to internalize childhood experiences and then to reflect those experiences through his or her adulthood behaviors. Freud, for instance, believed that human beings have an innate human propensity to replace their childhood play with a parallel activity in the adult world (437).

If modernism began to erase the line differentiating the child from the adult, so too did it rid itself of the distinction between human and nature. Irene Gammel relates the historical timeline of artistic and literary representations of environment, and establishes that even though Victorian works are often characterized by frequent depictions of the natural world, those depictions of nature are detached from the human. The modernist character, on the other hand, “blurs the boundaries” between “human and nature,” by creating an environment that is interactive and conversant with the character, sometimes resulting in a continuum between where the self ends and nature begins (“Embodied Landscape” 229). Furthermore, fluidity had also developed in challenge to the gender binary because authors like Montgomery and Hall began to mix ideas about masculine and feminine traits into one character. In fact, although both Anne and Stephen can be labeled queer, both also exhibit traditionally feminine tendencies and even take on maternal roles. In Anne's case, that maternal role is depicted through the care she provides for children. For Stephen, maternity is figured through the guidance and comfort she offers to her fellow inverts as well as through the art she births. By depicting these inverted women's masculine and feminine roles in nature, the two authors were implicitly arguing that queer female desire was as natural as male queerness had been when articulated in earlier works like Walt Whitman's "Leaves of Grass."

As scientists studied how the self interacts with its environment, the late nineteenth century also witnessed an increasing focus on the scientific study of human sexuality through the work of Freud, Richard von Krafft-Ebing, and Havelock Ellis. Sexology, combined with the notion of interiority in literature, made it possible to see how authors could represent a character's sexuality across the lifespan. The term 'invert'

used in the above review was defined by Ellis as a "sexual instinct turned by inborn constitutional abnormality towards persons of the same sex," referring to a conflict between gender and congenital sex (1). More specifically, Krafft-Ebing described female sexual inversion as "the masculine soul heaving in the feminine bosom" (Taylor 287). While the term initially appears indistinct from our current definition of 'homosexuality,' Ellis believed it to refer more specifically to only those individuals who were born with an inherent attraction to the same sex. Homosexuality, on the other hand, could refer to persons who developed such an attraction not congenitally but rather as the result of environmental circumstances-such as being forced into a sex-segregated prison without access to the opposite sex or from being influenced towards homosexuality as a child. Recognizing the invert as distinct from the homosexual may not have been possible had Ellis-as a result of new modernist ideas of the self-not also recognized the continuity between the child and the adult. Because Ellis was beginning to see a genetic, inborn basis for homosexuality, he also began to recognize patterns between certain personality traits and sexuality. Interestingly, many of the gender specific observations that resulted in *Studies in the Psychology of Sex* now seem arbitrary and even humorous, as when he argues that male inverts possess the ability to whistle whereas female inverts do not (291). Nevertheless, we see a general shift towards a way of thinking about same-sex desire as a congenital trait.

Reflecting Montgomery's and Hall's depiction of the inversion-intelligence link, a better known and more widespread stereotype propounded by Ellis was the idea that both the male and female invert's sexuality was "likely to be accompanied by high intellectual ability" (196). The genius associated with the invert could result both from inborn genetic

factors associated with inversion as well as environmental effects of being queer-like the loneliness that could result from being an outcast. For whatever factors were believed to cause exceptionalness in the invert, the connection between homosexuality and the notion of a creative or gifted genius was already well established by the earlier part of the twentieth century. In his book *Romantic Genius: Prehistory of a Homosexual Role*, Andrew Elfenbein traces the history of the homosexual-genius association. In it, he relates a story of a man who is imprisoned in New York City in the 1920s and who then tells the prison doctor that “most of the world's genius can be traced directly to the homosexual” (2). This story illustrates just how prevalent the connection between homosexuality and genius was at the time. Gavin Butt notes that this trend continued during the post-war era, as by the 1950s “calling men ‘artistic’ became code for calling them gay” (Butt 760).

According to Elfenbein, Freud further argued that “frustrated male homosexuality found its outlet in artistic and intellectual excellence” (1). Notably, the keyword in Butt’s and Elfenbein’s statements is “male,” as almost every source from the time period either specifies genius as male or ignores women altogether. Elfenbein goes on to explain that “traditional concepts of genius hide lesbian history and achievement by suggesting that only men are significant enough for their deviance to be worth noticing” (5). Moreover, even when women *were* recognized for their genius-as when Ellis acknowledges their capacity for “high intelligence” (148)-their genius was often attributed solely to their masculinity. For instance, a prevailing belief in the modernist period established that while “masculine women are abnormal, only they can achieve anything valuable because merely feminine women are worthless” (Elfenbein 5). Thus, inverted women-although

highly intelligent-did not practice their own unique brand of intelligence; rather, they were genius only in that their masculine features granted them the capacity to mimic the style of art practiced by men.

In *Gender and Genius: Towards a Feminist Aesthetics*, Christine Battersby similarly argues that women had almost always been ignored in the rhetoric of genius (4). Artistic genius has-according to Battersby- "from its inception been defined as male" (12). Thus, women needed to become men, so to speak, in order to accomplish anything noteworthy enough to be called the work of a 'genius.' Few associations had been made between lesbianism and exceptional creativity, particularly during the early part of the twentieth century contemporaneous to Montgomery and Hall. In fact, while homosexuality in men was repeatedly linked to genius, the same was rarely said for women. Yet, an analysis of Montgomery and Hall's two protagonists reveals that, in fact, the brand of genius practiced by female inverts was highly distinct from the masculine genius associated with modernist men. Significantly, both the Martins (Stephen's parents) and the Cuthberts (Anne's adoptive parents) anticipate having a boy, an expectation symbolic of the idea that masculinity was necessary for the cultivation of genius. Although both sets of parents have only practical expectations of a male child, their expectation is reminiscent of the mythic arrival of a heroic figure like Christ. The coming of a hero is further reiterated throughout both novels as Anne and Stephen frequently relate to heroic icons and perform martyr-like deeds. Thus, the anticipation of a boy is retrospectively symbolic of the unexpected feminine intelligence of Anne and Stephen's characters. In other words, Anne and Stephen represent a type of genius that had not yet

been recognized and certainly would not have been expected. Moreover, Anne and Stephen's unique genius highlights feminine genius as distinct from masculine genius.

Masculine genius had developed several distinctive features during the modernist period. Figures like Andy Warhol, Vincent Van Gogh and T.S. Eliot represent a troubled, isolated, and sometimes misunderstood male genius that—while often homosexual—celebrated only masculine genius, or perhaps at times a slightly feminized version of male intellect (Battersby 13). For a better understanding of how that picture differs from the lesbian genius depicted via Anne and Stephen—and, as we will see later, through the biographies of Hall and Montgomery—it is helpful to refer to the work of Gertrude Stein, who practiced a masculine style of art. Significantly, the masculine form of genius, argues Nancy Bombasci in “Performing Mindblindness: Gertrude Stein's Autistic Ethos of Modernism,” is quite similar to the genius often associated with autism. Like Bombasci, McDonagh also recognizes a connection between modernism and autism, even going as far as to argue that the aesthetic movement of modernism actually enabled the diagnosis of autism (110). Recognizing that connection, Mark Osteen cites the work of Marion Glastonbury, who similarly establishes a strong connection between modernism and autism, particularly in that its art is often “monologic, devoid of intersubjective richness; works that may be said to be about barrenness, reflecting and projecting a single stance, an unremitting mood: the minimalist sigh of an attenuated self” (14). If we define male modernist art in this way, Hall and Montgomery's novels emerge as quite distinct from the typical masculine work of literature. Specifically, they differ from masculine art not only through the actions of their protagonists, but also in that the

proselytization, emotional appeal, and even humor in the books themselves are inherently conversant with the reader, and thus both dialogic and inter-subjective.

In what follows, I argue that Stephen and Anne show striking similarities, particularly because both of them are inverted characters. I then argue that their inversion is linked to a uniquely feminine imagination, which is most frequently depicted through nature. Their feminine genius continues into adulthood and reflects the biographies of both Montgomery and Hall. Although their genius begins out of their isolation, their creative work actually develops as a highly social act distinct from the non-empathetic and unemotional writing of male modernists. I conclude by showing how Montgomery and Hall's literary style differed from the more modern male literary style. By articulating each of these points, Montgomery and Hall argue for a decidedly female version of genius and at the same time reveal an inherent male bias in the definition of genius. More broadly, they also reinforce the idea that modernism was defined by a blurring of the lines that divided multiple dichotomies: namely, medicine versus art; child versus adult; nature versus self; and-most importantly, male versus female.

“You’re Both Queer Enough”: Anne and Stephen as Sexually Akin Protagonists

Stephen's inversion is made explicit in Hall's novel, particularly during the memorable self-discovery scene in her father's library where she locates Krafft-Ebing's book on sexual inversion and recognizes her own self in it (204). Although Anne's sexuality is much more controversial, the striking similarities between the two works—as well as between the lives of the two authors—make a homosexual reading of Anne's character difficult to deny. If we are to understand how Montgomery ties homosexuality to the concept of genius, we must first understand Anne as a homosexual character. To recognize Anne's sexual inversion, we might look—as Temma Berg does—to a comparison of Montgomery's novel to the 1985 movie version by Kevin Sullivan, the latter of which highlights Anne's romantic relationship with Gilbert. That romance, however, is simply not as present in Montgomery's version, for as Berg argues, “in the novel Anne seeks a friend, not a romantic partner, in Gilbert” (Robinson 14). Indeed, from early in the novel Montgomery makes Anne's disinterest in Gilbert apparent, even when other girls her own age are smitten by him. In one scene in particular, Diana is trying to make Anne notice Gilbert, pleading, “Just look at him and see if you don't think he's handsome” (2194). Although Anne does acknowledge that Gilbert is attractive, she continues to pay little attention to him, since she “was at that moment totally oblivious not only to the very existence of Gilbert Blythe, but of every other scholar in Avonlea school itself” (2207). Eventually, Anne does marry Gilbert and leads a conventional domestic life; however, this marriage may result—as Robinson establishes—from Montgomery's recognition that “at the turn of the twentieth century, heterosexuality was compulsory” (13). Thus, Anne marries a man not because of her natural desire for the opposite sex, but rather because

her participation in the community requires her to follow social norms. Other critics like Joyce Alexander have also noted Anne's progressive acceptance of domesticity, again most likely because Montgomery knew that her character's acceptance by readers would depend partially on her adhering to social expectations and traditional gender roles (45).

Anne's close relationship with Diana provides additional evidence of homosexual attraction as well as a parallel to Stephen's more explicitly romantic relationship with Mary. Critic Elspeth Cameron argues that Anne and Diana's conversations often sound quite “erotic” (Robinson 15). Furthermore, Robinson also reminds us that the historical context of the Anne books provides further evidence of an underlying eroticism between Anne and Diana, since many female friendships at the time were “erotically charged” as women “wrote love letters to each other; they pledged undying love; they spent their lifetimes 'in love' with each other, even when they married men; they slept together and caressed and fondled” (16). At one point, Anne even seems to resent the idea that she and Diana will eventually have to separate as a result of heterosexual marriage. She regrets that when they are older “Diana will get married and go away and leave” her. She even proclaims that she “hate[s]” Diana's future husband “furiously” (2379). She then weeps at the thought of losing her companion to marriage—quite an extreme reaction for something so far into the future.

Diana's role in her friendship with Anne is quite similar to Mary's role as Stephen's romantic partner, particularly because both Diana and Mary exhibit a more traditionally feminine character than either Anne or Stephen. Diana and Mary, for instance, are both much more passive. Clare Hemmings elaborates on Mary's passive and feminine role in relation to Stephen by noting that Mary has little identity of her own

outside of Stephen's interests and talents, and that "the one moment when we think we are about to hear about Mary's history and maybe even her dreams ... is undercut by Mary using this opportunity to further highlight the benefits of Stephen keeping her close" (188). As Mary begs Stephen not to send her away, she pleads with her by explaining the services-which bear remarkable similarity to a stereotypical wife role-that she can provide to Stephen, including "look[ing] after the house" while Stephen pursues her career as a writer (Hemmings 188).

Like Mary, Diana also remains passive in her activities with Anne, often relying on Anne's talents and developing little identity of her own. When Diana, for instance, notices Anne's talent for writing fiction, she remarks, "I don't see how you can make up such thrilling things out of your own head, Anne. I wish my imagination was as good as yours," highlighting her own lack of imagination and incapacity for invention (4071). In response, Anne suggests starting a "story club" and assures Diana that she will "help [her] along until [she] can do them" without her assistance (4084). Anne later admits to Marilla that she "mostly always [has] to tell" the other girls in the club "what to write about" (4085). As in Mary's relationship with Stephen, Diana has taken on a non-active role in her friendship with Anne, allowing Anne to lead the way and relying on Anne's creativity and superior intelligence.

Both Anne and Stephen have creative talents they express through writing but their flare for the dramatic also reveals a common martyrdom as they both continually make confessions on behalf of those around them. The formality and vocabulary of Anne's confessions are often reminiscent of the Christian sacrament of confession, as if the person to whom she confesses is serving only as a medium between herself and God-

and more importantly, as she takes on the blame for the broader sins of humanity.

Perhaps the most memorable of Anne's confessional scenes occurs when Marilla loses her broach when she drops it behind her furniture. Anne proclaims: "Marilla, I'm ready to confess ... I took the amethyst broach" (1986). Anne had no part in taking the broach but is forced to confess for Marilla's own shortcomings of carelessness and forgetfulness. In that way, her confession is reminiscent of the Christian belief in confession for the original sin of Adam and Eve—a sin in which the individual realistically had no part but for which he or she must still hold accountability. In this way, Anne's confession is a symbol of her martyrdom on behalf of all inverts for the sin of same-sex desire. Such martyrdom is not uncommon in modern gay literature, such as in Howard Overing Sturgis's novel *Tim: A Story of School Life*. In this story, Tim must sacrifice his love for an older boy named Carol Darley to heterosexual marriage. Although he recognizes that his love for Carol exceeds "the love of woman," he ultimately dies unrequited (Blackford, "Childhood" 178).

The symbol of Anne's martyrdom on behalf of inverts is further reiterated when she and Diana visit Diana's Aunt Josephine, who is furious at the two friends for leaping into her bed and scaring her when she is sleeping. Diana, once again, takes on an innocent and traditionally feminine passive role as she first agrees to race Anne without protesting and then allows Anne to take on all of the blame for the race. Furthermore, the scene also serves as a sexual metaphor for the close-and arguably romantic-relationship that has developed between Anne and Diana. The event begins with Diana's suggestion that she and Anne get undressed and then continues when Diana mentions Gilbert to Anne. Anne responds by not only declaring her love for Diana but also by demanding

that they not speak of Gilbert: "Diana, you are my bosom friend, but I cannot allow even you to speak to me of that person" (3056). It is at this time that Anne suggests to Diana that they race to bed. When Anne and Diana are quite literally caught jumping into bed together, Diana's aunt is furious. When Anne later apologizes for their sin, she once again dramatically and formally announces her confession, even clasping her hands as if in prayer: "I'm Anne of Green Gables ... and I've come to confess if you please" (3134). If we are to understand Anne and Diana's relationship as homosexual like Stephen and Mary's relationship, the blame Anne takes for a sin for which she is only partially responsible represents not only her martyrdom on behalf of Diana, but also her martyrdom on behalf of other inverts who have also been caught-euphemistically speaking-jumping into bed together.

Like Anne, Stephen is also continuously making confessions on behalf of other people- particularly on behalf of other inverts; like her sexuality, Stephen's martyrdom is also much more explicit but nonetheless bears striking similarity to Anne's. Stephen's childhood dreams that she is a reincarnation of Jesus Christ foreshadow her repeated attempts at martyrdom by both taking on the pain experienced by other people and taking on the blame for their perceived faults (Hall 52). That martyrdom is first displayed when Stephen is just a child admiring her first sexual attraction for her maid Collins, who has acquired a painful medical condition in her knees. Stephen's sexual feelings for Collins are an allusion to one of the case studies cited in Ellis's book. For instance, one woman-whom Ellis refers to as Miss H.-was taught to masturbate by her nurse maid (224). Furthermore, at the time the book was written, the "servant was believed to be the most likely teacher of harmful sexual practices" (Armstrong 10). Thus, Stephen's sexual

feelings for Collins are yet another reflection of real world modern sexology-a field with which Hall was likely quite familiar, as evidenced by the explicit references she makes to prominent sexologists.

Seeing Collins in pain, Stephen pleads to God on her behalf: "I would like very much to be a Savior to Collins—I love her, and I want to be hurt like You were" (68). Stephen's propensity to sacrifice her own happiness and comfort in order to relieve others' discomforts is again emphasized when Valerie Seymour later proclaims to her: "You were made for a martyr!" as Stephen abandons her relationship with Mary so that Mary may be with Martin (435). The climax of Stephen's martyrdom occurs shortly thereafter at the conclusion of the novel when Hall writes that "the room seemed to be thronging with people" who called to Stephen: "Stephen, Stephen! Speak with your God and ask Him why He has left us forsaken!" (436). Just as Anne spoke on behalf of another to plead forgiveness for an act of inversion, Stephen similarly acts as a voice on behalf of other inverts. The social nature of being a martyr combined with the empathy necessary to defend and speak on behalf of other people is reminiscent of the social and empathic tendencies of feminine modernist art-particularly art like Hall's which serves to proselytize to the reader on behalf of inverts everywhere.

In their martyrdom, both characters are heavily influenced by the heroic figures they read about in their favorite literature. Because such heroism is almost always depicted as male, this influence provides additional evidence of Anne and Stephen's sexual inversion. In early childhood, Stephen "had very much liked being read to, especially from books that were all about heroes ... She, Stephen, now longed to be William Tell, or Nelson, or the whole Charge of Balaclava" (12). Stephen admires these

male heroes about whom she has read, and through play seeks to mimic them.

Eventually, Stephen begins to act out that heroism in real life as she attempts to take on the pain of her house maid's knee problems and later as she takes on the pain of other inverts.

Anne, likewise, frequently reads about heroic figures and then pretends to be them. In one scene, Anne follows a group of cows and while doing so utters "aloud the battle canto from Marmion" and then "stopped in ecstasy to shut her eyes that she might the better fancy herself one of that heroic ring" (4422). Like Stephen, Anne carries out her heroism in the real world when she saves Diana's baby sister's life "for it would have been too late by the time" anyone else could have gotten there to help the sick child. As Mr. Barry proclaims, "She seems to have a skill and presence of mind perfectly wonderful in a child of her age. I never saw anything like the eyes of her when she was explaining the case to me" (2858). Anne's martyrdom later reappears when she ultimately stays at Green Gables—giving up her school in the process- to help Marilla once Matthew has passed away.

Anne and Stephen share more in common than their similarly homoerotic relationships with other women and their heroic deeds; both Anne and Stephen also share close, intimate friendships with males in their lives. For Anne, the loneliness she feels early on in the novel is eased by the sympathetic friend she finds in Matthew's character. Quiet Matthew is often available for Anne whenever she needs to tell him something, causing her to remark that he is "such a sympathetic listener" (1824). Frequently, Matthew is also available to defend Anne and never punishes her as Marilla does; in fact, the narrator remarks that Matthew "never scolded a bit" (2407). Repeatedly, Matthew

also comes to Anne's defense. To provide just one example, at one point Anne gets in trouble for voicing her opinions to Rachel Lynd. Marilla, intending to punish Anne, is interceded by Matthew: "I reckon she ought to be punished a little. But don't be too hard on her, Marilla. Recollect she hasn't ever had anyone to teach her right. You're--you're going to give her something to eat, aren't you?" (1430). Indeed, Anne continuously relies on Matthew for emotional support as an outlet for sounding her feelings. Matthew dies only after Anne has gone away to college, particularly because she no longer needs to rely on him. Significantly, the death of the paternal figure is a common occurrence in heroic literature. Matthew's death, furthermore, is crucial in order for Anne to take on the heroic and more typically male role of protector for Marilla.

Like Matthew, Sir Philip, too, serves as a male companion and a listener for Stephen. Although Stephen's mother Anna is frequently cold and disapproving, Sir Philip constantly serves as her defender-much in the same way that Matthew pleads on Anne's behalf when she is in trouble with Marilla. Sir Philip does not approve of the way Anna treats Stephen, and when Stephen confides in him that she does not want to marry Martin, he supports her decision even when Anna does not. When Anna is unkind to Stephen, he questions Anna's motives, asking, "Cruel-it's abominably cruel of you, Anna. Why in God's name must you go on nagging Stephen?" (110). Like Matthew, Sir Philip also dies when he is no longer needed. His death not only allows Stephen to ultimately leave Morton and become a hero on behalf of other inverts, but his death also disrupts the chain of male lineage and symbolizes the end of patriarchy in the Gordon family.

Sir Philip, is not, however, the only male in whom Stephen confides. Interestingly, her horse Raftery also serves as one of her best friends in the earlier portion

of the novel. He, too, dies when he is no longer needed once Stephen must leave Morton for good. After Philip's death, Stephen knows that she must leave Morton because she cannot get along with Anna. Raftery's death allows her to do so, for "Raftery was dead, there was nothing to hold her" (234). Strangely enough, prior to his death, Raftery served as more to Stephen than just a companion. In "Stable Identity: Horses, Inversion Theory, and *The Well of Loneliness*," Mary A. Armstrong explains Raftery's character as an additional way for Hall to express female inversion. Because Stephen cannot act on her feelings for Collins, critics like Blanche Wiesen Cook believe she is able to use the horse as a substitute for homoerotic pleasure. The likening of Raftery to women for whom Stephen feels attraction seems to be supported once she develops feelings for her first tutor Mademoiselle Duphant and explicitly notes liking her "equine resemblance" (Armstrong 5). Furthermore, given that she specifically refers to Krafft-Ebing's work earlier in the novel, her inclusion of these horse scenes seems to highlight the sexologist's belief that the act of masturbation "spoils heterosexual desire" and even leads to bestiality (Armstrong 9). Stephen's experience of riding a horse might also be described as masturbatory in her insistence to ride full-saddle (Armstrong 7).

But for Hall, Raftery is also used for another purpose entirely: to highlight the idea that female homosexuality is a natural part of the world, particularly because all of Stephen and Raftery's erotic scenes occur outdoors in nature. If we are to understand Raftery as a transmigration of Collins or Mademoiselle Duphant, then Stephen's scenes of sexual pleasure-such as the sensuous one listed below-are also symbolic of homosexual sex:

The strange, implacable heart-broken music of hounds giving tongue as they break from cover; the cry of the huntsman as he stands in his stirrups; the thud of hooves pounding ruthlessly forward over long, green, undulating meadows. The meadows flying back as though seen from a train, the meadows streaming away behind you; the acrid smell of horse sweat caught in passing; the smell of damp leather, of earth and bruised herbage—all sudden, all passing—then the smell of wide spaces, the air smell, cool yet as potent as wine. (Armstrong 7)

According to Armstrong's analysis, these sexual scenes-replete with sensuality and somatic pleasure-are acceptable for Hall due to the fluidity of gender binaries.

Specifically, racial binaries often replace the traditional male/female opposition.

Raftery's Celtic roots combined with Stephen's British identity uproot the gender binary and replace it instead with a racial Anglo-Celtic dichotomy. Thus, Raftery's metaphorical female gender (as Collins or Mademoiselle Duphont) combined with Stephen's female gender does not matter because two opposites are still present. Armstrong further explains that the "Irish regressive tendencies of a wilder race and a healthy naturalness" is enough to contrast against the "evolved malaise of Britishness" (21). This same racial binary acts as a stand-in for gender differences in Stephen and Mary's relationship as well. In other words, the opposition necessary for sexual intercourse to occur is not limited to gender differences but can instead be substituted for nationality differences as well-or even, as in the case of Raftery-species differences.

Likewise, Anne's relationship with Diana is affected by the Celtic binary-this time as an opposition between Celtic-Canadian. Although both pairs-Mary/Stephen and Anne/Diana-are not of opposite genders, they are still of opposite ancestry and therefore are different enough that their sexuality should be considered natural and normal. Thus, as long as some type of binary exists-whether between butch/femme, passive/active,

Celtic/Canadian, or human/animal-the reader can still recognize that some binary is present and thus also realize the normalcy of the relationship. Modeled on traditional marriage, these binaries present an image of homosexuality based on mutual affection and empathetic understanding, an image quite distinct from the narcissism and self-love associated with homosexuality in earlier novels like *The Picture of Dorian Gray*.

“Something Primitive and Age-Old as Nature Herself”: The Invert’s Imaginative Landscape

The suffering both Anne and Stephen experience as lonely and sexually atypical children is not without psychological consequences, but certainly not all of what results from it is negative. One of the most positive outcomes of the depraved situations for both characters is their subsequent development of vivid imaginations, drawing an additional environmental link between the development of their creativity and their sexual inversion. Those imaginations develop as a result of the many hours Anne and Stephen have alone to think, play, and experiment with their minds as children. The connection between imagination and lonely childhoods was already recognized by psychologists of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, most especially by Sully, who wrote in 1895 that “the impulse to invent imaginary surroundings, and more especially to create mythical companions, is very common among lonely and imaginative children” (39). Stephen frequently engages in such pretend play by imagining herself to be various heroic icons. Anne, too, engages in pretend play, particularly through her imaginary mirror reflection friends, whom she affectionately dubs Katie and Violetta (1226).

According to Sully's theories, children's active imaginations demonstrate a “detachment from the sensible world,” something that would have been necessary for two children like Anne and Stephen, who had to deal with intense and traumatic alienation in their real lives and thus needed a way to escape from pain (40). Sully proposes that lonely children are particularly imaginative due to an “absence of engaging activities with the world” (40). Thus, because Anne and Stephen initially have no peers with whom they can relate, they must constantly use their imaginations in order to experience play. Having

someone to relate to would have been particularly important for two female inverts like Anne and Stephen who are highly social and sensitive to the feelings of both themselves and those around them. As Jerome Singer relates in his study of the imaginative processes of children, the presence of other individuals in a child's life makes it less probable that the child will imagine and fantasize during play (399). For Montgomery and Hall to have created two characters who, as we have already seen, experience extreme loneliness as sexually inverted children and who also demonstrate the repeated ability to use their minds to reinvent their worlds, the two authors were-whether consciously or not-drawing a connection between emotional alienation and the development of the outcast homosexual's imaginative mind.

Although Anne and Stephen's imaginations are shown in several ways, they are most repeatedly represented through their interactions with nature. Nature is not only used to express the idea that female inversion is a part of the natural world, but also as a canvas for the invert's imagination. It only makes sense that two highly feeling and emotional-even at times histrionic-people who lack human companionships would need to attach themselves to something, and thus they both develop an enduring connection to landscape. Anne, a character who spends the first years of her life without a stable home, becomes permanently attached to Green Gables upon her arrival. Her kinship to the landscape can be explained by her prior homelessness and, consequently, by the loneliness she has experienced as a result of her differences from others. As Joy Alexander asserts, there is little worse to Anne than being "place-less" (44). Yet, despite the fact that Anne becomes attached to the people of Green Gables, her relationship to the natural landscape is often even more prominent. From Alexander's perspective, the

permanence and stability afforded by trees and flowers provide an explanation for Anne's closeness to plants; thus, they represent the sense of "rootedness" for which Anne has always longed (50).

Both characters, in fact, have a deep and enduring connection to nature, and both use natural space to deal with their symbolic exile from society as well as with their own self-perceived flaws. Like Anne, Stephen also develops an enduring connection to trees. As a young child leaving Morton on a short trip, Stephen stares longingly at the landscape, although she is "too young to know why the beauty of Morton would bring a lump to her throat ... [f]or the spirit of Morton would be part of her then, and would always remain somewhere deep down within her" (28). Demonstrating a sense of imaginative empathy for the landscape and feeling remorse over leaving it behind even for a short trip, Stephen "would want to cry out in a kind of protest that was very near tears: 'Stop it-stop it, you're hurting it!' (28). Later, trees become an important symbol for the invert population, and that symbol is made explicit as Martin points out his admiration for trees: "Have you ever thought about the enormous courage of trees? I have and it seems to me amazing. The Lord dumps them down and they've just got to stick with it, no matter what happens-- that must need some courage" (84). Because Stephen repeatedly stresses her belief that inverts are as much children of God as anyone else, they, too, must endure hardships and the metaphorical windstorms of oppression.

The metaphor of trees as a symbol for the invert population continues throughout the novel. At one point in particular, trees take on a double metaphor for both victims of a war and the invert population as Hall describes war-torn France: "the country was strewn with murdered trees, cut down in their hour of most perfect leafing; orchards struck to the

ground, an orgy of destruction” (264). Hall’s decision to use the word “murdered” to describe the cutting down of trees highlights the human component of this metaphor—that the trees are actually meant to describe the invert population fighting back in a war against those who hate and oppose them. The sexual metaphor of trees standing in for inversion is further highlighted by her use of the term “orgy.” A second possibility is that the trees also serve as phallic symbols. This metaphor makes sense when we consider that Stephen is ultimately exiled from Morton, symbolizing her exclusion from the same rights and opportunities granted to men. It also makes sense, then, that Martin would be able to continue to be with the trees even when Stephen has to leave them. For both possibilities, this repeated emphasis on trees stresses Hall’s argument that inversion is a natural part of the world.

Moreover, Stephen’s attachment to landscape extends beyond the trees. Detailed descriptions of garden strolls and the natural environment at Morton are frequent occurrences in Hall’s novel, and so Anne and Stephen share a similarly close bond to nature. Just as Anne uses nature to reflect the relationships for which she longed in childhood, especially a sense of permanency, so too does Stephen use nature to attest to the ongoing dissimilarities from others that she first perceived in childhood. In that way, both are hyper-aware of their own feelings, so much so that they are able to project those feelings onto non-sentient and anthropomorphized beings. In strikingly similar ways, both use nature to reflect their own thoughts and feelings and to understand the feelings and emotions of those around them, thus demonstrating a tendency to use the imagination as an emotional outlet.

In her work on Montgomery, Gammel refers to the term “ecological psychology,” a phrase coined by psychologist James Gibson in the 1970s, to relate the way the human mind interacts with the environment (“Embodied Landscape” 230). Representing that cross between consciousness and nature, the imaginative relationship Anne shares with the landscape around her is most apparent during the first portion of the novel. Incidentally, this is also the period that immediately follows the loneliest stage of her life. Because Anne has suffered the trauma of losing her parents and also the loneliness of being an orphan, she must find some way of coping with the pain she experiences. As Val Czerny asserts, Anne was “exposed to work and traditions that would drain her of life if she lacked imagination” (153). Anne's means for doing so involve using her imagination to transfer or project her own feelings onto inanimate objects as a way to achieve some level of detachment and, eventually, adaptation to her surroundings. This capacity was also recognized by Sully, who wrote that the child “confers upon animals and even upon inert matter those psychological properties which he dimly perceives in himself” (qtd. in Blackford xvi). This phenomenon is certainly visible in Anne's interactions with nature as she continuously recognizes and identifies the emotions she experiences by projecting those feelings onto the trees and plants.

Anne's ability to use her imagination to reflect her traumatic feelings and memories of her lonely childhood is apparent as Matthew and Anne are first traveling to Green Gables. During their travels, Anne refers to her earlier childhood when she asserts that the trees that grew in front of her orphanage “looked like orphans themselves” and exclaims, “It used to make me want to cry to look at them. I used to say to them, 'Oh, you POOR little things! ... I know just exactly how you feel, little trees'” (23). Indirectly and

in a somewhat detached way, Anne alludes to her own experiences as an orphan. In the asylum, Anne does not have anyone with whom she can talk or play. Similarly, the trees, too, lack nurturing companions. Anne therefore pretends that the trees are orphans and feels sympathy for them, believing they must be lonely and unable to "grow" in the same way that she is. Anne has therefore, using the imagination she developed during her lonely hours as a child, invented a sympathetic companionship in the trees; they are stable friends in an otherwise unstable childhood.

Demonstrating that ability to adapt and connect to her surroundings, a short while after Anne makes this speech about the trees, the narrator remarks upon the scenery surrounding Matthew and Anne. She writes that a "wild plum leaned out from the bank like a white-clad girl tip-toeing to her own reflection" (27). The girl in this metaphor is likely Anne, and the reflection that she sees in the water is her own self in nature. A second possibility is that Anne perceives the wild plum as a female due to her lesbianism as well as Montgomery's portrayal of female homosexuality as a natural part of the environment.

Whether Anne and Stephen are perceiving their own selves in their landscape or empathizing with other queer females, they are depicting psychologist Edward Gibson's assertion that one's "perception of the environment is always also a perception of self" (qtd. in Gammel, "Embodied Landscape" 230). Moreover, the concept of reflections is repeated through the novel, particularly as Anne is repeatedly found talking to her own reflection as if it is a companion separate from herself (1598). Anne's conversations with her reflection may be an adaptive mechanism in reference to Lacan's mirror stage, as Anne attempts to gain back the loss of self she endured when her mother passed away

(Slater 168). However, it is also an attempt to gain the companions she failed to attain or keep due to her separate status as orphan and invert. Likewise, Stephen's interactions with her landscape are a way for her to articulate the impressions she keenly intuits in other people – even when those impressions are negative reflections of her own self.

Anne's personification of the landscape surrounding her continues repeatedly in the first few chapters of the book, and particularly during the time when she first arrives at Avonlea. As Matthew and Anne travel closer to Green Gables, nature begins to share in and even reflect the happiness Anne is feeling regarding the possibility of finally having a family and a home. Gazing towards the lake, Anne remarks, "That water looks as if it was smiling at me" (29). Anne is feeling great joy upon arriving closer to Green Gables, and she believes that the lake recognizes that happiness and so smiles back at her; once again, she has imagined an empathetic kinship with the natural world. Anne develops her tendency towards natural empathy as a means for coping with her loneliness, and her personified and imagined relationship with nature continues even as her joy progresses, as nature has become a way for her to not only reflect her own feelings but also to practice her empathy by recognizing the feelings nature would feel if it were human. As Anne arrives at the Gables, staring at the many trees which surround it, she says to Matthew, "Listen to the trees talking in their sleep ... What nice dreams they must have!" (32). The trees are again personified by Anne, and here she interprets their rustling as joyful sleep talking. Even if Anne does recognize that the emotions she perceives in nature are a product of her imagination and not of actual sentience in the plants she personifies, her instances of personification are nonetheless strong and frequent.

For both Anne and Stephen, garden scenes indicate a strong and vivid imagination that is most prominent during lonely periods. Anne's isolation, in fact, begins to disappear as she makes human companions, a phenomenon that is most explicit during her first meeting with Diana Barry in Mrs. Barry's garden. The focus on natural space remains at the foreground, and yet the necessity to relate to nature is not as great once Anne forms real human companionships, lending credence to the idea that the loneliness generated by sexual inversion can influence the imagination. The scene in Mrs. Barry's garden features lush descriptions of the natural surroundings. Despite those descriptions, Anne does not remark on the beauty around her because she is too focused on the new friend she is meeting. When Anne focuses on Diana rather than the landscape, she is displaying what Gammel calls a "desire for connectivity" ("Embodied" 230). Anne has so long wanted a friend, and now that she has a human one, the need to befriend or communicate with nature is no longer as immediate, even as Anne continues to appreciate nature as the novel progresses. Gammel writes that during this initial meeting, Anne is "physically immersed in nature," but "too preoccupied with matters of the heart to appreciate nature's beauty" (230). Montgomery makes clear the appealing aesthetics of the garden, which is described as a "bowery wilderness of flowers which would have delighted Anne's heart at any time less fraught with destiny" (121). The garden is filled with an array of trees and flowers of varying types, and we are told that the sunshine is "streaming through" the garden (Gammel "Embodied Landscape" 120). In an area so wrought with beauty, it is remarkable that Anne herself does not seem to notice her surroundings, so much as remark upon them, even as the reader is forced to consciously envision the natural scenery.

This garden scene bares striking similarity to a passage in Ellis' 1897 book *Sexual Inversion* as he describes what were known as 'flame' relationships. The term 'flame' originated in Italy to describe school friendships which were usually platonic but could often be sexual as well. A flame relationship occurring between two females "proceeds like a love relationship" (264). According to Ellis, one of the girls in the flame relationship is "shy" while the other is more outgoing and even man-like in characteristic. Thus, the shy party may be likened to the passive Diana or Mary. Ellis maintains that such relationships begin differently from platonic friendships, writing that "one sees the other on the stairs, in the garden, in the corridors, and the emotion that arises is nearly always called forth from beauty and physical grace" (265). According to Ellis, these love-at-first-sight scenes—like the one occurring in Mrs. Barry's garden—were not unusual for two females initiating a sexually charged flame relationship.

Stephen's personification of nature is also at its height as she feels most utterly alone. However, in Stephen's mind, nature reaffirms her status as lonely outcast rather than adapting her to the world. Nonetheless, as for Anne, nature is used to reflect the feelings Stephen is able to perceive in others. Once Martin departs, Stephen goes out into the gardens of Morton; there, she relates her childhood memories of feeling ostracized by projecting not her own feelings, but rather her perception of how others see her, onto nature. Instead of animating and personifying plants and animals to invent sympathetic companions as Anne does, Stephen instead imagines what she sees occurring in her own life back onto nature, as it too rejects and mocks her. In this particular scene, a sudden "stream of consciousness," a term coined by psychologist William James in the late nineteenth century (1), overwhelms her as one memory after another from childhood

returns to her. Each of these memories illuminates her differences and “queerness” from other people (Hall 83). Stephen “had not remembered these things for years, she had thought that all this had been quite forgotten” (102). She then looks at a swan and thinks, “Perhaps he thinks I'm a freak.” She even imagines it to exile her out of the landscape when she perceives it as saying, “Get out of this, Stephen, you clumsy, inadequate, ludicrous creature” (103). Stephen's mind here demonstrates what W.E.B. DuBois termed as “double consciousness,” (3) as she recognizes her own developing sexuality as well as the way that sexuality was perceived as unusual or even revolting by other people. Thus, she begins to see herself as society views her; as the narrator observes, “she felt revolted at the realization of her own grotesqueness; she was nothing but a freak” (250).

If Anne uses nature to assimilate to her world, Stephen conversely uses it to further rebel against social prescriptions, particularly as they relate to gender roles. As an alternative to conforming to her mother's expectations, Stephen instead moves away from her home. In fact, when Anna confronts Stephen regarding with disgust her scandalous relationship with Angela Crosby, her response is, “I understand. I'll leave Morton” (202). As she leaves, she repeats to herself, “I'm going away from Morton,” thus emphasizing her eventual separation from her childhood home (203). Raftery's death allows her the freedom to leave Morton, since she no longer has him or her father as confidants. Stephen's progression in the novel moves not from alienation to assimilation, but rather from alienation to continued separation from mainstream society as she becomes a champion of the alienated. One review contemporary to the publication of *The Well of Loneliness* hailed Stephen as a “sensitive, artistic, religious and uncompromising human being who refuses to adapt herself to the conditions of life” (rev 68). Nature and the

imagination are just one means that Hall employs to strengthen her message that Stephen is a creative figure who is also relentlessly cognizant and loyal to her sexual identity.

Nature, through her imagination and use of childlike projection, confirms what Stephen has perceived her whole life: that she is different from others. Nonetheless, she perceives what others are feeling and identifies her own feelings of loneliness through nature.

“Men and Women Who Must Carry God’s Mark on their Foreheads”: Male Versus Female Modern Art

Anne and Stephen are sensitive to their own feelings as well as the feelings of other people, and as they grow, that sensitivity that developed in nature is demonstrated in their adult lives and through their art. Although their work has since been disproven, Bombasci refers to the early twenty first century work of researchers Baron-Cohen and Wheelwright, who espouse the idea that unlike the autistic mind, “the female brain, on the contrary, is more predisposed towards empathizing, or demonstrating profound sensitivity towards the emotions of others” (135). Although two types of empathy actually exist—cognitive empathy and emotional empathy—the empathy displayed by both Anne and Stephen is more characteristic of the latter. While Stephen is described as looking masculine and often pursues hobbies usually associated with men (like hunting or horseback riding), her brain remains quite feminine in relation to empathy, once again highlighting Hall and Montgomery’s propensity to combine both male and female characteristics into one character. Stephen’s behavior and thought processes, in fact, display an exceptional capacity for empathy. For the purposes of this research, I define Anne and Stephen's particular brand of empathy as the ability to imagine, understand, and experience the feelings of others.

The empathy Anne and Stephen develop as children is interiorized and later represented in adulthood through their feminine art. But in order to understand what, exactly, feminine art entailed, we must first understand masculine art—particularly since masculine art was most frequently associated with modernism. The male homosexual was frequently described as a genius for his artistic ability, and the art he produced during the

early modernist period was decidedly masculine. To define the masculine mind, Bombasci cites Simon Baron-Cohen who “has argued that individuals diagnosed with severe autism and Asperger's Syndrome display excessively masculine neurological patterns associated with systematizing – the use of rigorous analysis to create intellectually complex systems” (135). Other more recent books like *The Genesis of Creativity: Asperberg's Syndrome and the Arts* (2005) and *Autism and Creativity* (2004) have also drawn a link between autism and excessively masculine tendency. Thus, when masculine traits are produced in excess, they are then defined as symptoms of autism. Notably, the autistic propensity for systematizing is something with which both Anne and Stephen struggle, particularly as demonstrated in their mathematical performance.

Conversely, through adolescence and adulthood, the feminine empathetic imagination developed by Anne and Stephen in childhood leads to exceptional abilities for both, particularly in areas that do not involve systematization or emotional detachment. Through nature, both characters project their own social positions through what Czerny calls “non-human communications,” and although the ways in which they do so differ from one another, their early and imaginative interactions with the natural world later lead to intellectual successes for both (151). Since both books were written during a time period when imagination was viewed as indicative of intelligence, then the emphasis placed on imagination during Anne and Stephen's interactions with their landscapes is also demonstrative of superior intellect, particularly the sort that requires creativity and empathy.

The future successes of both characters, in school and career, further establish that link. Both Anne and Stephen replace the imaginative processes they develop as children

and adolescents conversing with nature and replace them with more practical applications as adults. By doing so, they demonstrate what Freud believed was an innate human propensity; that is, both replace their childhood play with a parallel activity in the adult world. Incidentally, Freud believed that capacity to be particularly strong in creative writers, an activity pursued by Anne and Stephen alike. In his 1907 essay, "Creative Writers and Daydreaming," Freud espouses the idea that the imaginative child "rearranges the things of his world in a new way which pleases him" (437). Anne frequently does this, as Czerny writes, she "renames and reconfigures the reality that surrounds her" by using her imagination (151). According to Freud, the tendency of the creative writer to arrange and rearrange words on a page is not unlike the play of the imaginative child.

Adult writers thus replace imaginative play with a pragmatic, grownup activity; in that way, Freud links imaginative childhood play to the career of writing, something at which both Anne and Stephen excel. Several times in her novel, Montgomery makes it clear that Anne has a gift for writing that the other characters, especially Diana, simply do not possess. When Miss Stacy assigns her students to write a story, Diana complains that she is unable to do so, but Anne assures her that writing is not a difficult task. Diana replies to Anne by saying, "It's easy for you because you have an imagination" (290). Montgomery makes it clear, through Diana's conversation with Anne, that imagination is a necessary precursor to the task of writing. Anne's continued success in writing and scholarly studies continues to be emphasized more frequently as she grows older. At one point, Marilla remarks that Miss Stacy believes Anne to be "bright and diligent" (339). Anne also performs exceptionally well on her entrance exams at Queen's, which lead to

her receipt of the prestigious and competitive Avery scholarship (401). Once Anne enters the Academy, Montgomery writes that the other students were “thoughtful, imaginative, [and] ambitious students like herself,” once again drawing a parallel between imagination and intellect (395).

Significantly, it is Anne's scholarly success in the humanities, not in the sciences, that Montgomery continually emphasizes, noting that “in geometry Anne met her waterloo” (191). In that way, Anne's particular area of expertise is in tasks that require writing, not mathematics. Anne and Stephen's gift for writing may result from the sensitivity to feeling and even empathy they display as imaginative children at play, notably because writing is an inherently social task and some degree of empathy is necessary for the level of audience awareness necessary to be a successful writer. Thus, if the vivid imagination Anne developed in childhood and that is represented through her interactions with nature allows her intellectual success as a writer, she is demonstrating Freud's theory of the creative transfer of imaginative childhood play into writing.

Stephen's character, too, demonstrates a link between imagination, scholarly success and creativity. Showing her exceptional abilities, Stephen excels as a student when she is taught by Puddle. Specifically, like Anne, Stephen possesses a superior ability for writing. Hall writes that Puddle “observ[ed] in her pupil a really fine judgment, a great feeling for balance in sentences and words” and that she “began to excel in composition” (70). Demonstrating a newly emerging psychological emphasis on interiority, Stephen's memories of “all the beauty of nature,” as well as other stream-of-consciousness like “impressions from childhood” partially afford her the ability to think and write creatively. Stephen's ability to write may have also been a result of “Puddle

compelling her pupil to share in her own enthusiastic love of the Classics,” an allusion to Greek literature and its frequent emphasis on same-sex love (61). Hall further illustrates Stephen's exceptional mental capacities when Puddle calls her “gifted” (205). Further, once Stephen leaves Morton and writes *The Furrow*, she achieves “fame thanks to a fine first novel” (210). If Stephen's childhood memories, as Hall directly states, influence her abilities as a writer, then Hall has created a parallel between imaginative play-particularly visible through the landscape at Morton and Stephen's relationship to it-and the creative intellectual capacity for writing.

If Anne and Stephen's successful ability to write sprang from the imaginative minds they possess, and their imaginations were formed from a lonely youth, then both novels also establish an association between lonely or traumatic childhoods and creative prodigy. In that way, not only is inborn inversion associated with exceptional intelligence, but the environmental circumstances afforded by inversion also contribute to genius. Critic Laura Doan writes that Stephen is an “exceptional woman in possession of an array of rare and extraordinary gifts: high intellect, [and] artistic sensitivity” (173). Stephen's transgenderism may have resulted in a painful childhood, but it also grants her exceptional abilities as a literary artist. In fact, homosexuality may have been a contributing factor to both Anne and Stephen's ability to write, as psychologist Joyce McDougall later recognizes, “All creative acts must be conceptualized as a fusion of the masculine and the feminine elements in the psychic structure” (70). In that way, the trauma Stephen and Anne experience as a child is positively reconfigured as her exceptional ability to imagine and write creatively.

Although Anne and Stephen are both alienated during their respective childhoods, they nonetheless develop an exceptional capacity for empathy, as we have already noted. For Anne, that empathy grants her a superior ability to relate to others and to understand their feelings and emotions. When Mr. Harrison expresses anger towards her for letting her cow wander into his fields, she replies that she can “make an allowance for you, Mr. Harrison, because I have an imagination. I can easily imagine how very trying it must be to find a cow in your oats” (1585). Anne is, in fact, often able to use her empathy in creative ways to relate to others. When Anne has a disagreement with Marilla, Montgomery writes that Anne “knew that Marilla's only vulnerable point was her stern devotion to what she believed to be her duty, and Anne skillfully marshaled her arguments along this line” (1106). Anne can use her capacity for empathy to understand other people's complex motivations and then use those motivations to connect with other people; once again, this level of audience awareness may partially account for her unique writing ability. Later, this ability also grants her the opportunity to be a successful teacher by relating to her students. In one student named Paul, Anne begins to recognize a “genius” and thinks that “he was unlike other children anywhere, and that there was a soul subtly akin to her own gazing at her out of the very dark blue eyes that were watching her so intently” (6537). Just as Anne was able to recognize her own self in her interactions with nature, she is also able to project her own self onto other people. Although Anne is also frequently narcissistic and self-absorbed-as when she ignores Diana when Diana unknowingly gets drunk on what she believed to be raspberry cordial-Anne's narcissism slowly disappears and is replaced instead by a more favorable symbiosis between self-knowledge and awareness of others' feelings. Understanding

others as herself, in fact, allows her to be more empathetic as well as sympathetic to other people like Paul. Whether or not the feelings she projects onto others actually exist in those people is irrelevant because Anne's recognition of them nonetheless results in compassion and understanding.

Many of Anne's students also find it easy to relate to her and some even develop admiration of her that borders on the erotic; furthermore, that admiration serves as evidence that the feelings Anne perceives in other people are likely accurate. For one particular assignment, Anne has her students write her a letter. One student begins her letter by writing, "I think I will write you a letter to tell you how much I love you. I love you with my whole heart and soul and mind" (7532). The praise the student gives to Anne not only refers to Anne's teaching but also to her physical appearance, as when Annetta writes, "I shall never forget how sweet you looked the last time I saw you in that black dress with flowers in your hair" (7535). Her letter bears a marked resemblance to the letters Ellis describes during the pursuit of a flame relationship, and he states that "many letters are written during the course of these relationships." Such relationships occurred with special frequency in schools where boys were separated from girls and even occurred between teachers and pupils (276). Thus, Annetta's letter represents another example of female inversion displayed through creative means and also further demonstrates Anne's ability to connect with other people.

While Stephen is less gregarious than Anne, she nonetheless uses social discourse as a creative outlet. One of the most prominent ways she does this is through the lesbian writing circles in which she takes part. Frequently, she meets other people at the salon of Valerie Seymour, a character based on the real life figure of Natalie Barney. Notably,

Barney was a lesbian who enjoyed many relationships with women, particularly those artists, poets, and novelists she brought together. Although men also attended these meetings, it is worth noting that this group is led by a woman. At Seymour's house, as Hall describes, "meet men and women who must carry God's mark on their foreheads" (352). That these people meet as outsiders on the fringe of society emphasizes the idea of how pain can be turned into art, much like Anne and Stephen's creative minds are developed from their own outcast from society. Moreover, this statement highlights the idea of the invert as martyr pleading on behalf of other people. In addition to these writing circles, Stephen also becomes dependent upon her relationship—which may also be labeled as 'flame'—with Puddle, with whom she confides regarding all matters, including her writing.

Ironically, Gertrude Stein writes in a style opposite of Hall and Montgomery. Bombasci understands Stein's use of a male style of writing as an attempt to "criticize the high modernist tendency to glorify male genius and marginalize women artists and intellectuals." She goes on to explain further that Stein's writing style "performs as a mind that is oblivious to linguistic and social conventions" (133). Because people with autism are often unable to "use language in conventional ways," and because male modernist writing tended to be similar to autistic language, much of Stein's writing is highly non-communicative and even impenetrable. Perhaps her most famous example of this style of writing is *Tender Buttons*, loaded with imagery of seemingly unrelated objects and devoid of action or human emotion. In fact, many critics have noted that Stein's writing tends towards an "empirical focus on objects" (134) which stands in stark contrast to Hall and Montgomery's focus on emotionality. Even when Anne and Stephen

do seem to focus on objects, their focus usually involves a projection of emotion onto the non-sentient being rather than a focus on the reality of the object itself. Bombasci further notes that other artists, like T.S. Eliot, tended to avoid emotion as “aesthetically inappropriate,” as famously articulated in Eliot’s 1917 essay “Tradition and the Individual Talent” (Bombasci 135) According to Bombasci, “Stein, like Eliot, declares that her literary method is based on a distillation and even transcendence of emotion” (137). By understanding this emphasis that writers like Stein and Eliot placed on avoiding emotion, we can then better understand how the work of Hall and Montgomery stood in contrast to male ideas of Modernism. Clearly, Hall’s and Montgomery’s books were not impenetrable as Stein’s or Eliot’s work tended to be, particularly as evidenced by the popularity of Anne’s character with the general public.

Conclusion: “Kindred Spirits” of the Künstlerroman

As artists exemplifying a uniquely feminine aesthetic approach, both Anne and Stephen practice a highly social and collaborative approach to writing. Carol Singley and Susan Elizabeth Sweeney argue that feminist collaboration remains a common phenomenon today, particularly because it “empowers women who might otherwise remain silent, isolated, or fearful” (64). Therefore, the feminine act of writing as a social event was not confined to Montgomery’s and Hall’s time period but instead remains a prevalent occurrence in post-modern times. Thus, once again isolation serves as a catalyst for the creative and collaborative pursuit of writing – particularly for women who display that creativity through social acts, like participation in Seymour's writing circle. Like Stephen, Anne, too, carries out her writing not as a solitary act (as men were often thought to do), but as a participant in a social conversation about writing. Just as Stephen uses Puddle, Anne uses Miss Stacy as a confidant and guide for her writing. Furthermore, at one point Anne leads a “story club” which may be likened to a childhood version of Seymour's salon meetings. The club begins with just Anne and Diana but soon grows to include a few other girls; however, Montgomery is sure to specify that this is a girls-only club-“No boys were allowed in it” (4078). The meetings proceed such that “Each girl has to read her story aloud and then we talk it over” (4081). In that way, the creative act of writing is carried out as a social task dependent upon multiple participants. Although Anne is frequently declared a 'genius' because of her exceptional ability to write, her genius is wholly different from the solitary male figure who writes alone.

By taking part in writing circles and displaying exceptional gifts for social tasks like empathy, Anne and Stephen represent a uniquely modernist woman who could-like

the men both contemporary and prior to them- be declared a 'creative genius.'

Nonetheless, their particular brand of genius as distinct from men was little recognized, despite its differences from the solitary male figure whose writing process and the work produced displayed little social influence or emotionality. Ellis, however, was perhaps one of the few researchers who did recognize not only that homosexuality was often linked to "artistic genius" but also that women were capable of such genius. Specifically, he describes literature as the "number one career choice for inverts" (264). Furthermore, he recognizes homosexuality to be "on the rise among women" during his time period, simultaneously noting an aversion to science among inverted women as well as a tendency to be "accomplished writers of verse," much like Anne and Stephen are (171). Interestingly, Ellis believes that "modern movements" encouraged female inversion (171). Perhaps he believed that the tendency for close social relationships within artistic circles like the ones in which Anne and Stephen take part enabled sexual female relationships in the same way non-segregated schools encouraged flame relationships.

Female sexual relationships are depicted as a part of nature in both books. Robinson notes that Montgomery's association between nature and close female bonds is not unique to the Anne books. In her Emily books, she also links "nature and auto-eroticism" to female relationships ("Bosom" 14). In doing so, she propounds an argument that female-female sexuality is a part of nature. Puddle, too, at one point assures Stephen that she is not "unnatural" and is in fact "as much a part of nature as anyone else" (172). Thus, Anne and Stephen's interactions with nature display Montgomery and Hall's belief in the naturalness of lesbianism, and perhaps even more importantly—the naturalness of the female invert's imagination.

Anne and Stephen also both represent the child moving towards the forefront of psychological studies, as they use their interactions with nature to personify the trauma they endure as children. The term “Kunstlerroman” describes a genre of novels that follow the development of an artist. Both Hall’s and Montgomery’s novels may be placed into this category, as they span the development of Stephen and Anne as creative writers from childhood to adulthood (Plata 1). In that way, they are as Czerny says of Anne, an argument against the compartmentalization of the adult and child (150). In the same way, the real life biographies of Montgomery and Hall as well as the way those biographies relate to the characters they create demonstrate a similar psychological phenomenon, as both authors, whether consciously or not, implant pieces of their childhoods into the lives and personalities of Anne and Stephen.

Hall's life, for instance, shares several similarities with her protagonist's. Like Stephen, Hall perceived herself as an alienated social transgressor, referring to herself as “a writer of ‘misfits,’” and remarking further that “all the misfits of this world are lonely, being conscious that they differ from the rank and file” (Halberstam 146). This reference to being a ‘misfit’ is not unlike the way Stephen recognizes her own incongruities from the world by labeling herself a “freak.” In fact, a look at Hall's journals and writings reveals that Hall “did think of herself as a freak” (Rule 87). Additionally, Hall suffered rejection in her childhood, perhaps even more so than Stephen, as she was “emotionally and materially neglected in childhood” by her father and underwent a “brutal and indifferent” relationship with her mother. Further, like Stephen, she was considered “bizarre to most of her contemporaries” (Rule 79). She also shared several other traits in common with Stephen, including a love for riding horses, hunting, cars, travel, and men's

clothing (Rule 86). For Hall to have shared so many similarities to Stephen, it is likely that she also saw in herself a similar connection to her lonely condition and the development of her imaginative writing abilities as the one Stephen possesses.

Although Montgomery denies being a lesbian, much of her life also shares several characteristics in common with her protagonist's, and much of her childhood was spent in lonely circumstances not unlike those experienced by Anne. Like Anne's, Montgomery's own mother died when she was a young child. Her father was often absent, and so she was eventually placed into the care of her grandparents. Prior to moving in with them, her stepmother forced her to assist with childrearing duties, not unlike the way Anne is prematurely thrust into the role of caretaker when she resides in foster homes. Much of Montgomery's childhood was also focused on storytelling and reading, yet another activity she shares in common with Anne (Blackford xxiii-xxiv). Montgomery's journals further reveal that she had a "vivid imagination and an enduring love of nature" (Cowger 192).

Although Montgomery denies being a lesbian, her denial may have been more out of a desire to fit in with societal expectations than out of an actual lack of desire for other women. Roberta Buchanan notes that Montgomery may have married out of a "desire to conform to social expectations of femininity" (qtd. in Robinson, "Sex Matters" 176). Moreover, Montgomery experiences several relationships similar to Anne's. For instance, Katherine Brooke's character is quite similar to a female schoolteacher named Isobel, whom Montgomery describes as an "'unconscious' lesbian" (Robinson, "Sex Matters" 12). Although Montgomery rejects Isobel's repeated attempts at friendship, Montgomery writes that she can relate to Isobel's "special need" of her "only too well—much better

than she understands it herself. It is the horrible craving of the Lesbian” (qtd. in Robinson, “Sex Matters” 167). An analysis of the exchanges between Isobel and Montgomery reveals a flame relationship similar to the ones portrayed in Anne’s character. Nora Lefurgey Campbell was also a close friend of Montgomery’s and also “belonged to a writer’s club.” Nora was also noted for her masculine tendencies and even “wore pants and smoked cigarettes.” Like Anne and Diana, Nora and Montgomery frequently went for walks together and recited poetry with one another (*Intimate Life* 111). Montgomery also shared an extremely close relationship to her best friend Frede Campbell, even writing passionately at one point that she “couldn’t live without Frede” (qtd. in Robinson 171). Montgomery even describes in one of her journals a night where she and Frede “cuddled down under [their] blankets” (qtd. in Robinson 181). According to Robinson, Frede may have even been “the emotional core of Montgomery’s life” (Robinson “Sex Matters” 171).

Most obviously, both Montgomery and Hall share the common pursuit of writing as a hobby and a career in common with the characters they create. It is likely, then, that they viewed writing much in the same way that Freud did, by believing it to be a creative result of the childhood circumstances that differentiated them from the rest of the world. The lives of Montgomery and Hall and the way those lives correlate to their novels corresponds well to the beliefs of modern day composition theorists like Donald Murray who believes that all writing is autobiographical, regardless of genre (66). Many prominent authors, including writers like Willa Cather whose books are often about children, firmly believe that the ability to write is acquired mostly as a result of childhood circumstances (Murray 66). Representing immense parallels between author and

character, *Anne of Green Gables* and the *Well of Loneliness* echo the earlier twentieth-century belief that childhood memories are internal to the adult's mind and that they leave impressions that both develop and affect the adult self. Freud's theory that the child's imagination is replaced with practical applications in the adult world is evidenced when an author's real life biography is reflected within that author's fictional work. In other words, the presence of autobiographical material in a work of fiction displays the influence of the child's imagination on the adult mind – even when that autobiographical material is not knowingly included in the text by the author. Displaying this Freudian tendency, the adult lives of Anne and Stephen frequently reflect aspects of their respective childhoods.

These two books not only reveal a shift in thinking about child consciousness, but likely also represent a link, whether placed there by the authors knowingly or not, between female homosexuality and the creative genius. Specifically, if the child can develop a strong imagination in childhood as a result of being sexually atypical, then in adulthood he or she is more likely to display signs of creativity and superior intellect. In a time period predisposed to associate imagination with intelligence, it is no wonder that Montgomery and Hall chose to create characters who not only possessed active imaginations represented through nature but also displayed exceptional intellectual abilities.

When we think of modernism, emotional writing from authors like Montgomery and Hall probably does not spring to mind immediately. Rather, we may be more tempted to relate the work of writers like Stein or even Albert Camus. The emotional detachment of works like *The Stranger* provide further contrast to both Anne and Stephen,

particularly through Meursault's admission that "imagination had never really been one of his strong points" (70). Further, Mersault's famously unemotional response to his mother's death—"Mother died today. Or maybe yesterday; I can't be sure" (4) is far less wrought with dramatics and emotion than Anne's well known proclamation that her red hair had made her life a "perfect graveyard of buried hopes" (810). Clearly, Montgomery and Hall's writing displays a level of emotionality and even histrionics far exceeding that put out by most male writers of the modernist period.

Montgomery and Hall's portrayal of female creative genius as something inherently social and even dependent on empathy was an emerging and uniquely modernist—but also uniquely feminine-idea. Significantly, however, Montgomery and Hall's classification of lesbian genius reveals something even broader than gender differences; that is, it demonstrates a tendency for modernism to move away from compartmentalization, as ideas of male/female and child/adult become increasingly fluid. Stephen's final scene provides a memorable display of how Hall combined masculine and feminine tendencies into one character. In fact, although some critics have argued that Stephen is an overly stereotypical representation of lesbianism, in many ways she also displays particular maternal characteristics not usually associated with the butch/femme divide. We are reminded of the chaos of childbirth as Stephen sees a crowd of people, whom Hall dubs "the yet unborn," all calling out to her as children who cry for their mother. In this maternal way, Stephen is reminiscent of the Virgin Mary, a virgin who is birthing her own martyrdom as a savior for inverts everywhere as her children "clamor in vain for their right to salvation." Hall describes Stephen's pregnancy as taking place within her "barren womb" that "ached with its fearful and sterile burden." As during

childbirth, the people she sees are “tearing her to pieces.” In this scene of symbolic virginal birth, “their pain, her pain, all welded together into one great agony,” a moment in which her empathy culminates into one final display of martyrdom. Prior to this childbirth scene, her martyrdom, in fact, acts as a replacement for the act of sexual intercourse, as “rockets of pain ... shot up and burst” within her, a chaotic and orgasmic scene evoking imagery of sperm shooting towards an egg (436).

But even as Hall likens Stephen to the Virgin Mary with her childbirth imagery and hints at a virginal pregnancy, she simultaneously alludes to Stephen’s similarities to Jesus Christ. Thus, Stephen is not limited to the role of mother just because she is female. In this scene as in others earlier in the book, Stephen serves as a savior to other inverts, at this particular moment providing refuge for the “lost and terrible brothers” who refer to her repeatedly as God when Hall directly alludes to the Bible: “Oh God, My God, why have you abandoned me?”¹ At the same time, those she births also plead with her to intercede with God and plead on their behalf: “Speak with your God and ask him why He has left us forsaken” (437). Notably, many of Stephen’s maternal instincts are also reflected in Anne’s character, particularly as Anne repeatedly cares for children and other adults alike, and in that way, Anne, too, displays both feminine and masculine tendencies. Anne and Stephen’s feminine and maternal traits are significant in that they are unexpectedly juxtaposed beside their lesbian tendencies. Moreover, both are figured, as we have already seen, through nature. Yet, this final scene of *The Well of Loneliness*,

¹ A reference to Matthew 27:46, “My God, my God, why have You forsaken me?” New American Standard Bible

together with Anne and Stephen's repeated attempts at martyrdom, proposes something even more radical: that female homosexuality is not only natural-but divine.

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