

## **SECULAR PILGRIMAGES**

**SECULAR PILGRIMAGES:  
VACATION AS PILGRIMAGE TO PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND**

By

CATHERINE S. SWEET, B.A.

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AUTHOR: Catherine S. Sweet, B.A. (The University of Prince Edward Island)

SUPERVISOR: Dr. Ellen Badone

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## ABSTRACT

Prince Edward Island is Canada's smallest province, situated on the Atlantic coast. It is famous for the potatoes that grow in its red fertile soil, its seafood industries, and Lucy Maud Montgomery's novel *Anne of Green Gables*, which is set on the north shore of the Island. Prince Edward Island is a popular tourist destination. The tourists seek "authentic" experiences in a bucolic, pastoral atmosphere, and connections to a larger reality than they experience in their everyday lives. Distancing themselves from their everyday routines also provides rejuvenation. Drawing upon fieldwork data gathered on Prince Edward Island, I argue that vacations (specifically to Prince Edward Island) are secular pilgrimages. There are many parallels between pilgrimages associated with religious institutions and vacations undertaken by tourists, and the differences that exist between religious pilgrimage and secular pilgrimage are largely nominal.

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CHAPTER ONE:

INTRODUCTION

PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

Prince Edward Island is Canada's smallest province, nestled above Nova Scotia in the Gulf of St. Lawrence. Canada's Atlantic coast is a land of variety. While not as economically prosperous as provinces in the west of Canada, Atlantic Canadians have a reputation of being generously hospitable. The culture is inextricably tied to the ocean and steeped in French, Irish, and Scottish roots, with smaller groups of descendants of Dutch, English, African, German and Lebanese settlers. Newfoundland and Nova Scotia (and in Nova Scotia, especially Cape Breton Island) are ruggedly magnificent, with grand mountains and rocky seashores.

Prince Edward Island is the soft counterpart to the region's other lands of granite. It has no solid bedrock, but instead, tightly-packed sand, called sandstone, which supports the topsoil. The sand has a high level of hematite, an iron-rich mineral which rusts, giving the soil and sand a red hue. The soil is sandy, acidic, and fertile, qualities which make it especially suitable for growing potatoes. Agriculture is the Island's most lucrative industry, and the potato crops from Prince Edward Island are especially famous for their high quality, not only as table stock, but also for seed. Besides the agricultural reputation,

Prince Edward Island is also known for its aquacultural fortune. The fishery is the province's third richest industry. The waters off the Island are breeding grounds for lobsters, and both mussels and oysters (especially the world-famous Malpeque Oyster) are cultivated in the Gulf waters.

Tourism, however, is the second-highest money-earner for the small province. Its influence can be felt especially in the months of June, July and August when Prince Edward Island annually receives most of its more than one million visitors. Prince Edward Island's population is only about 140,000, so the influx of tourists creates a marked contrast from the Island's proclivity for a quiet and slow existence. The beautiful landscapes, red and white sand beaches, cuisine, activities (especially golf), cultural events, and the influence of the author Lucy Maud Montgomery, have attracted tourists to Prince Edward Island for over one hundred years.

#### RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Prince Edward Island is not recognized by any institutionalized religious tradition to be a spiritually significant place. However, many visitors, like those who participate in official pilgrimages, go to Prince Edward Island to experience a re-creation or re-discovery of self, and spiritual or emotional healing. According to anthropologist Clifford Geertz, religion is a system of culturally shared meanings "in terms of which each individual interprets his



experience and organizes his conduct” (Geertz 1973: 127). In line with this interpretation, religious experience is not exclusively restricted to the domain of official religious institutions. Moreover, religious meanings may be “implicit and directly felt rather than consciously thought-about” (Geertz 1973: 127). Following from Geertz’ understanding of religion, the definition of a pilgrim cannot be limited to the domain of institutionalized religion.

A number of anthropologists have studied both pilgrimage and tourism to understand the meanings ascribed to such journeys (Badone and Roseman 2004, Reader and Walter 1993, Frey 1998, Graburn 1983b, Harrison 2003). Turner and Turner have argued, “A tourist is half a pilgrim, if a pilgrim is half a tourist” (Turner and Turner 1978: 20). Since then, anthropologists have investigated the meaning of vacations and tourism to secular pilgrims, notably, Reader and Walter’s “Pilgrimage in Popular Culture” (1993) and Frey’s “On and Off the Road to Santiago” (1998).

Van Gennep’s (1960) notion of liminality applies to both pilgrims and tourists. Similarly, Turner and Turner (1978) argue that pilgrimage shares many structural features with rites of passage, including its liminality, which gives rise to the experience of *communitas*: “intense comradeship and egalitarianism” (V. Turner 1969: 95). As the Turners argue:

even when people bury themselves in anonymous crowds on beaches, they are seeking an almost sacred, often symbolic, mode of

communitas, generally unavailable to them in the structured life of the office, the shop floor or the mine. (Turner and Turner 1978: 20)

Nelson Graburn underscores the similarities between tourism and vacationing in the contemporary world and the passage from profane to sacred which takes place in pilgrimage.

The profane period... is the everyday life... the ordinary and inevitable. The period of marginality... is another life, which, though extraordinary, is perhaps more 'real' than 'real life.'... Thus, holidays (holy, sacred days now celebrated by traveling away from home) are what makes 'life worth living' as though ordinary life is not life or at least not the kind of life worth living. (Graburn 1989: 26)

Graburn would classify travel to Prince Edward Island as "Nature Tourism" (Graburn 1989: 31). Tourist destinations of this type are thought to be untouched by modernity, and to have curative or therapeutic significance as a result of their "pure air" and "soothing waters" (Graburn 1989: 31).

According to the Turners, pilgrimage is modernity's answer to Van Gennep's (1960) *rites de passages*. The Turners presented the idea that the same passages through liminality found in the rites of passage are found in pilgrimage. "Christianity generated its own mode of liminality for the laity. This mode was best represented by the pilgrimage to a sacred site or holy shrine located at some distance away from the pilgrim's place of residence and daily labor" (Turner and Turner 1978:4). The comparison is not quite complete because of the voluntary nature of pilgrimages, while rites of passage were seen

as necessary to develop as members of a society. The Turners recognise this parallel when they cite the sacraments of the Roman Catholic Church (Turner and Turner 1978: 3), but do not highlight the difference between obligation and choice.

Van Gennep's rites of passage can also be compared to Graburn's description of tourism as a change from the sacred to the profane.<sup>1</sup> Van Gennep's rites of passage are those "rites which accompany every change of place, state, social position and age" (Van Gennep 1960, quoted in V. Turner: 1969: 96). We can recognise vacation as a rite of passage because the travels of tourists certainly involve varying degrees of change of place, state and social position. It is the movement from home to not-home, and the change of title from "local" to "tourist." As for rites involving aging, many vacations are made on an annual basis, so although the trip might not be for the specific reason of celebrating (or, at least, acknowledging) aging, the years can still be tracked by time's passage. Edmund R. Leach, whose work concerns the passage and demarcation of "profane" time with "sacred" times, writes that, "among the various functions which holding of festivals may fulfil, one very important function is the ordering of time" (Leach 1979: 228). Here, festivals can easily be replaced with periods of vacation, as both are "sacred" events as opposed to the "profane," everyday life. Graburn notes the importance of the passage of

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<sup>1</sup> Graburn recognises Emile Durkheim's 1912 definition of sacred as "non-ordinary" (Graburn 1989: 24).

time as vacations become a tradition: “The passing of each year is usually marked by the annual vacation... and something would be wrong with a year if it didn’t occur, as if one has been cheated of time” (Graburn 1989: 25).

The primary questions motivating my research concern the religious and spiritual meaning of travel to Prince Edward Island for the tourists who vacation there. Anthropological and sociological literature on tourism (Crick 1995, Graburn 1983a; 1995a; 1995, McCannell 1976, Smith 1989) and pilgrimage (Reader and Walter 1993, Turner and Turner 1978) will be used as a broad framework for interpreting the experiences of tourists on Prince Edward Island. Specifically, this thesis sets out to pose the following questions: Can travel to Prince Edward Island be considered a secular form of pilgrimage? Do visitors to Prince Edward Island agree that it can be considered a pilgrimage site, and how is that response related to their experiences (if they have had any) of traveling to officially recognized pilgrimage sites? Can vacationing on Prince Edward Island be experienced as healing? It should be noted that symbolic and ritual healing does not necessarily involve curing in a biomedical sense, but may be perceived by participants to promote well-being (Boddy 1989, Dow 1986, McGuire 1988, E. Turner 1992).

## FIELDWORK

My fieldwork involved interviews and participant observation on Prince Edward Island in June, July, and August of 2004. I carried out thirty-three interviews on Prince Edward Island, including two with former visitors who had since become full-time residents and one with a full-time resident who was born in the province. I became a participant at the University of Prince Edward Island's Lucy Maud Montgomery Institute's biennial Conference in June, 2004, interviewing fourteen attendees. The L.M. Montgomery Institute Conference attracts both fans of Montgomery's works and academics interested in her impact on literature, particularly Children's Literature, Canadian Literature, and Women's Literature (or, at least literature written by women). The fans and academics who attend the conference form two separate but overlapping communities.

Following the L.M. Montgomery Institute Conference, I focussed my research attention on visitors to the north shore of Prince Edward Island. Of this group, I concentrated on interviewing campers at Robinson's Island Campground in Brackley Beach, which is part of the Prince Edward Island National Park. I also visited a family reunion in Brudenell, and interviewed two formerly regular campers at the Robinson's Island Campground, who have now built a summer home in the Brackley Beach area. My interviews ranged from

fifteen minutes to one hour. See Appendix A for a complete list of interview questions.

Of the thirty-three participants, there were ten men and twenty-three women. The dominance of women as participants was especially pronounced at the Lucy Maud Montgomery Institute Conference, where, of fourteen interviews conducted, only one interviewee was male. This distribution reflected the relative proportion of female to male participants at the Conference. While Montgomery's works are not specifically aimed at a female audience, the distribution of men compared to women at the Conference suggests that her readership is more strongly female than male. This situation could be owing to the author's gender, which can dictate the audience's gender. Moreover, Montgomery created many strong female characters with whom a female audience could readily identify. These characters include Anne Shirley, Marilla Cuthbert and Rachel Lynde in *Anne of Green Gables*, and Emily Starr and her aunts in the *Emily of New Moon* trilogy. Outside of the Montgomery Institute Conference, my sample of interviewees was more balanced in terms of gender. Nine of the nineteen participants interviewed on Prince Edward Island's north shore were men, a proportion that is more representative of the population at large.

Most of the participants interviewed for this study were from North America. Interviewees included fifteen Americans, sixteen Canadians, and two Australians.

I conducted interviews only in English, and although not all my informants were native English speakers, Denyse Lajeunesse, Park Ecologist of the Prince Edward Island National Park, reminded me that by not actively representing the large francophone Québécois (and largely Roman Catholic) clientele of the National Park, my results could be affected.

#### THE RESEARCHER

When I embarked on this fieldwork, I was placed in a unique position. My family moved to Prince Edward Island in 1990 and I grew up in the province. I worked summer jobs serving thousands of tourists in restaurants, theatres and the Prince Edward Island National Park. I learned that to go into downtown Charlottetown in the middle of the summer involved an exercise in patience because of the influx of visitors. Even though customer service can be a trying way to make money for university tuition, I was always pleased to talk to people who had come to Prince Edward Island. After all, they had decided to visit my home because they had heard it was beautiful, or interesting. It made me proud to be part of their memories. I liked listening to what they thought of the Island's tourist attractions, and I liked giving them recommendations from the "insider's" point of view.

After reading some of the literature on the anthropology of tourism, I immediately was attracted to the idea of studying tourism as secular pilgrimage,

and arranged to carry out my fieldwork on Prince Edward Island. My research put me in a unique position as one who was intimate with the province's tourist industry and yet also a researcher. I was insider and outsider all at once. Even though I was doing ethnography "at home," I was still placing myself in a realm that was outside of my experience. My role was not that of the Prince Edward Island "native" who has little interaction with tourists, nor was I in the service industry. Although I was familiar with my surroundings and the customs of the region, I was experiencing Prince Edward Island's tourist season in a way I never had. Also, as my thesis supervisor Ellen Badone predicted, I became the object of the tourist gaze (personal communication: 2004). Tourists travelling to experience a piece of life on Prince Edward Island were interested in interacting with me to add to their "authentic Prince Edward Island vacation experience." As a result, I was an ambassador not only for my own work and McMaster University, but also for Prince Edward Island.<sup>2</sup>

I thoroughly enjoyed the time I spent interviewing travellers to the Island. They were thoughtful and interested in my research and I met many colourful characters. They were on vacation, so they were relaxed and calm. One gentleman, Mario, a flight attendant from Halifax, had these insights about the post-modern use of the word *pilgrimage*:

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<sup>2</sup> For a discussion regarding roles performed and assumed by researchers, see Rothenberg: 1999.



We overuse the word pilgrimage like we overuse a lot of words... I think for me, for instance, going to Yankee Stadium was a bit of a pilgrimage, right? I have a good friend who's a German who goes to the original home of jerk cooking in Jamaica, and it was a four-hour pilgrimage, we called it, through the backwoods of Jamaica.

Hearing Mario's comments reassured me that laypeople understood that the concept of pilgrimage need not be strictly connected with a religious organisation, but refers to a meaningful journey that is set apart from everyday existence. Pilgrimage is sacred; it is special. So is vacation. Any significant journey is a personal pilgrimage, but not everyone will use the term because of its associations with religious institutions.

When I asked Jessie, a teacher from Maine (who also raises angora rabbits for their wool) if she thought we could call Prince Edward Island a pilgrimage site, she replied:

It's just a change of language. What one person identifies as a religious pilgrimage, those words apply to the secular pilgrimage, but secular pilgrimage uses different words. I think the experience that people are searching for may be getting the connection. The religious pilgrimage would call it the God, spiritual connections; the secular might use, you know, a connection with the land, a connection with the history, a connection with *Anne of Green Gables* or the stories, but I think they're all moving toward the same thing, just using different language.

The "connection" that Jessie mentions evokes the Turnerian concept of *communitas* (V. Turner 1969). My informants understood my project. They might not have previously thought about their travel to Prince Edward Island in

terms of pilgrimage, or perhaps they did not attach the term “secular pilgrimage” to the feeling of well-being they experienced when on vacation, but they understood what I was researching.

In the following chapters, I will discuss in more detail topics that influence vacation as pilgrimage to Prince Edward Island. These topics include role that Lucy Maud Montgomery plays in Prince Edward Island’s tourism, the historical and nominal differences and similarities between pilgrimage and tourism, the rejuvenative qualities of vacation, and the importance of “authenticity” while on vacation.

CHAPTER TWO:

L. M. MONTGOMERY AND HER INFLUENCE ON TOURISM ON PRINCE EDWARD  
ISLAND

MAUD OF PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

In 2004, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation invited Canadians to vote for the person they considered “The Greatest Canadian.” Politicians, scientists, artists, and athletes were presented for nomination. Novelist Lucy Maud Montgomery’s profile read: “She created a small red-headed orphan who charmed her way into the hearts of the world. Ever since Montgomery's Anne of Green Gables was published, the world has beaten an admiring path to Prince Edward Island.”<sup>3</sup> Finally, a list of the top one hundred “Greatest Canadians” was compiled. When all the votes were counted, Montgomery was number fifty-seven on the list of the top one hundred, the eighth-highest woman, and one of the highest-ranked authors.

Not only is Lucy Maud Montgomery responsible for creating Anne Shirley, one of Prince Edward Island’s most famous icons, Montgomery herself has become an iconic figure in her own right.

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<sup>3</sup> CBC. “The Greatest Canadian.” 22.07.05.  
<<http://www.cbc.ca/greatest/greatcanadians/index.html#51>>

Montgomery was born in the small community of Clifton on the north shore of Prince Edward Island in 1874. Her mother died of tuberculosis two years later and her father left her in the care of young Lucy's maternal grandparents while he moved to Saskatchewan to work (Gillen 1975: 1-4). Her grandparents, the Macneills, were stern guardians who seldom indulged Montgomery's active imagination (Rootland 1996: 10-11). She began writing at an early age and won third place in a writing contest in 1890 at the age of eight with a piece recounting the sinking of a clipper ship, the *Marco Polo*, off the coast of Cavendish (Gillen 1975: 19).<sup>4</sup> As an adult, Montgomery continued to write while she worked as a schoolteacher on Prince Edward Island. Her first novel, *Anne of Green Gables*, was published in 1908. It was an instant success and she followed *Anne* with more novels. In 1911 she married the Reverend Ewen MacDonald and after honeymooning in England and Scotland, the couple moved to Ontario (Rubio and Waterston 1995: 53-54). There, they had two sons (Gillen 1975: 101). Montgomery continued to write fiction set in Prince Edward Island when she lived in Ontario. She did not enjoy her time in Ontario as both she and her husband suffered from depression and stress disorders (Gillen 1975: 117). She returned to Prince Edward Island when she could, but by the time she died in 1947, she had spent more than half her life in Ontario. Montgomery's connection to Prince Edward Island and her yearning to return to the place she

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<sup>4</sup> "Marco Polo Land," an RV park and hotel on Prince Edward Island, is one of the few tourist establishments in the Cavendish area not named in reference to Montgomery. The name refers to the famous clipper ship, which ran aground and sank in a gale in 1883 (Gillen 1975: 19-21).

felt she belonged is reflected in her fiction and her journals. She wrote, “Oh, my Island is matchless – matchless. I feel that I did some violence to my spirit by leaving it. I belong here. It is mine – I am its own. It is in my blood. There is a part of me that lives only here... this colourful little land of ruby and emerald and sapphire” (quoted in Fawcett and Cormack 2001: 696).

Montgomery wrote 20 novels. Only one is not set on Prince Edward Island. Her most famous was her first, *Anne of Green Gables*, but her *Emily of New Moon* trilogy and the other six books in the series following *Anne of Green Gables* are also widely read.

Anne Shirley, the titular character in *Anne of Green Gables*, has become as important a figure as her creator. *Anne of Green Gables* is set in the fictional Prince Edward Island town of Avonlea in the late nineteenth-century. In the story, a pair of elderly siblings, Marilla and Matthew Cuthbert, decide to adopt an orphan boy from an asylum in Nova Scotia to help Matthew with the farm work. When the orphan arrives, it turns out that Anne Shirley had been sent to the Cuthberts instead of a boy. Practical Marilla’s first instinct is to send the girl back to the orphanage, even though Matthew protests. Once Marilla hears Anne’s short and pathetic life story, however, she decides that raising an orphan would be a philanthropic project. Anne soon endears herself to all of Avonlea. She is enthusiastic and dramatic, with a love for long words and the beauty of nature. She is tall for girls her age (eleven) and skinny with long, red hair. Although she is often called vain, she dreams of being a plump girl with

long, black hair, like her best friend, Diana Barry. *Anne of Green Gables* follows Anne, the Cuthberts, and other characters through episodic adventures in Avonlea.

In *Anne of Green Gables*, Montgomery includes long, evocative descriptions of Avonlea's natural surroundings. A sacred aura is often bestowed upon the fields, forests and orchards of the north shore of Prince Edward Island:

After the Mayflowers came the violets, and Violet Vale was empurpled with them. Anne walked through it on her way to school with reverent steps and worshipping eyes, as if she trod on holy ground.  
(Montgomery 1908: 161)

Anne and her friends spend a great deal of time entertaining romantic notions concerning the natural life of Avonlea, and Montgomery describes their pastimes with flowery prose. Anne's childhood parallels the time Montgomery spent as a girl in the Cavendish area. Montgomery integrated many features of her own life into the lives of the characters she created. Cavendish's way of life was transcribed into Avonlea, Marilla resembled Montgomery's strict Grandmother Macneill, and the imaginative young Montgomery is echoed in the orphan Anne's fantasies (see Rootland 1996: 71-108).

As *Anne of Green Gables* became an international success, more and more tourists began to come to Prince Edward Island. The Island had already been popular among tourists because of its beaches, and Montgomery refers to tourism in *Anne*. As Marilla is riding in the buggy with Anne to investigate why

she was sent to the Cuthberts rather than a boy, they pass a large hotel. Marilla tells Anne, "That's the White Sands Hotel. Mr. Kirke runs it, but the season hasn't begun yet. There are heaps of Americans come there for the summer. They think this shore is just about right" (Montgomery 1908: 42). Soon after the novel's 1908 publication, travellers began to seek out recognisable places from the book and, similarly, places of importance to Montgomery. This trend has continued to the present. Angela Knight, who, in 2001 was a first-time visitor to Prince Edward Island, wrote of the importance of *seeing* Cavendish to fans of Montgomery's work: "Once one reads of these characters' love of their pristine shores, red roads, and staggering cliffs, one can't help but plan to someday take a pilgrimage of sorts to this amazing place. And I was one of those readers."<sup>5</sup>

For many of Montgomery's dedicated fans, travel to Prince Edward Island *does* take on a religious tone. For many readers, Montgomery is the focus of the trip, and places and items related to her work take on the status of shrines and relics. The locations vary in their degree of "authenticity." Alternatively, one might suggest that Anne Shirley, and not Montgomery, is the main figure of devotion. The devotion to authenticity expressed by visitors to Cavendish does not necessarily indicate an interest in the "real" historical Cavendish, but in the Cavendish that is thinly veiled as Avonlea in Montgomery's books.

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<sup>5</sup> Knight, Angela. 2001. "Prince Edward Island: Lucy Maud Montgomery's homeland and much, much more" <[www.epinions.com/content\\_30283763332](http://www.epinions.com/content_30283763332)> 12.05.05.

In modern Cavendish, there are two major monuments related to Anne and Montgomery. They are the Green Gables House (now a National Historic Site) in the Prince Edward Island National Park, and the site known as “The Macneill Homestead.” In Montgomery’s youth, the Green Gables house,

...was owned by an elderly brother and sister, David and Margaret Macneill, who were second cousins of Montgomery’s maternal grandfather... In 1906, the farm was taken over by David and Margaret Macneill’s adopted niece, Myrtle, who with her husband, Ernest Webb, put the house and farmyard in order. (Fawcett and Cormack 2001: 694)

It was this house that Montgomery had in mind when she described the Cuthbert’s home. The Green Gables House, as it is now known, has long been the focus of tourist energy surrounding Lucy Maud Montgomery. In 1936, when the Prince Edward Island National Park was formed, the land on which the house stood was purchased and the Webbs lived in the house for another ten years, paying rent to the Park (Tye 1994: 124). During that time, “The gables were painted green and shutters added ‘to give the house what officials considered to be a more suitable appearance’ and the image of Green Gables that has since appeared on countless postcards and souvenirs created” (Tye 1994: 124).

The Macneill Homestead was Montgomery’s maternal grandparent’s home where she was brought up after her mother died and her father moved off-



Island. The house fell into disrepair and now, the building is gone and there is only a hole in the ground where the cellar once was.

The location and the landscaping of the homestead site demonstrate an elegant and minimalist aesthetic... Tourists standing near the foundations of the old house are shielded by thick woods from the sight and sound of two busy highways... Developing the homestead site, the Macneills dug out the well and excavated the cellar of the old house, but they did not reconstruct the house or the farm buildings. Instead they carved out a glade of birch, maple, evergreen, and apple trees – the heart of the homestead site – tidy, but relatively undisturbed, so that tourists sitting on a rough bench under the apple tree Montgomery described in her journal, could imagine themselves in Montgomery’s world. (Fawcett and Cormack 2001: 691)

The Homestead is not as frequented as the Green Gables House in the National Park, nor is it as notorious. Montgomery’s descendants, John and Jennie Macneill, now own and manage the site. They have made a conscious effort to keep the Homestead site from becoming too noticeably commercial, and the placards posted around the attraction allow more “scope for the imagination.”<sup>6</sup> Many of the signs feature quotes by and about Montgomery. The site focuses on her life as a writer as opposed to the Green Gables National Historic Site’s stronger, but not exclusive, emphasis on Montgomery’s fiction.

Both the Green Gables House and the Macneill Homestead sites have a strong connection to Montgomery. Other sites in the Cavendish area, like the post office at which Montgomery worked as a postmistress, and her grave, share

a historical link to the author. For vacationers as secular pilgrims, Montgomery has become the object of veneration in the same fashion as saints are on pilgrimages connected to official religious institutions. Many of the popular tourist sites on Prince Edward Island have connections with Lucy Maud Montgomery. Reader (1993) writes that historical figures are a common feature in sites of secular (or, as they call it, popular) pilgrimage:

Although [saintly and heroic figures] had died, they were considered still to reside in and around their tombs, and their relics, their corporeal remains, were believed to manifest a very special spiritual power to which prayers could be addressed. (Reader 1993: 19)

None of my data suggests that fans of Montgomery's work pray to her at places of interest as if she were a saint, but they find the places spiritually fulfilling in a more personal, internalized fashion.

On Prince Edward Island, such spiritual connections to Montgomery are not limited to the structures or specific plots of land with which she was associated, but also encompass the beaches, dunes, woods and fields. The natural features of Prince Edward Island figure prominently in Montgomery's writing, and are accordingly identified with her by her fans. Jane, a widow from the Midwest of the United States, started coming to Prince Edward Island in the 1970s on family vacations. She told me about her preconceptions of the

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<sup>6</sup> Experiences that allow for a broad "scope of the imagination" are a constant pursuit for Anne in *Anne of Green Gables* (Montgomery 1908: 12).

province: “I had a vision from reading [Montgomery’s] books and it actually was a lot like that [when I first visited] because there wasn’t so much tourist stuff at all. I mean, there was Green Gables, but it wasn’t like it was today.”

Jane’s wording is particularly apt: she had a vision of the province from reading Montgomery’s books. Montgomery’s descriptions of the landscape are very detailed and full of sensory references. For example, this is how Montgomery describes the horse-and-buggy journey along the North Shore of Prince Edward Island:

On the right hand, scrub firs, their spirits quite unbroken by the long years of tussle with the gulf winds, grew thickly. On the left were steep red sandstone cliffs, so near the track in places that a mare of less steadiness than the sorrel might have tried the nerves of the people behind her. Down the base of the cliffs were heaps of surf-worn rocks or little sandy coves inlaid with pebbles as with ocean jewels; beyond lay the sea, shimmering and blue, and over it soared the gulls, their pinions flashing silvery in the sunlight. (Montgomery 1908: 41-42)

The strength of Montgomery’s writing is her ability to evoke pictures in the reader’s mind with her words. Often romantic, her rich descriptions of the natural setting provide a vivid backdrop for her narratives. Her deep dedication to Prince Edward Island and her affection for the landscape is reflected in her careful descriptions, which continue to draw tourists to the Island almost one hundred years after her first novel was published.

When Angela Knight discusses Prince Edward Island, she divides activities into “Lucy Maud Montgomery’s World” and “Non-Anne Destinations

on the Island.”<sup>7</sup> Some might accuse Knight of over-simplifying Prince Edward Island’s tourism scene, but in reality, there are enough establishments named after Montgomery and her creations to make Knight’s assessment accurate. Fawcett and Cormack, professors in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at St. Francis Xavier University, address this trend:

Over the past several decades, a plethora of businesses, including theme parks, stores, restaurants, and shopping complexes have developed in Cavendish and other parts of Prince Edward Island, adopting Montgomery names, symbols and imagery to market their products. Montgomery and Anne referents, furthermore, have been used extensively in provincial government marketing campaigns to draw tourists to Prince Edward Island. (Fawcett and Cormack 2001: 702)

“Montgomery names” usually refer to character names and places in Montgomery’s novels, but also include the imaginative, alternative names that Anne and her friends give to ordinary places in Avonlea in *Anne of Green Gables*. Anne can not abide mundane names like “Barry’s Pond,” or “The Avenue,” but insists on calling these sites “The Lake of Shining Waters,<sup>8</sup>” and “The White Way of Delight.”<sup>9</sup> Tye describes how place-names have been incorporated into the tourist landscape:

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<sup>7</sup> Knight, Angela. 2001. “Prince Edward Island: Lucy Maud Montgomery’s homeland and much, much more” <[www.epinions.com/content\\_30283763332](http://www.epinions.com/content_30283763332)> 12.05.05.

<sup>8</sup> Montgomery 1908: 19.

<sup>9</sup> Montgomery 1908: 18.

Like Rainbow Valley [family amusement park], many commercial outlets affiliate with Montgomery's fiction, deriving their names from its characters and places: Lake of Shining Waters Lodge, Anne Shirley Motel and Cabins, Green Gables Keepsakes, Green Gables Bungalow Court, Ingleside Lodge, Matthew's Market, and Marilla's Pizza. (Tye 1994: 126)

References to Montgomery's work frequently appear in titles of businesses. The business operators assume that the titles will be recognised, and that familiarity will instil trust in the consumer, making the public more likely to patronise the establishment.<sup>10</sup> Angela Knight writes: "Whether or not you are a fan of Montgomery's literature, you will notice her characters' influence on the island tourism industry. *Anne of Green Gables*, in particular, seems to be peering around every corner."<sup>11</sup>

PRECONCEPTIONS OF PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND, AS INFLUENCED BY  
MONTGOMERY

Most of my informants had first been introduced to Montgomery's writing as children. Many of them told me that their mothers or grandmothers had given them copies of *Anne of Green Gables*. Travellers that I spoke with, especially those attending the Lucy Maud Montgomery Institute Conference,

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<sup>10</sup> For a similar phenomenon regarding business names in Glastonbury, England, see Bowman (1993: 49).

related stories of being completely absorbed in Montgomery's writing. They often savoured the books, reading and re-reading them over and over again. As these readers grew older, for some, the books have become a comfort in times of trial. Michelle, a University of Prince Edward Island English Literature student, said her connection to Montgomery was:

Kind of a nostalgia thing... I was reading the [*Anne*] novels when I was seven, and then I read all the *Emily [of New Moon]* books when I was eight, and I went from there, and so it's kinda for me like reading those books is very soothing. For example, when I went to Québec and I had to stay there for six weeks [for French language training], and I knew I was going to be desperately, desperately homesick, I took the *Pat [of Silver Bush]* books with me... I took Pat because she's the [Montgomery character] that's most attached to her house and the most attached to everything that's around her so she was kinda my "homesick soothing" thing.

The comfort that Michelle sought and found in the nostalgia connected to Montgomery's works is typical of adult travellers who, as children, were devotees of certain works of fiction. Fawcett and Cormack cite Beatrix Potter books as an example of this type of association and observe that:

Sites established around literature read during childhood are especially likely to elicit idealized and nostalgic memories of youth, family life, and countryside. Most generally, [these themes] are used to invite tourists to leave their quotidian world behind and enter the realm of Montgomery and Anne. Readers of *Anne of Green Gables* are encouraged, by identifying with Anne, to step back into a young girl's

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<sup>11</sup> Knight, Angela. 2001. "Prince Edward Island: Lucy Maud Montgomery's homeland and much, much more" <[www.epinions.com/content\\_30283763332](http://www.epinions.com/content_30283763332)> 12.05.05.

life in late 19th-century rural Prince Edward Island. (Fawcett and Cormack 2001: 690)

The life that Fawcett and Cormack suggest readers want to “step back into” is the romantic vision of Prince Edward Island. This vision includes pastoral farmland, a slower pace of living, and an emphasis on moral rectitude. These images are also promoted in tourism literature by the Prince Edward Island government and its tourism association. Angelina, a landscape architect originally from Ottawa, said, “To me, the Island isn’t really Charlottetown. The Island to me is getting out on to the red roads or getting up to the shore.... My whole idea of PEI, my whole dream of PEI, is... just more rural.” She grew up reading Montgomery’s novels, which are almost entirely set on the north shore of rural Prince Edward Island. The pastoral image of the province came to symbolise the “real” Prince Edward Island for her, since it was the image she recognised from her childhood reading.

Travellers who come to Prince Edward Island are familiar with Montgomery’s work and life to varying degrees. She plays a unique role as a focus of attention because of her own life story in addition to the absorbing stories that she created. Referring to a similar phenomenon, fans of Elvis Presley who are motivated to travel to Graceland, King observes:

Elvis fans see themselves as special. They are fundamentalist believers and for many he fills their whole lives. They and their organisations exist world wide and some are experiencing denominational schisms;

their devotion ranges from the serious to the hysterical. (King 1993: 101)

Certainly, if the name “Elvis” were replaced with “Lucy Maud Montgomery,” King’s description would not apply. Dedication to Montgomery is a blend of biography and bibliography. Many people who come to Prince Edward Island might have only a fleeting familiarity with Montgomery’s most famous work, *Anne of Green Gables*. For others, Montgomery has played a significant role in their lives. They find connections with her writing and sometimes identify with her personally. Jane, who was in attendance at the Lucy Maud Montgomery Institute Conference, smiled fondly when she told me, “Because of my love for L. M. Montgomery, I named my daughters Emily and Anne, which I don’t know is a curse or a good thing.” Jane is so dedicated to Montgomery’s writing that she integrated fiction into fact and imagination into flesh by naming her two daughters after two of Montgomery’s most popular heroines. As if she were naming her children after family members, Jane paid homage to characters that she felt she knows personally, and who had played an important role in her life.



CHAPTER THREE:

VACATION TO PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND AS A SECULAR PILGRIMAGE

ROOTS OF TOURISM AND ITS CONNECTIONS WITH PILGRIMAGE

Prince Edward Island has for decades been a popular vacation destination. Because of the Island's natural beauty and charm, and the impact of the works of Lucy Maud Montgomery, Prince Edward Islanders welcome more than eight times their population in tourists every year.<sup>12</sup> Most Islanders welcome tourists because they depend in part on them for their income. Other Islanders see tourists as nothing but an annoyance, monopolizing parking spots and crowding the beaches.<sup>13</sup> Much to the chagrin of some locals who resent their province being reduced to a caricature of a tourist destination, two of the car ferries that formerly carried locals and visitors to the Island were christened the "Vacationland," and the "Holiday Island." When the Confederation Bridge that linked the Island to the Canadian mainland was opened in 1997, those two ferries were decommissioned, but tourists continued streaming across the Northumberland Strait.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Prince Edward Island Tourism "Economic Impact: Tourism 2003." 12.06.05  
<[http://www.gov.pe.ca/photos/original/tou\\_ecoimpact03.pdf](http://www.gov.pe.ca/photos/original/tou_ecoimpact03.pdf)>.

<sup>13</sup> cf. Tye (1994).

<sup>14</sup> Wikipedia.org. "Confederation Bridge." 21.08.05.  
<[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Confederation\\_bridge](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Confederation_bridge)>

As Graburn writes in *Hosts and Guests* (1989), mass tourism is a relatively modern convention, but its history can be traced back to medieval European travel for religious motives: “In medieval Europe, travel was usually for avowedly religious purposes, as were pilgrimages and crusades; for ordinary people travel was difficult and dangerous” (Graburn 1989: 28-29). The religious connotations of travel, coupled with the Renaissance “idea that truth lay outside the mind and spirit,” led to scientific discoveries and the impetus to explore (Graburn 1989: 29). In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, travel was undertaken for educational purposes, as wealthy scholars undertook their “Grand Tours” (Graburn 1989: 29). At the end of the eighteenth century, the Industrial Revolution created demand for “trade and raw materials, and for imperial expansion... As the Grand Tour in its elitist form declined in significance, new modes of transportation and new political arrangements made travel safer and cheaper for the bourgeoisie” (Graburn 1989: 29). In the mid-19th century, Thomas Cook and later imitators facilitated group travel throughout the United Kingdom, France, Italy and the Middle East (Graburn 1989: 29-30). This development prompted another type of tourism among the upper classes:

Displaced from their command of the historical and cultural centres of Europe and the Far East, the aristocracy pioneered another form of tourism, which was later to become a form of mass escape: the ruling families and the very wealthy began to leave their palaces and their

homes for recreational and health reasons on a regular, yearly basis.  
(Graburn 1989: 30)

Here, we can see a precursor of the ritual of a yearly vacation. Following the First World War, the newly-rich population from the United States replaced wealthy Europeans in the war-weary European destinations. The discovery of health benefits obtained from Vitamin D from sunlight made the suntan the newest fashionable accessory and attitudes toward spending time outside in nature became positive (Graburn 1989: 30-31).

Modern tourism has historical roots in religious travel. Moreover, being away from home is a “non-ordinary” experience. If we follow Emile Durkheim’s (1912) definition of the sacred, such experiences of being removed from the “mundane” everyday world lend travel, and, therefore, vacation, a sacred quality. Graburn (1989) uses Durkheim’s concepts of the sacred and profane when analysing the similarities between tourism and the passage from mundane to “extra-ordinary” realms which takes place in pilgrimage. Similarly, Turner and Turner (1978) compare pilgrimage with its liminal (or liminoid) character to rites of passage:

In many tribal societies... rituals such as initiation, which contain extended liminal phases, tend to be obligatory.... Of course, some religious pilgrimages, like the hajj in Islam, are defined as a duty incumbent on all believers. But in such cases there are so many qualifying clauses and extenuating circumstances that the individual is placed once more in a situation of virtual choice... There is undoubtedly an initiatory quality in pilgrimage. A pilgrim is an initiand,

entering into a new, deeper level of existence than he has known in his accustomed milieu. (Turner and Turner 1978: 8)

The pilgrim returns home after his or her journey a changed person, to the same location, but with a changed feeling. In the same way participants in a rite of passage are physically separated from their familiar surroundings and live in a liminal state before being reincorporated into their original community (V. Turner 1969).

The tourist goes through the same transitions, set in the secular sphere. Many of the characteristics of pilgrimage and tourism overlap despite the absence of formal religious institutions in the latter. Reader writes:

The idea of a journey out of the normal parameters of life, the entry into a different, other, world, the search for something new, the multiple motives of participants, ranging from homage to veneration to the simple impulses of curiosity – are extremely common, if not always universal, denominators of pilgrimage... Many... commentators have attempted not only to draw parallels between pilgrimage and tourism, but to suggest that tourists are a form of contemporary pilgrim... and that tourism is a form of sacred journey. (Reader 1993: 7-8)

Few tourists consciously recognise vacation as a type of secular pilgrimage, but there are many parallels between the two activities. The blending of the two genres of travel is unpredictable and very subjective. Turner and Turner continue: “Those who journey to pray together also play together in the secular interludes between religious activities; sightseeing to places of secular interest is one common form of ‘play’ associated with pilgrimage” (Turner and Turner

1978: 37). Likewise, a tourist might enter a church while sightseeing and find the experience particularly moving. Many pilgrimage sites, like European cathedrals, are also of historical or architectural interest to tourists. While a tourist's motivation to visit a particular site may be secular, he or she may end up having a spiritual experience. Just as we should not assume that all pilgrims have exclusively religious motivations when they depart on pilgrimages, neither should we assume that all tourists have only secular motivations and experiences.

Among the large number of medieval Europeans who traveled to Santiago de Compostela and Canterbury, it is not likely that all were propelled by uniquely pious motives... Can we guarantee that present-day tourists who come to locations such as Rome or Jerusalem in search of culture and heritage will leave those sites unmoved by religious inspiration? (Badone and Roseman 2004: 2)

Some tourists on Prince Edward Island have had this type of spiritual experience. When I asked Cliff, a professor and consultant from New Jersey, if he had ever been on a pilgrimage, he told me that he and his wife had been on a pilgrimage to the Holy See during Holy Week and had enjoyed an audience with the Pope. Later in the conversation, though, I learned that it had not been their intention to celebrate Holy Week in the Vatican City. They were simply on a vacation to Italy that happened to coincide with Holy Week. Cliff seemed to understand the fluid and shifting meanings of the word pilgrimage: "You look at Rome, and it's the cradle of the Roman Catholic religion and it's the cradle of

Western Civilization. From two perspectives it's kind of a pilgrimage: cultural and religious." He was moved by both the history and the spiritual significance of the city.

Other tourists tend to make more of a separation between the concepts of pilgrimage and secular travel. I asked Suzanne, a recently-retired Torontonionian, if she had ever made a pilgrimage. Suzanne replied that she had not: "I visited sites where other people were going [on pilgrimages], but it wasn't a pilgrimage for me." She made a distinction between going to a site with religious intentions and going as part of a sightseeing tour. Likewise, when I asked Bill, a lawyer from Pennsylvania, if he had ever been on pilgrimage, he volunteered: "I went to Knock. That's in Ireland. That's a religious shrine in Ireland. My wife and I went when we were there. I haven't done *pilgrimage*" (his emphasis). He also seemed to make the distinction between "going to a pilgrimage site" and "going on pilgrimage."

According to Reader,

Indeed... the notion of the sacred and the profane as two conflicting spheres and opposites, and of pilgrimage as revolving around the sacred sphere which is set apart from, or implicitly different from that of the mundane, can itself be a tenuous and questionable distinction. (Reader 1993: 16)

The two "spheres" of tourism and pilgrimage overlap and their borders blur.

Graburn writes: "One is led to the conclusion that there is no hard and fast

dividing line between pilgrimage and tourism, that even when the role of pilgrim and tourist are combined, they are necessarily different but form a continuum of inseparable elements” (Graburn 1983a: 16). Tourists and pilgrims may not be in the same immediate family, but they are connected by history, behaviour, and motive, making them closely related cousins. “Tourist and pilgrim alike go out from the familiar world (their own home) to seek something that enriches their lives, and stands outside and in contrast to the normal modes of existence, and then return home again to the familiar world” (Reader 1993: 6).

If pilgrims have sites, tourists have sights (Badone and Roseman 2004: 6, Fine and Speer 1985). While Prince Edward Island is not recognised as being an official pilgrimage site by any religious institution, countless numbers of tourists are drawn to visit the province and many return time and time again, some for years and decades in succession. For many of these vacationers, travel to Prince Edward Island has become an annual ritual that marks the passage of time. The year would not feel complete without the visit to Prince Edward Island.<sup>15</sup> Furthermore, some tourists develop their own rituals that they only perform on vacation, and the trip would feel incomplete if those rituals were not performed. Shelaugh, a teacher, who, with her husband Joel were first-time visitors to Prince Edward Island, told me about their vacation ritual of reading

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<sup>15</sup> As Graburn writes, “The passing of each year is usually marked by the annual vacation (or Christmas), and something would be wrong with a year if it didn’t occur, as if one had been cheated of time” (1989: 25). cf. Leach (1979).

to one another. They told me that at no other time of the year do they read aloud to each other, but when they are on their summer camping vacations, they will choose a book and spend quiet hours outside listening to one another read. Bill, a lawyer from New Jersey, told me that ever since he was a child coming to Prince Edward Island in the summers with his family, they would always make a yearly deep-sea fishing trip. Now, with his wife and children, the fishing trip is an essential element of the vacation and does not feel complete without it. “Deep sea fishing – that’s kind of a ritual for us we have.”

McCannell (1976) writes that a natural progression from site sacralization is adopting rituals. “This miracle of consensus... rests on an elaborate set of institutional mechanisms, a twofold process of *site sacralization* that is met with a corresponding *ritual attitude* on the part of the tourists” (McCannell 42, his emphasis). Although McCannell is referring to public ritual activities, his insight also applies to more private personalised rituals.

#### SECULAR PILGRIMAGE

Religious pilgrimage, or, as I sometimes referred to it in conversation with my informants, “Capital ‘P’ pilgrimage,” usually revolves around travel to a specific location. Aside from the element of travel, the characteristics of pilgrimage can vary widely. The goal might be arrival at a tomb, or another type of physical marker at the end of the journey, like the grotto at Lourdes, or the



Ka'bah at Mecca.<sup>16</sup> While there are markers or objects of veneration along the way and at the end of a trek, importance can equally be placed on the journey itself, as Frey's study of the Camino de Santiago in Spain demonstrates (1998). Religious pilgrimages are undertaken with the goal of being spiritually uplifted,<sup>17</sup> either through sacred contagion<sup>18</sup> as pilgrims draw closer to the site, through expectations of miraculous healing, through rewards for some ascetic practices accepted during the journey, or simply through an extended opportunity to meditate on one's own spirituality.

The themes of secular pilgrimage are similar, but lack connections to religious institutions. Reader writes,

Pilgrimage need not, at least [from a] popular perspective, be limited to explicitly religious traditions. Indeed, a general examination of the word and concept of pilgrimage indicates that its scope runs far beyond the boundaries of visitors to shrines and holy sites connected with official religious traditions into areas far more concerned with the secular world, reaching into such apparently profane arenas as the worlds of sport and entertainment. (Reader 1993: 5)

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<sup>16</sup> cf. Coleman and Elsner (1995).

<sup>17</sup> Hindu pilgrimages, called *tirthas*, can even offer the pilgrim *moksa*, or release from *samsara*: rebirth. (Gold 1988: 3-11)

<sup>18</sup> Sacred contagion is understood to be holiness obtained from touching or being near a sacred object or place (Durkheim 1912). In Hindu pilgrimages, this epicentre of power is a site's *kshetra*. For example, because the origin of the Ganges is considered to be the god Shiva's home, the further north along the Ganges a pilgrim travels, the stronger the sacred power is considered to be. *Kshetras* are "fields of sacred force," that emanate from a sacred centre. Some can be very small and only cover the site itself, but other more important sites, like the city of Kashi (which is also high north on the Ganges River), is said to have a *kshetrya* of a ten-mile radius (Sopher 1987: 5).

Here, Reader includes the realm of popular culture in their extension of what was historically exclusively a religious concept. Literary pilgrimage falls under the rubric of entertainment. As Reader observes, “The divine is not always a requisite part of, or element in, the practice and goals of pilgrimage, and... heroic figures – especially dead ones – are every bit as important for pilgrims and pilgrimage” (Reader 1993: 22).

Literary pilgrimages involve travel to places associated with an author and his or her work. In literary pilgrimages, the author takes on the role of “heroic figure.” A desire for connection with Lucy Maud Montgomery motivates many travellers who visit Prince Edward Island. The Island plays a central role in her work. It is not simply a place where stories are set, but almost a sentient character influencing the flow of the narrative. Montgomery wrote:

There are beautiful landscapes everywhere, all over Canada, but they lack the indescribable charm that haunts [Prince Edward Island]. It is too elusive... too subtle... for definition... Lands have personalities just as humans beings have, and the spirit of one land is not the spirit of another nor ever can be. (Montgomery 1939)

Montgomery’s use of setting is important to both the storylines and characters of her novels, and for readers who seek first-hand experience of her stories,

travel to Prince Edward Island is obligatory. The landscape frames and validates the visitor's experiences.<sup>19</sup>

As mentioned earlier, it is difficult to segregate strictly religious from secular pilgrimages. Reader addresses this blurring of boundaries:

This does not... mean that such actions are in no way religious, or that they can be classified as purely secular. We believe that to rigidly separate the secular and the religious, even though this often provides a convenient tool for categorising or pigeon-holing ideas, events and practices, is not ultimately a viable frame of reference. (Reader 1993: 16)

Although Reader and Walter (1993) are careful to avoid dichotomizing secular and religious pilgrimage, they continue to make distinctions between the two, referring either to "religious pilgrimage," or "secular pilgrimage." This practice suggests that for these researchers, the two types of pilgrimage are recognizably different. Moore and Myerhoff assert that any practice that is ritualized instils a ceremony with "legitimacy," (Moore and Myerhoff 1977: 4) citing Durkheim's 1912 definition of sacred as "not inherent, but... a quality given to things" (Moore and Myerhoff 1977: 23).

Reader and Walter's (1993) book examines sites of popular pilgrimage. Significantly most of the destinations discussed in the volume are associated with the theme of death. Nonetheless, these authors recognise that:

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<sup>19</sup> For an excellent discussion on the importance of landscape in pilgrimage, see Coleman and Elsner (1995).

“Many secular pilgrimages... are not centred around the images of death, or sites, tombs, or shrines of death” (Reader 1993: 18). This statement applies to secular pilgrimage to Prince Edward Island. A majority of tourists (but not all) come with an awareness of Lucy Maud Montgomery’s link to the province. However, her gravesite, which is prominently marked by a wrought-iron arch over the entrance to the Cavendish Cemetery, was never mentioned as a point of interest by my informants, even those at the Lucy Maud Montgomery Institute Conference. Instead, the places she lived and those places that were important to her work took precedence.

Victor Turner (1992) also cites the parallels between pilgrimage and death and dying. “Pilgrimages in the salvation religions... are full of symbols of metaphors for death, and also are directly concerned with the dead” (V. Turner 1992: 29). Turner’s focus on death is connected to his theories of liminality and the symbolic death frequently experienced by participants of rites of passage. “Both pilgrims and initiands,” he writes, “are undergoing a separation from a relatively fixed state of life and social status, and are passing into a liminal or threshold phase and condition for which none of the rules and few of the experiences of their previous existence have prepared them” (V. Turner 1992: 29). Pilgrims have detached themselves from their social structure and have voluntarily placed themselves outside of their usual environs, which, according to Turner, can be likened to death. He also proposes that the period spent in the liminal state is like a re-birth. Instead of the point of re-birth being the period

that Van Gennep calls re-integration,<sup>20</sup> Turner writes that re-birth can also be interpreted as the period spent in liminality, separated from accustomed social structure. “Structural distance may, then, be an apt symbol for death, the dissolution of distance, and rebirth into authentic social life” (V. Turner 1992: 31).

Unlike the cases Reader and Walter (1993) discuss, great tragedy and death are not elements of attractions on Prince Edward Island. There has never been a major disaster on Prince Edward Island like others in Atlantic Canada. The fatal mining disaster at the Westray Mine in 1992 in Nova Scotia; the 1998 crash of Swissair flight 111 off Peggy’s Cove, Nova Scotia; and the Gander, Newfoundland plane crash that in 1985 killed 256 passengers, almost all American peacekeepers, are all marked by monuments set on or near the site in memory of those killed. Prince Edward Island has a noticeable *absence* of this kind of memorial, making the province seem all the more idealised and utopian, as if mass tragedy can never happen on its soil. Prince Edward Island’s relatively small population and lack of any large industry or heavy airline traffic probably accounts for this situation. Yet the perception remains for some that Prince Edward Island has a charmed existence, avoiding major tragedy, which is another characteristic that contributes to the mystical image of the place.

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Van Gennep (1960: 44).

## RETREATS

Only one of my informants told me that they had been on what they considered to be an official pilgrimage. In fact, when I asked Mario if he had ever been on a pilgrimage, his response was, “Definitely *not*” (his emphasis). While those with whom I spoke came from a variety of religious backgrounds, about half of them identified themselves as being affiliated with some sort of Christian denomination. When I asked if they had ever gone on a pilgrimage, many of them immediately told me that they had been on retreats, or religious “getaways.” Reader writes that it is not unusual to identify the two together. “Even within evangelical traditions... [there are] pilgrimage motifs in American Protestant rural and kinship-based revivalist gatherings and prayer meetings” (Reader 1993: 4). James, who uses his economics degree in his work with the Australian government, told me that he had never been on a pilgrimage, but he did mention a “Billy Graham revival-lecture.” Neville (1987: 13) writes that there are no formal Protestant pilgrimages since the Protestant Reformation considered Roman Catholic pilgrimages abuses of the faithful, but informal Protestant pilgrimages continually occur in the form of revivals, family reunions, and retreats (Neville 1987: 25).<sup>21</sup> Retreats and revivals are similar to pilgrimages because they gather people together to engage in religious

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<sup>21</sup> Neville further breaks down Protestant pilgrimage into three themes: travelling far from home to establish a new home elsewhere; the “Christian Soldier” defending the faith and fighting

experiences. The importance is not placed on the location, but the community of believers. In the history of religious travel, “Those who could afford it often retired to retreats or endowed religious institutions in their spiritual quest for the ultimate ‘truth’” (Graburn 1989: 29).

At the Lucy Maud Montgomery Institute Conference, Marta, a Presbyterian, who had just graduated with her BA in English and Classics, said she was “not sure if it counted” as pilgrimage, but that she had been to an Eastern Orthodox Easter retreat in the second year of her university studies. It was held in a monastery and the participants were called pilgrims.

I wasn't really familiar with the liturgy... but I'm willing to accept anything that I think will help me spiritually, so I went there and I spent about five days there and they're just really quiet and I read a lot and prayed a lot... and that, I think, is the most technically 'pilgrimage' thing I've ever done.

Later in the conversation, she said, “Me, coming [to Prince Edward Island] because of the way I've been inspired by her [Montgomery], is completely applicable to being on a pilgrimage, and I like the way you've made me think about it in that way.” Marta had not considered her trip to Prince Edward Island a pilgrimage before I explained my research to her, but she found the comparison apt.

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wars with evil; and creating communities away from others that act as a respite of the evils of major metropolises (1987: 22-23).

When I asked Angelina, the landscape architect originally from Ottawa, if she had ever been on a pilgrimage, she told me she had not, but growing up in a Catholic family, she always loved performing the Stations of the Cross in church. She told me that she remembers being taught that performing a certain number of the Stations served to alleviate the trials of Purgatory. She said she liked, “The sense of a goal... If you do this and if you go and see these things and complete this, then you will get to the Promised Land.” Although she had never been on an official Catholic pilgrimage, the metaphorical journey and reward involved in performing the Stations of the Cross came to mind when I asked her about going on pilgrimages.

When I asked Ferne, an English Literature professor and researcher from Australia, if she had ever been on a pilgrimage, she replied, “No, not really. I’ve been on retreats a number of times, which is sort of an inward pilgrimage.” Here, she makes the distinction between pilgrimages as a public undertaking, and retreats as a time of private religious reinforcement. Bowman writes:

Above all, there is a concern with people ‘finding themselves’, ‘embarking on an inner journey’.... Victor and Edith Turner’s claim that ‘Religion generally has been moved into the leisure sphere, more and more subject to individual option’... fits well with the stress on the individual quest... (Bowman 1993: 38)



In the same way that religion has become perceived to be a leisure activity, pilgrimage has moved to the secular sphere. When travellers embark on a journey to “find themselves,” or renew their energy for their everyday lives, they achieve the same self-renewal that pilgrims do on their religious journeys. Pilgrims refresh themselves with time dedicated to their spirituality in the same way tourists refresh themselves with time dedicated to relaxation, exploration, or education.

#### LITERARY PILGRIMAGES

Travel to a destination to see the setting of a work of fiction or to visit places where an author lived, wrote, or died is often termed literary tourism. “Literary tourism [is]... the intersection between literature, place and tourism manifested by tourist travel to areas made famous by literary associations” (Squire 1992: 138). Travelogues detailing trips to places that were settings in famous works of fiction, or where the author wrote, or both, are increasingly common in bookstores. *Literary Trips: Following in the Footsteps of Fame* (Brooks: 2000) is one such travelogue. It contains descriptions of destinations, their connections with writers like Rohinton Mistry, A. A. Milne, and Ernest Hemingway. At the end of each chapter there are statistics on costs, tips on “following the footsteps” of authors, and recommended reading related to the place, the author, or the literature.

On Prince Edward Island, Lucy Maud Montgomery's literary legacy is often the focus of travel. Many of my informants had travelled to Prince Edward Island with the express purpose of seeing Montgomery's home, and most had come with at least the knowledge that the province was the setting of *Anne of Green Gables*. Those interested in Montgomery's work seek an authentic experience of Montgomery's world, but authenticity is a subjective quality and is difficult to define. "Because literary tourism [to Prince Edward Island] is shaped by the intersections of Montgomery (biographical facts and real places associated with the author) and fiction (settings and characters), authenticity involves a complex set of ideas and themes" (Fawcett and Cormack 2001: 687).

Many of the people I interviewed were attending the 2004 Lucy Maud Montgomery Institute Conference, so it is not surprising that their motivation to come to Prince Edward Island revolved around Montgomery. When I asked Marta to tell me about herself, she told me that she loved to read. Reading was important enough to her that she listed it as one of her *basic* characteristics. She told me that almost all of her travels revolved around literature. She had been on a trip to California that was advertised as "The Great Books Tour." For two weeks, she had attended lectures about books and reading. Marta called this trip, "probably the most fun two weeks of my life." After reading a book that "opened her eyes" about the Irish monks who had preserved books during the

Dark Ages,<sup>22</sup> Marta had spent a week in Ireland, and, motivated by reading she had carried out as part of her studies in Classics, she spent three weeks touring the “Fertile Crescent.”

Discussing pilgrimage to the Eastern Orthodox Easter retreat, she mentioned that it was “really quiet and I read a lot and prayed a lot...” When she thought of a spiritual time in her life, it combined the organised spirituality of an Easter retreat with solitude and reading. Reading for Marta, then, is an enriching spiritual endeavour done in tandem with religious practice. Marta recalled that, in the years when her parents were having problems, she had to take care of her three younger siblings. She would escape into Montgomery’s stories, reading them over and over again, and even getting in trouble for reading in class at school. Marta said she liked the characters in Montgomery’s stories because although they were Christian, they never engaged in “Bible beating.” They were “virtuous and noble and... God-fearing, even though Montgomery’s never overt [with Christian overtones]... [Montgomery’s] characters are always inspirational to me to be a better person... [and to] better myself spiritually.”

When I asked Ferne, the Australian professor and researcher who had come to the Lucy Maud Montgomery Institute Conference, if she had ever gone on a pilgrimage, she told me,

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<sup>22</sup> Cahill, Thomas. 1996. *How the Irish Saved Civilization: The Untold Story of Ireland's Heroic Role From the Fall of Rome to the Rise of Medieval Europe*. New York: Anchor Books, Doubleday.

I think my pilgrimages have not been so much spiritual or certainly not religiously-oriented as such. I mean, my pilgrimages have tended to be literary, and so I've gone to Stratford, I've been to Westminster Abbey... that was a bit of a pilgrimage for me. But I've never actually, like, *gone* to a place that I can recall... I don't think I've ever gone to a place for spiritual pilgrimages, though I have gone to *many* places for literary [pilgrimages]. (her emphasis)

Although my question referred to religious pilgrimages, Ferne immediately began listing places that were pilgrimages *for her*, and they were literary-based. She does not consider them to be "real" pilgrimages because they are not based on institutional religion, but they remain very meaningful to her. Ferne feels uplifted by being in a certain *place* that she considers special, non-mundane, and, therefore, sacred. The historical proximity between Prince Edward Island and Montgomery was especially important to Ferne.

Because, I suppose, [Montgomery] invests the place with so much meaning, that you're trying to somehow... you know, you're not going to meet *her* there, because you can meet her... through the books... But you are curious and intrigued to see what it was, the beauty that was there that stimulated such a heart-felt response, I think. And that *is* a spiritual feeling." (her emphasis)

Through travel to Prince Edward Island, Ferne made a connection with something meaningful to her. She feels that Montgomery's writing was extremely sincere and actually seeing and experiencing the place which inspired Montgomery inspired Ferne as well. Referring more specifically to Prince

Edward Island as a pilgrimage destination for Montgomery's readers, Ferne continues:

Coming [to Prince Edward Island] the first time was a literary pilgrimage, but it was deeper than a literary pilgrimage because Montgomery's work has played such a significant role in my life, as a little girl, and as a growing-up young woman as well, and I read her books over and over again various times and certainly they have... had a huge influence on me and the way that I saw the world. Part of it was, it wasn't that I saw things in her that I didn't find in me, I found things in her that I knew I had in me, and so part of it was that, and it... articulated it or gave it a name or gave me something to pick on to [cling to] or whatever. So, when I came to PEI the first time, it wasn't a spiritual pilgrimage in that sense, but it was a deep life pilgrimage that had certainly a very strong spiritual component.

Ferne uses nostalgic language when she is referring to her formative years in Australia. Fawcett and Cormack highlight the nostalgic significance of sites associated with literature read during childhood (Fawcett and Cormack 2001: 690). This point echoes what Marta told me about seeking refuge in Montgomery's books in her early adolescence when her parents were experiencing marital problems and she took on the extra responsibility of caring for her siblings.

According to Urry: "There is then a 'romantic' form of the tourist gaze, in which the emphasis is upon solitude, privacy and a personal, semi-spiritual relationship with the object of the gaze" (Urry 1990: 45). Many Montgomery-related sites provide tourists with that solitude: the fields of Cavendish and the dunes of Prince Edward Island's North Shore. These sites promote the romantic,

nostalgic and spiritual form of the tourist gaze. Montgomery lived in what is thought to be a simpler time, her novels were set in that time period, and her characters often indulged in romantic fantasies.

I asked Marilyn, a PhD student in English Literature from New York City who also attended the Lucy Maud Montgomery Institute Conference, if she had ever been on an officially-recognised pilgrimage. Marilyn replied, “In terms of visiting a holy place? ... [Going to Walden Pond was] very much, in my life, a pilgrimage of sorts. That, for transcendentalism, for American literature, for nature writing in the United States...” Walden Pond, where Henry David Thoreau wrote *Walden* (1854) combines natural beauty with literary history. While Marilyn used the qualifier “of sorts,” indicating she was not fully comfortable referring to her trip to Walden Pond as “a pilgrimage,” she explains that she has her own personal concept of pilgrimage that drives her journeys: “I think for me the pilgrimages that I’ve associated with something special that I’ve had a long desire to go to, I would definitely say that my whirl-wind trip to PEI last summer counts as a pilgrimage. I mean, I’ve been longing to see this for *years*.” It seems that her personal definition of pilgrimage is having a dream realised, but not just *any* dream. Her dream was of going to a place that represented something meaningful to her.

The literary theme of travel is not a new concept. From *The Epic of Gilgamesh* and Homer’s *Odyssey* through Bunyan’s *Pilgrim’s Progress* to Kerouac’s *On The Road*, travel has been a meaningful motif in literature.

Through travel, readers can make their own storylines, which, paradoxically, may seem “more real,” sacred and utopian than their own everyday “real world.” Travel can be the expression of a desire to be connected with a larger reality. Reader writes:

One could cite... examples of the word ‘pilgrimage’ used by biographers... travel writers, and others... because they appear to affirm a general view that pilgrimage as a concept or phenomenon need not be limited within strictly religious boundaries. What seems to form a common strand in all these different uses of the term is the idea of quest, of seeking something that lies outside the accustomed patterns of everyday life, and that hence requires a process of movement from the everyday. (Reader 1993: 9)

The parallels between religious pilgrimage and literary pilgrimage are apparent in the way physical objects related to authors are presented and perceived. Her manuscripts, typewriter and wedding dress are all kept behind glass and velvet ropes.<sup>23</sup> These objects are the relics of the focus of the pilgrimage: Montgomery. They are tangible artefacts of the idealized, sacred world that Montgomery describes in her works, and provide direct material connection between the viewer and the author.

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For an in-depth discussion on the sacralization of objects, see McCannell (1976: 44).

*COMMUNITAS*

While comparing tourism to Prince Edward Island and religious pilgrimage, we cannot ignore Turner's concept of *communitas*. According to Turner, participants in a liminal state bond together in their unique circumstances in a combination of "lowliness and sacredness, of homogeneity and comradeship" (V. Turner 1969: 96). While he used the term liminality initially to refer to those participating in rites of passage, he also applied the concept of *communitas* to pilgrims (Turner and Turner 1978). More focussed on tourism, Reader claims,

Communitas involves the creation of an egalitarian bonding between individuals outside of, or freed from, the normal structures of society, and the formation of a temporary community and field of social relations that appears as an alternative to the normal structures of society. (Reader 1993: 11)

Owing to the parallels between pilgrims and tourists, I was curious to see if Turner's *communitas* was also part of the tourist experience on Prince Edward Island. I suspected that even if tourists did not spend time or have conversations with other tourists, they would feel an identification with other tourists owing to their similar circumstances. When I asked informants if they spent time with other tourists, the responses varied widely. I came to the conclusion that the sense of identification among tourists was as subjective as



the vacations that they designed around their personal preferences. As Graburn writes: “Any particular tourism style may be serendipitous for some... and at the same time boring to others, who have ‘done it all before’... One can never discount personality...” (Graburn 1983a: 20)

At the Lucy Maud Montgomery Institute Conference, the sense of *communitas* seemed stronger. In this case, however, all the delegates had come to Prince Edward Island for the same conference. Their shared interest in Montgomery’s work constituted a pre-existing common bond, and gave them a built-in sense of community. I was told that of those who come to the Institute conferences, about half are there primarily because they are non-academic fans of Montgomery’s work and the other half are academics. Ferne addressed this split:

There’s an interesting dichotomy of people here... Different people are here for different reasons. But I think, in a way, even though we are all here for different reasons, whether we come for whatever reasons, there is a bond which is the love of the books and the impact that the books have had on your lives.

The *communitas* of the Montgomery Conference revolved around the fact that everyone was interested in Montgomery’s work, whether it was for personal or professional reasons.

Angelina, the landscape architect originally from Ottawa and another Conference delegate, was an avid traveller and told me about what she called

the “backpack mentality.” She told me about a trip she took to Mexico where the advice given to her by other backpackers was not simply factual, but “verging on the spiritual.” She described sharing clandestine beaches with other trekkers, and appreciating the community that evolved among strangers when they were together in the “middle of nowhere.” Turner writes that *communitas* is often involved in moments which are “in and out of time,... and in and out of secular social structure” (V. Turner 1969: 96). Angelina and her backpacker colleagues were separate from their social structures, but were able to forge their own communities by sharing information and experiences concerning their travels.

The extent to which the community is perceived to exist among tourists is very subjective. Some of my informants told me that they did not have conversations with other tourists; and actually avoided doing so because they did not feel like they had much in common with other tourists. Eli, a technician from Toronto who was camping on Prince Edward Island with his daughter, prickled when I referred to him as “a tourist,” preferring “explorer,” and Jack, a carpenter from Maine, told me a story about a recent trip to Japan where all the American tourists he encountered behaved like “bone heads.” “Some tourists,” writes McCannell, “feel so strongly about the site they are visiting that they want to be alone in its presence, and they become annoyed at other tourists for profaning the place by crowding around ‘like sheep’” (McCannell 1976: 43).

As Reader observes: “Communitas, albeit present as one aspect and theme in many pilgrimages, does not operate as an [*sic*] universal force in pilgrimage, or in crowd behaviour at pilgrimage sites” (Reader 1993: 14). The same conclusion applies to touristic sites. While *communitas* seems to be a significant feature of the experience of participants at the Lucy Maud Montgomery Institute Conference, fewer tourists outside the context of the Conference seem to experience a sense of *communitas* with fellow tourists on Prince Edward Island.

CHAPTER FOUR:

REJUVENATIVE QUALITIES OF VACATION ON PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

REJUVENATION: AN INTRODUCTION

Traditionally, the desire for miraculous healing is one of the motivations for going on a pilgrimage. The pilgrimage site is often imbued with the healing power or powers of the saint to which it is dedicated. Often, cured pilgrims leave their crutches as a testimony to the miraculous healing received at pilgrimage sites.<sup>24</sup> Turner and Turner define pilgrimage sites as “places where miracles once happened, still happen, and may happen again” (Turner and Turner 1978: 6). While the physically afflicted are among those who go on pilgrimages, another goal of pilgrimage is to alleviate the gravity of the pilgrim’s sin. Making a pilgrimage was traditionally an act of taking control of one’s spirituality; being proactive about the potential time one would spend in Purgatory after death. According to Roman Catholic doctrine, Purgatory, is:

The state, place, or condition in the next world, which will continue until the last judgement, where the souls of those who die in the state of grace, but not yet free from all imperfection, make expiation for unforgiven venial sins or for the temporal punishment due to venial and mortal sins that have already been forgiven and, by doing so, are

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<sup>24</sup> St. Joseph’s Oratory in Montréal, Ste. Anne de Beaupré in Québec City (The Official Catholic Directory 2003: 61-65), both in Québec, and Lourdes, in France (Harris 1999) provide three examples of healing shrines.

purified before they enter heaven. (New Catholic Encyclopedia 2003: 824)

The length of time spent in Purgatory was proportional to the amount and gravity of sin committed. "Purgatory would provide a place where torment would be limited in duration, unlike Hell, and which the purged soul would eventually pass through" (Costen 1993: 142-143). One method of lessening the length of time spent in Purgatory is earning Indulgences, which are activities other than prayer,

such as contributions to the building or upkeep of churches, schools, hospitals and bridges. Pilgrims praying at great shrines of Christendom... could gain indulgences attached to each specific pilgrimage. (New Catholic Encyclopedia 2003: 436)

In a broader sense, therefore, the healing that traditional pilgrims sought was not exclusively physical. "Although miracles of healing formed the majority of those recorded, it was not necessarily why people went on pilgrimage to the shrine of a saint. Much more important for most people was the need to be freed from the burden of sin, that is from spiritual sickness" (Costen 1993: 142).

In the chapter "Vacation as Pilgrimage," I explain why pilgrimage and vacation are similar. Both forms of travel are motivated by a search for something that cannot be found at home. Like traditional pilgrims, modern pilgrims often seek some sort of healing, be it physical or spiritual, and some

tourists have the same goals. Vacationers, especially those with chronic illnesses like arthritis or asthma may seek to ameliorate their physical condition through rest, exercise and exposure to the sun and fresh air. Healing on vacation can result from a combination of choosing the correct location and activities to treat the dis-ease experienced. Travellers may also be seeking spiritual goals, but not necessarily those associated with institutionalized religion. Spiritual goals may involve ridding the self of malaise and ennui; and of distancing the self from everyday stresses. Choosing to take a vacation to treat these symptoms displays a tacit understanding of the divergence between the mundane and the sacred. Graburn underscores the similarities between tourism and vacationing in the contemporary world and the passage from profane to sacred which takes place on pilgrimage (Graburn 1989: 26). The everyday world in which people live and work is ordinary and therefore mundane. Vacations are not mundane. Vacations are periods of time (usually) spent away from home with the goal of experiencing something out-of-the-ordinary. "In line with the vestigial Protestant work ethic, long periods of monotonous work are understood to be morally uplifting, and vacation time involving travel is viewed as labor's legitimate reward" (Badone 2004: 183).

Vacationers' goals, like those of pilgrims, are varied. Some want to relax, spend "quality time" with family, indulge, and educate themselves about the world, while others want to challenge themselves by new experiences. Vacation is generally seen as the opposite of work (Badone 2004: 183).

Vacations exist today because there is an underlying sense that work is detrimental to one's health. If work is not actually detrimental to physical health, at least it wears away at one's spiritual health and sense of self. Many visitors go to Prince Edward Island to experience a re-creation or re-discovery of self. The ideal setting for this enterprise of emotional healing is a place perceived to be bucolic and pastoral, like Prince Edward Island.

Thomas Cook recognised that a respite from everyday life provided rejuvenation for the working classes of England. He "arranged for the poor people of the polluted and gin-soaked new industrial cities of northern England to visit the countryside and the mountain areas on day-long excursions..." (Graburn 1995: 163). These escapes from the everyday gave Cook's charges a chance to experience something other than their everyday lives. Cook, originally a Methodist minister, took on the mission of providing people with an "encounter with alterity, in the form of Nature, [which] was fundamentally re-creative and redemptive" (Badone 2004: 183). Just as sacred and profane are binary opposites, so are work and vacation. Graburn integrates this kind of contrast with the concept that vacation is a health-generating alternative to work. "A major characteristic of our conception of tourism is that it is *not* work, but is part of the recent invention, *re-creation*, which is supposed to renew us for the workaday world" (Graburn 1989: 22, his emphasis).

This notion of renewal was a common theme in conversations with my informants. Many of them told me that being on vacation allowed them time to

rediscover themselves. It seems as if the work from which they had escaped had stripped them of what makes them individuals: their personalities. Most working persons do not consider work to be a form of self-fulfillment but rather see it as a necessary evil.

In the “leisure sphere” of a vacation to Prince Edward Island, the traveller can design his or her own “individual option,” making leisure time more personally spiritual (Bowman 1993: 38). The importance placed on individualism explains why Angelina prefers to travel alone. “It’s easier to be in tune with my own rhythms,” she says, and she can explore at her own pace. When she travels with her husband, she gets easily distracted by things he wants to do, and he feels the same way about travelling with Angelina. When she travels alone, she explains that she has, “more freedom to figure it out as I go along.” Angelina’s solitary travels resemble an interior pilgrimage; a quest for something that she cannot find at home or with the distraction of others.

#### RECHARGING THE BATTERIES

Sarah, an educator from New Hampshire who has come to Prince Edward Island with her husband every summer for twelve years, told me enthusiastically, “We’re recharging our batteries!” This was a common sentiment expressed by my informants. They go on vacation to mark a kind of ending and to celebrate a new beginning. Usually, vacation celebrates the end of



a period of work with the purpose of relaxing and returning to work with renewed energy. Graburn uses Christmas vacation as an example of this interruption of normal activity for a vacation (Graburn 1989: 25; cf. Leach 1979).

Maria, the government worker from Halifax, said, “You kind of decompress. You kind of let everything go and then when you get back home you kind of start anew.” She, too, was recharging her batteries in order to return to work with new energy. Suzanne, the recently-retired Torontonionian, has come to Prince Edward Island for years and used to own a summer residence in Cavendish. She made these observations about her vacations on Prince Edward Island: “It was very restful, [a] nice change of pace from the workaday world, but it was also interesting by the time of the end of the summer would come, I was ready to go home... and enjoy the hurly-burly and all the activity of the big city.” Referring specifically to Glastonbury, Bowman discusses the healing properties of pilgrimage: “Both conventional Christian pilgrims and New Age pilgrims are drawn to Glastonbury, experience something special here, and return home renewed, refreshed or inspired” (Bowman 1993: 59). Tourists to Prince Edward Island seem to be experiencing the same type of rejuvenative effects.

This sense of new energy can also be linked to the symbolism of death and rebirth in Van Gennep’s model of rites of passage. The tourist makes a re-entry into society after being marginalised like someone going through a rite of

passage. Similar symbolism is found in seasonal rituals. "The presence of the idea of death and rebirth in the ritual is a consequence also in seasonal ceremonies, when 'nature goes to sleep' and 'awakens'... and it has an existence of its own in Christianity (the death and resurrection of the Saviour...)" (Van Gennep 1960: 183-184). Vacations can be compared to seasonal rituals since they are usually undertaken at the same time each year. Vacationers often seek a kind of rebirth. Metaphorically, even sunbathing can be compared to a refiner's fire that burns away impurities and brings the tourist to a state of restfulness, ready to return to his or her everyday life.

While the renewal that most people seek on vacation is spiritual and mental, the residual effect of feeling better physically was also mentioned in my conversations with tourists. Judith, the grandmother living in Oshawa who was born in Germany, told me that on her camping vacations to Prince Edward Island, "Age falls away from you." Her husband, Mark, later told me that he thinks all seniors' homes should be opened to let the residents go camping because, "all your little aches and pains go away."

Stress from the workplace can also have physical impacts on people. Many of my informants equated relaxation to physical renewal. Stress is one of the key reasons travellers want to "make an escape." High stress situations have physical effects, such as chest pain and sleep loss (Levi 1996: 5).<sup>25</sup> Hilda, a

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<sup>25</sup> For a more complete description of the biomedical symptoms of stress, see Cooper (1996).

professor of English Literature and Linguistics, found that the most therapeutic vacation destinations for herself and her husband were places that were aesthetically beautiful.

[Vacation] really was recuperative. My earliest memories of being on vacation are a combination of high stress and high enjoyment, and one of the things you hope as an adult, I think, is that you'll be able to cut down on the stress and maintain, at least, a level of enjoyment.... When we go to a place when we hope it will recuperate and regenerate us and rejuvenate us. What we thoroughly enjoyed, and certainly I've enjoyed, is *just being*, particularly when we're in beautiful surroundings. (her emphasis)

Hilda enjoys the freedom of existing in an extremely simple state. In this state, she can appreciate being alive in a very basic way, and that appreciation is heightened when she and her husband are able to witness Nature's beauty.

Nanette, a retired editor from Ottawa and attendee of the Lucy Maud

Montgomery Institute Conference, too, told me about the health benefits she experiences from going on vacation specifically to Prince Edward Island:

They say that some people find a place where their soul belongs and my soul belongs on PEI. I know that sounds so dramatic, but it's the only... way I can explain it. I really feel as if this is where I'm supposed to be. When I come here, it's almost like my blood pressure disappears completely – not that I have high blood pressure – but it's almost as if it just disappears. I'm so relaxed and I'm so content and I'm always very emotional. I'm very emotional about the countryside, and about Montgomery.

I asked her why she was more emotional on Prince Edward Island. Nanette replied:

I don't know. I don't know. I wish that I knew. And it's amazing the things that will strike me. The day before yesterday I was driving in the rain on the way up to the North Shore and as I was zig-zagging across the countryside, in the distance was a hill with those wonderful fir trees that line up like soldiers in a great line and I was in tears. And I thought, "[Nanette], don't." But I was in tears. I feel a peace here that I've never felt anywhere else.

Nanette's intense connection to Prince Edward Island helps prevent her from feeling alienated while on vacation. Feeling "at home" while getting intense relief from stress makes her vacations to Prince Edward Island therapeutic. In commenting that she believes her soul belongs on Prince Edward Island, Nanette also elevates her vacation to a spiritual level. As in pilgrimages to a sacred centre, Nanette's return trips to Prince Edward Island bring relief from the alienation she feels while living for extended periods away from the Island. On vacation, Nanette feels that her soul is reunited with its home.

Nanette also mentioned being uncharacteristically emotional while vacationing on Prince Edward Island. This emotional volatility could be explained in two ways. First, a pilgrimage is often made at a time of transition or crisis. As Frey comments, "A vow to make a pilgrimage to Santiago is often made in a moment of crisis such as the loss of employment, personal or familial illness, suffering or despair" (Frey 1998: 32). Nanette told me,

The Prince Edward Island [trip] is a truly, truly special one for me. I came in 1989 at a time when my life was in turmoil, and I've always, like all young Canadian girls, I think, loved the Anne of Green Gables books, and I came because it seemed such a wonderful idea to come and I had never seen it. I spent five days here in cold, pouring rain and I knew I would come religiously after that...

Nanette was in the middle of a crisis from which she felt some relief when she first came to Prince Edward Island. Even after the personal crisis had subsided, the residual memories of the healing reprieve from her problems kept her returning almost every year. She told me that since her first visit in 1989, she had come to Prince Edward Island eighteen or nineteen times because it offers her something that she could not find anywhere else: "Even in those years of terrible turmoil when I first started coming here, I could feel the peace. It is truly, truly wonderful for me..." Unique and localized feelings of peace and her vow to return "religiously" to the province after that first encounter endow Nanette's vacations with religious overtones. However, as a Catholic, she does not compare Prince Edward Island to institutionalized religious shrines, but claims that the feelings she gets from being on the Island are similar to those of a pilgrim.

The second reason for Nanette's site-specific catharsis may be the intense feelings of belonging that she experiences when she visits Prince Edward Island. A similar sense of belonging was described by Hilda on her Baha'i pilgrimage to Haifa:

All the things that happened to me that I didn't expect I think were the most wonderful. I didn't expect to cry my eyes out on the last day, and I did not cry my eyes out because I was leaving. I just cried my eyes out because [long pause], because I felt connected. It was wonderful. But perhaps the difference, too, was that is also intensely private... although it happened to a whole bunch of other people, it's intensely private and its meaning is not relevant to anybody except you.

Both Nanette and Hilda were experiencing *communitas*.<sup>26</sup> They both had an intense feeling of belonging and being "connected" to something larger than the self. The emotional release of a cathartic experience leaves one feeling rejuvenated, and both Hilda and Nanette felt this release on their journeys. They both purged their stress through crying, not because they were sorrowful, but because their emotions were too strong to maintain restraint.

The release of stress on vacation can also be facilitated by a change of pace. To simplify and slow down from one's everyday life can be calming and rejuvenative. Bernadette, a school teacher from New Brunswick and an avid camper, told me about a curious effect that she claimed Prince Edward Island has on its guests:

I was talking to a lady yesterday from Hamilton and she was saying... 'You know, things change when you're on PEI.' I said, 'Yes, and do you drive slower?' and she said that, 'We're driving slower, we're walking slower.' And I notice that as soon as I get on the Island, maybe not the first day, but all the other days, you know, you drive slower. Yesterday there was a car that just zoomed right by on the causeway

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<sup>26</sup>

Turner (1969: 96-97).

[on the way to the campground], and I thought, ‘Uh-oh, you’re just getting here!’

Like Nanette, who told me that Prince Edward Island makes her so calm that she feels its impact on her blood pressure, Bernadette senses that visitors slow down, following the Island’s example of slower pace. Hilda seemed to echo the sentiments of both Nanette and Bernadette when she told me:

Most people who come here [to Prince Edward Island] come precisely because they believe it is going to be different: it is going to offer them something they can’t find somewhere else and that’s primarily peace and quiet and a chance to *recover*. And I think to that extent, yes, they will find that it’s not the unhurried pace of Island life so much... but I think it has to do... with the landscape itself. The landscape is so open, and so rolling and so unimpeded that it’s possible for you to simply sit and get a vista which would not normally be available to you except in much more magnificent locations. You can’t get anything like this in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick because the scale is all wrong, and so I think... that it’s precisely the small scale of the Island topography and landscape – the very *human size* of the land in a way – that allows us to relax and to fit in... (her emphasis)

On Prince Edward Island, travellers are not dwarfed by monumental geographical features. Hilda’s description of the Island’s topography that allows visitors to “fit in” is a metaphor for the *communitas* that many visitors feel. This *communitas* does not necessarily involve other people in Hilda’s understanding, but the ability to connect one’s self with its larger surroundings; to feel “at home” or “comfortable in one’s own skin.” Also, when Hilda highlights the Island’s ability to allow visitors to “recover,” she describes the healing role that

Prince Edward Island plays as a vacation destination. Here, she implies that there is a presupposition of illness or dis-ease before a tourist goes on vacation.

Norma, a camper from Ontario, emphasized the links between rejuvenation, nature, and slowing down: "I find any time getting back to Nature... it gives you that release. That mental slowdown is what it's really all about." Maria, the government worker from Halifax, was especially impressed that although Prince Edward Island is a very popular vacation destination, it still allows people moments of privacy. She said, "And the deserted beaches! That's great, you know? [One does] an awful lot of travelling and it's rare to find a deserted beach, extremely rare, so there's certainly an appreciation for that. It's pretty hard to find." Both Norma and Maria value the chance for solitude that a vacation to Prince Edward Island provides. Nature allows them both to shed the distractions that they would normally encounter in their everyday lives and spend some quality time to concentrate on themselves or, perhaps more rejuvenative, to concentrate on nothing. This perceived relationship between Nature and rejuvenation is a common theme in contemporary Western society, writes Bruner: "Built into our Western metaphysics... is the notion of a privileged original, a pure tradition, which exists in some prior time, from which everything now is a contemporary degradation" (Bruner 1993: 324). Tourists attempt to find this true original in two ways on Prince Edward Island: in a simpler, more wholesome way of life, and in the bucolic landscape. Taylor's discussion of New Zealand's Maori tourism industry echoes the



sentiment of tourists to Prince Edward Island: “Juxtaposed against a backdrop of Western commerciality, modernity ‘touches’ and tarnishes the prelapsarian, mythological ideal” (Taylor 2001: 15). Here, we can see the link between an earlier, pure era and the tarnished present that is a central theme of the Judeo-Christian vision of the Garden of Eden and the myth of the Fall.

#### NOSTALGIA

The search for the true original, or the “pure tradition,” as Bruner (1993: 324) calls it, can be manifest in many forms. It can involve a quest for relics of a saint, for a culture that is considered to be untarnished, or for a lost, idealised time in one’s life.

One may ask whether nostalgia is a singular phenomenon, whether it is special to conditions of modernity or postmodernity, or whether it is part of the human condition. It is certainly a driving force in many forms of tourism, whether nature- or history based, and of course is particularly subject to commercial and political manipulation. (Graburn 1995: 166)

Visitors to Prince Edward Island are seeking a certain brand of vacation. They expect the Island to be clean, quiet, and safe. It is where they might go to try to re-experience fond memories of childhood vacations, or perhaps Prince Edward Island reminds them of an idealized childhood home.

Judith, the grandmother from Oshawa, came with her husband and children annually to Prince Edward Island. Once her children grew up and started families of their own, Judith and her husband continued to return each summer for four or five weeks of camping. Both Judith and her husband were born in Germany, and moved to Canada in 1962. Judith explained Prince Edward Island's appeal for her:

It has a lot to do with growing up in Berlin, as a child during wartime... That, to me, is it; because I could not understand why this little island draws me so, pulls me so... Nothing makes me as happy as when I see children running around laughing and being happy... young people, especially [in the summertime] when we have so much trouble in the world and I think that [is what Prince Edward Island] really is; peaceful, and... I think they treasure that, they treasure their peace.

Judith thinks of her own childhood, but also the childhood of others, which she sees as an innocent and idealised time. Later, when discussing how she made annual trips to Germany since the Berlin Wall fell in 1989, Judith told me that: "A pilgrimage is almost remembering. Going back is a pilgrimage." Revisiting her reunited homeland and coming to Prince Edward Island in the summers provides the opportunity for Judith to find peace in her memories of childhood. It is not necessarily her own childhood, but rather the state of childhood that she values.

Hilda told me she saw Prince Edward Island as a passive, fertile ground where visitors could grow their own unique memories rather than a place where

pre-fabricated memories are imposed upon the visitor. This perception could be, in part, related to the apparently seamless connection between past and present on Prince Edward Island. “Interestingly,” writes McCannell,

The best indication of the final victory of modernity over other sociocultural arrangements is not the disappearance of the nonmodern world, but its artificial preservation and reconstruction in modern society. (McCannell 1976: 9)

It is the glimpses of a simpler time that visitors seek, but not necessarily a simpler time involving horses and outhouses. Rather, it is an interiorized, personal era of one’s life that seems simpler in comparison to the present. “For moderns,” as McCannell refers to modern travellers,

Reality and authenticity are thought to be elsewhere: in other historical periods and other cultures, in purer, simpler life-styles. In other words, the concern of moderns for ‘naturalness,’ their nostalgia and their search for authenticity are not merely casual and somewhat decadent, though harmless, attachments to the souvenirs of destroyed cultures and dead epochs. They are also components of the conquering spirit of modernity – the grounds of its unifying consciousness. (McCannell 1976: 3)

CHAPTER FIVE:

AUTHENTICITY AND ITS IMPORTANCE TO

VACATION EXPERIENCES ON PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

WHAT IS AUTHENTICITY?

Many travellers come to Prince Edward Island in search of the “Authentic Prince Edward Island Experience.” Many tourism operators, in turn, strive to provide that authenticity. Badone (2004: 182) writes: “I see authenticity not as an absolute value but rather as a culturally and historically situated ideal that is *believed* to exist by individuals or groups of individuals in specific social settings” (her emphasis). Similarly, Handler writes, “Authenticity is a cultural construct closely tied to Western notions of the individual” (Handler 1986: 2). Authenticity is a decidedly subjective notion. Different tourists have different goals in mind while on their vacations. They see what they want to see. Different tourists go to the same sites and view them subjectively. Some might seek the exotic; the extraordinary; others want a safe family vacation and others might seek relaxation and rejuvenation. Some might seek all of the above.

For a tourist, labelling a vacation “authentic” is not necessarily a consciously articulated concern. However, if the experience fails to live up to expectations, the resulting dissatisfaction can result in the traveller considering

the trip “false,” or the opposite of authentic. They might feel cheated or that their time, money and energy were wasted. The sense of having accomplished with some success the goals of encountering the exotic and extraordinary, achieving relaxation and rejuvenation, or having a safe family vacation is influenced by the perceived “authenticity” of their experiences. On a person-by-person basis, the level of authenticity is determined differently.

In the tourist literature for Prince Edward Island, there are photos of red beaches, and green golf fairlanes. There are also many photos of smiling people dressed up like Anne Shirley, traditional Acadians, or in Victorian garb, depicting the “Fathers of Confederation,” the politicians who came together on Prince Edward Island to lay the groundwork for the Canadian nation at the Charlottetown Conference of 1864. All these images are under clear blue, uninterrupted and decidedly unpolluted sky. Brochures like these, Bruner writes, create clear-cut roles for both the tourists and the hosts: “they organize and give meaning to the tourist encounter for both the tourist and the native” (Bruner 1991: 240). The brochures reflect, publicize, and promulgate these roles, putting pressure on the locals to maintain a particular image and pressure on tourists to expect, and therefore, demand that image.

Tourists and Prince Edward Islanders alike see these photos played out in “real life” during the summers on the Island. The Acadian fiddlers and the “Fathers of Confederation” are all part of the show – the non-threatening carnival of Prince Edward Island in the summer – and these spectacles have

become the norm; locals expect them, and so do visitors. Some might argue that these events are not authentic because they are staged specifically for the tourist season, but this does not change the fact that they are, indeed, taking place. In this respect, they *are* real. In some shape or form, some Prince Edward Islanders, in their everyday lives play the fiddle, eat lobster, and go to the beach. The difference is that most of the summertime events are prompted by a perceived need: the tourist operators perceive a need to hold the events on behalf of the tourists. These spectacles take place in, as McCannell calls them, the “front regions” (McCannell 1976: 92).

In analysing encounters between tourists and hosts, McCannell divides regions into “front” and “back.” “The front is the meeting place of hosts and guests or customers and service persons, and the back is the place where members of the home team retire between performances to relax and to prepare” (McCannell 1976: 92). The front region is what the tourists are allowed to see. It includes the floor of the restaurant, the streets of Charlottetown and the stage of any theatre, big or small. The locals and the visitors both know that these are the realms of the visitors. This is where they belong and should stay. In the back regions – the restaurant kitchens, private Charlottetown homes, and the green rooms of the theatres – the performers (i.e. the locals) prepare, relax and act naturally. This is where they belong. “A back region, closed to audiences and outsiders, allows concealment of props and activities that might discredit the

performance out front. In other words, sustaining a firm sense of social reality requires some *mystification*” (McCannell 1976: 93, his emphasis).

This explains why a Prince Edward Islander might feel uncomfortable about participating in a tourist activity – they know it is a show not intended for them but for the visitors. The local is likely to feel embarrassed because by attending a tourist attraction, it looks as if he or she has been duped into thinking that the spectacle is real. The local is also more likely to know that the show is not “really real.” The tourist may know this as well, but it is the role of the tourist to consume the performance. For the same reason, some visitors would feel as if they were imposing if they inadvertently entered into a Prince Edward Islander family barbeque; it is too intimate and there are not enough props and painted faces, although it probably would be one of the most memorable experiences from the vacation. McCannell’s front and back regions create roles and territories for the locals and the tourists, and if the wrong space is breached by the wrong person, there is sometimes a sense of dissonance.

The mystification of McCannell’s “back region” leads to what he calls “site sacralization.” While McCannell’s use of the term site sacralization is intended to refer primarily to the “front region” sights, like the Mona Lisa kept behind glass and a velvet rope to heighten its importance (McCannell 1976: 44), I would argue that back regions are just as sacralized when they are separated from the viewing audience. McCannell writes that: “The first stage of sight sacralization takes place then the sight is marked off from similar objects as

worthy of preservation” (McCannell 1976: 44). Here, the sights that are marked off from regular viewing are the kitchens and greenrooms, heightening their mystification, eliciting the compulsion to “sneak a peek” behind the swinging kitchen doors to see how the workers behave when they are not “performing.” The back regions are not subject, however, to all of McCannell’s five stages of site sacralization: naming, framing and elevation, enshrinement, mechanical reproduction and social reproduction (McCannell 1976: 44). The back regions are named: “Staff Only.” They are framed from the front region but not elevated – if anything, they are usually lower in social status. They are somewhat enshrined, according to McCannell’s definition: “When the framing material that is used [in the first stage] has itself entered the first stage of sacralization... a third stage has been entered” (McCannell 1976: 45). The double swinging doors of the restaurant kitchen (which I have already mentioned), and the door marked “Stage Door” are both symbolic of what they conceal. The fourth stage is mechanical reproduction, when sights become postcards, figurines, and any other imaginable (and marketable) ephemera. For the most part, back regions have not been reproduced in this way, except for the recent home decorating trend of “hotel chic” in which home owners reproduce the bedding and place settings of high-end hotels.<sup>27</sup> When hotel guests integrate elements discovered

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**“Latest Home Decorating Trend: Hotel Chic**

Sales Of Hotel Decor Expected To Double From Last Year's \$60 Million

These days, guests aren't just 'borrowing' hotel bathrobes, they're taking entire rooms home with them. The latest trend in home design has consumers purchasing their favorite hotel decor from local department stores.



on their vacation into the back regions of their homes, such as bedding and flatware, the process is similar to displaying a poster of a famous work of art from a museum, or buying a figurine of a famous landmark to place on a shelf. These are not only souvenirs of a vacation but a symbol of the whole vacation experience. Finally, social reproduction is unlikely to happen for back stage areas, a process which usually “occurs when groups, cities, and regions begin to name themselves after famous attractions” (McCannell 1976: 45, cf. Fine and Speer 1985).

Even if back stage areas do achieve a degree of sacralization, the prime motivation of tourists coming to Prince Edward Island is not to catch a glimpse of the bustling kitchen of the “Fisherman’s Wharf” lobster restaurant in North Rustico. Rather, vacationers want to see traditional culture and unspoiled natural beauty, and Prince Edward Islanders (or at least the ones whose paycheques depend on the tourism industry) want to provide those attractions for the tourists. Islanders allow visitors to be privy to Island life, but with

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This trend has resulted in million-dollar business for both hotels and stores alike. Last year alone, the sale of hotel amenities raked in more than \$60 million dollars. This year, sales are expected to double.

Items up for sale are the luxurious sheets, duvets, and pillows. But bedding isn't the only hotel room amenity consumers are after - even the beds themselves are in demand. Nordstrom has tapped into the trend by offering the signature Heavenly Bed found in Westin Hotels. It marks the first time a hotel line of bedding is being sold in a national department store.

Travelers can also purchase anything from showerheads and tableware. The appeal is simple: how often does high-end merchandise lend itself to a test run before purchase? Now when guests like what they see, they have a way to bring home the luxury.

For consumers who want to sample swank before it's part of their home's style, this latest hotel-inspired trend is redefining ‘room service’.”

(source: Hotel News Resource: <http://www.hotelnewsresource.com/article16391.html> 12.06.05)

limitations. To assure the appropriate distance, the locals construct and reproduce events that approximate Prince Edward Island culture specifically for the audience of the visitors. McCannell calls this “Staged Authenticity,” and is careful to distinguish it from the “back regions.” “What is being shown to tourists is not the institutional *back stage*... Rather, it is a staged back region, a kind of living museum for which we have no analytical terms” (McCannell 1976: 99, his emphasis). Since most of the locals are understandably unwilling to invite all the tourists to their Uncle Stuart’s house for a barbeque, they organise something that will try to capture the same atmosphere. Uncle Stuart’s house would be truly too “back region” (McCannell 1976: 92).

#### THE SEARCH FOR AUTHENTICITY

Authenticity is not a term usually associated with tourism and certainly not with tourists. On the contrary, tourists are often considered hedonistic culture-crashers who wear loud shirts, and cameras (on the obligatory neck strap), as they are spoon-fed the “exotic.” Daniel J. Boorstin writes that,

The modern American tourist now fills his experience with pseudo-events. He has come to expect both more strangeness and more familiarity than the world naturally offers. (Boorstin 1964: 79)

Boorstin's description of American tourists is riddled with the assumption of inauthenticity. Words like "pseudo-events," and the logical inability for a tourist's experience to be both exotic and familiar at the same time point to Boorstin's belief that tourists are disconnected from reality. Bauman (1996) claims that tourists' expectations force the pasteurization of the "real world" in order for it to remain palatable. He thinly veils his disdain as he describes tourists as spoiled children who have all their "wishes and whims" catered to, "with one purpose in mind: to excite, please and amuse... The tourist's world is fully and exclusively structured by *aesthetic* criteria" (Bauman 1996: 30). Bauman's attitude is not uncommon, but scholars are increasingly arguing that tourists are not as shallow as they have been portrayed. "The term 'tourist' is increasingly used as a derisive label for someone who seems content with his obviously inauthentic experiences," writes McCannell (1976: 94). In reality, tourists *are* looking for "the authentic." The closer the experience reflects that of the locals, the more valuable it is considered to be:

Although the tourist need not be consciously aware of this, the thing he goes to see is society and its works. The societal aspect of tourist attractions is hidden behind their fame, but this fame cannot change their origin in social structure. Given the present sociohistorical epoch, it is not a surprise to find that tourists believe sightseeing is a leisure activity, and fun, even when it requires more effort and organization than many jobs. (McCannell 1976: 55)

Although the entire trip might require a great deal of planning, the spontaneous, more personalised incidents may be the most significant for particular travellers. It is the impromptu invitation to a local wedding, or the conversation with the fisher bringing in his catch that will stand apart in the tourists' memories from the anonymous mass tours and historical re-enactments. Those gems then gain more value, and are sacralized. In these memorable moments, the tourist feels that he or she is connected to the community and part of something larger and deeper than just themselves or their everyday existence.

When anthropologists began to delve into the customs of tourists in the same way as they studied any other cultural group, they began to develop identity crises as they recognised themselves more and more in their subjects. Crick writes that, "Anthropology has entered a period of reflexive anxiety which has brought to the fore the problem of the anthropological identity," and then wonders: "In what ways is the anthropologist studying tourism like or unlike the tourists being studied?" (Crick 1995: 205). He writes that the tourists, mostly people who live in the Western world, are too immediately identified with the anthropologists to be considered "Other" from them. When they are not considered "Other," they must be considered "Same," and spirals of self-analysis ensue (Crick 1995: 208). Crick dismisses the debate as pointless navel-gazing and seems to encourage his colleagues to once again fix their eyes on the prize: looking outward and thinking analytically. He does concede:

The researcher must become part of the system of tourist-local relationships in order to find out anything about the system. In other words, an anthropologist has no practical alternative to being subjected to touristic rules in order to undertake the research; in that sense, an anthropologist is simply a type of tourist. (Crick 1995: 217)

Both anthropologists and tourists travel to observe, take part in, or exoticize the life of the “Other.” The difference between tourists and anthropologists is that tourists travel as a leisure activity and anthropologists travel to advance their professional lives. Errington and Gewertz write, “For anthropologists to work toward reaching **and** conveying an understanding of such [cultural events, specifically, a local hazing ceremony] (even when specific events have a ludic form) strikes us as serious, but not as value-free, business” (Errington and Gewertz 1989: 51, their emphasis). Here, they argue that while anthropologists are experiencing the same events, tourists are gaining personal fulfilment while the anthropologists are simply gathering more data for serious analysis. Crick agrees: “Tourists do not have sufficient knowledge to understand world political economy; some do not want to understand” (Crick 1995: 209).

Graburn writes that: “very strong moral feelings are attached to the concepts of work and play, including an association of what is ‘proper’ in time and place” (Graburn 1989: 22). This insight can explain why anthropologists were initially offended by the comparison between themselves and tourists: it belittled their hard work and made it seem like they undertook their travels as

vacation time. Finally, it seems most scholars agree on one point: “The quest for authenticity can remain a powerful motivating force for on-the-ground behaviour, including travel” (Badone 2004: 182). The journey in search of authenticity moves many groups of people, including, as Badone writes, pilgrims, tourists, and ethnographers. (Badone 2004: 182)

#### PRECONCEPTIONS

The Island is the bloomiest place. I just love it already, and I’m so glad I’m going to live here. I’ve always heard that Prince Edward Island was the prettiest place in the world, and I used to imagine I was living here, but I never really expected I would. It’s delightful when your imaginations come true, isn’t it? (Montgomery 1908: 14)

These are some of Anne Shirley’s first words to the awestruck Matthew Cuthbert as they drove from the Bright River Train Station to Green Gables for the first time. Anne uses characteristically romantic language, and her descriptions remain in the readers’ memories. At the 2004 Lucy Maud Montgomery Institute Conference at the University of Prince Edward Island, keynote presenter Rachna Gilmore started her address like many of the other Conference speakers: she gave the audience a testimonial about her first experiences of reading Montgomery’s novels. She spoke of growing up in the urban “baked earth” of Bombay, India, and the jolt that went through her when she learned that Prince Edward Island was a real place. Like many other

readers, Gilmore did not know it was a province of Canada, but thought of it as a Utopia. When she became an adult and moved to Prince Edward Island, her excitement was dulled when she first encountered the mosquitoes and the small-town gossip. She had pangs of homesickness when she realized that mayflowers are neither as fragrant nor as plentiful as the jasmine of India.<sup>28</sup> Still, Gilmore began to understand that Prince Edward Island has a “homing device” that called her as it had called Montgomery. The province has a “smallness and intimacy,” that was “calling her home.” Happily, Gilmore said, she realised that Montgomery’s *Anne of Green Gables* was a work of fiction doing its job: “telling the truth through lies.” The intense sentiment of “home” can also be attributed to Montgomery’s devotion to the Island. The fact that all but one of her novels is set on Prince Edward Island emphasizes the importance of *place* in her writing.

Montgomery lived out the majority of her life in Ontario with her husband, away from her beloved home province. Both she and her husband suffered from depression while they lived in Ontario. Through her books she wrote nostalgically about a place where she was not – creating a sacred Heaven for herself disconnected from the fallen world of Ontario. “Writing enabled her to retreat into an ideal world of childhood memory... Montgomery had written, ‘It seems somehow pleasant to revisit the past and forget the present.’... Her

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<sup>28</sup> Montgomery includes a page of description of mayflowers in *Anne of Green Gables* (1908). “I’m so sorry for people who live in lands where there are no Mayflowers,” said Anne.... ‘I

fiction had come to serve as a vehicle for this kind of nostalgic introspection” (Squire 1992: 140). In *Jane of Lantern Hill* (1937), Montgomery’s titular character returns to Toronto after spending a summer on Prince Edward Island. Squire writes that in this novel in particular, “Montgomery’s juxtaposition of Prince Edward Island and Toronto, a utopian-dystopian polarity that has no parallel elsewhere in her fiction, enabled her to make her most explicit statement about Prince Edward Island. For her, it was a place of the soul” (Squire 1992: 141).

Many tourists develop preconceptions about Prince Edward Island in two ways: one through tourist literature during research for their vacations and the other through exposure to the works of L. M. Montgomery and the subsequent films, and television and stage shows based on her works. Montgomery’s fiction has painted images of Prince Edward Island in the minds of millions of readers since *Anne of Green Gables* was first published. The stereotype of Prince Edward Island conveyed in Montgomery’s writing is that of a place that has been spared the ravages of time; it is pastoral, pleasant, quiet and clean; agriculture and fisheries are still mainstays of the Island economy and the residents are good, God-fearing, salt-of-the-earth folk. This image freezes Prince Edward Island in the Edwardian settings of Montgomery’s

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think it would be *tragic*, Marilla, not to know what Mayflowers are like and *not* to miss them” (1908: 161 her emphasis).



works. Her descriptions are almost a century old but widely read. For example, from *Anne of Green Gables*:

[Anne and Matthew] had just driven over the crest of a hill. Below them was a pond, looking almost like a river so long and winding was it. A bridge spanned it midway and from there to its lower end, where an amber-hued belt of sand hills shut it in from the dark blue gulf beyond, the water was a glory of many shifting hues – the most spiritual shadings of crocus and rose and ethereal green, with other elusive tintings for which no name has ever been found. (Montgomery 1908: 19)

It is not unprofitable for tourism operators to perpetuate these stereotypes. From their point of view, getting tourists to their establishments is the primary goal. For operators with goals of return business and quality service, the work continues after the guests' arrival, but the first job of the brochure is to paint an agreeable picture in the mind of the tourist, and make it appear readily available. Bruner writes that, "Tourism has less to do with what other peoples are really like and more to do with how we imagine them to be..." (Bruner 1989: 440) In the case of Prince Edward Island, the representations are less about the "peoples" and more about the possible experiences visitors could have if they chose the Island for their vacation. The images, therefore, usually involve red earth, green pastures and freckled, red-headed orphans. Naturally, the tourist operators wish to put forth an agreeable image of the Island, but in reality, these romantic images of Prince Edward Island are not grossly embellished. Prince Edward Island *is* pastoral and green. There *are* lovely views

that seem untouched by time, and the style of living *is* less hectic than in other parts of North America.

When first-time visitor Joel, a prototype engineer from Vermont, was reading the tourist literature, he thought that Prince Edward Island would be covered in golf courses, resorts and cottages, but he was relieved to find that in reality, relatively little of the landscape was touched by commercialization.

Nanette, the retired editor from Ottawa, felt the same way:

I was kinda worried. I wondered whether I was coming to 'Tourism, Inc.,' and I found myself able to turn a total blind eye to the tourism aspects. I simply don't see them. They register, and I know there's 'Marilla's This,' and 'Matthew's That,' and 'Anne's This,' and I simply don't see it and it doesn't register. I know in some part of my mind, I know it's there, but it doesn't really bother me.

These tourists see what they want to see. If they have come to Prince Edward Island for an activity-filled family vacation, they choose to see the amusement parks, kitschy restaurants, and mini-putt courses. If they are seeking peace and quiet, they avoid the "touristy" attractions and go off the beaten path to create individual vacation memories, away from the pack. Ferne, the Australian professor, found this form of tourism most rewarding.

The first time I came [to Prince Edward Island], I went out to Green Gables, I think first, and I was very disappointed... And I just thought, 'It's plastic. It's lovely, but it's not authentic.'... Eventually, I trotted around and I found, almost accidentally, Jennie Macneill's place that [was] the site of [Montgomery's] original home, and that was where

I... felt very good. ... I just walked around there... with myself and my diary and spent about maybe five or six hours on my own.

She came across the Macneill Homestead “almost” by accident, as if it called to her. This experience at the Homestead was more authentic for her because it put her in contact with Montgomery’s original home, as if it were a relic from a religious figure. The site became more of a shrine than an historical location. For Ferne and many other tourists, it is the solitary moments away from the bustle of activity that are the most meaningful. Nancy Rootland feels the same way. She explained her strategy for visiting sites to take photographs for her book, *Anne’s World, Maud’s World: The Sacred Places of L. M.*

*Montgomery:*

Yeah, maybe it’s a little commercial, like Green Gables, but I go early in the morning and late at night, I photograph and people aren’t around and I walk the trails at six in the morning – no one’s around... Especially when I’m photographing I do not want anything of today – not a wire, not a golf ball... I also do not like people in [the photos] or objects of today, anything that will take you away from the time.

Here, Rootland engages in the same process that Bruner describes for tourists taking photos of natives on African tours. Instead of using the camera to separate the *real* native from the *photo* of the native, Rootland is separating the present from the past by carefully cropping her photos. “Such a perspective,” writes Bruner, “isolates the native people from their larger social context, in that everything outside the frame of the viewfinder is removed from view, including

the politics of the situation. In this sense, photography decontextualizes” (Bruner 1989: 441). Here, Rootland decontextualizes time and crops out modernity from her photos, something she finds polluting. By purging the present from her photos, she maintains the sacredness of the past. Perhaps that is precisely what some tourists hope will happen when they visit Prince Edward Island: modernity and all its trappings will be cropped out of the frame of their lives.

#### AUTHENTIC VACATION

Like authenticity, the meaning of the word vacation is flexible and personal. Graburn reminds us of its etymology: “The very word vacation comes from the Latin *vacare*, ‘to leave (one’s house) empty,’ and emphasizes the fact that we cannot properly vacation at home. People who stay home for vacation are often looked down upon or pitied” (Graburn 1989: 23). He makes clear distinctions between work and play. “Tourism,” he writes, “is a special form of play involving travel, or getting away from ‘it all’ (work and home), affording relaxation from tensions, and for some, the opportunity to temporarily become a nonentity, removed from a ringing telephone” (Graburn 1989: 22). Needing to get away from “it all” usually means that a true vacation involves entering a sort of deprivation chamber – a buffer between the tourist and the worries of the workaday world – as if there would be a temptation to stray back to the phone

and computer if there were not a distinct physical separation. “Home,” writes Bauman, “lingers at the horizon of the tourist life as an uncanny mix of shelter and prison” (Bauman 1996: 31). Vacation, to a lot of North Americans, *is* like staging a jailbreak from working. For many, work is seen as punitive, and the escape can take some careful planning. Badone writes that,

For the majority of individuals, temporal organization alternates between long periods of work – characterized as spiritually unrewarding, based on instrumental relationships, and lacking in creativity – and relatively short periods of vacation, associated with the cultivation of affective relationships, leisure, and self-renewal. These latter values are perceived as being attainable, at least in part, through travel. (Badone 2004: 183)

Like vacationing at home, shorter trips that require less planning or are not far from home are not perceived to be “real” vacation. Maria, who works for the Nova Scotia Department of Environment and Labour, told me that longer trips have “more R&R. You don’t have the stresses of having to do the housework or running around, or even thinking about your next day at work.” She did concede, though, that on longer trips there is “the inconvenience of having to have all your camping gear and all of that [supplies]. That’s certainly an extra step that you have to plan for.” A “stress-free” vacation seems to be out of reach on both longer and shorter trips, in Maria’s view. Still, shorter “getaways,” are not considered as “real” a vacation as the longer trips to places further afield.

Mario, the flight attendant from Halifax who has had extensive experience with travel abroad, referred to travelling with his girlfriend when he said, "I think our big trips are more of a cultural experience. We usually want to go somewhere steeped in history or culture; the people. In these trips [to Prince Edward Island] are where we kinda try to get in touch with nature a little bit more again." In this statement, Mario blends both Graburn's "Nature Tourism" and "Cultural Tourism" (Graburn 1989: 31-32). However, Mario takes on different personas in the different "type" of trip. In the "big trips," he takes more time to explore an environment that might be more different from home, allowing him to investigate local traditions and history. On the smaller trips, to places like Prince Edward Island, he explores on a smaller scale. In his mind, then, the shorter trips are no less of a true vacation than the longer ones, but there are different goals and outcomes in each case. Angelina, the landscape architect from Ottawa said that even when she was home she would take what she called, "travel days" in which she would take little road trips in her car. "I'll just point the car into the countryside and drive around." She described herself as a "self-styled archivist," or, as many people might say, a packrat, but in recent years she had made a conscious effort to un-clutter her life. When she is on vacation or even just driving through the countryside, she is physically removed from the weight of her archival burden. This separation is comparable to the physical separation from the ringing telephone, someone else's burden, mentioned by Graburn (1989: 22).

Michelle, an undergraduate English student from Prince Edward Island said, “To be honest, I’ve only been on one real ‘vacation’ vacation. The rest of the time, I’ve been travelling but it’s been really hectic, so I’ve only been on one trip where I went and my sole goal was just to relax and to do my own thing.” For Michelle, travelling is not synonymous with vacationing. Many of my informants made strong distinctions between travel for work and travel for vacation. Mario, the flight attendant, can probably understand this distinction better than any of my informants. As Graburn writes, *not* working while at home is as flawed as *working* while travelling – a time usually reserved for leisure (Graburn 1989: 22-23).

Ferne, the Australian professor and researcher, related the same sentiment about the conferences she attends. I asked her if she got the chance to travel for pleasure since most of her trips were for conferences and research, and she told me, “Yes, I do, but it’s much more often for business, and what I sometimes try to do is I try to work in a bit of pleasure as well,” but, “researching is pleasure, especially in this environment [of the L. M. Montgomery Institute Conference], so this is terrific.”

For most vacationers, escaping from work means a systematic slowdown or diametric change from everyday life. Vacation is Turner’s (1969) “anti-structure.” If “regular life” is what Turner called “structure,” with predictable events and routines, then “anti-structure” is the time between the routine when one can be more creative and expressive. Work is the structure

and vacation is the anti-structure. It is at work where there is importance placed on “positions and statuses” (V. Turner 1969: 126), but on vacation, all workers are all of the same status: they are tourists, or travellers, or explorers, whichever title they prefer. Having no (perceived) responsibilities, having at least a change of responsibilities, or changing the very atmosphere in which one lives can be therapeutic for an exhausted worker. Prince Edward Island can offer that kind of separation. It is thought to be bucolic and separated from the worries of the modern world. Whether this is true or not is inconsequential. The perception still exists and is there for the tourist to share.

Van Gennep’s (1960) rites involve stages of separation, liminality, and reincorporation. For the Prince Edward Island tourist, the phase of separation is the journey from their home to the Island. Their liminal experience is their time spent on vacation, not rooted as at home, and marginalised as a tourist. The re-integration is the journey home and return to daily routines and responsibilities. This separation is further emphasised by Prince Edward Island’s physical separation from continental Canada. The visitors must take an eighty-minute ferry ride or drive over the thirteen-kilometre Confederation Bridge. The traveller truly is “betwixt and between”<sup>29</sup> the mainland and the Island. Most tourists to Prince Edward Island are from Atlantic Canada, Ontario, Québec and

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<sup>29</sup> Turner (1969: 107).



the New England States of the United States,<sup>30</sup> so they are not wholly unfamiliar with the overall culture of their destination. This familiarity can make the traveller feel less marginalised than those seeking rejuvenation in a place where the traveller has to expend consistent energy into adapting to new surroundings. (Graburn 1989: 27)

If we compare the undertaking of vacation to a rite of passage, especially involving a change of place, the separation and re-integration phases of vacation to Prince Edward Island do not involve the extreme changes associated with vacations in which the surroundings are more distinctly different from the traveller's home. Of course, if the traveller is seeking adventure in and education about another culture, then being in an unfamiliar environment is ideal. However, if the goal is relaxation and rejuvenation, as it is for most vacationers to Prince Edward Island, a certain level of familiarity is comforting. Adapting to the North American lifestyle might be more of a challenge for the Japanese tourists, who, in 2003, made up approximately 0.1 percent of Prince Edward Island's tourist population.<sup>31</sup> In their case, the vacation would probably be more of an adventure-seeking trip than a time to relax. Expectations for vacations can vary tremendously, as Smith's typology of tourists shows. Smith's typology ranges from "Explorer," a rare type, to

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<sup>30</sup> Prince Edward Island Tourism "Economic Impact: Tourism 2003." [http://www.gov.pe.ca/photos/original/tou\\_ecoimpact03.pdf](http://www.gov.pe.ca/photos/original/tou_ecoimpact03.pdf), 12.06.05. pg. 7

<sup>31</sup> Prince Edward Island Tourism "Economic Impact: Tourism 2003." pg 28, figure 2. [http://www.gov.pe.ca/photos/original/tou\\_ecoimpact03.pdf](http://www.gov.pe.ca/photos/original/tou_ecoimpact03.pdf), 12.06.05

“Charter,” who arrive in massive numbers. She also arranges tourist types according to what “Local Norms” they accept. The local norms include food, lifestyle and housing customs. Some totally accept and participate in local culture, while “Charter” tourists, “[demand] Western amenities” (Smith 1989: 11-14).

For visitors from mainland Canada or the United States, the ability of tourists to design vacations to suit their needs on Prince Edward Island allows the tourist a certain degree of power, possibly making the trip more rewarding than a vacation to a place where the traveller is totally unfamiliar with his or her surroundings. “Many are relieved,” Graburn writes, “to return home safely and even anticipate the end of the tense, emotion-charged period of being away” (Graburn 1989: 27).

#### AUTHENTIC PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND EXPERIENCE

Discussing Balinese tourism, Bruner (1996: 157-8) writes: “We recognize the trope of the vanishing primitive, the pastoral allegory, the quest for origins.... This romantic characterization not only suppresses the true conditions of Balinese life; it also depicts a culture that never existed.”

Bruner’s observation is partially true for Prince Edward Island life. The culture of Prince Edward Island is richly steeped in the heritages of its inhabitants: French, Scottish, English, Irish and Mi’kmaq. These cultures *did* and *do* exist

on Prince Edward Island, but, like the bright brochure images, they are modified for the tourists' consumption. Referring to the native Maori culture of New Zealand, Taylor writes: "The moment that culture is defined as an object of tourism, or segmented and detached from its indigenous sphere, its aura of authenticity is reduced" (Taylor 2001: 15). Taylor's perspective implies that the authenticity of the culture (or cultures) of Prince Edward Island was blemished as soon it was identified as marketable. Like the photos of the African natives that Bruner describes, the tourist brochure photos are cropped to allow a limited view, cheapening the native's dignity and authenticity (Bruner 1989: 441). However, cultural performances on Prince Edward Island for the tourism industry actually aid in the cultures' preservation. In their own communities, Islanders enjoy their heritage in an everyday fashion, usually through music, song, and dance. These arts are important to East Coast inhabitants because there is a long tradition in the region of having to entertain one another. Prince Edward Islanders rarely dress up like *les habitants* or put on a kilt or full traditional headdress. They simply tell traditional stories, use traditional instruments, and sing traditional songs. These traditions are a source of pride, not just for their heritage, but also because they are part of the East Coast identity.<sup>32</sup>

Cultural performances are not static phenomena. As Bruner writes, "Anthropology has always recognised that peoples and cultures move..."

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<sup>32</sup> cf. Weale (1998).

(Bruner 1996: 178) A decade earlier, Clifford argued, “‘Cultures’ do not hold still for their portraits” (Clifford 1986: 10). The traditions of the East Coast and Prince Edward Island are always being updated: Montgomery’s *Anne of Green Gables* high-kicked its way off the pages of a novel to become a Broadway-style musical, traditional fiddles are now plugged into amplifiers, lobster suppers are served in massive restaurants big enough to hold hundreds of people, and the songs and dances of the Islander’s ancestors are performed for throngs of curious tourists who love to consume the entertaining and non-threatening display. However, performance for the tourists on Prince Edward Island is not comparable to the example of the Balinese frog dance that Bruner describes:

In the 1970s, for example, a cultural performance called a frog dance was devised for tourists. At the time of its creation, there was no “authentic” counterpart of the dance located elsewhere in Balinese culture; the dance was a commercial invention specifically designed for a tourist audience. It was not a simulation of an original, for there was no original. (Bruner 1996: 166-7)

It is more accurate to view the displays on Prince Edward Island as simply highlighting anachronistic elements of local culture. Prince Edward Island and its inhabitants live, like those in other parts of North America, in the twenty-first century. Nonetheless, Prince Edward Islanders still keep their communities rooted in earlier traditions. Tradition is valued, but malleability is allowed – to a certain extent. The local cultures are either consciously or unconsciously held to

be sacred, so if commercial concerns are perceived to have gone *too far* and diluted their sacred character, there is public outcry (cf. Taylor 2001).

I asked Hilda, the professor of English Literature and Linguistics, what her preconceptions of Prince Edward Island were before she first visited, and she told me,

I think if you come expecting that this is somehow going to be a culture under a glass bubble, you're going to be wrong and you'll be mistaken and you may well be disappointed, but in spite of... that, there's all sorts of *ersatz* early Island life: I mean, people who have been reproducing it and rigorously hanging on to it. No, to that extent, if you're going to regard the Island as a time machine, you're going to be disappointed, but if you regard it as the opportunity to encounter a place which allows you to re-connect with the sky and with the air, then I think you will have a fruitful and enjoyable and really good vacation. The Island is very forgiving. The Island is a place that can *hold* experiences and I think that may be one of its greatest virtues. It does not accept itself as necessarily providing experiences, but it provides the mist in which they occur. (her emphasis)

Hilda suggests that a traveller's experiences are not commodities to be bought or something that passively *happens* to visitors. Rather, her comments indicate that Prince Edward Island has the unique blend of old and modern that allows people to create or discover what they perceive to be authentic experiences of a world that is removed from their profane daily routine.

On Prince Edward Island, modernity is not vilified or de-emphasized in favour of the past. As McCannell suggests:

Modern society, only partly disengaged from industrial structures, is especially vulnerable to overthrow from within through nostalgia, sentimentality and other tendencies to regress to a previous state.... When tradition, nature and other societies, even 'primitive' societies, are transformed into tourist attractions, they join with the modern social attractions in a new unity, or a new universal solidarity, that includes the tourist. (McCannell 1976: 82-83)

Here, McCannell notes that the audience plays a role in constructing the authenticity of the performance. By commodifying it, the performers recognise modern commercial and touristic practices. The tourists purchase tickets to the show, perpetuating the demand. The demand motivates the operators to continue producing spectacles, and the exchange of money justifies the compromise of authenticity. (cf. Taylor 2001: 15)

However low the rates, there is crime on Prince Edward Island. Poverty and drug problems, illness, and misfortune *are* social issues. There is, in other words, real life. It is not unusual that tourist brochures do not highlight this fact; not many tourism associations from *anywhere* like to highlight their destination's vice and poverty. Most tourists to Prince Edward Island are not naïve; they know that what they are shown is polished for their viewing. They know that this smallest province is not the "land that time forgot," but they have not come to help solve social problems – they have come to enjoy themselves. Jane, from the American Midwest, discussed her dreams of moving to Prince Edward Island. "I always *wanted* to live up here," she told me:

and that's my dream – is to retire up here... when you come here on vacation it's the ideal... you don't see the bad things... the crime or the pollution or you know, the taxes or all those kind of things, but... you have to realise, and I've thought about that, too: Yes, you come and live here, I mean, I think I could be very very happy here and I kinda feel this is where my soul belongs, but if this becomes your full-time place, then the reality sets in and you still have to work and pay your taxes and pay your bills.

Although Jane would be removing herself from the social structure with which she is accustomed, she understands that she would be entering another society with somewhat different, but albeit existent social structure (V. Turner 1969: 125-126). Nanette echoes Jane's understanding of modern Prince Edward Island. She told me that she understood the element of "the show" that is presented to the visitors.

I'm not foolish. I know that, like any place, this place has problems. I know there's unemployment. I know there's poverty. I know that there are discontented people. I know there's a great deal of chagrin with the older generation because they know their children have to leave, and many times they've encouraged their children to leave and this must be heartbreaking. It *really* must be. No, it's like I thought it would be, and I can appreciate the real life that's there, too. And I've met people who live here, so I know there are problems. Oh, no – it's not a Never-Never Land. (her emphasis)

While most people know that there is a façade being provided them, they are happy to accept it. A strange custom of the host and the tourist is the acceptance of the performance but the tacit refusal to recognise it as such. In fact, Bruner writes that tourists "are upset if what is presented to them is an outright fake,

but otherwise they are quite content with a theatrical suspension of disbelief” (Bruner 1991: 240). Of course tourists know that people do not wander the streets of Charlottetown in Victorian costumes pretending to be the Right Honourable Mr. and Mrs. John Tupper, representatives of Upper Canada, for the fun of it – they are there because the City of Charlottetown pays them to do it; it adds charm and a sense of history to the province’s capital. The same goes for all the visitors who were motivated to come to Prince Edward Island because of their interest in L. M. Montgomery’s writing. They understand that the stories she wrote were set almost a century ago, but they still want to see tokens of that landscape and outlook that remain in the twenty-first century.

An interesting dilemma of the tourism scene on Prince Edward Island is that many visitors are not interested in the “touristy” attractions but feel their trips are more authentic without these spectacles. In order to have an authentic Prince Edward Island vacation, many tourists feel the need to escape from the bustle of the busy beaches and shops and find their own private corners. This is, of course, what the tourist literature promises. “That was the weirdest part of last summer,” Marilyn, the PhD student of English Literature from New York City, told me about her first visit to Prince Edward Island in the summer of 2003:

I was drawn here because of L. M. Montgomery but I did not want to do the L. M. Montgomery tourism, so it was kinda a weird double-bind.... So, it really was so strange that I’d come all this way just



because of L. M. Montgomery but I didn't really want to do all the things that were associated specifically with re-enactments or re-building of houses or all that, I just really wanted to see the *place*. (her emphasis)

Marilyn is describing a secular pilgrimage; a pilgrimage not motivated by religion but by something personal; by something that was not connected with organised religious institutions. She did not need to, indeed, preferred not to see markers of tourism. For those tourists that do come to Prince Edward Island to find places that were important to Montgomery and her works, Green Gables' authenticity is sullied by the crowds of tourists who might not appreciate its significance, the fact that it has become an attraction to which the National Park system charges entry, and the reconstructions of the grounds that hide modern amenities (the "barn" holds the café and the "woodshed" disguises the bathrooms).<sup>33</sup>

It is difficult to see unadulterated, while still meaningful, places in the Cavendish area, and this is especially true for Montgomery fans. Marilyn was more interested in the places that had been meaningful to Montgomery herself, and not the markers, as McCannell calls them, that represented them. "The information given by a sight marker often amounts to no more than the name of the sight, or its picture, or a plan or map of it" (McCannell 1976: 110). Fawcett and Cormack (2001) extensively address the importance of markers and the role they play at different tourist sites. Markers have no soul, no *anima*, but how

they are used demonstrates the over-arching philosophy of a site. If anything, markers lessen the significance of the site by limiting it to a small placard, not allowing for imagination or interpretation. Perhaps this is why Fawcett and Cormack seem to favour the markers at the Macneill Homestead and not at the Green Gables National Historic Site or the Anne of Green Gables Museum: the markers (often containing quotations from Montgomery's journals) at the Homestead allow the sightseer to better understand the meaning of the site as related to Montgomery, to get a better sense of the site's historicity, and to use more of their own imagination, therefore making the site personally meaningful.

The Macneills have carefully selected the quotations to illustrate the importance of the homestead to Montgomery as a child, a woman and an author... The quotations contain numerous references to the sensuality of nature... Natural images such as these suggest a sacred, discrete – even an Eden-like – site. Furthermore, many of the quotations provide images of the earth and the metaphor of rootedness, symbolically reaffirming the importance of the site for Montgomery. (Fawcett and Cormack 2001: 693)

Again, we are given the sense that the Homestead site has a religious element. Montgomery identified nature as a very moving element of her life, and therefore, her writing. The Macneill's use of Montgomery's nature imagery on the site markers at the Homestead, coupled with its physical separation from excessive evidence of modernity (telephone wires, the highway) contribute to

the site's feeling of sacredness. It is represented as that was which was personally important to Montgomery.

Many of my informants from the Lucy Maud Montgomery Institute Conference considered the site of Montgomery's Cavendish home ("The Macneill homestead") to be more meaningful than the Green Gables site. The Green Gables house has become one of those obligatory "must-see" places on Prince Edward Island, while the Macneill Homestead is more of a secret that only true Montgomery fans know about. The traveller must do research specifically about Montgomery, her life, and her significant places in order to learn about the Homestead, as opposed to the Green Gables house, which tourists who have not read Montgomery's novels *and* Montgomery fans alike recognise. As McCannell explains,

Modern museums and parks are anti-historical and un-natural. They are not, of course, anti-historical and unnatural in the sense of their destroying the past or nature because, to the contrary, they preserve them, but as they preserve, they automatically separate modernity from its past and from nature and elevate it above them. Nature and the past are made a part of the present, not in the form of are [*sic*] unreflected inner spirit, a mysterious *soul*, but rather as revealed objects, as tourist attractions. (McCannell 1976: 84, his emphasis)

This is the distinction that can be made between the Green Gables House and the Macneill Homestead. Green Gables has been made into a museum. It used to be a true home and a piece of literary history – it is where Montgomery was living at the time she conceived "Anne of Green Gables," and she used the

house as a mental model when she was writing about the Cuthbert's home. Now, the house has been separated from what it was: simply a family's home and made into a spectacle. It has been made to look like it was, *or*, how it is *expected* to have looked. Doug Heaney, then-Client Services Manager at the Prince Edward Island National Park (the custodian of Green Gables) told Fawcett and Cormack that

‘[Design of Green Gables is] a bit more challenging at a site like this because there's not much you can compare Green Gable [*sic*] to within our [Parks Canada] system.’ This difficulty is addressed by allowing some of the historical detail presented at the site to be interpreted through the writings of Montgomery as well as through other, more conventional, historical records and scholarship... Heaney notes that in 1985 ‘... a major attempt was made to make the restoration more authentic. And then I say more authentic, more authentic to what Montgomery describes of the house in the novel.’ (Fawcett and Cormack 2001: 695)

The Green Gables House, heavily commodified by Parks Canada, compromised the site's authenticity while they attempted to preserve its authenticity not according to history, but according to the imagination of Montgomery and her readers. What Parks Canada is doing with Green Gables' reconstruction project is assuming that *Anne of Green Gables* is not fiction, but fact. Therefore, Green Gables' reconstructed authenticity was neither absolutely loyal to history because of its dependence on fiction, nor absolutely true to Montgomery's fiction, as it is impossible to reconstruct the authentic according to something as nebulous as a person's imagination. The Macneill Homestead is

not reconstructed and refurbished. It is simply a hole in the ground where the home used to stand. A stone cellar still remains in the middle of the indentation. It has not been spared the ravages of time, so it seems more genuine. The site is minimally reconstructed, out of view of the highway, and less crowded than the Green Gables house, making the visitors feel more separated from the profane world. Besides its physical separation, Montgomery identified heavily with the homestead site, further propelling it into the realm of “relic.”

The expectation of authenticity in Montgomery’s works is complicated by the caveat that most tourism on Prince Edward Island is centred around her works of fiction, therefore, even if characters and places are replicated exactly as Montgomery described them, they still remain works of fiction and near-perfect replication is therefore impossible. In terms which call to mind Bruner’s discussion of the Balinese Frog Dance, Jean Baudrillard uses the word “simulacra” to describe that which is a replica of something that did not exist in the first place. “Today abstraction is no longer that of the map, the double, the mirror, or the concept. Simulation is no longer that of a territory, a referential being, or a substance. It is the generation by models of a real without origin or reality: a hyperreal” (Baudrillard 1994: 1). He later uses religious terms to explain: “The question returns to religion and the simulacrum of divinity: ‘I forbade that there be any simulacra in the temples because the divinity that animates nature can never be represented.’ Indeed it can be” (Baudrillard 1994: 4).

Movie-goers are often surprised to be disappointed by the big-screen representation of their favourite book once they realise that the movie has seized and stunted what made reading the book so rich and rewarding: the element of imagination. In parallel fashion, tourism operators on Prince Edward Island have seized and stunted the imaginative world of Avonlea. This could explain why so many of my informants from the L. M. Montgomery Institute Conference were less impressed with the Green Gables House than with the Macneill Homestead. The Homestead does not re-create fiction – it barely recreates reality – but just *is*. Avonlea was never more than a figment of Montgomery’s imagination (and subsequently, a century’s worth of reader’s imaginations), therefore making it difficult or impossible to re-create with tangible accuracy, since every reader will imagine it differently. “‘We didn’t rebuild the old house,’ says John [Macneill]... ‘because we didn’t want to make it commercial... This is for special people... We wanted you to be able to use your imagination, because that’s what Maud [Montgomery] did’” (Brouse 2002: 40). Tourism operators do not intentionally confine the imagination at their attractions. They know the spirit of Avonlea is endearing (read: marketable), but it remains inimitable nonetheless. “It’s hard to blame the people of Cavendish for this conflation of fantasy and reality,” writes Brouse, “since Montgomery’s readers would have made their pilgrimages whether or not anybody had invited them” (Brouse 2002: 36). Still, like Baurillard’s example of the hologram,<sup>34</sup>

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Baudrillard (1994: 105-109).

even if the operators succeed in replicating all things Montgomery, it remains a real simulation of an unreal concept.<sup>35</sup>

Similitude is a dream and must remain one, in order for a modicum of illusion and a stage of the imaginary to exist. One must never pass over to the side of the real, the side of the exact resemblance of the world to itself, of the subject to itself. Because then the image disappears.  
(Baudrillard 1994:105-106)

Paradoxically, the authenticity of the simulacra of Montgomery's imagination that Prince Edward Island tourism operators continue to produce and reproduce is compromised by simply *existing*.

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For further discussion of the *simulacrum* of Montgomery's work, see Lefebvre (2005).

CHAPTER SIX:

CONCLUSIONS

My research suggests that pilgrimages that are recognised by official religious institutions and vacations to Prince Edward Island share the same characteristics, but while the travelling public at large understands the strong similarities, the associative and nominal differences between the terms “pilgrimage” and “vacation” prevent most from considering the two types of travel as synonymous.

Three overlapping conclusions can be drawn from this study of travel to Prince Edward Island. The first is to recognise the importance of literary tourism, specifically, in the case of Prince Edward Island, that inspired by Lucy Maud Montgomery. The second conclusion deals with variability in perspectives among tourists on the “effectiveness” and authenticity of vacation. Finally, I argue that there are significant parallels between conventional religious pilgrimage and tourism.

MONTGOMERY’S ROLE

Prince Edward Island’s connection with the author Lucy Maud Montgomery and her works, coupled with its bucolic and pastoral setting, attracts approximately one million visitors each year. While not all visitors are



familiar with Montgomery, most are at least aware of her most famous novel, *Anne of Green Gables*. Montgomery is part of a larger phenomenon of literary pilgrimage. In this movement, readers become tourists whose goal is to explore the importance of *place* to an author and his or her work. Ernest Hemingway stimulated interest in Cuba through his writing (Brooks 2000: 203), and Jane Austen's home in Hampshire, England is still a popular destination for readers interested in her work (Kostrzewa 2000: 293). Acadian regions of Nova Scotia (especially Grand-Pré) still experience the influence of Longfellow's (1847) poem *Evangeline: A Tale of Acadie* and Newfoundland has recently seen an influx of tourists (especially campers in the Great Northern Peninsula) motivated by Annie Proulx's (1993) *The Shipping News* (Whalen 2004). Lucy Maud Montgomery has motivated much tourist interest in her home province of Prince Edward Island through her writing, especially *Anne of Green Gables* (1908). Although this kind of motivation for travel is often termed "literary tourism," I argue that it is more accurately called "literary pilgrimage." Given that the writing of any particular author is sufficiently meaningful to the reader to inspire travel to the work's setting (or the home of the writer), the journey is more sacred than secular, and the traveller gains spiritual satisfaction from *being* in the place.

Montgomery and her creations have become unique foci for visitor attention. Some fans of her work know how intimately attached Montgomery was to Prince Edward Island, especially the Cavendish area of the north shore.

They seek places that were influential in her creative process. Those places include extant buildings and aspects of the landscape of Prince Edward Island like rolling farmland and red sand dunes and beaches. Montgomery herself has, therefore, become like a sacred figure at the centre of a pilgrimage, with followers who wish to retrace her footsteps and see the sights as she did. As a result, locations and items that hold especially strong connections with the author become shrines and relics. These sites have become sacralized through a process of elevation and separation (McCannell 1976: 42-45, Fine and Speer 1985).

Montgomery is also responsible for creating other points of focus for many tourists. Anne Shirley, the heroine from *Anne of Green Gables*, has become a Canadian icon, with the epicentre of attention on Anne focussed on the Cavendish, Prince Edward Island area. Generations of readers have identified with Anne's sensitive and romantic temperament. Her name and names of other characters in *Anne* now grace a great number of tourist establishments on Prince Edward Island. Their presence belies the enduring popularity of Montgomery's writing.

Montgomery's description of Avonlea, the town in which *Anne of Green Gables* is set, is also a common theme in the tourist areas of Prince Edward Island. The constant references to Avonlea pose interesting dilemmas relating to the notion of authenticity. Although Avonlea is a purely fictional place, Montgomery did use Cavendish as a model for her depiction of a small Prince

Edward Island farming village at the turn on of the twentieth century. Tourism operators continue to attempt to recreate the “authentic Avonlea.” This recreation is simply impossible, as Avonlea *is* nothing more than a figment of Montgomery’s imagination (see Baudrillard 1994, Lefebvre 2005). No matter how similar Avonlea “is” to a century-old version of the village of Cavendish, it is impossible to authentically recreate, or, in this case, create, an authentic representation of a literary construct. Squire writes that Montgomery

experienced Prince Edward Island in a particular way, shaped by the late nineteenth- and turn-of-the-century circumstances. Today, not only have those experiences been preserved in a literary context, but also, over time and through different media, literary meaning had been appropriated and transformed into a much broader cultural framework. (Squire 1992: 138)

The impact that Montgomery has had on her readers, on Prince Edward Island, its tourism industry and its culture goes beyond the literary domain.

Montgomery’s works are more profound for many of her readers than books read for entertainment. Her work has become part of peoples’ consciousness, family histories, worldview, and ethos.

Informants from the Lucy Maud Montgomery Institute Conference more readily volunteered that their vacation to Prince Edward Island was a pilgrimage than those I interviewed in the National Park. The Conference attendees shared a focus on the character of Montgomery herself. Like a saint or miraculous event provides a focus for many religious pilgrims, Montgomery

and all things related to her served as a centre of attention for the Conference participants.

#### EFFECTIVENESS AND AUTHENTICITY

Anthropologists and sociologists have discussed tourism from an academic point of view and from a reflexive, subjective perspective (Bruner 1996, Crick 1995, Errington and Gewertz: 1989). While some anthropologists are loath to compare themselves to tourists because of negative stereotypes (see Boorstin 1964), others embrace the comparison. Crick (1995), for example, writes that, “an anthropologist simply is a type of tourist” (Crick 1995: 217). Both anthropologists and tourists are in search of “the authentic” and both return home with portraits of the Other. The “authentic,” however, is a very subjective term. (See also Headland et al. 1990.)

From the perspective of the tourist, rooted in their identity of traveller and vacationer, “authenticity” can be perceived in very different ways, both compared to other tourists and compared to ethnographers and anthropologists. On Prince Edward Island, tourists often share the perception that life can be lived “authentically,” that is, a life that is rich, but bare and unadorned, allowing for one’s “true self” to be explored. Whether this perception is true or not is inconsequential. Much of the sentiment that Prince Edward Island is “simple” is informed by the influence of Montgomery’s work. In an effort to appeal to

tourists that recognise her work, tourist operators evoke Montgomery's characters and fictional, albeit *based* on real, settings. As noted above, Baudrillard's (1994) concept of *simulacra* refers to some aspects of Prince Edward Island tourism. Tourists to Prince Edward Island, however, do not always spontaneously recognise simulations, and if they do identify something as "inauthentic," it does not necessarily lead to avoidance.<sup>36</sup>

#### VACATION AS PILGRIMAGE

My data suggests that vacationers are willing to call their holidays to Prince Edward Island a pilgrimage, but it does not seem that most would have spontaneously done so had I not introduced the concept. Once they had reflected on the idea, however, many vacationers conceded that travel to Prince Edward Island is so personally meaningful that they *would* consider it a pilgrimage. Inviting my informants to consider their vacations as a sacred journey animated them, and legitimated their reverence for their trip, which was sometimes the only annual extended break from the mundane working world they experienced.

Turner's concept of *communitas* (1969) is an important element of pilgrimages. Turner and Turner (1978) compared the liminal state of initiands in

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<sup>36</sup> See also Bruner's (1996) discussion of authenticity in Balinese performances for tourists.

Van Gennep's *Rites of Passage* (1960) to the situation of participants in pilgrimage. I found that while *communitas* did play a role in some tourists' vacation experiences to Prince Edward Island, their tendency to spend time with and communicate with other tourists was more a factor of their own personal gregariousness than a result of a social force that made them conscious of their connections to others in the same liminal state. The tourists' *communitas* on Prince Edward Island was more often a sense of connection with a larger reality. This sense of connectedness might be missing from their everyday lives, but on Prince Edward Island, it is motivated by the presence of Nature, a sense of "genuine living," and the authenticity evoked by Montgomery's writing.

Many of my informants volunteered the term "recharging the batteries" when they discussed the healing qualities of their vacations. This term denotes being re-filled with energy, and rejuvenated for the return to work (Graburn 1989: 22). For many of my informants, Prince Edward Island is not simply a random vacation destination. Rather the Island's particular characteristics are perceived by these visitors to be therapeutic (see also Bowman 1993). These characteristics include the slower, more relaxed atmosphere of Prince Edward Island, the close link to history and its related nostalgia (see Graburn 1995), the strong community sentiment, and the beautiful scenery.

#### SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

As my research progressed, I realised that I would have liked to have included more specific questions about each tourist's educational history to investigate if the informant's education could have played a part in what type of vacation is chosen, what kind of activities are undertaken, and which locations are visited. Prince Edward Island's tourism industry is intimately associated with interest in Montgomery's works, and reading as a pastime is, by virtue of its medium, something in which educated people engage. Further research could be done to try to delineate which particular attractions are considered meaningful for which groups, including information on the social class and education level of visitors. Are the same tourists going to the Macneill Homestead as those who go to Sandspit Theme Park? If so, what does each genre of attraction mean to the different groups of tourists? Which is more rejuvenating? Which is considered more obligatory for a vacation to Prince Edward Island (see McCannell 1976: 43)? Finally, what are the varying definitions of authenticity among the groups at difference types of attractions?

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## APPENDIX A

### Interview Questions:

- 1) Please tell me briefly about yourself (place of origin, job, education, etc.).
- 2) Do you travel often? If so, where?
- 3) With whom are you travelling?
- 4) What does going on vacation mean to you?
- 5) How is vacation different for you than everyday life at home?
- 6) Why did you choose to come to PEI for vacation?
- 7) What did you think PEI would be like before you came here?
- 8) Does it match your preconceptions or not? How?
- 9) What are your accommodations on PEI? How long do you plan to stay?
- 10) Can you tell me about how you plan to spend your time here?
- 11) Are you associated with a formal religion? Which one(s)?
- 12) Have you ever been to an official pilgrimage site (like Lourdes or Ste. Anne de Beaupré in Québec or St. Joseph's Oratory in Montréal)? Which one(s)? Can you tell me briefly about your experience(s)?
- 13) Do you see vacation as a chance for spiritual renewal or do you see vacation as promoting a sense of physical health and well-being?
- 14) Would you consider your visit to PEI as a type of pilgrimage or spiritually based travel?
- 15) Can you describe the feelings you have when you are on PEI?
- 16) Do you spend time with other visitors while you are on PEI?

17) Do they seem to share your experiences while here? How?

18) Do you sense that there is a community amongst visitors?

Additional Questions for Lucy Maud Montgomery Institute Participants:

19) How did Montgomery's work shape your view of what PEI would be like?

20) Would you say there is a discrepancy between the PEI of her literature and the PEI of today?

21) Do you feel a spiritual connection with both Montgomery and her work? Do you find it stronger when you are here on PEI?

22) Do you think that life on PEI would be more fulfilling than living elsewhere? Do you think it would provide a clearer sense of what is meaningful in one's life?



