Archives and Algorithms: Analyzing Anne’s Monologues

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Although L.M. Montgomery would later poke fun at literary characters who talk on and on, never letting anyone else get a word in edgewise, her own Anne indulges in extraordinarily long monologues. Why, then, does Anne appeal so strongly to so many people? Why doesn’t she seem objectionably narcissistic? This keynote talk explores how Montgomery's representation of Anne in 1908 builds on but also departs from the nineteenth-century cult of the charming, talkative child. Sigmund Freud's theory of narcissism (published in 1914) was partly inspired by one of these child characters. But ultimately, Gubar 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.

The joint video presentation below by Gubar and Funing Yang is "a work-in-progress report" on this research. Gubar introduces her original hypothesis about Anne's monologues, and then Yang shares the data that she’s compiled in the form of graphs and charts. Gubar concludes by showing materials from the Lincoln Center theatre archives about the 1937 dramatization of *Anne* by Wilbur Braun (aka “Alice Chadwicke”), which seems to have been the first dramatization of *Anne*. This joint discussion about data gathering and archival research reflects Gubar's and Yang's evolving hypotheses about Anne's monologues.

Archives and Algorithms: Analyzing Anne’s Monologues. 2020. Presented by Marah Gubar and Funing Yang.

About the Presenters:

Marah Gubar

Renowned children's literature scholar Marah Gubar, Associate Professor in the Literature Department of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, received her PhD from Princeton University and holds a BA in English and BFA in Musical Theater from the University of Michigan. She has written extensively on children's literature from the nineteenth through to the twenty-first century, children's theatre and musical theatre, and children's art and activism. Within the L.M. Montgomery community, she is probably best known for her 2001 article in *The Lion and the Unicorn* (excerpted in Mary Rubio and Elizabeth Waterston's Norton Critical Edition of *Anne of Green Gables*), "'Where is the Boy?': The Pleasures of Postponement in the *Anne of Green Gables* Series."

Funing Yang

Funing Yang is a rising junior at Wellesley College double majoring in English and computer science and works with Dr. Gubar on the Anne project. She is very interested in digital humanities and the interdisciplinary aspects of technology and the broader humanities issues. Funing has served as a research assistant in the MIT Digital Humanities Lab, MIT Media Lab, and Wellesley College's Credibility Lab. She is involved in research projects in multiple disciplines including the "Reading Redux ," democratizing k-12 AI education with the MIT App Inventor Group, and an investigative project on the IRA and disinformation campaigns.

Article Info

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