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**(Eco)Feminism in Lucy Maud Montgomery's**

*Anne of Green Gables*

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## *Dedications*

To the hundreds of writers whose books changed my life and introduced me to an alternative world that stretched beyond the confines of my prior knowledge and infused my mind with a thirst for learning that until this day has not been quelled.

My gratitude is further transmitted to my entire family members especially those who supported me in my intellectual pursuits; to my mother Amina, my sister Sanaa, my brother in law Benaouda and my aunt Naima: thank you for believing in me, especially during those overwhelming moments of pressure, I am grateful to you beyond utterance.

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## *Abstract*

The scope of this dissertation will substantially entail identifying the American twentieth-century patriarchal social conventions that imprisoned women within a multitude of gender biased roles and spheres that hindered their pursuit of a subjective self in addition to unraveling the detrimental ramifications which those unilateral handlings generated that will be demonstrated through women's stratified education and misdiagnosed as well as mistreated mental health's tribulations. Thus, relying on a historical and feminist approach, the tenets of Feminism and Ecofeminism in the classical novel *Anne of Green Gables* by Lucy Maud Montgomery will be elucidated so as to show the mediums by which those women managed to unchain themselves from the restrictions that have been vaulting their potential by shedding light on some of the social inequalities that had to be demolished, simultaneously tracing the patriarchal dominion and its rapid expansion on account of the industrialization which brought about the environmental decline. Seamlessly, light will be shed on how women identified themselves with its objectifying and exploitation together with how they deemed it their tonic for healing.

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## Glossary

**Attention-Deficit/ hyperactivity disorder:** “a mental health condition that can cause unusual levels of hyperactivity and impulsive behaviors” (Angel, Para. 1)

**Bipolar disorder:** “a devastating illness that is characterized by recurrent episodes of mania and depression. In addition to these cyclic episodes, individuals with BPD exhibit changes in psycho vegetative function, cognitive performance, and general health and well being” (Martinowich et al., Para. 1)

**Post traumatic stress disorder:** “a chronic impairment disorder that occurs after exposure to traumatic events” (Miao et al., Para. 1)

**Bromides:** “a sedative and an effective anticonvulsant” (Dempsey, Para. 1)

**Barbiturates:** “a group of sedative-hypnotic medications used for the treatment of seizure disorder, neonatal withdrawal, insomnia, preoperative anxiety, induction of coma for increased intracranial pressure” (Skibiski and Abdijadid, Para. 1)

**Epilepsy:** “the condition of recurrent, unprovoked seizures” (Stafstrom and Carmant, Para. 4)

**Mania:** “is a period of 1 week or more in which a person experiences a change in behavior that drastically affects their functioning” (Dailey, Para. 1)

**Dissociative identity disorder:** “formerly called multiple personality disorder, is a type of dissociative disorder characterized by 2 personality states (also called alters, self-states, or identities) that alternate” (Speigel, Para. 1)

**Clinical Depression:** “the more-severe form of depression, also known as major depression or major depressive disorder” (Hall Flavin, Para. 1)

**General**

**Introduction**



# General introduction

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## General Introduction

Literature; an art which since the dawn of time has represented a ground through which writers were able to document and depict their everyday life's events, their struggles, their fights for the change they aspired to see and it was also deemed as their way of providing a documentary as well as a commentary on the social conventions surrounding the eras concerned. Sometimes prominent revolutionary thoughts, movements and achievements throughout time get referred to by the literary works that have been written during them; whilst history moulds those events; literature provides them with a permanent eminence and vitality. Although these distinctive novels are often made out of different colors, they are all woven out of the same thread; that of infusing fiction with facts, a notion that has been incipiently highlighted by Virginia Woolf in her extended essay entitled "A Room of One's Own" in which she said: "fiction is here likely to contain more truth"

It is notably known that outstanding tales manage to be remarkably contingent on those who narrate them; a task that is occupied by unconventional writers often disguised in and mirrored by their main characters which are in some cases deemed as a mouthpiece of their inner dialogues; these authors actively challenged conventional foundations on which the pillars of the society are built. *Anne of Green Gables* by Lucy Maud Montgomery is one of the novels that can be seen as suggestive of the people's literal as well as metaphorical imprisonment whilst simultaneously providing an exit from being forced to unthinkably abide by the gyrations governing their times and annihilating any existing feather of innovation.

Lucy Maud Montgomery is one of those writers who dared to think beyond the thoughtful confinement. She was a novelist who deemed her novel a brush with which she painted an arguably intricate self-portrait that included the gender-biased burdens she was outweighed by and had to carry, the aspirations she endeavored to accomplish and the seeds of change she hoped to plant in a world that seemed to be designed to place constrictions on her potential as well as on women of her time.

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“All things great are wound up with all things little”; a quote said by the main character of the novel *Anne Shirley* provides a visualization of how any path that has ever been forged including the one in which we are walking in in our modern times are in direct linkage to and merely exist thanks to the previous ones that have blazed the way for them. Indeed, the scope of the selected novel emphasizes on women’s struggle in correlation to the oppression of nature, deeming the latter as a sanctuary for healing and also the gradual process of reclaiming their rights, detaching from patriarchy and successfully overcoming the social maladies of their time.

The liberties possessed by women nowadays is but a mountain overlooking the vast labyrinthine valley of their ambitious compatriots who fought for basic rights, then afterwards dared to rectify their status from being placed on the margin, oppressed, belittled, undermined and overlooked to becoming primary advocates of education as well as innovation and being altered to story tellers rather than being a subject that for centuries male writers told false stories about.

The aim of this dissertation is to examine the conundrums faced and eluded by women; as well as how they managed to alter their stance in society through Montgomery’s novel; henceforth narrowing down the research questions to the following:

- What are the challenging social conventions that stood in the way of women in the twentieth century and by which means were they annihilated by women?
- What are the author’s idiosyncrasies that she implicated within her novel?
- How did the female characters embody women’s social stance in the Twentieth Century?
- What are the prevalent tenets of Feminism and Ecofeminism in the novel?

These questions will be answered after examining the principles of feminism in the early twentieth century and the new approach of Ecofeminism, whereby a detailed analysis of the author’s biography will determine whether or not the author plagued the female characters in her work with instances that marked their transition from being stagnant

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mouthpieces of the society to attaining a gradual character's development throughout the events of the story. The answers to the research questions will be reached after an examination of the novel entitled *Anne of Green Gables*, using historical criticism, for understanding the author herself is central to deciphering her literary composition laced with utilizing feminist criticism because the present work twirls around the portrayal of women's social stance.

They will be elaborated on accordingly in two chapters. The first one will unravel the surrounding circumstances that incited the need for a movement like feminism to arise, seen through the lens of the early twentieth century social conventions, accompanied by ecofeminism; an extension of its ideals, the challenges that were faced by feminism including women's education and mental health and how there was an underlying thread linking women's oppression to nature's exploitation.

The scope of the second chapter will primarily emphasize on the tenets of feminism in the novel, discussed in and illustrated from a practical angle to avail in fathoming as well as discerning feminism, shedding light on the strong linkage between the author and her work along with exploiting gender misassumptions in the novel and displaying how they were rendered as nothing but a chapter in the long story of women's forging better paths.

**Chapter One:  
Feminism and  
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# **Chapter One: Feminism and Women in the Twentieth Century**

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# Chapter One: Feminism and Women in the Twentieth Century

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## 1.1. Introduction

Ever since the dawn of time, the upsurge of an array of movements has been incited by the change that was needed to be enacted; Feminism did not differ from them. This chapter provides an articulation of its definition to reconstruct and nullify the fallacies that accompany it by shedding light on the challenges as well as misalignments between the two genders through the socially imposed filters that determined and classified wit, liberties to be attained and rights based on gender rather than capacity. After that, a correlation will be drawn between Feminism and Ecofeminism that aims at displaying how the two movements proportionally operated in tandem, mapped the blueprints of newly found sources of empowerment for women as well as demonstrated the varying shades of oppression that governed the unequal education that has been received by women, how their mental health issues were deemed as an indication of their weakness rather than illnesses to be cured. Then, in the same line of thought, the scope will forthwith emphasize on the unilateral handlings that they have been subjugated to which created an intersection that linked it to the exploitation of nature.

## 1.2. Feminism

Feminism is a movement that was ushered by a need for change; it was imbedded with revolutionary thoughts and ideals, mainly the liberty-centered ones. It is defined as “an ideological and political movement that seeks equality and equity for women in all aspects, including social, political, personal, and economic realms. This movement recognizes that inequalities occur based on class, gender, physical and mental ability, sex, race, and sexuality” (Pariona, para.1). Feminism has been gradually introduced throughout various stages commonly known as waves; each characterized by a multitude of objectives that women yearned to achieve.

In a nutshell, the first wave that took place from the nineteenth to the twentieth century was incited by writers such as Mary Wollstonecraft whose book entitled *a Vindication of The Rights Of Women* was a testimony of the newly fostered awareness; she

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encouraged women to “... come out of their culturally constructed state” as well as to “examine their inherent nature” (“Summary of Mary Wollstonecraft’s *Vindication of The Rights of Woman*”, Para.1). This wave was commonly known for women’s intensified ambition in annihilating the patriarchal norms that disabled them from owning properties, depicted them as properties themselves to be owned and controlled by men which was supported by a multitude of laws and discriminatory acts that legalized women’s enslavement and reinforced their inferiority as well as endeavoring to attain an equal political representation under the law through having their voice acknowledged in voting.

Henceforward, feminism drifted towards the process of demolishing the gender biased spheres during the second wave that stretched from the 1960’s to the late 1980’s; this era arguably has a complex cause and effect relationships with the second world war. It is notably known that the latter provided women with the opportunity that they have longed for in order to demonstrate that their impotence in performing tasks and occupying jobs that were usually reserved for men was merely fabricated and not formulated based on empirical evidence or sound reasoning.

With men being drafted to join the war efforts for the army, the weight of responsibility in managing the domestic affairs was successfully carried by women who were deemed a main factor in securing the victory. The former enabled them to be everything that they have been denied and were at last able to taste the ravishing sweetness of equality, of what it means to stand on the front lines as allies with the same power rather than being placed on the sidelines.

After getting that primary taste, they could no longer go back to the previous lives that they have been prisoners to or to be overlooked by the society, a former nurse and an educator during the second world war named Delle Hahne summarizes the incipient notion as the following: “...cause they had a taste of freedom, they had a taste of making their own money, a taste of spending their own money, making their own decisions I think the beginning of the women's movement had its seeds right there in World War Two.” (*American Women during WWII*) Her articulation of the latter serves as a supporting

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deposition in how women deemed the post war era as the ground which they could use to support their demands for equality especially after displaying how genders should never be seen as privilege in the case of men and a burden for women. The latter worked as nurses, joined the industrial forces, invaded public sectors in all of their forms and overstepped every social confine that was prevalent at that time.

Sydney Jones and Howie Weber describe it as: “During the six years of World War II, American women stepped up to help the war effort both in uniform and by joining the industrial workforce. Since women were needed to fill many traditional male jobs and roles during the war, they took initiative in taking up responsibilities and eventually gained more rights.” (“Role of Wartime Women”). It broadened the debate to include matters such as equal education and demolishing what Mary Wollstonecraft referred to as the stratifications between the two genders. It was indeed a time infiltrated with a gleam of a better tomorrow devoid of a “sexist structure of power” (La Farge et al. Para. 5)

Marking the end of an era and the beginning of another that carried within its folds the same message that has been preached before during the first and the second waves of feminism whose legacy was preserved whilst simultaneously continued to expand, most of the third wave’s advocates were descendents of the women who contributed in installing the first milestones in the process of building the pillars on which this evolutionally movement was established.

The frame time during which this wave emerged dates back to the early 1990’s, in an article published by *Daily History* website entitled "What Was the Third Wave Feminist Movement" the author Alicia Gutierrez-Romine aimed at providing a thorough coverage of the term and its connotations through explaining that whilst the third wave of feminism carried the torch that has been lit by the first two waves, it was still distinctive in its own way, specifically in terms of rejecting any distinction lines that have been incipiently drawn to determine what was feminine and masculine, its advocates believed in the need of creating a universal identity under which both genders coexist and prosper rather than focus on all of the differences that exist between them, Gutierrez-Romine describes the latter as



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third Wave Feminism differed from the first two waves not just in goals, but in substance. While the first two waves generally accepted traditional gender identities and norms, the third wave challenged ideas about what was traditionally masculine and traditionally feminine. Not only did Third Wave feminists reject this strict separation and polarity between male and female, but they embraced a more complex and nuanced understanding of opportunities for gender and sexual expression, including identity (Par. 7).

In her famous book that have been published in 1987 entitled *Intercourse*, the author Andrea Dworkin; a social activist and a radical feminist who during her lifetime wrote influential books that addressed the issues related to gender, immensely highlighted how women have always been leading a battle to attain something that should have been granted to them without conducting a fight for it, she says that: “It is a tragedy beyond the power of language to convey when what has been imposed on women by force becomes a standard of freedom for women: and all the women say it is so”. (181)

Robin William once said that “words and ideas change the world” (*Dead Poets Society*), indeed thoughts change the course of history, all of the writers that have been mentioned incipiently proportionally served as indispensable fragments that constituted the bigger picture and colossally contributed in preserving feminism’s legacy by drawing the public attention to it, unbeknownst that they have taken the first steps in a path that will for centuries be comfortably walked in by every other woman.

A testimony of the colossal impact that feminism has had in reformulating the definition of what it means to be a woman and to reconstruct the boundaries behind which women stood manifests in how different scholars, philosophers, writers from different periods of time gravitated towards providing their individual notions as attempts to unveil its truth and explain its prominence as well as dismantle the society of the socially imposed filters that governed and influenced their faulty perception of it.

Virginia Woolf in her extended essay entitled *a Room of One’s Own* provided a glimpse on how feminism was deemed more of a fruit of a collective mass experience

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rather than a singular movement; that despite the multitude and disparity of the injustices that have been suffered by women throughout the centuries, they all could fit under the same umbrella; that of carrying varying tones of the same voice, in other words various forms that grant them equality, in that matter she said: “for masterpieces are not single and solitary births, they are the outcome of many years of thinking in common, of thinking by the body of the people, so that the experience of mass is behind the single voice” (37).

Her notion indeed grants a clarification in how the need for change and the seed of fighting for it was implanted by their foremothers since antiquity. Thenceforth, it was increasingly nurtured by the next generations who beheld the same adamant urge and envisioned the same prosperity for women until it deftly outgrew what they have known it to be and could no longer be contained. in that sense, feminism was what united their tones under one voice and mapped the blueprints of the success of their contrived endeavor.

Stephen West who is an American podcast host, in his podcast entitled *Philosophize This*, comprehensively explains the thoughtful parameters behind the philosophies that emerged by a multitude of thinkers throughout the history of the world, provided a commentary on Simone De Beauvoir’s book *The Second Sex* (1949) which is considered as the catalogue of feminism. West argues that “feminism is one of the most massive liberation movements in the history of the world”, his statement displays how the hallmark of feminism is liberty, that if we were to dissect the elements that constitute its pillars, it would be imbedded with a strive for equality and divested of misandry, for feminism is accompanied by a faulty bigotry that defines it as a movement revolving obliquely around hating men.

The latter conviction has been discussed in Simone de Beauvoir’s *The Second Sex*, which aimed at exploring the otherness of women, under the introduction segment, the author analyzes how women were deemed ‘the other’ and how the scope of focus was dislocated; instead of emphasizing on the atrocities committed against women, it shifted towards twirling around men and how their eminence was cemented beneath women’s ‘submissiveness’ that shielded it. henceforth, an accomplishment of feminist values would

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jeopardize their elevated stance. She says: “if we are to gain understanding,....we must discard the vague notions of superiority, inferiority, equality which have hitherto corrupted every discussion of the subject and start afresh” (35). This statement sheds lights on how things do not always exist on two sides of the same spectrum, sometimes each of them exists in a spectrum of its own; misogamy does not serve as a prelude to feminism, it never has.

The American actor Emma Watson who is also an ambassador of the United Nations under a campaign called *HeForShe*, delivered a speech regarding gender equality in which she said:

and, the more I spoke about feminism, the more I realized that fighting for women’s rights has too often become synonymous with man-hating. If there is one thing I know for certain, it is that this has to stop. For the record, feminism by definition is the belief that men and women should have equal rights and opportunities. It is the theory of political, economic and social equality of the sexes (Emma Watson at the HeForShe Campaign 2014 - Official UN Video).

In the same line of thought, in an article entitled "What Is Feminism" that was written by Amber Pariona; a freelance writer, translator and an English teacher who in one of her articles published by *worldAtlas* website defines Feminism as “an ideological and political movement that seeks equality and equity for women in all aspects, including social, political, personal, and economic realms. This movement recognizes that inequalities occur based on class, gender, physical and mental ability, sex, race, and sexuality” (“what is feminism”). The author recognizes that the mishandlings that women have been subjugated to were gender-biased, that their social stance, political voice and economic welfare were undermined deliberately by the hierarchical order of the society where patriarchy resides at the top of the pyramid.

This corresponds with what Virginia Woolf; a British writer who is deemed as one of the most notable advocates and pioneers of feminism who provided philosophically significant notions that shaped our modern society regarding gender equality including

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women's lack of equal education and opportunities within society overall, said that there seemed to be "two sexes in the mind corresponding to the two sexes in the body" (54), her testimony underlined how being acknowledged was granted by sex rather than potential.

With all that has been denoted hitherto, one can derive a conclusion out of all of their definitions of the term feminism, that this movement's sole enemy has always been the patriarchal system that is universally defined as men holding more power as well as advantage in respect with social, political, economic privileges. In context of feminism, it can be defined as a "social system that is male-centered, male-identified and male-controlled" (Narsaria, Para.1), "a cultural reposition" and a "a systematic bias against women" (*What Is the Patriarchy? Feminism and Social Constructs*, Para.8). In other words, its roots were firmly planted within the system especially during the twentieth century.

Hence, the aim of feminism was annihilating sexism and not creating an alternative form of it that uphold an emphasis on 'hating men'. It is common knowledge that patriarchy created an unsound discrepancy between men and women; it provided the oppressive treatment endured by the latter with the legitimacy needed which was what ultimately hastened the inevitable change that was accomplished through this women's movement.

### **1.2.1. Ecofeminism**

During the years that preceded feminism, people in the early twentieth-century were prostrated before a hierarchical order of society; despite it being labeled as one of the most inventive as well as progressive eras in the history, they were still living in a rudimentary stage of 'civilization'; one that lacked social awareness of the social maladies that threatened the stability of the infrastructure that composed society, but after the palpable changes that were brought by feminism, a new distinctive era began, one where the previously mentioned social awareness spread its roots deeper in an unprecedented way which enabled an envisage of yet another drastically transformative future to be unveiled.

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Seamlessly, Ecofeminism was a movement that has furthermore promoted the rumination over the processes that have been plagued within society which notoriously created dualisms within the social construction such as the adversity between men and women, nature and civilization as well as subjects and objects. When Ecofeminism was introduced by the French philosopher Françoise d'Eaubonne in her book entitled *Feminism or Death* in 1974, it provided people with another revolutionary movement redolent of a story foretold by the feminist advocates.

An examination of the word “Ecofeminism” components shows that not all is unfairly judged by the cover; in this case its labels are its very definition, they provide an insight into its identity; being composed of ecology and feminism, it implies the existence of an intersection drawn between nature and women, it displays that there is a common chord that interlinks the two; one that once explained, its dissection will demonstrate their interconnectedness and relatedness. The term has been the subject of inquiry and research by a variety of thinkers who were prompted to explain it and its surrounding vagueness, amongst them is the feminist philosopher and Professor Alicia H. Puleo.

Her published article "What is Ecofeminism" casts a light on how it is “a meeting between feminism and ecology” (27). She then further elaborates by adding that it is “an attempt to outline a new utopian horizon, addressing the environmental issue from the categories of patriarchy, androcentrism, care, sexism and gender” (30). Puleo’s words are suggestive of how the issues elaborately caused in nature; its exploitation and objectifying; how it was valued based on the economic profit that it beholds rather than the values it reflects is a chronicle that follows how women were subjected to the same mishandling, that both of them were trapped within the confines of the cultural androcentricism that reinforced the supremacy of civilization at the expense of nature. Western rationality at that time immensely stressed on how development is contingent on an abrupt detachment from nature.

Nasrullah Mambrol in his "Literary Theory and Criticism" article describes it using words that emphasize on the inferiority of ecology and the supremacy of ‘culture’; he says

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“the more closely associated with nature non-European peoples and women were considered to be, the more ‘inherently’ inferior they were” (3). Inferiority is yet again attached to a side of another dualism, playing an active role in the destruction of nature is what was believed to alter society.

The aim of ecofeminism was henceforth to shed light on how life on earth with all of its forms contributed in creating a balance; one that results in an exacerbation of existing problems and serves as an onset of a multitude of festerous consequences once meddled with. In that same line of thought, this movement’s core objective was to restore the value that was incipiently placed on the cultural as well as the biological diversity. Ecofeminists strived to show how differences enriched life on earth rather than providing an alibi that justifies the abusive attitude of those who were deemed as the dominant group over the dominated one, this is what is referred to by social Darwinists as the survival of the fittest; that the strong species are supposed to grow stronger on the expense of the ‘weakest’ and defenseless ones.

Laila Fariha Zein and Adib Rifqi Setiawan explained in their article "A General Overview of Ecofeminism" that “the ecofeminist theory asserts that a feminist perspective of ecology does not place women in the dominant position of power, but rather calls for an egalitarian, collaborative society in which there is no one dominant group” (1). This explains how the previously mentioned balanced is merely acquired through equity and cooperation and through highlighting the similarities rather than emphasizing on the differences between those dualisms.

In an encapsulation of what has been said, Kathryn Miles behooves herself to provide a general overview of the term by saying that,

“Ecofeminism uses the basic feminist tenets of equality between genders, a revaluing of non-patriarchal or nonlinear structures ... ecofeminism adds both a commitment to the environment and an awareness of the associations made between women and nature. Specifically, this philosophy emphasizes the ways both nature and women are treated by patriarchal (or male-centred) society.

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Ecofeminists examine the effect of gender categories in order to demonstrate the ways in which social norms exert unjust dominance over women and nature. The philosophy also contends that those norms lead to an incomplete view of the world, and its practitioners advocate an alternative worldview that values the earth as sacred, recognizes humanity's dependency on the natural world, and embraces all life as valuable". (para. 1)

According to Miles, The outline of the ecofeminist tenets is coordinated with those of feminism by the common factor that is endeavoring to achieve equality through the social change that implies reconstructing the formulas that govern the social paradigm and its related patterns and challenges that feminism aimed at extripating.

### **1.2.2. The Challenges Faced by Feminism**

Wangari Maathai; a former member of Kenya's national assembly who has been known for her large contribution in preserving the ecology in Kenya under the green belt movement and whose feminist orientations were projected in her activism once said: "the higher you go, the fewer women are" (quoted by Ngozi). Her statement is but a plausibly valid confirmation to how women indeed did not occupy prominent positions like those which were reserved for men and it was very unlikely for a woman to have a position through which she can rectify the restrictive social parameters. This was deliberately executed through the handicaps that were tailored to paralyze their way to progress; ones that feminism aimed at extripating.

The latter has been put into effect amidst the social context by the means of entrapping women within their own identity and rendering it more of a limitation rather than an identification, besides eroding their subjectivity and disabusing them of their sense of self to become mere objects. The literary scene has not been devoid of such inadequate juxtapositions sketched through a corpus of books highlighted by a highly detectable visibility of the implications of these characterizations written by male writers who deemed themselves well-rounded with what 'a true woman' was or was ought to be.

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Male authors during the late nineteenth century and the beginning of twentieth century adopted Karl Max's notion "They cannot represent themselves they must be represented" (62) that he aimed at the Orientals and in a committal manner applied it to women. Virginia Woolf is one of the authors who beheld themselves obligated to comment on this new upsurge of a cultivated need to represent the 'other' by saying "wherever one looked, men thought about women and thought differently" (20). Henceforth, men's distorted perspectives in writing about women created a semblance that wholly contradicted the reality.

Similarly, Simon De Beauvoir in her thought-provoking book *The Second Sex* quoted a feminist from the seventeenth century named Poulain De la Barre in her articulation: "all that has been written about women by men should be suspect, for the men are at once judge and party to the lawsuit" (9); adding that "being men, those who have made and compiled the laws have favored their own sex, and jurists have elevated these laws into principles" (quoted by De Beauvoir, 9). After that, she ascribes further meaning to De la Barre's notion by stating that this innate aptitude to draw a portrait of another does nothing but "conceal(s) a desire for self-justification" (De Beauvoir, 9).

Continually, men impersonating women by metaphorically wearing their skins can be acutely metaphorized through the character of the black servant in Frantz Fanon's book *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952) in which the former's attempts to assimilate in his white master's household by wearing a white mask ultimately makes him realize that a white mask cannot cover a dark skin. In other words, male writers' of the twentieth century paltry attempts to write from the point of view of a woman did not hide the carefully fabricated social perceptions that managed to float on the surface, the only way for the truth to prevail was dependent on women; that they attain the required tools to paint a self-portrait. But female publications at that time were deemed a disgrace to their household and society on general, unless they published their works under a male pseudonym such as the Bronte sisters (Emily and Charlotte) or anonymously such as the American poet Emily Dickinson.



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This is what Virginia Woolf was prompted to refer to as “anonymity runs in their blood” (30) to explain how women writers they felt compelled to be unknown.

In an article written by Cynthia Griffin Wolff entitled "A Mirror for Men: Stereotypes of Women in Literature", she sheds light on how the literary works in the early twentieth century were largely dedicated to the “masculine identity” (206) on its own. In some books it was regarding male characters surfing the high waves of economical prosperity or engaging in a journey of self-discovery while at other times, they were imposing their ethical guidelines on the women around them. The feminine identity on the other hand was represented in a way that solely accommodated the former one, it usually narrated the stories of women being subjected to forced marriages, having to abide by the rules that governed the essential codes that dictated how to be ‘a proper lady’ like those which Diana and Minnie May Barry in *Anne of Green Gables* were forced to adapt to by their mother. Wolff, who throughout her lifetime has written a multitude of biographies of many well distinguished writers, in her incipiently mentioned article wrote that the

characterizations of women are dominated by what one might call the male voice. The definition of women’s most serious problems and the proposed solutions to these problems are really, though often covertly, tailored to meet the needs of fundamentally masculine problems. To a greater or lesser extent, then, this kind of feminine characterization must be termed prejudiced or stereotyped because it tends to always emphasize one aspect of character while leaving out others of equal or greater importance. To be more explicit, the bias is carefully chosen so that certain types of masculine behavior (toward women and toward the world in general) might be justified (207).

Her formulation of the matter can be illustrated by Josiah Bounderby’s mother in *Hard Times* written by Charles Dickens, the dimensions that her character stretched to were limited to the fact that she abandoned him as an infant, she was merely depicted throughout the novel as the woman who left him, every other facet of her personality was overshadowed by the latter.

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In the second part of the quote, the author sheds light on how when a female character dared to defy the social norms, she created a masculine problem, as if the entire male self estimation was hanged by a chord that was incessantly wavering based on how women acted or spoke, that their actions were either adding fuel to or taking away from how men; mirrored in how male characters felt about themselves. This is prevalent in Henry James' novels such as *Daisy Miller* which was predominated by the theme of a free-minded woman meeting a predetermined doomed fate because she did not fit within the image of an 'ideal woman' at that time, despite the fact that she alongside her lover Giovanelli were accomplices taking the same course of action; both of them were exposed to the Roman fever but she was the only one burdened with the weight of the consequences, eventually she becomes nothing but a moral to a story and he carries on with his life intactfully.

Moreover, her good traits were eclipsed deliberately; her wittiness, her free spirit, her well outspoken nature, her recklessness was what stood out of all, it was the determining factor in creating a distinction between what the author categorized as "the virtuous woman and the sensuous woman" (207).

She makes a proclamation that women who were 'bad' exposed the submerged male inherent tendencies such as the need for control like Hindley Earnshaw's abusive attitude towards his sister Catherine in *Wuthering Heights* because she was one of a different stock and did not comply to his demands, and those who were 'good' gained respect from men by submitting to them (208) such as Hindley's wife because she was tone-deaf to his drinking and gambling issues. It was what the author referred to as "a moral evaluation" (209) to women, which seemed to be explicitly provided through a precise process of deciphering everything they do.

It was a time where women in literature were sketched in a manner that showed them competing for men and not for power such as Rachel and Mrs. Blackpool competing over Stephen Blackpool in *Hard Times*. Wolff on this regard says

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The relationship between women and men is treated as if it were the only meaningful relationship that a woman has; thus her relationship with other women, with children, and with society in general are significantly diminished. What is more, while women are seen as subsidiary parts of essentially masculine problems, men are seldom seen as subsidiary parts of feminine problems” (206).

Her statement is supported by Thomas Gradgrind’s passive wife in the same book, who lacked presence as well as essence. Her relationship with her children lacked intimacy for their lives’ decisions and entire existence were merely interlinked with their father’s ideals and what he deemed a rational approach to life ought to be. Cynthia Griffin Wolff after that concludes by saying that “those are women– not as they are, but as *men wished they were*” (218).

The challenges that were plagued within the social context henceforward, continually resonated with the formerly mentioned literary instances, women’s stance in society was further cemented beneath the heavy weight of an excruciating reality that could not be easily evaded. Since antiquity, the evolution under which the expansion of our limited understanding of the world around us and its ongoing processes has been largely indebted to categorizing the world; through narrowing it down to a sequence of elements that share mutual characteristics then drawing a distinction line in order to separate those that did not fit within that spectrum. Many philosophers throughout the history of the world provided distinctive theories that sometimes yielded the same results with infinitesimal variances, in their theories regarding the subject and object dualism, they generally claimed that they were fixed entities and no one can be the other.

Kadir Çüçen who is a professor in the department of philosophy in Bursa, Turkey wrote an article regarding this dualism. He begins his abstract by making a reference to Descartes’ idea which denoted that “the subject is a thinking thing that is not extended, and the object is an extended thing which does not think.” (“Heidegger's Reading of Descartes' Dualism: The Relation of Subject and Object”, Para.1). Based on his conceptualization, the

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object lacks the ability of thinking, and consequently is incapable of acting as an authoritative, so an object according to him cannot be a subject and vice versa.

For Simone de Beauvoir however, subjectivity is not a fixed trait that remains unchanged, she did not believe in the existence of an absolute subject. Our worldly experience knowingly draws a thin line where us being subjects and simultaneously objects are in a constant shift. people can be both; subjects in their own narrative and objects in that of the others but women were stripped out of their subjectivity by men; of the self that makes the choices and has an individual experience of its own; henceforth creating an identity schizophrenia.

...this is what is called objectifying a person, Simone De Beauvoir would say that when you look at the history of the world anytime, whether it was a ruthless dictator, an imperialistic regime, anytime people have been enslaved the party response so before enslaving them has systematically removed their subjectivity. They are objectified (West)

Rather than being deliverer, women became something to be delivered, rather being than a decision maker, they became nothing but a decision to be made and rather than being an individual; they became a social product of the oppression exercised upon it.

According to Aisha Mathews, “gender essentialism” (4) is the guiding force from which this dualism was extracted. It is what creates the association of women with descendent characteristics which later became to be labeled as feminine ones whilst men are associated with transcendentalist (masculine) ones. The former was sentenced to a life dictated by the latter based on the argument that they were inherently weaker. In this sense, femininity is “a social construct and not an unchangeable essence or a biological destiny” (Kruks, 94). She adds by saying that Beauvoir in her book *The Second Sex* “sketches an account of the gendering of subjectivity” (107) because when one of the two genders is naturally privileged, they “prevail over the other and undertake to keep it into subjection” (101)

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The abstract declarations that have been made by Aristotle when he said that “the female is a female by virtue of a certain lack of qualities” “we should regard the female nature afflicted with a natural defectiveness” as well as by Michelet when he said “woman, the relative being” and Benda in his Rapport d’Uriel said; “the body of men makes sense in itself quite apart from that of woman, whereas the latter seems wanting in significance by itself... man can think of himself without woman. She cannot think of herself without man” (quoted by De Beauvoir, 3) are what de Beauvoir noted and aimed to examine in her book *The Second Sex* henceforward explain why such false claims were made and what made them seem so plausible to those thinkers in the first place and men generally.

In her book, she affirms that women were indeed submissive because they were attached to men through residence, housework, financial stability, social standing ... etc (7). She compares this bond between them to that of a slave with his master; it was so powerful that it became a second nature, for according to her

master and slave, also, are united by a reciprocal need, in this case economic, which does not liberate the slave. In the relation of master to slave the master does not make a point of the need that he has for the other; he has in his grasp the power of satisfying this need through his own action; whereas the slave, in his dependant condition, his hope and fear, is quite conscious of the need he has for his master. Even if the need is at bottom equally urgent for both, it always works in favor of the oppressor and against the oppressed (7-8)

To further navigate this correlation and show how the objectifying of a person takes place, Martha Nussbaum identified seven features of the enslavement of women (cited by Evangelia). The first element she identifies is instrumentality through which women are deemed as mere means to an end, in other words they are instruments to be used, following it by the denial of autonomy; this is exemplified by the marginalization of women and their opinions when critical decisions were made by men, she then adds that they were also objectified through being seen as rigid entities; ones that do not evolve or have agency of their own, this is what she refers to as inertness. The fourth characteristic

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is fungibility in which women were seen as items to be exchanged; accordingly, they were also something to be owned and sold under the fifth label ownership, the last two tools are viability and lack of subjectivity, the former denotes violating them and their boundaries according to need and the later is stripping them of any sense of subjective experience to ensure that they remain enslaved to the chains that have been imposed on them (cited by Evangelia).

Henceforth, this need to repress and misrepresent the other commingled with the preexisting process of evaluating them based on eschew principals that substantially orbited around profiting from their usability had to be shed and recreated in order to align in perfect synchronicity with the (eco) feminist objectives; mainly those of heading towards annihilating those discrepancies that festered and fostered in the twentieth century.

### **1.2.3. Ecofeminism as an Extension of Feminist Principles**

As the term itself suggests, there is an undeniable cross-pollination of ideas between the two movements, in fact ecofeminism is an extension to the feminist principles that marginally differ in terms of the dimensions Feminism was extended to include and the angles that it covered. Whilst both of them are multifaceted (feminism provided an in depth exploration of women's discrepant stance in society to that of men whilst ecofeminism's scope of inquiry was more dedicated towards unraveling the relationship between women's oppression and nature's exploitation), notwithstanding, they were aligned pieces fused together that operated in tandem devoted to achieving gender equality.

The American professor Nancy R. Howell was one of those who were rather intrigued by this realm of investigation and provided valuable information that further elaborated on this phenomenon. She wrote in her an article "Ecofeminism: What One Needs to Know" that indeed there seem to be an interplay between women and ecology. She states that:

ecofeminism is concerned with connections between the domination of women and the domination of nature. Although ecofeminism is a diverse movement,

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ecofeminist theorists share the presupposition that social transformation is necessary for ecological survival, that intellectual transformation of dominant modes of thought must accompany social transformation, that nature teaches nondualistic and nonhierarchical systems of relation that are models for social transformation of values, and that human and cultural diversity are values in social transformation (231)

She emphasizes on how social transformation is an integral part of the well being of nature, and the latter itself seems to be the cure needed to heal the social impediments, symbolized by what Warren G. Harding referred to in his 1920 presidential campaign slogan “a return to normalcy” (Wallenfeldt, Para.1), a return to the inherent benevolent values that nature provided especially the factitude of living within an unrestricted environment devoid of hierarchy that grants one freedom and acceptance were immensely needed.

She then makes another observation regarding that social change by saying that it must direct the values towards a realm that is defined by equality and reciprocal relations. The author after that comments on that notion by saying that mutuality is the best suited to be the alternative to power-based relations (233), because according to her patriarchy is the hindrance that made progress seem to be far reached. She says that “within power-biased hierarchies, domination and expectation of humans along the lines of ... gender ... jeopardize ecological survival and human well being. Human and ecological survival and justice are linked with nurturing the interdependence of diverse humans” (235). Here she points how the interdependence of women from men and nature from ‘civilization’, that only once these elements are presented in their own light; not eclipsed by and not in a constant comparison with the other that both humans and ecology truly triumph.

In the same wave length, Alicia H. Puleo thinks that the existence of cultural trends that favored the replacement of natural realm by modernity is largely attributed to blindingly abiding by the costumes dictated by the modernized western vision of ‘reason’. People in the early twentieth century felt compelled to embrace it as the new system of living; she says that “the aim is to construct an ecological culture of equality together rather

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than to revere any custom just because it is part of the cultural tradition” (32). What she means here is that culture has to be reverted to benefit ecology and not to be used as an alibi that justifies its annihilation; just like gender roles had to be demolished to promote women’s prosperity and being further reinforced through ingraining an innate aptitude of submission in women and cultivating traits of blind obedience.

Accordingly, one of the images that strongly suggests the existing juxtaposition between the formerly mentioned dualisms is the process of objectifying women and nature and how both ecofeminism and feminism proportionally aimed to redeem the ramifications that stemmed from that, through relinquishing the balance of power to alter from an overabundance of self defeating roles to reclaiming of their subjectivity through fostering a sense of autonomy.

Howell advertently draws attention to how just as feminists were advocating for women being perceived as a subject rather than an object that yield to the demands of men, ecofeminists shared the same objective, they aspired to make people see nature for what it was rather than being an object to be used for its usefulness. This is what ecofeminists refer to as “a shift from instrumental value to intrinsic value in assessing nature” (Howell, 234); that once the latter is achieved, the blessings of the ecological equality are naturally extended to gender equality. By examining both of them, people come in terms with the unavoidable importance in how both avail in maintaining an ecological balance, the only way for that to happen is if we “build an ecological culture of equality” (234), that we make this new culture the basis of our nature from which we derive our actions hence, reformulate the misconceptions, roles and spheres that were attached to women in the twentieth century.

### **1.3. Women in the Twentieth Century**

After decades of women adapting to socially created ideologies and cultural dynamics as their nature and submitting to their shared doomed fates, it is notable that by the beginning of the twentieth century, they were at last linearly progressing towards



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developing a conscious understanding that in order for change to take place, formulas had to be changed.

### 1.3.1. Women's Education in the Twentieth Century

Accordingly, they were supplied with an awareness whereby they realized that their salvation and emancipation will merely be granted through instilling profound educational assets that will mould the needed awareness in other women within the liberal paradigm, that their endeavor to achieve an equal education would be the instrument through which they could channel their own thoughts and transform the course of their history. Despite the fact that by the middle of the twentieth century they have built the first glimpses of a social ascendancy, their education was still immensely imbedded with a multitude of submerged forms of segregation and was held ransom to the educational policies which were vibrant with patriarchal imprints.

To trace the evolution under which women's education has been reshaped, an examination of the historical as well as cultural background of the previous centuries, especially the nineteenth one is central in understanding what created this continual sequence of aligned events. The work of the Swiss philosopher and one of the founding members of the enlightenment Jean-Jacques Rousseau in the eighteenth century in his book entitled *Emile or on Education* regarding female education said that

the whole education of women ought to be relative to men; to please them, to be useful to them, to make themselves loved and honored by them, to educate them when young, to care for them when grown, to council them, to console them, and to make life agreeable and sweet to them— these are the duties of women at all times, and what should be taught to them from their infancy (365)

This is what Lucy E. Bailey and Karen Graves in their journal article entitled "Gender and Education" described as "gender as a constellation of socially constructed, malleable norms and expectations commonly associated with biological sex" (688). As Rousseau's formulation suggested, the courses that women received were of a rudimentary

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nature, they were taught the basics of writing and reading; not for the sake of learning, but to teach them to take care of their future children. They were also taught the social etiquettes through a curriculum that was endorsed with an emphasis on the “feminine accomplishments” (Jordan, 440) such as needlework, culinary classes, dressmaking ...etc, all of these were but what Ellen Jordan referred to in her essay’s title as a process of “Making Good Wives and Mothers” disguised behind the label of education, whereas the true intentions were that they were well-equipped with the necessary skills to lead a ‘successful’ marital life.

In response to such proclamations, Mary Wollstonecraft; an unconventional woman who has lived in a conventional era, was one of the philosophers who questioned tradition and ruminated over the infrastructural organizations of the hierarchical order, she led a retaliation against Rousseau by pleading to provide women with an equal quality of education, explaining that their blind obedience is but a fruit of their long nurtured ignorance, in her book *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* she said “strengthen the female mind by enlarging it, and there will be an end, to blind obedience” (30) adding that “contending for the rights of women, my main argument is built on this simple principle that if she is not prepared by education to become the companion of man, she will stop the progress of knowledge, for truth must be common to all, or it will be inefficacious with respect to its influence or general practice” (7).

Virginia Woolf seamlessly in her *A Room of One’s Own*, describes the limited education that women have received and which constituted a large proportion of their upbringing as one that has been “polished for centuries by good teaching and good feeding” (55). These writers whose firm conviction that education was a “site of transformative potential” (Bailey and Graves, 683) and whose contributions in the feminist discourse gave firm foundations to the feminists in the mid-twentieth century and what they needed to base on a new field of research called gender and education.

Advocates of this realm of investigation believed that there were some aspects of education that “exhibit the most pronounced gender disparities” (Jacobs, 153). Lucy E.

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Bailey and Karen Graves say that although the existing stratifications between the two genders have been under study prior to the 1960s, “the strands of gendered inquiry did not coalesce into a sustained focus of study until the mid twentieth century. Scholars generally situate the development of the interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary study of “gender and education” during the 1960s and 1970s” (693). They add that “during that vibrant period of social activism” the claims concerning women’s intellectual inferiority were changed temporally (693).

In the same article, Bailey and Graves claim that what hastened this newly fostered devotion to this paradigm was because the “gendered ideologies are structured into the very fibers of educational institutions, pedagogies, interactions, relations and policies” (696). These gendered ideologies were what created “women’s and girls’ perceived inferiority, their historical exclusions from schooling, male-dominated teaching and leadership, curricular biases and erasure of women’s accomplishments, and schooling practices that constrained female students’ development and opportunities” (683). Moreover, they argue that the designated proportion of power which was determined by race, class and gender entailed their value and placement within society that eventually shaped their “experience, identities and roles” (696).

All of these findings prompted the feminists to advocate for “change in policy and practice based on principles common to liberal feminism—that women, like men, hold inalienable rights to pursue freedom with the support of a just state, which includes rights to participate fully in educational pursuits” (694).

The twentieth century has indeed been defined by the educational expansion of women, notwithstanding, their increased visibility in the educational setting and their capacity of pursuing a higher education did not shield them from the unilateral male prejudices. Andrea Hamilton, in an essay published in *Omnilogos* website said that although women’s access to education was amplified by the late nineteenth and early twentieth century and that their enrollment in and admission to schools and colleges has largely increased in numbers, yet “The increasing visibility of women at all levels of the

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education system, however, did not signify that all barriers for girls and women in the educational world had been surpassed" ("School Girls and College Women: Female Education in the nineteenth and Early twentieth Centuries", Para.36).

The United States' most elite schools for example denied women admission until the 1970s. Prior to that, they adopted a men only admission policy. These eight universities, commonly known as the "ivy league" schools are Brown, Columbia, Cornell, Dartmouth, Harvard, Pennsylvania, Princeton, and Yale Universities.

Mary Wollstonecraft in her vindication said that "women must be allowed to found their virtue on knowledge, which is scarcely possible unless they be educated by the same pursuits as men" (200), the value placed on the education of women was hitherto reaffirmed by Sydney J. Harris when she said "The whole purpose of education is to turn mirrors into windows", that instead of merely looking at a mirror and seeing one's reflection and current state, education opens windows of opportunities and places that are yet to be reached and explored especially for women since men's education was only an asset, but that of women was a necessary prerequisite for their long craved salvation from the patriarchal constraints.

### **1.3.2. Women's Mental Health in the Twentieth Century**

In a way that spanned beyond their control and following the same tradition that has been long governing their education, the historiography of women's mental health during the twentieth century resonated with the same hierarchical bigotry that was incessantly hovering at the edge of their periphery. The way that women's mental issues were being dealt with has been documented in a plethora of autobiographies, books, articles, diaries and journals that exposed the physically as well as the mentally excruciating methods that have been adapted to allegedly 'cure' women from these ailments.

The hallmark of that era henceforth, was guided by a non-conceptual thinking that stemmed from a lack of understanding as well as recognition of mental health's problems besides confusing them with insanity; seamlessly, their discernment was handicapped by

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the “challenges of untangling biological factors from social and cultural ones” (Hirshbein, 1). The prescribed cures often buoyed between two spectrums; those which have been orchestrated by methods such as forceful hospitalization combined with the rest cure and those that were categorized under physically anguishing ones, exemplified by forced neurosurgery, electroconvulsive therapy and insulin shock therapy. Both of these methods hitherto merged into becoming procedures that aimed at containing and controlling this notorious ‘hysteria’ in women rather than properly treating them accordingly.

According to Victoria Potenza, a historian whose primary focus is women’s history and their mental well-being, wrote in a thesis entitled *Her-sterics vs Hysterics Reflecting on Women and Mental Health Treatment in the United States; 1800-Present* that within the psychological lexicon, women were mistreated and misdiagnosed in the twentieth century (1). It is agreed upon by the entirety of the historians whose scholarly articles tackled this paradigm of research that the formerly mentioned criteria exacerbated women’s mental afflictions which were mainly postpartum depression and post-traumatic stress disorder as well as their accompanying accumulated symptoms by dismissively labeling them as hysterical or maniacal episodes. Formulated in the late nineteenth century and adopted in the twentieth one, the rest cure which was coined by the American neurologist Dr. Silas Weir Mitchell predominated the psychological province and aimed at healing the formerly mentioned maladies.

This cure “was considered the best treatment for women suffering from depression and nervous behavior. In order to restore physical and mental health, the patient would be confined to a specific room for two to three months at a time. They would not be allowed to leave their bed, or even to move much unless instructed.” (Wolf). Kerry Cardoza, a journalist from Chicago wrote in her article entitled "Silenced by the Rest Cure: A History of the Psychological Treatment for Nervous Women" that at that time, it was believed to be efficient in treating “female maladies of hysteria and neurasthenia ... whose symptoms included depression, insomnia, anxiety, and headache”, adding that female patients were referred to as “invalids,” or “hysterical,” and recommended that a hardened nurse be

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assigned to each female patient so that they would not get accustomed to having their every desire met and possibly start neglecting their household duties”.

After that she further elaborates on the reasons why there was such a colossal emphasis paid to the restriction of women’s freedom by saying that “It seems that the rest cure for women was intended to reinforce traditional gender roles and keep women in their respected sphere, and had little respect for the woman’s mental health or feelings on the treatment”. Hence, based on her articulation, the rest cure was obliquely a facet to sexism imbedded in faulty diagnosis.

One of Mitchell’s patients was the American author Charlotte Perkins Gilman, who was of those writers who exposed the vicious unspoken-of aspect of the cure that she was prescribed for her postpartum depression, the latter is defined by *Merriam Webster* website as “a mood disorder involving intense psychological depression that typically occurs within one month after giving birth”. In her semiautobiographical book entitled *The Yellow Wallpaper*, “wherein the protagonist, confined to the bedroom, slowly descends into madness” (Cardoza, Para.5), Gilman thence exposes the malicious effects that it had on her mental state and how instead of ameliorating it, it was additionally aggravated.

In the same line of thoughts, Sylvia Plath the American novelist, was also a victim to the misdiagnosis in the twentieth century, she had reportedly struggled with clinical depression whose lingering unattended ramifications prompted her to commit suicide. Her novel *The Bell Jar* which was “a thinly veiled auto-biography of Plath’s young adulthood” (Hernandez, Para.5), twirled around the institutionalization of the protagonist Esther and her subjugation to electroconvulsive therapy; the same one that the author herself endured.

A 1977 article from the *American Journal of Psychiatry* stated that “the damaging effects of ECT on the brain are thoroughly documented. There has not been a single detailed report of a normal human brain after shock.” These miscellaneous cures were worse than the diseases themselves (Hernandez, Para.3). Plath and Gilman were but a fraction of the whole; they were but a single voice hiding behind masses of women whose involuntary admission into asylums was justified by and attributed to “insane by unknown

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reasons” (Pouba and Tianen, 101). Physicians and neurologists in the twentieth century, instead of viewing women as singular individuals with their own cases to be examined solitarily whilst taking account of the biological factors that altered their states, they were instead generalized and the treatment that they have received was utmostly gender motivated and biased.

The hallmark of the unilateral practices which have been utilized in treating women’s mental health are inextricably defined by the condensed inhuman conduct that was specifically utilized by white slave owners towards their slaves, extensively on black women. The latter were sexually harassed such as the African American author Harriet Jacobs, divested from their basic human rights, poverty-stricken and ill-treated prior to the civil war years in the United States of America. During their enslavement, they were by default prone to developing mental illnesses since they were incapacitated of the self awareness needed to identify the indicators of their deteriorating mental health.

Consequently, when slavery was abolished in the US through the 13<sup>th</sup> amendment to the constitution, their descendents during the twentieth century exhibited severe symptoms of intergenerational trauma and post traumatic stress disorder. According to Michael J. Halloran in his article “African American Health and Posttraumatic Slave Syndrome: A Terror Management Theory Account” published in 2019, he labels this phenomenon as “a cultural trauma”, one that is “generally defined as a condition or syndrome that occurs when a collective has been subject to an unbearable event or experience that undermines their sense of group identity, values, meaning and purpose, or their cultural worldviews” (49).

The resulting hallucinations as well as delusions for those women were limited to the insulin shock therapy which is operated through injecting “high levels of insulin into patients to cause convulsions and a coma. After several hours, the living dead would be revived from the coma, and thought cured of their madness.” (Fabian, Para.15) According to the same source, there have been numerous cases of amnesia in women who underwent

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this form of therapy. Moving with fluidity, women's maltreatment has followed the same blueprint and reintroduced itself, this time however, it was in correlation to that of nature.

### **1.4. Women's Oppression and Nature's Exploitation**

Since antiquity, the human understanding of the underlying factors that shaped our modern times; those that avail in fathoming what was created by nature and what was deliberately nurtured, have been colossally indebted to the process of dissecting the past; of attempting to discern whether or not certain phenomenon were born out of an arbitrary sequence of circumstances or they have a cause and effect relation with another one. The present sometimes is but a story either foretold or fostered in the past.

In this light, in order to locate the first traces of whence the subjugation of women and the depletion of nature's resources primarily appeared and stemmed from, one has to revisit the accounts of the past; to when industrialization caused an upheaval in the conceptualization of progress and was adopted as the guiding force and the standard of the ongoing 'social progress' by the systematic patriarchy during the twentieth century.

The western ideology at that time, blindly guided by the enlightenment under what was called the age of reason, to women and ecology was more of a curse and less of a blessing. Whilst it had remarkably ameliorated the quality of life by infusing it with an insurmountable amount of welfare, an example of that would be the introduction of the railways that facilitated transportation, it increased the expense of destroying green ideas. People at that time, distracted by those accommodations, paid no regard to what they had to give in exchange for that comfort. One of the first thinkers who addressed this issue was the American philosopher and naturalist Henry David Thoreau.

In his book entitled *Walden*, he explained that society was unknowingly anchored to civilization, that when people divested/abdicated themselves from the "curtains that nature provided" (51) and subconsciously adopted that newly found monoculture as their nature, it entailed that they give life for it. Inadvertently, in their quest to make their lives easier, they were robbed out of the things that gave them a sense of living.



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Alicia H. Puleo summarizes Riechmann's theory by narrowing it down to the "...unseen destruction of the fabric of life that sustain us" (29). Thoreau further elaborates by writing that "the cost of a thing is the amount of what I will call life which is required to be exchanged for it, immediately or in the long run" (25-26). In other words, everything comes with a cost. Here, once the blessings of modernity were cast upon society, women and nature were placed in the front lines as victims to the male monopolization of culture.

To further explore this existing relationship between the oppression of women and the exploitation of ecology, a discernment of what serves as a conjecture and linkage between them has to be made. Anne Primavesi, an expert in theology and a researcher in the realm of ecological enquiries, in her 1991 book *The Part for The Whole? An Ecofeminist Enquiry*, hints in the title that ecology was but a subordinate; but a part of something 'grander', in this case civilization. She further explains that the relation between nature and women is their mutual characterization as 'the other'; being labeled as the inessential and disposable. She says: "ecofeminism stresses the connections between women and nature on the grounds that nature, in our distanced, masculine-scientific culture, has also been made 'other', something essentially different from the dominant human male who has an unlimited right to exploit 'mother' earth" (42).

Nancy R. Howell, an American professor at Saint Paul school of theology in Missouri wrote her article "Ecofeminism: What One Needs to Know" as derived from Primavesi's notion. She provides an in depth investigation of this correlation by saying that this relationship manifests in the 'cultural conventions' that created imbalanced dualisms within the society such as subjectivity vs. objectivity, men vs. women, nature vs. culture. She holds that when these are mingled with "a value hierarchy" (234), patterns of behaviors are created as well as assumptions that give privilege to one side of the dualism just because it belongs to a certain category. This explains why there always seems to be an opposer and an opposed, an 'other' and a familiar element.

Another facet that is highly relevant is that of examining this existing relationship based on a socio-economic stance. The asserted male dominance over the natural processes

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and femininity, made both of them slaves to the same master and mere objects to be profited from, sold, controlled and oppressed accordingly. Puleo affirms the latter by saying that the ramifications were overlooked and eclipsed by the patriarchal construction's notion that the means justified the end; women and nature according to them were but cornerstones needed to create the leeways that availed them in climbing the social ladder. Indeed, "natural resources are consumed without taking into account the possibility or impossibility of their renewal" (Puleo 32); their value and importance was determined by how much profit it could bring, all that mattered was "the economic interest involved in environmental devastation" (32). Shiva also agrees that in western ideology anything that did not benefit the society economically was deemed "unproductive" (quoted by Mambrol, 189); therefore they have the needed alibis to abuse it and consume it in a heedless manner.

Nasrullah Mambrol quotes Shiva again adding that "wherever women acted against ecological destruction or/and the threat of atomic annihilation, they immediately became aware of the connection between patriarchal violence against women, other people and nature" (14). In this sense, women felt an underlying relationship connecting them to nature; both were prone to being hitherto subjected to repressiveness and replaced by alternative subjects that prevailed over them which are men and civilization, especially since the latter has been a by-product of the former.

Women's acquired critical awareness and nuanced reflection in ecology's destruction supplied them with a self-consciousness that rendered them aware of the patriarchal violence that has been disguised behind the veil of modernity. They were able to differentiate between and draw conclusions from how the social roles reserved for men and women which have incipiently tightened the noose around women by trapping them in the gender determined spheres, were yet again the cause of gendering nature as well.

This was the common chord that created a meeting point between them; both were equally deemed caregivers, nurturers and inherently inferior. Alicia Puleo explains how women are more interlinked with ecology than men through unraveling how since antiquity, men have been the primary beholders and makers of the things that brought

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destruction upon the world. They created and had access to the weapons used in wars, whilst women essentially claimed the vacancy of looking after the ‘inferior’ creatures like animals, children and nature. She then adds by saying that it explains their natural tendency in protecting what has not been protected. She says: “when these characteristics are complemented with appropriate information and a critical approach to hegemonic discourses, the conditions emerge to awaken their interest in the defense of nature and other beings” (27).

After that, she makes a claim that androcentrism which entails promoting the transcendence of men and placing them at the top of the social ladder on the expense of women through presenting a set of behaviors, cultural orientations that facilitate their prevalence and to ensure that the latter’s stagnate stance within society remains intact

androcentrism is a key concept to understand the ideology of dominion. The androcentric slant of culture comes from the extreme historical bipolarization of the social roles of women and men. In the patriarchal organization, the harshness of and lack of empathy of the warrior and the hunter became the most valued while the attitudes of affection and compassion related to the daily tasks of caring for life were exclusively assigned to women and strongly underestimated (32).

Here she addresses how according to the patriarchal system, empathy was an indicator of inferiority and inability of making critical life decisions that require the intrusion of men armed with their ‘needed’ attributes such as their intensified sense of control to redirect the fate of women, and they making nature productive in the name of forging a greater course for human and natural evolution when in fact they were merely nurturing their sense of eminence through oppressing the former and exploiting the latter.

### **1.5. Conclusion**

In encapsulation of what has been hitherto discussed, feminism’s intricate definition has been provided through abdicating the faulty conceptualization as well as perception of it by demonstrating how it was regarded through color strained lenses; those

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that commingled it with hating men whereas its core objective was achieving equity between the two genders. After that, a thorough examination of its endeavors was provided which sketched the cross pollination of ideas between feminism and ecofeminism, displaying how both movements were purely liberational and aimed at dismantling what composed the patriarchal structure and its practiced injustices within the social context, by alluding to the infrastructure of women's stagnate education and their unattended-to mental well being during the twentieth century which created a submissive attitude that was firmly carved into their affinity. The first chapter henceforth unveiled the common past that has been shared by women for centuries and how their biological differences compared to those of men were accounted for the variance the social expectations as well as limitations that have been placed on them. Seamlessly, the historical contextualization of eco/feminism will serve as an informative prelude to what is yet to be unraveled within the second chapter that will twirl around tracing those elements in the literary context of the concerned novel.

**Chapter Two:**  
**The Tenets of**  
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## **Chapter Two: The Tenets of Feminism in *Anne of Green Gables***

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### **2.1. Introduction**

Predominantly, the second chapter will forthwith twirl around Lucy Maud Montgomery's demonstrativeness of the tenets of feminism within the novel wherewith all that has been theoretically denoted will be further corroborated and exhibited in this present work's literary context. The scope of investigation will initially put the author's mental health under scrutiny by unraveling to what extent were her idiosyncrasies impersonated by the female characters. It will show how women were anchored to gender misassumptions infiltrated by the social inequalities through analyzing how women managed to free themselves from that tangled web of social restrains by the means of finding remedy in nature as well as disburdening their memory of the patriarchal confines through their cultivated imagination, creating an escape as well as a respite from their daunting repetitive daily lives.

### **2.2. The Author's Biography and Implications in the Work**

Lucy Maud Montgomery was a Canadian author who was born in Toronto, Canada, on the 30<sup>th</sup> of November in 1874. She spent the largest part of her life in Prince Edward's Island whence her childhood as well as worldviews were formulated and where she composed the entirety of her literary compositions. Montgomery was one of those notable writers who possessed an indistinguishable talent that gave prominence to her literary career, adorning it with a plethora of distinctive literary genres depicted in 20 novels, 500 poems, 530 short stories and 30 essays ("Lucy Maud Montgomery - Wikipedia" Para.1). Despite her rich corpus of publications, it was her book series entitled *Anne of Green Gables* (1908) which placed her at the center of the literary province since a rudimentary stage of her publishing journey.

Her formerly mentioned collection featured eight installments that she wrote throughout 13 years and which have been translated to more than 30 languages. Its chronicles follow the captivating protagonist Anne Shirley's journey from childhood to

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adulthood as she explores the world around her and dwarfs herself with the enrapturing landscapes of Avonlea.

The first installment of the books' series was adapted in some 13 visual adaptations including movies and series, the latest of which was released in 2017. Lucy Maud Montgomery's success was indebted to the ostentatious manner that she employed in articulating her books and the implicitly imbedded facets of her worldly experience within it that stemmed from her own upbringing.

This unconventional author had an affinity for writing fiction; but it was one that colossally resembled reality. She has extensively mirrored herself in Anne's sanctimonious admiration for nature besides her fertile imagination; for both the writer and the character had an innate aptitude for coloring reality with the brush of their imaginary stories. The correlation existing between them is hitherto displayed throughout the novel in Anne's professional endeavor to excel in her academic pursuits and become a teacher at the Avonlea School; the same occupation that was once vacated by the author prior to undertaking the literary path.

Although the novel mirrored various facets of the author's personal life, it was the psychological aspect that attracted the public's eye to fathom as well as localize the implied chords that joined the two. Montgomery utilized infinitesimal details in moulding Anne Shirley's character, strongly suggesting her influence by her background as depicted in Anne's unconventional opinions and thoughts which made her prone to experience a lack of understanding as well as belonging with other people. Henceforth, she befriended her reflection in the cabinet's double fronted glass to lessen her loneliness (75); a detail inspired from the author's upbringing ("75 Facts You Might Not Know about Anne of Green Gables and Author Lucy Maud Montgomery | CBC Books", Para.15).

Last but not least, the most prevalent common aspect that presents itself to the eye is the shared mental illness history between Montgomery and Anne; that is their Post Traumatic Stress Disorder resulting from them being orphaned at a young age ("75 Facts You Might Not Know about Anne of Green Gables and Author Lucy Maud Montgomery |



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CBC Books”, Para.12). Upon approaching her death, Lucy Maud Montgomery resigned to her hometown whereat she died on the 24<sup>th</sup> of April in 1942 where she deliberately placed a halt to her own life (“75 Facts You Might Not Know about Anne of Green Gables and Author Lucy Maud Montgomery | CBC Books”, Para.48), leaving behind a remarkable set of accomplishments and an everlasting and astonishing literary legacy that still harvests recognition in our contemporary times.

### **2.2.1. The Mental Health of the Author**

The colorful, optimistic and romanticized demeanor and life outlook adopted by the protagonist Anne and around which the orchestration of the events of the story entirely orbit is prodigiously a juxtaposed image to that of the author’s worldly view and psychological state. Lucy Maud Montgomery’s early exposure to traumatic events in her life bred what was then undiagnosed but is nowadays labeled as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder besides Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder accompanied by their correlated rippling effects including anxiety, depression, delusions and hallucinations (Pera, Para.2).

Her lingering debris from the past forthwith stemmed from the early disconnection in the maternal as well as paternal bond that she experienced in her early childhood. Maud as she liked to be called, upon approaching 2 years old, lost her mother Clara Woolner Macneil Montgomery to tuberculosis (“75 Facts You Might Not Know about Anne of Green Gables and Author Lucy Maud Montgomery | CBC Books”, Para. 12). Shortly after her death, her father Hugh John left her in the custody of her maternal grandparents to start a new family of his own; one that did not include her (“About L. M. Montgomery | L. M. Montgomery Institute”, Para. 1).

Hitherto, loss was her companion and seemed to inhabit every corner of her life. The author has yet again experienced another traumatic event when her cousin Frede whom she ardently loved and confided in died during the First World War due to catching the Spanish flu (Ribke, Para. 11), leaving her irretrievably deprived from the affection that is

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to be bestowed from her family and endorsed her sense of seclusion as well as disconnection from the world around her. The disequilibrium which was perpetually carved into her mental state was exhibited in the aggravating complications of encountering difficulties in fostering intimate relationships, severe depressive episodes, low self esteem and poor self image and suicidal tendencies magnified by her self-medication (Mitchell, Para. 2).

Her substance abuse, primarily that of Bromides and Barbiturates; intense drugs usually taken to treat severe seizures, insomnia and anxiety which have been negligently prescribed for her epilepsy to her alongside her husband, worsened her already deteriorating mental state (Mitchell). Her hallucinations kept alleviating commingled with the social pressure she endured in her attempt to cover her husband's manic episodes were what made her decide to place a halt on her own life through overdosing (Mitchell, Para. 2).

### **2.2.2. The Mental Health of the Female Characters**

Lucy Maud Montgomery and Anne Shirley's nonconformist nature and fertile imagination were not the only chords that joined the two of them. What imparted the realistic flavor that immensely enriched this fictional novel were the common psychological denominators which betokened that the author and her protagonist were perceptibly mirroring one another.

Trauma survivors usually adapt disparate forms of coping mechanisms in order to reduce or manage the lingering excruciating effects of the trauma. In the same vein, within the events of the novel *Anne of Green Gables*, the protagonist copes with her post traumatic stress disorder, bipolar disorder as well as clinical depression by the means of adopting avoidance, self reinvention and impulsive demeanor which were tangibly displayed in her manic episodes, poor self image, lack of social skills and disconnection from reality which quintessentially resembled those of the author.

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Within the third chapter of the novel, upon Marilla Cuthbert and Anne's first encounter, when the latter is queried about her name, she replies by creating a fabricated one that is Cordelia (32). Because names indicated an inescapable reality that she wanted to evade, for the name Anne entailed being trapped within a fixed past identity, her new chosen one Cordelia symbolized another deliberately chosen fate. She tells Marilla "Anne Shirley," reluctantly faltered forth the owner of that name, 'but, oh, please do call me Cordelia. It can't matter much to you what you call me if I'm only going to be here a little while, can it? And Anne is such an unromantic name.'" (33). This is inextricably laced with the distasteful view which has been beheld by Maud herself towards her first name Lucy and preferred to be called Maud instead ("75 Facts You Might Not Know about Anne of Green Gables and Author Lucy Maud Montgomery | CBC Books", Para. 22). Within the psychological realm, the early experienced neglect within a premature epoch fosters a low self-esteem and forges a poor self image. This is pervading the story whence Anne is constantly agonized by her appearance, especially her freckles and red hair which fueled her attempts to dye it to a raven like black color (272).

Aware of the occurrence of the mistake of sending a girl instead of a boy by the asylum, Marilla, despite her Brother Mathew's protests, decides to take Anne back to Mrs. Spencer so as to rectify it. On their journey there, the old woman is rather intrigued by the 11 years old girl's mental acuity which prompts her to inquire about her background story, to which Anne replied asserting that "she did not like talking about her experiences in a world that had not wanted her" (53) following it by "Oh, what I KNOW about myself isn't really worth telling," said Anne eagerly. 'If you'll only let me tell you what I IMAGINE about myself you'll think it ever so much more interesting.'" (50). The emphasized contrasting effect utilized by the author here in writing the words KNOW and IMAGINE, serves as a evidence of her as well as Anne's endeavor to imagine or achieve a procreated self recreation that does not resemble their truths.

Continually, the author introduces the readers to the heart-wrenching story of Anne; that of how her parents died shortly after her birth already drawing a parallel line that

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straightforwardly mirrors that of the author's mother; adding that she was prone to the same ill-treatment and abuse and mostly sense of estrangement bestowed upon her by all of the families that adopted her, or rather bequeathed her the responsibility of rearing their children including Mrs. Hammond's 8 kids who "took a lot of looking after" (52). Simultaneously, she was a victim to neglect and later on generated a sense of cloistered seclusion whetted by her lack of intimate relationships explaining her befriending of Katie; her reflection in the cabinet's glass: "I used to pretend that my reflection in it was another little girl who lived in it. I called her Katie Maurice, and we were very intimate. I used to talk to her by the hour, especially on Sunday, and tell her everything. Katie was the comfort and consolation of my life." (75-76) as well as an echo that she named Violetta "... and the loveliest echo lived there. It echoed back every word you said, even if you didn't talk a bit loud. So I imagined that it was a little girl called Violetta and we were great friends and I loved her almost as well as I loved Katie Maurice—not quite, but almost, you know" (76). This was a portrayal of Maud's two imaginary friends as she was growing up, including Katie Maurice herself and Lucy Gray whose 'presence' eased her loneliness ("75 Facts You Might Not Know about *Anne of Green Gables* and Author Lucy Maud Montgomery | CBC Books", Para. 15).

To compensate for the neglect that she was subjugated to and disburden the memories of her past, Anne's overinflated imagination created a disconnection from reality and fostered delusions and a mild case of schizophrenic tendencies; a symptom of untreated bipolar and dissociative identity disorders. This is exemplified through numerous occasions in the novel in her mania which she has in common with the writer that incessantly wavers between extreme highs and lows which compose a large proportion not merely of her identity but her creativity as well. Anne, aware of her complex personality, tells her bosom friend Diana; "There's such a lot of different Annes in me. I sometimes think that is why I'm such a troublesome person. If I was just the one Anne it would be ever so much more comfortable, but then it wouldn't be half so interesting." (203). this statement applies to the multifaceted nature of Montgomery; one where she is happily

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absorbed in her fiction, and that of being entrapped within her real life (Krzewinski, Para 1).

Anne Shirley's mania is further depicted in the striking contrast in her self evaluation; characterized by manic states whence her ego is overinflated, exemplified by how she condescendingly deems herself the brightest and the most literarily inclined one amongst her class: "we have to write compositions on our field afternoons and I write the best ones." (241). Then, in an unstipulated manner, her depressive episodes prevail and she is suffocated by what she referred to as being in "the depths of despair" (211); nullifying any claims that she incipiently proclaimed: "Marilla, go away and don't look at me. I'm in the depths of despair and I don't care who gets head in class or writes the best composition or sings in the Sunday-school choir anymore." (271). This sharp contrast was also recognized by Miss Barry who upon being familiarized with her disproportioned self conduct thought that "Anne has as many shades as a rainbow" (357)

Although these submerged psychological implications have not been identified at the time when the novel was published, the contemporary descendents of Montgomery, and Montgomery herself revealed in her diaries the latent mental health's correlations existing between herself and Anne. The author was irretrievably firmly rooted in what Anne referred to as the "ups and downs of existence" (225) but like Anne believed that "the equally great capacity for delight might more than compensate." (225) for the novel was the byproduct of her melancholic moods which she seemed to derive her inspiration from. Henceforth, the quality of her work was impervious to her psychological issues. Whether Montgomery has implicitly or deliberately imbedded them within this narrative, it does not absolve the novel from an authenticity that can merely be generated through a lived firsthand experience and her anticipated vision of a better future; one whence she wanted women to depart sharply from those conformities and embrace the blessings that freedom had to bestow upon them.

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### **2.3. Aspects of Feminism in *Anne of Green Gables***

Lucy Maud Montgomery's *Anne of Green Gables* was distinctive from the avalanche of books that have been written in the early twentieth century, its disparity is predominantly attributed to how she managed to create a nonconformist female protagonist who has rescinded the societal norms. The author in her orchestration of the events of the novel embedded it with passive male characters who are eclipsed by the female ones including Marilla Cuthbert, Mrs. Rachel Lynde, Mrs. Allan, Mrs. Barry ...etc. Notwithstanding, Montgomery has also plagued her literary composition with few glimpses of social unequal handlings as well as the gender faulty assumptions.

#### **2.3.1. Gender Misassumptions and Social Inequalities**

The author explicitly shed light on the female characters who were cemented underneath the social expectations, such as Marilla Cuthbert; a character who symbolized a mass of women at that time. Within the first chapter, an indicative of her marginalization by her brother Mathew is apparent when she confides in her friend Mrs. Lynde that the decision to adopt a boy to avail them in their barn's work was his and so she felt compelled to accept even though she had her own concerns regarding bringing a stranger home by saying "Rachel. I've had some qualms myself. But Matthew was terrible set on it. I could see that, so I gave in. It's so seldom Matthew sets his mind on anything that when he does I always feel it's my duty to give in" (11). The author utilizes the word "duty" to stress women's sense of obligation to acquiesce to the decisions that were made by men; alluding to how the former were dissuaded from deterring from the paths chosen by the latter even if those decisions did not comply with their needs or wants.

Marilla, frustrated by the "unfortunate occurrence" in their demand for a boy, tells Anne that a girl would be "of no use to us" (34), as an occupation of that sort was usually vacated by men unbeknownst that the young girl was immensely resourceful and has formerly worked as a nanny and a housekeeper. Here the author aims to explain that women have not been merely belittled by men, but also by other women whose convictions arose

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from the traditional gyrations around which twirled their upbringing; they were but a mouthpiece of the society. In the same line of thoughts, Anne queries Mrs. Lynde who despite her elevated social stance in Avonlea still shares the same ‘inborn’ or cultivated values as those of Marilla’s. When Anne questions her about women’s exclusion from the church’s related jobs, the former replies by thinking that it would be “a scandalous thing. She said there might be female ministers in the States and she believed there was, but thank goodness we hadn’t got to that stage in Canada yet” (315). In closer inspection Rachel’s response, using ‘yet’ was highly suggestive of how social progress hasn’t been introduced to that Canadian province yet, which explains why women could not even help in raising money for the church through organizing those held social events (315).

Montgomery hitherto departs from those sequences of thoughts by explaining women’s appetency for penetrating the dense impermeable darkness by which they were surrounded and hindered through feeling inclined to reinforce their utter devotion to a ritual which entailed being morally responsible for redeeming men and sacrificing their subjectivity to ensure attaining a ‘successful’ marital life. The former was illustrated in Diana’s wish to marry “some wild, dashing, wicked young man and reform him” (301) whilst Anne in her recollection of what she had been told about her deceased parents told Marilla “Well, my mother was a teacher in the High school, too, but when she married father she gave up teaching, of course. A husband was enough responsibility.” (315). Montgomery’s fascinating eye for the details; how her words were carefully selected in order to convey a hidden meaning was demonstratively hinted at in saying “of course” to imply that women’s resigning from their occupations upon marrying was less of a choice and more of an expectation.

### **2.3.2. Women’s Disentanglement from the Patriarchal Confines**

Montgomery’s *Anne of Green Gables* is substantially a comparative study; one whence the generational differences are dissected into two categories so as to manifest the old generation’s blind obedience to the patriarchal norms and how the younger generation

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achieved an infringement of those standards as well as a detachment from their dysfunctional patterns.

In order to decipher the differences between them, the author sketches uniquely formulated female characters that symbolize the formerly mentioned categories, primarily through the contrast between Marilla and Anne. The former had a limited sense of self, her puritanical nature deprives her from having a “subjective analysis of her thoughts and feelings” (268) to the point where she was not able to recognize them anymore and even when she did, in the midst of the joys that life sometimes had to offer, she always maintained a calm composure, exemplified by when she was walking back home in a late April afternoon momentarily absorbed in the enrapturing landscape surrounding her, saying “She probably imagined that she was thinking about the Aids and their missionary box and the new carpet for the vestry room, but under these reflections was a harmonious consciousness of red fields smoking into pale-purple mists in the declining sun” (268), suggesting that she was always occupied with the duties that outweighed her and divested her from any respite.

Anne on the other hand was the embodiment of the women’s process of shedding those hierarchical influences and becoming the first pioneers of unconventional approaches. Her curiosity prompts her to incessantly question the ordeal of living within Avonlea, for she is the mouthpiece of the author who attempted to display how the unsound thinking submerged underneath the structural foundations of society was not built on valid alibis but rather on gender biased ones. By the testimony of the old lady Mrs. Lynde of Anne’s fascinating way of articulating her thoughts; and beliefs that they will dissipate upon her involvement with the “civilized folks” (95). Montgomery highlights how even when women whose intellectual capacities surpassed what was commonly known, it was likely that society will reset them back to their ‘natural positions’, but Anne was an exception to that rule.

Upon making her introduction to the Avonlea community, Anne, leading by example, has planted the grains of this societal upheaval within her circle of friends. She



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clearly displays her disapproval of a classmate of hers named Ruby and how her infatuation with boys seemed to be the only personality traits that she beheld, for according to Anne there was more to life than that. She says to Marilla; “Ruby Gillis thinks of nothing but young men, and the older she gets the worse she is. Young men are all very well in their place, but it doesn’t do to drag them into everything, does it?” (301). Departing sharply from that, another friend of Anne’s named Jane says that “she will devote her whole life to teaching” (307) rather than indulging in the same pursuits as those of Ruby.

Despite people looking askance at Anne’s unorthodox way of thinking, she embodies the perpetuated change that women hoped to achieve but did not dare to. This is prevalent in how Anne thought that the minister Mrs. Bell’s prayers lacked devotion and were devoid of meaning as if it was more of an obligation or an act rather than being a spiritual closeness to God. Marilla agreed with her; however, she did not admit to it. Henceforth, Anne was the voice of the silenced women at that time by the social conformity to patriarchy and she annihilated the gender biased roles and spheres through her academic excellence as well as immense contribution in the society.

### **2.3.3. Women and Education**

Lucy Maud Montgomery; an advocate for education herself in her *Anne of Green Gables* advertently deciphers the social attitudes that were characterizing how the former has been perceived in the twentieth century’s cultural parameters through the perceptively miscellaneous set of characters.

Mrs. Rachel Lynde represented the women who were vaulted within those gender reserved spheres and had a strong conviction that women’s education should be restricted to primary school and that they should never gain access to a higher education, she beholds a strong conviction that “it unfits them for woman’s true sphere.” (365) which affirms that the educational expansion within this century did not abstain women from being subjected to those festering prejudices. It was not only implemented by men but by other women as well.

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Embodying women's contorting to a new shape; that of seeking education in masses in spite of its restrictive nature, Anne's steadfastness of motivation portrayed in her academic achievements which have been the subject of admiration of Mr. Philips who was initially contented for her classmate Gilbert Blythe to excel in his class, admitted to Mathew that she was "the smartest scholar in school and was making rapid progress. 'Rapid progress'" (175). Besides gaining the recognition of her classmate Charlie Sloane who deemed her "the smartest girl in school" (138), Anne's rivalry with Blythe hitherto supplements her with an additional motivation to rank first in their exams which she triumphs at besides the fact that she defeats him in attaining the Avery Scholarship that granted a university admission. She says that nothing mattered to her as much as her academic excellence as that enhanced the quality of the life one can possibly dream of having; "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." (353)

The invasion of the educational realm became a necessity for women, it did not solely grant them financial independence but has also been the instrument by which they broadened their horizon. This is illustrated by Montgomery's character Josie Pye. A descendent of a wealthy family, she wants to attend college "for education's sake" since she "won't have to earn her own living" (307). Marilla however disagrees saying that she believes in "a girl being fitted to earn her own living whether she ever has to or not." (305). Women's reasons accordingly varied; notwithstanding, they were all wired with and combined by the same thirst for knowledge that could not be quelled.

The highest pinnacle of the significance that was placed on the education of women is exhibited in Marilla's protest to the instructs given by her oculist that she must abstain from reading so as to not worsen the dire condition of her eyes. She tells Anne: "what am I to live for if I can't read ... I might as well be blind—or dead." (377). Last but not least, the writer crystallizes the vagueness and demolishes the faulty conceptualization that accompanied women's education by evincing the fruitful outcomes that are to be harvested

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through an egalitarian cultivation of knowledge by concluding her novel in exhibiting that Anne won the Avery Scholarship and her male competitor got the medal. Henceforth, the moral that is entailed is that when the gender biased relations are obsolete, social progress is far reached.

### **2.4. Aspects of Ecofeminism in the Novel**

The first instance of the ecofeminist influence in Montgomery's novel was when Anne queried Mathew whether or not the name "Green Gables" was suggestive of its dominating landscape, adding that the trees which were planted nearby the asylum were secluded and gave the impression that they were lonely. Henceforth, they could not prosper in such a barren environment just like women were entrapped. She then creates a correlation between herself and those trees saying that "Oh, you POOR little things! If you were out in a great big woods with other trees all around you and little mosses and June bells growing over your roots and a brook not far away and birds singing in you branches, you could grow, couldn't you? But you can't where you are. I know just exactly how you feel, little trees." (22-23)

Anne's prolonged stay in Green Gables has hitherto inspired her to redefine the landmarks' identity by changing their labels through infusing them with a sense of subjectivity. She changes the name of the "avenue" into "the white way of delight" (26), "Barry's Pond" into "the lake of the shining waters" (27), "the spruce wood over the brook" to "the haunted wood" (206), a lane through which she passed by in order to reach her school to "lover's lane" (133) and labels the place where she alongside Diana used to play as "Idlewild" (206). The latter was immensely implicating that naming things gave them a respite from being limited to being just a fixed entity and broadened their identity. She forthwith tells Marilla "You wouldn't like to be called nothing but a woman all the time." (46), once again comparing the objectifying of nature to that of women.

Anne's fondness of nature invades every chapter in this extraordinary literary work, she deems it the only thing that cannot be "improved upon even by imagination" (133).

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She apotheosized it to the rank of the only thing that can infuse in her an intense sense of religious devotion and the only altar at which she worshipped. When Marilla was teaching her how to pray she said:

Why must people kneel down to pray?' If I really wanted to pray I'll tell you what I'd do. I'd go out into a great big field all alone or into the deep, deep, woods, and I'd look up into the sky—up—up—up—into that lovely blue sky that looks as if there was no end to its blueness. And then I'd just FEEL a prayer. (66)

Nature to her as well as to women of the early twentieth century was a refuge that represented an inherent goodness and a setting where one feels a sense of connectedness and unconditional acceptance.

In the same vein, Anne declares her renouncement of the urban life by saying that she “wasn't born for city life and that I was glad of it. It's nice to be eating ice cream at brilliant restaurants at eleven o'clock at night once in a while; but as a regular thing I'd rather be in the east gable at eleven, sound asleep, but kind of knowing even in my sleep that the stars were shining outside and that the wind was blowing in the first across the brook.” (296). For according to her, the city offered a bleak and a suffocating atmosphere “outside of her window was a hard street, with a network of telephone wires shutting out the sky” (350) whilst examining the picturesque views of her hometown with “reverent steps and worshiping eyes, as if she trod on holy ground.” (202)

The only unfortunate experience that permeated Anne's enjoyment of her dear Green Gables was when she witnessed the annihilation of her Idlewild; the place where she alongside Diana composed stories and found a solace that fueled their inspiration and creativity by Mr. Bell who cut the tree. Lucy Maud Montgomery underlines the profound effect that it had on the young orphan girl by saying “Idlewild was a thing of the past, Mr. Bell having ruthlessly cut down the little circle of trees in his back pasture in the spring. Anne had sat among the stumps and wept” (278). The expression “a thing of the past” alludes to how the life that they have incipiently known; one where industrialization was not invading every corner of their lives, has been irretrievably lost. It became was but a

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story told about a beautiful past to draw the contrasting effect it has with an unpleasant present.

Mr. Bell's exploitation of the natural resources that beautified Green Gables however was retaliated by a new teacher named Miss Stacy who was chosen as a replacement for Mr. Philips. Unlike the latter, she introduces a new class for her students called "field afternoons" (241) which entailed that they wander about in the woods and study the existing plants there then write compositions in which they describe their experience. Through her classes, she colossally nurtured her students' love for nature and strengthened their bond with it. She represented the women who contributed to the preservation of Green Gables' natural treasures; which itself is an explicit indication of women's empowerment coinciding and operating in tandem with that of nature.

Anne's attunement with nature was deemed a breeding ground for her fertile imagination and a potent medicine for her mental health tribulations; the worst of which were her melodramatic severe bipolar emotional outbursts. In the installment, whenever she was triggered by a recollection from her past or was subjected to ill-treatment, she had an innate instinct to immerse herself in the natural realm whose environmental stimulus proved to be indispensable in pacifying her and forthwith shifting her emotional state.

Anne's talkative nature and precise articulation of the thoughts that reside within her head is a central defining characteristic of the child, the author shows that throughout the entirety of the novel the beauty of the landscapes "seemed to strike the child dumb" (25). Montgomery's description of what nature represented to Anne in saying "adventures wonderful and enthralling were happening to her in cloudland—adventures that always turned out triumphantly and never involved her in scrapes like those of actual life." (299) shows how magnified her interconnectedness with nature in Green Gables was incessantly perpetuating. The latter was indebted to the fact that it supplied her with the power to create her own fate unlike real life whence she was infringed from that sort of power. Hence, she preferred imagining and scheming over remembering.

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The main character, due to being bullied in the asylum at which she was living before her adoption by the Cuthberts, grew to be overly self-conscious with her appearance; fueled by Mrs. Lynde's comments when she described her as "terrible skinny" and has got "hair as red as carrots" and telling her that the two old siblings did not choose her for her "looks" (83) worsened her already inflicted sense of self-esteem. After that unpleasant confrontation, Anne resigned to her room and "was sitting on the yellow chair by the window gazing mournfully out into the garden." (90) which consoled her in her agony.

Seamlessly, the healing powers that nature bestowed on Anne quelled her anguish. When Mathew passed away, she headed to the garden where she "felt something like shame and remorse when she discovered that the sunrises behind the firs and the pale pink buds opening in the garden gave her the old inrush of gladness when she saw them" (371). But then she surrendered to the comfort that swept over her, beholding the conviction that "we should not shut our hearts against the healing influences that nature offers us" (372); voicing the manifesto of Ecofeminism.

Lucy Maud Montgomery displays the extent to which women have covered their past with a mantle of oblivion and blazed a path that prophesized an auspicious future where convention was summoned to a collective level, the formerly sparked contrast exhibits in the first and last pages of her book, whence initially Mrs. Lynde says that living under those communal ethical guidelines is not "LIVING at all" that it was merely "STAYING" adding that "they seem contented enough; but then, I suppose, they're used to it. A body can get used to anything, even to being hanged" (6), then in Anne's closing line in the novel where she said "all's right with the world." (386).

### **2.5. Conclusion**

As have been hitherto conveyed, Lucy Maud Montgomery's keen eye for the details in the novel *Anne of Green Gables* served as a literary ground that contained within its

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folds the societal challenges faced by women in the twentieth century. The author managed to shine light into their dimly lit present and past; epochs which were defined by unequal and discrepant attitudes that have been projected into their undermined evaluation as members of the society, their stratified education, unattended to mental health and how it simultaneously intersected with the prevalent natural resources' depletion.

Montgomery gilded her piece of art by the means of utilizing an assemblage of distinctively contrasted and carefully articulated characters that impersonated those conventional social guidelines and others that embodied the feminist and ecofeminist endeavor to demolish those intergenerationally bequeathed traditions. By doing so, she draws more attention to the existing juxtapositions on the level of the submerged layers of infrastructure of the twentieth century's gender relations, henceforth ascribing more significance to what women were able to achieve in a natural and ecological setting that warranted them no paved roads.

# **General Conclusion**



# General Conclusion

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## General conclusion

Literature since antiquity has notably permanentized some of the greatest and most significant events that shaped our worldly experience, ameliorated our critical thinking as well as our understanding of the ongoing social processes by thoroughly examining the foundations on which they were built and availed us in rectifying those that were handicapping our quest to unvault the chains that locked the gates behind which our emancipation was entombed. The latter was documented in the rich corpus of writings which served as an evidentiary proof as well as an instrument by which we can trace the factors that hastened their emergence and evaluate the progress that has been made.

Lucy Maud Montgomery's fictional masterpiece was the brush by which she painted the predicaments which the feminist as well as the ecofeminist movements were originally tailored to convey in the twentieth century. She illuminated the societal patterns that entrapped women within their own identity by rendering their gender an occupation in itself that justified their undermined placement in the hierarchical order illustrated by Marilla Cuthbert and Rachel Lynde who symbolized the old generation who beheld unwavering traditionally instilled convictions. Notwithstanding, there are numerous instances where their viewpoints are penetrated by an admiration towards the nonconformist acts of Anne Shirley. This was depicted throughout the novel through their inner dialogues whenever Anne was untangling herself from those confines, their outward reactions were but a semblance that contradicted their inward opinions, for she was the change that they wanted to see but could not participate in.

The author has also been able to portray women's attunement with nature and the healing power that it had bestowed on the characters; mainly Anne whose mental health's tribulations dissipated whenever she was engulfed by its presence saying that in the Green Gables' picturesque landscapes, her soul was "washed in that bath of earliest sunshine" (337) which juxtaposed with her description of the view outside Mrs. Barry's window in the city where "a network of telephone wires [was] shutting out the sky" (350). Henceforth,

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her ecological criticism of the injection of the industrial influence in the environment which was battled by the ecofeminist advocates prevailed in her demonstrativeness of the exploitation of natural resources by the patriarchal society represented by Mr. Bell whose annihilation of the tree on which Anne built her sanctuary and called it Idlewild drew the intersection between how ecology and women were both objectified and instrumentalized by emphasizing on the emotional ramifications that it had generated on the protagonist and how it was hindering society's social progression.

A thorough analysis of *Anne of Green Gables* betokens that Montgomery infused her plot, main character and setting with realistically imparted flavors that encapsulated her subjective experiences; mainly those of her mental health's anguishes by utilizing mutual psychological denominators in moulding Anne's character which interlinked them on a cellular level. The author has successfully abolished the stigmatization attached to mental illnesses during the twentieth century; that they were a rippling effect of women being genetically inferior than men. Henceforth, it was their natural defectiveness that made them prone to developing those predicaments by explaining through Anne that they are rather generated by the exposure to traumatizing events, sometimes in a premature epoch like that of the redheaded young girl.

Seamlessly, the miscellaneous articulation of the other female characters within this literary composition highlights the intergenerational differences between the female characters wavering between those who were deemed mouthpieces of the social expectations such as Josie Pye's marital pursuits that overshadowed her other personality traits laced with the passiveness that defined women's social stance in the early twentieth century and those contrasted by other female characters who achieved a redefinition in the conceptualization of gender roles and norms such as Mrs. Stacy and Anne Shirley. The multifaceted nature of all of those characters' representation aimed to achieve a full coverage of how each woman was the byproduct of her environment; they had their own subjective pursuits of what they have perceived a better life to entail. All of their individualized visions commingled in their desire for attaining a freedom of choice.

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The Canadian author hitherto imbeds her work of art with the implanted seeds of feminism's prodigious efforts that harvested fruitful outcomes whereby women's interconnectedness with nature and increased value placed on educational pursuits laced with their annihilation of gender misassumptions and newly fostered personal agency were central in emancipating women from those limiting social parameters.

The bipolar complex characteristics that defined each character within this literary composition maybe subject of being further expanded in future inquiry. Montgomery's novel illuminates how both feminism and ecofeminism were not movements of an impermanent and whimsical nature but rather kindled an inextinguishable flame that has enlightened our future.

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