Seeing Female Readers, Reading Female Readers, Making Meta-Readers: Montgomery as Depictor and Creator of Scholars

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This essay explores L.M. Montgomery's depiction of female readers, the transformation of those readers into writers, individually and collectively, and the extension of this dynamic to readers outside the books. It creates the concept of the L.M. Montgomery origin story: stories that readers tell about discovering Montgomery's work.

In *Anne of the Island*, Aunt Jimsie is talking with Anne about Philippa Gordon:

> "I love her. But *I* can't understand her—she beats me. She isn't like any of the girls I ever knew, or any of the girls I was myself."
>
> "How many girls were you, Aunt Jimsie?"
>
> "About a half a dozen, my dear."[1]

L.M. Montgomery's characters are many types of girls. Some are thinkers. Some are doers. Some are indoorsy. Some are outdoorsy. Most are dreamers. Nearly all are readers.

Anne is a reader. Indeed, this exchange with Aunt Jimsie happens while Anne is away at university, reading and studying much of the time. We know Anne is a longstanding reader because as a child she often cites things she "read in a book," and we hear about Anne being punished for reading *Ben Hur* during class, a book that was lent to her by Jane Andrews, alongside another book lent to her by Ruby Gillis.[2] The all-too-often-overlooked Diana is first described when she meets Anne as "sitting on the sofa, reading a book," and Diana's mother subsequently comments that "she reads entirely too much" and is "always poring over a book."[3] Outside the Anne series, Valancy's devotion to nature books changes the entire course of her life, and we are told that she "enjoyed" them, even though "a book that was enjoyable was dangerous."[4] Emily is a reader, all the girls at Patty's Place are readers, and though Sara Stanley is not a reader per se, her life is surrounded by stories and storytelling.



Book cover of The Golden Road. 1982. KindredSpaces.ca, 010 GR-AR.

Some believe that reading is a passive endeavour: a reader absorbs the thoughts of the author while sitting in a stationary environment. But those of us who read avidly, like Montgomery's heroines do, know that reading is a much more active endeavour than it appears. We engage our minds, emotions, thoughts, and imaginations when we read. We may discuss what we read: with family, with friends, with our book groups (either online or in person), with colleagues, with classmates, with teachers/professors, with students, with Bookstagrammers.5 In addition to discussing what we read, many readers are prompted to take action—social, political, scholarly—based on what they read. In these cases, reading is, by definition, an activity. Readers, rather than being passive recipients of the texts they read, are active interactors and engagers with the textual material and, by extension, with a world of book discussion and interaction outside the text.

As an exercise and example, please consider this passage that describes Patty's Place from *Anne of the Island*:

> What a dear place it was! Another door opened out of it directly into the pine grove and the robins came boldly up on the very step. The floor was spotted with round, braided mats, such as Marilla made at Green Gables, but which were considered out of date everywhere else, even in Avonlea. And yet here they were on Spofford Avenue! A big, polished grandfather's clock ticked loudly and solemnly in a corner. There were delightful little cupboards over the mantelpiece, behind whose glass doors gleamed quaint bits of china. The walls were hung with old prints and silhouettes. In one corner the stairs went up, and at the first low turn was a long window with an inviting seat.6

In your (the reader's) mind, what colour are the braided mats? What pieces of china are in the cabinet? Perhaps a teapot or teacups? What are their shapes and patterns (roses, violets, flow blue)? What do the pictures on the wall show? What is the view out the window?

Visual readers already have answers to all of these questions before asked, answers that are uniquely their own. Even though the words on the page are identical for everyone who reads or hears them, the specific mental picture prompted by those words belongs, completely and individually, to each reader.[7] Readers manufacture personalized images as a result of hearing Montgomery's words. So, in the act of reading, readers transition from receivers to creators. We create that visual, mental image in our mind's eye(s) based on Montgomery's influence.

As a result, reading can be a creative endeavour in and of itself. But that creativity is heightened when readers transition into writers, scholars, artists, crafters, or anyone who creates a physical product based on an image in their mind. Just as discussing a book takes a potentially individual activity and extends it into the wider world, creating a physical product based on an imaginative moment—particularly one prompted by reading—extends the mental creativity of reading into the social and physical world.

Montgomery's characters model this transition beautifully. Nearly all of them begin as readers. Many become creators in their own right as an extension of their reading. Moreover, this reading is often portrayed as a communal/social activity, as is their creative work. Recall that Anne's friends are reading and circulating copies of *Ben Hur* and *The Lurid Mystery of Haunted Hall* to her, taking the potentially individual act of reading and turning it communal.[8] This communal reading, while decidedly not scholarly in nature, is intimately linked to the girls' futures as students, as scholars, because it is conveyed to the reader just preceding, and in close connection with, Anne's invitation to join the Queen's College prep class, along with Jane Andrews and Ruby Gillis.[9] The girls' endeavours as a readerly and scholarly community extend to the creative arts, when they become performers in their school concert and form The Story Club to "cultivate" "imagination."[10] Indeed, Anne's first foray into paid publication occurs when Diana sends a story of Anne's to a contest, unbeknownst to Anne.[11] It is as though the group's shared reading transmutes into shared writing, scholarship, and creativity, and the transition from reader to writer/artist/scholar happens for all of them collectively. The Avonlea girls engage in communal creativity—as writers, scholars, and performers—and this creativity has its root in shared reading.[12]



Book cover of *Anne of the Island*. 1968. KindredSpaces.ca, 116C-AIS-MHRBOX.

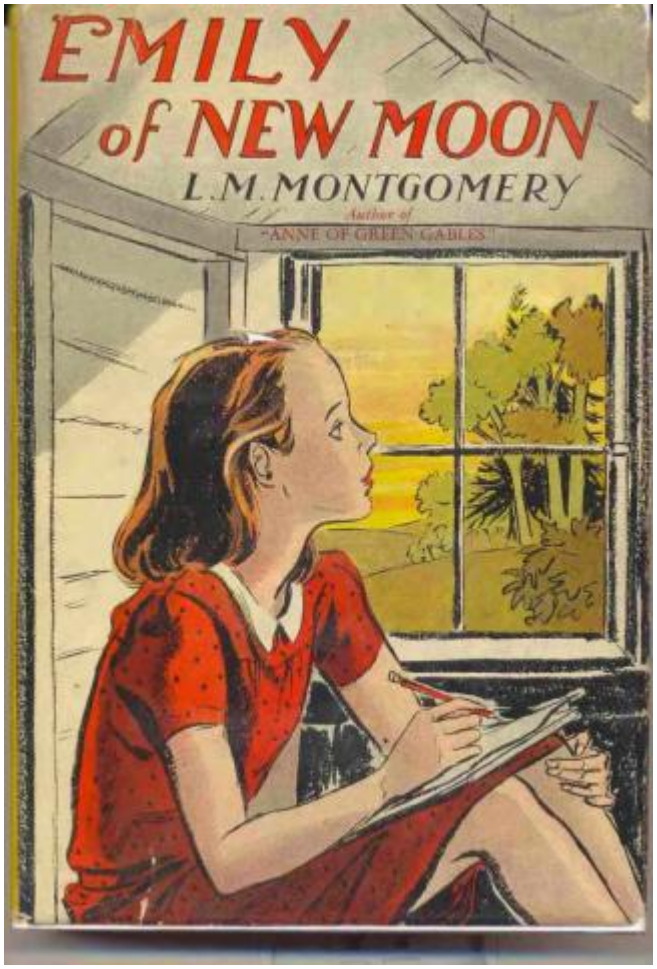
However, since Anne as an individual takes her writing the furthest of the Avonlea crowd, she provides perhaps the best example of the reader-creator transition in the *Anne* books. I'm particularly fond of the scene in *Anne of Avonlea* in which Anne is stuck armpit-deep in a duckhouse, having stood on the roof to peek in a window and fallen through.13 She contrasts her state to those of heroines' she's read, whose "misfortunes" are "romantic," as opposed to her "simply ridiculous" ones.14 Shortly thereafter, while still stuck in the duckhouse, Anne imagines a "most interesting" idea for a story that she feels the need to record immediately, "because I daresay I'll forget the best parts before I get home."15 And so she "wrote out her garden idyl under conditions that could hardly be considered as favorable to literature," that is, while encased in a half-collapsed bird coop.16 Here, Anne demonstrates a serious devotion to writing. But she also exemplifies an irresistible writerly impulse in a readerly heroine, a way of story-izing life whereby avid readers create a lens to view their own world as storied, and as if it were in a story (which, paradoxically and metafictionally, is true for Anne). Montgomery does this frequently with Anne, who is constantly comparing her life to various stories she's read and viewing her own life in a narrativized way. But Montgomery takes this storying process one step further, by depicting Anne's urge to write sequentially—and perhaps causally—linked to her readerly recollections. As such, Anne models the transition from reader to creator. Moreover, Anne is a *public* creator, in multiple senses of the term. Her reading shapes her view of the world, which in turn prompts her to create works out in the world (at least for a time). This Avonlea scene takes place outdoors, in a yard, with Diana looking on and helping (she procures the pencil and paper), rather than in the privacy of a home.17 When Anne later publishes this very work, her writing becomes even more public, social, and shared. So, Montgomery depicts the transition from reader to creator, and she does this through a series of stages in Anne's creative development. Anne is characterized early and

throughout her life as a reader. She is frequently “lost” in her imagination and the world of books. She uses her bookish mind—her literarily influenced brain—as a vehicle for viewing the world. She feels creative impulses, a need to create as an extension of her vivid imagination and way of viewing the world. She becomes a creator, someone who produces a physical, imaginative product based on her mind, and that mind is built on, and linked to, reading. Finally, Anne sends that creation out into the world, ensuring that her work as a creator, like her work as a reader, is far removed from the isolated, passive-reader stereotype. She typifies the act of reading, and of creativity, as one that is active and meant to be shared.

This effect of creating creators through reading is not limited to Anne Shirley within Montgomery’s works. Emily Byrd Starr is perhaps the quintessential reader-turned-writer, for it is she who builds a full-fledged career as a published author. But even early on, Emily’s bookishness is linked to her writerly tendencies. In the Tansy Patch chapter of *Emily of New Moon*, for example, Emily writes to her deceased father about having read “Little Red Riding Hood,” and then about two poems she herself has written:

> I read the story of Red Riding Hood to-day. I think the wolf was the most interesting character in it. Red Riding Hood was a stupid little thing so easily fooled.
>
> I wrote two poems yesterday.[18]

The passage is crafted—by both Emily and Montgomery—as if the writing about the reading and the subsequent creative writing are natural extensions of the same activity, flowing back and forth seamlessly. Emily is writing a letter to her father; she describes her reading; she describes her opinion of the reading in the role of youthful critic; and then she describes her poetry. As with Anne, Emily’s reading (and perhaps her desire to revise what she’s read) prompts and informs her writing. Emily goes one step further, though, by casting herself in the role of writer. While Anne’s writing is largely un-self-reflexive, Emily portrays herself to her father (and to the reader) as both a reader and a writer, closely connecting the two activities. In turn, Montgomery casts Emily as a writer thrice over: poet/literary critic, correspondent, and inset narrator of *Emily of New Moon*, in those moments where her writing is inserted into the text. This three-layered writing depicts and enacts Emily’s transition from reader to writer and connects her to her—and Montgomery’s—readers. And while Emily’s personality is certainly more introverted than Anne’s, her ultimate career as a published writer reaffirms even more powerfully the journey that we saw first in Anne: readers become creators. Creators share their creations in the world.



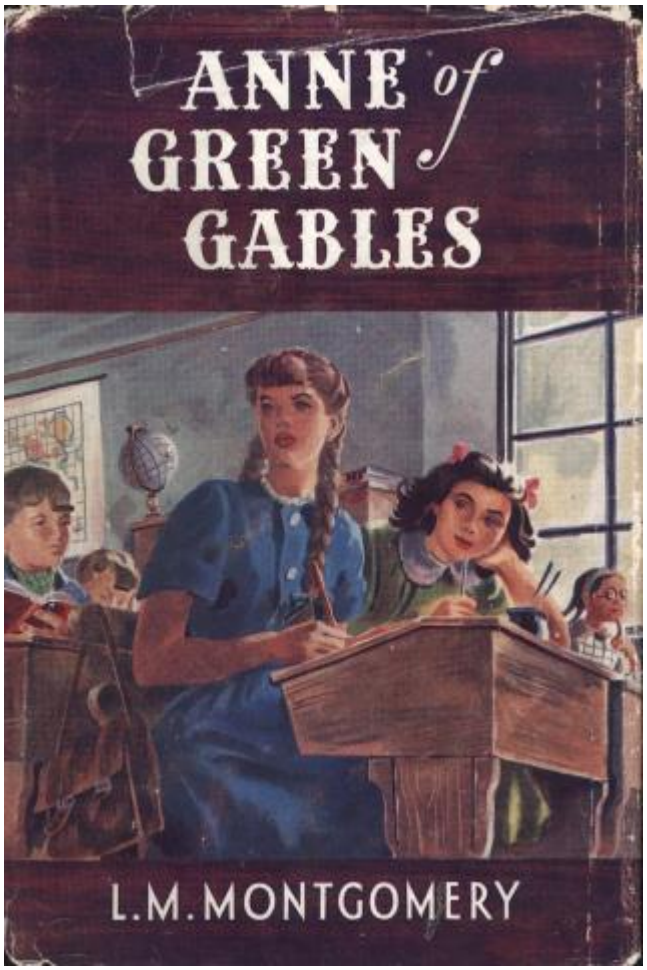
Book cover of *Emily of New Moon*. 1938. KindredSpaces.ca, 182 ENM-GD.

Montgomery, through her creation of active readers both in and of her books, and through the reader-to-writerly journey of her heroines, models the reader-to-writerly journey for and of her readers. In so doing, Montgomery potentially creates scholars and artists of us all. But if this occurs, how exactly does it happen? How is it that seeing a heroine do something in a book prompts a similar action in a reader? Certainly and thankfully, we don't all imitate everything we read. But when we read about book characters who are themselves reading, those characters often stand in for us, as readers, in the world of the book. That is, because they're readers, and we're readers, we see ourselves in them, and we live through them.19

From one perspective, this technique is a safe bet as narrative strategies go. If a person is reading a book, that person is, by definition, a reader. Therefore, as a writer, it makes sense to create an instant identification between readers within books and readers of them. Some terms for this in literary theory are metafiction and meta-reader. 20 Meta-reading or metafiction is reading that makes us think about the act of reading while we're doing it. It is self-conscious reading. While, for the reasons noted above, it's a potentially productive narrative strategy to have book readers identify with readers inside books, it can also be risky. An author may be confident that their readers are readers, but no writer can be completely assured that making the reader aware of the reading experience will enhance, rather than undermine, that experience. When an author breaks the "fourth wall" to nod at the reader and say, "See this girl here reading. She's like you, and we see you out there reading, too," it runs the risk of rupturing the fictional facade.21 But, when done successfully, I would argue that it actually removes the invisible wall between reader and book and makes us feel like we're one; we're in the book. We're not just reading about Anne, Diana, Valancy, or Emily; we're reading *with* Anne, Diana, Valancy, and Emily, and

sometimes even reading as them ... but with our own mental narrative that we produce as co-creators of their fictional worlds.

So, when Montgomery then illustrates her heroines' shift from reader to writer, scholar, and/or artist, she nudges the reader to make the same transition. Anne at Redmond, reading "*Pickwick*" and studying for her High Honours in English, becomes our role model for ourselves as scholars of her work.22 Emily as a writer becomes the writer in all of us struggling to get out. This effect extends beyond Montgomery's depictions to adaptations of her work as well. Whatever mixed feelings we may have for Kevin Sullivan and his cinematic adaptations of the *Anne* series, we cannot deny that he reproduces (or re-reproduces, or re-meta-produces) many visual images of Anne as a reader and a writer, and even inserts new ones, including Anne reading when she's supposed to be taking Mr. Hammond his lunch.23 All of these instances collectively demonstrate that Montgomery not only depicts readers, but through her crafty identification with her readers as readers, and the subsequent transition of her reader-heroines into scholars and writers, she models that transition for all readers. In turn, that work is replicated and extended in visual adaptations of her work that re-re-reproduce the image of woman as reader, writer, scholar, and creator. These images of Montgomery readers (both in the books and of them) and Montgomery creators (both in the books and of them) multiply beyond measure in the world outside Montgomery's books, as prompted by Montgomery's depictions.



Book cover of *Anne of Green Gables*. 1954. KindredSpaces.ca, 023 AGG-AR.

But in this fluxing world of re-re-representations, where does it all begin?24 From the time I first thought about this essay in 2017, and kept thinking about it since, I found myself returning to the concept of the origin story. And I am thinking about origin stories in two respects:

Culturally, origin stories tell how humankind came to be, or how a particular cultural group of people came to be. One story in Hawai'ian oral history says that Maui fished the Hawai'ian islands up from the ocean.25 That's an origin story. The book of Genesis from the Christian Bible, "in the beginning God created the heaven and the earth," is an origin story.26 The story of Adam and Eve and the creation of humankind is also considered a quintessential Christian origin story.2728 The story of the girl/woman who fell from the sky and came to rest on the back of The Great Turtle, who in turn became the Earth, is an origin story.29 These are all examples of culturally specific origin stories, and virtually every culture on earth has one or more origin stories.

In pop culture, and specifically in comic book culture, the origin story tells how the superhero became a superhero. Peter Parker became Spider-Man because he was "bitten by a radioactive spider" that gave him special powers.30 Superman became Superman by being hurled to earth just before the destruction of his home planet Krypton.31 Wonder Woman actually has a few different origin stories, but most suggest that she's a powerful woman of divine and/or royal origin raised in an Amazonian culture who then emigrates to the United States to fulfill her destiny fighting evil.32

So, how does this concept of the origin story apply to L.M. Montgomery and her readers? Specifically, how does it apply to the transition of Montgomery readers to Montgomery scholars and artists?

Like this: Every L.M. Montgomery scholar that I've ever met has an L.M. Montgomery origin story. When and how did they first fall in love with L.M. Montgomery's work? What's their recollection of first reading Montgomery? If they're scholars, when did they first know they wanted to do scholarly work on L.M. Montgomery? Likewise with artists. When and how did they turn that corner from Montgomery reader to Montgomery writer, scholar, creator? The answers to these questions become Montgomery origin stories. Our Montgomery origin stories, in turn, elucidate our transition from Montgomery readers to Montgomery writers.33

Many Montgomery scholars include their origin stories in their scholarly works. I know how Elizabeth Epperly fell in love with Montgomery's works and became a Montgomery scholar, because I've read her books.34 Because I've read Gabriella Åhmansson's works, I know not only know her Montgomery origin story, but I know the Montgomery origin story of the first Swedish translator of L.M. Montgomery's work.35 What's more, telling these stories in the act of scholarship replicates the meta-reader experience within Montgomery's own novels. That is, these scholars are not just offering readings of Montgomery's work, but also offering the story and image of themselves reading Montgomery's work. If I may riff on Catherine Sheldrick Ross' title, "Readers Reading L.M. Montgomery," these are readers reading, meta-reading, and meta-meta reading L.M. Montgomery, or, to put it another way, re-re-representing the act of reading as they read. They reenact the reader-writer transition that Montgomery's heroines enact, which is then re-read by future Montgomery scholars.

As a reader-writer friend of mine likes to say, "insert hall of mirrors here."36

I'd like to suggest that this concept of the Montgomery origin story—these tales that we tell of how we came to be Montgomery readers, scholars, and creators—is something distinct to Montgomery's work. It may not be unique to Montgomery, but then again, it's not common among other authors. I've been in Jane Austen classes and attended Jane Austen panels, and I've only ever heard a couple Jane Austen origin stories.37 As a scholar, I specialized in late nineteenth/early twentieth-century American literature, but I have never heard a Hemingway or Melville or F. Scott Fitzgerald origin story. But I have heard dozens and dozens of Montgomery origin stories and hope to hear hundreds more within my lifetime.38 In my opinion, that's no coincidence. I believe Montgomery origin stories exist in such abundance, in part, because Montgomery wrote us that way. She

modelled our scholarly and creative futures through the way she wrote her characters as readers and writers, through her depiction of their development from readers into writers, and through the way she crafted our response to them.



I Shared My LMM Story! Did You? 2020. Created by Trinna S. Frever.

Just as Montgomery portrayed her characters as readers in reading communities turned to writers in the larger world, she forecasts and shapes the community of Montgomery scholars that arises to share their own Montgomery stories. As Montgomery foretold—or as we retro-tell—we collectively form a reader-writerly community about and with Montgomery, in the spirit of The Story Club and The Patty's Place scholars. For Montgomery herself is a reader-turned-writer, and as such, joins us in our superheroic transformation from reader to creator.[39] We all exemplify reader response morphed into writer response, through our engagement with Montgomery's works.

So, I charge you, Montgomery readers and Montgomery superheroes, to go forth from your reading of this essay and create. Montgomery shows us how.

You can watch the video of Trinna S. Frever virtually presenting an earlier version of this research at the 2018 L.M. Montgomery conference on "Reading" here.

About the Author: Trinna S. Frever is a tenured professor turned fiction writer, specializing in intersections between oral storytelling, music, visual media, and print fiction (intermedia theory), and, more recently, depictions of reading and writing within fiction (meta-media theory). Frever is at work on three children's fantasy novels that are full of songs and stories: one featuring vintage aviation, one featuring quirky princesses, and one featuring wacky space aliens (as opposed to calmer, more sedate space aliens). Frever is also an avid Bookstagrammer. Please visit https://trinnafrever.com/.

Banner image derived from *Emily Climbs*. 1981. KindredSpaces.ca, 014 EC-AR.

- 1 Montgomery, *AIs* 139.
- 2 Montgomery, *AGG* 37; 240–1.
- 3 Montgomery, *AGG* 86.
- 4 Montgomery, *BC* 8.
- 5 For anyone unfamiliar with the term, Bookstagram is a segment of the social media platform Instagram™ devoted to talking about books. Annestagram is a lively subset of that discussion. Both the L.M. Montgomery Institute and I may be found in these Bookstagram discussions, along with numerous other Anne scholars and fans. Some of my favourite tags for Anne and Montgomery discussions include #12daysofannestagram, #lmmontgomery, #anneofgreengables, and my own #lmmontgomerymonday. Please go to @yourlmmstory, #yourlmmstory, or *Your LMM Story*, yourlmmstory.com for information on our current project related to this presentation.
- 6 Montgomery, *AIs* 71.
- 7 The premise that a printed book is identical in all its reproductions, yet individual to all its readers (a seeming paradox and yet also true) is a basic tenet of reader response theory, as defined by scholars like Jane Tompkins. Jane Tompkins's *Sensational Designs* was particularly influential for me during my early study of reader response and new historicism. For more on reader response, see also Tompkins, ed., *Reader Response Criticism: From Formalism to Post-Structuralism*.
- 8 Montgomery, *AGG* 240–1.
- 9 Montgomery, *AGG* 242–3.
- 10 Montgomery, *AGG* 192–3; 210.
- 11 Montgomery, *AIs* 112–6.
- 12 I see this concept of communal creativity extending to the group of King children and their friends in *The Story Girl* and *The Golden Road*, though in their case, the community is based in oral storytelling rather than books. They frequently participate in oral storytelling circles that translate into adult careers as writers and orators.
- 13 Montgomery, *AA* 155.
- 14 Montgomery, *AA* 156.
- 15 Montgomery, *AA* 157–8.
- 16 Montgomery, *AA* 158.
- 17 Montgomery, *AA* 158.
- 18 Montgomery, *ENM* 129.

- 19 As a fiction writer, I often put female readers in my stories/manuscripts/novels, because I remember so fondly that moment of reading a book as a child, coming across a bookish heroine, and thinking “Oh! She’s like me!”
- 20 I first encountered these terms and concepts through Patricia Waugh’s book *Metafiction*. My analysis here departs from Waugh’s in that Waugh emphasizes books that use these precepts as structural principles for the entirety of the work, whereas this analysis is more interested in the metafictional moment in works that are otherwise committed to the world within the books—Anne’s world, Emily’s world—as their own full-fledged narrative realities.
- 21 “The fourth wall” is a commonly used cinematic/theatrical term to describe the invisible wall between the audience and the narrative content when viewing a film, performance, or television show. Most fictional works will avoid breaking the fourth wall, with the viewer as a detached observer of the material unfolding before them, though some films, particularly documentaries, may break the fourth wall by having the participants in the film speak directly to the audience (or seem to). My early encounters with these concepts (though not necessarily using the “fourth wall” terminology) were through works by Andrew; and Bordwell and Thompson. I am influenced here by Andrew’s discussion of Bazín and of “realistic” vs. “formalistic” films, whereby films that call attention to their constructedness (a technique associated with deconstruction/poststructuralism) are often deemed “formalistic” rather than “realistic.” I would contend that they may, in fact, be more realistic than those works that participate in the facade of an onscreen reality that isn’t itself constructed. Though Montgomery’s works are not generally considered metafictional, formalistic, or poststructural in their construction (because we participate in the world of the books as its own “real” world and engage in the readerly suspension of disbelief), Montgomery’s use of the reader-turned-creator, and its potential effect on the actual readers of her books, is a highly metafictional/formalistic/poststructural narrative strategy and ripe for analysis using these concepts that postdate her work.
- 22 Montgomery, *AIs* 140–1; 219.
- 23 My stringent standards for Montgomery adaptation have led me to avoid most Montgomery adaptations as a rule, so I cannot speak at this time as to whether more recent visual adaptations replicate, extend, modify, or bear some other relationship to this concept of Anne as reader-turned-creator.
- 24 While poststructural analysis does not generally concern itself with the primary, favouring concepts of identity, time, and text as multi-faceted and fluctuating (rather than unified, stable, and chronologically fixed), I nonetheless synthesize poststructural analysis and the concept of the origin story here. Since origin stories—despite the name—are themselves often varied and fluctuating, existing in many versions that shift across tellers and time, their unfixed quality suits them to poststructural discussion. My own understanding of poststructuralism is influenced by my reading of selections from Derrida, *Of Grammatology* and *Writing and Difference*; Gates; and Weedon during my graduate school years.
- 25 I first heard a version of the Maui story from a M?ori hei matau carver residing on O’ahu during a visit there in the early 2000s. My understanding of the story and its context has developed through attendance at a number of conferences that emphasize oral history and oral storytelling, in particular the Native American Literature Association’s symposia and the University College of Cape Breton’s storytelling symposia. I particularly recall Leilani Basham’s work on Hawai’ian orality, music, and poetry, though I do not recall if she mentioned the Maui story specifically in her 2007 NALS presentation. Since then, I’ve seen/heard the Maui-fishing-the-islands-from-the-sea-story in numerous cultural and pop cultural contexts ranging from the PBS astronomy show *Star Gazers* ("The Fish Hook and the Scorpion!") to the film *Moana*, wherein the animated Maui self-references his own story. Of course, anytime Disney attempts to portray an international or indigenous culture, it will raise legitimate concerns about colonization and appropriation. For perspectives on these issues, see Diaz; Ngata; Teaiwa; and “Voice of the Islands.” All origin stories referenced in this essay are included with the intent of respect for the cultures that produce them. I thank the tellers from whom I first heard these stories and offer respect to their ancestors.

- 26 Genesis 1:1. All origin stories referenced in this essay are included with the intent of respect for the cultures that produce them. I thank the tellers from whom I first heard these stories and offer respect to their ancestors.
- 27 Genesis 2:7–3:24.
- 28 One of the particular challenges of working with oral storytelling in scholarly research is that it can be difficult to document stories heard at conferences, in classrooms, in storytelling circles, at community gatherings, in family homes, and in other environments where stories are verbally shared. For this documentation, I have chosen five online sources that include versions of the story that I recall as the Turtle Woman story. They vary slightly from one another and from my own recollections of this story. This discrepancy could be due to subjective memory (mine or the tellers' or both); the relative accuracy, inaccuracy, authenticity, or inauthenticity of sources; and/or the natural variation in oral stories from teller to teller. Only respect is intended for the cultures discussed herein, the people currently practising them, and their ancestors.
- 29 For versions of this story, see "The Earth: Iroquois Creation Myth"; "The Great Turtle"; "The Haudenosaunee Creation Story"; "Native American Turtle Mythology"; and "Origin Stories—Sky Woman." All origin stories referenced in this essay are included with the intent of respect for the cultures that produce them. I thank the tellers from whom I first heard these stories and offer respect to their ancestors.
- 30 "Spider-Man (Peter Parker)."
- 31 "Superman."
- 32 Comic culture, like oral storytelling, is often an unfixed narrative style, with characters shifting and morphing in various retellings. Wonder Woman exemplifies this. At the time of writing the first version of this essay, the DC Comics website was surprisingly vague on Wonder Woman's origin story, perhaps because it varies so widely in different adaptations and incarnations. See "Wonder Woman," Characters, *DC Comics*. Since the first version of this essay, the DC Comics website has been updated with a link to a more specific and unified Wonder Woman origin story. See "Wonder Woman," Origins, *DC Universe*. For an overview and discussion of feminist implications to the various Wonder Woman stories, see Bastién. As a child, I myself viewed the Lynda Carter live action version of the Wonder Woman story, as well as her adventures on the "Super Friends" cartoon as part of the Justice League of America.
- 33 Kate Scarth and I have created a website, working in cooperation with the L.M. Montgomery Institute, to collect readers' Montgomery reading experiences and LMM origin stories: *Your LMM Story*. Please visit yourlmmstory.com for project details. Additional information may be found in the *Journal of L.M. Montgomery Studies* and on social media @yourlmmstory.
- 34 Epperly retells her first encounter with Montgomery's *Anne of Green Gables* in the introduction to *Through Lover's Lane: L.M. Montgomery's Photography and Visual Imagination* (6). Epperly also recounts her own scholarly journey through Montgomery's scrapbooks and visual ephemera in the same introduction, giving the reader a mental image of Epperly-as-scholar studying Montgomery-as-writer and Montgomery-as-visual artist (1–7).
- 35 Åhmansson "Mayflowers" 15; 14.
- 36 The "hall of mirrors" comment stems from my friend Heather Anne Pettypiece. In conference, my intention was to invite other Montgomery fans and scholars to share their Montgomery origin stories in the moment. Instead, we are collecting individuals' LMM stories using the previously mentioned website, yourlmmstory.com. Please note that any stories shared on this website may be referenced by Montgomery scholars Trinna Frever (me) and Kate Scarth in future research.
- 37 I think of Austen here, in part, because both she and Montgomery have massive, vibrant twenty-first century fan bases and scholar bases, with overlap between the two. I also think of Austen in this context because I had a magnificent university course on Jane Austen with Professor Adela Pinch, yet I do not recall ever hearing Professor Pinch's own Austen origin story. I have since learned that some exploration

of Austen origin stories occurs in the book *Among the Janeites*, and I thank Dr. Kate Scarth for introducing me to this volume. I may soon hear many more Austen origin stories, however, since we are currently discussing a project to collect them, just as we have for Montgomery stories. Do Janeites have these stories in abundance after all? Stay tuned for @yourJAstory and/or @yourAustenstory.

- 38 This will become possible sooner than anticipated, due to the aforementioned @yourlmmstory project. For project details or to share your story, go to Your LMM Story, yourlmmstory.com
- 39 So many examples of Montgomery's reading exist in her novel references and journals that I won't even begin to catalogue them here. For my own exploration of her Shakespearean references and their gender implications, see Frever. We are all deeply indebted to Rea Wilmshurst and Emily Woster for their thorough documentation of many of the references in Montgomery's works and for all the future work that may arise from this grounding.

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