

Introduction to L.M. Montgomery: Vision and Re-vision

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“Oh, if there only were not such a chasm between *seeing* a thing and getting it down on paper!”

—Chapter 19, *Emily Climbs*

The L.M. Montgomery Institute (LMMI) quoted these words from Emily Byrd Starr as an epigraph to its call for papers for the 14th International Biennial Conference, “L.M. Montgomery and Vision,” scheduled for 24–28 June 2020. This call for papers noted, “The word *vision* derives from the Latin *videre*, ‘to see,’ but as Montgomery knew, there is never a direct or straight line between the observing eye and the object that is seen (or not seen).” Throughout 2019, the LMMI conference planning committee, on which I served, confirmed keynotes, vetted the 100+ proposals, published a preliminary program, and prepared promotional blogs. We thought we had a clear vision of the paths leading to the June 2020 conference. The convoluted turns that these paths would take from early 2020 to the present moment (and beyond) were not something that anyone could have foreseen or for which anyone could have prepared. Two years later, as the LMMI began planning for the 15th International Biennial Conference, scheduled for 22–26 June 2022, the appropriate theme of “Re-vision” was chosen, an acknowledgement of the vicissitudes of the previous few years and their impact on ways of seeing and responding to what is seen.

2019–20: Vision Conference Planning

Conference planning for the “Vision” conference seemed to be progressing smoothly in late 2019 and early 2020. Conference co-chairs, Emily Woster (as previous Visiting Scholar) and me (as current Visiting Scholar), had circulated the call for papers with

a multitude of suggested topics:

Beyond topics relating to “visuality,” “vision” might also suggest, among other topics, (in)visibility, prescience, dreams, wisdom, imaginary or supernatural phenomena, apparitions. It could also be the visioning and re-visioning of material—including Montgomery's own life—for which she is renowned.

The conference theme will explore:

- Montgomery's visual descriptions and aesthetic; how she “sees” the world through her writing;
- Adaptations or *revisions* of Montgomery's life and works on/in film, stage, art, new media, and beyond;
- The art and artistry of the illustrators of Montgomery's works;
- Connections between vision and other senses in her fiction;
- Sight/seeing and the limitations of it or the enhancements and physical aids to it (e.g., glasses, binoculars, telescopes, camera lenses, etc.);
- Metaphors of vision (e.g., re/views, perspectives, visionaries, reflections, blindness, opacity/transparency, etc.) in and around the world of Montgomery;
- Re-seeing, revision, remembering, and nostalgia in Montgomery's creative and/or autobiographical processes;
- Things unseen, invisible, imaginary, or otherwise out of sight;
- And much, much more ... looking forward to seeing you in Charlottetown!

From the over one-hundred proposals we had received in response to this call, the vetting team made its recommendations, and the preliminary program was drafted. This program included two Wednesday, 24 June workshops and a cèilidh hosted by Bradan Press, and from Thursday to Sunday, 25–28 June, sixty-eight presentations (two plenaries and twenty-one concurrent sessions); three keynote addresses (from Marah Gubar, Kate Scarth, and me); an exhibition launch with artists' talks; a screening of *Amazing Grace*, a documentary on Aretha Franklin, to be introduced by Evelyn White; and the always popular bus tour of L.M. Montgomery's Island with Carolyn Strom Collins. There were delegates from thirteen countries: Austria, Canada, Finland, Germany, Ireland, Japan, Norway, Poland, Slovakia, Sweden, South Africa, United Kingdom, and United States. These were the days before virtual or hybrid options were common, and many delegates were making travel plans.

2020: Vision Conference Cancelled

In January 2020, we began to hear the occasional mention of a virulent pneumonia that had world health organizations concerned. Mid February this virus was given a name—COVID-19—and the World Health Organization (WHO) issued warnings and guidelines. I remember this period well, as I was spending four weeks from mid-February to mid-March with friends in Portugal, and from our rental-property balcony across from the Olhão waterfront market, the largest market in the Algarve, we watched as cafés, shops, and restaurants attempted to comply with social-distancing and hygiene regulations and eventually shuttered their premises. Media coverage picked up. On 11 March, WHO declared COVID-19 a pandemic, and in Canada, federal and provincial states-of-emergency were declared in the weeks that followed. Travel restrictions and bans, social distancing, self-isolation, masks (some people were even wearing gloves on my return flight from Portugal on 18 March), closures of schools and non-essential businesses and retail outlets ... these seem like distant history, although, as I write this on 9 April 2025, it is only five years ago. The images of local, national, and global suffering are ingrained in all our minds. The effects are still being felt financially, socially, culturally, and psychologically.

In fact, it was 9 April 2020 that the then-chair of the LMMI management committee, Philip Smith, announced the cancellation of the June conference. The conference planning committee and the management committee were still holding onto hope that this pandemic would be short-lived and that life would return to “normal,” with the LMMI even making a statement as late as 13 March that “[a]t this point there are no recommendations from our public health officials that would suggest the June conference on PEI must be cancelled, but as we know, the situation is fluid. While we hope to be able to proceed as usual, we also are developing contingency plans for the conference.”

A month later, however, cancellation was the only recourse:

Hosting an international conference this June is just not safe for members of our Montgomery community and those with whom we connect.

In important ways, nothing will replace the energy, joy, and fun of gathering in person. Especially at this difficult time for our world we recognize how Montgomery has been, in times of peril and distress, a source of deep consolation and of happy distraction. The L.M. Montgomery Institute committee has given a great deal of consideration over the past weeks to alternatives to an in-person conference should this cancellation become necessary.

Philip's statement outlined the various options that had been considered and rejected, and particularly poignant was his conclusion: "One reality is that we have all witnessed reports of great tragedy, sometimes very close to Montgomery community members, and we expect that losses may only grow in the weeks to come. Perhaps this is a time to make way for witnessing grief, and for honouring loss." As a contingency, a virtual conference had been discussed, but as Philip observed, "Another reality is that many of our presenters are feeling worn down, drained by relentless Zooming and videoconferencing. ... While preparing for and presenting virtually in June would be a fit for some, we did not want to add burden to, or exclude, those for whom this is just not the time."

24-28 June 2020: The Vision Forum

Meanwhile, Kate Scarth, chair of L.M. Montgomery Studies with the LMMI and editor of the *Journal of L.M. Montgomery Studies (JLMMS)*, and the two co-chairs of the originally planned conference, Emily Woster and I, had been considering the option of what came to be known as the "Vision Forum," a virtual platform hosted by the journal, its content available online in perpetuity. We put out a call for content and were ready to launch on 24 June (the day that many of us would have been in Charlottetown for the workshops and cèilidh), beginning with a welcome video from Kate, Emily, and me. In this video, we explained the rationale for this forum, thanked the many (many, many) people and organizations that had provided support of various kinds, and outlined what was to follow over the next six to eight months in written, recorded, and visual form: creative projects, scholarly content, and information about what the Institute had done over the past couple of years, what it was currently doing, and what its plans for the future were. I also mentioned "fun ... while we can't sip a glass of wine and throw back some oysters together—and, oh, how I'm going to miss my biennial lobster supper—we can enjoy a cèilidh, shop online for new books on Montgomery, and go on a virtual tour of Montgomery-related sites."

In addition to our "Welcome Message," the first day also saw the launch of the following:

- Eight welcome letters, from Kate Macdonald Butler, Lesley Clement, Elizabeth Epperly, Katherine Gottschall-Pass, Julie Pellissier-Lush, Kate Scarth, Philip Smith, and Emily Woster;
- Schedule for the five-day launch of the "L.M. Montgomery and Vision Forum";

- Preliminary program for the 14th Biennial International Conference had we been able to gather in person in Charlottetown;
- Abstracts and biographical statements of those in the original preliminary program;
- *MaudCast*: Season 01, Episode 01: “Launch of the Vision Forum,” hosted by Brenton Dickieson, with guest Lesley Clement;
- Yoshiko Akamatsu’s blog, “My Turning Point: The 2008 L.M. Montgomery International Conference”;
- #foundlmmontgomery Challenge, brought to you by Alyssa Gillespie @foundlmmontgomery on Instagram;
- “Pessimism Is as Pessimism Does: L.M. Montgomery and the Transformation of Experience,” a discussion starter by K.L Poe and Caroline Jones, moderated by Lesley Clement and Kate Scarth;
- Rita Bode’s blog introducing a keynote speaker (from the preliminary program) Lesley Clement;
- “Cèilidh,” a video celebrating the launch of *Anna Ruadh*, the Gaelic translation of *Anne of Green Gables*, with Bradan Press editor Emily McEwan-Fujita and translator Etta Moffatt;
- New Montgomery books available for purchase from Charlottetown’s local, independent bookstore, The Bookmark;
- Lesley Clement’s “Visual Culture, Storytelling, and Becoming Emily: An Illustrated Essay” (of which an updated version is published in the print volume).

Thursday, 25 June, featured a video recording of Julie Sellers’s “Envisioning Kindred Spirits: Anne Shirley’s Imagined Community” exploring Benedict Anderson’s concept of “imagined community” in “increasing agency among non-elites” and “how Anne’s consumption, discussion, and adaptation of the literary canon and popular genres, her word choice and language, and her understanding of unseen kindred spirits waiting to be discovered are representative of an imagined community.”

Montgomery’s kindred spirits, Sellers argues, “serve as a model for readers to envision their own such community in physical and virtual realms.” Her observations were extremely relevant in a time when virtual communities were springing up in lieu of access to physical communities during the pandemic, the impact of these virtual realities and the trust put in them being one of the many ways that ideas about vision and visuality were being impacted.

Also published on Thursday were the following:

- Simon Lloyd's recorded tribute to donors to the LMMI;
- Kate Scarth's "The L.M. Montgomery Institute: Projects and Possibilities";
- An interactive visual curation of the "Domestic Art Challenge" from Bonnie Tulloch and Heidi Haering;
- Holly Pike's blog introducing a keynote speaker (from the preliminary program) Marah Gubar;
- *MaudCast*: Season 01, Episode 02: "L.M. Montgomery and Nordic Translations," hosted by Brenton Dickieson, with guest Laura Leden.

Further timely content followed on Friday, 26 June, such as the video recording of Marah Gubar and Funing Yang's "Archives and Algorithms: Analyzing Anne's Monologues," a "joint discussion about data gathering and archival research" outlining their "evolving hypotheses about Anne's monologues," based in part on "materials from the Lincoln Center theatre archives about the 1937 dramatization of *Anne* by Wilbur Braun." This presentation "ultimately ... reads Anne's monologues—and even the moment when she sees a reflection of her own face and kisses it—less as a sign of narcissism than as a crucially sustaining form of self-love. Seeing yourself as lovable when no one else regards you that way is a quietly defiant act of radical self-care." Again, this presentation is reflective of the times. While the pandemic profiled the importance of community building, it simultaneously highlighted the equally important perceptions of self as essential to developing "sustaining form[s] of self-love."

Several more pieces were released on Friday:

- Evelyn White's blog "*Amazing Grace*: Aretha Franklin and Anne Shirley";
- Laura Leden's article "The Nordic Vision of L.M. Montgomery in Book Covers as Featured on Instagram";
- Kate Scarth's video "Exploring L.M. Montgomery's Book Covers";
- Lesley Clement's report on the LMMI's Mentorship Program;
- Trinna Frever's blog introducing a keynote speaker (from the preliminary program) Kate Scarth;
- Jean Mitchell's blog introducing a workshop facilitator (from the preliminary program) Jessica Brown.

We missed the annual conference banquet traditionally held on Saturday, but plenty of content was posted on Saturday, 27 June with which to engage. Jessica Brown's video recording of her paper "Eyes for Avonlea: Montgomery's Affective Rendering of Nature" explores how Montgomery's descriptions encourage "readers to see nature with new eyes, eyes for Avonlea, which transform attentive observation into a mode of response that recognizes how entwined and generative elements of nature are. Both organic (i.e. tree leaves) and inorganic (i.e. moonlight) nature thus becomes a force that matters, enfolded and unfolding with us." From our isolated family, social, and learning pods, the pandemic was giving us a new-found understanding and respect for just how "entwined and generative" all forms of organic and inorganic, sentient and insentient, life are.

On Saturday, Trinna Frever and Kate Scarth's "The World of L.M. Montgomery and Her Fans: Sharing Your LMM Story," Laura Robinson's blog introducing a workshop facilitator (from the preliminary program) Arnold Smith, and *MaudCast*: Season 01, Episode 03: "Kate Scarth and the L.M. Montgomery Institute," hosted by Brenton Dickieson, with guest Kate Scarth, were also posted.

For the LMMI's on-site conference attendees, Sunday is always a day of mixed emotions as we bid goodbye, in some cases for another two years, to new and old friends. There was no way we could replicate this on a virtual platform, so, instead, for Sunday, 28 June, we planned something more appropriate for the events unfolding globally, most of which we were experiencing virtually. Along with releasing "The L.M. Montgomery Institute's BIPOC Resource List," compiled by Melanie Fishbane, and the "2020 Virtual Tour of L.M. Montgomery Sites on PEI," by Carolyn Strom Collins and Bernadeta Milewski, the Vision Forum's finale was a virtual "live event," with notes of appreciation and announcements:

- Recipients of the 2020 Rev. Dr. Francis W.P. Bolger Award: the Anne of Green Gables Museum and the Campbell Family;
- Recipients of the 2020 L.M. Montgomery Institute Legacy Award: Mary Beth Cavert and Carolyn Strom Collins;
- 2021-22 Visiting Scholar: Alan MacEachern;
- Theme for the 2022 conference: L.M. Montgomery and Re-vision.

While the Vision Forum could not replace seeing friends in real life rather than virtually, many sent kind notes of gratitude and appreciation for our efforts. "I was watching the building of the online conference with admiration and amazement. It is

fantastic—and will be there for your Sunday finale! You have all achieved so much with so many difficulties to negotiate. Just wish we could all go out for a lobster supper to celebrate” (Margaret Reynolds). “The Forum is amazing. So much exciting material. This was a huge job but it is paying off so well. I look forward to new discoveries each day” (Rita Bode). “It is fantastic and such an inspiration. I am so impressed by what you have done with all of this technology. I can only imagine the hard work and perseverance involved. Congratulations! So creative and such a boost for all of us at this time” (Margaet Steffler). “I had to laugh—not in a bad way—listening to Marah Gubar and Funing Yang—English lit at MIT, anyone? ☐ Where else would people think to use algorithms and computer programming to figure out how much someone talks in a classic piece of literature” (Heidi Lawrence).

July to December 2020: The Vision Forum Expanded

The months that followed saw more visual art and shorter pieces added to the Forum: “Just in Time for Christmas: Children’s Books Inspired by Montgomery and Her Novels” (books by Elizabeth Epperly and Carolyn Epperly, Kallie George and Geneviève Godbout, Kallie George and Abigail Halpin, and Kelly Hill were featured); a poster of Wendy Roy’s new book *The Next Instalment: Serials, Sequels, and Adaptations of Nellie L. McClung, L.M. Montgomery, and Mazo de la Roche*; a news item from Alyssa Gillespie about the #foundlmmontgomery Challenge; and a note from Toshimi Mizutani on “The Japanese Translation of *The Alpine Path: The Story of My Career*.”

Two articles were added to the Vision Forum that presented their content in recorded video format. The first, Carolyn Strom Collins’s “Envisioning *Anne of Green Gables*: How L.M. Montgomery Shaped a Classic,” examines Montgomery’s “process of envisioning and creating her first and best-known novel.” The other, Rebecca Thompson’s ““The Window Opens on a World of Wonder and Beauty’: Windows as the Eyes of the Soul in Montgomery’s Fiction,” builds on Elizabeth Epperly’s discussions of the visual imagination in an examination of how windows function as “symbolic spaces for dreaming and visions.”

Two articles in text form were added to the Forum that reflect Montgomery’s international reach in both visioning and re-visioning canonical texts: Meriel Dhanowa’s “Animating Anne: How *Akage no Anne* Recreates L.M. Montgomery’s Vision Through a Visual Medium” and Mary McDonald-Rissanen’s “Emily Lives on in Finland: Two Finnish Poets Write Emily into Adulthood.”

Finally, Rebecca Janzen's blog "L.M. Montgomery, Physical Books, and the Pandemic" sums up what so many of us had been experiencing—and continue to experience—since those early days in 2020, especially when drawing parallels between what was happening in the United States at the time, and again currently, and events in the novels and how Montgomery's novels "are reminders of the importance of caring for the people around us." In turn, Janzen reminds us how "during these times of overlapping crises ... building a community" is so imperative, "no matter how many obstacles certain leaders may put in our way."

The first essay in the Vision and Re-vision print collection is from the Vision Forum, my "Visual Culture, Storytelling, and Becoming Emily: An Illustrated Essay." It is a kind of second introduction, a conceptual framework that begins with an overview of scholarship focusing on vision and visibility up until the early 2020s and ends with suggestions of further avenues of visual scholarship that can be applied to all the novels in Montgomery's canon. We can see some of these ideas—and many more—developed in both the "Vision" and "Re-vision" online collections, which have been updated and lightly edited for the print edition.

2021-24: The Vision Collection

The call for submissions for the Vision Forum simultaneously invited papers and creative projects for the "L.M. Montgomery and Vision Collection," which would evolve over the next few years, co-edited by Tara Parmiter and me. All nine papers in the online Vision Collection published between 2021 and 2024 are included in the print edition ... and what an impressive collection it is from so many different lenses!

Apart from the range of conceptual perspectives, what is also so impressive about the scholarly essays in the Vision Collection is the range of coverage from the earliest to the latest of Montgomery's publications. Holly Pike's "Past, Present, and Visual Technology in *The Story Girl* and *The Golden Road*" shows how "Montgomery and her narrator replicate Montgomery's journalling and scrapbooking practices to explore the opportunities created by the visual technology of writing. The narrator's accounts of performative storytelling and use of visual records recreate rather than describe past experiences." Heidi Lawrence's "Caught Forever in a Picture Frame: The Impact of the Gaze in *Kilmeny of the Orchard*" also shows how Montgomery was engaging with different aspects of visibility even in her earliest writings, as it examines how Jacques Lacan's theories on the mirror stage can be applied to the

male gaze in the novel Montgomery published in 1910, two years after *Anne of Green Gables*.

Nor are the *Anne* novels overlooked in the Vision Collection. Brenton Dickieson's "Befriending the Darkness: L.M. Montgomery's Lived Theodicy in *Anne's House of Dreams*" looks at the "complex and nuanced consideration of faithful living in the face of unexplainable evil that functions as a lived theodicy in story form" and how "shared darkness can bridge a gulf between friends and transform how we live in a providential world of both deep sorrow and unspeakable joy." Alicia Pollard's "Wordsworth's Light and Shelley's Shadow: Revelation in L.M. Montgomery's *Anne* and *Emily* Series" likewise examines the light and shadow images in Montgomery's fiction but arrives at a much different conclusion, finding in the later novels not just "the allure of mystery" but also "the despair of anti-revelation."

My "illustrated essay," mentioned above, examines the *Emily* trilogy and "L.M. Montgomery's visualizing practices in developing Emily Byrd Starr as a woman and artist, focusing on the cultural 'traces' (Gen Doy) of images, particularly portraits, and how Emily engages with—and ultimately resists—their encoded meanings and thus bequeaths a legacy to inspire others learning to look." Daniela Janes's "A Cat of One's Own: The Woman Writer and the Feline Companion in *Emily of New Moon*" approaches the first book in the trilogy from a perspective provided by animal studies: "The literary representation of cats gives us a human-mediated view of animal experience and consciousness, inviting us to reflect on the kinds of stories that are told about animals."

Two papers in the Vision Collection engage with Montgomery's posthumously published *The Blythes Are Quoted*. Susan Erdmann's "Double Vision in *The Blythes Are Quoted*: Reading Marked External References" examines how in Montgomery's *The Blythes* "intertextual references all offer the kinds of doubled perspectives provided by direct quotation, but without the visible signals" and so "introduce both straight and deviant—'double-vision'—readings of the textual sections in which they appear." Double vision is also evident in Catherine Clark's "Creative Vision, Grief, and Memory in L.M. Montgomery's *The Blythes Are Quoted* and Virginia Woolf's *To the Lighthouse*" in the sense of both how two very different authors have divided their very different books into "two parts that are interrupted by the First World War" and how Montgomery and Woolf "develop artists who manage to create meaning after the war. They rally through grief and loss to weave, write, and paint a new vision from the loss of the past."

The Vision Collection also has two creative pieces. As a companion piece to her video recording in the Vision Forum, Jessica Brown's acrostic poem "Avonlea" structures her "Eyes for Avonlea: How Maud Teaches Me to See the Natural World." Brown explores how "Montgomery's rendering of nature helps [her] to see the natural world as affective—connected, enchanting, immersive, and generating affection." She has interwoven seven Polaroids inspired by Montgomery's photographs. Both the form of the poem and these images reflect the synergy between the textual and the visual in Montgomery's writings. Caroline Stellings also captures this synergy in her "The Old Home Calls: Maud's Places through the Seasons," four watercolour paintings of "beloved settings" with titles taken from Montgomery's poetry, one from each season of the year.

2021-22: The Re-vision Conference

As the online Vision Collection was coming together and articles were being published, preparations were underway for the 2022 "Re-vision" conference, co-chaired by the new Visiting Scholar (Alan MacEachern) and previous Visiting Scholar (me). One exciting development was the LMMI management committee's decision that the conference would be hybrid; that is, there would be virtual options for both presenters and attendees, since the platforms for offering these options were much more user-friendly and because so many more users were comfortable participating virtually than before the pandemic. The call for papers went out:

The 2022 conference invites proposals for research pertaining to L.M. Montgomery's life, writings, and/or scholarship through the lens of "re-vision." The theme plays off the "Vision" theme of the cancelled 2020 L.M. Montgomery Institute conference, but it also stands on its own, speaking to the editing of literary works and to reinventions within Montgomery's own life. "Re-vision" might also suggest proposals on translations, new editions, or literary, dramatic, cinematic, musical, or new media adaptations; on revisionist scholarship or confronting orthodoxy; and/or on seeing Montgomery's work and life anew.

The conference theme might inspire papers that explore:

- Adaptations or revisions of Montgomery's life and works on/in film, stage, art, new media, and beyond;
- The art and artistry of the illustrators of Montgomery's works;

- Re-seeing, revision, remembering, and nostalgia in Montgomery's creative and/or autobiographical processes;
- How Montgomery adapted her writing to changing environments;
- Revising genres (e.g., romance, pastoral, epic, literature for children and young adults);
- Telling and retelling, or rescripting master narratives;
- Metaphors of change and renewal in and around her work.

From the invitations extended to guest speakers and the 100+ proposals we received in response to this call for papers, a program was developed with a workshop led by Julie Pellissier-Lush on "Revisioning Land as Teacher and Healer: Mi'kmaq Stories and Theories"; sixty-six paper presentations (eighteen concurrent sessions and four plenaries); three keynote speakers (Alan MacEachern, Marah Gubar, and me); an exhibition launch with artists' talks; a celebration of new books; an evening of "Maud on Stage"; a "Pre-banquet Celebration: Building the Future, Recognizing Donors"; and, again, but now live rather than virtual, the bus tour of Montgomery's Island with Carolyn Strom Collins. Because we were hybrid, our reach extended globally, and we had on-site and virtual delegates from eighteen countries: Australia, Austria, Brazil, Canada, Finland, India, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Norway, Poland, Saudi Arabia, Slovakia, Sweden, South Africa, Ukraine, UK, and USA. The program had a call for papers for the "Re-vision" Collection, with papers due by 1 September 2022. The six papers we received and that were published online are included in the print collection.

2022-25: The Re-vision Collection

For many of us, the pandemic was a time for reflection, and it is telling that four of the six pieces in the Re-vision Collection reflect on the enmeshment of private and public or professional lives, beginning with Julie Sellers's "Reflections," a selection of poems and images that "represents a dialogue with the creative works and life of L.M. Montgomery." Caroline Jones's "Read What You Know: Nostalgia and the Discovery of Self through L.M. Montgomery's *Emily of New Moon*" applies "the critical lens of nostalgia, with an extension into the more intimate realms of family connection and personal identity" and "engages the broader reader response to Montgomery's personal and literary descriptions of the natural setting of Prince Edward Island." Vappu Kannas's "Rereading L.M. Montgomery's Journals: A Personal Reflection" (the online version has a video recording to complement the text)

explores the effect of a six-year gap on the reading and rereading of Montgomery's journals, a period when Kannas herself changed "from an academic to a fiction writer" and "the world ha[d] changed drastically." Yuko Matsumoto's "Revising the Japanese Translations of *Anne of Green Gables: My Story*" is both a personal reflection and a scholarly look at the "four major reasons for the deletions and changes" in the abridged and altered Japanese translations of Montgomery's first novel and how Matsumoto's "unabridged translations of the entire *Anne* series with hundreds of annotations in each book are revising the understanding and appreciation of Montgomery's works in Japan."

This volume closes with two scholarly essays. Idette Noomé's "Breaching the *Hortus Conclusus*: L.M. Montgomery's *Una of the Garden* and *Kilmeny of the Orchard*" rereads these two works using the enclosed garden "motif as a lens to explore how romance and the realistic code collide and so embody L.M. Montgomery's ambivalence regarding romantic love." Carole Gerson's "Patterns of Commemoration in Montgomery's Afterlife: 'We Are Not Anne of Green Gables; We Are L.M. Montgomery'" brings this volume to an apposite conclusion, demonstrating that "[p]ublic attention has recently shifted from focusing almost exclusively on *Anne of Green Gables* and Montgomery's other fictions to recognition of the author herself as a compelling historical figure" and that "Montgomery is now honoured in a wide range of commemorative activities in the public sphere and enjoys a flourishing afterlife on the page and on the stage."

Afterlife

On 8 November 2024, Tara Parmiter and I met for coffee at the Marlton Hotel near New York University where she teaches. I was on one of my frequent trips since pandemic regulations had lifted to experience as much theatre and art as humanly possible during my short stays. Our conversation naturally turned to Montgomery and the twists and turns that academic discourse and Montgomery scholarship had taken over the last four to five years. For many of us, as Carole Gerson points out, Montgomery and her works are honoured in non-print commemorative activities; however, the print page still provides many of us that physical, human connection that we so missed during the pandemic. There had been talk of a print collection of "Vision" and "Re-vision" for several years, and this meeting was our inspiration and impetus to see it through to fruition, a very real "afterlife" for the virtual experiences of watching and reading content online.

Gerson's "afterlife" is also reflected in the multitude of new perspectives in Montgomery studies that evolved out of the pandemic. I was one of the fortunate people who never contracted COVID-19 and never lost anyone close to me to the virus, although I did experience the isolation and challenges of losing two close family members during those years. The pandemic reminded us of the value of prioritizing human life—all life—and how important all forms of communication, including visual, are in defining and sustaining a vision for viable communities. Several of the recent *Journal of L.M. Montgomery Studies* collections demonstrate the impact this reminder has had on Montgomery studies—"Mental Health," "#Maud150: Back-to-the-Future," and the "Politics of Home"—as does the 2026 conference theme of "Change." I began with an epigraph that we chose for the Vision conference and now close with one that we chose for the Re-vision conference:

It is never quite safe to think we have done with life. When we imagine we have finished our story fate has a trick of turning the page and showing us yet another chapter.

—Chapter 13, *Rainbow Valley*

About the author: Lesley D. Clement, past visiting scholar at the L.M. Montgomery Institute (2019–21) and a consulting editor of the *Journal of L.M. Montgomery Studies*, has held teaching and administrative positions at various Canadian universities, most recently Lakehead-Orillia. She is (co-)editor for the Vision Forum and the Vision, Mental Health, International Notes, Re-vision, Vistas, and Back-to-the-Future collections of the *Journal of L.M. Montgomery Studies*. She has published on visual literacy, visual culture, empathy, death, and queer joy in children's picturebooks, YA literature, and Montgomery's writings. Her work on Montgomery appears in *Studies in Canadian Literature*, *L.M. Montgomery's Rainbow Valleys* (ed. Clement and Bode), *L.M. Montgomery and the Matter of Nature(s)* (ed. Bode and Mitchell), the *Journal of L.M. Montgomery Studies*, *L.M. Montgomery and Gender* (ed. Pike and Robinson), *Children and Childhoods in L.M. Montgomery: Continuing Conversations* (ed. Bode, Clement, Pike, Steffler), and *L.M. Montgomery's Emily of New Moon: A Children's Classic at 100* (ed. Du and Sanders).

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[Back to top](#)

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No

Works Cited

Montgomery, L.M. *Emily Climbs*. 1925. Tundra, 2014.

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The following LMMI and *JLMMS* webpages are referenced throughout this introduction, in the order that they were mentioned.

2019-20: Vision Conference Planning and Cancellation

[L.M. Montgomery and Vision call for papers](#)

[L.M. Montgomery and Vision preliminary program](#)

[Cancellation of L.M. Montgomery and Vision conference \(9 April 2020\)](#)

June to December 2020: The Vision Forum

[Call for submissions \(Vision Forum and Vision Collection\)](#)

[L.M. Montgomery and Vision Forum Collection](#)

- [Welcome video](#)

- [Eight welcome letters](#)
- [Schedule for the five-day launch](#)
- [Preliminary program](#)
- [Abstracts and biographical statements](#)
- [MaudCast: Season 01, Episode 01](#)
- [Yoshiko Akamatsu's blog](#)
- [#foundLmMontgomery Challenge](#)
- ["Pessimism Is as Pessimism Does"](#)
- [Rita Bode's blog](#)
- [Cèilidh video](#)
- [New Montgomery books](#)
- [Lesley Clement's "Visual Culture, Storytelling, and Becoming Emily: An Illustrated Essay"](#)
- [Julie Sellers's "Envisioning Kindred Spirits: Anne Shirley's Imagined Community"](#)
- [Simon Lloyd's tribute to donors to the LMMI](#)
- [Kate Scarth's "The L.M. Montgomery Institute: Projects and Possibilities"](#)
- [An interactive visual curation of the "Domestic Art Challenge"](#)
- [Holly Pike's blog](#)
- [MaudCast: Season 01, Episode 02](#)
- [Marah Gubar and Funing Yang's "Archives and Algorithms: Analyzing Anne's Monologues"](#)
- [Evelyn White's blog](#)
- [Laura Leden's "The Nordic Vision"](#)
- [Kate Scarth's video "Exploring L.M. Montgomery's Book Covers"](#)
- [Lesley Clement's report on the LMMI's Mentorship Program](#)
- [Trinna Frever's blog](#)
- [Jean Mitchell's blog](#)
- [Jessica Brown's video "Eyes for Avonlea: Montgomery's Affective Rendering of Nature"](#)
- [Trinna Frever and Kate Scarth's "The World of L.M. Montgomery and Her Fans"](#)
- [Laura Robinson's blog](#)
- [MaudCast: Season 01, Episode 03](#)
- [LMMI's BIPOC resource list](#)
- ["2020 Virtual Tour of L.M. Montgomery Sites"](#)
- [Vision Forum's Finale](#)
- [Recipients of the 2020 Rev. Dr. Francis W.P. Bolger Award](#)

- [Recipients of the LMMI Legacy Award](#)
- ["Just in Time for Christmas"](#)
- [Poster Wendy Roy's *The Next Instalment*](#)
- [News #foundlmmontgomery Challenge](#)
- [Toshimi Mizutani's "The Japanese Translation of *The Alpine Path*"](#)
- [Carolyn Strom Collins's "Envisioning *Anne of Green Gables*"](#)
- [Rebecca Thompson's "'The Window Opens'"](#)
- [Meriel Dhanowa's "Animating Anne"](#)
- [Mary McDonald-Rissanen's "Emily Lives on in Finland"](#)
- [Rebecca Janzen's "L.M. Montgomery, Physical Books, and the Pandemic"](#)

2021-24: The Vision Collection

[L.M. Montgomery and Vision Collection](#)

- [Holly Pike's "Past, Present, and Visual Technology"](#)
- [Heidi Lawrence's "Caught Forever in a Picture Frame"](#)
- [Brenton Dickieson's "Befriending the Darkness"](#)
- [Alicia Pollard's "Wordsworth's Light and Shelley's Shadow"](#)
- [Daniela Janes's "A Cat of One's Own"](#)
- [Susan Erdmann's "Double Vision"](#)
- [Catherine Clark's "Creative Vision, Grief, and Memory"](#)
- [Jessica Brown's "Eyes for Avonlea"](#)
- [Caroline Stellings's "The Old Home Calls"](#)

2021-22: The Re-vision Conference

[L.M. Montgomery and Re-vision call for papers](#)

[2022-25: The Re-vision Collection](#)

- [Julie A. Sellers's "Reflections"](#)
- [Caroline E. Jones's "Read What You Know"](#)
- [Vappu Kannas's "Rereading L.M. Montgomery's Journals: A Personal Reflection"](#)
- [Yuko Matsumoto's "Revising the Japanese Translations of *Anne of Green Gables*"](#)
- [Idette Noomé's "Breaching the *Hortus Conclusus*"](#)
- [Carole Gerson's "Patterns of Commemoration in Montgomery's Afterlife"](#)