

The Complex Anne-Grrrl:

A Third Wave Feminist Re-reading of *Anne of Green Gables*

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Tämän pro gradu -tutkielman tavoitteena oli selvittää voidaanko Lucy Maud Montgomeryn 1908 ilmestyneestä romaanista *Anne of Green Gables* löytää kolmannen aallon feminismiin piirteitä. Erityisesti tutkin löytyykö romaanista piirteitä ristiriitaisuudesta ja sen omaksumisesta ja individualismin ideologiasta, feministisestä ja positiivisesta äitiydestä sekä konventionaalisen naisellisuuden etuoikeuttamisesta.

Tutkielmani teoreettinen kehys muodostuu feministisestä kirjallisuuden tutkimuksesta, painottuen kolmannen aallon feministiseen teoriaan. Erityisesti feminististä äitiyttä tutkittaessa tutkielman kulmakivenä on Adrienne Richin teoria äitiydestä, jota Andrea O'Reilly on kehittänyt. Tämän teorian mukaan äitiys on toisaalta miesten määrittelemä ja kontrolloima, naista alistava instituutio patriarkaalisessa yhteiskunnassa, toisaalta naisten määrittelemä ja naiskeskeinen positiivinen elämys, joka potentiaalisesti voimauttaa naisia. Kolmannen aallon feminismi korostaa eroja naisten välillä ja naisissa itsessään, tästä muotoutuvat teoriat ristiriitaisuuden omaksumisesta ja individualismista. Myös konventionaalisen naisellisuuden etuoikeuttaminen on tärkeää kolmannen aallon feminismissä. Tutkielmassani selvitin miten nämä kolmannen aallon piirteet manifestoituvat *Anne of Green Gables* romaanissa.

Mielestäni tämä tutkielma osoittaa, että *Anne of Green Gables* romaanista voidaan löytää piirteitä kolmannen aallon feminismistä. Marilla Cutbertin äitiyttä määrittelevät feministisen äitiyden tunnusmerkit: hän hoivaa Annea vastoin patriarkaalisen yhteiskunnan äitiyden instituutiota, luottaen enemmän omiin vaistoihinsa, hän saattaa muitakin osalliseksi Annen kasvatukseen, haastaa valtavirran kasvatustapoja ja ajatuksen, että ainoa tunne mitä äidit tuntevat lastaan kohtaan on rakkaus. Feministisen äitiytensä kautta Marilla voidaan katsoa panevan alulle yhteiskunnallisia muutoksia lastenkasvatuksessa. Matthew Cuthbertin voidaan myös katsoa hoivaavan Annea kuten äiti.

Ristiriitaisuus naisten elämässä ilmenee *Anne of Green Gables* romaanissa monella tavalla ja tasolla. Ensinnäkin kolmannen aallon teoriaa ristiriitaisuudesta ilmentää itse kirjailija Lucy Maud Montgomery kieltäessään oman feminisminsä, mutta heijastaessaan monia aikansa naisasialiikkeen ajatuksia romaaneissaan. Tutkielmassa esitän, että Montgomeryn käytös heijastaa monen modernin naisen ajattelutapaa: "En ole feministi, mutta...". Samalla ristiriitaisuutta ilmentää romaanin päähenkilö, Anne Shirley, joka voidaan nähdä sekä feministisenä hahmona että ihanteellisena viktoriaanisena naisena, joka pitäytyy sukupuoliroolinsa rajoissa.

Avainsanat: third wave feminism, feminist mothering, empowered mothering, Anne of Green Gables, Lucy Maud Montgomery

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1. Introduction: A New Departure in Flavorings

I have always loved the story of the little red-haired orphan from Prince Edward Island. Anne Shirley is the protagonist in a series of eight novels by Lucy Maud Montgomery, a Canadian-born author who published her first novel *Anne of Green Gables* in 1908 having already established a career as a writer of short stories and poems published in various magazines. The series tells Anne's life story from a girl of eleven at the beginning of *Anne of Green Gables* through her years in college, as a teacher, a wife and a mother to the final book of the series *Rilla of Ingleside* (1921) about the lives of her children. I have chosen to study only the aforementioned first novel of the series, since Montgomery, in fact, did not plan to write a series, but was pressured to do so by her publisher.¹ Montgomery intended to leave her protagonist forever looking forward to "the bend in the road" in "her ideal world of dreams".² Therefore, *Anne of Green Gables* illustrates best Montgomery's genuine voice as an author, before the pressures of her publisher, the world wide popularity of the Anne-girl and the demands of her audience influenced her writing.

Åhmansson explains that "for decades it has been possible to dismiss a work like *Anne of Green Gables* simply because its readership has been to a large extent female".³ At the beginning of my research I was annoyed by the treatment the novel had received in the hands of several male critics (e.g. Perry Nodelman called *Anne of Green Gables* "one of the most sexist books I know of"⁴) and, unfortunately, also in the hands of some female critics. For example, in *You're a Brick Angela! A New Look at Girls' Fiction from 1839 to 1975* Mary Cadogan and Patricia Craig wrote Montgomery "off as sentimental and conventional and her creation Anne Shirley as 'banal' and 'nauseating'".⁵ Also, Sheila Egoff in *The Republic of Childhood: A Critical Guide to Canadian Children's Literature* dismissed *Anne of Green Gables* with condescending approval as "an

¹ Åhmansson, Gabriella. 1991. *A Life and Its Mirrors: A Feminist Reading of L. M. Montgomery's Fiction. Volume I.* (Uppsala: Textgruppen i Uppsala AB.), 27.

² Montgomery, L. M. 1998. *Anne of Green Gables.* (New York: Bantam Books.), 307-8

³ Åhmansson, 55.

⁴ Weiss-Townsend, Janet. 2003. "Sexism Down on the Farm? Anne of Green Gables." *Such a Simple Little Tale: Critical Responses to L. M. Montgomery's Anne of Green Gables*, ed. Mavis Reimer. (Lanham: Scarecrow Press.), 109.

improvement on what little was being written for children at the time", but that "the increasing sentimental dishonesty of the succeeding books tends to destroy the first."⁶ I consider myself a feminist, so how could I love a story that apparently was the manifestation of patriarchal society? After my initial disappointment in the treatment Montgomery had received, I found "an impressive flourishing of scholarship on Montgomery."⁷

My research is related to the interdisciplinary academic field of Women's Studies, also known as Feminist Studies. My intention is to look at *Anne of Green Gables* specifically from the point of view of third wave feminism. Numerous articles and books have been published, and a vast amount of research has been made in the more than one hundred years since the novel's publication in 1908. Third wave feminism as a theory, however, is fairly new in itself and in the study of Montgomery's novels and therefore worth examining. Especially, since the novel remains popular even to this day. I intend to look at some characteristics of third wave feminism, namely, feminist mothering, celebrating popular modes of femininity and the importance of embracing contradiction and individual empowerment for women. My goal is to see whether these characteristics of third wave feminism can be found in the novel and how they are manifested. In discussing third wave feminism in *Anne of Green Gables* I do not mean to imply that the novel as a whole is an example of third wave feminism. Rather, I will point out how there are certain characteristics, characters and events in the book that can be seen as examples of feminist mothering, how valuing the girlishness and sentimentality of the novel is important in allowing its readers to privilege their own femininity and how individual empowerment differentiated in the novel enables women. Although Montgomery was not an outspoken advocate of women's rights, she did hold opinions that were decisively against the norms of her contemporary patriarchal society, e.g. women's access to higher education and economic independence.⁸ Later, I will argue that Montgomery used her fiction in

⁵ Cadogan and Graig, quoted in Åhmansson, 16.

⁶ Egoff, quoted in Åhmansson, 16-7.

⁷ Gammel, Irene. 2005. "Introduction: Life Writing as Masquerade: The Many Faces of L. M. Montgomery." *The Intimate Life of L. M. Montgomery*, ed. Irene Gammel. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press Incorporated.), 8.

⁸ Gerson, Carole. 1995. "'Fitted to Earn Her Own Living': Figures of The New Woman in the Writing of L. M. Montgomery." *Children's Voices in Atlantic Literature and Culture: Essays on Childhood*, ed. Hilary Thompson.

Anne of Green Gables in subtle way to try and affect social changes, for example in the position of the dependent child. This is achieved in part through the feminist mothering done by both Marilla and Matthew Cuthbert, Anne's adoptive parents.

This thesis begins from a discussion of the various waves of feminism and taking in a brief look at the general history of feminism. I then move on to discuss third wave feminism in more detail. After that I go on to analyse the novel from the point of view of some of the characteristics of third wave feminism. I think my own feminism has always been as Henry states in *Not My Mother's Sister: Generational Conflict and Third-Wave Feminism* "a given, handed to [me] at birth".⁹ However, feminism to me had always felt like a strict mother, expecting me to behave in a certain way, as Rebecca Walker writes in *To Be Real: Telling the Truth and Changing the Face of Feminism*: "For many of us it seems that to be a feminist in the way that we have seen or understood feminism is to conform to an identity and a way of living that doesn't allow for individuality, complexity, or less than perfect personal histories."¹⁰ As a teenager I remember struggling to become "a good feminist" and being confused by my own wants, needs and desires. On the other hand, I was surprised to find so much inequality, misogyny and chauvinism all around me. Ellen Newborne's essay *Imagine My Surprise* characterises the surprise in store for my generation's women, women who received feminism as a birthright: "I thought the battle had been won. I thought that sexism was a remote experience, like the Depression. Gloria [Steinem] had taken care of all that in the seventies. Imagine my surprise."¹¹ Many of the autobiographical essays of self-defined third wave feminists I have read in preparation for writing this thesis struck a chord. I felt I was reading about my life. The more I read, the more intrigued I got. After the feminism handed to me at birth and struggling with sexism as a teenager, in feminism's third wave I found my own personal "third wave" of feminism.

(Guelph: Canadian Children's Press.), 26.

⁹ Henry, Astrid. 2004. *Not My Mother's Sister: Generational Conflict and Third-Wave Feminism*. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press.), 40.

¹⁰ Walker, Rebecca. 1995b. "Being Real: An Introduction." *To Be Real: Telling the Truth and Changing the Face of Feminism*. (Toronto: Anchor Books.), xxxiii.

¹¹ Newborne, Ellen. 1995. "Imagine My Surprise." *Listen Up: Voices From the Next Feminist Generation*.

As mentioned above, *Anne of Green Gables* as well as its author L. M. Montgomery have been the interests of much scholarly research especially since the mid-1970s to this day. Edited collections of essays have investigated for example the international popular culture surrounding Montgomery's books and their characters such as films, television series, plays, musicals, and various merchandise surrounding the entertainment industry.¹² Montgomery's Canadianness and Anne as a cultural icon of Canada has been studied, and as well as Montgomery's life writing.¹³ Montgomery's own journals have been published in five volumes and her autobiographical writing has been delved into, many books deal with critical responses to her novels.¹⁴ Several biographies on L. M. Montgomery have also been published.¹⁵ There are also numerous journal articles written about Montgomery and her work, the L. M. Montgomery Research Group lists 175 articles ranging between the years 1942-2011.¹⁶ *Anne of Green Gables* specifically has been studied from a feminist point of view.¹⁷ Very little of the research on Montgomery studies, however, deals with *Anne of Green Gables* specifically from a third wave feminist point of view. Motherhood in *Anne of Green Gables* has been looked into by literary critics¹⁸ there is, however, no literary criticism of

(Washington: Seal Press.), 30-31.

¹² *Making Avonlea: L. M. Montgomery and Popular Culture*, edited by Irene Gammel.

¹³ *L. M. Montgomery and Canadian Culture*, edited by Irene Gammel and Elizabeth Epperly, and *The Intimate Life of L. M. Montgomery* edited by Irene Gammel respectively.

¹⁴ *Selected Journals of L. M. Montgomery 1-5*, edited by Mary Henley Rubio; *Harvesting Thistles: The Textual Garden of L. M. Montgomery: Essays on Her Novels and Journal*, edited by Mary Henley Rubio; *Such a Simple Little Tale: Critical Responses to L. M. Montgomery's Anne of Green Gables*, edited by Mavis Reimer; *Fragrance of Sweet-Grass: L. M. Montgomery's Heroines and the Pursuit of Romance*, edited by Elizabeth Epperly and *100 Years of Anne with an 'e': The Centennial Study of Anne of Green Gables* by Holly Balckford, to name a few

¹⁵ *The Wheel of Things: A Bibliography of L. M. Montgomery Author of Anne of Green Gables* by Mollie Gillen, *Kindred Spirit: A Bibliography of L. M. Montgomery, Creator of Anne of Green Gables* by Catherine M. Andronik, *The Intimate Life of L. M. Montgomery* by Irene Gammel, *Lucy Maud Montgomery: The Gift of Wings* by Mary Henley Rubio, and *L. M. Montgomery* by Jane Urquhart.

¹⁶ Journal Articles. [Internet] Wordpress. Available from <http://lmmresearch.org/bibliography/journal-articles/> [Accessed 18 July 2011]

¹⁷ Essays, articles or book-length studies include titles such as *Sexism Down on the Farm?: Anne of Green Gables* by Jane Weiss-Townsend, *The Female Bildungsroman in Nineteenth-Century America: Parameters of Vision* by Eve Kornfeld and Susan Jackson, *Anne of Green Gables: A Girl's Reading* by Temma F. Berg, *'Kindred Spirits' All: Green Gables Revisited* by Carol Gay and *Journeys of the Mother in the World of Green Gables* by Nancy Huse, "L. M. Montgomery: Anne of Green Gables" in *What Katy Read: Feminist Re-Readings of 'Classic' Stories for Girls* (1995) by Shirley Foster and Judy Simons, "Why Anne Makes Us Dizzy: Reading Anne of Green Gables from a Gender Perspective" by Julia McQuillan and Julie Pfeiffer in *Mosaic: A Journal for the Interdisciplinary Study of Literature* (2001, 34:2), "Fitted to Earn Her Own Living': Figures of The New Woman in the Writing of L. M. Montgomery" by Carole Gerson in *Children's Voices in Atlantic Literature and Culture: Essays on Childhood and A Life and Its Mirrors: A Feminist Reading of L. M. Montgomery's Fiction* (1991) by Gabriella Åhmansson,

¹⁸ Cecily Deveraux's essay "'not one of those dreadful new women': Anne Shirley and the culture of imperial motherhood" in *Windows and Words: A Look at Canadian Children's* and Erika Rothwell's "Knitting Up the World: L.

empowered motherhood in *Anne of Green Gables*. Furthermore, a more in depth look at privileging conventional femininity is also lacking. I hope to begin to fill this void with this thesis.

2. Third Wave Feminism: How We Got There/ Feminism's Waves

It is beyond the scope of this thesis to give a full account of the development of the history of women's movement i.e. feminism's waves. Therefore, in this chapter I do not attempt to give a full report of feminist history. A brief look at the different waves of feminism, however, is appropriate to demonstrate how the third wave of feminism emerged and how some characteristics that represented the beginning of second wave feminism in relation to the first wave of feminism now exist between second and third wave feminism. Nor will I attempt to give a comprehensive overview of the third wave of feminism in subchapter 2.1, but instead concentrate on the characteristics relevant to this thesis. My goal is to introduce the history of the women's movement and third wave feminism sufficiently to give this thesis its theoretical and conceptual framework.

The wave is often used as a metaphor when describing women's movements from the mid-nineteenth century to this day. The first wave of feminism began in 1848 in Seneca Falls, New York with the "Declaration of Sentiments".¹⁹ As Jennifer Baumgardner and Amy Richards point out: "At the time, [...] women had fewer rights than a man deemed insane."²⁰ The objective of the women's movement at the time, therefore, was to gain a legal identity for women. Seventy-two years later, in 1920, women in the United States attained the right to vote with the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment.²¹ New Zealand, part of the British Empire, was the "first country in the world to grant women the right to vote" in 1893, women however, "were not given the right to stand for parliament [...] until 1919".²² "The first European country to introduce women's suffrage was the Grand Principality of Finland", "the predecessor state of modern Finland", in 1906.²³ In Britain, women got the vote in 1918, but with severe restrictions: "only women who were over the age of

¹⁹ Dicker, Rory and Alison Piepmeier. 2003b. "Introduction." *Catching a Wave: Reclaiming Feminism for the 21st Century*. (Boston: Northeastern University Press.), 8-9.

²⁰ Baumgardner, Jennifer and Amy Richards. 2000. *Manifesta: Young Women, Feminism and the Future*. (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.), 69.

²¹ Baumgardner and Richards, 71.

²² Wikipedia. [internet] Available from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Women%27s_suffrage#New_Zealand [Accessed 14 July 2011]

²³ Wikipedia. [internet] Available from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Women%27s_suffrage#Finland [Accessed 14 July

30, providing they were householders, married to a householder or if they held a university degree", and "not until 1928 [...] were women granted the right to vote on the same terms as men".²⁴ In Canada "women were granted the right to vote in municipal elections in Ontario in 1884", the right applied to "widows and unmarried women" only. "[In 1919] the right to vote was extended to all women in the Act to confer the Electoral Franchise upon Women", most provinces passed the act in quick succession, "except for Quebec, which did not do so until 1940".²⁵ Women living on Prince Edward Island, where the fictional village of Avonlea of *Anne of Green Gables* is situated, did not get the vote until 1922.²⁶

The second wave of feminism began in the 1960s with wide spreading activism. Frustrated by the fact that women's issues were given secondary status on the political left and encouraged by the civil rights movement, women began to work together to further their own goals. These activists coined the term "second wave" to signify the continuation of the women's movement from the nineteenth and early twentieth century, an era which became known as the "first wave".²⁷ The idea was to categorize "the two eras of feminism [...] as two moments in the same movement" and thereby "validate feminism at a time when it was often ridiculed as silly and not politically serious".²⁸ Second wave feminism's relationship to the previous wave was somewhat contradictory. The first wave was regarded with irreverence and rejected by second wave feminists, but on the other hand it was respected by them.²⁹ The rejection rose from a need for the second wave feminist to present their feminism as something new and radical, i.e. better. It was argued that first wave feminism's "struggle for the vote had achieved a meaningless victory and vitiated the feminist

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²⁴ Wikipedia. [internet] Available from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Women%27s_suffrage#United_Kingdom [Accessed 14 July] 2011]

²⁵ Wikipedia. [internet] Available from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Women%27s_suffrage#Canada [Accessed 14 July 2011]

²⁶ Jackel, Susan. Women's Suffrage. [internet] The Canadian Encyclopedia. Available from <http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com/index.cfm?PgNm=TCE&Params=A1ARTA0008687> [Accessed 14 July 2011]

²⁷ Henry, 2004, 24.

²⁸ Henry, 2004, 53.

²⁹ Henry, 2004, 57.

movement" and it was time for "a new fight for real emancipation [to] begin".³⁰ Henry suggests that "It was precisely the productive tension between these two contrasting relationships to the first wave that emboldened the second wave to see itself as a powerful political movement."³¹ On the other hand, Henry suggests that "[in] an act honoring the past" some "women's groups [in] the 1960s [...] named themselves after a figure from [first wave feminism's] women's history".³² Noticeably, third wave feminism has striven to distance itself from second wave feminism in a similar fashion. This will be discussed in further detail in subchapter 2.1.

The goal of second wave feminism was to gain full human rights for women, including: "equal opportunities in employment and education, access to child care and abortion, the eradication of violence against women, and the passage of the Equal Rights Amendment [in the USA]".³³ Today, most of the central goals remain unachieved in their entirety, but there is no question about the enormous difference that the second wave of feminism brought to the lives of women. Second wave feminists gave women the ability to speak about the inequity in patriarchal society in the important act of naming or renaming i.e. changing and creating language to account for women's experience of the world. Barbara Findlen notes some of these changes in language and therefore in our conceptual system: "things like sexual harassment, date rape, displaced homemakers and domestic violence - that used to be called, as Gloria Steinem pointed out, *just life*."³⁴ In other words, "for anyone born after the early 1960s, the presence of feminism in our lives is taken for granted. For our generation, feminism is like fluoride. We scarcely notice that we have it - it's simply in the water."³⁵

In the 1980s feminism had moved on from the activism of the 1960s and 1970s nearly to non-existence. Henry describes the 1980s as an era in which "younger women weren't interested

³⁰ Henry, 2004, 54.

³¹ Henry, 2004, 57.

³² Henry, 2004, 56.

³³ Dicker and Piepmeier, 2003b, 9.

³⁴ Findlen, Barbara. 1995b. "Introduction." *Listen Up: Voices from the Next Feminist Generation*, ed. Barbara Findlen. (Seattle: Seal Press.), xi.

³⁵ Baumgardner and Richards, 17.

and older women were burned out."³⁶ In the media feminism had been proclaimed dead, 119 times in *Time* magazine alone since 1969.³⁷ Jennifer Pozner has titled this phenomenon "False Feminist Death Syndrome".³⁸ On the other hand, the women's movement was claimed to have entered an era of "post-feminism". The prefix "post" indicating that the women's movement was over and done with, "that the women's movement was over, all the necessary gains having been made, and [...] feminism was no longer necessary".³⁹ Conservatives claimed that women had achieved equality and feminism was redundant. Paradoxically, the term favoured by feminism's detractors can also be seen as feminism's success: "the prefix 'post' points to a time *after* feminism - in other words, a time when feminism is no longer needed precisely because its goals have been achieved."⁴⁰ Many young women, however, were eager to deny the label of a feminist: "I'm not a feminist, but...."⁴¹ In fact, the whole word "feminism" had been abbreviated into "the f-word", as if it were something dirty, not suited for civilized conversation. Although having grown up with all the benefits of second wave feminism, young women were still suggestible to the stereotypes of feminism. Findlen writes: "If something or someone is appealing, fun or popular, it or she can't be feminist. Feminists are still often assumed to be strident, man-hating, unattractive - and lesbian."⁴²

This brings us to the third wave of feminism. The metaphor of a wave warrants glossing here. In her book *Not My Mother's Sister* Astrid Henry writes: "The wave metaphor signals both continuity and discontinuity, both are essential to its rhetorical effectiveness. Continuity is suggested in the very notion of a wave, which is inevitably followed by successive waves [...] The term 'wave' is rarely used to stress the singularity of something but rather emphasizes the inevitability of - and connection to - other such waves. Discontinuity - and often progress and

³⁶ Henry, 2004, 18.

³⁷ Baumgardner and Richards, 93.

³⁸ Pozner, Jennifer L. 2003. "The 'Big Lie': False Feminist Death Syndrome, Profit, and the Media." *Catching a Wave. Reclaiming Feminism for the 21st Century*. Eds. Rory Dicker and Alison Piepmeier. (Boston: Northeastern University Press.), 31.

³⁹ Henry, 2004, 17.

⁴⁰ Henry, 2004, 19.

⁴¹ Orr, Catherine M. 1997. "Charting the Currents of the Third Wave." *Hypatia: A Journal of Feminist Philosophy*. 12:3 (29-45), 41.

⁴² Findlen, 1995b, xiv-xv.

improvement - is highlighted by the numerical delineation of a new [...] [third] wave."⁴³

Consequently, third wave feminism is a natural continuation of the women's movement that began in the mid-nineteenth century and rekindled again in the 1960s. "In fact, the term 'third wave' can only be understood within the context of its two preceding waves", Henry notes.⁴⁴ And just as their predecessors during the second wave sought to distance themselves from the politics of the previous (first) wave, similarly third wavers chose to distance themselves from the second wave, while simultaneously venerating their achievements.⁴⁵ One of the major differences between the second and the third wave of feminism is the third wavers' rejection of the second wave idea of a shared sisterhood. Henry construes: "Rather than arguing for a feminism based on a shared identity "woman" or on shared political goals, as the rhetorical gesture of sisterhood once suggested, younger feminists today seem to find their collectivity mainly through a *shared generational stance* against second wave feminism."⁴⁶ This rejection has led to the usage of "another familial metaphor - the mother-daughter trope" for third wave feminists: "to articulate their feminism, [they] speak as 'daughters' rather than 'sisters'."⁴⁷ Henry argues that "articulating this new wave primarily in generational stance [...] has hindered the development of third wave feminism as a political movement or as a critical perspective."⁴⁸

In the following subchapter 2.1. I will go on to introduce the theoretical framework of my thesis, feminism's third wave in more detail. I will then move on to introduce some of the specific characteristics of third wave feminism related to this thesis. In subchapter 2.2. I briefly introduce feminist mothering and empowered mothering. In subchapters 2.3. I concentrate on the ideology of individualism and embracing contradiction in feminism's third wave, and in subchapter 2.4. I discuss how conventional femininity is privileged in feminism's third wave.

⁴³ Henry, 2004, 24.

⁴⁴ Henry, 2004, 24.

⁴⁵ Henry, 2004, 55.

⁴⁶ Henry, Astrid. 2005. "Solitary Sisterhood: Individualism Meets Collectivity in Feminism's Third Wave." *Different Wavelengths. Studies in Contemporary Women's Movement*, ed. Jo Reger. (New York: Routledge.), 82.

⁴⁷ Henry, 2005, 82.

2.1. Feminism's Third Wave

In the early nineties young feminist women were beginning to feel left out by the feminist movement founded by their mothers' generation.⁴⁹ In 1991, Naomi Wolf wrote a best-selling book *The Beauty Myth*, "call[ing] for a rekindling of feminism".⁵⁰ In 1992, in an essay in *Ms.* magazine, written in part in response to the media's claims "that we had entered an age of postfeminism",⁵¹ Rebecca Walker, daughter of second wave feminist Alice Walker, wrote: "I am not a post-feminism feminist. I am the Third Wave."⁵² Walker later noted that third wavers "modify the label [feminism] in an attempt to begin to articulate our differences."⁵³ Third wave feminism stresses the differences between women and contradiction within every woman. Henry writes: "[By the end of the] 1990s the term 'third wave' had become synonymous with younger feminists and with stressing generational differences from the second wave feminists."⁵⁴ Younger feminists wanted "their own, distinctive version of feminism", "that addresses their different societal context and the particular set of challenges they face".⁵⁵ In *Catching A Wave: Reclaiming Feminism for the 21st Century* Dicker and Piepmeier specify these challenges:

third wave feminism's political activism on behalf of women's rights is shaped by - and responds to - a world of global capitalism and information technology, postmodernism and postcolonialism, and environmental degradation. We no longer live in the world that feminists of the second wave faced. Third wavers, who came of age in the late twentieth century and after, are therefore concerned not simply with 'women's issues' but with a broad range of interlocking topics [...] ranging from protests of the World Economic Forum and welfare reform to activism on behalf of independent media outlets.⁵⁶

In *Listen Up! Voices from the Next Generation* Barbara Findlen "stresses the historically unprecedented nature of this relationship to feminism when she notes that it is 'the kind of experience *only* a woman of this generation could have had. We are the first generation for whom

⁴⁸ Henry, 2005, 82.

⁴⁹ Baumgardner and Richards, 77.

⁵⁰ Baumgardner and Richards, 77.

⁵¹ Dicker and Piepmeier, 2003b, 10.

⁵² Baumgardner and Richards, 77.

⁵³ Henry, 2004, 25.

⁵⁴ Henry, 2004, 24.

⁵⁵ Snyder, R. Claire. 2008. "What is Third-Wave Feminism? A New Directions Essay". *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture & Society*. (Vol. 34, 1: 175-196.), 178.

feminism has been entwined in the fabric of our lives."⁵⁷ Therefore, it is important to continue feminism's work of re-reading and re-evaluating works of literature such as *Anne of Green Gables* through the lens of third wave feminism.

From the early nineties onwards, several books were being published which declared the existence of a third wave of feminism.⁵⁸ Several of these central works of third wave feminism consist of autobiographical essays which became third wave feminism's way of highlighting the importance of individualism. Henry notes that: "Such essays can be seen as the first step in the consciousness-raising process developed from the earlier women's liberation movement."⁵⁹ This is certainly true, as the autobiographical essays in the books mentioned above are written by a wide variety of women, as Barbara Findlen demonstrates by listing how the authors in *Listen Up! Voices from the Next Feminist Generation* label themselves:

articulate, white, middle-class college kid; wild and unruly; single mother; Asian bisexual; punk; politically astute, active woman; middle-class black woman; young mother; slacker; member of the Moscogee (Cree) Nation; well-adjusted; student; teacher; writer; an individual; a young lady; a person with visible disability; androgynous; lapsed Jew; child of professional feminists; lesbian daughter; activist; zine writer; a Libra; and an educated, married, monogamous, feminist, Christian, African American mother. These identities all coexist (to varying degrees of comfort) with feminism.

These texts work as consciousness-raising in telling women they are not alone with the controversies within themselves or in their life experiences and they can be feminists in varying ways, there is no one right way to do feminism. However, this lack of "a particular feminist agenda" can be taken too far and "feminism [can become] so devoid of politics that anyone - no matter how homophobic, antichoice, or racist - can claim it for herself".⁶⁰

⁵⁶ Dicker and Piepmeier, 2003b, 10.

⁵⁷ Findlen, quoted in Henry, 2005, 81.

⁵⁸ Titles such as: Susan Faludi's *Backlash: The Undeclared War Against American Women* (1991), Barbara Findlen's *Listen Up! Voices from the Next Feminist Generation* (1995), Rebecca Walker's *To Be Real, Telling the Truth and Changing the Face of Feminism* (1995), *Third Wave Agenda: Being Feminist, Doing Feminism* (1997) by Leslie Heywood and Jennifer Drake, *The BUST Guide to the New Girl Order* (1999) by Marcelle Karp and Debbie Stroller, *Manifesta: Young Women, Feminism, and the Future* (2000) by Jennifer Baumgardner and Amy Richards and *Colonize This! Young Women of Color on Today's Feminism* (2002) by Daisy Hernández and Bushra Rehman.

⁵⁹ Henry 2005, 83.

⁶⁰ Henry 2005, 84.

In her article *What is Third-Wave Feminism? A New Directions Essay* Claire Snyder argues that third wave feminism, according to its literature, can be seen to differ from second wave feminism in four ways.⁶¹ Firstly, the above mentioned need for a generation's feminism of their own.⁶² Secondly, the argument that their mother's generation of feminists are "antimale, antisex, antifemininity, and antifun".⁶³ Thirdly, third wave feminism is portrayed as "more inclusive and racially diverse".⁶⁴ And finally, the fact that the third wave depicts itself as "hav[ing] a broader vision of politics [...] no 'party line'" and a "focus on more than just women issues".⁶⁵ Snyder points out that some of these differences (e.g. portraying second wave feminism as antisex and third wave feminism as prosex) are not as black and white as some third wavers would have it and I agree. However, Snyder assents that "second-wave feminists can [...] be overly defensive or dismissive of the younger women's perspectives", whereas "third-wave feminist often argue against a [...] caricature of second-wave feminist that papers over the differences and nuances that existed within the movement".⁶⁶ However, "third wave feminist are not simply daughters rebelling for rebellion's sake."⁶⁷

Third wave feminism has been met with a lot of controversy. Many second wave feminist have been eager to disclaim third wave feminism as a movement lacking "juridical power"⁶⁸ or "historical knowledge [of the second wave]".⁶⁹ Third wave feminism has been called by E. Ann Kaplan "an ideology without movement".⁷⁰ Moreover, Ednie Kaeh Garrison has argued that "In the Third Wave, feminist collective consciousness may not necessarily manifest itself in a nationalized and highly mobilized social movement unified around a single goal or identity. At the moment, this

⁶¹ Snyder, 177.

⁶² Snyder, 177.

⁶³ Snyder, 179.

⁶⁴ Snyder, 180.

⁶⁵ Snyder, 181.

⁶⁶ Snyder, 182.

⁶⁷ Heywood and Drake, 2007, 118.

⁶⁸ Fixmer, Natalie and Julia T. Wood. 2005. "The Personal is *Still* Political: Embodied Politics in Third Wave Feminism." *Women's Studies in Communication*. (28, 2: 235-57), 253.

⁶⁹ Gillis, Stacy, Gillian Howie and Rebecca Munford, eds. 2007b. "Introduction." *Third Wave Feminism: A Critical Exploration*. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan.), xxxin1.

⁷⁰ Henry, 2004, 35.

hardly seems imaginable."⁷¹ Henry notes, that feminism's third wave "is more about textual and cultural production, local forms of activism, and a particular form of feminist consciousness."⁷² Gillis, Howie and Munford point out that third wave feminism has been excluded from contemporary histories of feminism: as an example, they mention Estelle B Freedman's *No Turning Back: The History of Feminism and the Future of Women* (2002), in which the Third Wave Foundation is mentioned only in passing.⁷³ Baumgardner and Richards discuss the patronizing attitude of second wavers towards third wave feminists, the complaint that "young women are apathetic and 'just don't get it'".⁷⁴ Furthermore, the "well-established Second Wave feminist", author of the second wave classic *Women and Madness*, Phyllis Chesler, wrote a book *Letters to a Young Feminist* (1997) "addressing her frustration with young women for abandoning, rather than preserving, the rights and movement her generation had worked to secure".⁷⁵ Henry points out that "the [...] focus in recent feminist discourse on generational differences between women has ensured that much energy has gone into internal conflicts within feminism rather than external battles against sexism, racism, and homophobia."⁷⁶ It cannot be denied, however, that "the term [third wave] is doing its job as a focus for widespread debate, forging new connections within and without academia, and fostering a recovering sense of feminist urgency."⁷⁷

In the following subchapters I aim to discuss some of the characteristics of third wave feminism that are relevant to this thesis. These include the ideology of individualism and contradiction in feminism's third wave, privileging conventional femininity and looking at feminist mothering.

2.2. Feminist Third Wave Mothering and Empowered Mothering

⁷¹ Henry, 2004, 35.

⁷² Henry, 2004, 35-6.

⁷³ Gillis, Howie and Munford, 2007b, xxxin1.

⁷⁴ Baumgardner and Richards, 85.

⁷⁵ Baumgardner and Richards, 85-6.

⁷⁶ Henry, 2004, 183.

⁷⁷ Spencer, Jane. 2007. "Afterword: Feminist Waves." *Third Wave Feminism: A Critical Exploration*, eds. Stacy Gillis, Gillian Howie and Rebecca Munford. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan), 302.

Andrea O'Reilly explains in the introduction to her book *Feminist Mothering*:

Any discussion on feminist mothering must begin with the distinction Adrienne Rich made in *Of Woman Born* (1976) between two meanings of motherhood, one superimposed on the other: "the *potential* relationship of any woman to her powers of reproduction and to children" and "the *institution* - which aims at ensuring that that potential - and all women - shall remain under male control" --. The term *motherhood* refers to the patriarchal institution of motherhood that is male-defined and controlled and is deeply oppressive to women, while the word *mothering* refers to women's experiences of mothering that are female-defined and centered and potentially empowering to women.⁷⁸

In this thesis I shall discuss maternal practices using these terms. O'Reilly continues: "In other words, while motherhood as an institution, is a male-defined site of oppression, women's own experiences of mothering can nonetheless be a source of power."⁷⁹ Later in this thesis I intend to show that (feminist) mothering is indeed "a source of power" and empowering to both Marilla and Matthew Cuthbert in *Anne of Green Gables*.

O'Reilly states that "Feminist mothering may refer to any practice of mothering that seeks to challenge and change various aspects of patriarchal motherhood that cause mothering to be limiting or oppressive to women."⁸⁰ Women who practice feminist mothering may or may not see themselves as feminist.⁸¹ I will show in my analysis in chapter 3, that the mothering done by Marilla and Matthew Cuthbert in *Anne Of Green Gables* shows some characteristics of feminist mothering in that it challenges traditional motherhood practices.

2.3. Embracing Contradiction in Feminism's Third Wave and The Third Wave's Ideology of Individualism

"While linked through common concerns, notions of sisterhood seldom appeal to women of my generation", Rene Denfield wrote in *The New Victorians*.⁸² Henry explains further: "Third wave feminist rarely articulate unified political goals, nor do they often represent the third wave as sharing a critical perspective of the world. Rather, third wave texts are replete with individual

⁷⁸ O'Reilly, Andrea. 2008b. "Introduction". *Feminist Mothering*, ed. Andrea O'Reilly. (Albany: State University of New York Press.), 3.

⁷⁹ O'Reilly, 2008b, 3.

⁸⁰ O'Reilly, 2008b, 4.

⁸¹ O'Reilly, 2008b, 6.

definitions of feminism and individualistic narratives of coming to feminist consciousness."⁸³

Dicker and Piepmeier argue that this "insistence on women's diversity, [is] new"⁸⁴ and I agree. It is impossible for a middle-class, lesbian, western woman to identify with the struggles of a Afghan woman denied education, freedom and oppressed in the name of religion. It is not necessary to go to such lengths to find diversity however. It is similarly difficult for two western, white women to identify with similar struggles, when one is an unemployed single-parent on welfare and another a well-to-do married woman without children. Regardless of a woman's position in life, everyone can be a feminist. "The third wave's 'ideology of individualism', to quote Leslie Haywood and Jennifer Drake, has found its ideal form in the autobiographical essay, the preferred writing genre of third wavers and one that shares little with the group manifestos of a previous generation."⁸⁵ In fact, the famous words of Rebecca Walker "I am not a postfeminist feminist. I *am* the Third Wave"⁸⁶ already mapped out the ideology of individualism for the third wave of feminism, "in calling for a new wave, Walker does not speak in a collective voice [...] she writes about her own individual [...] feminism."⁸⁷ Therefore, Montgomery's subtle attempt to affect social change, her ideas about women's education and economic independence already mentioned in the Introduction of this thesis and her criticism of the Victorian marriage can be seen as her "own individual feminism". These will be discussed in further detail in chapters 3 and 4.

The ideology of individualism in feminism's third wave leads inevitably to its embrace of contradiction. If "there is no one right way to be: no role, no model", there needs to be "[an] emphasis on making room for contradictions."⁸⁸ Heywood and Drake argue in their "Introduction" to *Third Wave Agenda: Being Feminist, Doing Feminism* that "because [third wave feminists'] lives have been shaped by struggles between various feminisms as well as by cultural backlash against

⁸² Quoted in Henry, 2004, 43.

⁸³ Henry, 2005, 82-83.

⁸⁴ Dicker and Piepmeier, 2003b, 10.

⁸⁵ Henry, 2005, 83.

⁸⁶ Quoted in Henry, 2004, 25.

⁸⁷ Henry, 2005, 83.

⁸⁸ Reed, Jennifer. 1997. "Roseanne: 'A Killer Bitch' For Generation X." *Third Wave Agenda: Being Feminist, Doing Feminism*. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.), 124.

feminism and activism, we argue that contradiction [...] marks the desires and strategies of third wave feminists."⁸⁹ Moreover, they point out that:

The lived messiness characteristic of the third wave is what defines it: girls who want to be boys, boys who want to be girls, boys and girls who insist they are both, whites who want to be black, black who want to or refuse to be white, people who are white and black, gay and straight, masculine and feminine, or who are finding ways to be and name none of the above; successful individuals longing for community and coalition, communities and coalitions longing for success; tensions between striving for individual success and subordinating the individual to the cause; identities formed within a relentlessly consumer-oriented culture but informed by a politics that has problems with consumption.⁹⁰

"[Third wave feminism] struggles to accommodate the differences and conflicts *between* people as well as *within* them."⁹¹ This applies to contradictions in gender roles as well. Reed points out that "Negotiating the possibilities and limitations of gender roles has been a particularly accessible strategy for the third wave, and is a luxury provided by the groundwork done by second wave feminists."⁹²

In the introduction to *To Be Real: Telling the Truth and Changing the Face of Feminism* Rebecca Walker describes how she wanted to find "'[...] essays that explored contradiction and ambiguity' in living feminist lives [...] and [...] that she is interested in 'using the contradictions in our lives' as the basis for feminist theory."⁹³ In this thesis I will argue that *Anne of Green Gables* contains contradiction that echoes the way third wave feminism portrays contradictions. This will be discussed in more detail in chapter 4.

2.4. Everything Girlie Is Not Bad for You or Privileging Conventional Femininity

Leigh Shoemaker writes in her essay *Part Animal Part Machine: Self-Definition, Rollins Style*: "Feminists of my generation learned at a young age that we were girls and that we could do anything the boys could do (thanks to second wave feminism), but also that to achieve that goal, we

⁸⁹ Heywood and Drake, 1999b, 2.

⁹⁰ Heywood and Drake, 1999b, 8.

⁹¹ Reed, 124.

⁹² Reed, 132.

⁹³ Henry, 2004, 150.

could no longer be *girls* (thanks to 1980s conservatism). We could not admit to feminine qualities - to compete, we had to disavow "girly" emotions, responses, appearances. We had to be just as hard as the boys."⁹⁴ She explains further: "One thing that the backlash did do for me and other female members of my generation, was to encourage rejection of all things feminine, as I learned to associate the feminine with women and with things that I did not want to become or associate with - weakness, lack, obsessive behaviour."⁹⁵ In her essay *Femmenism*, Jeannine Delombard writes about her "out-of-sync girlhood": growing up in the 1970s with feminist parents, Delombard was frowned upon for her excessive femininity.⁹⁶ She received "politically correct dolls" and all she wanted was "Barbies, a nurse kit, and Tinker Bell play makeup".⁹⁷ She wanted "pouffy [sic] pastel party dresses", but was bought "corduroys and hiking boots".⁹⁸ Anne's feminine obsession for the fashionable puffed sleeves will be discussed in chapter 5. Growing up "in a home where gender roles were anything but strict, and breaking out of them was strictly encouraged", Delombard realized that "avoiding gender roles can be every bit as frustrating, limiting and ridiculous as adhering to them."⁹⁹ Baumgardner and Richards call "[the] intersection of culture and feminism 'Girlie'".¹⁰⁰ They explain further: "Girlie says we're not broken, and our desires aren't simply booby traps set by the patriarchy. Girlie encompasses the tabooed symbols of feminine enculturation - Barbie dolls, makeup, fashion magazines, high heels - and says using them isn't shorthand for 'we've been duped'."¹⁰¹ Furthermore, "barbie, it needs to be said, is not at the root of the girls' self-esteem problem, to the extent that there is a problem. When adults talk about Barbie, they aren't talking about the classic doll with sun-kissed flesh that many of us gripped as eight-year-olds; they're talking about 'gender roles' and 'white supremacy' and 'body image' and 'beauty myths' - none of

⁹⁴ Shoemaker, Leigh. 1997. "Part Animal, Part Machine: Self-Definition, Rollins Style." *Third Wave Agenda. Being Feminist, Doing Feminism*, eds. Leslie Heywood & Jennifer Drake. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.), 105.

⁹⁵ Shoemaker, 115.

⁹⁶ Delombard, Jeannine. 1995. "Femmenism." In *To Be Real: Telling the Truth and Changing the Face of Feminism*, ed. Rebecca Walker. (New York: Anchor Books.), 22.

⁹⁷ Delombard, 23.

⁹⁸ Delombard, 23.

⁹⁹ Delombard, 23-4.

¹⁰⁰ Baumgardner and Richards, 136.

¹⁰¹ Baumgardner and Richards, 136.

which are acutely or perniciously symbolized by a little child's [30€] beloved doll."¹⁰² Baumgardner and Richards go on to reminisce about their childhood and how they played with their Barbies. They come to the conclusion that "Barbie didn't so much influence us as that she was a blank screen on which to project what was happening in our heads" and "that most girls don't want to *be* Barbie; they want to use Barbie to explore what they can be"¹⁰³ (italics in original). Furthermore, "while it's true that embracing the pink things of stereotypical girlhood isn't a radical gesture meant to overturn the way society is structured, it can be a confident gesture."¹⁰⁴ Embracing things that one finds interesting and gets pleasure from - be it "pink things" or the above mentioned hiking boots - empowers women. Baumgardner and Richards further construe that "establishing a girl culture addresses what Gloria Steinem was trying to identify when she wrote *Revolution from Within* - the huge hole that grows in a woman who is trying to be equal but has internalized society's low estimation of women."¹⁰⁵

"The value of third wave feminism is that it 'contains elements of second-wave critique of beauty culture, sexual abuse and power structures' while [...] celebrating [...] femininity."¹⁰⁶ This can mean "reclaiming feminine culture from a misogynist society: valuing knitting, cooking, and dressing up."¹⁰⁷ And also, valuing a sentimental female Bildungsroman written over a hundred years ago that remains important to a lot of readers to this day.

¹⁰² Baumgardner and Richards, 195.

¹⁰³ Baumgardner and Richards, 198-9.

¹⁰⁴ Baumgardner and Richards, 136.

¹⁰⁵ Baumgardner and Richards, 135.

¹⁰⁶ Stacia, Christina Lucia. 2007. "My Guns Are in the Fendi!" The Postfeminist Female Action Hero." *Third Wave Feminism. A Critical Exploration*, eds. Stacy Gillis, Gillian Howie and Rebecca Munford. (London: Palgrave Macmillan.), 239.

¹⁰⁷ Baumgardner and Richards, 216.

3. Echoes of Feminist Mothering and Empowered Mothering in *Anne of Green Gables*

In this chapter I will begin to analyse *Anne of Green Gables* from third wave feminist point of view. First, I intend to study whether feminist mothering and empowered mothering can be found in *Anne of Green Gables* and how these concepts are manifested in the novel. I aim to look at how Marilla and also Matthew mother their adopted daughter and whether this mothering has any bearing on third wave feminism's ideas of feminist mothering. In subchapter 3.1 I concentrate specifically on Matthew Cuthbert's character as a nurturing male figure in *Anne of Green Gables* and in subchapter 3.2. I discuss Mrs Rachel Lynde's character as representing patriarchal motherhood in contrast to Marilla's feminist mothering.

It has been argued that "Montgomery's books contain implicit criticisms of the Victorian institution of marriage."¹⁰⁸ Carole Gerson points out in her essay "*Fitted to Earn Her Own Living*": *Figures of the New Woman in the Writing of L. M. Montgomery* that "the New Woman of the 1890s [...] resisted male domination by resisting marriage."¹⁰⁹ It is interesting that Montgomery has chosen to portray a brother and a sister as the central characters of *Anne of Green Gables* instead of a married couple as in "the faded entry" which she reported in her diary as the origins of the idea for the book: "Elderly couple apply to orphan asylum for a boy. By mistake a girl was sent them."¹¹⁰ In their essay *Feminist Family Values: Parenting in Third Wave Feminism and Empowering All Family Members* Colleen Mack-Canty and Sue Marie Wright argue that "the husband-wife relationship [is] male-dominated" and that "the organization of work and the male provider role pushed women to both need and want their husbands to be superior."¹¹¹ Marilla and Matthew's relationship as siblings makes them in some ways more equal than a married couple. Michele Stairs

¹⁰⁸ Gerson, 25.

¹⁰⁹ Gerson, 29.

¹¹⁰ Blackford, Holly. 2009b. "Introduction, Anne with an 'e': The Enduring Value of *Anne of Green Gables*." *100 Years of Anne with an 'e'. The Centennial Study of Anne of Green Gables*, ed. Holly Blackford. (Calgary: University of Calgary Press.), xi.

¹¹¹ Mack-Canty Colleen and Wright Sue Marie. 2008. "Feminist Family Values. Parenting in Third Wave Feminism and Empowering All Family Members." *Feminist Mothering*, ed. Andrea O'Reilly. (Albany: State University of New York Press.), 144.

discusses the reasons behind Marilla and Matthew's singleness in *Matthews and Marillas Bachelors and Spinsters in Prince Edward Island in 1881*: "Montgomery implies rather than states the reason behind the Cuthberts' unmarried state. Matthew appears far too shy to court a woman, and his sister capably runs the farm household, successfully *eliminating the need to marry for survival*" (italics mine).¹¹² Indeed, Montgomery writes that "Matthew Cuthbert had never been known to volunteer information in his whole life" and he is described as "the shyest man alive [who] hated to go among strangers or to any place where he might have to talk."¹¹³ Furthermore, in discussing the real life spinsters on Prince Edward Island in her essay *Stairs* points out that "it was not unusual for a spinster daughter to receive all or a significant portion of the family estate".¹¹⁴ Marilla, therefore, can be seen as economically independent, not dependent on her brother's charity or in need of a husband. Moreover, being a capable woman with a strong will she can easily be seen as the dominating figure in the Green Gables household instead of the shy, quiet, withdrawn Matthew. In fact, Matthew is described in the novel on several occasions as being relieved that Marilla "was at hand to cope with [difficult] situation[s]"¹¹⁵, e.g. telling Anne her arrival to Green Gables has been a mistake¹¹⁶ or dealing with the unpleasant task of punishing Anne.¹¹⁷ The strength and stubbornness of Marilla's character and the probable cause of her unmarried state become clear to the reader at the very end of the book, when Marilla confesses to Anne that she had had a "beau" in her youth, Gilbert Blythe's father John, but the relationship ended: "We had a quarrel. I wouldn't forgive him when he asked me to. I meant to, after awhile - but I was sulky and angry and wanted to punish him first. He never came back."¹¹⁸ Also the rural setting emphasizes the equality of Matthew and Marilla's status in their efforts to provide for themselves and their family. Both of them are necessary for the maintaining and running of their farm. Mack-Canty and Wright argue that "The

¹¹² Stairs, Michele. 2004. "Matthews and Marillas. Bachelors and Spinsters in Prince Edwards Island in 1881." *Mapping the Margins. The Family and Social Discipline in Canada, 1700-1975*, eds. Nancy Christie and Michael Gauvreau. (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press.), 256.

¹¹³ Montgomery, 1998, 2-3.

¹¹⁴ Stairs, 260.

¹¹⁵ Montgomery, 1998, 10.

¹¹⁶ Montgomery, 1998, 21.

¹¹⁷ Montgomery, 1998, 98.

traditional family [...] reflect[s] the dualist values of hierarchy and coercive authoritarian control and [...] these hierarchal relationships are exemplified in both parent-child relationship and husband-wife relationship."¹¹⁹ Furthermore, "the authoritarian family [...] [has] strictly ascribed gender roles [...] where the husband is the 'head of the household'."¹²⁰ The Cuthberts' family structure, made up of siblings as adoptive parents, not husband and wife and the adopted child, lacks "the dualistic values of hierarchy and coercive authoritarian control" and is resistant to the patriarchal "essential family form" i.e. the heterosexual, two-parent family, which is "in conflict with feminist values".¹²¹ Moreover, Marilla's independence as an unmarried woman gives her leeway to mother Anne against the patriarchal society's norms.

As quoted in *Feminist Mothering*, Erica Horwitz contends that there are several themes that characterize empowered mothering which all contest patriarchal motherhood.¹²² These are as follows: "the importance of mothers meeting their own needs; being a mother doesn't fulfil all of women's needs; involving others in their children's upbringing; actively questioning the expectations that are placed on mothers by society; challenging mainstream parenting practices; not believing that mothers are solely responsible for how children turn out; and challenging the idea that the only emotion mothers ever feel towards their children is love."¹²³ In involving others in the raising of their children, empowered mothers "look to friends, family, and their partners to assist with childcare and often raise their children with an involved community of what may be termed *co-mothers* and *othermothers*."¹²⁴

Marilla's mothering is characterised by several of the above mentioned themes. She happily includes several "othermothers" in Anne's raising, namely her neighbour Mrs Rachel Lynde (whose advice, on the other hand, she also at times rejects), Anne's teacher Miss Muriel Stacy and the

¹¹⁸ Montgomery, 1998, 299.

¹¹⁹ Mack-Canty and Wright, 146.

¹²⁰ Mack-Canty and Wright, 146.

¹²¹ Mack-Canty and Wright, 146.

¹²² O'Reilly, 2008b, 6.

¹²³ O'Reilly, 2008b, 6.

¹²⁴ O'Reilly, 2008b, 7.

minister's wife Mrs Allen. "Communal mothering also mirrors feminist values, configuring mothering as a verb and recognizing mothering as a chosen practice rather than a biological destiny and, further, by demonstrating that the patriarchal institution of traditional motherhood is an isolating and limiting expression of maternal practice."¹²⁵ In a sense, the philosophy of "it takes a village" to raise a child is operating here. Anne's adoptive father Matthew, Marilla's brother also participates in Anne's upbringing. Matthew's role in Anne's raising will be discussed further in the following chapter.

Marilla challenges mainstream parenting practices in refusing Mrs Lynde's advice to whip Anne as a punishment after Anne has been rude to Mrs Lynde:

"Well, I see that I'll have to be very careful what I say after this, Marilla, since the fine feelings of orphans, brought from goodness knows where, have to be considered before anything else. Oh, no, I'm not vexed - don't you worry yourself. I'm too sorry for you to leave any room for anger in my mind. You'll have your own troubles with that child. But if you'll take my advice - which I suppose you won't do, although I've brought up ten children and buried two - you'll do that 'talking to' you mention with a fair-sized birch switch. I should think *that* would be the most effective language for that kind of a child. Her temper matches her hair I guess. Well, good evening, Marilla. I hope you'll come down to see me often as usual. But you can't expect me to visit here again in a hurry, if I'm liable to be flown at and insulted in such a fashion. It's something new in *my* experience."

Whereat Mrs. Rachel swept out and away - if a fat woman who always waddled could be said to sweep away - and Marilla with a very solemn face betook herself to the east gable.

On the way upstairs she pondered uneasily as to what she ought to do. She felt no little dismay over the scene that had just been enacted. How unfortunate that Anne should have displayed such temper before Mrs. Rachel Lynde, of all people! Then Marilla suddenly became aware of an uncomfortable and rebuking consciousness that she felt more humiliation over this than sorrow over the discovery of such a serious defect in Anne's disposition. And how was she to punish her? The amiable suggestion of the birch switch - to the efficiency of which all of Mrs. Rachel's own children could have borne smarting testimony - did not appeal to Marilla. She did not believe she could whip a child.¹²⁶

The passage warrants quoting in full as it demonstrates several things. First, Mrs Lynde is made to appear melodramatic and ridiculous (both mentally and physically) rendering her advice to use a birch switch and her expertise on childrearing ridiculous too. Second, Mrs Lynde's character is

¹²⁵ Berger, Aimee E. 2008. "The Voice of the Maternal in Louise Eldrich's Fiction and Memoirs." *Feminist Mothering*, ed. Andrea O'Reilly. (Albany: State University of New York Press.), 92.

¹²⁶ Montgomery, 1998, 66.

made questionable, she shows no Christian charity, understanding or forgiveness to an orphan "brought from goodness knows where".¹²⁷ Furthermore, her ability to use "the birch switch" in childrearing contrasted with Marilla's hesitation portrays her as a somewhat cruel woman.

Admittedly, corporal punishment was viewed as the norm in the society at the turn of the century. Indeed, "The old idea that the child was a repository of original sin, possessed of an 'old Adam' to be beaten out of it, had a persistent hold."¹²⁸ Mrs Lynde clearly believes in the phrase "Spare the rod, spoil the child". In fact, Mrs Lynde tells Anne that she is "full of original sin."¹²⁹

Notwithstanding, the fact that Montgomery juxtaposes Mrs Lynde's willingness to whip her own children to Marilla's unwillingness to whip even a dependent child forces the reader, both early 20th century and early 21st century reader, to reconsider the tradition of corporal punishment.

Thirdly, this passage above is one of many in the book where Marilla is shown to reflect her own thoughts about raising a child, her own mothering and the contradiction of her emotions when Anne misbehaves, gets into scrapes or acts against social norms. In fact, Marilla struggles with and also reflects on her mothering quite a lot throughout the novel. Soon after Anne has settled to Green Gables Marilla begins to have problems "striving to overcome that unholy tendency to laughter which she was dismayed to find growing upon her."¹³⁰ Anne's trials and tribulations and her melodramatic speech awaken Marilla's sense of humour. At the beginning of the novel Marilla is described as follows: "there was a saving something about her mouth which, if it had been ever so slightly developed, might have been considered indicative of a sense of humor."¹³¹ Anne certainly "develops" Marilla's "glimmerings of a sense of humor"¹³² and in chapter XV *A Tempest in the School Teapot* Marilla cannot any longer help herself when she finds Anne "sob[bing] luxuriously" at the possibility of one day in the future losing her dearest friend Diana to matrimony:

¹²⁷ Montgomery, 1998, 66.

¹²⁸ Doody Jones, Mary E. 1997. "The Exceptional Orphan Anne. Child care, Orphan Asylums, Farming Out, Indenturing, and Adoption." *The Annotated Anne of Green Gables*, eds. Wendy E. Barry, Margaret Anne Doody, Mary E Doody Jones. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, Inc.), 426.

¹²⁹ Montgomery, 1998, 180.

¹³⁰ Montgomery, 1998, 130.

¹³¹ Montgomery, 1998, 5.

¹³² Montgomery, 1998, 51.

Marilla turned quickly away to hide her twitching face, but it was no use; she collapsed on the nearest chair and burst into such a hearty and unusual peal of laughter that Matthew, crossing the yard outside, halted in amazement. When had he heard Marilla laugh like that before?¹³³

Marilla's relief, when Anne decides to apologize to Rachel, her "helpless[ness]"¹³⁴ when she cannot decide whether Anne should be scolded or not for incisive, but by conventional standards improper assessment of the superintendent's prayers, the minister's sermons¹³⁵ or the influence of Mrs Lynde's advice which makes Anne "want to go and do the very thing she tells me I oughtn't to do" that Marilla agrees with¹³⁶ are all examples of Marilla struggling with her mothering. When she believes Anne has lost her brooch Marilla is shown channelling her emotions into "work[ing] fiercely and scrubb[ing] the porch floor and the dairy shelves when she could find nothing else to do. Neither the shelves nor the porch needed it - but Marilla did."¹³⁷ These examples from the novel show that Marilla "questions the expectations that are placed on mothers by society." In a sense, in the passage from the novel above, where Mrs Lynde "sweeps away" after being insulted, Mrs Lynde can be seen to represent the patriarchal institution of motherhood, whereas Marilla represents feminist mothering. This will be discussed further in subchapter 3.2.

Marilla also challenges mainstream parenting practices in her strong belief that Anne be educated: "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."¹³⁸ From the very beginning of the novel Marilla is shown to advocate education, as she also meant to educate the boy they initially wanted to adopt, even though his main purpose would have been to help on the farm: "old enough to be of some use in doing chores right off and young enough to be trained up proper. We mean to give him a good home and

¹³³ Montgomery, 1998, 119.

¹³⁴ Montgomery, 1998, 83.

¹³⁵ Montgomery, 1998, 81-2.

¹³⁶ Montgomery, 1998, 251.

¹³⁷ Montgomery, 1998, 101.

¹³⁸ Montgomery, 1998, 242.

schooling."¹³⁹ Doody points out that an "orphan's education was limited", both in the orphanages and in adoptive families.¹⁴⁰ Therefore, in her decision to educate Anne, Marilla is challenging patriarchal society's practices at large as well as the practices of the Avonlea community, and especially the beliefs of that community's power figure, Mrs Lynde. Mrs. Lynde's opinions about women's education are made clear in *Anne of Green Gables* when Anne says: "Mrs. Lynde says pride goes before a fall and she doesn't believe in the higher education of women at all; she says it unfits them for women's true sphere."¹⁴¹ Women's true sphere being the "sacred mission" of homemaking; cooking, cleaning, attracting their husband's attention away from any vices: essentially being "the Angel in the House".¹⁴² Furthermore, even Anne's good friend Diana is denied higher education. Against these matriarchs, women who have biological children, uphold the community, speak with the authority of married women, Marilla the spinster adoptive mother holds her own.

Clearly Marilla, who has lived most of her adult life childless, is apt to meet her own needs even after adopting Anne. She has her meetings of the Aid Society,¹⁴³ she goes to see the Canadian Premier on a political tour leaving Matthew and Anne to fend for themselves,¹⁴⁴ and retreats to solitude to cure her headaches¹⁴⁵. Nor does being Anne's adoptive mother fulfill all of Marilla's needs, but it certainly enriches her life. In fact, "for the older woman, the choice to mother involves an extension of the self rather than its contraction [...] they [...] mother [...] from a position of privilege: one of power rather than of dependency."¹⁴⁶ Love may be said to be one of the last feelings Marilla feels, let alone admits to feeling for Anne, partly because "her harsh and rigid

¹³⁹ Montgomery, 1998, 6.

¹⁴⁰ Doody, 427.

¹⁴¹ Montgomery, 1998, 291.

¹⁴² Salah, Christina R. 2009. "A Ministry of Plum Puffs: Cooking as a Path to Spiritual Maturity in L. M. Montgomery's *Anne* Books." *100 Years of Anne with an 'e': The Centennial Study of Anne of Green Gables*, ed. Holly Blackford. (Calgary: University of Calgary Press.), 193.

¹⁴³ Montgomery, 1998, 120.

¹⁴⁴ Montgomery, 1998, 138.

¹⁴⁵ Montgomery, 1998, 79.

¹⁴⁶ O'Reilly, 2008b, 12.

upbringing prevents her from expressing her feelings,"¹⁴⁷ partly because of contemporary ideas of showing a child affection. As Mary Rubio points out, "children's feelings were simply not considered important" as they are today, at the time the novel was written.¹⁴⁸ However, it could be argued that in *Anne of Green Gables* Montgomery was also trying subtly to influence this lack of consideration for a child's feelings in society. Rubio points out in her essay *The Architect of Adolescence* that the emotional coldness and strict discipline of Montgomery's grandparents who raised her "made her feel abandoned and unwanted" and that she "grew up without [...] psychological support".¹⁴⁹ Her own experiences made her sympathetic to the wants and needs of the dependent child. In fact, the reader is not reassured of Marilla's "natural" motherly love for Anne until at the end of the novel, when Marilla confesses her love for Anne after the death of Matthew:

We've got each other Anne. I don't know what I'd do if you weren't here - if you'd never come. Oh, Anne, I know I've been kind of strict and harsh with you maybe - but you mustn't think I didn't love you as well as Matthew did, for all that. I want to tell you now when I can. It's never been easy for me to say things out of my heart, but at times like this it's easier. I love you as dear as if you were my own flesh and blood and you've been my joy and comfort ever since you came to Green Gables.¹⁵⁰

Marilla is also portrayed having negative emotions towards Anne. When Anne makes up her false confession about losing Marilla's beloved amethyst brooch "Marilla felt hot anger surge up into her heart again. This child had taken and lost her treasured amethyst brooch and now sat there calmly reciting the details thereof without apparent compunction or repentance."¹⁵¹ In her essay *Performing Motherhood: L. M. Montgomery's Display of Maternal Dissonance* Margaret Steffler argues that "Even before she be[came] a mother, Montgomery establishe[d] a pattern in her journals with respect to motherhood when she repeatedly notes an absence or shortcoming of maternal love followed by a profusion of excess of such feelings."¹⁵² It could be argued that a similar pattern is

¹⁴⁷ Pearce, Sharyn. 2009. "Constructing a "New Girl": Gender and National Identity in *Anne of Green Gables* and *Seven Little Australians*." *100 Years of Anne with an 'e': the Centennial Study of Anne Green Gables*, ed. Holly Blackford. (Calgary: University of Calgary Press.), 240.

¹⁴⁸ Rubio, Mary. 2003. "Anne of Green Gables. The Architect of Adolescence." *Such a Simple Little Tale. Critical Responses to L. M. Montgomery's Anne of Green Gables*, ed. Mavis Reimer. (Lanham: Scarecrow Press inc.), 72.

¹⁴⁹ Rubio, 2003, 72.

¹⁵⁰ Montgomery, 1998, 296.

¹⁵¹ Montgomery, 1998, 100.

¹⁵² Steffler, Margaret. 2008. "Performing Motherhood: L. M. Montgomery's Displays of Maternal Dissonance." *Storm*

used in *Anne of Green Gables*. Marilla's lack of nurturing, motherly feelings is highlighted, her unconventional emotions are emphasised, like "that unholy tendency to laughter which she was dismayed to find growing upon her."¹⁵³ Furthermore, Marilla's lack of innate motherly feelings is juxtaposed with Matthew's feelings which seem to be maternal in their depth and gentleness. A "pattern of declaring deficiency in order to claim excess" and that "the shocking admission of the lack of the very feeling [of a mother's love for a child] expected and demanded by the [patriarchal] institution of motherhood imbues the presence of that feeling, when it finally does arrive, with a powerful agency that comes within [Marilla] herself in that she has not faked the feeling in order to satisfy herself or society."¹⁵⁴ Steffler notes that in her journals Montgomery "[went] so far as to point out that the supposedly innate maternal feelings demanded and expected by the [patriarchal] institution of motherhood do not automatically exist and are possibly fraudulent."¹⁵⁵ Through her fiction she subtly portrayed these ideas. Marilla, like Montgomery in her journals "assertively takes ownership and agency for her feelings by having them appear in their own time and then, when they do appear, having them exceed in their overwhelming power and passion the comfortable and nurturing propriety of 'sweet' and simple maternal love."¹⁵⁶ This "opens up space for the negative as well as the positive [...] and in a way that challenges and subverts the limitations and boundaries of society's positive and essentialist expectations of the mother and motherhood."¹⁵⁷ Marilla's feeling when she finally voices them to Anne at the end of the novel, as quoted above, are indeed overwhelming and passionate, and further enhanced by Marilla's sorrow over Matthew's death: "Marilla's impassioned grief, breaking all the bounds of natural reserve and lifelong habit in its stormy rush."¹⁵⁸ Thus, Marilla clearly challenges the idea that the only emotion a mother ever feels towards her child is love. Also, Marilla does not credit herself for how Anne turns out, nor does she take it upon herself to feel the responsibility of how Anne turns out. Again part of the reason for this

and Dissonance: L. M. Montgomery and Conflict, ed. Jean Mitchell. (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.), 184.

¹⁵³ Montgomery, 1998, 130.

¹⁵⁴ Steffler, 184-5.

¹⁵⁵ Steffler, 185.

¹⁵⁶ Steffler, 186.

¹⁵⁷ Steffler, 186.

is contemporary attitudes toward children and orphans.

"In the context of children, feminist mothering means dismantling traditional gender socialization practices that privilege boys as preferable and superior to girls," O'Reilly writes in *Feminist Mothering*.¹⁵⁹ I will admit that for the most part Anne is being socialized to be a proper Victorian ideal of girl/woman. However, it has been argued that "nineteenth-century [...] women used the novel as [...] a forum from which to question prevailing gender relations."¹⁶⁰ There are several instances in the book where gender socialization is called into question and examples of feminist mothering emerge. Indeed, Cecily Devereux has argued that "[Anne's] gender, far from being represented as a handicap [...], is foregrounded and insistently valorized."¹⁶¹ Most obviously, for example, when Matthew answers to Anne's regret that she is not a boy and able to help him more: "'Well now, I'd rather have you than a dozen boys, Anne,' said Matthew patting her hand. 'Just mind you that - rather than a dozen boys. Well now, I guess it wasn't a boy that took the Avery scholarship, was it? It was a girl - my girl - my girl that I'm proud of.'"¹⁶² Thereby, Matthew attests that Anne is equal to "a dozen boys" and has competed and won on a male platform of education as an equal. Moreover, Montgomery's treatment of Gilbert and Anne as equal rivals in education from the very start of their acquaintanceship is another example. Patricia Kelly Santelmann notes that "her determination to excel contrasts with what has been written about the contemporaneous American sensibility" and quotes a poem called *In School Days* by John Greenleaf Whittier where a girl apologizes for doing better in a spelling competition than her male classmate.¹⁶³ Anne does no such thing, she is aggressively determined to beat Gilbert and stays up all night to learn her lessons

¹⁵⁸ Montgomery, 1998, 295.

¹⁵⁹ O'Reilly, 2008b, 9.

¹⁶⁰ Kornfeld, Eve, and Jackson, Susan. 2003. "The Female *Bildungsroman* in Nineteenth-Century America. Parameters of Vision. *Such a Simple Little Tale. Critical Responses to L. M. Montgomery's Anne of Green Gables*, ed. Mavis Reimer. (Lanham: Scarecrow Press, Inc.), 140.

¹⁶¹ Devereux, Cecily. 2003. "'not one of those dreadful new women': Anne Shirley and the culture of imperial motherhood." *Windows and Words: A Look at Canadian Children's Literature in English*, eds. Aida Hudson and Susan-Ann Cooper. (Ottawa, University of Ottawa Press.), 128.

¹⁶² Montgomery, 1998, 292.

¹⁶³ Santelmann, Patricia Kelly. 1994. "Written as Woman Write: *Anne of Green Gables* within the Female Literary Tradition. *Harvesting Thistles: The Textual Garden of L. M. Montgomery: Essays on Her Novels and Journals*, ed. Mary Henley Rubio. (Guelph: Canadian Children's Press.), 69.

if necessary. Anne holds her own in the male world of education, despite being discouraged and ridiculed by her teacher Mr Phillips. For example Mr Phillips tells Anne that she is "the worst dunce he ever saw at [geometry]"¹⁶⁴ and shows the whole class how "disgraceful" Anne's spelling is.¹⁶⁵ Anne persists, even though education is not seen as part of "a girls true sphere" in the community she is desperately trying to be admitted into, even when her best friend Diana is denied education and some of her fellow female students appear to be more interested in securing husbands than a career and economic independence: "Ruby says she will only teach for two years after she gets through, and then she intends to be married."¹⁶⁶ Noticeably, one of Anne's fellow students has no intention to marry: "Jane says she will devote her whole life to teaching, and never, never marry, because you are paid a salary for teaching, but a husband won't pay you anything."¹⁶⁷ Moreover, Marilla and Matthew's decision to educate Anne empowers her, and thereby they "perform antisexist childrearing practices."¹⁶⁸ Anne's empowerment means that she is free to decide between marrying and teaching and/or studying further. Should she choose it, economic independence is within Anne's grasp.

Montgomery "dismantles traditional gender socialization practices" further in portraying Anne as the near opposite of what a Victorian girl should be. Sharyn Pearce describes "the imperial girl" in her essay, which examines gender roles in the imperial novel, as:

a colourless, two-dimensional figure, hovering only in the margins of that other staple of the colonial literature diet, the family story. [She is] denied access to the boys' life-threatening but sinew-enhancing dramas, and ha[s] a very low profile generally. [She] is no quesser, and there is no thorny path to womanhood commensurate with the boys' journey to manly self-definition. She remains indoors in almost purdah-like confinement, kept there by her male kin, who are fearful of her defilement by her racial inferiors [...] for the most part imperial girls stay within the confines of the domestic world, patiently sewing, reading useful works, and being virtuous. [...] Her role is a traditional "waiting" one [...] In a nutshell, she reveals only too clearly that to be born female is to be born into a world that demands submission, and dependency - a world, in fact, where girls customarily get the short straw.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁴ Montgomery, 1998, 137.

¹⁶⁵ Montgomery, 1998, 108.

¹⁶⁶ Montgomery, 1998, 244.

¹⁶⁷ Montgomery, 1998, 244.

¹⁶⁸ O'Reilly, 2008b, 11.

¹⁶⁹ Pearce, 235-236.

By comparison, the boys were "courageous", honest, practical, and self-reliant, and proved to be brave and gallant in the face of pressure", they had "physical prowess and moral integrity" and partook in life-threatening adventures, all the while behaving like gentlemen and protecting the weaker sex.¹⁷⁰ Anne waits for no-one, she defies these descriptions of traditional gender biased spheres and characteristics, she is loudly outspoken, not domestic, disobedient, intelligent, imaginative, resourceful and "next door to a perfect heathen"¹⁷¹. In fact, when Montgomery introduces Anne in the novel, she notes that "no commonplace soul inhabited the body of this stray woman-child"¹⁷², thereby establishing that Anne is different. She is indeed "a quester", a girl actively searching for a home, for her place in the world. She is "passionate, [...] feisty, yet sensitive; [she is] candid, impetuous, and [...] unconventionally high-spirited."¹⁷³ Furthermore, Anne has agency alien to the passive image of the Victorian ideal of a girl. When disaster strikes, Anne keeps her wits about her and does not succumb to panic or hysterics. Anne handles Minnie May Barry's croup with calm and poise, when Diana is described "nervous [...] [and] sobb[ing]" and the "young [...] French girl" left to stay with the Barry girls while their parents were away "was helpless and bewildered, quite incapable of thinking what to do, or doing it if she thought of it".¹⁷⁴ It takes an outsider to the Avonlea community to first recognise Anne's value. The doctor, who finally arrives tells Mr and Mrs Barry that

'That little redheaded girl they have over at Cuthbert's is as smart as they make 'em. I tell you she saved that baby's life, for it would have been too late by the time I got there. She seems to have a skill and presence of mind perfectly wonderful in a child of her age. I never saw anything like the eyes of her when she was explaining the case out to me.'¹⁷⁵

Also, in the incident of the "unfortunate lily maid" Anne shows the calmness of her character and her ability to act in a crisis. While acting out a scene from Tennyson's *Idylls of the King* Anne,

¹⁷⁰ Pearce, 235.

¹⁷¹ Montgomery, 1998, 52.

¹⁷² Montgomery, 1998, 11.

¹⁷³ Pearce, 238.

¹⁷⁴ Montgomery, 1998, 141-2.

¹⁷⁵ Montgomery, 1998, 143.

playing Elaine, finds herself in the middle of a river in a fast sinking rowboat, without oars: "Anne gave one gasping little scream which nobody ever heard; she was white to the lips, *but she did not lose her self-possession*."¹⁷⁶ Anne remains composed and saves herself by climbing to a pile of a bridge and is rescued by Gilbert who happens to row past. Anne's agency is again juxtaposed by the panic of the other girls partaking in the scene. They see Anne's rowboat sink and panic. Ruby Gillis "succumbed to hysterics and [had to be] left to recover", Diana and Jane are "in a state narrowly removed from positive frenzy" and upon finding Anne unharmed, the former "falls on [Anne's] neck [...] weeping with relief".¹⁷⁷ By contrast, Anne only "*thought* it would be a relief to sit down and have a good cry."¹⁷⁸

Moreover, in *Anne of Green Gables* "Montgomery [...] stress[es] the healthy outdoor environments, where [her] protagonist [is] completely at home, and in doing so presents Canadian [...] girls as vigorous, wholesome, happy, and close to nature, enjoying idyllic childhoods spent largely outdoors."¹⁷⁹ Anne even manages to have a life-threatening adventure when she "comes to grief in an affair of honor", i.e. is dared to "walk the ridgepole of a roof" and falls down and breaks her ankle.¹⁸⁰ Had she fallen off the roof on the other side of the house the consequences might have been more serious.¹⁸¹ All in all then, Anne is not at all "the Avonlea type of well-bred little girl"¹⁸², who though presenting "a Canadian girl", is nonetheless far closer to "the insipid imperial norm"¹⁸³ of which Anne is a striking contrast. *Anne of Green Gables* can indeed be seen as the protagonist's "thorny path to womanhood" and to *womanly* "self-definition". Montgomery, however uses humour to depict Anne's "thorny path". Moreover, instead of writing "[a] cautionary tale of harm done by girls who strayed from the righteous path by neglecting their chores, for example, or

¹⁷⁶ Montgomery, 1998, 223.

¹⁷⁷ Montgomery, 1998, 226.

¹⁷⁸ Montgomery, 1998, 226.

¹⁷⁹ Pearce, 237-238.

¹⁸⁰ Montgomery, 1998, 181-187.

¹⁸¹ Montgomery, 1998, 185.

¹⁸² Montgomery, 1998, 15.

¹⁸³ Pearce, 238.

refusing to sacrifice their own pleasures to gratify their families"¹⁸⁴, Montgomery "reward[s] Anne's domestic and social failures instead of punishing them"¹⁸⁵. For example, when Anne dyes her hair unintentionally green and has to have her hair cut "as closely as possible".¹⁸⁶ After the incident Anne chatters endlessly about the reception her hair has in school and instead of reprimanding her Marilla remarks that she has gotten "so used to [Anne's chattering]".¹⁸⁷ The author then remarks that "[this] was Marilla's way of saying that she liked to hear it."¹⁸⁸ Moreover, Anne's friend Diana comforts her by saying: "your hair is ever so much darker than it used to be before you cut it."¹⁸⁹ So, it seems that Anne is rewarded for her wicked deed of dying her hair by the very outcome that she hoped to achieve - her hair is darker. When Diana and Anne behave most unladylike by running and jumping into the spare-room bed in the middle of the night and "frighten poor old Miss Barry to death"¹⁹⁰, instead of being punished, Anne finds in Miss Barry another "kindred spirit".¹⁹¹ In fact, the narrator notes that "little mistakes, such as absentmindedly emptying a pan of skim milk into a basket of yarn balls in the pantry instead of into the pigs' bucket, and walking clean over the edge of the log bridge into the brook while wrapped in imaginative reverie, [are] not really worth counting."¹⁹² Thereby, Montgomery could be seen to be hinting that lack of domestic skills is not really very important and that it is acceptable to be "wrapped in imaginative reverie". Salah notes that "Montgomery does not subvert the didactic form to reject the values with which she was raised, but as a critique of the insular and inflexible mindset that presumes those values to be the only valid ones."¹⁹³ Therefore, it can be said that *Anne of Green Gables* dismantles traditional gender socialization practices of the literature of its time. The novel has shown girls growing up in the last hundred years, even girls maturing in the 21st century that energetic, active behaviour,

¹⁸⁴ Salah, 194.

¹⁸⁵ Salah, 195.

¹⁸⁶ Montgomery, 1998, 218.

¹⁸⁷ Montgomery, 1998, 219.

¹⁸⁸ Montgomery, 1998, 219.

¹⁸⁹ Montgomery, 1998, 220.

¹⁹⁰ Montgomery, 1998, 155.

¹⁹¹ Montgomery, 1998, 159.

¹⁹² Montgomery, 1998, 183.

outspokenness and intelligence can be positive female characteristics which should be embraced.

In *Anne of Green Gables* Montgomery attempts through her fiction to "affect social change through the socialization" of the orphan Anne, thereby she can be seen "defining motherhood as a political site wherein mothers can affect change".¹⁹⁴ Montgomery's intention was to "change the attitudes towards the vulnerable young, as valuable simply for themselves".¹⁹⁵ In the late nineteenth century and the early twentieth century orphans and poor children were still mostly considered cheap labour.¹⁹⁶ Indeed, "animal welfare came earlier than concern for children's welfare."¹⁹⁷ In fact, towards the end of the 19th century an animal rescue organization, the Nova Scotia Royal Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA) began to rescue abused children too.¹⁹⁸ Montgomery can be seen to subtly criticise or draw attention to this comparative value of animals and children in her decision not to name Matthew's sorrel mare in the first chapter of *Anne of Green Gables*, in Matthew's comment "I wouldn't give a dog I liked to that Blewett woman" and the noticeable, curious, absence of animals in the Green Gables farm in general.¹⁹⁹ Anne "goes around naming plants, trees, and places, but no animals."²⁰⁰

Towards the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, a change was taking place, advocated by child reformers, "who spread the doctrine that childrearing and nurturing were to be associated with love and pleasure".²⁰¹ In the course of *Anne of Green Gables* Anne transforms from a potential labourer to a cherished daughter and thereby Montgomery throws light on the "shifting attitudes towards the usefulness of children".²⁰² Blackford argues: "[Montgomery] self-consciously enters a debate about the role of children in the world, one that we should not

¹⁹³ Salah, 196.

¹⁹⁴ O'Reilly, 2008b, 7.

¹⁹⁵ Doody, 422.

¹⁹⁶ Doody, 422.

¹⁹⁷ Doody, 423.

¹⁹⁸ Doody, 423.

¹⁹⁹ Doody, 424.

²⁰⁰ Doody, 424.

²⁰¹ Blackford, 2009b, xix.

²⁰² Blackford, 2009b, xx.

receive uncritically; she challenges some aspects of childhood and naturalizes others."²⁰³ For example, Montgomery can be said to challenge the sensibleness of corporal punishment, as already discussed earlier in this chapter and naturalize the value of considering (dependent) children's feelings or the normalcy of tom-boyish little girls. The change in attitudes and the "removal [...] of the child from the labour force was one of the most profound alterations of [...] ideologies about childhood."²⁰⁴ Blackford argues that this change in attitudes can be seen in the novel in Marilla and Matthew's initial attitudes towards Anne and the debate they have over whether to keep her or not. Marilla assents that Anne could be useful, but Matthew in an uncharacteristic outspoken way announces that "[they] might be some good to Anne".²⁰⁵ Therefore, once Marilla gives in and begins mothering Anne she will be changed, relinquishing the idea that a child should be useful and she will affect change on her community, leading by example.

3.1. "Put[ting] an oar in". Images of a Nurturing Male in *Anne of Green Gables*

The aim of this subchapter is to discuss Matthew Cuthbert's role in the upbringing of his adoptive daughter Anne. I intend to analyse whether Matthew can be seen as mothering Anne according to feminist mothering or empowered mothering.

Matthew Cuthbert participates in Anne's upbringing from the very beginning of the novel, though not with consent from Marilla: "And mind, Matthew, you're not to go interfering with my methods. Perhaps an old maid doesn't know much about bringing up a child, but I guess she knows more than an old bachelor. So you just leave me to manage her. When I fail it'll be time enough to put your oar in."²⁰⁶ Matthew does "put [his] oar in" when Marilla's methods fail, but usually without her knowledge, for example when he persuades Anne to apologise to Mrs Lynde.²⁰⁷ Anne's upbringing becomes a balancing act between Marilla's often unfairly strict methods and Matthew's

²⁰³ Blackford, 2009b, xx.

²⁰⁴ Blackford, 2009b, xx.

²⁰⁵ Blackford, 2009b, xxi.

²⁰⁶ Montgomery, 1998, 47-48

²⁰⁷ Montgomery, 1998, 71-72.

softer touch, leaning rather towards overindulgence. Indeed, Montgomery reinforces this interpretation of Marilla and Matthew's roles when she writes:

Those two [Anne and Matthew] were the best of friends and Matthew thanked his stars many a time and oft that he had nothing to do with bringing [Anne] up. That was Marilla's exclusive duty; if it had been his he would have been worried over frequent conflicts between inclination and said duty. As it was, he was free to "spoil Anne" - Marilla's phrasing - as much as he liked. But it was not such a bad arrangement after all; a little "appreciation" sometimes does quite as much good as all the conscientious "bringing up" in the world.²⁰⁸

In the quotation above, Matthew is underrating his role in Anne's parenting and at the same time the author subtly questions contemporary methods of bringing up children without any "appreciation" for their needs or feelings.

Monika Hilder argues in her essay *The Ethos of Nurture: Revisiting Domesticity in L. M. Montgomery's Anne of Green Gables* that "Matthew's central role as a nurturer problematizes a feminist reading of *Anne of Green Gables*."²⁰⁹ On the contrary, Matthew's role as a male othermother could be said to be one of the key aspects of a third wave feminist reading of *Anne of Green Gables*. Katharine Slater also hesitates to place Matthew "within the mother-category" in her essay "'The Other Was Whole': Anne of Green Gables, Trauma and Mirroring":

A catalog of *Green Gables*'s mother-figures, certainly, should not leave out Matthew Cuthbert, whose nurturance might be considered a type of maternalism; I hesitate, however, to include him unequivocally within the mother-category. Matthew does possess qualities - kindness, shyness, patience - that have been traditionally associated with the feminine, but to suggest that Matthew is, without qualification, a mother-figure, implicitly aligns him entirely with Anne's other mothers, with whom he shares no characteristics besides his care for Anne. Montgomery's text sets aside Matthew from the women in Anne's life by emphasizing his inability to participate productively in social interaction with them (Anne and Marilla, of course, are exceptions).²¹⁰

Matthew does not need to "share characteristics" with Anne's other co-mothers in order to be qualified as Anne's othermother. Slater seems to hint that in order to be qualified as Anne's othermother Matthew should possess not only feminine qualities, but also female qualities.

²⁰⁸ Montgomery, 1998, 194.

²⁰⁹ Hilder, Monika. 2009. "The Ethos of Nurture: Revisiting Domesticity in L. M. Montgomery's *Anne of Green Gables*. *100 Years of Anne with an 'e': the Centennial Study of Anne of Green Gables*. (Calgary: University of Calgary Press.), 214.

²¹⁰ Slater, Katharine. 2010. "The Other Was Whole": Anne of Green Gables, Trauma and Mirroring." *The Lion and the Unicorn*. 34, 2: (167-187), 173.

Matthew's role as Anne's othermother is undeniable, as he is the first person to realize Anne's need for a home, stubbornly insisting that he and Marilla adopt the girl. Matthew and Anne form a strong bond from the very first moment they meet:

Matthew, however, was spared the ordeal of speaking first, for as soon as she concluded that he was coming to her she stood up, grasping with one thin brown hand the handle of a shabby, old-fashioned carpet-bag; the other she held out to him. 'I suppose you are Mr. Matthew Cuthbert of Green Gables?' she said in a peculiar clear, sweet voice.²¹¹

Being unlike "the Avonlea type of well-bred girl", Matthew soon finds out "much to his own surprise [that he] [i]s enjoying himself" in Anne's company.²¹² And he in his turn wins Anne over by being an untiring listener, he tells Anne: "'Oh, you can talk as much as you like. I don't mind.'"²¹³ Matthew's intuition also leads him to realize that instead of Anne being useful to him and Marilla "we might be some good to her", according to Rubio "one of the most important lines in the book."²¹⁴ This line alludes to relinquishment of Victorian ideas of a dependent child's usefulness to the adoptive family and to the emergence of the idea of a child as emotionally "priceless", as discussed in more detail in the previous chapter.²¹⁵ Matthew's love for Anne is unconditional, whereas it could be said that the love of Marilla and the other co-mothers has at least at times conditions. For example, while still contemplating whether to keep Anne or give her to the unpleasant Mrs Blewett, Marilla tells Anne to: "'Go back and sit down quietly and hold your tongue and behave as a good girl should.'"²¹⁶ Anne responds: "'I'll try to do and be anything you want me, if you'll only keep me.'"²¹⁷ On another occasion Marilla reprimands Anne for putting flowers on her hat when she went to church. When Anne bursts into tears Marilla tells her: "All I want is that you should behave like other little girls and not make yourself ridiculous."²¹⁸ Furthermore, Matthew's mothering can also be seen to challenge mainstream parenting practices. Instead of believing that

²¹¹ Montgomery, 1998, 11.

²¹² Montgomery, 1998, 15.

²¹³ Montgomery, 1998, 15.

²¹⁴ Rubio, 2003, 71.

²¹⁵ Blackford, 2009b, xx.

²¹⁶ Montgomery, 1998, 47.

²¹⁷ Montgomery, 1998, 47

²¹⁸ Montgomery, 1998, 85.

"pride goes before a fall", Matthew freely praises Anne in front of her, whereas Marilla will only admit her positive emotion behind Anne's back:

"Well, now, I guess our Anne did as well as any of them," said Matthew proudly. "Yes, she did," admitted Marilla. "She's a bright child, Matthew. And she looked real nice, too. [...] Anyhow, I was proud of Anne tonight, although I'm not going to tell her so." "Well now, I was proud of her and I did tell her so 'fore she went upstairs," said Matthew.²¹⁹

O'Reilly explains in her *Introduction to Feminist Mothering* that she begins her women's studies course on "Mothering-Motherhood" by asking her students to "define a 'good' mother".²²⁰ She lists some of the answers: "the students commented that good mothers, as portrayed in the media or popular culture more generally, are white, heterosexual, middle-class, able-bodied, married, thirty-something, in a nuclear family with usually one or two children, and ideally are full-time mothers. Words such as *altruistic, patient, loving, selfless, devoted, nurturing, cheerful* were frequently mentioned to describe the personality of this ideal patriarchal mother" (italics in the original).²²¹ O'Reilly points out that "the dominant ideology also reserves the definition of good motherhood to a select group of *women*." (italics mine).²²² Even in the 21st century the media does not often portray men doing mothering. Nor is the group of women deemed suitable to mother very inclusive. Matthew may fare badly on the first list that characterises a "good mother", but noticeably, the adjectives used to describe the personality of a "good mother" in the second list above, might easily be a list describing Matthew's personality. Therefore, Matthew has several characteristics of an ideal, "good" patriarchal mother, but his age, status as a unmarried man and above all his gender render him a "bad" mother. Noticeably, Marilla fares even worse on both of the lists above.

Further it could be argued that by Anne's influence Matthew awakes. When we first meet Matthew in the novel, he is described as shy, inattentive, and "hav[ing] such a mortal dread of little

²¹⁹ Montgomery, 1998, 204.

²²⁰ O'Reilly, 2008b, 10.

²²¹ O'Reilly, 2008b, 10.

²²² O'Reilly, 2008b, 10.

girls".²²³ However, when it comes to Anne, Matthew remembers her smallest wishes, for example Anne mentions chocolate caramels on her the first night in Green Gables, and Matthew promptly brings her some on his very next visit to town.²²⁴ After Matthew asks Mrs Lynde to help him "pick out a dress [...] to give to Anne" Mrs Lynde comments to herself: "'That man is waking up after being asleep for over sixty years.'"²²⁵ O'Reilly points out that "a theory of feminist mothering begins with the recognition that mothers [...] benefit when [they] live [their own] lives, and practice mothering, from a position of agency, authority, authenticity, and autonomy."²²⁶ Anne awakens Matthew and he begins to "live" his life and mother his adopted daughter, gaining "agency, authority, authenticity and autonomy". He crosses invisible boundaries, visits the second floor of his house for the first time in four years,²²⁷ ventures to foreign territory by shopping in an unfamiliar store to buy Anne material for a new dress and ends up being served by a lady clerk which in the past, before Anne's influence, before his newfound agency, would have had him running out of the store.²²⁸ His overwhelming devotion to Anne makes him even question his political stance. When the list of those who passed the entrance examination to university is late in being published in the newspaper Mrs Lynde blames the "Tory superintendent of education".²²⁹ For Matthew "to vote Conservative was part of [his] religion".²³⁰ Therefore, when "Matthew, not[ed] Anne's paleness and indifference and the lagging steps that bore her home from the post office every afternoon, [he] began seriously to wonder if he hadn't better vote Grit at the next election."²³¹ Though the narrator may intend this to be read as irony, to Matthew all things concerning Anne are serious. Furthermore, "Matthew begins to rebel against Marilla" by, for example, "smoking in the house",

²²³ Montgomery, 1998, 48.

²²⁴ Montgomery, 1998, 26 and 89.

²²⁵ Montgomery, 1998, 200.

²²⁶ O'Reilly, 2008b, 11.

²²⁷ Montgomery, 1998, 71.

²²⁸ Montgomery, 1998, 197.

²²⁹ Montgomery, 1998, 262.

²³⁰ Montgomery, 1998, 140.

²³¹ Montgomery, 1998, 262.

thereby gaining autonomy.²³² Matthew is empowered by his mothering. The unobservant, shy and nervous Matthew sees Anne most clearly, noticing her needs intuitively. Matthew "is a kindred to Anne's sentiments because he values aesthetics and imagination."²³³

As mentioned above in chapter 3, empowered mothers "do not regard childcare as the sole responsibility of the [...] mother [...]. They look to friends, family, and their partners to assist with childcare and often raise their children with an involved community of what may be termed [...] *othermothers*."²³⁴ Furthermore, "patriarchal motherhood limits family to a patriarchal nuclear structure wherein [...] the mother is the nurturer and the father is the provider, [whereas] the formation of feminist families are many and varied."²³⁵ Feminist mothering and empowered mothering can be seen in *Anne of Green Gables* in Matthew's mothering of Anne. Matthew can be seen as one of the "othermothers" participating in Anne's raising, even though Marilla initially forbids Matthew's meddling. Matthew is clearly the more nurturing of the siblings, and "does not represent an intrusion of the values of a patriarchal culture."²³⁶ Carol Gay describes Matthew as "gentle, forgiving and soft" in her essay "*Kindred Spirits*" *All Green Gables Revisited*.²³⁷ She further notes that Matthew's "humanity has survived because of the 'feminine values' that predominate in his makeup."²³⁸ Hilder calls Matthew "a meek patriarch, [...] who disconnects notions of aggression and colonization from patriarchy, replacing them with gentleness and emotional responsiveness."²³⁹ Eve Kornfeld and Susan Jackson analyse in their essay *The Female Bildungsroman in Nineteenth-Century America Parameters of Vision* "[the] curious role assigned to men" in *Anne of Green Gables* which they label a "matriarchal utopia": "traditional gender boundaries are crossed frequently by 'feminized' [Matthew] [...] and there seems to be no

²³² Blackford, 2009b, xiv.

²³³ Hilder, 220.

²³⁴ O'Reilly, 2008b, 7.

²³⁵ O'Reilly, 2008b, 11.

²³⁶ Gay, Carol. 2003. "'Kindred Spirits' All. Green Gables Revisited." *Such a Simple Little Tale. Critical Responses to L. M. Montgomery's Anne of Green Gables*. (Lanham: Scarecrow Press, Inc.), 105.

²³⁷ Gay, 105.

²³⁸ Gay, 105.

²³⁹ Hilder, 220.

appreciation for traditional 'masculine' qualities."²⁴⁰

By the end of the novel, we find Matthew reflecting on his own involvement in Anne's upbringing: "'Well now, I guess she ain't been much spoiled,' he muttered, proudly. 'I guess my putting in my oar occasional never did much harm after all. She's smart and pretty, and loving, too, which is better than all the rest.'"²⁴¹

3.2. The Representation of Patriarchal Motherhood in the Character of Mrs Lynde

In this subchapter I will analyse the character of Mrs Lynde in *Anne of Green Gables* in more detail to examine whether she can be seen as representing patriarchal motherhood in the novel. I aim also to see whether Mrs Lynde can be seen to change in the course of the novel.

In her essay *The Architect of Adolescence* Mary Rubio describes Mrs. Lynde:

the inestimable Mrs. Rachel Lynde, whose house overlooks the road that all must pass who enter or leave Avonlea. Mrs. Lynde is the watchdog and the conscience of Avonlea, [...] even the natural landscape succumbs to order around Mrs. Lynde. [...] Even the names of the vegetables around her house suggest her overriding influence on the environment [...] Her all-seeing eye refracts the entire small Scots-Presbyterian community; religion, order, and the decorum prevail in all aspects of the residents' lives, and they all resist change.²⁴²

Mrs Lynde is the Cuthberts' neighbour, a central figure in the village of Avonlea, "she [runs] the Sewing Circle"²⁴³, she is "'a notable housewife' who 'helped run the Sunday School, and was the strongest prop of the Church Aid Society and Foreign Missions Auxiliary'"²⁴⁴ all the while "knitting 'cotton warp' quilts [...] sixteen of them".²⁴⁵ Mrs Lynde is one of Anne's othermothers, as already mentioned in chapter 3. Throughout the novel we hear Mrs Lynde's voice in all matters big and small, when Anne recounts on several occasions what "'Mrs Lynde says...'"²⁴⁶ "Montgomery [...] makes it clear that as a demonstrative Christian and a superior housekeeper, [Mrs Lynde] is

²⁴⁰ Kornfeld and Jackson, 150.

²⁴¹ Montgomery, 1998, 277.

²⁴² Rubio, 2003, 69-70.

²⁴³ Montgomery, 1998, 1.

²⁴⁴ Montgomery quoted in Salah, 197-8.

²⁴⁵ Montgomery, 1998, 2.

guaranteed the respect of her community."²⁴⁷ Mrs Lynde is the matriarch who polices all aspects of life in Avonlea. Instead of challenging mainstream parenting practices as I have argued Marilla does, she upholds the patriarchal values of the society in her resistance of women's higher education, in her ideas of "women's true sphere", in upholding the stagnant status quo of the community and protecting it from "the entrance of alien force[s]"²⁴⁸ such as foreign orphans. At the beginning of the novel, Mrs Lynde warns Marilla "that taking orphans is both foolish and dangerous."²⁴⁹ Thus, Mrs Lynde can be seen resisting the change in society toward the dependent child which Montgomery tried to achieve and Marilla is portrayed doing in her feminist mothering of Anne. In resisting change in the prevailing society, Mrs Lynde is performing her mothering within the patriarchal institution of motherhood. Mrs Lynde also resists change in society in her resistance towards women as teachers, as Anne recounts to Marilla: "'Mrs Lynde says they've never had a female teacher in Avonlea before and she thinks it is a dangerous innovation'."²⁵⁰ When the young and dynamic Miss Stacy comes to teach in Avonlea, her innovative methods raise concern:

Much of this was due to Miss Stacy's tactful, careful, broad-minded guidance. She led her class to think and explore and discover for themselves and encouraged straying from the old beaten paths to a degree that quite shocked Mrs. Lynde and the school trustees, who viewed all innovations on established methods rather dubiously.²⁵¹

Mrs Lynde does not only oppose innovative female teacher and women's education, but thereby also women's economic independence. Furthermore, Mrs Lynde thinks female ministers "would be a scandalous thing."²⁵² And she thinks ministers' wives should not "dress so fashionably."²⁵³ Anne tells Marilla that "Mrs Lynde says that sound doctrine in the man and good housekeeping in the woman make an ideal combination for a minister's family."²⁵⁴ Thereby, Mrs Lynde announces that she is a firm believer in the Victorian society's prevailing ideas of separate spheres for men and

²⁴⁶ Montgomery, 1998, 168, 170, 181, 182, 222.

²⁴⁷ Salah, 193.

²⁴⁸ Rubio, 2003, 68-9.

²⁴⁹ Rubio, 2003, 70.

²⁵⁰ Montgomery, 1998, 182.

²⁵¹ Montgomery, 1998, 253.

²⁵² Montgomery, 1998, 251.

²⁵³ Montgomery, 1998, 168.

women. Erika Rothwell argues in her essay *Knitting Up the World: L. M. Montgomery and Maternal Feminism in Canada* that "through what [she] say[s] Rachel [Lynde] perpetuate[s] traditional restrictions placed on women" and that "[her] role always remains secondary and domestic".²⁵⁵

In *From Motherhood to Mothering: The Legacy of Adrienne Rich's Of Woman Born* Andrea O'Reilly points out that "most women mother in the patriarchal institution of motherhood" and "women's mothering, in other words, is defined and controlled by the larger patriarchal society in which they live."²⁵⁶ As "the watchdog and conscience of Avonlea" Mrs Lynde most certainly mothers her children "in the patriarchal institution of motherhood". O'Reilly points out that "mothers do not make the rules [...] they simply enforce them" and that "[in patriarchal motherhood] a mother raises her children in accordance with the values and expectations of the dominant culture".²⁵⁷ Mrs Lynde with her love for "decency and decorum" and as demonstrated by her respected status in the society of Avonlea "enforces" the rules of the surrounding patriarchal society. Furthermore, "mothers are policed by what Sara Ruddick calls 'the gaze of others' [and] under the gaze of others mothers 'relinquish authority to others [and] lose confidence in their own values'".²⁵⁸

Mrs Lynde tries to enforce 'the gaze of others' upon Marilla in her advice to whip Anne as a punishment for her bad behaviour, which has already been discussed in chapter 3. Marilla, however, will not relinquish her maternal authority by accepting Mrs Lynde's advice and this can be seen as drawing the reader's attention to the fact that Mrs Lynde mothers her children from the patriarchal institution of motherhood, instead of the feminist mothering practices by Marilla. In fact, Mrs Lynde's is unable to break away from the patriarchal institution of motherhood to find her own

²⁵⁴ Montgomery, 1998, 170.

²⁵⁵ Rothwell, Erika. 1999. "Knitting Up the World: L. M. Montgomery and Maternal Feminism in Canada." *L. M. Montgomery and Canadian Culture*, eds. Irene Gammel and Elizabeth Epperly. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press Incorporated.), 138.

²⁵⁶ O'Reilly, Andrea. 2004b. "Introduction." *From Motherhood to Mothering: The Legacy of Adrienne Rich's Of Woman Born*, ed. Andrea O'Reilly. (Albany: State University of New York Press.), 6.

²⁵⁷ O'Reilly, 2004b, 6.

²⁵⁸ O'Reilly, 2004b, 6.

agency and empowerment in feminist mothering.

Mrs Lynde, is in for several surprises as the title of the first chapter of *Anne of Green Gables* attests: "Mrs. Rachel Lynde Is Surprised". First by the decision of her neighbours the Cuthberts to adopt a child, to import "an alien force" into the community, then by that child's improper behaviour and finally by her friend Marilla's decision to employ (feminist) mothering, instead of patriarchal motherhood.

By the end of the novel we see a somewhat changed Mrs Lynde. Indeed, Rubio argues that "Mrs Lynde becomes Anne's advocate once she is won over."²⁵⁹ Mrs Lynde admits to Marilla that she was mistaken about Anne towards the end of the novel:

'I must say Anne has turned out a real smart girl,' admitted Mrs. Rachel [...] 'She must be a great help to you.' [...] 'I never would have thought she'd have turned out so well that first day I was here three years ago.' [...] When I went home that night I says to Thomas [Lynde], says I, 'Mark my words, Thomas, Marilla Cuthbert'll live to rue the step she took.' 'But I was mistaken and I'm real glad of it. [...] I did make a mistake in judging Anne, but it weren't no wonder, for an odder, unexpecteder witch of a child there never was in this world, that's what.'²⁶⁰

Anne wins Mrs Lynde's approval even though Mrs Lynde does not in the course of *Anne of Green Gables* appear to change her ideas about women's education. At the end of the novel Mrs Lynde tells Anne: "'You've got as much education now as a woman can be comfortable with'"²⁶¹, yet she congratulates Anne on her academic achievements with untypical praise: "I just guess she has done well, and far be it from me to be backward in saying it. You're a credit to your friends, Anne, that's what, and we're all proud of you."²⁶² Consequently, Mrs Lynde can be seen as representing a contrasting figure, a woman who mothers in the patriarchal institution of motherhood, to Marilla's feminist mothering.

²⁵⁹ Rubio, 2003, 70.

²⁶⁰ Montgomery, 1998, 248-9.

²⁶¹ Montgomery, 1998, 304.

²⁶² Montgomery, 1998, 264.

4. Embracing Contradiction in *Anne of Green Gables* and the Individual Feminism of Anne and Lucy Maud

In this chapter I intend to discuss contradiction in *Anne of Green Gables* which echoes the ideas of embracing contradiction in feminism's third wave and the individual feminisms of Anne and her creator Lucy Maud Montgomery.

In their article *Why Anne Makes Us Dizzy: Rereading Anne of Green Gables from a Gender Perspective* Julia McQuillan and Julie Pfeiffer argue that

Anne's own recognition that an individual is a complex of selves, that our actions are not necessarily consistent, combined with her struggle to be feminine, make gender as a structure visible in a way that opens up the possibility of social change. Gender is most insidious when we don't see it. Anne tells 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."²⁶³

This quotation from *Anne of Green Gables* highlights the fact that "[Anne's] character is multiple, complex and not easy to reconcile."²⁶⁴ Anne embodies contradiction. "Some critics, like T. D. MacLulich, Elizabeth Epperly, and E. Holly Pike, focus on Anne's ultimate conformity [...], other critics, like Temma Berg and Janet Weiss-Town [...] grant more weight to Anne's subversions and rebellions, suggest[ing] that she is a feminist figure."²⁶⁵ Robinson further argues in her essay "*Pruned Down and Branched Out*": *Embracing Contradiction in Anne of Green Gables* that "*Anne of Green Gables* represents conflicting ideological movements - one stressing conformity for the heroine and one allowing agency - without resolving or reconciling them."²⁶⁶ However, Anne finds a way to "negotiate the two forces of agency and conformity."²⁶⁷ Robinson explains that "this negotiation is a powerful position for feminists to recognize and explore as it shows a capacity to

²⁶³ McQuillan, Julia and Julie Pfeiffer. 2001. "Why Anne Makes Us Dizzy: Rereading Anne of Green Gables from a Gender Perspective." *Mosaic: A Journal for the Interdisciplinary Study of Literature*. (34:2, 17-32.), 29.

²⁶⁴ Robinson, Laura M. 1995. "Pruned Down and Branched Out: Embracing Contradiction in *Anne of Green Gables*." *Children's Voices in Atlantic Literature and Culture: Essays on Childhood*, ed. Hilary Thompson. (Guelph: Canadian Children's Press.), 35.

²⁶⁵ Robinson, 35.

²⁶⁶ Robinson, 35.

²⁶⁷ Robinson, 35.

embrace contradiction without trying to reconcile it [...] with synthesis, or without giving in."²⁶⁸

Though Robinson does not mention third wave feminism in her essay, third wave feminism embraces just such contradictions in the lives of women. Nor does Robinson discuss the various contradictions Anne faces throughout the novel, but rather concentrates on negotiation of "the contradictory ideological pressures of conformity and agency."²⁶⁹ The purpose of this thesis, on the other hand, is to look at *Anne of Green Gables* from the point of view of third wave feminism and embracing contradiction is one of the characteristics of feminism's third wave. Furthermore, this thesis aims to take a more in depth look at the contradiction's the author of *Anne of Green Gables* faced.

"Embracing contradiction is central to the new vision of feminism put forward in [Rebecca Walker's] introduction [to *To Be Real: Telling the Truth and Changing the Face of Feminism*] - a feminism founded on the notion of being real."²⁷⁰ As noted in the autobiographical essays of third wave feminists (e.g. *Imagine My Surprise* by Ellen Neuborne and *Femmenism* by Jeannine DeLombard), women and girls must constantly negotiate with the mixed messages society sends us and therefore we need to be able to embrace contradiction. In *Anne of Green Gables* the protagonist is shown negotiating such mixed messages society sends her on several occasions. For an example of such mixed messages, Anne cannot understand why it is wicked to say that the orphan asylum "is worse than anything".²⁷¹ Also, Anne's way of mitigating her loneliness with imaginative friends is deemed inappropriate, Marilla tells her: "I don't approve of such going-on [...] Mrs Barry [wi]ll think you tell stories."²⁷² Anne also questions the proverb "children should be seen not heard", when she asks Marilla: "How are you going to find out about things if you don't ask questions?"²⁷³ Furthermore, in the chapter titled *Anne's Confession* such mixed messages prompt Anne to make a false confession about taking Marilla's amethyst brooch (which Marilla has misplaced herself as the

²⁶⁸ Robinson, 36.

²⁶⁹ Robinson, 39.

²⁷⁰ Henry, 2004, 150.

²⁷¹ Montgomery, 1998, 12.

²⁷² Montgomery, 1998, 59.

reader later learns). Anne has been told that she will be kept in her room until she confesses. Intent on going to the very first picnic of her life, the innocent Anne comes up with the most elaborate confession. Nevertheless, Marilla forbids her going to the picnic. What is more, when the brooch is recovered, Marilla reproaches Anne for telling a falsehood. She, however, does admit her own guilt in forcing Anne to confess. Anne also receives mixed messages from her teacher Mr Phillips, who does not heed rules himself, nor do his job properly, demonstrated by Mrs Lynde's remark to Marilla: "Mr Phillips isn't any good at all as a teacher. The order he keeps is scandalous, that's what, and he neglects the young fry and puts all his time on those big scholars he's getting ready for Queens." Mr Phillips, however, expects the pupils to respect his rules which he rarely bothers to enforce and when they do not, he punishes them wantonly. Anne is "singled for punishment from among a dozen equally guilty ones"²⁷⁴ when the pupils arrive late for class.

Anne also questions bigger social contradictions in the novel. Especially the hypocrisy of religious procedures comes up on several occasions, for example Anne asks Marilla: "Why can't women be ministers?"²⁷⁵ Anne wonders at the joyless seriousness of religion and criticizes a painting titled "Christ Blessing Little Children": "I wish the artist hadn't painted [Christ] so sorrowful looking. All His pictures are like that, if you've noticed. But I don't believe He could really have looked so sad or the children would have been afraid of Him."²⁷⁶ She also comments on the way the superintendent prays "[like it] was a disagreeable duty"²⁷⁷ and the length of the minister's chosen Bible texts and sermons, Anne tells Marilla: "If I was a minister I'd pick the short, snappy ones. The sermon was awfully long, too. [...] I didn't think he was a bit interesting."²⁷⁸ To her surprise, Marilla finds herself agreeing with a lot of the things Anne says, though she feels that the child should be scolded. Therefore, Marilla is also faced with the contradictions in society and her own thoughts which are in contrast with society's ideas:

²⁷³ Montgomery, 1998, 14.

²⁷⁴ Montgomery, 1998, 115.

²⁷⁵ Montgomery, 1998, 251

²⁷⁶ Montgomery, 1998, 56.

²⁷⁷ Montgomery, 1998, 57.

Marilla felt helplessly that all this should be sternly reproved, but she was hampered by the undeniable fact that some of the things Anne had said, especially about the minister's sermons and Mr. Bell's prayers, were what she herself had really thought deep down in her heart for years, but had never given expression to. It almost seemed to her that those secret, unuttered, critical thoughts had suddenly taken visible and accusing shape and form in the person of [Anne].

In her article *Grrrls at War* Kim France writes that "[third wave feminism's] unifying principle is that being female is inherently confusing and contradictory and women have to find a way to be sexy, angry and powerful at the same time."²⁷⁹ Anne may not need to "find a way to be sexy", but she certainly needs to find a way to be powerful and intellectual in a society not keen on women's higher education, to incorporate her intellect and agency into "woman's true sphere", to conform her appreciation of all things beautiful to the Puritan dread of vanity, to control her aggressive behaviour, to tame her wild imagination, her never-ceasing tongue and her out-spoken ways in order to fit into the society she longs to find a home in. "When a woman wants to achieve an amount of autonomy, yet her society or community perceives that autonomy as potentially threatening, she can only negotiate: give in a bit here, to get a bit there."²⁸⁰ Anne's ultimate negotiation between society's planned role for her and her own desires to educate herself comes at the end of the novel: Anne stays at home to take care of Marilla instead of going to university to continue her studies. However, "where Anne appears to have made a sacrifice in giving up school, she does not, in fact, give up her schooling. She plans to take Redmond courses by correspondence 'right here at Green Gables'".²⁸¹ When Marilla voices concern about Anne sacrificing her scholarship, Anne answers her: "I'm just as ambitious as ever. [...] Besides, I mean to study at home here and take a little college course all by myself. Oh, I've a dozens of plans, Marilla."²⁸² In *Anne of Green Gables* Montgomery leaves her protagonist looking forward to the "bend on the road" and the ending of the novel can be seen as open-ended. Anne may continue her studies and realize her

²⁷⁸ Montgomery, 1998, 82.

²⁷⁹ France, quoted in Heywood Leslie and Jennifer Drake. 1997c. "Introduction to Part Four: Third Wave Activism and Youth Music Culture." *Third Wave Agenda: Being Feminist, Doing Feminism*. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.), 204.

²⁸⁰ Robinson, 36.

²⁸¹ Robinson, 39.

²⁸² Montgomery, 1998, 303.

dream of becoming a writer or her newfound friendship with Gilbert may develop further.

Robinson points out the important symbolism of "the brook that runs close to Green Gables and through Avonlea" in that the brook "mirrors the [...] development of Anne".²⁸³ "By the end of the novel, Anne is like the brook [...] has conformed to Avonlea standards of propriety:"²⁸⁴

a brook that had its source away back in the woods of the old Cuthbert place; it was reputed to be an intricate, headlong brook in its earlier course through those woods, with dark secrets of pool and cascade; but by the time it reached Lynde's Hollow it was a quiet, well-conducted little stream.²⁸⁵

However, Robinson points out that "Anne, like the brook, learns to be quiet and well-conducted, [but] she also learns what she can get away with."²⁸⁶ Anne learns to negotiate how to be a woman with the contradictory expectations of the patriarchal society around her and her unconventional character, her "own feminism".

Robinson also notes that there is another interpretation of the brook. She quotes Anne's comment "on her first morning in Green Gables: 'I can hear the brook laughing all the way up here. Have you noticed what cheerful things brooks are? They're always laughing. Even in the wintertime I've heard them under the ice.'"²⁸⁷ Robinson argues further: "The brook, like Anne is always laughing, even when its environment - either wintertime or Avonlea propriety - causes it to grow a superficial layer to mask this laughter. That the brook's and Anne's expression is laughter rather than murmuring or babbling, words also associated with brooks, indicates the response Montgomery looks for in the reader: we as readers are not to take Anne's conformity too seriously."²⁸⁸ Consequently, "Anne's negotiation lies in her apparent conformity which conceals but does not erase her 'improper' thoughts and desires."²⁸⁹ Anne learns to hide her agency, empowerment, her imagination, all the qualities that make her an unsuitable Victorian woman. In a sense, she learns to hide what is her "own individual feminism".

²⁸³ Robinson, 37.

²⁸⁴ Robinson, 37.

²⁸⁵ Montgomery, 1998, 1.

²⁸⁶ Robinson, 37.

²⁸⁷ Robinson, 37.

²⁸⁸ Robinson, 37.

Outside the text Anne's creator, L. M. Montgomery, had to balance contradictions if she wanted to get published and earn her living. Holly E. Pike quotes her journal:

I write a lot of juvenile yarns. I like doing these but would like it better if I didn't have to lug a moral into most of them. They won't sell without it. The kind of juvenile story I like to write - and read, too for the matter of that - is a rattling good jolly one - "art for art's sake" - or rather "fun for fun's sake" - with no insidious moral hidden away in it like a spoonful of jam. But the editors who cater to the "young" person take themselves too seriously for that and so in the moral must go, broad or narrow, as suits the fibre of the particular journal in view.²⁹⁰

Pike quotes another passage from Montgomery's journal: "she wrote [...] that she was completing 'a very sensational yarn, written to suit the tastes of the journal that ordered it and I don't care much for writing such but they give good price for it'" and explains that "these passages reflect Montgomery's sense of the market and need to meet the requirements of a genre and editor rather than write to suit herself. To some extent she saw her job more as supplying a commodity than as expressing herself."²⁹¹ The fact that *Anne of Green Gables* has no such didactic morals as the stories described in the passages above and that therefore Montgomery had difficulties in getting the book published could be seen to explain the novel's long-lasting popularity, its value as something not written to suit the editor's taste, but the author's own taste and a way of expressing herself. In fact, in *Anne of Green Gables* Montgomery could be said to ironize the contemporary requirement of "lugging in a moral". When Anne and her school mates form a story club to practise writing stories and to "cultivate [their] imagination", Anne tells the disapproving Marilla that "'we're so careful to put a moral into them all, Marilla,' [...]. 'I insist upon that. All the good people are rewarded and all the bad ones are suitably punished. I'm sure that must have a wholesome effect. The moral is the great thing.'"²⁹² Furthermore, Montgomery writes that "Marilla was as fond of morals as the Duchess in Wonderland, and was firmly convinced that one should be tacked on to every remark made to a child who was being brought up."²⁹³ In juxtaposing Marilla and the Duchess on

²⁸⁹ Robinson, 38.

²⁹⁰ Pike, E. Holly. 2009. "L. M. Montgomery and Literary Professionalism." *100 Years of Anne with an 'e': The Centennial Study of Anne of Green Gables*, ed. Holly Blackford. (Calgary: University of Calgary Press.), 31.

²⁹¹ Pike, 31.

²⁹² Montgomery, 1998, 210-1.

²⁹³ Montgomery, 1998, 58.

Wonderland Montgomery is again using irony to draw the reader's attention to contemporary childrearing practices. In *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* when Alice first meets the Duchess, she is nursing her "sneezing and howling" baby in her kitchen where the air is filled with pepper.²⁹⁴ As she nurses the baby the Duchess is "singing a sort of lullaby [...] giving [the baby] a violent shake at the end of every line: 'Speak roughly to your little boy, And beat him when he sneezes: He only does it to annoy, Because he knows it teases.'"²⁹⁵

Montgomery had to embrace contradiction, for as Barbara White argues: "Female novelists who wanted to be successful did have to consider the tastes of the male editors and publishers who controlled the literary market".²⁹⁶ However, as already mentioned in chapter 3, "nineteenth-century [...] women used the novel as an extension of the self, and as a forum from which to question prevailing gender relations."²⁹⁷ This questioning, however, had to be done discreetly.

What about Montgomery's "own individual feminism"? She reportedly had "no favour for woman suffrage"²⁹⁸. Montgomery, however, "had views about independence of choice for women and a right to speak for herself" and she wrote to her friend Ephraim Weber "I do believe that a woman with property of her own should have a voice in making the laws. Am I not as intelligent and capable of voting for my country's good as the Frenchman who chops my wood for me, and who may be able to tell his right hand from his left, but cannot read or write?"²⁹⁹ Furthermore, Montgomery held other views that were clearly feminist, as mentioned in chapter 3, "Montgomery's books contain implicit criticisms of the Victorian institution of marriage"³⁰⁰. In *Anne of Green Gables* the protagonist remarks several times reproachingly how her friend Ruby Gillis "thinks of nothing but young men"³⁰¹ and "says [that] when she grows up she's going to have ever so many beaux on the string and have them all crazy about her; but I think that would be too exciting. I'd

²⁹⁴ Carroll, Lewis, 1994. *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*. (London: Penguin Books.), 69.

²⁹⁵ Carroll, 72.

²⁹⁶ White, quoted in Åhmansson, 70.

²⁹⁷ Kornfeld and Jackson, 140.

²⁹⁸ Gillen, Mollie. 1975. *The Wheel of Things: A Biography of L. M. Montgomery Author of Anne of Green Gables*. (Don Mills: Fitzhenry & Whiteside Limited.), 85.

²⁹⁹ Gillen, 86.

³⁰⁰ Gerson, 25.

rather have just one in his right mind."³⁰² Anne's own views are quite different: "'Young men are all very well in their place, but it doesn't do to drag them into everything, does it? Diana and I are thinking seriously of promising each other that we will never marry but be nice old maids and live together forever.'"³⁰³ Contrary to the other little girls in Avonlea school, Anne does not want her name written with a boy's name on the school porch wall with "a big 'Take Notice' over them".³⁰⁴ Anne's ideas of marriage and young men are childish, yet they represent reserved views which are opposed to the Victorian norm of marriage being the height of a woman's aspiration. Montgomery could be said to underline Anne's lack of interest in the opposite sex. In chapter XXXV, *The Winter at Queens*, Montgomery writes: "There was no silly sentiment in Anne's ideas concerning Gilbert. Boys were to her, when she thought about them at all, merely possible good comrades. If she and Gilbert had been friends she would not have cared how many other friends he had or with whom he walked."³⁰⁵ It begins to dawn on Anne that she might be missing something in not being friends with her intellectual rival, a boy with whom she seems to have much in common.

Moreover, when it comes to Montgomery's "own feminism", apart from her criticism of the Victorian marriage, in her novels "more explicitly articulated are the issues emanating directly from her own life [...]: the desire for higher education for women, women's need for economic self-sufficiency, and the cultural valorization of women writers and women's writing."³⁰⁶ The phrase "I'm not a feminist, but..." comes to mind. Maybe Montgomery's denial of the early women's movement was simply lack of knowledge about the movement, a lack of consciousness raising?

According to Cecily Devereux in her essay "*not one of those dreadful new women*": *Anne Shirley and the culture of imperial motherhood* "we can locate the 'feminism' of the Anne books" in "the series' idea of progress - imperial progress [...] - staged in what is, through the whole eight

³⁰¹ Montgomery, 1998, 239.

³⁰² Montgomery, 1998, 140.

³⁰³ Montgomery, 1998, 239.

³⁰⁴ Montgomery, 1998, 109.

³⁰⁵ Montgomery, 1998, 283.

³⁰⁶ Gerson, 25.

parts, a maternal narrative."³⁰⁷ She contends that "[when] Montgomery [...] aims her heroine towards maternity [she] is not capitulating to 'limited' late nineteenth-century ideas of womanhood, but, rather, is effectively engaging with first-wave feminism's discourse of imperial motherhood."³⁰⁸ As Devereux goes on to explain, "'first-wave' feminism is characterized in English Canada not necessarily by suffragism, and, after the 1890s, not by the 'new woman,' but by the idea of a woman as imperial 'mother of the race'."³⁰⁹ The fear of the "fall" of the British Empire due to the "new woman's" reluctance to perform her "reproductive duty", the "decline in the British birth rate" , "the spread of what came to be called 'racial diseases' [...] which affect[ed] reproduction and deplet[ed] population" ("tuberculosis, [...] venereal disease and alcohol") "were affecting the quality of the imperial race, [and] continued to be seen as a threat to future generations of Britons".³¹⁰ "These dreadful new women" - and, by extension, all feminists - were easy targets for blame."³¹¹ Due to these accusations "Anglo-imperial feminist discourse struggled to distance itself from most of the ideas associated with what middle-class British women had appeared to want."³¹² Consequently, "the new woman [...] was displaced by a figure who was profoundly maternal."³¹³

According to Lucy Bland

[t]he idea of "Woman as Mother" was mobilized by many feminists. It both empowered women, giving them a vantage point of superiority from which to speak, while simultaneously locating that vantage point within a discourse of racial superiority. For women were superior not as mothers in general, but as mothers of "the nation" and of "the race." Such constructions were inevitably placed within an Imperialist framework of which the vast majority of feminists were blithely uncritical.³¹⁴

Admittedly, "the promotion of motherhood for the purposes of populating the Empire had not always been concerned with the advancement of women," but nevertheless "feminism when it 'appropriated' [...] the idea of woman as 'mother of the race' effectively undermined the position

³⁰⁷ Devereux, 128.

³⁰⁸ Devereux, 128.

³⁰⁹ Devereux, 125.

³¹⁰ Devereux, 126.

³¹¹ Devereux, 126.

³¹² Devereux, 126.

³¹³ Devereux, 127.

³¹⁴ Bland, quoted in Devereux, 127.

taken by [its'] opponents [...], by affirming that the 'advancement' of women and the race - and, of course the Empire - were necessarily linked."³¹⁵ Thus, "suffrage was to be one 'advance', but it was arguably less important to most women than the empowerment, social validation, and professionalization of maternal work that is the hallmark of 'first-wave' feminism in imperial English Canada."³¹⁶ This would suggest that Montgomery did indeed have her "own individual feminism" and that she was aware of the aims of first wave feminism and supported those ideas. Furthermore, the empowered motherhood we find in *Anne of Green Gables* echoes both ideas of first wave feminism in imperial English Canada and third wave feminism. Indeed, Devereux concludes that "Montgomery's fiction [...] reproduces early twentieth-century feminist ideology."³¹⁷

Devereux notes that "From the beginning, Anne is configured as a child whose salient characteristic is not only her motherlessness, but her motherliness."³¹⁸ In the chapter titled "Anne's History" Anne tells Marilla about her life before she came to Green Gables: "[My mother] died of fever when I was just three months old. I do wish she'd lived long enough for me to remember calling her mother. I think it would be so sweet to say 'mother', don't you? And father died four days afterwards."³¹⁹ In this quotation Anne establishes herself as a motherless orphan, desperate for a mother and at the same time Montgomery brings forth the theme of maternal narrative in the novel. Anne continues to tell Marilla about her earlier life, she was placed in the care of a Mrs Thomas and her alcoholic husband where "I helped look after the Thomas children - there were four of them younger than me - and I can tell you they took a lot of looking after"³²⁰ After the death of Mrs Thomas's husband Anne is again without a home, but her ability to take care of small children, her motherliness, is what secures her a new home, regrettably as an unpaid child maid: "Then Mrs Hammond [...] said she'd take me, seeing I was handy with children [...] Mrs Hammond had eight

³¹⁵ Devereux, 127.

³¹⁶ Devereux, 127.

³¹⁷ Devereux, 128-9.

³¹⁸ Devereux, 124.

³¹⁹ Montgomery, 1998, 39.

³²⁰ Montgomery, 1998, 39-40.

children. She had twins three times [...] I used to get so dreadfully tired carrying them about."³²¹

Anne was clearly performing a motherly role in her two foster homes, she was an othermother.

After Mr Hammond also dies, Anne is sent to an orphan asylum. Anne's life history demonstrates both the fate of a dependent child in society which Montgomery hoped to change for the better as discussed in chapter 3 and her apparent natural motherliness which establishes her as "a mother of the race" according to the 'first-wave' feminism of imperial English Canada. Devereux points out that "[Anne's] 'natural' ability with children is dramatically foregrounded in the narrative when she saves Minnie May Barrie from an attack of croup [...] Anne [...] is represented as [...] maternal."³²²

In her essay *Knitting Up the World: L. M. Montgomery and Maternal Feminism in Canada*

Erika Rothwell also notes that

Montgomery was an astute social historian and maternal feminist who kept her finger upon the pulse of Canadian women's experiences. She powerfully knit into her fiction events, circumstances, beliefs, experiences, and realizations that were of moment in the living history of Canadian women. Montgomery knits up her portrayal of the changing status of the mother, recreating the tapestry of maternal feminism in Canada.³²³

She further argues that in *Anne of Green Gables* "Montgomery depicts the maternal as a strong, positive force rooted in tradition."³²⁴ However,

this influence is then used by rising generations, who gain power, demand change and reform, and finally attain suffrage. Eventually, however, the maternal becomes subject to challenge and inquiry and alters, losing much of its power to nurture and effect good, while pointing towards the need for remaking feminine identity and power.³²⁵

In *Anne of Green Gables* domesticity is privileged, the women knit their "cotton wraps", do their patchwork, there is a "community value of good housekeeping"³²⁶, even the yard at Green Gables is so neat that "one could have eaten a meal off the ground without overbrimming the proverbial peck of dirt."³²⁷ Hilder argues that in *Anne of Green Gables*, Montgomery "celebrat[es] [...] domesticity" which she labels "an ethos of personal nurture for others" and that this domesticity "is, in some

³²¹ Montgomery, 1998, 40.

³²² Devereux, 124.

³²³ Rothwell, 142.

³²⁴ Rothwell, 133-4.

³²⁵ Rothwell, 134.

³²⁶ Santelmann, quoted in Hilder, 211.

important ways, essentially non-gendered".³²⁸ Anne's world is "a predominantly maternal world: strong women knit up the substance of Anne's domestic, educational, political, and religious experiences. Marilla oversees Anne's domestic education; [...] Miss Muriel Stacy reigns over Anne's intellectual development; and Miss Josephine Barry is a cultural mentor."³²⁹ Also, Mrs Allen takes care of Anne's religious education. Rothwell points out, however, that "Montgomery's vision of maternal feminism is steeped in realism".³³⁰ *Anne of Green Gables* has plenty of examples of less than perfect mother figures: "Mrs Hammond and Mrs Thomas use Anne as a maid-of-all-work, and Mrs Peter Blewett, who has quarrelsome children, consistently wears out successive serving maids."³³¹ Furthermore, Montgomery describes Mrs Barry as "a woman of strong prejudices and dislikes, and her anger was of the cold, sullen sort which is always hardest to overcome."³³² Mrs Barry refuses to believe neither Anne or Marilla, when her daughter Diana is accidentally served currant wine instead of raspberry cordial and becomes intoxicated as a result of the unhappy mistake. After the unfortunate incident she will not allow Diana to associate with Anne, until the latter saves the life of Diana's little sister Minnie May.

In their essay "'Matthew Insists on Puffed Sleeves': Ambivalence towards Fashion in *Anne of Green Gables*" Alison Matthews David and Kimberly Wahl write that "Fashion is inherently contradictory".³³³ Fashion and its significance in *Anne of Green Gables* will be discussed in the next chapter of this thesis.

³²⁷ Montgomery, 1998, 4.

³²⁸ Hilder, 213-4.

³²⁹ Rothwell, 134.

³³⁰ Rothwell, 135.

³³¹ Rothwell, 135.

³³² Montgomery, 1998, 129.

³³³ David, Alison Matthews and Kimberly Wahl. 2010. "'Matthew Insists on Puffed Sleeves': Ambivalence towards Fashion in *Anne of Green Gables*." *Anne's World: A New Century of Anne of Green Gables*, eds. Irene Gammel and Benjamin Lefebvre. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press Incorporated.), 39

5. Privileging the Conventional Femininity of *Anne of Green Gables* or Insisting on Puffed Sleeves

In this chapter I will discuss the importance of privileging conventional femininity in *Anne of Green Gables*, the importance and significance of fashion and more specifically the importance of puffed sleeves.

Early criticism of *Anne of Green Gables* as overly sensitive, and conventional, as mentioned in the introduction of this thesis, can be seen as encouragement to reject "all things feminine" as Leigh Shoemaker wrote in her essay, discussed in subchapter 2.4. Furthermore, we are believing the patriarchal standards set by a male canon of critics if we condemn *Anne of Green Gables* for being "too girly". Lerner writes in *The Majority Finds Its Past: Placing Women in History* that "women's culture is not and should not be seen as a subculture".³³⁴ Baumgardner and Richards state that "if feminism aims to create a world where our standard of measurement doesn't start with a white-male heterosexual nucleus, then believing that feminine things are weak means that we're believing our own bad press."³³⁵ Moreover, we "don't have to make the feminine powerful by making it masculine or 'natural'; it is a feminist statement to proudly claim things that are feminine, and the alternative can mean to deny what we are."³³⁶

David and Wahl have pointed out that "as an emblem of modernity, femininity, and empowerment, fashion is a structuring narrative device [...] in *Anne of Green Gables*."³³⁷ They "propose that a key aspect of the novel is the presence of fashion itself as a structuring element and narrative tool that is largely disavowed but which remains central to Anne's acceptance into the community of Avonlea."³³⁸ Anne appears in Avonlea at the beginning of the novel "garbed in a

³³⁴ Lerner, quoted in Gay, 103.

³³⁵ Baumgardner and Richards, 134-5.

³³⁶ Baumgardner and Richards, 135.

³³⁷ David and Wahl, 47.

³³⁸ David and Wahl, 36.

very short, very tight, very ugly dress of yellowish grey wincey"³³⁹ and by the end of the novel, Anne has a choice of at least two party dresses when she is to recite at the White Sands Hotel. Anne is persuaded by Diana "[who] was beginning to have a reputation for notable taste in dressing"³⁴⁰ to wear her "white organdy [which] suit[s] [her because] it's so soft and frilly and clinging [and] seems as if it grew on [her]."³⁴¹ Fashion, in other words, has "[an] ambivalent status [...] in *Anne of Green Gables*."³⁴² David and Wahl explain:

At the turn of the twentieth century, modern life itself was viewed with a sense of ambivalence, with fears and anxieties centreing on the development of mass-produced goods, increasing mechanization, urban crowding, and, most crucially, a growing level of commercial materialism. In response to this supposed decay of culture, many artists and intellectuals felt the necessary antidote was a self-conscious adherence to lost human values and a renewed attention to the way in which daily life was undertaken and lived.³⁴³

This created a rise of anti-modernism which was considered "a retreat from an industrialized present that was perceived as over-civilizing and ultimately capable of spiritual and moral corruption."³⁴⁴ Moreover, "the dress reform movement, along with artistic and Aesthetic forms of dress, were an important expression of anti-modernism."³⁴⁵ "Design reformers [...] wrote extensively on the quaint and becoming nature of dress inspired by folk costume, and rural and pastoral settings"³⁴⁶ and "smocking and puffed sleeves were two distinct and important features that characterized folk dress and other forms of 'pastoral' clothing."³⁴⁷ "The pastoral setting of *Anne of Green Gables* can easily be situated within this trend in the visual and literary arts of this era."³⁴⁸ The value of the pastoral setting over the urban setting is emphasized in the novel, for instance, when Anne visits Miss Barry in town. Anne tells Marilla that Miss Barry's beautiful home with its "velvet carpet[s] [...] and silk curtains" makes her feel uncomfortable, as "there is no scope for

³³⁹ Montgomery, 1998, 11.

³⁴⁰ Montgomery, 1998, 267.

³⁴¹ Montgomery, 1998, 265-6.

³⁴² David and Wahl, 37.

³⁴³ David and Wahl, 37.

³⁴⁴ David and Wahl, 37.

³⁴⁵ David and Wahl, 37.

³⁴⁶ David and Wahl, 37.

³⁴⁷ David and Wahl, 38.

imagination" and that the crowds at the Exhibition grounds made her feel "dreadfully insignificant" and she "c[omes] to the conclusion [...] that [she] [i]sn't born for city life [...] and [...] [i]s glad of it."³⁴⁹ Though Anne feels the visit "'marks an epoch in [her] life'", nevertheless, "'the best of all was the coming home.'"³⁵⁰

As already mentioned in the previous chapter, David and Wahl note that "fashion is inherently contradictory: at the same time that it allows a woman (or a man) to express her (or his) personality, it is also a force that is driven by mass culture, both economically and in terms of shared or communal preferences."³⁵¹ "Anne's characterization in the novel embodies the inherent contradiction between individual distinctiveness and mass-produced fashionability."³⁵² Furthermore, "her relationship with public life and the era's 'modern' world is always mediated through the safety of community values and practices as well as her own individual preferences and distinctive personality."³⁵³ For instance, the above mentioned recitation at the White Sands Hotel. In "the performers' dressing room [...] Anne felt suddenly shy and frightened and countrified. Her dress, which, in the east gable, had seemed so dainty and pretty, now seemed simple and plain [...] among all the silks and laces that glistened and rustled around her. What were her pearl beads compared to [...] diamonds [...]?"³⁵⁴ Anne hears the other performers sarcastically talk of "'country bumpkins'" and "'rustic belles'" and does not realize that she is not thought to be one herself.³⁵⁵ She is consumed by stage fright which she barely overcomes. On the way home, after the concert and Anne's triumphant recitation, the other girls express their desire to be like the rich Americans at the hotel "'to spend [their] summers at a hotel and wear jewels and low-necked dresses and have ice cream and chicken salad every blessed day.'"³⁵⁶ Anne answers them:

³⁴⁸ David and Wahl, 39.

³⁴⁹ Montgomery, 1998, 233-5.

³⁵⁰ Montgomery, 1998, 237.

³⁵¹ David and Wahl, 39.

³⁵² David and Wahl, 39.

³⁵³ David and Wahl, 39.

³⁵⁴ Montgomery, 1998, 269-70.

³⁵⁵ Montgomery, 1998, 270-1.

³⁵⁶ Montgomery, 1998, 273.

'We *are* rich,' said Anne staunchly. 'Why, we have sixteen years to our credit, and we're happy as queens, and we've all got imaginations, more or less. Look at the sea, girls - all silver and shadow and vision of things not seen. We couldn't enjoy its loveliness any more if we had millions of dollars and ropes of diamonds. You wouldn't change into any of those women if you could. Would you want to be that white lace girl and wear a sour look all your life, as if you'd been born turning up your nose at the world?' [...] 'Well, I don't want to be any one but myself, even if I go uncomforted by diamonds all my life,' declared Anne. 'I'm quite content to be Anne of Green Gables, with my string of pearl beads.'³⁵⁷

Thereby, Anne confirms she venerates above all the Avonlea community and its values and appreciates her own distinctive personality and the author places her protagonist at a safe distance from "the more disturbing elements of the New Woman"³⁵⁸, situating her firmly to the pastoral idyll of Avonlea, clothed in the anti-modern artistic form of dress. Gammel has pointed out that "the conflict between Anne's desire for a unique sense of individuality and her urge to belong to a larger community is nowhere more apparent than in her interest in fashion, and more particularly, in puffed sleeves."³⁵⁹ The imagery of the puffed sleeves proceeds throughout the novel. For example, Miss Stacy, Anne's teacher, is described as having "sleeve puffs [...] bigger than anybody else's in Avonlea."³⁶⁰ Anne also desires the ultimate feminine puffed sleeves on her dresses, but the Calvinist Marilla does not yield. As Marilyn Stolt points out in her essay *The Uses of Setting in Anne of Green Gables* "Marilla considers it 'sinful' to even think of [pretty clothes]".³⁶¹ In Marilla's opinion clothes need to be "'neat, and clean and serviceable'".³⁶² It is shy Matthew who notices that "there was something about [Anne] different from her mates"³⁶³ and after thinking it over he realizes that Marilla has made Anne's clothes too plain in her fear not to encourage vanity. And so "Matthew insists on puffed sleeves".³⁶⁴

Anne first expresses her desire for puffed sleeves when she is presented with the three plain dresses made for her by Marilla. Marilla, not "believ[ing] in pampering vanity," has made the

³⁵⁷ Montgomery, 1998, 273-4.

³⁵⁸ David and Wahl, 47.

³⁵⁹ David and Wahl, 39.

³⁶⁰ Montgomery, 1998, 189.

³⁶¹ Stolt, Marilyn. 2003. "The Uses of Setting in *Anne of Green Gables*." *Such a Simple Little Tale: Critical Responses to L. M. Montgomery's Anne of Green Gables*, ed. Mavis Reimer. (Lanham: Scarecrow Press, Inc.), 61.

³⁶² Stolt, 61.

³⁶³ Montgomery, 1998, 195.

dresses "without any frills or furbelows", i.e. exceedingly plain.³⁶⁵ Anne would have wanted "just one of them with puffed sleeves. Puffed sleeves are so fashionable now. It would give me such a thrill [...] to wear a dress with puffed sleeves."³⁶⁶ Marilla replies: "I hadn't any material to waste on puffed sleeves. I think they are ridiculous-looking things anyhow. I prefer the plain, sensible ones."³⁶⁷ Anne, however, maintains that "I'd rather look ridiculous when everybody else does than plain and sensible all by myself."³⁶⁸ David and Wahl argue that "this quotation encapsulates [...] Anne's [...] ambivalent attitude towards fashion, capturing its emotional appeal and 'thrilling' qualities while simultaneously maintaining an intellectual distance by satirizing and rationalizing fashion's completely arbitrary rules."³⁶⁹ David and Wahl also note that "[the] puffed sleeves were not simply a frivolous luxury or a waste of fabric, but a necessary part of conforming to Victorian social codes, even if, as Anne puts it, these codes meant looking as 'ridiculous' as everyone else."³⁷⁰ Later, Anne receives a dress with puffed sleeves as a Christmas present from Matthew and consequently Marilla understands the importance of belonging and starts making Anne's clothes more fashionably. "Fashion theorists have often pointed out the conflicted yet central role of fashion in the construction of identity."³⁷¹ Furthermore, it "has been argued that fashion allows for individual expression of identity while simultaneously providing access to wider community codes and conventions that are shared."³⁷² By gaining the puffed sleeves, Anne becomes part of the Avonlea community and shares important feminine attributes with the women and girls in the community. David and Wahl point out that "the iconic presence of puffed sleeves in the text presented both Montgomery and her readers with a rare opportunity to collapse seemingly contradictory categories of beauty in fashionable dress, since at the time of the novel's completion,

³⁶⁴ Montgomery, 1998, 195.

³⁶⁵ Montgomery, 1998, 78.

³⁶⁶ Montgomery, 1998, 79.

³⁶⁷ Montgomery, 1998, 79.

³⁶⁸ Montgomery, 1998,79.

³⁶⁹ David and Wahl, 41.

³⁷⁰ David and Wahl, 41.

³⁷¹ David and Wahl, 39.

³⁷² David and Wahl, 39.

such sleeves were associated with mainstream modishness as well as artistic dressing."³⁷³

When striving to privilege conventional femininity, however, one needs to be careful not to slip from third wave Girlie feminism into postfeminist ideas of girl power. Baumgardner and Richards explain:

A Girlie-girl can be a stereotypically feminine one - into manicures and hairstyles and cooking and indoorsy activities. Girlie is also a feminist philosophy put forth most assertively by the folks at *Bust* [a zine]. Girlies are adult women, usually in their mid-twenties to late thirties, whose feminist principles are based on a reclaiming of girl culture (or feminine accoutrements that were tossed out with sexism during the Second Wave), be it Barbie, housekeeping, or girl talk.³⁷⁴

Postfeminist, on the other hand is

a movement [which argues that all] women's movements are, for whatever reasons, no longer moving, no longer vital, no longer relevant; the term suggests that the gains forged by previous generations of women have so completely pervaded all tiers of our social existence that those still 'harping' about women's victim status are embarrassingly out of touch.³⁷⁵

"Both third wave feminism and postfeminism privilege conventional femininity [...]; however, in translation of Girlie to girl power, what gives is both a complete dismissal of past feminisms and any sense of the need for gender equality: we are always already equal, it is just a matter of exercising one's girl power."³⁷⁶ As Jennifer Poltner, quoted by Baumgardner and Richards, notes: "It's probably a fair assumption to say 'zigzag-ha' [the lyrics of the chorus of the song Wannabe] is not Spice [Girls] shorthand for 'subvert the dominant paradigm'".³⁷⁷ While agitating for girl power the Spice Girls, like many self-acclaimed advocates of girl power in the 1990s, were actually only giving lip service to the women's movement. In other words, "as much as Girlies see femininity as a powerful site of personal power, they do not advocate girliness instead of political agitation."³⁷⁸ However, "Girlie can be a trap for conformity, just with a new style."³⁷⁹ In *Anne of Green Gables* the protagonist does not fall into this "trap for conformity", but rather learns to negotiate between

³⁷³ David and Wahl, 39-40.

³⁷⁴ Baumgardner and Richards, 400.

³⁷⁵ Gillis, Howie and Munford, 2007b, xxi.

³⁷⁶ Stacia, 240.

³⁷⁷ Baumgardner and Richards, 128.

³⁷⁸ Stacia, 240.

the surrounding patriarchal society and her own empowerment, as discussed in the previous chapter. The "political agitation" going on in *Anne of Green Gables* is subtle, but it is there, for example in the form of empowered mothering, first wave feminist ideas of motherhood in the imperial English Canada and the criticism of the role of the dependent child, as discussed above. It is also important to let readers of the novel know that they can enjoy the femininity in *Anne of Green Gables* and claim similar feminine things in their own lives and still be feminists. Also, choosing a traditional domestic roles is not playing into the hands of patriarchy, problems arise only when the domestic role is not chosen but forced upon a woman. This is to say that feminist mothering is empowering to women, but the male-defined and controlled patriarchal institution of motherhood is oppressive. Therefore, Anne yearning for puffed sleeves can be translated into the desire of the modern reader to be fashionable, or "a desire to fit in with [...] peers",³⁸⁰ Anne's longing to become beautiful can be empathized with, her struggles to come to terms with her hair as "red as carrots"³⁸¹ can easily be comprehended: "we all know what it is like to have a 'defective' body part."³⁸²

"A lot of what Girlie radiates is the luxury of self-expression that most Second Wavers didn't feel they could or should indulge in."³⁸³ Anne certainly "radiates self-expression" which empowers her and is frowned upon by Marilla. She has her imagination, which has helped her to cope with her dreary life prior to arriving in Avonlea, she expresses herself with her non-stop chattering, she has her own tools of making her depressing outfit more beautiful: on her way to church she "liberally garland[s] her hat" with "buttercups and [...] wild roses"³⁸⁴. Montgomery's writing is current even today. Anne is shown to find friends and acceptance even in her unfashionable clothes. Anne's individual agency gives a powerful role model to 21st century readers.

³⁷⁹ Baumgardner and Richards, 161.

³⁸⁰ David and Wahl, 41.

³⁸¹ Montgomery, 1998, 64.

³⁸² McMaster, Juliet. 2002. "Taking Control: Hari Red, Black, Gold, and Nut-Brown." *Making Avonlea: L. M. Montgomery and Popular Culture*, ed. Irene Gammel. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press Incorporated.), 58.

³⁸³ Baumgardner and Richards, 161.

³⁸⁴ Montgomery, 1998, 80.

6. Conclusion

Gabriella Åhmansson writes in the "Preface" of her work *A Life and Its Mirrors: A Feminist Reading of L. M. Montgomery's Fiction* that

no amount of support, however, financial or academic, would enable me to complete this book had I not had adequate help in looking after my children. Barbara White writes in her introduction to *Growing Up Female*: 'It is customary for authors to acknowledge the support of various institutions - foundations, universities, libraries, etc. - but the institution that allows women with small children to write books is day care.'³⁸⁵

I would like to add that day care and in the words of another author "a good feminist husband"³⁸⁶ are also essential when doing one's thesis.

The aim of this thesis has been to examine whether L. M. Montgomery's classic *Anne of Green Gables* could be looked at as portraying elements of third wave feminism. In particular, whether the novel could be said to have elements of empowered mothering, contradiction and the ideology of individualism similar to feminism's third wave. My thesis is part of the discussion of feminist literary criticism with a third wave feminist point of view. I believe that this work has shown that *Anne of Green Gables* does indeed embody characteristics of third wave feminism.

In the first analysis chapter, I analysed the representation on feminist mothering in *Anne of Green Gables*. I discussed how Marilla's mothering of Anne characterised empowered mothering, depicting several themes of feminist mothering. I conclude that Marilla's mothering indeed reflects feminist mothering as represented in the edited work of Andrea O'Reilly. Marilla does not mother Anne according to the contemporary patriarchal institution of motherhood, but uses her agency to resist mainstream parenting practices. Through her mothering, Marilla initiates subtle social changes in the fictional village of Avonlea and through her writing the novel's creator L. M. Montgomery does the same in the real world. In subchapter 3.1. I examined how Matthew can also be seen as one of Anne's othermothers. Although, some critics disagree,³⁸⁷ in my opinion Matthew

³⁸⁵ Åhmansson, 10.

³⁸⁶ Gilbert, Elizabeth. 2010. *Eat Pray Love: One Woman's Search for Everything*. (London: Bloomsbury.), 288.

³⁸⁷ Hinder (2009) and Slater (2010).

can clearly be placed among Anne's othermothers, who mother her through feminist mothering. Matthew's role is confirmed by his nurturing character, his nonpatriarchal features, the way he is able to see Anne more clearly than all the other people in her life. It is significant that the shy Matthew attains agency to inherently realize how Anne should be mothered. In subchapter 3.2. I examined how the character of Mrs Rachel Lynde can be seen as representing the patriarchal institution of motherhood compared to feminist mothering practices as performed by Marilla. I conclude that though Mrs Lynde clearly upholds the contemporary patriarchal norms in the Avonlea society, she is merely enforcing the rules of dominant culture.

In the second analysis chapter I concentrated on analysing contradiction in *Anne of Green Gables* and in feminism's third wave and how these two relate. I also looked at the individual feminisms of Anne and her creator L. M. Montgomery. I feel that Montgomery's "own feminism" has been overlooked by several literary critics and her lack of interest in first wave feminism's suffrage has been emphasised too much. This has left in its shadow the fact, that Montgomery clearly had strong feminist ideas, whether she herself recognised the fact or not. Montgomery's individual feminism consisted of her advocacy of women's higher education, women's economic independence and a right to speak for themselves. She viewed the institution of marriage with distaste, seeing how it limited women's lives. In my opinion, Montgomery clearly promotes the imperial English Canadian first wave feminist idea of a "woman as a mother" in *Anne of Green Gables*. In Montgomery's controversial attitude to the women's movement one can find the concept of individual feminism promoted in feminism's third wave. As literary critics and as readers we have to embrace the contemporary contradiction Montgomery had to live with. She needed "to give a little here, to get a little there", to conceal her criticism of society in order to get published and earn her living.

Anne of Green Gables can be seen embodying contradiction in several ways. Anne herself is a complex character, who personifies contradiction in that she can be seen as conforming to the Victorian idea of a woman's true sphere and as a feminist figure. The author, on the other hand,

depicts many contradictions in norms of Avonlea society and society at large. For example, Montgomery points out the hypocrisy of religious procedures. Robinson has argued that embracing contradictions empowers women.³⁸⁸ Similarly, Rebecca Walker has pointed out that embracing contradiction is essential to feminism's third wave.³⁸⁹ Anne truly finds a way to combine her individual agency and the expectations of the Avonlea community.

In the final analysis chapter, chapter 5, I examined the importance of privileging conventional femininity and how it is manifested in *Anne of Green Gables* in the form of the puffed sleeves. Privileging conventional feminine culture is exceedingly important in empowering young girls. Be it the ultimately feminine puffed sleeves (or their modern counterpart) or sighing "all's right with the world"³⁹⁰ or "think[ing] dear pretty thoughts", being feminine to the core is just as valuable as being a helplessly not-domestic, disobedient, outspoken tomboy. Revising Leigh Shoemaker's words quoted in subchapter 2.4., we need to teach the following generations of girls that they "c[an] do anything the boys c[an] do (thanks to second wave feminism)"³⁹¹ and be as girly as they want while doing it (thanks to third wave feminism).

Examining the role of fashion in *Anne of Green Gables* opens up an interesting area of study yet to be thoroughly explored. There are a lot of undercurrents to the seemingly superfluous theme of dress in the novel. David and Wahl point out that "the female readers of the period would have had a more complex understanding of fashions socioeconomic and aesthetic implications grounded in their own experience."³⁹² Furthermore, the theme of belonging through being similarly clothed as one's peers is current even to this day.

In conclusion, I see *Anne of Green Gables* as an example of early female *Bildungsroman* which has distinct feminist undercurrents. The novel and its study is current to this day, because 21st century third wave feminist ideas can be easily found in it.

³⁸⁸ Robinson, 36.

³⁸⁹ Henry, 2004, 150.

³⁹⁰ Montgomery, 1998, 308.

³⁹¹ Shoemaker, 105.

³⁹² David and Wahl, 42.

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