**CHAPTER I**

**Introduction**

This study explores how female identity is represented in classic literary narratives. To frame this analysis, in this chapter the researcher outlines the background of the study, identification of the study, limitations of the study, research problems, research objectives, and significance of the study.

**1.1 Research Background**

Lucy Maud Montgomery, the first Canadian woman inducted into the British Royal Society of Arts, she is recognized as a children's literature writer who explores issues such as personal development, familial bonds, friendship, and ambitions. Her first novel, Anne of Green Gables (1908), is a classic of children's literature, having sold 50 million copies globally and translated into 36 languages, followed by other sequels featuring Anne Shirley. Montgomery's work is indicative of the progressive ideologies of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, which include the early feminist influences of the developing women's movement.

Anne of Green Gables is a classic children's novel released in 1908. The depth of character, themes of self-identity, acceptance, social relationships, and beautiful descriptions of nature made it a favorite among adult readers as well. This novel tells the story of the life of an orphan girl named Anne Shirley, who is adopted by siblings Matthew and Marilla Cuthbert who initially seek a boy to assist on their farm, Green Gables, located in the fictional community of Avonlea on Prince Edward Island, Canada. The popularity of Anne of Green Gables has increased via several adaptations, including films, television programs, stage productions, and animated works.

L.M. Montgomery started writing the novel Anne of Green Gables in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, deriving significant inspiration from her personal experiences. The setting of this novel, Prince Edward Island, is the same location where L.M. Montgomery was raised. The description of village life and the island's picturesque natural environment are beautifully expressed in the novel through Anne Shirley's imagination. Anne Shirley characterized by her imagination and intellect, reflects her own experiences and grapples with her societal function throughout that period. Furthermore, the feminist background significantly influences the novel's development and narrative.

The novel Anne of Green Gables was written during the very first wave of feminism, which occurred in the late 18th to early 20th century. This period witnessed a significant advancement of feminism, particularly in Western countries. The primary emphasis of first wave feminism was on women's fundamental rights, particularly suffrage, civil rights, and equitable educational opportunities for women. Although L.M. Montgomery does not openly address the issue of feminism, many features of the work reflect feminist views that evolved around the time. Researchers perceive this novel as a reflection of the evolution of narratives that empower women and challenge existing societal systems.

Despite the fact that the novel was created in the early 1900s, Anne does not actively advocate for the rights of women. Her world is more concerned with the beauty of nature and the aspirations of schoolgirls, (Montgomery, L. M, 1997).  However, if examined more closely, researchers believe that the novel's characters and narrative are indicative of feminist concepts. Although children's literature is frequently perceived as merely entertaining or educational, it has the potential to convey deeper messages, such as social criticism and gender equality. According to Anita Moss's 1982 paper "Feminist Criticism and the Study of Children's Literature," feminist criticism should be an important part of the way children's literature is studied. She stated that employing a feminist viewpoint is crucial for comprehending how children's books may affect their knowledge of gender and identities.

Feminism continues to be a subject of ongoing debate and academic exploration. There are several previous study findings that discuss similar matters. Several studies' findings and conclusions, aren't focused on Anne Shirley's imaginary world related to her identity as a female character. In this context, Anne Shirley liked to imagine a variety of topics, including romance, friendship, adventure, and the beauty of nature. Researchers believe that if examined more deeply, the imagination reflects freedom of expression, independence, and rebellion against traditional norms that apply to women. Children, who are the primary readers of children's literature, particularly girls, can be inspired and encouraged by this, especially if imagination can encourage them to become individuals who are free, creative, and strong. Furthermore, researchers will look into Anne Shirley's imaginary world as a way for women to dream, resist norms, and express themselves freely.

There are three theories used, the grand theory used is the theory of children's literature, as this work belongs inside that genre. Children's literature plays a significant influence in forming children's identities and their comprehension of the world, particularly on gender equality. Other theories is the theory of gender performativity by Judith Butler and narratological theory by Gérard Genette. Butler presented this thesis in her book Gender Trouble (1990), asserting that gender is not inherently linked to an individual, but rather constructed via repetitive actions and behaviors. This theory is used to explore how Anne's gender identity is shown by her acts that frequently contravene the conventional gender standards of her era and her liberation from gender stereotypes, particularly concerning women through dialogue and narrative.

Knowing gender equality and feminisms are endless issues to discuss and L.M Montgomery did not overtly declare herself a feminist or actively address the feminist movement, but the themes present in her writing frequently resonate with the feminist ideals of her era, researchers feel it is important to study the “Beyond the stereotypes: Anne Shirley’s Representation of Female in Children’s Literature”. Researchers are intrigued in the representation of female characters in literary works of the late 19th century, a period in which women's rights were increasingly advocated.

**1.2 Identification of the Study**

Lucy Maud Montgomery published 8 series of novels portraying the life of Anne Shirley from youth to adulthood. As explained in the study background, Anne of Green Gables (1908) focuses on Anne Shirley's personal journey, but during the process Anne indirectly seems to dare to oppose several social norms that existed at that time that were in line with feminist values. Consequently, researchers suspect that Anne Shirley's portrayal of women differs from other female characters.

The researcher identifies how the main character Anne Shirley represents women during that time in children's literature using the theory of gender performativity by Judith Butler, narratological theory by Gérard Genette, and children's literature theory. The researcher expects that the findings of this study will lead to enhanced insights and understanding regarding facets of feminism, particularly the representation of women in children's literature

**1.3 Limitation of the Study**

The researcher limited the problems to be studied, a children's literature novel by Lucy Maud Montgomery entitled Anne of Green Gables (1908) Wordsworth Editions published in 2018 with English language. Due to the era of the author writing this novel in the late 19th century and early 20th century, a period in which the first wave feminist movement was developing, the main focus of this study remains on how women are represented in children's literature and how Anne Shirley's imagination relates to women's freedom of expression.

**1.4 Research Problems**

The researcher identified the problems in the study and defined them according to the mentioned circumstances, such as:

1. How Anne Shirley challenged traditional gender norms and the freedom of expression from gender stereotypes, particularly for female, through her actions as a representation of female in children’s literature “Anne of Green Gables”?
2. How Anne Shirley's imaginary world reflects freedom of expression and challenges traditional gender stereotypes in children’s literature "Anne of Green Gables"?

**1.5 Objective of the Study**

Based on the research problems, the objectives of this research are:

1. To find out the representation of women by Anne Shirley in "Anne of Green Gables” which tends to challenge traditional gender norms and the freedom of expression from gender stereotypes.
2. To find out Anne Shirley's imagination that helped her express her identity as a women in defiance of conventional gender expectations in "Anne of Green Gables.

**1.6 Significances of the Study**

1.6.1. Theoretical Significance

By finding out the representation of women in the novel Anne of Green Gables (1908), this study advances the development of children's literature. This study shows how the representation of women is formed and can reflect social values ​​related to gender in children's literature. The results of this study increase the understanding of how the character Anne Shirley represents female identities that are appropriate and contrary to social norms of her time using the theory of Gender Performativity by Judith Butler. In addition, this study increases the understanding of Judith Butler's theory into the study of children's literature showing how complex gender analysis can be applied to children's literature.

1.6.2. Practical Significance

This study offers methodologies and insights for researchers, educators, and parents on how to include female representation and enhance awareness and critical comprehension of gender through children's literature. By understanding the concept of gender and feminism, especially the representation of women in the character of Anne Shirley, they can teach children to see that women's identity and freedom of expression do not have to be tied to certain stereotypes that tend to experience imbalances that are still challenged in all aspects. In addition, women, especially girls, can be inspired to explore their own identities bravely. In terms of education, Anne of Green Gables may be used  as a subject of analysis for the gender perspective. Students can comprehend the novel not just as a work of children's literature, but also as a medium for learning about the concept of gender and identity.