Double Vision in The Blythes Are Quoted: Reading Marked External References

DOI
https://doi.org/10.32393/jlmms/2022.0001
Published on
Wed, 04/06/2022 - 10:22

In common with many of her earlier works, L.M. Montgomery's final text, *The Blythes Are Quoted*, is rich in references to external sources. This article examines marked external references in *The Blythes*, suggesting that they introduce both straight and deviant—"double-vision"—readings of the textual sections in which they appear.

To quote is to deal in dualities. At their most basic level, quotations within a text signal visibly the insertion of additional voices into a narrative ostensibly controlled by another. In English typography, direct quotation is usually initiated and concluded with doubled marks, as if even in typography, quotation is acknowledged as an exercise in duality. In the broader sense, quotation does not always rely on the typographic marks, and snippets of text, reusing of plot material, and other types of intertextual references all offer the kinds of doubled perspectives provided by direct quotation, but without the visible signals. These intertextual references allow authors to engage not only with the voices, thoughts, and ideas of others, but also with the past, both with their own past in the form of previous works or autobiographical incidents as well as with a larger community of previous works, which may or may not be familiar to the immediate reader. By their nature, quotation and other kinds of intertextual references allude to language and events that have been uttered prior to the time of the current narration and thus recontextualize past sentiments and rework words and ideas in terms of the demands of the new text. The narrative rich in intertext creates a "polyphony of words and voices that are ours and not ours, past and not-past, mingling while standing back, both presence and beyond presence."[1] L.M. Montgomery's final text, *The Blythes Are Quoted*, is just such a polyphony, reworking previously published stories and poems, revisiting characters and events in Montgomery's fictional universe, and incorporating intertextual references from Montgomery's capacious store of previous reading.

The publication history of *The Blythes* is as complicated as the work. Elizabeth Epperly's "Foreword" and Benjamin Lefebvre's "Afterword," "A Note on the Text," and "'That Abominable War!'" have charted the publication history of the stories contained in the book and the posthumous publication of the abridged and complete versions of the volume. Briefly, *The Blythes* was received by Montgomery's publishers, McClelland and Stewart, the day of her death in 1942 and remained entirely unpublished until 1974 when a selection of the stories was published under the title *The Road to Yesterday*. The complete text was only published in 2009, as a result of Lefebvre's efforts. Montgomery had published at least five of the stories and many of the poems contained in *The Blythes* as separate pieces prior to their inclusion in the full text delivered to the publisher in 1942. Some pieces, like the story "A Dream Comes True," discussed here, appear in Montgomery's lists of pieces accepted for publication, although there is currently no trace of the original version of the text.2 Some of the others exist in alternate versions in magazine back catalogues.3

Montgomery's work in general contains many examples of intertextual references in the form of direct quotations, semi-quotations, allusions, and other miscellaneous cultural references. In coining the term intertextuality, Julia Kristeva developed an aptly nuanced notion of the phenomenon that seems particularly salient to the discussion of *The Blythes*, where intertextuality is practically a leitmotif. Kristeva simultaneously views all texts as a mosaic of quotation, where any text necessarily is in communion with previously written literature, and as a more direct relationship between any two texts that can be manifested through reference, allusion, or direct quotation.4 *The Blythes* operates in both these senses of intertextuality and, in particular, employs what Swedish linguist Per Linell calls a practice of recontextualization. For Linell, recontextualization is a meaning-making process whereby "selected parts of discourse and their meanings in their prior 'quoted' discourse-in-context are used as resources in creating new meaning in the 'quoting' text."5 Recontextualization processes, quotations, and other forms of intertextual references engage the memory of the reader, relying on the recollection of the original context to shape new contexts, sometimes forgetting portions of the old in the process. Intertextuality thus brings in other voices to provide additional richness to the communicative context into which they are imported.

As the title indicates, *The Blythes Are Quoted* is specifically about extratemporal material recontextualized and given new meaning in this, Montgomery's final, work. Some of this material exists at least in some form in her earlier works, while other material is drawn from external sources. In *The Blythes*, the logic of quotation works as a structuring device, authorizing the inclusion of Blythe family speech into all included material, and as an exercise in duality as the book is cloven into pre– and post–First World War sections. Like typographic quotation marks, *The Blythes* opens and closes with the recitation of two war poems, "The Piper" and "The Aftermath," which are attributed to previous moments in other Montgomery novels. For the purposes of my analysis and argument, I will examine examples from *The Blythes* for which a character directly invokes an external source, named or unnamed, specifically to comment upon events, which in turn provides an additional interpretative vision for the reader. In a polyphonic text like *The Blythes* that contains any number of references to external sources, those marked as external within the text add not only to the chorus of voices that make up the whole but also to what I am calling a "double vision," potentially affecting a reader's sense of what the text is suggesting. Since these references are marked as external by characters within the work, they are not just part of the background mosaic of intertextuality but marked off as particularly important within the text as a whole.

Using the trope of vision to discuss these marked external references allows me to capture how this form of intertextuality authorizes two modes of textual interpretation. Double vision—diplopia—is a visual disturbance whereby two images of one object appear beside or partially superimposed upon one another. The condition thus disrupts normal perception and confounds previously stable notions of reality. In real-life cases, it is a pathology, something to be corrected through surgery, medication, or specialized glasses. In *The Blythes*, double vision produces insight that is both deviant—that disrupts normal perception—and revelatory, producing a layer of perception that enriches or enhances comprehension. In this way, the intertextual references provide the reader with additional layers of insight into the individual texts in which they appear and into the larger body of work Montgomery creates and reworks throughout *The Blythes*.

Previous studies of *The Blythes* have addressed the intra-referential quality of the text, often remarking that the dark quality of the material in the text—the book recounts homicide, suicide, felicide, illegitimate births, insanity, alcoholism, embezzlement, a disturbing kidnapping, as well as ordinary death, gossip, and small-mindedness—presents a kind of critical exploration of Montgomery's earlier works, if not an outright refutation of her often-optimistic themes. "The text," Lefebvre notes, "appears to be an unflinching exploration of the downside of everything that Montgomery's career seems to encompass."[6] For Epperly, *The Blythes*'s existence is a "debunking of Montgomery as a sunny, one-song warbler."[7] Laura Robinson goes further, arguing that in *The Blythes*, Montgomery created a parody of her own writing which, while "re-placing and revaluing what has gone before … trades on the iconic Anne but also demolishes readers' expectations of the beloved redhead."[8] The scholarly consensus has been that, through the intertextual linking of events and characters in *The Blythes* with those in earlier works, Montgomery recontextualizes her own literary universe, making it a darker and more complicated place.[9] Irrespective of a darkening of tone, this complexity is attained thematically and structurally whenever references are marked explicitly as extra-textual by characters and overtly direct readerly attention to "deviant" or critical reading through their inclusion. In particular, the marked external textual references found in the final poem "The Aftermath" (read in tandem with the opening poem "The Piper"), the novella "Some Fools and a Saint," the comic "A Dream Comes True," and the closing story, "The Road to Yesterday," challenge readers to accept a fictional reality that simultaneously accommodates a "straight" and a distorted view of the text, that is, to develop the capacity for double vision.[10]

The Framing Poems

To determine how quotation and other recontextualization strategies in *The Blythes* add additional layers of meaning, I will begin by focusing on the framing poems "The Piper" and "The Aftermath," which operate as literary quotation marks, appearing first and last in the work and marking the beginning and ending of this collection of stories, poems, and connecting dialogues. Although the marked external reference occurs only in "The Aftermath," the poems operate as opening and closing quotation marks for *The Blythes* as a whole because they can be read together as a reflection upon the doubled catastrophe of the two world wars and how the repetition of hostilities changed the way people viewed the arc of history. Both poems are attributed within the world of *The Blythes* to Anne's son Walter, who died at the front during the First World War, "The Piper" taking place before the First World War and "The Aftermath" imagining a postwar world. Described by Epperly as a "lacklustre lyric" and a "tepid endorsement of war,"[11] "The Piper," which opens the book proper, combines the figure of an actual piper employed as part of the recruiting effort in Montgomery's home of Leaskdale during the war with the sinister figure of the Pied Piper of Hamelin who lures children to their deaths. Although the poem is

presented in *Rilla of Ingleside* as ostensibly a lukewarm patriotic war lyric, it is not a poem that necessarily offers even a "tepid" pro-war message as the reuse of the Pied Piper story might indicate. Susan Fisher has suggested that the "insipid" quality of the "The Piper" might be the result of Montgomery's own ambivalence toward patriotic war lyrics, an argument that resonates with the claims here that the reader is offered competing interpretations or visions of the subject matter introduced in the text.12

Specifically, Montgomery's use of the poems "The Piper" and "The Aftermath" to frame the text has been interpreted as Montgomery's re-evaluation of the patriotic stance found in her war novel *Rilla of Ingleside*.13 While mentioned in *Rilla of Ingleside* as a successful poem,14 the full text of "The Piper" appears only at the beginning of *The Blythes*, with a note from Montgomery that "many people have written me, asking me where they could get it." The poem, Montgomery continues, "has been written recently" and "seems even more appropriate now than then."15 The precise "now" of Montgomery's note is unclear, but the complete text of the poem was surely written near the end of her life in 1942. Thus, *The Blythes* does not open directly with pre–First World War material as it announces in a note previously—"The first half of this book deals with life before the First World War. The second part deals with it after the war"16—but with a Montgomery poem, written during the Second World War and attributed to the dead First World War soldier Walter. From the beginning of *The Blythes*, the reader is, therefore, presented with a complicated recontextualization strategy whereby both chronology and authorial identity are muddled in the service of recontextualizing earlier published material.

The interpretation of the stance on war taken in "The Piper" is certainly far from straightforward. How, for example, is the reader to understand the repeated word "matter," used twice in the two stanzas? The first "matter" appears early in the poem, in the line "[n]o matter how those who loved might implore," where it suggests the children have followed the piper to their deaths despite appeals by their parents. The second appearance of "matter" is toward the end of the poem, where it appears in an open-ended question, "What matter that if Freedom still / Be the crown of each native hill?" This second "matter" seems to suggest two interpretations at once. First is the suggestion that the deaths of young soldiers like Walter, the voice and ostensible author of the poem, are not important in face of the greater good, "Freedom." Simultaneously, "matter" argues that it is of no importance if freedom exists or not when compared to the value of the individual young life and that abstract notions such as freedom cannot enter into the calculus of loss. "The Piper" thus strikes an ambivalent note at the opening of *The Blythes*, leaving the reader uncertain about who is speaking and what is being said.

Montgomery also attributes the final poem of *The Blythes*, "The Aftermath," to Walter, claiming that it was sent to his mother after his death at Courcelette. "The Aftermath" cannot be read as a war endorsement of any kind, as it presents the nightmare visions of a soldier who survived the war but is haunted by the image of a young man he killed "horribly and … was glad."17 The message of "The Aftermath" might be clearer than that found in "The Piper," but much about the conversation that follows the poem is not. Although the poems preceding "The Aftermath" attributed to Walter are discussed by several members of the family who seem to be in attendance during the reading of "The Aftermath," the discussion of "The Aftermath" is limited to Jem and Anne. Montgomery's setting here is almost cinematic, with the rest of the family present in the room fading out of focus and Anne and Jem being profiled in the foreground to converse. So intimate is the conversation between mother and son that it is not even entirely clear if the poem has actually been read to the family party at all or if it is only the subject of conversation between Anne and Jem. The narrator of *The Blythes* states that Anne "has

never read [the poem] to anyone but Jem Blythe,"18 and although it is typographically located as part of the "Au Revoir" family poetry interlude, its reading may not actually have been a part of that gathering. The discussion of the poem opens with Jem's reassuring Anne that the first-person narrator of "The Aftermath" is only a literary device—that Walter had never bayonetted anyone in the manner depicted in the poem—and that the poem represents Walter's imagining what it would be like to have killed a man in battle, but the poem's stark depiction of war and the bayonetted boy "writhing … like a worm"19 make the distinction between Walter's active or passive involvement in the scene of little importance.

As the conversation (and the book itself) ends, Jem introduces another poetic voice into the discussion: "Who was it said, 'We forget because we must'? He was right."20 "He" is British poet and essayist Matthew Arnold, and the poem Jem quotes is "The Absence," a title that echoes both the title of "The Aftermath" and Walter's absence within the second half of *The Blythes*. "The Absence" is part of Arnold's longer work "Switzerland," a multi-segmented poetry cycle focused on lost love. The lines from "The Absence" are almost the last words in *The Blythes*, although Arnold's poem itself argues for a very different mechanism for forgetting than what Jem puts forward during the conversation with his mother or Walter imagines in "The Aftermath." Jem seems to be arguing that forgetting functions as a psychological survival mechanism and a defence against painful memory and that Walter's poem claims that forgetting is impossible for those who have experienced trauma. Arnold's poem, on the other hand, proposes that forgetting works counter to the natural desires of the individual. For Arnold, individuals forget "because we must / And not because we will," and forgetting occurs as a result of being filled with the "petty dust"21 of the quotidian, rather than as a consequence of an act of will in response to a past trauma that threatens present well-being. Like the ambiguous use of "matter" in "The Piper," which both justifies and dismisses the worth of organized violence to achieve an ideological goal, Jem's recontextualization of Arnold's language points to opposing interpretations within the poetic framework of the role of the memory and forgetting in a human life. Through Jem's inclusion of the Arnold quotation, *The Blythes* offers a complex vision of forgetting which is simultaneously an impossibility, a willful act of self-defence, and a natural process of silting up the streams of remembrances.

The two Montgomery poems that open and close *The Blythes* thus frame an ambiguous fictional space—a space that is before, during, and after the First World War—in part through the mobilization of the marked reference to the Arnold poem. This powerful framing device with its introduction of complex themes does indeed suggest that *The Blythes* is in part a re-evaluation of Montgomery's sunnier earlier works in the manner that Epperly, Lefebvre, and Robinson suggest. It is not, however, simply a bleak reassessment of Montgomery's humorous, pastoral, or patriotic themes. As seen in the example of the quotation from Arnold, direct references to external texts indicate alternative readings of Montgomery's earlier works or comment upon the thoughts and actions of her characters in ways that are suggestive rather than nihilistic. Can forgetting be a form of healing, or is it a sign of an atrophied imagination? Could it be both at the same time? Is forgetting even possible at all? Montgomery offers different visions without suggesting that one is more correct than the other. The lens of the Arnold poem directs the reader to different interpretations than those suggested by Walter or Jem, without actually nullifying Walter's poetic arguments or Jem's analysis of the poem's meaning. In short, the double vision afforded by the Arnold reference holds judgment in abeyance, allowing the reader to appreciate the scope of possibilities without being directed to a proscribed interpretation.

Double Vision Through Seeing and Not Seeing

This kind of double vision as a layered interpretative strategy also structures the first story in the collection, "Some Fools and a Saint," which was originally published as a four-part serialized story in 1931 in the *Family Herald and Weekly Star* and was slightly reworked for inclusion in the publisher's copy of *The Road to Yesterday*.22 The story is a gothic parody reminiscent of Jane Austen's *Northanger Abbey* both in its canny acknowledgement of the excesses of the genre and its denouement revealing the real-world basis for supposedly spectral activity. The story unfolds in a rather conventional setting, in the haunted ancestral manor house occupied by siblings Lucia and Alec Field (Long Alec), the children of a deceased tyrannical father, and their ostensibly paralyzed cousin, Alice. The community of Mowbray Narrows has long given up solving the mystery of the haunted Field mansion, avoids discussing the topic in public, and discourages the newly arrived Methodist minister, Curtis Burns, from moving to the manse or engaging himself in the Fields' affairs. When Curtis announces that he will begin boarding with the Fields, the old minister, Mr. Sheldon, rather enigmatically issues a command that he should "remember John Wesley"23 when considering the possible nature of the Field haunting.

In mentioning Wesley, Mr. Sheldon is not merely attempting to remind Curtis of the founder of their religious denomination but also directing his attention (as the text directs the reader's) to accounts of the haunting of Wesley's childhood home, Epworth Rectory in Lincolnshire, between 1716 and 1717. The account of the Epworth haunting was published at least twice, in 1791 and 1835, by the Wesley brothers John and Samuel. Appearing only when members of the immediate Wesley family circle were home, the Epworth ghost (called Jeffrey) haunted the rectory for a few months but took hold on the imaginations of the Wesley family, who returned to the topic in their private letters for many years afterward. In these family accounts, brother John assumes the role of the ghost-hunting detective attempting to make some sense of the Epworth events for his family. In "Some Fools," the young minister does indeed "remember Wesley" and, like him, sets about trying to solve the mystery of the Field family's haunting even though others, including Mr. Sheldon, Dr. Gilbert Blythe, and the Field family themselves, have largely written off the affair.

Like the Field spook, the Epworth ghost was clearly a family affair. Jeffrey was seldom seen by the servants who slept in the house and directed particular attention to the father and two of the Wesley daughters, Hetty and Emilia. Writing after the death of his parents, John Wesley admits that a marital dispute may have been the "the key to this circumstance" and that his father had abandoned the family for a year before the hauntings occurred, reappearing shortly before Jeffrey began terrorizing the rectory.24 For her part, sister Emilia, whose married name of "Harper" Montgomery uses as the surname of the Field cousin, Alice, interprets the Epworth ghost as "an opportunity of convincing myself past doubt or scruple of the existence of some beings besides those we see" and as a kind of spiritual trial leading to increased faith. As late as 1750, Emilia Harper writes to her brother about the relationship between the "wonderful thing called by us Jeffrey" and his role in attending to her "against any extraordinary new affliction."25

There is some suggestion that Long Alec and Lucia also view their ghost both as a kind of spiritual trial and as inextricably tied to their intimate domestic circle in a manner reminiscent of the Wesleys and their relationship to the spectral Jeffrey. Like the Wesleys, the Field/Harper family reacts in different ways to the supernatural events in the home but the Fields and Harpers are in general far more stoic than their frightened servants, some of whom leave the manse after experiencing the ghostly events firsthand. Alec, who says very little throughout

the story, largely ignores the hauntings and resists any discussions of the events. Lucia displays only slightly more emotion when confronted with the ghost's malevolence and prefers a kind of silent martyrdom in the face of the spectre's direct provocations. In fact, all the residents of Field House wish to present themselves as patient sufferers of various kinds: Alice suffers from her feigned injury, Lucia from her degradation at the hands of her cousin, and Alec from a family legacy that forces him to reject the girl he desires.

But the Fields' masochistic suffering exists alongside a trait nearly everyone in the Mowbray Narrows community attributes to them—that of excessive family pride. "We Fields," Alice declares, "are a clannish crew ... and always back each other up and keep fast hold of our traditions." Lucia displays her "Field pride" and takes the hauntings "a little too coolly," almost endorsing the spectre's scuttling of a marriage proposal between Alec and a girl whose family Lucia considers below the Fields. It is, Alice notes, "a disgraceful thing to have ghosts in the family," and at least in part, this disgrace motivates Alec's refusal to discuss the haunting or to investigate the events. Even the Field manse itself participates in what Curtis calls the "Fieldness" of the family, bearing "an odd resemblance to a motherly old hen, with little chickens peeping out from under her breast." Looking at the house that shelters the three young Fields, united in their shared suffering and their desire to control the narrative of their victimization, Curtis quotes an old aunt, "There's *family* behind that."[26]

As the reader discovers at the end of the story, there is indeed family behind the entire affair, and when Curtis reveals Alice's role in the hauntings, Lucia and Alec simply refuse to comment, being "too stunned to even be angry."[27] Other residents like Mr. Sheldon and Dr. Blythe reveal that they had always suspected that Alice was not what she seemed, and while the narrator never makes clear how much the siblings have known about Alice's role in the hauntings, it is clear they suspected a great deal, and there are hints the siblings may be more stunned by the public revelation of Alice's role—a role they may have been trying to disguise—than by the knowledge that Alice was behind the nocturnal events. Many of the spectral events occur when only Alice, Lucia, and Alec are in the house, and when Curtis becomes so obsessed with solving the mystery that he risks doing so, Alec and Lucia indicate that they would like him to leave. In fact, as Curtis reflects, "[e]verybody seemed in a plot to get him away from the old Field place."[28]

The advice given to the young minister and thus to the reader to "remember Wesley" draws attention to the similarities between Curtis's motivation for disguising the identity of the Field ghost and Wesley's admission that his parents, if alive, would be "pained" by his public exposure of their rift and its relationship to the Epworth haunting.[29] In the case of the Fields, admitting to a ghost may have been less disgraceful than admitting to what Mr. Sheldon and Dr. Blythe call an "abnormal" woman in the family. Alice's behaviour—feigning paralysis and torturing her family for five years—is quite simply insane, and mental instability would have brought far more shame on the family than ghosts. Immediately after Alice's role in the affair is exposed, the cloak of secrecy drops. The two ministers agree never to speak of the events again, and in the last paragraph of the story, Lucia literally runs away from Curtis as he tries to propose. Alice's insanity, the father Winthrop's tyranny, and the collective past of the family remain unexamined after the revelation and Alice's subsequent departure. The mention of the Epworth Rectory haunting, however, provides a way of viewing the Fields' haunting that hints at the complexity of both inter-familial relationships and the relationship between families and the larger social world they inhabit. The unresolved Epworth story as a double for the Fields' haunting acts as a lens through which the straight narrative can be filtered.

Notably, the Wesley/Epworth affair is not mentioned in the 1931 version of the story serialized in *Family Herald and Weekly Star*. The serialized "Some Fools and a Saint" differs from the later version as published in *The Blythes*. At the structural level, the material pertaining to Dr. and Mrs. Blythe in the *The Blythes*'s version of the story conforms to the quotation trope of the volume. But more interestingly, the addition of the Wesley/Epworth material to the story contributes to the ambiguity of the ending, while introducing and enhancing the thematic structure of *The Blythes*, which meditates on the persistence of the past and on the effect of past trauma on the present. The Epworth addition, with its emphasis on familial and spiritual trials, provides a lens through which the traditional ghost story elements of "Some Fools" can be read both as a gothic narrative and as a meditation on the lasting impact of previous events.

Double Vision of What Is and What Might Have Been

If the Arnold poem and the Epworth Rectory haunting offer alternate lenses through which to read sections of *The Blythes*, John Greenleaf Whittier provides Montgomery with an argument structure in "A Dream Comes True," which is placed in the first half of the book, between the fifth and sixth family poetry evenings. While "A Dream Comes True" is situated in the first half of *The Blythes*, I would argue that the story really rests at the centre of the collection, consolidating many of the important themes from the other sections of the book. The story concerns the life of Anthony Fingold, a Walter Mitty–like character (James Thurber published "The Secret Life of Walter Mitty" in 1939) who believes he would have been destined for a more adventurous and glamorous life had fate not arranged for him to have been born on the Upper Glen in Prince Edward Island.30 Anthony's fantasies frequently revolve around his childhood crush, Caroline Mallard Wilkes, despite his having been happily married to the very patient Clara for many years.

The story's comic adventure sequence where the crazed Caroline forces Anthony on a joyride dressed in pyjamas is set up through a sketch of him as a solid citizen, a handyman and elder of the church, happily married but lost in daydreams of piracy, tiger-stalking, and maiden-rescuing. In his immaturity Anthony imagines that he alone lives in a world of quiet desperation, while wife Clara is "perfectly contented with her narrow existence" as is "everybody he knew."31 Both intensely sensitive to public opinion and convinced that others gossip about him, Anthony at sixty years old regrets his well-behaved youth and his respectable present, longing for a more exciting life or at least to be allowed to wear a nightshirt to bed. Anthony joins other characters from *The Blythes* , such as Lincoln Burns from "Fool's Errand" and Timothy Randebusch from "Brother Beware," as unworldly men whose social or intellectual limitations are treated with impatient tolerance by their friends and family.

Montgomery has created a truly comic character in Anthony, and the story unfolds with impeccable comic timing and a strong cast of "pastoral" PEI characters. But "A Dream" hints at more serious themes as well and represents an engagement with ideas about the place of the past and, as in "The Aftermath" and "Some Fools," an examination of the shadow that the past can throw upon the present. In a manner similar to Jem's introduction of the Arnold poem in "The Aftermath" interlude, Anthony recites the lines "God pity us all, who vainly the dreams of our youth recall," and, although he cannot recall where he has "heard or learned these lines," he believes they "hit the mark."32 To Anthony, memories of his youthful fantasies serve to mark the distance between his early potential as an adventurer and his present reality as a married man and rural handyman.

The marked external reference, however, directs the reader toward the external source and presents an additional layer of interpretation whereby a past youth can impact present age. While Anthony remembers these particular lines from the fourth last stanza of Whittier's 1856 poem "Maud Muller" about the ability of youthful dreams to poison a life, the unquoted lines immediately after the ones he quotes—"For of all sad words of tongue or pen / The saddest are these: 'It might have been'"—are probably more familiar with readers. "Maud Muller" sketches an encounter between a judge and young farm girl, Maud, during which each imagines marrying the other and living a life corresponding to the other's social position—the judge would become a harvester, and Maud a wealthy lady. This brief encounter between the two young people serves as a cherished fantasy for both throughout their lives. The judge, married to a fashionable and cold woman, dreams of Maud, and the simple life. Maud, surrounded by poverty and hard work, dreams of the clean halls of the rich man's home.

"Maud Muller" effectively argues that forgetting can happen neither by force of will nor through the natural dimming of past experience, but rather that memory is integral to the pitiable human condition, which encompasses both the dreams of youth and the regret for actions not taken. Anthony, haunted by his imagined youthful failures of will, has spent his life in this kind of regret and dreams in the manner of Whittier's poetic couple. As a total work, however, "A Dream Comes True" sets about countering the romantic fantasy sketched in "Maud Muller" and does so through the obscure lines Anthony remembers, recontextualizing the lines from the poem and imagining what would happen if youthful dreams were to come true. For Anthony, this means being confronted by the fulfillment of his dreams in the form of a nightmarish parody of seduction. He is kissed against his will and made to undress, put on pyjamas, and crawl into bed by the haggard and completely mad Caroline about whom he has spun an intricate fantasy world. "Was this how dreams come true?" he asks himself several times while being accosted and molested at dagger-point.[33] In his encounter with the insane Caroline, Anthony's youthful memories do indeed become pitiable as his dreams of youth are transformed into nightmare.

"A Dream" does not, however, entirely dismiss the dreams of youth, and the story is not simply a refutation of the romanticism of "Maud Muller." Anthony finds gold, both in the literal form of stolen money tossed into the river and in his recognition of his love for Clara. He finally has had an adventure, learns to appreciate his wife, and probably receives reward money for returning the stolen cash. In short, the story's selective use of the "Maud Muller" quotation offers two ways of seeing the role of memory and childhood dreams. On the one hand, Anthony's idealized memory of Caroline has robbed him of his enjoyment of his actual life. However, the fulfillment of his dreams—finding out what might have been—reveals the nightmare that could have been his fate had he succeeded in winning her when they were young. On the other hand, the persistent memory of Caroline leads to a chain of events that provides Anthony in the end with the adventure and the happiness he has sought. Arguably, "Maud Muller," despite the better-known lines the story does not quote, also suggests that memory can serve a sustaining function, providing a fantasy escape for "us all," when confronted by the gap between what youth had dreamed and age provided. Through the less-familiar lines from "Maud Muller," the story becomes more than a joyride through PEI's back roads, but a multiple-layered examination of memory and forgetting.

Memory, Revisioning, and the Marriage Plot

In the same way that “The Piper” and “The Aftermath” can be read in tandem, the final story in *The Blythes Are Quoted*, “The Road to Yesterday,” can be seen in relationship to the opening story, “Some Fools.” “The Road” appears immediately before the “Au Revoir” poetry episode, which closes the volume. This story concerns the activities of young people, including Anne and Gilbert Blythe’s grandchildren, in the early years of the Second World War. The narrative follows young newspaper editor Susette King’s encounter with a man she believes to be her second cousin, Dick, at a farm belonging to family members. Susette is on the verge of becoming engaged to the “big fox man” Harvey Brooks and has momentarily escaped his family party at Glenellyn to revisit scenes of her childhood.

The version of “The Road” included in the *The Blythes*’s volume differs substantially from the one published in the January 1934 issue of the *Canadian Home Journal*. All of the Blythe family references were added in the later version to reflect the Blythe quotation motif. Susette’s newspaper name is changed from *Womanhood to Enterprise*. The story now has a wartime setting and ends with the couple setting off to Charlottetown rather than flying off to Peru. One external intertextual reference—the changes to the lines from *The Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám*, “A jug of tea … a crust of bread … and thou”—is marked as belonging to “Omar” in the 1934 story but appears without the ellipsis points and as an unmarked allusion in the *The Blythes*’s version. With the removal of the “Omar” reference, only one intertextual element is introduced as a marked external reference in the *The Blythes*’s version of “The Road,” although like the Arnold and Whittier quotations, this one too is unattributed. Adhering to the now familiar intertextual referencing strategy, the story has a character introduce the quotation while denying any knowledge of its provenance: Jerry—in the guise of the devilish cousin, Dick, whose cruelty is recounted in great detail—quotes lines from an obscure play, John Dryden’s *The Spanish Fryar, or The Double Discovery* (1681), while claiming to be ignorant of the source. “There is a pleasure sure in being mad / That none but madmen know,” Jerry recites, saying that he has heard Walter Blythe (Jem’s rather than Anne’s son) quoting these lines.[34] This quotation also appears in the 1934 version, although there it is not associated with a Walter of any generation. The association of “The Road” with Dryden is in many ways more overt in the 1934 version, which gives Harvey’s aunt’s name as Clorinda, a name appearing in Dryden’s operatic play *King Arthur*, whereas the aunt is Clara in *The Blythes*’s version.

The “pleasure … in being mad” lines are arguably better known than the Dryden play in which they appear, but the structural similarity between *The Spanish Fryar* and *The Blythes Are Quoted* suggests that keeping the marked reference to Dryden was more than simply a way to introduce another Blythe family reference into a story. *The Spanish Fryar* has two plots, one comic and one serious, that only loosely interact with one another. In his introduction and dedication to the play, Dryden notes of the two plots that he “could have rais’d a Play from either of them” but has “satisfied [his] own humour, which was to tack two Plays together; and to break a rule for the pleasure of variety.”[35] Later readers, including Walter Scott, found this strategy “tiresome,” “unnatural,” and improper.[36] *The Blythes*, of course, also has two distinct kinds of textual modes—the intimate Blythe family poetry evenings and the short stories—an arrangement present in neither the earlier publications of the 1974 collection *The Road to Yesterday* nor the 1934 version of the short story “The Road.”

Within the context of “The Road to Yesterday,” the Dryden quotation aligns airman and suitor Jerry Thornton with the Dryden military hero Torrismond, who is in love with Queen Leonora, already betrothed to Bertran. Montgomery has clearly adapted some elements of the convoluted *Spanish Fryar* plot to suit her story. Susette

(King rather than Queen), like Dryden's Leonora, faces a profound internal conflict between her sense of duty toward one suitor (Harvey) and her deep physical attraction to Jerry. In both "The Road to Yesterday" and *The Spanish Fryar*, the tensions are largely the result of mistaken identities and are resolved when the suitors are shown to be other than they seem. Dick is actually his kinder cousin Jerry; Torrismond is in reality the son of the deposed king.

The inclusion of Torrismond's lines about the joys of madness serves several purposes in "The Road." The reattribution of the lines to Jem's son Walter—a poet like his uncle and, as Jerry indicates, another madman—presages the collection of the poems from the older Walter in the "Au Revoir" section, which immediately follows "The Road." The lines also link the plot of "The Road" and its improbable doubles with Dryden's play in a manner that highlights both the double-suitor plot Montgomery uses frequently in *The Blythes* as well as with the not entirely satisfying denouement. The quotation sets up an explicit comparison between the lovers Jerry and Susette with the deeply problematic Torrismond and Leonora (the latter of whom sets into motion a plot to kill Torrismond's father) and contributes to what Caroline Jones describes as the haunted quality of the story, which disturbs the swiftly imposed happy ending.[37] The whirlwind wooing of Jerry and Susette, the physical claim Jerry makes upon Susette's body, the initial lies about Jerry's identity, and Jerry's immediate departure to the front all destabilize an easy acceptance of their relationship and their future together. *The Spanish Fryar* reference and the evocation of the difficult relationships and uneasy resolutions found in that play intensify the impression that all is not completely well on "The Road to Yesterday."

Dryden is an unusual source of intertextual material for Montgomery, and *The Spanish Fryar* is a relatively obscure play. While there can be no doubt that Dryden was on Montgomery's mind when she wrote "The Road"—the Torrismond/Leonora/Bertran relationship aligns quite neatly with the Thornton/King/Brooks triangle—it is an open question whether Dryden would be on the mind of Montgomery's readership. By explicitly flagging the quotation as an intertextual reference, however, Montgomery clearly marks the significance of the Dryden elements in "The Road" and, in the manner of the earlier stories discussed here, provides another way of viewing the events of the story that allows for the acceptance of the marriage plot while also suggesting that there is something contrived and unsatisfying about its contours. Although the denouement reveals that Jerry is not Dick, Susette falls in love with Dick, and, like Dick, Jerry forcibly kisses her, laying claim to her body and declaring that she "can never belong to anyone else." The disturbing ending of *The Spanish Fryar*, in which Torrismond marries the woman who has ordered his father killed, is thus interposed over the disturbing ending of "The Road," which sees Susette agreeing to marry a sexually aggressive man, the memory of whose cruelty "was intolerable."[38]

Conclusion

In examining quotations and intertextual references in *The Blythes Are Quoted*, this paper suggests ways in which Montgomery's final work consists of a polyphony of voices from not only her earlier fictional universe but also some of the literary touchstones with which she was familiar. She carefully selected these marked external references, I believe, to offer different visions of the events presented in the individual stories and, in the case of "The Aftermath," the structure of *The Blythes* as a whole. Three of the marked external references

discussed here are very similar both in form and in rhetorical purposes. “The Aftermath,” “A Dream Come True,” and “The Road to Yesterday” employ an almost identical introductory strategy whereby a character introduces a quotation or near quotation and marks it as external while simultaneously denying knowledge of its provenance. The imperative to “remember Wesley” found in “Some Fools” is different in form—it is an allusion to a text, a series of incidents as a whole, and not to specific words in a literary text. Like “A Dream Come True” and “The Road to Yesterday,” however, the Wesley source text structures some of the events in the story and, through that structure, interposes an additional interpretive lens through which the events can be read. While similar to “A Dream” and “The Road” in the way the external reference is signalled, the “Aftermath” quotation does not offer a structuring plot device. Rather, the Arnold quotation intervenes more directly into the interpretive framework surrounding both “The Aftermath” as a poem and the framing structure of *The Blythes*, a book very much about the recontextualization of past events and the role traumatic memory plays in this recontextualization.

The Blythes Are Quoted is an unusual book, which looks both forward toward the unmaking and remaking of the world following the two world wars and backward to the pastoral world of the original *Anne* novels prior to the First World War. The stories and poems contained in the book revisit Montgomery’s early work and the work of others, creating a conversation with other texts tied to the relationship of the past to the present. The marked external intertextual references addressed in this paper represent particularly interesting interventions that suggest ways of seeing plot elements and allow for both straight and deviant readings in the manner I have called double vision. This double vision is enabled through the source materials’ recontextualization from both their original textual location and often their use in previously published versions of Montgomery’s works. Together with unmarked allusions and references, both inter- and intratextual, Montgomery has created in *The Blythes Are Quoted* a complex and challenging work deeply engaged with the ways in which the past is never truly past and memories persist within individuals and the families they inhabit. The marked external references and the double vision afforded by them allow the reader insight into this temporal persistence through the fictional lives of Montgomery’s characters.

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Banner Image: Kristiansand, Norway. Photo by Susan Erdmann, December 2021.

- 1 Finnegan, *Why* 31.
- 2 Lefebvre personal communication with Lesley Clement, 4 Aug. 2021.
- 3 For a list of published magazine stories, see https://www.fadedpage.com/sc/montgomery.php.
- 4 Kristeva, “Word, Dialogue and Novel” 35–61.
- 5 Linell, *Approaching* 155.

- 6 Lefebvre, "'That Abominable War!'" 112.
- 7 Epperly, Foreword xii.
- 8 Robinson, "'Anne Repeated'" 66.
- 9 Montgomery's use of external sources has also been discussed in a recent article by Laura Leden, who addresses Montgomery's propensity for intertext in the *Emily* series, arguing that the pervasive references to other literary works often serve subversive purposes that pass unrecognized by younger readers but are "caught" by more mature readers who recognize the external references and understand the subversive commentary on gender norms they provide.
- 10 There is another marked external reference in *The Blythes*: Stephen Francis Barry (mis)quotes Pilate's "What is the truth?" toward the end of "Fancy's Fool" (167), which will not be dealt with at length here. This quotation also provides a lens through which both a straight reading (Esme Dalley was an impressionable child) and a deviant reading (Esme Dalley met a ghost) are rendered possible or at least equally "true." Unlike the texts that are the focus of this article, however, the marked external reference in "Fancy's Fool" does not tie the story's theme or structure to an external source text in the manner present in "Some Fools," "A Dream," or "The Road," or comment upon larger themes within *The Blythes* as whole as the reference in "The Aftermath" does.
- 11 Epperly, xi.
- 12 Fisher, "'Watchman'" 94.
- 13 Lefebvre, "'That Abominable War!'" 122.
- 14 Montgomery, *RI* 215.
- 15 Montgomery, *BAQ* 3.
- 16 Montgomery, *BAQ* xv.
- 17 Montgomery, *BAQ* 509.
- 18 Montgomery, *BAQ* 510.
- 19 Montgomery, *BAQ* 509.
- 20 Montgomery, *BAQ* 510.
- 21 Arnold, "Absence" 199.
- 22 Montgomery, "Some Fools and a Saint."
- 23 Montgomery, *BAQ* 10.
- 24 Wesley, *Works* 476.
- 25 Wesley, *Original Letters* 135, 277.
- 26 Montgomery, *BAQ* 23, 15, 22, 17 (emphasis in original).
- 27 Montgomery, *BAQ* 65.
- 28 Montgomery, *BAQ* 44.
- 29 Wesley, *Original Letters* 476
- 30 Montgomery, *BAQ* 176.
- 31 Montgomery, *BAQ* 178.
- 32 Montgomery, *BAQ* 179.
- 33 Montgomery, *BAQ* 190.
- 34 Montgomery, *BAQ 498.*
- 35 Dryden, *Spanish Fryar*, "Dedication" para. 4.
- 36 Paige, "'A Stranger'" 263. Scott edited an edition of Dryden's plays in 1808.
- 37 Jones, "The Shadows" 179.
- 38 Montgomery, *BAQ* 499, 496.

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Peer reviewed
Yes

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