Eyes for Avonlea: Montgomery's Affective Vision of Nature

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Birch skin, shadowed wood, patches of dappled light, endless varieties of dusk and dawn, prismatic colours of the sea: surpassing mere descriptive prose, Montgomery’s rendering of nature thoroughly registers how nature impresses upon and affects the assemblages surrounding it. In order to present Montgomery’s configuration of nature as an affective strata, I will look at several passages from *Anne of Green Gables.* Then, I will explore how this affective rendering of nature teaches 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. This paper will especially utilize the superb introduction to *L.M. Montgomery and the Matter of Nature(s)* by Rita Bode and Jean Mitchell. In also using texts like Gilles Deleuze’s *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy* and Jane Bennett’s *The Enchantment of Modern Life,* I hope to continue to extend the critical conversations about Montgomery and nature from key concerns of aesthetics and Romanticism into the foci and lexicon of affectivity, which might offer new insights into Montgomery’s work as pedagogic encounter and nature (and an author’s capture of it) as affectual – inaugural and transformative – force.

> Eyes for Avonlea: Montgomery's Affective Vision of Nature. Video by Jessica Brown, June 2020.

About the Author: Jessica Brown, born and raised in southeast Texas, now lives with her husband and son in County Clare in Ireland. With an MA in English from

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