Keynote Speaker: Kate Scarth

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Trinna’s blog was originally posted on the LMMI website on 25 February. Kate is developing her interviews with scholars, which would have been the subject of her keynote as described in this post, into an open access, online L.M. Montgomery course. At the same time, Kate and Trinna are collecting fans’ stories of how they first encountered and have been affected by L.M. Montgomery and her world (you can share your L.M. Montgomery story at yourlmmstory.com).

Please welcome Dr. Kate Scarth, keynote speaker for the L.M. Montgomery Institute’s 2020 Conference, L.M. Montgomery and Vision; Assistant Professor of Applied Communication, Leadership, and Culture at the University of Prince Edward Island; and Chair of L.M. Montgomery Studies at the University of Prince Island.



Dr. Kate Scarth. Courtesy of The University of Prince Edward Island, 2017.

Though the L.M. Montgomery Institute was founded in 1993 and the University of Prince Edward Island has offered courses on Montgomery for thirty-odd years, Dr. Scarth is the first official chair of L.M. Montgomery Studies at UPEI. Congratulations Kate! Way to go!

And she's off to a cracking good start, co-organizing two Montgomery conferences and helping to establish the *Journal of L.M. Montgomery Studies*, an online and print open-access, peer-reviewed journal devoted to studies of Montgomery. Chair of L.M. Montgomery Studies indeed! Why, she's even been called "the future of L.M. Montgomery Studies."

How did she achieve such an honour?

Maybe it's her experience. Scarth's education includes a bachelor's degree from Dalhousie University in Nova Scotia; a master's degree from Memorial University in Newfoundland; a doctorate from the University of Warwick, UK; and awards for excellence all along the way. Her work tends to focus on the connection between people, fiction, and place, and she's pursued this work in some of the most beautiful places in the world. Clearly, this woman knows where to go to read a book with a view! And she knows what to do when she gets there.

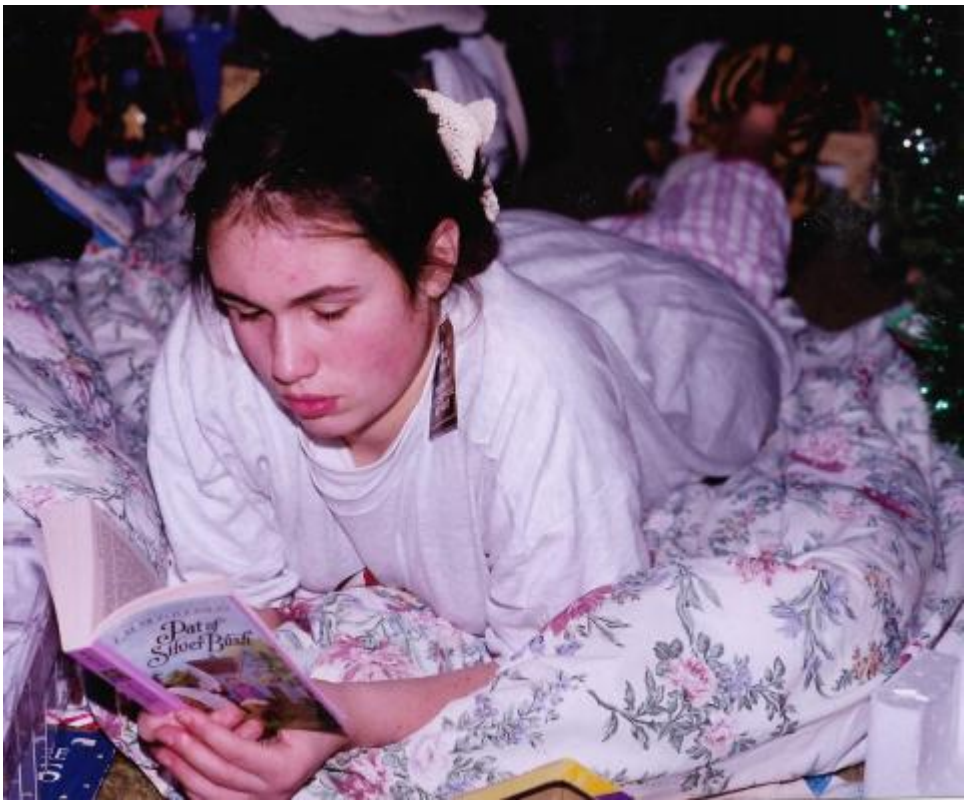
But in my opinion, Kate achieved her current role in the literary landscape because she chooses amazing projects. Her book, *Romantic Suburbs: Ecology, Sensibility, and Greater London* (under contract with University of Toronto Press), explores the portrayal of the London suburbs in fiction from the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. I, for one, can't wait to read it. Just think of strolling the streets of London with Kate's insights by your side!

Her keynote for this summer's conference promises to be just as exciting. Along with the L.M. Montgomery Institute, Kate has been filming interviews with the most famous Montgomery scholars in the world for "Scholars on Screen: Seeing the Past and Envisioning the Future of L.M. Montgomery Studies." If you're an LMM fan, we're talking rock stars here, people like Elizabeth Epperly, Yuko Katsura, and Elizabeth Waterston. She'll be sharing juicy deets from the interviews and describing an online opportunity to view the videos yourself when she speaks at the conference.

Come on. You know you want to be there.

Of course, I'm not completely objective when it comes to talking about Kate's projects. I'm collaborating with her on "The World of L.M. Montgomery and Her Fans." (You can share your L.M. Montgomery Story at yourlmmstory.com.). Together, we're creating a website to collect people's "L.M. Montgomery origin stories," stories about how fans first discovered Montgomery's world, what they love about it, and how this world has affected their lives. From there, we'll be writing a book reflecting on the stories and on Montgomery's enduring appeal through the lens the stories provide. More details on that project at the conference, too!

And what about Kate herself? How did she get started with all this in the first place? What's her L.M. Montgomery origin story?



Young Kate Reading *Pat of Silverbush*. Photo by Hazen Scarth, circa 1992.

Kate writes: "I don't remember a time that I didn't know *and* love Montgomery and Anne." She goes on to say, "Already an avid reader (the one year I played hockey, age nine, I spent my time in the dressing room reading), I was determined to know

the Anne *in* the books. At age eight, my family came to PEI on vacation, and I came armed with my stack of Anne books (now, and probably then too, bearing the evidence of being well read and well loved). On breaks from visiting Green Gables and Rainbow Valley, I clearly remember reading in our motel room, taking in as much Anne as I possibly could while on PEI. Visiting Green Gables was definitely an epoch in my life—the Haunted Wood particularly captured my eight-year-old imagination."

How did these Montgomery experiences affect her current work? "I think this fascination with literary places must go back to Montgomery: her love of place, her heroines' powerful, emotional engagement with place, the places where we as readers discover her imagined world."

Can't you just picture Kate reading LMM in her hockey gear? Well, I say the NHL's loss is our gain! And I can't wait to see what her next scholarly insights will be.

For more on Kate Scarth, visit https://katescarth.com/

For more on Trinna S. Frever, visit https://trinnafrever.com/ or trinna_writes on Instagram.

For more on their shared project, visit @yourlmmstory on FB, Instagram, and Twitter and their website https://yourlmmstory.com/



Trinna_Writes Logo. Photo by Trinna S. Frever.

Trinna S. Frever is a tenured professor turned fiction writer, specializing in intersections between oral storytelling, music, visual media, and print fiction (intermedia theory), and, more recently, depictions of reading and writing within fiction (meta-media theory). Her latest essay on L.M. Montgomery, “Seeing Female Readers, Reading Female Readers, Making Meta-Readers: Montgomery as Depictor and Creator of Scholars,” is under review at the *Journal of L.M. Montgomery Studies*. Frever is at work on three children's fantasy novels that are full of songs and stories: one featuring vintage aviation, one featuring quirky princesses, and one featuring wacky space aliens (as opposed to calmer, more sedate space aliens). Frever is also an avid Bookstagrammer and visit https://trinnafrever.com/.

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