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The Green Gables Utopia. On the Novel by Lucy Maud Montgomery

Abstract

This paper deals with the issue of “utopianism” in L.M. Montgomery’s novel *Anne of Green Gables* (1908), a book which has been translated into Polish many times and has been shaping the worldview and mentality of Polish female readers for over a century. This utopianism is here presented in three separate approaches. Firstly, the study investigates the “translatological utopianism” of the first translation of the novel (by R. Bernstein, published in 1911), which, as a result of the linguistic and stylistic decisions of the translator, has been significantly naturalised and domesticised, as well as adapted to the multiple (genological, social, and cultural) expectations and conceptions of the Polish implied audience. Secondly, attention was drawn to the fact that Avonlea as presented in the novel is a kind of social “matriarchal utopia”, emphasising the issues of women’s solidarity, responsibility, and education, at the same time strongly referring to the Arcadian trend in utopian literature. Thirdly, it was suggested that in Moira Walley-Beckett’s film adaptation *Anne of Green Gables* (*Anne with an E*, 2017-2018), the reading “between the lines” of Montgomery’s novel and the application of the hermeneutics of suspicion by the screenwriter made the idyllic utopia of the original resemble a dystopia.

Keywords: Lucy Maud Montgomery, *Anne of Green Gables*, Canadian literature, feminist interpretations of *Anne of Green Gables*, film adaptations of *Anne of Green Gables*.

In the collection of *...czterdzieści i cztery. Figury literackie. Nowy kanon*,¹ which presents figures of femininity that create the Polish imagination, perhaps one very important figure, namely, Anne Shirley, the protagonist of the nine-part novel series by Lucy Maud Montgomery, is lacking.² Since 1911, when the first translation by Rozalia Bernstein was published, volume I alone has been translated again into Polish as many as thirteen times (not to mention translations into Kashubian and Silesian)³ and at least one hundred editions,⁴ which allows *Anne of Green Gables* to be considered a book that has profoundly shaped the worldview and mentality of several generations of Polish women. This is supported not only by old readership rankings, but also by the establishment in recent years of a Polish Montgomery fandom (thousands of websites dedicated to the writer, the birth of a collector's market focused on gathering particular editions, and finally "literary tourism" to Prince Edward Island, Canada). Against the backdrop of the rest of the world, the over-century-long popularity of Montgomery's writing in Poland is a surprising ex-

¹ *...czterdzieści i cztery. Figury literackie. Nowy kanon*, red. M. Rudaś-Grodzka et al., Warszawa 2016.

² The series consists of the following parts (in brackets, I give the date of the first Canadian edition and the title of translation most established in the Polish tradition): 1. *Anne of Green Gables* (1908, *Ania z Zielonego Wzgórza*); 2. *Anne of Avonlea* (1909, *Ania z Avonlea*); 3. *Anne of the Island* (1915, *Ania na uniwersytecie*); 4. *Anne of Windy Poplars* (1936, *Ania z Szumiących Topoli*); 5. *Anne's House of Dreams* (1917, *Wymarzony dom Ani*); 6. *Anne of Ingleside* (1939, *Ania ze Złotego Brzegu*); 7. *Rainbow Valley* (1919, *Dolina Tęczy*); 8. *Rilla of Ingleside* (1921, *Rilla ze Złotego Brzegu*); 9. *The Blythes Are Quoted* (2009, *Ania z Wyspy Księcia Edwarda*). The subsequent volumes were not written in chronological order; volumes 4 and 6 were "added" later. The main character, Anne Shirley, also appears in *Chronicles of Avonlea* (1912, *Opowieści z Avonlea*) and *Further Chronicles of Avonlea* (1920, *Pożegnanie z Avonlea*).

³ The authors of the translations, invariably entitled *Ania z Zielonego Wzgórza*, are Rozalia Bernstein (1911), Przemysław Piekarski (1995), Jolanta Ważbińska (1995), Dorota Kraśniewska-Durlik (1995), Ewa Łozińska-Mańkiewicz (1996), Rafał Dawidowicz (1997), Katarzyna Zawadzka (1997), Katarzyna Jakubiak (1997), Agnieszka Kuc (2003), Jan Jackowicz (2003), Paweł Beręsewicz (2003), Joanna Sałaciak (2013), Magdalena Skrabek (2014). Additionally, there was a simplified version for children (edited by Kathleen Olmstead) translated by Roman Honet (1998). Since the latter was published in violation of legal norms, the Zielona Sowa publishing house decided to destroy all the copies. Montgomery's novel was also published in translation into Kashubian (*Ana z Zelony Grzëpë*, skasziła M. Bobkowska, Gduńsk 2017), while fragments were included in the anthology of translations of world classics into the Silesian dialect (language) (M. Szołtysek, *Ślązoki nie gęsi*, Rybnik 2002).

⁴ The number of editions is difficult to determine as many legal deposits have not been sent to libraries or registered.

ception—the only country where it has a similar reception is Japan.⁵ I mean, of course, the popular reading reception, not professional literary research. In Western English studies, multifaceted studies on Montgomery's work have been conducted for many years, often in terms of the "hermeneutics of suspicion", in which feminist readings of the novels definitely come to the fore.⁶

The popularity of Montgomery's novel in Poland seems to have several causes. In 1911, when the first Polish translation was published, there were no equally attractive personal or plot patterns in books for girls. Instead, impudent didacticism of jingoistic and churchly character dominated the prose addressed to this audience. Montgomery treated her readers as partners and did not instruct them on every page, which was an important innovation. The emancipatory model presented in the novel, which in the original work was revolutionary and sometimes even subversive, has lost its original subversiveness due to the course of time and the specificity of the first Polish translation, and for that reason became particularly popular in quite traditional Polish society. Indeed, it was a "safe" and conservative emancipation, emphasising that despite the benefits of education, the goal of a woman is still to marry and have children. The book also undertook a motif that had been extremely popular in Polish literature since the nineteenth century, i.e. the fate of an orphan.⁷ What is more, Montgomery's novel, translated by Bernstein, was culturally domesticated, and its protagonist began to appear as "a Polish girl from a manor house". Nevertheless, it was still a book from Anglo-Saxon culture, inscribed in the then modernising "phantasm" on England and America, visible already in *Lalka (The Doll)* by Bolesław Prus. Finally, in the now socialist country after World War II, when the great career of *Anne of Green Gables* began, the subject of the social (and intellectual) advancement of a rural girl became extremely topical.

⁵ See Y. Akamatsu, *The Continuous Popularity of Red-Haired Anne in Japan: An Interview with Yoshiko Akamatsu*, in: *Anne Around the World. L.M. Montgomery and Her Classic*, eds. J. Ledwell, J. Mitchell, Montreal, London, Ithaca, NY 2013, pp. 216-227.

⁶ For example, collections and monographs: *L.M. Montgomery and Canadian Culture*, eds. I. Gammel, E. Epperly, Toronto, Buffalo, NY, London 1999; *Anne Around the World. L.M. Montgomery and Her Classic*, op. cit.; *Anne's World. A New Century of Anne of Green Gables*, eds. I. Gammel, B. Lefebvre, Toronto, Buffalo, NY, London 2010; *Making Avonlea. L.M. Montgomery and Popular Culture*, ed. I. Gammel, Toronto, Buffalo, NY, London 2002; E. Waterston, *Magic Island. The Fictions of L.M. Montgomery*, Oxford 2008; I. Gammel, *Looking for Anne of Green Gables. The Story of L.M. Montgomery and Her Literary Classic*, New York 2008; G. Åhmansson, *A Life and Its Mirrors*, vol. 1: *A Feminist Reading of L.M. Montgomery's Fiction*, Uppsala 1991; *The L.M. Montgomery Reader*, vol. 1-3, ed. B. Lefebvre, Toronto, Buffalo, NY, London 2013-2015. There is also a critical scientific edition of the novel issued by the prestigious Norton publishing house: L.M. Montgomery, *Anne of Green Gables*, ed. M.H. Rubio, E. Waterston, New York, London 2007.

⁷ Cf. M. Jonca, *Sierota w literaturze polskiej dla dzieci w XIX wieku*, Wrocław 1994.

It is hard to resist the impression that in Poland researchers still treat Montgomery's writing with a certain indulgence as—to use Miłosz's phrase—"a reading from a maidenly room" ("czytanka z panińskiego pokoju"). At best, there are sincere, yet sentimental confessions in which the readers emphasise that Anne taught them the courage to be themselves. The reluctance of the academic "institution" to deal with the Polish phenomenon of Montgomery may also stem from the fact that—and it has to be said directly—this literature is rather second-rate (and sometimes even third-rate) in artistic terms, created for lineage by a writer who was the only breadwinner of her family, for lineage. However, in contrast to the "serious works dealing with important and universal problems", most often the subject of the academia's research, it had a direct impact on the shape of culture, social attitudes, and mentality.

In Montgomery criticism, the term "utopia" is very common.⁸ In this paper, I shall draw attention to its three possible applications to the novel. I will discuss the "utopia of the translation" created by Rozalia Bernstein, as well as the matriarchal utopia of Avonlea, and will demonstrate how the utopia in Moira Walley-Beckett's film adaptation of the novel becomes dystopian.

The utopia of the translation

The first Polish translation of the novel was published in 1911 by Michał Arct's publishing house, and its author was Rozalia Bernstein.⁹ This translation, most frequently renewed and almost treated as canonical, deviated from the original in many places. What is more, it was not based on the English text, but on the earlier translation of the novel into Swedish. The basic problem that the translator had to face was the lack of similar cultural, stylistic, and genological models on the Polish publishing market. *Anne of Green Gables* belonged to a very popular trend in the United States and Canada called *college girl literature*, a genre designed for young, ambitious, educated women, in which the educational aspect played a key role. It was also a typical late Victorian novel, indirectly referring to many classical features, including *Jane Eyre*. The typographic design and artwork of the first edition of the book, which came out in Boston in 1908, clearly confirmed that it was addressed to adult readers.

⁸ E.g. G. Åhmansson, *op.cit.*, pp. 128-137; E. Kornfeld, S. Jackson, *The Female Bildungsroman in Nineteenth-Century America: Parameters of Vision*, "Journal of American Culture" 1987, vol. 10, issue 4, pp. 69-75; P. Nodelman, *Progressive Utopia: Or, How to Grow Up without Growing Up*, "Children's Literature Association Quarterly" 1979, pp. 146-154.

⁹ See P. Oczko, T. Nastulczyk, D. Powieśnik, *Na szwedzkim tropie Ani z Zielonego Wzgórza. O przekładzie Rozalii Bernsteinowej*, "Ruch Literacki" 2018, no. 3, pp. 261-280.

On the black, hard cover with gilded inscriptions, there is an image of a young woman with a high-rise fin-de-siècle coiffure.

The style of Bernsteinowa's translation differed significantly from the original: affectionate, pompous, and sentimental, lacking irony and the (often edgy) sense of humour. The setting was domesticated, toponyms were translated, names were changed (for example, Rachel Lynde became Pani Małgorzata), and the realities were modified: farms were rendered as *dworki*, that is literally mansions, and Protestant ministers as *księża*, or priests. The message of potentially shocking fragments, such as those referring to the fate of French orphans "imported" *en masse* to work on Canadian farms,¹⁰ has been omitted or softened. Numerous intertextual traces present in the original have disappeared, and finally the emancipatory meaning of the novel has been significantly weakened. The translator, however, cannot be blamed for this—after all, one must cut one's coat according to one's cloth. The translation was to be published in a country in which "well-bred young ladies", and not country girls who could go to university, were still reading Klementyna Hoffmanowa née Tańska and her *Pamiętka po dobrej Matce, czyli ostatnie jej rady dla córki. Przez młodą Polkę (The Remembrance of a good mother, or her last advice to her daughter. Written by a young Polish lady, 1819)* or the more "modern" *Księżniczka (Princess)* by Zofia Urbańska.

As a result of these translation devices, however, the book was not intended for aspiring women aged 16-18, but for children, as evidenced by the fact that the protagonist's polonised name was used in its diminutive form, that is Ania, instead of Anna. The educational, and sometimes even revolutionary, meaning of the original was pushed into the background. Instead, the Polish translation began to function as a story about an idyllic world and a dreamlike orphan.

Avonlea as a matriarchal utopia

The category of literary utopia is an ambiguous and historically variable concept. It can be treated as a separate literary genre, an ideological or didactic programme inscribed in the work, and finally as a specific aspect of the characters' personalities (an internal utopia of the characters). It can also be related to the concept of Arcadia, especially in early Renaissance works. These problems were discussed by Northrop Frye in a famous essay *Varieties of Literary Utopias*.¹¹ For a long time, research on utopias was dominated by a phallogo-

¹⁰ Cf. P. Oczko, *Anna z domu o zielonym dachu. O cyklu powieściowym Lucy Maud Montgomery*, "Teksty Drugie" 2013, no. 5, pp. 42-61.

¹¹ N. Frye, *Varieties of Literary Utopias*, in: *Utopias and Utopian Thought*, ed. F.E. Manuel, London 1965, pp. 25-49.

centric direction, focusing on ideal, mainly urban, patriarchal communities and male institutions, which for a long time was substantiated by the subject itself. From the Renaissance to the Enlightenment, the subject was rarely elaborated from a typically womanly perspective (e.g. *The Blazing World* by Margaret Cavendish, 1666). The change took place at the end of the nineteenth century, when the genre gained more popularity among female authors, mainly Anglo-Saxon,¹² who published about 150 such works. *Herland* by Charlotte Perkins Gilman (1915) deserves special attention. It is a novel about an isolated, ideal women's community unfamiliar with hierarchy, violence, or private property, who, two thousand years after the extinction of men, reproduces itself through parthenogenesis and lives in harmony with nature. It is only in recent years that the topic of female utopias has been given a deeper critical reflection, for example in the works of Nina Auerbach,¹³ Lilian Faderman,¹⁴ and Rachel Blau DuPlessis.¹⁵

Gabriella Åhmansson draws attention to the fact that old (that is those from the turn of the twentieth century) utopias created by women often have a different structure—they are much closer to the concept of rural Arcadia located somewhere on the outskirts of real countries. The patriarchal social model is replaced in them by a construct of an extremely matriarchal nature, while utopianism can be realised in a psychological dimension, as an inner paradise where one arrives through the process of socialisation finding one's place in a harmonious micro-community of home and neighbourhood. The description of such a community focuses on rituals and relationships between self-sufficient women, while the patriarchal factor is kept to a minimum. The influence of male figures on the life of the community is limited, and men themselves are, in a sense, "effeminate".¹⁶

The world of the insular Avonlea presented by Montgomery is not, of course, a female utopia *par excellence*, but it has many quasi-utopian features. Time and again in the cycle, examples of female responsibility, entrepreneurship, and solidarity are presented.¹⁷ Marilla (Maryla in the Polish version) rules Green Gables indivisibly; she also welcomes the widowed and impoverished Rachel (Małgorzata) into her home, and adopts orphaned twins, Davy (Tadzio) and Dora (Tola). Anne gives up her scholarship to take care of Marilla, who is

¹² Cf. K. Trzeciak, *Utopia komunikacyjna w działaniu. Charlotte Perkins Gilman język emancypacyjnej literatury i architektury*, "Wielogłos" 2019, no. 4, in press.

¹³ N. Auerbach, *Communities of Women*, Cambridge, MA, London 1998.

¹⁴ L. Faderman, *Surpassing the Love of Men: Romantic Friendship and Love between Women from the Renaissance to the Present*, London 1985.

¹⁵ R. Blau DuPlessis, *Writing Beyond the Ending. Narrative Strategies of Twentieth-Century Women Writers*, Bloomington, IN 1985.

¹⁶ G. Åhmansson, *op.cit.*, pp. 129-133.

¹⁷ In the following paragraphs, I partially recapitulate my observations presented in my following study: P. Oczko, *op.cit.*, pp. 52-60 (part: *Feminizm z Green Gables*).

aging and losing her sight. She will graduate only because another independent, wealthy woman, Josephine (Józefina/Józefa) Barry, will bequeath her money. The author also refers several times to the examples of the so-called Boston marriages, self-sufficient female micro-communities, existing outside the patriarchal world and governed by their own internal laws. Within a Boston marriage, two unmarried women could run a joint farm, rent a farmhand for field work, and enjoy independence. Lonely women could not usually afford such a life and usually bore the fate of unwanted residents, old women at the mercy of their families. In America, in the second half of the nineteenth century, such female communities were recognised as one of the fundamental social units. Perhaps some of them were lesbian (as the “romantic” aspect of such friendships might suggest), but there is no strong evidence of this.

In the world of the novels, men are often portrayed in a light that is not very flattering. Pastor Meredith in the *Rainbow Valley* is an intellectually detached, withdrawn, absent-minded, and helpless widower, incapable of looking after a bunch of uncared for children. Their fate is of interest only to their neighbours. After his wife’s death, Pierce Grayson in *Anne of Windy Poplars* abandons a little daughter, and the carefree mess-maker, Mr Harrison in *Anne of Avonlea*, is an immature boy whose life will be back on track as soon as his once deserted wife appears. Montgomery often shows adult men as losers or withdrawn henpecked husbands (e.g. the almost autistic Matthew Cuthbert, or Mateusz in Polish version), as well as raving madmen or irresponsible egoists. A positive hero, on the other hand, is often a mythical and idealised character, *deus ex machina*, who appears in the female world only to finally marry the heroine (like Stephen Irving in *Anne of Avonlea*) who had been waiting for years to marry him. The writer’s own life experience cannot be omitted here. Married to a mentally ill Presbyterian pastor, constantly transferred from parish to parish, she had to shoulder the fate of the family.

In Avonlea, women continue to discuss the problems of the community, as well as politics, and often criticise government decisions, with Rachel Lynde having the lead, of course. In such discussions, the leading figures are the model “patriarchal guards”, rural gossip girlfriends, and exemplary housewives, who keep cleaning and preparing preserves, and most of all, are devoted to needles, knitting needles, and crochet. I am only signalling here that the motif of sewing, weaving, and knitting, characteristic from today’s feminist perspective, appears many times in the cycle, and often even organises the plot. Susan Drain suggests that the tailoring *imaginarium* appearing in the first paragraphs of *Anne of Green Gables* is nothing more than a foretoken of the feminine structure of the world, which in a moment will be fully presented to us.¹⁸

¹⁸ S. Drain, *Community and The Individual in Anne of Green Gables. The Meaning of Belonging*, “Children’s Literature Association Quarterly” 1986, vol. 11, no. 1, p. 16; E. Rothwell, *Knitting Up the World: L. M. Montgomery and Maternal Feminism in*

The main theme of the first three volumes is women's education, which is the basis for achieving independence and freedom, especially when you are a girl from a Canadian village in the countryside. The competition for grades and results at school presented in the novel between Anne and Gilbert, which symbolically ends with their first place *ex aequo* in the teacher's college exam, highlights the equal intellectual aptitudes of both sexes. Around 1881 (the plot time), exactly when in Poland Marta Świcka in Orzeszkowa's novel *Marta* loses her tragic battle for her life, Marilla says the following words:

When Matthew and I took you to bring up we resolved we would do the best we could for you and give you a good education. I believe in a girl being fitted to earn her own living whether she ever has to or not.¹⁹

[...] she [Mrs Lynde—P.O.] doesn't believe in the higher education of women at all; she says it unfits them for woman's true sphere. *I don't believe a word of it.*²⁰

In *Anne of the Island*, one of the female characters, *nota bene* a coquette of dazzling beauty, will strive to attract the interest of a man not with her cooking skills but winning the first university prize in mathematics. Moreover, in volume I, there is also a postulate to ordain women as pastors²¹ (at that time a revolutionary and almost subversive idea), and mentions of the books Anne Shirley reads, which include e.g. the works of Marietta Holley, an American suffragette popular in those days, hiding under the pseudonym of Josiah Allen's Wife.²²

Montgomery's feminine utopia, however, can be apparent. Many a time, the author reveals the skeletons hidden in the closets: mutual resentments, old grudges, power struggles, and even hatred suppressed for years. Obsessively, the question of spinsterhood also appears in all of her works treated as a kind of trauma. And although most of these conflicts are usually resolved happily, the diagnosis of interpersonal relationships is often pessimistic. The matriarchal outline is evident only in the first three volumes of the cycle, consistently intended as an educational *Bildungsroman*. In the following, additional parts, written by the author out of financial necessity, female independence and solidarity goes into the background, and the main character, the former

Canada, in: *L.M. Montgomery and Canadian Culture*, *op.cit.*, pp. 133-144; J. MacDonald, "I Just Love Pretty Clothes": *Considering the Sartorial in Anne of Green Gables*, in: *Anne Around the World. L.M. Montgomery and Her Classic*, *op.cit.*, pp. 245-261; A. Matthews David, K. Whal, "Matthew Insists on Puffed Sleeves": *Ambivalence towards Fashion in Anne of Green Gables*, in: *Anne's World. A New Century of Anne of Green Gables*, *op.cit.*, pp. 35-49.

¹⁹ L.M. Montgomery, *Anne of Green Gables*, Boston 1908, p. 338.

²⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 405. Emphasis—P.O.

²¹ *Ibidem*, p. 350.

²² *Ibidem*, p. 424.

university graduate, clearly fades away, gives up her ambitions, and gradually takes on the form of a social function, Mrs Doctor Gilbert Blythe. Grażyna Plebanek aptly called this evolution “utracona rudość Ani” (“the lost foxiness of Anne”).²³ The former feminist utopia, the childhood and youthful Arcadia, is replaced by reality, i.e. the social and economic patriarchy, which says: yes, be ambitious, but not too ambitious, remember that your achievements should never hinder the well-being of men, and finally—do everything you can to get married after all. It is only in the last volume of the cycle, which will be discussed later, that we will learn that Anne has been writing poems all her life. Indeed, time and again, Montgomery bitterly pointed out that marriage was a necessary choice for women in Canada²⁴.

It should also be emphasised that the world presented in Montgomery’s novel is a kind of “ethnic utopia”—the author (in line with the expectations of readers at that time) presented Canadian society as homogeneous in terms of race (white) and culture (Protestant), “erasing” from it even representatives of indigenous peoples, African-Americans, Metis, and mulattoes.

When utopia becomes dystopia

Anne of Green Gables has been presented on screen several times. A silent film was directed by William Desmond Taylor in 1919, and in 1934 another adaptation was made by George Nichols Jr. There have been at least a dozen television series and animated versions. All of them represented the trend of traditional “family movies”, proclaiming safe and lasting values such as friendship, family, and home.²⁵ It was only in 2017 that the Canadian scriptwriter and producer Moira Walley-Beckett decided to read Montgomery’s novel in a completely different way, i.e. between the lines. The series *Anne with an E* (season 1, 2017; season 2, 2018) is a customary drama in which an optimistic story about an orphan who finally finds her place in a friendly rural community is replaced by the story of an unloved, deeply traumatised child, not particularly pretty (skinny, with a crooked bite). A child for whom an escape into the pretentious, romantic visions of the imagination is the only possible way to survive. Walley-Beckett has also introduced numerous threads, which—if only this history really happened in Canada at the end of the nineteenth century—would undoubtedly have to appear. She showed, for instance, the difficult process of becoming adoptive parents to a strange teenager, violence in school,

²³ G. Plebanek, *Utracona rudość Ani*, “Wysokie Obcasy Extra” 2011, no. 3, p. 18.

²⁴ See: *The Canadian 100: The 100 Most Influential Canadians of the 20th Century*, eds. G.H. Rawlinson, J.L. Granatstein, Toronto 1997, p. 145.

²⁵ Cf. T.F. Sheckels, *Anne in Hollywood: The Americanization of a Canadian Icon*, in: *L.M. Montgomery and Canadian Culture, op.cit.*, pp. 183-191.

or the contempt of peers for the “waif”. She also added a first menstrual scene and discreetly suggested the possibility of sexual harassment of the girl. The fate of typical Canadian orphans of Anne’s age was in fact much worse: they experienced various forms of violence as children. Thinking about contemporary western audiences, the series also features a strongly outlined theme of women’s emancipation and LGBTQ+ people. Such a reading of the novel is part of a long academic tradition of reading Montgomery’s books and searching for their hidden depths, previously left unmentioned. Suffice it to say that Helen Hoy interpreted the protagonist’s unconventional behaviour as a clinical example of foetal alcohol syndrome—in nineteenth-century Canada pregnant women were drinking “for health” at least a few glasses a day.²⁶

Moira Walley-Beckett did not necessarily act against Montgomery’s intentions. In April 1942, Montgomery submitted her last, ninth book about Anne of Green Gables to the publishing house. Then, on 24 April, she wrote a farewell note and took a deadly dose of barbiturates. The novel did not come out in its entirety until 2009, that is sixty seven years later. Benjamin Lefebvre, who came across an original manuscript in the archive and prepared it for printing, wrote the following observation: “Adultery, illegitimacy, revenge, murder, and death—these are not the first terms we associate with L.M. Montgomery. But in *The Blythes Are Quoted*, completed at the end of her life, the author brings topics such as these to the fore.”²⁷ The title of the last novel was: *The Blythes Are Quoted*. As if Montgomery almost wanted to free herself from the convention imposed on her for years and wished to shout to her readers: now I will finally tell you (quote) what it really was like.

The Polish translation of the book was published under the title *Ania z Wyspy Księcia Edwarda* (literally Anne of Prince Edward Island), and on the first page of the cover, the Wydawnictwo Literackie Publishing House placed a meaningful annotation: “The previously unpublished last volume of adventures of Anne of Green Gables”. The serial *Anne with an E* received an official Polish name *Ania*, not *Anna* (*Ania* is a Polish diminutive from *Anna*—K.S.), which once again completely distorted the meaning of the work. In the original, Anne Shirley emphasises that her name is written as *Anne*, with an “e” at the end, not as *Ann*. *Anne*, which evokes French connotations, is a dream of a better and happier life, a social advancement, while *Ann*, a familiar English woman, is a reality. Bernstein, at her wit’s end, only came up with the opposition of *Ania*—*Andzia* (two different Polish diminutives from *Anna*—K.S.).

Evidently, the utopia of Green Gables is still doing very well in Poland.

Translated by Kaja Szymańska

²⁶ H. Hoy, “Too Heedless and Impulsive”: Re-Reading Anne of Green Gables through a Clinical Approach, in: *Anne’s World. A New Century of Anne of Green Gables*, op.cit., pp. 65-81.

²⁷ As cited in: *The L.M. Montgomery Reader*, vol. 3, op.cit., p. 385.

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