

"TRIALS AND TRIUMPHS":  
THE HEROINE IN SELECTED NOVELS  
OF ANASTASIA ENGLISH

CENTRE FOR NEWFOUNDLAND STUDIES

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**"TRIALS AND TRIUMPHS":  
THE HEROINE IN SELECTED NOVELS OF ANASTASIA ENGLISH**

by

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A thesis submitted to the School of Graduate Studies  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
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## ABSTRACT

Anastasia English (1862?-1959) is Newfoundland's first significant female novelist. She was not only prolific in several genres -- short stories, novels, and poems -- but was also the editor of a local Christmas annual for at least forty years. Although her name has fallen into relative obscurity, her contribution as a writer is a valuable one. In the absence of any sustained commentary on either her life or her works, this thesis presents a brief biography, followed by an analysis of her major work.

An examination of the plots of three of English's four novels -- *Only a Fisherman's Daughter* (1899), *Faithless* (1901), and *When the Dumb Speak* (1938) -- reveals a recurring motif: the heroine undergoes a series of trials, but ultimately triumphs over them and achieves happiness. The pattern of trial and triumph, found in many novels written by women writers in the nineteenth century, not only reflects the moral consciousness of the time but makes a statement about the readership. Plot analysis, with its focus on the didacticism inherent in all three novels, stresses the centrality of contemporary moral values for both the author and her readers.

## PREFACE

My original interest in Anastasia English was sparked by a graduate course in Newfoundland literature. When writing a paper on *Only a Fisherman's Daughter*, I found that a search for printed materials pertaining to her life and works revealed not only a lacuna in early Newfoundland scholarship on women writers in general, but a paucity of resources for Anastasia English in particular. A few facts are available from brief entries in the *Encyclopedia of Newfoundland and Labrador* and *Dictionary of Newfoundland and Labrador*, but these for the most part dismiss her as a marginal writer of formulaic, escapist, romantic novels. With the exception of a brief discussion of two of her novels in one recent doctoral dissertation, no serious attention has been paid to Anastasia English. This thesis, then, is the first comprehensive treatment of her life and work.

Compiling even a brief biography of Anastasia English has presented significant problems. The major obstacle is the lack of any collections of papers. I was able to piece together a chronological picture from scattered information in various newspapers, and statistical sources such as census reports, voters' lists and city directories. Despite a thorough search of archival material, there are still large gaps to be filled. For instance, I found nothing about her education from the archives of the Presentation Congregation and the Congregation of the Sisters of Mercy. Fortunately,

Edward-Vincent Chafe was able to supply genealogical information. As a consequence of this dearth of archival material, there are many unanswered questions about her personal life, her literary influences and contacts. But in spite of scant resources, it has been satisfying to re-create, albeit incompletely, a life that deserves more than a few short, dry references in literary compendia.

In the absence of any previous evaluation of Anastasia English's work, I have opted for an analysis of the plots of three of her novels: *Only a Fisherman's Daughter*, *Faithless*, and *When the Dumb Speak*. These novels lend themselves to this approach as they all utilize the same pattern: they chronicle the 'trials and triumphs' of a heroine. While some critics may still frown on this methodology, plot analysis has regained favour, thanks to work done primarily by Nina Baym and Jane Tompkins. The methodology that I am applying to these novels is that used by Baym in *Woman's Fiction* (1978). Although she was dealing with a group of nineteenth-century American novels by women writers, her approach works equally well with English's fiction in that it focuses on the novels as reflections of contemporary moral attitudes.

As no prior bibliography of Anastasia English exists, I have expanded mine to include as complete as possible a list of her published works, whether they are used in the thesis or not. As it was common practice to publish stories anonymously, it is probable that more stories exist. In some cases, stories unsigned in their original

appearances are identified as hers in later publications. It would seem that most of her stories were published in the Christmas annuals; however, very few of these annuals are still extant. I have examined all that are available at the Centre for Newfoundland Studies at Memorial University, Provincial Archives of Newfoundland and Labrador, and the Provincial Reference Library's Newfoundland Collection.

I wish to acknowledge financial assistance from the School of Graduate Studies at Memorial University of Newfoundland. The staffs of the Centre for Newfoundland Studies, Provincial Archives, and the Provincial Reference Library gave invaluable assistance. I would also like to thank the following: Joan Strong for her encouragement and for kindly sharing with me her work on Anastasia English; Bert Riggs for his perceptive comments and for reading a draft of this thesis; Anne Hart, Robert Hollett, Dr. Roberta Buchanan for their encouragement; Mary Barry for the use of her computer; Steve Carr for his time and patience in printing this thesis and for reading drafts; Edward-Vincent Chafe for generously making available to me his genealogical file on Anastasia English and for answering my many questions; and Paul O'Neill for taking the time to write his recollections of Anastasia English in a letter. Thanks also to my wonderful parents, and to friends for their encouragement and moral support. Finally but most importantly, I wish to thank my supervisor Dr. Elizabeth Miller for her guidance and encouragement.

**For my mother and father,  
and  
In memory of a wonderful teacher,  
Dr. George M. Story**

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## CHAPTER ONE

### BIOGRAPHY

Anastasia Mary English was born in St. John's in either 1862 or 1863,<sup>1</sup> of a very respected family, the daughter of Joseph English (1832-1909) and Elizabeth Born (1833-1921), who were married 7 August 1860 at the Basilica. Her paternal grandmother, Anastasia Kinsella (for whom Anastasia was undoubtedly named), arrived in the colony of Newfoundland in the 1820s from Tintern, Co. Wexford, Ireland, where she had probably been one of the tenants dispossessed of their homes when Lord Colclough of Tintern Abbey razed the town.<sup>2</sup> Joseph English's family originally lived in Job's Cove, Conception Bay, where he was born, but moved to St. John's when Joseph was four years old. It seems that he received his education from a paternal relative, Patrick Doutney, and apprenticed as a newspaperman. Joseph English is noteworthy for having founded the *Terra Nova Advocate* in 1880. It was established as a voice for Catholics to counteract the pro-Protestant bias of the press of the day. He eventually left the newspaper business and accepted a clerical position with the government.<sup>3</sup>

Anastasia's mother, Elizabeth Born of St. John's, was the daughter of Valentine Born (1798-1860) and Mary Doutney (1808-1887). Valentine Born, a civil servant, was from England and a convert to Catholicism, while Mary Doutney was Irish and most likely a native of St. John's. The Born family was undoubtedly very religious:

Elizabeth's brother became a priest, and her sister a nun. When Valentine Born died, the government found a job for his widow and daughters as housekeepers at the Colonial Building, where they lived in the basement. At the time of her death in 1921, Elizabeth Born English<sup>1</sup> resided at 136 Water Street.

Little is known about Anastasia's schooling, though it is a reasonable assumption that she attended the convent school operated by the Mercy Sisters on Military Road.<sup>4</sup> The first two stanzas of her poem "To the Memory of a Loved Cousin and Friend" (which appeared in the 1945 *Yuletide Bells*) suggests attendance at such a school:

Companion loved of my childhood days,  
 The days of frolic and fun,  
 When we skipped and played in merry glee  
 'Neath the golden summer sun.  
 When schooltime came, together we went  
 Looking as proud as we could,  
 Wending our way to the hallowed spot  
 Where our Alma Mater stood.

The happiness of those golden hours,  
 Hours spent within convent walls,  
 The merry pranks on our homeward way  
 Fond memory oft recalls.  
 In converse sweet in the after years  
 We lived them over again,  
 But now your voice is forever hushed,  
 And the knowledge brings its pain.

As for the nature of her education, she was obviously fairly well-versed in literature and music: her novels are liberally sprinkled with literary quotations and references to Shakespeare, Tennyson, and other standard authors, as well as Biblical quotations,

ballads and songs. In all of her novels at least one character has musical ability, either vocal or instrumental. As for her religious training, Chafe suggests that *Butler's Catechism* was "drilled into every Catholic child until Vatican II."

Anastasia English was one of six children. Of her three brothers, William J. (1861-1917)<sup>5</sup> founded the *Bell Island Miner* in 1913 (which after his death continued to be published by his daughter Bessie until the 1940s); Valentine emigrated to the United States; and Joseph F. (1867-1945) obtained a bailiff's job through social connections. She had two sisters: Mary J. (1869-1946) who married John Fagan; and Annie (1874-1963) who, it seems, worked at the East End Post Office, and never married.<sup>6</sup>

Anastasia and Annie lived with their brother, Joseph, until his death, an event which seems to have left a void in their family. In a poetic tribute to him (*Yuletide Bells* 1945), Anastasia reveals both her sense of loss and her faith in God:

Your burden was so great you laid it down,  
 And we, who stay behind, must take it up,  
 Walk the road, so lonely now without you,  
     Beset with thorns and rough.  
 You had not thought so soon to leave us, dear,  
 Hence, oftentimes when sitting by your side  
 We heard the sigh and marked the silent tear  
     You bravely tried to hide.

But still with trusting faith and hope sublime  
 You bowed submissive to your God on high.  
 And with that courage born of grace divine  
     You did not fear to die.

With breaking hearts we saw the shadows steal,  
 Our love and care had failed to hold you here,  
 For He, Who loves us with undying love,  
 Had wanted you up there.

But, oh! our home is desolate and lone,  
 And when the twilight shadows draweth near,  
 We only see your pictured face beside  
 Your lonely vacant chair.  
 Farewell, then, until our years are numbered,  
 And you with happy, shining face shall stand  
 Near the Gate through which we'll pass with glory,  
 Into the promised land.

The English family had a number of notable members including Anastasia's cousins: Leo Edward Francis English (1887-1971), a writer and curator of the Newfoundland Museum, who according to the *Newfoundland Who's Who for 1952* was "the best living authority on Newfoundland tradition, [and] author of school textbooks" (34); Arthur Stanislaus English (1878-1940), farmer, journalist, and scientist; Captain Edward English (of the SS *Ethie*); and Mary Theresa (Sister Mary Clare) English (1878-1940), who played a significant role in the founding of St. Clare's Mercy Hospital. It would appear that from her father's side of the family, Anastasia received her desire to write, an interest in social activism,<sup>7</sup> and an awareness of the prejudices against Catholics. From her mother's side, she gained social position in the Catholic community. Strong, independent women on her mother's side provided positive role models.

The English family were literary: not only were Anastasia's father and brother in the newspaper business, but the English women were also writers. Scattered through various Christmas annuals, periodicals and papers of the day are poems by Anastasia, and by her nieces Leona, Kathleen, and Bessie English. Bessie continued to publish the Bell Island paper after her father died and also edited a Christmas annual after she married, while Kathleen (another of William's daughters) edited a Christmas annual, *Christmas Greeting*, and wrote a novel "*Lover's Meetings*," or *Monica's Destiny* (1937).

While we know very little about where Anastasia English lived,<sup>8</sup> we do know that she was a prolific writer.<sup>9</sup> In addition to four novels -- *Only a Fisherman's Daughter* (1899), *Faithless* (1901), *Alice Lester* (1904); and *When the Dumb Speak* (1938) -- she published a collection of short stories, "*The Queen of Fairy Dell*" *And Other Tales* (1912).<sup>10</sup> She also wrote many poems and stories (although probably not the hundreds of stories suggested in her obituary), as well as newspaper articles. As editor of the Christmas annual *Yuletide Bells*,<sup>11</sup> she composed many editorials.

According to an article that appeared in the *Evening Telegram* two days after her obituary, English's novels were very popular when they became available in local bookstores.<sup>12</sup> When *Alice Lester* was published, the *Evening Telegram* (1 August 1904) carried an announcement that the book (by "Maria") was for sale in local

bookstores; an advertisement mentioned that her two previous novels had local scenes and plots. English published under various names: four of her books use the pseudonym Maria, and her last, published in 1938, lists Statia M. English as the author. Most of her stories (especially those published in the Christmas numbers), are credited to Statia M. English.<sup>13</sup> She wrote her last story in 1958 for publication in that year's planned edition of the Christmas number (the obituary does not identify the annual), but it never saw print as Bessie English, the editor, died in September 1958, and the issue was never published.

Anastasia English was quite popular as a writer in her day. In 1907 she won second prize (for which she received \$3.00) in a Christmas short story competition, for her story "Snowed in at Tickle Harbor; or, Granny Hunt's Prediction" (*Free Press* 17 December 1907). The paper noted that English was "a writer of fiction," and "has won [with this prize] a well-merited position in local literary circles." According to the 22 December 1908 *Free Press*, she was again a prize winner in the annual Christmas short story competition, winning first prize and \$5.00 for "Looking for Santa Claus": "Miss English is one of our best-known local writers, and always has an interesting story for Christmas. Many of her short stories have been more pretentious than that which we published last week [15 December 1908 issue], but none have excelled it in its tone, easy diction and wholesome influence. We would greatly miss Miss English, were her name not to appear amongst our prize winners."

No announcements have been found of the release of her books other than *Alice Lester* and *"The Queen of Fairy Dell" And Other Tales*.<sup>14</sup> Special circumstances surrounded the publication of *Alice Lester*: in 1 August 1904 *Evening Telegram* an announcement entitled "Latest Local Novel," noted that *Alice Lester* was issued and dedicated to "Old Home Week" comers. Old Home Week welcomed back to their native soil hundreds of Newfoundlanders who had left the country to seek their fortunes in the United States and Canada. The newspaper noted that this novel was "all local [scenes] and one with which all Newfoundlanders are thoroughly acquainted, and this should make the story doubly interesting." The same issue of the *Telegram* contained an advertisement for the novel: the "latest Newfoundland Novel," for sale at bookstores, and at 50 Long's Hill (price 50 cents). In the 8 August 1904 issue there was a lengthy write-up entitled "Alice Lester" about "the lady novelist of Newfoundland" and her new novel:

... from the pen of a talented local writer, who is already known to the public under the pseudonym of Maria, author of "Only a Fisherman's Daughter" and "Faithless". Miss English is the daughter of our fellow-citizen, Mr. Joseph English. She knows how to tell a good story, and in her latest venture, "Alice Lester", has woven a thrilling tale of love and madness, of incident and adventure. From the earliest chapters the interest of the reader is assured. Her characters are not sentimental impossibilities, but very man and very woman -- neither all bad nor all perfect, but such as the world knows and has known from the days of Eden to these latter days, when even amid the stress and strain of the strenuous life, there remains time for mystery, for generosity and love. At times the tale is one of absorbing interest, and to Newfoundlanders it will appeal with especial force on account of the delightful local touches with which the book abounds.

The scene is placed on the western coast of the island, whence it

shifts to the city of St. John's and other parts of the mighty, and yet, little world, in which humanity lives, and moves, and has its being. The book is dedicated to the wanderer who has been "compelled by circumstances to bid adieu to home and friends, and seek a fortune 'neath a foreign sky; to the wayward roamer, whom love of adventure and a yearning for a wider sphere of action have wooed from his native soil; to the stranger, who bent on pleasure and wholesome enjoyment, comes in our midst in all good fellowship." Printed attractively on thick paper, it presents a pleasing appearance and does credit to the typographers of the *Free Press* office, who have been working night and day during the past three weeks to have it ready in time to greet our visitors.

At the modest sum of fifty cents it should meet a ready sale. Miss English wrote for the love of her art, but the public cannot express their appreciation more truly than by promptly exhausting the edition. The carping critic may find defects and blemishes in her work, but the "tout ensemble" does credit, not only to the gifted writer, but to the city, of which she is a resident and a native. Those who have read her previous books will notice that in facility of description and vividness of narrative, Miss English has excelled, and will unite with us in warmly congratulating the lady novelist of Newfoundland.

While no reviews (in the contemporary sense of the word) exist, at least such an article gives a glimpse of her popularity. It is interesting to note that *Faithless* was mentioned in a 1912 *Telegram* advertisement -- it first (the first for that year) appeared in the 13 June issue in a Dicks & Co. advertisement.<sup>15</sup> "*The Queen of Fairy Dell*" *And Other Tales* received a brief mention in 14 October 1912 *Daily News*, as a book that "all lovers of Newfoundland should have on their shelves."<sup>16</sup>

We can glean some evidence of English's social and political views from her editorials<sup>17</sup> in *Yuletide Bells*. For the most part they focus on the passing of time, the origin of Christmas, and reaffirmation that the Christ-child should not be forgotten.

While these editorials bear the mark of a devout Christian (they often read like sermons), others address the war and its atrocities, the school system, and the government. For example, in the 1916 issue she writes of the cruelty of war, a war that must be fought by honorable men "to preserve the liberty of the British Empire and the purity of their women ... that tyrants who have broken through all laws, human and divine, and trampled honor in the dust, may never again have power as a nation to perpetuate such sacrileges against God and humanity as have scandalized the Christian world during the past two years." Her poem "Somewhere in France" appeared in the same issue and reinforced her certainty that the innocent must pay to appease God:

"'Tis not for thee, oh, mortal man,  
 To question God's decree,"  
 The beauteous angel serious grew,  
 And sad of voice was he,  
 "This planet earth is steeped in sin,  
 And sin must sin beget,  
 Nor all the blood that shall be shed,  
 Can pay the awful debt."

"Then what, oh, what can make amends?"  
 The soldier trembling cried,  
 "If life and blood impotent are,  
 To stem the crimson tide.  
 If tortures borne in trench and field  
 Must fail to satisfy,  
 What expiation can be made,  
 To the Majesty on High?"

The angel raised his hand and said,  
 "It ever has been known,  
 The innocent and clean of heart,

For man's crimes shall atone,  
 The tears that must like rivers fall,  
 From the stricken mother's eyes,  
 The anguished sighs that shall be wrung  
 From the broken-hearted wives."

"When these shall count against the guilt,  
 And balance in the scale,  
 God's majesty shall be appeased,  
 And right o'er might prevail  
 Farewell, oh man, thou'rt wise as I,"  
 The angel gently spoke,  
 The soldier kissed the shining robe,  
 And to pain and suffering woke.

War is the focus of a 1940 editorial, in which World War II is perceived as a threat to Christianity: "Can Christianity, we wonder, live under such cruel oppression? Can normal conditions ever come out of the chaos that envelopes the world? They shall and will as the Ark rose triumphant above the troubled waters so shall Christians and Christianity [sic] arise victorious from the persecutions and cruelties by which they are now assailed." From this editorial we also get a sense of the impact of modernism: the world is brought in closer relief to Newfoundland. Her patriotism is clear: "Britain shall be victorious by means of the faith and trust placed in her by the people of Great Britain and her vast Empire." In 1943 the war is still raging and this time her concern is with Hitler, whom she does not name:

This other tyrant, whose name begins with same letter [as Herod the Cruel], and who has caused the streets of cities, towns and villages to run with the blood of innocent victims, does he in his innocence and presumption also think that he can overcome the omnipotent God; that

he with his puny mind, can plan and accomplish that which he has so evilly designed -- the abolishing of Christianity and everything pertaining to God from the face of the earth?...

... God will not forsake us, ... the Pope will always sit in the Chair of Peter till, on Judgement Day he hands back the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven.

In a pro-Catholic editorial in 1944, she attacks the school system for not allowing "anything pertaining to God" to be voiced: "They may be taught anything else but that which treats of God and the world to come; and of how important it is that we live our lives here so that, when we come to die, we may be found worthy to live eternally with Him in Heaven." She points out that "the Catholic Church will not tolerate schools where religion is not taught." Not only does she focus on the school system, but she also addresses the absence of God in social gatherings, and in the marriage ceremony: outside the Catholic Church they are "disobeying His law every day, trampling in the mire the sacredness of the marriage vows, destroying the home life, the unity of the family circle; making but a mockery of that solemn rite of matrimony." She lambasts the divorce courts, calling them "an insidious poison ... sapping all that is sacred and holy, all that is loyal and beautiful from the family life." "Abolish the divorce courts," she suggests, "and there will be no cause for alarm, and perhaps peace may come to the world." She is hopeful for a new era for Newfoundland when "we shall have shaken off the yoke [Commission of Government] which for the past ten years has oppressed us."

Her political views resurface in the 1945 issue:

We have amongst us capable hands and active, clever brains, the hands and brains of our native soil. Why, we ask, can they not be given the right to rule the affairs of their own Island; the right to govern and protect their own interest.

There is now no reason why we Newfoundlanders should be denied that right, the right for which our great-grandfathers fought so long ... We, too, must fight -- fight with tooth and nail, until that grand victory is ours. It will take some time no doubt, to retrieve the blunders that have been made.

She refers again in 1946 to "the yoke" -- presumably Commission of Government -- "under which we've groaned"; she points out that "[g]ranted, we may have our oddities and peculiarities but they're our own, and our own can deal with them."

Again in 1947 she campaigns for the return of Responsible Government:

The Responsible Government League has espoused a noble and holy cause, which is to foster in the younger generation that pride in their Country's charms, to kindle in their spirit that immortal fire, which is Godlike, for next to God comes our country.

We loved her in the days of freedom and prosperity, in the days of her many sorrows, in her joyous days, and now, in the days of her bondage our hearts cry out, louder and stronger, "We love thee Newfoundland." How best can we prove the sincerity of our words, how best show that the words are not empty, meaningless? The answer is this, when the time is ripe, when the opportunity is ours, let every loyal son and daughter of Terra Nova mark their ballot for "Responsible Government" for which generations, yet unborn, will bless them.

In a short article entitled "Matters Political" published in the 1948 issue, she makes her stance clear on those who she feels have betrayed Newfoundland in supporting Confederation with Canada:

Short as the passing year has seemed, how much can be crowded into it, the sorrows and woes, the horrors and tragedies, the hopes that have been crushed by treachery and deceit, treachery from those whom we trusted, deceit on the part of those whom we have deemed our friends. We Newfoundlanders are the victims of those in whose hands is welded [sic] the sceptre of power. The year ... is certainly the blackest in history ... did we truly value the grand heritage which was ours we would never have allowed it to slip from our grasp, we would have put up a strong fight against such a disaster.

The fire of patriotism, we are inclined to think, has of late years, been burning very low within us, and our pride has needed this blow to kindle anew the flame to make us feel our loss and realize what that loss means to us. The love of freedom and independence was so strong an element in the breasts of our forefathers that it urged them on to fight the good fight for their posterity and, tho many times defeat awaited them, they persevered till at last victory crowned their efforts, and responsible government was ours ... So we shall struggle, we shall not give up the fight tho our dictators try in every way to frustrate our efforts. Of course they are still sore at the complete snowing under, the flat turn down, which the Responsible Government voters gave them at the June Referendum and this is their manner of retaliation.

In "Writing in Newfoundland" in *The Oxford Companion to Canadian Literature*,

Patrick O'Flaherty notes that the period in which English lived and wrote was an exciting literary time:

As the nineteenth century ended, Newfoundland had become a well-used setting for tales of adventure by Canadian, British, and American authors.... the closing decades of the century were noteworthy for an outburst of scholarly and patriotic writing by resident authors anxious to prop up Newfoundland's faltering nationhood. The period 1875-1915 was possibly the most fertile in the colony's literary history, although, as in earlier decades, the bulk of the writing was descriptive and topical rather than imaginative. (550)

Having listed several authors (all men), O'Flaherty notes that:

This heady time in Newfoundland letters was marked by the founding of two ambitious periodicals: the ephemeral *Newfoundland Magazine* (1900) and *The Newfoundland Quarterly*. . . . Nor were poetry and fiction absent from this small renaissance. Isabella Rogerson, Michael F. Howley, F.B. Wood, and R.G. MacDonald produced volumes of verse between 1898 and 1908, while W.B. Stabb, Anastasia M. English, and J.A. O'Reilly wrote romances loosely based on Newfoundland life and history. Stabb's *Florimel Jones* (London, 1876) appears to be the first novel written by a native Newfoundlander. (550)

There were other women writing in St. John's at the same time as Anastasia English, many of whom were quite prolific, as a perusal of newspapers, Christmas annuals, and other periodicals reveal. Her nieces, Bessie and Kathleen, were both editors of Christmas annuals, and Kathleen was also the author of a novel; another niece, Leona, also wrote poetry. Margaret Duley's first novel was published in 1936, just two years before English's last novel. There were quite a number of poets including Rose M. Greene, Phoebe Florence Miller, Bertille Tobin, Ellen Carberry, to name only a few. Very little has been written about Newfoundland's literary history, and in particular, those women who wrote. It is not even certain that English was Newfoundland's first woman novelist.<sup>18</sup>

English, who died 30 May 1959 at St. Patrick's Mercy Home at the age of 97, retained a clear and intelligent mind right up to the time of her death. She never married, nor did her sister Annie, with whom she lived all of her life. Chafe notes that "what fascinates me about the entire English family is the sense of independence and individualism which is characteristic of most of them. In some family members

this non-conformity to norms led to marginality ... I find it rather interesting that so many of them never married."<sup>19</sup>

Today few people recognize her name. For the few who do, the name is a vague memory.<sup>20</sup> One exception is local author Paul O'Neill, who writes that "[t]he first Newfoundland novel I ever read was Statia English's *When the Dumb Speak*." He obtained it from his school library and read it when he was in grade eight or nine, and was "completely fascinated by it and was totally swept away by the story." He acknowledges that it was "one of the early books that influenced me to become a writer."<sup>21</sup>

## CHAPTER TWO

### TRIALS AND TRIUMPHS

And we want to recover  
    our foremothers'  
        navigations.  
But where are the signposts,  
    the keys, the legends,  
    the scales for reading their experience;--  
Where do we find the markers of their efforts?  
Without maps,  
    We stumble,  
    Or ask--  
Stop someone along the way, and say:  
    "Can you help me to find--?--"

Anastasia English's fiction is similar in narrative technique, plot construction, character and theme to numerous American, British and Canadian novels of the nineteenth century. Consequently, a good starting point for examining her work, in the absence of any significant commentary on nineteenth-century Newfoundland fiction in general and the works of Anastasia English in particular, is the critical literature dealing with the genre itself. The approach which provides the theoretical framework of this thesis is that of Nina Baym whose seminal work, *Woman's Fiction*,<sup>2</sup> focuses on American fiction by women from 1820 to 1870. Conclusions similar to Baym's have been reached by scholars of Canadian literature of roughly the same period.<sup>3</sup>

Reading criticism of nineteenth-century American and Canadian women's novels

exposes the lack of consensus about the labelling. To try to classify English's fiction by situating it within a specific genre is to confront the same set of problems identified by Baym in her feminist survey of the "once popular but now neglected American fiction, the many novels by American women authors about women, written by women between 1820 and 1870," works we hear of today chiefly "through detractors who deplore the feminizing -- and hence degradation -- of the noble art of letters" (Baym 1978, 11). In the mid-nineteenth century when more and more American women began writing and publishing, their fiction was usually classified as "sentimental," "domestic," or "romantic"<sup>4</sup> (Hiatt, 131). Another label used today is "a fiction of sensibility," while in some literary histories the genre is called "domestic sentimentalism" (Baym 1978, 23). All of these designations are inadequate: rather than describing they often convey adverse judgement, or put the emphasis on "a presumed ambience in the fiction rather than on the implications of the basic plot" (Baym 1978, 23).<sup>5</sup>

Mary Kelley has proposed that these female writers be called "literary domestics," as the labels "sentimentalists" or "scribbling women" have, she feels, a pejorative and ahistorical quality (viii). The latter label comes from Nathaniel Hawthorne's famous complaint about the "d--d mob of scribbling women"; he was incensed that their "trash" preoccupied the public taste.<sup>6</sup> Of course, Hawthorne was referring to Americans, but his complaint could also be applied to women writing in British North

America: "There was certainly a mob of women writing in Canada in the nineteenth century, a much larger mob than is generally appreciated" (McMullen, 4). But, Kelley's label still connotes judgement. Baym's solution is to call this fiction "woman's fiction" -- as it is fiction written by women, addressed to women, telling one particular story about women -- a solution that sidesteps all weighted labelling, and simply describes the fiction.<sup>7</sup>

A strong bias exists against this type of fiction; consequently the novels and their authors have been consigned to the literary rubbish heap of oblivion. The myth of the dreadful nineteenth-century woman writer has been firmly established. Although scholarly interest is increasing -- research by Nina Baym, Jane Tompkins, Mary Hiatt and others has opened up this whole area of fiction -- it still remains largely an unmapped territory. Current scholarship has not produced monolithic approval or any agreement on critical stances. Terms such as "domestic" and "sentimental" continue to be used in discussions of nineteenth-century fiction by women.

While popular in the nineteenth century, this fiction has limited appeal to the modern taste. While not claiming that these women writers are outstanding, contemporary feminist critics do insist that men and women wrote fiction of equal value. Furthermore, they contend that this fiction must be contextualized: "contemporary tastes and values applied indiscriminately to older literature may illuminate

contemporary tastes and values but say little about the literature itself" (Tompkins in Davidson, 123). "Symbolic, romantic, ideological, philosophical, inspirational, and mythic" (Baym in Springer, 214), it is unlike realistic or postmodern fiction. To see what it is, or was, the distorting perceptions that controlled earlier scholarly accounts of this fiction must be put aside.

Denigrated for content as well as its stylistic "flaws," this fiction has also been criticized for its strong didactic component. Indeed, much nineteenth-century fiction was didactic<sup>8</sup>: "Praiseworthy novels were expected to contain an extractable moral," and overtly didactic tales with their clear moral structure were generally acceptable (Gerson 1989, 30). Just as MacMillan, McMullen and Waterson note in their study of six nineteenth-century Canadian female novelists,<sup>9</sup> didacticism is "a lingering trace of moralistic upbringing," a reflection of the moral message that was "the salient characteristic of [British] domestic fiction" (7).

Many nineteenth-century novelists wrote in a tradition of piety and moral commitment for a reading public that was steeped in religious and moral discourse; thus it is hardly surprising that the domestic novels of the time dealt with themes of sin and salvation. Authors expected their efforts to be more than ephemeral; they meant their readers to take something away from their reading that would help them in their lives. On the secular level, fictional characters faced trials as the means of strengthening character.

From the otherworldly vantage point,

The trials were sent to detach a person from earthly impermanence and turn her (or him) to God, who alone does not change or fail. The sincere heart received assurance of God's love and from this love an influx of strength that ennobled it to return to its earthly struggle fortified to prevail.... By punitive measures, God makes himself necessary to his children. The proof of his existence is in suffering and deprivation; and, hard as it may sometimes seem, the mere human creature must assent to the idea that God loves us most when he punishes us. (Baym 1978, 43)

From this fiction impressionable young women readers learned submission to the will of God, endurance, resignation, fulfilment of duty, and self-sacrifice (Fryckstedt, 9). Lessons embedded in the story often illustrated a passage of scripture. Tompkins notes "the endlessly repeated rescue scenes ... and the Job-like trials of faith ... while violating what seems to be self-evident norms of probability and formal economy, serve as a means of stating and proposing solutions for social and political predicaments" (xvii). Readers were taught what kind of behavior to emulate or shun. In the nineteenth century morals were carefully guarded: "At a time when the national welfare was thought to depend upon the Christian virtue of individual citizens, and when bringing the whole world to Christ was conceived as a goal of national welfare, stories about orphan girls whose trials of faith teach them to submit to God's will did not seem irrelevant to the collective civic enterprise" (Tompkins, 120). Twentieth-century critics, however, have taught us to equate "popularity with debasement, emotionality with ineffectiveness, religiosity with triviality, and all of these, implicitly with womanly inferiority" (Tompkins, 123).

Woman's fiction has also been criticized for its frequent digressions and intrusive narrative voice, which are annoying and discomforting to the modern reader who objects to being addressed as "dear reader," and to having the action stopped for "wearisome" lecturing and philosophizing. In the nineteenth century when the dictum was to tell rather than to show, such stylistic techniques were acceptable, even expected and approved. As for its purpose, the direct authorial approach was one textual strategy used to enhance the sentimental potential in the plot. The author depicts characters and situations on the one hand, while on the other she issues direct emotional appeals, explicitly asking the reader to analogize from his/her own experience. The narrator guides the reader by the use of the personal pronoun ("we"), thus lessening the distance between the author and the reader. The narrator, addressing the reader directly in a conversational tone that takes him/her into her confidence, also lends the story the aura of an oral tale and serves to direct the reader in his/her assessment of or sympathetic response to the character(s).

This fiction has still other flaws by today's standards: the novels are rife with improbability, and they are melodramatic and formulaic. Coincidences abound, conversations are overheard, letters disappear to turn up years later and reveal crucial information, characters wear disguises and often undergo physical transformation, and mystery followed by revelation is the order of the day. As Kelley points out, tales of rags to riches, and riches to rags are intertwined (336). Furthermore, many of the

conventional characteristics of the sentimental novel are mixed with gothic elements. To modern and postmodern tastes, these nineteenth-century stories are undermined by their emphasis on sentimental, melodramatic plots and stereotypical characters. Carole Gerson applies this to Canadian literature, noting that "most nineteenth-century Canadians voiced a preference for romantic fiction in which the author removes characters and circumstances from the arena of common experience by heightening their distinguishing characteristics so that the heroes are more perfect, villains more evil, and events more coincidental, tragic or blissful than in real life" (Gerson 1989, 56).

With the emphasis on plot rather than character development, such narratives are often intricate and multi-threaded. In her 1978 study Baym concentrates on plot analysis, arguing that "all these fictions are linked by their participation in one overplot," in their chronicling of the 'trials and triumphs' of a heroine (22),<sup>10</sup> as she reaffirms in her introduction to the second (1993) edition:

*Woman's Fiction* (1978) is a *literary* study in that it approaches and interrelates novels through a plot, a literary concept. I employ this methodology partly because plot -- the patterned dynamic of disturbance, complication, climax and resolution, organized around an agent whom readers care about -- constitutes those works as novels rather than some other form, and partly because it is the similarity of plot that connects these works to a more general form. Moreover, since voluntary novel readers usually read for plot, one might hope that reading for plot in the 1970s (and the 1990s) would more clearly resemble (though of course never replicate) the experiences of the books' first audiences than would analytic techniques specific to

academic practice.

My kind of formalist approach recognizes, as theorists from Aristotle to Edgar Allan Poe and beyond have argued, that artistic form is not abstract, but always designed for an anticipated audience effect. In academic terms, "formalism" and "reader response" approaches might be perceived as completely interdependent. (xviii)

As this is the approach to be applied to the novels of Anastasia English, these concepts are worth a closer examination.

Basically the story or overplot exists in two forms: in one, the heroine (most frequently an orphan) begins as a poor and friendless child; in the other, she is a pampered heiress who becomes poor. Both plots show how the heroine develops the capacity to survive and surmount her troubles; in both plots, the purpose is to deprive the heroine of all external aids she had (rightly or wrongly) depended on to sustain her throughout her life, and to make her success in life entirely a function of her own efforts and character, forcing her to win her own way in the world. This "way" is "nothing like a success story of today, since it seldom involves more than domestic comfort, a social network, and a companionable husband; what makes the success is her overcoming of obstacles through a hard-won, much tested 'self-dependence'" (Baym 1993, ix). The protagonist -- and the readers vicariously -- learn that women must become people to survive in a difficult world. The basic plot of all of these novels is the "[human woman's] achievement of happiness and success through self-discipline, with the aid of teachers and examples, and sometimes in the teeth of

determined opposition" (Baym in Springer, 229). Applying John Cawelti's formulaic approach in popular fiction to romantic fiction, Kay Mussell notes that the stories are basically the same -- relationships between men and women, with almost all heroines happily married by the end of the book:

Between the beginning and the end, males may be less in evidence than females, as the heroines spend their time solving domestic difficulties and improving their character, saving souls, learning to be 'true women'; but despite the trials of domestic life, the reconciliation with woman's place in a good marriage is where the plot ends. (320)

On the technical side, the plot is constructed of a series of events or repetitive scenes taking the form of "five or six confrontations with heavy emotional content" and the plot machinery needed to get from one to the other is "rapidly narrated and inconclusively imagined" (Mitchell, 33). The central focus is the emotions experienced by the heroine; information about the other characters is developed only to the extent that it will make the heroine's emotional confrontation possible. An event happens, then some other people talk about it, and then one of them tells someone else about it. The repetition does not reveal how different people interpret the same happening, but simply allows the event to be experienced again, so that the emotions elicited by it can be re-lived. Associated with this, is the way time is deployed: the action is condensed, and great chunks of time jumped over, leaving out details that would often aid plot development. Barbara White notes that authors of romantic novels seem bent on disposing of the heroine's childhood as quickly as possible, often describing the

protagonist's antecedents, birth and early childhood; the years of maturation are summarized in one sentence; then having assured the reader that the heroine has received a proper education, the author is ready to embark on the important part of the book -- her 'adventures' or 'trials' (White, 22).

Just as there are two basic plots, there are, according to Baym, two kinds of heroines: flawed and flawless, often counterpointed. The former "already possess the emotional strength and stability to function effectively when adversity strikes"; the latter are those whose "characters are defective, so that triumph in adversity becomes a matter of self-conquest as well as conquest of the other" (Baym 1978, 38). Elsewhere she notes a trio of female types: diabolical, angelic, and human. The diabolic woman, often a wicked stepmother derivative, is linked with vengefulness, duplicity, coldness and malevolence. The angel-woman incarnates self-abnegation, humility, piety, openness, generosity, mildness, love and forgiveness. Generally an orphan without any maternal guidance, the human female (heroine) has psychological strength, moral stamina and intellectual ability;<sup>11</sup> full of wayward passion and impulse, she is disciplined by reality into the mold of gracious womanhood, a state which is related to the Christian tradition, as the flawed human soul is attacked by Satan on one hand, and supported and inspired by Christ on the other (Baym in Springer, 228, 230).

Addressing the occurrence of stereotypes, Winifried Herget contends that "the

sentimental text as a rhetorical construct relies on a storehouse of common assumptions, thereby fulfilling the necessary precondition of any successful rhetorical act. It is for that reason that clichés and stereotypes play such an important role, and that commonplace experiences are referred to in sentimental literature. The mnemonic is thus part of the structure of feeling" (7). Tompkins also acknowledges stereotyped characters, but rather than seeing them as constituting a defect, they are the "instantly recognizable representatives of overlapping racial, sexual, national, ethnic, economic, social, political, and religious categories," conveying "enormous amounts of cultural information in an extremely condensed form" (xvi).

Even though nineteenth-century popular audiences are long gone, this fiction has "qualities that can still catch both our fancy and our intellectual concern" (MacMillan et al, 202). As so many of the biases are tied up with modern and postmodern tastes, it is essential that this fiction be examined and appraised from the perspective of its social and cultural context:

When literary texts are conceived as agents of cultural formation rather than as objects of interpretation and appraisal, what counts as a 'good' character or a logical sequence of events changes accordingly. When one sets aside modernist demands -- for psychological complexity, moral ambiguity, epistemological sophistication, stylistic density, formal economy -- and attends to the way a text offers a blueprint for survival under a specific set of political, economic, social, or religious conditions, an entirely new story begins to unfold, and one's sense of the formal exigencies of narrative alter accordingly, producing a different conception of what constitutes successful character and plots. (Tompkins, xvii-xviii)

But, as Tompkins is careful to point out, "reconstructing sympathetically the discourse out of which domestic fiction springs, and for which it is also responsible, requires a considerable effort of imagination" (120). Tompkins sees 'literature' as a variable entity, and the plots and characters of the novels she studied as defining certain aspects of a social reality which the authors and their readers shared, dramatizing conflicts and recommending solutions. And as Cathy Davidson insists, literature is not simply words upon a page but "a complex, social, political, and material process of cultural production" (viii). History and the author cannot be divorced from each other, as authors and books exist within historical moments as "junctures of ideas, controversies, and tensions in a society" (Davidson, 123).

Nineteenth-century woman's fiction indicates how women felt about this society:

Since all woman's fiction shares the same story of 'trials and triumphs,' the lesson is to accept the author's solution to her difficulties as pertinent to their own lives. Her dilemma, simply, was mistreatment, unfairness, disadvantage, and powerlessness, recurrent injustices occasioned by her status as female and child.... Thus, while commiserating with the heroine in difficulties not of her own making, the stories hold her entirely responsible for overcoming them. (Baym 1978, 17)

It is difficult to speak of such stories and their 'message' without having one's discourse biased by ideology. While earlier critics castigated this literature for certain allegedly female qualities, Baym feels that these novels represent "a moderate, or limited, or pragmatic feminism, which is not in the least covert but quite obvious,

needing only to be assessed in mid-nineteenth century terms rather than those of a later century" (Baym 1978, 18). Duty, discipline, self-control, and sacrifice (within limits) were believed to be not only moral but actually useful strategies for getting through a hard world. Feminist critics have discovered that this fiction is not at all simplistic. New readings attest to its depth and complexity and offset any justification for its wholesale dismissal. These neglected novels should be studied because they "offer powerful examples of the way a culture thinks about itself, articulating and proposing solutions for the problems that shape a particular historical moment" (Tompkins, xi). Many other critics support the value of nineteenth-century woman's fiction.<sup>12</sup> Indeed, there is a consensus among feminist critics that the fiction of this genre helps to illuminate not just the role of women in society, but also the self-image that society as a whole desired to present to the next generation.<sup>13</sup>

The major impetus for foregrounding the biases against woman's fiction is the general challenge to the literary canon, from which until recently, female writers of the nineteenth century have been excluded, and hence not examined critically. Hiatt suggests that their exclusion from the American canon occurred because the male literary establishment had felt financially threatened by these scribbling women, and their writing was dismissed as inferior and substandard. Even more effectively, the labels were affixed before dismissal (Hiatt, 4). And, as is already evident, the serious consequence of the negative and dismissive nature of this criticism<sup>14</sup> is that it has

skewed appraisal of all nineteenth-century American literature (and by implication, Canadian and Newfoundland).

There is no doubt that the bias has been gender-centered. Baym suggests how a preference for stories about whaling rather than housekeeping may have operated unjustly to exclude women's books from serious critical consideration (Baym in Springer, 215). Aware that a re-examination of this fiction will show it to lack "the esthetic, intellectual, and moral complexity and artistry that we demand of great literature," Baym cannot avoid the belief that "'pure' literary criteria, as they have been employed to identify the best American works, have inevitably had a bias in favor of things male" (Baym 1978, 14). While not claiming literary greatness for any of the novels in her study, she endeavours to correct the gender-centered bias by taking their content seriously, and to re-examine the grounds upon which certain texts have been called great.

The same tendencies have existed on the Canadian scene; for example, MacMillan, McMullen and Waterson suggest that the six Canadian women writers in their study were disregarded because the reaction against "romance and sentiment that followed World War I contributed to the decline in interest of these authors" (11). As none were on any school curricula, once the books ceased to be reprinted for a popular audience, the authors vanished from the general view. As was the case with their

American counterparts, these novels disappeared because of both their content and the decisions of the patriarchy. Indeed, a similar situation has been identified on the local Newfoundland scene. Commenting on canonicity, Helen Porter, a well-known Newfoundland writer, laments the non-inclusion of women in anthologies of Newfoundland literature: "We felt then, as we've often felt before and since, that women writers in Newfoundland and Labrador have not been actively discriminated against as overlooked, which sometimes can be a far worse insult" (1).

In the canon of Newfoundland literature -- itself on the margins of the Canadian mainstream canon -- English is not included. She is hardly remembered or even recognized, and is not found in any anthologies of Newfoundland literature. Until very recently no attention had been paid to her, scholarly or otherwise.<sup>15</sup> Surprisingly, there is no mention of English in Margaret Duley's essay, "Glimpses Into Local Literature," which appeared in the July 1956 *Atlantic Guardian*.<sup>16</sup> The *Dictionary of Newfoundland and Labrador Biography* and the *Encyclopedia of Newfoundland* both dismiss English as a writer of romantic, escapist fiction. Patrick O'Flaherty, in his seminal study of Newfoundland literature, notes only that "Newfoundland and Labrador continued to serve as a backdrop to such escapist fiction [romances for younger readers, with the setting often functioning as a conveniently remote territory in which to locate improbable adventures] well into the twentieth century ... and [in] the various performances of the Newfoundland-born novelists Anastasia M. English

(1864-1959) and Erle R. Spencer (1897-1937)" (84). Brief mention is made by Gerson, who includes English (along with Kathleen English, Phoebe Florence Miller and Margaret Duley) in a list of more than three dozen women writers associated with the Atlantic region (including Newfoundland) who published at least one book in the period bounded by the world wars. Gerson points to

... multiple marginalization of Atlantic women writers: as women in a masculinist society, as Atlantic authors during an era when national Canadian culture was largely defined from a centralist/Western outlook, and as recounters of women's experiences when "virility" was the mode most acceptable to the academic modernists (male by chromosomes and taste) who guided the institutionalization of Canadian literature between the wars and whose judgements still linger. (Gerson 1993, 65)

In light of this exclusion of Anastasia English from the canon of Newfoundland literature, it is time for an analysis of her novels. As English's heroines fit the patterns outlined in Baym's study, her methodology is the one employed in the following chapters.

## CHAPTER THREE

### *ONLY A FISHERMAN'S DAUGHTER*

English's first novel opens in the Newfoundland outport of St. Rose, and charts the trials of an orphan, Nora Moore, in the love relationship between her and Harry Brandford. As the title implies, Norrie (as she is commonly known), a fisherman's daughter, is at the bottom of the social scale, while Harry is the educated and wealthy son of an upper-class merchant. Despite the virtually insurmountable barriers between them, they fall in love. Their relationship is buffeted by the snobbery, misguided notions of caste, and hatred for Norrie held by Mrs. Brandford, Harry's stepmother. Because of a deathbed promise (and her notions of sacrifice and gratitude) to her benefactor, Dr. Hamilton, Norrie refuses Harry. Before a happy ending is realized, Norrie experiences many trials in her efforts to adhere to her principles, and she has to discharge her pride and her responsibilities to the upper-class Hamiltons and Brandfords. An intrusive narrative voice, in a plethora of digressions and asides, alerts the reader to deeper subtexts operating in the story, and reinforces the didactic intent of the novel.

In the beginning, the reader observes that there is little interaction between Norrie and Harry. They inhabit different social spheres: she is not part of his life and he is a nebulous figure in hers. Norrie, who is a "wild, impulsive child brimming over with fun ... [but] truthful and honourable" (7), is barely in her teens, and Harry, at

nineteen, has taken over his father's business and is "a straight-goer, and like his father before him, honest and upright in his dealings with everyone" (8). Their first encounter occurs while Harry, having returned from college, is trout fishing. Norrie yearns to fish but has never owned a rod. Sensing disapproval and criticism in his offhand remark about one of her recent escapades, she labels him an enemy, and stubbornly refuses to fish, telling him "You think I'm a dreadful girl, not fit to be with Lucy [the doctor's daughter], just as Mrs. Brandford thinks" (23). As she explains her reasons for the escapade (a need for justice), and that she will take the blame herself (a punishment that later changes to self-punishment), Harry is amazed at her spirit. Caring little for his class position, Norrie refuses to forgive his comment. Harry realizes her sensitivity and generosity, but when he asks her to try and be a nice, gentle little girl like Lucy Hamilton, his *faux pas* is obvious to the reader. Her liveliness juxtaposed with Lucy's passivity, delicateness and gentleness, Norrie Moore is indubitably herself, wants to be her own person, stamped with her own individuality and insists that she does not want to be like anyone but herself. The thought that he has hurt the feelings of "this humble little fisher maiden," the narrator clarifies for the reader, causes Harry pain and more keen regret than he would have felt "were she a queen on her throne" (24).

When Norrie was twelve she met Lucy Hamilton at school. Throughout the novel, Norrie and Lucy are counterpointed: Lucy is delicate and fairylike with flaxen hair

while Norrie is dark and high-spirited; Lucy tires easily and even her voice is weak, but sweet, while Norrie's voice is powerful and clear as a bell. Despite their social inequalities, and despite Mrs. Brandford warning the Hamiltons of Norrie's evil influence on their daughter, they become inseparable. Lucy is the first person, irrespective of class, to befriend Norrie, and to accept her for herself. From being playmates, they will attend convent school together, even though by birth they inhabit different social spheres. Though she is aware of her different station from the Hamiltons, Norrie is also conscious of how she differs from the children of St. Rose. When she tells Tommy Brown, "I only want to tell you that I have no more use for you" (32) -- she will not have time for dories and oars, as she is going to be good and learn poetry and music -- although maybe unconsciously, she is putting on airs.

A second meeting between Harry and Norrie, when Harry offers Norrie and Lucy a ride in his carriage, is equally brief. Norrie accepts only because Lucy, who tires easily, will not ride without her. Again Harry notes Norrie's generosity to everyone but himself. When Harry asks forgiveness for his words by the river, Norrie's response indicates that her classifications are simplistically but clearly defined: "I suppose though we must forgive our enemies" (26). Harry, however, does not wish to be placed in that category and his ensuing words are a foreshadowing, "I trust, my dear little girl, that you will always find your enemies, if you ever have them, as staunch and true to you as I will ever be" (26), and his thoughts demonstrate his

perceptiveness:

"What a strange, interesting child ... so noble, generous, self-sacrificing, and so obstinate in her likes and dislikes. She is one who will, I think, develop great strength of character, how much my mother wrongs her." (26)

Harry does not share his stepmother's fixed ideas of social hierarchy or her opinion of Norrie: he is never condescending to her, but always respectful, even though his stepmother's scorn and disdain for Norrie are palpable. Harry is sensitive to Norrie's uniqueness, and aware of a serious nature underneath her high-spiritedness.

Two years later Harry, coming to say goodbye to Norrie before she leaves for the United States with Lucy where they will attend a boarding school, is surprised to learn that she has been thinking of him. Although he is aware that Norrie is pretty, he has "too candid and serious a disposition" to pay fine compliments (58). At this point in the novel there is no love interest between Norrie and Harry, though his parting words reveal that he has thought of her since their last meeting:

"I am delighted that you are getting the advantage of a good education, Norrie, its just what you require to make you a perfect woman; I shall miss you a great deal, tho' I've so seldom seen or spoken to you, I've often thought of you, and wished you could get the opportunity which you are now very wisely embracing." (59)

Harry is sincere in his wish that Norrie obtain a good education, as in his viewpoint education, not marriage, effects perfection: the result is a perfect woman, not an "accomplished" lady. Contrite for her words of two years previous, Norrie tells Harry

not to mind that she had labelled him her enemy, and that she had often felt ashamed of her unreasonableness for rejecting the use of his fishing rod. Now, as friends, they are on an equal footing. When he says, "I hope you'll never doubt what I say, Norrie" (words which will carry greater significance later), she replies:

"I never would again ... because I've learned to know a true face when I see it, since that time. I like truth always, and would rather have it, even when it is unpleasant, than an untruth." (59)

Norrie might desire truth, but hers is an abstract not an applied philosophy. In his farewell, "Goodbye Norrie, always think kindly of me as you do now, and pray often for me; God bless you and send you safe home to us again," there is no overt awareness of the superiority of his class position. They are just two young people, possessed by an undefined yearning, saying goodbye.

Norrie craves education. The curriculum she has studied has been deficient for her needs. As an orphan Norrie is not financially able to study abroad, but as she has risked her life to rescue Lucy from drowning, the Hamiltons show their appreciation and sense of duty by educating her with their daughter. Norrie's "superhuman strength" (41) kept both her and Lucy from drowning; with this act -- the news of which is carried in the St. John's papers -- she becomes a heroine, but, this heroism changes the pattern of their lives:

She [Lucy] often, afterwards, wondered what made her so anxious that day to go across the harbour even without Norrie's companionship? but what a small thing often changes the current of our lives, the simple

fact of Lucy remaining in the dory that day changed the course of Norrie's life, and made her almost wish she had been left in the lonely sphere to which she belonged. (38)

Norrie's differentness from the other St. Rose children is obvious. She does not speak in colloquialisms and dialect as they do, but not only her speech patterns set her apart. Norrie takes naturally to music, finds the landscape beautiful, and loves poetry. Dr. Hamilton, aware of Norrie's uniqueness as "a rare, beautiful plant" with "rare natural talents" which need to be cultivated, thinks that there is an unawakened artist in this untutored orphan (47). On the other hand, Norrie's guardians have difficulty in accepting her peculiarity and Dr. Hamilton's belief that "[a] wiser hand than ours guides those things ... it is not for us to ask why; the fact remains that she is not suited to the life here" (49). Dr. Hamilton's proposition that her education is a practical consideration that will lead to teaching, and teaching subsequently to money, leads them to wonder why she should be intended for a different life than the rest of her kin. But, her uncle concedes that she would never do for a fisherman's wife. This alerts the reader not only to Norrie's uniqueness, but to her rise above her lower station birth. Gratitude to Dr. Hamilton for the opportunity to be educated prompts her desire for sacrifice, as recompense or a penance:

... one hope filled her heart, and it was that sometime she should be called upon to make a sacrifice for dear Dr. Hamilton, or his wife or child, so that she could prove her gratitude, for the interest they had taken in her. (50)

Given the ideology of her class, this expression of gratitude is the best that Norrie can offer to her upper-class benefactor. This mode of expression is the root of the self-immolation (almost to martyrdom) displayed by Norrie. She hopes that she will get a chance to suffer, to prove herself and her thanks. At this point, though, the sacrifice is a vague abstraction.

When Dr. Hamilton is on his deathbed, Norrie has an opportunity to make a specific sacrifice. Norrie wishes that she could die so that he might live. Dr. Hamilton tells her that after his death she can give the love she had for him to Lucy, together with what she already has for her, and he exhorts her to always take care of and protect Lucy whenever she can. Glad to have a focus for her need (obligation) to sacrifice, Norrie pledges her word:

"I promise," said Norrie, in slow, solemn tones, "to love Lucy always, and to give up gladly, and freely, the dearest wish of my heart, my life's happiness, if need be, to save her any pain." (54)

The intrusive narrative voice excuses Norrie from such a zealous oath and at the same time intimates later disasters: "Ah, rash promise, made without fully understanding its meaning; how those words haunted her, in the after years" (54). Norrie's avowal echoes the Biblical exhortation that "greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (John 15:13), but it becomes problematic only later when she realizes that Lucy also loves Harry, the man Norrie loves and who loves her. Norrie's earlier comment "a promise is a promise, no matter who it's made to"

(14), although ostensibly referring to a surreptitious picnic, is her creed.

After four years in the United States, Norrie, striking with "large, deep and mystic looking" eyes through which shine a "beautiful soul," and long curls "tamed to straightness" (63), is educated and accomplished: she has a beautiful voice, is a brilliant pianist as well as a talented painter, and has surpassed everyone at the school, including Lucy. Even if Norrie was not born into the upper class, she has irrevocably proven that she has talent. Norrie now has the accomplishments to befit her to fall in love with someone of a higher social class, but she will never have the pedigree. She even has physical proof of her achievements: her tanned skin is now soft and white, and her uncultivated rough ways have been tamed and replaced by culture. At the graduation ceremony (where class status is not a judging factor), Norrie is admired by "a famous statesman" who feels that her beauty, grace and talent are rare, and that Newfoundland should be proud of such a daughter. In her rich, sweet voice, Norrie exquisitely sings a difficult piece by Chopin, but her great charm is "perfect freedom from anything approaching affectation" (64). The Mother Superioress (later important in Norrie's life) has a special liking for her, and gives her advice as she leaves the convent -- advice which Norrie does not heed:

"I want to give you a little advice ... always consult those older and wiser than yourself, before any serious undertaking; you may make grave mistakes by not doing so, and if this fault is not corrected, Norrie, may lead to graver ones." (65-6)

In the middle of this advice-giving, the intrusive narrative voice alerts the reader that "When that day did come, with its bitter sorrow and desolation, Norrie remembered those words" (65).

Norrie's ambition is to open "a music, singing and painting school" (65) in Newfoundland. When she is back in St. John's, Frank Dane becomes part of her life. Like Lucy and Harry, Frank, the son of a member of Parliament and owner of a flourishing mercantile business left to him by his father, is a member of the upper class by virtue of birth. Frank, impressed by the educated Norrie, falls in love with her. Seeing Norrie's effect on Frank, his sister, May, thinks:

"What if it were to happen? Well! I should be glad. She has no fortune, I suppose, nor aristocratic connections, but she is sweet, brave, good, and beautiful, and would grace the home of any man." (67)

While class tension is evident in across-class relationships, Norrie has a positive effect on everyone except Mrs. Brandford. In spite of her lower (birth) status, an accomplished education and her own sensitive qualities allow her to meet and associate with the Danes, Harry Brandford and the Hamiltons. Only Mrs. Brandford, thoroughly outraged at Norrie's education, still views her with disdain. When Frank Dane tries to find out from Norrie if she has a sweetheart she tells him that she has to teach and make a living for herself before she can think of love. Although he does not understand her ambition, Frank thinks that Norrie is worth spending years to win, and tries to persuade her to relax her plans for the future:

"But, Miss Moore, if you found one who loved you very much, and would devote his whole life to your happiness, take you from the tiresome task of teaching, to be his wife and live in a home of luxury, would you not abandon the idea of making a living for yourself?" (75)

Wealth and position do not awe Norrie; she makes it clear to Frank that nothing can tempt her from her ambition.

There has been no mention of Harry Brandford since Norrie left Newfoundland, although she has often thought of him. In a discussion with Lucy, Harry hears of Norrie's beauty, talent and goodness, and of the strong love that exists between the two friends. While shuddering at those women of history who were beheaded, guillotined, or burned at the stake, Lucy -- her obvious passivity makes her the antithesis of Norrie -- tells Harry that she would not hesitate to give her life for those she loves, if it were a natural death. Realizing that this does not entail a giving, Harry tells Lucy that "there are things we value more than our lives, and which we would feel harder to part with" (80): happiness, peace of mind, the life of a dear one would be harder to give up than one's own life, and such a person would be a heroine. Extrapolating from Harry's words, the reader later realizes the depth of Norrie's sacrifice; concerning the basic tenets of life, however, Norrie and Harry think alike. That Norrie is to display the characteristics of a heroine is also anticipated in Lucy's remarks to Harry: "Of course, these things would be harder than life for a very brave person to give up; but I think I would be a veritable coward where my life is

concerned. Norrie would not, she has the stuff heroines are made of" (80-81). At this stage, the perceptive reader does not make the mistake of thinking that Lucy is the heroine of the novel.

With Norrie's return to St. Rose and close proximity to Harry, the major plot complications begin. The mature Harry does not mix much in the society of young ladies; his notions of women are peculiar and once they overstep the boundary of "womanly dignity," they lose their charm for him (80). His ideas of marriage (formulated before Norrie's return to St. Rose) are vague and idealistic: a strong and tender, good and true woman is the limit of his imagination. His answers to Lucy's questions about love reveals his abstract thoughts: "True love is the most sacred feeling of which the human heart is capable: it is a blessing from Heaven; the crowning of a good man's or woman's life; the acme of earthly happiness; and the nearest approach to heavenly bliss, which we mortals are permitted to know" (82). Harry's memories of Norrie are from four years previous -- with her short dress, tangled brown curls, her "quaint sayings with often a touch of the bad accent of the fisherfolk," and her wild "harum scarum ways" (84). He is totally unprepared for the transformed Norrie: a tall dignified young lady with soft, white hands. In his opinion she has changed for the better in appearance but, as he tells her, he hopes that she has not changed in her heart and mind. On the other hand, when Mrs. Brandford sees Norrie, she is "inwardly surprised and mortified at [her] rare beauty, perfect manners

and intellectual conversation" (89), but she is certain that her earlier ill-breeding will eventually come out. Although Norrie returns as educated as any member of the upper class, she knows that Mrs. Brandford has never forgiven her "for breaking the fetters that bound [her] to the life of [her] ancestors" (84). In an implicit criticism of Mrs. Brandford, Mrs. Hamilton insists that Norrie did not require training and education to refine her, as she already possessed "innate refinement, and, tho' according to the ideas of high-toned society she may not be a horn one; she is as thorough a lady as one would meet in any part of the world" (79). Harry, too, apologizes for his stepmother's "peculiar notions about caste and society, and all that sort of nonsense" (80), and comments on her "many mistakes, and [how] it is impossible to get an idea or a prejudice out of her head once it takes possession of her" (80).

Although finally educated and accomplished, Norrie yearns for love and affection. Lucy does not confide in Norrie, but Norrie senses that Lucy has fallen in love with Harry, the man Norrie herself is attracted to. Harry Brandford, whose face Norrie has seen in the moon, is Norrie's ideal. Norrie and Lucy -- friends who have sworn to die for each other -- are not totally honest and open with each other about their feelings for Harry. Norrie fights her love for Harry because she knows that he is Lucy's ideal, although Lucy denies her attraction for him. The arrival of Frank Dane and his friends from St. John's changes the dynamics of the triad consisting of Harry, Lucy and Norrie. The attention that Frank pays to Norrie awakens Harry to an awareness of his

true feelings for her:

... unconsciously to himself he had learned to love sweet, bright, mischief-loving Norrie Moore. But had he learned too late, had another won the prize? how tenderly he thought of her; what would he not give to win her: to claim for himself the priceless treasure of her true, womanly heart, with her beauty, her genius, her youth and innocence, and better than all these, the beauty and goodness of soul, which shone forth from her dark brown eyes.

In his grand simplicity he deemed himself unworthy of her. "My disposition is too dull, and serious," he told himself, "to attract one as gay and mirth-loving as the queen of my heart, Norrie Moore." (92)

But, as the reader knows, Harry's serious disposition complements Norrie's sunny spirits. Ironically, although he is above her in class, he feels his unsuitability as a suitor. Because the narrator qualifies his thoughts, the reader does not berate him as he does himself: "He entertained too humble an opinion of himself to remember his own personal attractions; the manly beauty of his face, together with the irresistible charm of voice and manner; while a true, brave and noble soul, looked out from his dark grey eyes" (92).

When Norrie asks Harry about his ideal woman, he tells her that he has seen his. She paints a word picture (ostensibly of Lucy) of this paragon for him, but rebukingly he tells her that

"[Lucy] could never be the one bright star of my existence, the queen of my heart, the one being in this world who could fill my home with sunshine, my life with happiness, the one, whose place in my heart, shall never be supplied by another." (99)

His candid disclosure that his ideal mate can be seen in Norrie's own mirror unsettles

her; although he is the epitome of perfection for her, Lucy must come first. Taking refuge in coldness, she asks him not to mention this subject again; instead they must try to be friends. His tentative moves rebuffed and his hopes dashed, Harry covers his disappointment with a veneer of coldness, and (mentally) gives Norrie up to Frank Dane:

"... beautiful Norrie Moore, with her bright, merry, winsome ways, her pure and candid soul, her loving, faithful heart can never be mine. I might have known it, I'm too quiet and serious to attract such a gay, light-hearted creature, even if Dane were not before me. Well, may he make you happy dearest, if he is fortunate enough to win you. Life will be more dreary than ever to me now, for I feel I can never learn to forget. Well, dear one, I will never pain you by speaking of my bitter disappointment, let us be friends." (112)

While they are on a fishing excursion Norrie tells Harry that she likes "a heavy rod" (113); the reader, already aware of Norrie's penchant for self-abnegation, discerns another subtext in her comment: is it a rod for her back? Since there is little safe ground for discussion, the locket on his watch chain becomes the focus of their conversation. Her response to the picture of his namesake in this locket reveals her awareness of the nuances of his expression. It looks like him, she tells him, yet is not, as "the eyes have not such a deep, thoughtful expression, and the face is brighter looking," but it "could be him when he was perfectly happy" (114,115). In the ensuing discussion Harry tells Norrie that he does not expect his allotment of perfect happiness. She knows that the reason lies with her as he wordlessly looks at her with "a steady, reproachful gaze; which made her tender heart go out to him more

yearningly than ever" (115).

Caught in a web of anguish over having to give up Harry, she thinks of how happy she might be if there was no obstacle to their happiness. Summoning reserves of strength, she resolves to be brave and to fight down her feelings. She realizes that although she is acting falsely to him and to herself, she must bear it for "Lucy's sweet sake" (112). By deciding to remove herself from St. Rose, Norrie naively thinks that Harry will have no other recourse but to fall in love with Lucy: this is the beginning of Norrie's evasion of Harry, and of her self-immolation. Harry, learning of her proposed departure, concludes that Frank Dane is the reason for it, and speaks so coldly to her that she thinks that he does not care as much as she had thought.

In the midst of the tension between Norrie and Harry, Mrs. Brandford proposes to give a ball -- an event which results in a clashing of forces between her and her stepson. Mrs. Brandford has no intention of including Norrie in her list of invited guests: her inferiority of birth cannot taint the Brandford house, and she cannot have Norrie mixing with her aristocratic friends. When Harry insists that she invite Norrie, Mrs. Brandford, who has already voiced her opinion that "that girl does not know how to keep her own place" (116), unloads her venom in his ears and makes her prejudices perfectly clear:

"... you forget yourself so far as to dare ask me to invite a low born

fisher girl (because she has managed to scrape up an education through the mistaken charity of fools, whose favor she was clever enough to win), amongst refined ladies and gentlemen ... Nora Moore," she sneered, "may be well enough to go on excursions through the woods, it's what she's best used to; and very well for you or Frank Dane to flirt with ... but, I do not think her good enough to associate with my friends." (117-18)

Mrs. Brandford not only insults Norrie, but in labelling the Hamiltons "fools," she denigrates members of her own social class. Harry, adamantly refusing to have his love insulted, is merciless in his retaliation. If his stepmother were a man he would strike her, but instead he tells Mrs. Brandford that not only is he ashamed of her, but he despises her:

"You are right in one thing, Miss Moore is not your equal, for she is as far above you, as the angels are above satan." (118)

Through its deliberate use of "angels" and "satan," this situation transcends the prosaic and takes on a Biblical context. The reader is made aware of the dichotomy of good and evil, and of the didactic import of the novel. Mrs. Brandford, the villainous stepmother, is a devil compared to Norrie's angel-nature. Just as there is a gulf between heaven and hell, a gap exists between Mrs. Brandford and Norrie. But, Mrs. Brandford is firmly put in her place, which from Harry's assertion that the Brandford house is his property, is a tenuous position. Mrs. Brandford's pride in her status in St. Rose cannot survive Harry's threat to stop the ball should Norrie not be invited. She feels that Norrie's audacious declining of her (forced) invitation is an example of an ill-breeding which had to come to the surface some time, but Harry realizes that the

real reason for Norrie's rejection is that hers was such "a sensitive disposition that she could not go where she knows she's not wanted ... she is aware of your aversion towards her, and has, perhaps, made a shrewd guess as to how reluctantly the invitation was sent" (121). Mrs. Brandford, however, is not through with diffusing her poison. Because of Mrs. Brandford's machinations, Norrie will be subjected to greater trials than any she has already experienced.

Before Norrie leaves St. Rose, Harry tries to get her to divulge her secret -- the obstacle between them, created by her swearing an oath to Dr. Hamilton -- of which she speaks so enigmatically, that it is not impossible but improbable that it would ever be removed. Her response, based on the possibility that Lucy might not find a replacement in her heart for Harry, is to suggest that they not meet again. Norrie desperately wants a relationship with Harry, but fighting her own desires, she remains a noble and aloof enigma. His parting words are neutral, but reveal his concern for her well-being: it is easier to lose strength than to gain it as "teaching is a very trying occupation" (123). As they part he tells her that he will see her in St. John's in the new year.

Living with the Danes in St. John's brings Norrie in contact with Frank, whose proposal of marriage tempts her, not for his wealth or social position but for altruistic reasons. Even though "it would be the surest way of not interfering with her friend's

happiness," the temptation is short-lived:

... she was too true a woman to marry a man to whom she could not give the love which is his due, and also to wrong that man, by marrying him, merely to secure the happiness of another. (129)

Knowing how much she herself loves Harry, Norrie is willing to sacrifice her own (and Harry's) happiness to try to ensure Lucy's happiness. After rejecting Frank's proposal, Norrie is hurt to find herself treated a trifle cooler by the Dane family.

Frank, getting involved with drink and unsavoury characters, feels that "Harry's deep, quiet, but everlasting love for Norrie, would win her yet, and he was weak-minded enough to let this knowledge make him desperate, and careless" (134). Only after she saves Frank from a life of dissipation does Mrs. Dane tell Norrie that she deserves a better man than Frank. Becoming nervous and morbid from the constant restraint she has placed on herself, Norrie realizes that Harry is never going to care for Lucy, and "her own heart was going out to him, more and more every day" (133). She dreams of getting away from St. John's as she cannot allow herself to be happy with him while Lucy remains miserable. She avoids him in the hope of avoiding pain:

"Sometimes, when sitting near him, she would fancy Lucy was looking at her with pained, reproachful, eyes. Then she would make some excuse and leave him" (133).

A combination of Frank's behaviour, Lucy's pain (real and imaginary), and her own pain affects Norrie's psyche; engaging in self-analysis she concludes that she must have been born to give trouble to those who are always kind to her. She feels in everyone's way and wishes that men in particular would leave her alone, for she does

not like bringing trouble to people as she always seems to be doing. Harry reassures Norrie that she cannot help "the sins of others." He thinks that Frank Dane is cowardly to hold her responsible for his troubles and tells her that she is allowing Frank's behaviour to unnecessarily bother her: she is not at fault but has acted as "any true woman" should have done under the circumstance (136).

When Harry learns that Norrie has rejected Frank's proposal, he knows that he has been a fool. She is still free, and he is at liberty to win her. Hopeful but puzzled, he feels sure that Norrie cares for him, though he cannot understand her motive for continuing to avoid him. Despite his frustration, his sensitivity and tenderness are evident in his insistence that she confide in him:

"You need not look so frightened ... I would rather die, Norrie, than force my companionship upon you.... neither do I intend to pry into this secret of yours, but should it continue much longer to be an impediment to our happiness, I shall feel myself in duty-bound to insist on your confiding to me the nature of it, and allowing me to judge.... Then it must not be the means of making us unhappy; I shall insist on this sometime very soon." (136-7)

Although in this patriarchal society, Harry's love for Norrie gives him the right to insist that she tell him her troubling thoughts and to let him judge the validity of the obstacle, her promise to Dr. Hamilton restrains her from telling Harry that "the impediment [to their happiness] is only of my own making, I can break it when I please, and will do so now if you tell me to" (136). Norrie wants to concede to Harry's masterfulness, but she is engaged in a tug-of-war between her heart (Harry),

and her responsibility (Lucy). Her sense of responsibility wins. She has to discharge her duty before she is rewarded with the joys of marriage.

With Harry's loving treatment -- his gentle, considerate and deferential yet masterly manner -- Norrie's love and admiration for him increase; her tenuous barriers are threatened, and when he asks, "will you tell me whose face always appeared to you when you tried to find your ideal in the moon?" she promises to do so some day if he will not tease her about it (137). This answer, though an evasion, momentarily satisfies him, for he knows that she loves him; from then on he takes charge of her. Despite their different social positions, Harry wants to display his love for Norrie; he even confides in Lucy (in whom Norrie has not confided, hoping to spare her pain), telling her that Norrie continually avoids him and "sometimes will not remain in my company, unless I make merely common-place remarks, and what's more, tells me I'm never to expect anything else from her, and the strangest part of it all is, that I believe in spite of all she cares something for me" (140-1). Although Norrie's mysterious secret and her reluctance to confide in him tries Harry, he resolves to be patient a while longer.

Another ball, held outside St. Rose and beyond Mrs. Brandford's influence, cancels the wrongs of the previous one, and is an opportunity for Harry and Norrie to be together. Harry, the finest man present, is well known in St. John's; the radiant

"queenly figure" (139) of Norrie is welcomed and is the centre of attraction at the Irish ball, where she is not judged by her lack of pedigree. During the ball Harry admits to Lucy that he has reached the goal of earthly happiness from which it would be harder to part than his own life. But his bliss is soon threatened.

The scene shifts back to St. Rose where the whole community knows that there is something between Harry Brandford and Norrie Moore. In a poignant scene, the reader senses all their repressed love and longing. Only after seeing that Lucy is looking bright and happy, does Norrie finally but erroneously conclude that Lucy must be learning to forget her love for Harry, and so, gave herself up to "the sweet influence of 'Love's young dream'" (152). Harry, who is preparing to leave on a business trip, wants a final answer from Norrie; he tells her that he has been patient and has kept his promise of not prying into her troublesome secret. Norrie stalls (but does not tell him why) as she wanted to tell Lucy and Mrs. Hamilton of hers and Harry's love for each other in his absence, but it is the thought of Lucy's illness that stops her, and she tells Harry that she will give him her answer when he returns. Reluctantly he consents, but even though she has not given him her promise, he regards her as his promised wife. Harry is a man of few words, but his word is reliable: "I have never loved another woman, and he never will; even if Norrie's trouble separated them forever, he would go unmarried to his grave. In response to Norrie's need for reassurance that he loves her for herself alone, he asserts that her

beauty is not her essence or the basis of his love for her. Although he is glad that she is both fair and talented, beauty, though it attracts attention, is never the means of winning love. He allays her doubts and tells her that even if she lost her beauty, she would still be the star of his life, as he loves her for her own "sweet self" (155). Convinced of the strength and depth of his love, Norrie finally admits her own for him and accepts his birthday gift, a locket stamped with the words "from H.B. to his promised wife." Norrie gives Harry her solemn promise instead of a "full promise" (156). In the code by which they live, promises (used repeatedly in conversations between Norrie and Harry) are sacred. Another subtext of which only Norrie and the reader are aware is operating in their conversation:

"You hold promises of this kind very sacred, Harry, do you not?"

"Certainly, Norrie," he answered, "as sacred, almost, as a promise made to the dying."

"Almost," she echoed, as a sudden pang struck her; "then, you would keep a promise to the dying more faithfully."

"Yes," he answered, "if the promise was a just one." (154)

It is unimportant if the reader regards Norrie's promise to Dr. Hamilton as just -- she does.

The instant Norrie allows her defences to relax, she is buffeted by more trials: Lucy becomes suddenly and mysteriously ill on Norrie's birthday, and Mrs. Hamilton coldly tells her that, although it is not her fault, she is the cause of Lucy's illness and unhappiness. Only when Norrie feels that Lucy can survive without Harry, does she

allow herself to accept his engagement gift and promises to marry him. Class status is not problematic; Norrie never uses the excuse that she does not fit in his class and there is no discussion that she cannot marry him because she is below his social class. It is only when Mrs. Brandford "reveals" that Norrie's father "died head and ears indebted" to Mr. Brandford (carefully omitting that this "debt" had been discharged) and denigrates the "lazy spend-thrift habits" of her mother, that class becomes a factor. Norrie is also informed that Dr. Hamilton had supplemented her education. What would have happened if Norrie had not overheard the conversation between Mrs. Brandford and Mrs. Hamilton, where Mrs. Brandford appeals to Mrs. Hamilton to join with her in a scheme to separate Norrie and Harry? According to the narrator, her "noble, if mistaken, sacrifice" would not have been made. All her life Norrie had been the object of Mrs. Brandford's scorn; now finally basking in Harry's love, Norrie hearing herself described as "that girl Nora Moore ... with her clever wiles and coquettish airs" (159), is grievously wounded by Mrs. Brandford's venom. And to add insult to injury, Mrs. Brandford blames the "betrayal of her false friend" as the reason for Lucy's "tender, sensitive disposition" (159) being crushed. Mrs. Brandford earlier insinuates that Norrie's morals are deficient; now her verbal dissection slanders Norrie as a wicked and deceitful woman: a Jezebel, and a Judas.

The final sacrifice that Norrie makes seems more to avenge her father than to fulfil her oath to Dr. Hamilton. It is unclear which motive is dominant as both seem to be

inextricably intertwined; she vows that "that woman shall feel what it is to insult the memory of my father, if Lucy were never in the question" (169). Norrie does not know if she is doing right, but allows herself to be sacrificed for Lucy's possible happiness and position in the community. Although Mrs. Hamilton feebly attempts to defend Norrie against Mrs. Brandford's scorn, she eventually sacrifices Norrie, and permits Norrie to sacrifice herself. Mrs. Brandford's insistence that nobility and sacrifice are contingent on class foregrounds the class consciousness in the novel: "When you say she would forfeit her own happiness for your child's, if you asked her, you forget that she is only a fisherman's daughter and not capable of such a sacrifice" (160). In Mrs. Brandford's philosophy, emotions, feelings, and morals are all class-determined. Unintimidated by Mrs. Brandford, Norrie refuses to passively acquiesce by eavesdropping on any more of the conversation between the two women, and fearlessly confronts Mrs. Brandford. In her generosity to Mrs. Hamilton (and Lucy), she sacrifices herself and any future happiness with Harry:

"I would not insult you, dear Mrs. Hamilton, by promising to pay you in money what you've so generously spent on me. I will discharge my debt to you in another way ... Your trust in me is not misplaced, for I shall be true to it." (162)

Her emotions and (potential) happiness are sacrificed to secure Lucy's (tenuously potential) happiness and physical health. Although Norrie tells Mrs. Brandford "I would not be you, with all your thousands, and have your spirit, were it to make me Queen of the Universe" (162), as Harry had observed many years before, Norrie is

generous and she forgives Mrs. Brandford for her cruel words. She vows that her debt to the Brandfords will be paid:

"I forgive you freely for all you've ever said to me, and I'm glad to know what I should have known before. I'm not ashamed of my humble birth, Mrs. Brandford, on the contrary, I feel quite proud that, 'though *only a fisherman's daughter*, I can show you, a member of the charmed circle of the aristocracy, what proper pride and independence of spirit mean." (163)

With Mrs. Brandford's revelation, Norrie faces something too enormous for her. The odds are against her: on one side there is Lucy's illness and Norrie's (alleged) responsibility for it, Lucy's love for Harry, Mrs. Hamilton's aloofness and the pain Norrie's actions would further inflict on Mrs. Hamilton and Lucy if she stayed in St. Rose, her debt to the Hamiltons as well as her oath to Dr. Hamilton, and Mrs. Brandford's scorn and the money owed to the Brandfords; on the other, Harry's and Norrie's love, and the thought that she would be causing them both pain. Who decides now if her promise to Dr. Hamilton is a just one? Given the narrative asides and references to Norrie's oversensitivity, the reader is not quite sure. Norrie's first reaction is to run. In keeping her oath to Dr. Hamilton, and avenging the insult to her father, Norrie now breaks her promise to Harry. A younger Norrie had insisted that promises are to be kept. Does she now expect others to keep their promises to her, when she cannot? A plethora of factors converge on Norrie, causing much confusion and anguish. Knowing that Harry loves her and that his feelings for Lucy are platonic,

does she naively think that by leaving the way will be clear for Lucy and Harry? In any case, Norrie chooses to sacrifice her own and Harry's happiness.

Praying for the necessary strength to flee from St. Rose, Norrie recalls the Mother Superior's advice, but instead of heeding it relies on her own logic: Mrs. Hamilton expected it of her, her relatives would not understand, and she could not consult Mrs. Dane. Norrie is alone, and powerless. She may be over-reacting to Mrs. Brandford's insinuations, but there is no one, no maternal figure to turn to: Mrs. Hamilton has treated her coldly on her birthday and blamed her for Lucy's unhappiness, and her aunt, the only other female in her life, does not understand her. How much can Norrie bear?

There is a definite point where sacrifice (the oath to Dr. Hamilton) is subsumed under pride. Two passages from the Bible seem to be embedded in this novel: "Greater love hath no man than this, than a man lay down his life for his friend" (John 15:13); and "Pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall" (Proverbs 16:18). Norrie's exile is a sacrifice, but more important, it is provoked by pride. She is torn between love, and duty (oath) mixed with pride. Guilty over Lucy's illness, she is also frustrated by having to hide her love for Harry. Tormented dreams rise from her tortured psyche and unsettle her sleep: Lucy lies in her coffin; Mrs. Hamilton points an accusing finger at Norrie, telling her that but for her Lucy would not be dead;

Norrie impotently tries to tell Mrs. Hamilton of her sacrifice; and Dr. Hamilton smiles kindly at her, knowing that she will keep her promise. The dream, combined with Lucy's self-pitying remark that "it is better for people like me to die, and not live to give trouble to everyone" (157), tips the balance. Christ-like, Norrie shoulders the weight of Lucy's suffering: "Anything which I can do to lessen that suffering is only pleasure to me" (157-8). Pleasure, however, is dissonant with self-immolation. Lucy's words -- "oh, Norrie, why did you not let me drown that day. I would be free now from all this pain and sorrow" (158) -- were not meant to be heard by Norrie, but she does hear them, and both she and the reader are propelled back to when Norrie physically saved Lucy from drowning. Norrie blames herself for the pain in Lucy's voice, and decides that she cannot allow herself the luxury of happiness while Lucy's heart is breaking. She berates herself for being weak and cowardly to have given Harry any encouragement. Norrie has to choose between Lucy and Harry. It is apparent to Norrie that Lucy is weak and defenceless, but does Harry have more emotional resilience simply because he is male? And as for herself, is she destined to be a martyr?

Over the years her promise to Dr. Hamilton has intruded in Norrie's thoughts; she often feels that he is watching her, to see if she is fulfilling her promise to always take care of and be kind to Lucy. But it only begins to haunt her when she senses that Lucy loves Harry. Although Norrie has pledged to put Lucy's happiness above her

own, she has to keep reminding herself of this commitment. Sharing a love with Harry is what she longs for, yet she fights down her feelings. Now with exile imminent, she is not unaware or uncaring of how her actions will affect Harry; she knows that she is acting falsely, but Lucy and her promise to Dr. Hamilton are her priorities. Recalling vividly how she had wished for something to prove her gratitude, how she even promised to give up her own happiness if it would save Lucy pain, she knows she could not be true to herself or Dr. Hamilton if she took her own happiness at the expense of Lucy's.

Before leaving St. Rose, Norrie visits the graves of her mother and Dr. Hamilton. Although her mother has not figured in the novel, Norrie now pours out her broken heart to her dead mother, rhetorically asking, "would it have been wiser if Uncle John had persisted in refusing to give the money you left for me, to spend on my education?" (164). She mistakenly thinks that if she had not received an education then she and Harry would not have "met on equality," and she would still be "just the lowly little fisher maiden" and not be called upon to make the sacrifice that is breaking her heart. But her sacrifice is of her own making. Her impassioned words reveal her confusion. Had she, before hearing the conversation between Mrs. Hamilton and Mrs. Brandford, resolved to discharge her oath to Dr. Hamilton, and seize her own happiness? It seems so. Pride and independence now consume her; she has to prove herself so that Mrs. Brandford, "that mean, selfish woman," will know

that "the pride of a fisherman's daughter is of a nobler and higher order than hers"

(165). At Dr. Hamilton's grave, she reflects on the high cost of her bargain:

"I said I would give up my own life's happiness any time, if by so doing I could save Lucy, pain, and I'm doing it now, tho' unfortunately, the sacrifice is not complete, as I cannot keep her from suffering, for, I fear, she will never be more to Harry than she is now. If I could only make her be to him what he told me I am. I would but ... [narrative voice intrudes: "Ah, human nature is only human after all"] oh, could -- could -- I do it? ... Well, were it in my power to make her his wife, and make them happy, I would do it." (165)

Norrie is bewildered and helpless, without a friend, confidante or mentor. Her decision has been, and had to be, made alone. She realizes now that her promise to Dr. Hamilton had been made when she was young and idealistic, without any experience of love (eros) or awareness of the pain it would cost her. Now older, wiser and in love, but still proud and determined, she acknowledges the tenuousness of her resolve:

"What I've got to do I must do quickly ... or my courage will fail me. How fortunate Harry is away? for I could never do it otherwise; one look at his dear face, one reproachful gaze from his deep, grey eyes, and Dr. Hamilton, Lucy and all else would be forgotten." (165)

She knows that if Harry were to appear all her resolutions would be futile, and her limited strength would crumble.

Knowing that she is powerless to ensure Lucy's happiness, Norrie grasps at an equally tenuous solution -- once she is beyond reach, Harry will in time care for Lucy. Her exile, though, is primarily to avenge the insult to her father's memory. For all her

pride and determination, Norrie is a lonely, frightened, confused but well-intentioned young girl, with only the dead to go to for advice. She prepares to go to the comfort of the Mother Superioress, the only mother figure in her life, and the haven of the convent school, but at the last moment she almost turns back when "a terrible fear of the responsibility of the step she was taking ... a dread of something, and a sense of such utter loneliness" overwhelm her (171). The narrator informs the reader what might have happened, that "[m]uch pain, sorrow, anger and resentment might have been spared had she acted on this impulse," but instead "she paused, the word coward seemed to sound in her ears, was it from a good or bad spirit? she could not tell, for she really did not know whether she was doing right or wrong" (171-2). In her mind she sees the pain in Harry's eyes, and feels his pain:

"... if I could only bear the pain I am making you suffer as well as my own, I would even be happy, but I cannot, you must suffer also, if you will deem me worth it, perhaps it would be better if you could think of me as a fickle-headed flirt, who does not know what constancy and truth are." (171)

As she pictures her future without Harry Brandford, she wonders if her heart will always be filled with the same dull, heavy pain she is now experiencing.

Despite the pain, she goes. At the convent, the Mother Superioress -- the voice of reason and practicality -- scolds her for her tempestuousness. Has Norrie tempted fate? Has she tampered with God's control of the universe? The Mother Superioress thinks so, and is gentle but direct in her upbraiding:

"... you've acted very wrongfully. Why did you leave your home and friends without consulting someone. Mrs. Hamilton would never dream of expecting such a sacrifice from you, and besides, what right had you to treat a good and noble man in such a manner. Heaven guides these things, Norrie, and even your own life cannot be ordered to your own ideas. The man whose promised wife you almost were, had a right to your confidence, and unless he were satisfied to have you make this sacrifice, you should not have done so, and I fear, my child, that pride is the leading element which has influenced you in this step?" (174)

Norrie has not consulted a higher authority. In response to Norrie's bitter remark, "And I suppose a fisherman's daughter has no business with pride," the Mother Superioress points out that she is too young to have the iron enter her soul; she concedes that "a certain amount of pride of the proper nature" is permitted, but warns Norrie against letting it run away with her altogether (174). But how was Norrie to determine the appropriate amount? She can only use her own measure to prove that she has strength, pride and independence. She is resolute, though; she has come this far, suffered this much, and refuses to go back:

"Oh! dear Mother, you do not know me. Never, will I go home until I have paid the last farthing to Mrs. Brandford, and it is only certain circumstances that will permit me to go then, for, tho' you do not seem to credit it -- were this money never in question -- I would do what I have done for Lucy's sake, and to fulfil my promise to Doctor Hamilton. I will never accept happiness that would cause her pain." (174-5)

The entire situation is multi-layered: has one strand become subsumed by the other? As the Mother Superioress points out, Norrie is not the sole sufferer: "Were you alone the sufferer ... your sacrifice would be a grand one, but you've no right to destroy the happiness of another. You do not know what harm it will do" (175). Norrie tries to

convince the Mother Superior and herself that Harry will not be hurt. Although he is as firm as a rock where duty is concerned, Norrie knows that he too will suffer: "I can judge of that by what I'm suffering myself" (175). They are in harmony by their suffering.

Norrie's exile takes a toll on her. Whereas she had been strong and healthy, and Lucy the weak, delicate one, now with her energy depleted, she is "confined to her bed with complete prostration of mind and body" (176). Years before Norrie had returned from her tenure at the convent school glowing and totally transformed, but with this second transformation her internal light is extinguished:

But the bright, sunny spirits had gone, a look of calm determination had settled on her face, and her large, fearless, candid brown eyes had a sad, faraway expression in place of the bright light, and mischievous laughter that once shone there....

Her face was thinner, and a little paler, than it was four weeks ago, her sweet, brown eyes had a quiet, rather grave expression, which seemed capable of winning any heart. The look of resolution which had settled on her face, had given to it a dignity which seemed to suit her. (176, 179)

Is this calm determination the stigma she now must wear? Once Norrie begins the work which will earn her freedom from Mrs. Brandford, the reader is conveyed back to St. Rose, to assess the reverberations caused by Norrie's exodus. Lucy is quick to judge Norrie's hasty departure as an abandonment, complaining that "we have never deserved this from Norrie" (185); the class differences that simmer below the surface ready to impinge on every relationship are reinforced by Lucy's remark. The reader,

hearing anger and resentment against Norrie for the first time, realizes that Lucy has misunderstood Norrie's sacrifice. The "we" becoming "I," Lucy tells Harry, "I did not deserve such treatment from her" (190). Mrs. Hamilton alone knows why Norrie has disappeared, but permits Lucy to think the worst of Norrie, even though she knows that Norrie's sacrifice is for Lucy; both Lucy and her mother are disloyal to Norrie. Just as Mrs. Brandford had sent Norrie an invitation to avoid the embarrassment of having her ball cancelled, so Mrs. Hamilton, her social equal, puts avoidance of humiliation before Norrie's happiness.

The reader feels sympathy for Harry as he longingly watches the shore on his return to St. Rose, thinking that Norrie, his dearest treasure, will no longer let anything stand between their happiness. But from almost tangible expectancy and optimism, he is plunged into despair when he learns of her absence. A cryptic letter as mysterious as her secret is his greeting:

"... I do not know what you will think of me, but no matter what you think, I must do what I'm doing. Try and forget me, perhaps I am not worthy of the love you bear me ... Do not think that I suffer nothing in leaving you, but if I could take your share of suffering along with my own, I would gladly do so." (189)

Harry's initial reaction to her desertion is visceral: "For the twentieth time he read those heart-breaking words. Where had she gone and why had she left him?" (189).

The reader glimpses Harry's agony as he rails against his pain:

"... if you had felt one hundredth part of the pain I now suffer you

would never have left me. Oh, you are truly cruel and heartless, or can it be possible that there is, known only to yourself, something of so serious a nature as to justify our life-long separation? I cannot believe it ... but whatever happens I will never lose my faith in your truth and goodness, and I will be true to your memory all my life." (190)

It is interesting that Harry and the Mother Superioress both recognize Norrie's "truth and goodness," commendable attributes but misdirected in her actions. Harry, the one person who is totally loyal to Norrie, seeks answers for her disappearance. Mrs. Hamilton does not ease his pain by telling him of the exchange between Mrs. Brandford and Norrie; she will not betray Lucy. The narrator insists that Mrs. Hamilton "must be excused if she shrank from letting Harry know the humiliating fact, that her daughter had loved him unsought" (190). Harry perceives that there is something behind Norrie's mysterious exile, cryptic letter and his unnecessary suffering. He alone senses, and is sensitive to, Norrie's pain, and vows to find its source. Harry suspects that his stepmother has a part in this; he vows that if he finds out that she had anything to do with driving Norrie from him, he will not be responsible for the consequences. The only way he can momentarily assuage his pain is to pour out "soft, mournful strains" on his violin, often playing over their favorite songs.

On the recommendation of the Mother Superioress, Norrie, because of her inherent truth and goodness which were deemed more worthy of admiration than beauty, becomes governess and companion to Alice Erington, the daughter of a wealthy

Southern widower and begins a tour of Europe with the family. Finally exposed to the culture she had longed for since beginning to read, Norrie is getting an education which formal schooling could never provide. She imbibes art, architecture, and ambience, which satisfies her artistic soul, but it is insufficient balm for her lacerated spirit. Although Norrie is living with her decision to leave Newfoundland and Harry, she misses him desperately and weaves dreams and fantasizes about how after she has discharged her debt to Mrs. Brandford, maybe Harry just might forgive her, and love her again. She is intermittently optimistic, wanting a real life with love and marriage, but needing to fulfil her promises first.

Norrie learns accidentally of the marriage of Harry Brandford and Lucy Hamilton from a three-month-old copy of the *Evening Telegram* left in a European hotel. Her total sacrifice has been required: "Well! did I not wish for it. Did I not do all in my power to bring it about, and why am I not glad?" (193). The reader knows that far from being elated, she has not, through sacrifice, attained the reward she had thought. The narrator comments: "Ah! strange, mysterious, human nature, perhaps deep down in Norrie's heart, almost unknown to herself, there lingered a hope that, after all Harry would be true to her, that Lucy would learn to be happy without him" (193). Neither rationalization nor justification can dispel the intense pain Norrie is experiencing. Alone in her room she sheds bitter tears of sorrow and disappointment and tries to deal with feelings of betrayal, but eventually manages to school herself to

calmness and resignation. Would a lack of tears increase her stoicism, or undermine it? Her tears attest to her humanness; she is a disappointed girl still in love, for whom life has been increasingly difficult. Forcing herself to imagine a happy and healthy Lucy, as if this could expiate her pain, she wonders, too, if Dr. Hamilton is finally pleased with her. The reader is aware of overtones of the Biblical sentiment "well done thou good and faithful servant." But this picture is insufficient to comfort her parched, sacrificed-to-death spirit. Reality is far too painful, and she is plunged into deeper despair when she realizes that she will not see her home for many years, as she cannot trust herself to be near Harry Brandford; she knows that she will never learn to forget him. She acknowledges that she loves him even more than when she left St. Rose, although it is wrong now, as he belongs to another.

Back in St. Rose unbeknownst to Norrie, Lucy had married Harry Brandford's cousin also named Harry Brandford. With Lucy safely married, Mrs. Hamilton attempts to make restitution and explains to Lucy Mrs. Brandford's role in Norrie's exile.

"Norrie's sacrifice need never have been made" (195), the narrator points out. On hearing of her friend's noble sacrifice, Lucy's anger quickly dissipates and her gentle heart is touched. Norrie's letter of explanation and payment is sent to the Brandford firm, to ensure Harry's awareness of her finally discharged debt. The joyous light which fills Harry's face when he sees a foreign letter quickly changes to a "dangerous gleam" (197) when he absorbs its contents:

"May Heaven protect me from doing what I would regret all my life ... she has taunted my poor darling with that old debt of her father's. Oh, Norrie, my love ... why did you not confide all your troubles to me and let me shield you from her insults?" (197)

This knowledge, combined with Mrs. Hamilton's admission, impels Harry to accompany Lucy and his cousin on their honeymoon tour of Europe, to search for Norrie who is also travelling on the continent. After Alice Erington's death, the Eringtons, accompanied by Norrie, are again visiting Europe. Lucy, the object of her sacrifice, is the first to be re-united with Norrie, and her remark reinforces Norrie's sacrificial nature: "At first I felt hard and bitter towards you, but now I know how much you love me, and what a noble self-sacrificing girl you are" (203). Lucy is generous in her forgiving. Norrie tries to be truthful -- "I have all the reward I want, Lucy dear, when I see you looking so well and happy" (203) -- but she is not truthful either with Lucy or herself. She must maintain the facade, or she will break down when she faces Harry. When she learns that there are two Harry Brandfords and that her love is still free and true to her, her pain is forgotten: "But oh, the sudden rush of joy that came to her with the knowledge that he was true to her after all, and now there was no barrier to their happiness" (206). So that the reader has no doubt about the presence of a higher power, the narrator gently acknowledges the source of this happiness: "Ah! surely Alice Erington had done her work well in Heaven" (205).

That such a sacrifice brings reward implies a deeper subtext, a moral message. What

is being promulgated to the readers of this novel? That underneath suffering, trials, and vicissitudes there is a reward for the proud and self-sacrificing heroine, a reward meted out by Heaven; that there is a higher, heavenly order at work, controlling the universe, an order that notices Norrie's noble but misplaced sacrifice; that there is a divine cosmology, and a divine plan; and that like the Biblical "sparrows of the field," God notices Norrie. An important question the reader must consider is: would Harry and Norrie have achieved such a degree of happiness if they had not passed through the vale of tears, if Alice Erington had not interceded for them? Is this a homily on the efficacy of prayer? It is only after prayer that Norrie's Gethsemane, her "bitter tears of sorrow" (194), change to tears of joy.

Although Harry could have been accusatory when he is finally re-united with Norrie, he does not berate Norrie for her misplaced sacrifice: "Oh, Norrie, how could you do it?" is all he says. Norrie admits that she had been helpless: "What else could I do, Harry? tho' I should not have done it I own, but I was bewildered, and so many unpleasant things came to my knowledge together" (206). Norrie had tried to spare Lucy, Mrs. Hamilton and Harry pain, sacrificing herself for all of them. She acknowledges the lack of guiding maternal or paternal figures in her life, forcing her to make her own decisions. Harry chides her gently, as the Mother Superioress had done:

"You should have confided all to me, darling. What little faith you

must have had in my constancy, Norrie? when you believed I had forgotten you enough to marry another.... I could never tell you what I suffered, Norrie, but the happiness of this night repays me for all."  
(206)

Not only does Norrie concede her wrong, but she finally confesses and confides all to him; from his previous statements, the reader knows that Harry understands her dilemma and her subsequent actions, that all this havoc has stemmed from the best of intentions.

The novel ends in marriage and happiness; all wrongs are righted, and there will be no more partings "until the angels call us home to rest" (209). Before her exile Harry promised Norrie "w|hen you are my wife, Norrie, I shall secure you from any unpleasantness from her" (155-6); now with the villainous Mrs. Brandford banished to St. John's, the "fisher girl" from the "fishing stage" reigns as mistress in Mrs. Brandford's elegant home (160). Norrie's pride no longer consumes her and her trials are at an end. It is clear to the reader that this happy ending comes only after Norrie has made a noble sacrifice of physical love for the 'higher' love of Lucy, and recognition of her social obligation to her upper-class benefactor.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### *FAITHLESS*

Set in St. John's, the United States, and Britain, *Faithless* has a historical framework (the Bank Crash of 1894); the outport setting so prominent in *Only a Fisherman's Daughter* is absent in this novel. The class differences that permeate the central love story of *Only a Fisherman's Daughter* do not appear in *Faithless*, as Eva Carlen and Alan Horten both belong to the upper class. However, despite her upper-class background, the heroine is not exempt from trials and suffering, but is repeatedly tested in a series of Job-like ordeals. The more overt didacticism of *Faithless* is evident in the repeated use of words such as "redemption," "salvation," and "atonement." God's love and forgiveness are promulgated and all the main characters must acknowledge and accept a power greater than themselves before happiness can be achieved.

Eva Carlen, the heroine, has few friends, and, like Norrie Moore, is used to making momentous decisions for herself. But unlike the fun-loving Norrie, Eva is so proud, enigmatic, aloof and self-controlled that her acquaintances think that she is cold; however, underneath this facade is a loyal and faithful heart. Having just lost his fortune, Alan Horten, Eva's fiancé, is leaving for New York to secure better financial prospects and he expects Eva to go with him. An only child, Eva feels that it is her duty to remain with her parents. As it will be two years before he can return, her

decision displeases Alan; to him it indicates that she does not love him enough, that her love cannot bear "the test of misfortune" (3). The question to be resolved in this novel is immediately established: whose love is stronger? If Eva followed her heart, she would go with Alan, but she feels a primary duty to her parents. If they had been married, however, her duty would have been to him.

Unlike Norrie, Eva has no class barriers to surmount. Although she is unused to privation, her tremendous strength of character causes her to be unafraid of poverty. But fear of hardships is not a deterrent in this situation; even if Alan were already a millionaire, she would still refuse to go with him. Alan and Eva have different expectations and each doubts the strength of the other's love. She tells him that there is much difference between them: "you love me well, -- I believe that -- but you are a little selfish, all men are, and you do not trust me. I both love and trust you" (5). Although her heart is breaking at their fast-approaching separation, Eva is determined for Alan's sake to be stoical until he leaves; then she will let the barriers of her restraint break in a storm of tears. When he desperately seeks reassurance that she will be true to him, Eva intuits this as a criticism and counters that he still mistrusts her. Everything hinges on how the other perceives faithfulness. When Alan asks Eva if she thinks that he could be unfaithful to her, she tells him that she does not think he would ever allow another to take her place, or love her less, but that "a man's heart can be much easier weaned from the object of its affections than a woman's" (6).

While he, as a man, may be distracted without being really unfaithful, not for one moment would his "image" be absent from her thoughts. She is emphatic that she will be more faithful than he. Just as Norrie had been inexperienced when she zealously made her promise to Dr. Hamilton, so Eva speaks in the abstract (though when the pressure comes, she is less faithful than Alan). Alan's words, "Time will teach you, Eva, how faithful I can be" (6), are prophetic. He senses a coldness despite Eva's declarations of love. Although he asks, "I wonder is your heart as heavy as mine?" there is no answer, except his comment, "I would not wish to see you suffer as I am suffering" (6). As the novel unfolds the reader must try to determine who suffers more, Alan or Eva.

Despite her stoicism and resolution, Eva counts too much on her own strength and has difficulty controlling her emotions and tears. But according to the narrator, by virtue of her sex she is permitted such a display: "she was only a woman, after all, with a woman's loyal, faithful and loving heart, breaking now with its first great grief" (6). Eva wonders how she can possibly live through the long, lonely days when she will be unable to see him, touch his hand or hear the sound of his voice: the two-year separation seems interminable. She laments that even he thinks that she is cold-hearted, that she cannot love enough to suffer. But, she reminds him, if she were devoid of feeling, her heart would not be torn with sorrow as it is now. She feels a presentiment of coming sorrow deeper than what they are presently suffering, that

something will come between them. Her prophetic words combined with her feeling of disaster, set the tone of the novel and alert the reader that the impending trouble will wreck their relationship. In the next two years much will come between Eva and Alan, primarily themselves and their false perceptions of the other's actions.

After Alan's departure from Newfoundland, Eva's trials begin in earnest. Her parents' fortunes are reversed, her father dies, their beautiful home is lost, and her mother's health declines rapidly. Unlike Norrie, Eva is already educated and accomplished, and she can support herself and her mother by giving music lessons. Eva's life is hermetic, but her joy comes with Alan's long, loving epistles filled with hope and cheer. From the beginning the reader knows that letters will be important, not only in providing a vicarious happiness, but as a vital instrument in the destruction of their relationship. Eva's letters, which paint the brightest picture, reflect her stoicism. Just as trouble resulted when Norrie was not totally honest with Harry, the reader expects similar problems for Eva. Eva's first mistake is not telling Alan of her misfortunes. Eva's intentions, like Norrie's, are noble and honorable, but, as the narrator points out, total honesty would have served her better. Eva fears that if she tells Alan that her family has lost everything and that she now has to earn a living, he would feel helpless, and worry, and if she whines he will think that she is not strong enough to be his wife. In addition to her mother, Eva is supported emotionally by her one close friend, Ida Carroll, who gives her unconditional love and friendship. Mrs. Carlen's

scolding of Eva's "false notion of pride" and urging her to be truthful with Alan echoes the Mother Superior's advice to Norrie in *Only a Fisherman's Daughter*. While Eva is struggling with her mother's worsening condition, she gets a short, unexplained and hurried note from Alan, a departure from his usually long letters.

In New York, Alan moves in the milieu -- different both spiritually and materialistically -- of the wealthy Grants, who are better situated in society than the Hortens. Nellie Grant is a beautiful, spoiled, rich girl who goes after what she wants, and currently that is Alan Horten. Deliberating over her fixation, Nellie has to choose between good and evil, and when she chooses the latter the reader is alerted to the grave danger ahead for Eva and Alan. In essence, Nellie makes a pact with the devil:

When she arose, Nellie Grant was a changed girl. All that was noble, generous, truthful and honorable in her nature was cast aside, and all that was scheming, wily, mean and treacherous arose to the surface. It had been a hard-fought battle between right and wrong, but wrong had triumphed. (13)

Nellie tells herself that she must have patience in the tedious task -- one that requires skill and diplomacy -- of stealing a girl's lover; she plans to win Alan under the guise of friendship. Assessing Eva's portrait, Nellie thinks her too calm and proud-looking, too cold and mercenary, that she would not break her heart if she lost Alan, but she tells Alan that Eva's face "besides being beautiful expresses goodness, decision, faithfulness, adherence to duty, and what else can man desire in woman?" (16). In her careful delineation, she points out that with Eva's "decision of character" she would

never "flinch from duty no matter how repugnant it might be"; she would be faithful just because it is her nature; and "she will not love too well, but wisely" (16). By way of explanation, she tells him that "though a woman may love one man faithfully all her life, should anything come between them, she could, after a certain length of time, adapt herself in circumstances, and be happy with another, especially if it was any falsity or neglect on the part of the man she first loved" (16-17). It is Alan's purported "falsity" and "neglect" (engineered by Nellie) that causes Eva to think that Alan has been unfaithful to her. Nellie is perceptive about Alan's character, and uses that knowledge to her advantage.

In a conversation with Nellie about love, Alan clarifies his position -- that he would never forgive anyone, no matter how much he loved them, if they practiced fraud and deceit on him. His comment that "[l]ove is too pure and sacred a thing to be won by fraud and false pretences" (23) should have warned Nellie, but once set in motion her evil has to run its course. The narrator, however, makes it clear to the reader that Nellie will not win Alan:

Did the words have any good effect on the unhappy girl who heard them?... Though she spent many hours battling with temptation, though several times she was on the point of yielding at the promptings of the 'still small voice' which never fails to admonish us, still the demon conquered, and each time she went to the fray girded with fresh armor and more determined than ever to reach the goal at which she aimed.  
(23)

The fact that the reader hears the Biblical cadences of this narrative aside reinforces

that this is a battle between the forces of good and evil. While this dichotomy was apparent in *Only a Fisherman's Daughter*, especially with the villainous Mrs. Brandford, it is a much more pronounced feature here as the diabolical figure is the heroine's rival in love. At this point, evil conquers and the convoluted events that form the plot are set in motion: the insidious evil is perpetrated by letters -- conveying neglect, false words, misunderstandings, deliberate lack of detail -- which add up to a totally false picture. Letters (and the lack of them) between Alan, Eva, Nellie and Mrs. Horten are controlled by Nellie Grant, and impinge on the conversations that ensue between Mrs. Horten and Eva (with the concomitant interference of Robert Greene).

Mrs. Horten's acceptance of Eva (lukewarm at best) is only because she is heiress to a large fortune, comes from a good family, is clever, beautiful and popular, and Alan, she feels, could probably not do much better in Newfoundland. As in *Only a Fisherman's Daughter*, money is central to the plot of *Faithless*. When the Carlen fortune declines, so, in Mrs. Horten's eyes, does Eva's suitability for entrance into the Horten family. Stripped of her fortune, Eva is no higher than Norrie is in Mrs. Brandford's eyes. Mrs. Horten has no concept of love -- maternal, romantic, or platonic; she is ruled by money, position and power. With her credo -- marriage equals money -- Eva stripped of her fortune is disposable, and the engagement is a misfortune: "It's a wonder the girl herself would not have the sense to see that it is

simply a piece of folly their remaining engaged. They should each marry money. It is ridiculous for two young people who are poor to think of marrying" (32). The thought of how Alan would benefit from the Grant millions, combined with her correspondence with Nellie Grant, leads her to support a match between her son and Nellie. Greedy for power and control, Mrs. Horten sets out to destroy the relationship between Alan and Eva. Putting ideas in Robert Greene's ear -- that Alan's present engagement is the barrier to his marriage with the daughter of a millionaire -- Mrs. Horten slyly manipulates him to plant the seed in Eva's ear that Alan is going to marry Nellie Grant.

Mrs. Horten, an instrument in Eva's suffering, is reminiscent of Mrs. Brandford. However, while Mrs. Brandford is primarily a snob with a vindictive streak, Mrs. Horten is more fundamentally evil. Mrs. Horten only pretends to misunderstand Robert Greene when he inadvertently points out a solution to her problem of how to extrude Eva from Alan's life; her thoughts, however, reveal her duplicity: "I must not write Alan a deliberate lie -- if it should ever come out it would be unpleasant" (35), yet she sets out to paint a totally false picture. Mrs. Horten toys with emotions and is unconcerned with ruining two lives (one of which is her son's). After a conversation with Eva, she is content that her wicked plan is set in motion:

"Well the rest is all plain sailing," murmured Mrs. Horten with [sic] a self-satisfied air ... "I have managed that delicate piece of business quite cleverly. He writes to her and she does not get them, she has

written to him and he did not get it. I wonder what happens to their letters. Well, it is none of my business. She won't write again till she hears from him. Her pride, which she has plenty of, will prevent her, and I must manage so she won't hear." (36)

But despite her declaration to the contrary, she makes it her business, and instead of the unadorned truth, Mrs. Horten writes Alan a letter that is carefully worded to deceive him:

"I have called upon Eva since receiving your letter. She is quite well and hears from you so she tells me, but has not written you lately. Her manner seemed rather cold and I did not care to question her further. I don't believe that Mrs. Carlen will ever thoroughly recover her health, but her condition does not by any means prevent Eva from writing you." (36)

Instead of telling Alan about Eva's difficulties, she suggests that Eva is being careless in her duty to write him. In reinforcing the didactic intent, the narrator lets the reader know that Mrs. Horten's heartlessness is a factor in the dissolution of their engagement: "Ah, false, cruel words, that destroyed the trust and blighted the happiness of two faithful hearts" (36).

The forces mounting against Eva are strong, much stronger than against Norrie in *Only a Fisherman's Daughter*. Whereas Mrs. Brandford criticized Norrie from a distance, Mrs. Horten actively conspires against Eva. The narrator exposes Mrs. Horten's game and ensures that her strategy is clear to the reader; in conversation with Eva she says:

"She and Alan are very great -- friends -- I suppose." (The last three

words were said very slowly, with a marked stress on 'suppose.')

"He writes in glowing terms of her" ... she laughed carelessly ... "if he had not been an engaged young man, we might never see him again."  
(35)

With her inferences and air of familiarity with Nellie Grant, Mrs. Horten blatantly baits Eva, and makes her feel superfluous in Alan's life. Eva, enduring the emotional pain of Mrs. Horten's assault, feels that the remark is uncalled for and tries to defend herself, but only receives further battering; Mrs. Horten tries to make her feel like a fool by insisting that there is no need to take her words so seriously. Feigning innocence but watching closely to gauge Eva's reaction, Mrs. Horten slyly but mercilessly questions, "He writes you often, of course?" (35).

Mrs. Horten enjoys inflicting pain on Eva, who in the face of such adverse treatment continues to maintain a proud, defiant look. Like Norrie, Eva seems to have vast reserves of pride, which now help her to withstand Mrs. Horten's attack. Eva (rightly enough, the reader feels) does not think that it is necessary to tell Mrs. Horten the truth, but answers her politely and cautiously, though ambiguously, as (much to her despair) Alan had not written for six weeks. At this point the intrusive narrative voice informs the reader, "How was she to know that the words were only used to mislead her, that Alan had only asked if Mrs. Carlen was ill again" (36). When Alan reads his mother's disingenuous letter, he takes her devious suggestion as a *fait accompli* and believes Eva to be unfaithful. On the strength of one letter from his mother, and a

reduction in communication with Eva (who is not writing because of lack of letters from him), Alan hardens his heart, but vows to be faithful until the terms of the separation have been fulfilled.

The narrator paints a sad picture of Eva wounded by Mrs. Horten's poison, a picture that would have torn at Alan's heartstrings if he were cognizant of it, even though he thinks her unfaithful. But only the reader is invited to this viewing of Eva's broken heart. She thinks that if Alan is false -- as Mrs. Horten insinuates he is -- then there is "no truth upon earth" (37). She cannot find an answer to her question "what does it all mean?" (37). Her mind fixes on the one cold note which was her last communication from him, and the lack of an answer to a letter telling him of her mother's approaching death. Feeling forsaken, she fears that "the gold of the millionaire's daughter" (37) has lured him from her. When Eva, unable to assimilate all the forces that impinge on her, wishes that her heart would break and she could die, the reader's heart wrings with pity for her. The plot revolves on purported lost and misplaced (but strategically removed) letters. Since letters have been the sole communication between Alan and Eva (and the instrument for the evil to be disseminated back to New York, via Mrs. Horten's careful word choice and deliberate omissions calculated to put Eva in the worst possible light), their lack causes each now to think the other unfaithful. There is no direct contact: the damage is all epistolary as everything is inferred from, and manipulated by, the written word without the

concomitant aid of eye contact or body language.

While Eva is suffering Job-like torments from Mrs. Horten's verbal attacks, a lack of letters from Alan, the privations of the family's loss of fortune and the necessity of having to earn her own living, her mother, the only close relative she has left, dies. Eva is now an orphan. With her last words, Mrs. Carlen tries to persuade Eva to believe in Alan's constancy, and invokes God's promise to be faithful: God never fails, yet humans do, and the remainder of the novel attests to this. Although Eva is sceptical of the future, Mrs. Carlen reassures her that God will reward her and that she and Alan will be happy one day. The direct reference to God so early in the novel emphasizes that *Faithless* has a more overtly didactic plot than does *Only a Fisherman's Daughter*.

Hearthroken and numbed by her sorrow, Eva maintains her pride and independence (intangibles that have no connection with wealth). She refuses help from friends (unwisely, according to the narrator), as she does not want to be a burden on anyone. Almost at the end of her two-year separation from Alan, Eva is bereft of everything: money, home, parents, and lover. She labels Alan unfaithful not only because of the dearth of letters and Mrs. Horten's evil insinuations, but because of what she reads in the papers. Instigated by the sycophantic Robert Greene, the rumour that Alan Horten is to marry Miss Grant, the American millionaire's daughter, and that the couple are

to visit Newfoundland early in the year appears in the newspapers. Eva is suffering her own personal pain, as her subjective reading of the situation is based on the carefully orchestrated "facts" that Mrs. Horten distributes in conversation with Eva; she will now publicly be a pariah. Weakened by her mother's death, she is even more powerless in the face of this new attack. Just as with Norrie, the cards are stacked against Eva. On the other hand, Alan, geographically distant and contending only with a lack of mail from Eva and receiving letters from his mother that suggest Eva's deficiency and unfaithfulness, does not initially suffer as much as Eva.

Aided by an omniscient narrator, the reader knows both sides of the story, but for Eva, everything points to Alan's unfaithfulness. The final determinant is Alan's failure to respond to Ida Carroll's news about Mrs. Carlen's death. Totally numbed by this display of neglect, Eva, devoid of all supports, is left with only her pride, and Ida Carroll. Ida alone knows that underneath Eva's cold, proud, impassive face is a "heart torn by sorrow but fast hardening from the injustice she had suffered from the hands of the man she had loved and trusted so well, the man who should be at her side in the trying ordeal through which she had passed" (39). In this society, roles are clearly defined: as a fiancé, it is Alan's duty to be with Eva in her sorrow. In this statement the reader hears an implicit authorial criticism of Alan's absence. Finding an exhausted, hungry Eva asleep, Ida Carroll heaps verbal abuse on the absent Alan for allowing this. Alan's unfaithfulness and her mother's death have taken an emotional

and physical toll on Eva. She has sacrificed the last morsel of food in order to provide her mother with nourishment, and her inadequate pocketbook cannot meet their expenses. Still too proud to ask for help, she exists for a week on the last of the tea, biscuits and butter. Her life empty and her health taxed, Eva wishes for death.

But her trials are far from over. In a visit to Eva, Mrs. Horten and Robert Greene engage in a conversation which allows Mrs. Horten to further her plan to destroy the relationship between Alan and Eva; Eva is not only insulted, but lied to.

Unsympathetic to Eva's recent bereavement, Robert and Mrs. Horten combine forces to torture Eva; Eva, however, gives them no satisfaction but maintains her cold, proud, calm face. With a complacent smile, Robert twists his blonde moustache just as his words are calculated to twist the knife in Eva's already broken and bleeding heart. They talk about Alan's marriage to Nellie Grant as if it is a given, as if Eva is deaf, witless, and impervious to pain. Robert refers to his authoritative source for the news of Alan's upcoming marriage to Nellie, his 'facts' are supplied by a chum who lives in New York, who says they are inseparable and to be married early next month.

Robert wishes to strike at Eva because she interfered in his suit of Ida Carroll, who is now beginning to think Robert's chums are all fakes. Mrs. Horten and Robert Greene all but spit on Eva and trample her into the ground, as they complacently and carelessly sow their vituperative strife.

Believing that Mrs. Horten's and Robert's allegations will soon be reality, Eva has reached the limit of her endurance, and her spirit breaks. Unable to confront Alan, she removes the symbol of his love and trust from her finger in the sincere belief that its giver is marrying another woman, sends it to him without any accompanying explanation, giving him his freedom and disengaging him from any unwanted commitment or responsibility to her. Eva, still clinging to her pride, is doing the only honorable thing that she knows. She tells herself that she knows why "he hesitates to marry before he returns home; he has some spark of honor left, and wishes to be 'off with the old love,' etc." (46-7), but determines not to wait until he returns to Newfoundland with the story of his love for another and asks for his freedom. As far as she is concerned, he can marry the heiress whenever he chooses. Her action is justified to herself and her interpretation is plausible to the reader, but she (in isolation) cannot know the whole picture. It is clear that Eva is as concerned with her honour as she is with Alan's, yet she remains stoical and does not cry or sigh. She severs the last link between them without a shred of substantive evidence.

With this decisive action, Eva embarks upon a new juncture: a life without love, fuelled by her pride -- a life of ambition. Having suffered for love and found that her suffering brought only dashed dreams, Eva now steels her heart and her emotions. A certain negativity, though not as overt as Nellie Grant's evil triumph, creeps into Eva's thoughts and is sensed in her declaration:

"Oh, no, Alan Horten, you shall not find me a heartbroken girl because another has won you from me. I shall marry, too, some day, but not for love. Love can have no more to do with my life. I shall marry money and position. I am capable of winning hearts, I feel the power within me and I shall use it, but mine shall never again be won." (47)

Eva's longing for a chance to leave Newfoundland and begin a new life free from suffering, is realized by the *deus ex machina* appearance of Mrs. Brown, a figure from her past, who promises Eva a position as governess in England. Realizing that she can escape the pain, humiliation and embarrassment of meeting Nellie Grant, as well as a confrontation with Alan, Eva sees exile as a salvation, not realizing that she is about to plunge into near doom and much more grief than she has already suffered. As the narrator tells the reader, she retreats from anguish thinking, "[a]way from the pain of meeting Alan Horten, her false lover, and perhaps his bride, the millionaire's daughter" (51), only to land in a worse hell. Just as Norrie's exile is precipitated by an overheard conversation between Mrs. Brandford and Mrs. Hamilton, Eva overhears Robert Greene say that Alan and Nellie are expected any day, but that the date of their marriage will depend on her. His careless words that "Alan is a honorable sort of fellow that way, and he does not like the idea of breaking a girl's heart, but I say he is a fool to let a girl's heart stand in the way of a fortune" settles the matter for Eva (53). The author is at pains to point out that a portion of upper-class society is populated by callous ambitious people who revere money and position, and there is evil resident in them. Robert's words stab Eva's heart and she takes one final vow: "Eva Carlen's heart shall never stand between you and fortune ... She shall be far

beyond your reach when you come to seek your freedom" (53).

Instead of getting sympathy or consolation from Alan in her deepest sorrow, Eva has received a cold, cruel silence that is more torturing than the bitterest truth, and in her home town seems to be attacked on every side. Revenge becomes her ambition. In this frame of mind she longs for the day, no matter how distant, when she can triumph over him. She refuses to "wear the willow for his sake," but from now on her ambition (echoing Mrs. Horten's) is to make a brilliant marriage, and some day when she should meet "him and his wealthy bride, the millionaire's daughter, and she should queen it over her" (51). Up to this point it is clear that Nellie Grant and Mrs. Horten are ambitious, but with Eva's final vow -- ambition for revenge -- it is clear that the same quality has seeped into her. The narrator, though, reminds the reader that "Eva was only human, and must be excused if she cherished in her heart this very natural piece of revenge" (51) -- the suggestion is that Eva is not in Mrs. Horten's league, and is not to be seen as such, but that her new feelings derive from her situation, rather than from an inherent base evil. Despite her own desire for revenge, Eva is locked into a position in society, and can only express her emotions to herself. She cannot publicly lash out with what she is actually feeling: "hot anger and indignation against him that she felt she hated him" (51). She is infuriated that he has won her "youth's best affections" only to fling them from him without a word of explanation (51). But though her heart rebels, the desire must be quelled; it cannot be

publicly acknowledged. Her (impotent) thoughts of revenge are juxtaposed with the sound of Christmas bells, a sound that had always accompanied Alan's Christmas gift and one that now brings a certain pain. Whereas gold is associated with Christmas (the gold, frankincense and myrrh brought to the Christ child in the Biblical story), "it was gold, sordid gold, that won him from her" (52). Despite the pleading of the Christmas bells for peace on earth, there is no concomitant peace in Eva's tumultuous heart. Just as Nellie had to choose between good and evil, the narrator makes it clear that Eva also has a choice -- "Hate, revenge and ambition warred with love, forgiveness and resignation" (52) -- and with her choice she unwittingly aids in her own trials.

Sacrificing herself so that Alan's fortune is secure through marriage with Nellie Grant, Eva is heartbroken and consumed with thoughts of revenge on Alan Horten. Her one ambition is to make a brilliant marriage. As she tells Ida, she does not plan to take "any mean or ignoble revenge, or make trouble between him and his wife, as the girls do in novels" (54); it is a revenge nevertheless. She is not quite convinced that she has been totally replaced in his heart; she feels that it is Nellie's wealth that has won him and this is why she despises him. She tries to justify Alan's alleged action with the thought that if he honestly loves Nellie, she could at least respect him; she still loves him despite the pain she feels he has caused her, but she "would rather lie fathoms deep in the water than let him know" (54). Having despised Alan for his purported greed, she becomes greedy herself and clings tenaciously to her pride.

Despite a lengthy silence, his letters unanswered, and his engagement ring returned, Alan is faithful, optimistic that when he meets Eva he will receive explanations for all that has happened in the past two years. But, just as Harry eagerly returns to St. Rose to announce his engagement with Norrie only to find her gone, so Alan has to face Eva's disappearance when he arrives in Newfoundland. After Alan leaves New York, Nellie Grant, who had set all this evil in motion, becomes ill. Her conscience cannot bear the cumulative weight of guilt and crime, and although her constitution is ordinarily strong, her physical body cannot tolerate her tortured mental state.

Just as Norrie had a tormented dream on the eve of making her decision to leave Newfoundland, so Eva, with a heart devoid of peace, has a dream that foreshadows what will happen after she arrives in England:

*She dreamed that she roamed amid trees and flowers, that she was very unhappy. She was looking for Alan and could not find him; it was night but the moon shone brightly. A terrible fear overpowered her, such as we sometimes experience in dreams. She turned to go home, as she thought, not knowing where home was, but she could not move, and suddenly gazing a little distance off, she saw Alan lying on the ground. She rushed towards him and threw herself on her knees at his side calling him by every endearing name to speak to her. She placed her hand over his heart, it did not beat, and lifted her hand again she found that it was covered with blood, and he was dead. "He has been murdered ... murdered by the millionaire's daughter." (52)*

The ostensibly pastoral landscape is imbued with evil: it is an evil that cannot be escaped by going beyond geographical boundaries. The reader later learns that the dream is founded in reality, and Eva herself is the cause of Alan's near murder.

The position that Mrs. Brown secures for Eva in England is similar to that chosen for Norrie by the Mother Superioress in America. Once Eva is situated in her new surroundings, the narrator momentarily leaves the action of the plot and unexpectedly jolts the reader in a digressive aside which is, in effect, a philosophical summary of the novel, and attests to its didactic intent:

Why does it often happen that when persons aim at a certain object from unworthy motives, they find themselves whirled along by the force of circumstances to the attainment of it? Is it a wise Providence who wishes to show us that when the object for which we labored is in our grasp, when victory crowns our efforts, it can be made to recoil with bitter sorrow on our own heads, that leads us on; or, is Satan, with his arts, the instrument which is permitted to lead us into temptation, the more to purify noble souls like gold in the furnace?  
(59)

This is the basic theological dilemma presented in the novel. The reference to Satan makes it obvious that the reader is to see Eva as being tempted into revenge, and she is clearly the vehicle to save her future husband's atheistic soul from eternal damnation.

The didactic import of the novel is doubled by the use of a carefully crafted subplot which echoes the main plot. Eva will marry Arthur Brandon -- one of England's wealthiest men -- in order to carry out her threat to make a brilliant marriage. As his name implies, Arthur Brandon (although not the quintessential chivalric knight) is branded. His life story -- all the wrongs that have been done to him -- are a mirror image of Eva's: "instead of being a happy man, by his own fireside with the woman

he loved, and laughing children around him," he is an exile and a wanderer who leads a careless, reckless life (61). Just as Eva was conned into believing that Alan is false to her and as a result doubted his love, so Arthur's love, Elsie, did not have the strength of character to trust the man she had promised to marry because his enemies called him a scoundrel. Arthur has utmost contempt for such weakness, and as a result of this tragedy in his life, his faith in women has been destroyed. Guided by the omniscient narrator who relates both sides of the story, the reader knows that this is exactly Eva's situation. Although Mrs. Brown is citing Arthur's life for Eva's ears, the subtext is evident to the reader. As Arthur and Eva get to know each other, she learns that as a result of fate and the wrongs practiced on him, Arthur Brandon lives according to a nihilistic philosophy: "suspect all, love none, trust none, believe in nothing, rush through life in a reckless, dissipated manner" (69). Through his jaded eyes, he (mistakenly) feels that Eva's sorrows have ennobled her, that hers were not the kind that destroys the faith, love and trust of a young heart. But he is mistaken, as her misfortunes have caused her love, faith and trust to be subsumed by the baser emotions of revenge and anger.

That Arthur Brandon and Eva Carlen are suited in the tenor of their philosophies is summarized in a line of a ballad which they sing: "Oh! love for a year, a week, a day,/ But alas for the love that lives alway" (76). The parallels of their situations are emphasized, particularly when Arthur reveals the "facts" of his situation to Eva, how

the letters between him and Elsie had been stolen. The reader knows (and Alan and Eva later discover) that the letters between Alan and Eva have been stolen by Nellie Grant. Arthur learns of Eva's broken engagement and of the man she still loves. She acquaints him with the reasons for her broken heart, how things had come to her knowledge convincing her that he was acting falsely. She holds nothing back from Arthur, nor does she paint a pretty picture. Her desire in life has changed from the shared love of marriage, to the unworthy ambition of marrying wealth so she can meet and "queen" it over her rival, the millionaire's daughter, whose gold, she suspects, has tempted Alan from his allegiance to her. Eva's sole reason for marrying Arthur is mercenary. She tells him frankly that it is a means of achieving her revenge and if, even after marriage, he loses his wealth, he would lose his usefulness to her. Although she has consented to marry him, her head and heart are not connected as they should be in this major commitment: "Her lips uttered the words at which her heart revolted: 'I consent,' and hated herself the next moment for saying it" (80).

After accepting Arthur's suit and promising to marry him, Eva, alone in her room, reflects on her life and the monumental step she is about to take. It is a time for total honesty, even about Alan's purported deceit. For the first time, she acknowledges that she has condemned him on very frail evidence and admits that she has no positive proof that he has been false to her, except that he had not written. Eva is voicing questions to which the reader already has the answers:

"Why did he use her name so familiarly in his letters to Mrs. Horten, and why had she become so intimate with his mother, whom she had never seen, as to keep a correspondence with her; and, why, after she returned his ring, had he not written to acknowledge the receipt of it; and, ah, yes, crowning proof of all, why did he not write even a line of sympathy in the greatest sorrow of her life, her mother's death?" (83)

Although she has emigrated to England and accepted Arthur's proposal, Eva still wonders if Alan is true to her and why he does not get her address and write for an explanation. The narrator reminds the reader that Eva had forgotten that she had exacted a promise from Ida to lead Alan to believe that she wished their engagement at an end. Because he has not done as she had hoped, she blindly concludes that he is glad to be free. The reader is not totally sympathetic with Eva as she triumphs over what she perceives is Alan's desire for freedom. Eva tells herself that there is no need to give up her pleasure of travel in foreign lands, to return to a humble existence in Mrs. Brown's cottage, and her thinking indicates an exercise in justification. Confronted by all the luxuries and pleasures that can be bought, Eva is easily convinced. She decides that she will take "the goods the gods provided, and be as happy as she could"; but the "small, still voice" of her conscience cannot be silenced (83). Eva is aware that Arthur Brandon does not believe in a hereafter, that he is simply an atheist, and her better self shrinks from him. The narrator points out that in accepting Arthur's proposal she knows that an alliance with him is wrong, but her overwhelming desire to be even with and triumph over Alan Horten urges her on. As if on the brink of a precipice, Eva tries to appease the voice of her conscience with

the thought that she would be able to win her husband back to his lost faith. The reader is told repeatedly that Eva knows that her actions are wrong, yet she ignores her inner voice. Eva is not a victim; she chooses freely to do wrong. Eva, like her Biblical foremother in the garden of Eden tempted by Satan with an apple, succumbs; Eva Carlen is tempted by the taste of revenge.

Ida Carroll, on the other hand, listens to her conscience even though she had promised Eva not to divulge anything to Alan; she tells Alan about Eva's losses, sorrows and privations, of her loyalty to him, and that it was her pride that made her feign inconstancy. From Ida, Alan learns of his mother's visits to Eva. Like Harry when he finds out Norrie's whereabouts and goes to Europe to seek her, Alan, tired of trusting his life's happiness to letters, is true to Eva's own hopes and expectations, and immediately heads for France. Just as Harry's stepmother caused a rift between him and Norrie, so Alan thinks that his mother is the sole factor in misleading him about Eva. He is neither aware of, nor suspects, the enormity of Nellie Grant's deviousness; her cable message, "Take this direction on way to Europe. Can explain all concerning lost letters" reaches Newfoundland after Alan has left. It is too late. When he arrives in France, Eva is already branded as the wife of another man. Defeated, Alan writes a final letter to Eva, pointing out that he was more faithful than she -- a letter in which his pain is clearly evident:

"Can you recall the words, Eva Brandon, or is the past entirely blotted

from your memory? Three times I wrote and received no reply, only our engagement ring returned without a word of explanation, yet ... I kept my appointment ... if I had only come in time to see you in your shroud it would not have pierced my heart as did the sight which I beheld ... Your heart is too false and fickle for any memory of the past to cause it a pang." (90)

"Too late, too late" (the repetition is like a death knell), Eva knows that she was mad to have doubted Alan, and now this is her punishment. Confronting Alan, her calm, composed exterior cracks; she entreats him not to goad her to madness as she is not prepared to say what she might do. As she pours out long pent-up words, a strong sympathy for her is evoked in the reader, who suspects that Eva might indeed be bordering on madness:

"I am selfish too, for I am not giving you a thought. I am only thinking of my own lost happiness. What evil fate kept you one hour too late to save me from that hateful marriage, or what blind, mad folly led me on to it. When the chance of happiness was so near I threw it from me."  
(91)

Now a tragic figure, Eva recognizes that what the gods had provided is now her evil fate: her pride has been her downfall. She is, however, finally honest with Alan; his reply is to insist that it was a small thing to condemn him just because she did not get his letters. But, as she points out, this is not the sole reason: "When that report began to be circulated, and I saw people looking at me with sympathetic eyes, my pride arose, and my heart rebelled at the injustice which I believed you had done me" (92). In addition to public scorn, she also wished to avoid seeing him before he married

Nellie Grant.

Just as Norrie's pride kept her from Harry, Eva's pride got in the way of her happiness with Alan. Possibly the author is suggesting that Eva's love does not, at this point, have sufficient depth; she has to suffer more before she realizes the full extent of true love and faithfulness. Although Eva is now another man's wife, she asks Alan if he ever cared for Nellie Grant. Momentarily forgetting her new status, Alan holds her hands and reassures her that he had never cared for Nellie, except as a friend: "never have I, by thought or act, been, in the smallest degree, untrue to you. My heart is as much yours now as on the day we parted over two years ago" (92). Eva, confronted by Alan's exemplary faithfulness, reiterates that she was not faithless in heart, but in "mad, wicked deed," for which she is now bitterly punished, and she tries to verbalize her agony:

"... if you knew the torture, the slow, lingering torture which I endured when your letters did not reach me. How every day I hoped, and hoped in vain, to hear from you ... the cruel bitter disappointment, when I thought I could not live through it, when I prayed to die. Who could have taken our letters? What enemy had we?" (92-3)

Alan shows Eva the message from Nellie which had been forwarded to him en route, who he thinks is doing detective work on his behalf instead of being the agent of their pain. Ironically, Alan still has faith in Nellie.

Arthur Brandon reveals another side of his personality when he scornfully comments

that he thought it was only in "the pages of romance we hear of the bride of a few hours going to keep tryst with her lover in her husband's absence" (93). Caught up in her mercenary game, Eva is unaware of the facets of Arthur's character. Now she is numb to any subtleties of his sarcasm. When words ensue between Arthur and Alan, the latter tries to be rational, clarifying that they are not meeting by appointment but that it is their last farewell. He explains how a misunderstanding caused each to believe the other false, and how he should have suffered in silence, but that "the frailty of human nature rose above the nobler promptings of the soul" and he had reproached Eva for what she had done (94). As a 'good' knight, Arthur suggests a duel. Wildly Eva beseeches Alan not to agree, as she fears that Arthur will kill him. To allay her fears, Alan reminds her that he has proven his faithfulness, that he has never broken a promise to her. When he tells her that nothing can induce him to fight with her husband, he means exactly that.

Alan's worth is given in his own words, in which Arthur recognizes "a truer heroism, a higher nobility of character than his own" and his own inferiority. Alan is not a coward nor does he fear the opinion of the world, but would be "a foeman worthy of [Arthur's] steel" (95). He will not consent to fight because "[t]he God whom you impiously deny, commands that we not so expose to danger the life that is not our own, but were it lawful by the laws of God and man, I should still refuse" (95). Alan has given Eva his word and even if "ten thousand worlds" branded him a coward, he

could not be tempted to break it. Despite the pain of finding his beloved the wife of another man, Alan demonstrates his strength of character. When Alan is accidentally shot (by a group of young boys after an owl, it is later discovered), Eva (without any proof) publicly brands Arthur a murderer. Alan, however, has merely fainted, and revives to exonerate Arthur.

Eva, realizing her dilemma, engages in self-examination and reflection. Although the ramifications of her marriage are already clear to her, she knows that she has been saved from a terrible crime: she could have been labelled a "double-dyed murderess" (98) -- Alan's, because she had detained him; Arthur's, because calling him a murderer would have convicted him -- but God saved her. Her realization is epiphanic:

The more she thought of it the higher her heart rose in gratitude to Him, the ruler of all destinies, Who, in his mercy had saved her from so terrible a fate ... she would nobly atone to her husband for the wrong she had done him ... She would see him and ask his forgiveness ... But a nobler, higher, greater sacrifice than this kept forcing itself upon her mind. She put it from her at first as something beyond her strength. But it came again and again, each time leaving a deeper impression, till by degrees all bitterness melted from her heart and a firm and noble resolve took its place. After all, was it not her duty. She owed him this reparation. It was the only way in which she could atone to him for her unjust accusations which she had heaped upon him. (98-9)

Eva, caught in a moral, ethical dilemma, has to make her sacrifice alone. She must

submit to and fulfil a higher calling. The Biblical cadences of "atonement," "sacrifice," and "reparation" reinforce the didactic purport of this passage. A changed and determined Eva resolves to make atonement for all her wrongs. Confronting Arthur, she admits her wrongdoing, acknowledges her sense of duty, asks for his forgiveness, and offers to live in the seclusion of the country with him:

"My path of duty lies straight before me and I will not turn from it. I must endeavour, in some degree to make atonement for my folly and rashness. I have been wrong -- all wrong. I entered into marriage with you from unholy motives, and if that shot had proved fatal last night, I should have been guilty of his death and yours; ... I resolved to go to my husband, ask his forgiveness, and do my best to make the remainder of his life happy, if he will let me." (101)

Although Eva is willing, Arthur is not pleased with her sacrifice or atonement: he will forgive but he can never forget that she has tried to brand him with "the sin of Cain"; she had not considered his love, much less reciprocated it:

"I take a long time to forget a wrong. For twelve years I resented one which had been done me in my early youth, and this one cuts deeper than that because it has been dealt me by the one I loved best on earth ... My life seems to be made up of broken chords." (101-2)

Although Arthur cannot forgive and forget, from now on Eva aspires to something higher and will live apart from the world. Before her marriage she was filled with a mean ambition, a desire for revenge in some form, and a determination to live for her own pleasure, but with the experience of Alan's near death, she has become a better woman. Tried in the fire, she becomes gold, transformed and ennobled. Her mean ambitions dissolve; remorse and a wish to atone for all the wrongs she has done to

Arthur and Alan, and a desire to make an effort to save Arthur's soul from destruction have taken their place. A higher purpose is now her *raison d'être*. Hers is a self-imposed penance, a saintly, selfless devotion, carried out with missionary zeal.

In a scene with strong didactic overtones, references to the sin of Cain fix the story firmly in the Bible. Arthur rails against the fact that "if Alan Horten had never spoken again, the gallows would have been my fate and my blood would have cried out for vengeance against you as the blood of Abel did against his brother Cain" (103). In answering Eva's question, to whom did Abel's blood cry for vengeance, "to God" is reluctantly dragged from Arthur:

... as the words escaped his lips there seemed to sweep over his soul a great and mighty change, an awe of some power more than human, a forced, inward acknowledgement of his own nothingness, of the unfitness and inability of the human intellect to solve those mysteries which are destined to be, till the end of time beyond its reach, and, though he did not realize it, his stubborn will was submitted to Him who gave it. (103)

This clear sense of a greater power is the beginning of Arthur Brandon's journey back to a belief in God. With help from the narrator, the reader knows that Arthur Brandon's soul will eventually be made right with God, whose power is stronger than Arthur's will. Eva insists that Arthur is no atheist; she has always believed that he was "neither a dolt nor insane, and he, who is really an atheist, must be one of these" (103). Arthur wishes to leave England and to forget all that has happened since he met Eva; in words that echo the Bible (Job 23:10), he tells her that he will remember her

words, and the noble sacrifice which she tried to make to fulfil her duty. He firmly believes (as he did the first moment he saw her), that if she was tried, "like gold in the furnace," she would come out purer than when she entered (104).

The narrator notes that "It has often been said that only very proud natures can at times be truly humble" (104). This clearly applies to Eva -- throughout the novel her pride has been evident, but now she is completely humbled. Eva's heart overflows when Alan's life is spared: no sacrifice is too great and no humiliation too bitter for her to offer in thanksgiving. Her self-abnegation, like Norrie's, is generous and entire; she has learned that life's cup is bitter:

"... all the sorrows of the past years put together cannot equal the bitterness of this hour. When we last parted I thought my heart would break, though I knew it was only for two years, and now it is forever."  
(104)

The gradations of sorrow are now clear to her: she must endure sorrow for all eternity. Powerless to say what he wants to as Eva is Arthur Brandon's wife (although he does tell her that the only wife he will ever know is the memory of Eva Carlen), Alan tells her to devote her life to the holy task of winning Arthur back to his lost faith, and that this will bring her peace and happiness. He, too, has duties; they part, to spend the rest of their separate lives in altruistic endeavours.

On returning to New York, Alan learns the mystery of the letters and the full extent

of Nellie's deceit. Just as Eva had confronted the repercussions of her marriage to Arthur, Nellie Grant confronts her own actions, and laments that she has been a fool: "what a bitter price I have paid for my wickedness. It has cost me my life" (110). Wishing to make atonement for her wrong, Nellie had sent a cable to Alan, but it was too late to be efficacious. She now reveals the extent of her pride, but her confession goes beyond any concomitant humiliation: "I have made it with the hope that in the world beyond, where soon I hope to be, it may help to weigh in the balance against the evil I have done" (110). The higher power evident in Eva's life (and at work in Arthur's) has changed Nellie's thinking.

Although Alan has appeared to be nobler than Arthur, he displays some affinity with Arthur in his interaction with Nellie. Cold and inflexible, he is immune to her pleading for forgiveness for her eternal soul: "Do not turn your face from me. Can I, dare I, plead your forgiveness for the irreparable injury I have done you? Remember my soul is hovering on the brink of eternity ... Say you forgive me, I was but human?" (110-11). Alan has forgiven Eva, his "angel of goodness," but he refuses to forgive Nellie:

"May God pardon you, Nellie Grant, I never can, -- never on this side of the grave. Were my own wrongs ten times as great, I could forgive you, but what you've made her suffer, my wronged, innocent darling, I cannot pardon. You had all that the world could give, wealth, beauty, home, friends, love, if you chose to take it; she had lost home, fortune, parents; the one gleam of sunshine in her clouded sky, was the knowledge of my love and devotion, her faith in my constancy. You

robbed her of that. It is a desecration to call such a feeling as yours by the name of love, it was a vain, selfish passion to possess that which belonged to another." (111)

Alan is merciless and tells Nellie that she has brought her suffering on herself, and has earned it. In reminding him that (even) God has forgiven her, her words highlight that Alan is being less merciful than God. Even heaven admits reformed villains. Nellie points out (correctly, the reader expects) that Eva Carlen would not refuse her dying request, and asks his forgiveness for Eva's sake. He still refuses and gives Nellie a non-committal answer that tomorrow he might be able to forgive her, but tomorrow is too late. Just as Eva had realized that her life was composed of bitter dregs, Nellie Grant realizes the bitterness of her punishment: "With your refusal to pardon me, I have drained the cup to its bitter dregs" (112). Before she dies, Nellie gives Alan all his unopened letters.

Like the Biblical Jacob wrestling with God, all that night (after his meeting with Nellie) Alan battled with his conscience, trying to decide if Nellie deserved his forgiveness. The words of Christ filter through his consciousness: "Forgive as you would be forgiven," and "Be merciful and you shall find mercy" (113). Not only do scriptures penetrate his mind, but when in his imagination he hears Eva interceding for Nellie, he begins to realize the nobility in Nellie's character, her act of atonement, and that she had not taken the easy way out. At last he determines that he can forgive her, not just with empty words, but meaning it from his heart. God's power has

melted the anger and ice from around Alan's heart, and he admits his own sin. Eva's role is two-fold: she is the catalyst for Alan to forgive Nellie, and the means by which Arthur regains his lost faith. But her total sacrifice is first required.

Nellie will never hear Alan's words of forgiveness, as she dies while he is grappling with his conscience. The narrator is as hard on Alan as he had been on Nellie:

Ah, hard, relentless heart of man, feel now the gnawing pangs of remorse. Thou has not dealt as "gently with the erring one as God hath dealt with thee." She to whom you yesterday refused one word of forgiveness, does not need it to-day. She has gone to receive her sentence from a more just and a more merciful judge. (114)

The narrator's reprimand is a commentary on the ephemeral nature of life. God, however, is more just than man. Alan can only hope that Nellie will hear his words of forgiveness (whispered in her dead ears) in the "spirit land": "Freely and from my heart I forgive you. You have nobly atoned for your sin, and ask of Him whose pardon you have received, that when my hour comes He will show more mercy to me than I have shown to you" (114). Alan realizes that God is all-powerful, and that he cannot be judgemental where God has already forgiven. But, Alan and Eva cannot be happy together until they both admit their sins -- of anger, pride and greed -- and forgive their respective "enemies."

Eva, a deserted wife, nobly and patiently leads a lonely and desolate life. When Arthur contracts smallpox (a disfiguring and highly contagious disease), she goes to

him, heedless of any danger to herself, as she feels that her place is at her husband's side. He has not sent for her as he feels that he has done enough to spoil her happiness and he does not wish to spoil her beauty. The reader is reminded of the Biblical Job, bearing his leprosy patiently. Arthur has to lose his health and become physically disfigured before he is ready to accept salvation. Having mellowed with time, Eva now feels something akin to love for Arthur, and is touched with infinite pity for him. In risking smallpox, she reveals the essence of her character. A strong, good woman, she proves her worth. She is finally ready to put her commitment to her husband before everything (she dies to self, a Biblical concept). If she loses her physical beauty, she will still have inner beauty. Her strength of character has been tempered with experience and complete trust in God. Her desire to care for Arthur is not to appease any guilt: this is a transformed Eva. Arthur realizes, by Eva's words and actions, that she is totally resigned to God's will, as his words reveal:

"... now that I realize how unworthy I was of you. You have reached the highest pinnacle of womanly heroism, and happiness will come to you for you deserve it ... I shall not see another sun set, but your example, your noble words, your sweet humility and self-renunciation have not been lost upon me. They have sunk deep into my heart, helping to enliven my awakening faith, which I knew was not entirely lost but only sleeping." (121)

Just as Nellie has done, Arthur faces the consequences of his actions. With his admission and acceptance of God's existence, the "light of faith" floods his soul, and the previously cacophonous "broken chords" which composed his life are finally harmonious. Arthur and Nellie are given eternal life, while Alan and Eva have another

chance at earthly happiness.

After all the bouts of grief, temptation and remorse, Eva finally has peace, calm, and happiness which comes to "those whose conscience do not upbraid them" (122). As she is thinking that it is not the supreme happiness with Alan of which she had once dreamed, he, faithful to the end, reappears. Alan and Eva -- "two loyal hearts whose faith had been so cruelly tested" -- feel that their joy is worth all their suffering.

Unlike Mrs. Brandford, who is banished from St. Rose with "rage, disappointment and mortification" as her portion (*Only a Fisherman's Daughter*, 174), the author is gentler on Mrs. Horten, who becomes quite attached to her son's wife. The reader, propelled back to the opening of the novel, finally hears both sides:

"How positive I was, Alan, that I would be more constant than you. What did you think of me when you came home at the end of two years and found me gone?"

"Very hard and bitter things, Eva, until I discovered that you did not receive my letters, then, knowing how proud you always were, I understood exactly how you must have felt. But, Eva, dearest, even taking all which we have gone through into consideration, now, that it is past, we have no cause for regret. Much good has resulted from it, for our love and faith would not have been so fully tested, nor perhaps the soul of Arthur Brandon saved from eternal ruin, if, when I returned at the end of two years, I had not found you 'faithless.'" (125)

Just as pride was the major impetus for Norrie's exile, Eva has to be divested of her pride (her downfall) before she is ready to meet her lover again. If suffering is an indication of love, then Eva has proven hers: she has suffered many trials as a result

of her pride. That suffering is a prerequisite for love is suggested in Eva's initial comment when she tells Alan that people think she could not "love enough to suffer" (6). This is reinforced in Alan's words to Nellie, that "Love, that is worthy of the name, forgets itself, its impulses, its promptings are noble and self-sacrificing; its groundwork, truth and loyalty" (111). Although these words appear somewhat abstract, the reader realizes that this, in essence, is the framework of the novel.

Overtly didactic, the plot of *Faithless* is played out on a battlefield of good and evil. There are many Biblical allusions and scriptural quotations scattered throughout the novel. Central is the trial by a fiery furnace. Further emphasis on gold has multiple applications: Eva is tried in the fire, and comes forth as gold; gold is what Eva feels lures Alan to Nellie; and gold (wealth) is what attracts Eva to Arthur Brandon. This novel, like *Only a Fisherman's Daughter*, deals with powerlessness: Eva is first powerless against the evil designs of Mrs. Horten, but this societal powerlessness is replaced by God's power. Because she repents and submits to God, she ultimately triumphs: she is re-united with, and marries, Alan Horten.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### *WHEN THE DUMB SPEAK*

With its prologue and division into two parts which portray two generations of the same family, English's compelling fourth novel is structurally a departure from her previous novels, but shares with *Only a Fisherman's Daughter* and *Faithless* a strong didactic intent. The prologue, set in Ireland, foregrounds the novel's inherent didacticism: in the words of the Monk, "[e]arth is a mixture of sorrows and joys," and "everyone born in this world has his or her mission to fulfil, and until that mission is ended, God lets them live" (4, 5). From the beginning, the juxtaposition of Douglas Thorne's villainy with the inherent goodness of his (dumb) twin brother, Paul, clearly establishes the dichotomy of good and evil central to the novel. The trials of the first heroine, Agatha Harding, are a link in the strange chain of circumstances that "seal the destinies of those that were then unborn" (6), and extend into the following generations to plague her granddaughter, Agatha La Mala, in the love relationship between her and Paul Thorne, Douglas Thorne's only son. In addition to an intrusive narrative voice using Biblical language to clarify certain scenes, the novel's didactic intent is reinforced by the use of parallel (generational) plots.

Agatha Harding, the novel's first heroine, is the only daughter of Stephen Harding (of English ancestry), who lives with her father in the Newfoundland outport of

Flowerville. Harding's house is built away from the villagers as he wants to keep his daughter apart from the community: he does not want his daughter to become the wife of a fisherlad. To keep her free for a suitable suitor who would "raise her to a position befitting his daughter, and so regain their former prestige" (10) is his consuming passion. He has made many sacrifices so that Agatha could receive a good English education with a scholar from Ireland who had opened a school in St. John's. At twenty-two Agatha, beautiful and innocent, is in love, but with Mark La Maia who, metaphorically and geographically, is from the other side of town: as the grandson of a Spaniard who had married a local girl, he is of foreign descent. Because she fears her father's disapproval, their meetings have to be clandestine, but Harding has no control over their developing love. He considers Mark's status as not far above that of the fisherlad: he is only the village schoolmaster on a small salary who also works his father's land. But Mark's admirable qualities are evident to Agatha: he is "as straight as an arrow, strong of limb and muscle" (13), and he has an honest soul.

When Douglas Thorne -- a wealthy and influential merchant from St. John's and a suitor with an assured social and financial status -- enters Flowerville and Agatha's life, he does not expect to find such grace, beauty and refinement in the outport, and tries to woo the "fair village belle" (20). Thorne's evil is felt by Agatha, and at the sight of him she is conscious of a chill and a nameless dread. Angered when he does not make any impression on her, Thorne, "possessed of a desire to rule" (14), is

determined that she will be his wife. Agatha feels only fear: "[h]is conversation did not interest her, and his bold admiration, and sentimental speeches made her shrink from him" (22).

Thorne first tries to bribe Agatha with rich dresses and jewels that would make her look like a queen; when this fails, he tries persuasion. Consumed by his monomania, Thorne, the quintessential snob, is even willing to overlook the differences in their social standing if she marries him. But his thoughts reveal his true metal: "once she is my wife she'll have to obey me, and shall be made sensible of the condescension I'm making in raising her to a position which she is scarcely competent to fill, though her hoity-toity parent thinks she is" (24). Having shrewdly guessed that Harding would rejoice at his daughter's good fortune if she married him, in addition to promising Agatha everything that a girl could desire he offers Harding a good position in his mercantile office in St. John's. In his undisguised eagerness for Thorne's offer, Harding points out that his daughter is not an ordinary village girl, but then excuses her backwardness in the customs of fashionable society and in other accomplishments, and assures him that with her English education it would not take her long to become familiar with "all the codes or etiquettes of fashionable life" (23). Annoyed when his "little fool of a daughter" refuses this exemplary suitor, he tries every means in his power to induce her to reconsider her decision. Her father's inducement that she would "occupy a place in society second to none" (24) does not interest her. Thorne

disdainfully wonders why this village girl hesitates to marry him when any one of his own circle would welcome such an opportunity.

In labelling his daughter a trifle selfish for refusing Thorne's offer of marriage, Harding reveals instead his own selfishness and snobbery. Trying to extricate herself from this painful dilemma, and relying on her father's word that he would not try to make her marry Thorne if she loved another, Agatha confesses her love for Mark La Mala. Harding's word, however, is not to be trusted. He is sarcastic that she would love a poor, foreign school teacher:

"... Mark La Mala, that fellow of Spanish descent, who has a father and mother to support, and scarcely enough to do it on.... School salary [is] not enough to keep the wolf from the door. He, to expect you to marry him. What does he take you for? Does he think that you can work in his vegetable garden? for that is what his wife shall have to do; or does he think that you may take a turn at making hay now and again? What presumption! I certainly would never give my consent to such a marriage for you, even if Captain Thorne were never in the question.... you'll marry and drag out your life here. You will be just a drudge; grow old before your time. All this romantic nonsense about love will fly out the window when poverty comes through the door."  
(25-6)

Agatha's father has decided on her fate -- and it is to be a grandiose one. To Harding the choices are clear, and based on that he tries to point out the advantages for both of them if she married Thorne. She would have a life of "ease and luxury, see the world outside of Newfoundland, [and] meet nice refined people" (26). He reminds her of his age, that he no longer wants to work hard especially since it is within her power to

place him where he can take it easy for the remainder of his life. By adding "but perhaps this does not count" (26) as an afterthought, Harding tries to take advantage of her soft heart, by playing on her sympathies and her love for him. She reminds him that he has given his word, to which now he conveniently appends a condition: "Not if he were one fitted to be your husband" (26). Harding makes it clear that he will never consent to her marriage to someone he considers is beneath her. Agatha now fears Captain Thorne and her father. With her emotions assaulted by both of them, Agatha feels sad and depressed, and her happiness is spoiled. A dream arising from her troubled sleep is a foreshadowing of Mark's "death" by drowning: "he seemed to be in some danger from which she was trying to save him, but just as her hands were about to touch him, he vanished from her sight" (28). There is a raging storm in the elements, and a concomitant storm in her heart. When she awakes, Agatha learns of the tragedy of the wrecked schooner, and of Mark's drowning.

With Thorne's return to St. John's, Agatha assumes that he has passed out of her life, and that knowledge brings peace and contentment. But, Captain Thorne has no intention of taking her dismissal as final; her reluctance to become his wife only makes her more desirable. With Thorne's return imminent, Harding lays down the law to his daughter (and there is no mother figure to provide a buffer against his insensitivity in chiding her for her continued grief). With more strategically-timed, fatherly advice, Harding desperately reiterates all the advantages to be gained by such

a union:

"... I want no nonsense ... But, [Mark La Mala] is dead. You're not going to remain single all your life; no girl ever does because she loses her first love. And what better can you do than marry a good man who can give you every comfort in life. He will be kind to you, for he loves you very dearly. It is only natural to love one who loves you. Of course, during his former visit you had no thought for any other man than poor La Mala. Now it will be different; you will be looking on Captain Thorne as your future husband, who is going to raise you to a higher station of life, lavish luxuries on you, make the declining days of your father free from work and worry. There is no girl in her sound senses would refuse such advantages, and all just for a silly notion, because you're not madly in love with him, I suppose. Every good woman loves her husband, and when you're married you'll love yours. It is your interest and future happiness that I'm looking to more than my own. I'll expect when Captain Thorne again asks you to be his wife, that you will consent.... You're talking like a foolish, unreasonable child, Agatha. In the years to come you will bless me for urging you to this marriage. The happiest wives were those who allowed their parents to select their husbands." (30)

After this lengthy litany of advice, Harding orders his daughter to obey him, and tries again to evoke guilt in her:

"There are no 'if's,' Agatha; you've got to be sensible and obey me. I should think that after my life of devotion to you, you might make some little sacrifice just to please me. You think too much of yourself, my dear.... You're most ungrateful, Agatha." (31)

The narrator, seeming always to look for good in every situation, tells the reader that Harding thought he loved his daughter and was doing his duty, but Agatha feels "as though a net were closing in on her; that there was no escape; that she would be forced into this marriage, from which her whole soul revolted" (32). The net, a strong symbol of entrapment, reinforces her powerlessness: she is "fettered, hand and foot"

(35). Her plight reflects the power of the patriarchy under which she is forced to live: all her life her father had dominated her, and she lacks the strength of will to hold out against him. He succeeds in making her feel that perhaps it is her duty to obey, that she is being selfish and ungrateful in refusing to make the declining years of his life free from toil and worry. For Agatha there is no way out: reasoning with her father is futile and he is insensitive to both her grief and her intense dislike of Thorne.

Thorne's second proposal is a reiteration of the social advantages Agatha would gain by marrying him, and a reminder of the difference it would make in her father's position, but there are no emotional advantages for her. Sadly and wearily, she realizes that there is no escape, that she must sacrifice herself: it is her duty (though she fails to see it) to ensure that her father's declining years be spent in ease and comfort. Her last desperate attempt to extricate herself from this repellent situation -- telling Thorne that she does not even like him well enough to become his wife -- does not bring the desired results, as Thorne is immune to pleas for mercy. Her father has promised her to Thorne, and she must submit. Powerless, she can only vocalize her recognition of the inherent cruelty in forcing her into a marriage that revolts her; at this point she is unable to act.

Knowing that his hold on his "pretty captive" is tenuous, Thorne fears that she will "escape" him and speeds up the marriage (36). Within the strictures of her situation,

however, Agatha exhibits an independent streak. Beneath her quiet demeanour is "a latent power of determination" (35); she refuses to let Thorne deck her out in a fancy wedding dress that would blatantly advertise his wealth and publicly label her as his property:

"When I am his bride ... he can deck me out in silks and jewels; until then I'm just the simple village girl, Agatha Harding; and if my wedding robe should offend his fastidious taste, let him go, and leave me where he found me." (36)

Whereas Agatha had been pliable and ready to follow her father's advice, ensnared in this dilemma she develops "a quiet determination, an independence of thought and action, [and] a capability to handle her own affairs" (36). Harding continues to try to instill guilt by pointing out that she is not adding to his happiness; he tells her that by her words and manner it would appear that she is going into exile (which she would be), instead of a life of gaiety and affluence. By telling her that she will be the envy of every girl in St. John's, as well as Flowerville, he expects to appeal to her sense of pride, but nothing can convince her that she should marry Thorne. Agatha has difficulty wrestling with the issue of marriage, and the burden of guilt created by her father:

It sometimes occurred to her to throw herself on her father's mercy, to tell him how unhappy she was, to implore him to let her break this hateful engagement. But then, the terrible disappointment which, she knew, he would experience at such a request, deterred her. It seemed as though he had taken on a new lease of life, become rejuvenated. His financial difficulties and worries had -- through the promised position in Thorne & Company's office -- all slipped away, so she had not the heart to speak the words, and drifted on to her fate. (37)

Mark La Mala, miraculously alive, returns to Flowerville on the eve of Agatha's wedding. Harding keeps the news of his re-appearance from Agatha; he later lies, claiming that he had tried to tell her, but was afraid that it would shock her and disturb her sleep. With "a kind of veiled satire" (the narrator points out), Agatha retorts that "[a] joyous shock is never fatal, so people tell us" (43). Agatha does not marry Thorne, but as the only way out of her entrapment, jilts Thorne and elopes with La Mala. Agatha had planned to sacrifice herself to ensure her father's happiness, but at the eleventh hour she realizes that she does not have the strength to say goodbye to Mark:

Release, safety, love and happiness lay for her across that shining harbour. Perhaps the moonlight maddened them. Blame her if you will, she was not the first who flung her promised words to the winds, and took her life in her own hands.

A heart-breaking attempt at farewell; a hurried, whispered entreaty; a brief hesitation; then, a joyous assent.

At midnight, a small boat containing a man and a girl, skimmed over the rippling water. (46)

The narrator makes it clear that Agatha chooses between money and love, and sacrifices parental approval for a husband's love. But the repercussions of her act will be felt by a subsequent generation. While identifying with Agatha, and cheering her when she extricates herself from her father and Thorne, the reader knows that trials will come and retribution will be demanded later. Just as Eva Carlen had to pay for her broken promise, Agatha will likewise suffer for her declaration of independence.

After eloping, Agatha's first trial comes in the form of rejection: her father refuses to acknowledge her existence. His reply to her note (written on the same note) baldly states, "For the future, we are strangers" (48). Thorne's reaction to the news of her elopement reveals the force of the inherent evil that has now been unleashed, as well as his affinity with the devil. His verbal and physical reactions expose this inner nature:

A fierce cry, which sounded like a howl of rage from a wild beast, escaped him ... [his] pale, distorted face, eyes gleaming like balls of fire, hands clenched, lips drawn back from strong white teeth, nostrils dilating; in short the face was that of a Demon....

"She has dared to do this!" the baffled man screamed in a voice of madness; "dared to make me the laughing-stock of St. John's and Flowerville; dared to slight the honour which, in making her my wife, I was conferring upon her." He swore an awful oath; fierce imprecations fell from his lips. "She, and that dog of a village lad, shall 'ive to rue the day they crossed my path." (51)

As a "fiend of Hell" (67), Thorne represents evil incarnate -- a force that will insidiously impinge on the lives of the next generation. Whether it takes one year or twenty, he swears to exact such revenge as "should wring their hearts, and mar their lives" (52).

With the revelation of Thorne's diabolical nature, Harding (who cowered before the fire of such wrath) rejoices that his daughter has escaped. But she does not escape. Before he leaves Flowerville, Thorne, on what was to have been his wedding day, seeks out Agatha and sneeringly reminds her that "[a] midnight flight with a low-born

villager" and her concomitant marriage has placed her "beyond the pale" (54). His evil is a force to be feared; his "love" has quickly turned to hate. As he tells La Mala:

"... I do not love your wife now. I hate her; I hate you both, and remember the hate of Douglas Thorne is something to dread. I just came to warn you." He then raised his right hand, and swore the same dreadful oath he had sworn in the presence of Stephen Harding.  
 "Though it may be years hence ... I shall take a revenge upon you both that shall wreck your lives.... May the memory of my oath embitter the first year of your wedded life; and my revenge, when I take it, blast the remainder." (54)

The revelation of Thorne's true nature accentuated by his frightful words and threats cause Harding's sudden death; before he dies he makes his peace with his daughter and her husband, and admits that he was wrong to have tried to force her:

"I allowed my ambition to overrule my heart, for I could see that you were unhappy, but I loved to picture you queening it over many a City belle. As Captain Thorne's wife, you would have had every luxury the world could give; and I admit I thought a great deal of myself, too. I could take it easy for the remainder of my life, and be where I could have -- as I was getting up in years -- the attention and advice of a doctor. Well, I built my castles, and they've tumbled down." (56)

With Harding's demise, it is clear to the reader that the work of the devil has begun to infect the La Mala family. The reader also learns that Thorne's influence cost Mark his position as school teacher. After seven years, however, the threats and vows of vengeance had faded from their minds; when their baby daughter, Rose, shows signs of delicacy, Agatha fights her distaste for the city and the concomitant proximity of Thorne in order to take their child to the doctor.

In addition to his destruction of the La Mala family, Thorne's evil saps his mother's strength, causing her life to be one of "intense martyrdom" (60). Since Agatha's rejection of him, he has become a demon, and the fear of her son has made Norah Thorne, who is not a weak woman, a nervous wreck; consequently she is returning to her home in Ireland. Her ship is to sail at the same time as the La Malas. But Agatha does not, cannot, return to Flowerville. Mark and Agatha are separated in the pandemonium of a waterfront fire and a drunken brawl. Recognizing Agatha, Thorne seizes his chance to make his threat of revenge a reality, kidnaps her, and puts her on his ship -- the ship that is taking his mother to Ireland.

Once Agatha realizes that she is not on her way to Flowerville, but has been abducted, she is terrified, but this time she has a buffer and saviour in the form of Norah Thorne. Agatha relates the history of the broken engagement and of Thorne's subsequent mercilessness to Thorne's mother, and tells her that she would rather brave the dangers of the fire than the fire of Captain Thorne's wrath. Aware that she and Agatha are incarcerated in their cabin, Norah knows that her son is "guilty of the most despicable piece of treachery with which he had ever yet had stained his soul" (66). When Agatha learns that she is being taken across the sea, she is grief-stricken, not only for her own plight, but because she realizes that her baby will probably die without her. This is the worst evil that Thorne could possibly perpetrate. Agatha is powerless to extricate herself this time. Norah is also powerless, and all she can do is

to implore the distracted girl to place her trust in God who will save her and restore her to her family. The message is clear to the reader: God is the only power which can counteract the force of evil. Disconsolate, Agatha gives way to "such an outburst of grief, as shatters the nerves and saps the strength of the strongest," then sinks into a semi-conscious state, roused only by her enemy checking on his "fair captive" (67). At the sight of him Agatha is consumed by an unparalleled anger and, goaded by his words, she lashes out at him:

"How dare you, fiend of Hell, messenger of the Evil One, come here to gloat over your despicable work, you vile, miserable coward. Set your hireling another task, command him to consign me to the waves, they would be more welcome to me than your hateful presence." (67)

Thorne had expected tears and pleading as evidence of her fear, not those vehement words. Instead of finding a simpering, grovelling captive, he faces "a proudly indignant woman, fearless in her righteous anger, who hurled at him scathing words of scorn and contempt" (67). Her fate, he reminds her, is in his hands: she will never again see her husband. He is confident of his power and her powerlessness, but as she points out, there is a power greater than his:

"... you're not all-powerful. My fate does not lie in your hands; it lies in the hands of a Higher Power, a Power that may strike you dead at any moment, and frustrate your evil designs." (67)

Raging out of control and spewing out a storm of oaths, Thorne threatens Agatha and his mother. Caught in a primal battle of good versus evil, Agatha feels "a wave of desolation sweep over her soul" but resolves neither to kneel nor plead with Thorne.

Norah has faith that God will help them, and implores Agatha to keep up her strength and courage. For the remainder of the voyage Agatha, living with "mingled hope and despair, of keen anguish, unavailable regret, and a vague terror which never left her" (69), refuses to acknowledge Thorne's existence.

Thorne's pride had been wounded when Agatha jilted him; now, ensuring that she pay for her deed, he gloats over her broken heart:

"She did not consider me when she made me a laughing-stock for society. I vowed I'd be revenged and pay her back, and I'm going to do it.... I shall take charge of the woman who held me up to ridicule. I shall wring her heart, and that of the village lad who tempted her to break her promised word. I'll show them no mercy." (73)

But what Thorne exacts as retribution for the wounding of his pride far exceeds the 'crime.' Although he has insisted that she will never again see her children, because of the heroic generosity of Thorne's mother once the ship docks in Ireland Agatha escapes and once more eludes an uncertain fate engineered by this madman. Aware that it is God who has delivered her, she, like Norah, thanks "Him who is ever the Helper of the helpless, and the Guardian of the innocent" (77). Imbibing alcohol to imbue him with courage and bravado in his hour of revenge, Thorne had planned to gloat over Agatha's misery, taunt her with her questionable position, and torture her. Instead of finding Agatha alone in the cabin, he finds his mother. Angered that Agatha has eluded him again, he vows to find her and this time kill her. The powerful Douglas Thorne is "fooled, outwitted, hood-winked, by two weak women" (75).

Back in Newfoundland, when Mark La Mala cannot find his wife, he intuitively senses that Thorne's revenge has finally been exacted. Their frail child dies because of the lack of her mother's nourishment. As the narrator carefully points out, "[b]ut for the cruel, cowardly, felonious act of an unscrupulous villain [sic], the little baby would be alive, and blooming with health to gladden the hearts of her adoring parents" (82). Thorne's evil has now claimed two lives. With the disappearance of his wife and the death of their baby, the demon of revenge is born in Mark's heart. He vows that Thorne's life will pay: "a life for a life, he is the murderer of my child" (83). The reader realizes that the evil in Douglas Thorne unleashed when Agatha rejected him is all-pervasive, and has now infected La Mala.

Although Agatha has been resurrected from across the sea (as Mark had earlier been resurrected from its depths) and is restored to her family, the shock of her kidnapping, compounded with the sorrow of finding that her baby has died causes her life to ebb away. But before she dies, she informs Mark that she has forgiven her enemy, and that if he wants to join her and baby Rose in heaven, he also has to forgive Thorne. Although the author depicts heaven as a place where Agatha and little Rose wait "at the gate" (87), the architectonics of heaven are not significant. What is important is that the reader learns the Biblical sentiment that there can be no entry into heaven until one's enemies are forgiven. While Agatha lives, Mark does not discuss his dark, vengeful thoughts, but after she is dead, he publicly swears revenge, even if it takes

twenty or thirty years to be achieved.

Thorne does not mellow with age or show any indication of regretting his actions, but marries and produces a son. He plans a trip to Flowerville -- where he has caused so much havoc in the La Mala family -- to re-establish a branch of Thorne & Company. With Thorne's return to the village, Mark's friends, remind him of his vow, and ask about his intentions for revenge. Mark, unaware of Thorne's proximity, reinforces that he has heeded Agatha's injunction:

"... I intended then and for many years afterwards, to keep it [the vow]; but latterly I've thought that if I wish to meet my Agatha in the heaven above, I must hearken to the words of One who has said 'Vengeance is Mine, I will repay.' I have tamed my heart to submission, and, even if the opportunity did come, and I did take his worthless life, what a heritage, were I convicted and hanged, would I leave to my sons -- their father a murderer! No; I've never told them the story, and I forbade Jane to do so. I shall never, in all likelihood, see him again, and, in God's Name, men, let it rest between us. Do not tempt me." (93)

In addition to the underlying echo of the Biblical admonition to "forgive your enemies," a Biblical precept, "Vengeance is mine; I will repay" (Romans 12:19), is clearly stated. But with "insolent bravado" (84), his temper as quick as ever, and his heart still black, Thorne comes to Flowerville. "The brazen effrontery, the unwarrantable liberty and consummate insolence" of this "cowardly villain" leads him to a gathering of men at the center of which is Mark La Mala (95). Seeing him after all these years, La Mala vividly recalls all that he has suffered at the hands of this

man, and cries out, "Seize him! seize him!" (95). This command causes Thorne to sense imminent death, but through a bizarre twist of events it is his twin brother, Dumb Paul, who dies instead. Thorne is too late to save him. Fearing that he will be killed if he is found alive, Thorne dons his brother's monk's robe and puts his own clothing on his brother; in doing this he seals his own fate, and consigns himself to a lifetime of silence. Finding what is supposedly the body of Douglas Thorne at the bottom of Devil's Gulch, Mark feels that has been avenged "by a Mightier Hand" than that of his friends.

The second part of the novel chronicles the repercussions of this tragedy -- and all the previous tragedies experienced by the La Mala family in the wake of Thorne's unleashed wickedness -- on the next generation. Twenty-three years after his father "dies" in Devil's Gulch, Paul Thorne arrives in Flowerville to re-establish a branch of the company. The trials of Agatha La Mala, the orphaned granddaughter of Agatha Harding and Mark La Mala and the novel's second heroine, in the love story between her and Paul Thorne demonstrate the Biblical pronouncement that the sins of the father visit the children and its repetition throughout this part of the novel reinforces the message that the second generation must learn. Even though evil permeates the first part of the novel and will trouble the second heroine, it will not ultimately triumph, as the villainy that had consumed Douglas Thorne is not resident in his son (although while Thorne lives, it will plague Agatha).

Paul and Agatha met briefly when, as a young girl, Agatha, sending her sister Rose whom she fondly calls Rosebud, to the United States, put her on a ship on which Paul Thorne was travelling, and entrusted her to his care. Instead of going with her sister, Agatha had chosen to remain with her grandfather, Mark La Mala, who is now old and invalided. Solitary like Eva Carlen, Agatha has few friends in the village. Except for three years in St. John's "under the tuition of the Nuns" (119) to prepare her for teaching, Agatha has led an insular life. Like her grandfather, Agatha, at 22, is the village school teacher; she is expert lacemaker as well as an expert "fisherman."

Although he is a Thorne by birth, Paul, at 26, does not have any of his father's evil qualities; as the narrator, echoing the scriptures, rhetorically asks, "Can figs grow of thistles, can bitter give forth sweet, so would run the mind of those who knew Paul Thorne, and had known his father?" (107). Whereas his father had been "selfish, cruel, when thwarted of his desires, vindictive, hard-hearted, unprincipled, of a violent temper," Paul is "unselfish, gentle, kind-hearted, high-principled to a fault, generous and lenient to his employees who loved and respected him," has a "courteous and chivalrous" manner, a strong will, and with his noble and refined thoughts he is the apotheosis of the perfect man (107). Paul goes to Flowerville, meets Agatha while he is trout fishing, and they fall in love. At first there are undefined feelings between them, but soon their "soul spoke to soul" (116). Agatha's "soulful charm," "expression of high resolve," and "nobleness of character" which eclipse her beauty,

complement Paul's noble character (112). When she tells Paul about her life, he thinks that "none but a brave, noble, spirit could be capable of such a great sacrifice and such unselfish love" (115). Early on the intrusive narrative voice firmly tells the reader that the tragedies experienced earlier will re-surface and trouble this generation:

Dream on Paul. That shining river with the islands gleaming on its breast, those rugged boulders, over which the waters fall, making music in their maddening rush, shall ever live in your memory, shall ever waken in your soul thoughts so tender and sweet that the recollection will fill your heart with rapture, even though the shadow of a tragedy, for a time, shall darken your joy, and stand, as a gaunt spectre, between you and your life's happiness. (111)

Paul, dazed and bewildered by the wonderful feelings that have entered his life, happy with the joy that is surging through his heart, is in love. Although he has met many accomplished girls, none of them compare with Agatha, who is described in a picture reminiscent of Norrie as she appeared to Harry:

... this village girl in her pink muslin dress, which seemed to set off to advantage her dark hair, her Spanish eyes, her crimson lips and creamy skin, with the bright hue of health glowing in her cheeks; together with that nameless something which attracted him as the magnet does the iron. (118)

Agatha and Paul meet clandestinely just as Agatha Harding and Mark La Mala had previously. Before long their undefined feelings change to love, and they know that "for weal or woe, their lives from henceforth were bound together" as without words "they had found their affinity; that earth held for them no sweeter, greater happiness than that which was theirs" (122). After Paul declares his love, Agatha is fearful that

she will not fit into his society. She wonders if he has considered the ramifications of this, and if his love can stand the test of any deficiency she might exhibit as he is used to meeting "women of culture and refinement, accomplished in the arts of music, singing and entertaining," of all those forms of etiquette which she knows exist, but does not understand. Class consciousness is evident here, but after her initial fears have been allayed, Agatha, knowing that she will have to enter this society, longs to be his wife. Unlike his father, Paul is not overtly concerned with "the polished veneering of society" (127). In his eyes, she is "queen over every woman" who has crossed his path, and he would not have her change "one iota" (127). As far as he is concerned, she has "grace, beauty, and intelligence, besides the nameless charm which marks [her] the refined lady" (127-8). She is his "pearl of price" (128), and no other woman can or will fill his life, heart, or home.

Happy in their "love dream" (128), Paul has neglected the conventionality of asking her grandfather's permission for her hand in marriage. But, just as Eva Carlen could not leave her parents to go with Alan to New York, Agatha cannot marry him and leave Flowerville, because while her grandfather lives she must care for him. Up to this point she has not asked Paul to their home because her grandfather, though he loves her dearly, is sensitive, and she does not want him to think that his life stands between his granddaughter and her happiness. She will be his wife, she promises him, when she closes "his eyes in death" (128). Before Paul returns to St. John's they

promise to always tell each other the truth about everything, whether pleasant or not. But, their perfect love, understanding, and complete trust is about to be assaulted by the painful vicissitudes of life.

The La Mala's servant, Jane, who knows the story of Douglas Thorne, realizes that Agatha and Paul Thorne have fallen in love. She wrestles with her conscience; she knows that she should tell Agatha the truth, but as the narrator divulges, "unfortunately for the two concerned, she did not obey the suggestion" (131). When a storm exposes the engagement ring that Douglas Thorne had given Agatha Harding, lying under the rotting boards of the verandah all those years, Agatha's curiosity about her grandmother's engagement is piqued. Jane, however, tells her only part of the story.

Receiving news that his mother is ill, Paul returns to St. John's, but even before he tells Agatha about his mother's illness, Agatha senses that something is wrong. Like Norrie's sensitivity to Harry's facial expressions that are an indicator of his feelings, Agatha is sensitive to every nuance of Paul's emotions. When she tells him that he must return to his mother, Paul marvels at her heroic bravery and dauntless courage in putting him first. When he promises to return as soon as possible, "a strange foreboding, a premonition of coming sorrow, fell with leaden weight" (135) upon her heart. Like Norrie and Eva who try to be stoical when they say goodbye, by a

supreme effort. Agatha masters her emotions and puts a bright smile on her face. They bid a sad farewell to each other: "The ecstasy of a perfect silence charmed the night; but a sense of coming tragedy was felt by each" (136).

The narrator informs the reader that it was a strange fatality that led Mark La Mala to his bedroom window overlooking the garden where Agatha and Paul were saying goodbye that particular hour on that particular night. Although La Mala has kept the knowledge of Douglas Thorne and that segment of the family history from Agatha, it cannot be a secret forever. It is more than just a painful story now. The past has impinged on the present: Douglas Thorne's son has fallen in love with the granddaughter of the woman whose life he had ruined, and she returns his love. In a savage and somewhat surreal scene, La Mala, exhibiting a calculated craftiness (he knows the identity of her companion), finally tells Agatha the truth that he has kept from her all those years. The reason he gives for telling her "the story of wrong, and villainy, and perjury, and persecution, of mean revenge, and a terrible retribution" (139), is that he may not have much longer to live. Preparing to tell the story, Mark gets excited "as the memory of his wrongs swept over him, his eyes blazed with the passions long since lying dormant" (139). Initially, his version, like Jane's, pointedly omits the name of the guilty wretch, and the existence of a twin brother.

Painting a highly subjective and emotional picture according to his own agenda, La

Mala's story takes the form of questioning. First he asks Agatha what she would call the perpetrator of such crimes? Following his carefully contrived lead-in, she has no choice but to reply:

"... I cannot find words strong enough to apply to such a vile wretch as he must have been. A murderer -- he is one because he caused little Rose's death, and, just as surely, that of my grandmother. A perjurer, a coward, a black-hearted villain; and then, after all these years, to come here with the intention of gloating over the havoc he had wrought. Well, God would not let him live; he met the death which he richly deserved. Let us hope though that he had a little moment to repent ere the end came to his miserable life." (140)

Slyly he edges closer to the present situation: "You would not think that a man such as he could have a son who would make the woman he married a happy wife?" (140), all the while knowing that she is totally unaware of the villain's identity. With the "facts" that he dangles before her, her answer can only be biased: she would not care to trust her happiness to such a man. In his paranoid zeal, La Mala promises to safeguard her from such a catastrophe. Agatha, thinking about Paul, knows the impossibility of being interested in anyone but him, even if the "son of this scoundrel" is fine, handsome, and wealthy. When she asks the name of this despicable villain, instead of replying, La Mala asks her to fetch the Bible, kneel and swear a solemn oath on the Sacred Book, before he will reveal his identity.

Although Agatha feels a strange nervousness and unreality, she is powerless to resist her grandfather's request. He is going to bind her so that nothing will ever induce her

to become the wife of the villain's son. Agatha tries to remonstrate with him, that it is unlikely that they should meet. Just as Stephen Harding had tried to make his daughter feel guilty so that she would marry Douglas Thorne for his sake, so La Mala slyly coaxes Agatha, "just to please me, child ... I would die happier to know that I've made it impossible for you to meet such a fate" (141). In *Only a Fisherman's Daughter* and *Faithless* the troubling oaths and promises are instigated by the heroines themselves, but here the patriarch commands the oath and controls her words:

With pale face, and beating heart, she knelt by the table, holding the Bible with shaking hands, whilst she repeated after Mark the solemn words of an oath, so terrible, and so binding, that, in the middle of the sentence, she cried out:

"Oh! grandfather, spare me this! I can give you reasons; I can tell you right now, why such an oath is unnecessary. I would not want to marry him. There is someone else. I would have told you in a little while." (141)

But just as Stephen Harding had been merciless when his daughter told him that she loved Mark La Mala, now La Mala disregards his granddaughter's pleading. Asking why she fears to take the oath (suggesting a criticism of his wisdom), she responds that it is too terrible. But he sternly commands her to finish it: "and never while I live, to touch the hand of this man. I solemnly swear to abide by this oath while life lasts" (142). To which he adds, and she repeats, "Unless released by me" (142). After she has kissed the Bible, he asks her if she intends to keep the oath, she replies, "I should not take such an oath if I did not intend to keep it" (142). Agatha La Mala abides by a strong moral code and will keep her word.

After abusing his power over her and forcing her to be a participant in his preposterous scheme, La Mala reveals the name of the fiend who caused all his unhappiness and the death of his dear ones, and gloats over having deceived her:

The man sat bolt upright, and raising a thin white hand said.

"As God hears me, the man whom you've sworn never to marry, nor so much as touch his hand is, Paul Thorne, the son of Captain Douglas Thorne, the despicable scoundrel -- the murderer -- the perjurer -- the abductor" -- with each scathing epithet his voice rose higher, until the last was almost a shriek.

The unhappy girl sat as if turned to stone. The room spun round, for a moment everything went black, and consciousness left her; but she did not faint. She was possessed of a wonderful vitality, and great powers of endurance, this girl.

With supreme effort she regained her failing faculties. What was this terrible thing which her grandfather had said? "His mind must be deranged," was her next thought, "or could there be two Paul Thorne's?" (142-3)

Agatha had sensed that she was to hear something that she did not want to hear, but this revelation is beyond anything she could have imagined. There is but one Paul Thorne, "the dastard, the worthy son of a perfidious father, who has, for his own amusement, sought to win the love and trust of an innocent girl" (143), and he reminds her that she can never break the oath she had sworn. With his reference to Paul's dumb uncle who used to go around in the garb of a monk, she realizes the implication of her action and beseeches him to release her from the oath that she had taken in ignorance. It is too late to insist that he should have told her the name before he forced her to take it. She defends Paul, telling La Mala that he is not like Douglas Thorne but is good, honorable, noble and would not hurt a worm. But La Mala is

beyond the boundaries of reason:

"Release you," and now the voice of Mark La Mala rose again to a frenzied shriek, "never, you must abide by that oath, sworn upon the sacred Bible.... Listen, girl," and his voice sounded harsh and weird, "WHEN THE DUMB SPEAK, you are released." (143-4)

And with that pronouncement, La Mala dies. Although it seems that he tries to speak, "no words would come. His lips worked convulsively in an effort to articulate, but all in vain" (144). The intrusive narrator suggests that La Mala repents, but the reader can only trust the reliability of that voice; the distraught girl is unaware of La Mala's remorse and remains irrevocably bound by her promise:

Who knows, but in that final struggle, whilst his soul hovered on the brink of eternity; the full realization of the unjust act of which he'd been guilty swept over him, and he knew that he should have merely warned the girl, and let her use her own judgement instead of wilfully deceiving her when he forced her to take such a solemn oath; and, were it possible he would have released her. But, alas! for the miserable girl who stood by, with despair in her heart; his repentance came too late. But not, let us hope, too late for the man, whose life had been one of trials and adversities, to make a voiceless prayer for pardon from his Maker, for this last wrong act of his life. (144)

Agatha's legacy for a life of devotion to her grandfather is a bitter one: in order to keep the oath she has been cruelly forced to swear, she loses her love. In her mind she bids Paul farewell and tells him that they must both suffer for the sins of others. The reader hears echoes of the Ten Commandments with the admonition: "for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquities of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me" (Exodus 20:5). Agatha

does not know how to deal with the combination of pain and loss of her beloved, and berates herself for taking the oath. The reader hears echoes of Norrie's voice as she prepared for a life without Harry:

"[Paul] ... how can I tell you, what words shall I use to make you understand how impossible it is that I can ever be your wife? I should have refused to take such an oath. I knew it was wrong, but I must stand by it now. If I were the only sufferer I would not care, but the breaking of it calls from God sorrow, pain and suffering unspeakable on his dear head, and death would be easier to me than that. I must live my lonely life, but I trust that when a little time has passed, Paul may find happiness with some good woman who will make his home happy, and fill the place that I had hoped to fill." (145)

When Jane, thinking like La Mala, suggests that Thorne's son could never make any woman happy, Agatha orders the servant to never again breathe a word against Paul Thorne: "He is the noblest, the truest, the most tender hearted of men, and the woman who is fortunate enough to be is [sic] wife will have all the happiness that this world can give" (146). She laments that her consideration for her grandfather's feelings has landed her in this situation and she feels that had she allowed Paul to ask consent to their engagement, everything would have been different. Concern for her grandfather has resulted in tragedy. Agatha writes to Paul telling him that she is going to her sister in the United States, and asks him not to look for her.

Before leaving Flowervilla, Agatha visits the scene of the blissful week when Paul entered her life, to saturate herself with fond memories, but "[t]he river seemed to

murmur his name; the birds seemed to be chanting a requiem over the grave of her buried hopes," and despairing of ever regaining that joy, she flees from the unbearable memories of Flowerville (148). Agatha goes to St. John's, planning to rent a small shop, and sell her own crocheting, embroidery and fancy knitting. She plans to live as cheaply as possible in rooms attached to the shop until she has enough money to go to her sister. She chooses "the humbler parts of the city; far removed from the elegant surroundings of Thornleigh [Paul's home]" (148). She is told that her location is inconsequential as the elite, who will vie to buy her beautiful laces, will seek her out wherever she resides. Hearing repeated references to the elite of St. John's and fearful that Paul will find her, Agatha adjusts to the parameters of her new situation and adopts her grandmother's maiden name, and is known as Miss Harding. Before the opening of her store she prays that God would spare both she and Paul the pain of a meeting; her prayer brings peace.

Paul, in the meantime, has told his mother about his decision to marry Agatha. Mrs. Thorne's misgivings about this outport girl's unsuitability for Paul's society expose the social codes of the day:

"... I have no doubt that the girl is all you say, it is still only natural to suppose that she must be deficient in that culture and refinement which -- as your wife -- she should possess. She has never been accustomed to the society in which -- as Mrs. Thorne -- she will move, and the chances are that in time to come you will regret that you did not choose, from amongst your own class, a woman who can sustain the dignity and uphold the honours of your home." (151)

Mrs. Thorne, reminiscent of Mrs. Brandford, thinks that members of the lower class are deficient in qualities that the upper class have by virtue of birth. But Paul is unswerving in his belief in Agatha's character, and reassures his mother that "Agatha La Mala will not fail in sustaining the dignity and uphold the honours of our home" (151). Like Norrie, Agatha's formal education and her innate refinement and exceptional intelligence allow her to enter society. Agatha La Mala, he tells her, is the only woman for him, regardless of status, and he gives an eloquent and proud description of her: "My Agatha has the soulful eyes, the noble heroism, the matchless bravery, of the daughters of Spain" (152).

When Paul receives Agatha's letter he is plunged into despair. Just as Norrie had left a cryptic letter for Harry, the "explanation" that Agatha gives Paul is far from satisfactory:

"What I've got to tell you is breaking my heart. We must never meet again, dearest. That which separates us can never be changed. I'm bound, by solemn oath, to never again touch your hand. But I did not know, when taking the oath, that it meant yours, or no power on earth would have compelled me to take it.

"Oh! I can never explain it. All I ask is do not try to see me. It would be too painful for us both, and could do no good. We must suffer for the sins of others." (153)

Although his mother, advising him that an oath taken in ignorance should not be binding and that the girl must be under a misconception, Paul reminds her that "[t]hough her conception of the matter may be wrong, she believes it to be right....

She has counted the cost, to herself and to me" (154). Mrs. Thorne and Agatha have different moral codes. There is no answer for Paul's rhetorical question: "Why must we suffer for the sins of others?" (154). Like Harry and Alan, Paul seeks his beloved: he goes to Flowerville but Agatha has gone. Mrs. Thorne concludes that Agatha does not love her son as much as he had thought, but he is certain of her love. He explains that Agatha with her deeply religious and sensitive nature, holds her oath as sacred, and would never violate it. Paul is worthy of Agatha as he understands her basic nature. Unlike his father and Frank Dane, Paul is not a "pitiable weakling who seeks to drown his sorrow in guilt and dissipation" (157).

A letter from the United States revealing that Agatha is not with Rosebud causes Paul to worry:

"Where is she, my precious one, whom I would have sheltered from the storms of the world? What has happened to her? Where shall I seek her? In what direction shall I turn?... to think of her alone, in a strange land ... with perhaps limited means at her disposal. Oh! it's awful to contemplate." (159)

But, Agatha is closer than he thinks. Her business venture prospering, with determination she is saving enough money to enable her to go to the United States. Painful though her life is without Paul, yet "[f]rom out of [her] dark eyes shone the light of a noble courage, a high resolve" (161). She does not "flinch from the course which conscience told her was the only one for her" (161). The solemn oath that she had sworn upon the Bible at her dying grandfather's bedside, from which he had

refused to release her, will be forever sacred to her. By coincidence, Mrs. Thorne and Rosebud, who has just arrived from the United States and is living with the Thornes as Mrs. Thorne's sister is Rosebud's guardian, visit Agatha's store. Agatha recognizes Paul's mother as well as her sister, but, the reader is told, Rosebud's "sensibilities were not as keen as Agatha's" (162). The "dainty little vision" (162) that is Rosebud does not recognize the lacemaker as her sister. Like a butterfly flitting about here and there, Rosebud considers surroundings more important than people. Having adopted a different persona, Agatha cannot at this point reveal herself. When she is alone, her tumultuous feelings and acute pain surface, and she indulges in "tears such as she had not shed since that night, years ago, when she had placed Rosebud in Paul's arms, and watched the boat which held them as it glided away and was swallowed up in the darkness" (163). Counterpointing Agatha, Rosebud is incapable of deep feelings, either of joy or sorrow, and gives "a wide berth to all unpleasantness, and loved the good things of life" (163). True to her nature, she is nonchalant about her sister's disappearance, and carelessly comments, "I guess someone has told her by this time that I'm in Newfoundland" (165-6).

But when Paul sees the laces from Agatha's store, he senses that the dainty work is familiar. Inquiring of his mother who owns the store, he learns of the fame which the young lacemaker had gained, and of the girl with "a beautiful, noble face, and wonderful eyes, dark and tragic-looking" (164). He speculates that this might be

Agatha: he solves the mystery, but does not share this knowledge with his mother.

Paul is joyful to finally find Agatha, but she wards him off, telling him:

"I have hidden from you so as to spare us both the pain of a meeting. What has happened to keep us apart, and which must forever part us, happened before you or I were born. We are victims, as I told you in that letter, of the sins of others." (167)

Just as Harry cannot understand Norrie's mysterious references to a secret, Paul finds Agatha's explanation equally cryptic. Agatha has tried to spare Paul pain, but he insists on learning the details. He tells her that his love for her gives him the right to know. She tells him that she was unaware of the identity of the "hand" she was forbidden to touch when she took the oath, and when the revelation came the best part of her died. Just as his mother had suggested, he tells her that she should not be held to an oath taken in ignorance, but thinks that if he knew the full circumstances, he might be able to see a way out. Impatient at her repeated use of the word "victim" and all the mystery she has created, he reminds her of their promise to have no secrets between them: "Must not that promise be kept, Agatha, or does a promise made then not count now, because you've sworn never to touch my hand?" (167).

She relents, and when she tells him the La Mala history and of the cruelty his father had inflicted on her family he realizes then how much she has suffered, and still suffers. While he tries to make her see that she is not bound by such an oath, her adherence to her moral code is too strong to be revoked. Paul, equally firm in his

principles, vows that he will not give her up. But unlike Agatha Harding, who had broken her word to Douglas Thorne, Agatha La Mala, realizing the consequences of broken promises, vows that nothing can change her mind:

"If I were weak enough to break my vow, and try to silence my conscience with the thought that I'm not compelled to keep that oath, you would have a wife who'd be living under a shadow, and that shadow would also darken your life, and I could not bear that. There would also be no happiness for me, and consequently none for you. I should make your life miserable." (169)

And she firmly turns the conversation to Rosebud.

At eighteen, Rosebud is a spoiled teenager who needs attention from everyone, particularly males. Paul does not take her seriously (this later exonerates him when he accepts Rosebud's proposal), but regards her as a child, and loves her for Agatha's sake. When Agatha's identity is revealed and she and Rosebud meet, their differences are glaringly obvious to the reader. Agatha, assuming that her sister is her responsibility, wants Rosebud to come and live with her instead of continuing to impose on the hospitality of the Thornes. But Rosebud, accustomed to wealth, is distressed when she sees Agatha's humble surroundings, and insists that she could not live in such a small room. Agatha is angered that Rosebud, with her one great aim in life to secure a rich husband, places wealth above the ties of family; she insists that there is more to a husband than wealth. Rosebud's upbringing has not inculcated a strong awareness of principles. She realizes that:

... when she had placed Rosebud in Paul Thorne's arms that night, long ago, she had placed her for ever out of her life; her little sister was lost to her; a great gulf lay between them now. Rose was just a butterfly, seeing nothing beyond the gay things of life; reared in luxury, trained to know the value of riches, made selfish from over-indulgence.... A sense of utter desolation swept over the girl's [Agatha's] soul when, after Rose's departure, she stood alone. The joy at meeting her sister was clouded with disappointment. Rosebud's nature was shallow and weak, she was not possessed of any depth of feeling. Her character was formed, she had passed the plastic stage, and would only see life from her present viewpoint. (176,177)

Rosebud, the antithesis of Agatha, is lost to Agatha forever.

Just as Norrie declines an invitation to the ball given by Mrs. Brandford, so Agatha declines an invitation to a ball held in Rosebud's honour at Thornleigh. Rosebud, worried about what people will think, is angry that she has refused, but since she is unable to explain, Agatha bears everything in silence: "It was her fate, and she was obliged to let her sister depart in a high state of indignation" (180). But she observes the activities of the ball through the window. Watching her sister dance with Paul, she fears that he might fall in love with Rosebud; then she would have to bid goodbye to her sister as well. Her words, "I seem to be born for sorrow" (183), echo those of the other Agatha. Agatha feels shut out from love and happiness by the sins of Paul's father, and the cruelty of her grandfather. Meanwhile, convinced that Paul is in love with her, Rosebud, cognizant of Paul's wealth, becomes worldly-wise and proposes to him. Thinking that she is jesting, he humours her and accepts. When Mrs. Thorne questions this new development, he assures her that his love for Agatha is as strong as

ever; Paul remains chivalrous, and does not reveal that Rosebud has proposed to him.

Hearing the news of Paul's engagement, Agatha's immediate desire is to flee from a reality that is more painful than any of her previous trials:

... each word fell, like a death-knell upon her heart. It seemed as if nothing were left but to go, to put miles of ocean between her and every tie she held dear. She had long since bidden farewell to any joy which the future might have held; but now, the love which had been hers, the memory of which was so precious a thing -- but which, alas! could never be aught but a memory -- was slipping away. (186)

Her memories, now soiled, can no longer sustain her. In an attempt to console herself, she tries to rationalize and justify Paul's actions; in addition she thinks that she is deficient, and blames herself for this new turn of events:

Paul had met her amidst romantic surroundings. He was then heart-whole, and the novel manner of their meeting held him so that he mistook it for love. Well, perhaps if nothing had happened, if her grandfather had died without any knowledge of Paul, and that dreadful story of the past not been dragged forth with all of its harrowing misery, his love would not have died. But she had disappointed him; he had deemed her cruel, over-scrupulous [sic]. And now, Rosebud, with her fresh young charm, her girlish grace and beauty, had won his love. ... she was much better fitted than she, Agatha, for such a position. She was accomplished, used to the customs of fashionable society, and could uphold the honour of her husband's home. (188)

But no matter how many arguments she unfolds to try to mollify her pain, Agatha knows that Rosebud does not have the equivalent of her strong love for him. Rosebud can never understand his high ideals, or appreciate his noble character. Reminiscent of Norrie consoling herself with the knowledge that, although she is destined for a life of

self-sacrifice, at least Lucy would be happy, Agatha tries to convince herself that "as the woman who was Paul Thorne's wife could not fail to be" (188), Rosebud will be happy. When Rosebud suggests that Agatha come and live with them when she and Paul are married, the knife is twisted in Agatha's heart, but she conceals her horror from Rosebud. But when Agatha refuses to be her bridesmaid, Rosebud throws a tantrum, telling her sister she is positively unbearable. Agatha cannot explain, and the reader suspects a pun in her answer: "perhaps you would not understand if I did. Your path is strewn with roses; mine, with thorns" (189).

Paul, about to embark on a trip to England, tells Rosebud that she is free, but she tells no one. He goes to bid a covert farewell to Agatha; although she is unaware of his presence, he perceives the pain in her face and the resolve in her eyes. He wonders what she thought of his engagement, if she thinks him fickle and small-minded; he has no intention of marrying Rosebud, even though his mother reminding him of Rosebud's prettiness and accomplishments has suggested it, but as he points out to her:

"There is a wide difference between the sisters. Little Rosebud is just made to be petted and indulged, as she seems always to have been; but Agatha -- well, words of mine can scarcely do justice to her. She is a queen amongst women; noble, heroic, brave to martyrdom. She would not stifle the voice of conscience, though her heart may break. A man, loving a woman with such a love as Agatha compels, could never love another. There is no one else for me." (193)

Paul hopes that time will be the anodyne that will "lessen the horror, and overcome

the scruples" (179) of Agatha's resolve.

Agatha feels a keen sense of loss when Paul is gone: "to know that they breathed the same air, that the same hills surrounded them, the same atmosphere enveloped them" (194) sustained her even though they were doubly parted now since his engagement to Rose. While Paul is absent, Rosebud falls in love with a very rich American. She has already concluded that Paul is not in love with her, that she has made a fool of herself, and deals with the matter of her proposal in her typical blasé manner noting that "some of the queens did the same," as if history could exonerate her actions. When Mrs. Thorne learns that Rosebud has not told Arthur Peyton of her unusual engagement to Paul, she realizes "how far short this girl would fall of the high ideals and strict sense of honour which characterised her son" (200). Agatha makes her position clear when Rosebud tells her of her new engagement, and points out that she has not kept her promise to Paul. Lacking in courtesy, principle and every code of honour which marks the true lady, Rosebud does not fit Agatha's definition of a lady. Agatha is ashamed of her and angered at her sister's lack of principles.

But Agatha's trials are still not over. Although her house is spared when a fire breaks out, the smoke and water do serious damage to her beautiful work, and at the same time money is stolen from her till. She refuses Rosebud's offer of a passport to the United States, where, Rosebud insists, she will make plenty of money at her

lacemaking. Agatha will always be a conundrum to Rosebud, who scornfully tells her to remain in her poverty and ruins as she is too proud for her own good. With her last "two and six pence," Agatha buys two caged sparrows, and releases them "to the free winds of Heaven" (211) -- a symbolic freedom that cannot be bought for her. The mysterious engagement between Paul and Rosebud is finally explained by Mrs. Thorne, who re-affirms Paul's love for Agatha. Despite her recent losses, Agatha is momentarily elated, but her joy is swept away the next moment by the bitter realization of the oath that is ruining her life. She resolves to re-build her business, and to raise enough money to try her fortune in another country, thinking that when she is gone, Paul will forget her.

Like Norrie and Eva, Agatha prepares for exile, but unlike them she never gets beyond the planning stage. In a philosophical aside, the narrator lets the reader know that Agatha's trials will soon be over:

We are told that people die of broken hearts. Perhaps they do, but they are only the weak, the cowardly, the fragile, or the aged. The young, the strong, the valiant, the noble, do not die so easily. They suffer and live; overcoming the sorrows, conquering the adversities, and raising triumphantly above the waters of tribulations.

Such a one was Agatha La Mala. (214)

An Asiatic cholera epidemic breaks out in St. John's. When news comes that Paul Thorne has died of cholera, Agatha, who is not of a nervous disposition but is imbued with "Christian courage and noble bravery," feels that this is the end (218). Not

knowing that Paul has a namesake cousin (just as in *Only a Fisherman's Daughter* there are two Harry Brandfords), Agatha, like Eva Brandon exposing herself to smallpox, goes to the graveyard to mourn and bid him a final goodbye. After the mourners leave and "all that was mortal of Paul Thorne had been lowered and laid to rest in Mother Earth, to await the sounding of the last trumpet," Agatha, "sad; so inexpressibly sad," kneels at his grave and weeps floods of tears. The narrative voice allows her a final lachrymose moment, as she is about to be filled with joy:

Ah! weep on, Agatha; you've had your share of sorrow, but soon your tears will be dried; for the sun of happiness is about to burst upon your horizon. (219)

Caught up in her grief, Agatha is startled when Paul speaks her name. In her thankfulness to learn that he is not dead, she reaches out to touch him, but at the last moment remembers her oath and draws back her hand. Paul, wondering if it were better if he were dead, asks, "What is life to us, who love each other as we do, and yet, through your decree, must live apart?" (220). Hopelessly, she tells him that if the yielding up of her life would bring happiness to him, she would gladly lay down her life, but "I cannot, I dare not, break my vow" (220).

In a surreal scene, similar to that of the oath-taking, an unprecedented miracle happens: Dumb Paul, who had been close to death, has come to the graveyard. Stretching forth his long arms like Aaron stretching out his hand upon the waters of Egypt (Exodus 7:19), he crosses them on his breast, and carefully intones the last

words he will ever utter:

... those words issued from those dumb lips, and fell in disjointed sentences upon the wondering ears of the man and girl, who listened in silent awe:

"AGATHA LA MALA, BE HAPPY -- YOU ARE RELEASED FROM YOUR OATH -- THE DUMB HATH SPOKEN!" (220)

The enormity of this pronouncement does not elude his two listeners, but the old man collapses before they have a chance to revel in the gift of his words. In ministering to the man who had freed them, their hands meet, but there is no shrinking now: "Joy was singing in the girl's heart; the words spoken by those mute lips were ringing in her ears" (220). Her eyes, when they fix on the setting sun, are luminous with the light of a holy joy, and, believing totally in the miraculous power of God, she kneels to offer a prayer of thankfulness which is couched in strong Biblical cadences:

"Oh, Lord, Thou Who didst make the dumb to speak and the deaf to hear, when on this earth Thou walked, can do it now as then. The dumb hath spoken. I take the sign; I am released. Thou hast taken pity on the lowly village maid and, my God, I thank Thee." (221)

The narrator comments on the strangeness of this scene, where alone, yet surrounded by the dead, Agatha receives the greatest joy of her life. "We have been told that Heaven is a state, not a place" (221), the narrator comments to the reader, and elucidates that Agatha has just been transported to heaven, right there in the graveyard.

Agatha and Paul, who have "experienced no small share of life's adversities," now

embark joyfully upon their new life together (225). True to her sacrificial nature, Agatha wonders if it is cowardly for them to run away from the sorrow and desolation of those around them. Agatha finally acquiesces to Paul's proud air of proprietorship after he assures her that they deserve happiness, and a honeymoon. Mrs. Thorne, unlike Mrs. Brandford or Mrs. Horten, rejoices that her son has chosen such a good and beautiful wife. Agatha is the first of English's heroines to be visible in a class of society into which she had not been born; the eager narrator wanting to tell the reader how Agatha fares, jumps ahead of her story:

When in the following year, Mrs. Paul Thorne took her place in society, and queened it over highly accomplished ladies, the friends of Paul's mother realised how truly she had spoken when she had called her son's wife 'good and beautiful.' Her high sense of honour, her love of truth, her sweet sympathy for those in sorrow, her kindly aid to the distressed and needy, gained for her a wide popularity; whilst the charm of her personality won for her a host of friends. (225-6)

Agatha transcends societal barriers, however, because she has been true to her principles. Although choosing the path of self-sacrifice, Agatha rises to be "queen" over the society which she earlier had been considered unsuitable to enter.

A letter written by Douglas Thorne (ostensibly Dumb Paul) before he uttered his last words relates to Paul that he is the innocent victim of his crimes. It also clarifies the mystery, and recounts how "the sins of the father had been visited upon the offspring, for, through me, the happiness of my son, and that of the noble girl he had chosen for his wife, was blighted" (232), and how Thorne had tried to atone for his earlier sins.

In Devil's Gulch, Thorne had bidden farewell to his wife and his son, to live a life of self-abnegation as Dumb Paul. The first Paul Thorne's mission in life had been the conversion of his wicked twin brother, Douglas Thorne; the second Dumb Paul (Douglas Thorne), also fulfilling his mission in life, is instrumental in releasing Agatha from her vow, and in ending the evil he had begun in the previous generation. Thorne had hoped for an opportunity to speak to Agatha to tell her that she was released from her oath. When the opportunity does present itself, Douglas Thorne makes generous restitution. In the letter he assures his son that he has known more peace and happiness in his life than ever before: "for the peace of a tranquil conscience is now mine, though it never ceases to upbraid me for my many crimes" (236). His faith has told him that "were my sins as numerous as the sands of the ocean, the tears of repentance can wash them away" (236). Paul is afraid to tell Agatha that the dumb had not really spoken, fearing that she might leave him. But to her the revelation is "more wonderful by far than if the dumb had really spoken; for I still take the sign that I am released; that a kind providence intervened to bring about our happiness" (239).

Douglas Thorne repents, and with his final act, he makes noble and generous restitution and atonement. He has been both saint and devil, but now with the evil episode closed, the next generation need not fear a visitation from the sins of the fathers:

... those two faithful hearts who had had a glimpse of the tragedies and vicissitudes of life, knew what it was to find that peace and happiness which only such a marriage as theirs can bring -- a marriage with faith, trust, reverence and love for its foundation. (240)

The novel closes with the final words of the marriage vow, which is the ultimate oath, as Agatha tells Paul, "even if I did have any scruples about being released from my vow ... I am your wife now ... And what God has joined together -- ... No man can put asunder ... AMEN" (240). Agatha chose the heroic path as a matter of principle and her scruples are rigorously tested, but she is rewarded a hundred-fold. The narrative voice ensures that the reader never loses sight of the message embedded in the text: the power of God ultimately triumphs over evil.

## CONCLUSION

The application of Nina Baym's technique of plot analysis used in *Woman's Fiction* (1978) to the plots of three of Anastasia English's novels is possible because these novels have much in common with contemporary American "woman's fiction" of the nineteenth century. Despite variations, they all tell the same basic story or overplot: they chronicle the "trials and triumphs" of their heroines. Each heroine, deprived of all the external aids she had depended on to sustain her, develops the capacity to survive and surmount her troubles. She is thrust into life: finding herself in an insecure, difficult and often hostile environment, she is forced to win her own way; and her success is a function of her own efforts and character. The trials she experiences develop and strengthen her character, and happiness comes through self-discipline, often in the face of determined opposition.

While such novels are still frequently denigrated by twentieth-century readers, these works need to be contextualized. Twentieth-century standards cannot be applied indiscriminately to nineteenth-century fiction: they reflect contemporary taste and values instead of revealing much about the literature itself. The nineteenth-century reading public was steeped in religious and moral discourse, and novelists (themselves part of a tradition of piety and moral commitment) wrote precisely for such an audience. English's Newfoundland women readers would have been well-schooled in basic Christian morality, and were familiar with the sentiment of being reconciled to

suffering. They would have taken for granted the relation between the daily activities of the humble people and the spiritual destiny of humankind. Consequently, they would have identified with English's heroines as well as with the didacticism central to the plots of her novels: the necessity for trials, the assurances of God's love, the placement of duty before self, and the importance of sacrifice. The message to the reader was to accept the author's solution to such difficulties as pertinent to her own life. These novels taught their readers that the only way to overcome adversity is through overcoming the enemy within. The writer's conviction that a character had to adjust to limiting circumstances, her belief that suffering and hardship could not be avoided in any human life, and her strenuous insistence that such trials, because they called out otherwise dormant abilities, could be occasions for "perfecting" the character, was common to her era.

These heroines are vulnerable, powerless, and innocent females, victimized either by authoritative figures or by circumstances. Although their belief in submissiveness and self-abnegation horrify the twentieth-century reader, we cannot help siding with the heroine's efforts to do what she believes is right. She believes that self-sacrifice is better than self-actualization, and acceptance wiser than protest. Subjugation to a series of authorities over which she has no control springs from hierarchies of power. Some degree of self-control is a moral and practical necessity, while total self-abnegation is suicidal.

Generally these heroines are defective characters whose triumphs in adversity become a matter of self-conquest as well as a conquest of others. The flawed human heroine (generally an orphan without maternal guidance) was attacked by Satan on the one hand, and supported and inspired by Christ on the other. The human heroine (incorporating qualities of self-abnegation, humility, love and forgiveness common to a type of angel-woman) had psychological strength, moral stamina and intellectual ability, was full of passion and impulse disciplined by reality into gracious womanhood. When a woman turned to marriage or elopement as an escape, she found herself enthralled to a tyrant even worse than the one she fled. Her trial is not evaded, only reformulated. Many heroines must endure apparently permanent separations from the men they love and hence learn that they cannot depend on marriage for identity or meaning in their lives. However, all stories end with a happy marriage (to a man who is strong, stable, and safe) as a symbol of successful accomplishment of required tasks and resolution of the basic problem in the story. The heroine's losses have been returned a hundred-fold.

Anastasia English's novels should not be dismissed as escapist romances. Rather it is time to retrieve them from obscurity and to consider them as serious attempts to reflect the moral standards of their time.

## NOTES

## Chapter One

1. The year of her birth is unclear. While the *Encyclopedia of Newfoundland and Labrador* lists it as "1862?" and the *Dictionary of Newfoundland and Labrador Biography* as 1864 (repeated by Patrick O'Flaherty in *The Rock Observed*), we know that she was baptized on 22 February 1863 (Parish Records Collections for the Basilica of Saint John the Baptist, 1861-1864, page 90, located at the Provincial Archives).
2. This suggestion as well as most of the genealogical information used in this biographical sketch was supplied by Edward-Vincent Chafe.
3. [Obituary] *Evening Telegram*, 19 July 1909.
4. Chafe notes that Anastasia English was probably educated by the Mercy Sisters at St. Clare's Boarding School. However, the Presentation Congregation Archives and the Congregation of Sisters of Mercy Archives have no records that substantiate this.
5. William J. English had two sons: Edward M. (1884-1901) and Stanislaus (1885-1901), and six daughters: Ellen A. (1887-1917), Bessie B. (married Thomas C. Foote) (1891-1958), Kathleen M. (1894-1960), Leona, also known as Leone and Leonie, (1904-), Margaret, and Ethel (married Joseph Basha).
6. Anastasia English's obituaries (*Evening Telegram* 1 June 1959; *Daily News* 1 June 1959) notes that she left one sister Annie.
7. Chafe makes this suggestion.
8. In the 1911 Census of Newfoundland (for St. John's East, Ward 5) Anastasia English is listed as a music teacher. According to the 1913 *St. John's Newfoundland Directory*, she is a music teacher boarding at 15 Monkstown Road. In the 1915 *McAlpine's St. John's City Directory*, she is again listed (with no occupation identified) as boarding at 15 Monkstown Road. The 1928 List of Electors notes that Anastasia, Annie, and Joseph were living at 327 Water Street. The 1935 Census of Newfoundland records that Joseph, Anastasia and Annie lived at 6 Wood Street; at that time Anastasia's occupation was identified as a journalist. When the 1945 Census was taken, they were still living at the same location, with Anastasia as the head of the household. And, according to the 1948 List of Electors, Anastasia and Annie were still living at 6 Wood Street. This is confirmed by Paul O'Neill who writes that Anastasia "lived next door but one to my mother, who was born at 10 Wood Street" (letter to the author, 4 April 1994).

9. According to the *Encyclopedia of Newfoundland and Labrador* (Vol. 1), "English began writing at an early age." How early, we are left to speculate. As no bibliographic sources are listed, this assertion cannot be checked.
10. The *Encyclopedia of Newfoundland and Labrador* and *Dictionary of Newfoundland and Labrador Biography* both erroneously attribute to English the writing of a *Book of Short Stories* (n.d.).
11. The Centre for Newfoundland Studies has on microfilm issues from 1910, 1913, 1916, 1928, 1943, 1944 and 1948, and she is listed as editor of each of those issues.
12. "Local Authoress Dies at 97; A. English, Novelist, Poet." *Evening Telegram*, 3 June 1959.
13. As many of the stories in the periodicals of the day were unsigned, we may never know for certain which ones she wrote.
14. A search of newspapers for the period has failed as yet to turn up any such notices.
15. A search of subsequent issues reveals that this advertisement also appeared in 17, 18, 20, 21, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28 June, and 1 and 2 July issues. Her volume of short stories, "*The Queen of Fairy Dell*" *And Other Tales*, was published in 1912.
16. It is also worth noting that in the *Dictionary of Newfoundland English* three of English's books are used as sources for specific Newfoundland words (*Only a Fisherman's Daughter*, *When the Dumb Speak*, and "*The Queen of Fairy Dell*" *And Other Tales*).
17. *Yuletide Bells* for 1913, 1916, 1928, 1940, 1943, 1944, 1945, 1946, 1947, and 1948 are the only extant issues.
18. In an article entitled "Writers Guild: Promoting creative writing in the province" (*The Newfoundland Herald*, 12 February 1983), Kathleen Winter states that Stacia English was "Newfoundland's first published woman author," who published her books herself. In a Newfoundland Historical Society Lecture, "Women in Newfoundland History," given 24 February 1976, Edith M. Manuel notes that "Our first native born professional writer was Margaret Iris Duley," while Elizabeth Miller in "Newfoundland Literature in the 'Dirty Thirties'" calls Duley "Newfoundland's first significant female novelist."
19. Chafe, letter to the author, 21 January 1994.
20. Barbara Mercer (in a telephone conversation 26 May 1994) of Upper Island Cove remembers reading a copy of *When the Dumb Speak* and finding it both mysterious and fascinating. Like O'Neill, she was a teenager when she read it. Her father, however, did not want her to read it, telling her that "the book was for grownups."

21. O'Neill also suggests that as English published her books herself, this is a possible reason why she has not had "the same recognition as Margaret Duley whose works were published in New York."

## Chapter Two

1. Jo Gates, "Without Maps," in *Teaching Literature from a Regional Perspective*, ed. Leonore Hoffman and Deborah Rosenfelt (New York: MLA, 1982) 11-13.

2. In her expanded introduction to the second edition of *Woman's Fiction* (1993), Baym points out that since the first edition was published, there has been "a tremendous outpouring of work on Victorian-American women's culture, along with burgeoning interest in writing by nineteenth-century American women" (xii). She also notes that the shift of critical interest since 1978 from intrinsic (formalist) to extrinsic (cultural) commentary opens these novels to new kinds of close readings.

3. Although I concentrate on American and Canadian criticism, I am not unaware of the important work done on British popular fiction of the same period. Monica Correa Fryckstedt in "Defining the Domestic Genre: English Women Novelists of the 1850s" looks at British novels which tell a "domestic love story," and preach homespun virtues (endurance, perseverance, and submission). Fryckstedt notes that the women novelists of this genre -- Anne Marsh, Anne Manning, Charlotte Yonge, Dinah Mulock Craik, Margaret Oliphant, Geraldine Jewsbury, Holme Lee, Julia Kavanagh, Emma Worboise, Selina Bunbury, Lady Georgiana Fullerton, Hesba Stratton, Katherine Macquoid, and Georgiana Craik -- all supplied wholesome family stories.

4. R.C. Terry labels them "domestic novels" (8). Herbert Ross Brown (in his book of the same name) devotes a chapter to "the sentimental formula" (166-178) of these early American novels. Kay Mussell adds that "romantic formulas intersect with other kinds of popular fiction: gothic, historical, juvenile, sentimental, domestic, seduction" (318).

5. Baym (1993) notes that she tried to avoid the term *sentimental* in her 1978 study -- she "associated the word with only one of its two divergent meanings. For *sentimentalism*, though it denotes private, excessive, undisciplined, self-centered emotionality, also notes public sympathy and benevolent fellow-feeling." Authors of woman's fiction rejected sentimentalism, she notes, in the former sense while celebrating the latter, in which sense it reproduces the Enlightenment advocacy of philanthropy and benevolence (xxix-xxx).

6. Qtd. in Hiatt, 4. Hiatt suggests that the reason for his scorn and derogation was financial envy. Her study proves that there is no empirical justification of such terminology then or now, although the sudden plethora of women writers was doubtless very threatening to male critics and writers (143).

7. While Baym focuses on twelve especially successful writers (Catharine Sedgwick, Maria McIntosh, E.D.E.N. Southworth, Caroline Lee Hentz, Susan Warner, Anna Warner, Maria Cummins, Ann Stephens, Mary Jane Holmes, Marion Harland, Caroline Chesebro', and Augusta Evans), she looks at 130 novels by 48 women.
8. For comments on the pervasiveness of didacticism, see Rowbotham (2), and Agress (48).
9. The novelists examined are Rosanna Mullins Leprohon, May Agnes Fleming, Margaret Murray Robertson, Susan Frances Harrison ("Seranus"), Margaret Marshall Saunders, and Joanna E. Wood.
10. Baym adds that "the young girl is fittingly called a heroine because her role is precisely analogous to the unrecognized or undervalued youths of fairy tales who perform dazzling exploits and win a place for themselves in the land of happy endings" (11).
11. The heroine, Baym notes, is not at all like the weak, clinging, nonrational and inferior creature of the era's ideology. If popular books do urge women to conform, they also celebrate female strength, ambition and autonomy.
12. See also Herget (7), Terry (13), Gorsky (viii).
13. See in particular Mitchell (30-1) and Rowbotham (8).
14. It has been dismissed, as Hiatt points out, by writers from William Dean Howells to Joyce Carol Oates (5).
15. The recent exception is Joan Strong's doctoral dissertation entitled "Acts of 'Brief Authority:':" Entrapment, Escape and Narrative Strategy in Selected Twentieth-Century Newfoundland Novels." This has a section on English dealing with images and metaphors and the language of power/powerlessness in two of her novels.
16. The novelists listed in this article are Erle Spencer and herself. The only other woman mentioned is Florence Miller -- for her "folksy poems."

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