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Anne Adapted: A (Con)textual Analysis of L. M. Montgomery's Novel *Anne of Green Gables* and *Anne with an E*

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Abstract

The present MA paper examines the adaptation of the 1908 Canadian Bildungsroman *Anne of Green Gables*, written by Lucy Maud Montgomery, to a 2017 TV show *Anne with an E*, created by Moira Walley-Beckett. The analysis is based on the theories of adaptation set out by Linda Hutcheon and Julie Sanders, as well as the cultural and social implications and reception of each version. In using these theories and circumstances surrounding each version and its medium, I examine what the differences between them imply on a socio-cultural level. The focus of the thesis is not fidelity to the original, but rather the comparison of the two narratives, as well as the analysis of the social messaging behind these narratives in terms of its delivery, audience, and socio-cultural context. It is evident that even though the novel and the TV series are part of the same universe of *Anne*, each version is concerned with different ideological issues, making *Anne with an E* function in contemporary society as a separate entity.

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Stories, great flapping ribbons of shaped space-time, have been blowing and uncoiling around the universe since the beginning of time. And they have evolved. The weakest have died and the strongest have survived, growing fat on the retelling.

– Terry Pratchett, *Witches Abroad*

1. Introduction

Adaptation is one of the core concepts of evolutionary biology – it refers to the “modification of an organism or its parts that makes it more fit for existence under the conditions of its environment” (Merriam-Webster, n.d)¹. If we were to consider this definition applicable to adaptations as a cultural and literary phenomenon and think of cultural change as similar to a species facing the threat of extinction, it would be obvious that some adaptations are simply not successful. However, while some renderings perish, others can withstand the test of time and change their shape and delivery enough to remain in focus (Hutcheon, 2006, 32). Some of such timeless ideas for a story were brought into life by Lucy Maud Montgomery, a prolific writer of romance novels, whose influence on the Canadian culture should not be understated.

Montgomery, born in November of 1874, was quite a lonely child (Rubio 2008, 17). After her mother’s death and her father subsequently moving away, Montgomery spent her childhood years with her grandparents in Cavendish, Prince Edward Island. Feeling ostracized by her peers, Montgomery reverted to imaginary friendships, which she later credited for helping her explore and build upon her creativity (Bourgoin 1998, 136). Even in her early years, Montgomery cherished the dream of stardom, which she expressed in her journal after submitting a poem for publication: “I saw myself the wonder of my schoolmates – a little local celebrity” (in Hammill 2006, 656). Montgomery’s dream of being a famous writer is reflective in her extensive bibliography – during her lifetime, she published 20 novels, over 500 short stories, an autobiography, and a book of poetry (Rubio 2008, 1). Yet, even with the prior release of quite a few short stories, Montgomery truly rose to fame in July 1908, when the first book of her *Anne* series, *Anne of Green Gables*, was finally printed. The sentimental coming-of-age story, which Montgomery was allegedly inspired to write after reading newspaper excerpts about mixed-up orphans (although Montgomery has given conflicting accounts for her inspiration over the years), was an instant success (*ibid.*). Only about a year and a half after first being published, *Anne of Green Gables* was already on its sixth print version (Brennan 1995, 247). In fact, Montgomery holds the title of the most successful Canadian author in terms of sales during her lifetime, which we could see as proof of the

¹ This definition is available at <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/adaptation> and was retrieved in March 2022.

fascination the public had with Anne. Even Mark Twain, whom William Faulkner had famously proclaimed to be the ‘father’ of American literature, said that Montgomery's Anne was “the dearest and most moving and delightful child since the immortal *Alice*” (quoted in Brennan 1995, 248). However, this tremendous success in print did not seem to correlate with the way the public viewed Montgomery – at the time, she did not make it to the 1924 greatest Canadian people list curated by *Maple Leaf* magazine. Faye Hammill, a University of Glasgow professor known for modern North American and British middlebrow literature research, has theorized that the status of Montgomery as a seemingly overlooked Canadian author was influenced by a few factors. Among them, we could distinguish that Montgomery was a woman, a notion that automatically placed distinct societal expectations on her. This social pressure is reflective in her work: according to Susan Drain, *Anne of Green Gables* plays with what is considered conventionally (and essentially) feminine; Montgomery achieves that by working both with the convention of femininity, as well as against it (Drain 1992, 40). This conflicting image of a woman author in the Victorian era, as well as the overwhelming success and relatability of *Anne* may have overshadowed Montgomery as an author in the living years of her career (Hammill 2006).

The early critical discussion regarding the novel has, unsurprisingly, often focused on comparing Anne to other female literary heroines of the time, namely, Kate Wiggin's *Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm*: “*The Outlook* [22 August 1908] states, ‘But the book is by no means an imitation,’ and *The Spectator* [13 March 1909] affirms, ‘There is no question of imitation or borrowing’” (quoted in Carman 2013, 66). Later on, the conversation shifted towards the subjects that Montgomery touches on, such as abuse, femininity, and even glimpses of the first wave of feminism, which led some to question whether the novel was intended for children or adults. Montgomery was puzzled by this confusion, as she noted to MacMillan, “they seem to take the book so seriously – as if it were meant for grown-up readers, and not merely for girls” (quoted in Carman 2013, 65). Yet the question of the audience was not only concerned with the age and gender of the readers, but also their nationalities – the matter of American appropriation of the Anne story became important. In *Such a Simple Little Tale: Critical Responses to L. M. Montgomery's Anne of Green Gables*, Mavis Reimer remarks on how differently Canadian and American productions have approached *Anne of Green Gables*. Reimer posits that the story “is often discussed as an American novel by critics and, indeed, seems to be readily assumed into those literary contexts” (1995, 4). At least one Americanized version of Anne did not sit well with Montgomery, who expressed frustration and anger with the 1919 film edition of *Anne of Green Gables*:

I think if I hadn't already known it was from my book, that I would never have recognized it. The landscape and folks were 'New England', never P.E. [Prince Edward] Island... A skunk and an American flag were introduced – both

equally unknown in PE Island. I could have shrieked with rage over the latter. Such crass, blatant Yankeeism! (quoted in Hammill 2006: 666)

After the novel has been translated into 36 languages and rightfully earned the title of a Canadian classic, it has become impossible to deny the widespread appeal of L. M. Montgomery's bildungsroman. Consequently, the story of Anne has been subjected to plenty of adaptations into various media: we can meet Anne in theme parks, translations to Japanese-style cartoons, renderings into contemporary TV shows, and more. The adaptability of the storyline has helped the character and story of Anne, as well as the legacy of L. M. Montgomery, live on for more than a century. However, the recent 2017 *Netflix* adaptation, titled with Anne's famous one-liner *Anne with an E*, is a polarizing addition to the collection of adaptations. It is not just a replica: the creator of the series, Emmy-winning Moira Walley-Beckett, describes the novel as "timeless, timely, and topical" (Wilkinson, 2017)² and takes certain creative liberties to highlight and problematize the issues that were not addressed (or held a different level of public awareness) in the original *Anne of Green Gables*. And although the addition of certain dramatic elements and subtraction of others is understandable due to the shift in the medium, some changes entice curiosity about their intention. The series is not a blind recreation of the "original", therefore Anne (and other characters) are not just carbon copies, but rather vessels to deliver a particular message. Yet, while the show has shown potential and received not only national but also worldwide acclaim, some critics argue that it deviates from the 'spirit' of the original text or even other adaptations, namely, the 1985 nostalgia-invoking audience-favorite mini-series, directed by Kevin Sullivan and starring Megan Follows. While some critics from the *New York Times*, *The Atlantic*, and *Collider* have hailed the 2017 series as a "rewarding return to Green Gables" (Genzlinger 2017)³, "the best kind of adaptation", which reads between the lines (Gilbert 2017)⁴, and "undeniably the most stylish adaptation of *Anne of Green Gables*" (Keene 2017)⁵, it has also received less than brilliant reviews. *Vanity Fair*, for example, has

² This interview is available at <https://ew.com/tv/2017/05/11/anne-interview-moira-walley-beckett> and was accessed in March 2022.

³ This review is available at <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/05/11/arts/television/review-anne-with-an-e-is-a-rewarding-return-to-green-gables.html> and was accessed in March 2022.

⁴ This review is available at <https://www.theatlantic.com/entertainment/archive/2017/05/anne-with-an-e-netflix-review/525987> and was accessed in March 2022.

⁵ This review is available at <https://collider.com/anne-with-an-e-review-netflix/#:~:text=Anne%20with%20an%20E%20is,at%20odds%20with%20Montgomery's%20story> and was accessed in March 2022.

claimed that this version of *Anne* is “bleak” and “gets it all so terribly wrong” (Robinson 2017)⁶, and a reviewer from *Paste* magazine has even called the motivations of the adaptation into question:

This show tramples the source material in a way that dilutes and arguably betrays the protagonist. What’s the power in Anne’s legendarily overwrought imagination once the world around her is darker than anything she could ever come up with? What’s the point of scenic and linguistic fidelity to the time and place once you’ve powder coated it with an incredibly unsubtle overlay of 2018 sensibilities? (Glynn 2018)⁷

In a sense, when taking these creative liberties, *Anne with an E* could be seen as a catalyst that prompts a conversation about fidelity in adaptation studies. The approach taken by the creators of the show echoes the ideas of Linda Hutcheon, who defines an adaptation as “an extended, deliberate, announced revisitation of a particular work of art” (2006, 170). Therefore, with this MA thesis, I aim to revisit both, *Anne of Green Gables* and the 2017 rendition *Anne with an E*, and to analyze the presence and portrayal of social issues (such as mental health and gender) in both versions. While some comparisons of these versions exist, they are limited in scope and either focus on fidelity, a single social issue (for example, gender and femininity), or a singular character (which, of course, is usually Anne herself). This MA thesis aims for a more comprehensive approach that would be based on the works of Hutcheon, Sanders, and other scholars of adaptation studies. The recent television recreation will not be measured according to equivalence, so-called “faithfulness” or fidelity to the originating text, since we have already established that adaptations are context-dependent transformations, and such a comparison would only perpetuate hierarchies. Instead, I propose that neither the original text by Lucy Maud Montgomery, nor the adaptation, exist in a “cultural vacuum”, as labeled by Hutcheon (2006, 142). Therefore, the focus of the thesis will be a comparative analysis of the two narratives, as well as the assessment of the social messaging behind these storylines in terms of its delivery, audience, and cultural (social) context. In short, with this MA thesis, I aim to compare the two versions of Anne, the characters surrounding her, and the events that take place in the book and in the series, by also considering the historical, cultural, and social backgrounds of each version.

My reasoning behind choosing this topic is quite simple: I have decided to analyze how the novel by Lucy Maud Montgomery has been adapted because an academic analysis will not only pay homage to my personal relationship with the novel and its variations, but also provide ample space to study intermediality – an important concept in the field of adaptation theory, which also happens to be closely

⁶ This review is available at <https://www.vanityfair.com/hollywood/2017/05/anne-of-green-gables-netflix-review-anne-with-an-e-bleak-sad-wrong> and was accessed in March 2022.

⁷ This review is available at <https://www.pastemagazine.com/tv/anne-with-an-e/netflix-anne-with-an-e-season-two-review/> and was accessed in March 2022.

related to my academic and professional experience in translation. I believe that translation is one of the methods in which adaptations occur: both disciplines have roots in recreation. Various translation scholars and authors have aimed to debunk the prevailing idea that original texts are superior to their renditions into other languages (see, for example, Jorge Luis Borges' *Some Versions of Homer*) – a concept that ties in well with our discussion of adaptation.

The present MA paper is comprised of three main chapters, first of which is the present Introduction. The second one – “Adaptation and appropriation: a theoretical overview” – briefly reflects on the history of adaptation studies and provides a conceptual framework by discussing how Linda Hutcheon and Julie Sanders have theorized adaptation. The subsequent chapter is dedicated to the analysis of the adaptation from novel to film. Both sections of this analysis deal with a different socio-cultural issue, while also incorporating overviews of the cultural and social backgrounds of both versions of the *Anne* story. The first section deals with the interpretations of mental health, abuse, and suicide in the context of a coming-of-age story, while the second one focuses on gender tropes and female identity. Both of these sections discuss how, because of the shifts that take place in the move to another medium, the ideological premises, expressions, and thematic concerns of the adaptation change the narrative scope of Anne's world. The MA thesis ends with conclusions and a summary in Lithuanian.

2. Adaptation and appropriation: a theoretical overview

This chapter of the thesis aims to provide a comprehensive overview of the history of adaptation studies and the evolution of adaptation theory. It also establishes a theoretical framework that will be followed throughout this MA thesis by discussing the theory put forward by Hutcheon and Sanders, which will help establish connections between an adaptation and the cultural context that surrounds it.

2.1. Adaptation studies and theory: a brief history

Tracing back to when adaptation as a practice began is challenging, yet it is likely safe to assume that adaptation may have been in existence for as long as any type of art form has been. For example, we can look back at the ancient Greeks, well-known for their inception of theater, which heavily featured adaptations of myths and legends: “Audiences knew the myths already and went to the theatre to see how the stories were told” (Reilly 2017, xxi). It has been thousands of years since then, yet adaptation as a practice has prevailed over time, and it is becoming increasingly more challenging to ascertain its genesis and few scholars dare make assumptions about it. Kamilla Elliot attributes the lack of “historical adaptation studies” to theoretical and practical reasons, one of which is the fact that adaptation does not have a “home discipline” and is actually “scattered across many” (2020, 15), which makes adaptation harder to detect through time.

However, we can still attempt to trace back the history of adaptation studies and theory. What Thomas Leitch defines as “Adaptation Studies 1.0” (2017, 15), i.e., the conceptual years of the field following the “pre-historic” phase (*ibid.*), began with George Bluestone’s 1957 monograph *Novels into Film*, which established adaptation studies as a field with a particular methodology and opened up the space for an important discussion of individual adapted works. However, with his series of case studies and the establishment of medium-specific adaptation principles, Bluestone concludes that film and literature are two media that are so fundamentally different that adaptation is a “futile endeavor” (*ibid.*), a belief that many of subsequent adaptation scholars and theorists have refused to concur with. Yet, the impact of Bluestone should not be understated – his monograph was instrumental in defining the (albeit soft) edges of adaptation studies and marking the beginning of negation of fidelity discourse. Since then, a variety of scholars have challenged the idea of a hierarchical structure, which relied heavily on intertextuality and the relationship between *hypertexts* and *hypotexts*⁸. Leitch labels this period and shifting of priorities as “Adaptation Studies 2.0” (2017, 16) and recognizes Robert Stam, Alessandra

⁸ In this context, the prefixes *hyper-* and *hypo-* signify an intertextual relationship, which was theorized by Gerard Genette and involves “any relationship uniting a text B (which I shall call the hypertext) to an earlier text A (I shall, of course, call it the *hypotext*), upon which it is grafted in a manner that is not that of commentary” (quoted in Allen 2000, 107-108).

Raengo, and Linda Hutcheon as some of the most influential scholars of the time. It may appear that the original text held a certain degree of superiority over any adaptation, particularly when concerning the renderings of celebrated literature into film. Robert Stam has expressed that “the conventional language of adaptation criticism has often been profoundly moralistic, rich in terms that imply that the cinema has somehow done a disservice to literature” (2005, 3). This summarizes the widespread assumption about adaptation theory – that it used to revolve around fidelity – the discourse of faithfulness to the original, which later received substantial criticism. This “fidelity criticism” helped adaptation studies and theory move towards a non-hierarchical view of adaptation. As mentioned above, Leitch credits this shift in discourse to various scholars, who have questioned the status and meaning of fidelity discourse:

Should one be faithful to the physical descriptions of characters? Perhaps so, but what if the actor who happens to fit the description of Nabokov’s Humbert also happens to be a mediocre actor? Or is one to be faithful to the author’s intentions? But what might they be, and how are they to be inferred? ... And to what authorial instance is one to be faithful? To the biographical author? To the textual implied author? To the narrator? (Stam 2000, 57–58)

Correspondingly, Linda Hutcheon has reinforced the idea that “fidelity criticism” used to be the status quo, the “critical orthodoxy in adaptation studies, especially when dealing with canonical works such as those of Pushkin or Dante” (2006, 6–7). Recent adaptation theory arising from “Adaptation Studies 2.0” has been trying to “indicate that adaptations have value, validity, and integrity not dependent upon the originals and able to say interesting and unique things about language and culture” (Slethaug 2014, 3). In her 2020 breakthrough book *Theorizing Adaptation*, Kamilla Elliot proposes that this view of adaptation theory is misguided and might be the result of a theoretical fallacy that has been perpetuated for decades: “the myth of fidelity criticism is the product of humanities theorization’s centuries-long preference for difference and abiding hostility to similarity” (2020, 20). According to Elliot, the fidelity discourse was never as prominent as “infidelity discourse” (*ibid.*). Elliot uses Kara McKechnie’s phrasing to express the magnitude at which much of the academic community dislikes fidelity: “[it] is the ‘F-word’ of adaptation studies” (*ibid.*, p. 16). The present MA thesis will not be dealing with the question of fidelity or infidelity criticism, yet a brief introduction to the concept is necessary to understand the context of the discussion.

2.2. Adaptation and appropriation: defining terminology

If one were to look at “adaptation” through the lens of natural sciences, it would be defined as the process of “modification of an organism or its parts that makes it more fit for existence under the conditions of its environment” (Merriam-Webster, n.d.)⁹. This ability to conform to one’s surroundings, made possible

⁹ This definition is available at <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/adaptation> and was retrieved in March 2022.

by various behavioral, structural, and physiological processes, is one of the fundamental principles of Charles Darwin's evolution theory. This is so for a good reason: science agrees that the ability to adapt to one's circumstances can be considered essential for survival, especially in the long-term, generational perspective. Here we may draw parallels between science and the humanities. Some scholars, including Richard Dawkins and Linda Hutcheon, theorize that natural selection is not just a mechanism of evolution that is applicable to the flora and fauna – the necessity for change affects a variety of domains and has even resulted in a cultural transmission, which is concerned primarily with the effect that “memes”, Dawkins' cultural equivalent to genes, have on ideas. This cultural parallel, concerned with change, could, in turn, be extended to storytelling: “descent with modification is essential” (Bortolotti & Hutcheon 2007, 446).

Part of the confusion in adaptation studies is caused by the general disagreement over terminology. Over the years, the definitions concerning adaptation have differed from scholar to scholar. According to Elliot, the “many manifestations” of adaptation “have generated a panoply of synonyms and alternative terminologies” (Elliot 2020, 182). Elliot provides an extensive list of terminology synonymous with adaptation, citing Sanders, Stam, and various other scholars. For example, “*variation, version, interpretation, imitation, proximation, supplement, increment, improvisation, prequel, sequel, continuation, addition, paratext, hypertext, palimpsest, graft, rewriting, reworking, refashioning, revisioning, re-evaluation, bricolage, and pastiche*” (*ibid.*), taken directly from Sanders' 2006 introduction to *Adaptation and Appropriation*. This vastness of terminology contributes to the disorganization of the field. In this MA thesis, I will be relying on the definitions set out by Hutcheon (2006) and Sanders (2006) to avoid any confusion.

Literary theorist Linda Hutcheon defines an adaptation as “an extended, deliberate, announced revisitation of a particular work of art” (2006, 170) and “repetition but without replication, bringing together the comfort of ritual and recognition with the delight of surprise and novelty” (*ibid.*, p. 173). She builds on the ideas of Brian McFarlane and differentiates between two types of adaptations: adaptation as a product and adaptation as a process. When thinking of adaptation as a product, Hutcheon defines it as a “transposition” of a particular work (2006, 8). The term “transposition” is common in the fields of translation studies and semiotics, and it is part of a bigger process of transcoding – converting information from one form of expression to another. Hutcheon proposes that we can see similarities between the process of transposition from one sign system to another and adaptations, because they can involve a change in medium or genre, or differences in framing and, by extension, context (*ibid.*). According to Hutcheon, transposition can involve a “shift in ontology”, for example, going from the real

to the fictional, etc. (*ibid.*). Adaptation, both as a product and as a process, inherently opposes the idea of fidelity – the products cannot be entirely faithful to their sources, because then they cause questions regarding plagiarism, whereas the process of adaptation fundamentally relies on human memory and our ability to decipher that what we are seeing or reading is, in fact, an adaptation. So adaptation as a product must have tangible differences from the source, while the process of adaptation must retain the most fundamental ideas of the originating source. The simultaneous execution of both can be difficult to do properly, especially since the ideas of process and product are contradicting to a degree.

To Hutcheon, adaptation as a process can be seen from two perspectives: the “process of creation” or the “process of reception” (2006, 9). If we look at adaptation from the standpoint of creation, it always involves “both (re-)interpretation and then (re-)creation”, which has been referred to as “appropriation” and “salvaging” (*ibid.*). It is unlikely that Hutcheon was referencing Sanders’ idea of appropriation here, yet both definitions are similar: Sanders proposes that the process of adaptation co-exists with appropriation, making adaptation and appropriation accomplish different things while operating on a similar framework. An adaptation provides a link to the ‘source’ material by signifying a relationship with it; an adaptation is an intertext that makes its intentions clear. To illustrate, Sanders offers the example of *Hamlet*: even if we pass the Shakespearean story through the hands of various directors, actors, scriptwriters, *etc.*, the final product will remain “ostensibly Hamlet” (2006, 26). According to Sanders, an adaptation “can continue a simpler attempt to make text ‘relevant’ or easily comprehensible to new audiences and readerships via the processes of proximation and updating”, which are very dependent on “social as well as economic rationales” (*ibid.*, p. 19). Adaptation as creation is not necessarily neutral – instead, it is a “highly active” process and “far removed from the unimaginative act of imitation, copying, or repetition” (*ibid.*, p. 24).

Appropriation, however, takes adaptation to a new level by creating a whole new cultural product or domain (*ibid.*, p. 26). When looking at an appropriation, the fact that it is one may not immediately come across; an appropriation is still an intertext, yet it is concealed. In contemporary culture and society, the term ‘appropriation’ also comes with certain negative connotations attached to it. It is the act of taking something – a piece of writing, a visual element, or other forms of cultural expression – and tailoring it to your own needs. Essentially, an appropriation could be characterized as making something your own, an undertaking that may be met with negativity, especially from the cultures or societies that would be considered the originators. An appropriation is different from an adaptation because it does not always provide an explicit link to the source, and its function is entirely separate from the role that the predecessor was performing. It can be difficult to draw a precise line between adaptation and

appropriation, but by Sanders' definition, it would be safe to assume that appropriation is a form of adaptation that is not reliant on human memory.

According to Hutcheon, human memory and intertextuality become important when considering how an adaptation is received by the public. Hutcheon argues that people experience adaptations as palimpsests “through our memory of other works that resonate through repetition with variation” (2006, 8). This would generally mean that people who are aware of the ‘informing source’, as Sanders puts it (2006, 24), would generally have a different relationship and perception of the adaptation than those who are not aware of the origin of the adaptation: “As audience members, we need memory in order to experience difference as well as similarity” (Hutcheon 2006, 22). Of course, while knowledge of an intertextual source may be beneficial for our cultural understanding, it is not an absolute necessity to enjoy an adapted product independently (Sanders 2006, 22). This ability to detach from the originative source is what makes adaptations function as separate organisms. Even though they serve as derivations, adaptations are not “derivative” – they are works that are “second without being secondary” (Hutcheon 2006, 9). Hutcheon proposes dealing with adaptations by employing a set of particular questions, “the *what, who, why, how, when, and where* of adaptation” (2006, xiv). These questions relate to the particular circumstances of the adaptation – what is being adapted, who is executing the adaptation, as well as how, when, and where it is taking place. These questions help structure Hutcheon's *Theory of Adaptation*. Since we have already covered the *what, who, and why*, it is time to move on to the process-specific theory.

2.3. Canonicity and context: adaptation as intertext

Hutcheon regards adaptations as highly “palimpsestic”, a term she borrows from Scottish poet, critic, and scholar Michael Alexander (Ermarth 2001). To Hutcheon, this means that adaptations are inherently able to add and rewrite their intertextual references, yet not actually erase them – adaptations themselves are intertexts. The idea and the presence of the source is felt in the target medium; according to Hutcheon, adaptations do not exist in a ‘cultural vacuum’ (2006, 142) and should be considered as part of a pre-existing context, including their own intertexts. In terms of reception, the audience inevitably perceives an adaptation through the lens of contemporary events, which result in a “dialogue between the society in which the works <...> are produced and that in which they are received, and both are in dialogue with the works themselves” (*ibid.*, p. 149). An adaptation is a dialogue between the present and the past – Hutcheon also adds that the economic, legal, and religious rationales have the ability to influence the context of an adaptation. (*ibid.*)

This idea of setting-dependency is echoed by Sanders, who proposes that adaptations have layers, which means that it is possible to relocate the source texts “not just generically, but in cultural, geographical, and temporal terms” (2006, 20). Adaptations seek certain “equivalences”, as termed by Hutcheon, which would allow the reader to infer the relationship between the adapted version and the “informing source” (Sanders 2006, 24):

In adapting, the story argument goes, “equivalences” are sought in different sign systems for the various elements of the story: its themes, events, world, characters, motivations, points of view, consequences, contexts, symbols, imagery, and so on. (Hutcheon 2006, 10)

Sanders has also proposed the importance of invoking the “ideas of similarity and difference”. She argues that in order to be successful, film adaptations specifically need to have an “explicit link” to the source (2006, 22) – an apparent case of intertextuality. Viewers of an adaptation need to recognize that it links up with a particular source in order to make relevant associations: “[adaptations] need to serve as part of a shared community of knowledge, both for the interrelationships and interplay to be identifiable and for these in turn to have the required impact on their readership’ (*ibid.*, p. 97–98). Not just that, but the reader/viewer needs to be aware of the relationship between a source and an adaptation to appreciate the changes made in the adapted version fully. If we are looking to maximize the number of people aware of such a relationship, it would logically mean that the informing source has to be well-known (*ibid.*, p. 22). If we were to filter this information through the lens of the profit-driven entertainment industry, it would mean that canonicity is a necessity for any form of adaptation to continue to exist (*ibid.*, p. 120) and is likely the reason why adaptations tend to “operate within the parameters of an established canon”, which can further act as a reinforcement to the canon since it attracts attention back to the originating text (*ibid.*, p. 97–98). Because of this adaptation loop, it may appear that the consumers of entertainment are constantly being offered repetitive adaptations of the same sources.

2.4. Shifting forms: literature into film

Of course, the implications of an adaptation on the cultural landscape (and vice versa) are also reflective in the form that an adaptive transformation takes. Different media have specific communicative abilities and restrictions: what works well in text form may not necessarily translate into visual arts. If we are considering the adaptation from “telling” to “showing”, as Hutcheon puts it, we must understand what the process of shifting forms requires. Adaptation theory is primarily concerned with the way content and ideas shape shift between media, and, similarly to mutations, renderings from medium to medium are rarely random or inexplicable (although they do occur) – they are partially motivated by the environment in which they exist, as well as by consumer needs. The ever-changing demand and the way

we consume, interpret, and prioritize different media can make a compelling case for why adaptations are so attractive to a plethora of different audiences, thus being produced *en masse* in the entertainment industry. It is evident that a variety of different art forms – whether it be contemporary literature, film, music, or any other – are fighting for survival, which, in today’s day and age, is at least a few seconds of our attention (Hutcheon, 2006, 187). Since this MA thesis is concerned with the shift from literature to film, specifically, a television series, the specificities of transforming a written text into a screen-suitable visual representation will be considered.

Due to the 19th century advances in printing technology, increased literacy rates, and better coordination of distribution, the novel became a genre of ever-needed entertainment that was accessible to people of many diverse backgrounds (Graham 2000). In a way, the novel bridged the gap between entertainment that would be considered suitable for the *élite* and the masses. It was a usual practice to publish novels in installments, which “[encouraged] addiction to plotlines and characters” (Sanders 2000, 122). Therefore, it is not surprising that, when looking to adapt a story of the Victorian times, prose fiction is one of the most popular choices. And yet, despite its prevalence, the move from literature to film is often frowned upon. People tend to assume that the shorter and visually expressive form of movies will do a disservice to long and complex novels with intricate plots or complicated characters: “a novel, in order to be dramatized, has to be distilled, reduced in size, and thus, inevitably, complexity” (Hutcheon 2006, 36). Especially in television adaptations, which are conventionally “faster paced than film, <...> [which has to be taken] into account even when working with inevitably slower paced literary works”. (*ibid.*, p. 66). Dramatization also inevitably involves “a certain amount of re-accentuation and refocusing of themes, characters, and plot” (*ibid.*, p. 40), often complemented by looking at things from the marginal characters’ points of view (Sanders 2006, 57), which, as a result, can make the “ideological purpose to the revised perspective” become “almost inevitable”. (*ibid.*) Sanders elaborates on this issue by referencing Shakespearean adaptations, many of which echo the “theoretical concerns of postcolonialism, feminism, and queer theory, or a vibrant fusion of all these [issues]”. (*ibid.*) The changes that happen during the dramatization process can often be unwelcomed by the enthusiasts of a certain canon, because changes in narrative may ultimately deviate from the imagination and expectations that the audience holds – the relationship between the person experiencing the adaptation and the “informing source” (Sanders 2006, 24) becomes important. Yet, according to Hutcheon, telling a story (either by speaking or writing it down) will never be the same as translating it into a visual and aural experience of any performance media (2006, 23).

The process of adapting a novel to film requires an extensive process of transposition. Text and its functions, such as narration and dialogue, must find their place within the world of action, sound, visuals, and speech (Hutcheon 2006, 40), and can be re-imagined in a variety of different historical or cultural contexts (Sanders 2006, 55). Instead of remaining indistinct background information, “conflicts and ideological differences between characters must be made visible” (Hutcheon 2006, 40). And while some people argue that film can show us the characters “experiencing and thinking, but can never reveal their experiences or thoughts, except through the “literary” device of the voice-over” (*ibid.*, p. 58), Hutcheon disagrees. She argues that film is able to find “cinematic equivalents” (*ibid.*) since external portrayals can mirror the characters’ “inner truths” (*ibid.*). However, when does the adaptation transform so much that it starts to function entirely separately from its own intertexts? Sanders separates the notions of adaptation and appropriation for this reason – appropriation, while still a form of adaptation, deviates farther from the source material:

Appropriation clearly extends far beyond the adaptation of other texts into new literary creations, assimilating both historical lives and events, as viewed in the preceding chapter, and companion art forms, as mentioned above, into the process. <...> Nevertheless, [the process] has gained a particular cadence and significance in the wake of the late twentieth-century postmodernist theory, which has made us constantly aware of the processes of intervention and interpretation involved in any relationship or engagement with existent art forms. (Sanders 2006, 146)

If sustained, this process may lead us to question whether the similarities are homage or plagiarism. Therefore, a transposition between media requires surgical precision to allow for proper execution. And while positive receptions of novels-turned-films exist (think of the television adaptation of Zadie Smith’s *White Teeth*, which the author welcomed and even praised), any upcoming adaptation is still often deemed as inferior until it proves itself otherwise.

So, the “evolution” of a particular work of art should not be immediately considered as a linear improvement or regression – the mere existence of a recent version does not automatically indicate that it is somehow better or worse than the original or source. It just goes to demonstrate that an attempt has been made to make the work more relatable and in line with the current media trends, audiences, and cultural norms, or, as Julie Sanders put it, “make text ‘relevant’ or easily comprehensible to new audiences and readers via the processes of proximation and updating” (2006, 19). And, if we circle back to the biological premise of adaptation and consider cultural change as similar to a species facing the threat of extinction, some adaptations are simply unsuccessful. This does not necessarily mean that the underlying story of the adaptation will die along with a particular retelling of it. And while some renderings perish, others can withstand the test of time. One of such stories is Lucy Maud Montgomery’s *Anne of Green Gables*.

I will be basing my analysis of *Anne of Green Gables* and the 2017 adaptation *Anne with an E* on the works of Sanders and Hutcheon, since the ideas put forward by these theorists are relevant when interpreting the socio-cultural implications that the particular context of the adaptation carries. The theory put forward by Sanders dismantles various layers of the adaptation process, which is very useful when establishing the distinctions between adaptations and appropriations, yet Hutcheon's case-by-case medium and genre analysis may be more applicable in the practical terms. Since this MA thesis deals with the adaptation, rather than an appropriation, of *Anne of Green Gables*, the theory put forward by Hutcheon may be referenced more. In short, I aim to understand *Anne with an E* through the eyes of Hutcheon and Sanders, and use their ideas to establish what the transformations concerning gender and mental health imply on a socio-cultural level.

3. Coming-of-age vs. being-of-age: trauma, mental health, and childhood

This chapter of the analysis explores the links between trauma, mental health, abuse, and maturity in the context of Anne's narrative arc as a coming-of-age story. First of all, I will consider the dramatization of mental health related topics, as well as, by relying on the observations made by Hutcheon and Sanders, discuss how the characters' experiences changed during the move from novel to film and what implications these shifts carry. Ultimately, throughout this chapter, I will attempt to relate these changes in plotlines, character traits, and themes to the broader social and cultural contexts of the cinematic adaptation.

3.1. Dramatizing mental health

Dramatization is an essential part of moving from novel to film – it is the act of “adapt[ing] something for theatrical presentation” (Merriam-Webster, n.d.)¹⁰. However, the English verb “to dramatize” also has an additional meaning – “to present or represent [something] in a dramatic manner”. (*ibid.*) The topic of mental health is an issue that carries a lot of potential for dramatization, in both senses of the word. In the context of adaptations, the dramatization of certain themes, contexts, or characters is an essential part of shifting media; it allows for changes to the informing source while keeping the equivalences between the renditions intact. In relation to representing something in a dramatic manner, dramatization becomes a necessary tool to keep the audience engaged and interested. Adaptations that take both definitions into consideration have the potential to be successful. Consequently, it is no surprise that the actualization and dramatization of mental health, trauma, and abuse issues is more prevalent now than it used to be.

And while some of these portrayals are not necessarily positive – some argue that they perpetuate an outdated and stigmatized view of mental illness in particular – they are very impactful. On average, society gets the largest amount of exposure to information about mental health issues on mass media channels, suggesting that, at least a little over a decade ago, television held the most power in terms of “framing public consciousness” (Baun 2009, 31). Mental health-related topics are definitely on the rise, at least in Canada; ever since 2004, the topic of mental health has been getting an increasing amount of Google searches every year.¹¹ The newfound awareness of the topic makes it more relevant to the

¹⁰ This definition is available at <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/dramatize> and was retrieved in March 2022.

¹¹ The Google Trends search data is available at <https://trends.google.com/trends/explore?date=all&geo=CA&q=%2Fm%2F03x69g> and was accessed in March 2022.

contemporary audience. This, in turn, is attractive to media producers, because they are aiming to make their productions resonate with the public. Moira Walley-Beckett herself has posed the question of how to achieve this with her adaptation: “if we were going to do it [adapt Anne’s story] now, how would it be, what would it look like, how would we make it relevant, and in what ways was it relevant to us and the current conversations in the world?” (Wilkinson, 2017)¹² So relevance is essential for the success of a dramatization, since economic motivations are part of all stages of the adaptation process (Hutcheon 2006, 88).

One of the reasons why *Anne with an E* is such a polarizing adaptation is because of its focus on trauma and the ripple effect it causes throughout a person’s life. Such openness and acknowledgement of mental struggles did not have a place during Montgomery’s lifetime, especially in a book by a woman, and some may feel like there is no need to bring up the issues that were not discussed by Montgomery herself, even if that was due to stigma. Throughout the early days of the Canadian mental health movement, being mentally fit meant not exhibiting any symptoms of potential illness (Goodman, 2006). Those who did, however, often found themselves in abuse-ridden asylums, a term that was dropped after Dr Charles Clarke’s reorganization of mental health facilities in the late 19th century (*ibid.*). Of course, this might not have been applicable to “orphan asylums”, a term that Montgomery used quite liberally. It also goes without saying that the understanding of trauma and the implications it has on the quality of life has considerably improved. Of course, this is partially due to the increased accessibility to mental health resources and facilities, along with the expansion of the fields of psychiatry and psychology, which signal the importance society now places on maintaining the general mental wellbeing in decent shape. I propose that the changes in our understanding of mental health and the risks associated with ignoring it have prompted wider discussions about it, which are ultimately reflected in our everyday entertainment due to the process of “proximation and updating” (Sanders 2006, 19), and *Anne with an E* is no exception.

3.2. From “telling” to “showing”

The wish to be inclusive and maximize the dramatic output of the adaptation may be one of the reasons why, during the process of adaptation, the producers of the show chose to put a magnifying glass on what Montgomery wanted to leave as an implication. I suggest that these changes stem from the need to meet audience expectations, which arise when moving “from the imagined and visualized to the directly perceived” (Hutcheon 2006, 42). While the novel’s narrator is omniscient and the TV series is third-person based and omniscient at times, the two narratives focus on different aspects of the story. Let us

¹² This interview is available at <https://ew.com/tv/2017/05/11/anne-interview-moira-walley-beckett> and was accessed in March 2022.

take Anne’s difficult and abusive childhood and her subsequent proclivity for narrative escapism as an example. Such an approach to adapting Anne was unprecedented until the 2017 release of *Anne with an E*. While Montgomery’s text carries certain undertones of abuse, they are subtle enough to not draw too much attention to themselves – it is almost as if going into more detail about Anne’s past would taint the otherwise light story. For example, Anne is hesitant to verbalize the mistreatment she has experienced. When asked whether the twin-bearing Mrs. Hammond and Anne’s first guardian, Mrs. Thomas, were “good” to her (Montgomery 1908, 54), a question which, in my opinion, does not communicate the gravity of the situation¹³, Anne is very hesitant: “Oh, they MEANT to be—I know they meant to be just as good and kind as possible. And when people mean to be good to you, you don’t mind very much when they’re not quite—always. They had a good deal to worry them, you know”. (*ibid.*) Anne goes on to further excuse the behavior of Mrs. Thomas and Mrs. Hammond by stating that having a drunken husband and three sets of twins in a row must have been “very trying” for them both (*ibid.*). It is evident that in the book, the explicit details of the abuse and neglect are mostly left unspoken; their existence is factual, yet covert. To infer the connections between Anne’s character and her upbringing (or lack thereof), the reader must pay attention to the unspoken and read between the lines. If we were to consider the TV series as a move from “telling” to “showing”, as Hutcheon puts it, Montgomery has not explicitly *told* us anything about Anne’s abuse. Yet, the 2017 TV adaptation clearly *shows* it via cool-toned and dimly-lit cinematography shots (see Figure 1 below).

¹³ By that I mean that the phrase “being good to someone” has the ability to carry a variety of meanings and is a very delicate way of asking about abusive behavior.



Figure 1: Anne holds her face after being slapped by Mrs. Hammond. ("Your Will Shall Decide Your Destiny", 2017)

In addition to the visual elements like the scene pictured above, the TV series also has the dimension of sound at its disposition, which can further enhance the dramatic effect of the adaptation. Music, soundtracks, and sound effects are essential in conveying meaning, because they act as emotional stimulants, as well as a means to “connect inner and outer states in a less explicit way than do camera associations” (Hutcheon 2006, 41). This convergence is especially present in Anne’s traumatic flashbacks, where ominous soundtracks intertwine with menacing sound effects, for example, the sound of multiple crying babies in Mrs. Hammond’s house. The visual and aural dimensions of the story converge to form a deep emotional and psychological viewing experience, which the creators of the show were going for. The director and executive producer of the show, Moira Walley-Beckett, once expressed aiming for a visceral retelling of Anne's abusive past in an interview:

All the darker aspects of the story are inherently in the book, so I'm not actually reinventing the wheel; I'm just taking us there. <...> I wanted to dramatize it and I wanted it to feel visceral. I wanted you to know exactly what her origin story was so that we could really understand her original wounding and the stakes that were at play for her. It was all there, I just dug it out. (Wilkinson 2017)¹⁴

Yet, as opposed to the TV series, the novel gives us very little insight into and emotional investment in Anne’s abusive past. For example, Marilla is aware that Anne’s neediness and literary escapism are a result of the trauma experienced in her early life. She is “shrewd enough” to “divine the truth” that Anne

¹⁴ This interview is available at <https://ew.com/tv/2017/05/11/anne-interview-moira-walley-beckett> and was accessed in March 2022.

had a “starved, unloved life <...> of drudgery and poverty and neglect [sic]” (Montgomery 1908, 54). Yet, this is all that the readers get to know; this conversation between Marilla and Anne is one of the very few opportunities for the reader to get a closer look at Anne’s life as an orphan, and even then, in true Montgomery fashion, the presentation of it is discreet. Montgomery constructs the narrative as a lighthearted coming-of-age story, whereas the 2017 Anne (portrayed by the Irish-Canadian actress Amybeth McNulty) is already of age in terms of the hardship that she has endured. Anne has to overcome plenty of adversity in her lifetime, and the creators of *Anne with an E* have chosen to pay closer attention to her early childhood. By taking into consideration what Hutcheon (2006, 10) sees as the equivalences of the story, or, as Moira Walley-Beckett put it, “the iconic moments that we [the readers] cherish” (Wilkinson 2017)¹⁵, but refocusing on the context surrounding them, I suggest that *Anne with an E* achieves one of the objectives of a successful adaptation – repetition without replication, a phrase that Hutcheon used in her definition (2006, 173).

The deliberate choice to expand our knowledge of Anne’s past resulted in a more well-rounded portrait of her, yet some may insist that in the move from medium to medium, Anne’s whimsical side was overpowered by her trauma. The Anne in the series is just as imaginative as her novelistic counterpart, but the show portrays Anne’s creative abilities as a double-edged sword, and most of the time, our heroine appears to be driven by anxiety and distress, instead of creativity and childish playfulness. While Anne finds “scope for the imagination” (Montgomery 1908, 19) in most situations of her life and is able to successfully use it as a form of escapism, stressful events and even everyday objects can trigger intense traumatic flashbacks, whereas the novel abstains from highlighting trauma. The 2017 version of Anne is haunted by unwanted and intrusive memories of her mistreatment, which manifest themselves in dimly lit, cool-toned cinematography shots. The first few minutes of the pilot episode, already introduce the viewer to Anne’s traumatic past – Anne has a flashback of the dingy, children-packed home of Mrs. Hammond. In the memory, overwhelmed with child-caring activities, Anne failed to milk the cow in time, which made Mrs. Hammond exclaim: “You want these children to starve to death? Do something right for a change! You’re more trouble than you’re worth. Nothing but a miserable piece of trash! Hurry up! We’ll see what Mr. Hammond has to say about this when he gets home. (“Your Will Shall Decide Your Destiny”, 2017) Anne tries to shake the memory off, but then sighs: “Why are the worst memories the most insistent?” (*ibid.*) Later on in the episode, she recalls the way Mrs. Thomas’ drunken husband

¹⁵ This interview is available at <https://ew.com/tv/2017/05/11/anne-interview-moira-walley-beckett> and was accessed in March 2022.

had beaten her with a belt (see Figure 2), while Anne was clutching a tree stump. In the middle of the scene, Mr. Thomas succumbs to a timely heart attack, serving as an act of poetic justice.



Figure 2: Mr. Thomas succumbs to a heart attack after beating Anne with a belt. ("Your Will Shall Decide Your Destiny", 2017)

We also get a glimpse of the life in the orphanage, where older, stronger girls bully Anne. One of the girls shatters Anne's illusions: "Guess what, Princess Cordelia. We're sick of you and your stupid stories!" (*ibid.*) and compares her to a mouse that squeaked too loud. The girls taunt Anne with a dead mouse and eventually throw it at her, leaving her crying (see Figure 3).



Figure 3: Anne getting taunted by bullies at the orphanage. ("Your Will Shall Decide Your Destiny", 2017)

The series clearly draws abuse out of the shadows and places the spotlight on it, helping us understand Anne on a deeper, more personal, and vulnerable level.

The way Montgomery glosses over Anne's abusive past begs the question whether the adaptation was aiming at the same audience: if we consider that Montgomery intended her readers to be children (most likely young girls), it would make her wish to keep certain details hidden understandable. Children may fail to draw parallels between the oddities of Anne's character and her upbringing, so they may not be worth fleshing out. Yet, the TV series chooses to magnify these issues, which may not be well-suited to the readership of young girls. While the show does not have a special motion picture rating in Canada or the US, it would seem like some themes of the show might be more suitable for teenagers, rather than children; and indeed, the series has been very popular with teenage girls, signaling that the contemporary audience finds these gloomy topics attractive. While glimpses of Anne's ill-treatment are certainly in Montgomery's novel, these moments of her childhood do not define her character, perhaps speaking less of Montgomery's intentions as a storyteller and more of the taboo that at the time surrounded the topics of mental health and abuse. In the book, the talkative nature and boundless creativity are what make Anne Anne, though the novel hardly gives any explanation as to why she possesses these characteristics. By contrast, in the adaptation, it becomes clear that the vivacity of her imagination is not just a character trait, but a trauma response – a survival mechanism, accessible to an otherwise deprived orphan. In the

pilot episode, *Your Will Shall Decide Your Destiny*, the 2017 Anne herself states that she likes “imagining better than remembering”; she is a survivor, who is marked by her struggles, and not simply a quirky child with some eccentric and uncommon traits. Yet, due to the emphasis placed on trauma, the whimsical and imaginative nature of Anne no longer moves the story along. Instead, the Moira Walley-Beckett version relies on drama. Therefore, the 2017 TV series is not only an adaptation in the sense of moving from novel to film; it is also a very palpable shift in genre.

3.3. “Garbage girl”: bullying and childhood adversity

Despite the many obstacles in her life (past and present), the McNulty Anne survives and eventually experiences some positive moments. However, the 21st century depiction of Avonlea is quite different: to Montgomery, Green Gables are a safe haven, but to Moira Walley-Beckett, it is yet another challenge that Anne has to tackle. This Avonlea, cruel from the very first episode, is not an immediate safe refuge. While Anne is creative, sharp, and spirited in many everyday situations, she is not immediately out of harm's way. Instead of a near-fairytale approach, *Anne with an E* employs a more realistic set of circumstances.

To the viewer, it seems like Anne simply moves from one nightmare to another. Anne’s eccentric character immediately separates her from her peers; the gap between her and other children at school is very visible. Thus, Anne’s behavior does not go unnoticed – instead of being almost universally loved and adored by her peers (with the obvious exception of Josie Pye)¹⁶, which is how Montgomery imagined it, Anne becomes the victim of relentless bullying. When the Montgomery Anne stopped going to school after the teacher punished her by making her sit together with a boy, “everybody missed Anne so and wished she’s come to school again” (Montgomery 1908, 155). However, in the series, Anne is not going to school because of the cruel nature of her schoolmates rather than the teacher, and even resorts to lying about going to classes, when in actuality, she wanders around in the forest. It is important to note, however, that after first coming to Avonlea, Anne also faces some adversity in Montgomery’s book:

Avonlea little girls had already heard queer stories about Anne. Mrs. Lynde said she had an awful temper; Jerry Buote, the hired boy at Green Gables, said she talked all the time to herself or to the trees and flowers like a crazy girl. They looked at her and whispered to each other behind their quarterlies. Nobody made any friendly advances (Montgomery 1908, 102)

Yet, when compared to the dramatization within the TV series, it becomes quite clear that the bullying the 2017 version of Anne faces is amplified and more ruthless. Instead of being subjected to some gossip around the town, Anne has to deal with insults and even threats of physical violence. In one episode,

¹⁶ Josie Pye is an antagonist who immediately takes a disliking to Anne for seemingly no reason. However, while the novel’s version of Josie Pye is mean, her remarks are largely harmless.

Anne encounters Billy Andrews, a boy who wants to punish Anne for saying some “pretty nasty stuff about my sister” (“But What Is So Headstrong as Youth?”, 2017). He tells Anne he is going to “teach her a lesson” and that she is a “bad dog. Bad little dog!” (*ibid.*) In this particular scene, Anne is saved by Gilbert Blythe.¹⁷ Surprisingly, the bullying comes not just from other kids, but adults as well. Anne is repeatedly referred to as a “stray”, “stray dog”, “talking dog”, “garbage girl”, “trollop”, et cetera (“I Am No Bird, and No Net Ensnares Me”, 2017). Even her best friend’s parents, the Barrys, are prejudiced towards Anne until the ever-optimistic Diana reassures Anne that “it won't be long until my parents accept you, now that you're a Cuthbert and all” (“But What Is So Headstrong as Youth?”, 2017). In the show, Anne is the underdog of her own story, someone who is unwanted from the very moment she becomes an orphan up until she finally feels accepted in Avonlea – a difficult experience for anyone, but especially during the formative years.

3.4. “Nothing but death can part us”: suicide, grief, and obligation

Although Anne is dramatic in her actions and her character, she is not solely responsible for all the drama at the Cuthbert farm. While *Green Gables* definitely witnesses a variety of emotional highs and lows after Anne’s arrival, it also sees much hardship before she ever steps foot on the property, which could be the reason why the Cuthberts feel inclined to adopt and raise an orphan child in the first place. Since film adaptations are often complemented by looking at things from the marginal characters’ points of view (Sanders 2006, 57), this is addressed by filling in certain plot holes like the tragic childhoods of Matthew and Marilla (portrayed by R. H. Thomson and Geraldine James), which remain unexplained by Montgomery. Strangely, the author never made it clear why the Cuthberts have stayed put in *Green Gables* for all their lives. The reader just accepts that in the early 20th century, a fictional world where an unhappy marriage is regarded as more traditional than no marriage, two siblings decide to never create families or leave the family farm. The 2017 series takes it upon itself to flesh out this unspoken backstory of the Cuthberts, which, in turn, contributes plenty of contextual information about them and results in a more comprehensive, multifaceted character arc. In the episode *Wherever You Are Is My Home*, we learn that, when they were children, Matthew and Marilla helped their grieving mother to keep the farm afloat after the death of their elder brother. It required a lot of sacrifice: dropping out of school, foregoing any romantic relationships, and giving up hope for a life that they once imagined for themselves, all because of a rigid moral compass and the sense of responsibility and obligation. Matthew and Marilla

¹⁷ This encounter will be further analyzed later on in this MA thesis.

reflect on how different their lives would have been if they had not had to make these sacrifices. Just like Anne, Matthew and Marilla are shaped by the trauma that they have experienced.

Unlike the novel, the TV series employs and toys with the idea of suicide on more than one occasion. Character agency also plays a part in the process of dramatization: the idea of choosing death instead of it simply happening to the characters contributes towards the shift to the dramatic. For example, in the pilot episode, Anne has a confrontation with Mrs. Lynde, who describes Anne as “terribly skinny and homely” (“Your Will Shall Decide Your Destiny”, 2017). But instead of running upstairs to cry her heart out, the McNulty Anne sets out for the hills: we witness a visibly distressed Anne running towards a cliff in Prince Edward Island (see Figure 4), and only at the end of the scene does it become clear that she does not actually intend to jump off of it.



Figure 4: Anne running towards the cliff and suddenly stopping. (“Your Will Shall Decide Your Destiny”, 2017)

The character of Anne’s beloved guardian, Matthew Cuthbert, also faces death, yet the novel and the TV series handle the situation very differently. In Montgomery’s version, he finds out about the financial struggles that Green Gables is about to encounter from a newspaper. The news puts Matthew in “sudden shock” (Montgomery 1908, 368), which prompts an “instantaneous and probably painless” (*ibid.*) death by implied heart attack, thus marking a literary choice that Montgomery later regrets. In her autobiography, *The Alpine Path: The Story of My Career*, Montgomery writes:

Many people have told me that they regretted Matthew's death in Green Gables. I regret it myself. If I had the book to write over again I would spare Matthew for several years. But when I wrote it I thought he must die, that there might be a necessity for self-sacrifice on Anne's part, so poor Matthew joined the long procession of ghosts that haunt my literary past. (1917, 47)

The Moira Walley-Beckett adaptation has (either knowingly or not) paid homage to Montgomery's regret of Matthew's death. In the final episode of the first season, *Wherever You Are Is My Home*, he survives the heart attack, yet the creators choose to overlay our modern sensibilities over Matthew's recovery process. While Matthew is physically getting better, his mind is deteriorating; the man of Green Gables finds it hard to cope with the idea of losing the farm due to his illness and inability to work. He is plagued by a sense of responsibility and begins to consider suicide (see Figure 5).



Figure 5: Matthew getting a gun out of a cabinet. ("Wherever You Are is My Home", 2017)

Matthew tells Marilla that she and Anne would be "better off if I were gone" and that his life insurance policy would "hold them both in good stead" ("Wherever You Are Is My Home", 2017), and this conversation is followed by an interrupted suicide attempt. We experience the direness of the situation from Matthew's perspective – a typically supporting character's point of view (Sanders 2006, 57). The character of Matthew moves from the periphery into the centre, which coincides with the creators' choice to give him agency regarding his own death. Interestingly, in the TV series, Matthew holds a certain degree of control over his fate; in a sense, he gets to decide whether he lives or dies – a choice that Montgomery made for him and later regretted. Along with these differences in the character arc, the show captures the mental struggles that a financial burden can place on a person – in this case, Matthew

and, by extension, Anne and Marilla. The creators of the TV show go back and forth with Matthew's character, nearly killing him twice in one episode, which certainly ups the intensity and heightens the anxiety of the viewers, resulting in a very dramatic interpretation of how a person struggles with his mental health.

4. “We’re not getting a girl”: the facets of female identity

This section of the analysis tackles the topics of gender, relationships, female identity and how issues related to these topics manifest themselves in Montgomery’s novel versus *Anne with an E*. First of all, I will rely on the established theoretical framework and discuss how the original themes changed during the move from novel to film and what implications these shifts carry. Finally, I will attempt to relate these changes to the broader social and cultural context of the adaptation throughout this chapter.

4.1. Creating a 21st century heroine

Since the genre of the story shifted from a bildungsroman to a drama, and the tone of the adaptation became significantly darker during the adaptation as a process, certain modifications to Anne’s character are not surprising. I suggest that the series does not move forward on the basis of whimsical blunders that Anne gets herself into in the novel because of the palpable shift in genre. Instead, the show runs on drama, which requires a different, more visceral and easily understandable approach as we move from the “imagined and visualized to the directly perceived” (Hutcheon 2006, 42). I propose that to distill and reduce the complexity of the novel (Hutcheon 2006, 36), the producers of the show have opted to maximize Anne’s battle with adversity, which also changed her motivations, character development, and certain plotlines of the story.

Similarly to Montgomery’s Anne, the 21st century Anne is a quick thinker, hardened by the life she was forced to live. She is different from her peers: while the other girls her age are portrayed as soft and tenderhearted, Anne is courageous and resilient. For example, both audiences get exposed to Anne’s experience raising Mrs. Hammond’s children, which comes in very handy when Diana’s little sister nearly dies from croup. Anne is able to help by demonstrating expertise and maturity in the presence of an inept adult woman, who is “helpless and bewildered, quite incapable of thinking what to do, or doing it if she thought of it” (Montgomery 1908, 180). However, the TV series goes on to further dramatize her experiences by adding in new situations, which are then bravely (and conveniently) tackled by Anne. The McNulty Anne is braver than her novelistic counterpart: from standing up to her bullies to taming a scared mare, Anne can deal with it all. Yet, it does seem as if she is anxious underneath it all, and that her bravery is an automatic response to any traumatic incident. The heroine in Anne is driven by affliction and anguish, rather than childish ambition. R.H. Thomson, the actor who embodies Matthew Cuthbert, has remarked: “<...> it [puberty, immigration, women’s rights, abuse] sits there as background to this little girl’s anguish and determination to survive. The character of Anne is in pain: she has no

family, no place in the world. But that pain drives her intelligence, her imagination, her energy. That's the story Moira [Walley-Beckett] has gone after". (Schneller, 2017)¹⁸

The fourth episode of the series, *An Inward Treasure Born*, features an unstoppable fire in the Gillis household, which is finally extinguished only after Anne steps in. She decides to run into the burning house to close the doors and cut off the oxygen supply to the fire, which helps the flames die down. Afterwards, she explains her rationale to a little crowd of cheering women, citing the origin of her resourcefulness: "The Fire Manual in the orphanage. There wasn't much else to read" ("An Inward Treasure Born", 2017). During this single segment, the series again cements Anne as a heroine in the quickest way possible – by making her commit an additional act of bravery. I would attribute this choice to the limitations of the visual medium; however, the producers of the show demonstrate that these limitations do not mean that the viewers' perception of Anne cannot be elevated. *Anne with an E* balances the adversity that brews in Anne's everyday life with her character development, creating a more realistic, yet intensely dramatic portrait of a child heroine.

4.2. The transpositions of childhood naivete

Although we witness Anne performing heroic deeds on a regular basis, the series makes it extremely clear that, underneath it all, she is just a little girl. Anne is 11 years old in Montgomery's novel, and her naivete is obvious, yet absolutely different in tone. The novel portrays Anne as a quirky child, who unintentionally gets herself into trouble. For example, the Montgomery Anne buys hair dye from a door-to-door salesperson, but, instead of a "beautiful raven black" (Montgomery 1908, 272), the dye turns her hair a "queer, dull, bronzy green". (*ibid.*, p. 271) This situation can be funny to the reader but is absolutely devastating to Anne herself. Montgomery presents this unfortunate story of childhood naivete with a certain humor and lightness – after being told to "never let one of those Italians in the house" (*ibid.*, p. 273), Anne wittily replies: "Oh, I didn't let him in the house. I remembered what you told me, and I went out, carefully shut the door, and looked at his things on the step. Besides, he wasn't an Italian" (*ibid.*). I propose that the pilot season of the adaptation ignores this and similar manifestations of childhood foolishness in favor of darker and sometimes sinister implications, which mark a palpable shift in genre that occurs during adaptation as the process of creation (Hutcheon 2006, 9). I also suggest that the transposition of the story involves both, "(re-)interpretation and then (re-)creation" (*ibid.*) of the circumstances surrounding Anne, for the purposes of dramatization.

¹⁸ This interview is available at <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/arts/television/breaking-bad-writer-brings-dark-sensibility-to-anne-of-green-gables/article34336503> and was accessed in April 2022.

While the TV series is reduced in certain aspects – it misses some of the original subplots – it is more expansive in other areas, especially those that were not fleshed out, or even considered by Montgomery herself. For example, though the McNulty Anne displays maturity and quick thinking in some life-or-death situations, she is very childlike when it comes to understanding interpersonal relationships, a quality much less emphasized by Montgomery. The adaptation stresses that Anne has little worldly experience and knowledge of how people (especially men and women) interact, despite being exposed to some distressing events in the past, which makes her lose some of the childhood innocence and whimsy that made the original *Anne of Green Gables* so popular.

In the episode *But What Is So Headstrong as Youth?*, Anne and Diana witness their teacher, Mr. Phillips, and one of his older students, Prissy Andrews, holding hands in the back room.¹⁹ Anne immediately decides that, since they are touching, they must be having “intimate relations”, which are related to a “pet mouse” that a man is supposedly carrying in his front pants pocket: “I expect Prissy Andrews has made its [“the pet mouse’s] acquaintance. Mrs. Hammond – she’s a lady I used to work for – she said she always had twins after she pet Mr. Hammond’s mouse” (“But What Is So Headstrong as Youth?”, 2017). This situation prompts further recollections of Mrs. Hammond and it is implied that she was frequently heard screaming while being abused and raped by her husband. Yet, Anne is clearly unaware of the gravity of the situation that she has unknowingly witnessed in her younger years. In an attempt to fit in with her peers and joke around, Anne retells the story to other girls:

Mr. Hammond always had his moonshine, and after he'd partaken, he would stomp around the house like Frankenstein's monster and everybody would run! But nobody faster than Mrs. Hammond, because she knew he was going to make her pet his mouse. <...> I could hear everything! <...> To this day, I don't know quite what to make of it. There were times I heard laughing and it sounded like fun, but there were other times I was sure he was murdering her. Either way, it sure made Mrs. Hammond mad. And the next morning, more often as not, she would take after me with a wooden spoon. (ibid.)

Yet, the schoolmates are not amused but disturbed at Anne’s recollection. It is clear that this version of Anne has witnessed worse things than her sheltered friends have, and even though these events affect her life in numerous ways, she does not fully comprehend them. Anne is stuck reliving her traumas in multiple ways until she can process and understand them. However, the fact that the situation is unacceptable is absolutely clear to Matthew, who remarks: “A girl of her tender age, she oughtn't to know such things” (*ibid.*). This just demonstrates that the bravery, resourcefulness, and imagination of Anne veil the naivete of a little girl, further cementing that during the adaptation as a process, the innocent, beautiful, and whimsical is traded in for the realistic, yet dark, gloomy, and unsettling.

¹⁹ I will also be analyzing this situation from the viewpoint of inappropriate relationships later on in this MA thesis.

Anne's naivete is also demonstrated through her relationship with her own body. In the fifth episode of the series, we see a hysterical Anne scrubbing her blood-soaked bed sheets. She thinks she is dying: "I never got to wear puffed sleeves! <...> Will you please plant some pink roses on my grave?" ("Tightly Knotted to a Similar String", 2017), until Marilla (portrayed by Geraldine James) calms her down and explains that she has simply started menstruating and is in her "womanly flowering time" (*ibid.*). Anne contests this change in her body and feels that it is unfair – she does not want to lose her childhood, which is understandable, given that she has experienced so little of it. To Anne, "becoming a woman" is a terrifying prospect and one of the few situations in Avonlea where she has no agency to fight it. During the process of creation, Anne's road to womanhood is reimagined and recreated (Hutcheon 2006, 9): her first period is one more instrument in the drama toolbox, since she has just made friends and gone back to school, yet puberty robs her of her childhood. While Marilla handles the situation with tenderness and care, in school other girls tell Anne that a woman's cycle is "unmentionable" and a "shameful thing" (*ibid.*), aligning the adaptation with the ethos of Montgomery's novel, since it does not bring up this topic at all. Later in the episode, after mistakenly drinking currant wine instead of raspberry cordial, Anne accepts the change as inevitable and even proclaims that she now "loves being a woman" (*ibid.*). Anne's first menstruation marks a shift in her character, rather than her body. Simply put, I suggest that Anne's petrified reaction to her first period is a startling reminder that, in spite of the many dark themes and events that are present in the series, the audience should not forget that Anne is still a child and should be regarded as such.

4.3. An "accidental feminist": gender roles, education, and relationships

In an interview with *Glamour*, the lead actress Amybeth McNulty has described Anne as an "accidental feminist" (Radloff, 2017)²⁰. The executive producer of the show, Moira Walley-Beckett, adds: "I hope <...> Anne's point of view serves not only as an inspiration to young girls everywhere but also as a battle cry." (*ibid.*) Having this in mind, I suggest that, by mirroring Anne's (and other characters') "inner truths" (Hutcheon 2006, 58) via cinematic means, the creators of the show aim to drive certain audience responses. And that, indeed, in this version of the story, we see quite a few contextual clues and plot lines that point us towards the questions of feminism, education, and appropriate gender roles, which are ultimately reflected in the active process of adaptation that is "far removed from the unimaginative act of imitation, copying, or repetition." (*ibid.*, p. 24)

²⁰ This interview is available at <https://www.glamour.com/story/anne-with-an-e-netflix-scene> and was accessed in March, 2022.

To Montgomery, Anne is the classic feminist heroine. She already has agency: Anne demonstrates her ability to overcome adversity largely on her own, becomes a top student, and pursues her academic interests for her own benefit. The novel plays with what is considered conventionally (and essentially) feminine; Montgomery achieves that by working both with the convention of femininity, as well as against it (Drain 1992, 40). The Anne in the novel is dramatic, but very rooted in her ideals: she barely ever doubts herself, and is not scared to stand up for what she believes in. Anne is childish, yet unapologetically herself (even though this quality tends to get her into trouble). However, the TV series chooses to sabotage and obstruct Anne's journey towards success for the purposes of dramatization. Since TV adaptations are supposed to move along faster than film (Hutcheon 2006, 66), Anne's slow-burning success, achieved through her hard work, is fragmented into a series of challenges. One of these challenges is the climate at school: the bullying and teasing directly prevents Anne from being comfortable with herself, especially since she is picked on for being an overachiever. In the episode *An Inward Treasure Born*, after being ostracized by her peers and feeling practically bullied away from school, Anne is lectured by her minister, who serves as a patriarchal figure. She objects to going back to school multiple times, and the minister proposes an alternative:

If the girl doesn't want to go to school, then she shouldn't go. She should stay home and learn proper housekeeping until she marries. Then the good Lord said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him." There's no need for her to bother with an education. Every young woman should learn how to be a good wife. ("An Inward Treasure Born", 2017)

The minister employs Victorian conventions in his thinking: the woman's place is the private, domestic domain. This idea echoes throughout Montgomery's novel as well, yet it is not linked to Anne, but rather supporting female characters like Anne's best friend, Diana. In the books, Diana is not expected to get a higher education and become emancipated: "her parents did not intend to send her to Queen's" (Montgomery 1908, 306). Instead, it is implied that Diana is supposed to stay at home and, eventually, get married. The 2017 Anne is not enthusiastic about the prospect of "learn[ing] proper housekeeping until she marries" ("An Inward Treasure Born", 2017) that was proposed by the minister, but she does not seem to fight against it either: "I fear preparing myself to be a wife will be a powerful challenge for you, Marilla. Admittedly I'm very homely and clumsy. It'll be a big surprise to both of us if I marry someday. I certainly never expect to, but if God decrees it..." (*ibid.*) Thankfully, Marilla advocates for Anne to have agency and to "decide for yourself what you want to do and be, and set your mind to it." (*ibid.*) During the process of adaptation, the creators of the TV series have chosen to create a conflict, which allows Anne to challenge the patriarchal system. Besides, Anne is full of soundbites that are

appropriate for the current feminist landscape²¹, and, given her anxious nature, constant adversity, and traumatic past, the fierceness of her character is highlighted further. I propose that the vision of Anne that Montgomery had – the impulsive, fierce, and idealistic redhead – translates well in the series. Anne’s fiery nature is in no way muted, as she constantly has to fight her way through life, and the challenges she faces are often downright cruel.

This is also reflected in her relationships with others, especially Gilbert Blythe. In the novel, Anne’s first interaction with her future romantic interest is short and forceful: after Gilbert is unable to properly convey his interest in Anne, he resorts to whispering “Carrots! Carrots!” (Montgomery 1908, 140) to get her attention. Anne then “sprang to her feet, her bright fancies fallen into cureless ruin <...> [and] brought her slate down on Gilbert’s head and cracked it—slate not head—clear across.” (*ibid.*) In this situation, Anne may have been in the wrong and acted impulsively, but it was a way for Montgomery to make her heroine stand up for herself. This interaction fuels Anne’s rivalry with Gilbert, which is only resolved at the very end of the novel. Instead of this slow and steady contention between the two characters, the TV series decides to amplify the “will they or won’t they” romantic scenario. At first, Gilbert is the convenient representation of the “white knight” trope, who saves the “damsel in distress” from Billy Andrews, the bully threatening Anne in the woods. This ultimately marks Anne and Gilbert’s first interaction as positive. While the McNulty Anne eventually does smash her writing slate over Gilbert’s head and refers to him as “a boy whose sole purpose in life is to humiliate me” (“An Inward Treasure Born”, 2017), instead of it being an act of standing up for herself, it is in part motivated by her need to be liked: other girls at school tell Anne that she “can’t talk to Gilbert Blythe” or even “look at him” (But What Is So Headstrong as Youth?”, 2017). Ruby has liked him for three years. She has dibs”²² (*ibid.*), so Anne resorts to avoiding him on various occasions and, eventually, hitting him with the slate. I propose that this detail means Anne’s attempts at ignoring Gilbert are influenced by external circumstances in addition to her opinion of him, which further dramatizes the adaptation and may call Anne’s agency in this particular situation into question.

In addition to the actualization of feminist thinking, the adaptation also tackles taboo topics, which may have been not as talked about or understood during Montgomery’s lifetime. One subplot of the series revolves around Anne and Diana witnessing their teacher, Mr. Phillips, and the oldest female student, Prissy Andrews, caressing each other in the back room (see Figure 6). The secret romance between an

²¹ Think of Anne exclaiming, “It doesn't make sense that girls aren't allowed to do farm work when girls can do anything a boy can do and more! Do you consider yourself to be delicate and incapable? Because I certainly don't!” (“Your Will Shall Decide Your Destiny”, 2017)

²² In this context, “dibs” refers to having a priority claim over something.

older teacher and a sixteen-year-old student is a non-issue in Montgomery's novel: it is not necessarily considered as the norm, but it is not called into question either. In *Anne of Green Gables*, Montgomery makes the romance apparent by making the character of Mr. Phillips pay special attention to Prissy Andrews, which starts in the classroom:

She [Prissy] sits in the long seat at the back and he [Mr. Phillips] sits there, too, most of the time—to explain her lessons, he says. But Ruby Gillis says she saw him writing something on her slate and when Prissy read it she blushed as red as a beet and giggled; and Ruby Gillis says she doesn't believe it had anything to do with the lesson. (Montgomery 1908, 135)

His 'courting' gets progressively less covert, and transitions from the public to the private domain, which would suggest that the relationship is getting more serious: "Mr. Phillips goes up to see Prissy Andrews nearly every evening. He says it is to help her with her lessons but Miranda Sloane is studying for Queen's too, and I should think she needed help a lot more than Prissy because she's ever so much stupider, but he never goes to help her in the evenings at all". (*ibid.*, p. 177) At last, the romance comes back to the public, yet it faces no backlash: "Mr. Phillips gave all the Mayflowers he found to Prissy Andrews and I heard him to say 'sweets to the sweet.'" (*ibid.*, p. 202)

Instead of keeping the lighthearted, romantic tone, the TV series gives this unfolding relationship an uncomfortable feeling. The 2017 adaptation is heavily based on visuality due to its medium, so the viewer can clearly witness the interactions between Mr. Phillips and Prissy Andrews, instead of them staying as background information, "conflicts and ideological differences between characters [are] made visible" (Hutcheon 2006, 40). And while the viewer may understand that the relationship between Mr. Phillips and Prissy Andrews is akin to child grooming (see Figure 6 below), the characters witnessing the situation (in this case, Anne and Diana) do not.



Figure 6: Mr. Phillips and Prissy Andrews in the back room. ("But What is so Headstrong as Youth?", 2017)

We frequently see shots of Mr. Phillips' face, which serves as a cinematic equivalent to "telling" of his emotions (see Figure 7). The shot captured in Figure 7 is particularly interesting. It portrays Mr. Phillips as a figure of authority since the camera points upwards at him, serving as a reminder of the relationship between him and Prissy Andrews. Together with his interactions with other students, it becomes clear that the TV series aims to portray Mr. Phillips as a controlling character, who takes advantage of his position of authority. The show captures the shift in our contemporary understanding of (in)appropriate relationships; such 'courting' could be characterized as abusive by today's standards. Due to the age gap between Mr. Phillips and Prissy Andrews, as well as the inevitable power imbalance that comes within the student-teacher dynamic, such a relationship could be viewed as problematic and may be even punishable by law.



Figure 7: Mr. Phillips walking past Prissy Andrews. ("But What is so Headstrong as Youth?", 2017)

The rise of social activism, especially the viral *#MeToo* movement of 2017, has raised awareness towards the issues of sexual harassment, assault, and abuse. Therefore, it is understandable why the series does not portray this ‘courting’ in the same airy fashion as Montgomery does. Our understanding of what is acceptable in terms of sexual conduct and relationships, and what is not, has changed since the Victorian times. With the enforcement of new boundaries, contemporary viewers and readers are able to recognize Mr. Phillips’ behavior as predatory, which gives the adapted story a sense of relevance and moral ambivalence.

5. Conclusions

Ultimately, the focus of the thesis was not fidelity, but rather the comparison of the two narratives (*Anne of Green Gables* and *Anne with an E*), as well as the analysis of the social messaging behind these narratives in terms of its delivery, audience, and socio-cultural context. I argue that in the 2017 adaptation and “creative reinterpretation” (Hutcheon 2006, 22), Anne’s story is no longer a light, whimsical read. I suggest that this change in tone stems from the need to meet audience expectations, which arise when moving “from the imagined and visualized to the directly perceived” (*ibid.*, p. 42). By tackling the issues of mental health, abuse, suicide, female identity, gender roles, and bullying, *Anne with an E* amplifies the humanity of Anne, the Cuthberts, and surrounding characters, and relates them to the audience by “proximation and updating” (Sanders 2006, 19). I argue that, even though the adaptation of *Anne of Green Gables* is not relocated in temporal or spatial terms, it has experienced a shift in terms of the topics it chooses to amplify due to the changes in our understanding of them. The adaptation employs the topics discussed in a twofold way: to flesh out the characters’ backstories, as well as one of the plot-driving forces. With these changes, we observe a visible shift in genre, where situations that could be considered comedic become dramatic. This approach results in a more realistic and well-rounded, yet more dramatic portrait of a child heroine; I suggest that *Anne with an E* achieves this by balancing the adversity that Anne faces in everyday life with her character development.

This MA thesis has shown that during adaptation as a process, Anne’s journey is fast-paced and fragmented for the purpose of drama, and, by taking on the portrayals of gender roles, inappropriate relationships, education, and childhood naivete, *Anne with an E* attempts to achieve three things: 1) drive the plot forward with the use of dramatization, 2) echo the current climate related to gender issues, and 3) establish Anne as a feminist icon. I propose that the vision of Anne that Montgomery had – the impulsive, fierce, and idealistic redhead – translates well in the series. Anne’s fiery nature is in no way muted, as she constantly has to fight her way through life, and the challenges she faces are often cruel. I suggest that during adaptation as a process, by mirroring Anne’s (and other characters’) “inner truths” (Hutcheon 2006, 58) via cinematic means and creating conflicts which challenge the patriarchal system, the creators of the show aim to drive audience responses in regards to issues relating to gender and female identity.

The seriousness of the topics that the adaptation chooses to tackle brings up questions about the audience that it intends to target. Self-admittedly, Montgomery wrote the book for little girls, yet the adaptation is a visibly darker, perhaps more realistic rendition of the story, which may be better suited for teenagers

and adults. I propose that, instead of focusing on the target audience of the novel, the series reflects our current understanding of mental health and gender related topics regardless of what type of audience they are aimed at. Nevertheless, it is unclear whether the show has been popular because of its approach to these topics or in spite of it; it is a conclusion I am yet unwilling to make.

Summary in Lithuanian

Transformuojant Anę: (kon)tekstinė L. M. Montgomery romano „Anė iš Žaliastogių“ ir serialo „Anė“ analizė

Šiame magistro darbe nagrinėjama 1908 m. kanadietiško Bildungsromano „Anė iš Žaliastogių“, parašyto Lucy Maud Montgomery, adaptacija į 2017 m. televizijos serialą „Anė“, kurį sukūrė Kanados prodiuserė bei režisierė Moira Walley-Beckett. Analizė grindžiama Lindos Hutcheon ir Julie Sanders pasiūlytomis adaptacijos teorijomis, taip pat romano bei serialo kultūrinėmis ir socialinėmis aplinkybėmis bei auditorijos recepcija. Remdamasi šiomis teorijomis ir aplinkybėmis, susijusiomis su kiekviena Anės istorijos versija ir ją perteikiančia medija, nagrinėju, ką skirtumai tarp jų reiškia sociokultūriniu lygmeniu. Šiame magistro darbe daugiausia dėmesio skiriama ne serialo ištikimybei originalui, o abiejų pasakojimų palyginimui, taip pat šių pasakojimų tropologinių ir ideologinių kodų analizei jų perteikimo, auditorijos ir sociokultūrinio konteksto požiūriu. Akivaizdu, kad nors romanas ir televizijos serialas remiasi ta pačia Anės istorija, abi jos versijos gvildena skirtingus ideologinius klausimus, todėl 2017 m. serialas „Anė“ šiuolaikinėje visuomenėje atlieka kitas funkcijas.

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