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WOMEN TRANSCENDING IN LUCY MAUD MONTGOMERY'S *ANNE OF GREEN GABLES*

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Abstract

This research explored the representation of women's transcendence in Lucy Maud Montgomery's *Anne of Green Gables*. In the 20th century, life in Green Gables was characterized by traditional values and strict gender expectations. Thus, this research examined the causes that trigger women from Green Gables to engage in transcendence and the results of their struggles. Using a qualitative method, data were collected from novels, articles, and other literary sources. Through a Beauvoirian lens, this research explored how women negotiate their roles and identities in the context of patriarchal norms and structures. It provided an insight into women's achievements in transcending roles and identities. The findings revealed two causes triggering Green Gables Women to transcend: discrimination and pressure. Besides, there were two ways women do while transcending: creativity and independence. Lastly, the result of women transcending; economic independence and freedom of speech.

Keywords: Transcendence, women's struggle, existentialist feminism, identity.

I. INTRODUCTION

In the early 20th century, Canadian women were generally tied to traditional roles within the family, which placed them as housewives and domestic workers. Their tribute to political and social field is limited, and it has already influenced their lives and society. Gender equality is far from being achieved as they do not have the same voting rights as men.

Fortunately, the late 20th century was a period of extraordinary change in Canada. Notably, there has been an evolution in Canadian women's roles. They are becoming increasingly involved in various social and economic aspects. It is also a process or action taken by women to get out of patriarchal values that limit women's space for movement, physically, mentally, socially, and spiritually. Beauvoir (1949, p: 42) said there are two interrelated dynamic aspects of life: it can be maintained only through transcending itself, and it can transcend itself only on condition that it is maintained. These two factors always operate together.

This phenomenon is portrayed in Montgomery's novel. Green Gables is an iconic farmhouse that serves as the center of the story. It was located in the fictional village of Avonlea on

Prince Edward Island. It offered a setting full of natural beauty and classic country comfort. In this story, women are expected to fulfill domestic roles and be good housewives, while men often hold authority in society's politics and economy. Marilla Cuthbert is an example of a woman who can fulfill the role of a housewife without a husband, living devoted to her brother Matthew and guardian of the land, while Anne Shirley, despite having a strong spirit and ambition, often feels constrained by society's expectations of her, to be a "good girl". Even though they are limited by existing social norms, the females in Green Gables also show their ability to challenge these limitations and begin to be aware of oppression and are able to overcome it.

II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Women transcending is a form of resistance since they have actually been labeled as weak. They can only do domestic work (washing, cooking, and looking after children). Therefore, feminism emerged as a women's movement that demands equality, where women hope that there will be no more oppression.

Transcendence sheds light on women's career ambitions and limitless creativity. Apart from the domestic work that women do to serve and improve the welfare of the family at home, women are also able to express themselves in public. According to Beauvoir (1949 p. 156)

“Because of the fact that she has taken on awareness of self, however, and because she can also free herself from marriage through a job, woman no longer accepts domestic subjection with docility.”

There are things make women unable to surpass themselves. For example, marriage, because it can limit women's freedom. According to Beauvoir (1949, p. 415) “Marriage has always been a very different thing for men and women.” In a marriage life a woman become a slave or subordinate for her husband and his family.

Next, ambiguity presents the idea that women in men's lives have absolutely no value; in fact, women are only considered sexual objects. According to Beauvoir (1947, p.1) Everyone feels like a subject in the world, but everyone else as an object, and yet also knows that others also see them as an object; and as much as people feel empowered to act in the

world, they also recognize that the world is infinitely larger than they are and can easily overwhelm them. In this context, ambiguity refers to individuals' awareness of their own limitations.

Lastly, freedom is a word that means happiness, where all humans want it without interference from other parties. However, it cannot be denied that freedom cannot be fully accepted by humans, because there are things that limit human freedom, such as the existence of other individuals, religion, norms, legal regulations. According to Beauvoir (1947 p. 9) Freedom is the source from which all meaning and value emerge. This is the original condition of all justification for existence. This means that freedom is the source of all justification for existence.

III. RESEARCH METHOD

This research was conducted using a qualitative method. As stated by Cresswell (2009, p.4), qualitative research is a means for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to social or human problems. For this reason, it needs some activities such as collecting the

data in the form of paragraphs, sentences, parts of sentences, quotations, and words. The data in this research is classified based on the way women do transcending, the causes that trigger women, and the results of women's transcending.

IV. FINDING AND DISCUSSION

4.1 The Causes that trigger Green Gables women do transcending.

Green Gables women do transcend for several causes. The first cause is gender discrimination. It includes sexual violence or harassment against women, both verbal and nonverbal. According to Beauvoir (1949 p. 22):

“Women were ordered to return home more strictly because their emancipation was a real threat. Even among the working class, men attempted to curb women's freedom, as they began to see women as dangerous competitors, especially since they were used to working for lower wages. In the quote above, it is clear that there is a form of discrimination carried out against women, even though women actually only want to position themselves as equal to men”.

Quotation above shows discrimination experienced by Anne. At that time, people in Green Gables were very vulnerable to discrimination. Anne

Shirley who is an orphan adopted by Cuthbert had experienced gender discrimination where she was almost worthless to be adopted because from the beginning the Cuthbert family want to adopt boys because they were more useful than girls. It can be seen in the quotation below:

“Where is the boy?” “There wasn't any boy,” said Matthew wretchedly. “There was only her.” “No boy! But there must have been a boy,” insisted Marilla. We Sent word to Mrs. Spencer to bring a boy, and we mean to give him a good home and schooling” “No... We want a boy to help Matthew on the farm. A girl would be of no use to us.” (1908 p. 17).

There is a repetition of "boy" defines the existence of gender discrimination, because women is only a complement. Boys are believed to be more useful for working in the fields. This shows that they have a stereotypical view of gender roles, where boys are considered more suitable for doing physical work than girls. The first reason they do not want a girl is because they are not physically strong and then girls are also weak in thinking. “A girl will be of no use to us” illustrates a form of rejection by Marilla who states that they don't need a girl. The reason they do not need Anne is very thin and weak.

According to Beauvoir (1949), stereotypes often link a woman's self-esteem to her physical appearance. Beauty is considered one of the most important attributes for women, and women are expected to meet the standards of beauty set by society. In this research, Anne is often stereotyped as a thin woman, who resembles inanimate objects such as plants and not humans being. This can be seen in the following quotation:

“Gilbert reached across the aisle, picked up the end of Annes long red braid, held it out at arm’s length said in a piercing whisper, “Carrots! Carrots!” (1908 p. 81)

The quotation above shows the stereotype that Gilbert carried out towards Anne. The words “Carrots! Carrots!” shows a thin and red hair woman. It is a striking physical characteristic of her. According to Blackford (2009 p.182) this is an example of how gender discrimination based on physical appearance, particularly in relation to standards of female beauty, can affect the development of a person's identity.

The next form of gender discrimination is bullying. It is an act of oppression that is often carried out

in groups. According to Kenneth (2002) bullying is a form of aggressive behavior that aims to hurt other people physically or emotionally. It happened to Anne, because her body shape did not match the standards of a beautiful woman. It can be seen through the data below:

“She’s terrible skinny and homely, Marilla. Come here, child, and let me have a look at you. Lawful heart, did any one ever see such freckles? And hair as red as carrots! Come here I said.” (1908 p.46)

The quotation shows such kind of bullying among women. The sentence “hair as red as carrots! Come here, I said” describes how Anne is often teased and judged based on her appearance, especially her red hair. It also reflects that society tends to use women's physical aspects as a standard of beauty. In this case, women are often defined based on standards set by men and patriarchal society.

The second cause is pressure. Pressure is one form of reason for women to transcend. Social pressure is the influence created by individuals, groups, or the general public on someone to follow the rules in a

particular social environment. Sources of social pressure can come from family, friends, co-workers, mass media, or the dominant culture in society. In this case, social pressure happened between Anne and Marilla at Green Gables. After she left the orphanage, her life became very unreasonable, full of rules, and she hoped to start a new life. She is under new pressure from her adoptive mother.

“You must learn to cook and clean, Anne. It's not all about reading and writing. A woman needs to know how to keep a home.”(1908, p.57)

This sentence, “You must learn to cook and clean, Anne. It is not all about reading and writing.” Marilla Cuthbert emphasized the importance of household skills such as cooking and cleaning the house. It shows that women, as housewives, had to be skilled in the household. In her domestic role, Anne was told that cooking skills were more important than academic education. It means that women should focus on the household rather than pursuing education or a broader career. Beauvoir (1949, p. 534) said society places rigid expectations on women, giving rise to great social pressure to

conform to gender norms. Women are taught from childhood to accept the domestic role as their destiny, which prevents them from achieving transcendence, that is, going beyond the boundaries set by society. The pressure experienced by Anne is a clear example of how the domestic role imposed on women limits their freedom and potential.

Social pressure plays a significant role, where women are expected to meet ideal beauty standards, including how to dress, how to care for themselves to maintain beauty, and even how women pose, as well as not being allowed to talk while eating. There are cases where a husband leaves his wife because her body no longer meets her initial beauty standards. It suggests that standards of body perfection can have a real and damaging impact on personal relationships, creating additional pressure for women to maintain a perfect physical appearance. It can be proved through the quotation below:

“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. It's very uncomfortable a feeling indeed. When you try to imagine you are a good little girl with a big braid of hair hanging down your back, and you can't imagine you are pretty, because you aren't, it's awfully hard." (1908, p.28)

The quotation above is one form of pressure seen from body perfection. "Depths of despair" shows Anne's despair about the depth of the emotional impact of dissatisfaction with her appearance and her struggle to achieve society's standards of beauty. According to Grogan (2016), body dissatisfaction can affect self-esteem and mental well-being. Anne feels the pressure of ideal but unrealistic standards of beauty. "A very uncomfortable feeling indeed" emphasizes that the pressure to meet standards of bodily perfection can lead to emotional discomfort.

4.2 The Ways Green Gables Women do Transcending

The first way is by creating creativity. It is an ability that produces unique and useful ideas, solutions, or works. Amabile (1996, p. 35) proposed a component model of creativity that includes expertise, creative thinking skills, and intrinsic

motivation. It appears in various forms, including art, science, technology, and everyday life. Creativity can be seen through the ways the Green Gables women create at the creative club. This club consists of Anne and her friends. It can be seen through the quotation below:

"This was how the story club came into existence. It was limited to Diana and Anne at first, but soon it was extended to include Jane Andrews and Ruby Gillis and one or two others who felt that their imaginations needed cultivating."(p. 143)

They can develop their skills and imagination. Anne created a space where members could express themselves creatively and support each other creatively to transcend social boundaries and find new ways to express themselves.

Next, by achieving morality. It refers to efforts made continuously by individuals to live by high moral principles. There are many ways to achieve it. Women strive for morality by writing stories, and by having the courage to admit mistakes. In this case, Anne and her friends ensure that all their stories have a clear moral message, where good people are always rewarded and bad people are

punished. It is seen through quotation below:

“But we’re so careful to put a moral into them all, Marilla,” explained Anne. “I insist upon that. All the good people are rewarded and all the bad ones are suitably punished. I’m sure that must have a wholesome effect. The moral is great thing Mr. Alan says so”(p. 143)

The sentences “I insist upon that. All the good people are rewarded and all the bad people are suitably punished. I’m sure that must have a wholesome effect” describe how she attempted to internalize and practice moral principles in her life. It reflects Anne's constant efforts to achieve and maintain high moral standards. It also shows how Anne tries to transcend existing moral boundaries by creating a narrative in which justice is always upheld, depicting ideal moral aspirations.

Then, having the courage to admit mistakes. It sounds like a normal thing, but it has moral meaning. Sometimes people make mistakes, and they will be afraid to admit their mistakes, to protect themselves from being ostracized by society or the surrounding environment. However, there are also those who make mistakes and admit

the mistakes they have made, so that they cannot bear the moral debt for their mistakes. Likewise, Anne, who made a mistake and she had the courage to admit it.

“I’ve come to confess, if you please. Confess what? That it was all my fault about jumping into bed on you last night. I suggested it Diana would never have thought of such a thing, I am sure.” (p. 107)

The quotation above is a form of Anne's striving for morality. She admits her mistake to Miss Josephine Barry after jumping into bed. “I’ve come to confess, if you please. Confess what? “That was all my fault about jumping into bed on you last night.” This sentence shows Anne’s full sense of responsibility for the mistake she made. Even though Miss Josephine will be very angry, it is better to be honest about what has been done. This action shows Anne's moral growth and living according to the values held in that society.

Lastly, by achieving women’s independence. Independence is one of the keys for women to transcend social restrictions that hamper their development. Beauvoir (p. 450) emphasizes that to achieve true freedom, women must step out of the

roles determined by patriarchal society and find their meaning and purpose in life through autonomous action. In this case, independence can give women strength and confidence in making their own decisions and determining the direction of their own lives.

The first thing that shows that women are independent is respect for the process of struggle. In fact, there are many twists and turns before achieving something. For example, someone who values the journey of learning or overcoming challenges shows that they understand the value of each step in the journey, not just the result. It happened to the Green Gables women.

“But just now I honestly feel that as long as I know the violets are coming out all purple down in the hollow below Green Gables and that little ferns are poking their heads up in Lovers’ Lane, it’s not a great deal of difference whether I win the Avery or not. I’ve done my best and I begin to understand what is meant by the ‘joy of the strife.’”(p. 194)

The quotation illustrates women's independence through respect for the process of struggle. Anne shows that she does not need external validation to feel fulfilled or happy. The phrase "joy of the strife" reflects Anne's

understanding that there is value and happiness to be found in the process of struggle itself, not just in achieving the result. This is a form of intellectual independence, where she appreciates the value of the experiences and learning she gains during the process. Instead, she finds happiness in her own efforts and the beauty of the world around her, indicating a high level of emotional and mental independence.

4.3 The Results of Green Gables Women Transcending

First, economic independence. It happens when someone has achieved success, whether in education, finances, or lifestyle, especially for women who are always considered weak and physically useless. Duflo (2011, p. 20- 21) highlights the importance of economic empowerment for women. It has a positive impact not only on themselves but also on the welfare of their families and society. In this case, Anne was struggling to become a teacher.

“I’m going to be a school teacher, Anne told him, “and I’m going to teach in the school here at Avonlea.”(p. 246).

The quotation shows a result obtained by Anne because she already has her income through her profession as a teacher. This sentence, "I'm going to be a school teacher," shows that Anne has a job as a teacher at a school in Avonlea. This achievement shows a form of transcendence because a woman becomes economically independent. Anne begins to produce her own opinions through her work as a teacher. By teaching, Anne not only supports herself but also makes an important contribution to society by educating the next generation.

Next, freedom of speech. After everything has passed through various struggles, women are no longer afraid of all forms of action carried out by men. They will show their voices and provide a form of resistance because they are no longer weak. They already have the power in freedom. It happened to Anne who showed a form of resistance to Gilbert who mocked her physically.

"How dare you!" And then-Thwack! Anne hadbrought her slait down on Gilberts head and creacked, hit head- clear across." (p. 354)

Anne reacts angrily to the taunts, showing her courage in speaking out against unfair treatment. It shows a strong side of her personality that is

not only confident but also firm in defending herself. This sentence "You mean, hateful boy!" She claimed passionately. "How dare you!" and then-Thwack!!!" show Anne who used to be a woman who didn't dare to speak out and could only hide and surrender, fought back with words and swung the blackboard at Gilbert.

V. CONCLUSION

Anne, as the main female character in this novel, represents a woman who can be independent, intelligent, and brave in making important decisions in her lives. She was able to solve her problems by showing her struggle and ability to achieve independence. She became an independent woman and achieved success in transcending. This demonstrates her desire to be an intelligent and independent woman.

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