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Mobilizing the Power of the Unseen:
Imagining Self / Imagining Others in L.M. Montgomery's *Anne of Green Gables*

Lesley Clement

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Lesley Clement

IN HER DISCUSSION OF ANNE SHIRLEY'S "classical adolescent temperament," Irene Gammel observes that the young protagonist of L.M. Montgomery's *Anne of Green Gables*, whom the reader follows from age eleven to sixteen, "is constantly reinventing and testing herself" as she develops "a distinctive personal identity that is also carefully negotiated with respect to its social context" (*Looking* 169). Studies confirm that, particularly during early adolescence, "developmental needs and contextual affordances often conflict" (Wentzel, Filisetti, and Looney 898). While there is much debate among psychologists over the median age at which children become aware of the relationship of self to others, most would concur with David Russell that "perhaps the most salient feature of growing up is the movement away from a preoccupation with self toward a concern for others. The result of this progression is inevitably the discovery of one's own identity" (221). From late childhood, ages eight to ten, to middle adolescence, ages fourteen to seventeen, the capacity to assume the perspectives of others is refined and acted upon as the adolescent becomes increasingly able to view and respond empathically to the uniqueness of others and their stories beyond the here and now defined by the presence of self, including empathic engagement with fictional creations (Hoffman, "Contribution" 52; Davis and Franzoi 73-75, 83). As the adolescent's experiences widen and cognitive abilities develop, the capacity and tendency to empathize are strengthened and contribute to the development of moral principles grounded in caring, equality, and justice (Hoffman, "Contribution" 71-72).

Anne's maturation, the central theme of *Anne of Green Gables*, is rooted in an exploration of various ways of seeing as they relate to the negotiation of identity and belonging, visibility and invisibility, and the connections between them. As Anne's perspective swings from self

to other, other to self, shaping not only her identity as a young woman but also her future as a writer, empathy[1] emerges as a core value against which Anne "is constantly reinventing and testing herself" (Gammel, *Looking* 169). Psychologists tell us that there are two basic kinds of empathy corresponding to two different kinds of "perspective taking": an "imagine-self perspective," that is, "imagining what one's own thoughts and feelings would be if one were in the situation" of another; and an "imagine-other perspective," that is, imagining the thoughts and feelings of the person actually in the situation. Whereas the first results in the adulteration of empathy by more egotistical motivation and behaviour, the second "produce[s] relatively pure empathic feelings" and, therefore, leads to more purely altruistic motivation and behaviour (Batson et al. 1192). "Imagining self" thus requires some degree of visibility of self; "imagining other" demands the surrender of self and acceptance of invisibility. In the boundary between self and other is to be found identity, as Peggy Phelan describes: "Identity is perceptible only through a relation to an other — which is to say, it is a form of both resisting and claiming the other, declaring the boundary where the self diverges from and merges with the other" (13).

Throughout the novel, Anne is exposed to different ways of seeing that influence her own perspective and, consequently, her potential to develop empathic relationships with Avonlea's community members. The mentorships that three characters provide are crucial for moulding Anne's identity as she negotiates a place of belonging for herself: that of Rachel Lynde, as representative of the communal perspective; that of Marilla Cuthbert, with a capacity to see through appearances; and that of Matthew Cuthbert, who learns to look only in Anne's presence. Adolescent readers, empathizing most readily with those similar to themselves,[2] will likely turn to the adolescent protagonist whose periscopic vision permits her to see, like Montgomery's Emily Byrd Starr, "with other eyes than those of sense" (*Emily of New Moon* 37), and negotiate, along with Anne, these various ways of seeing. From the Greek *periskopein*, "to look around," a periscope is an instrument that permits the viewer to see objects that are not on a direct sight line or that are on a different level, providing a wider and deeper range of vision ("Periscope"). Periphery, therefore, is "a zone constituting an imprecise boundary" ("Periphery"). The metaphor of periscopic vision is appropriate because *Anne of Green Gables* explores various ways of seeing that

pierce — or fail to pierce — the imprecise boundaries and liminal spaces between the seen and unseen, the visible and invisible. Montgomery's "artistry and her lasting power," Elizabeth Epperly explains, are rooted in her "teach[ing] her readers/viewers to see what is there and what is not there; that is, she teaches her readers to see story and metaphor in images" (178). For Montgomery's adolescent readers, as for her characters, seeing begins with looking at the cues given in the visible world, but they must embrace and act on the unseen — "intangible and invisible, yet none the less real" (Montgomery, *SJ* 1:160)[3] and cultivated through an imaginative engagement with this visible world — to perceive self as other and the story of self as the story of other and so attain full empathy. Moreover, these readers must embrace the opportunity to be empowered by their own invisibility, "the power of the unmarked, unspoken, and unseen" (Phelan 7).

Readers are led into the novel and Avonlea through Rachel's field of view. But before conveying Rachel's perspective, the narrator provides her own frame of reference. Montgomery, especially in this, her first novel, will not experiment with structure and point of view as would those modernist writers who aspired to remain "invisible, refined out of existence" (Joyce 215). This narrator is very visible as she situates Rachel at her window, looking out over the surrounding countryside. The opening paragraph determines what Rachel can see, what she cannot see, and what she can see but chooses not to see. One clearly visible feature of the landscape is the brook, with its invisible source deep in the Haunted Wood that later will cause Anne and Diana so much terror — "A Good Imagination Gone Wrong," as the title of chapter 20 indicates. Because Rachel cannot see the source of the brook, "with dark secrets of pool and cascade," she cannot see or understand the brook's "intricate, headlong" origins as it begins its journey. As the reader learns more about Anne several chapters into the novel, parallels can be drawn between the brook's origins and those of Anne, neither of which Rachel sees or understands. Rachel is uninterested in anything she cannot scrutinize and judge, being fixed solely on communal mores — "decency and decorum" (9) — values which, as the novel will expose, suppress the perception of "dark secrets," past and present. She is on the lookout for anything visibly odd in her immediate environment, and even the anthropomorphized brook, recognizing this, complies by putting on a facade of good behaviour, just as Anne will need to do. If the brook

cannot be invisible, at least it will be silent. Can a parallel perhaps be drawn between this brook and Anne's negotiation of visibility on her own terms as she matures under the vigilant eye of the community as represented by Rachel? In her pioneering book on "psychological theory and women's development," entitled *In a Different Voice*, Carol Gilligan observes that "the secrets of the female adolescent pertain to the silencing of her own voice, a silencing enforced by the wish not to hurt others but also by the fear that, in speaking, her voice will not be heard" and that, to avoid "the mysterious disappearance of the female self in adolescence," her secret "underground world" needs to be mapped (51). Will there be anyone in Avonlea with the empathic inclinations to encourage Anne to bring her "underground world" into the light?

As Rachel ignores the natural beauty that surrounds her on this afternoon in early June, flowers and fruit trees "in a bridal flush of pinky-white bloom," being so concerned with "keeping a sharp eye" on the behaviour of anyone who traverses her visual field and who must therefore "run the unseen gauntlet of Mrs Rachel's all-seeing eye" (10), so too she will be intolerant of Anne's "underground world." The image of the "unseen gauntlet" and Rachel's slightly elevated vantage point confirm this woman's status and dominance within her domain, where the visible is valued, while suggesting the invisibility of the power of social expectations and their enforcers — Avonlea's "unseen gauntlet." In her essay "Women, Art, and Power," Linda Nochlin makes an observation about power relations that is particularly applicable to this scene: "symbolic power is invisible and can be exercised only with the complicity of those who fail to recognize either that they submit to it or that they exercise it. . . . Foucault has reflected that power is tolerable 'only on the condition that it mask a considerable part of itself'" (14).[4] Phelan also interrogates "the binary between the power of visibility and the impotency of invisibility" when she asserts that "there is real power in remaining unmarked; and there are serious limitations to visual representation as a political goal" (6). Phelan argues, however, that "there is an important difference between willfully failing to appear and never being summoned" (11), a choice that Anne, in early adolescence, is too vulnerable to entertain. When Rachel summons, Anne will have no option but to appear.

The opening three paragraphs are essential for establishing Rachel as the "panoptic" (Gammel, *Looking* 141) eye of this insular commun-

ity, an eye that takes in "everything visible in one view" ("Panoptic"). Although a powerful eye, it is not "all-seeing" since there are deep secrets and hidden stories to which Rachel is not privy and elements of the natural world that she chooses not to see as she is so focused on "ferret[ing] out the whys and wherefores" of any deviation from regular routine (9). Rachel is driven by curiosity — she needs answers — but her questions are not of the philosophical or psychological sort. She asks much more basic and immediate questions: "Now where was Matthew Cuthbert going, and why was he going there?" (11). Having no imagination — not being able to imagine the unseen without the seen — Rachel demands a logical explanation reached inductively from observable data for Matthew's break in routine. Nothing adds up from what she knows or from what she can see; therefore, she changes her vantage point and makes her way to Green Gables, "barely visible from the main road along which all the other Avonlea houses were so sociably situated," to draw conclusions from ocular evidence (11-12). In the yard, nary a stick or stone is out of place, but the kitchen provides plenty of visible clues of which Rachel, whose eye is now more microscopic than panoptic, takes "mental note" (13).

For Rachel, the oddness of Matthew's unexplained trip and the conundrum of the Green Gables's kitchen — everyday plates and humble fare but place settings for three rather than the usual two — are nothing in comparison to the oddness of the Cuthberts' adopting an orphan child. Several pages into the novel, Montgomery is so focused on seeing as essential to reading the scene that we get this curious passage: "Mrs Rachel felt that she had received a severe mental jolt. She thought in exclamation points. A boy! Marilla and Matthew Cuthbert of all people adopting a boy! From an orphan asylum! Well, the world was certainly turning upside down! She would be surprised at nothing after this! Nothing!" (14). Even to express this deeply felt emotional response — in this case, surprise — Rachel and her narrator need visible props. Exclamation points, like the silent *e* of Anne's name, can only be discerned visually in written discourse. In orally transmitted language, they, like the italics in the following dialogue, are conveyed through tone and must be imagined into existence — just as Anne imagines that the silent *e* in her name "makes *such* a difference. It *looks* so much nicer" (36). "When you hear a name pronounced," she asks Marilla, "can't you always see it in your mind, just as if it was printed out?" (36).

Anne does not trust her audience — the literal-minded Rachels and Marillas of Avonlea — to see what they cannot hear and must assert the visibility of her name as a prominent feature of her identity. "Would we have a unique identity in a culture that assigned no proper names?" asks Kenneth Gergen in *Relational Being: Beyond Self and Community* (31).

While Rachel feels pity for the child the Cuthberts are to adopt, it is the narrator who conveys the sympathy and invokes the empathy that Rachel lacks and who has the final word in chapter 1: "if [Rachel] could have seen the child who was waiting patiently at the Bright River station at that very moment her pity would have been still deeper and more profound" (17). When, in chapter 9, she is finally able to "inspect" (78) Anne, Rachel's microscopic vision, sharp and focused but missing the larger context beyond the here and now that she can see, is again apparent. Structurally, chapter 8 mirrors chapter 1: Rachel is again driven by curiosity to provide ocular evidence for herself; Marilla again anticipates Rachel's reason for visiting — "I suppose you'd like to see Anne," Marilla says to Rachel (80); and Rachel is again not content just to observe but must also judge rather than empathize. As a child, a girl, an orphan, and an outsider, Anne is powerless to stop this inspection or the judgement that Rachel imposes when she summons Anne to make herself visible. Anne must develop strategies to negotiate when and how to appear or she risks losing a sense of self and relinquishing the shaping of an identity to either her own fantastical creations or the expectations of others.

Whether panoptic or microscopic, Rachel's vision confines her to a static view of surface details, the limitations of which the precocious and indomitable Anne is aware and about which she is vocal from a young age; Marilla, however, has two qualities that give her the potential to grow under the influence of this odd child while providing Anne with the strategies required to negotiate identity and belonging, visibility and invisibility. Coupled with Marilla's latent humour is her ability to read character and story beneath the surface. Chapter 1 juxtaposes the scene of Rachel sitting at her window with one of Marilla in a similar position at the east window of Green Gables, but whereas Rachel focuses on the local citizenry, Marilla looks exclusively at her knitting, avoiding the "dancing and irresponsible" afternoon sunshine and life beyond the window. Describing Marilla, who is all "angles and without curves," the narrator reads beneath the surface and observes that

"there was a saving something about her mouth which, if it had been ever so slightly developed, might have been considered indicative of a sense of humour" (13). Many, many times throughout the novel, the rigidity of Marilla's character is mitigated by her temptation, generally restrained, to laugh at the inconsistencies of her fellow human beings and at life's little ironies. Like Rachel, Marilla lacks imagination, but whereas Rachel responds judgmentally, Marilla resorts to sarcastic comments. Neither the judgmental nor the sarcastic perspective is conducive to empathic engagement. Most important for this consideration of ways of seeing and reading is Marilla's ability to see beneath the surface to the inner character or hidden story, a kind of X-ray vision that, Marilla suggests, has been honed through living with her non-verbal brother (48). Although sarcasm is Marilla's way of dealing with inconsistencies and ironies, it is perhaps her X-ray vision that causes her sense of humour because she perceives the goodness that underlies seeming cruelty — in Rachel, for example — or the wisdom that underlies seeming folly — in Anne, for example — or the sad story of Anne's early years — the dark pools that can make life such a serious affair.

Unlike Rachel, Marilla is immediately "shrewd enough to read between the lines of Anne's history and divine the truth" (55). Moreover, Marilla reads what will happen to Anne if she is sent to work for Mrs. Peter Blewett. A scene in chapter 6, which narrates Marilla's sensitivity to Anne's circumstances, is once again dominated by, even totally built through, allusions to eyes and visual metaphors. Because Marilla has "a keen eye" (68) and reads concealed character and story — past and present and future — from visual cues, she diverts the course of Anne's life journey from following the same narrow and loveless path as her own. Marilla is never entirely "drawn from the safe concrete into dubious paths of the abstract" (100)[5] and never learns the "lesson of a love" displayed in an "open look" (271), but she does not deny Anne the chance to experience these paths, from the "delights of anticipation" (the title of chapter 13) to ambition to romance. Marilla even allows some joy into her own life, becoming more responsive, albeit privately, to nature, Green Gables, and her adopted daughter (243).

"You never can tell about people from their outsides" (341), Marilla tells Anne as they share their grief over Matthew's death and as Marilla opens up some of her past to Anne. Most significantly, Marilla is suggesting the need to read people and events very carefully to penetrate

to what lies beneath: the unseen qualities and hidden stories. Among the many, predominantly moral, lessons that Marilla provides Anne, this lesson in learning to look and to see, a lesson in perspective and proportion, is perhaps the most valuable one she has to offer — and perhaps the most valuable one that Anne learns from anyone throughout the course of the education she receives in Avonlea. Unlike the various moral lessons that Anne learns from Marilla — and that Anne easily delineates as they correspond to specific episodes in her life (259) — Anne's acquiring the skills to look and see beneath the surface of character and circumstances — an essential prerequisite in the development of empathy — permeates the texture of the novel.

If we trust Anne's word, it is Matthew, one of Anne's "kindred spirits" — someone "to whom I can confide my inmost soul" (73) — who gives her the resources to grow (141, 174, 229-30, 320, 336-39); however, Matthew is and, with one exception, remains totally "unobservant" (222) because, being too intimidated by women and especially girls to look, he has cocooned himself in a kind of somnolent existence. The narrator, as has been the case with both Rachel's and Marilla's gaps in seeing, steps in to describe what Matthew does not observe. Whereas Rachel ignores the dark pools and overlooks the natural beauty of her surroundings and the invisible worlds of others, and Marilla avoids the light in a world she takes very seriously, Matthew "barely not[es]" anything at all and completely misses seeing Anne at Bright River station (18-19). The narrator, therefore, takes us through several layers of observation, describing Anne from the perspective of an "ordinary observer" and then from that of a "discerning extraordinary observer" (20).

Matthew becomes Anne's "infatuated," adoring audience, losing all sense of perspective, as Marilla is given to reminding him (107); only in the scene that leads him into the local shop to buy Anne a dress with the puffed sleeves she so covets does Matthew see Anne in her social context. Watching Anne among "a bevy of her schoolmates," "unobservant" Matthew becomes aware that Anne is different from them and that somehow this difference is wrong. After "hard reflection," he recognizes that this difference is in her attire, specifically her sleeves (222-23). Matthew's observations and transformation — Rachel expresses surprise that Matthew has perceived these details and concludes "that man is waking up after being asleep for over sixty years" (227) — are significant when read in the light of the other visual

iconography in the novel. The imagery of puffed sleeves is interwoven throughout the novel. Puffed sleeves were the fashion at the time, and in terms of size, they would certainly have made a statement. Marilla dismisses these "puffs" as impractical, wasteful, and ridiculous; furthermore, she argues, they will "just pamper Anne's vanity . . . and she's as vain as a peacock now" (228). Yet Anne's skimpy attire makes her all the more visible among these girls wearing puffs as big as balloons. The more socially aware Rachel discerns that, far from "cultivat[ing] a spirit of humility," Anne's humble attire is "more likely to cultivate envy and discontent" (227). "Fashion," Gammel reminds us, "is the arena in which social contradictions are both encoded and negotiated," and *Anne of Green Gables* "exploit[s] fashion as a domain for both arbitrary rules and for breaking those rules and celebrating self-expression" (*Looking* 179). Sociologist Joanne Entwistle, discussing the "new significance" of fashion at the end of the nineteenth century, argues that fashion "is the means by which people negotiate their identity" while "serv[ing] almost as 'armour' protecting the individual" from being too visible: "Fashion can be used to give oneself impressive 'individual' identity, while simultaneously being capable of signalling commonality since it enhances uniformity" (108-09). Puffed sleeves, then, are "a necessary part of conforming to Victorian social codes, even if . . . these codes meant looking as 'ridiculous' as everyone else" (David and Wahl 41). Ironically, the highly visible puffed sleeves, provided by Matthew, make Anne less visible than the modest dresses Marilla has prescribed, and when Anne wears Matthew's dress for her recitation and feels as though a million eyes were looking at her, the puffed sleeves give Anne courage as she puts her presence in perspective and sees herself in context of the scene (231). The dress, fashioned from "a lovely soft brown gloria with all the gloss of silk," and its puffs, adorned with "rows of shirring and bows of brown silk ribbon" (229), are, David and Wahl suggest, "an irresistible combination for Anne, underlining the narrative importance of such garments in the transaction and negotiation of social power" (44). While dress may enable this transaction and negotiation, Anne's "style" of seeing and being seen and of resolving the tensions between identity and belonging will ultimately rest elsewhere. Rachel, Marilla, and even Matthew have all, in their own ways, dressed Anne with an eye to her "fitting in" (David and Wahl 47). Elizabeth Wilson contends that by the end of the nineteenth century, "formation of 'self'" was tied

to "the idea of the Self as a Work of Art" and "appearance became more and more mixed up with identity" (123).[6] As Anne passes through adolescence and grows beyond being simply "Anne with an *e*," she discovers a more sustaining boundary between self and other than the artificial layer that a fashionable dress provides.

The greatest challenge Anne undergoes as she matures from the homely, eleven-year-old waif at the beginning of the novel to the understated beauty with her "big-eyed style" (284) at the end is a negotiation of the visibility and invisibility of herself and others. Several chapters before the "puffed sleeves" chapter, Marilla chastises Anne for thinking too much about herself and not enough of others, "hitting for once in her life," the narrator interjects, "on a very sound and pithy piece of advice." Anne obviously heeds Marilla's advice because she immediately begins to demonstrate "a beatified state of mind" (206). Anne craves an audience, and her "kindred spirits" — Matthew, Diana, Miss Stacy, and Mrs. Allan — supply her with the adoring attention she so needs; moreover, Anne tends to cast herself as the heroine of the stories she weaves for these rapt listeners. Anne's early years before Avonlea, with her only friends having been Katie Maurice, her own reflection in glass doors, and Violetta, an echo of her own voice (74), invite psychological insights into her need for visibility on her own terms. From the first time we see Anne at Bright River station, the focus is on her eyes, her watching, and her consciousness of being watched or not being watched. On the trip from Bright River to Green Gables, Anne describes to Matthew how on her journey to the Island, she overcame the feeling that everybody was looking at and pitying her by imagining herself in resplendent attire and so freeing herself from inhibiting self-consciousness (23-24). Later scenes between Marilla and Anne (34-35), Mrs. Blewett and Anne (58-61), and Rachel and Anne (80-81) are dominated by Anne's determination to control how others perceive her. Although Anne cannot control the actual inspection and judgement passed, in all these instances her resistance to being seen on terms other than her own results in her manipulating her destiny. Matthew takes her to Green Gables. Marilla neither turns her out nor turns her over to Mrs. Blewett. Rachel, although at first affronted, sees Anne anew after the apology: "good Mrs Lynde," the narrator tells us, "not being overburdened with perception," does not see what Marilla sees, "that Anne was actually enjoying her valley of humiliation — was revelling in the thoroughness of her abase-

ment" by turning her punishment "into a species of positive pleasure" (90). Gammel refers to this scene as "one of the most ironic and original scenes in girls' literature" because "the narrator and reader [are] equipped with the highest level of perception"; they discern Rachel's ignorance of, and Marilla's recognition of and complicity in, Anne's self-involved theatricality (*Looking* 127). While Anne's resistance involves manipulating how she is perceived, it never leads to slyness or deceit, as Marilla notes (90, 121), a theme that is explored in the *Emily* series. Much later, in chapter 33 at the hotel concert, Anne, suffering stage fright exacerbated by the scrutiny of Gilbert Blythe, misreads his gaze as "triumphant and taunting" rather than appreciative and sympathetic. She nevertheless channels her stage fright into success: "in the reaction from that horrible moment of powerlessness she recited as she had never done before" (309-10).

Chapter 15, in which the famous slate-breaking scene is narrated, is important for profiling Anne's extreme sensitivity when she is put on display against her will. "Far away in a gorgeous dreamland, hearing and seeing nothing save her own wonderful visions," Anne is "totally oblivious" to Gilbert's attempts to make her look at him: "She *should* look at him, that red-haired Shirley girl with . . . the big eyes that weren't like the eyes of any other girl in Avonlea school." And with his utterance of "carrots," she does look at him, we are told, "with a vengeance" and then does "more than look" (130). As punishment, she is not only put on display, but she is also mislabelled by Mr. Phillips, her teacher: "Ann Shirley has a very bad temper. Ann Shirley must learn to control her temper." Anne experiences "hot" anger and an "agony of humiliation" as her "resentful eyes" confront the gazes of her fellow school mates — all, that is, except Gilbert at whom "she would not even look. . . . She would *never* look at him again!" (131-32). Slyness and deceit may not be among Anne's shortcomings, but deep-rooted and long-lasting acrimony, a consequence of her juvenile egocentricity, is.

Canadian photographer Freeman Patterson argues that "letting go of self is an essential precondition to real seeing" and that "preoccupation with self is the greatest barrier to seeing" (9). As Anne matures and attains a sense of perspective, she loses her adolescent need for self-dramatization, as well as her equally adolescent expectation that she can dominate her environment through controlling her own and others' gazes; that is, she loses her centripetal, self-centred way of seeing and

begins to see herself as part of a larger whole — a family, a community — and thus develops a more centrifugal, outward-looking perspective. Yet her need for an admiring, uncritical audience of friends and family, a product of her centripetal vision, continues to define and control her life to the extent that she will never take the risks of an Emily Starr, an emerging artist with a poetic sensibility who must reconcile herself to the possibility of never having a receptive audience. As Anne explains to Marilla about the dismantlement of their Story Club, "It's nicer to think dear, pretty thoughts and keep them in one's heart, like treasures. I don't like to have them laughed at or wondered over" (290). Recognizing that she cannot always control how others perceive her, Anne mobilizes the power of the unseen — her own invisibility — to preserve the sanctity and dignity of her inner life, a tendency she has perhaps learned from Matthew.

But does Anne develop the perspective necessary to attain empathy, the ability to see the world through others' eyes and to understand, appreciate, and respect the sanctity and dignity of the hidden, inner life of others? To do so, Anne must position herself at exactly the right distance — not too far, not too close — and feel (physically and emotionally) and think how another person feels and thinks. As Martin Hoffman points out, "Clearly, the most advanced empathic level involves some distancing — responding partly to one's mental image of the other" rather than simply to the "immediate stimulus" of the other ("Contribution" 53). Although Anne understands in theory the ethics of empathy, her juvenile egocentricity is a barrier to her truly attaining it. Attacking Rachel for twitting her about her looks, Anne asks her, "How would you like to be told that you are fat and clumsy and probably hadn't a spark of imagination in you?" (81). She repeats this argument when defending her outburst to Marilla: "Just imagine how you would feel if somebody told you to your face that you were skinny and ugly." In this scene, neither Rachel nor Anne displays empathy. Only Marilla, with her ability to read beneath the surface and with "an old remembrance" of a similar slight she received as a child, identifies with the "sting" Anne feels (84). Marilla's is a kind of empathy aroused through "direct association" — "a passive, involuntary affective response, based on the pull of surface cues, and requir[ing] the shallowest level of cognitive processing" (Hoffman, *Empathy* 5). In a later scene, which takes place the February after Anne's arrival in Avonlea, Anne claims to feel

empathy for Aunt Josephine Barry's situation by imagining how "very disturbing" it must be for Diana's old aunt to be woken by two girls jumping on her bed. Yet Anne immediately requests Aunt Josephine to see the situation from Anne's perspective and provides her with a litany of reasons for doing so, ending with her trump card of being "a little orphan girl" who has never had the "honour" of sleeping in a spare bedroom (182).

Endowed with the imagination to engage intensely with the natural world around her, an element of her periscopic vision that should give her the potential to follow Marilla's example and read beneath the surface to discern underlying character and hidden circumstances, Anne reaches maturity as her imaginative capabilities affect and change her relationships with her adoptive family and community. Attaining a sense of perspective that takes the edge off her juvenile egocentricity, she matures into adulthood as she begins to demonstrate some degree of empathy for her fellow human beings, a conclusion we can draw from her behaviour in the last four chapters. By now, her ambitions are not so self-centred and all-consuming, and they are directed more toward pleasing her adoptive parents than defeating a foe, an attitude that changes her relations with Marilla and then with Gilbert (323-24, 328). Anne has begun to respect an identity as described by Kenneth Gergen, one based not on a "bounded self" — "singular," "separate," "central to life," and "static" (xiv, xxvi) — but on a "relational being," a "vision . . . [which] seeks to recognize a world that is not within persons but within their relationships, and that ultimately erases the traditional boundaries of separation" (5). Anne never, however, achieves the heightened empathy required to evolve as a "story girl" like Sara Stanley, who has the plasticity and performative ability of the actor she aspires to become and assumes "so thoroughly the thing impersonated that it was a matter of surprise . . . when she emerged from each [impersonation] our own familiar Story Girl again" (*Story Girl* 119). Anne never totally loses the sense of self to assume the identity of another, underlining the difference between the dreamer and the artist. Montgomery describes the distinction between these two positions in her journal: "These dream lives are altogether different from the stories I 'think out.' When thinking out a story I am *outside* of it — merely recording what I see others do. But in a dream life I am *inside* — I am living it, not recording it" (*SJ* 3:244).

Although Anne's "imagining-other perspective" may not develop fully into pure empathy, it does intersect with another quality, her periscopic vision, which Anne has from the beginning and which makes her such an engaging and valuable protagonist for adolescent readers. Driving from Bright River station to Green Gables, Matthew and Anne pass through the arch of the Avenue, and Anne gazes "afar into the sunset west, with eyes that [see] visions trooping splendidly across that glowing background" (28). Unlike Emily Starr, who would have been compelled to give such a "flash" shape on paper, Anne experiences it simply at a personal and personalized level. Anne's periscopic vision allows her soul to wander "afar, star-led" (28); however, she is equally able to revel in the colours and shapes and textures of the world around her (140). And while her imagination is primarily governed by her "beauty-loving eyes" (43), Anne is open to experiencing the fear of a collapsing bridge (31), the terror of the Haunted Wood (chapter 20), or the thrill of a drowning Elaine (chapter 28). From her creation of imaginary friends as a child, through her adolescent dreams of life's "possibilities lurking rosily in the oncoming years" (326) and her visualization of a new ambition "glittering higher up still" than the one just attained (320), to her more adult potential for empathy with family and friends at the end, Anne maintains her capacity to see the unseen, pictured as the "bend in the road." After the death of Matthew, Anne, with the maturity that perspective has granted through negotiation of visibility on her own terms, carries on her life's journey not on a straight road with a discernible horizon but on a crooked road with all its curves and twists (345-46). The novel opens with the image of the brook from Rachel's limited perspective and ends with images of Avonlea's "home lights" and "homestead trees" superimposed on those of the Lake of Shining Waters and the sea from Anne's periscopic perspective: "Beyond lay the sea, misty and purple, with its haunting, unceasing murmur. The west was a glory of soft mingled hues, and the pond reflected them all in still softer shadings" (349). In the closing chapters, Anne and the narrator articulate a cautious optimism and realistic aspirations, reinforcing the value of both the visible and invisible: "if the path set before her feet was to be narrow she knew that flowers of quiet happiness would bloom along it. The joys of sincere work and worthy aspiration and congenial friendship were to be hers; nothing could rob her of her birthright of fancy or her ideal world of dreams. And there was always the bend in

the road!" (351). Gammel and Epperly note that Montgomery's style is more evocative than descriptive.[7] So too is her resolution. In a caption to one of his photographs, Freeman Patterson writes that "the lure of the unknown is suggested by a road that reaches the edge of a picture without suggesting its eventual destination. That is left to our imagination" (81). Because Anne's road has reached the edge of this picture "without suggesting its eventual destination," the reader's imagination continues to be engaged beyond the final page, lured by "the unknown."

Mary Jeanette Moran argues that *Anne of Green Gables*, particularly its ending, "supports a feminist, relational model of ethics" as framed by Carol Gilligan (Moran 52-54). Because Anne is "an über-connector" and "a polymorphous figure" (Gammel, "Introduction" 3, 10), the novel supports new concepts of identity that Gilligan's work has inspired, such as Kenneth Gergen's "relational being." "Within any relationship," Gergen contends, "we also *become somebody*. That is, we come to play a certain part or adopt a certain identity. . . . Each relationship will bring me into being as a certain sort of person, and the actions that I acquire will enter the repository of potentials for future use" (136). Carole Gerson describes "the official Anne of the twenty-first century" as "thoughtful, intelligent, and determined to see beyond the horizon" (31); so too are those readers who engage in the process of reading her story. "At the moment of reading," observes Gergen, "there is no clear separation between me, the book, and you. Not only are we joined together, but we are wedded as well to a preceding world of language without evident end. And as you put this book aside and speak to others, so will we be carried into the future" (29). *Anne of Green Gables* actively engages the visual imagination, guiding its young readers to approach, to retreat, to determine foreground from background, to experiment with multiple angles and points of reference, and so read the unseen from the seen while inviting them to clarify their own perspectives and negotiate their own presence in the boundaries between the visible and invisible. Being cognizant of the unseen and attaining multiple perspectives, young readers can exercise and develop an empathic imagination as they become aware of the multiplicity of stories that lie beneath the surface. Only in so doing, can they avoid the "visibility politics" which fail to be "transformational" because "lead[ing] to the stultifying 'me-ism' to which realist representation is always vulnerable" (Phelan 11); only in so doing, can they engage in "the generative processes of

relating" (Gergen xv). Montgomery's Anne encourages readers to heed the visible world — personal and communal, sunlight and shadows — while inspiring them to embark on invisible journeys to where only the imagination can lead.

Notes

[1] Because the word *empathy* did not enter the English language until 1909 through psychologist Edward Titchener's translation of the German *Einfühlung* ("Empathy"), Montgomery uses the terms *sympathy* or *compassion* instead. Journal entries Montgomery made in 1897 are pertinent to this idea that empathy is a mark of maturation and adulthood (*Selected Journals* 1:190-95; hereafter referred to as *SJ*, followed by volume and page number).

[2] This is linked to the familiarity bias that Hoffman identifies as one of the ways in which empathy is vulnerable; even adults tend to favour family and friends, those who are similar, rather than those who are different, when there are conflicting claimants for empathy ("Contribution" 67-68). Outlining Erik Erikson's five stages of "psychosocial development," Russell observes that during the fifth stage, "identity versus role confusion," "most [adolescent readers] prefer stories about others like themselves" (32). Holly Blackford's interviews with girls between the ages of eight and sixteen contest such conclusions. These girls, she discovered, read "to encounter alterity, or a radically different experience and world" that "transcends their own lives" (19). To explain her findings, Blackford references the revisionist psychology of Carol Gilligan, which identifies stages different from those of Erikson because "girls think of themselves as 'relational selves'" (Blackford 6; cf. Gilligan 11-13).

[3] Montgomery is referring to "old dreams [that] can haunt rooms" here.

[4] Nochlin quotes Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*: *An Introduction* (New York: Pantheon, 1978) 1:86.

[5] The one example of Marilla responding empathically (84), discussed later, demonstrates this as her empathy is inspired by a personal experience from the past rather than by a purely imaginative engagement with Anne.

[6] I am indebted to David and Wahl's article for drawing my attention to the Entwistle and Wilson books.

[7] Gammel (*Looking* 159) and Epperly (92) make this observation specifically in reference to descriptions of Green Gables; however, both also suggest Montgomery's tendency to evocation throughout their studies of *Anne of Green Gables*, as for example in their discussion of the novel's conclusion (Gammel, *Looking* 186-90; Epperly 117-18).

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