

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Children require supportive and consistent surroundings with affection, care, and guidance to build confidence and emotional stability, as recognized by experts in the field. The home and the wider community are the first places where children learn to form relationships and trust others. Erikson notes that “the earliest and most fundamental task of childhood is developing a basic sense of trust in the world.” Such stability fosters self-esteem, creativity, and resilience (1963: 247).

Life, unfortunately, does not always unfold under such ideal situations.

A considerable number of children encounter circumstances of loss, rejection, or displacement, which produce a disruption in their sense of safety and identity. These experiences have the capacity to engender profound emotional impressions, which can influence an individual’s self-perception and their perception of the environment. According to Herman, “the core experience of psychological trauma is disconnection from others and from one’s own self” (1992: 53). Herman clarifies that trauma interrupts the fundamental assumptions of safety and belonging that are established during the initial stages of life. In the absence of attachment and protection, the survivor’s internal emotional landscape becomes fractured, characterized by a disconnection between emotions and memories, and a sense of everyday life being devoid of reality.

Over time, this fragmentation can affect personality formation, interpersonal relationships, and the ability to construct a coherent sense of identity.

The difficulty of forming secure attachments often reemerges in future relationship patterns or behaviors, and is often reflected in an individual's language or imagination. As Abrams defines literature as a means of representing and exploring emotional distress, "a literary work is a fictional imitation of human action that mirrors the complexities of life" (1999: 42). In narratives, authors depict not only external feelings and experiences that are difficult to express in words. This explains why psychological analysis of literature focuses on how texts reveal hidden thoughts, memories, and emotional behaviors.

First published in 1908, Lucy Maud Montgomery's *Anne of Green Gables* is one of the most enduring works of children's literature. Anne Shirley, an eleven-year-old orphan girl who spent her whole life being passed around foster families, never really wanted. She ends up accidentally adopted by siblings Marilla and Matthew Cuthbert in Avonlea, Prince Edward Island. Anne's presence challenges the household's quiet routine, as she is initially unwanted because Cuthbert had requested a boy. But what arrives instead is Anne Shirley, the girl with red hair, freckles, and absolutely no stopping to talk. Throughout the novel, Anne grows up at Green Gables, finding friendship and belonging, and she gets into trouble through her imagination, but also experiences moments of self-reflection.

As Montgomery notes, "Isn't it nice to think that tomorrow is a new day with no mistakes in it yet?" (1908: 215), highlighting Anne's optimistic approach to emotional healing. Through the novel, Montgomery presents the idea that instead of being erased,

painful memories are shaped by love, joy, and imaginative thinking. Anne's story shows how being part of a community and being creative can restore the ability to experience joy and form attachment.

Through an analysis of *Anne of Green Gables*, this study explores the portrayal of childhood trauma and psychological growth. The key point is that Anne's creative imagination, emotional intelligence, and personal growth demonstrate how traumatic experiences can lead to mental well-being and a sense of belonging. The novel shows that creativity and human interaction can lead to emotional healing and bring about a sense of self.

1.2 Research Questions

In *Anne of Green Gables* (1908), Montgomery provides a narration of the life of Anne Shirley, a young girl defined by her remarkable imagination and her adoption as an orphan. Her narrative is a symbolic representation of the complexities inherent in the experience of childhood and the process of personal growth, as she journeys from a state of loneliness to a sense of belonging. This study analyzes the novel's depiction of psychological trauma and the evolution of the protagonists through processes, behaviors, and interpersonal relationships.

1. How are Anne Shirley's childhood trauma manifestations represented in Lucy M. Montgomery's *Anne of Green Gables*?
2. How does Anne Shirley move from unclaimed traumatic experience toward a more integrated sense of self.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

1. To identify and examine the manifestations of trauma experienced by Anne Shirley's psychological, emotional, and social dimensions
2. To investigate Anne Shirley's movement from unclaimed traumatic experience toward a more integrated sense of self.

1.4 Previous Studies

A variety of critical perspectives have been employed in previous studies of *Anne of Green Gables*, resulting in the revelation of the text's complexity from cultural and psychological angles.

The first previous research is a thesis by Gammel (2010) titled "*Looking for Anne: How Lucy Maud Montgomery Dreamed Up a Literary Classic*," published by St. Martin's Press. Gammel's analysis of the personal and external influences that shaped Montgomery's conceptions of Anne Shirley emphasizes the novel's status as a feminist text that deviates from early 20th-century gender norms. It is essential to note that the study places significant focus on Anne's ambition, portraying her as a prime example of a woman's empowerment rather than as a child with psychological trauma.

The second one is a research article entitled "*Imagination as a Coping Mechanism: Defense Mechanism in L.M. Montgomery's Anne Series*" (2021) published in *Children's Literature Association Quarterly* by Pike. This study underscores the role of Anne's imaginative tendencies as a psychological defense mechanism against trauma, thereby establishing a foundational framework for the analysis of her coping responses. This exploration aims to clarify the function of Anne's imagination as both a defensive

strategy and a creative force that contributes to the formation of her identity. Pike's analysis the role of imaginative play and storytelling in Anne's self-expression and resistance against social controls, emphasizing these activities as forms a resistance rather than as mere symptoms of trauma.

The third one is a research thesis entitled "*The Other Was Whole*": *Anne of Green Gables, Trauma and Mirroring*" (2010) by Slater. This study addresses a substantial yet frequently disregarded aspect within the broader discourse on Green Gables. Building this fascination, as posited by Lacan, is rooted in the observation of Anne's recovery from early childhood trauma. This process encompasses her transition from isolated fantasy and profound mirror phenomena to the establishment of productive social relationships with an inclusive community.

The fourth one is a thesis titled "*Social norms and imaginative conflict in Anne of Green Gables*" (2022) by Sebti. This thesis analyzes how Anne's imagination functions as a form of resistance against the inflexible moral and social expectations of Avonlea's societal norms. Sebti claims that Anne's imaginative world consents her to question authority and consider that Anne's creativity functions as a mediating force that helps her resolve her individuality with social agreement.

The fifth one is a thesis titled "*The power of imagination in L. M. Montgomery's Anne of Green Gables*" (2017) by Pintér. This study explains imagination as a central motif in Montgomery's narrative style. The thesis treats imagination as aesthetic rather than psychological, avoiding trauma as a logical lens.

The last one is a research thesis by Rubio, Mary Henley, and Waterson, Elizabeth (2002) titled "*Writing a Life: L. M. Montgomery*," published by the University of

Toronto Press. This biographical literary study discusses how *Anne of Green Gables* reflects Canadian rural life and identity. The text's focus is on the manner in which Avonlea symbolizes collective values such as morality, simplicity, and community, thereby establishing the novel as a foundational element of Canadian cultural heritage rather than a mere psychological narrative.

Although previous studies have discussed Anne's imagination, coping mechanisms, trauma, and social adjustment, they have not specifically examined how Caruth's concepts of latency, belatedness, repetition, and unclaimed experience can illuminate Anne's movement toward a more integrated sense of self.

1.5 Research Method

Grounded in Cathy Caruth's trauma theory, this study conducts a psychological analysis as reflected through the main character to investigate the manifestation of childhood trauma in Anne, the protagonist of Lucy M. Montgomery's novel *Anne of Green Gables*.

1.5.1 Type of Research

This type of research is typically supported by library resources. Zed defines library research as "a series of activities related to the method of collecting library data, reading and taking note, and processing research materials" (2008: 3). Library research is a valid method of literary analysis. This is because it entails the systematic collection and analysis of data from a variety of written texts, primarily literary ones, as well as theoretical works. Library research is not based on personal observation or

experimental evidence. This type of research allows for in-depth examination of textual evidence to understand how childhood trauma is represented and how psychological healing is portrayed in L. M. Montgomery's *Anne of Green Gables* (1908).

Meanwhile, according to Cresswell (2014: 4), qualitative research is “an approach for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem.” This present research employs a qualitative approach, emphasizing the interpretation of textual meaning as opposed to the quantification of data. In the domain of literary studies, this methodological framework facilitates the exploration of emotions, symbols, and psychological representation within a text.

From this viewpoint, specific models of theory highlight possible ways in which intense experiences could fail to be processed by the mind and resurface through repetitive actions or recollections. Caruth (1996: 11) explains that trauma is “the response to an unexpected or overwhelming violent event that is not fully grasped as it occurs, but returns later in repeated flashbacks, nightmares, and other forms of revealing.” These theories enable the reader to recognise both how literature represents trauma and the process of healing.

In view of these portrayals, this study explores *Anne of Green Gables* through the lens of trauma theory to analyze how childhood trauma is represented in the novel and how the claiming process is represented. The analysis focuses on identifying the specific manifestations of Anne's trauma and investigates how she transforms from a traumatized orphan convinced of her unworthiness into a more integrated young woman with a secure sense of self, stable relationships, and realistic hope for the future.

1.5.2 Research Approach

This study adopts a psychological approach to trauma using a qualitative method with descriptive-analytical techniques. The psychological analytic approach allows for examination of character psychology, specifically focusing on traumatic experiences and their psychological effects as theorized by Cathy Caruth's trauma theory framework. This approach enables the researcher to study how literary characters exhibit psychological patterns consistent with trauma theory, including the manifestations of trauma and the integrated sense of self. The descriptive-analytical nature allows the researcher to describe psychological phenomena found in the text and inspect them through trauma theory to produce an interpretive conclusion about the representation of childhood trauma and claiming experience in literature. By using this approach, the researcher interprets a main character's inner conflict, emotional, and mental condition. Within this framework, the study applies Cathy Caruth's theory of trauma as a central lens of analysis, which views trauma as a delayed and unassimilated response (Caruth, 1996).

Psychoanalytic literary criticism is a form of literary criticism or literary theory that is influenced, in method, concept, or form, by the tradition of psychoanalysis established by Sigmund Freud (Ellmann, 2014: 1). As all variants of this approach endorse, at least to some degree, the idea that literature is fundamentally entwined with the psyche, the object of analysis may be the author, the literary text itself, or, at its simplest, a particularly significant character within a given work, where the criticism follows the same interpretive process as psychoanalysis itself.

1.5.3 Data Source and Data Collection

In this study, all data, both primary and secondary, are collected from written texts rather than from direct observation. The primary data source for this study is the novel *Anne of Green Gables* by Lucy Maud Montgomery (1908). This analysis is centered on textual evidence, incorporating direct quotations from character dialogue, narrative descriptions of Anne Shirley's emotional states and behavior, character relationship and interacting, with a focus on plot events related to manifestations and the movement of claiming the traumatic experiences. The secondary sources consist of Cathy Caruth's *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History* (1996) as the primary theoretical framework, which is further supported by a range of scholarly works on trauma theory, literary criticism, and childhood psychological development are selected for the analysis of trauma in literature.

The data were collected through close reading of the novel, a fundamental technique in literary analysis. According to Brummett (2013: 3), the term "close reading" is defined as "the systematic examination of texts in their context to discover meanings, both intended and unintended." The practice of close reading entails a meticulous and detailed examination of literary texts, with a focus on specific linguistic elements, imagery, patterns, and implicit meanings. This approach is intended to foster a comprehensive understanding of the text's structural and thematic elements.

In accordance with Tyson's (2006: 137-138) methodological framework, the close reading process in this study involves: (1) repeated readings of the primary text to attain a close understanding of the narrative, characters, and themes; (2) identification of pertinent passages illustrating trauma manifestations, and healing processes; (3) in-

depth examination of specific quotations through the lens of Caruth's theoretical framework; (4) interpretation of underlying meanings and psychological patterns within character development; and (5) combination of textual indication to construct clear arguments directing the research questions.

The data collection procedure is composed of a series of systematic steps. Initially, *Anne of Green Gables* was reviewed multiple times, with particular emphasis on passages detailing Anne's traumatic experiences, emotional responses, patterns of behavior, and interpersonal relationships. Secondly, relevant passages were identified and chosen based on their relation to Caruth's theoretical categories, including belatedness, repetition, unassimilated experience, unknowing, testimony, and relational encounter. Thirdly, a close-reading analysis was conducted of selected passages, with particular attention paid to word choices, character statements, narrative descriptions, and patterns of repetition. Fourth, explored passages were categorized according to manifestations of trauma (psychological latency and compulsion to repeat), and claiming experience (from unknowing to knowing, from repetition to testimony, the relational dimension). Finally, the textual analysis was interpreted through the lens of Caruth's trauma theory and integrated to produce a comprehensive analysis that links specific quotations to theoretical concepts and character psychological development to the claiming of trauma experiences.

1.6 Scope of the Study

The analysis focuses on the intrinsic elements of the novel; characterization, setting, and conflict as well as on Anne's psychological responses as represented

through dialogue, behavior, and narrative description. This study is limited to the analysis of childhood trauma manifestations and the movement toward claimed experience in the character of Anne Shirley, as constructed in Lucy M. Montgomery's novel *Anne of Green Gables* (1908). This study does not extend its conclusions beyond the textual evidence of the novel itself, nor does it claim to represent the experience of real trauma survivors. The findings of this study show that Anne's childhood trauma is consistently manifested through psychological latency, belatedness, and the compulsion to repeat, and that her gradual movement from unclaimed to claimed experience is represented through her evolving relationship with self-recognition, language, and the relational figures of Matthew and Marilla Cuthbert.

