

READING ANNE OF GREEN GABLES TROUGH THE LENS OF POST-TRUTH CULTURE

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Abstract

The post-truth culture is a circumstance when facts are less important than someone's preferences, or in other words, emotions and feelings are more important than the truth. The post-truth culture happens in all fields of life, including in the literature work. In this study, the writer chooses to analyze Anne of Green Gables, a novel written by a Canadian author, Lucy Maud Montgomery. This classic children's book tells a story about an eleven-year-old orphan girl named Anne Shirley, who was sent to middle-aged siblings, Marilla and Matthew Cuthbert, who had asked for a boy, not a girl, to help them on their farm. This paper aims to examine the real Lucy Maud Montgomery and a fictional Anne Shirley of Green Gables using the post-truth concept. The study found that Lucy Maud Montgomery is a Canadian author who gave a little touch of her real-life story in her novel. The story fills with the imaginations, emotions, and struggles of Anne Shirley that somehow blurred the borderline between the real life of LM Montgomery and Anne Shirley's life in the fiction. As people nowadays pay more attention to their impression of a literary work that can touch their feelings rather than the truth behind the work, the readers are not fully informed of the facts that Montgomery's real life is not as smooth as Anne Shirley's life.

Keywords – Anne of Green Gables, post-truth, Lucy Maud Montgomery

Introduction

Lucy Maud Montgomery wrote a novel entitled Anne of the Green Gables in 1908 that tells a life's journey of an orphan girl named Anne Shirley, who was adopted by a middle-aged sibling, Marilla, and Matthew Cuthbert. At first, Marilla and Matthew did not want to take Anne because they wanted a lad to help them work on their farm in Green Gables. However, the little Anne has already stolen their heart with her naïve personality. From the first day she arrived in Avonlea, Anne has shown that she is a talkative and imaginative girl, and she can turn everything into poetic words based on her passion for romantic literature. Dreaming seems to be an essential thing in her life.

Unfortunately, she is instead a temperament. Anne quickly gets angry. On the other hand, she is a sensitive girl. The reason behind this personality is because Anne grew up without proper parents' love. As a result, Anne's behavior is not well-appreciated in Avonlea at that time. People start to think that Anne can harm their circle. Therefore, Anne should pass through a difficult time. In the end, with the help of Marilla and Matthew, and her friends, she can get along in her society. Additionally, she is a smart girl and has a sharp point of view, so later, her creative mind and her braveness will bring many colors to her life.

LM Montgomery has succeeded in making

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the readers love Anne Shirley as the main character from this story. LM Montgomery also used some of her experiences in the past to make this story more alive. Her mother passed away when she was a child, and her father left the young Montgomery with her grandparents. She coped with loneliness with imagination, books, nature, and writings. Montgomery's childhood story seems to look alike with the opening of Anne Shirley's story. Sometimes, the readers assume if Anne Shirley's life reflects her writer's life in detail without knowing that it is just a fictional novel that consists of her writer's imagination as well.

The writer of this paper considers this study very important because nowadays, people tend to pay attention to something that can impress their feeling more than the truth itself, especially in literary works. As a result, the fact of the writer is left behind. This condition happens because now we live in a post-truth era. Post-truth is a term to picture circumstances when there is no line between the truth and someone's preferences, or in this case, there is no difference between fiction and non-fiction [1]. For example, Anne of Green Gables novel. The novel becomes very popular, and now, people start coming to Prince Edward Island, the novel's setting, to see the replica of Green Gables. They come to that place because they get satisfaction while reading the book and want to visualize their imaginations, although it is just the place that Montgomery created in her novel. Besides, in the story, Anne's imagination and creative thinking help her solve every problem in her life. Even though it is not always as smooth as she hopes, Anne Shirley still gets her happy ending. Anne's life as a fictional character can touch

people's feelings more than the real-life of Lucy Maud Montgomery.

This study aims to reveal and compare the differences between the real-life of LM Montgomery and Anne Shirley as her novel's main character. The theory that researchers use is the post-truth theory in literary criticism. Four literary criticisms can be used to find the meaning and analysis of a literary text [2]: didactic approach, reflective approach, partisan approach, and religious approach. In this paper, the researcher used a reflective approach to analyzing literary work. A reflective approach is when literature can also contain some truths [2]. The author of the work use literature as a mirror to reflect the truth itself. In comparison with the didactic approach, the writer in the didactic approach is seen as a teacher, whether in a reflective approach, the author is an observer so that literature can provide some truth, but not all of it is something that we should take it as a lesson.

There is also educational evidence from journals examining Anne of Green Gables and post-truth analysis. The first evidence is a journal written by Arfiani [3]. She used a psychological approach to find similar personalities between Anne's character and LM Montgomery. As a result of her research, she proved that three personalities are similar. They are imaginative, the desire to be appreciated, and loneliness. Then, other evidence is research from Aneesh [1] Aneesh writes about how Petty Jenkins, through Diana in Wonder Woman movie, deals with the post-truth crisis.

This study is different from previous studies. The first study is Arfiani's discusses the similar personalities between Anne Shirley and LM Montgomery from

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the psychological point of view, and the second one tries to analyze the post-truth in Petty Jenkins Wonder Woman. This paper aim is to uncover the real-life of LM Montgomery in comparison with Anne Shirley's tale.

Methodology

In this research, the researcher applied a biographical approach to analyze the life of LM Montgomery compared to Anne's life. According to Gillespie [4], there is a relation between the authors' life and work and their literary works. If we want to understand the literature, we must know the author as well. With this kind of approach, the readers see how the authors using their creativity to refashioned their life experience into her works of art [4]. Biographical research provides a way to find the facts of the writer's life and connect it with the writer's work. Biographical research assisted the analysis of the background of the author in Anne of Green Gables novel. The primary purpose of this research is to analyze Montgomery's life through her literary work, Anne of Green Gables.

In this research, the researcher used Anne of Green Gables, a novel written by LM Montgomery. Below are the details of the primary source of this research

Type/Genre: Novel, Fiction, Slice of Life, Bildungsroman

Title: Anne of Green Gables

Author: LM Montgomery

Publisher: L.C., Page & Co.

Year of Publish: 1908

Country: Canada

Page: 386 pages

In doing the research, the researcher did several procedures. First, the researcher read the Anne of Green Gables. Second, the researcher paid attention to every event in Anne's life. Third, compare the life of Anne Shirley's like a fictional character to LM Montgomery's autobiography. Last, the researcher made a conclusion based on the collected data. The biographical approach was used to analyze the life of an author to find the differences with the character in her work [5]. There might be some similar incidents in the literary work with the author's life, but still, the content of the fictional work is also based on the author's imagination.

Finding and Discussion

Based on the researcher's reading, Anne of Green Gables is a novel that reflected Anne Shirley's life from the very first day when she arrived at Green Gables until when she is finally growing up and ready to face her dreams. This paper will discuss three concentrations to elaborate on LM Montgomery's experiences and Anne's story. They are the beginning of the story, experiences in life, and the ending of the story.

Anne Shirley has complicated experiences in the past because her parents died when she was a baby, and after that, she was adopted by several people before she is sent to an orphanage. One day, she is mistakenly sent to Green Gables because a couple of middle-aged siblings, Marilla and Matthew Cuthbert, needs a young-blood to take care of their farm. When Matthew picks her up along the road, he has fallen in love with Anne's innocence. Anne shows her spirit for everything she sees and turns in into poetic words based on her imaginations.

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However, when Marilla realized that Matthew brings a girl, not a boy, Marilla asked Matthew to return this girl tomorrow because the girl would be useless. Knowing that Marilla does not want her, Anne is very miserable and beg Marilla to keep her. Anne believes that she can also work at the farm, even better than the boy. It seems useless, but the next day is like a surprise for Anne. Indeed, Marilla does not want to keep Anne and decided to bring her back to the orphanage at first. The next day, she makes up her mind after she listens to Anne's story. Marilla decided to take care of Anne with some conditions. Anne is a strong and determined girl. She also a girl who definitely will always try to express her mind, especially when it is related to women's rights. She is also a temperament girl. People say it is because of her red hair.

Over the centuries, people with red hair symbolize their lousy temperament, that are reprehensible and different [6]. However, in this novel, everyone can accept Anne as who she is in the end, although she has red hair. Montgomery, with her novel, tries to give a new attitude towards this situation. Even though Avonlea's rigid society did not admit Anne's red hair, as the days are gone, they knew the color of someone's hair is not that prominent as long as the person's personalities. Thus with reading Anne of Green Gables, the readers may think that red hair was not a big deal in that era. Montgomery made it more understandable and way more convenient because it is only a work of fiction.

The readers can see the example from the story when Marilla introduces Anne to her friend, Mrs. Rachel Lynde, Anne does not like how Mrs. Lynde talks about her appearance, especially her red hair. Anne starts to shout at Mrs. Lynde and bring her

temper up. Mrs. Lynde is so horrified and does not like Anne Shirley. She asks Marilla to send her again to the orphanage. This situation also happens with other people who start to realize that Anne is very emotional and can not handle her feeling. Nevertheless, Marilla and Matthew try to teach Anne how to control herself rather than punish and send Anne back to the orphanage. Marilla and Matthew give the new perspective that having red hair is not why Anne is moody and emotional. It is because of her past experiences. Therefore, they are willing to teach and nurture Anne to help her control her emotion.

There are discrepancies between the situation in the fictional and real life. In her writing [6], Montgomery brought the idea that children have the right to get special care. In the eighteenth and early nineteenth century, orphans and poor children were regarded as cheap laborers. Poor children could not receive a formal education because they must pay for private education or only by the various churches. Therefore, Montgomery broke the tradition in that era that it was not common for the orphans and needy children to get specialized treatments, even education.

Anne's life journey fills with happiness and dreams but also great despair. She can make terrible mistakes but in the end. Marilla and Matthew Cuthbert always support and appreciate Anne for what she has done. For example, Anne always dreams about wearing a beautiful puffy sleeves dress like the other girls, and finally, Matthew Cuthbert buys it for Anne as a Christmas Gift. Marilla and Matthew also give support to Anne and her school's friend when they make a petition to stand up for Ms. Stacy, their new teacher, who uses a modern method to teach the students in Avonlea. Even though Anne

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Shirley is a girl, it is not always easy for her to speak up because of the rigid society at that time, she has friends and the Cuthberts who always support her. Anne develops an excellent relationship with her society. The example is Anne get much appreciation from Mrs. Barry when Anne can handle Diana's sister, who get a cough with her traditional way until the doctor comes to Diana's house and help Ruby Gillis, her friend, out of her burning house. All of those appreciation increase Anne's confidence and give the courage to keep striving.

On the other side, Montgomery's childhood was not as pleasure as Anne's world. Maud's mother died when she was only 21 months old, and after that, her father left her with her mother's parents. As she grew up, little Maud became a very creative and strong girl. On the other hand, according to Montgomery, Lucy Maud's article [7], she also a moody and oversensitive girl. Her attitude became worst when she grew up. Because of that, Her grandparents suffered from her attitude. They try to control and limit Montgomery's actions. Sadly, the more her grandparents control herself, the more secluded Montgomery's life.

Maud childhood filled with so unwanted and unloved feeling. Moreover, her grandfather was very firm and had a sarcastic tongue. Young Montgomery should obey her grandparents' rules [3]. Even though Maud was a perfect and submissive girl, she never got any appreciation from her grandparents. Maud also has shown her passions for writing and storytelling from a very young age, but her relatives underestimated her abilities because they think it was not appropriate for a girl to do such things. Her family never honored her creativity and efforts.

Loneliness became part of Montgomery's life. Whenever she felt lonely, she will use her imagination and start to write something as the way out. Her family treatments caused her loneliness. Furthermore, Montgomery's grandfather did not want to accommodate her teacher's training course at Charlottetown [3]. Her grandfather's attitude towards her did not make shut off her spirit. On the contrary, she used it as a weapon to always strive to be better than before until she can make other people proud of her.

Montgomery's life mirror how society thought of women were more suitable to do some practical things. Instead of using her mind, it was better to sew to make the family clothes [6]. It was not what LM Montgomery wrote in her novel. She gave Anne the freedom to use her imaginations that was unusual in the nineteenth century.

In school, Anne is one of the smartest students in the class. Her dream is to be a teacher. On the other hand, there is a smart and popular boy named Gilbert Blythe, who then becomes Anne's rivals in school. On the first day of school, Gilbert wants to get Anne's attention by ridiculing her hair as a carrot. Anne gets angry and slaps his head with her slate, and she decided not to like Gilbert Blythe as long as her life. They become an enemy but also a friend. Destiny never goes wrong. As soon as they grow up, they become more mature and start to have feelings for each other. Both Anne and Gilbert do not realize their feeling until it is time for them to go to college. However, the ending of their relationship is beautifully written in this novel. Their kind of relationship seems very sweet and makes the readers satisfied, just like another fictional work. Finally, in the end, Anne can reach her dream to be a teacher and continue questioning what life will take her.

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Based on Anne's story, LM Montgomery had some experiences in a romantic relationship. Once, she had a very passionate romantic relationship with Hermann Leard, a farmer, Prince Edward Island. However, Leard suffered from Influenza and died. After that, Montgomery seems not interested in any romantic relationship again. Time heals, people said. On 5 July 1911, Montgomery married to a Presbyterian minister named Ewan McDonald. They had a happy marriage until Ewan should have unstable mental health. This condition also affected Montgomery's mental illness because, at that time, she also at the crisis of her writing career. Montgomery and Ewan had three children. Unfortunately, their second child was stillborn. She suffered from anxiety and depression until the end of her life. It is known that Anne's romantic love story is more dramatic and appealing to the readers' stack up with Montgomery's real love story.

Comparing both Lucy Maud Montgomery's life with Anne's life is very interesting because Montgomery gave her childhood dreams in her writing. People love to read Anne of Green Gables because it has a perfect ending. In real life, not everyone as lucky as Anne Shirley, not even the writer itself. Montgomery included some of her desires that she could not get in the past in her novel. Moreover, Montgomery brought a lot of modern perspectives that are contrary to the actuality in that era. In Table 1, we can see the outline of the comparisons between Anne Shirley's fiction and the real Montgomery.

Table 1. Data Comparisons

Anne Shirley	LM Montgomery
Anne was adopted by a generous	Montgomery's grandfather was

sibling.	very firm and had a sharp-tongue.
Marilla and Matthew Cuthbert always support and appreciated Anne.	Montgomery did not get appreciation from her grandfather.
Anne's life as a fictional character is smoother than Montgomery's real life.	Her life was real and not as beautiful as the main character in her work.
Anne of Green Gables novel has a positive happy ending.	LM Montgomery died because of mental illness.

It means that Anne of Green Gables still a fictional work that mostly consists of the writer's imaginations and hopes.

Conclusions

In this paper, the researcher analyzes Anne of Green gables novel to compare it with Lucy Maud Montgomery's life to deal with this post-truth era. Anne Shirley's life as a fictional character is way more picturesque than Montgomery's actual life and can make the readers enjoy reading it. Therefore, a novel is still a fictional work that can not represent the detail of the writer's biography, even the exact situation in the time and setting of the novel.

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