

**A Comparative Analysis of Lucy Maud Montgomery and Anne Shirley from the
Novel *Anne of Green Gables***

By Mashael Alharbi

A thesis submitted to the Graduate Faculty of

Auburn University at Montgomery

in partial fulfillment of the

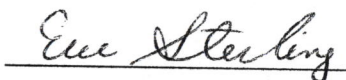
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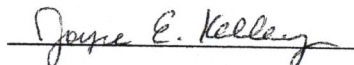
Montgomery, Alabama

May 5, 2017

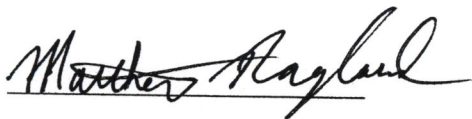
Approved by



Professor Eric Sterling
Thesis Director



Professor Joyce E. Kelley
Second Reader



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Abstract

The goal of this master's thesis is to extrapolate and analyze the similarities that exist between the author Lucy Maud Montgomery and her character Anne Shirley from *Anne of Green Gables*. The book *Anne of Green Gables* is one of the most acclaimed novels in Canadian literature. In order to accomplish the aim of this research paper, a total of fourteen sources that are relevant to the purpose of this study were utilized. Among these were biographies of the author, the sequels and a prequel of *Anne of Green Gables*, and critical works that extract meaning from the novel. The thesis is composed of five chapters.

Introduction

To begin with, the primary aim of this thesis is to investigate the similarities between Lucy Maud Montgomery and the main protagonist of her book *Anne of Green Gables*, Anne Shirley. This will be accomplished by looking back at the early life of the author, including her childhood and the hardships that she overcame. Also, several works that interpret and analyze Montgomery's life will make a substantial contribution to this thesis.

The novel *Anne of Green Gables* was written by Lucy Maud Montgomery in the year 1908, when the author was 30 years of age. After 3 years, the novel was published and made available to the public. In particular, *Anne of Green Gables* was considered a children's novel. The story follows the life and journey of Anne Shirley, an 11-year-old orphan. Notably, the novel touched the hearts of many people across the globe, and thus it is unsurprising that it was made into an award-winning mini-series in 1986. In addition, a spinoff drama made by Disney, called *Avonlea*, continued the story of *Anne of Green Gables* in the 1980s and 1990s. Demonstrating its continual appeal, in 2016 PBS acquired the US rights to produce a mini-series of *Anne of Green Gables*. During its original publication, the novel was just as well-loved as in the past and was followed by a series of sequels. *Anne of Green Gables* was admired by other writers, including Mark Twain. To quote the man who penned *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, Anne Shirley is "the dearest and most lovable child in fiction since the immortal Alice" (Andronik 83). As can be seen, the implications of the meaning and the significance of the novel have spread to many people across the world.

In light of this, in order to extrapolate the meanings and concepts in *Anne of Green Gables*, one should definitely dig deep into the life of Lucy Maud Montgomery. Montgomery had an early taste of life's bitter tragedies. During her childhood years, she had her first heartache when her mother died from tuberculosis. That unfortunate event triggered her to live a solitary life. Afterwards, she grew up on Prince Edward Island with her grandparents. As time passed by, she eventually became fond of that particular place, often spending her waking hours plucking berries, fishing, and strolling on the seashore. In addition, she had a habit of giving names to things on the island. For instance, she named her apple trees Little Syrup, Spider, and Gavin. Later, when Montgomery wrote *Anne of Green Gables*, she gave Anne the same habit. Anne would give the name "Haunted Woods" to the forest that is adjacent to their farm, while "Lover's Lane" was the cow path beneath the pasture. The pond owned by Montgomery's uncle would be called the "Lake of the Shining Waters" in the novel.

As illustrated above, readers of *Anne of Green Gables* can extract similarities between the way of life of Anne Shirley and that of the woman who penned the novel. In detail, the novel describes Anne as an orphaned girl who grows up in the care of Marilla Cuthbert and her brother Matthew. The siblings decide to adopt an orphan in order to acquire a helper who would aid them on their farm. Originally, they requested an orphaned boy; however, the institution sends them a red-headed girl, Anne Shirley. Despite the disappointment, the siblings grow fond of her because of her high-spirit, independence, and her nature as a kind-hearted person.

Generally speaking, Anne Shirley is a picture of the way Lucy Maud Montgomery was when she was a child. In particular, both Anne and Lucy lost their

parents at a young age. Also, both women found a new home with a man and a woman, Anne with the Cuthbert siblings, and Lucy with her grandparents. As a matter of fact, Anne Shirley reflects Lucy's independence that was instilled in her while living with her grandparents. In like manner, both girls also displayed some rebellious attitudes that were brought about by the strict ways of their upbringing. To explain, Lucy had expressed her insurgence through developing a macabre sense of humor. Meanwhile, Anne becomes more laid-back by learning from the mistakes that she has made.

By the same token, there are other features in the personality of Anne and Lucy that show striking similarities. For instance, Lucy had a deep love for the environment, and so does Anne in the novel. Both women, though one is fictional, developed a mannerism of communicating with the trees and flowers. Likewise, Lucy and her companions played in the forest near their homes, while Anne has a handful of adventures in the Haunted Wood with her best friend Diana Barry. Furthermore, Lucy and Anne both enjoyed strolling through Lover's Lane.

From the above paragraph, it can be deduced that the loneliness of Lucy and Anne, brought about by the misfortunes that had occurred in their early lives, was connected significantly to their surroundings. In order to combat sadness, they had talked to nature, for in it they had found solace and peace. They had few people to talk to, so they communed with nature.

At the same time, Lucy and Anne had undergone the same situation while they were in school. To clarify, Lucy was in constant competition with her friend Nate Lockhart, while Anne is in rivalry with Gilbert Blythe. In essence, Lucy considers her education as highly important, as she wanted to escape the societal limitations of being a

woman in the late Victorian age: she wanted to be a writer, in a world dominated by male writers. Consequently, this outlook is reflected in the behavior of Anne.

In the same fashion, Lucy Maud Montgomery inspired change in the world around her. She endured an atmosphere where men dominated Canadian literature. Despite all the unfairness directed against women at that time, Lucy had written *Anne of Green Gables* and had it published after many years. Significantly, before being available to the public, the novel's manuscript had been rejected by several publishers (Gammel 196). There are many speculations about the reasons behind the rejection of Montgomery's novel; on one hand, women in the nineteenth century were still often seen as the weaker sex who should live their lives through husbands and children. Despite it being the late Victorian era, there were still books published to warn women about the dangers of learning and education, that it would harm them, so the publisher perhaps wouldn't take the risk of publishing the work of unknown woman writers (Rubio 45). Because Montgomery was a first time author, this increased the probability that the novel would not succeed (Gammel,195).

However, Montgomery, despite those hardships, never gave up. Eventually, she had surpassed the earnings of male writers of her time. In some ways, this stubborn attitude of Lucy and her inclination to break the traditions that had enveloped Canadian society are shown by Anne in her own unique ways. Montgomery, as Gammel said, "would forego marriage to claim her independence as a woman and a writer" (25). Similarly, in the novel, Anne has no intention to conform to strict gender roles that are imposed by her society. She seeks higher education, and she despises the traditional custom of courtship and desires more idealistic marriage ideas. In light of this, Anne's

marriage with Gilbert Blythe does not clearly fit with this particular aspect of her personality. You can see that from this conversation between Anne and Charlotta about marriage:

“Oh, of course there’s a risk in marrying anybody,” conceded Charlotta the Fourth, “but, when all’s said and done, Miss Shirley, ma’am, there’s many a worse thing than a husband.” (*Anne of Avonlea* 406)

It can be deduced from this quotation that Anne is looking for an independent life, not a traditional husband to depend on, and that she wants a marriage built on an affectionate relationship (Gammel 149). With attention to her life in the asylum the reader can see where this determination came from, since Anne’s poor childhood influences a lot of her future decisions. Anne’s childhood has motivated readers and fiction writers.

Writers after Montgomery have shown interest in adding to Anne’s story. *Before Green Gables* is a prequel novel written by author Budge Wilson published in 2008. As the title suggests, it delves into the world of Anne Shirley before she even sets foot in Green Gables. In particular, it focuses on the hardships that she sustained and her endurance to stand up and adapt to them. Markedly, *Before Green Gables* portrays a slightly more excruciating storytelling of the childhood years of Anne Shirley.

Among literary critics who focus attention on the novel, John Seelye has authored a book titled *Jane Eyre’s American Daughters*, which talks about the influence of Charlotte Brontë upon several North American writers, including Lucy Maud Montgomery. In particular, this book analyzes the way Montgomery had *written Anne of Green Gables*. Seelye believes the style of Charlotte Brontë is evident in this specific

masterpiece by Montgomery. For this reason, *Jane Eyre's American Daughters* is a significant contribution in extrapolating Montgomery's purpose in putting much of her own character into Anne Shirley.

There is a connection between the two authors in the sense that they both wrote about girls who started life in very humble and disturbing conditions. Both Jane and Anne are imaginative and do everything they can to escape the hardships in their lives. The whole story of *Jane Eyre* revolves around her abusive childhood, the trouble she went through in school, and her troubled grown-up life. With Jane's and Anne's efforts, however, their lives slowly start to change for the better, and they are finally able to live the lives they have always wanted to live. This especially serves as a message of empowerment to girls and women to always hold on and persevere as better days are coming.

In the second half of the 19th century, there was increased demand for novels that targeted juvenile readers. For example, several novels had been the close contemporaries of *Jane Eyre*, including Louisa May Alcott's *Little Women* (1868) and Susan Warner's *Wide Wide World* (1850). Later on, Frances Hodgson Burnett published *The Secret Garden*, *Sara Crewe*, and *Little Lord Fauntleroy*. Montgomery's *Anne of Green Gables* is discussed alongside these books in the conclusion to Seelye's book *Jane Eyre's American Daughters*. Common similarities with all the works mentioned are their female protagonists who are subjected to an early tragic life. However, these women do not let their misfortunes become a hindrance to their happiness. In essence, the different stories that were depicted in these books show the idea of female empowerment.

All these writers had one aim and goal in mind, which was to bring about female empowerment amongst the young girls in society. All the stories they wrote were geared towards encouraging girls and giving them a positive outlook on life. The stories were also encouragement to the girls to persevere through tough conditions because eventually relief would come their way. The writers were seeking to uplift young women to take control of things and simply not resign their lives to fate. Montgomery was herself a sign and a symbol of female empowerment in the sense that she never gave up despite the multiple rejections by publishers. She went through with five failed attempts to get her first book published which made her lose hope and stash the book away in a hat box. In fact; the rejection of publishers was not the only obstacle that Montgomery had to deal with: Gammel argues that Montgomery's family disapproved of her being a writer. This can be deduced from an excerpt from her journal, wherein she indicated that the fortunes that she had reaped from her works had somewhat silenced her family. Montgomery noted that she would always remember their snide remarks and violent reactions whenever her career is concerned. Nevertheless, she persevered.

Notably, Seelye also explains that Montgomery paralleled her work with the novel *Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm* that was written by Kate Douglas Wiggin in the year 1903. Both masterpieces were centered on young, witty female protagonists who had captured the hearts of their foster parents (Seelye 337). Both Rebecca and Anne also talked endlessly, only stopping when they feared the possibility that they may be returned to the orphanage. Correspondingly, the gender mistake in *Anne of Green Gables* is clearly inspired by the replacement of Rebecca for Hannah Randall, who was more dedicated and industrious. Additionally, there are similarities that can be drawn from the

overall personalities of Rebecca and Anne, including their innocence, bubbly nature, and the way they prioritize their families over their careers and future prospects. In addition, the existence of the minister's wife who alleviates the melancholy in Anne's life is a plot that is somewhat appropriated from *The Chronicles of Rebecca* (Seelye 337).

Seelye has also suggested that Montgomery created the character of Anne Shirley based on the combinations of the personalities of various female protagonists (Seelye 337). For instance, Anne amuses her companions by telling them fascinating stories the same way Burnett's Sara Crewe does. Also, like Rebecca, Anne is often a trouble-maker because of her fanciful and illusory nature. Likewise, a piece of Cedric Errol can be seen in her, particularly in Anne's tendency to influence others with incredible happiness. Lastly, Fauntleroy's kindness and compassion are exhibited by Anne Shirley. Be that as it may, Anne's life, the way Montgomery had crafted it, is far from those fairytale-like stories that enveloped these American novel protagonists that were seen to have similarities with Anne. As can be drawn from the story, Anne's transition from a child into an adolescent is gradual and her only savior is herself. No rich man comes to rescue her from her sufferings; instead, she strives hard to overcome all the hardships that appear in her life. Despite Anne's likenesses to other characters, many scholars have noted how unusual Anne is as a character, and how she is beloved for being so different.

However, some early reviewers did not appreciate these differences. *The New York Times* book review went forward to critique the book *Anne of Green Gables* in early 1908 by stating that as much as the author wanted to make the girl look unusual, she ended up being too queer. This is further fueled by the fact that Anne had spent the better part of her young life living with individuals who were mostly illiterate and as well as in

an asylum but when she meets the farmer's family, she speaks like a refined individual. The critic goes on to state that she has a vocabulary "like that of Bernard Shaw, the sentimentality of Alfred Austin, and reasoning power like that of a Justice of the Supreme Court" ("*A Heroine from an Asylum*"⁴⁰⁴). Nonetheless, most readers and scholars liked the novel and published articles and books on it.

For modern scholars wanting to investigate the novel, a notable annotated edition of *Anne of Green Gables* was made available to the general public in the year 1997. In essence, this book presents notes that explain the mythical, religious, and literary references of the fictional world of Anne Shirley. Moreover, the book provides additional information regarding Prince Edward Island, where Lucy Maud Montgomery resided throughout her life. Significantly, a timeline of Montgomery's life experiences is also included. From this, a researcher can efficiently deduce the comparisons between Anne Shirley and Montgomery. Furthermore, it offers hints and clues regarding the way Montgomery's environment from her childhood affected her style of writing *Anne of Green Gables*.

A second book, *Looking for Anne of Green Gables*, has been written by a biographer by the name of Irene Gammel, and contains the dual biographies of Anne Shirley and Montgomery. In essence, it presents the development of the personality and character of Anne Shirley that is remarkably in accordance with that of Montgomery. Accordingly, this book provides its readers with a comprehensive description of the life of Montgomery, and thus, it is a substantial component of this thesis. Gammel also explains in this book that Montgomery had a tendency to cling to the past and allowed it to affect her future and her writing. She was a keen writer of her own adventures;

however, the journals, documents, and letters that Montgomery had left for the public to see do not represent the totality of her life. It was somewhat like a trailer to an upcoming motion picture, with bits and pieces of hints of how the story will go. Gammel compares the examination of Anne Shirley's life with the act of peeling the skins of an onion. This is because there are several layers of skin that cover it, which is somewhat analogous to the way Montgomery had hidden her true feelings and intentions (Gammel 15).

Although Anne is a reflection of Montgomery, Gammel finds several possible sources for Anne's character. One inspiration in crafting the character of Anne was the face of Evelyn Nesbit. Evelyn Nesbit was a member of the famous group the Gibson Girls. It was reported that Montgomery came across a photograph of Evelyn in a magazine, and she cut it out and pasted it into her journal. On the photograph, Gammel described Evelyn as a teenage girl with round eyes and a face that express a bit of sadness and gloom. She also had chrysanthemums that adorned her hair, which is somehow in contrast with her mournful expression (Gammel 29).

Gammel also found a magazine clipping that was pasted in Montgomery's journal, which came from the October 1893 issue of the *Godey's Lady's Book*. Significantly, this contains a poem which the author dedicated to a particular person named Anne. Notably, Anne was described as a woman with flaming red hair and fair skin. Accordingly, the image of Anne Shirley that Montgomery created has similar features with the Anne who is depicted in the poem (Gammel 208). Additionally, through Gammel's research, she discovered the possibility that Montgomery was influenced by two fictional characters named Anne. The first one was "Charity Ann," an orphan girl,

who was featured in *Godey's Lady's Book*. "Charity Ann: Founded on Facts" was penned by Mary Ann Maitland in the year 1870 (Gammel 209).

Significantly, many readers and scholars asked Montgomery the reason for Anne Shirley's red hair. Gammel argued that Montgomery had become fascinated with distinct characteristics of people who have this unique hair color (Gammel 172). Over the years, Montgomery had encountered various redheads who had been significant in her life. This includes one of her teachers named Mr. Lamont, a member of their church called Artie Moffat, and one of her short-haired Bideford students. Indeed, *Anne of Green Gables* is a narrative that presents Anne's acceptance of her quirky hair color and how she embraces it wholeheartedly.

Another of Gammel's books, *The Intimate Life of L.M. Montgomery*, contains important revelations about many aspects of Montgomery's life that left its readers shocked and awed. In addition, she argues that while Montgomery was writing her autobiography, she had assumed many different roles and characters, which depicts the role-playing that was seen in contemporary theaters. She once wrote in January 1927 that "Myself I wore a widow's dress and veil," which proved that her journal was written in correlation with the way the acts and scenes in a theatrical performance were crafted (Gammel 5). Correspondingly, Montgomery applied the concept of "masquerade" in which her true self was hidden in some sort of a façade. This façade is in contrast with Montgomery's real emotions and feelings. For instance, she often expressed herself in accordance with the societal expectations of women's actions, which includes the delicate and gentle character of women that is portrayed in the photographs that can be found in Montgomery's journals (Gammel 5).

Meanwhile, she carried herself as a timid author of children's books and a modest mother and wife to a minister. On the contrary, behind that façade, Montgomery was rebellious and subversive. She also wrote in her biography that she was never in love with her husband Ewan and that she had been suffering from depression. Montgomery also revealed that she had always loved Herman. She started the secret dates with Leard in 1897; he was 27 "and his face was elusive, magnetic, hunting" as described in her journal (Gammel 130). However, she did not accept him as a husband because he didn't fit with her image as a farmer. Notably, the first chapter of this book presents the secret diary of Montgomery that she had written together with her friend Nora Lefurgey. This journal contains the written record of their lives from January to June 1903. Actually, this diary was very difficult for scholars to find, because Montgomery placed its only copy at the University of Guelph Archives, and its tone and the manner in which it was written was very different from the usual style of Montgomery. This diary was centered on boys whom Montgomery and Lefurgey expressed interest in, including Ewan Macdonald and Edwin Simpson. As a matter of fact, it is in this journal that Montgomery expressed that she was suffering from depression and how bleak and forlorn her life was, as can be demonstrated from this quote from her diary: "I am tired of existence. Life has been a sorry business for me these past five years" (qtd. in Gammel 9).

In detail, the friendship of Nora and Montgomery commenced when they were rivals for the love of James Alexander Stewart and when they were spontaneously pursuing the Cavendish and Bay View beaux. Markedly, one can deduce a substantial meaning in the photograph of Nora and Montgomery titled "Secrets" (Gammel 20). In the photo, the intimacy and closeness of the two were clearly portrayed, which sparked the

idea that Montgomery was sexually repressed, according to the essays represented in Gammel's book. Moreover, the photograph exhibited her profound and passionate relationships with her female friends (Gammel 11).

Similarly, another book authored by Irene Gammel and Benjamin Lefebvre, titled *Anne's World: A New Century of Anne of Green Gables*, also aids in achieving the goals of this thesis. The book tackles the way the novel dominated Canadian readers and their perception on the hidden meanings that exist in *Anne of Green Gables*. Additionally, Ned Bustard's book titled *Anne of Green Gables, a Comprehension Guide* contains a method of dissecting the novel penned by Montgomery.

As a matter of fact, several scholars have taken a special interest in the life story of Lucy Maud Montgomery. The works of these authors are vital in the comparative analysis of Anne Shirley and Montgomery. An example of this is the book *Lucy Maud Montgomery: The Gift of Wings* that was written by Mary Henley Rubio. In addition, Catherine Andronik fancied Montgomery's remarkable life journey, thus giving her the motivation to pen *Kindred Spirit: A Biography of L. M Montgomery, Creator of Anne of Green Gables*. Another biographical study is the *Wheel of Things: The Biography of L.M. Montgomery* by Mollie Gillen.

This thesis compares the lives of Anne Shirley and Lucy Maud Montgomery. The thesis utilizes different sources that are relevant to the topic. These sources include biographies of Montgomery, an annotated edition of *Anne of Green Gables*, and a prequel to the novel. Together with the original publication of *Anne of Green Gables* by Montgomery, the analysis of several authors regarding the novel aid in my critical review

of the book. In general, this thesis extracts information from reading these materials that are parallel with the themes and motifs that were laid out by Montgomery

The expected outcome of this thesis is to establish the influences of Montgomery's upbringing and unique life journey in creating the character of Anne Shirley. In essence, this is necessary to comprehend fully the direct and implied meanings that are present in the novel. With that being said, this thesis is different from those that have already been published, because this thesis will review comprehensively a number of aspects that revolve both around the lives of Montgomery and Anne Shirley and the overall story of *Anne of Green Gables*. Most importantly, the information will be gathered from a number of distinct sources, and thus the thesis is rich in terms of its foundation of facts and interpretations from various authors.

Chapter 1

Concerning the Biography of the Author, Lucy Maud Montgomery

To start our author's story, we need first to delve into her early childhood past. Lucy Maud Montgomery was born in Clifton, Prince Edward Island, on the 30th of November, 1874. Lucy Maud lost her mother to tuberculosis – consumption, as it was called at that time. She was left with her father, Hugh John Montgomery, who left her in her maternal grandparents' care. Lucy Maud's family history goes way back, and many family members have been successful in the fields of agriculture, politics, literature, and business.

Like Anne Shirley, Lucy Maud lost her mother at an early age. She was abandoned by her father, who was struck with grief at his wife's passing and left for the West to Prince Albert, Saskatchewan. She was left in her grandparents' homestead, which today is preserved as the *Prince Edward Provincial Park*. She did not receive much love and attention from her maternal grandparents, the McNeills (Andronik 7). She lived in this strict, Presbyterian household for much of her childhood days. Her life, like that of Anne Shirley, was a "perfect graveyard of buried hopes" (Montgomery 31). She spent most of her early life alone, and in her plight, she found solace in the only comforts she could find in her state: her imagination, her books, and her writing. She would find out that, for the rest of her life, this passion of hers would help her cope with the bouts of melancholia that struck her, and would lead her to the path of becoming a writer in the future (Gammel 21).

She was tomboyish in her early age, and hated to be alone. Many of her relatives were nearby, hailing from the McNeill and Montgomery clans, and allowed her to spend

time with them. She would engage in boyish activities with her friends, such as climbing trees and building forts. Furthermore, she also developed a keen connection with nature, something that she kept until she was of old age (Montgomery, *The Alpine Path* 47). She would often stroll on the St. Lawrence Gulf shoreline to collect sea shells and other niceties, and also to fish. She also wandered around the farmlands of her maternal grandparents' homestead, gathering berries. She would also go out on picnics with her companions and spend some time in the surrounding countryside, buried in her thoughts (Gillen 11).

She named places and landmarks that were at least vaguely interesting to her — places like the *Lake of Shining Waters* and the *Haunted Woods*. Possibly, naming the places she visited allowed her to have a much more intimate and personal connection with them. She reflects, in her autobiography, how beautifully complex and human-like nature was for her, and it had perhaps given her more insight into how the trappings of the human mind work:

And yet we cannot define the charm of Prince Edward Island in terms of land or sea. It is too elusive – too subtle. Sometimes I have thought it was the touch of austerity in an Island landscape that gives it its peculiar charm. And whence comes that austerity? Is it in the dark dappling of spruce and fir? Is it in the glimpses of sea and river? Is it in the bracing tang of the salt air? Or does it go deeper still, down to the very soul of the land? For lands have personalities just as well as human beings; and to know that personality you must live in the land and companion it, and draw sustenance of body and spirit from it; so only can you really know a

land and be known of it. (Montgomery: *The Alpine Path: The Story of My Career* 51)

Despite her outward friendliness and openness, Lucy Maud blossomed into a delicate and thoughtful individual. Her quiet childhood was interspersed with tragedies, large and small, starting from the loss of her mother very early in her life. She remembered some memories of her mother's death – her coffin and the muslin white dress she wore to the funeral – and how she writes in her journal, that “she wanted to meet her again in heaven” even though she enjoyed her current life more. Furthermore, her writings in her journals were inspired by her sad encounters in life. In one instance, she had found her pet cat, Pussy-willow, poisoned. Her reactions to these experiences were, as one could notice, ahead of her age and level of comprehension as a child, as we see in one of her anecdotes:

One morning I found her dying of poison. I shall never forget my agony of grief as I watched my little pet's bright eyes glazing, and her tiny paws growing stiff and cold. And I have never laughed with grown-up wisdom at my passionate sorrow over the little death. It was the first time I *realized* death, the first time, since I had become conscious of loving, that anything I loved had left me forever. At that moment, the curse of the race came upon me, ‘death entered into my world’ and I turned my back on the Eden of childhood where everything had seemed everlasting. I was barred out of it forevermore by the fiery sword of that keen and unforgettable pain. (*The Alpine Path* 119)

Likely due to her sensitive nature, Montgomery turned to writing poetry. She began writing poetry when she was nine years old. She also began to write in her journal at this age. Many of her first writings were simply writing on scraps of paper detailing her imaginative inner world – descriptions of her pets, of places she visited, and drawings of her imaginary friends. She was highly introspective and sensitive to the qualms and happenings outside of her.

In her autobiography, Lucy Maud mentions some influences on how she became a writer later on in life. She notes how she obtained her literary inclinations from her maternal side – the McNeills. The McNeills had a distinguished, if not minor, intellectual history. Her distant uncle, Hector McNeill, was known as a minor poet back in Scotland, as were her other more distant ancestors. Her grandfather was a storyteller, and she was told many stories in her early childhood, mostly about shipwrecks. She probably adopted her penchant for reading and writing from her maternal side; although her grandparents did not own many books, Lucy Maud still had numerous reading materials at her personal disposal: magazines, history books, and poetry. This allowed her to engorge her voracious reading habits. Many of these books, such as those by Hans Christian Andersen and those of Tennyson, Byron, and Milton, would come back and influence her writing later on (*The Alpine Path* 13).

Lucy Maud began her schooling near her grandparents' house when she was six years old. She however, took a year of absence from her studies when she left for Prince Albert, Saskatchewan, to live with her father and stepmother. Here, she had published her first poem, "On Cape LeForce," in *The Daily Patriot*, a Prince Edward Island newspaper, but not before enduring her own fair share of earlier rejection. This was the start of her

first monetary gains from writing, and the first of many. She then returned to Cavendish in 1891, citing how unhappy the marriage between her father and stepmother was. As she was too late to enroll for that school year, she then started grade 10 the following year. Montgomery finally finished her grade-school education in Cavendish. In 1893, she attended the Prince of Wales College in Charlottetown. Here, she obtained her teaching license. She had completed her two-year course in only a span of a year, leaving with honors (*The Alpine Path* 58).

From 1894 to 1895, she worked as a teacher in a one-room school in Bidefort, Prince Edward Island. Her career as a teacher can be deemed too short, as she left a year afterwards, presumably after earning a sum of money to sustain her time in college. In 1895, she received her first payment for her writing –a sum of five dollars– with which she bought more books. From 1895 and 1896, she studied literature at Dalhousie University in Halifax. She went on teaching again after graduating from Dalhousie University at various island schools, namely Belmont and Lower Bedeque schools. She disliked her job, but it allowed her to earn a living, and have more time for her to indulge in writing. For a time, in 1896, Lucy Maud was also engaged to her cousin, Edwin Simpson, whom she did not marry. And soon, in 1897, she began sending her short stories to magazines and newspapers for publishing (Andronik 44).

In 1898, her maternal grandfather died. She gave up her teaching career to move in with her—now alone—grandmother. This allowed her to pursue her creative writing full-time, mostly with children's stories. Although she earned a livable wage with her writing submissions, most of her works were rejected by presses; yet, still she persisted. She sent these manuscripts to other publishers to have them accepted. In 1901, Lucy

Maud took a position in the Halifax Chronicle's *The Daily Echo* newspaper as a proofreader and writer. She then quit, citing the long hours it entailed. It prevented her from focusing on her own stories, as her only free time was the early morning hours before work.

She returned to her old job again in 1902, working as an independent writer in and contributor to magazines. She explained in her biography how in 1904 her first ideas for *Anne of Green Gables* began to crystallize:

I found a faded entry, written many years before: "Elderly couple apply to orphan asylum for a boy. By mistake a girl is sent them." I thought this would do. I began to block out the chapters, devise, and select incidents and "brood up" my heroine. Anne – she was not so named of malice aforethought, but flashed into my fancy already christened, even to the all-important "e" – began to expand in such a fashion that she soon seemed very real to me and took possession of me to an unusual extent. She appealed to me, and I thought it rather a shame to waste her on an ephemeral little serial. Then the thought came, "Write a book. You have the central idea. All you need do is to spread it out over enough chapters to amount to a book." The result was *Anne of Green Gables*. (*The Alpine Path* 72)

Publishers weren't so keen, however. The book was, in fact, rejected several times until she found a publisher willing to stake money on the novel. Until then, she had kept the novel in an old hat-box out of frustration.

During this time of trying to accomplish her dream in writing, Montgomery was still living her early life in her own quiet world. It was a life that may be considered boring for some, but she was not at all bored by her quiet (and for some, repressive) atmosphere (*The Alpine Path*,47). She held her imagination as her solace from her otherwise unstimulating childhood, as well as her breathing space from more terrible tragedies in her life. She quips, in one of her anecdotes, that these experiences, no matter how dull or terrible, were essential to her career as a writer. She wrote: “Were it not for those Cavendish years, I do not think *Anne of Green Gables* would ever have been written” (*The Alpine Path* 52).

My next section will demonstrate how much Montgomery’s early life would come to play a huge part in her novel *Anne of Green Gables*. Her experiences, which primarily involved personal anguish and adversities, made her master of her unique strategy of coping — which for her came through writing. Indeed, her struggles in order to survive a number of sufferings in her life had been eased when she had started writing *Anne of Green Gables*. Through this novel, she was able to mirror her true self, emotions, and character.

Chapter 2

Examining the Life of the Protagonist Anne Shirley

The character of Anne Shirley is one of the most well-loved by many readers. Anne Shirley experiences the best and worst of this world, which makes her one of the most unique and distinct characters in Canadian literature. With that in mind, it is essential to investigate Anne's background, especially the influence of the orphanage life at the asylum on her personality. In contrast to what we might expect, Anne's talkative, optimistic personality overcomes all the awful experiences she is subjected to.

The journey of Anne Shirley first begins when Matthew Cuthbert arrives at the train station in order to fetch the orphan boy whom he has requested from the Hopetown Asylum. When he first sees Anne, Mr. Cuthbert's response is, "I'm not expecting a girl. It's a boy I've come for. He should be here. Mrs. Alexander Spencer was to bring him over from Nova Scotia for me" (Montgomery, *Anne of Green Gables* 10). Mr. Cuthbert is disappointed because he doubts if the orphan girl would be any help with his daily work at the farm. Nevertheless, because he does not know what to do about the mistake, he still accepts Anne Shirley and decides to bring her home. According to the description given by Mr. Cuthbert, Anne is:

...a child of about eleven, garbed in a very short, very tight, very ugly dress of yellowish gray wincey. She wore a faded brown sailor hat and beneath the hat, extending down her back, were two braids of very thick, decidedly red hair. Her face was small, white and thin, also much freckled; her mouth was large and so were her eyes, that looked green in some

lights and moods and gray in others. (Montgomery, *Anne of Green Gables* 11)

It can be deduced from her look that she has lived in poverty. The poor dress and thin body show how the asylum lacks the basic needs for children. Also it shows that Anne has no one to belong to and she is looking for a family. However, her eyes are full of spirit and her mouth is like a faucet that is constantly spouting out words.

On their way home, Mr. Cuthbert gets a glimpse of Anne Shirley's unique personality, as you can see in her dialogue with Mr. Cuthbert:

“Isn't it splendid to think of all the things there are to find out about? It just makes me feel glad to be alive It wouldn't be so half interesting if we knew all about everything, wouldn't it? There'd be no scope for imagination then, would there?” (*Anne of Green Gables* xiv)

This quotation shows how Anne views life from a different perspective. Though she has lived in poverty, she is grateful for her life and the little things that she has. She is looking forward to seeing and to knowing everything, leaving all the tragedies behind her. This introduces how she escapes her reality with her imagination, which keeps her spirit up and full of hope. This dialogue goes on to show that Anne is a special kind of girl. Most girls her age would find it very hard to appreciate the gift of life if they were in similar circumstances, but Anne is able to see beyond that and appreciate what matters.

In addition, Anne Shirley also describes what it has been like living in the asylum. Her experience, though it was short as compared with the other children, is enough to show that the institution is not a likely place for children to thrive. She describes the asylum to Mr. Cuthbert when she says:

“But the asylum was the worst. I’ve only been in it four months, but that was enough. I don’t suppose you ever were an orphan in an asylum, so you can’t possibly understand what it is like. It’s worse than anything you could imagine. Mrs. Spencer said it was wicked for me to talk like that, but I didn’t mean to be wicked. It’s so easy to be wicked without knowing it, isn’t it? They were good, you know, the asylum people. But there is so little scope for the imagination in an asylum —only just in the other orphans.” (*Anne of Green Gables* 12)

As can be deduced from the above quotation, Anne Shirley has a deep, imaginative personality that sets her apart from all the other children in the asylum. Additionally, she refuses to conform to authority, as shown by her bold revelations regarding the unfortunate situation of the children in the asylum. Anne Shirley is a free spirit and is interested in knowing more about the world. The asylum does nothing but impede her curiosity to explore far beyond what the asylum offers. She wants something more to fuel her avid imagination in regard to what the world out there has to offer. She does not mean to speak against authority as she considers the people in the asylum to be good. Nevertheless, she does speak her mind, which is one of her defining traits in the novel.

Anne Shirley also feels happy when she is informed that Green Gables, the place where the Cuthbert siblings reside on Prince Edward Island, is surrounded by trees, brooks, flowers, hills, and an abundance of birds that are singing happily, as we can discern from her dialogue with Mr. Cuthbert: “It’s always been one of my dreams to live near a brook. I never expected I would, though. Dreams don’t often come true, do they?”

Wouldn't it be nice if they did? But just now I feel pretty nearly perfectly happy" (*Anne of Green Gables* 15).

In a similar imaginative manner, Anne Shirley has a habit of giving names to inanimate objects and places. When she and Mr. Cuthbert are driving, they pass a pond that looks like a river with a bridge that bisects it. Eventually, Mr. Cuthbert says it is called Barry's Pond. But Anne Shirley, who proclaims that she does not like it to be called that, gives it the name "The Lake of Shining Waters" because of its pristine and majestic appearance. Likewise, she also names the cherry tree that is situated outside her window the "Snow Queen," and the kitchen geranium, according to Anne Shirley, must be named "Bonny."

Anne Shirley has a unique way of thinking and doing things. Instead of simply accepting things because they are that way, she adds her own twist. This is clearly evidenced by the fact that she prefers giving inanimate objects names that she sees as more befitting. This is unlike most children, who would have simply adopted the names they are told. This shows that she is an independent and strong-willed thinker who has firm stances in what she believes, and the creative mind to adapt these objects to her world of beauty and fantasy.

When Marilla Cuthbert meets Anne Shirley, of course, surprise and shock clearly paint her face. But, like Matthew, she for the moment accepts Anne Shirley into their household. A unique exchange of dialogue occurs between them when Marilla asks the child her name. Anne answers that she must be called Cordelia because it has a romantic sound to it, unlike "Anne." Anne Shirley thus permits the Cuthberts to call her Anne, but she emphasizes that it must be spelled with an "e" at its end. When Marilla asks Anne

what is the difference between the name with an “e” and the one that is without, her response is this:

“Oh it makes such a difference. It looks so much nicer. When you hear a name pronounced, can’t you always see it in your mind, just as if it was printed out? I can. And A-n-n looks dreadful, but A-n-n-e looks so much more distinguished. If you’ll only call me Anne spelled with an e I shall try to reconcile myself to not being called Cordelia.” (*Anne of Green Gables* 21)

Anne’s bubbly and endearing character captures the heart of Marilla and Matthew Cuthbert. Moreover, Anne is a breath of fresh air in their barren lives. In their monotonous world, the arrival of Anne Shirley brings them various shades of humor, fantasy, and poetic insight. Even though it is a surprise that she is female, the Cuthberts decide to keep her because of her refreshing traits. It is also clear that Anne Shirley’s disappointment from losing her parents and living in the asylum and the saddening situations in her life are not enough to bring down her high spirit. For instance, the following quotation shows how Anne Shirley hates her red hair and wishes to have hair “black as the raven’s wing,” like a woman in a novel: “I can imagine that I have a beautiful rose-leaf complexion and lovely starry violet eyes. But I cannot imagine that red hair away. I do my best. I think to myself, ‘Now my hair is a glorious black, black as the raven’s wing.’ But all the time I know it is just plain red and it breaks my heart. It will be my lifelong sorrow” (Montgomery, *Anne of Green Gables* 15). This quotation shows that Anne converts her frustration into a dream, though she knows it is one that cannot come true. In fact, despite her imagination, her red hair cannot be imagined away. With time,

however, Anne is able to grow to accept her hair color and live with her looks as they are; once this happens, Anne truly matures.

Readers learn more about Anne's traumatic past when she opens up to Marilla about her history when they are driving along the shore road. Anne explains that she was born in a yellow house in Bolingbroke, Nova Scotia, in March. Her father's name was Walter Shirley, and her mother was Bertha Shirley. Both Walter and Bertha Shirley were teachers at Bolingbroke High School. However, Bertha gave up her profession when she married Walter. Unfortunately, when Anne was only three months old, Bertha succumbed to a severe fever, which claimed her life. Four days after the death of Bertha, Walter died from the same disease. The Shirleys did not have any relatives, so Anne was put in the care of Mr. and Mrs. Thomas until she was eight years old. However, it seems to be the fate of Anne to be orphaned and abandoned by the people she loves. Mr. Thomas died after being hit by a train; consequently, Mrs. Thomas could not afford to look after Anne solely by herself because she had her four own children that required great care. Then, Anne Shirley lived with Mrs. Hammond for a period of two years until the latter died. That is the time when Anne Shirley was brought to the Hopetown Asylum where she spent four months until she was mistakenly given to the Cuthberts. Actually, hearing all this history convinces Marilla to keep Anne.

Anne also says that she has enjoyed reading several literary pieces while in the asylum. They include *The Battle of Hohenlinded*, *Bingen on the Rhine*, *The Seasons*, *Edinburgh after Flodden*, and *the Lady of the Lake*. These books have a significant connection to Anne; for example, *Edinburgh after Flodden* talks about Scottish and English conflicts and how the Scottish immigrants are depressed and struggling to find

homes and schools for their children; compared to Anne's situation it is quite similar. Montgomery took such Scottish struggles and connected it to Anne's unhappy life to reflect her heritage as an immigrant. Also Doody and Barry argue that:

Montgomery calls upon Sir Walter Scott often, not only as a reminder of the national heritage he represents but frequently to make a subtle, comic point, When Anne dyes her hair for instance, she exclaims to Marilla in the bitterness of regret, "Oh, Marilla 'what a tangled web we weave when first we practice to deceive'. That is poetry, but it is true" (p 291).

The reader is again struck by the comic contrast between the dramatic tone of Scott's historical poem and Anne's unfortunate experience with the hair dye. (Doody and Barry 458)

As can be seen from the above quotation, Montgomery planted a lot of Scottish symbols when discussing Anne's red hair, the poems she reads, and her language as hints of her heritage.

Anne had undergone a tough childhood, moving from one family to another and seeing and knowing death. She has been affected by loss yet has still been able to maintain her charismatic personality despite all this loss. She is a strong-willed person with a very impressive personality as she is able to overcome grievous situations in her life and maintain calm even after all those occurrences.

Significantly, Anne's loneliness and transitory position makes her wish for an intimate friend with whom she can confide her secrets and opinions. She reveals that while she was still under the wing of Mr. and Mrs. Thomas, she invented a friend, Katie Maurice, who made her life less miserable. They talked about everything, and leaving her

broke Anne's heart. Anne became attached to the memory of Katie. When she arrived at the asylum, she discovered a valley that echoes the things that she shouts. She then imagined that the voice speaking back at her is a girl named Violetta.

These examples show that Anne is able to adapt to a situation no matter what loss she suffers. This is clearly evidenced by the fact that she was able to use her wild imagination to make new imaginary friends whenever she needed a friend. The idea of using an echo as a way to symbolize her friend talking back to her was quite an innovative one, which shows Anne is an exemplary and special kind of girl. She has unique abilities and a brilliant way of thinking which sets her apart. While Anne lost some imaginary friends, she gained a real one at Green Gables. Marilla tells her that Diana Barry, a girl who is the same age as Anne, lives at the Orchard Slope. Diana is a pretty child with raven eyes and hair and cheeks as red as a rose like the heroines Anne imagines.

Perhaps because she is so imaginative, when it comes to the aspect of religion, Anne Shirley does not like Sunday School. As a matter of fact, it is Marilla who teaches her the proper way of praying to God. Marilla, of course, is concerned that the child isn't so much motivated to praise the Almighty God. When she asks Anne of her opinion about Sunday School, she boldly says to Marilla that, "I didn't like it a bit. It was horrid" (*Anne of Green Gables* 64). She explains that she dislikes the Sunday School because Mr. Bell made a long prayer and the minister's sermons make her feels bored, so she tries to imagine interesting things to pass the time. In addition, at one particular time, Anne Shirley attends Sunday School wearing a ridiculous hat full of buttercups and roses instead of her ordinary hat. Thinking that she looks better with that hat shows how Anne

is innocent and trying to be innovative to feel good about herself. However, the town is scandalized. Consequently, Marilla warns her about mischievous behavior and makes Anne promise that she will never do it again. It is because of that event that Marilla decides that Anne should meet Diana Barry, in the hopes of modifying her slightly wicked or iconoclastic nature.

Anne's imaginative nature extends to her relations with Diana. Genevieve Wiggins describes the importance of imagination for Anne in her critical essay:

A part of Anne's imaginative perception is her belief that the world is peopled with "kindred spirits," and she goes about seeking those to whom she may offer her love.... She perceives that the honesty and loyalty of the mundane Diana outweigh any lack of imagination and intellectual distinction and make her a "bosom friend." Hungry for affection, Anne instinctively knows that the key to receiving love is to offer it, and so initiates loving relationships. (Wiggins 304)

All these significant feelings are what makes Anne ask Diana Barry to be her "bosom friend" (68), and Diana accepts Anne's offer of friendship. Be that as it may, it is still not enough for Anne, and she demands that a solemn oath between them should be made. Anne insists on the friendship oath because she feels lonely since she has no friends, and also she wants to be loved and make that love last forever, which is shown below:

"We must join hands—so. It ought to be over running water. We'll just imagine this path is running water. I'll repeat the oath first. I solemnly swear to be faithful to my bosom friend, Diana Barry, as long as the sun

and moon shall endure. Now you say it and put my name in it.” (*Anne of Green Gables* 69)

Her ability to adapt her objects of imagination into the real world is best displayed during the moment where she is putting her friend’s Diana’s words into an oath. She said that since there was no river with running water, they would just assume that the path was a river and that the oaths would be made there. In this instance, the paths become a river in the two girls’ imagination and they are able to conduct their oath. This is a beautiful thing as it marks the blossoming love between two friends and at the same time it acts as a fantasy as the two girls imagine themselves standing beside a flowing river. From the language used, it is evidently clear that Anne has either read a lot of books that touched on romance and friendship, or she just happens to have a very fertile imagination, which she decides to apply in real life circumstances. This altogether shows the commitment and devotion she places on relationships with friends. This is all because of the fact that she is willing to go through all the trouble of making sure that their friendship is under oath.

Indeed, Diana and Anne become the best of friends. They have a space outdoors that they called Idlewild. At school, Anne finds other friends as well as her most competitive opposition in Gilbert Blythe. The two have been competing to prove who is the most intelligent student in the class. Little do they know that they will marry each other when they grow up. It is likely that through the constant competition with Gilbert that Anne is able to gather the strength to keep on forging forward in the hope of becoming better than she once was.

Consequently, the reader can see that Anne Shirley's life at Green Gables is the best thing that ever happens to her. It saves her from the depressed and sad life in the Hopetown Asylum. Certainly, it is in Anne's destiny to be mistakenly brought to the Cuthbert siblings, because through it she is able to fulfill her dreams and meet people who make her life proud and joyous. She starts a new life with friendship, love, and a permanent family. She overcomes all the troubles in her life to finally live a life that she really deserves. Inspired by her own strength, Montgomery's heroine is the ultimate motivation and inspiration to other girls to always rise above the challenges that they face, as their strength will allow them to see better days in the future. More modern critics of the novel realize that Anne's anomalous nature is one of the elements that makes her an exceptional character and the secret of the success of *Anne of Green Gables*.

Chapter 3

Comparing the Lives of the Author and the Heroine

Many scholarly sources have proven that the book *Anne of Green Gables* is in many ways a reflection of the life of its author, Lucy Maud Montgomery. From the similar personality of the main character to that of the author to the significant events that are narrated in the book and were reported in various biographies of Montgomery, the similarities are very much apparent. With attention to that, in the following paragraphs, the similarities in the stories of Anne Shirley and Lucy Maud Montgomery will be discussed and extrapolated.

In light of this comparison, we will begin by looking back into the childhood years of these women. Through her journals, Montgomery told the story of how her early years were marred by sorrow and grief. Her mother passed away because of a fatal illness, and this event determined her destiny. Despite being a toddler at that time, Montgomery remembered the way her mother, Clara, was laid to rest in a coffin and how cold her face was when she touched her:

I did not feel any sorrow, for I knew nothing of what it all meant. I was only vaguely troubled. Why was Mother so still? And why was Father crying? I reached down and laid my baby hand against Mother's cheek. Even yet I can feel the coldness of that touch. Somebody in the room sobbed and said, "Poor child." The chill of Mother's face had frightened me; I turned and put my arms appealingly about Father's neck and he kissed me. Comforted, I looked down again at the sweet, placid face as he carried me away. That one precious memory is all I have of the girlish

mother who sleeps in the old burying-ground of Cavendish, lulled forever by the murmur of the sea. (Montgomery, *The Alpine Path* 27)

After that unfortunate event, her father was forced to travel to Boston and then to Canada in search of a worthwhile job that was needed in order to raise her. When her father left her, Montgomery felt that she was an unwanted child, which had left a deep wound in her. This is primarily explained in this quotation that talks about Montgomery's father after his wife's death: "He visited his daughter as often as he could, whenever his business brought him back to Prince Edward Island. But more and more, his real home was in the West" (Andronik 6).

Montgomery was left in the care of her grandparents, Alexander Marquis Macneill and Lucy Ann Woolner Macneill in Cavendish on Prince Edward Island. Together with them, other relatives of Montgomery also helped in her upbringing, including her Uncle John, Uncle Leander, and Aunt Emily. However, she argued that she always felt that she was isolated from the people in Cavendish. In fact, she asserted that "big family connections are by no means a wholly good thing. They produce too much heart-burning and jealousy" (qtd. in Gammel, *Looking for Anne of Green Gables* 21) because everyone wants to participate in "nagging" in raising the orphan girl. In addition to that, according to her diaries, her early years at school were difficult: "I was an extremely sensitive child and such, I think, have always a hard time in public school" (Gammel, *Looking for Anne of Green Gables* 21). Actually, this planted the feelings of self-importance in Lucy and how she was special and unlike others. She further added that:

“Looking back now, I see clearly how unwholesome it was and how easily it might have ruined forever the disposition of so sensitive, ‘highly strung a child.’.... I received an impression of which to this day I have never been able quite to rid of myself—that everybody disliked me and that I was a very hateful person.” (Gammel, *Looking for Anne of Green Gables* 21).

In accordance with the preceding paragraph, Montgomery crafted Anne Shirley’s childhood in a strikingly similar way to her own. Before tragedy strikes the Shirleys, Walter and Bertha may have been the happiest parents on earth when Anne is born. Budge Wilson imagine this in his prequel to *Anne of Green Gables*:

Bertha looked at her new daughter, all wrapped up in a flannellete blanket and decided that she had never seen such a beautiful baby. And Walter was just staring and staring at his child, stunned by an almost suffocating love. (Wilson 25)

While Montgomery never allows us to see this moment, Anne does show that she became an orphan at an early age when her mother and father succumbed to a deadly fever that claimed both their lives:

“She died of fever when I was just three months old. I do wish she had lived long enough for me to remember calling her mother. I think it would be so sweet to say ‘mother,’ don’t you? And father died four days afterwards from fever too. That left me an orphan and folks at their wits’ end, so Mrs. Thomas said what to do with me. You see, nobody wanted

me even then. It seems to be my fate.” (Montgomery, *Anne of Green Gables* 32)

Similarly, Montgomery’s mother died of tuberculosis as Anne’s parents and her father left her with her grandparents, so both Anne and Maud became orphans at an early age.

After her parents’ death, Anne is cared by Mrs. Thomas and then by Mrs. Hammond. Unfortunately, neither can keep Anne for a very long time, so Anne Shirley is brought to the Hopetown Asylum. When asked if Mrs. Thomas and Mrs. Hammond were kind to her, Anne Shirley’s reply is:

“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. It’s very trying to have a drunken husband, you see; don’t you think? But I feel sure they meant to be good to me.”

(Montgomery, *Anne of Green Gables* 34)

Likewise, these gloomy events scar Anne Shirley’s psyche and cause her to feel alone for a significant period of time. When Marilla inquires about Anne’s history, the latter says, “Well that is another hope gone. My life is a perfect graveyard of buried hopes. That’s a sentence I read in a book once, and I say it over to comfort myself whenever I’m disappointed at anything” (Montgomery, *Anne of Green Gables* 31).

As can be deduced from the early years of Montgomery and Anne Shirley, they endured a huge weight of pain and misery brought about by events that they could not control. Indeed, their sadness had turned them into other people who struggled to cope with everything that life threw in their way. For Montgomery, her hopelessness had been

a strong tool in influencing her to be an acclaimed writer. On the other hand, Anne Shirley's sorrows are instrumental for her to find the good things in everything and everyone. These similarities enable the readers to comprehend fully Montgomery's purpose and agenda in her book, *Anne of Green Gables*.

In like manner, both Montgomery and Anne Shirley placed high value on their education. Certainly, these women strove hard to be at the top of their classes. However, Montgomery and Anne Shirley were superseded by their rivals, Nate Lockhart and Gilbert Blythe, respectively. The existence of these young men motivated Montgomery and Anne to be the best that they could be.

In the same fashion, Anne Shirley's ambitions are patterned after that of Montgomery. In detail, Anne Shirley seeks to obtain the Avery scholarship when she is studying at Queen's Academy, the teachers' college. Anne Shirley is thrilled when Josie Pye informs her of that news because she knows that this opportunity will be a great help in obtaining the teacher's provincial license. Before going to bed at that night, Anne Shirley says to herself:

“I'll win the scholarship if hard work can do it. Wouldn't Matthew be proud if I got to be a B.A.? Oh it's delightful to have ambitions. I'm so glad I have such a lot. And there never seems to be any end to them—that's the best of it. Just as soon as you attain to one ambition you see another one glittering higher up still. It does make life so interesting.”

(Montgomery, *Anne of Green Gables* 219)

Similarly, Montgomery attained her teaching license at Prince Wales College in the year 1893. In fact, she completed the two-year program in a span of one year, and also

graduated with honors. Then, her teaching career commenced in Bidefort, Prince Edward Island. Afterwards, she pursued a literature degree at Dalhousie University in Halifax. Upon graduating, she devoted her life to teaching again in the Belmont and Lower Bedeque Schools (Andronik 41-51).

Accordingly, what can be seen here is the determination and persistence of Montgomery and Anne Shirley to reach their dreams and ambitions. Their hardships and struggles did not hinder them from having a greater purpose in their lives. Moreover, the ill-fated circumstances they endured failed to take away all the joy of life and their optimism that, one day, something favorable would happen to them.

Montgomery and Anne found lifelong intimate friends who accompanied them every step of the way. While Diana Barry is Anne's friend, Montgomery had Nora Lefugery. Montgomery had kept a diary that was jointly written by them that is housed at the University of Guelph Archives. The diary reveals how these two women were close to each other and how Nora shared a lot of Montgomery's characteristics. Nora loved adventure writing, outdoor activity, and exploring Cavendish with her 'bosom-friend.' Nora encouraged Montgomery in her writing journey and pushed her to a high level of writing that Montgomery was not used to. Nora was friends with Lucy Maud for forty years for better and worse; they grew up together sharing secrets in their dairy, like their flirtation with bachelors in the "Dear James" journal, and also their depressed and darkest days (*The Intimate Life of L.M. Montgomery* 9-10).

In *Anne of Green Gables*, when Diana agrees to be Anne's bosom friend, the latter's excitement and happiness are clearly manifested in her words:

“Oh Marilla, I’m the happiest girl on Prince Edward Island this very moment. I assure you I’ll say my prayers with a right goodwill tonight. Diana and I are going to build a playhouse in Mr. William Bell’s birch grove tomorrow. Diana’s birthday is in February and mine is in March. Don’t you think that is a very strange coincidence? We have agreed to call the spring down by the log bridge the Dryad’s Bubble. Isn’t that an elegant name? I read a story once about a spring called that. A dryad is a sort of grown up fairy, I think.” (Montgomery, *Anne of Green Gables* 69)

Montgomery and Anne Shirley both took refuge under the wings of their friends. The friendships that they made were a breath of fresh air that carried hope and love into their lives that were previously full of misery. As can be seen, each girl’s friendship, Anne’s with Diana and Lucy’s with Nora, showed that there was always someone out there who was willing to love. The two had a trait of loneliness in them and this is what particularly made them feel unloved. The loneliness was largely because of the eccentric behavior that they exhibited that made them, in most instances, isolated. Montgomery and Anne Shirley eventually realized that there were still people out there who were willing to appreciate and adore them, despite their shortcomings. However, this was not apparent early on to both Montgomery and Anne Shirley, and this is clearly shown in the dialogue of Anne, presented below when she is talking to Diana:

“I thought you liked me of course, but I never hoped you loved me. Why, Diana, I didn’t think anybody could love me. Nobody has ever loved me since I can remember. Oh, this is wonderful! It’s a ray of light which will

forever shine on the darkness of a path severed from thee, Diana.”

(Montgomery, *Anne of Green Gables* 104)

Be that as it may, the friendships that were formed by both Anne and Montgomery were subjected to discontinuities brought about by unlikely circumstances. Nevertheless, the passion and devotion still remained whenever the relationships were rekindled once more. Even as much as the friends were separated by circumstances, they always kept each other at heart, and whenever there was a chance for reunion, the close friendship continued to grow. Despite the fact that Lucy Maud and Nora separated, the feeling of friendship never went away and they always had each other in their hearts.

However, the misery in the lives of these two women accrued again when a loved one died. In the year 1898, Montgomery’s maternal grandfather passed away because of a heart attack, which caused her to leave her teaching career to accompany and take care of her widowed grandmother (Gammel 62). Similarly, Matthew Cuthbert, Anne Shirley’s adoptive father, dies of a heart attack described as “instantaneous and painless death” (*Anne of Green Gables* 229). Like Montgomery when she gave up her career, Anne Shirley gives up her Avery scholarship at Redmond to be with Marilla at Prince Edward Island. These deaths opened a deep wound in both Montgomery and Anne Shirley, because they reminded them of the painful deaths of their own parents. But, these women were already molded to become strong and resilient persons, so they learned that life must go on despite losing those they love. Notably, this is shown in this dialogue of Anne to Mrs. Allan when discussing Matthew: “I miss him so much—all the time—and yet Mrs. Allan, the world and life seem very beautiful and interesting to me for all. Today,

Diana said something funny and I found myself laughing. I thought when it happened, I could never laugh again” (Montgomery, *Anne of Green Gables* 231).

Generally speaking, Lucy Maud Montgomery purposely mirrored her own experiences when she wrote *Anne of Green Gables*. This enabled her to truly give birth to a character to whom she and others could relate. The effect of this was that she was able to give the readers a clearer glimpse of what it had been like for her growing up, despite the fact that she gave her plot a different twist. Her life and emotions gave the story of Anne a soul in the sense that it made Anne more lifelike and more endearing, and this achievement made Montgomery famous.

Chapter 4

A Comparison in the Personalities and Characteristics of Anne Shirley and Lucy Maud Montgomery

In the preceding section, I discussed in detail the similarities in the events that transpired in the life journeys of Montgomery and Anne Shirley. Now, in this chapter, I will focus on the sympathy that exists within the personality and the way of thinking of these two women.

It is noteworthy to begin the discussion with the magazine clipping that symbolizes Montgomery's dreams and ambitions. She came across it when she was still a little girl and clipped it in her portfolio. It is entitled, "To the Fringed Gentian":

Then whisper, blossom, in thy sleep

How I may upward climb

The Alpine path, so hard, so steep,

That leads to heights sublime;

How I may reach that far-off goal

Of true and honored fame,

And write upon its shining scroll

A woman's humble name.

(qtd. in Montgomery, *The Alpine Path* 10)

Indeed, this verse truly summarizes Montgomery's unending and unyielding determination that began when she was a child. She passed her passionate personality on to the character of Anne Shirley when she wrote *Anne of Green Gables*. In the succeeding

paragraphs, the significance of the verse above will unfold as I explain the similar natures of Lucy Maud Montgomery and Anne Shirley.

As a child, Montgomery grew up on Prince Edward Island with her grandparents. She was fascinated with the undisturbed beauty of the island and placed high value on its majestic plains, fields, mountains, and faunae. Montgomery attributed her attraction to Prince Edward Island: “the beauty of the Island is due to the vivid color contrasts—the rich red of the winding roads, the brilliant emerald of the uplands and meadows, the glowing sapphire of the encircling sea. It is the sea which makes Prince Edward Island in more senses than the geographical. You cannot get away from the sea” (Montgomery, *The Alpine Path 11*). This is expressed in an excerpt from her autobiography:

Great is our love for it; its tang gets into our blood: its siren calls ring ever in our ears; and no matter where we wander in lands afar, the murmur of its waves ever summons us back in our dreams to the homeland. For few things am I more thankful than for the fact that I was born and bred beside that blue St. Lawrence Gulf. (Montgomery, *The Alpine Path 11*)

Montgomery walked along the sea shore where she was able to collect various sea shells and to catch fish. Correspondingly, she strolled around the farmlands of her grandparents to pick berries. In essence, Montgomery found solace in nature, and she took advantage of the spectacle that surrounded her to let go of her brooding thoughts (Montgomery, *The Alpine Path 43*).

It seems that, in like manner, Montgomery purposely created Anne Shirley to reflect her fondness for nature. When Anne learns that she will be living on Prince Edward Island, she feels joyful, for she knows that the place is surrounded by trees, hills, brooks,

ponds, and other natural scenery. As a matter of fact, she once says to Matthew Cuthbert early in the novel:

“This Island is the bloomiest place. I just love it already, and I’m so glad I’m going to live here. I’ve always heard that Prince Edward Island was the prettiest place in the world, and I used to imagine I was living here, but I never really expected I would. It’s delightful when your imaginations come true isn’t it?” (Montgomery, *Anne of Green Gables* 13)

This unique characteristic of fondness for nature that Montgomery and Anne Shirley share was instrumental in their coping with the hardships that they sustained in the early years of their lives. Being one with nature enabled the two women to release their thoughts and to find a feeling of peace and sanctuary that was taken away from them when their innocent childhood was marred by extreme grief and sadness. Knowing this can help readers to understand Montgomery’s message about finding nature as a friend and source of comfort.

In the same way, Montgomery and Anne both exhibited an imaginative and dreamy nature. When Montgomery was on Prince Edward Island, the trees in the orchard were named “Spotty,” “Spider,” and “Little Syrup” (Montgomery, *The Alpine Path* 35). This trend is then exemplified in Anne’s habit to personify the lifeless objects around her, since Anne gives a name to anything that catches her attention. In like manner, Anne also has a creative tendency to imagine things about the other children in the asylum. For example, she imagines that one of the girls is in fact a daughter of a prominent earl who was stolen by a lunatic nurse at the hospital. Indeed, testament to this are Anne’s own

words to Matthew Cuthbert that show Anne's peculiar way of eradicating some of her physical flaws:

“I used to lie awake at nights and imagine things like that, because I didn't have time in the day. I guess that's why I'm so thin.... There isn't a pick on my bones. I do love to imagine I'm nice and plump, with dimples in my elbows.” (Montgomery, *Anne of Green Gables* 12)

Montgomery also allowed her imagination to get the best of her. She once imagined that the grove on the island was haunted despite its harmless and peaceful appearance. She pretended that ghostly “white things” mysteriously floated at wee hours in the grove. As a result, she and her friends soon came to believe that the grove was indeed frequented by spirits of the dead. Therefore, they eventually avoided going near the grove because they feared becoming one of the “white things.” Montgomery once said, “What was death compared to the unearthly possibility of falling into the clutches of a “white thing?” (Montgomery, *The Alpine Path* 30). In fact, this made-up concept is the inspiration for the Haunted Woods that exists in the world of Anne Shirley in *Anne of Green Gables*. By the same token, Gillen also describes Montgomery's view in her book as:

Whenever chance had brought this child to birth, she would have exulted in what her eyes beheld, made its beauties and eccentricities her own personal possessions, illuminated her spirit with a passionate response to every experience, made every stick and stone, rock and tree, ditch and hillock in her environment part of an enchanted country to dwell in.
(Gillen 1)

As can be deduced from the evidence of Montgomery's and Anne Shirley's imaginative and creative nature, they used their imagination as an essential tool to get away from reality once in a while. It is actually connected to the way these two women utilized the natural environment to find sanctuary and comfort in their distressing life. When they conceptualized and imagined, they felt as though their world was slowly coming to life, with all the liveliness and happiness along with it. Notably, Anne Shirley imagines things that are in contrast with some of her physical attributes, specifically her red hair. Montgomery allowed Anne Shirley to apply her dreamy nature in order to turn aspects of herself and of her life into something in accordance with her desires. Correspondingly, the optimistic attitude is clearly displayed by Anne as is implied in this quotation: "You mayn't get the things themselves, but nothing can prevent you from having the fun of looking forward to them" (*Anne of Green Gables* 73). Notably, through Anne's imagination, Montgomery conveys messages to her readers of how to empathize with others as when Anne explains her feelings to Marilla in this passage:

"I can't. I'm in the depths of despair. Can you eat when you are in the depths of despair?"

"I've never been in the depths of despair, so I can't say,"
responded Marilla.

"Weren't you? Well, did you ever try to *imagine* you were in the depths of despair?"

"No, I didn't."

"Then I don't think you can understand what it's like."

(Montgomery, *Anne of Green Gables* 70)

Anne has learned how a person can discover his or her abilities and change something he or she doesn't like even if he or she has nothing. Like Anne, he or she only needs to imagine. Clearly, it is a temporary solution but it is one that helped both Anne and Montgomery to pass their troubled days.

In the same light, Anne and Montgomery both loved to read and had a way with words themselves. It is noteworthy to emphasize that Montgomery attributed her influences as a writer to her maternal side — the McNeills. She had an uncle who was a minor poet in Scotland and a grandfather who was a storyteller. As a child, young Montgomery had plenty of novels, magazines, and books of poetry at her disposal (Rubio 22). These works of literature were mostly by Tennyson, Byron, and Milton. Indeed, their influence on Montgomery is astonishing.

Markedly, Montgomery began writing poems when she was nine years of age. For instance, she once created a poem about the spruce and maple trees that were intertwined with one another, and titled it "The Tree Lovers." Furthermore, she also penned a poem about an old birch tree that she adored and called it "The Monarch of the Forest." Aside from those poems that were mentioned, Montgomery also wrote "Autumn," which she based on James Thomson's book of poems entitled *The Seasons*. In addition, she considered "Evening Dreams" to be her masterpiece (Montgomery, *The Alpine Path* 33). The first two opening verses are presented below:

When the evening sun is setting

Quietly in the west,

In a halo of rainbow glory,

I sit me down to rest.

I forget the present and future,
 I live over the past once more,
 As I see before me crowding
 The beautiful days of yore.

(Montgomery, *The Alpine Path* 55)

In these verses one can see why Montgomery has this passion for writing poems and stories. It is clear that she finds a peaceful relief from her present time. She relates that while she is writing she forgets everything around her and loses all sense of time; she only remembers the past beautiful days which makes her feel happy and comforted.

Anne Shirley also shares this love of literature. When she is still at the Hopetown Asylum, she spends her free time reading and learning poetry by heart. This includes “Edinburg after Flodden,” “The Battle of Hohenlinden,” “The Lady of the Lake,” and the “*The Seasons*” by James Thomson. In fact, Anne Shirley once asks Marilla, “Don’t you just love how poetry gives you a crinkly feeling up and down your back?” (Montgomery, *Anne of Green Gables* 33). In addition, Gammel and Lefebvre also note that:

Since these poetries also correspond directly to Anne’s own expatriate status as a homeless and friendless waif all alone in the world, she effectively models the reading strategies of bibliotherapy for her contemporary readers in moments that are filled with added dramatic irony. Reliving her own expatriation in aesthetic form is a cognitive event that allows Anne to distance and control her past by turning it into a moment of aesthetic pleasure. (Gammel & Lefebvre 90)

This particular aspect of the personality of Montgomery and Anne Shirley is not just a form of habit; rather, there exists a deeper meaning to it. As emphasized in the previous paragraphs, Montgomery and Anne experienced great losses even before they had even learned to utter their first words. Consequently, these sequences of unfortunate events left them with deep-seated, sorrowful emotions that were truly far-reaching. Eventually, these sentiments became their primary drive to have a way with words and relate to them. In the case of Montgomery, her grief enabled her to create masterpieces that later on touched the hearts of many. In other words, her melancholy was transformed into an array of exceptional poems and stories. On the other hand, Anne Shirley was able to relate her heartaches to the narratives that are concealed behind the philosophical words of poems and novellas. Living a life similar to that of various literary heroines helped Anne Shirley and Montgomery to recover from the catastrophes that occurred in their lives.

Furthermore, there existed an extreme air of stubbornness that may be seen in the personalities of both Montgomery and Anne Shirley. They were both tenacious and refused to bend to the rules of the people around them who were opposed to them. For instance, Montgomery, during her childhood years, often engaged in boyish activities despite her grandparents' dislike for such activities. She climbed trees and built forts together with her childhood friends. As a matter of fact, this degree of tomboyish behavior exhibited by Montgomery pales in comparison with that displayed by Anne Shirley all throughout *Anne of Green Gables*. We see this not only in some of her activities, such as walking on the edge of the roof, but also in her temper. During a particular incident, when Mrs. Rachel Lynde tells Marilla that Anne is "terribly skinny

and homely,” this comment is enough to stir the rage and anger of Anne Shirley. Her reply shocks both Marilla and Mrs. Rachel Lynde:

“How dare you say such things about me? How would you like to have such things said about you? How would you like to be told that you are fat and clumsy and probably hadn’t a spark of imagination in you? I don’t care if I do hurt your feelings by saying so! I hope I hurt them. You have hurt mine worse than they were ever hurt before even by Mrs. Thomas’ intoxicated husband. And I’ll never forgive you for it, never, never!”

(Montgomery, *Anne of Green Gables* 51)

Mrs. Lynde’s comment represents how most people judge Anne. It can be seen from the quotation that it is not just Mrs. Lynde who makes hurtful comments. Anne has suffered a lot as a vulnerable orphan; therefore, she dramatically responds with the same hurtful comments, not afraid to defend herself. This is a sign of her stubbornness.

In fact, Anne’s anger and insecurity is also seen when Gilbert Blythe makes fun of Anne Shirley’s red hair in school. The young boy pulls on Anne’s hair and compares it to carrots. Accordingly, Anne is sensitive and insecure when it comes to her red hair; thus gets angry with Gilbert. A quote of that particular scene is displayed below:

She did more than look. She sprang to her feet, her bright fancies fallen into cureless ruin. She flashed one indignant glance at Gilbert Blythe from eyes whose angry sparkle was swiftly quenched in equally angry tears.

(*Anne of Green Gables* 87)

Montgomery expressed her rebellious attitude in a subtler way, probably fearing that she would anger her grandparents and her other relatives. This could be attributed to her

anxiety that she would disappoint them, thus strengthening the probability that her remaining family would neglect and abandon her. Montgomery could not afford to lose anybody anymore. Somehow, these repressed emotions inside Montgomery were manifested when she wrote *Anne of Green Gables*. She created Anne Shirley's character that somewhat made up for the aspects of her personality that she could not openly display in her real life. And Anne Shirley's recalcitrant demeanor is a flawless example of that.

Chapter 5

Comparing the Romance of the Author and her Protagonist

Right after discussing Montgomery and Anne Shirley's personalities and characteristics, it is essential to explore the romantic relationships that these two women developed. This romance is further stretched beyond *Anne of Green Gables* to Anne's relationship with the man that she would later marry, Gilbert. Despite the bad start, the two of them end up being college sweethearts and eventually marry in a sequel to the original novel. It is relevant to begin this particular section with a quote from *Anne of Avonlea*:

Perhaps, after all, romance did not come into one's life with pomp and blare, like a gay knight riding down; perhaps it crept to one's side like an old friend through quiet ways; perhaps it revealed itself in seeming prose, until some sudden shaft of illumination flung athwart its pages betrayed the rhythm and the music, perhaps . . . perhaps . . . love unfolded naturally out of a beautiful friendship, as a golden-hearted rose slipping from its green sheath.
(Montgomery, *Anne of Avonlea* 33)

This beautiful description of what romance is like is significant in Montgomery's journey in her lifelong search for that one true person with whom she would share her life. The detailed explanation and narration of it will be done in the succeeding paragraphs.

When Montgomery was teaching school, she had various love interests. Montgomery's slim and attractive looks definitely captivated a lot of young men at that time. As a matter of fact, Nate Lockhart, a Cavendish boy and once her rival and classmate, expressed his romantic intentions to Montgomery when they were 14 years

old. Eventually, after several years, he proposed marriage to her; however, Montgomery declined his offer. Then, in the 1890s, Will Pritchard and John A. Mustard made their attraction to Montgomery known to her. Notably, Mustard tried to catch the interest of Montgomery by introducing her to various religious functions, but Montgomery did not find them appealing at all. On the other hand, Pritchard was the brother of Laura, one of Montgomery's closest friends. However, when Pritchard offered to take their friendship to another level, Montgomery opposed it. Montgomery rejected Mustard's and Pritchard's marriage proposals.

Montgomery once wrote in her journal that she loved flirting with men because it was a nice feeling to have some power over them. Indeed, Montgomery became the master of flirtation, for she was an expert at captivating men and bending them to her whims. Later in her life, Montgomery described the act of kissing as “a very boring and silly performance... at best and at worst very nauseating” (Gammel, *Looking for Anne of Green Gables* 87). While teaching in Lower Bedeque, Montgomery accepted the proposal of one of her cousins, Edwin Simpson, because she felt he could provide her with profound love and affection. She describes him as a cheerful and confident fellow but also awfully conceited and always talking about himself, which made her feel intimidated by his strong personality and regret the engagement (122). However, it seems that there was one man who was an exception to the two-faced flirtations of Montgomery. This man was Herman Leard, who unfortunately passed away soon after the two met. Montgomery came to know Leard when she was 24 years old and teaching in Lower Bedeque. Montgomery and Leard had a brief but passionate relationship, which eventually caused the former to break off her nine-month betrothal with Edwin Simpson.

After the break up, Montgomery never again sought romantic love even when she later got married; she just “wanted the security and stability that marriage offered, and she dreamed of raising a family. She was no longer hoping or looking for love” (Andronik 86). In one of her journal entries, she commented on her marriage and wrote, “I sat at that gay bridal feast, in my white veil and orange blossoms, beside the man that I had married—and I was as unhappy as I had ever been in my life” (Rubio 152).

It was mentioned earlier that Montgomery nursed her grandmother after her grandfather died. In 1911, when her grandmother McNeill passed away, Montgomery tied the knot with Reverend Ewan Macdonald, a Presbyterian minister. In fact, Montgomery and Macdonald had been secretly engaged since the year 1906, and they were corresponding while the former was in the process of writing *Anne of Green Gables*. Their relationship had a strong foundation that was mainly attributed to their friendship with one another. Montgomery liked that Macdonald did not make any requests and demands from her as her admirer and lover. Under these circumstances, Montgomery never felt suffocated or restricted, feelings she had experienced with her past lovers. This unique quality of their relationship gave Montgomery the freedom and independence to complete the book *Anne of Green Gables*. After their marriage, the husband and wife moved to Ontario where they had their own family. Macdonald and Montgomery had three sons: Chester, Hugh, and Stuart. However, the second one was stillborn. Montgomery’s psychological depression brought about by this loss was proven when she wrote that: “For a woman who had given the world so much joy, [life] was mostly an unhappy one” (Montgomery, *The Alpine Path* 76). Nevertheless, Montgomery

still found joy in the company of her husband and two living sons. An excerpt from her autobiography is presented below about her life with Macdonald and their children:

Ewan was maladroit when it came to anything practical or mechanical. Still, he learned how to crank the car to start it, then hustle back to the driver's seat very quickly to keep the motor from dying. His family grew accustomed to lurches when he tried to get the car moving forward without killing the motor. Like many other drivers at that time, he had trouble remembering that the car was not a horse, and if he needed to stop quickly, his first impulse was always to yank backwards on the steering wheel, as if he were holding the horse's reins, and yell "Whoa! Whoa!" Some found this endearing, others found it funny, but his young sons found it very embarrassing. (Rubio 238)

Be that as it may, Macdonald was afflicted with depression that made Montgomery's life miserable. Ewan's behavior started to change. He started to have headaches, "pawing at his head," and sometimes he heard a voice telling him that he would go to hell. He lost interest in everything and became unaware of anyone around him. Montgomery did what she could to keep her husband's illness a secret. They went to consult a doctor, who diagnosed Ewan with "simple melancholia" (a serious mental illness that was inherent and would recur again and again) (Rubio 217). Montgomery attributed his illness to headaches and indigestion; also because at that time depression was not understood very well, there was no helpful treatment. Ewan continued to take his medication and Lucy Maud tried to accommodate herself with new changes in her circumnutation. A testimony to this is written by Doody:

Ewan kept his bouts of melancholia a secret during their engagement. And she later believed that had she known then, she would not have married him. Ewan's madness was to render her marriage a nightmare for much of the time after 1919. (Doody 16)

As you can see, Montgomery's married life became very difficult. Now, in the following paragraphs, it is important to delve into the love affairs of Anne Shirley of *Anne of Green Gables* in order to see the comparison with Montgomery's life. In many ways, Montgomery made the romances of Anne resemble hers, a winding journey of self-discovery and wild realizations, although there are a few crucial differences.

Anne Shirley's romances begin when she is studying in Redmond College in Nova Scotia. Anne has a lot of friends in college, including Charlie Sloane, Philippa Gordon, Priscilla Grant, and, of course, Gilbert Blythe. As discussed in the previous sections of this thesis, Gilbert Blythe is Anne's rival in school at Prince Edward Island. However, the two eventually reconcile their differences and become friends. When Gilbert Blythe gives up his teaching post at the Carmody School for Anne, this kind act strengthens their friendship. An endearing comment from Gilbert Blythe when Anne thanks him for his good deed is shown below:

“We are going to be the best of friends. We were born to be good friends, Anne. You've thwarted destiny long enough. I know we can help each other in many ways. You are going to keep up with your studies, aren't you? So am I. Come, I'm going to walk home with you.” (Montgomery, *Anne of Green Gables* 240)

From this kind act of Gilbert Blythe, it is hard to discern whether he acts like a gentleman or if there is an underlying reason for it—that he somehow realizes that he has been in love with Anne Shirley all along. In the long run, the two of them end up getting married despite their initial rivalry where they were constantly trying to outdo one another in terms of academics. It seems that they both started to develop warm feelings towards one another that led to them looking beyond the need to prove that one of them was better than the other.

Halfway through their college years, Gilbert Blythe finally decides to bring his relationship with Anne to the next level. He admits to Anne that he has been in love with her ever since they studied on Prince Edward Island. Gilbert says to Anne, “I’ve loved you ever since that day you broke your slate over my head in school” (Montgomery, *Anne of the Island* 77). Gilbert asks Anne for her hand in marriage. However, Anne Shirley has not set her eyes on the prospect of becoming someone’s wife and to someday build a family. Her reply is:

“I don’t want any of it to change. I wish I could just hold on to those days forever. I have a feeling things will never be the same again, will they? You’re a great deal too good for me. But you want someone who’ll adore you. Someone who’ll be happy just to hang on your arm and build a home for you. I wouldn’t. We’ll end up like two old crows fighting all the time. I know I’d be unhappy and I’d wish we’d never done it.... I promise I’ll always be here if you need me. Good friends are always together in spirit. Let’s not change Gil, let’s just go on being good friends.” (Montgomery, *Anne of the Island* 78)

This painful exchange between Anne and Gilbert is enough reason to break the heart of the latter and for the two to drift apart from one another. As a matter of fact, what contributes to this sad scenario are Anne's idealistic fantasies with regards to her ideal man. Anne dreams she is in love with someone who is an inscrutable, flawlessly handsome, tall, and dark hero. After rejecting Gilbert's proposal, Anne soon entertains the courtship of Roy Gardiner, who clearly fits the exact description of Anne's dream gentleman. Roy Gardiner is also a student at Redmond College and always wants his various literary masterpieces to win her over. After a period of two years, Gardiner bravely proposes to Anne; however, the latter declines it. It is because Anne realizes that she does not truly love Roy. Instead, she is just happy that he fits her image of a knight in shining armor. Consequently, Anne Shirley feels remorseful for the way she has treated Roy, because she has given him false hopes, which is similar to Montgomery's first engagement with Edwin when she realized that she did not love him and broke up with him.

When she graduates from Redmond College, Anne Shirley immediately returns to Green Gables. She feels extremely alone and hopeless, because all her other friends have married and are starting to build their own families. Jane Andrews marries a millionaire from Winnipeg, while Diana Barry has married several years before and has just given birth. While she is at Green Gables, Anne learns that Gilbert Blythe is suffering from a potentially fatal case of typhoid fever that could claim his life. It is in this moment that Anne finally recognizes her sincere love for Gilbert. Luckily, Gilbert survives the dangerous ordeal, and the two are given another chance to rekindle their friendship and to begin their fruitful romance. Unfortunately, Gilbert is going to pursue his journey to

become a medical doctor, and warns Anne that they would have to wait for three years before Gilbert would graduate. Furthermore, Gilbert says that after that “there will be no diamond sunbursts and marble halls.” Notably, Anne’s reply to this is:

“I don’t want sunbursts and marble halls. I just want YOU. You see I’m quite as shameless as Phil about it. Sunbursts and marble halls may be all very well, but there is more ‘scope for imagination’ without them. And as for the waiting, that doesn’t matter. We’ll just be happy, waiting and working for each other—and dreaming. Oh, dreams will be very sweet now.” (Montgomery, *Anne of the Island* 251)

Gilbert answers:

“I have a dream.... I persist in dreaming it, although it has often seemed to me that it could never come true. I dream of a home with a hearth-fire in it, a cat and dog, the footsteps of friends—and you!” (Montgomery, *Anne of the Island* 251).

Finally, after a long time, Anne Shirley and Gilbert Blythe become engaged and they eventually tie the knot at Green Gables. The couple then live in a small home on the Four Winds Point that overlooks the seashore.

Both Anne and Montgomery had their own love affairs before they ultimately found the person that they love. These transient relationships helped the two women to open their eyes about all the aspects that envelop the concept of love, friendship, and companionship. It appears that Montgomery was a flirt and she had quite a number of relationships that ended up poorly, one of these being with her second cousin Edwin Simpson whom she realized she did not love. Instead of breaking the relationship up, she

kept on stringing him along. Her appealing character also led to her getting more proposals coming her way. At one point, she fell in love with Herman Leard who happened to be a farmer's son.

In addition, Lucy was a very attractive woman and this is the reason as to why many men wanted her and courted her. It is her beauty that stood out and made her desirable to the men. Lucy turned down all the suitors to settle for Ewan MacDonald.

Anne's beauty and character are more unusual, but she has a personality that is quite entertaining and endearing to her friend, and it is because of these qualities that she is able to find men who want to court her and eventually want to marry her. She, however, like Montgomery turns them down when she feels they are not suitable. Both women had qualities that endeared people to them, and despite them being different in terms of physical looks, they were able to elicit interest from potential suitors despite the fact that they ended up breaking their relationships with some of them.

In the end, Anne ends up happier than Montgomery turned out to be. This is because initially Anne is able to go to a place that she likes when she is still a young girl which means that all her childhood is not spent at a lonely place. Her stay with the Cuthbert family is much more enjoyable than what Lucy got from staying with her grandparents. Also, by the time of death, Lucy was depressed with the long years of tending to her husband having taken a toll on her. In the end she died a sad person. Anne, on the other hand, enjoys fifty years of marriage with her husband where they are able to live a good life with their six children. Montgomery is thus able to give Anne a life she would have wanted for herself.

Conclusion

This thesis has aimed to establish the similarities between the life of Lucy Maud Montgomery and that of Anne Shirley of *Anne of Green Gables*. This novel was written by Montgomery herself, and many have argued that the author reflected her own life in that of the main protagonist in her book. In order to accomplish the goal of this thesis, the biographies of Montgomery and Anne Shirley have been carefully inspected. Then, the similarities and the way their paths overlap one another have been explained. A total of fourteen books, including biography and critical materials, have been consulted in this study.

The focus of the discussion of this thesis has been the biographies of both Anne Shirley and Lucy Maud Montgomery. The flow of analysis consisted of their early lives up to the point wherein Montgomery began writing *Anne of Green Gables*. The quotation below, taken from the book *Alpine Path*, the biography of Montgomery's life, acts to show Montgomery's inner feelings about what she thought of her writing career.

When the Editor of *Everywoman's World* asked me to write "The Story of My Career," I smiled with a little touch of incredulous amusement. My career? *Had* I a career? Was not – should not – a "career" be something splendid, wonderful, spectacular at the very least, something varied and exciting? Could my long, uphill struggle, through many quiet, uneventful years, be termed a "career"? (*The Alpine Path* 2)

This quotation is significant in this thesis because it summarizes the way Montgomery viewed her own life that was marred by tragedies and uplifted by fortunes at the same time.

This thesis has shown how Montgomery's early tragedies left her in the care of her grandparents. This turn of unfortunate events had sparked a unique drive in her to immerse herself in nature and in literature. Montgomery was often found to be reading books and spending the rest of her day in the company of trees, forests, and animals. Her loneliness and sadness she transformed into something beautiful, because it became her inspiration to lose herself in words. In the year 1904, when she wrote *Anne of Green Gables*, her life and her inspiration combined to lead her to create a remarkable heroine.

As can be seen, in a lot of ways, the paths of Montgomery and Anne Shirley parallel each other. From their childhood years, up to the point that they settled down with the person that they loved, there are similarities that are strikingly present. Specifically, their childhood years, their personalities and characteristics, and their romances have been analyzed and explained.

Perhaps the most notable similarities in Montgomery and Anne Shirley are found in their childhood years. Both Montgomery and Anne Shirley experienced hardships when they became orphans at an early age. Consequently, the McNeills were the real life version of the Cuthbert siblings in *Anne of Green Gables*. A series of terrible events transformed Anne Shirley and Montgomery into mature persons. It changes their life perspective; thus, they affect the people around them and change their view of everything. Furthermore, sorrows and pains had driven Montgomery to be an acclaimed writer. She had written a lot of poems that reflected her inner thoughts, dreams, and aspirations. The road to becoming a writer was a tough one, because she had relatives like her grandfather who disapproved of her writing, and that weakened her skills and capabilities. Nevertheless, Montgomery did not let this hinder her; she pursued her

ambition and was unrestrained by the widespread culture of patriarchy at that time. The same goes for Anne Shirley, because the pen and paper serve as her sanctuary and allow readers to witness her deepest feelings and thoughts.

In like manner, Montgomery and Anne Shirley experienced competition when they were at school. Montgomery had Nate Lockhart, while Anne Shirley has Gilbert Blythe. Correspondingly, both women have their own bosom friends. Nora Lefurgey was that to Montgomery, while Diana Barry is the good friend of Anne Shirley. In the same light, the dreams and ambitions of these two women are very much alike. For instance, it is emphasized that Anne Shirley applies for the Avery Scholarship at Queen's, which she successfully earns. This scholarship allows her to achieve her dream of being a teacher one day. On the other hand, Montgomery obtained her teaching license at the Prince Wales College and began teaching at the Bidefort, Prince Edward Island, soon after that. Eventually, she pursued literature at Dalhousie University.

Actually, similarities can also be drawn not just in the events that emerged in the lives of these two women, but also in their personalities and attributes. Of course, both of them have a deep and intense interest in nature. They always spend their time watching birds and strolling along the meadows. Their imaginative personalities are also clearly manifested by serving as their armor and tool in coping with their lives and in easing the unfortunate events. Meanwhile, Anne Shirley and Montgomery are both determined to get college degrees. As a matter of fact, in the romances of these two women, the likenesses are very apparent. Montgomery married Ewan MacDonald, who had been a good friend to her for a long time. Meanwhile, Anne Shirley settles down with her rival, Gilbert Blythe, who becomes one of her close friends when she is in college.

From the above paragraphs, it is important to emphasize these likenesses in the events, personalities, and romances in the lives of Montgomery and Anne Shirley. This is because it opened up a window to look into the souls of these two women, especially Montgomery herself. At the beginning of the life of Montgomery, she had already experienced intense grief and sadness that molded her into what she later became. Indeed, Montgomery had a unique and special way of coping with her sadness, for it was her drive to give birth to *Anne of Green Gables*. Certainly, Anne Shirley reflects Montgomery's life, especially in the way she overcomes adversity. Montgomery gave her soul and spirit to Anne Shirley, which in turn has been touching the hearts of many people through *Anne of Green Gables*. Montgomery's intentions to write the book were mostly because of the fact that she wanted to showcase her skills and to free herself from the world around her. Little did the author know that Anne Shirley would inspire young girls across the globe.

This thesis's primary aim has been to investigate the similarities between Montgomery and Anne Shirley of *Anne of Green Gables*. Knowing about Montgomery's life enables the reader to interpret and to extract the hidden and deeper meanings that are between the lines of the book *Anne of Green Gables* and the way it connects with the author herself. Indeed, this research has a diverse and wide range of implications. I hope scholars will find this thesis helpful in exploring *Anne of Green Gables* and the life of Lucy Maud Montgomery. This thesis has aimed to provide a better understanding of the author herself and her drive and reasons in writing the events that transpired in the book and in life of the character of Anne Shirley. I would like to conclude by presenting a quotation from Montgomery's biography, which best expresses her life and ambitions:

The "*Alpine Path*" has been climbed, after many years of toil and endeavor. It was not an easy ascent, but even in the struggle at its hardest there was a delight and a zest known only to those who aspire to the heights. (Montgomery 89)

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