



Anne and Gilbert's Falling in Love in L.M. Montgomery's *Anne of Green Gables* series

Mia Johansson
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Department of English
Centre for Languages and Literature
Lund University
Supervisor: C. Wadsö Lecaros

Like sheaves of corn he gathers you unto himself.
He threshes you to make you naked.
He sifts you to free you from your husks.
He grinds you to whiteness.
He kneads you until you are pliant;
And then he assigns you to his sacred fire, that you may become sacred bread for God's
sacred feast.
All these things shall love do unto you that you may know the secrets of your heart, and in
that knowledge become fragment of Life's heart.

'Kahlil Gibran' (Dilman, x)

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Introduction

Love is a word which is hard to describe and to analyse. Love is not a specific science nor is it something you can touch or see. In that sense love is ambiguous. To fall in love is a process, the process which leads up to the goal, which is love. Francesco Alberoni, a sociologist, has written *I Love You* and *Falling in Love and Loving*. His works deal mostly with love and due to his line of work he focuses predominantly on the impact of society.¹ Alberoni's theories, which are found in *Falling in Love and Loving*, concern the four phases he has identified for the process of falling in love: ignition phase, denial, realisation and outcome.

The process of falling in love in a novel and the process of falling in love in real life is not necessarily the same. Novels have in particular one advantage over real life and that is the presence of a narrator. A narrator tells the story, enters the characters' mind, observes and interprets their actions. In real life, on the contrary, there is no one that can do this; as a result we can never be sure of how people are feeling about each other. When applying Alberoni's theories about the process of falling in love to fiction, it is therefore essential to bear in mind that his books have been written to and about real people, not fictional characters.

The aim of this paper is to make use of Alberoni's phases to be able to answer the question how the process of falling in love is represented in the Canadian writer L.M. Montgomery's *Anne of Green Gables*, *Anne of Avonlea*, *Anne of the Island*, *Anne of Windy Poplars* and *Anne's House of Dreams*. The books concern a girl called Anne Shirley. The entire series which consists of eight books follows Anne, the main character, from that day when she arrives to Green Gables until the very day when she leaves it and dies. Since this paper has set its focus on the process of falling in love, the discussion will be limited to the first five novels.

This series belongs to the genre of female novels of development. More commonly known is the *Bildungsroman*, where there is a hero rather than a heroine. Wojcik-Andrews argues that

the content of the *Bildungsroman* describes a hero's journey away from private, familial life of often hostile parental guidance and control to a public, social life where control is learnt and then internalized, that moment of internalization forever shaping his odyssey through life. His identity is

¹ I will in this paper focus on the process of falling in love and not what love is, although one is the outcome and the goal of the other. See Alberoni's book *I Love You* for a further and a more in-depth analysis of the concept of love.

achieved by the end of the journey, an ending that usually coincides with the close of the story. (3)

The journey a heroine is taking is somewhat different. A male protagonist searches for circumstances where he can realize his dreams and reach his ideals, while a female protagonist must fight to voice any ambition at all. (Lindgren, 24) In addition to what Gunilla Lindgren has brought up, Wojcik-Andrews states that “the interior journey women take is often determined by material conditions. The journey inward is a function of a repressive journey within a role, within a house, within an ideology that is both real and material” (13). Besides this, it can be said that a woman goes through various stages in her life on her journey from childhood to adulthood. The four stages that can be identified are almost identical with the four phases drawn from Alberoni’s book *Falling in Love and Loving*.

This paper is divided into four main sections corresponding to Alberoni’s four phases of falling in love as well as to the developmental phases recurring in female novels of development. The question I hope to answer is how the process of falling in love is represented in the first five books in the *Anne of Green Gables* series.

Ignition phase

Alberoni argues that when a person is falling in love, he goes through various phases. To be able to fall in love a person has to be at a certain point of his life. In *I Love You* he writes that

We fall in love when we are ready to change, when we want to discard a past, worn-out experience, and have the energy and strength to begin a new exploration and change our lives. [...] We fall in love when we are deeply dissatisfied with the present and possess the inner fire to begin a new stage in our existence. (34)

Alberoni’s first phase is the ignition phase. This is where things and actions that set feelings in motion and change everyday life begin to take place. Alberoni argues that

when we enter the *ignition state* of love, we knock that fiery sword out of the cherubim’s hand and dart into paradise. We aren’t ever able to stay there very long [...] we can’t make it our home or mark it off as our territory. This is because this initial part of falling in love is by definition transitory: it is not a stagnant phase but rather a forward motion, a ‘going on to something else.’ Entering it means leaving it behind. (*Falling*, 84-85)

In other words, one can say that the first stage of falling in love is very brief as will be demonstrated further below. What is equally interesting is the fact that Alberoni says that the process of falling in love is more apparent when a person is going from childhood to

adulthood. This is true because during adolescence there is an ongoing transition between two worlds, the first being the childhood including one's family and the second being the adulthood filled with complexities. This transition, which can be called the separation process, mirrors a part of the process of falling in love. What used to be united is separated and vice versa (124-125). The way this phase is described by Alberoni to a large extent resembles the initial phase.

When *Anne of Green Gables* begins, we meet Anne at the age of eleven. She is an orphan since early infancy. When she arrives to Mathew and Marilla at Green Gables in Avonlea, she is craving for love. Having been forced to shift between different foster families and finally been put in an orphanage, she needs love and stability in life. Despite this, Anne is a very happy child who has a way with words. She immediately finds a bosom friend in Diana. When school is about to start, Diana relates to Anne that there will be a boy in their class who is beyond doubt handsome: Gilbert. However, Anne's first contact with Gilbert is not good. Anne tries to behave as a well-mannered girl and thinks it is tiresome when others are not. Her first impressions of Gilbert are thus not particularly favourable: "I think your Gilbert Blythe is handsome [...] but I think he's very bold. It isn't good manners to wink at a strange girl." (I, 111)² Unmistakably Gilbert has, from the beginning, decided to take interest in Anne.

Gilbert wants to get Anne's attention. In the beginning he does this discretely, although he soon becomes more straightforward: "Gilbert Blythe was trying to make Anne Shirley look at him and failing utterly, because Anne was at that moment totally oblivious, not only of the very existence of Gilbert Blythe, but of every other scholar in Avonlea school and of Avonlea school itself" (I, 111). L.M. Montgomery is here using the narratological tool of foreshadowing. She is making the reader understand that Anne is oblivious of Gilbert at that moment but that she is bound to become more aware of him as the novel progresses. Gilbert is not used to making such efforts to make a girl look at him: "She *should* look at him, that redhaired Shirley girl with the little pointed chin and the big eyes that weren't like the eyes of any other girl in Avonlea school" (I, 111). The italicization of the verb 'should' highlights

² Since there are four novels by the same author, when a reference is given to the novels, roman numerals will be used: *Anne of Green Gables* (I), *Anne of Avonlea* (II), *Anne of the Island* (III), *Anne of Windy Poplars* (IV) and *Anne's House of Dreams* (V).

Gilbert's strong ideas regarding how Anne ought to have behaved according to him. She ought to have looked at him, due to the fact that most other girls look at him.

Gilbert does not succeed in getting Anne's attention and therefore resolves to tease her, but this teasing has terrible consequences. Gilbert does not know that Anne is feeling self-conscious about her red hair, so when he holds out her hair and whispers the word 'carrots,' Anne becomes furious:

Anne looked at him with a vengeance! She did more than look. She sprang to her feet, her bright fancies fallen into cureless ruin. She flashed one indignant glance at Gilbert from eyes whose angry sparkle was swiftly quenched in equally angry tears. 'You mean, hateful boy!' She exclaimed passionately. 'How dare you!' And then- Thwack! Anne had brought her slate down on Gilbert's head and cracked it- slate, not head-clear across. (I, 111-112)

This very passage is of great importance to the novel as a whole, but even more important to the development of the relationship between Anne and Gilbert. Anne is sensitive about her red hair. There is no place in the novel that enlightens the reader why this is so. However there are numerous passages where she is given remarks about her hair. Appearance is important to Anne and perhaps this has something to do with the fact that she is an orphan. However wanting to be pretty in this time is nothing strange (Åhmansson, 88). The woman did not need to be clever, being pretty was of greater importance. The reader even notices Anne saying that she prefers being pretty to being clever. Until the age of eleven she has no family, only hopes and dreams. Perhaps she feels as if she is singled out as being of less value being an orphan, skinny and having red hair. When people point out one of these features, she might feel insufficient or of less value.

Anne, who at this point is ignorant of boys in general, does not see that Gilbert is yearning for her attention and that he is not teasing her out of pure wickedness. As a consequence Gilbert's teasing has the opposite effect. She has decided that what he just did is something that she will never forgive him for doing: "As for Gilbert Blythe, she would not even look at him. She would never look at him again! She would never speak to him!!" (I, 112-113) Gilbert, who only craved her attention, is feeling awful. He does his best to make amends. Gilbert tries to apologise to her but she will not hear of it. Diana is outraged with Anne's behaviour. But Anne's weakest spot is her hair, and she just cannot forgive him. What Anne does not know is that Gilbert has a habit of teasing the girls, but never before has he apologised. Therefore the

reader one more time has reasons to believe that Gilbert is interested in Anne. If he had not shown any interest in Anne he would probably have treated her with indifference as with the other girls in the school and consequently never apologised to her.

Mr Phillips, who is the teacher, tells his students that he expects to see every single one of them in their seats when he returns after lunch. When he returns all students run to their seats, but Anne, who starts through the door amongst the boys is singled out for punishment. She is no longer allowed to sit with Diana but is forced to sit next to the boy whom had teased her about her red hair. Anne is devastated:

this was the end of all things. It was bad enough to be singled out for punishment from among a dozen equally guilty ones; it was worse still to be sent to sit with a boy; but that boy should be Gilbert Blythe was heaping insult on injury to a degree utterly unbearable. Anne felt that she could *not* bear it and it would be no use to try. Her whole being seethed with shame and anger and humiliation. (I, 115)

She does her uttermost to try to ignore Gilbert throughout the rest of the day. It is here she resolves to treat Gilbert as air. This continues during the rest of the novel, and not until much later will she realise that she has stopped resenting him. But at this point, her heart is set on never forgiving Gilbert and on never addressing him again. Gabriella Åhmansson feels that this part of the novel is of great importance to Gilbert and Anne's development (121-124). She points out that Anne is not acting in a feminine way. If she had, she would have resolved to forgive him or at least to give the impression of having done so. But Anne is getting in touch with a more masculine side and it is this side that makes her hit Gilbert in the head with her slate.

Gilbert however, does not resent Anne. He tries repeatedly to make her forgive him. He even discretely gives her a pink little candy heart with the inscription "you are sweet". Not surprisingly, Anne cannot accept this candy heart. Once again she becomes angry, but handles her emotions 'discretely,' at least for her: "Anne arose, took the pink heart gingerly between the tips of her fingers, dropped it on the floor, ground it to powder beneath her heel, and resumed her position without deigning to bestow a glance on Gilbert" (I, 115). That Gilbert gives her candy, shaped as a heart, might mean more to Gilbert than just an innocent *forgive me gesture*; it is another tool of foreshadowing, giving the reader more reasons to believe that one day it might be Anne and Gilbert. Anne is, as mentioned earlier, not an average

schoolgirl, neither has she had an average background. In her past she has solely been able to rely upon herself. Therefore it can easily be imagined that she has become defensive.

To avoid Gilbert and to prevent her from losing her pride she decides to stay at home and do her schoolwork there. Although she does not go to school for a long while, her pride cannot prevent her from going to Sunday school, nor can she avoid to run in to him by accident in the street. For that reason she develops a 'system' of what she will do if that happens. She will pass him by with an icy contempt. In spite of Diana's work as a peacemaker, Anne decides to hate Gilbert forever. (I, 118)

Something striking in these novels, and also in real life, is the fact that the ignition phase does not necessarily mean the same for the two people who are about to fall in love. Gilbert is evidently deeply affected by Anne from the first time he sees her and shows his affection for Anne by his actions. His actions are by no means different from boys' general behaviour at that age. Anne, on the other hand, has not yet shown any interest in boys in general. Although the reader can access her inner feelings on numerous occasions in the novels, nothing at this stage is revealed to the reader. A reason for this is that Anne herself is not feeling anything out of the ordinary; as a result the reader is as much kept in the dark as Anne herself. In Alberoni's terms, Anne has not yet reached that stage in her life where she is open to something new such as love. She finds herself overwhelmed by the immense amount of new impressions that are being sprung upon her. Having found herself a family in Mathew and Marilla and a bosom friend in Diana, she now has a stable life; she has chores and schoolwork to do, etc. She is in want of nothing. Therefore, when Gilbert tries to get her attention, she is just not interested; she does not need him yet. Nonetheless, Anne finds herself in the ignition phase. This might not be apparent after a first reading, but becomes clearer later on. Gilbert's teasing has triggered something in her. Anne can no longer ignore him even though she outwardly wants to ignore that impression. This will be further demonstrated in the following section dealing with denial.

This section has demonstrated how both Anne and Gilbert find themselves in the ignition phase soon after their first encounter. It is only Gilbert, however, that realises the significance of their first meeting. Even though Anne does not seem to realise that she needs Gilbert, the reader does. As a result Anne soon enters a new phase, which is filled with feelings of denial.

Denial

When a person has completed the ignition phase she or he proceeds into the second phase of denial. At this stage it is common to start to have conscious or subconscious doubts, and also feelings of resistance and denial. According to Alberoni, “resistance is always part of our falling in love” (*Falling*, 174). But why does a person want to resist love? It is rather simple; when you fall in love, it is without guarantee and security, you open yourself up and if the love is not mutual you can end up being hurt. Alberoni furthermore states, “when someone falls in love, he opens himself to a foretaste of a different existence without any guarantee that will actually come to pass” (50).

There are numerous scenes in which Anne refuses to see that she is in love with Gilbert. The first ones take place in school or in relation to school. Ever since Gilbert called her ‘carrot’ she has been resenting him and there has been an ongoing competition of who is the better student. The competition is even, because they are both very intelligent. Since Anne is so proud she cannot allow herself to lose and even though she has sworn to ignore him for the rest of their lives, she cannot do this completely. This is shown to the reader on numerous occasions.

For example, when Anne is baking a cake she accidentally uses anodyne liniment instead of baking powder. She is not concerned what all the other boys would think about it, only about Gilbert’s reaction: “I shall always be pointed at as the girl who flavored a cake with anodyne liniment. Gil –the boys in school will never get over laughing at it” (I, 175). This passage shows Anne’s accidental slip of tongue, she begins to say Gilbert, but never finish saying it, instead she tries to cover it by referring to ‘the boys’ instead. Passages like this one are to be found four more times in the first novel. That these passages are allowed to be found in these novels might be intended by the author as to give Anne a more real-life dimension, giving the reader a chance to identify with her.

People around them can see that Anne and Gilbert are perfect for each other, although Anne continues to be oblivious. When she moves away from home to start at a new college, a new part of her life begins. One of her best friends in college is Philippa. Philippa is as always going on about boys and the following specific conversation is also about Gilbert: “But, of course, the one I like the best I can’t get. Gilbert Blythe won’t take any notice of me, except

to look at me as if I were a nice little kitten he'd like to pat. Too well I know the reason. I owe you a grudge, Queen Anne" (III, 37). Philippa is the first to point this out to her, but Anne does not seem to care about it.

Further on in the novel she even gets it pointed out to her a second time. Davy asks Anne if she is getting married soon and if it is to Gilbert (III, 132). Anne clearly becomes annoyed with this and storms out of the room. This scene can be compared to another one where Diana and Anne are having a discussion regarding Anne and Gilbert: "I wonder why everybody seems to think I ought to marry Gilbert Blythe," said Anne petulantly. "Because you were made and meant for each other, Anne- that's why. You needn't toss that young head of yours. It's a fact" (III, 155). This proves once again how Anne is ignorant to the fact that Gilbert is the one for her, even though she gets this indicated by her bosom friend Diana. She apparently feels as she must demonstrate her ignorance so that the people around her can understand that there is and should not be anything between her and Gilbert. Her storming out of the room and tossing her head might not only be her way of demonstrating to the others her ignorance and her disinterest but a way to prove to herself that she does not *need* him in spite of what everybody else says.

The reader is never really told why Anne is acting so blindly when it concerns herself and Gilbert. Does she honestly feel that he is not right for her or is it just so that she is afraid to lose what she has fought for so long? Accepting the fact that Gilbert loves her and admitting this to herself would change everything. Anne has perhaps not yet reached that level of development to see herself being with Gilbert, the reader is left in the dark and so are the people around her who continuous to be amazed by her ignorance.

Consequently, when Gilbert proposes to Anne the first time, she cannot accept because she has not yet realised that she loves him. At the moment when she returns back to her house she meets Philippa who realises that Anne has refused Gilbert's proposal. She does not think that Anne should have refused his proposal and says, "You don't know love when you see it. You've tricked something out with your imagination that you think [sic] love, and you expect the real thing to look like that" (III, 143). But why is Anne resisting what the reader can see from the start? Alberoni states that there may be other factors and bad past experiences or inexperience with love relationships behind the general resistance to love (*Falling*, 174).

Anne has up to this point no experience with love relationships, so perhaps her resistance can be explained by her inexperience?

Another scene is set when she returns to Avonlea the following summer although things have not remained the same: “Life was very pleasant in Avonlea that summer, although Anne, amid all her vacation joys, was haunted by a sense of ‘something gone which should have been there.’ She would not admit, even in her inmost reflections, that this was caused by Gilbert’s absence” (III, 151). That Anne could not admit this is yet another proof of to what extent she is denying her feelings.

A last scene that is of relevance to this chapter is set back in college. Philippa and Anne are having yet another discussion about boys: “‘I’d marry Gilbert Blythe if he were rich.’ ‘Oh would you?’ said Anne viciously. ‘We don’t like that idea a little bit, although we don’t want Gilbert ourselves, oh, no,’ mocked Phil. ‘But don’t let’s talk of disagreeable subjects’” (III, 137) Philippa here points out something very interesting. Anne says that she is not interested in Gilbert, yet she does not want anyone else to have him. The same thing happens when rumours circle around Gilbert and another girl stating that they are to get engaged. Anne does not like this and insists on finding flaws with this girl in order to feel better. These actions give the reader the impression that Anne is afraid of someone else taking Gilbert from her. Anne is clearly denying the fact that she is in love with Gilbert, which is a normal state according to Alberoni. He remarks that “resistance to love [...] co-exists alongside our falling in love” (138).

Falling in love is a process with love as the outcome. However as this paper is showing, the road to true love can be long and bumpy. Alberoni demonstrates that we ourselves put our partner or future partner to test and so does society:

Some of these tests are crucial. Passing them means that our experience of falling in love has ‘set’, and that it has become the compact cluster of daily certainties that we term ‘mature, stable love’. Not passing them, on the other hand, means that instead of love we end up with something else (*Falling*, 136)

Anne is resisting her love for Gilbert and she is somehow subconsciously wanting him to fail these love tests. The struggle that Anne insists on fighting must cease if she is to be able to love Gilbert. Alberoni mentions that “This peculiar inner resistance to love is a struggle against ourselves that we must lose. We surrender, *we yield to love*, and yet this does not

mean that the struggle isn't real, any more than realizing it prevents it from taking place" (*Falling*, 138-139). Applying this idea to the *Anne of Green Gables* series, Anne will finally surrender in the next phase, which Alberoni terms realisation.

Realisation

The third of Alberoni's four phases deals with realisation. This is when the person realises that he is in love. The questions and the tests made in the previous phase have been answered and dealt with. What remains are true and mutual feelings. Alberoni remarks that

thanks to our new powers we perceive relationships or connections which were lost on us before. We also understand an immense amount from the gestures, looks, or movements that the person we love may happen to make; in them we can read the story of his or her past and even childhood. We understand all his or her feelings, and we understand finally our own. We can distinguish between what is sincere and false in others and in ourselves because we have become more sincere. (*Falling*, 16)

When a person realises that he is in love with someone, all emotions that have been latent now emerge to the surface and thereby risk overwhelming the person in question.

The *Anne of Green Gables* series focuses mostly on Anne and therefore the reader does not learn how and exactly when Gilbert realises that he is in love with Anne. When it comes to Anne herself, we comprehend that after having gone through the phases of ignition and denial, Anne finally understands what has already been foreshadowed: that she is in love with Gilbert Blythe. Her realisation is developed into three steps; the first takes place when she is told that Gilbert is dying, the second when she recognises that she loves him, and the third and final step is when she makes her love known to Gilbert.

Starting with the first step, Anne returns home on vacation and receives horrible news; Gilbert is ill and is dying. Her reaction is what can be expected: "Anne stood quite silent and motionless [...] Her face had gone so white that Marilla thought she was going to faint" (III, 235). The fact that Anne reacts to the bad news in this way, serves to prove that Gilbert means something much more than she has earlier admitted. This is furthermore demonstrated when the other characters remark on her strange expressions and her voice not being hers. Mrs Rachel tells Davy to hold his tongue. Since Anne is in shock Mrs Rachel asks her to change her expression and to lessen what has just been said. Anne cannot, and asks in a voice that does not belong to her if what she just have heard is true. Once more they try to soften it and tells her not to look like that and remind her that while there's life there's hope (III, 235). This

first step ignites something in Anne which leads to the second step, which is Anne's realisation concerning her love for Gilbert.

To match Anne's feelings or numbness, the narrator gives an account of the weather: "It was very dark. The rain was beating down over the shivering fields. The Haunted Wood was full of the groans of mighty trees wrung in the tempest, and the air throbbed with the thunderous crash of billows on the distant shore. And Gilbert was dying!" (III, 235) Consequently, the reader starts to feel despair as well. Is this the end? Will Gilbert die? Will there not be a happy ending?

However, Anne needs this darkness and point of no return to arrive at the second step of her realisation. She needs to realise what she has and what she is about to lose. Alberoni says, "when there's a risk they might die, we realize how we might lose them and how essential they are to us. At the same time (and only at the same time) we realize their precious worth, which overshadows that of everything else on earth (*Falling*, 215). Then he continues, "The power of this force of darkness, in whatever form it may assume (death, illness, terrorism, kidnapping) consists only in its depriving us of something: it is nonbeing as power" (215). Even though Anne is a character and Alberoni is referring to people in real life, this can be said to be one very important aspect of why Anne finally realises that she is in love with Gilbert. Up until this moment he has only been her friend or constant rival, but now she has reached that point in her life where she is ready to see things clearer. She realises what she has and what she has had for a very long time. Now when he is on the verge of dying, she is ready to reveal those feelings that have been latent within her since that day, when she first met Gilbert Blythe:

She loved Gilbert –had always loved him! She knew that now. She knew that she could no more cast him out of her life without agony than she could have cut off her right hand and cast it from her. And the knowledge had come too late –too late for even bitter solace of being with him at the last. If she had not been so blind –so foolish –she would have had the right to go to him now. But he would never know that she loved him –he would go away thinking that she did not care. Oh the, the black years of emptiness stretching before her! (III, 236)

She finally understands that she loves him. She cannot bear the thought of being deprived of Gilbert's presence, a presence she earlier would give anything to do without. Now she wishes for the first time in her life that she would die with him: "If Gilbert went away from her, without one word or sign or message, she could not live. Nothing was of any value without

him. She belonged to him and he to her. In her supreme agony she had no doubt of that” (III, 236). The consequence of Anne’s sudden recognition of her inner feelings seems at first to be all negative. However, things are about to turn more positive.

Anne reaches the third and last step somewhat miraculously at the same time as she realises that she loves Gilbert. This might seem strange considering the fact that Anne and Gilbert are not at the same place, but in their respective homes. Nevertheless, when Anne during that night understands that she loves him, he all of a sudden becomes better. This gives the reader the impression of something supernatural, a higher force that refuses to see their love being wasted. Alberoni does not say anything about and if love is supernatural though he does say that “Love triumphs over the everyday world” (216). This statement should however be taken lightly, at least since Alberoni is referring to the real world.

The importance of the description of the weather was earlier mentioned as reflecting Anne’s feelings. Another interesting point concerning the weather is the fact that as soon as Gilbert becomes better, the account of the weather, which previously was filled with dark adjectives, has now been replaced by bright ones instead.

This section has demonstrated how Anne understands that she is in love with Gilbert. The realisation does not occur all at once but develops, though rapidly, in three steps. Consequently, Anne’s understanding of her love for Gilbert literary speaking saves his life. Both Anne and Gilbert are thereafter ready for a new phase in their lives, the outcome.

Outcome

It takes time for Anne to finally figure out that she loves Gilbert. Gubar gives a reason for this. She states that Montgomery is using this lengthy process to show that it sometimes takes effort to achieve such a couple as Anne and Gilbert finally forms, but also to demonstrate that such delays allow the formation of more passionate relationships. (1) This section marks the end of Anne’s and Gilbert’s process of falling in love. The outcome is the stage where previous feelings and past events forming a threshold to an existence as life partners. Alberoni states that “When all goes well, our falling-in-love experience ends in love; what begins as an unstable propulsion becomes a solid and stable institution: we and the person we love are ‘a fixed couple’” (*Falling*, 85). In the case of Anne and Gilbert, this stage can be divided into three smaller sections, the first being when Gilbert proposes to Anne and she accepts, the

second being the intermediate life where they are separated although remaining a couple, and the third and final one being when the two get married.

As has been mentioned in a previous section, Gilbert has already proposed to Anne once before. However, Anne at that stage is not ready for Gilbert's love and as a result refuses him. Now when Anne has realised that she is in love with Gilbert, she is ready to take the next step. When Gilbert proposes this time, she consequently accepts his proposal:

“I asked you a question over two years ago, Anne. If I ask it again today will you give me a different answer?” Still Anne could not speak. But she lifted her eyes, shining with love-rapture of countless generations, and looked into his for a moment. He wanted no other answer (III, 24-242).

Sometimes words are not needed, which is a point made by the narrator. Gilbert's second proposal is not coming as a surprise to the reader as his first attempt did. This proposal marks a big change in Anne's life. She can no longer be the same person as before. Now she must prepare for a life as a wife, although this education has been going on ever since she arrived at Avonlea. The reader has until this point seen Anne develop from a child, uncertain about her looks but with ambition, transform into a woman who is finally proud of her looks.

When Gilbert has proposed to Anne they cannot yet be married at once, because to be able to set up a house, Gilbert needs to finish his education. Ironically, the reader has gotten the impression that Anne is somewhat different to the average girl of this time due to the fact that she has proven ambition and ability to continue her education on a higher level. In spite of these facts and that she has on numerous occasions worked as a teacher, no focus is set on her and her need to pursue a teaching career or a completely different one. No, all attention is directed towards the importance of Gilbert staying in school completing his studies to become a doctor. However there are answers to why focus is set in this way. Gunilla Lindgren has written a thesis concerning higher education for girls in fiction. Here it is pointed out what difficulties women had to access higher education and for what use they would want to access it. The women are often in college not to earn a degree but to prepare for life itself (172). Gunilla Lindgren argues that this is the very same reason why Anne is in college: “The heroine of Avonlea puts similar thoughts into these words: ‘What I want to get out of my college course is some knowledge of the best way of living life and doing the most and best with it’” (172). Since Anne is in college for herself and her own development and not to earn a degree to start working it is Gilbert's education that is more important. Gunilla

Lindgren also talks about the fact that women in general had two choices in life: study and work or marry. It was very rare at the time when the *Anne of Green Gables* series takes place that the women combine the two. Consequently, it becomes less peculiar that Anne becomes solely a wife and does not pursue a career as for example a teacher.

Due to the fact that Gilbert needs to finish his education, the young couple are separated. Their love can predominately be seen through numerous letters. In these letters the reader learns what is happening in their lives, their thoughts and feelings but most importantly we understand how difficult it must be for the two lovers to be separated. This separation can be seen as an example of what Alberoni calls a “truth test” (*Falling*, 138). They have a second chance to see whether their love is strong enough to last even if they do not see each other. Gilbert and Anne pass the test. During their separation they write each other letters and perhaps this is a good way to remain close and in love with one’s partner. This truth test was not as important as the one Anne had to go through when she was told that Gilbert was dying. They were not yet separated but the mere thought of being separated from him made her realise that she loved Gilbert.

When Gilbert has earned his degree the two reach the third phase within the final stage of the outcome, their actual marriage. Marriage is a symbol of love. When they take this final step they decide before themselves and before God that they will love each other in sickness and in health until death do them part:

She was his at last, this evasive, long-sought Anne, won after years of patient waiting [...] Was he worthy her? [...] as she held out her hand, their eyes met and all doubt swept away in a glad certainty. They belonged to each other; and no matter what life had in store for them, it could never alter that. (V, 24-25)

Gilbert finally gets his Anne and Anne her Gilbert. This long and, for these two, difficult process of falling in love ends in marriage. This institution marks an end to Anne’s work as a teacher but marks a beginning towards other aspirations. Due to the fact that Anne is a woman living in a time where higher education is mainly for men, Anne must have no aspirations to pursue a career as a teacher but to become a mother and take care of the household. This is astonishing. Anne seems to be a person who has higher aspirations but who has to denounce from them to be a suitable wife. The reader expects that Anne would pursue a career as a writer but the reader is never told that she is. Gabriella Åhmansson draws parallels between Montgomery’s own life and Anne, because apparently there is a great deal

of similarities. Montgomery herself hid her writing from her husband for many years. If Anne did not continue writing, I would say that she lost a part of her identity when she married Gilbert.

When Anne and Gilbert finally are married the process of falling in love can be said to have ended. Consequently, they are now proceeding into a new stage in their lives, where they are husband and wife. Now they are no longer struggling with making the other fall in love but to prevent the other and oneself from falling out of love. This is an ongoing battle. In addition, Alberoni is of the opinion that for a couple to be able to stay together and to remain in love, they need to continuously overcome obstacles, discover new things about each other, etc. In other words, they need continuously to fall in love all over again, again and again for the rest of their lives.

Conclusion

This paper has served to demonstrate how the process of falling in love is represented in the *Anne of Green Gables* series. The four phases identified by Alberoni have been applied to the series and been used to draw parallels between an in real life process of falling in love and that of a fictional one. What also has been done is to draw parallels between Anne's process of falling in love and her development into a woman.

The narrator has been an important feature in this series. The author makes use of the narrator to: describe characters feelings, describe their actions, etc. Consequently we get close to the characters, and can more closely observe this process of falling in love. The absence of a narrator would have given a somewhat different result, since the narrator at least here is seen as being objective and the absence of one would only give an external view of this process and consequently been more difficult to prove.

The results of this paper are to some extent unexpected. I have been able to identify all of Alberoni's four phases which are: ignition phase, denial, realisation and outcome. It is surprising because we must bear in mind that Alberoni's theories are not meant to be applied to the fictional world yet they have fitted extraordinarily well with the *Anne of Green Gables* series. One reason for this is that the series as mentioned earlier belongs to the *Bildungsroman* genre and a too far fetched plot development would make the novels too imaginative and perhaps rather taken for fantasy. The four stages within the process of falling in love can be

set almost equal with the process of becoming a woman. To develop as a person as well as a character means to go through various stages in life. During each stage we learn something new and something to take with us to the next one. Anne goes through various phases both in life in general as well as in her process of falling in love with Gilbert. She goes through a journey inward as well as outward. Even though Anne has changed a great deal when she marries Gilbert, she does not fully develop at least not in terms of personal fulfilment. Anne's development is pulled back by the norms of the society. Consequently, the outcome most likely would have been somewhat different today. Anne might not have stayed at home with her children but pursued her career as a teacher or would have become a fulltime writer. External aspects have prevented Anne from fully developing and this is the reason why the process of falling in love and Anne's development into a woman cannot be set entirely equal.

In order to limit the paper, focus has been set on answering the question how the process of falling in love is represented in the *Anne of Green Gables* series. It is only the first process of falling in love which has been analysed. According to Alberoni's theories there is a continuous process of falling in love for a couple to be able to stay in love. Since Anne and Gilbert stay together for the rest of their lives, it would be interesting to analyse this part of their lives. On what basis do they remain together and can Alberoni's theories also be relevant here? There are many questions of interest that remain unanswered; perhaps this can be done in another paper?

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