

CHAPTER II

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Intrinsic Elements

The intrinsic elements of the novel, encompassing character and characterization, setting, and conflict, function as the textual basis for identifying and interpreting the manifestation of childhood trauma.

2.1.1 Character and Characterization

In the study of literature, characters are regarded as the primary conduits through which authors articulate human experiences, values, and conflict. According to Roberts, characters are defined as “the person represented in a drama or narrative, who are interpreted by the reader through their dialogue, actions, and thoughts” (1991: 41). This definition posits that characters do not merely serve as names, but rather embody reflections of human behavior, manifested through their verbal and non-verbal interactions, as well as in their cognitive processes.

Characterization refers to the way an author constructs and reveals the personality, motivations, and inner life of a character within a literary work. Characters themselves are generally classified according to their role and complexity within the narrative. Characters are commonly distinguished as round or flat: a round character is complex, multidimensional, and capable of change or growth across the story, while a flat character is defined by a single, consistent trait and remains largely unchanged. Characters may also be classified by narrative function, as protagonist, the central

character around whom the story revolves; antagonist, the character or force that opposes the protagonist; or static, a character whose contrasting qualities serve to highlight particular traits of another.

Roberts and Jacobs state that “the protagonist is the central character who engages the reader’s interest and sympathy, whereas the antagonist is the character or force opposing the protagonist” (1995: 45). These two roles are essential for building conflict, which drives the plot and reveals the moral or psychological dimensions of the story. Forster explains between two basic types of characters, stating that “a flat character is constructed round a single idea or quality”, while “a round character is capable of surprising in a convincing way” (1927: 67-69). Flat characters serve specific narrative purposes without requiring development, such as providing comic relief or representing a social type, while round characters undergo internal conflicts and transformations that drive the story’s emotional. Perrine (1984: 69) adds that “a static character is the same sort of person at the end of a story as at the beginning, while a dynamic character undergoes a permanent change in some aspect of character, personality, or outlook”.

Characterization refers to the author’s technique in presenting and developing these figures. Abrams (1999: 32) explains, “characterization is the representation of a person in narrative and dramatic works; such representation may be direct, by exposition, or indirect, through the actions, speech, and thoughts of the characters.” This indicates that characterization involves both the writer’s description and the reader’s interpretation, shaped through language and action.

Literary characterization employs two primary methods: explicit (direct) and implicit (indirect) characterization. Pickering and Hoeper (1981: 28) define an explicit characterization, or “telling,” as occurring when the author directly states a character’s traits, such as “She was generous” or “He was ambitious.” In this regard, Kenney (1966: 26-27) offers that implicit characterization also as “showing” entails the indirect revelation through the character’s actions, speech, appearance, thought, and interactions with others. Instead of labeling an individual as cruel, the author employs mistreating others. Jones (1968: 84) notes that indirect characterization requires readers to infer traits from textual evidence, creating active engagement. While direct characterization proposes clarity and efficiency, indirect characterization provides depth and realism, allowing characters to emerge naturally through the narrative.

Therefore, the analysis of character and characterization with understanding the types of characters flat or round, static or dynamic, protagonist or antagonist and the techniques of characterization enables readers to comprehend how authors create believable figures and develop the psychological within a literary work, involves examining how the author constructs individuals through speech, behavior, and interaction, as well as how elements invite readers to interpret the character’s psychological and moral dimensions.

2.1.2 Setting

In literary studies, setting refers to the temporal and spatial context within which the events of a narrative unfold. Stanton clarifies that “the setting is the environment that surrounds the events, including the place, the time, and the atmosphere” (1965:

18). Based on this definition, setting may be understood through three fundamental elements; place, which refers to the geographical location of the story; time, which concerns the temporal dimension or period in which events occur; and atmosphere, which conveys the emotional tone or mood that permeates the narrative.

Abrams defines setting as “the general locale, historical time, and social circumstances in which the action of a fictional or dramatic work occurs” (1999: 330). This notion further provides coherence to both the events and characters within a narrative. Klarer defines setting as “the location, historical period, and social surroundings in the narrative within broader cultural and contextual dimensions” (2004: 25).

Holman and Harmon (1986: 465) unfold that “setting is the physical and cultural background against which the action of narrative takes place,” suggesting that setting serves not merely as a backdrop but as an active component that shapes the meaning and experience of the text.

In terms of this theoretical framework, the concepts of setting can be further classified into four distinct categories: the temporal setting denoting the time period in which the narrative unfolds; the space setting, signifying the physical locations that apply influence on the emotional states of the character; the cultural setting, involving social norms and values that shape identity and behavior, and the social setting, emphasizing on community structure and relationships that influence interaction and development. The integration of these elements demonstrates how setting functions not only as the underlying context of a narrative but also as a dynamic element that interacts

with emotion and experience, providing a comprehensive understanding of the literary details representation.

2.1.3 Conflict

In the domain of literary studies, conflict is defined as the struggle between opposing forces that propel the narrative and reveal the emotions and motivations of a character. Holman and Harmon defined conflict as “the struggle that grows out of the interplay of two opposing forces in a plot [...] within a character (internal) or between a character (external) force such as another person, nature, society, or fate” (1986: 107). The concepts of internal conflict represent the psychological distress experienced by an individual, involving a clash between conflicting emotions and beliefs. It reflects the character’s aim to reconcile their personal emotions and motivations, a process that frequently gives rise to feeling confused, guilt, and anxiety. In contrast, external conflict refers to a character’s struggle against out forces that act in opposition to the fulfillment of maintenance of interpersonal harmony, such as social expectations or the influence of other individuals. Perrine defines conflict as “a clash of actions, ideas, desires, or wills” (1974: 59). This definition highlights the presence of tension within or out of the character that generates movement and growth in the story. Stanton also explains that “conflict is the opposition between two forces which creates tension and interest in a story” (1965: 16). Conflict serves as a catalyst for the revelation of a character’s personality, the process of making a decision, and transformation.

Overall, conflict serves as a foundational narrative and psychological mechanism, thereby exposing the complexity of human behavior. It allows readers to

interpret how characters respond to internal and external struggle, depending on the understanding of emotional and moral dimensions in literature.

2.2 Cathy Caruth's Theory of Trauma

Cathy Caruth's theory of trauma, as developed in *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History* (1996), departs from a simple understanding of trauma as a painful event and proposes instead that trauma is fundamentally a crisis of knowing, a wound not of the body but of the mind's encounter with an experience it cannot fully grasp at the moment of its occurrence. In its most general definition, Caruth describes trauma as "an overwhelming experience of sudden or catastrophic events in which the response to the event occurs in the often delayed, uncontrolled repetitive appearance of hallucinations and other intrusive phenomena" (1996: 11). At the core of this framework is the argument that traumatic experience is characterized not by what the survivor knows, but by what remains, in its very nature, unknowable at the moment it occurs. Drawing on Freud's analysis of the accident victim, a person who walks away from a train accident apparently unharmed, only to develop severe psychological symptoms weeks later (Caruth, 1996: 17) argues that what constitutes the central paradox of trauma is not the forgetting that occurs after the event, but rather "an inherent latency within the experience itself." The traumatic event is not fully experienced as it occurs; it is "experienced too soon, too unexpectedly, to be fully known" (Caruth, 1996: 4), and it is therefore not available to consciousness until it imposes itself again, repeatedly, in the nightmares, intrusive images, and compulsive behaviors of the survivor. Trauma, in this framework, is therefore not locatable in "the

simple violent or original event in an individual's past, but rather in the way that its very unassimilated nature, the way it was precisely not known in the first instance, return to haunt the survivor later on" (Caruth, 1996: 4).

This understanding generates four interconnected concepts that structure the present study's analysis of Anne Shirley's traumatic experience: psychological latency, belatedness, intrusive and repetitive phenomena, and the compulsion to repeat. Caruth (1996: 17) defines psychological latency, drawing on Freud's term for the incubation period of trauma, as the period of silence in which the traumatic impact remains concealed, not because it has been consciously repressed, but because the event was never fully registered in the first place. It is this inherent latency that explains why trauma does not announce itself immediately after the wound is inflicted: the survivor does not simply remember the event; she is possessed by it from within, and it returns not as voluntary memory but as lived, uncontrolled experience that governs behavior from beneath the surface of consciousness. Closely related to latency is belatedness, the temporal structure through which trauma makes itself known only in another time and place, long after the originating event. Because the traumatic event "was precisely not known in the first instance" (Caruth, 1996: 4), it cannot settle into the past as an ordinary memory; instead, it continues to erupt into the present, collapsing the distance between then and now, and making it impossible for the survivor to experience the present moment on its own terms without the past intruding upon it. It is through belatedness as broken chronology that the disruption of linear time becomes visible in the survivor's experience: the past does not recede but returns, repeatedly and without invitation, into the present. Intrusive and repetitive phenomena refer to the involuntary

forms through which this return manifests, what Caruth (1996: 11) describes as “the often delayed, uncontrolled repetitive appearance of hallucinations and other intrusive phenomena.” These are not chosen recollections but compulsive, uncontrolled re-experiences: vivid mental images, intrusive memories, and repetitive behavioral patterns that impose themselves on the survivor against her will, returning with the same force as the original event because that event was never fully processed. This leads directly to the compulsion to repeat, the broader mechanism Caruth identifies, following Freud, through which unassimilated experience reasserts itself in the survivor’s life. As Caruth (1996: 2) argues, this repetition is not a mastery of the past but its endless return, “the unwitting reenactment of an event that one cannot simply leave behind.” The survivor does not choose to repeat; she is compelled to, because the original experience was never fully lived and therefore cannot be fully left behind.

Caruth further argues that trauma “seems to be much more than a pathology, or the simple illness of a wounded psyche: it is always the story of a wound that cries out, that addresses us in the attempt to tell us of a reality or truth that is not otherwise available” (Caruth, 1996: 4). This formulation, the wound that cries out; is central to understanding the movement from unclaimed to claimed experience that the novel ultimately traces. For Caruth, the traumatic wound speaks only indirectly and belatedly; it demands a witness, an empathetic other who can receive and acknowledge what the survivor cannot yet fully know. It is through this relational encounter, and through the gradual transformation of mute repetition into articulated narrative, that the survivor begins to move from unknowing to knowing, from repetition to testimony, and from isolated suffering toward what Caruth (1996: 7) calls not cure, but the possibility of

learning “to live with trauma's endless impact on a life.” It is important to clarify, however, the precise scope within which this study applies Caruth’s framework. Caruth’s theory is used in this thesis primarily to analyze the structure of latency, belatedness, intrusive phenomena, and the compulsion to repeat; that is, the ways in which Anne’s traumatic past was not fully known when it occurred and continues to return, uninvited, into her present behavior and relationships. These are the dimensions of Anne’s experience that Caruth’s framework most precisely and legitimately illuminates.

The movement discussed in the subsequent section is toward a more integrated sense of self and a more stable relation to her traumatic past. Caruth’s framework ends, as she herself insists, not with cure but with the ongoing experience of living with trauma’s “endless impact on a life” (1996: 7). The discussion of Anne’s movement toward belonging and relational stability in this thesis is therefore best understood not as an extension of Caruth’s theory, but as an analytical reading of the narrative movement of the novel itself, the trajectory Montgomery constructs for Anne as a literary character, which this study traces through the textual evidence of the story. This distinction is maintained throughout the analysis in order to ensure that Caruth is applied carefully and within her own conceptual boundaries.

From these viewpoints, Caruth’s theory underlines the complexity of traumatic experience as something that resists direct narration yet demands to be told, through latency, belatedness, intrusive phenomena, and the compulsion to repeat. This theory is used to identify the manifestations of Anne Shirley’s trauma that shape her emotional responses and behavioral patterns, as well as to trace the movement from unclaimed

experiences toward a more integrated, if never fully resolved, relation to her traumatic past.

2.2.1 Anne Shirley's Manifestations of Trauma

The manifestations of trauma in *Anne of Green Gables* are primarily observed through the structural return of the past in Anne's present life. Caruth defines psychological latency as a period of "incubation" or silence in which the traumatic impact remains unknown to the survivor (1996: 17). Trauma is characterized by its belatedness; it is a history that is not fully experienced in its own time but instead returns to haunt the survivor at a later point in life. In this sense, trauma does not announce itself immediately; rather, its effect lie dormant beneath the surface of consciousness, only to resurface unexpectedly. These manifestations often appear as sudden emotional or physical responses that seem disconnected from the present environment but are in fact the echoes of past wounds that were never properly processed.

Furthermore, Caruth argues that when an experience remains unassimilated, meaning it has not been integrated into normal memory, it imposes itself repeatedly through nightmares, flashbacks, or repetitive behaviors (1996: 91), a phenomenon known as the compulsion to repeat. This repetition is not a conscious act of remembering, but rather an unconscious attempt by the survivor to master a "void" or an unclaimed experience that could not be fully understood at the moment of its impact. The traumatic event, having never been truly grasped, continues to return with

the same force and urgency, compelling the survivor to relive what was never fully lived in the first place.

2.2.2 The Movement from Unclaimed to Claimed Experience

Caruth's book titled *Unclaimed Experience* points toward a transformative process from unclaimed to claimed experience, not cure but learning to live with trauma's "endless impact on a life" (1996: 7). That process consists of three interconnected movements: from unknowing to knowing, from repetition to testimony, and the relational dimension.

The first movement, from unknowing to knowing, involves bridging the gap of latency by transitioning from a state of "unknowing", on which trauma governs the survivor's action from the shadows, to a state of conscious recognition. It is the movement when the survivor finally encounters the traumatic truth as a historical fact rather than an unnamed force that silently dictates their present existence (Caruth, 1996: 3-4). This shift does not erase the trauma, but rather allows the survivor to acknowledge it as part of their lived history.

The second movement, from repetition to testimony, demands the transformation of "mute" repetitive behaviors into articulated testimony. According to Caruth, the "wound" must be granted a voice, evolving from silent reenactment into a structured narrative that can be communicated both to the self and to others (1996: 5). Integration, therefore, is not merely psychological but also linguistic; it requires the survivor to find words for what was once unspeakable.

The third movement, the relational dimension, recognizes that the act of articulating a traumatic experience is inherently a relational encounter. The presence of an empathetic observer who is capable of acknowledging the survivor's truth is a critical component of this transformative process (Caruth, 1996: 8). This encounter serves to transition the trauma from the realm of isolated suffering into the domain of shared humanity, allowing the survivor to move not merely from trauma to recovery, but from isolated suffering toward an integrated self.

