

Faith, Family, Female Education and Friendship: *Retelling*
Louise Amelia Monk's Adolescence in Bourgeois Montreal, 1867-1871

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ABSTRACT

Faith, Family, Female Education and Friendship: *Retelling* Louise Amelia Monk's Adolescence in Bourgeois Montreal, 1867-1871

Jessica L. Brettler Vandervort

Historians are increasingly using diaries in their research to uncover the largely hidden lives of nineteenth-century women. Diaries provide evidence about the internal lives of individual women and allow scholars to speculate on how women actually experienced Victorian cultural expectations and restraints. In her journals, Louise Amelia Monk (1850-1874), the only daughter of the six children born to Judge Samuel Cornwallis Monk and Caroline Debartzch, describes coming of age in bourgeois Montreal. Louise's particular experience of adolescence was shaped by her class, race, gender, religion, and her unique personality and family circumstances. Louise's introspective diary entries, composed between 1867 and 1871, are dominated by faith, family, female education, and friendship and chart her journey of self-awareness. Her writing shows a young religious, Catholic, bilingual Anglophone woman growing up within a loving and intellectually stimulating family who accepted her female destiny (marriage and motherhood) with little ambivalence. Louise employs her diary as a silent confidant, voicing concern about her future, and as a place to express her spirituality. Louise died at 23 years of age, leaving behind a bereaved family and a compelling historical and literary document.

DEDICATION

For Mark Charbonneau

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PROLOGUE

I have determined upon adopting this [marbled paste-board exercise] book for my journal; though in the origin I reserved it for the meaner and more humble office of Scrapbook; however economy recommends and approves of the latter determination...¹

I resume my journal after rather a long interruption; since last I sat brooding over these pages no event in my life has ruffled its dear monotonous current. Of course some pains, some wee little pangs some pleasures too have been experienced but nothing very grand or appalling has occurred.²

I am reading a dear little book at present called *The Recreations of a Country Parson*... and he writes several pages on the keeping of a diary which I approve so entirely that I have determined to become more assiduous to mine. I feel that a resume written here in the evening of my daily work would never “encourage a tendency to rest on my oars” but as I am certain I would always be ashamed of the little I did I have hopes ... on the contrary effect spurring me on to do more.³

Between 1867 and 1871 Louise Amelia Monk, a bourgeois adolescent female from Montreal, filled three journals with her private thoughts and hopes for the future. Her first book began as a travel diary that the seventeen year old kept sporadically while on a fifteen month European tour with her mother. Upon returning to Montreal, Louise continued to confide to her diary on a more regular basis. Her last entry occurred in the summer of 1871 while on vacation in St. Vincent, Quebec, at which time she simply ran out of space. Louise’s surviving diary entries provide a window into the inner world of one Canadian woman and her experiences of coming of age in Confederation-era Canada.

¹ Louise Amelia Monk, *Manuscript Diaries, 1867-1871*. 1 October 1868. Rare Book Division, McGill University Library, Montreal. Hereafter the diary will be referred to as LAM.

² LAM, 25 October 1868. Louise underlined words that she wanted to emphasize. Unless otherwise indicated assume that words that are underlined in quotations were written that way in her original document.

³ LAM, 30 October 1869. Louise is quoting from Reverend Andrew Kennedy Hutchinson Boyd, *Recreations of a Country Parson* (Boston: Ticknor and Fields, 1861).

INTRODUCTION: MORE THAN A JUDGE'S DAUGHTER

My little room, my little book... I thought I would spend this evening alone, but a cruel invitation from Mrs. T's has just come in and I must fly. To the noisy turmoil of a ballroom I must go, and in the midst of the music, of the dancing, of the flirting, the vain and silly talk will not my thoughts return to my low windowed corner where without a doubt, I am happier than anywhere else...I know there is more enjoyment here, than there. I go...from an unworthy wish that people should not begin to suppose that I am going to enter a convent, or that I am dead.¹

Louise Amelia Monk certainly did not want her contemporaries to think she was dead or had entered a convent; she wanted them to be aware that she was very much alive and available for marriage.² According to her diary, written between 1867 and 1871, Louise, having just finished her studies at a Congregation of Notre Dame convent school, was waiting to be engaged and married. Without an admirer, she feared that she would remain at home alone with her aging parents, while her brothers made their way in the world. As the years passed, Louise became increasingly lonely; the way she dealt with her sadness was to seek solace in her diary and in God. Catholicism gave meaning to Louise's life and helped her come to terms with her unhappiness in a constructive way.

Tragically, Louise died just three years after she penned the above diary entry, at the tender age of twenty-three. Her last months on earth would have been spent in that "little room" she so lovingly described in her journals. In declining health, Louise may have yearned for life as it was before, when she was able to go to those dreadful parties where she often felt like a wallflower and came home full of disappointment. In the Kingdom of Heaven, Louise at last would find the peace that escaped her on earth.

¹ LAM, 20 January 1870.

² See Louise Amelia Monk's photo taken at the Notman's Photographic Studio in 1864 in Appendix A.

Louise led a devout life and her cherished family and friends no doubt took comfort in the fact that God would welcome her into the eternal world. As her obituary notice stated, she accepted her death with “pious resignation” and the epitaph on her gravestone referred to the impending “resurrection” of her soul.³ The young Montrealer was Roman Catholic, like the majority of nineteenth-century Quebecers, but she seems to have been unusually religious. How she experienced her faith and expressed her spirituality is revealed in her diaries.

Had her diaries not survived to this day Louise would have remained a nameless Judge’s daughter who in her father’s biographical write-ups met an early death. The male members of Louise’s family have fared much better in the historical record and through their biographical sketches a substantial picture of her family history emerges. Louise’s gravestone, her obituary notice, public documents such as baptismal records and census records all provide information on Louise, but it is fragmentary. Her male relatives earned their spot in sources such as the *Dictionary of Canadian Biography* because they participated in the events that mark traditional political history (wars and rebellions) and were part of the power structure of Canadian society, as lawyers, judges, legislators and seigneurs.⁴ It is only because of the survival of her personal diaries that we know anything about Louise’s life.

Louise’s diary opens in 1867, the year of Canadian Confederation, but interestingly she never mentions this historical event, the event that many Canadian

³ *The Montreal Star*, 3 April 1874; The Notre-Dame-des-Neiges Cemetery, Section S, lot 0001, Montreal.

⁴ While the majority of the population and more specifically the personal life histories of women, urban workers and small farmers, have been lost in the historical record, this does not mean that their lives do not merit research; it is just much more difficult to do. It is because the Monk-Debartzch family were ‘notables’ that I was able to find background information on Louise; perhaps this is also why her diaries were saved. McGill University acquired the manuscript journals in 1988, having purchased them from the collection of William P. Wolfe, a Montreal book dealer.

historians use to organize our grand narrative. The concept of pre-confederation Canada and post-confederation Canada is a historical construct and simplifies undergraduate Canadian history courses. Confederation serves as a convenient and undeniable transitional point in our history. For many people living at the time, it is questionable how significant this event was in their lives. When describing Louise's life it may not be appropriate to use the traditional historical demarcations that form the backbone of her male ancestors' biographies.

Tracking women in nineteenth-century historical sources is very difficult. As Laurel Thatcher Ulrich points out, many women's lives are no more than a succession of dates—when a woman was born, when she married, the birth of her children and her ultimate death.⁵ Geo Maclean Rose's *A Cyclopaedia of Canadian Biography: Chiefly men of their time* is a classic example of how women, who were viewed merely as daughters and wives, were recorded. In 1888 Rose wrote, "Judge [Samuel Cornwallis] Monk was married in 1844 to a daughter of the late Hon. P.D. Debastzch [sic], member of the legislative Council of Lower Canada. The fruit of this marriage has been five sons and one daughter, the latter having died some years ago."⁶ The nameless woman, the daughter of Debartzch, the wife of Judge Monk, and the mother of the six children (including Louise) was Rosalie Caroline Debartzch. In the write-up the brothers also remain unnamed but they, unlike Louise, would grow up and establish their own identities separate from their father's. Louise, on the other hand, had she married would have been subsumed under her spouse's identity.

⁵ Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, *A Midwife's Tale: The Life of Martha Ballard, Based on Her Diary, 1785-1812* (New York: Vintage Books, 1991), 5.

⁶ Geo Maclean Rose, *A Cyclopaedia of Canadian Biography. Chiefly men of their time* (Toronto: Rose Publishing Co, 1888), 537.

Lack of concrete information in Victorian source material on women such as Louise leads historians to speculate incorrectly. For example, basing herself on Rose's *Cyclopaedia*, Constance Backhouse in her book *Petticoats and Prejudice: Women and Law in Nineteenth-Century Canada* has the nameless daughter of Judge Monk dead seven years before her actual death.⁷ Backhouse was discussing the Connolly trial, an 1867 case concerning the validity of "country marriages."⁸ *Connolly v. Woolrich and Johnson et al* was an inheritance fight between the children of Connolly's first marriage to a Cree woman, which lasted twenty-eight years, and his second set of children, the product of a later Roman Catholic marriage that took place in the province of Quebec.⁹ Backhouse speculated that perhaps Judge Monk sided with the plaintiff, declaring that the country marriage had to be recognized, because both the Monks and the Connollys had six children, and both had lost a daughter tragically to an early death. In fact, Louise was still very much alive in 1867 when her father was deciding the case, and traveling in Europe with her mother.¹⁰

Backhouse's argument might have been different and stronger had she read Louise's diaries; they reveal that the Judge was a religious man who had a close

⁷ Constance Backhouse, *Petticoats and Prejudice: Women and Law in Nineteenth-Century Canada* (Toronto: The Osgoode Society, 1990), 17.

⁸ "Country marriages" describe the common-law relationships between men of European descent and Native women in the "unsettled" lands of the Canadian Northwest. These unions are referred to as "marriages in the manner of the country" in nineteenth-century court documents. See Sidney L. Haring, *White Man's Law: Native People in Nineteenth-Century Canadian Jurisprudence* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998), 169-172. According to Olive Patricia Dickason, intermarriage during the French regime "...often occurred according to the 'custom of the country,' which missionaries regarded as a form of concubinage." See her work, *Canada's First Nations: A History of Founding Peoples from Earliest Times* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1992), 170. Country marriages were governed by common law, meaning that they were recognized by the community as a marriage. If a ceremony had been conducted, it would have been done according to local native customs.

⁹ See Haring, *White Man's Law* for a full discussion of the case. His interest in the case stems from the fact that Judge Monk recognized native law.

¹⁰ Backhouse clearly inferred that Louise was dead in 1867 from Rose's reference (written in 1888) that the Judges' daughter had "died some years ago."

relationship with his own wife and lavished attention on all his children. These character traits more likely influenced his decision to recognize the validity of “country marriages.” The fact that Monk was a father was not a motivating factor; most Judges were. But Monk had a particular fondness and sense of responsibility for his children and respect for his own wife.¹¹ These factors may have helped shape his belief that the children of a marriage should be recognized and provided for, even if the marriage between the European father and Cree mother had been conducted according to Native customs.

If historians want to understand the *variety* of female experience they must look to personal documents, such as letters, diaries, stories, poems and religious literature. Reading material written by women themselves allows historians to uncover the hidden history of nineteenth-century women’s lives and put a name to a nameless history. Accessing the history of the middle and upper middle class is easier than for rural or working class women for they were literate and had the leisure time to pour out their inner thoughts to their journals, to write letters, or to compose literature in the form of stories, poems or religious tracts.

Diaries written by women provide historians with a window into a world that is largely missing from the nineteenth century historical record. Although historians have been working with women’s diaries intensely for more than three decades there is still much to learn about women’s lives and their experience as adolescents. The beauty of diaries is that they allow women to speak for themselves.

¹¹ Justice Church remarked that the late Samuel Cornwallis Monk was “an able, experienced and learned judge”, “a distinguished and patriotic citizen”, a sympathetic and cultivated member” of the bar, “a warm hearted and genial” friend, and “*a fond husband and indulgent father*” (emphasis mine). See *The Montreal Star*, 2 November 1888.

Feminist scholars lay a great deal of emphasis on “[h]earing women’s words” and on the need “to listen intensely” to female texts.¹² “A Psalm For Everywoman” by feminist Miriam Therese Winter encourages scholars to search out women, specifically religious women, in the historical record. Winter writes, “Who will retrieve our stories from the void of the unremembered? Who will believe we were who we are and did all the things we do?... Who will take the time we have taken to find the lost lives of our sisters? Who will seek us and find us? Who will remember our names?”¹³

Since diaries provide a glimpse into an individual’s emotional life, they allow us not only to “find the lives of our lost sisters” but also to get closer to ‘reality’ and away from what was prescribed or expected of women.¹⁴ Furthermore, personal writings allow the historian to question stereotypes that dominate our historical understanding. The enduring image of the bourgeois Victorian young woman shows her leading a life of emptiness, boredom, religious devotion, and ultimate hysteria. What a diary can do for the historian is to get past these simplistic images to provide a picture of a person’s ‘real’ experience. It can enable us to get as close as possible to an authentic experience of religion, of class, of gender or womanhood, of ethnicity, and of adolescence. A diarist’s words, such as those in Louise Amelia Monk’s journals, give meaning and add inescapable complexity to our understanding of Victorian Canadian female adolescence.

There is a lack of historiography on both female adolescence in Quebec and on the personal religious experience of Catholic female laity. Only one series of diaries

¹² Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, “Hearing Women’s Words,” in *Disorderly Conduct: Visions of Gender in Victorian America* (New York: A. A. Knopf, 1985), 11-52; Judy Long, *Telling Women’s Lives. Subject/Narrator/Reader/Text* (New York: New York University Press, 1999), 142.

¹³ Miriam Therese Winter, “A Psalm for Everywoman,” *WOMANWORD: A Feminist Lectionary and Psalter*, reprinted in Muir & Whitely, *Changing Roles of Women within the Christian Church in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995), preface.

¹⁴ Quote from Miriam Therese Winter’s psalm. Also see Smith-Rosenberg, “Hearing Women’s Words,” 28-29.

written by a nineteenth-century female Quebec adolescent has been published. Since Henriette Dessaulles' diaries covering the period between 1874-1881 is an easily accessible text, published both in French and English, historians have mistakenly used it to reflect the norm of late nineteenth-century bourgeois girlhood and young womanhood.¹⁵ But as this study will demonstrate, despite the similarities between Henriette and Louise, there were also many differences—differences possibly based on their individual characters and family personalities, but most importantly differences in the depth of their religious belief.

Three of Louise's diaries have survived to this day, recording five years of her life. The first diary was a travel diary written in Europe when on a "Western tour" with her mother. The thick leather journal begins with a description of Liverpool and ends in France where her maternal aunt lived. Louise kept her diary sporadically between the spring of 1867 and the fall of 1868, describing the coast of Ireland, England, France, Switzerland and Italy. It is full of descriptions of the landscape and churches she visited and some thoughts of "Home friends."¹⁶

The second book is a simple paste-board exercise book and, unlike the first book, all the pages are filled. This journal recorded the period from the fall of 1868 to February of 1870 and is much more introspective than the travel book. The third journal does not follow chronologically from the second (ten months are missing), so it is safe to assume that there is a missing journal that would have covered the period between March and

¹⁵ Henriette Dessaulles, *Fadette, Journal d'Henriette Dessaulles 1874/1880* (Montreal: Hurtubise HMH, 1971); Henriette Dessaulles, *HOPES AND DREAMS--The Diary of Henriette Dessaulles 1874-1881*, trans. Liedewy Hawke (Willowdale, Ontario: Hounslow Press, 1986). For an example of the use of Henriette's diaries as a reflection of the normative experience of the Victorian bourgeoisie see Clio Collective, *Quebec Women: A History*, trans. Roger Gannon and Rosalind Gill (Toronto: The Women's Press, 1987), 132-135, 137.

¹⁶ LAM, 8 September 1868.

December 1870. Louise never mentioned destroying a journal, nor was there any indication of a crisis, so perhaps it was simply lost. The third journal, also a simple exercise book, began at the end of 1870 and ended, rather abruptly, in the summer of 1871 while she was on vacation, when she simply ran out of space. Apparently because she had no other journal with her, for the first time Louise composed a double entry, criss-crossing her sentences. It is unknown if she continued to keep a diary after returning from vacation—none has survived.

All three journals were written in blank, lined books. Therefore Louise was not restricted in any way by their layout; she could write as much and as often as she chose on any given occasion. Louise wrote anywhere from a line to several pages at a time, sometimes on a daily basis but she did miss weeks at a time.¹⁷

While Louise controlled the space of her journals, her writing was influenced by her culture, by society's expectations of her as a young bourgeois lady. This meant that she carefully chose what to include and what not to reveal within the pages of her journals. In addition, some of the material that she wrote is encoded in such a way that readers will be unable to decipher all of her comments.¹⁸ Louise wrote as if she were the only intended audience for her diaries, but as with all diaries, the possibility of other readers is implied. Moreover, she once referred to another "locked diary," suggesting that she was aware that her diary was potentially not private.¹⁹

¹⁷ See a sample page from Louise's diary in Appendix B.

¹⁸ Diary theorist Cynthia A. Huff writes that diarists' entries are influenced by the culture in which they live in "Textual Boundaries: Space in Nineteenth Century Women's Manuscript Diaries," in *Inscribing the Daily: Critical Essays on Women's Diaries*, eds Suzanne L. Bunkers and Cynthia A. Huff (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1996), 123-138. Literary critic Helen M. Buss writes that women encode what they write and that readers must try to deconstruct what is written. See her article "Decoding L.M. Montgomery's Journals/Encoding a Critical Practice of Women's Private Literature," *Essays on Canadian Writing* 54 (Winter 1994): 80-100.

¹⁹ LAM, 9 June 1868.

Perhaps in that locked book she revealed herself more candidly than she does in the diaries that I studied. Compared to her first entries, her later entries show that she was aware of the potential presence of an audience. Early entries named people, but did not reveal exactly who these individuals were. Her later entries however, said things like, “my brother, Wally, went with his father.” This shift suggests that Louise knew her work might be read.

Louise’s journals appear to be in their original form rather than a self-edited copy. Evidence of their authenticity is that Louise did try to recopy her travel journal sometime after her trip but only actually edited a handful of pages. The task probably bored her and was unfulfilling and that was why it was never completed. On another occasion, it is clear that Louise tore out several pages of her journal. She did this after she revealed to her readers that her brother had told her a lie. The missing pages reveal two things: first that the pages were probably removed immediately after they were penned for the chronology of the diary follows in a timely fashion, and secondly that Louise guarded what she revealed to her readers. While Louise was careful about what she wrote she did not feel the need to edit her work; her diary was not *intentionally* a public document. Diary writing for Louise, especially after she returned from Europe, appears to have functioned primarily as a “private” sounding-board, a place for introspection.

Louise’s words are of prime importance in this paper. She has so much to say that my approach is to let her speak in her own words as much as possible. My task is to be what Lynn Z. Bloom calls a “midwife” to Louise Amelia Monk’s words, or as Helen Buss puts it, to act as her “accomplice.”²⁰ In reading Louise’s three journals and *retelling*

²⁰ Lynn Z. Bloom, “Auto/Bio/History: Modern Midwifery,” in *Autobiography and Questions of Gender*, ed. Shirley Neuman (London: Frank Cass & Co. Ltd., 1991), 13. Helen M. Buss, “A Feminist Revision of

Louise's life, I developed a relationship with her and her world; this thesis is a product of that interaction.²¹ As Louise's perspective shaped what she wrote, my perspective as a secular feminist Anglophone first-generation Quebec woman born in 1970 to transplanted American academic parents (one Quaker, the other Jewish) has clearly shaped my historical analysis. Four main themes emerged in my reading of her five years of "scribbling"—faith, family, female education and friendship. These themes provide the structure necessary for rendering a complicated and complex life to the simple pages of a thesis.

Louise's experience of adolescence was influenced by her class, race, religion, and gender, and by her unique personality and family circumstances.²² This study will retrieve the story of this young religious adolescent female, Louise Amelia Monk, and give a voice to a previously nameless Judge's daughter who came of age in late nineteenth-century Montreal. Louise Amelia Monk has much to tell us about growing up in late nineteenth century bourgeois Montreal, about female adolescence in that era, and about individual religious experience.

New Historicism to Give Fuller Readings of Women's Private Writing" in *Inscribing the Daily*, 88. See also Jeanne Braham's comments on the relationship between writer and reader as being "collaborative" in "A Lens of Empathy," in *Inscribing the Daily*, 57.

²¹ Judy Long points out that in the past, scholars in the social sciences wrote as if they were invisible, not narrators who had a relationship with their subjects. See her chapter, "The Second Person in Social Science," in *Telling Women's Lives*.

²² The concept that Louise was not only influenced by her class, race, religion, and gender but by her "individual temperament and circumstances..." is based on Deborah Gorham, *The VICTORIAN GIRL and the Feminine Ideal* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982), 179.

CHAPTER 1: THE MONK-DEBARTZCH FAMILY IN BOURGEOIS MONTREAL

For an obscure creature like myself, I am astonished to see how many different minds of society I have been placed in. There never was a more cosmopolitan family than our own, firstly in blood, then in education, ideas and manners... Of Canadian society which is more varied than interesting, we have seen an immense deal; I think I might safely assert that we have met it in its every form and constitution.¹

Yesterday evening I was at General Windham's reception for Prince Arthur. Some persons seemed to enjoy it very much, but I did not, and today I am dissatisfied...²

Yesterday I went with Mary to Mrs. Griffin's and as usual she was kind enough to show us all over the house. What luxury, what beauty, and what wealth, it made me almost forget that I had lately resolved to think poverty a blessing!... it would give me so much pleasure to possess one, only one of those paintings [that] hang on their walls by the dozens.³

Louise Amelia Monk's family was fully integrated into Montreal's middle and upper class community. The Monk-Debartzch family identity defies stereotyping and simplistic labelling. In a sense, the family represented what Montreal would become in the modern era—an ethnically diverse and cosmopolitan city. The Monks bridged the French and English worlds of middle and upper class Montreal and Canada both in their heritage and in their chosen professions as lawyers and public office holders, at the provincial and federal levels. They were definitely a family of means but not extremely wealthy, making their living primarily by serving the public.

Louise was of mixed French and Polish ancestry on her maternal side, and English American ancestry on her father's side. She spoke and wrote French, as did her entire family, but she saw herself as being both English and an Anglophone, not as a

¹ LAM, 17 January 1871.

² LAM, 10 November 1869.

³ LAM, 11 April 1871.

“Canadienne.”⁴ All the children in her family were brought up in the Roman Catholic faith of their mother, although their father grew up in the Church of England. Her parents were married in the Roman Catholic parish church of Saint Marc but the 1861 census stated that her father was a member of the Church of England.⁵ Interestingly by the 1871 census he was declaring himself a Roman Catholic and Louise never wrote that her father was not Catholic like the rest of the family.⁶

As Roman Catholics, the Monks could identify with French Canadians and poor Irish immigrants and the virtue of separate religious schools. The Church, as all nineteenth-century historians at least make cursory mention of, was an important, if not the primary, cultural institution in society.⁷ Being French-Canadian implied being Roman Catholic but the picture was less clear for Anglophones. Being an Anglophone was not synonymous with being Protestant as some historians simplistically suggest.⁸ You have to look no further than Louise’s own family and thousands of Irish Catholic immigrants as proof.

Louise was born in 1850, the third child and only daughter of Samuel Cornwallis Monk and Rosalie Caroline Debartzch; she was baptised in the Catholic Church of Notre Dame located in the St. Antoine district of Montreal.⁹ Louise spent most of each year in Montreal. The summer months were spent on her mother’s family’s seigniorial property

⁴ Louise’s diaries were written predominantly in English but when she was in France she often wrote in French. When she was remarking on reading material written in French or quoting a French sermon she did not translate into English.

⁵ *Index de Mariages Catholiques* (Montreal: Archives Nationales du Québec, 1844); *Manuscript Census for Québec*, 1861.

⁶ *Manuscript Census of Canada*, 1871.

⁷ See Ruth Compton Brouwer, “Transcending the “unacknowledged quarantine”: Putting Religion into English-Canadian Women’s History,” *Journal of Canadian Studies* 27(3): 47-61; J.L. Granatstein, *et al.*, *Nation: Canada Since Confederation*, 3rd ed. (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1990), 13; Roderick MacLeod, “Salubrious Settings and Fortunate Families: The Making of Montreal’s Golden Square Mile, 1840-1895” (Ph.D. diss., McGill University, 1997), 24.

⁸ See J. L. Granatstein, *et al.*, *Nation*, 12.

⁹ *Index de Baptêmes Catholiques* (Montreal: Archives Nationales du Québec, 1850).

on the Richelieu River. Montreal could be beastly hot in the summer; the stench of the animal excrement combined with heat of July sent the over-dressed bourgeois of the city in search of cooler temperatures and idyllic surroundings.¹⁰

Louise's parents were married in 1844 and began having children in 1847. Caroline gave birth to six children over a twelve year period: Wentworth Dominique (Wenty) was the eldest and he was quickly followed by Edward Cornwallis (Wally), Mary Louise Amelia (our diarist), Charles Dering (Charlie), Frederick Debartzch (F. D. or Debartzch) and James Gould (Jimmy). Wenty entered the priesthood in 1869 and Wally, Charlie, Debartzch, and Jimmy followed their father's path and entered the legal profession. Wally, Charlie and Debartzch all practised law and Debartzch later made a name for himself in the federal government. Young Jimmy, who was a child when Louise penned her diary, became a law clerk.¹¹

Samuel Cornwallis Monk and his brother-in-law, Lewis Thomas Drummond (a close political and business associate of George-Etienne Cartier) were both Conservatives

¹⁰ Mrs. Frances Monck (no relation to Louise) in *My Canadian Leaves* complained that the Montreal heat of the month of July made her feel physically ill. See Mrs. Frances Monck, *My Canadian Leaves* (London: 1891; reprint, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1963), 33 (page citations are to the reprint edition). Frances Monck was the wife of Colonel Richard Monck, the brother of Lord Monck, who served as Canada's Governor-General between 1861 and 1867. Frances and her husband Richard visited Canada during Lord Monck's term and crossed paths with the former law partner of Louise's father, John Rose, and the Monk family friends, the McGees and the Cartiers. Mrs. Frances Monck never mentioned the Monks. For information on animals within city limits see Bettina Bradbury, "Pigs, Cows, and Boarders: Non-Wage Forms of Survival among Montreal Families, 1861-1891," *Labour/Le Travail* 14 (1984), 13, 20. She points out that Montreal residents walking in the 1860s district of Ste. Anne had to skirt around animal droppings and that "people and animals [horses, cows, pigs, goats] intermingled in a way unimaginable today."

¹¹ Information on family members and the brother's adult professions drawn from *Manuscript Census for Québec, 1861; Manuscript Census of Canada, 1871; Lovell's Montreal Directory* (Montreal: John Lovell, 1869-70; 1870-71; 1874-1875, 1877-78, 1884-1885, 1903-1904); *Monk Family Tree*, <http://awt.ancestry.com>; *George Henry Monk*, <http://www.entrnet.com/tal/young/monk.html>; Henry James Morgan, *Canadian Men and Women of the Time: A Handbook of Canadian Biography of Living Characters* (Toronto: William Briggs, 1912), 815. See Monk-Debartzch Family Tree in Appendix C.

and supported Canadian Confederation.¹² Samuel Monk was well liked and described as a learned and honourable man by his contemporary, Justice Church.¹³ In the House of Commons debate of 30 March 1868, he was called “an ornament to his profession and [someone who] would be a credit to any Judiciary...”¹⁴ Geo Maclean Rose claimed that Monk spoke both English and French perfectly and that “it would be impossible for a stranger to tell by his speech to which nationality he belonged.”¹⁵ Monk’s son, the lawyer and politician Frederick Debartzch, would receive similar praise in his biographical write-up. Debartzch was referred to as “[t]he best bi-lingual speaker in Canada” and his speeches “whether in Eng[lish] or French,...are regarded as the utterance of a conscientious public man.”¹⁶

Louise’s paternal forefathers were descended from British Loyalists who immigrated to Nova Scotia prior to the American Revolution. The Monks became members of the ruling class of colonial Canada after their arrival from the United States. Samuel Cornwallis Monk grew up in Halifax, Nova Scotia. His parents sent the young Samuel to the province of Quebec to finish his schooling and he followed in the footsteps of his male relatives by entering the legal profession. He was a practising lawyer when Louise was born. Samuel would later become a Judge, first at the Superior Court and then at the Queen’s Bench; when Louise composed her diaries, her father was at the apex of his career.¹⁷ Samuel’s uncles, Sir James and George Henry Monk, both had had judicial

¹² See Brian Young, *George-Etienne Cartier: Montreal Bourgeois* (Kingston and Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1981) on the politics of the period.

¹³ *The Montreal Star*, 2 November 1888.

¹⁴ Canada. House of Commons. *Debate*, 30 March 1868.

¹⁵ Geo Maclean Rose, *A Cyclopaedia of Canadian Biography. Chiefly men of their time* (Toronto: Rose Publishing Co, 1888), 537.

¹⁶ Morgan, *Canadian Men and Women of the Time*, 815.

¹⁷ Pierre-Georges Roy, *Les Juges de la province du Québec* (Québec: R.Paradis, 1933), 385.

careers as well; as judges, the three men held powerful positions in their respective jurisdictions.

Caroline, Louise's mother, grew up in and around the seigneurie of St. Charles and St. Marc and probably met Samuel Cornwallis Monk through her sister, Elmire, as Elmire married Samuel's law partner Lewis Thomas Drummond a few years before Louise's parents were married.¹⁸ The two families, the Monks and the Drummonds, would live in close proximity to one another in Montreal and spend time socializing together and with other notable Montreal families such as the Roses, the Cartiers, the McGees, the Taylors, and the Mondelets.

Louise's maternal lineage was predominantly French, but in the 1750s a Polish merchant immigrant, Dominicus Bartzsch, joined the family tree by way of marriage to Therese Filiau, dit Dubois. The Bartzsch family later added the "De" to their name in order to present themselves as members of the gentry. They experienced exceptional upward mobility in their newly adopted country; within two generations the family became members of the ruling class. The grandson of the immigrant petty soldier and merchant, Pierre-Dominique Debartzch (Louise's maternal grandfather), married into the prominent de Saint Ours family in 1815.¹⁹

Pierre-Dominique, Louise's grandfather, made a name for himself in Canadian history. The young lawyer/seigneur served "nobly" in the military in the War of 1812 and later became a legislative councillor in Lower Canada until 1841. Debartzch was

¹⁸ Young mentions that one of the Debartzch daughters (of which there were four) rejected Cartier's marriage proposal. Unfortunately we do not know which of the sisters this was because Young *fails* to mention her first name. Luckily none of the Debartzch daughters married Cartier—he was not an ideal husband—he drank, was not the most religious of men, and he had an adulterous relationship. Young, *George Etienne Cartier*, 28.

¹⁹ Ludwik Kos Rabcewicz Zubkowski, "Pierre-Dominique Debartzch," in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, Vol VII (Canada: University of Toronto Press and Les Presses de l'Université Laval, 1988), 235-236.

involved in the 1820s anti-unification movement (a song even celebrates his involvement) but as the debate heated up, he switched sides and became a 'turncoat.' During the Rebellion the family fled their home when their Saint Charles seigneurie was occupied by the Patriotes; Debartzch later claimed \$ 26,000 compensation for losses sustained during the occupation. Interestingly, his soon-to-be son-in-law (Lewis Thomas Drummond) defended Patriotes who participated in the Rebellions.²⁰

The de Saint Ours family had been in Quebec since the mid-seventeenth century. Although they had been granted a seigneurie, generations of Saint Ours supplemented their income with military stipends, trading in furs and investing in real estate.²¹ Only in the early 1800s was the Saint Ours family able to reside full time on their seigneurie and able to enjoy "a comfortable agrarian independence."²² Allan Greer wrote that Charles-Louis-Roch de Saint Ours (Louise's great-grandfather) was "the first truly resident seigneur," having reconstituted the seigneurie by buying out his siblings.²³ Charles developed the land to its fullest potential and was able to leave an estate which allowed Louise's great uncle, Francois-Roch to live as a country gentleman.²⁴

Louise Amelia Monk, the daughter of longstanding members of the ruling class grew up in a large and busy household at 26 Victoria Street in Montreal's Golden Square

²⁰ Zubkowski, 235; Roy, 183.

²¹ C.C. J. Bond, "Pierre de Saint-Ours," in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, Vol II, 592-593; C.J. Russ, "Jean-Baptiste De Saint-Ours Deschaillons," in *DCB*, Vol III, 578-579; Serge Courville, "Charles (Louis Roch) de Saint-Ours," in *DCB*, Vol VI, 679-680; Allan Greer, *Peasant, Lord and Merchant: Rural Society in Three Quebec Parishes 1740-1840* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985).

²² Greer, *Peasant, Lord, and Merchant*, 109.

²³ *Ibid.*, 111.

²⁴ See Allan Greer's excellent descriptions of the de Saint Ours family and the Debartzch family in his books *Peasant, Lord, and Merchant* and *The Patriots and the People: The Rebellion of 1837 in Rural Lower Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996).

Mile.²⁵ According to the 1861 census of Canada East, eleven year old Louise shared her home with her parents, Caroline and Samuel, her five brothers, her paternal grandfather, five servants (a cook, a coachman, two housemaids and a nurse), three horses and one cow.²⁶ At that time the Monk children ranged in age from two to fourteen years of age; the cow provided the family with fresh milk and the nurse provided supervision for the young children.

Keeping a cow was common among the professional classes of Montreal and was almost a necessity because it was not until the 1880s that Montrealers had fresh milk delivered daily from farms located in the rural outskirts of the city.²⁷ Mid-nineteenth-century Montreal still had open spaces for grazing animals and much of Louise's neighbourhood was still rural when she penned her diaries.²⁸ Bettina Bradbury's research based on Montreal census records shows that livestock were common within city limits. For the professionals, livestock and vegetable gardens provided families with a practical way to feed themselves. For the workers, "a poor man's pig" combined with a tiny garden, and/or house sharing, allowed those living in poverty to survive.²⁹

In addition to the above non-wage subsistence strategies, working class women could always find paid work as domestic servants. Domestic service was the most common employment for women in nineteenth-century Montreal; most of the servants were immigrant women or from rural Quebec and almost half of all servants were

²⁵ See MacLeod for a through examination of the development of the area and its inhabitants. See Map of Louise's neighbourhood in Appendix D.

²⁶ *Manuscript Census for Québec*, 1861.

²⁷ Bradbury found that the working class were more likely to have pigs, not cows. Bettina Bradbury, "Pigs, Cows, and Boarders," 14.

²⁸ MacLeod, 220-221.

²⁹ Bradbury, "Pigs, Cows, and Boarders."

employed in Louise's district of Saint Antoine.³⁰ Working as a servant was viewed as acceptable employment for working-class women, merely an extension of their lives as daughters, and as a good preparation for eventual marriage and motherhood.³¹ The Monks employed three Irish immigrants (one male, one single female and a widow) and two Canadian-born female servants in 1861.³² All the servants lived at the family home and they each received room and board and probably about five dollars a month for their services.³³

The 1871 manuscript census reveals nothing about the family's livestock because enumerators did not systematically take down this information but the census does show that the Monk household was smaller than in the previous decade.³⁴ Louise's grandfather died in the mid-1860s, her eldest brother Wenty had joined the priesthood, and Wally married in 1871 and set up his own household with his new wife, Mary Murphy. Only two Canadian female servants were now required for the family because it only consisted of the twenty-year-old Louise, her three younger school-aged brothers, and her parents.³⁵ Louise never mentioned the servants in her diaries.

Louise's three-storey home on Victoria Street is no longer standing but the short street remains today near the McGill University campus, running north-south from Ste. Catherine to Sherbrooke one block west of University Street. Ste. Catherine Street was

³⁰ Bettina Bradbury, *Working Families: Age, Gender and Daily Survival in Industrializing Montreal* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1993), 140.

³¹ Alison Prentice, *et al.*, *Canadian Women: A History* (Toronto: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1988), 124. On young working class women using convents during their adolescence as a transitional strategy between childhood and marriage see The Clio Collective, *Quebec Women: A History*, trans. Roger Gannon and Rosalind Gill (Toronto: The Women's Press, 1987), 173.

³² *Manuscript Census for Québec*, 1861.

³³ Bradbury, *Working Families*, 140.

³⁴ Bradbury, "Pigs, Cows, and Boarders", 29; *Manuscript Census for Québec*, 1861; *Manuscript Census for Canada*, 1871.

³⁵ *Manuscript Census for Canada*, 1871. Montrealers did not experience a servant shortage until the 1890s according to The Clio Collective, 158.

not a commercial area in the 1870s as it is today: it was completely residential, as was the rest of the Golden Mile until 1900. On Sherbrooke Street stood the large single family homes with their beautiful gardens; the homes located on the north-south streets, such as Louise's, were built closer together, each having three or four storeys and a back alley.³⁶

The term "Golden Mile" describes what was literally a square mile or 2.6 km² area located on the southern slopes of Mount Royal.³⁷ In Louise's time, her neighbourhood was referred to as "New Town," as opposed to the "Old Town" which had previously housed those Montreal residents of means. The new suburb was developed in the early 1840s by the middle and upper classes. The first residents were mostly middle-class Scots and their domestic servants but some were very wealthy industrialists and commercial magnates.³⁸ The shady-tree lined streets of the late-nineteenth-century Square Mile had a definite Anglo-Protestant aura but there were French Catholics living in the area as well, and all the different churches were represented.³⁹

When Louise spent hours writing out her thoughts to her diary in her Montreal bedroom in the developing suburb of New Town, the majority of Canadians and Quebecers were still living in the countryside. Canada in the 1870s was predominantly rural; under twenty percent of the population lived in towns and cities. In fact Montreal

³⁶ François Rémillard and Brian Merrett, trans. Joshua Wolfe, *Mansions of the Golden Square Mile, 1850-1930* (Montreal: Meridian Press, 1987), 21-25. See Charles E. Goad, *Map of Montreal, part of St. Antoine Ward*, (Montreal: Chas E. Goad, 1880).

³⁷ The north-south boundary of the Golden Square Mile runs roughly from Mount-Royal to the Canadian Pacific railroad tracks and the east-west boundary runs from Park to Atwater.

³⁸ Rémillard and Merrett, 21-25.

³⁹ See MacLeod, 190-191.

was the only true city in Canada at the time, home to more than 100,000 people. Toronto would only reach that number at the turn of the twentieth-century.⁴⁰

As well as being the most populous city, Montreal was the business centre of Canada and most of the capital of the nation was in the hands of the residents of Louise's neighbourhood.⁴¹ In her lifetime, New Town became more densely populated, as did the rest of the Island, and the city received massive immigration from the British Isles. Many of these immigrants were employed in the developing industrial sector and, as has already been mentioned, as domestic servants in New Town. The working class lived near the industries located "below the hill" and the city was therefore divided both physically and socially along class lines.⁴²

Louise's world as a young nineteenth-century female was more restricted than her brothers' world. Once she had finished school at seventeen, she simply was waiting to marry and start her family. Higher education and a professional life were not an option for Louise, nor did she express any real inclination for them. To keep herself occupied Louise attended church, wrote in her diary, read many books, practised the piano, sewed a little, visited with girl friends and family members, attended parties, theatricals and lectures, went for walks, and did charity work. The family's servants performed the housework, a hard and time-consuming traditionally female activity; this freed up Louise's time and that of her mother. Writing about George-Etienne Cartier's daughters, who were Louise's contemporaries, Brian Young stated that they "complained of empty

⁴⁰ Granatstein *et al.*, 64-68.

⁴¹ John A. Dickinson and Brian Young, *A Short History of Quebec* (Toronto: Copp Clark Pitman, 1993), 117; MacLeod, 1.

⁴² The term "City below the Hill" was coined in the 1890s by Sir Hebert Brown Ames in his study, *The City Below the Hill: A sociological study of a portion of the city of Montreal, Canada* (Montreal: Bishop Engraving and Printing Co., 1897).

lives devoted to masses, piano lessons and social activities oriented to finding them a 'gentleman.'"⁴³ Female adolescents from the higher ranks clearly led relatively leisured lives until marriage, unlike those from the working class who commonly worked as domestic servants until marriage.⁴⁴

The period of adolescence for both young men and women lengthened during the mid-to late-nineteenth century. Women were menstruating earlier but marrying later, which had a variety of implications for society. One result was that the birth rate decreased because women were unmarried when they tended to be most fertile. Women born in 1825 could expect to give birth to eight children, and women born a generation later would have on average six children, while women born in 1867 would have five children over their lifetime.⁴⁵ The other effect was that both men and women were dependent on their families for a longer period of time.⁴⁶ Since single female adolescents were of childbearing age, their propriety had to be protected; middle and upper class codes of right conduct guarded the modesty of these young women and courting was a carefully supervised activity.⁴⁷

The worlds of the male and female members of the Monk family and their bourgeois contemporaries overlapped. The male space was larger than the female space

⁴³ Young, *George-Etienne Cartier*, 52. "Idle" is the word that historians often use to describe bourgeois women's lives. I find the tone of that word problematic because it implies that upper class women had nothing to do.

⁴⁴ See Michael B. Katz on the nineteenth-century female youth experience in Hamilton, Ontario in *The People of Hamilton, Canada West: Family and Class in a Mid-Nineteenth-Century City* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1975), 272, 284, 289-90.

⁴⁵ The Clio Collective, 136.

⁴⁶ Prentice, *et al.*, 162-168; Katz, 212.

⁴⁷ On the protection of young Victorian women within a system of female mentoring see Joan Jacobs Brumberg, *The Body Project: An Intimate History of American Girls* (New York: Random House, 1997), 18, 25. For a discussion on courting among the bourgeois see The Clio Collective, 133-134; Peter Ward, *Courtship, Love and Marriage in Nineteenth-Century English Canada* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1990), 80.

and even in public areas such as the church, where women participated, men dominated.⁴⁸

Young adolescent bourgeois women growing up in the late 1860s and early 1870s expected to lead lives very much like their mothers, dominated by family and church.

The Monk's place within Canadian, Quebec and Montreal society was complex and, as shown above, they bridged the gaps between both the Roman Catholic and Protestant and the French and English worlds. They did so from *above* and were fundamentally conservative. The Monk-Debartzch family were longstanding members of the ruling class; they adapted to change in different regimes in order to retain that power, and the family continued to be influential and respected by their contemporaries well into the early twentieth-century.

⁴⁸ Brian Young, "Bourgeois Visions of Urban Space in Nineteenth-Century Quebec," in *Shifting Boundaries: Place and Space in the Francophone Cultures of Canada*, eds Jaap Lintvelt and François Parée (New York: Editions Rodopi b.v., 2001), 61.

CHAPTER 2: VICTORIAN ADOLESCENCE IN THE LITERATURE

My dear Lady Fullerton says somewhere that in youth, it is extraordinary how much time is wasted in useless reflections, in complete concentration of the powers of mind, about self [.] I certainly waste a great deal of time and perhaps even too much paper in conjectures about my character, if it is only slightly improved by all this concentration of thought but I am afraid it is not.¹

Louise observed that “youth” or what is now referred to as “adolescence” is a time when young people spend a great deal of time in self-reflection. For the purpose of this study, the terms will be used interchangeably although the word adolescence was not used widely until American psychologist G. Stanley Hall popularized it in his 1904 book, *Adolescence: Its Psychology and the Relation to Physiology, Anthropology, Sociology, Sex, Crime, Religion and Education*.² “Adolescence” has its etymological roots in the Latin word, *adolescens*, meaning “grow up.”³ The term adolescence, according to *The Canadian Oxford Dictionary*, is defined as the stage “between childhood and adulthood,” but contemporary historians use adolescence to mean the period between puberty and adulthood.

Historians, based on their own experiences of coming of age and on their academic research, have come to view youth as an important time for the formation of identity, of concepts of masculinity and femininity, and of expected adult gender roles.

¹ LAM, 15 January 1870.

² G. Stanley Hall, *Adolescence: Its Psychology and the Relation to Physiology, Anthropology, Sociology, Sex, Crime, Religion and Education* (New York: Appleton, 1904). According to Carol Dyhouse, Hall’s work was written within the debate over the so-called youth crisis. Adolescence was perceived to be a time when young people underwent particular developmental changes and there was a concern “that *adolescents* as a group might well constitute something of a social problem.” Hall believed that adolescence was a dangerous period in a girl’s life and that girls would never attain self-knowledge as boys would. Society’s job, Hall argued, was to protect young women in this time of instability. See Carol Dyhouse, *Girls growing up in late Victorian and Edwardian England* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981), quote 115 and 121.

³ T. F. Hoad, ed., *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of English Etymology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986).

Youth was recognized by Victorians as a stage in life and as such, adolescence should be viewed as socially created, as historians Carol Dyhouse and Charlotte Neff and anthropologists M. Kay Martin and Barbara Voorhies have pointed out.⁴

Bourgeois women coming of age in the mid-to late-Victorian era were expected to fit the ideal of womanhood prescribed by what both nineteenth-century commentators and modern historians refer to as the “separate spheres” ideology. Historian Linda K. Kerber argued in her analysis of the American literature on “separate spheres” that the use of the concept by historians brought women’s history “... out of the realm of the trivial and anecdotal into the realm of analytic social history.”⁵ Nevertheless, in Kerber’s view, the notion of separate spheres has often been used very sloppily without clear definitions. The metaphor has been used interchangeably as “an ideology *imposed* on women [and often portrayed as therefore being negative], a culture *created* by women [and therefore positive], [and as] a set of boundaries *expected to be observed* by women.”⁶

While historians are aware of the problems associated with employing this metaphor, as Wendy Mitchinson acknowledged in *The Nature of Their Bodies*, the term continues to be widely used, even by those who ultimately want to reject it. Mitchinson justified her own use of the concept by stating that the ideology had repercussions in women’s actual lives because it framed the Victorian medical discourse over women’s

⁴ See M. Kay Martin and Barbara Voorhies, *Female of the Species* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1975) on the social creation of gender roles. Also see Dyhouse, 117; Charlotte Neff, “Youth in Canada West: A Case Study of Red Hill Farm School Emigrants, 1854-1868.” *Journal of Family History* 25 (October 2000): 432-490.

⁵ Linda K. Kerber, “Separate Spheres, Female Worlds, Women’s Place: The Rhetoric of Women’s History,” *Journal of American History* 75 (June 1988), 37.

⁶ Kerber, “Separate Spheres,” 17.

health.⁷ Historians today recognize that any discussion of the ideology must also incorporate a race and class analysis. Although in reality Native and working-class women were unlikely to meet the expectations of what was basically a white middle class ideology, the concept shaped public legal norms, much in the way the ideology influenced Victorian medical practices and attitudes.⁸

Academics continue to use the model of separate spheres even as they critique it because it functions as a reference point or benchmark for characterizing Victorian social experience. For example, Kate Flint used English women's autobiographical writing to contrast the 'reality' of women's experience with the expectations contained in Victorian prescriptive literature.⁹ In a recent collection of Canadian essays on gender, the editors insisted that "the concept of 'separate spheres' never captured the reality of women's and men's lives in the past, [and] that the 'public' and the 'private' were always inextricably linked."¹⁰ In both these cases, the scholars were compelled to mention separate spheres while at the same time showing how the subjects in their particular studies deviated from Victorian norms and past historiography. The majority of scholars writing on women routinely employ the metaphor to signal how their own perspective fits into the larger debate, even if they reject the reality of the concept in past women's actual lives.

Young Victorian bourgeois women came of age within the culture of separate spheres but the repercussions of the ideology on women's individual lives of course differed from woman to woman. Deborah Gorham has argued that an individual woman's

⁷ Wendy Mitchinson, *The Nature of Their Bodies: Women and Their Doctors in Victorian Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991), 16.

⁸ On double standards in the Canadian legal system and the influence of the separate spheres ideology on the law see Alison Prentice, et al., *Canadian Women: A History* (Toronto: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich 1988), 147.

⁹ Kate Flint, *The Woman Reader 1837-1914* (Oxford; Clarendon Press, 1993).

¹⁰ Kathryn McPherson, Cecilia Morgan, and Nancy M. Forestell, eds. *Gendered Pasts: Historical Essays in Femininity and Masculinity in Canada* (Don Mills, Ontario: Oxford University Press, 1999), vii-viii.

experience of patriarchy, of separate spheres, of being viewed as *Other*, was very much tied to her “[s]ocial status, and individual temperament and circumstances...”¹¹ This being said, one thing that clearly was shared by all Victorian female adolescents was the expectation that they would marry. Since young women were having their first menses earlier and marriages were being delayed until they were in their mid-twenties, the period of adolescence lengthened in the latter part of the nineteenth-century. Sexually mature bourgeois adolescent girls were dependent on their parents longer than the previous generation while at the same time, at least until the 1880s, there were no educational opportunities beyond high school as they waited for marriage.¹²

The international historiography on adolescence emerged in the 1960s with *Centuries of Childhood: A Social History of Family Life* by Philippe Ariès. Ariès’ claim that adolescence began in preindustrial Europe has been criticized by historians who see adolescence as a nineteenth-century development. Perhaps it is that a new construction of what it meant to be an adolescent developed in the nineteenth-century and as Charlotte Neff points out, this is exactly what most historians have concluded.¹³ In the nineteenth-century, adolescence became a phase of life during which instead of apprenticing as youths had done in the preindustrial period, they attended schools and remained largely dependent on their parents. Early texts dealing with nineteenth-century youth were John Gillis’s *Youth and History* and Joseph Kett’s *Rites of Passage, Adolescence in America 1790 to the Present*, but their focus was predominantly on boys, as was Neff’s recent

¹¹ Deborah Gorham, *The VICTORIAN GIRL and the Feminine Ideal* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982), quote 179, and also see conclusion.

¹² Prentice, *et al.*, 167.

¹³ Neff, 432.

article on the English boy reformatory school immigrants to Canada West and Michael Katz's 1975 book on mid-century Hamilton.¹⁴

By the 1980s, historians began to research female adolescence in England and the United States but very little has been published on Canadian female adolescence. Foreign studies are very useful to Canadian historians but we need our *own* studies based on the experience of Canadians. Jeanne Peterson, Deborah Gorham, Kate Flint, and Carol Dyhouse have examined English young women. Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, Suzanne L. Bunkers, Joan Jacobs Brumberg, and Jane Hunter have made American Victorian girls central in their scholarship. All of these scholars have employed Victorian women's diaries in their respective studies. Canadian female adolescents may have had similar experiences to those living in the rest of the Atlantic world but before we can draw any parallels, we need to study more Canadian adolescent diaries.

According to most historians, strong bonds developed between women in the Victorian era but some scholars emphasize the concept of female culture more than others. Carroll Smith-Rosenberg's 1975 influential article, "The Female World of Love and Ritual: Relations between Women in Nineteenth-Century America" argued that Victorian culture encouraged the development of close relationships between mothers and daughters, girls and their female kin, and among females more generally.¹⁵ The concept of separate spheres, as well as evidence found in women's personal papers,

¹⁴ Philippe Ariès, *Centuries of Childhood: A Social History of Family Life*, trans. Robert Baldick (New York: Knopf, 1962); John Gillis, *Youth and History: Tradition and Change in European Age Relations, 1770- present* (New York: Academic Press, 1974); Joseph Kett, *Rites of Passage, Adolescence in America 1790 to the Present* (New York: Basic Books, 1977); Michael B. Katz, *The People of Hamilton, Canada West: Family and Class in a Mid-Nineteenth-Century City* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1975); Neff, "Youth in Canada West."

¹⁵ Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, "The Female World of Love and Ritual: Relations between Women in Nineteenth-Century America," *Signs* 1 (Autumn 1975): 1-29.

forms the basis of Smith-Rosenberg's claims. *Canadian Women: A History* also speaks of the close ties between Victorian mothers and daughters.¹⁶

The view that women lived in a strictly "female world of love and ritual" largely separate from men is overstated according to the work done by Kate Flint, Deborah Gorham and Jeanne Peterson on middle and upper class English women. While Smith-Rosenberg wrote that she was aware that women formed close relations with men she nevertheless stressed that "...relationships between men and women differed in both emotional texture and frequency from those between women."¹⁷ Flint, on the other hand, found that women's autobiographical writing made it clear that fathers helped choose what their daughters were reading. Peterson also found that fathers were involved in their daughters' education and Gorham's work reaffirms this view.¹⁸

While there has been a general trend in women's history away from seeing strict boundaries between male and female spaces or worlds, allowing for overlap and blurring of boundaries, there is still debate among the historians about how much interaction there was between the sexes and about the relative importance of homo-social and hetero-social relationships.¹⁹ Generalizations become problematic when looking at the actual lives of Victorians; the evidence shows that not all fathers or mothers had social and educational roles or positive and close loving bonds with their daughters.

¹⁶ Prentice, *et al.*, 148.

¹⁷ Smith-Rosenberg, 2.

¹⁸ See Flint, 42, 84-85, 201; M. Jeanne Peterson, *Family, Love and Work in the Lives of Victorian Gentlewomen* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989), 37; Gorham, 128-130.

¹⁹ In addition to Flint, Peterson and Gorham, see Kerber, "Separate Spheres" and Brian Young, "Bourgeois Visions of Urban Space in Nineteenth-Century Quebec," in *Shifting Boundaries: Place and Space in the Francophone Cultures of Canada*, eds Jaap Lintvelt and François Par e (New York: Editions Rodopi b.v., 2001).

Brian Young's work on the Cartier family is a prime example of a poor bond between a father and his daughters. Both Josephine and Hortense Cartier had a difficult relationship with their father, George-Etienne. Young claims that Cartier was bitterly disappointed that he did not have a son and that Cartier's marriage to Hortense Fabre (1828-1898) was not successful. The daughters came to resent their father, obviously not a situation conducive to the formation of loving bonds.²⁰ Being a member of the upper class was no guarantee that a young female received special attention from her father; young bourgeois women had a whole range of relationships with their fathers.

Much of the information on bourgeois women living in nineteenth-century Montreal is contained in texts written with the primary focus on men. Texts such as Margaret Gillett's *We Walked Very Warily*, which describes the development of female education at McGill University, are notable exceptions to the rule. *The Elegant Canadians*, written by Luella Creighton, referred to the Canadian bourgeoisie more generally, not the specific Montreal experience. In other works, such as Brian Young's *George-Etienne Cartier: Montreal Bourgeois* and his research on the McCord family, and Susan Sheets-Pyenson's book on *John William Dawson*, bourgeois women of mid-to late-nineteenth century Montreal are mentioned but are not the central focus.²¹

What all these texts on nineteenth-century Montreal confirm is that the domestic space was a shared family space where bourgeois women resided and the men moved in

²⁰ Brian Young, *George-Etienne Cartier: Montreal Bourgeois* (Kingston and Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1981).

²¹ Margaret Gillett, *We Walked Very Warily. A History of Women at McGill* (Montreal: Eden Press Women's Publications, 1981); Luella Creighton, *The Elegant Canadians* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1967); Susan Sheets-Pyenson, *John William Dawson: Faith, Hope and Science* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1996); Brian Young, *The Making and Unmaking of a University Museum. The McCord 1921-1996* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2000).

and out. Women were by no means restricted to the home, however; they also had access to a larger space in the public arena. From the 1850s to the 1870s this public space was restricted to schools, church, lending libraries, commercial shops, and other peoples' homes. Female adolescents of Louise's class were involved in activities such as going to church, reading, learning to write (autobiography, poems, fiction), visiting their mother's adult acquaintances (often quite reluctantly) or their girlfriends, practising the piano and attending dinners, private theatricals and dances.

Many historians interested in the actual lives of Victorian female adolescents have drawn on evidence from nineteenth-century female diaries or autobiographical writing but all have approached the material from slightly different angles. Smith-Rosenberg, as explained above, was most interested in strong female relationships while Flint, Gorham and Peterson all pointed out that men were not completely absent in girls' lives. American historian Jane Hunter's main concern in her analysis of young women's writing was how the diarists used their journals to come to terms with their gender roles. Hunter concluded that young women did not reject their roles within their families but carved a space out for themselves within them, and used their diaries as a safety valve for the release of tension. Suzanne Bunkers's young diarists all reveal the emotional challenges of growing up female; however their diary entries were not analyzed but left by Bunkers for her readers to interpret.²²

Joan Jacobs Brumberg, a feminist social historian of American girls and women, was particularly interested in the shift from the Victorian emphasis on good female

²² Jane Hunter, "Inscribing the Self in the Heart of the Family: Diaries and Girlhood in Late-Victorian America," *American Quarterly* 44 (March 1992): 51-81; Suzanne L. Bunkers, *Diaries of Girls and Women: A Midwestern American Sampler* (Madison, Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2001).

character and Christian good works to the modern emphasis on the body or good looks. While she did not want to romanticize the Victorian period with its protection/restriction of middle class female adolescents, Brumberg, taking an activist stance, argued that modern girls would greatly benefit from the intergenerational female mentoring that she saw in Victorian girls' diaries to help ease the transition between girlhood and maturity.²³ Her earlier work on Anorexia Nervosa also talked of the shift from the internal spiritual perfection sought by young religious Victorians to a personal salvation today being achieved through "an external body configuration..."²⁴

The historians all recognize that most of a young woman's adolescence took place within her family. Family was central to Victorians and to women in particular and there has been a great deal of international scholarship on the family and women's place within the Victorian home. Bettina Bradbury's recent review of the family literature in Canada concluded that the field was relatively small in the 1980s but is now multiplying and dealing with a diverse range of topics, including religion. Interestingly in the Canadian case we know more about the working class experience than about that of the middle class.²⁵

Victorian commentators, thoroughly steeped in the ideology of separate spheres, viewed women as being naturally religious and certainly more religious than men.²⁶

²³ Joan Jacob Brumberg, *The Body Project: An Intimate History of American Girls* (New York: Random House, 1997), 18. Brumberg's comments about intergenerational female mentoring supports Carroll Smith-Rosenberg's claim that female bonds were very important to Victorian women.

²⁴ Joan Jacob Brumberg, *Fasting Girls: The Emergence of Anorexia Nervosa as a Modern Disease* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1988), 7.

²⁵ Bettina Bradbury, "Feminist Historians and Family History in Canada in the 1990s," *Journal of Family History* 25 (July 2000): 362-383.

²⁶ Ronald G. Walters, *American Reformers 1815-1860* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1978), 103. See also Hannah M. Lane, "'Wife, Mother, Sister, Friend' Methodist Women in St. Stephen, New Brunswick, 1861-1881," in *Separate Spheres: Women's Worlds in the 19th-Century Maritimes*, eds. Janet Guildford and Suzanne Morton (Fredericton: Acadiensis, 1994), 94.

Nineteenth-century women were to be no less than the “Angel in the House,” as the title of the poem written by a Victorian poet Coventry Patmore suggested. Women were encouraged to be the spiritual guardians of a moral and heavenly household in a troubled world.²⁷

Prescription aside, more nineteenth-century women attended church than men did, but historians such as Roberto Perin recognize that a distinction has to be made between an outward religious affiliation with a particular denomination or church and the actual experience devotees have of their religion. Perin stated that it is difficult to know “how faithfully people actually practised their religion.”²⁸ René Hardy agreed that not only was there a range of religious conviction among Quebec Catholics but that assessing individual devotion is a very difficult task since “[I]es convictions les plus intimes de l’homme ne se révèlent pas aisément.”²⁹

Quebec historians have addressed religion more fully in their work on nineteenth-century society than English historians but as Ronald Rudin points out Quebec historians have approached Catholicism in a variety of ways. Rudin argues that prior to the 1960s historians viewed Catholicism as one of the forces that made Quebec distinctive. With the rise of what he refers to the “revisionist” point of view, discussion on Catholicism became largely marginalized. Material forces gained prominence as historians sought to integrate the Quebec experience into the larger western world; the history of Quebec was

²⁷ Gorham, 7; Walter E. Houghton, *The Victorian Frame of Mind, 1830-1870* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1957), 344-346.

²⁸ Roberto Perin, “French Speaking Canada from 1840,” in *A Concise History of Christianity in Canada*, eds. Terrence Murphy and Roberto Perin (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1996), 208.

²⁹ René Hardy, *Contrôle social et mutation de la culture religieuse au Québec 1830-1930* (Québec: Boréal, 1999), 10.

viewed as “normal” and developing economically much like other modern states.³⁰

According to Rudin, those revisionist historians who did write about religion, such as René Hardy, Normand Séguin and Serge Gagnon, emphasized that Catholicism was “... an ideology imposed on the people.”³¹

Historian René Hardy and religious studies scholar Louis Rousseau have drawn on statistical information regarding lay adherence to church requirements such as the Easter communion, the rise of volunteer religious associations, and the increase in religious vocations to speculate on the so called “réveil religieux” in nineteenth-century Roman Catholic Quebec.³² Hardy and Rousseau have been engaged in a well documented debate over this “religious awakening” and the relative role of the church and the parishioners in its formation.³³ That is, did the awakening begin in the 1820s, developing slowly (not a revolution) as Hardy would have it or was it a result of the crisis of the 1830s and relatively rapid development which the people helped create as Rousseau has argued.³⁴ Was the church an instrument of social control coercing the laity to adhere to priests’ demands as Hardy and Gagnon argue, or did it play a more positive role? Rousseau argues that historians need to remember that the church was more than simply an institution; it also served nineteenth-century Quebecers’ spiritual needs.³⁵

³⁰ Ronald Rudin, *Making History in Twentieth-Century Quebec* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), 172-173.

³¹ Rudin, *Making History*, 185.

³² See René Hardy, *Contrôle social et mutation de la culture religieuse au Québec 1830-1930*; René Hardy, “Catholicisme et culture dans le Québec du XIXe siècle” *Présentations* 49 (1996): 203-225; René Hardy, “À propos du réveil religieux dans le Québec du XIXe siècle: Le recours aux tribunaux dans les rapports entre le clergé et les fidèles (district de Trois-Rivières)” *RHAF* 48 (automne 1994): 187-212; Louis Rousseau, “À propos du ‘réveil religieux’ dans le Québec du XIXe siècle: où se loge le vrai débat?” *RHAF* 49 (automne 1995): 223-245; Louis Rousseau, “Crise et réveil religieux dans le Québec du XIXe siècle” *Interface* 11(1990):24-31.

³³ See Rudin’s summary of the Hardy-Rousseau debate in *Making History*, 207-214.

³⁴ Hardy, *Contrôle social*, 9, 154; Hardy, “À propos du réveil religieux,” 195, 211-212; Rousseau, “Crise et réveil religieux;” Rousseau, “À propos du ‘reveil religieux,’ ” 241, 243.

³⁵ Rudin, *Making History*, 209.

Much like Rousseau, English historian Ruth Compton Brouwer is interested in the spiritual lives of the laity but more specifically the female religious experience. Lately, historians interested in examining the actual religious experience of women have begun to answer her call to go beyond simply recognising that religion played an important role in women's lives and in how society perceived womanhood more generally, and instead "to make women's experience in the realm of religion the *central* focus of scholarly study."³⁶

Although Brouwer seems to think that this is a problem in the study of English Canadian women, Elizabeth Smyth points out that the only group of French Canadian women that has been studied in depth are the Catholic nuns.³⁷ One of those classic studies of French Catholic nuns is Marta Danylewycz's work, *Taking the Veil: An Alternative to Marriage, Motherhood, and Spinsterhood in Quebec, 1840-1920*, and even Danylewycz stated that understanding how individual lay women responded to religion is very complex and difficult to assess.³⁸

While it is recognized that all religious Canadian women have been neglected by historians, Elizabeth Smyth argues that one of the most neglected areas of study is English Roman Catholic lay and religious females.³⁹ Brian Clarke's essay, "The Parish and the Hearth: Women's Confraternities and the Devotional Revolution among Irish Catholics of Toronto, 1850-85" contributes to our knowledge of English Catholic lay

³⁶ Ruth Compton Brouwer, "Transcending the 'unacknowledged quarantine': Putting Religion into English-Canadian Women's History," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 27(3), 47.

³⁷ Elizabeth Smyth, "Christian Perfection and Service to Neighbours: The Congregation of the Sisters of St Joseph, Toronto, 1851-1920," in *Changing Roles of Women within the Christian Church in Canada*, eds. Elizabeth Gillan Muir and Marilyn Färdig Whiteley (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995), 42.

³⁸ Marta Danylewycz, *Taking the Veil: An Alternative to Marriage, Motherhood, and Spinsterhood in Quebec, 1840-1920* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1987), 42-43.

³⁹ Elizabeth Smyth, "Christian Perfection," 41.

women but only those in English Canada, not French Canada.⁴⁰ To my knowledge, the non-Irish Anglophone Roman Catholic experiences of lay women living in French Canada has not been studied by anyone. Terrence Murphy and Gerald Stortz in *Creed and Culture: The Place of English-Speaking Catholics in Canadian Society, 1750-1930* argue that the reason there is so little written on English Catholics in Canada is that Catholicism is associated primarily with the French and Protestantism with the English.⁴¹ Of all the literature on the lives of the female laity it is Protestant English Canadian women who have received the most press.

Historians agree that men had far more power than women in their churches, as they did in the rest of Victorian society.⁴² There is also agreement among historians that church was not only a religious place for Victorian women but also a social space to which they could escape from their domestic chores or in the case of more elite women, simply have a reason to leave their homes.⁴³ Other issues have created more debate among historians studying religion, such as whether Mariology was positive (being a powerful female image) or negative (restricting women to the role of help-mate and self-sacrifice) for Victorian Catholic women and whether Protestantism was more liberating for women than Catholicism, because lay Protestants had more power in their churches.⁴⁴ Ultimately, in order to make any conclusive comments on the role of religion in women's lives, historians need to examine more individual life histories.

⁴⁰ Brian Clarke, "The Parish and the Hearth: Women's Confraternities and the Devotional Revolution among Irish Catholics of Toronto, 1850-85," in *Creed and Culture: The Place of English-Speaking Catholics in Canadian Society, 1750-1930*, eds. Terrence Murphy and Gerald Stortz (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1993), 185-203.

⁴¹ Murphy and Stortz, *Creed and Culture*, xviii.

⁴² Danylewycz, 42; Young, "Bourgeois Visions of Urban Space in Nineteenth-Century Quebec," 61.

⁴³ Clarke, "The Parish and the Hearth," 199; Lane, 109; Elizabeth Gillan Muir and Marilyn Färdig Whiteley, eds., *Changing Roles of Women within the Christian Church in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995), 15.

⁴⁴ Danylewycz, 39-43.

Ruth Compton Brouwer, Marguerite Van Die, Elizabeth Gillan Muir and Marilyn Färdig Whiteley all have argued that women's personal papers such as poems, religious tracts, or autobiography in the form of letters and diaries will provide evidence for historians to assess how lay Victorian female adolescents and grown women actually experienced their faith or reconciled societal expectations of them more generally.⁴⁵ Personal papers, unlike prescriptive texts, provide information on the adolescent woman's inner experience of religion and allow the historian to get past simple quantitative observations such as how many women regularly went to church.

Interestingly, the only female adolescent diary that has been both published and widely quoted by Canadian historians was written by a young Catholic woman who was critical of the church. While the diarist, Henriette Dessaulles, attended church much like her female contemporaries, she developed her own ideas on religion which are revealed in her diaries. Her family background is of prime importance for understanding why Henriette was critical of religion. Henriette's stepmother was a very religious woman but Henriette did not get along with her so most likely did not view her as a role model. Her father, on the other hand, was more radical and anticlerical in his beliefs (but still sent his daughter to be educated by the nuns); since Henriette admired her father, she was most likely greatly influenced by her father's views. Her diaries reveal a healthy skepticism but she was not irreligious; Henriette's comments on church matters are both humorous and modern in tone and in my view this is one of reasons historians have taken to quoting her widely.

⁴⁵ Brouwer, 53; Marguerite Van Die, "'A Woman's Awakening': Evangelical Belief and Female Spirituality in Mid-Nineteenth-Century Canada," in *Canadian Women: A Reader*, ed. Wendy Mitchinson (Toronto: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1996), 52; Muir and Whiteley, 18-19.

Henriette's diaries were composed between 1874 and 1881. At twenty-one, Dessaulles married her childhood sweetheart, and later published a women's column under the pseudonym "Fadette" in the newspaper, *Le Devoir*. Dessaulles's journals were published first in French in 1971 under the title *Fadette, Journal d'Henriette Dessaulles 1874/1880*. The journal was translated into English in 1986 and entitled *Hopes and Dreams—The Diary of Henriette Dessaulles 1874-1881*.⁴⁶ Since there is no published rival and because her diaries are compelling, her entries are quoted extensively by English and French historians to illustrate the normative young female bourgeois experience of the period.⁴⁷ I would argue that it is problematic to use Dessaulles as the benchmark for bourgeois adolescence until we have some more comparable studies.

There are a number of other manuscript diaries available for research. Historian Brian Young drew on Cartier's daughters' diaries in his book, *George Etienne Cartier, Montreal Bourgeois*. Josephine (1847-1886) and Hortense (1849-1941) Cartier's journals provide excellent source material on their father but could also be used as a basis for a study on the girls themselves.⁴⁸ Their writing should be examined more thoroughly and made available to the academic community so we can compare their experiences to Henriette's and Louise's. In addition to these four Quebec diaries, there are hundreds of adolescent dairies housed in university archives and in the homes of private citizens

⁴⁶ Henriette Dessaulles, *Fadette, Journal d'Henriette Dessaulles 1874/1880* (Montreal: Editions Hurtubise HMH, 1971); Henriette Dessaulles, *HOPES AND DREAMS – The Diary of Henriette Dessaulles 1874-1881*, trans. Liedewy Hawke (Ontario, Hounslow Press, 1986). See also the critical edition of Dessaulles' diaries written by Jean-Louis Major (1989).

⁴⁷ See The Clio Collective, 132-135, 137, 159; Prentice *et al.*, 151-152; Ann Marie Adams and Peter Gossage, "Chez Fadette: Girlhood, Family, and Private space in Late Nineteenth-Century Saint-Hyacinthe," *Urban History Review* 26 (1998): 56-68; Christyl Verdun, "La Religion dans Le Journal d'Henriette Fadette," *Atlantis* 8 (1983): 45-50; Valerie Raoul, "Women and Diaries: Gender and Genre" in *Mosaic* 22 (1989): 57-65; Valerie Raoul, *Distinctly Narcissistic: Diary Fiction in Quebec* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993).

⁴⁸ Both diaries are housed in the Archives of the Archbishop of Montreal, Montreal.

across Quebec and Canada. We clearly need to know more details about the unique experience of Canadian Victorian adolescents, male and female, those from both English-speaking and French-speaking Canada.

Contemporary historians and other academics have displayed two contradictory approaches on the question of whether French Canada is different from or similar to English Canada. Academics outside Quebec have tended to view the experience of Quebec and of French Canada as being distinct from the rest of Canada. The reason probably has to do with the fact that there is a language barrier as well as a belief that outsiders or non-French Canadians do not have the background to comment accurately on the history of Quebec.⁴⁹ The unfortunate result is that the French experience is dismissed by the scholarly community in the rest of Canada as being *different* and therefore out of the range of their particular studies. A prime example of this can be seen in a footnote in the introduction of a recently published collection of diaries written by English speaking women from all across Canada, *the small details of LIFE*. Kathryn Carter writes that “[t]here has been no attempt to include French-Canadian diaries in this collection; they have a *distinctive* tradition that is receiving attention in several critical studies.”⁵⁰

Quebec is seen as distinctive by the majority of outsiders, but interestingly as we have seen, French revisionists have in recent decades been presenting Quebec as a

⁴⁹ Valerie Raoul writes about how it feels to be an immigrant writing on Quebec. She states, “[i]t is not without some trepidation that an immigrant from England, who finds Quebec fascinating, dares to write about it. I have the uncomfortable feeling that this is how a man must feel talking about women’s writing. But there *are* some feminist men – and some bilingual English-Canadians, including myself...” See Raoul, *Distinctly Narcissistic*, “Acknowledgments.”

⁵⁰ Kathryn Carter, *the small details of LIFE* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002), 28 (emphasis mine).

“Normal Society.”⁵¹ Even some Anglophone historians such as Allan Greer and Susan Mann can be seen as part of this normalizing trend; the central premise of their work is that Quebec’s social and political experience in the nineteenth-century was very much in line with the general Western experience.⁵² The late French Canadian historian Louise Dechêne made a similar point in the introduction to her grandmother’s diaries. Dechêne argued that Henriette Dessaulles’s writing revealed that this French Canadian girl had “a great deal in common with Victorian girls leading similar lives elsewhere.”⁵³ Dechêne’s implication was that there may have been a common Victorian Atlantic experience of female adolescence, but she provided no evidence to support the suggestion.

But what if Henriette’s diary, the source so many Canadian historians have used to illustrate the experience of female adolescence in Quebec, was in a real sense *fictive*? What if this widely used diary was not in fact the original diary of Fadette, but a self-edited version of her original diaries? Valerie Raoul has suggested that Henriette altered her diary twenty years after her last entry was penned in 1881. Not only did she expunge large sections but she moved entries around. As the mother of five children, having just lost her husband and best friend, Henriette turned to her girlhood diary and edited the work as a tribute to her husband’s memory. The edited diary retained the intimacy of the

⁵¹ See Ronald Rudin, “Revisionism and the Search for a Normal Society: A Critique of Recent Quebec Historical Writing,” *Canadian Historical Review* (March 1992): 30-61. Rudin expresses concern because he believes that the revisionists have gone too far in downplaying all distinctiveness.

⁵² Allan Greer, *The Patriots and the People: The Rebellion of 1837 in Rural Lower Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996); Allan Greer, “1837-1838: Rebellion Reconsidered,” *Canadian Historical Review* (March 1995): 1-18; Susan Mann Trofimenkoff, *Dream of Nation* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1982), 33, 123.

⁵³ Louise Dechêne, “Introduction,” in *HOPES AND DREAMS—The Diary of Henriette Dessaulles 1874-1881*, 12.

original journal, and but was structured much like a romance novel, ending with her marriage to her girlhood sweetheart, Maurice Saint-Jacques.⁵⁴

Henriette's diaries were clearly not fictive in the traditional sense. Even in their edited form, the entries are authentic, not made up nor based on fictional characters. On the other hand, the evidence the edited version provides presents a slightly different image than what was written in the original diaries. The fundamental difference is that Henriette's original manuscript diaries record a young girl's first reaction to the events in her life; the self-edited version reflects what an adult woman wants to remember or emphasise, or retrospectively saw as significant. Regardless, Henriette's work remains a diary rather than an autobiography.

The difference between a traditional autobiography and a diary or journal (two terms that I will use interchangeably) is that the diary entry tends to be written on a more daily basis and closer chronologically to the events.⁵⁵ Unlike autobiographies, which are more removed in time and space from the events described in the text, diaries/journals cannot foreshadow but write only about the present and the past, as Harriet Blodgett has pointed out. Another difference, according to Blodgett, between a diary and autobiography is that a diary appears to reflect a "life in process," while an autobiography

⁵⁴ Raoul, *Distinctly Narcissistic*, 45-57. Henriette Dessaulles' journals serve as a starting point for Raoul's book-length discussion on true fictive diaries written by Quebec novelists. On the influence of fiction on diary writing see Steven E. Kagle and Lorenza Gramegna, "Rewriting Her Life: Fictionalization and the Use of Fictional Models in Early American Women's Diaries," in *Inscribing the Daily: Critical Essays on Women's Diaries*, eds. Suzanne L. Bunkers, and Cynthia A. Huff (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1996), 38-55. Kagle and Gramegna also claim that "early novelists borrowed techniques from autobiographical forms..." and applied them to their fiction much like Raoul sees in Quebec diary fiction.

⁵⁵ On the negligible differences between diaries and journals see Kathryn Carter's comment that the differences are "spurious." Carter, 5. According to Carter, both words come from similar roots (*dies* is day in Latin and *jour* is day in French) and diaries are no more introspective or less coherent than journals. Margo Culley also used the two terms interchangeably in *A Day at a Time: The Diary Literature of American Women from 1764 to the Present* (New York: Feminist Press at the City University of New York, 1985), xiii.

describes a “life retrospectively shaped to a coherent whole.”⁵⁶ Not everyone agrees with that conclusion. Judy Nolte Lensick, for example, sees diaries as being quite close to traditional autobiographical writing because diarists have “thematic purpose, [develop] persona and [use] distinctive imagery.”⁵⁷ Moreover, as Judy Simons has pointed out, diarists choose what to include and exclude in their accounts.⁵⁸ Steven Kagle and Lorenza Gramegna agree with this view, stating that even diarists “color the events of their lives.”⁵⁹

Diary theorists have shown that interpreting a diary is a complicated business. Historians, as we know, base their arguments on their primary sources and their interpretations are grounded in material evidence. Historians therefore need to be sensitive to the process of diary writing because the form the diary eventually takes has a direct influence on the kind of interpretations a historian can ultimately make. As the first women’s historians wrote about famous historical women such as the first female doctors or the wives of famous historical men, so literary critics first looked at the diaries of famous or notable literary women.⁶⁰ Over the last thirty years, however, there has been a general trend away from investigating the famous, in search of the lives of ordinary

⁵⁶ Harriet Blodgett, “Preserving the Moment in the Diary of Margaret Fontaine,” in *Inscribing the Daily*, 167-168, quote 156.

⁵⁷ Judy Nolte Lensink, quoted in Blodgett, “Preserving the Moment in the Diary of Margaret Fontaine,” in *Inscribing the Daily*, 167.

⁵⁸ See Judy Simons, *Diaries and Journals of Literary Women From Fanny Burney to Virginia Woolf* (London: Macmillan, 1990), 15.

⁵⁹ Kagle and Gramegna, 38.

⁶⁰ See the scholarly edition of the diaries of Elizabeth Smith Shortt, one of Canada’s first female doctors. The book consists of an introductory essay written by Veronica Strong-Boag and Smith’s diary. Elizabeth Smith Shortt, *A Woman with a Purpose: The Diaries of Elisabeth Smith 1872-1884*, eds. and intro. Veronica Strong-Boag (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 1980).

people. As Lynn Z. Bloom has stated, this is because we now recognize that “[e]veryone has a story to tell...”⁶¹

According to the scholars interested in diary literature, how diarists describe their worlds is influenced by multiple factors. As Cynthia Huff, an influential diary scholar, argues, the actual space diarists write in influences what they can write; she refers to these as “textual boundaries.” A blank lined or unlined diary provides a space that is completely different from a diary that has both a predetermined calendar and a certain amount of space allotted to each day. The first example allows the diarist more control over the form her diary takes than the second kind. A blank book allows the diarist to determine when and how much she wants to write at any given time.⁶²

According to Huff, the second textual boundary is the ideological atmosphere in which the diarist writes. So, for example, the two British female diarists Huff studied used their journals to position themselves “... within the space allotted by the ideological constructs of gender and class in nineteenth-century Britain. Yet the personal biographies of each influence how these women construct themselves and their diaries according to the role of lady.”⁶³ Helen Buss agrees with this view; according to her the writer “is shaped by the ideology of the world she lives in.”⁶⁴ Gender, class, unique family circumstances, religion and age are factors that help determine what a diarist ultimately writes.

⁶¹ Lynn Z. Bloom, “Auto/Bio/History: Modern Midwifery,” in *Autobiography and Questions of Gender*, ed. Shirley Neuman (London: Frank Cass & Co. Ltd., 1991), 15.

⁶² Cynthia A. Huff, “Textual Boundaries: Space in Nineteenth-Century Women’s Manuscript Diaries,” in *Inscribing the Daily*, 123-138.

⁶³ Huff, “Textual Boundaries,” 137. This quote refers specifically to two nineteenth century British diarists but is relevant to any diarist, male or female, European or North American.

⁶⁴ Helen Buss, “Canadian Women’s Autobiography in English: An Introductory Guide for Researchers and Teachers” (Ottawa: CRIAW/ICREF, April 1991), 11.

According to the scholars, diarists had models for the diaries they were composing. Stephen E. Kagle and Lorenza Gramegna point out that diarists used fictional models when writing their diaries and that their diaries were full of literary references.⁶⁵ Lynn Z. Bloom found that writers “set the scene” in their journals much as a novelist does.⁶⁶ Valerie Raoul (as stated above) found that Henriette’s edited journals were constructed much like a romantic novel in describing how a childhood love affair ended in a happy marriage.⁶⁷

Diarists also write with an audience in mind; as Judy Long puts it, “[t]he making of a record, no matter how secretly intended, evokes an audience.”⁶⁸ After reading thousands of diaries, Steven Kagle came to a similar conclusion. He writes, “there is no such thing as a totally private diary... [and that] almost all, if not all, diarists envision an audience for their entries.”⁶⁹ Since diarists write with an audience in mind, they are not completely candid and therefore encode their writing. As Helen Buss and Margo Cully both point out, part of the job of the reader is then to read very carefully and to try to deconstruct what the writer has written. Cully describes the process as being like putting together a puzzle.⁷⁰ Bloom supports the view that private diaries are never truly private because there is “the presence of an audience, whether near or remote...” and believes that the diarist censors how she writes as a result. This being said, Bloom also argues that diaries fall into two main categories—those that are intended to be truly private and are

⁶⁵ Kagle and Gramegna, 39-40.

⁶⁶ Lynn Z. Bloom, “‘I Write for Myself and Strangers’: Private Diaries as Public Documents,” in *Inscribing the Daily*, 29.

⁶⁷ Raoul, *Distinctly Narcissistic*, 50.

⁶⁸ Judy Long, *Telling Women’s Lives. Subject/Narrator/Reader/Text* (New York: New York University Press, 1999), 33. See also Lynn Z. Bloom, “‘I Write for Myself and Strangers.’”

⁶⁹ Steven Kagle, *Early Nineteenth-Century America Diary Literature* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1986), 5.

⁷⁰ See Helen M. Buss, “Decoding L.M. Montgomery’s Journals/Encoding a Critical Practice of Women’s Private Literature,” *Essays on Canadian Writing* 54 (Winter 1994), 81.

stylistically simple with little contextualization or retrospection, and those dairies that are deliberately written with an audience in mind and are therefore structurally more complex, employing literary techniques.⁷¹

Diary theorists emphasize that diarists develop a persona, an identity, or a voice in their writing, much like what you see in an autobiographical work. As Margo Culley states, the writer is the central actor in her diary.⁷² Because a writer's concept of self changes with time, Lois J. Fowler and David H. Fowler remind us, diaries cannot be viewed as a complete reflection of a person.⁷³ Trudel H. Thomas argues that in re-reading one's own diary, self-knowledge, insights and a sense of control may be gained by the writer.⁷⁴ This self-knowledge in turn could not help but affect how the diarist then writes her future entries. Jane Hunter, who looked at adolescent diaries of American women, found that diaries allowed Victorian young women to form a self-identity, one that was separate but very much integrated in their families.⁷⁵

Diaries have different functions for different diarists or even multiple functions. Some nineteenth-century diaries were travel journals which described European tours or migration experiences and others journals were more therapeutic, religious, or creative. Some diarists wrote primarily for themselves or because their parents required that they keep a diary.⁷⁶ What theorists by and large agree on is that diaries on the whole provide women a private place (even they are never truly private) to both release tension and

⁷¹ Lynn Z. Bloom, " 'I Write for Myself and Strangers.' "

⁷² Culley, 12.

⁷³ Lois J. Fowler and David H. Fowler, eds, *Revelations of Self. American Women in Autobiography* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990), preface.

⁷⁴ Trudel H. Thomas, "The Diary as Creative Midwife: Interviews with Three Writers," in *Inscribing the Daily*, 183.

⁷⁵ Hunter, 51,53.

⁷⁶ Hunter described situations where parents not only required that their girls keep diaries but also insisted on reading them, 71.

come to terms with their realities. As stated above, Jane Hunter refers to adolescent diaries as a “safety-valve” for young women coming of age.⁷⁷ Unlike the public space where women acting out could have negative repercussions, the private or semi-private space of the diary offers a safe place to voice displeasure.⁷⁸

The actual space in which a diarist writes, her personal background (class, race, religion, family circumstances and personality), the presence of literary models, the public nature of her private diaries, the fact that the writer’s persona develops over time and that diaries have a functional value in writer’s lives all influence how and what is put down within a journal’s pages. Knowledge of these influences will lead to more nuanced readings of women’s diaries and allow historians to better interpret their evidence. For those historians interested in understanding past female experience, diaries are a wonderful window into the inner world of actual women’s lives.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 74.

⁷⁸ Hunter, 58-59, 61, 70; Kagle and Gramegna, 42-43, 52.

CHAPTER 3: FAITH, FAMILY, FEMALE EDUCATION AND FRIENDSHIP

I love the temples of God when crowds of human being[s] stand beneath their high roofs and the deep tones of the organ peal forth like the voice of people sending their love and praise to the celestial abode of their God; but what I love still better than that, is the silence of an almost empty church [with] only here [and] there an earnest soul imploring with all it[s] power the grace for which it lives, the blessing in which all is centred.¹

Some years ago I was scarcely fifteen then, I remember feeling for the first time, a heartfelt pleasure in offering up to God what before has seemed to me unspeakable happiness. I had long[ed] for that one thing since months, I had dreamed of it, hoped for it, and at length it came bright and ...[then] cruel circumstances obliged me to give up that which I had looked forward to with such raptures; my heart almost died ...I cried to God, God take this, my sacrifice; and give me more! What I felt in the instant is indescribable, a heavenly touch seemed to heal my whole self...²

Faith in God permeates Louise's entire diary. In the late-nineteenth-century the Roman Catholic religion pervaded Quebec society but adherence to church dogma varied.³ In the diary entries above, Louise presented herself as one of those "earnest soul[s]" who had felt God's "heavenly touch" and whose religiosity was clearly on the higher end of the spectrum. We know from census statistics that the majority of Quebecers were Roman Catholic, at least nominally, but it is more difficult to assess

¹ LAM, 11 April 1869. Religion was a major focus in many Victorian diaries. See Alison Prentice, *et al.*, *Canadian Women: A History* (Toronto: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1988), 151.

² LAM, 15 December 1868.

³ Marta Danylewycz, *Taking the Veil: An Alternative to Marriage, Motherhood, and Spinsterhood in Quebec, 1840-1920* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1987), 39; Roberto Perin, "French-Speaking Canada From 1840," in *A Concise History of Christianity in Canada* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1996), 208. See also Serge Gagnon, René Hardy, and Louis Rousseau on nineteenth-century Catholicism in Quebec. René Hardy, *Contrôle social et mutation de la culture religieuse au Québec 1830-1930* (Québec: Boréal, 1999); René Hardy, "Catholicisme et culture dans le Québec du XIXe siècle" *Présentations* 49 (1996): 203-225; René Hardy, "À propos du réveil religieux dans le Québec du XIXe siècle: Le recours aux tribunaux dans les rapports entre le clergé et les fidèles (district de Trois-Rivières)" *RHAF* 48 (automne 1994): 187-212; Louis Rousseau, "À propos du 'réveil religieux' dans le Québec du XIXe siècle: où se loge le vrai débat?" *RHAF* 49 (automne 1995): 223-245; Louis Rousseau, "Crise et réveil religieux dans le Québec du XIXe siècle" *Interface* 11(1990): 24-31; Serge Gagnon, *MOURIR, hier et aujourd'hui* (Québec: Les Presses de L'Université Laval, 1987).

how people experienced their religion internally.⁴ Looking at church attendance or participation in confraternities and in the sacraments provides a picture of how many Catholics regularly practised their religion, as well as revealing their gender and their class background, but personal papers such as diaries, indicate how parishioners experienced their faith on an intimate level.⁵ How Louise lived her faith is revealed in her diary entries.

Louise was a member of a faithful Catholic family and she had a rigorous Catholic education both in her home and at her convent school. This religious education provided Louise with both a normative structure within which to conduct her life and an explanatory framework to help interpret her experience. It would not be an understatement to claim, based on Louise's diary entries, that Roman Catholicism was the determinative matrix from which everything else in her life flowed. Louise stated that she was "too much of a coward ever to give up thinking or praying to God. I should dread His forgetting me, and leaving me out 'in the dark and cold.'"⁶ Louise's words indicate that she had acculturated the teachings of the Catholic Church. Although

⁴ According to the Canadian Census of 1871 86% of Quebeckers were Roman Catholic. Perin acknowledged that it is difficult to know "...how faithfully people actually practised their religion" and although rates of participation in the Easter sacrament did increase from the mid-to the late-nineteenth century there were mixed reviews on the laity's knowledge of church dogma. Perin, 208-209.

⁵ Ruth Compton Brouwer argued that it is in women's private papers that one can see evidence of women's spirituality and "...the varieties of female religious experience." Ruth Compton Brouwer, "Transcending the 'unacknowledged quarantine': Putting Religion into English-Canadian Women's History," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 27(3), 53. Marguerite Van Die argued that it is in personal documents that Christian women have left "traces of their religious faith." See "'A Woman's Awakening': Evangelical Belief and Female Spirituality in Mid-Nineteenth-Century Canada," in *Canadian Women: A Reader*, ed. Wendy Mitchinson (Toronto: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1996), 52.

⁶ LAM, 7 April 1871.

Catholic ideology was imposed on her by her family, priest and teachers, it is important to note that Catholicism also served her spiritual needs.⁷

Roman Catholicism coloured Louise's social experience not only in life but in death as well. She was baptized, cleansed from the sins of her conception and birth, in the Notre Dame Church in the year of her birth, 1850.⁸ She received an early morning Catholic funeral in the Church of the Gésu on 6 April 1874, four days after her premature death, and was buried in the Notre-Dame-des-Neiges Catholic Cemetery, overlooking the city of Montreal.⁹ Her epitaph describes her family's last wish that she be welcomed into the eternal Kingdom of God through the golden gates of Heaven. Her monument refers to the impending "Resurrection" of her soul and her obituary notice refers to her accepting death with "pious resignation."¹⁰ The concept of "resignation" connotes awareness that the follower, as "un bon Chrétien," can die peacefully with the knowledge that they have done all that they can to prepare for their passage to join God.¹¹

Louise's monument, its form and its location on the top of Mount Royal overlooking the city, is very symbolic and attests to the strength of her family's faith and the assumption that her soul will reunite with God in the eternal world. The monument is a five-tiered stone structure; from bottom to top each marble block gets smaller, reaching towards the heavens. A piece has broken off the top of the monument; this missing

⁷ Gagnon and Hardy both point out that Catholicism was imposed on the masses and Rousseau reminds historians not to neglect the fact that Catholicism also serve peoples' spiritual needs. See the discussion on Catholicism as an ideology and as a religion in Chapter 2.

⁸ *Index de Baptêmes Catholiques*. Montreal: Archives Nationales du Québec, 1850.

⁹ The Notre-Dame-des-Neiges Cemetery, located on the slopes of Mont-Royal, was founded in 1855 to meet the needs of an expanding Montreal population by the Catholic Parish of Notre-Dame Basilica. Their old cemetery was located where Dominion Square stands today. See the cemetery's comprehensive website at http://www.basiliqueddm.org/en/the_cemetery/historique.asp

¹⁰ Louise's monument is located The Notre-Dame-des-Neiges Cemetery, Section S, lot 0001. See her obituary notice in *The Montreal Star*, 3 April 1874.

¹¹ See Serge Gagnon's research on Christian death in nineteenth-century Quebec in *MOURIR, hier et aujourd'hui* (Québec: Les presses de l'université Laval, 1987). His discussion on resignation can be found on 9-10.

element was most likely a cross. Her body, her material being, is in the earth, while her monument, above the ground, symbolizes where her soul will rise. The location of her grave and her monument is full of Christian meaning (as was her life) and the structure itself reaches up symbolically towards God.

Death was a topic that surfaced often in Louise's diaries. This makes sense considering the high mortality rates in late-nineteenth-century urban Montreal, the preoccupation Victorians had with death, and the Catholic emphasis on the beauties of the Kingdom of Heaven.¹² Losing family members to sudden death was a common event for both the working class and the bourgeoisie of Montreal. While mortality rates among the working class were higher than among the middle and upper class due to deplorable housing conditions and lack of adequate sanitary systems, proper nutrition and clothing, infectious diseases and other maladies still struck the better-off families with a frequency unknown today.¹³

A whole elaborate set of rituals were observed to mourn the passing of family members, such as dressing in black. The period of mourning depended on one's connection to the deceased; widows mourned for three years, while parents and children were to dress in black for twelve months.¹⁴ Louise revealed how she believed mourning should be conducted when a child lost a parent. She was absolutely appalled when she

¹² Gagnon stated that nineteenth-century correspondence was full of references to death. See *MOURIR*, 24.

¹³ Bettina Bradbury, *Working Families: Age, Gender and Daily Survival in Industrializing Montreal* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart Inc, 1993), 71- 75, 105. See Jean-Claude Robert, "The City of Wealth and Death: Urban Mortality in Montreal 1821-1871," in *Essays in the History of Canadian Medicine*, eds. Wendy Mitchinson and J. D. McGinnis (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1988) and Gagnon, *MOURIR*.

¹⁴ See Leonore Davidoff, *The Best Circles: Society Etiquette and the Season* (London: Croom Helm, 1973), 54-56, for a full discussion of mourning among the upper class in Victorian England. See Marguerite Van Die, " 'A Woman's Awakening,' " 64, for a discussion of death as a public and a family event. Deathbed scenes were common in nineteenth century novels according to Walter E. Houghton, *The Victorian Frame of Mind, 1830-1870* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1957), 276-27. Houghton argued that deathbed scenes with their reference to heaven and angels served to reassure readers of their own Christian faith and to quell any of their religious doubts.

saw Miss Mary McGee, whose mother had died just under a month before, out walking, smiling and laughing with friends without her mourning veil pulled down over her face.

Louise lamented,

Oh! Has the world no heart, has it grown cold, and hard, that a child can find its mother lifeless, and a stiffened corpse, on the return from a ball; and still go on heedless, and as if unconscious of having lost anything. There are times when I grow sick from the excess of worldliness, that low heartedness frivolity...¹⁵

Since death was viewed in Christian terms as the reunification of the soul with God and other dead family members, mourners had an effective way to deal with their loss. Louise wondered why people would mourn the loss of a young child rather than celebrate its early death. She asked about the death of a young boy she knew: “why should we weep because [God] has parted him from all the misery and short lived happiness of this world; is it not far better for him to go pure and innocent for I am sure his soul was pure and innocent.” She goes on to say that this young boy might not have chosen to live a life surrounded by the “glorious auroras of Faith” and therefore it was better for him to go before he could have made this mistake.¹⁶ Knowing that innocent children would be welcomed into Heaven was very comforting to family members (including Louise’s own family) who lost children to early deaths.¹⁷

Scattered throughout Louise’s diary are comments about the basic ideas of Christianity, the Catholic concern with sin, and evidence of her personal worldview and knowledge of theological dilemmas. It is important to keep in mind that Louise was drawing on basic Christian teachings, that her principles were not unique to her but

¹⁵ LAM, 11 April 1871.

¹⁶ LAM, 21 May 1869.

¹⁷ One evangelical mother in English Canada felt comforted by the fact that when she died she would be reunited with her dead two year old son, whose passing had caused her pain. See Van Die, 63.

shared by other practising Quebec Catholics as well. Louise wrote that “[t]his world is ... the land of the exile”¹⁸ and that the “curse of suffering ... [has] dwelt among the descendants of Adam & Eve” since the time of creation and that “[w]e are a weak and fallen race.”¹⁹ She described herself as a “degenerate, unbeautiful, earthly creature”²⁰ who needed God to “[t]ear that heavy load of indifference, of weakness from my guilty soul, [and] teach me how to love you truly, piously; and oh! Keep my heart pure and guiltless.”²¹

By the mid-nineteenth-century, when Louise was born, the Catholic Church in Quebec was becoming a powerful entity, controlling Catholic educational institutions and regulating the province’s social services. While there is a lively debate among Quebec historians about when and how the church gained prominence in Quebecers’ lives, it is clear that nineteenth-century Quebec was experiencing a “religious awakening” and Louise’s diary shows that she was involved in devotional activities sanctioned by the church.²² During the religious awakening the Catholic Church in Canada became more oriented to Rome and lay piety became “more fervid, ostentatious and public.”²³ Faithful laity in French and English Canada were integrated (or perhaps even coerced) into the

¹⁸ LAM, 24 October 1869.

¹⁹ LAM, 4 December 1869; 25 February 1871

²⁰ LAM, 27 January 1870.

²¹ LAM, 6 December 1868.

²² Danylewycz, 22 and Perin, 204. Whether the change was rapid as Rousseau argues or a slower process as put forth by Hardy is largely irrelevant in this paper. The role of the 1837 Rebellions in this development is also beyond the scope of this paper but it should be noted that its role is also debated in the historiography. Denis Monière, *History of Ideologies in Quebec* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1981), 120, takes a very negative view of the triumph of the clergy after the 1837 rebellions and concluded that “...a century of obscurantism” was the result of the failed rebellion. Historians whose focus is on religion mention the Rebellion but their interpretations take a more complex view and the Rebellions are but one factor in the rise of the clergy in the second half of the nineteenth-century.

²³ Perin, 197.

church through a revival of traditional practices, some of them medieval in origin.²⁴ The Quebec laity were encouraged to make yearly confession, go on holy pilgrimages, recite the rosary, pray to relics, attend special services to the Immaculate Conception (Mary, the Virgin Mother of Jesus Christ), and to participate in prayer groups and in lay religious and charitable societies such as the Children of Mary.²⁵

Women were at the forefront of the mid to late-nineteenth-century religious awakening; religious laywomen were given an active but supportive role in the church, but they also carved out additional space for themselves.²⁶ Although women had been blamed for centuries for the fall of humankind, nineteenth-century women were viewed as naturally more religious than men, as the guardians of the Christian home, and as having a positive influence on the religious lives of their family members. Victorian notions of femininity and Christianity mutually reinforced one another; women's ultimate calling was to motherhood (Mary being the ideal mother) and self-sacrifice. Both of these themes, mothering and self-sacrifice appear uncritically in Louise's journal.

²⁴ Brian Clarke, "The Parish and the Hearth": Women's Confraternities and the Devotional Revolution among the Irish Catholics of Toronto, 1850-85," in *Creed and Culture: The Place of English Speaking Catholics in Canadian Society, 1750-1930*, eds. Terrence Murphy and Gerald Stortz (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1993), 186; Brian Clarke, "English-Speaking Canada From 1854," in *A Concise History of Christianity in Canada*, 280; and Perin, 198. On coercion see Hardy, *Contrôle social*.

²⁵ Danylewycz, 34-35, 43-46. Interestingly Louise never mentions reciting the rosary but she did go on pilgrimages.

²⁶ Clarke, "The Parish and the Hearth", 199; Elizabeth Gillan Muir and Marilyn Färdig Whiteley, eds. *Changing Roles of Women within the Christian Church in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995), 16; Perin, 197. Susan Mann suggests that working class Quebec women supported the church not solely for religious reasons but because the church provided them with aid in times of need. It was the churches' involvement in social services (in health and education) which allowed it to have such an influence on the masses, and particularly on women. See *Dream of Nation*, 124, 130. "Religious awakening" and/or "religious renewal" are terms employed by those writing about nineteenth-century French Catholic devotional activity but those writing about Irish Catholics tend to use the terminology "devotional revolution" to describe a similar process. The debate over what to call the religious activity of the latter half of the nineteenth-century is still raging. See Rousseau's discussion on terminology in "À propos du 'réveil religieux' dans le Québec du XIXe siècle: où se loge le vrai débat?"

The Christian world of Montreal was divided into those who were Roman Catholic and those who were Protestant, and this distinction was very important to Louise and all Christians generally. Bigotry in both Christian Churches was rampant in nineteenth-century Canada.²⁷ While traveling in Europe with her mother on her way to the 1867 World Fair in Paris, Louise lamented that Westminster Abby was “an old Cathedral, no longer ours; its very walls seem to murmur at the change. It was in full Protestant disguise.”²⁸ Similarly, she wished that her cultivated and knowledgeable friend, Mary Stuart, was Catholic. “[S]he could understand and appreciate the beauties of our beautiful religion, she would go deep into its very depth, & find treasure which belong to it alone.”²⁹ Louise believed that Roman Catholicism was the supreme religion for Christians and wrote that through its principles alone could one hope to “bring our souls pure through life, up to ‘the Golden Gate of Heaven.’”³⁰

Catholicism gave meaning to Louise’s life and it served multiple functions. Religion provided her with a belief system and a clear code of ethics. While it is true that Catholic ideology was imposed on her and she had no real choice in the matter, Louise was not victimized by Catholicism; she used her religion, and her trust in God to her advantage. Most importantly, on a personal level, she sought solace in God for psychological reasons, as a way to deal with her loneliness and having “the blues.”³¹ Since finishing high school, Louise was waiting to become a wife and mother; a

²⁷ Suspicion between Protestants and Catholics led to physical clashes between the groups in late nineteenth-century Canada. See John Webster Grant, *The Church in the Canadian Era* (Burlington, Ontario: Welch Pub. Co., 1988), 82-85. Catholics in Quebec wanted a separate school system to protect their children from “the perils of Protestantism,” states Danyleywcz, 23. See also Clarke, “English-speaking Canada from 1854” on the objection to state funded Catholic schools by Canadian Protestants and Protestant-Catholic conflict generally, 293-306.

²⁸ LAM, 30 May 1867.

²⁹ LAM, 17 February 1869.

³⁰ LAM, 12 January 1871.

³¹ LAM, 17 March 1870.

professional life in addition to motherhood was out of the question, nor was paid labour necessary because of her class. After attending a party where she was surprised that she had not been “signally neglected” she let her readers know that while she “had several very nice [dancing] partners,” she “had no decided admirer.” She wrote, “I was telling Mamma this morning that this latter acquisition I sadly needed; and I certainly would like to know that I was loved by somebody, actually loved, what a true woman I am, so full of vanity, such a hungry craving to please ____.”³²

This desire to acquire an admirer continued throughout the five years of diary entries and it caused her much pain and anxiety. Louise ultimately believed that her psychological challenges were not without a purpose. She concluded that God was challenging her to be more grateful for what she had and to teach her humility. After describing a party she attended where she felt “sat upon, outrivalled, ignored, looked down upon and abandoned” she stated that this did her “moral good.” Being denied attention and being humiliated reminded Louise “to cling still more firmly to those whose hearts I could ever rely, it attaches me to my home.”³³

Louise often wrote to her diary, which she regarded as a faithful friend, expressing feelings of sadness, disappointment and loneliness. On one occasion she described her days as “colourless and wearisome” and on another she emphasised that without her mother her “world would seem so lonely, so lonely!”³⁴ In her journals, not only could she give words to the pain she was feeling, it was clear that she came to terms with these trials partly in a religious way. Once, after describing how she felt such a heavy weight upon her shoulders, she wondered if her canary was trying to cheer her up

³² LAM, 28 October 1868.

³³ LAM, 26 January 1871.

³⁴ LAM, 8 March 1871; 13 May 1871.

with his sweet songs. She stated that the bird was singing “all in vain, unless you be a messenger from Him, whose voice alone can soothe me. My crucified Redeemer! I often forget Him in my sunny times; but He is my never failing refuge when the storm arises.”³⁵ When simply writing out her anxieties were not enough, she read her *Imitation of Christ* for comfort.³⁶

The story of creation was referred to by Louise several times, probably because the late-nineteenth-century Christian world was reeling from Charles Darwin’s revelations in his 1859 publication, *The Origins of the Species*. Louise and her religious father often spoke about the wonders of creation and though she never stated the reason, I speculate that Darwin’s revolutionary theory may have been the impetus for these long and frequent discussions. For Christians, Catholic and Protestant, who were both educated and interested in theological questions, incorporating natural selection into a Christian framework was difficult, and each Christian who gave this topic any thought came to terms with Darwin’s challenges in his or her own way.³⁷

Louise went to church several times a week, sometimes twice on Sundays, and before retiring each evening, she said her prayers. In the same way that she put herself in the category of an “earnest soul,” she let her readers know that she was such a devoted Catholic that she would only receive the sacrament if she deserved it. Church doctrine set out rules for proper Christian behaviour and probably since childhood, the young Louise had been encouraged to examine her behaviour and confess her sins. Primed from childhood to evaluate her thoughts and actions, Louise continued to do so into her

³⁵ LAM, 13 March 1871.

³⁶ *Imitation of Christ* is a collection of spiritual readings.

³⁷ See Susan Sheets-Pyenson, *John William Dawson: Faith, Hope and Science* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1996) on how Dawson, the Principal of McGill University, reacted to evolutionary theory and his refusal to believe that people could be descended from apes.

adolescence. In early December 1868, the eighteen-year-old confessed to her diary that she had put confession off because she “was unworthy of approaching even the sacrament of penance.”³⁸ The following year she went three months without receiving the blessing for “reform was needed.”³⁹ Louise implored God to assist her in being pious, not merely to avoid “yielding too often to what is wrong” but to make her “perform the good.”⁴⁰

Why she felt unworthy to receive the sacrament ranged from the insignificant to the more serious. On the more trivial side of sinfulness, Louise admitted to her diary that she sometimes attended church but did not pay attention to the sermon. She made light of being inattentive in church by stating that she was an “impious monster...[for she] did’nt [sic] pray one bit!”⁴¹ In reference to feeling guilty for having the “Blues,” she wrote that she felt “ungrateful to Him who has brightened my life, and cast so many shadows from it.”⁴² On another occasion, she asked God to forgive her for wishing she “were under the daisies.” She felt that with all life offered her (a loving family, her youth and health, her hopes for the future), wishing for death was a very shameful request.⁴³ None of these sins were that dreadful (unless of course if she were contemplating suicide) but Louise thought they were worthy of mention and thought that they were important enough to keep her from receiving the sacrament.⁴⁴

³⁸ LAM, 6 December 1868.

³⁹ LAM, 9 March 1869.

⁴⁰ LAM, 30 October 1868.

⁴¹ LAM, 23 April 1869

⁴² LAM, 17 January 1871.

⁴³ LAM, 30 October 1869.

⁴⁴ See Gagnon’s discussion on suicide in nineteenth-century Quebec. He argues that nineteenth-century suicide rates were lower than those seen in late twentieth-century Quebec in part because of the greater influence the Catholic Church had in society.

Not only was church a place to hear inspiring sermons, pray, confess her sins and receive the sacrament, but it was an important social outlet for Louise. Elizabeth Gillan Muir and Marilyn Färdig Whiteley argue that churches “may have meant the difference between emotional and mental well-being and loneliness and depression, providing intellectual and peer stimuli to many women who otherwise would have been isolated in their homes.”⁴⁵ Their observation about women’s involvement in Christian churches aptly describes one benefit Louise derived from her church and from her Catholic faith.

On occasion, Louise prearranged to meet with her dearest friend, Ellen, at the Church of the Gésu. Ellen, whom Louise describes as her “violet,” was an old classmate from her convent days.⁴⁶ Louise writes “I went to confession at the Gésu where I met Ellen (by appointment). We went together and thought ourselves extremely lucky because we had been under the same roof, for about an hour.”⁴⁷ She mentions going to several Roman Catholic churches with her parents, her brothers, and her cousins, Elmire Drummond and Henriette Dorion. She also mentions that she occasionally attended St James Church, which was Protestant, with the Stuart sisters.⁴⁸

In addition to being a place to *rendez vous* with girl friends, church provided Louise with an appropriate venue for meeting young men of comparable social standing. Although she never states it, her occasional visits to the chapel of the College of Montreal where her brothers studied may have been partially motivated by the opportunity to meet

⁴⁵ Clarke, Hannah M. Lane, and Muir and Whiteley all point out that the church provided Christian women an escape from isolation. Quote from Muir and Whiteley, 15. See Clarke, “The Parish and the Hearth”, 197-199. Hannah M. Lane wrote that Methodist mothers used the church as “an escape form the domestic drudgery,” in “‘Wife, Mother, sister, Friend’ Methodist Women in St. Stephen, New Brunswick, 1861-1881,” in *Separate Spheres: Women’s Worlds in the 19th-Century Maritimes*, eds. Janet Guildford and Suzanne Morton, (Fredericton: Acadiensis Press, 1994), 109. Louise had no domestic work to do but church provided her with an opportunity to leave the house.

⁴⁶ LAM, 9 January 1871.

⁴⁷ LAM, 14 November 1869.

⁴⁸ LAM, 4 October 1868.

such eligible young men. Louise's primary social world was her extended family and any of her male acquaintances were connected to this familial network. As a young lady of propriety there was no other acceptable way to meet would-be admirers but through her family.

These visits to her brothers' college helped fill Louise's long lonely days. By 1871, the twenty-one-year-old increasingly wrote sad and despondent diary entries. She had graduated from convent school four years previously, but she, unlike her brothers, was in limbo. While the boys in her family were being brought up to lead professional lives, Louise was waiting for wifehood and motherhood. And she was beginning to fear that this would never come her way.

Only once did Louise express any explicit criticism of her position as a daughter and as a female; usually she was much more accepting.⁴⁹ After expressing her happiness at having just spent a church sermon sitting between her beloved parents she wrote:

I should like to dwell in complete seclusion, and devote my whole life to the comfort, the support, and good of my parents, and there are moments when my eyes fill with tears at the utter hopelessness of such desires. Oh! What can a weak woman do who has neither strength, *nor right*, nor might, nor gifts of any kind to push her way through this crowded world and grasp the metal [sic] which gives so much! Alas! *were I but a man!*⁵⁰

This critique was out of character for Louise, but it was prompted by the fear that she would be "left alone at home, all my brothers gone. The very thought of it saddens me much."⁵¹ Her two older brothers were well on their way to manhood; Wally was married in the spring of 1871, and her eldest brother, Wenty, whom she adored and

⁴⁹ Muir and Whiteley stated that prior to the nineteenth-century "women appear to have been reasonable content to operate within the boundaries established by society" in their "Introduction", 9.

⁵⁰ LAM, 29 May 1871 (emphasis mine).

⁵¹ LAM, 13 May 1871.

idealized, had since 1869 been working towards becoming a priest. Although Louise had gained a sister-in-law (Mary Murphy), a welcome change for the sisterless adolescent, she did not know what her own future held for her. It was in that context that Louise finally expressed her ambivalence and frustration at being a woman.

Although Louise did spend a great deal of time lamenting about her life to her diary, she also wrote about other preoccupations, including her involvement in the Society of the Children of Mary. Through this Catholic laywomen's organization, she was involved in public service (sewing for the poor) and as its secretary, she was responsible for their meeting annals. Her daily diary entries, the place where she learned to write, may have provided her with the necessary writing skills to take on this responsibility.⁵²

The Society of the Children of Mary was first created for older students of the Congregation of Notre Dame in 1845 by two of the order's nuns. In 1857, a Society was organized for alumnae of the Congregation's Montreal convent school, Villa Maria, and by 1870 there were more than two hundred members. Marta Danylewycz found that the membership roster was filled with the "wives and daughters of Montreal's political and economic elites" (including Louise's cousin Elmiere Drummond) and this makes sense considering that Villa Maria offered the most advanced curriculum of all the Quebec convent schools.⁵³

⁵² On diaries as a place where women learn to write see Steven E. Kagle and Lorenza Gramegna, "Rewriting Her Life: Fictionalization and the Use of Fictional Models in Early American Women's diaries," in *Inscribing the Daily: Critical Essays on Women's Diaries*, eds. Suzanne L. Bunkers and Cynthia A. Huff (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1996), 48.

⁵³ Danylewycz, 43 and 77. Elite families valued education and wanted their daughters to have the best education available, not so they could go on to university and pursue professional careers but so they could make good companions for their educated spouses and " 'sparkle in the salons and perhaps in the most refined circles of Europe.' " Quoted in The Clio Collective, *Quebec Women: A History*, trans. Roger Gannon and Rosalind Gill (Toronto: The Women's Press, 1987), 144.

The Society of the Children of Mary took its name from the Virgin Mary, reflecting the long history of Mariology, or devotion to the Virgin, in the Catholic Church. This was especially pronounced in the mid-nineteenth century when the Vatican proclaimed the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception, stating that Mary had not been conceived in sin. Historians have argued over whether Mary worship was positive and empowering for women or negative because it kept women in their place, but this is not my concern here.⁵⁴ For Louise, being involved with the Society gave her yet another outlet for her faith, the opportunity to do charity work, and an escape from home. It allowed her to socialize, contributed to her emotional well-being, and provided her the occasion to develop administrative skills. She probably never would have had this position if she was not viewed as a competent writer and serious member of the Society.

The Society would not have been pleased to know that Louise did not keep a consistent record of the meetings and that when asked to produce the yearly minutes, she had to scramble to recompose out of her memory and a few notes, what her Society had been up to! Louise wrote, “at our sewing yesterday ... [Father Giband told] me the secretary’s annals were to be read ... Tuesday. Woe betide me! I have not a word, or the faintest recollection of our doings since last year; “*Je vais employer le secours de St. Joseph [et] de Ste. Thérèse...*” to help remember the details.⁵⁵ Louise did manage to put together the yearly annals despite “having been recklessly neglectful of them since last September.” She included notes from Giband’s sermons, which seemed to satisfied him and her own conscience. In addition to writing, Louise had to read her “sublime Annals”

⁵⁴ See Danylewycz on how feminist scholars interpret Mariology, 39-43.

⁵⁵ LAM, 2 June 1871.

to the Society, which caused her “much fluttering about the heart; and fearful uneasiness of mind.”⁵⁶

From Louise’s journal, we know she sewed with the Children of Mary once a week beginning in 1869. Louise never tells what and why she was sewing but Danylewycz stated that the society was both a religious and a charity organization. They sewed for the poor children of Montreal and in December of 1872 they gave out “twenty coats, thirty dresses, thirty shirts, and twenty-five pairs of shoes” in honour of Mary.⁵⁷ Louise wrote that the society members listened to sermons while they sewed; she had taken some notes of Giband’s sermons.⁵⁸ Once she went out of her way to write that she had heard a particularly lovely sermon while sewing. Louise’s involvement in the Society provided her with a spiritual, social, charitable and administrative outlet but she was not interested in entering a convent as the nuns of the Congregation may have hoped she would.⁵⁹

It was not that Louise did not celebrate those who had opted for a religious vocation or that she did not fantasize about convent life herself, but when she was composing her diary between seventeen and twenty-one years of age, she was very much fixated on attracting an admirer, not on becoming a nun. After watching her friend Blanche become a novice, Louise commented that at least her friend knew when she lay

⁵⁶ LAM, 22 June 1871.

⁵⁷ Danylewycz, 44. Louise not only did charity work with the Society, but she also did charity work among the poor residents of her family’s old seigniorial lands in St. Charles. After a charitable visit with her Godson in 1869, Louise made it clear that charity work was something that made her feel good. See LAM, 25 July 1869.

⁵⁸ LAM, 22 June 1871. See Danylewycz for a confirmation that the members did listen to religious readings, 44.

⁵⁹ Danylewycz claims that the nuns and priests hoped that some of the young members of the Children of Mary would opt for a religious vocation, 45.

her head down on her pillow at the end of the day that what she had done was blessed.⁶⁰ Louise may have been implying that it was more challenging to be in the world, where you could make mistakes.⁶¹ Since getting married was what Louise hoped to eventually do, she was not completely joking when she stated that she forced herself to attend a party because she did not want her contemporaries to believe that she had entered a convent!⁶² That her fellow partygoers would assume she had become a novice has to be taken seriously. Louise was known to her peers to be a religious young woman and in addition she was not engaged to be married. Having a religious vocation and entering a convent was a viable option for religious women, even for women of the elite.⁶³ Louise therefore had reason to believe that people would think she was nun material.

Louise's faith determined how she interpreted her world; it guided her behaviour, provided her with a social life, helped her come to terms with her loneliness, and influenced how she felt and wrote about her family. While Louise clearly was not a passive follower of Catholicism as Protestants believed Catholics were, she was thoroughly indoctrinated in the "beauties" of her religion.⁶⁴ Louise feared not to believe; she even referred to herself as a "coward" and practised her faith because she wanted to join Jesus in the Kingdom of Heaven after she died. Catholicism gave meaning to her

⁶⁰ LAM, 26 April 1869.

⁶¹ According to Danylewycz entering a convent was seen as a safer option than marriage because unlike marriage you could choose to leave a convent but divorce was not permitted.

⁶² LAM, 20 January 1870.

⁶³ Danylewycz writes that middle-class and elite women were more likely to be members of the Congregation of Notre Dame order (teaching sisters), rather than of the Sisters of Miséricorde (who cared for orphans and unwed mothers). Membership in the CND ensured nuns a middle-class existence. See Danylewycz, 91-93.

⁶⁴ Both Roberto Perin and Allan Greer address the false stereotype of the traditional Roman Catholics in French Canada who meekly listened to their priests and had no knowledge of church dogma. To be sure, there were lay Catholics who were ignorant, as in all religions, but the idea that the majority of French Canadian Catholics were superstitious and priest-ridden with no minds of their own is questionable. See Perin, 208-210; Allan Greer, *The Patriots and the People* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993), 112-113.

life, which was a journey to join God, and gave her a sense of control over her destiny and that of her family.⁶⁵ When her mother was gravely ill in 1868 while they were in Rome, Louise prayed that her “Mamma” would get well and she did.⁶⁶ When her father was away to Ottawa or Quebec City to hear his cases Louise would pray that he would return safely, and every time her “Papa” returned unharmed.⁶⁷

FAMILY

My darling parents how you sadden me when you talk of your growing old! When Papa looks at me and says with his dear deep voice “nevermore” I feel as if my heart would break, and still the time must come when their heads will be all grey and their beautiful faces all wrinkled;--may they then at least live their youth over again with their children and may I never overcast those declining year[s] with the shadow of coldness or ingratitude... My beloved parents: Oh!... could I but take all burden from your spirits, and lay it on my own! I am young and can bear much...⁶⁸

The portrait Louise painted in her journals of her family life was overwhelmingly positive; her home was harmonious and loving, and her descriptions verge on the idealistic. We know from the secondary literature that family, like religion, was central to Victorian women and Louise’s journals provide ample evidence of this interpretation.⁶⁹ Louise showered praise on her parents and their relationship with Louise and her brothers was characterized by a feeling of mutual respect and warmth. As the only daughter, Louise inhabited a special place within her family. Her lack of female siblings intensified her bond with her mother; besides the female servants, they were the only women in the house. Her relationship with her father, while less intimate than the one she

⁶⁵ As historians Hardy and Gagnon have pointed out, priests’ sermons provided parishioners with advice on proper Christian behaviour and it is likely that Louise was influenced in part by the sermons she was exposed to.

⁶⁶ LAM, 18 March 1871.

⁶⁷ LAM, 21 January 1871.

⁶⁸ LAM, 5 June 1869; 26 Jan 1871.

⁶⁹ On the Victorian family as central in women’s lives see Prentice *et al.*, 142-143, 148-150.

shared with her mother, was close. Louise had a strong sense of responsibility for her parents and this duty was encouraged by Christian ideology, Victorian mores and her own family's particular closeness.

Louise's prayers always made special mention of her parents, for their speedy recovery when ill and for their general well being. One typical diary entry reads, "Yesterday was Sunday; the sweetest day in all the week, how I love the solemn High Mass when I sit between the two persons I love best in this world, and ask God to shower on them all those blessings which He alone can give."⁷⁰ Louise prayed for her parents because she adored them and was utterly dependent on them, but also because she believed her prayers were listened to; her parents continued to receive the grace of God. Praying, as we have seen, gave Louise a sense of some control over her life. As a Catholic, she knew the power of prayer; it could help influence the future.⁷¹

In 1867 while Louise and her mother were on their European tour and staying in Rome, the "City of Soul," Louise's mother became deathly ill.⁷² This event was recalled by Louise almost on a yearly basis, around the anniversary of her illness. In 1871 Louise remembered the scare in Rome three years earlier by thanking God for her mother's recovery, writing that she stood "... over the brink of an awful chasm, the dark home of despair from which by God's incomparable goodness, I was excused."⁷³ Writing about the event was not enough for Louise so she "took the crucifixion which used to hang

⁷⁰ LAM, 29 May 1871. See also LAM, 18 March 1871.

⁷¹ Marta Danylewycz, 37.

⁷² We only know that Caroline was sick in Rome from Louise's later journals. The travel journal which recorded their fifteen month "Western" tour did not mention Caroline's illness.

⁷³ LAM, 18 March 1871.

above Mamma's sick bed, a witness to all our anguish, I placed it near my heart and went to pray at the Gésu."⁷⁴

In fact, any time her mother was ill after their stay in Rome, Louise became very preoccupied. Louise responded very emotionally when her mother fell ill in the winter of 1871. She lamented that she felt "anxious, restless, and dissatisfied" since her mother had been sick all week. "To see her ill," Louise wrote, "leaves me no peace, it crushes my energy, disables me entirely for anything like occupation; and I can only sit by her bedside full of fears, and full of thoughts of Rome."⁷⁵ Louise clearly had been traumatized by the Rome crisis and she simply could not imagine a world without her mother, whom she referred to as her "angel."⁷⁶ Louise's own psychological well being was very much affected by that of her parents; not only when her mother was ill did she relive the drama of Rome but also when her father appeared pensive Louise described herself as "not good for much."⁷⁷

The bond Louise had with her mother very much fit the ideal of Victorian mother-daughter relationships. The culture of Victorian society encouraged mothers and daughters to spend time together to developing close emotional bonds. From childhood, young women were indoctrinated with the values of duty towards one's parents and the repression of hostile feelings towards them. Louise never spoke of resenting her mother, but quite the opposite, her mother was the centre of her life.⁷⁸

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

⁷⁵ LAM, 14 February 1871. See also 2 June 1871 when Louise again worries because her mother was not feeling well.

⁷⁶ LAM, 3 January 1871.

⁷⁷ LAM, 29 May 1871.

⁷⁸ Joan Jacobs Brumberg found, based on extensive research on American adolescent diaries from the 1830s to the 1980s, that in addition to religion being of prime importance in young Victorian women's lives, the relationship daughters had with their mothers was characterized by harmony and closeness, not resentment. Interestingly, as Beth Brophy pointed out, Brumberg found that by the 1980s you would not

Louise idealized her mother and she believed that there was no better role model. While standing over her sleeping mother, Louise wondered if her mother knew “beneath that veil of sleep, beneath those closed eyelids with what intensity [of] my feeling I cling to her. She is more than life to me, for I prize her far above my own existence; she has been the angel of my childhood, the unclouded sunshine of my girlhood, and is now the eternal rainbow of my youth.”⁷⁹

Louise idealized her father as well but she did not write that she wanted to emulate him in the same way she desired to be like her mother; after all gender prescriptions precluded that; he was a man and Louise was a young woman. The relationship Louise had with her father, however, does not fit the common stereotypical model of the Victorian family, often characterized as one where men and women led separate emotional and social lives.⁸⁰ Samuel spent many hours engaged with Louise in learning and debate and at no time was it implied that Louise’s participation in these pursuits was strange or unique.

Judge Monk was active in the outside world of politics and law and was therefore less available to Louise than her mother. He was often out of town working and Louise made special mention of his trips and his safe return to the family circle. When he was

even know that young women had mothers, for they were almost if not completely absent from their daughter’s diaries. See Beth Brophy, “Dear diary: a history: 150 years of girls’ intimate secrets show what’s on their minds,” *U.S. News & World Report* (October 1995), 89. Alison Prentice, *et al.*, also referred to the close bond mothers and daughter had, 148. See also Carroll Smith Rosenberg, “The Female World of Love and Ritual: Relations between Women in Nineteenth-Century America,” *Signs* 1 (Autumn 1975): 1-29.

⁷⁹ LAM, 2 June 1871.

⁸⁰ Carroll Smith-Rosenberg argues that women shared an intimacy with one another but that men were “shadowy” figures in women’s lives, while Jeanne Peterson, Deborah Gorham, and Kate Flint found that men, specifically fathers, were involved in their daughters’ lives. See Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, “The Female World of Love and Ritual: Relations between Women in Nineteenth-Century America”; M. Jeanne Peterson, *Family, Love and Work in the Lives of Victorian Gentlewomen* (Bloomington; Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1989); Deborah Gorham, *The VICTORIAN GIRL and the Feminine Ideal* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982); Kate Flint, *The Woman Reader 1837-1914* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993).

away hearing cases in Quebec City, Aylmer, and Ottawa, Louise missed the cozy evenings the family usually spent all together in the library talking about the “mysteries of creation” and reading aloud to one another.⁸¹ Once her father had Louise and her younger brother Charlie “read Robertson’s description of Columbus to America” and at other times he read aloud to the children in “his deep voice.”⁸²

Besides reading together in the evenings, Louise and her father shared an intimacy that allowed Louise to feel comfortable confronting her father on a topic about which they disagreed. Louise wondered if she had “done anything towards changing Papa’s opinion... How wrong they all are! How unjust, how uncharitable Papa was!”⁸³ She did not reveal what the discussion was about but the fact that she stood up to her father is evidence of their companionable relationship. Clearly there may have been more participation on the part of fathers in socializing their female children than previously thought or there was at least more variety in young women’s experiences than historians have often acknowledged in their interpretations.

Louise recognized that when her father was absent she had no competition for her mother’s attention and on one occasion Louise reported that she and her mother had become “more united than usual” while her father was out of town.⁸⁴ During the summer of 1869, Louise wrote that although her mother was disappointed that she would be unable to return to Montreal to be with Samuel since her train had been cancelled, Louise

⁸¹ LAM, 21 January 1871; 13 March 1871.

⁸² LAM, 4 January 1871; 17 November 1869.

⁸³ LAM, 14 November 1869.

⁸⁴ LAM, 18 March 1871.

was very much delighted to have her mother's presence and undivided attention for another twenty-four hours.⁸⁵

Samuel and Caroline's marriage could have been an advertisement for the ideal Victorian marriage. Husbands, according to the ideology of separate spheres, were to reign in the outside world and the wife was "the angel of the house," overseeing the family's domestic concerns; in marriage men and women beautifully complemented one another. This ideology in its full fruition viewed women as pure, religious, frail and emotional and men as their opposites. Women were protected by their spouses from the harsh world; within that sweet "haven" of home, wives could subdue any of their husbands' rough behaviour.⁸⁶ The differences between men and women were so self-evident to mid-to late-nineteenth century Canadians that they were deemed *natural* (as opposed to being socially created) and this thereby further rationalized the sexual division of labour.⁸⁷

Louise endorsed her society's beliefs about men and women and the beauties of Victorian marriage, but she had own very clear ideas on the subject and her observations, not surprisingly, were more complex than the familiar ideology of Victorian femininity and masculinity. Louise thought that men and women were different from one another or as she put it that there was a "contrast," but she does not reveal exactly what that meant.⁸⁸ What Louise's comments did recognize was that women have diverse personalities and

⁸⁵ LAM, 28 July 1869.

⁸⁶ Ronald G. Walters, *American Reformers 1815-1860* (New York: Hill and Wang 1978), 102-103.

⁸⁷ See Wendy Mitchinson, *The Nature of their Bodies: Women and Their Doctors in Victorian Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991) on the Victorian medical discourse on the differences between men and women and women's so-called natural vulnerability and inferiority. See also Marta Danylewycz's discussion on how men and women internalized these differences and how this in turn further reinforced inequality in *Taking the Veil*, 53-54. See also Prentice *et al.*, *Canadian Women*, 111-112; 142-148.

⁸⁸ LAM, 6 December 1869.

she wondered to what type of women men were generally attracted. She asked her diary, “is it the grand strong proud eagle like female, or the meek cooing turtle dove, or the beautiful bird of paradise with naught but its bright plumage to attract, or the plain hidden unobtrusive nightingale that sings its soulful melodies in the shade of the forest, or in the hours of the misty twilight?”⁸⁹

Louise believed that her mother represented the ideal woman and she described her mother as having “lofty perfection.” Mother, Louise wrote, “is to my mind the purest, the highest, the truest, the most devoted, the grandest, the most humble, [and] the most beautiful of womankind.” In comparison to her mother, Louise felt that she herself was “degenerate,” “unbeautiful” and merely an “earthly creature,” but she hoped that “God should reserve for me the sweet and solemn character of mother.”⁹⁰ Louise’s ideal man would possess “the wealth of a strong mind, a generous heart, and a virtuous soul.”⁹¹ An ideal man was “nice,” “manly,” and “devoted to the few who he loves,” and these descriptors were very specific to an unnamed man to whom Louise felt drawn.⁹²

Louise wondered if she could live up to her mother’s character and whether she would find herself in a successful marriage like that of her parents. While Louise desired to become a wife, she feared the state of marriage at the same time. Would it be a good idea, she asked, to “make a human being in life become the centre of my hopes, the keeper of all my joys, the pillar of my feebleness, the height of my ambitions [and]

⁸⁹ LAM, 27 January 1870. These descriptive phrases of so called differing female personality types were also used by Louise to describe the fictive characters that she read about in her novels. Louise’s blurring of real and fictive worlds is a phenomenon that Kagle and Gramegna discuss in “Rewriting Her Life,” 38-41.

⁹⁰ LAM, 27 January 1870; 3 January 1871.

⁹¹ LAM, 2 February 1871. This description very much fits Judge Monk but Louise never said so herself.

⁹² See LAM, 12 January 1870 where the man was referred to as A.G.L.

tenderness.”⁹³ As a daughter, Louise was sheltered and loved, but as a wife, she would be vulnerable.⁹⁴

Although marriage was both desired and feared by Louise, the alternative, remaining home with her parents, was also problematic.⁹⁵ Louise obviously was in an ambivalent position; marriage would allow her to become a mother but spinsterhood would provide a safe yet lonely option as well. Adolescence, or “youth” as Louise called it, was a transitional period between childhood and adulthood, a time full of unknowns and anxiety. Louise never had to resolve this common female adolescent dilemma—death put an end to her fears of the future.⁹⁶

In re-reading her daughter’s journals four years after her death, Louise’s mother wrote directly into her daughter’s journal. Caroline’s short passage within Louise’s 1869 diary was an emotional testament of the strong bond between mother and daughter. Caroline wrote to her deceased daughter, “Do you my beloved, my lost daughter see your mourning bereaved desolate mother? Now can you help her to carry her great crop, to obtain ‘the blessing’...”⁹⁷ Louise’s entries on that same page blessed her home and professed her love for her family and her profound sadness that she could no longer

⁹³ LAM, 21 February 1871.

⁹⁴ On the trauma impending marriage instilled in some of the nineteenth century women see Smith-Rosenberg, “The Female World of Love and Ritual,” 69.

⁹⁵ Only very occasionally would single women live on their own away from their natal homes. Roderick MacLeod’s one example of this was where two sisters set up house together. See Roderick MacLeod, “Salubrious Settings and Fortunate Families: The Making of Montreal’s Golden Square Mile, 1840-1895” (Ph.D. diss., McGill University, 1997), 217.

⁹⁶ Adolescence in the nineteenth-century (as it is today) was a difficult time because some decisions, such as whom one marries, or even if one is to marry, have long-term consequences in women’s lives. In the Victorian age when separation and divorce was uncommon, the decision about who to marry was very serious. Not that today it is less serious but contemporary women are less reliant on male breadwinners and while it is far from ideal, single mothers can always fall back on the welfare state.

⁹⁷ See LAM, 28 September 1869, where Caroline Debartzch Monk’s entry (written in April of 1877) is located.

“sing the songs I sung a short while ago.”⁹⁸ The evidence of how important family was in her daughter’s diary must have comforted her sad mother but her daughter’s pain at seeing her childhood slip into the past could not help but make Caroline thankful that Louise had at last found the eternal peace she had so longed for.⁹⁹

What was troubling Louise so much in September of 1869 was that her cherished eldest brother, Wenty, was about to enter the priesthood and would be separated from her. Wenty was three years older than Louise and as stated previously they were particularly close. Since Louise did not have a sister to receive her confidences, Wenty fulfilled this intimate role. The two spent time alone walking and sharing their intimate thoughts; after returning from one such outing, Louise wrote, “need I say that it was charming?”¹⁰⁰

Louise missed Wenty tremendously and although she thought that God was smiling down upon her as a result of his involvement in the Church, this fact could not make up for the loss she sustained when he became a novice.¹⁰¹ Her adoration of her brother was intense; she always carefully noted letters received from Wenty and the anniversary of his birth always got honourable mentions. Typically she lamented her brother in this way: “I wonder if my darling Wenty has any idea of how much I want him and how much I envy him.”¹⁰²

Louise’s description of their relationship was steeped in emotion and if you did not know that Wenty was her brother, you might come away with the impression that he

⁹⁸ LAM, 28 September 1869.

⁹⁹ Death in the Victorian era was viewed within religious terms and Christian parents did take comfort that they would be reunited with their lost children upon their own deaths. For confirmation of this view see Peterson, 115.

¹⁰⁰ LAM, 13 December 1868.

¹⁰¹ LAM, 30 November 1869.

¹⁰² LAM, 13 March 1871.

was her lover. Louise was merely employing the romantic sensual language of the day when she referred to her brother as “darling” or “*cher*.” It was entirely appropriate for Louise to employ this flowery and loving language because Wenty was a close family member. Male acquaintances, on the other hand, received only guarded mention by Louise in her diary because of her Victorian sense of propriety.¹⁰³

Louise even described Wenty and herself as being a perfect couple like their parents. Looking at a photo of Wenty she commented that he looked liked their mother. “Wenty,” she wrote, “is as unlike Papa, as I am unlike Mamma and perhaps this contrast of mind and disposition is the cause of the perfect union and sympathy which exists between these respective couples.”¹⁰⁴ Louise’s description of the union she had with her brother should not be seen as unusual. According to Leonore Davidoff, Western literature is full of references to intense bonds between male and female siblings and much of nineteenth-century personal writing attests to the fact that many sisters were extremely devoted to their brothers. In fact, as Davidoff points out, the theme of ‘brother-sister marriage’ has along history running from the Judaic-Christian creation story, with Adam and Eve as quasi ‘siblings,’ and their children who married their siblings, into the late nineteenth-century where sibling marriage was viewed in spiritual

¹⁰³ Louise wrote that she had been introduced to a young gentleman from Toronto who seemed “agreeable.” LAM, 2 October 1868. Smith-Rosenberg claims that women did not really mention men in their letters and diaries. I would argue against Smith-Rosenberg’s claim that men were emotionally remote from women. As I have concluded above, males outside the family circle were referred to formally because this was the only acceptable way to refer to non-familial males. Smith-Rosenberg unfortunately tends to downplay male-female connections in her argument in order to place female-female connections at the forefront. You can both have a female world which women inhabited, and which was mutually emotionally supportive and still have female-male relationships that were also emotional (as seen between Louise and her father) or almost sensual (as we see between Wenty and his younger sister, Louise). See Smith-Rosenberg, “The Female World of Love and Ritual.”

¹⁰⁴ LAM, 20 October 1869.

terms. Sisters were ideal emotional mates for their brothers because they were “less psychically dangerous than mothers, and without the sexuality...of wives.”¹⁰⁵

There were more references to Wenty than any of her other brothers throughout the diaries although the tone of Louise’s comments was not marked with such emotion until Wenty had left the family circle for the priesthood. She wrote, “I loved my brother dearly, dearly, and he is lost to me, though won to the only rival I would gladly give him to.”¹⁰⁶ Perhaps it was a good thing that Louise lost Wenty to the church for how would she have felt if her rival had been another woman instead of God? When Wally married Mary Murphy, Louise wrote that she had gained a sister. Perhaps her elation would have been much more subdued had Wenty married.

Her brothers were a source of both pleasure and pain for Louise. The boys were her companions in childhood and as a young woman, but at times they hurt her feelings with their teasing and insensitivity. Even her dearest Wenty, who had so much sympathy towards his little sister, hurt her by behaving disagreeably. “[H]ow ignorant, how utterly unconscious [Wenty is] of what sensitiveness is,” Louise complained, and she felt that no one in her family understood “how childishly touchy” she was.¹⁰⁷ A few weeks earlier, she confided to her diary that she would “harden” her own daughter against “getting fraternal affection into her heart of hearts.”¹⁰⁸

In Wenty’s absence, Louise spent more time with brothers Wally and Charlie, socializing, reading, and studying together. Wally was only one year older than Louise

¹⁰⁵ Leonore Davidoff, “Where the Stranger Begins: The Question of Siblings in Historical Analysis,” in *World’s Between: Historical Perspectives on Gender and Class* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 211-215, quote 213. See also Gorham on the Victorian idealization of brother-sister bonds, 44-47.

¹⁰⁶ LAM, 27 October 1869.

¹⁰⁷ LAM, 31 July 1869.

¹⁰⁸ LAM, 17 July 1869.

and Charlie was three years younger so they shared common interests. The other brothers, being much younger (Jimmy by ten years and Debartzch by six), surface much less often in Louise's diaries. When the younger "boys" were home from school the Monk house became a much livelier place, especially on the account of one *very* vocal brother, who used to drive Louise crazy with his non-stop talking. "Debartzch has made our small habitation resound with his truly collegial noisiness" Louise told her diary.¹⁰⁹

The first comment that showing that Louise understood that the Monk family was going to go through some major transitions was given in the "state of excitement" of having the boys home from the Montreal College in the summer of 1869, shortly before Wenty's departure. "At tea tonight I could'nt [sic] help looking sad. I looked around at those seven faces, and thought in ten years where will we be?" she asked her diary. Similarly, when Wally was on his honeymoon in 1871 Louise realized that the family nest was in the throes of transition and would never be the same. Louise's poignant entry the day after Wally's marriage revealed how negatively affected she felt by the changes in her family life.

I have been much depressed since a week, Wally's departure has inflicted a deeper wound than I can tell, already have I bid farewell to two brothers, my two eldest; and a foreboding of loneliness overshadows my life at present, Charlie's coming absence is a trial which I have not courage enough to look forward to, tears are constantly coming into my eyes, and the source from whence they flow, is deep, and troubled.¹¹⁰

In addition to her nuclear family, Louise's extended family formed the centre of her entire social world. It was, nevertheless, a world that clearly extended far beyond her

¹⁰⁹ LAM, 26 January 1871. Debartzch's love of talking bothered Louise but later in life he became a renowned politician who was reputed to be an eloquent speaker. See Henry James Morgan, *Canadian Men and Women of the Time: A handbook of Canadian Biography of Living Characters* (Toronto: William Briggs, 1912), 815.

¹¹⁰ LAM, 19 April 1871.

female relatives. The Drummonds were especially prominent in Louise's life; the families spent time together both in Montreal and vacationing together in the country during the summertime. According to the 1861 census Aunt Elmire and Uncle Thomas Lewis Drummond had four children. The oldest was Elmire (named after her mother), six years older than Louise. Elmire's younger brothers' names were William D., Lewis and Charles and in 1871, the cousins were 28, 25, 23 and 21 respectively.¹¹¹ Louise in 1871 was twenty-one years old.

Louise referred to Cousin Elmire most often in her diaries because as unmarried young women their worlds intersected most frequently. Both women had completed their formal schooling and were free to go to church together, attend the Children of Mary Society, share meals, and vacation together.¹¹² Elmire was never referred to in glowing terms, as were Wenty or Mary Murphy. Elmire appears to have been a staple in Louise's life, one that was important enough to be mentioned to her diary but not striking or dear enough to rave about. Being the only females among the Monk-Drummond cousins did not mean that Elmire and Louise shared a particular closeness; their respective personalities and perhaps their age differences appear to have kept them from forming a loving bond.

Elmire's brothers, while they appear much less often in her diaries, elicited a much more spirited response from Louise. William D., according to Louise "possesses to a very eminent degree '*le talent de se faire valoir*' [and] that style is not at all attractive to me. I hate it. I have known many men who knew how to make use of their advantages, not only to help themselves, but [also] to dazzle their neighbours. Everybody admires

¹¹¹ *Manuscript Census for Québec, 1861.*

¹¹² Danylewycz mentions that Elmire Drummond was a member of the Children of Mary along with other notable wives and daughters of Montreal.

them and thinks a great deal [of them], yet how shallow they are.”¹¹³ Lewis also came under the fire of Louise’s harsh criticism. Although she recognized that Lewis was saintly (he was studying to become a Jesuit priest), she thought he was very “conceited.”¹¹⁴ After Louise had been ill for a couple of weeks with an “inflammation of the insides,” Lewis wrote to her and asked if she had prayed to the Almighty and offered her physical pain to him. Louise did not like her cousin telling her how to conduct her spiritual life, especially because she admitted to her diary that she felt so ill that she had found “it sometimes difficult to pray” and was ashamed that her “gratitude on recovery was very far from what it ought to have been.” Louise penned a retort to Lewis, with the hope that it would “snuff him.”¹¹⁵ Unlike his brothers, Charles Drummond never received bad press in Louise’s journal; he was a fixture in her and especially her brothers’ lives.

Louise’s references to the cousins and her candour in describing them or her dealings with them reflect the fact that the two families had grown up together and had reached a level of intimacy that the Monks shared with no other family. In addition, it was clear that emotional intimacy crossed the boundary of sex. For young women, family life was central to their lives and this was why Louise’s family was so prominent in her diaries. Young women such as Louise formed close bonds with their parents, siblings and extended family. In Louise’s case, she thrived within this familial network but also had a duty to serve it as well.¹¹⁶ As Louise aged, she came to understand how lucky she was to have such a wonderful family. Since there was no marriage prospect on

¹¹³ LAM, 19 December 1869.

¹¹⁴ LAM, 13 February 1870. See short biography of her cousin, Lewis Drummond in Henry James Morgan, *Canadian Men and Women of their time: A handbook of Canadian Biography* (Toronto: William Briggs, 1898), 287.

¹¹⁵ LAM, 12 February 1870. In addition to feeling too ill to pray, Louise also did not write in her diary.

¹¹⁶ See Prentice, *et al.*, 148-149 on women’s obligations as family members and the fact that women were not always happy to serve their families as daughters, sisters, mothers and wives; some felt rather burdened by their duties.

the horizon, Louise became increasingly withdrawn into her family and her faith, realizing that she might never marry and leave her safe haven.

As the only girl child, Louise inhabited a special place within the family. This affected how she interacted with the various personalities within her family and how she experienced life on a broader level. Firstly, it can be argued that both her intimacy with her mother and her brother Wenty magnified because there was no sister in the family to fulfill Louise's emotional needs. Louise's joy at the fact that with Wally's marriage she at last had a sister (even if only a sister-in-law) provides more credence to this conclusion that Louise's emotional life was very much affected by the lack of a sister. Louise would not have made special mention of having a sister in Mary Murphy nor would she have spent so much ink on how she felt about her and Mary's blossoming relationship if being the only girl in her family was a non-issue.

Louise was delighted at having a sister but also felt uncomfortable at the change in the family dynamic—the house had become very lively and less serious and intellectual. Mary and Wally did not move in with the Monks but did spend time socializing with the family. Louise feared that she would be too busy having fun with her new sister to fulfill her less worldly endeavours. Quiet time for serious study and religious reflection was circumscribed by Mary's presence. Louise had come to rely on her inner world in order to deal with loneliness and growing older and she felt vulnerable feeling too happy with her new sister.

Secondly, as the only female child in her family, Louise had to stand in as surrogate mother when her mother was absent and this was especially true when the family was on summer vacation without their parents. She was "in the most wretched of

humours,” she wrote, because she was going to “be alone with the boys” for a week and one half in St. Charles during the summer of 1869.¹¹⁷ During the same summer, Louise had to act as host, in her mother’s absence. She described an unexpected visit in this way:

At about 1 ocl. While I was in my room, this afternoon, I heard a noise of a carriage rolling up towards the door, and looking from my window I saw a white spotted black dog rapidly approaching. It was only Archie Campbell’s dog. “*Bella questa*” What am I to do? My hair’s down, my dress is dirty, nothing for dinner, I’m ugly, nobody is in I was so confused before my guests that I almost shouted this is an unexpected blow instead of quietly saying ‘this is an unhoped for pleasure.’

Louise felt she had done a horrible job hosting her guests and after their departure she reported to her journal that she thought that her “reputation as a housekeeper is lost forever.”¹¹⁸

Thirdly, Louise was brought up differently than her brothers because she was female. Although she was highly valued by her family and recognized as being intellectual, Louise could not help but compare herself with her brothers and this affected her self-esteem negatively. Louise was as critical of herself as she was of others and in fact, she saved the harshest comments for herself. Louise wrote that she was far less talented than her brothers were. Wenty had the “gift of the gab” while she felt she did not express herself as well as she wished.¹¹⁹ Wally played the violin beautifully, while Louise pointed out that she played the piano poorly. She wrote that she was not “nearly as clever” and “far less handsome” than the boys were and she believed that her heart was

¹¹⁷ LAM, 31 July 1869.

¹¹⁸ LAM, 19 July 1869.

¹¹⁹ LAM, 29 March 1869.

her strongest attribute.¹²⁰ The fact that she lacked access to the same opportunities that her brothers had may have contributed to her negative self-portrait but she never explicitly stated so.¹²¹

Although her brothers, her male cousins and their male friends formed the basis of much of her social world, Louise, as a female, was undeniably excluded from their male world at times. She commented that Charles Drummond and another of her brother's friends had come over one evening but Louise did not spend time with them for they were locked up in Wally's "*fumoir*." She did not go to school with the boys, nor would she enter the professions and she certainly would not hang out with the men in the smoking room. It should be noted that the young men were at the same time excluded from Louise's intimate female world. The adolescent world of the Monk and Drummonds can be best described as two large overlapping circles, one male, one largely female.

Louise's experience as a daughter, sister and cousin was affected by her social class, her personality or temperament, and her particular family circumstances. Though family was the most important institution for Victorian women, not all young women had the same relationships with their families. Clearly there was a spectrum of experience, ranging from the loving and supportive atmosphere of the Monks to a not-so-positive family atmosphere, much like there was a spectrum of religious experience, ranging from

¹²⁰ LAM, 5 June 1869. See LAM 12 June 1869 for another reference to her lack of cleverness.

¹²¹ This being said, it is also important to keep in mind that being critical of one's self was common Christian endeavour. Improvement was very important to the Victorians and so Louise may have been simply trying not to show off. See Margaret Gillett on the effect that women's lack of opportunities had on their self-esteem. McGill Principal Dawson's daughter (Anna), in a letter addressed to her brother (Rankin), wrote that because of her own lack of a college education she had felt " 'very inferior to you boys in mixed groups... ' " but that her mind was in " 'just as good in quality as most & has a clearness & an easy perception ahead of most & yet it has been of comparatively little use, because of lack of training.' " Quoted in Margaret Gillett, *We Walked Very Warily* (Montreal: Eden Press Women's Publications, 1981), 37.

an outward affiliation with a church to a deeply felt inner religious commitment. How Louise was educated was very much tied to her family's particular orientation, both because of its class and because of who her parents were.

FEMALE EDUCATION

There was a chapter in my old Logic called "Association of Ideas" which I liked very much; I have been making a practical study on that subject since the last three hours.¹²²

I wish I could write poetry. I would write about the lonely log cabin and a lonely inhabitant within. This morning as I stay in my bed, fancy-dreaming instead of getting [up] as I ought to have done; I began trying to build up a subject for a piece of poetry, my subject was suggested by the cold hard snow making a very wintry noise against my window; and I thought of a small wood hut way off in a distant Canadian wilderness. There on the slope of a snowy spotless valley stood the home of my ideal wanderer. It would be in the evening and his fire would be lit.....¹²³

I got *Lauder* from Hill's *pour mes moments perdus*, Papa having spoken so much of Scott the other evening I felt myself obliged to enlarge my acquaintance with his works....¹²⁴

Louise had received her formal education at an all-girls' convent school. Most likely, this school was run by the Congregation of Notre Dame, the organization that was affiliated with the society of the Children of Mary.¹²⁵ Though her convent schooling ended in 1866 or 1867 Louise did not stop learning; after that she began what can be best described as her informal education. Upon graduation, Louise and her mother and youngest brother Jimmy spent fifteen months in Europe, visiting England, France,

¹²² LAM, 2 March 1869.

¹²³ LAM, 17 November 1869.

¹²⁴ LAM, 17 February 1871.

¹²⁵ Louise never mentions the name of her school in her diary but because she was a member of the Children of Mary it is safe to assume that she had attended a convent school run by the CND.

Switzerland, and Rome. Her travel memoirs fill the pages of the first of her three surviving journals. Louise does not tell us if she had kept a diary before her trip but she definitely felt that her new European experiences merited a record. After returning from Europe, as we know, she continued to keep a diary until the summer of 1871 when the third diary ended. In Europe, whole months go unrecorded but what was written tells of a young woman very taken with her new surroundings and endeavouring to learn from them.

The limitations of female education after the secondary level exemplified the Victorian expectation that young women would become wives and mothers and not professionals. Nineteenth-century Canadians and Québécois viewed education as a good asset for elite young women like Louise; an educated wife would make a good companion for her professional husband. Mid-to late-nineteenth-century female education both for the poorer classes and for their upper class sisters prepared them for their destinies as wives and mothers. Roman Catholic girls, and in fact all girls, regardless of their religious affiliation, were educated both separately and differently from their male counterparts.¹²⁶

Catholic girls like Louise were sent to convent schools. It is not clear where she went to school but she may have gone to the elite institution of Villa Maria or Mont-Sainte Marie, as a day student or as a boarder. After graduation, there were no higher educational opportunities for Louise except for informal learning; colleges and

¹²⁶ Muir and Whiteley, 9; Clio Collective, 142-144; Prentice, *et al.*, 150-160; Danylwyycz; Bettina Bradbury, *Working Families*, 123; Margaret Gillett, "What Would you Have a Woman Know?" 1-18 and "The Principal and the Paradox," 21-38.

universities in Montreal did not open their doors to women until later in the century.¹²⁷

Even if she had received more formal education after her convent days, the professions were completely closed to her. This being said, it is important to keep in mind that Louise was a member of the elite. She did not need to seek paid employment nor did she express any desire to enter the professions.

We learn from her travel journey that her days at the convent school “were not always happy.”¹²⁸ She never told her readers why she had been unhappy or what she learned at school but the secondary literature on the convent curriculum reveals that Louise had a rigorous formal education. She would have studied religion, reading and writing (both in French and English), arithmetic and natural and social science, in addition to domestic and ornamental subjects, such as sewing and singing. Marta Danylewycz tells us that education at the convent would have been conducted in an atmosphere that emphasised discipline, order, obedience, industriousness and diligence.¹²⁹ Those qualities exemplify Victorian Christian womanhood and Louise, having been thoroughly steeped in these values, had very much internalized them. Her diary entries reveal the constant battle she waged against idleness and worldliness.

A trip to Europe was a common “finishing” education for elite young women.

Better than simply reading about other places or cultures, travel allowed for direct

¹²⁷ McGill University did not officially open doors to women until the fall of 1884, ten years after Louise’s death. Louise could have attended the McGill Normal School that opened up in 1857, but this facility trained teachers, mostly women, to teach in the Protestant school system. If Louise had wanted to teach, she would have taught in the Catholic School system, which tended to employ teaching nuns, not laywomen. Louise could have taken courses at McGill through the Montreal Ladies Educational Association, which operated from 1872 until McGill admitted women, but since her diaries end before this time, we cannot know if she did so. The Catholic institution, L’École de L’Enseignement Supérieure, which would have been an appropriate place for the young Louise to pursue her studies, did not open until 1908. See Gillett on women’s history at McGill University.

¹²⁸ LAM, 18 July 1867.

¹²⁹ Danylewycz, 125-126.

observation. In addition, since Canada was a relatively young place, it was believed that a “Western” tour would provide polishing that was not yet available at home.¹³⁰ Louise inadvertently acknowledged this view of Europe by remarking that even the deer had a “civilized look” in England.¹³¹ She never forgot her fifteen-month trip but chastised herself for daydreaming about it too much. She wrote in October 1868 that she had

been thinking all day of the same date a year ago and returning to Geneva [;] with what enjoyment my memory looks back upon the past, it is full of souvenirs, and such finds of happiness dwell in that past. I like to dig up those bygone buried days, and to act the old life over again, it makes me dreamy and unfit for anything else...¹³²

One of the notable things Louise did when she was in Europe was to attend the 1867 Paris Exposition Universelle. Although she was “mortified by our Canadian show [because] it was so poor” the rest of the exhibition was enticing enough that Louise returned on at least three other occasions.¹³³ Canadian writer Andrew Spedon, who wrote *Sketches of a Tour from Canada to Paris, By Way of the British Isles, During the Summer of 1867*, agreed with Louise’s reaction to the Canadian Exhibition. He concluded that “Canada was mis-represented [sic]” because the image portrayed was overly primitive, emphasising the “uncivilized” natives and wildlife.¹³⁴

¹³⁰ Eva-Marie Kröller, *Canadian Travellers in Europe, 1851-1900* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1987), 46-49.

¹³¹ LAM, May 1867.

¹³² LAM, 1 October 1868.

¹³³ LAM, 17 July 1867.

¹³⁴ His reaction is quoted by Kröller, 92. Kröller contrasted Spedon’s reaction with a completely different picture imagined by celebratory writer, Luella Creighton in *The Elegant Canadians* (Toronto and Montreal: McClelland and Stewart Limited, 1967) on the eve of Canada’s Centenary. Creighton “fantasizes”, Kröller writes, that the Canadian exhibit was so sophisticated that it demoralized the Frenchman who had to unpack the boxes. See Kröller, 149 and Creighton, 100-103. See also E.A. Heaman, *The Inglorious Arts of Peace: Exhibitions in Canadian Society during the Nineteenth Century* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), 177-181. Heaman states that “the press voiced pride and satisfaction” with the Canadian display and that the 1867 exhibition was an attempt to show the world that the newly created country, Canada, was an “integrated and strong” nation, worthy of recognition.

On a broader level, what the entire exhibition provided for Louise was an instant visual lesson or snapshot of what the world had to offer in 1867, and housed all “within a great elliptical iron and glass building.”¹³⁵ It was, at least to some degree, intended to be educational. The American Samuel Morse argued that children would benefit from seeing World’s Fairs. Morse stated that he believed that his own children would “learn more of the condition of the arts, agriculture, customs, manufactures and mineral and vegetable products of the world in five weeks than they could by books at home in five years, and as many years’ travel.”¹³⁶

While in Europe Louise made practical use of the languages she knew.¹³⁷ In England, she wrote and spoke in English. In France, she most likely spoke more French and she tended to slip into French in her descriptions. Louise commented that she wished she knew German so she could read the poetry of Madame de Staël in its original, not in French translation.¹³⁸ While in Italy she probably tried to use her Italian, which was rudimentary at best. On returning home after her trip to Europe, Louise continued to work on her Italian exercises and from time to time wrote out simple comments in Italian in her journal. She never wrote that anyone was formally teaching her Italian so it can be safely assumed that she was largely self-taught.

¹³⁵ Richard L. Mandell, *Paris 1900: The Great World’s Fair* (Canada: University of Toronto Press, 1967), 12. Mandell provides an excellent description of the physical layout of the 1867 Paris Fair and what Louise would have seen. See Robert W. Rydell, *et al.*, *Fair America: World’s Fairs in the United States* (Washington and London: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2000) for a discussion on the lack of consensus among academics on the meaning of World’s Fairs.

¹³⁶ Quoted in John Allwood, *The Great Exhibitions* (Great Britain: Cassell & Collier MacMillan Publishers Ltd, 1977), 42.

¹³⁷ In Peterson’s examination of the English Paget family, she found that many of the women had knowledge of foreign languages and that this helped them in their continental travels, as well as in their reading. See Peterson, 52-55.

¹³⁸ LAM, 15 November 1869.

Much of Louise's self-education occurred through reading, an activity in which she frequently engaged; she often commented on what she was reading.¹³⁹ Louise's father was also heavily involved in directing his daughter's reading.¹⁴⁰ Her reading of fiction was far from passive, and she let her readers know if she admired the characters or if she thought the work was hard to understand or silly.¹⁴¹ Having "just finished *Aurora Leigh*," Louise stated that she found some parts of it "incomprehensible" but that it was "very lively in others."¹⁴² In her assessment of *Veronique* by Miss Marryat she stated that "Gordon Romilly is weak [and] commonplace" and "Veronique is too childish."¹⁴³ She praised *Lady Bird* but in rereading the book she stated that she did not "feel now the same affection for its lovely heroine Gertrude Lifford" though "she is a beauty, a bird of paradise." In her reappraisal of *Lady Bird*, Louise thought that the "dove-like Mary Grey" was the ideal character for she was a "sweet [and] uncomplaining, resigned little sister of charity, [and] how silently she bears her weight of sorrow, how deeply her broken heart loves on until the end." It was Grey's "devotion to Maurice" which according to Louise was "the most touching part of the whole tale."¹⁴⁴ In writing about

¹³⁹ Gorham, 103. Also see Peterson's discussion of female self-education as being a life-long process and her argument that "[s]elf-education at its worst might lead to continued ignorance and dilettantism; at best it left room for freedom, and variety in the female curriculum..." Peterson, 44 and quote 41-24. See also Flint, 108.

¹⁴⁰ LAM, 4 January 1871; 17 February 1871. Peterson stated that although women did provide most of the Paget girls' education, men also participated, 37. Flint argues that even though Victorian prescriptive literature viewed mothers as being the best suited to direct their daughters' reading, actual autobiographical writing by women shows that in fact fathers had a large role in their daughter's reading. See especially 42, 84-85, and 201.

¹⁴¹ Active reading on the part of women is discussed by Flint, 15.

¹⁴² LAM, 17 February 1871.

¹⁴³ LAM, 13 December 1869.

¹⁴⁴ LAM, 14 January 1870. "[B]ird of paradise" and "dove-like" were concepts that Louise used to describe actual women as well.

Lady Fullerton's work, Louise stated that she preferred her earlier books to her later books.¹⁴⁵

Louise read ferociously and not just novels but spiritual works, poetry and history. Some of her history resumés survive and are contained in her travel journal. They read like something a first-year undergraduate student would produce, summarizing some of the common events in European early medieval political history. She wrote out a brief biography of the first Christian emperor, Constantine, who, not surprisingly, was of interest to the very religious adolescent. Louise also wrote about famous figures such as Charlemagne. Interestingly, in 1870, her father Judge Monk wrote a privately published book of poetry on the Norman Conquest; perhaps his interest in history motivated Louise to pursue historical subjects.¹⁴⁶

At nineteen years of age, Louise told her diary that she believed that she must be getting older because she was reading fewer novels and instead taking on more serious works, such as the lives of saints. "It astonishes me," Louise wrote, "to see how much my passion for novel reading has diminished [:] some years ago I remember that I could not imagine any more pleasurable occupation than going through a tissue of fictions, like Sir Walter Scott's ... novels..."¹⁴⁷ She felt very encouraged by this development and wrote that she would devote the next day to *Le livre des rois et des peuples*.¹⁴⁸ Although Louise claimed that she was reading less fiction, her diary shows that this was not the case and she continued to indulge in novels. There was a lively discourse on novels among

¹⁴⁵ LAM, 13 February 1869.

¹⁴⁶ See Samuel Cornwallis Monk, *The Norman Conquest* (Montreal: private publisher, 1870?).

¹⁴⁷ LAM, 7 August 1869.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

Victorians and Louise's comment suggests that she was aware of the controversy on the negative impact novels could have on the minds of young women.¹⁴⁹

In addition to travel, language acquisition, and reading, part of Louise's informal education was learning to write. Louise's reading influenced what she wrote in her journals and there can be no doubt that the novels, books of poetry and prescriptive literature provided models for her own writing.¹⁵⁰ *Recreations of a Country Parson*, a book enjoyed by Louise, had a whole section on diary keeping.¹⁵¹ The writer, Reverend Boyd, encouraged his young readers to keep a list of their accomplishments at the end of every day so they would be encouraged to do more.

Louise occasionally followed Boyd's advice but in the end she wrote whatever came to her mind at any given sitting—sometimes she described her day, her reactions to a book or sermon, a dream, a conversation, or her innermost feelings. As the years passed, Louise learned to write and express herself eloquently; there was a clear development in her ability to tell a good story. In addition to keeping her journal Louise was also in the process of writing a novel, which she found quite difficult. She also spent a great deal of time writing letters, and as already mentioned, she was responsible for the *Children of Mary's* annals.

At the same time she was broadening her intellect, Louise also developed what can be best described as more ornamental skills, such as sewing, embroidery and playing music. Louise knew how to play the piano and practised on a regular basis, but as we

¹⁴⁹ See Flint on the Victorian concern with girls reading novels, 48.

¹⁵⁰ See Kagle and Gramegna on the influence of fiction on women's diaries in "Rewriting Her Life: Fictionalization and the Use of Fictional Models in Early American Women's Diaries," in *Inscribing the Daily: Critical Essays on Women's Diaries*, eds. Suzanne L Bunkers, and Cynthia A. Huff (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1996), 38-55.

¹⁵¹ Reverend Andrew Kennedy Hutchinson [A.K.] Boyd, *Recreations of a Country Parson* (Boston: Ticknor and Fields, 1861).

know, she informed her readers that she did not play particularly well. In addition to sewing for the poor with the Children of Mary, Louise reported that she had made a hat for herself, a calico jacket and embroidered handkerchiefs. Though she did not enjoy sewing and found it rather difficult, she did admit to her diary that she was “not lovely enough, nor clever enough, nor ideal enough to ignore the art of sewing.” She vowed never to learn to cook.¹⁵²

Louise was socialized to assume her mother’s role, to become a bourgeois lady. One of the activities of women of her class, in addition to attending church, was to go on visits and do charity work. Louise did charity work with the Children of Mary and in the village where her mother had grown up; she was the godmother of a poor child in St. Charles.¹⁵³ Charity work was seen as a good use of her time but Louise hated to go on visits with her mother and was relieved when “most of the ladies were out.”¹⁵⁴ Once she reported that she had just spent “a very unpleasant two hours of visiting with Mama.”¹⁵⁵ Louise much preferred visiting with her own friends.

The Monks valued learning for the sake of knowledge itself. They prepared Louise in the skills that would make her a good mother to her professional male children and a stimulating companion to a professional husband. Education for Louise was not intended to prepare her for a life outside motherhood and church work. The Monks were of the class where it was simply unnecessary for Louise to have to seek paid employment, clean the house or cook —Louise would either marry someone of similar social standing who would provide for her, enter a convent (which she had no desire to do), or

¹⁵² LAM, 12 June 1869.

¹⁵³ LAM, 23 July 1869; 24 July 1869.

¹⁵⁴ LAM, 31 January 1871.

¹⁵⁵ LAM, 24 November 1869. On visiting as a female activity see Creighton, 87-89.

alternatively remain at home with her aging parents.¹⁵⁶ Louse's bourgeois female contemporaries like her beloved friend Ellen had similarly limited options when they contemplated their futures.¹⁵⁷

FRIENDSHIP

My old, and only friend Ellen is in town, for perhaps a year, so her aunt says. I never lose the depth of my old feeling when I see her [;] all its intensity comes back to my heart. I couldn't feel very happy at their removal.¹⁵⁸

Outside her close family circle, Louise had several girlfriends, one of whom Louise cared about deeply. Louise and her dearest friend, Ellen, her old convent schoolmate, remained friends after graduation, and presumably right up until Louise's death in 1874. Strong friendships with women were a reality of many women's lives; they were both encouraged by the culture of separate female worlds and grew out of the strong bonds girls had with their kin, most notably their mothers.¹⁵⁹ In addition, Victorians saw friendship as a positive thing for young women, as long as it was not a frivolous relationship. Deborah Gorham suggests that the advice literature encouraged female friendship because it allowed young girls to develop "the feminine qualities of empathy and expressiveness..." and the kind of intimacy that would be useful when girls became wives and mothers.¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁶ See Peterson, 57 and Gorham, 24, both of whom argue that upper class women's education, while at times very thorough and of high quality, was not seen as preparing them for paid employment.

¹⁵⁷ Henriette Dessaulles writes of the options she had—she could die young, marry or enter a convent. And all these events she would do wearing white! See Raoul, *Distinctly Narcissistic*, 52.

¹⁵⁸ LAM, 26 April 1869.

¹⁵⁹ While Smith-Rosenberg's influential article, "The Female World of Love and Ritual" has problems in that it neglects male-female intimacy, it does nicely describe female relationships. Although I have argued that the worlds of men and women did indeed overlap, and this was especially so within the familial network, I do not deny that women did form very intimate bonds in the nineteenth century (as they do today).

¹⁶⁰ Gorham, 113-115, quote, 113.

While it is interesting that female friendships were both encouraged and found acceptable by the culture girls grew up in, and by Victorian commentators (unlike relationships between unrelated young men and women), what is of interest in this study is the function Ellen and the other girlfriends had in Louise's life. Ellen was someone to whom Louise could turn to. She was an intimate friend, with whom Louise spent time and on whom she could rely for emotional support. Ellen, unlike Louise's mother or Wenty or her other brothers, was an adolescent in similar circumstances as herself. Both young women were finished their formal education and waiting for marriage and they shared the same interests in church, reading, novel writing, and young men.

Louise described Ellen in very sensual terms similar to the way she wrote about her brother Wenty. According to Louise, Ellen was a "dear little perfection" and a "sweet little combination of heart, mind and soul."¹⁶¹ After a walk the girls shared, Louise wrote about "[h]ow good, how pure, how gentle, how clever and how loving..." Ellen was, and that she should not "fear inconstancy" from Louise.¹⁶² A parting kiss the girls shared combined with a lovely walk in the snow made Louise feel "strange and joyous."¹⁶³ The language Louise employed to describe Ellen, while it may seem suggestive today, was typical of the Victorians.¹⁶⁴

Besides sharing walks together, Louise wrote that she and Ellen were composing fiction. Ellen apparently wrote much faster than Louise. "Ellen's book is finished," Louise wrote, while "mine is only at the first pages, nor do I know when it will be further." Louise, who was probably jealous of her friend's accomplishment, commented

¹⁶¹ LAM, 16 February 1870.

¹⁶² LAM, 27 June 1869.

¹⁶³ LAM, 14 November 1869.

¹⁶⁴ Smith-Rosenberg affirms this point.

that she was “afraid Ellen writes too fast, without sufficient care.”¹⁶⁵ On another occasion, Louise expressed pride in Ellen’s writing. After hearing Ellen recite her composition, Louise wrote that she was “proud of [ev]ery talent she possesses.”¹⁶⁶ When the girls were separated they exchanged letters but Louise wished she could write letters as lovely as Ellen’s, letters which expressed “unchanging affection” and were “*coeur ouvert*” rather than the “insignificant little note[s]” that Louise felt she wrote in return.¹⁶⁷

When Louise took ill in the winter of 1870, it was Ellen’s visits that cheered her up. The only benefit of being sick was that Ellen visited more often but Louise warned herself not to become too accustomed to those cherished visits.¹⁶⁸ When Ellen became ill in the summer of 1871, it was Louise’s turn to visit her sick friend. Louise commented that under her care her “pitifully ill and delicate...dearest violet” would recover quickly.¹⁶⁹ One fantasy of Louise’s reveals the strong bond the girls shared with one another and eerily foreshadows what may have happened when the young Louise died. Louise had a dream that she was dying. She wrote that not only would her family be gathered around her death-bed, but that she had a vision of Ellen being at her side as well.¹⁷⁰

When the girls visited, they shared their intimate feelings and spoke about the topics that preoccupied them, including marriage. On that subject, the girls both agreed that they “could be contented in that state.” Ellen told Louise that she could never marry a poor man but Louise claimed she could because other qualities were more important.

¹⁶⁵ LAM, 17 December 1869.

¹⁶⁶ LAM, 27 June 1869.

¹⁶⁷ LAM, 8 August 1869.

¹⁶⁸ LAM, 13 February 1870; 16 February 1870.

¹⁶⁹ LAM, 22 June 1871.

¹⁷⁰ LAM, 27 January 1870.

The “rarer” qualities of strength of mind, generosity of heart, and the possession of a virtuous soul were attributes that were more important than wealth in a man. Louise felt uneasy because her “impetuous, extravagant, and romantic friend” did not understand the importance of such characteristics and she thought that if her friend did not marry such a man, her “violet would [surely] shrink.”¹⁷¹

Though Ellen was her dearest and best friend, Louise did have other female acquaintances. Her references to these female friends did not have the sensuous tone of the entries about Ellen but these comments were intimate and informal unlike her comments about any of her male acquaintances. While men were simply described as “agreeable” the ladies in Louise’s journal had more elaborate descriptions.¹⁷² Mary Stuart, for example, was “a treasure of a girl... so clever, so unpretending, so perfectly reserved and dignified in her manner.”¹⁷³ Mary, whom she was “quite enthusiastic about,” met Louise at the Hill’s Lending Library (a private library), and the two went for walks and sometimes attended church together.¹⁷⁴ They discussed their respective religions and the books they were reading and sometimes “talked deep.”¹⁷⁵

Louise was a person who could be trusted with private information and what she talked about with her girlfriends does not always surface explicitly in the pages of her journal. On one occasion Louise and her friend Charlotte Baby shared some quiet time together after their Children of Mary meeting. Louise’s reference to this conversation reveals several things. The first is that the conversation was to remain in confidence and therefore the reader does not know what the girls actually spoke about. Secondly,

¹⁷¹ LAM, 9 January 1871; 2 February 1871.

¹⁷² LAM, 2 October 1868.

¹⁷³ LAM, 4 October 1868.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁵ LAM, 20 January 1870.

Charlotte's willingness to share her problems shows that she felt Louise was a trustworthy person. Thirdly, it shows that Charlotte felt comfortable enough to reveal her innermost thoughts with a girl outside her own family, evidence of the importance of peers for young women and the fact that young women did reach out to one another for emotional support.¹⁷⁶

Her female friendships, while important and necessary for Louise's psychological well-being, were not enough to make her truly happy. Friends were undeniably sweet but what was really lacking in Louise's life was intimacy with a young man. Writing about friendship, Louise penned the following poem.

Friendship
Sweetest yet not deepest enjoyment
Love
delight
disappointment
nameless hopes
wretchedness
My fate !!¹⁷⁷

Having no lover, the young Louise turned to her diary, to her faith and to her family for solace. Louise's diary provided the space to come to terms with the fact that marriage might never come her way and provided a safe place to express her feelings more intimately than she could have with the important people in her life; she did not want to upset those who were dearest to her. Louise had been schooled in the virtues of proper

¹⁷⁶ See Smith-Rosenberg, "The Female World of Love and Ritual."

¹⁷⁷ This poem was inscribed inside the back cover of her second journal. That journal covers the period from October 1868 to February 1870.

Victorian female behaviour; as a good friend and dutiful daughter Louise kept certain thoughts and desires within the pages of her diary alone.¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁸ On diaries as a place to release tension see Jane Hunter, 41-43, 52, 74; Kagle and Gramagma, 58-59, 61, 70.

CONCLUSION: “THE VANISHED GIRL... WHO WROTE SO MUCH NONSENSE”

What have I been writing? A tissue of lamentations, unworthy of the time. I have been taken to express them; my only excuse is that I have nobody to tell my little woes to since my eldest brother [Wenty] is gone, and it seems difficult to hold ... everything within.¹

Oh! My book; I remember in days that have sped away, [the time spent at] your side with my youthful sorrows, and my tears have been dried, and my heart has learnt wisdom. Be to me what you have been in the past; I ask no more.²

I’ve reached the last page of my little book. I thought I would give up before I got so far my dumb friend, my ever patient listener. I must [put] it away now, “and the dust on its cover”, will probably “get dusk, and brown” and when time will have brought me wisdom, sense, reflection, for these are gifts which I hope the coming years will not refuse me, shall I open these yellow leaves, and smile at the vanished girl of eighteen who wrote so much nonsense?...Oh! God Bless me.³

Though Louise Amelia Monk did not live to publish any of her own writing, thirteen decades later her diaries are finally reaching a wider audience, albeit through my lens. Louise voiced concern that what she was composing was “[a] tissue of lamentations,” but what she actually produced is a rich historical document. Louise’s diaries, covering five years of her adolescence, are a testament to a life that until this study has remained largely unknown. The intention of this paper was to transform the historical Louise from being merely a nameless judge’s daughter into what she actually was—an individual in her own right.

I first came across Louise’s diaries as an undergraduate student at McGill University in the early 1990s. At that time, I read them without the knowledge that Louise died just years after she penned her last entry. For ten years I wondered what had happened to Louise. The only reference I had to Louise’s possible early death was

¹ LAM, 13 March 1871.

² LAM, 8 March 1871.

³ LAM 21 February 1870.

Rose's 1888 *Cyclopaedia* that stated that Judge Monk's daughter had "died some years ago." Because in 1888 Louise would have been in her late 30s, she could have had time to marry and have children before her early death.

When I began conducting my graduate research at Concordia University in the spring of 2002, I discovered that Louise did indeed die, having never reached adulthood, and that her final resting place was in central Montreal on the slopes of Mount-Royal in the Cote-des-Neiges Cemetery. Having found when Judge Monk died (from a bibliographical write-up) and where he was buried (from a newspaper obituary notice) I went to his gravesite with the hope that Louise would be buried beside him; my instincts proved correct. Armed with the knowledge of Louise's death in late adolescence, I found that the references in her diary to her future and her fantasies about her own death became all the more poignant.

Death was a fact of life for Victorians; they practised a whole set of rituals for mourning and were armed with the comforting belief that all Christian believers would be re-united in the Kingdom of Heaven. Nonetheless, the loss of a child was still traumatic for parents, family members and dear friends.⁴ The Monks suffered a great loss when Louise died and her memory carried on in two of Wally and Mary Murphy's children, Alice Louise and Jeannie Amelia, presumably named in Louise Amelia Monk's honour.⁵ Evidence of the family's devastation, and more specifically Louise's mother's pain, is

⁴ See Brian Young, *The Making and Unmaking of a University Museum* (Montreal; Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2000), 25, on the "shattering effect" the early death of John Samuel McCord and Ann Ross' daughter, Eleanor, had on her family. McCord's diary provides evidence of his loss. Eleanor died in 1863 and was one of the first buried in the Protestant Mount-Royal Cemetery, which is located right beside the Catholic Cemetery where the Monks are buried.

⁵ *Index de Baptêmes Catholiques*, 1873; 1874. Alice Louise was baptized in July of 1873 and Jeannie Amelia in November of 1874. Louise Amelia Monk was still alive when her nieces were born but since she did die of "a long and painful illness," (*The Montreal Star*, 3 April 1874) she was probably already sick at the time the second niece was baptized.

illustrated in Caroline's own entry within the pages of Louise's diary, where three years after Louise's death, Caroline still referred to herself as a "mourning bereaved desolate mother."⁶

From the pages of Louise's diary we come to know a young woman who is struggling with adolescence and coming to terms with the fact that she is no longer a child. Her diary, or her "dumb friend," provided Louise with a space to release tension and express her emotions without having to worry that she upset her family, particularly her mother, with her "lamentations." Furthermore, writing out her life made her "feel better" and made "things look brighter."⁷ Although Louise appreciated the space her diary provided her, she wished she could share her emotional life with an actual person. Louise looked longingly at the relationship her brother Wally had with Mary Murphy and commented that while Wally had Mary to confide in, she had no one.⁸

Louise's diary entries provide evidence of her bourgeois world, a world, I have argued, that was dominated by faith, family, female education and friendship. Louise was particularly religious and her religious belief permeates her entire diary; in almost all of her entries, she refers to her faith. She wrote of going to church, doing charity work, her religious readings, her desire to be a good Catholic, and her use of faith as a way to gain strength and a sense of control over her destiny. Although she was quite religious, she did not want to become a nun. Perhaps had she been a member of the lower ranks of Montreal society that option would have been more appealing; as a daughter of a well-established loving family which valued and stimulated Louise's intellect, the convent did not offer Louise a 'better' life.

⁶ LAM, 28 Sept 1869.

⁷ LAM, 13 March 1871.

⁸ LAM, 25 December 1869.

Family was a source of comfort to Louise as well as her Christian obligation. As a dutiful and only daughter, Louise was dependent on her family for her own happiness but at the same time felt responsible for her parents' well-being. Though Louise loved her parents and her brothers dearly, one of the things that surfaced time and again in her diaries was her ambivalence about aging, and about the reality that she might never leave home and lead an independent life. Louise's anxiety about her own future increased as each of her brothers left the house.

As a young woman, Louise was socialized to follow in her mother's footsteps, and as such, her education did not stop when she graduated from her convent school. Louise kept up her studies informally both because she required the stimulation, and as preparation for her presumed future as the wife of a professional man. She studied religion, languages and history through reading directed both by her father and herself, and honed her "feminine" skills in the arts of sewing and piano playing, letter writing and going visiting with her mother.

In addition to spending a great deal of time with her mother, Louise's world included a small network of female friends. Friendship among women was not only culturally acceptable, but also had an important emotional function in their lives. Louise's female peers were in similar circumstances, they understood one another, and were mutually supportive as they all moved through adolescence together. Ellen was Louise's oldest and dearest friend; Louise loved her "violet" as if she were family. The loss of Louise must have been dreadful for Ellen.

It is only by studying the stories of individuals that historians will come to better understand the experiences of bourgeois female adolescents coming of age in Victorian

Canada. Only a handful of studies on individual female Canadian adolescents exist and before any definitive statements can be made about the uniqueness of the Canadian or the Quebec experience more research must be conducted. Based on very preliminary comparative research with other Canadian female diarists (such as Henriette Dessaulles) and work done by historians in the United States and England it does seem probable that there may have been a North-Atlantic Victorian experience of bourgeois female adolescence, as has been suggested by Louise Dechêne.⁹

But it is important to bear in mind that any general comments about Victorian adolescence must be made with the recognition that no two young women are exactly alike. The specific cases of Louise Amelia Monk and Henriette Dessaulles provide evidence of this claim. Here we have two young women who came from similar backgrounds (both had seigniorial roots and were members of the ruling elite) but whose internal religious lives were completely different. Both young women were Catholics and had been taught in the convent schools but Henriette was critical of the church, while Louise was not. The girls each had their own unique personalities and their fathers (whom both of them adored) had differing attitudes towards the church; this combination undoubtedly influenced how the girls ultimately felt about religion. Although we know Quebec Victorian women and girls attended church, were active participants in church life and that their society expected them to be religious, it is only by looking at personal stories of individual women, at how women actually experienced their faith and what function religion had in their lives, that these facts take on any real meaning.

⁹ See Louise Dechêne's introduction in *HOPES AND DREAMS—The Diary of Henriette Dessaulles 1874-1881* (Willowdale, Ontario: Hounslow Press, 1986).

Clearly not all young Victorian women, even if they were members of the bourgeoisie, had the same experiences as they came of age in the late Victorian Canada. What young women did share a similar cultural context, one that viewed women as destined for wifehood, motherhood and good works. While their opportunities were rather limited in the 1870s, young women such as Louise were not idle. She kept very busy reading, writing, visiting, doing charity work, participating in family life and day-dreaming about her future. Coming of age was difficult for Louise emotionally but by the time she was nearing twenty-one she had clearly developed the beginnings of a strong sense of self. Far from writing “nonsense,” Louise’s diary shows that she had gained wisdom. The wisest thing the young Louise learned over the five years of diary keeping was that ultimately she was responsible for her own happiness. She wrote in 1871 that she must look to herself “for a certain kind of pleasurable pastime ...”; she could not rely on others to give her joy.¹⁰

Louise’s reference to her diary as a testament to a “vanished girl” shows that Louise was aware that she was becoming a woman. I came to know Louise as I read through her journals, I listened carefully to her words as she came of age and grew into a intelligent young woman. My *retelling* of her adolescence is intended to contribute to our collective understanding of female Canadian Victorian experience and illustrate the usefulness of hearing individual ‘voices’ in our quest for that knowledge.

¹⁰ LAM, 26 January 1871.

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APPENDIX A: LOUISE AMELIA MONK'S PHOTO



This photo of fourteen-year-old Louise Amelia Monk was taken at the Notman's Photographic Studio in Montreal in 1864. McCord Museum of Canadian History, *Notman Photographic Archives*, Montreal.

APPENDIX B: SAMPLE PAGE FROM LOUISE'S DIARY

I went to Mass and helped, and wrote to Mamma. I received a letter from Ellen yesterday. Monday 24. I wrote to Estlin, Stuart and Mary Murphy, today, and learned of something from Elvira about the wickedness of mankind. Oh! Heavens, I was disgusted.

Saturday 30th. Mrs Campbell, Blanche D., Archie Bruce, etc, came to see us today. I was sorry when they left for their presence was not at all disagreeable. My old dislike (it might be called hatred) is fast sinking into indifference. I don't believe however that our characters are ever to meet at these opposite and supposed angles.

I have scarcely done any thing this week. Today I read a small life of St. George interested me, very much.

APPENDIX C: MONK-DEBARTZCH FAMILY TREE

-----Wentworth Dominique Monk
(1847-1090)

-----Edward Cornwallis Monk
(1848-1883)

-----Louise Amelia Monk
(1850-1874)

-----Charles Dering Monk
(1853-1929)

-----Frederick-Debartzch Monk
(1859-?)

-----James Gould Monk
(1959-1909)

(1792-1865)

Samuel Wentworth Monk

||

Anna Amelia Gugy
(1799-1825)

-----Samuel Cornwallis Monk
(1813-1888)

||
1844
||

(1792-1846)

Pierre-Dominique Debartzch

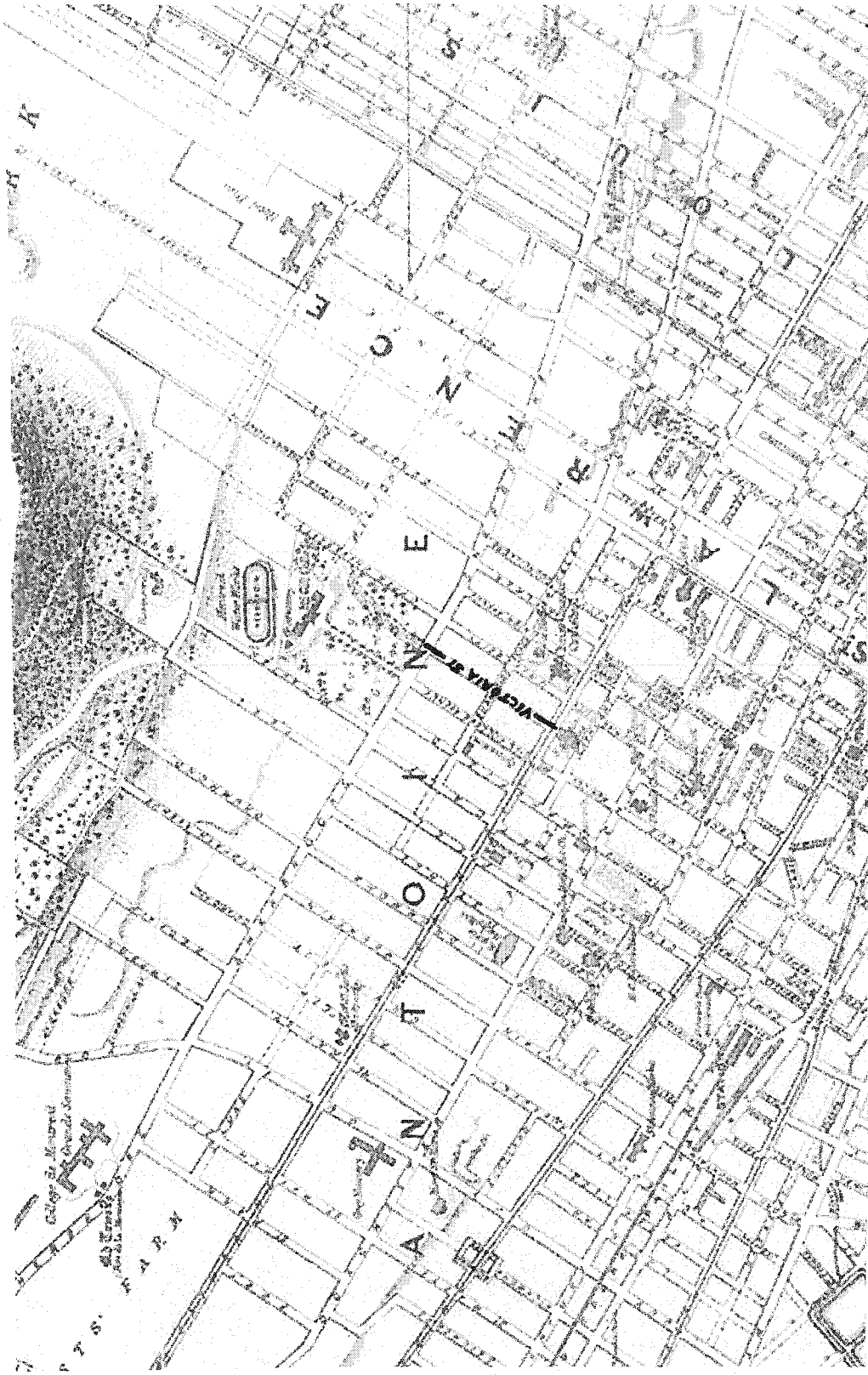
|| 1815

Josephte-Marie-Anne de Saint Ours
(1793-?)

-----Rosalie Caroline Debartzch
(1819-1889)

Genealogy based on The Notre-Dame-des-Neiges Cemetery Monk family gravestone, Section S, lot 0001, Montreal; Allan Greer, *Peasant, Lord, and Merchant: Rural Society in Three Quebec Parishes 1740-1840* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985), 106; Ludwik Kos Rabczewicz Zublowski, "Pierre-Dominique Debartzch," *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, (Canada: University of Toronto Press and Les Presses de l'Université Laval, 1988), Vol II, 235-36; *Monk Family Tree*, <http://awt.ancestry.com>; *George Henry Monk*, <http://www.entirenet.com/tal/young/monk.html>.

APPENDIX D: MAP OF VICTORIA STREET AREA, MONTREAL



Louise's house was located at 26 Victoria Street in the St. Antoine district of Montreal. The map section above is from J. Johnston, C. E. *Johnston's Complete Map of Montreal & Vicinity*, 1872 (Montreal: Geo E. Desbrarats, 1972). Rare Book Division, McGill University Library, Montreal.