

'Just like a man!': A project pontinuing L.M. Montgomery's subtle gender activism through the arts

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There is a long history of utilising various facets of the arts in peace activism. Writing in Canada at the fin de siècle, author L.M. Montgomery's work contains numerous examples of her gender activism with her creation of peaceful societies for her female protagonists. As this was a time when women were not free to openly express dissatisfaction with their role in society, the arts were a method by which they could subtly share their views. While several authors consider Montgomery's subversive views on gender, few authors involve arts practice as part of their research. This paper will investigate Montgomery's building of strong, supportive female communities in her Anne series of novels. I will continue the culture of utilising creative arts to explore these gender dynamics by using an arts-based methodology to identify themes in Montgomery's work, resulting in a new musical composition that articulates the gender struggle. This work exemplifies how responding to gender dynamics through art continues, well beyond Montgomery's era, to provide a peaceful form of gender-based activism.

KEY WORDS: Gender, L.M. Montgomery, music, female community, literature

Introduction

There is a long history of the arts being used for peace activism, with the accessibility and social role of the arts reflecting emotions and providing a voice for societal change. The activism need not be blatant and forceful, but can be equally effective when delivered quietly and subtly. This has been especially the case for issues such as gender and the patriarchy in socially policed contexts. Canadian author L.M. Montgomery wrote during the fin de siècle, when options for young girls were limited due to rules confining their biological sex. This was the life of Montgomery's famous heroine, Anne Shirley, of *Anne of Green Gables* (Montgomery, 1908). It was also the life of her creator, L.M. Montgomery, known as Maud. At this time, as McQuillan and Pfeiffer (2001: 4) claim, 'Gender is a hierarchical structure that legitimates inequality'. Anne and Maud lived with this inequality. Montgomery responds to this gender inequality and patriarchal dominance in her *Anne* series of novels by destabilising the patriarchy to bring more peace into her fictional communities. Peace activism can function as a social criticism and release societal tension (McCarthy 2007: 364). Wergin asserts when art consumers are disoriented by art, they are invited 'to engage in some fresh thinking about how to deal with oppression and the worst instincts of humanity' (2017: xlv). The arts can provoke, generate unrest and ultimately encourage action (Wergin 2017: xlv).

These gender politics also resonate in a musical space and this article will explore the relationship of

music and gender, as throughout history gender has impacted Western art music in a number of ways. From the seventeenth century, concepts of male and female musical characteristics were constructed that affected how music was created, performed and received. Just as male privilege was evident in the patriarchal societies of Montgomery's time, so was the idea of male dominance in music; features connected to the essence or stability of the music were deemed masculine, while those that disturbed this stability were considered inferior and feminine. Discourse also exists surrounding gender being connected to performance, musicology and composition with activities related to the mind viewed as more masculine than the feminine pursuits of the body. When Montgomery was writing, there were still acceptability criteria attached to what instruments each gender could play, with restrictions only existing for females.

Methodology

How Montgomery lived during the fin de siècle had an influence on her work as an author. This article outlines her experiences, accompanied by a discussion of her subversive writing strategies, her portrayal of cohesive female communities and her treatment of male characters in the *Anne* series of novels, the series that builds on Montgomery's first novel, *Anne of Green Gables*. To continue Montgomery's gender activism using the arts, an arts-based methodology was employed to compose

a piece of music that represents the gender limitations of the era and how Montgomery wrote about strong female communities to subtly address this. Both Montgomery's journals and the *Anne* series of novels were analysed, enhanced by hermeneutic interpretation, to ascertain the most prevalent themes relating to gender. Also crucial was a consideration of the intertextual links between the novels and journals and how a new piece of music could be included in this intertextuality. This analysis coupled with a review of current literature indicated that Montgomery addresses gender inequality by creating strong female characters who unite to form supportive communities and the composition was written to represent this.

Short samples of the composition are included at relevant points in the paper, along with an explanation of how the compositional choices address Montgomery's treatment of gender in her novels. The first sample is situated at the conclusion of the discussion of gender in music as the motif shown represents the patriarchy. Following an explanation of how Montgomery wrote subversively is the second sample that represents new musical gestures being introduced to destabilise the patriarchy motif, just as Montgomery's writing did. Finally, the third sample is located following the analysis of Montgomery's creation of cohesive female communities as the patriarchy motif is modified and supported differently to epitomise this support.

Music and Gender

If it is accepted that what Joan Scott calls 'gender metaphors' exist all through society, then it may also be assumed they exist in music, from a composer's choice of sounds through to how the listener hears and associates those sounds (Cusick 1994: 14). Concurring that music and gender are connected, Biddle argues music is pressured to perform a cultural role that traditional discourse is unable to accomplish (2003: 217) and that it is a great resource to assess the male privilege of the Western world:

The phallogocentrism of the Western rational epistemology marks music as a particularly volatile yet profoundly effective (and affective) cultural resource in the imagining, policing, and managing of discourses on gender (2003: 218).

The male privilege – or dominance – in Western music reveals itself in many ways. Investigating music through many eras to ascertain how it relates to gender, McClary discovered that different aspects of music have, since the seventeenth century and until recently, had a connection to one gender or another due to the cultural conventions connected to them (McClary 2002: 7-8). Some of these

cultural codes change over time, while those that remain stable do so because the connected attitude about gender remains. Many of these conventions were connected to the concept of the masculine self – the essence of the music, the tonic, the strength, the resolved – and the feminine other; that which disrupts the masculine, the tension that requires resolution. Even a cadence – the ending of a phrase – was considered masculine if on a strong beat, feminine if it occurred on a weak beat. The main theme of a sonata was deemed masculine, while the subsidiary theme that disrupts the main theme was feminine and the music would only be considered complete when it returns to the masculine (McClary 2002: 9-13).

Using Liszt's *Faust* as an example Kramer also notes significant historical cultural codes in the musical themes connected to male and female characters. The female protagonist, Gretchen, has themes that are conjunct, homophonic, repetitive and almost immobile. In complete contrast, the themes of Faust, the male protagonist, are disjunct, contrapuntal, sequentially developed and highly dynamic (Kramer 1990: 106-107). Kramer states 'symbolic immobilization' as the main method used in the nineteenth century to 'regulate femininity', giving the role of subject to the male and imbuing the female with little meaning (Kramer 1990: 107-108).

Several theorists also discuss the relationship of gender to the experience of music, either performing or receiving it. Similar to the male dominance theories discussed above, these experience relationships are also a construct created from cultural conventions of the time and are now recognised as such, rather than fact. There are claims theorists in the past have resisted considering how music is experienced because the personal engagement and expressiveness required is seen as vulnerable and feminine as opposed to objective theoretical discourse, which has a masculine authority (Maus 2009: 63-64). Cusick (1994: 9-10) adds that performers relate to music with their body while musicology and theory require the use of the mind – what Maus calls the 'gendered opposition of mind and body' (2009: 71). Additionally, composition is considered masculine due to its connection to the mind, with the composer making conscious choices to inform the minds of those who will receive the music (Cusick 1994: 16). However, Cusick argues that only considering music as this connection of minds disregards the fact that the body is required to perform it and therefore the feminine is ignored (Cusick 1994: 16).

This previously clear delineation of the masculine and feminine in music has been modified over time, figuring more noticeably now in areas such as performance and

persona rather than embedded in the essence of the music; however, the change has been relatively recent. McClary (2009: 50-51) explains as recently as the 1960s female musicians were not featured in music history textbooks and it was difficult to find good recordings of female performers except singers. Additionally, particular genres of music such as lullabies, wedding music and funeral ritual music have been and still are associated with women, as they are connected to emotional life stages (McClary 2009: 52). In the 1970s performance in some genres started to expand the considerations of music and gender. In particular, glam rock was theatrical and gender-bending, with the indeterminate gender performance in some ways more important than the music, allowing masculinity to be presented in new ways (Weedon 2009: 38-39). Similarly, punk rock and the resulting new wave music allowed women to enter a typically-masculine sphere and explore new ideas of feminine behaviour (Weedon 2009: 39). In this Postmodern time rather than speaking from a particular viewpoint, McClary – using performer k.d. lang as an example – claims that artists ‘can only inhabit, destabilize, and somehow try to make a new kind of sense by means of previously existing codes’ (McClary 2000: 157). However, the patriarchal system still has control in subtle ways, as evidenced in this quote from Sonja Eismann:

When a female musician is up on stage, the audience sees a woman, whereas when they see a man they see a musician. Women are never perceived independently of their gender, while men, free of sex-based limitations, set the norm that makes women the exception (Weedon 2009: 37).

After the preceding discussion about music and gender it may be expected that the composition I have written would have a clear masculine/feminine delineation to mirror the patriarchal time in which Montgomery was writing the *Anne* series; however, this is not the case. By today’s standards music is no longer defined as feminine or masculine and I do not desire to perpetuate that stereotype. Pursuing an intertextual relationship between the literature and the music, the world that Montgomery created for *Anne* is most important. Montgomery did not make a point of mentioning male dominance in her novels in a negative way. Instead, she gave it less importance. Consequently, the composition

represents this destabilising of the patriarchy and concentrates on the presence of Montgomery’s capable, resilient female characters and the way they come together to support each other. The composition begins with a short motif that represents the patriarchy (see Figure 1), which is modified as the piece progresses and discussed in a later section. In a major key with assertive leaps, the motif is assured and rhythmically secure, representing the confidence of the patriarchy.

Gender and Instruments

The instrumentation chosen for this composition is also related to gender. One of the first sources to connect instrumental performance with gender was a 1528 etiquette book by Renaissance author Baldassare Castiglione in which he condemned instruments that required harsh movements or sounds that would ‘destroy the mild gentleness which so much adorns every act a woman does’ (Castiglione in Meling 2019-2020: 2). In 1784, German composer Carl Ludwig Junker wrote a detailed account of which instruments were appropriate for young women to play and which were definitely not. The horn, cello and bass were particularly unacceptable. Junker’s reasoning can be summarised as follows (Meling 2019-2020: 4):

1. The contradiction of body movement while playing and ladies’ fashion: the fashion of the day was not sympathetic to the movements required.
2. The contradiction of instrumental sound and the character of female sex: females were not deemed physically strong enough to produce the sounds required, plus loud tones should not come from the dainty fairer sex.
3. The impropriety of certain playing postures: some instruments required immoral posture; woodwinds meant not only pursed lips, but an obvious movement of the abdominal muscles, violin required an unnatural stretching of the body and neck and the cello was abominable not only because the instrument is straddled but also because it is held up against the chest.

Acceptable instruments for a female performer were piano and guitar, as the woman could sit in a ladylike manner and neither her clothing or posture are disturbed or immoral (Meling 2019-2020: 4-5). One hundred years later when Montgomery was writing, things didn’t seem

Figure 1: Patriarchy motif.



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to have changed greatly. In her novels, men played the violin – usually called a fiddle – while young girls mainly took piano lessons or occasionally played the guitar. Only young girls are offered music lessons and the term is understood to mean piano or organ. To continue Montgomery's passive gender activism using the arts, my composition is written for instruments that at the time would have been deemed inappropriate: flute, violin, clarinet and cello, for the reasons listed above.

Montgomery and the Fin de Siècle

The turn of the century from the 1800s to the 1900s, known as the fin de siècle, coincided with a change of eras from Victorian times to Modernism. The unquestioned patriarchy of Victorian times was starting to be challenged. The fin de siècle was also the era of the New Woman, with the changes to the role of women outweighing other changes in the areas of science, politics and art (Buzwell 2014: 1). The New Woman was independent and educated. However, with this education, women began to realise men were perhaps not always the best choice for determining all of society's rules and morals:

Women were ... at every point in their lives, always under scrutiny in relation to a pre-determined, socially-engineered role. Conversely, men could, if they chose, behave or misbehave as they pleased with little uncomfortable interruption to their public or private roles (Ramday 2015: 29).

How was our author, Maud Montgomery, living at this time? Maud is raised by her grandparents after her mother died and her father left in search of better opportunities. She keeps copious journals from her early teens, which provide a lot of detail regarding how she lived and felt. She writes of her grandfather, 'I have always been afraid of him' (Montgomery 2017a: 389) and that he was 'a stern, domineering, irritable man' who took pleasure in wounding her pride (Montgomery 2017b: 118). After sporadic schooling Maud eventually convinces her elders to let her study for a teacher's licence, although her grandfather refuses to support her in any way to gain employment. When her grandfather unexpectedly dies, Maud is forced to resign from teaching and return home to look after her grandmother, writing 'It is my duty to stay here and I do it willingly, but she makes it very hard for me in a hundred petty ways' (Montgomery 2017b: 124). However, as was the tradition of the time, the house was left to Maud's uncle, not her grandmother. After some brief independence and burgeoning success as a short story author, Maud was once again back under the rule of a male relative and fulfilling all the household duties for her grandmother.

During this quiet and lonely time, Montgomery began writing what would become her best-known novel, *Anne*

of Green Gables. In this novel she started to find her voice and the ways she is able to subtly convey her views on the current patriarchal society and her gender-based limitations. However, she does this in gentle ways and continues to do so throughout the seven books of the series.

Montgomery and Gender

A number of authors have identified ways in which Montgomery is subversive in her passive gender activism, but the originator of this idea is Montgomery biographer Mary Henley Rubio. She identified nine ways in which Montgomery subverted the conventions of the time, using in particular examples from Montgomery's non-*Anne* books (Rubio 1992). This article will relate some of her points to the *Anne* series of novels.

First, Montgomery kept any relevant comments at a very low profile; they were usually throwaway comments (Rubio 1992: 121), such as Anne telling how, '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, and growls if you ask for a share in the egg and butter money' (Montgomery 1909: 205). The women on the farms were generally in charge of the dairy and the chickens, so the reference to 'egg and butter money' is particularly pointed because it is the income earned directly by the women. As a child Anne would also occasionally ask questions such as why a woman can't be a minister when they could surely pray as well as a man (Montgomery 1908: 210), while Anne's guardian, Marilla mentions she believes 'in a girl being fitted to earn her own living' (Montgomery 1908: 203). Montgomery was not openly what might be considered a feminist and had some quite traditional opinions but reading her journals and discovering what drove her success reveals she believed in education, employment and independence for females, which all converge in Marilla's comment above.

As an extension of keeping her comments low-key, a strategy Montgomery often used was 'situational humour, verbal wit, and ironic and comic juxtapositions' (Rubio 1992: 126). In one example, Anne tells of a student who has decided she wants to be a widow when she grows up because 'if you weren't married people called you an old maid, and if you were your husband bossed you; but if you were a widow there'd be no danger of either'. (Montgomery 1909: 80) This speaks to both society's view of unmarried women and the patriarchy of a marriage but does so with humour so as to be less confronting. Miss Cornelia, a great friend during Anne's married life, has the catch-phrase, 'Just like a man!' (Montgomery 1917: 54), and its variation question, 'Isn't that like a man?' (Montgomery 1917: 48) used any time she wants to condemn the actions or attitude of a man, which is often.

She is known as a man-hater but she is not really such; as an independent woman she simply doesn't have patience for much of their behaviour.

Many of the subversive comments are made by secondary characters, such as Miss Cornelia's 'Just like a man!'. As Anne matures, her character conforms to societal expectations, as what was acceptable coming from an innocent child is not as appropriate when spoken by a respected member of society and particularly a doctor's wife (Rubio 1992: 127). Consequently, the subversion comes from characters such as Anne's maid, Susan Baker, the new minister's children, or other less important characters.

Montgomery also uses a narrative method of character over plot (Rubio 1992: 127); women could rarely cause action but they could respond to it. Typical of the patriarchal society, once Anne is married, the couple's movements are dictated by her husband Gilbert and his career. However, the story is not so much about the husband's actions as how Anne and others respond to them (Rubio 1992: 127). There is also power in language rather than action. Women censured their community through gossip – they lived in fear of what others would say or think (Rubio 1992: 127). One chapter of *Anne of Ingleside* is devoted to women of the community having a quilting bee in Anne's home and under the guise of humour and gossip, delivered by unimportant characters, every topic raised has to do with the poor behaviour of the men in their community. Anne was not in the room because a main character could not be party to the gossip.

Through all of these devices, Montgomery creates strong, supportive female communities. Although gossip existed in the larger community, a woman's inner circle was more compassionate and understanding. In the worlds created by Montgomery marriage was utilitarian, giving women children and social status and often little else (Hitchcock and Ball 2021: 269-270). In Montgomery's experience 'love and marriage signified a loss of autonomy' (Klempa 1998: 73) with her own needs being placed well below those of her husband. Montgomery writes of men who assess a woman's suitability for marriage based on her housekeeping or child-rearing skills but she responds by creating mature, wise women who contribute strongly to the community regardless of their marital status.

Why may this have been so important to Maud? When her grandmother dies, after years of looking after her, Maud is left homeless. Most of the friends of her youth have moved away with their husbands. She is lonely. Also, she wants to be a mother and is by now in her late thirties. What options are available to her? Only one. Marriage. She marries Ewan Macdonald, a Presbyterian minister, and writes how immediately after the wedding she felt 'a

sudden horrible inrush of *rebellion* and *despair*' and like a prisoner because there was something in her 'that did not acknowledge him as master'; the feeling eventually passes (Montgomery 2017b: 418). Again, because of the patrilocal society, even though she is now a well-known author, she has to leave her beloved Prince Edward Island and follow Ewan to the Canadian mainland. No nearby friends, no family, no support. More restrictions as a minister's wife; a minister's wife cannot make close friends within the parish as she cannot be seen to be playing favourites (Montgomery 2016: 56). She also deals with a husband who ignores her success and intelligence; she writes:

Ewan's attitude to women – though I believe he is quite unconscious of this himself – is that of the mediaeval mind. A woman is a thing of no importance intellectually – the plaything and servant of man – and couldn't possibly do anything that would be worthy of a real tribute (Montgomery 2018: 20).

Similar to Montgomery's use of subversive devices, in my composition I aim to disrupt the patriarchy theme, destabilising it a little, but allowing it to keep its place while the new themes and gestures are building prominence underneath (see Figure 2). This is achieved with mainly small but repetitive gestures such as mordents and trills and the use of contrasting chromaticism and staccato. The mordents written in extended form first appear in bar seven and become a feature of the non-melody lines throughout. Bar nine sees the introduction of staccato notes on the offbeat, bringing the suggestion of a less conventional rhythm along with the main motif. In bar seventeen these features all come together in a section that also includes destabilising chromaticism and shortly after the main motif returns again it is interrupted by high trills at bar thirty. The overall feeling is one of disturbance with gestures fighting for attention.

Montgomery and Female Communities

Instead of attacking the patriarchal system that keeps her subdued, in her novels Montgomery concentrates on

Figure 2: Destabilisation of the patriarchy motif

The image shows a musical score for four instruments: Flute, Violin 1, Clarinet in B, and Violoncello. The tempo is marked 'Allegro'. The Flute part is mostly rests. Violin 1 has a few notes starting in bar 9, marked 'p'. Clarinet in B has rests. Violoncello has a more active line starting in bar 7, marked 'mf'. The score is in 4/4 time and features various musical notations such as mordents, trills, and staccato markings.

5
Fl. -
Vln. 1 -
Cl. -
Vc. -

21
Fl. *mf* *f* *p*
Vln. 1 *f*
Cl. *mp* *f*
Vc. *p*

8
Fl. *p*
Vln. 1 *mf*
Cl. -
Vc. *p*

24
Fl. *f*
Vln. 1 *p* *f*
Cl. *p* *f*
Vc. *f*

12
Fl. -
Vln. 1 -
Cl. *p*
Vc. -

26
Fl. *f*
Vln. 1 *mp*
Cl. *mp* *mp*
Vc. *mp* *f* *p*

15
Fl. *mf*
Vln. 1 *mf*
Cl. *mf*
Vc. *mf*

28
Fl. *p*
Vln. 1 *mf*
Cl. *p*
Vc. *mp* *p*

18
Fl. *mp* *mf*
Vln. 1 *mp*
Cl. *mp* *mf*
Vc. *mp*

31
Fl. *mf*
Vln. 1 -

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building vibrant female communities of great value. As a child, Anne surrounds herself with female role models – Marilla her guardian, Mrs Lynde a neighbour, Mrs Allan the minister’s wife, and Miss Stacy her favourite teacher. She expresses her adoration with phrases such as, ‘I love Miss Stacy with my whole heart, Marilla’ (Montgomery 1908: 161) and ‘Mrs Allan is one of the naturally good people. I love her passionately’ (Montgomery 1908: 153). Each of these women teach Anne different skills and values that enhance her life. As an adult, Anne herself becomes a role model to Little Elizabeth, while Anne’s daughter Rilla also finds good models in two of her teachers.

Female friendships were a vital part of young Anne’s development and also her adult life. As was typical during the fin de siècle, young girls spoke of their friendships with what Robinson calls ‘adolescent hyperbole’ (Robinson 2012: 170). Simply thinking about her bosom friend Diana one day marrying has Anne sobbing and exclaiming, ‘I love Diana so, Marilla, I cannot ever live without her ... And oh, what shall I do? I hate her husband – I hate him furiously’ (Montgomery 1908: 103). There is no such language in Anne’s male romances; the ‘emotional

intensity’ of her language is reserved for her female friendships (Robinson 2012: 171).

In relation to romance, Montgomery delays marrying off Anne until the fifth book of the series, after years of feuding, then friendship, and finally a three-year engagement for Anne and Gilbert Blythe. During this waiting time Anne experiences deep friendships with other women at university, and as a high school principal. There are also several secondary characters and stories about people experiencing similar suspended romances. Marah Gubar argues this postponement of marriage serves to evade the eventual submission to the patriarchy, also suggesting ‘Montgomery does not deem marriage obligatory for a cheerful existence’ (Gubar 2001: 49). Once married and in a new location – the patrilocal society at play again – Anne develops a new intense friendship with Leslie Moore, telling her ‘I am your friend and you are mine, for always... Such a friend as I never had before ... there is something in you, Leslie, that I have never found in anyone else’ (Montgomery 1917: 129). This is the adult version of her childhood friendship with Diana, with Anne even sharing the raising of her baby with Leslie more than Gilbert, waiting until ‘Gilbert was out of the way’ (Montgomery 1917: 203) before indulging in baby worshipping (Hitchcock and Ball 2021: 275). Female friendships are more intense and more romantic than any heterosexual relationship.

Most of Anne’s life after coming to Green Gables is spent in female-based or female-centred houses. Although she is adopted by a brother–sister duo, Marilla runs the house. The gentle Matthew dies at the end of the first book, leaving Anne and Marilla alone until at the end of the second book, Marilla’s friend Rachel Lynde moves in, allowing Anne to go away to college. At college, she sets up house with three female friends and a female housekeeper; the house they rent is owned by two elderly sisters. Now engaged, but with her fiancé Gilbert still away studying, Anne spends three years as a high school principal, where she boards with two widows and their housekeeper. Her own house is regularly populated by her friends Leslie and Miss Cornelia, and later her housekeeper Susan Baker. Gilbert is so busy with work he doesn’t figure prominently.

These houses often contain women such as Marilla, Miss Cornelia and Susan Baker who are lifelong single ladies, and happily so. They are not seeking a husband and show that life can be lived successfully without one. Even when Miss Cornelia does eventually marry – after refusing the man for 20 years because he wouldn’t shave his beard – he moves into her house, instead of the usual patrilocal tradition of the woman moving in with the man. Additionally, her attitude to men does not soften and she loses none of her independence. ‘Just like a man!’ is still

her common catchphrase. As well as living independently and confidently as single women, Montgomery also uses both Marilla and Miss Cornelia to show that a conventional marriage is not required for child rearing, as Marilla raises Anne, then the twins Davy and Dora, and Miss Cornelia takes on Mary Vance (Hitchcock and Ball 2021: 270). The raising of Davy and Dora is evidence of the female community at work, as single women Marilla, Anne and widowed Mrs Lynde all have a significant role in their upbringing, with no direct male influence.

As my composition progresses, it ends with a representation of the female communities Montgomery created for Anne. Instead of the jostling for attention in the previous excerpt, the instruments are now working very cohesively, signifying the unity derived from the supportive groups of women. Using the same theme, the harmonies are more traditional so it is clear the instruments are working together and supporting each other.

Montgomery and Male Characters

Men, of course, exist in these communities, but their roles are secondary. They offer little in the way of companionship or conversation; that emotional

Figure 3: Cohesive female community

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attachment comes from other females (Hitchcock and Ball 2021: 269). Additionally, in opposition to the men who are gossiped about, the male characters invited into Anne's inner sanctum are given stereotypically feminine qualities. Anne's guardian, Matthew, is a quiet, gentle man, quite the opposite of the stern matriarchs. Although her love interest, Gilbert, is more often in the background due to his masculinity (Hitchcock and Ball 2021: 278), he is also gentle and kind, reads poetry and understands Anne's flights of fancy. A young student she takes under

her wing, Paul Irving, is described in feminine terms such as having 'features of exquisite delicacy and refinement' (Montgomery 1909: 36) and has an appreciation for romance. But the best example is Anne's son, Walter, who is given many of Anne's own qualities – beautiful features, a love of beauty, an imagination, a romantic nature and he is a poet (Hitchcock and Ball 2021: 278-279). Walter and his struggles related to gender are a large feature of the final novel in the series, *Rilla of Ingleside*, which also addresses the complexity of gender roles and expectations in a time of war and the resulting frustrations and sorrows experienced by both genders. While the trauma of Walter's experience is a rich area, it is not part of the composition that accompanies this paper so will not be discussed.

Conclusion

L.M. Montgomery wrote at a time when the patriarchy was being challenged and women were fighting for a new position in society. Although she was not overt in expressing her views on the situation, the preceding discussion demonstrates how she was able to use the creative art of writing to articulate her opinion in subtle ways. This was mainly achieved through the creation of supportive female communities with males only as minor characters. As these gender politics have also long been evident in the musical world it is fitting that Montgomery's gender activism through the arts is continued with the creation of a musical composition that represents the destabilisation of the patriarchy by a cohesive female community. Peace activism need not always be achieved by shouting and overt gestures; in particular circumstances, subtlety and whispering can be much more effective.

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