

“If Ye Break Faith...”

**L.M. Montgomery’s *Rilla of Ingleside* as a Representation
of a Nation in War and the Mythical Meanings and Memories of
the Great War in Canada**

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Työssäni käsittelem kanadalaisen kirjailijan L.M. Montgomeryn *Anna*-sarjan kahdeksatta teosta eli *Kotikunnaan Rillaa* (*Rilla of Ingleside*) ensimmäisen maailmansodan aikana alkunsa saaneen ns. ”sotamyytin” näkökulmasta, jonka Jonathan F. Vance esittelee teoksessaan *Death So Noble*. Tämä myytti määritti millaisena sota haluttiin muistaa, vaikka se oli usein melko paljon ristiriidassa todellisuuden ja historiallisten faktojen kanssa. Myyttiä tarvittiin selittämään sodan merkitystä ja lohduttamaan sodasta kärsineitä, tuomaan parempaa huomista. Tutkin millaisen kuvan sodasta ja kotirintamasta kirja antaa ja miksi. Johdatan lukijan ensin aiheeseen selvittämällä Montgomeryn omaa näkökantaa ensimmäiseen maailmansotaan ja tutkimalla *Kotikunnaan Rillaa* edeltäviä teoksia, jotka Montgomery kirjoitti sodan aikana ja joissa on runsaasti vaikutteita sodasta. Nämä kirjat – *Annan unelmavuodet* (*Anne of the Island*), *Anna omassa kodissaan* (*Anne's House of Dreams*) ja varsinkin *Sateenkaarinoitko* (*Rainbow Valley*) toimivat ikään kuin johdantona varsinaiselle sotaromaanille, *Kotikunnaan Rillalle*. Tämän jälkeen käsittelem lyhyesti sotaa pääpiirteissään sekä esittelen sotamyytin keskeisimmät piirteet.

Varsinaisessa analyysissä käsittelem kirjan antamaa kuvaa sodasta ensin erilaisten teemojen kautta, sitten käsittelemällä myytin kuusi eri tasoa yksitellen. Ensimmäinen maailmansota oli Blythen perheelle ennen kaikkea ristiriitainen tunnetason kokemus, sillä taisteluja ei käyty omalla maankamaralla, mutta silti maa oli sotatilassa. *Kotikunnaan Rillassa* yksi toistuvista teemoista on politiikka, niin sisä- kuin ulkopolitiikka, mistä yllättäen keskustelevat naiset. Naisten rooli on hyvin monimuotoinen teoksessa: toisaalta heidän elämänsä muuttuu radikaalisti heidän joutuessaan esim. vastaamaan ns. miesten töistä, mutta toisaalta se on vain jatkumoa entiseen elämään. Rillakin valitsee lopussa perinteisen roolin äitinä ja vaimona. *Kotikunnaan Rillassa* on paljon erilaisia sotilastyyppejä, mutta yhteistä heille kaikille on se, että värväytyttyään heistä tulee eräänlaisia sankareita, jotka eivät koskaan enää ole entisensä. Yksi mielenkiintoisimmista sotilaista kirjassa on Annan toiseksi vanhin poika Walter Blythe, jonka esikuvana on ollut kanadalainen sotilaslääkäri ja ”In Flanders Fields” –runon kirjoittaja John McCrae.

Myytin mukaisesti sotaa pidetään oikeutettuna *Kotikunnaan Rillassa* ja sen katsotaan tuovan lopulta hyvää maailmaan. Sodan uhrauksia pidetään sen arvoisina. Sotilaat taistelevat kuin ristiretkeläiset hunneja vastaan ja heidät kuvataan ylösnousevina, ikuisesti elävinä sankareina. Sota kuvataan kirjassa ennen kaikkea kunniallisen keskiluokan näkökulmasta, mutta toisaalta kotiapulainen Susan Baker tuo esille työväenluokan kokemuksia. Sotaa käsitellään myös huumorin avulla, korostaen positiivisia seikkoja. Tärkeimpänä ajatuksena teoksessa on uhrausten muistaminen ja lupausten pitäminen, ”keeping faith.” Jotta sotilaat eivät olisi kuolleet turhaan, heidät ja ne arvot, joiden puolesta he taistelivat tuli muistaa ikuisesti. Oli jatkettava taistelua, kunnes maailma olisi parempi paikka. Rilla koettaa toimia tämän lupauksen mukaisesti. Myytin yhtenä tavoitteena oli herättää kansallistunnetta ja jossakin suhteessa tämä onnistuikin. Tämä seikka näkyy myös *Kotikunnaan Rillassa*, jonka Montgomeryn sanotaankin kirjoittaneen ”tarkoituksella.”

Työni johtopäätös on, että *Kotikunnaan Rilla* sisältää selkeästi kaikki sotamyytin keskeisimmät piirteet. Montgomeryn teoksesta löytyy kuitenkin myös muutamia myytin vastaisia piirteitä, mikä osoittaa, että kirjailija sittenkin halusi jossain määrin kritisoida sotaa ja sen valtavia uhrauksia.

Avainsanat: *Rilla of Ingleside*, L.M. Montgomery, ensimmäinen maailmansota, Kanada

*To my parents, who encouraged me through all the years of study,
to my little hairy four-footed friends, who kept cheering me up when I was tired
and to the memory of my grandparents, who once experienced the horrors of war in Finland.*

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www.firstworldwar.com/posters/images/pp_uk_10.jpg



If Ye Break Faith - We Shall Not Sleep [Canada], [ca. 1918]
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1. Introduction

We're from Prince Edward Island,
'Tis a land of noble worth,
You'll see by our geographe
'Tis "the only Island" on earth
We have water all around us,
Yet they say that we are "dry"
Oh we're the boys to raise the noise
With our regimental cry.

Who are we, boys? We are the Hundred and Fifth,
Marching, marching, to give our old Mother a lift
We can lick this bloomin' Kaiser man
His Bosches we will shift,
You can bet your eyes, there ain't no flies
On the boys of the Hundred and Fifth.

O the heathen call us Abegweits,
They saw we're fed on spuds,
That we have eaten codfish,
Till we can't take off our duds
But when Kitchener gets his eyes on us,
He'll shout, "Why man alive!
We've got the Hun upon the run,
Here come the 1-0-5?

The day is not far distant.
When we'll hear the word, "Advance"!
But for just now, we're learning how
To make the Kaiser dance.
And when General French is planning
The Huns will be humming
"The Cambell's are coming"
Mein Himmel! the 1-0-5.

An extract of a Marching Song from WWI

War is a strange phenomenon that always has two participants that fight to defend the views and beliefs of their own. War – no matter where it is fought or why or by whom – is always a tragedy, felt deeply both on the personal level and on the national level, above all emotionally and financially, but also in many other different ways. In theory, there can be many different types of war, such as civil wars, wars of independence, revolutionary wars,

religious wars and imperialistic wars, with the help of which great powers of the world try to remodel the world and get more power. Imperialistic wars have traditionally been regarded as unjust, whereas others are more accepted.

But no matter what one calls a war, war is war and one of its results is always the same: human misery for many. There has not been and there will never be a war in the world that would not leave marks on the people involved with it. In war, people are ready to give their own lives to defend their opinions, but they are also ready to harm innocent civilians and cause lots of pain, often because of their sense of duty. WWI was the first modern war, very different from all the previous wars in many different ways. These changes and experiences were also reflected by “much of the literature coming out of the war”, according to Pike.¹ A part of L.M. Montgomery’s literature can be considered to be an example of this. The fact that one cannot literally go back to the days of the past makes war as well as other past events a difficult theme to study, as it is not so easy to be objective and it is not so easy to find the truth(s), “what really happened”, “wie es eigentlich gewesen ist.” Historians act as producers of interpretations and try to reach the past realities. They must try to desert the present and attempt to enter into the age they are investigating in order to understand the phenomena. Historians can never act as judges and this is very significant when wars are being examined.

War is also a very fascinating theme – it is perplexing to be able to see how much people believe in their own ideas – especially if one does not have any experiences of one’s own of war and its vast effects on practically everything in life. The first time I was captivated by war was in my childhood when I heard stories of war time from my grandparents. It was at the same time sad and exciting, weird and wonderful, to listen to the tales of the past. When I then as a teenager read L.M. Montgomery’s romanticized war novel

¹ Pike, Holly. *A Woman’s War*. Animus 11/2006. (p. 1).

Rilla of Ingleside for the first time, I was mesmerized for ever by these charming representations of war. In *Rilla of Ingleside* (1920) the horrors of WWI are seen through the home front, through the eyes of a young Canadian girl, Rilla Blythe, the redheaded Anne Shirley's youngest daughter.

Only as an adult I have realized that also the tales of my grandparents told after the actual war were – in spite of their unhappy nature – somehow positive and optimistic and also full of pride of one's survival and also of being a Finn. Furthermore, the representation of the Great War and Canada produced by L.M. Montgomery after the war is somehow very hopeful and cheerful and unbelievably full of satisfaction and pride towards one's nation and its people. In spite of its sadness, the book seems like a memory of some golden days, as if the war had after all been some kind of progenitor of good, and the readers have believed this without questioning. It makes one wonder how this can be. One cannot escape the fact that wars are tragedies and catastrophes and one is not supposed to feel so positive about them. The only reason for this cannot be that the book was “formally” meant for children and young people, since the book was read and still continues to be read by people of all ages all over the world.

I find it very worthwhile to study *Rilla of Ingleside* because there is not so much previous research on the war novels of L.M. Montgomery and they do deserve research, as they can for example reveal new culturally interesting views and ideas of Canadians and the war time. There are not very many contemporary novels on WWI in Canada – and not many are written by women or tell about the home front. Therefore, the topic of my thesis is WWI in L.M. Montgomery's novel *Rilla of Ingleside*. I will analyze the representation of the war created by Montgomery's novel and deal with many different kinds of aspects of war. The international and wide-reaching tragedy of the past will be investigated at the micro level, from the national, local and individual point of view. As Canada and Prince Edward Island

are celebrating the 100th anniversary of *Anne of Green Gables* and L.M. Montgomery this year, it is nice to make one's own little contribution to the celebrations and investigations.

Two main issues I am going to investigate in my thesis are as follows: Firstly, I intend to look into *Rilla of Ingleside* as a representation of WWI, which of course was not WWI at the time, but “the Great War” or “the War to End All Wars.” I will explore what kind of version of the war the novel gives, what kind of events and reactions and details one can find in it. I will especially investigate the role of the home front, but I will not forget the soldiers, either. The women's role and the reactions to some contemporary events will be looked into, as well as the role of the soldiers and the emotional side of the war in Canada. I will use some secondary material in my analysis. Secondly, at the same time with the thematic interpretations and examinations, I would like to go deeper and investigate *Rilla* more, using as my main guidance *Death So Noble* (1997) by Jonathan F. Vance and his theory of the creation of a Canadian war myth after and during WWI. My hypothesis is that this myth will strongly show itself in *Rilla of Ingleside*, too, as the myth was accepted and propagated by practically all classes and in all geographical places in Canada. As Vance says, “the memory of the war was not found only on the non-fiction shelves of library and bookshop; poetry and novels also shaped, and were shaped by, the myth. Like amateur historians, poets, novelists, and playwrights lost no time in turning their talents to a consideration of the war and ... they produced an immense quantity of literature that dealt either directly or indirectly with war.”² The foremost aim of this myth was to create an image of a harmonious and happy nation that the war had united forever. The war was seen as a mythical and very positive experience and the soldiers as great heroes. The myth and its theoretical background will be dealt more closely in chapter 3.3. I want to find out how the

² Vance, Jonathan F. *Death So Noble. Memory, Meaning, and the First World War*. Vancouver: UBC Press, 1997. (p. 174).

war affected Canadian society and its people, their spirit of unity – or did it affect them at all. I would like to investigate what lies “between the lines” and behind the choices of Montgomery. Thus: the main concern will be first to answer to the question “what can there be found in *Rilla*?” and then “why it is there, what is the meaning of it?” Among other things, I attempt to discover what is for example the meaning of the Canadian trench soldier Walter Blythe – Anne Shirley’s creative and sensitive middle son – in *Rilla* and what does his fate – dying very courageously in a battle but leaving behind a poem that is never forgotten (and that has a counterpart in real life) – mean. It is said that Montgomery wrote *Rilla* with a purpose and I am going to try to reveal – if possible – what this purpose was, what she had in mind when she wrote her loved war novel.

But before dealing with these questions I intend to lead to the theme by introducing WWI in very broad outline and then Canada’s role and position in it. I also see it necessary to deal with L.M. Montgomery and the changes in her subject matters and themes after the two first *Anne* novels – the style of which eventually led into the “fulfillment”, *Rilla of Ingleside*. In addition, Montgomery’s views of the war will be looked at to the extent that will be useful and relevant. L.M. Montgomery wrote a lot on WWI in her journals and even copied some of her writings directly to *Rilla of Ingleside*. One might even claim that many of the thoughts represented in *Rilla* are also her own opinions and attitudes.

As far as I know, there is no significant previous scholarship on exactly the same topic as I am going to investigate and this has of course caused me a lot of trouble in finding suitable secondary sources for my thesis. On the basis of many different kinds of sources, I will try, however, to draw my own conclusions and ideas on the topic and investigate the theme of WWI and *Rilla* more than others have done so far. For example, *Rilla* has hardly been examined from the point of view of the mythical meanings before and this, on the other hand, is the key idea in my thesis: *Rilla* reflects the myth created in Canada after and during

WWI and the meanings of *Rilla* and the choices of Montgomery will also partly be dealt on the basis of this myth. As already mentioned, I also try to make a coherent exploration of several different themes in *Rilla*, such as the war's effects on women's life and how Montgomery describes the ordinary citizen's reactions to the political happenings in Canada during the war and to the war events such as the sinking of the "Lusitania", a British passenger boat sank by the Germans in the Irish Sea. When possible, I will also link the myth with this first analysis.

The most important secondary sources in this thesis are the above-mentioned *Death So Noble* by Jonathan F. Vance that deals with the mythical meanings of WWI and even brings up *Rilla* on some occasions, Edwards & Litster who have mainly explored the roles of Walter Blythe and Mary Vance in Montgomery's novels and Tector, who in her slightly incoherent article *A Righteous War* discusses the war time and nation building in *Rilla*. She mainly concentrates on the justifiableness of the war, on the roles of Rilla and Walter Blythe as well as on that of Susan Baker – the aging maid at Ingleside – and on *Rilla* as a Bildungsroman (which I am not going to do). Tector is actually the only critic who has referred to Vance in her work – but very vaguely. Vance, on the other hand, has included a few-sentence-long analyses of *Rilla* in his book but not more.

2. The End of Innocence, A Writer and War

In this chapter, the main concern after introducing the author will be how WWI slowly but surely affected Montgomery's writing and what the war meant for her, how in her "ordinary children's books", one can find many traces of war and how they all seem to culminate in *Rilla of Ingleside*. With *Rilla*, Montgomery went very far from the innocent days of *Anne of Green Gables*. WWI did not leave Montgomery alone in her later *Anne* books (*Anne of Ingleside*, *The Road to Yesterday*), either, she always mentions it one way or another. It was something that touched her very deeply.

2.1. From Green Gables to "A Death-grapple Between Freedom and Tyranny"

The Canadian writer Lucy Maud Montgomery (1874-1942) wrote during her lifetime over 20 novels – most of them for children – but also an autobiography, a great amount of poetry and hundreds of short stories and she also kept a diary for many decades. She was also an enthusiastic correspondent. Her first published novel was *Anne of Green Gables* and due to the huge popularity and success of *Anne* in many countries of the world, she continued the *Anne* story and wrote altogether eight sequels. In the last ones *Anne Shirley* is no longer the main character, instead, it is her children that have the leading roles. She set many of her stories on Prince Edward Island, where she had been born and spent much of her adult life, too. This is the case in *Rilla*, too. As stated in *Literary History of Canada*, the *Anne* books and her other children's/girls' stories are her best literary creations – when she turned "to

adult fiction where her talents did not lie, she never came close to the standard or the popularity of the early Anne books.”³

Åhmansson says that children’s literature, such as the domestic girls’ books by Montgomery, were not regarded as proper literature in academic circles.⁴ She states: “... we were made to believe that children’s books ... read with a great deal of fascination, belonged to childhood and that they should be discarded like outgrown clothes at a certain age. As late as the 1970s students of literature at the university automatically internalized the contempt poured on girls’ stories by those who had been ‘mature’ enough to grow out of them or ‘wise’ enough never to have read them at all” (p. 7). Thus, the *Anne* series and other literature produced by Montgomery was pushed to the sidelines of literature and not recognized as significant literature until the 1980s when critics finally began to respect her literary work – and children’s literature and women’s literature in general – more. Montgomery’s war novel *Rilla of Ingleside* was also found anew and slowly but surely it was taken more seriously – only in the last few years it has been getting some of the attention it deserves as a noteworthy representation of WWI through the eyes of Canadian women.

Hammill also claims that “only in the last two decades ... critics ... have begun to uncover serious messages beneath her apparently sunny, light-hearted tales, and to challenge the exclusive categorization of her as a children’s writer.”⁵ According to some statistics⁶ publishing activity and the number of scholarly publications and theses on Montgomery was

³ Klinck, Carl F. *Literary History of Canada. Canadian Literature in English*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1976. (p. 345).

⁴ Åhmansson, Gabriella. *A Life and its Mirrors. A Feminist Reading of L.M.Montgomery’s Fiction*. Uppsala: Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis, 1991. (p. 7).

⁵ Hammill, Faye. *Literary Culture and Female Authorship in Canada 1760-2000*. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2003. (p. xv).

⁶ Tables in MLA Database and tables in Dissertations International Database in Gerson’s “*Anne of Green Gables Goes to University: L.M. Montgomery and Academic Culture*” (p. 17-31).

especially high during the years 1985-89 and 1995-99. The number of theses and dissertations was highest in the years 1991-2 and 1995-8. The most articles on Montgomery in scholarly journals – for example “Canadian Children’s Literature” – were published in 1995-98 and 1985-92. In Finland, Montgomery has been a popular theme of investigation lately and some results of it can be seen on the shelves of the bookshops: *Uuden Kuun ja Vihervaaran tytöt* (2005) and *Runotyttöjen vuosi* (2007) by Suvi Ahola & Satu Koskimies and *Anna ja muut ystävämmme* (2008) by Sisko Ylimartimo.

Lynes claims that “the literary legacy of L.M. Montgomery has moved in two directions.”⁷ She continues that “on the one hand, largely because of the efforts of feminist scholars, Montgomery’s work has become a legitimate subject of study in the academy” but that “on the other hand, Montgomery’s legacy exerts a strong presence in the realm of popular culture – a realm that encompasses tourism, entertainment, and consumable artifacts” (p. 268). Gammel claims: “No other Canadian author has been able to create and sustain an industry that has supported an entire provincial economy for decades through tourism, consumer items, musicals, and films. No other author has had Montgomery’s sustained power to export Canadian literature and culture around the world. No other author has come to be associated so forcefully and emotionally with the nation’s cultural heritage.”⁸

WWI had a huge impact on Montgomery’s life; she was very shocked when she understood the scale of the war. Nevertheless, she regarded the defense war of the allies as very justified. On August 5, 1914, after Britain had declared war on Germany, Montgomery wrote in her diary:

⁷ Lynes, Jeanette. “Consumable Avonlea: The Commodification of the Green Gables Mythology” in Gammel’s *Making Avonlea*, p. 268-279.

⁸ Gammel, Irene & Epperly, Elizabeth. *L.M. Montgomery and Canadian Culture*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999. (p. 3).

Good God, I cannot believe it! It *must* be a horrible dream. It has come up like a thundercloud. ... Britain or Germany must fall. But the death-grapple will be awful beyond anything ever known in the world before. Oh, if I could but waken up and find it all a dream! These last four days have seemed like a nightmare. Already Canada is ablaze. Volunteers are being called for Red Cross and patriotic funds are being started. The bottom has fallen out of the world's markets. Civilization stands aghast at the horror that is coming upon it. ... If Germany wins Canada will be a German colony – there is no doubt of that. God save us!⁹

Pike says that for Montgomery WWI was “a tragedy of giant proportions, although none of her close associates were combatants” (p. 1). Her sons were still too small to go to the front but her half-brother Carl did go to the front – however, he was not very close to her. Nevertheless, she did write him a letter, where she spoke “from her heart” and wished him good luck. At the same time, she thanked God that his own sons did not have to go and she felt very ashamed of these natural emotions, which she poured down in her diary. She was unhappy to know that other mothers had to give up their sons instead.

Montgomery followed the war news intensively and was very angry at the Germans and their violence against civilians. She calls Germans “Huns” both in her journals and in *Rilla*. From the very start, Montgomery was very much in favor of the war and Canada's participation in it and said that the war was “a death-grapple between freedom and tyranny, between modern and medieval ideals... between the principles of democracy and militarism.”¹⁰ According to her, Canada and Britain shared the same ideological heritage. She sometimes argued with some of her friends who criticized the war, she declared to them that the war was a just war and totally acceptable morally – some one had to stop Germany. When the allies won battles, Montgomery “waved the paper wildly in air” as she “danced around the dining room table and hurraed” (SJ II, p. 157). Even though there was no fighting in Canada, one could see, hear and feel that the nation was at war. Montgomery

⁹ *The Selected Journals of L.M. Montgomery. Volume II: 1910-1921* Ed. Mary Rubio & Elizabeth Waterston. Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1987. (pp. 150-151).

¹⁰ Unpublished letter to Ephraim Weber, January 12, 1916 (in Gammel & Epperly, p. 32).

writes about her trip to USA: “It seems so strange to be in a country that is not at war! I did not realize until I came here how deeply Canada *is* at war – how *normal* a condition war has come to be with us” (SJ II, p. 191). The war had lasted so long that no wonder Montgomery felt it had become almost a routine part of life. Montgomery was so shaken by the war that she wanted to write about it right after it and this can be seen in the leap of time between *Anne’s House of Dreams* and *Rainbow Valley* – over ten years has passed and an army of future soldiers have been born.

Montgomery also felt that the war and the sacrifices made would finally produce “real Canadian literature.” Edwards and Litster argue that her four novels (*Anne of the Island*, *Anne’s House of Dreams*, *Rainbow Valley* and *Rilla of Ingleside*) “examine the ideology behind Canadian involvement in the war, express Canadian hostility at American neutrality, reflect the alterations in Canadian society resulting from the war, and witness radical changes in Montgomery’s own literary style.”¹¹ Here it might be mentioned that Montgomery’s style of writing did not change much over the years, but the themes did. Her last novels and stories are just as old-fashioned as the first ones with their long and comprehensive nature depictions, but the contents do change, there is more violence and agony. Edwards and Litster also contend that “from an examination of these three earlier novels the implication is that Montgomery was moving as determinedly toward war as the arming European nations” (p. 33). This statement should be understood metaphorically, as Montgomery did not write before the war but during and after it. Still as late as in 1928, Montgomery was definitely for the war and thought that the war was able to produce great literature – she could not understand if someone told her that the war had not been justified. She writes in her diary:

One day this week I had two letters that weren’t pleasant. ... The other letter was from a fanatic “pacifist” in New Zealand who calls *Rilla of Ingleside* a “beastly

¹¹ Edwards, Owen Dudley & Litster, Jennifer H. “The End of Canadian Innocence: L.M. Montgomery and the First World.” In Gammel, Irene & Epperly, Elizabeth. *L.M. Montgomery and Canadian Culture*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999. p. 31-46.

book” because it “glorifies war.” God rest her simple soul. Can’t the poor moron realize the difference between offensive and defensive war. I wrote *Rilla* not to “glorify war” but to glorify the courage and patriotism and self-sacrifice it evoked. War is a hellish thing and some day it may be done away with – though human nature being what it is that day is far distant. But universal peace *may* come and *may* be a good thing. But there will no longer be any great literature or great art. Either these things are given by the high gods as a compensation – or else they are growths that have to be fertilized with blood.¹²

2.2. The WWI Elements in *Anne of the Island* and *Anne’s House of Dreams*

The *Anne* books that include implied war elements are *Rainbow Valley* (1919) that introduces the imaginary “Pied Piper of Hamlin” coming down the valley and leading the little boys of Ingleside to war and destruction, *Anne’s House of Dreams* (1917) that is perhaps the saddest and gloomiest of the *Anne* books, it is not what the readers of Anne could expect. Also, *Anne of the Island* (1915), which is the third book in the series and still a comparatively happy book, includes some traces: WWI started when Montgomery was writing this novel and one can see it. In addition, the short story collection *The Road to Yesterday* (1974) (originally *The Blythes are Quoted*) includes some war elements and the last short story “A Commonplace Woman” shows clearly how Montgomery’s writing changed over the years (in the story a close relative of Anne’s has an illegitimate child and she murders a man cold bloodily – without regretting anything on her death bed). This story also mentions WWII, to which Anne’s grandsons were going (again very enthusiastically). These above-mentioned books are evidence for a different world view and a changed atmosphere of Montgomery’s literary world – compared to the first book *Anne of Green Gables* (1908), which is still a happy, innocent, pastoral novel and the second book *Anne of Avonlea* (1909). It is also important to notice that in *Anne of the Island* and especially in *Anne’s House of Dreams*, the setting is no

¹² *The Selected Journals of L.M. Montgomery. Volume III: 1921-1929.* Ed. Mary Rubio & Elizabeth Waterston. Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1992. (p. 387-388).

more the familiar Avonlea but it is more “global” and different. Even Anne’s close friends have been scattered all over the globe and everything seems to have changed.

When WWI started, Montgomery was writing *Anne of the Island*. In this novel, young people of Anne’s age get ill and die or are dying. Edwards and Litster claim that the sudden and tragic death of Ruby Gillis – Anne’s coquetting and in the end God-fearing childhood friend who dies of consumption at the age of nineteen – was her first “war casualty” (p. 33). It is true that her death is depicted in a similar way as the soldiers’ deaths in *Rilla*; she is purified and the death is by no means ugly, but beautiful: “She had died ... painlessly and calmly, and on her face was a smile ... death had touched it and consecrated it, bringing out delicate modellings and purity of outline never seen before....”¹³ They continue that “Montgomery’s initial shock and distress are reflected in Anne’s bitterness of soul at the end of her college days and in Gilbert’s near-tragic illness” (p. 33). Gilbert Blythe – hardworking and dutiful, faithful and in this way a soldier-like young man – might be regarded as another war victim, but this victim she lets survive. Montgomery longed for the past peaceful days during the war and it seems that this is one of the reasons she lets Anne choose the conventional, conservative Gilbert at the end of the novel – not the unconventional, liberal stranger, Roy Gardner, although he is clearly the man of Anne’s teenage dreams. The serene past is the safer choice.

Anne’s House of Dreams is one of the gloomiest books in the series, although one would expect something else – it is the novel where Anne and Gilbert finally marry and that is the reason it should be full of sunshine and cheerfulness; the readers had waited for it to happen for so long. But this is not the case – the war’s influence can clearly be seen in Montgomery’s writing. Montgomery lets Anne lose her firstborn and experience the pain of losing in the hardest way, a familiar feeling to those living in war time. Edwards and Litster

¹³ Montgomery, Lucy Maud. *Anne of the Island*. (1915) London: Penguin Books, 1994. (p. 132).

say that in this novel, Montgomery also investigates the ideas of disagreement (p. 33) – at the end of the novel, Anne and Gilbert have a serious disagreement over the medical treatment of a neighbor’s husband. It seems that Montgomery was already planning *Rilla*.

In *Anne’s House of Dreams*, there is a strange young female figure in the neighborhood, something new in the *Anne* books. She is called Leslie Moore and her life has been a misery and bereavement from the start and when describing it, Montgomery is more plain-spoken than ever. She depicts her brother’s death: “She worshipped little Kenneth – he was four years younger than her.... And he was killed one day – fell off a big load of hay just as it was going into the barn, and the wheel went right over his little body and crushed the life out of it. ... Leslie saw it. She jumped from the loft on to the load and from the load to the floor, and caught up the little bleeding, warm, dead body.”¹⁴ Leslie seems here a Madonna-like mother embracing a dead child or even a dead soldier. Not only this loss of Leslie’s brother is described but also her father’s death: “He wasn’t strong and it was a shock to him.... ... one day when Leslie was fourteen years of age, he hanged himself... right in the middle of the parlour from the lamp-hook in the ceiling. ... It was the anniversary of his wedding day, too. ... And of course, that poor Leslie had to be the one to find him” (p. 94). Here, death forces its way through the safety of the home, which in war time was a very natural experience.

While walking Leslie carries blood-red poppies on her waist: “... her lips were as crimson as the bunch of blood-red poppies she wore at her belt” (p. 31). Poppies occur in the war poem “In Flanders Fields” written by the Canadian soldier John McCrae (this poem will be dealt with more closely in connection with Walter Blythe in the chapter 4.3). In the case of Leslie Moore, the red color can also have other meanings (Leslie can be seen as a temptress, as Eve, as Anne’s falling equivalent) but this aspect of her is not dealt with here.

¹⁴ Montgomery, Lucy Maud. *Anne’s House of Dreams*. (1917) London: Penguin Books, 1994. (p. 93).

Instead, the attention is paid to the other meaning of red, that of blood. Leslie's house is also linked with blood-red: "it ... glowed out of its quiet and greyness like the throbbing blood-red thoughts of a vivid soul imprisoned in a dull husk of environment" (pp. 69-70).

In addition, Leslie's childlike "husband" Dick Moore brings to mind a handicapped or shell-shocked soldier, who has come back home and who is not the same as he was and never will be. It seems that Montgomery was here describing a bitter woman's poor lot with a husband that needs constant care and attention because of his injury and state. In her position, as a minister's wife, Montgomery must have met many such couples and she was also the one that had to go and tell people their son/father/brother had fallen. It is true that Dick Moore – who actually is George Moore, that is, Dick's cousin; a surprise that is revealed at the end of the novel – was injured in a fight in a pub in Havana and not in a war, but for me, it is the injury that is relevant here. Besides, he was injured in another country, where he had sailed some years ago. George Moore had also tried to take care of his ill cousin, the "real" Dick Moore, but he had died in his arms as a soldier might die in another soldier's.

Still another element in *Anne's House of Dreams* that seems to refer to the war time is the ocean imagery. In *Anne of Green Gables* and *Anne of Avonlea*, we hardly ever hear of the sea and Avonlea people never seem to be in very close proximity to it. It is "over there behind the woods" but not in their backyards, not so near than in the novels to come. As Sheckels points out Anne "is obviously on an island, but its insularity and its surrounding seas are not stressed."¹⁵ He continues that "Prince Edward Island offers safety, but the threat that necessitates safety is not clear" (p. 4). The adult Anne, on the other hand, lives very near the sea and many (significant) scenes of the novel are situated in the harbor or on the beach; this is a completely new feature in the *Anne* novels. Åhmansson claims that "sea, moon and

¹⁵ Sheckels, Theodore F. *The Island Motif in the Fiction of L.M. Montgomery, Margaret Laurence, Margaret Atwood, and Other Canadian Women Novelists*. New York: Peter Lang, 2003. (p. 4).

sky represent the infinite” in *Anne’s House of Dreams* (p. 165). Anne gets acquainted with the old Captain Jim, who takes care of the lighthouse in Glen St. Mary. The novel is full of stories of losses in the sea. For example, Captain Jim’s young fiancée drowned one night in the sea. This changed Captain’s life and nothing was the same again.

Thus, the sea is a very mysterious and heartbreaking element in the novel: “... the sea is a mighty soul, forever moaning of some great, unshareable sorrow, which shuts it up into itself for all eternity. We can never pierce its infinite mystery – we may only wander, awed and spellbound, on the outer fringe of it. ... the sea has ... only – a mighty voice that drowns our souls in its majestic music. ... the sea is of the company of the archangels” (pp. 71-72). That Canadian contingents sailed over the Atlantic one after another and many a man never came back – and not all the fates of the fallen were ever cleared up – might explain the use of the sea in the novel. When describing the fate of the drowned Margaret – Captain Jim’s fiancée – it seems as if Montgomery were describing the fate of a lost soldier “somewhere in France”: “an old, old forgotten story... for nothing was ever certainly known as to her fate... to perish in the black thunder-squall which had come up so suddenly that long-ago summer afternoon. ... the sea never give her back to me. ... I want you to promise me that you’ll tell *them*¹⁶ the story of lost Margaret, so that her name won’t be forgotten among humankind” (pp. 159-160). Here, it is also stressed that the myth must go on from generation to generation, in order not to “break faith”, not to forget what once happened. One must “keep faith”, as in war time.

¹⁶ Anne’s future children

2.3. Dark Clouds Above *Rainbow Valley*

One day the Piper came down the Glen...
Sweet and long and low played he!
The children followed from door to door,
No matter how those who loved might implore,
So wiling the song of his melody
As the song of a woodland rill.

Some day the Piper will come again
To pipe the sons of the maple tree!
You and I will follow from door to door,
Many of us will come back no more...
What matter that if Freedom still
Be the crown of each native hill.

L.M. Montgomery, "The Piper"
(published before Montgomery's death)

Many war elements can be found in *Rainbow Valley*. According to Edwards and Litster, *Rainbow Valley* was written during by far the longest war time span and "as such must surely reflect the impact of the war on the ordinary processes of life" (p. 34). *Rainbow Valley* is a kind of introduction to *Rilla*. For instance, it introduces the readers to the characters not present before but present in *Rilla* (such as the Meredith family with four children and the orphan Mary Vance). It makes *Rilla* seem even worse than it is, because in *Rainbow Valley*, we can see the future soldiers' happy, innocent childhood days. The reader knows what is coming but the characters do not. According to Edwards and Litster, traces of real soldiers can also be seen in *Rainbow Valley*. They argue:

The growing authoritarianism of Jerry in particular and Jem to a lesser extent is both witness and prophesy of the rise of the Canadian officer class; Jerry's dragooning of his own siblings into a general fast, and a vigil in the rain for Carl, results in illness for Una and near-death for Carl, an all too accurate symbol of the ludicrous and worthless sacrifices officers demanded of their men, frequently to no military purpose beyond some ideal of discipline, or image, or esprit of corps. Officers in the armed forces of all belligerent countries sacrificed many lives in ill-judged strategy and tactics. But whether Montgomery's Jerry was intentionally or unwittingly used to symbolize this or not, she knew the value of her work as witness to the militarization of Canadian society and did that work well. (p. 34)

Mary Vance is a completely new kind of (orphan) figure in the *Anne* novels. Edwards & Litster say that “Mary Vance is an anti-Anne” (p. 40) and her behavior and language are certainly different from Anne’s right from the start. One never learns exactly what Anne’s life was before her coming to Green Gables, we can only read “between the lines”, but in the case of Mary Vance, nothing is hidden. Anne’s parents – although they died young – loved each other, but the readers are told openly that Mary’s parents were drunkards of the worst kind and that they both committed suicide – her mother hanged herself and her father cut his throat. One also learns that she was beaten by her family every day: “*They used to beat me.... Laws, I’ve been licked so much I kind of like it.*”¹⁷ Edwards & Litster argue:

The most drastic assertion in *Rainbow Valley* of the changes wrought by war is the violence done not only to the *Anne* genre but to the whole tradition of orphans in Montgomery’s work. The story of Mary Vance seems a deliberate violation of almost all the *Anne* conventions, as though war demanded a break with the pretty literary past. ... *Anne of the Island* gives us our fullest glimpse of Anne’s parents, and the reader is assured as to their devotion to each other, their child, and their profession. Mary Vance is acknowledged to be from the same asylum as Anne.... (p. 40)

The Piper is introduced for the first time in *Rainbow Valley* and is a clear hint of the war time. Walter has four visions of the notorious Piper in *Rainbow Valley* and *Rilla*. Piper is depicted as a strange figure that lures the children of the village far away, even around the world with his bizarre music. Other people’s reactions to the Piper are not described so much. It is said that Jem is very excited about the Piper and says he would gladly follow such a creature. Mary is the only one that reacts more and is scared. Edwards & Litster say that because of her ‘childhood scars’, Mary Vance “seems the necessary, if not altogether welcome or wanted, link between the romantic (and untruthful) past and the violent upheaval of the future” (p. 42). It seems that adults do not know anything about Walter’s Piper. One

¹⁷ Montgomery, Lucy Maud. *Rainbow Valley*. (1919) New York: HarperCollins, 1998. (p. 33).

explanation could be that Anne and others are from the pastoral pre-war era and not suitable to discuss the Piper at all.

Edwards & Litster argue that “*Rainbow Valley* also confronts cowardice and its replacement by courage on the part of the girls, specifically Faith and Una Meredith” (p. 38). This seems to introduce their future roles in *Rilla*, when the war breaks out and women have to be strong. Faith tries to get money for her father’s church from a frightening neighbor called Norman Douglas, first by being a nice, polite girl and then by shouting at him and calling him a devil. However, Montgomery does not let Norman Douglas’s “nobler nature stir” because of the girl’s apologetic deed and meek words but because of her angry words and impolite manners. According to Edwards & Litster, Montgomery uses here “a reversal from another quotation of military interest but anti-war authorship, John Greenleaf Whittier’s ‘Barbara Frietchie’” (p. 39) where the situation was opposite – a man in the poem acted gently when a woman was polite and well-mannered towards him. This suggests again that Montgomery was for war. Una Meredith, too, has to confront her worst fears in the novel. However, she, too, like her sister, overcomes her fears. She gets Mrs. Marshall Elliot to adopt Mary Vance and she asks Rosemary West to marry her father, although she is very afraid of evil stepmothers. As in the real war and in *Rilla*, the girls and boys in *Rainbow Valley* show that you have to make sacrifices because the situation simply requires it.

Already in *Rainbow Valley*, one can see hints of what kind of soldiers for example Jem and Walter Blythe will be in *Rilla*. Jem Blythe is a brave young boy, always ready to defend others and the one that always wants to do “the right thing.” Jem Blythe invents “The Good Conduct Club” for the Meredith children: “I’ll tell you what to do. ... punish yourselves every time you do anything that’s not right” (p. 161). Jem wants to be a great general at the end of *Rainbow Valley*: “I’d love to be a soldier – a great, triumphant general. I’d give *everything* to see a big battle. ... Let the Piper come and welcome. I’ll follow him

gladly round and round the world” (pp. 224-225). The sensitive Walter, on the other hand, hates pain and violence. He cannot even go to the dentist: “I hate being hurt. ... The bleeding is worst of all – it’s so ugly. It just made me sick when Jem cut his foot last summer. Susan said I looked more like fainting than Jem did. But I couldn’t bear to see Jem hurt, either. ... I just can’t *bear* to see things hurt. It makes me just want to run – and run – and run – till I can’t hear or see them. ... I wish there weren’t any ugly, dreadful things in the world (pp. 109-110). He has more typically female characteristics than other boys; he loves beauty, art and poetry and is called “Miss Walter” at school. But when he decides to do something, he does it – properly. Walter challenges Dan Reese to fight, because he insults Faith and her mother – both female. Edwards & Litster argue that “it seems important that Walter could avoid combat, given the truth of the insults, but that once he decides to fight he will not temporize, however justly” (p. 37). As in *Rilla* and in the war, we can here see a glimpse of another, brave Walter: “Then he felt pain no longer. Something, such as he had never experienced before, seemed to roll over him like a flood” (p. 124). After the fight, Walter feels “none of the victor’s joy, but ... a certain calm satisfaction in duty done” (p. 125). Walter changes into another being when he starts to fight.

“Even nature becomes more hostile in *Rainbow Valley*”, claim Edwards & Litster (p. 41). For example, in this quotation the war and its atmosphere with alliances and aliens seem to be lurking implicitly:

... the little path was shadowy and narrow. Trees crowded over it, and trees are never quite as friendly to human beings after nightfall as they are in daylight. They wrap themselves away from us. They whisper and plot furtively. If they reach out a hand to us it has a hostile, tentative touch. People walking amid trees after night always draw closer together instinctively and involuntarily, making an alliance, physical and mental, against certain alien powers around them. (p. 89)

Edwards & Litster continue that it is important to notice that in *Rainbow Valley* there are two persons – Norman Douglas and Ellen West – that are still for the German Kaiser (p. 39).

However, they are the “bad” persons in the novel and are “defeated” in one way or another sooner or later. And, in *Rilla*, they are then clearly against Germany.

Edwards & Litster contend that “Canada had changed since Marilla Cuthbert declared her preference for a Canadian-born orphan, and L.M. Montgomery’s wartime novels reflect this dramatic change” (p. 43). They continue that “the First World War brought large-scale violence into Canadian history and culture for the first time” (p. 43). Before, in the 19th century, there had only been some smaller conflicts that had been for the most part local, for example the conflict with the Métis people (descendants of aboriginals and Europeans). Also, there had been the war between the USA and Britain fought between 1812 and 1815, but even that had not affected the whole nation.

As has been shown, in the so-called war novels, one can easily notice a different kind of atmosphere, compared to the first book, *Anne of Green Gables*. Edwards & Litster say:

From Anne’s ‘Book of Revelation’ in *Anne of the Island*... through the tragic and death-filled history of Leslie Moore in *Anne’s House of Dreams*, to the mania of Walter’s fight with Dan Reese and the horror of Mary Vance’s childhood in *Rainbow Valley*, Montgomery was widening the parameters of her fiction to include the new reality and the new Canada that war had created. That *Anne’s House of Dreams* turns on a plot where a woman shares board, and may – for all that we are ever told – have shared bed, for fourteen years with a man she believes to be her husband but who is not, shows the extent to which war was breaking fictional constraints and how far Montgomery’s work had moved from *Green Gables*. (p. 43)

3. Fighting as Never Before: WWI

WWI was the end of the old world – or at least so it seemed. WWI started in August 4, 1914 after the assassination of the Austrian Archduke Franz Ferdinand and ended four years later after Germany had surrendered. The armistice was signed November 11, 1918 (at 11.00 AM). These four years include a huge amount of human despair and misery, both at the war front and at the home front among many different nations. WWI was the first modern war, very different from all the previous wars, partly because it was so widespread and because of the technical achievements used. Also the name of this war illustrates this, because it was not named for any specific place or cause – it was “only” called the “Great War.” The war was also the first war where there were no pauses. During the four years, there was not a single day without fighting in some place – the soldiers had to live among the horrors around the clock. This chapter will lead to the main phases and characteristics of the war and to Canada’s role in it.

3.1. Europe in Flames

...But many there stood still
To face the stark, blank sky beyond the ridge,
Knowing their feet had come to the end of the world.

Wilfred Owen, “Spring Offensive”, 1917

Martel writes that “the most persistent assumption underlying the decisions of July 1914 was the illusion that the war would be short” – partly because “modern methods of transportation and communication created unprecedented opportunities for speed and mobility in attack.”¹⁸

¹⁸ Martel, Gordon. *The Origin of the First World War*. London: Longman, 1987. (p. 70).

But the war was nothing but short. The number of casualties and the scale of destruction were very high in WWI – altogether about 8 million soldiers were killed by the war. The number of the wounded amounted to about 21 million.¹⁹ The number of dead civilians was very high, too: over 6 million (Westwell, p. 185). Most of the deaths occurred in 1916, in the year of the biggest battles, such as Verdun and the Somme. Never before had there been such a conflict. It was a world war literally – it had involved in one way or another about 30 nations. In this war, there were many combats that saw the deaths of thousands of men in a few days: for example in the battle of the Somme there were 60 000 casualties in one day only. WWI was a war that no one had expected to last for so long and a war that changed many people's lives – and many nations – forever. No other war had changed the map of Europe so dramatically – four empires disappeared: the German, Austro-Hungarian, Ottoman and Russian. Instead, small nations, such as Finland, were created.

The war had its roots in the competitive atmosphere of Europe at the beginning of the 20th century. European nations were competing for the military and economic power as hard as they could, imperialism flourished and nationalism was also a popular trend in many countries. European nations made different kinds of treaties of alliance to protect their positions and international politics was very complicated. In Germany, Wilhelm II had been crowned Kaiser in 1888. He was a very militaristic man and sought power and fame. Because of him, Germany seemed stronger than ever before, above all militaristically but also economically. He was Queen Victoria's grandson, which people do not generally know. When Serbia entered in conflict with Austria and Serbia refused to comply with Austria's demands, Austria declared war on Serbia. Russia wanted to help her Slavic neighbors and declared war on Austria, whereas Germany stood by Austria's side and entered the conflict,

¹⁹ Westwell, Ian. *Ensimmäinen maailmansota. Tärkeimmät sotatapahtumat päivä päivältä*. Jyväskylä: Gummerus, 2004. Translated from English by Veikko Ahola, Matti Ahola, Jorma Luotio & Irmeli Kuhlmann. (p. 185).

too. Because of the complicated treaties of alliance, France had to keep her promise and come to the rescue of Russia. And, to be faithful to France and the crushed Belgium and Luxemburg, Britain had to declare war on Germany. This meant that also the countries of the Empire all around the world, including Canada and even its smallest rural province Prince Edward Island, were immediately at war. Later, more countries became involved; for example Bulgaria and Italy in 1915 and Romania in 1916. The USA remained neutral until 1917 and even then she emphasized that she was a kind of outsider in the conflict and joined only for moral and humane reasons.

New kinds of weapons and other new technology were used in WWI: for example poisonous gases and tanks, as well as airplanes and automobiles. At the time, airplanes were still a novelty, having been invented only about 10 years before the war. However, they became a military precondition during the war. They were still very simple and insecure and often made only from wood, fabric and plywood. The cockpits were very cold and the higher one flew, the worse were the conditions for the pilot. There were no parachutes, either. One third of all the fliers died in combat.²⁰

In the early stages of the war, aircraft were used largely for reconnaissance, to observe enemy troop movements and spot artillery, and to obtain photographs and motion pictures – only then came the bombers and fighters as airmen sought to destroy railroad centres and industrial targets far behind enemy lines, to destroy Zeppelin bases, and to hunt submarines at sea.²¹ Dangerous adventures among the clouds soon became a skillful art, almost a science of killing and destruction. Because flying was so dangerous and new, war pilots were often regarded as great heroes, “the cream of the crop.” The war in the air meant for many – both for the pilots and for the average citizens – fame and splendor. In a drawing

²⁰ <http://www.vac-acc.gc.ca>

²¹ <http://www.vac-acc.gc.ca>

by Varley²², one can see a depiction of a Canadian flyer, who reminds one immediately of a member of royalty or some kind of celebrity waving hands to the public in a very relaxed and cheerful manner. Even the sun is shining in the picture. One of the famous Canadian pilots was Billy Bishop. According to Vance:

... the aviator was a knight of the air, jousting with the enemy in the clouds according to a complex but well-understood code of chivalry. Technology ... freed them from the constraints of battlefield and ... allowed them to assert their individuality through garishly painted aircraft, lone-wolf tactics, and colourful nicknames. ... the airman transcended the anonymity and stagnation of the trenches by taking to a realm where personal action clearly determined the outcome of events. (p. 145-146)

German zeppelins were the first official bombers of civilian targets in the history of humankind. They could fly higher than airplanes and were regarded as a nightmarish invention. The zeppelins could fly in the dark without anyone noticing them and if some one did, there were no alarms. In Britain, many people died in their homes and in the streets because of the attacks of the zeppelins. The zeppelins showed that the nucleus of the British Empire, London, was in fact very vulnerable and that the country was not well prepared for the air attacks. The fear of zeppelin attacks spread in other countries, too.

WWI was also notorious for its horrible atrocities. Some of them historians have been able to prove to be true, some of them are claimed to be only rumors. However, no one can ever know for sure what actually happened. According to Taylor, some atrocities in Belgium can be proved by documents, for example the case of Louvain.²³ The villagers, including babies, were all killed and the village burned by the Germans. There were also persistent rumors that German soldiers had for example cut the hands on some Belgian babies and the breasts on some Belgian nuns and that a priest in some Belgian village had been tied alive to the church bells. On the other hand, a contemporary soldier remembers that

²² F.H.Varley, *Knights in the Air* (in Vance, p. 145).

²³ Taylor, A. J. P. *Ensimmäinen maailmansota*. Porvoo: WSOY, 1971. Translated from English by Tapio Hiisivaara. (p. 83).

of the allies, the troops that had the worst reputation for violence against prisoners were the Canadians, who were for example said to crucify German officers.²⁴

3.2. Canada in WWI

They were summoned up from the hillside, they were called in from the glen,
And the country found them ready at the stirring call for men;
Let no tears add to their hardship, as the soldiers pass along,
And although your heart is breaking, make it sing this cheery song.

an extract from the song “Keep the Homes Fires Burning”

Canada was more or less automatically at war when Britain declared war on Germany in 1914, including the small colony of Prince Edward Island who had joined Confederation as late as 1873. According to Stacey, “there was no need to decide whether or not Canada should go to war; that was decided by the existing constitution of the Empire.”²⁵ The participation of Canadian men was unquestioned – Canadians promised help for Britain in a spirit of astonishing agreement – immediately after the outbreak over 30 000 men volunteered. By the year 1916, there had been over 300 000 volunteers. When the war broke out, Canada had only about 8 million people. This means that the country’s war efforts were quite outstanding: over 600 000 people served in the forces during the war. Over 60 000 were killed and almost 200 000 wounded.²⁶ About 8 000 men had enlisted in the navy and some 24 000 had gone into the British Air Services (McNaught, p. 213). According to Stacey, however, the nation was not very united:

The population of Canada in the summer of 1914 is estimated to have been a little less than eight million, of whom considerably over two million were of French origin. ... these two million and the four million whose ancestors came from the

²⁴ King, Jere Clemens. *The First World War*. London: Macmillan, 1972. (p. 213).

²⁵ Stacey, C.P. *Canada and the Age of Conflict. A History of Canadian External Policies*. Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1977. (p. 174).

²⁶ McNaught, Kenneth. *The Pelican History of Canada*. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1982. (p. 213).

British Isles would view the impending crisis rather differently. ... some English-speaking Canadians simple-mindedly thought that their French compatriots would be moved by the peril of the French motherland, as they themselves ... were drawn by inherited sentiment to support Great Britain. (p. 170)

According to some statistics of voluntary enlistment, in Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island (that together formed Military District Number 6) the estimated population in 1916 was about 597 000²⁷ and voluntary enlistments in this region were about 24 456²⁸, that is, about 4 % of the population (my calculations). (The percentage seems quite small – especially compared to the view given us by *Rilla*, where all the time the Island's and the small Glen St. Mary's involvement and the number of enlisting soldiers are being highlighted.) Only one region has a lower percentage and that is Quebec with its 2.4 %. As McNaught claims, for most Quebecois, “revolutionary and anticlerical France was as foreign as England” (p. 213) and they did not want to take part in such a war. The region with the highest percentage is Yukon with its 33 %. The average enlistment percentage of all the regions in Canada is about 9.2 %. This means that in Prince Edward Island, the enlistment percentage was quite small. Stacey admits that “in the old-settled Maritime provinces the low enlistment rates present something of a puzzle, in the light of the fact that their population was overwhelmingly of British origin” (pp. 236-237). He says that “two explanations suggest themselves: the absence of large cities and the fact that only a few of the teeming immigrants of the prewar years went to the Maritimes” (p. 237). As to the “Canadian” war efforts, it is a fact that the first contingent consisted of men of whom about 70 % were British-born and the truth is that of all the soldiers that served in Europe less than half had been born in Canada. Most of the soldiers were blue-collar workers, and then came white-collar workers.

The war was a strange experience for Canadians: on the one hand, it was so far away, across the ocean, one did not see battles where one lived, and on the other hand, it was so near, because the sons, fathers and brothers were there. As Pike states, “the war could be a

²⁷ *Canada Year Book* (in Stacey, p. 235).

²⁸ Canadian Sessional Paper No. 264 (in Stacey, p. 235).

distant event of no significance or a personal tragedy as family members or friends enlisted” (p. 1). Britain was so close to the front that even letters and parcels could reach it in only about two days²⁹ but this was not the case with Canada. “German” became a swear-word for many Canadians – Germans living in Canada and everything that could be associated with Germans or German origin were despised and boycotted. It is told that even dachshunds were stoned. A German submarine sank the British passenger boat – the “Lusitania” – without any warning on the coast of Ireland in 1915. Hundreds of people were drowned, many of them women and children. This incident added to the hatred towards Germany in Canada, too.

Canadians resisted division of Canadians and this led to the formation of the Canadian Corps. Britain and Canada did not have conscripted armies; their armies consisted of rapidly trained volunteers. The first Canadian contingent had sailed for England in 1914. These Canadians – called Princess Pats – were sent to the trenches “somewhere in France” January 4, 1915³⁰ – it was a cold and rainy winter and the soldiers had to fight not only against Germans but also against colds and lice – or cooties as they are called in *Rilla*. However, it is not usually made known that in the first contingent, 70 % of the men were recent immigrants from the UK. The French-speaking Canadians were a very small minority, about 10 %. The second contingent followed in the spring of 1915, the third one in December of the same year. In spite of many casualties, the Canadians kept actively joining up and sailing across the ocean.

However, as time went by, the war became less popular and there were not so many volunteers as when the war broke out. WWI also caused several political crises in Canada. One of them was the Conscription Crisis that broke out as late as 1917. There were simply not enough volunteers to send any more as the war still dragged on in Europe as stubbornly as ever. The Military Service Act was introduced, which permitted Canada to recruit men if

²⁹ Fussell, Paul. *Great War and Modern Memory*. London: Oxford University Press, 1975. (p. 65).

³⁰ Davidson, R. I. K. & Kerr, D. G. G. *An Illustrated History of Canada*. Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1966. (p. 134).

needed. Unlike English Canada, French-speaking Canada opposed this act very strongly; they thought the war was “none of their business.” In order to strengthen his position in the elections and to get as much support for his venture as possible, the Canadian prime minister introduced two acts more: the Military Voters Act and the Wartime Elections Act; these acts extended the scale of voters more than ever before. Oversea soldiers, oversea nurses, women, who had close male relatives (husband, father, brother) serving in Europe – all these groups could now vote. However, recent immigrants from the “enemy countries” of Canada could not vote, neither could the women who had not yet husbands but only fiancés at the front. Propaganda posters such as “Borden’s bill brings out the slacker and leaves your brother at home” were to be seen in the streets.³¹ The Military Service Act was finally passed into law January 1, 1918. At first, it was possible to get an exemption, but a little later, the law was changed so that no releases were possible. However, only a small number of recruited men (about 20 – 30 000) arrived to the front after all and the war was also finished soon after this. Accordingly, most of the soldiers that ever came from Canada to Europe were volunteers, not conscripts or professionals, but ordinary citizens. Many of them were from larger cities and about half of them were of British origin.

According to Stacey, the years 1917-1918 were gloomy and blood-spattered but they seemed “years of extraordinary significance in the history of Canada” (p. 202). By this, he means all the political happenings in Canada and in the world. The relations with the USA had been very bad because the USA had remained neutral for so long. On the other hand, during WWI, Canada had become more independent and more internationally acclaimed than ever before. Canada had acted as an interpreter between Europe and the USA and the important development from the British Empire to the Commonwealth had begun. However, it might be stated here that the disappointments of the American neutrality stayed in the mind

³¹ A photo in Kerr & Davidson, p. 140.

of the average Canadian for a long time. Stacey adds that “people remembered the long cold years when Canadians were shedding their blood in Flanders and the United States was maintaining what seemed to them a callous and pharisaical neutralism” (p. 234).

After the war Canada was still literally a part of Britain, as were all the other dominions. Nonetheless, it cannot be denied that the long process of independence had begun and the war had played an important role in it. Right after the war, Canada joined the League of Nations totally independently of Britain. And, even if Canada (and other dominions such as Australia) had not themselves literally declared war against Germany in 1914 – they were more or less automatically at war – each dominion was included (individually) among the other signatories of the peace treaty of Versailles. Also, a new Canadian identity had begun to develop in the minds of average Canadians. In 1931, Britain finally announced Canada's independence. This meant that Canada declared war on Germany independently during WWII – three days after her former mother country Britain. However, the Maple Leaf Flag – a flag of one's own is usually regarded as one of the signs of an independent nation – was introduced as late as 1965. Before that Canada had had a common flag with Britain (the Union Jack, which is used in *Rilla*, too).

As to the economic and social changes in society during the war, one might say that Canada's economy suffered less than Britain's, but that the war had for example a negative impact on the prices and there was a shortage of fuel. Women, too, had new kinds of opportunities in society because men were at the front. In October 1916 women were employed in manufacturing munitions for the first time in Canada and by the end of the First World War, over 30 000 female munitions workers had been employed while an even greater number of women found paid public occupations replacing men in service and manufacturing industries³² In a photograph³³ from the year 1917 we can see young women working in a

³² Light, Beth & Parr, Joy. *Canadian Women on the Move 1867-1920*. Toronto: New Hogtown Press and The Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, 1983. (p. 99).

Canadian factory. Light & Parr also argue that “the conflict carried so many young men away that there could be no denying the interdependence between the cradle and the sword” (p. 6). They go on that because of the war, women were first able to notice and then establish their new position in society, for example by working in munitions plants or farms (p. 6).

After the war, the fallen were remembered and honored in many ways in the European countries, especially in Britain and but also in Canada. Massive statues were erected and charming speeches were held. Special commemoration days were created in the calendar, for example the Poppy Day (or Remembrance Day) November 11 (the date of the armistice) from the year 1921 onwards. Many of the traditions are still celebrated and people continue to “keep faith” to this day – including this Poppy Day. The red poppy had become the symbol of remembrance of the fallen soldiers; this had been motivated by the Canadian John McCrae’s poem “In Flanders Fields.”

³³ A photo, 1917, Public Archives of Canada, in Light & Parr, p. 99.

3.3. The Construction of the War Myth

Good to die not live as a disabled
We shall feel the snows of cheerless winter;
But you shall be forever young,
With you it shall be forever spring
Where you wander through the willows.

McGill alumnus, 1921

To have had the strength to serve in the Great War,
Oft missing Death by inches, scarcely harmed;
And having lived to know that victory was ours - ...
These are the blessings that lay claim each day,
To grateful recognition which I gladly own.

William Howey, "Blessings"

In this chapter, I want to explain in a broad outline what is meant by "myth" in this thesis (and also in the book by Vance), that is, what is the theoretical background in my paper. After that I will introduce the war myth in Canada to some extent. There will be more of it during the actual analysis of *Rilla* in chapter 5.1.

There are many definitions and theories of "myth." In this work and in the work of Vance, myths are seen as carriers of thoughts and ideas, as means of implications and connotations and as structures of interaction. Myths are generally regarded as something that have origins in the superstitious minds of the people from primitive era and that do not have anything to do with "real science." In the 17th and 18th centuries "... it was thought that science could only exist by turning its back upon the world of the senses, the world we see, smell, taste and perceive; the sensory was a delusive world, whereas the real world was a world of mathematical properties which could only be grasped by the intellect and which was entirely at odds with the false testimony of the senses."³⁴ Nowadays myths and mythology can

³⁴ Lévi-Strauss, Claude. *Myth and Meaning*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978. (p. 6).

also be studied and examined, regardless of their “arbitrariness” or “absurdness” or “meaninglessness.” It would perhaps not be completely wrong to say that new myths are born somewhere every day, they are not works of primitive minds but also of modern minds. The type of “myth” that is relevant in my paper is outlined by a dictionary in the following way: “a widespread but untrue or erroneous story or belief; a widely held misconception; a misrepresentation of the truth”, “something existing only in myth; a fictitious or imaginary person or thing” and as “a popular conception of a person or thing which exaggerates or idealizes the truth.”³⁵

Myths are usually kind of “half-truths” – perhaps someone would like to call them illusions – and they are needed to understand the surrounding world or its circumstances. Myths often try to solve some kind of problems, too. Myths often belong to some special groups and explain their fate. Lévi-Strauss notes that when one element in myth is transformed, the other elements should also be changed (p. 40). He says that in myths, there is also a lot of repetition (p. 40). Barthes divides myth in three dimensions: the signifier, the signified and the sign.³⁶ He says that myths distort, they are not lies but inflexions and compromises, they cannot be questioned or made better or worse by time or knowledge (Barthes, p. 142). Myths are consumed unknowingly because they are seen as inductive and read as truths, as facts (Barthes, p. 142). Because of spreading, “a myth ripens” (Barthes, p. 163). According to Barthes, this is what myths do, what is their foremost aim:

Myth does not deny things, it purifies them, it makes them innocent, it gives them a natural and eternal justification, it gives them a clarity which is not that of an explanation but that of a statement of fact ... it abolishes the complexity of human acts, it gives them the simplicity of essence ... it organizes a world which is without contradictions because it is without depth, a world wide open and wallowing in the evident, it establishes a blissful clarity: things appear to mean something by themselves. (p. 143)

³⁵ OED

³⁶ Barthes, Roland. *Mythologies*. New York: Hill and Wang, 1972. Translated from French by Annette Lavers. (p. 123).

During the war and right after it a strange myth was created in Canada, as to the events and outcome of the war and people's memories and the most central recollections of it. The important thing is that this did not happen after or during WWII – a war where Canada's boys were again fighting side by side with "Mother England" – but only after and during WWI. This fact makes the myth special and worth studying. As mentioned by Ferro: "They marched off to war, their faces a picture of delight... in striking contrast to the mobilization of 1939, when ... the soldiers' faces showed shock and despair."³⁷

The main function of the myth was to present the past in a natural, explicit and straightforward way. Vance says that the myth was constructed "from a complex mixture of fact, wishful thinking, half-truth, and outright invention, and expressing that version in novel and play, in bronze and stone, in reunion and commemoration, in song and advertisement" (p. 3). He continues that the myth was conveyed "to those people who had not experienced the events themselves and to ensure that a certain version of the war became the intellectual property of all Canadians, not simply those who had lived through 1914-18" (p. 3) and he adds that the memories of Canadians "sometimes bore little resemblance" to war's actualities (p. 4).

Average Canadians were as responsible for the creation and spreading of the myth as the higher level; politicians, intellectuals, elite groups etc. According to Vance, the average citizens were even more responsible for the myth and supported it very enthusiastically, aware or unaware (p. 7). This diversity and mixture makes the myth a very interesting area to study; Vance asserts that it "crossed boundaries of gender, class, religion, ethnicity, and region" (p. 7). There were opponents of this myth, but they were very few.

³⁷ Ferro, Marc. *The Great War 1914-1918*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1973. Translated from French by Nicole Stone. (p. xi).

And, actually, the more they opposed it, the more they in fact supported and helped and made it easier to mold and shape the myth.

Nostalgia had an effect on the construction of the war time myth. It was thought that the past days were the better days and the present was less preferable than the past. Vance claims that “individuals who constitute any social order share a common vision of history that locates the community in time and space, giving it an appreciation of its own past as well as a sense of its future” (p. 9). These memories are not always based on truth; they rather tell “how it ought to have been.”

Above all, the myth filled needs. This was, according to Vance, its main function and meaning (p. 9). The needs were many, they could be consolatory, explanatory, educational, motivating, practical or even amusing. With the help of the myth, Vance adds, Canadians were “determined to see 1914-18 as the progenitor of good” and they “refused to countenance a preoccupation with the horrors of battle or with the grief of loss” (p. 11). Interestingly, Sheckels, too, argues that in the later *Anne* books – obviously he is including *Rilla* – “the atmosphere consoles many who are facing the pain of losses suffered because of World War I” (p. 21). He sees *Rilla* as filling the consolatory need, which actually seems to “hit the nail on the head.” The Canadian war myth consisted of many different kind of aspects – Vance presents us with six in his theory: the idea of a just war, the idea of soldiers fighting *for* Christ and *as* Christ, the construction of a positive, humorous version of the war, the war as a raiser of status, the idea of soldiers as Canada and the idea of “keeping faith.”

The idea of a just war meant that in the collective war memory of Canada, the allies had without a doubt won the war and the war had been very worth all sacrifices. Vance states:

The Hun had been vanquished, and civilization had been saved from the threat of barbarism. Still, there was no guarantee that the salvation was permanent, and the memory of the war accepted that such a struggle might well have to be waged again. In this way, it acted as a powerful antidote to pacifism, for it assumed that the truest

lovers of peace were those people who were willing to fight for it. Because the country had gone to war to preserve peace, Canada could look back with pride at its first world war. The nation had fought a good fight; it had been a just war. (pp. 12-13)

One of the key ideas was to stress the defeat of Germany. The celebrations were full of symbols of German defeat (for example trophies), not the symbols of peace. Even casualties became – according to Vance – “signs of triumph” (p. 17). He continues that “the glow of victory was no time to raise awkward questions about whether the triumph had been a pyrrhic one (p. 20). Canadians did not care for forgiveness. They did not want to forget the fates of the Belgian women and children or the use of gas in the war. The Kaiser was hated and despised even many years afterwards. Everywhere in Canada many people felt that the war had been moral and honorable; the soldiers had fought for nation, humankind, freedom, truth, righteousness, honor etc. Very few tried to fight against this view of the war. One of the few was, however, a poet called Wilson MacDonald:

His feet are rotting
From a slow gangrene;
His tusks are yellow
And his eyes are green.
But the church of god
Calls him sweet and clean.

Then there was the idea of soldiers fighting *for* Christ and even *as* Christ. The church was very much in favor of the Canadian war efforts. Vance states that “the Great War became a crusade, a holy war that pitted Christians against the pagans of Europe” (p. 35). It was a question of “a war for righteousness, the best kind of war that could be fought” and Canada wanted to defend “the very values upon which Christianity was founded” (p. 35). It could be said that khaki soon became “a sacred color” and the soldiers “soldiers of Christ.” One of the justifications for the horrible war and the sufferings of soldiers that Canadians could think of was the idea of soldiers as Jesus. In the same way as Jesus, the Canadian

soldiers were suffering and sacrificing themselves for a good cause, for humanity, and would finally be rewarded with salvation and redemption. According to Vance, “in this theology, each death was an atonement, each wound a demonstration of God’s love, and each soldier a fellow sufferer with Christ” (p. 36). This idea offered consolation for everybody and made sense to many Canadians, for disabled veterans coming home, for soldiers at the front and for the families who had lost one of their members. It was thought that the fallen soldiers were immortal and lived forever. According to Vance:

... many believed that ...death in battle was by far the best. they were able to separate the significance of death from its physical realities. A body bloated by gas, sliced apart by shrapnel, or pulverized into atoms by artillery did not necessarily mean that the death was a hideous one. ... if the ideals were pure, the physical ugliness was irrelevant. ... the myth considered it a mistake to view death in battle as a loss; rather, it was a sacrifice willingly made. (p.50)

Because of the “pure ideals”, it was not considered very proper to mourn someone’s death very much – it did not make sense with the myth’s high principles. And, veterans with psychological problems such as shell-shock were only rare exceptions in the myth.

There was also another means of justification for those that were not so keen on God and Jesus. As Vance puts it, a similar outcome could be reached by a secular approach (p. 73). The war was made to be seen less horrible and non-threatening, even positive, with the help of humor. According to Vance’s idea, it was a question of “the creation of a version of the war that avoided the painful memories in favour of the positive, light-hearted recollections, and that retained essentially nineteenth-century images to describe a twentieth-century war” (p. 74). The war lasted so long that by the last years of it, people had had enough of misery and melancholy caused by it. They wanted something new and this meant that the war “had to be tidied up to accommodate the desires of countless Canadians who had had enough of horror and tragedy” (p. 74)

The fourth aspect of the myth emphasized the idyllic comradeship between the soldiers at the front and the strange but permanent connection that only those who had been “somewhere in France” could feel, joined by the common fate. According to the myth, in this comradeship there were no division into classes or some other groups; in the trenches everyone was/had been equal. Vance states:

The ‘band of brothers’, whether at Agincourt or Arras, was an exclusive club, membership in which was held by a select few. All Canadian men of military age had been given the opportunity in 1914 to join that club, and those who had leapt at the chance were forever a breed apart. In the myth, the ‘happy few’ were a privileged body on a different level from the rest of society; those who had declined to accept the challenge would indeed ‘hold their manhoods cheap.’ (p. 111)

Those soldiers that had had the opportunity of a lifetime, to defend their country and its values “entered into a special relationship with the county” (Vance, p. 136). Here one can see the fifth aspect of the myth, soldiers soon became to be seen as Canada itself: “It was not just that the individual soldier represented Canada; he was Canada personified. ... he was the nation’s past, present, and future, the embodiment of all its aspirations and potential. The soldier *was* Canada” (Vance, p. 136). In many pieces of art, the news of the war reaches people in the middle of nature, either in woods or in the field, during the “Golden Summer”, and this fact emphasized the role of citizen-soldiers further. Mother symbolism is connected to this aspect, too, as the bond between mother and son (and at the same time between Britain and Canada, as a contemporary picture³⁸ shows with its Britain-lioness and five cubs – New Zealand, Canada, India, Australia and South Africa – that come when she calls them on a mountain) was stressed. The myth has it that the soldier’s last thoughts were often of his mother (or of the beautiful sceneries of his childhood – hinting at the love of the nation). In the myth, WWI was also linked in one way or another to some past heroic histories and “a natural outgrowth of the past” and “to provide an interpretive context” (Vance, p. 151). As

³⁸ A picture, “Answering the Call”, Vancouver Province, August 5 1914 (in Vance, p. 151)

Vance puts it, there are two common representatives of Canadian soldiers in the memory of the war in Canada: one is “the rugged backwoodsman” and the other is “the sensitive intellectual” (p. 158).

The sixth aspect of the myth deals with writing down the war. The official histories, chronicles and records were delayed for so long that “while Canadians waited for the official record, they set about compiling their own story of the war, in countless local and battalion histories, poetry collections, novels, and short stories. They took their mythicized version of the war, with all its inaccuracies and half-truths, and gave it legitimacy as history” (Vance, p. 163). All other alternatives soon became excluded as untrue and when the official records finally were published, they did not have any role anymore. The history created by the people themselves did not criticize or question anything. In the war time, the most common phrases were “keep faith” or “do not break faith.” But what did they actually mean? They meant safeguarding the mythical memories of the war – aware or unaware – and above all, remembering and commemorating the fallen and the values they had fought for in different ways. More about these ways will follow in chapter 5.1.

4. “We’ll Keep Faith”: A Representation of Canadians in WWI

Hello Mother, what do you know
I enlisted today I said I’d go
Yes, I mean to do my little bit
Afraid “Why Mom never thought of it
Oh I know it’s true all that you say
Only fifteen and going away
But age don’t count it’s the heart within
The courage to lose the faith to win
So come now Mother you must’nt cry
Other boys have joined so why not I
It won’t last long please understand
Then I’ll come Home to the things we planned
Remember Mum, what you have often said
The little house all painted red
A garden filled with lovely flowers
Where we planned to spend such happy hours
I know how much it all means to you dear
But really I could’nt be happy here
When I know that every Mothers son
Is badly needed to man the guns
So cheer up Mother dont take it so hard
You would’nt have you son branded a coward
Come smile thru your tears and think of the day
When I’ll return Home to be with you always

Robert Dorman, “The Argument”

In this chapter, I will go through certain aspects of how the war seemed to affect the fictional Canadian village Glen St. Mary – what kind of a representation of the war time the novel gives and how Montgomery presents events to the reader. I will hint at the mythical meanings lurking in the text, although they will also be discussed in chapter 5.

4.1. A War of Emotions

The very beginning of the war generally went unnoticed in Canada, in a what-does-it-matter-to-us mood. An average citizen thought it was not at all significant when an archduke was murdered in Sarajevo, this is what Montgomery felt, too. This is also how people react in

Glen St. Mary, the fictional village on Prince Edward Island where the novel is situated and which is depicted as pure and innocent:

It was a warm, golden-cloudy, lovable afternoon. ... Susan... opened her copy of the *Daily Enterprise* and prepared to read the Glen notes.... There was a big, black headline on the front page of the *Enterprise*, stating that some Archduke Ferdinand or other had been assassinated at a place bearing the weird name of Sarajevo, but Susan tarried not over uninteresting, immaterial stuff like that; she was in quest of something really vital.³⁹

The above-mentioned description clearly hints at the concept of the “Golden Summer” mentioned by Vance, the prerequisite and ground of the myth. As the soldiers went to the war to defend the gifts and innocence of their home, it was required by the myth that the time before the war had been perfect and ideal, which of course had not been quite true – in fact, there had been many kinds of problems, such as materialism, egocentrism, the deeper gap between the classes, industrial unrest, social problems, political schisms, even corruption. As Vance says, “the last months of peace constituted the legendary Golden Summer of 1914” (p. 137) and it was a time of “innocence and promise, of perpetual sunshine”, a season of “bounty, tranquility, and contentment”, of “brightness, clarity, and plenty” – thus, the volunteers could go to the war to defend all this (pp. 137-138). The Blythe family, too, is very happy during the last months of peace; life is full of love and pleasant events.

One of the first settings in *Rilla* is a ball on the seashore by the lighthouse, the setting of which seems significant. Epperly claims that “the lighthouse is a symbol of the old world.”⁴⁰ I have mentioned the sea symbolism in chapter 2.2. Even church bells are ringing in the background. The young people go and see the old House of Dreams, which was the birth place of Jem Blythe (Anne’s firstborn son), the death place of Anne’s firstborn daughter

³⁹ Montgomery, Lucy Maud. *Rilla of Ingleside*. (1920) New York: HarperCollins, 1998. (pp. 1-2).

⁴⁰ Epperly, Elizabeth Rollins. *The Fragrance of Sweet Grass. L.M. Montgomery’s Heroines and the Pursuit of Romance*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992. (p. 113).

Joy and Anne's first home as Mrs. Doctor as well as the place of proposal of Kenneth Ford's parents. With this setting Montgomery seems to be emphasizing the gap between the life in the pre-war era (House of Dreams) and in the war time and the shifting of the days of dreams to the days of suffering; she also seems to be hinting to the coming deaths and sorrows (sea, bells, Joy). She also uses the Cinderella theme to show the beauty and confusion of the last moments of pastoral happiness, the "Golden Summer." Rilla is the princess of the night, dancing happily with her prince (Kenneth) in her new silver shoes – but the night will be over in no time at all and the fairy tale will be finished, the prince planning to go overseas and Rilla walking towards her home crying and without shoes.

Montgomery describes the moment when the Canadians realize it all really does matter to them and that the events far away in Europe are not "uninteresting or immaterial" after all. Walter thinks: "This had all come up with the blackness and suddenness of a thundercloud. A few days ago nobody had even thought of such a thing. It was absurd to think of it now. ... War was a hellish, horrible, hideous thing – too horrible and hideous to happen in the twentieth century between civilized nations" (p. 20). After a week Rilla is still shocked: "She wanted to be alone – to think things out – to adjust herself, if it were possible, to the new world into which she seemed to have been transplanted with a suddenness and completeness that left her half bewildered as to her own identity" (pp. 39-40). Montgomery continues with the sea symbolism in *Rilla*. Miss Oliver dreams of waves of the ocean coming over Glen St. Mary, almost drowning it under the waves, the waves of which suddenly turn out to be waves of poppy-red blood. This dream is based on Montgomery's own dreams.

On the day of the ball – which is also the day when Britain declares war on Germany – many people – especially young men, including Jem Blythe and Jerry Meredith – are very excited, in very high spirits, and even want to hoist the flag, the "Union Jack." Jem is very energetic and speaks for the war enthusiastically, as if it were a simple adventure.

This kind of behavior is typical as to the myth of the war, which highlights boyishness, innocence, youth and optimism. Kenneth declares why Canada has to go and help the “Old Lady” (Britain): “We are part of the British Empire. It’s a family affair. We’ve got to stand by each other” (p. 35). Susan is a very stubborn and patriotic woman and also entirely for the war: “... it will take more than a year to make a German out of *me*” (p. 76).

Everyone seems positive about the war and its outcome that should come rapidly. Norman Douglas states that one British (not Canadian!) soldier is “a match for ten foreigners” (p. 50). Mr. Meredith tries to understand the war and its meaning, with the same words that Montgomery herself had written in her diary:

Without shedding of blood there is no *anything*. ... *Everything*, it seems to me, has to be purchased by self-sacrifice. Our race has marked every step of its painful ascent with blood. And now torrents of it must flow again. ... I don’t think the war has been sent as a punishment for sin. I think it is the price humanity must pay for some blessing – some advance great enough to be worth the price – which *we* may not live to see but which our children’s children will inherit. ... a country whose sons are ready to lay down their lives in her defense will win a new vision because of their sacrifice. (p. 50-51)

Above all, the war is described at the emotional level in *Rilla*. This is the main viewpoint: to depict the new, different emotions that the war time brings to the life of Canadians and to portray the experiences in the lives of two different generations and especially the emotions of the home front, although the reader also gets small glimpses from the front “somewhere in France.” According to Pike, Montgomery wants to claim that the effects of the war can be seen at the individual level, in homes, and that it is at the emotional level that the Canadians have to face the war – she goes on that in *Rilla* “the goals of the war are stated in abstract terms, the response to war is depicted on a local, personal, and emotional level” (p. 8). She continues that Montgomery wants to imply that “the war, even when not fought at home, is fought for home” (p. 8). As there are no fights on the Canadian continent, the people are literally safe, but this does not mean that their lives and feelings are

not turned upside down because of the war. Rilla's emotions can be compared to the emotions of the European girls in war-faring countries – the sorrow and fear of the fates of the sons, fathers, brothers, husbands and fiancés at the front – but Rilla never faces those physical dangers and threats that her “European sisters” face. This is also how Montgomery herself experienced the war time; she poured down her emotions in her diaries and lived the war through her strong emotions and feelings.

The emotions of people at Ingleside – the residence of the Blythe family – change all the time according to the setbacks and battles, victories and atrocities on the European continent: “Then the smile faded from the doctor's face; the Germans were twenty miles from Paris. Horrible tales were beginning to appear in the papers of deeds done in martyred Belgium. Life was very tense at Ingleside for the older people” (p. 73). They face the same emotions and feelings than their European counterparts but the important thing is: the home front is never threatened physically. People at Ingleside are always hoping for the best and when their hope proves to be a failure, they are very disappointed and emotional: “They had thought they were quite resigned to Warsaw's fall but now they knew they had, as always, hoped against hope” (p. 128). When the Germans use the notorious gas weapons for the first time, the atmosphere is very distressing: “...had Jem been gassed? Had he died in torture?” (p. 103). Also, the positive feelings over victories and successes are expressed more strongly than before the war. In Canada, people were very happy about “the miracle of Marne” in 1914 and many thought that the war had ended. At Ingleside, people are also rejoicing: “Rilla rushed madly home from the office waving the *Enterprise* with its big red headlines. Susan ran out with trembling hands to hoist the flag. The doctor stalked about muttering ‘Thank God.’ Mrs. Blythe cried and laughed and cried again. ‘God just put out His hand and touched them – ‘thus far – no farther,’” said Mr. Meredith that evening” (p. 74).

In spite of the distance, the war does change people's life at the home front: "...it seems as if it happened in another life lived years ago..." (p. 99). Horror or the possibility of it is always present; death is threatening and lurking behind a corner all the time: "The daily list of casualties had begun to appear in the papers and no one at Ingleside had ever answered the telephone without a horrible cold shivering – for it *might* be the station-master phoning up to say a telegram had come from overseas. No one at Ingleside ever got up in the morning without a sudden piercing wonder over what the day might bring" (p. 94). Miss Oliver comments on how everything is connected with war in one way or another – even weather: "I never go out these dark cold nights myself without thinking of the men in the trenches" (p. 95).

On the other hand, the war and everything connected with it fairly – perhaps even surprisingly – soon becomes a kind of "habit": "It seems strange that we can go on with ordinary life just as if nothing were happening overseas that concerned us, just as if any day might not bring us awful news. But we can and do. Susan is putting in the garden, and mother and she are housecleaning, and we Junior Reds are getting up a concert in aid of the Belgians" (p. 101). The war especially seems a routine part of life for women: "'The war will not be over before next spring now,' said Dr. Blythe, when it became apparent that the long battle of the Aisne had resulted in a stalemate. Rilla ... laid down her knitting for a moment and said, 'Oh, *how* can we bear it so long?' – then picked up her sock and went on. The Rilla of two months before would have rushed off to Rainbow Valley and cried" (p. 75). In her diaries, Montgomery, too, soon links "the war news with routine events, as if it is as ordinary as the neighbor's harvest" (Pike, p. 3). This is the way the women of Ingleside behave, too. In one passage of Rilla's diaries, she writes sadly about the war and then in another passage about something else, for example something amusing.

The contrast between the situation in Europe and the ostensibly peaceful time in Canada is all the time emphasized. Rilla writes in her diary: “How can spring come and be beautiful in such a horror. When the sun shines and fluffy yellow catkins are coming on the willow-trees down by the brook, and the garden is beginning to be beautiful I can’t realize that such *dreadful* things are happening in Flanders. But they are!” (pp. 98-99). The war is far away but still so near: “The world shook with the thunder of contending armies ... and in quiet, hill-girdled Glen St. Mary, thousands of miles away, hearts beat with hope and fear over the varying dispatches from day to day” (p. 80). At the front, the soldiers also realize the existence of two different worlds: “We’re in an absolutely different world. The only things that are the same are the stars – and they are never in their right places, somehow” (p. 97). In the novel, the huge gap between the peaceful, pastoral era of Anne’s childhood and the hectic, war-filled youth of Anne’s daughter Rilla can be clearly noticed. Anne used to love bends of the road, her daughter does not – here one can see the gap between the two generations: “She had heard her mother say that she loved turns in roads – they were so provocative and alluring. Rilla thought she hated them. She had seen Jem and Jerry vanish from her round a bend in the road – then Walter – and now Ken. ... Yet still the Piper pined and the dance of death went on” (p. 139). Anne is no longer a main character and Montgomery lets her fade in the background. Edwards and Litster argue that the shadowy Anne in *Rilla of Ingleside* suggests that Anne is really no longer useful or appropriate as a heroine – in contrast to her daughter Rilla or her maid Susan, which are not immediately associated in reader’s minds with the Canadian idyll and peaceful pastoralism before the war (p. 32). Only sometimes we learn how Anne feels. Anne had always been the one “to whom laughter had always come so easily and freshly” (p. 104) but Anne’s attitude on life during the war time is different: “I hate going to bed now. All my life I’ve liked going to bed, to have a gay, mad, splendid half-

hour of imagining things before sleeping. Now I imagine them still. But much different things” (pp. 91-92).

4.2. Politics and Events in Canada and Elsewhere

Rilla of Ingleside provides a lot of interesting details for a researcher of wartime politics and the reader is presented with glimpses of the way ordinary Canadians reacted to the events in Canada and elsewhere during the war. Canadian politics and also the politics of other nations such as Britain, the USA and some other European countries – for example Russia and Greece – are discussed to some extent. Throughout the book, it is Susan Baker, the maid, who comments on politics and politicians. Others do not talk about politics in the novel; they may listen to what Susan has to say and maybe comment on something but they do not discuss the events as she does. Susan – very openly – expresses strong views on politicians and their doings and not-doings and she is able to do this because she is in a different kind of position than all the other main characters, including Rilla – she is a member of the working class, a housekeeper. Susan is always the one to hoist the flag when something important happens for the allies. She for example hoists the flag when Italy joins the war. Susan is very eager to learn about everything connected with the war, for example other nationalities, and she forms opinions on people on the basis of what they do or what they do not do in the war. On the one hand, she regards the leaders of the world as her superior but on the other hand, occasionally she sees them as her equals. For example, Susan compares the Russian czar to ordinary villagers in Glen St. Mary: “But I am of the opinion that he cannot help himself and is just doing the best he can under the circumstances, the same as the rest of us” (p. 122). Susan is 64 years old and very interested in the politics of the world, even if she is “only” an aging maid, an old “gossipmonger.” As Rothwell says, “traditionally opposed discourses –

the domestic and the political – have become deeply and inextricably intertwined” in *Rilla*.⁴¹ It seems that Susan is the one that learns most during the war years and it may even be said that she benefits from the war – she is no longer the simple old maid baking cakes and washing dishes, by 1919 she knows much more of the world. By the end of the book, Susan seems very clever compared to what she has been, even cleverer than the others but she must try to hide it because of her lower position. Susan is always very modest: “My knowledge of geography is not so profound as I wish it was but I have an idea that it is quite a walk from Premysl to Petrograd” (p. 121).

One of the “main political topics” in *Rilla* is the USA. As has been stated, the USA stayed neutral very long; she only went to the war when the war was almost finished. In the meantime, Canada had lost many a man in the battles. The USA seemed to be more interested in her trade and business opportunities and did not want war to interfere with the war in any way. Stacey says that “after Canadian casualty lists began to grow, emotional hostility against American neutralism developed among the Canadian public” (p. 228) and this can be seen in *Rilla*, too. These feelings did not vanish very easily. Stacey quotes an extract of a mocking composition⁴² of a twelve-year-old Canadian school boy on “The USA in the War” from the year 1919 and says that even written by a school boy, this composition represents well the Canadian thoughts about Americans of that day (p. 234). Susan is very critical towards the Americans and their president that are not at war. She is said to be talking “with the bitter irony she had of late begun to use when referring to the poor president” (p. 92). The president is also discussed with his own name (which is one of the things that are missing from the Finnish translations, by the way): “And I also see that Woodrow Wilson is

⁴¹ Rothwell, Erika. “Knitting up the World: L.M. Montgomery and Maternal Feminism in Canada.” In Gammel & Epperly, p. 133- 144.

⁴² Composition of a Canadian school boy, school year 1918-19, Normal Model School in Toronto: General Pershing is in Paris. The general calls a taxi but it does not arrive quite on time. When it does arrive, Pershing protests to the female driver: “My good woman, you’re three minutes late.” The lady replies: “My good man, you’re three years late.” (Pershing was the general of the American forces at the front.)

going to write another note. I wonder if that man's schoolmaster is alive" (p. 92). When the USA finally entered the war, "Canada found herself an ally of the country that had once been a traditional and potential enemy" (Stacey, p. 202).

The sinking of the "Lusitania" is also mentioned and discussed in *Rilla*. It is regarded as a terrible event, especially because of the drowned children. Altogether 1 198 people are said to have been drowned.⁴³ Norman Douglas declares – with the words of Montgomery again – that "If the devil doesn't get those men who sank the *Lusitania* then there is no use in there being a devil" (p. 106). Little Bruce Meredith is said to be "worrying over the babies who were drowned" and he "understood now why God didn't answer his prayer – He was too busy attending to the souls of all the people who went down on the *Lusitania*" (p. 106). This happening makes also Mary Vance finally let her fiancé go to the front – before she had tried to prevent him from doing it: "This *Lusitania* business was too much for me. When the Kaiser takes to drowning innocent babies it's high time somebody told him where he gets off at. This thing must be fought to a finish. It's been soaking into my mind slow but I'm on now" (p. 104). The incident of the "Lusitania" is important in many ways. Walter also makes his mind up because of this event: "... I had to do it. I couldn't live any longer on such terms with myself as I have been since the *Lusitania* was sunk. When I pictured those dead women and children floating about in that pitiless, ice-cold water – well, at first I just felt a sort of nausea with life. I wanted to get out of the world where such a thing could happen – shake its accursed dust from my feet for ever. Then I knew I had to go" (p. 118). After the sinking of the "Lusitania", Susan is very sarcastic: "... Woodrow Wilson is going to write a note about it, so why worry? A pretty president!" (p. 104). It is also added that "President Wilson was rapidly becoming anathema in Susan's kitchen" (p. 104). Wilson

⁴³ Yoder, Amos. *World Politics and the Causes of War Since 1914*. Lanham: University Press of America, 1986. (p. 43).

decided to stay neutral in spite of the fact that 128 of the casualties had been American citizens.

As mentioned in chapter 3.1, the German zeppelins were the source of much fear among the citizens of war-faring nations. This fear was also caught by Canadians, although it was not very feasible to come across a zeppelin in Canada. People, especially the older people in Glen St. Mary, such as Susan Baker's cousin Sophia Crawford, are also very afraid of zeppelins: "...when Sophia heard the bricks clattering on the roof she thought it was a Zeppelin raid and went into hysterics" (p. 137). It is a little odd that the so-called Halifax Explosion is never mentioned in *Rilla*. A French ship called "Mont Blanc" exploded in the harbor of Halifax December 6, 1917 after colliding with another vessel (Kerr & Davidson, p. 134). This was, nevertheless, an event very near Prince Edward Island and it caused a lot of agony and despair for many Canadians. It is said to be the largest "man-made" explosion before atom bombs. But, this must again have something to do with the myth and which incidents to include in the novel and which not. As the explosion was not the doings of Germans, as it was first thought, it was not suitable to add it to the mythical memories of war that *Rilla* represents – the memories could not regard Canadians themselves as guilty of such disastrous events. This incident made many Canadians doubt the whole war and their participation in it, so in a novel like *Rilla* that all the time propagates the war and sees the war as just, it was apparently not correct to mention it. The burning of the Parliament Buildings in 1916 in Ottawa – a big piece of news of the time – is an issue mentioned in *Rilla* but – apparently for similar reasons – this incident is only used to stress the evilness of the Germans. Actually, Germany had nothing to do with the burning but this is never explained in *Rilla*. Dr. Blythe is said to be "wrathful and excited over the burning" and Susan exclaims: "What will those Huns do next? Coming over here and burning *our* Parliament building! Did anyone ever *hear* of such an outrage?" (p. 152).

The war did affect the economy of Canada and the financial situation of people in various ways. The prices rose and the products became scarcer. People were supposed to save; this was stressed with the help of some posters, too. In one contemporary poster, it says “Waste not – Want not”, in other “Buy Fresh Fish, Save the Meat for our Soldiers and Allies.”⁴⁴ Canada was the main supplier of food to the allies during the war, but the use of it was rationed in Canada. Even daylight was “saved” as the Daylight Savings Time was introduced, much to the horror of Susan Baker: “Susan got up and went to bed by ‘God’s time’, and regulated her own goings and comings by it. ... she said the prayers by her own clock, and fed the hens by it...” (p. 243). Susan’s reaction is normal, as rural Canadians – such as the Islanders – saw the new time affecting negatively on their habits and livestock.⁴⁵ That the economy of the war society is not the best possible is, however, not very much emphasized in *Rilla*. It may be due to the fact that the Blythes are after all a middle-class family with the father working for a living and not fighting at the front. They do not seem to be suffering from lack of money or poverty and in fact the main reason for being careful with the money is a moral one: it is not so *proper* to eat too much or buy too fine clothes (when Rilla buys a new expensive hat at the beginning of the war this is not accepted by her mother, it is significant that she was able to buy it!) because Belgian children are starving. One of the few occasions when the economic situation is being referred to in *Rilla* is when Susan complains how ink now costs much more than before the war: “I paid eleven cents for a bottle of ink tonight. Ink is twice as high as it was last year. Perhaps it is because Woodrow Wilson has been writing so many notes. It must cost him considerable” (p. 137). However, the Blythes are able to buy ink and also many other articles in addition to food. During the war, they can even afford the first car of the family: “We were all – except Susan – out for a trial ride in father’s new automobile tonight” (p. 223). When the war is over, little Jims

⁴⁴ http://www.vac-acc.gc.ca/images/vimy90/galleries/01_posters

⁴⁵ <http://www.collectionscanada.ca/firstworldwar/index-e.html>

exclaims: “Can we have as much sugar as we want to now?” (p. 267) but as already stated the references to rationing are few.

In *Rilla*, it is not hinted at all that most of the soldiers came from working class families, thus leaving their families in need while in service. There were allowances to those in need but too often that was not enough. As Light & Parr state, “despite government financial support to the families of World War I soldiers, many women found it difficult to make ends meet” (p. 186). Anything of this kind is never mentioned in *Rilla*. Only the wife of James Anderson is said to suffer from poverty but she was already poor before the war. A woman from British Columbia called Mrs. R.E. Farquharson regarded her situation so bad that she made up her mind to write to the Prime Minister in November 1917 to complain about her difficult situation: “This year my husband is in France. ... My oldest child is a girl eleven years old my youngest 15 months, the price of fuel and clothing is awful as well as the price of the plainest food-stuffs. I have asked... for help and can’t even get an investigation. Where there is being so much money wasted and spent on Election and such, surely it is not necessary that any little one’s should suffer...”⁴⁶

As mentioned in chapter 3.2, the Conscription Crisis gave new opportunities for Canadian women: voting. Oversea nurses and women who had close male relatives (husband, father, brother) serving in Europe could vote from December 17, 1917. It was, however, required that the blood tie to the soldier was complete: for example stepmothers or stepsisters could not vote. In posters, women were urged to vote for Union⁴⁷: “Vote Union, Save

⁴⁶ Letter from Mrs. R.E. Farquharson to R.L. Borden, 27th Nov 1917, Robert Laird Borden Papers, Public Archives of Canada (in Light & Parr, p. 187).

⁴⁷ “Union” means here a Union Government by the Conservative Robert Borden that was for conscription. It was formed during the war as the Liberals led by Wilfrid Laurier refused to form a coalition government. Borden called an election on the issue of conscription. Some Liberals left Laurier to support conscription. The Union Government defeated the Liberals and conscription was introduced.

Canada.”⁴⁸ This is what women in Glen St. Mary vote for, too. For feminists it was a happy day. A contemporary feminist Janie Smythe writes to another feminist Flora Denison: “It was a proud day yesterday for me and an hour which you and others have by unceasing devotion to the cause, made possible. I may now be recognized by humanity at large, as having a complete number of organs and faculties with more or less average mental ability to use them! In a word, am equal of my husband....”⁴⁹ In Glen St. Mary, women are also very excited about the election, the result of which might contribute to the acceptance of conscription. Anne is able to vote, but not Gertrud, Susan or Rilla. In order to introduce conscription in society, it had to be accepted by the French-speaking Canadians, too. The Ingleside women were naturally all for the conscription and for the politicians that were for conscription, as may be expected as to the myth. Montgomery also voted in these elections for the first time in her life and of course – for conscription. The time of the elections is exciting time at Ingleside and the women know that it will be a significant day: “Conscription is the real issue at stake and it will be the most exciting election we have ever had” (p. 225). The Blythes are described as waiting anxiously for the results of the elections December 18, 1917: “Yesterday the election came off. In the evening mother and Susan and Gertrude and I forgathered in the living-room and waited in breathless suspense....” (p. 228). When the rumor has it that the conscription seems not to be accepted after all, the women of Ingleside look “at each other in dismay” – they say that “if the Government had failed to carry the West, it was defeated” and complain that “Canada is disgraced in the eyes of the world” (p. 228).

⁴⁸ <http://www.collectionscanada.ca/firstworldwar/index-e.html>

⁴⁹ Letter from Janie Smythe to Flora M. Denison, 18th Dec 1917, Mrs. Flora M. Denison Papers, Library of University of Toronto, in Light & Parr, p. 227.

4.3. Soldiers So Noble

In Flanders fields the poppies blow
Between the crosses, row on row,
That mark our place; and in the sky
The larks still bravely singing, fly
Scarce heard amid the guns below.

We are the Dead. Short days ago
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
Loved, and were loved, and now we lie
In Flanders fields.

Take up our quarrel with the foe:
To you from failing hands we throw
The torch; be yours to hold it high.
If ye break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow
In Flanders fields.

John McCrae, "In Flanders fields", 1915

In *Rilla of Ingleside*, there are many different kind of soldiers, as surely existed in real life, too. In the Canadian war society, enlisting was seen as a man's duty and unavoidable responsibility; this also becomes clear when looking at the posters of the time, which tell men to enlist. Stacey claims that "enthusiasm for the cause – enthusiasm of a nation which had scarcely the faintest idea of the nature of the ordeal ahead – was unbounded" at the beginning of the war (p. 177). This is how young men in *Rilla* responded, too. In the Blythe family, there are three soldiers: Jem, who rushes to the war immediately after Britain has declared war, Walter, who does not like fighting and puts off his enlistment for a long time, and then there is the youngest son of the family, Susan's favorite boy Shirley, "little brown boy" as he is called in the family, who volunteers right after his 18th birthday despite the fact that his brother Walter has just died in combat. In the neighborhood, in the Meredith family, that is already familiar to the reader from *Rainbow Valley*, there are two soldiers: Jerry (the fiancé of one of Anne's daughters) and Carl. Kenneth Ford, Rilla's secret fiancé and the son of

Leslie Moore of *Rainbow Valley*, is also a representative of the soldiers “somewhere in France.” Edwards and Litster contend that “the most dramatic impact of war on Montgomery’s characters is obviously the case of Walter Blythe, emblematic of Canadian youthful sacrifice in *Rilla of Ingleside* and overshadowed throughout *Rainbow Valley* with that inevitable destruction” (p. 35). As mentioned in chapter 3.2, statistics show that in Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island voluntary enlistments were about 24 456, that is, about 4 % of the population. This percentage of Prince Edward Island seems quite small – especially when Nova Scotia is excluded. The view given us by *Rilla*, the Island’s and especially the small Glen St. Mary’s involvement and the number of enlisting soldiers seem quite considerable. This discrepancy seems to have again something to do with the war myth. It is never mentioned in *Rilla* in any way that it was mainly people of British origin that enlisted, either. Montgomery also “forgets” the fact that “more than 35 000 US citizens served in the Canadian Armed Services during the war.”⁵⁰

Unlike his brother Walter, Jem wants to be a godlike hero from the start. He is one of the very first to enlist and everything seems very clear and simple for him, as if he “were arranging the details of a picnic”: “They are calling for volunteers in town, father. ... Scores have joined up already. I’m going in tonight to enlist. ... I must, mother. I’m right – am I not, father?” (p. 41). What is important here as to the myth, Jem goes to the war as a trench soldier, even though he could go there as a medical assistant – he is finishing his medical studies in Redmond University. Gilbert and Anne are sad but implicitly very proud of him, they are happy he is not “selfish and small-souled” (p. 42) and that he feels that it is his duty, that no one has to force him. Rilla, too, is full of pride and carries “her head high among the girls whose brothers had not so responded”, thinking how splendid it was that “the lads of Canada” were “answering so speedily and fearlessly and uncalculatingly to the call of their

⁵⁰ Busch, Briton. *Canada and the Great War*. Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2003. (p. x).

country (p. 43). It is significant that Jem is already going with the very first Canadian contingent: "... Jem far out on the Atlantic, where the great fleet was carrying Canada's first army across the ocean" (p. 78). As said by Stacey: "On October 3 a convoy of thirty transports carrying 31,200 Canadian soldiers sailed for England from Gaspé harbour" (p. 177). He goes on with the words of Nicholson⁵¹ that it was "the largest military force that had ever crossed the Atlantic as a unit." It is in this contingent that Jem, too, leaves. Like Jem, Kenneth is also eager to go and show people that he does dare: "My ankle is about as good as new. ... It will be some feeling to get into khaki all right. Little Ken will be able to look the whole world in the face then and not owe any man" (pp. 90-91).

Walter is the one who even seems to have a more or less clear counterpart in real life: he is at least to some extent the equivalent of the Canadian doctor John McCrae, who wrote the famous war time poem "In Flanders Fields" in 1915 of his experiences at the front. This poem soon became the world-famous emblem of the sufferings and agony of WWI and that later had an effect on the use of poppies as the symbol of the fallen. The same thing happens to the poem by Walter (which we never actually can read on the pages of the novel but it even has three stanzas as "In Flanders Fields"). Both men also die during WWI and even resemble one another to some extent; they are modest men, who want to do their best in the war. Montgomery certainly had John McCrae in mind when writing about Walter. Edwards & Litster see the role of Walter as more important and active than perhaps was his model John McCrae; Walter represented Canada's casualties and departed this life in the war whose violence he had always loathed yet had to take up himself (p. 36).

Walter is very horrified at the war and especially the pain what one might have to endure – not only his own physical pain but also the mental pain of killing others:

Some days I *almost* make up my mind to do it – and then I see myself thrusting a bayonet through another man – some woman's husband or sweetheart or son –

⁵¹ Nicholson, *Canadian Expeditionary Force*, pp. 29-31 in Stacey, p. 177.

perhaps the father of little children – I see myself lying alone torn and mangled, burning with thirst on a cold, wet field, surrounded by dead and dying men – and I know I *never* can. I can't face even the thought of it. How could I face the reality? There are times when I wish I had never been born. Life has always seemed such a beautiful thing to me – and now it is a hideous thing. (p. 81)

Walter is actually the only person in *Rilla*, who thinks of the German soldiers as human beings, not only as nasty Huns destroying the world. He understands that they, too, belong to someone, are dear to someone. Walter is very afraid of pain and feels he is a coward:

I don't think I'm afraid of death itself – it's the pain that might come before death – it wouldn't be so bad to die and have it over – but to keep on dying! ... I've always been afraid of pain.... ... I shudder when I think of the possibility of being mangled or ... *blinded*. ... I *cannot* face *that* thought. ... never to see the beauty of the world again.... I ought to go – I ought to *want* to go – but I don't – I hate the thought of it – and I'm ashamed – ashamed. ... I should have been a girl. (p. 46)

Lefebure claims that “by making Walter the hero of *Rilla of Ingleside*, Montgomery is expanding the notion of manhood, widening the boundaries to encompass this non-traditional male.”⁵² In the form of Walter, Montgomery does not forget to describe those that did not want to rush to the front and that actually did not want to or did not dare to participate in the war. Walter is teased and pestered in the college because he seems healthy but is not in khaki: “The Piper's music rings in my ears day and night – but I cannot follow” (p. 90). He gets letters that are “far more conspicuous for malice than for patriotic indignation” (p. 90) and Walter depicts how “the whole college is aflame over the war” (p. 90). He continues: “A perfectly fit fellow, of military age, who doesn't join up is looked upon as a shirker and treated accordingly. Dr. Milne, the English professor, who has always made a special pet of me, has two sons in khaki; and I can feel the change in his manner towards me” (p. 90). Someone also sends a white feather to Walter. This shows what it could be like, when one did not rush over the Atlantic as quickly as so many others. It was not easy to be a “shirker” when the whole society seemed to be for war. With the words of Vance:

⁵² Lefebure, Benjamin. *Walter's Closet*.

For much of the war, the able-bodied adult male ventured into Canada's streets in civilian clothes at his peril. At every corner, he ran the risk of being accosted by a crowd of drawing-room patriots who demanded to know why he considered himself to be above enlistment. These self-appointed recruiting sergeants might even follow him through the city streets, brandishing the white feather that was the universal symbol of cowardice. Even in his own home, the man of military age was not safe from criticism. (p. 112)

There was no denying that although every other work done for the war (such as growing more crops or supplying troops with the things they needed) should have been just as welcome – in accordance with the myth, to step into khaki was the more honorable and more important undertaking. It was the khaki that counted in the Canadian society of 1914-1918 – and even afterwards.

When Walter finally leaves for the front, everything is different. People are no longer repeating that the war will be over in no time: “There was no crowd at the Glen station the next morning to see Walter off. It was becoming a commonplace for a khaki clad boy to board that early morning train after his last leave. Besides his own, only the manse folk were there, and Mary Vance” (p. 126). Rilla is relieved when Walter finally enlists: “Amid all her pain she was conscious of an odd feeling of relief in some hidden part of her soul, where a little dull, unacknowledged soreness had been lurking all winter. No one – *no one* could ever call Walter a slacker now” (p. 119). Not even Rilla herself, which she almost admits here of doing. Tector contends that Rilla's “reaction is an implicit criticism of the way war has perverted values, for Rilla willingly sacrifices her beloved Walter to the Piper's call”⁵³ That Walter, too, is finally willing to go to the front is significant as to the myth, as the soldier was supposed to sacrifice himself freely and voluntarily. Somehow, the war seems to confuse the identities of people in *Rilla*; there is Walter who does not want to go to the war, but on the other hand, there are women who would like to go. It is interesting that Walter is at the

⁵³ Tector, Amy. *A Righteous War. L.M. Montgomery's Depiction of the First World War in Rilla of Ingleside*. Canadian Literature 179/Winter 2003. (p. 79).

beginning of the novel almost a feminine figure, while Rilla seems an atypical girl, having many male characteristics. However, during the novel, they both develop to conventional citizens, typical representatives of their sex at the beginning of the 20th century. During the war, Walter even gets a D.C. Medal because he had “dashed back from the safety of the trench to drag in a wounded comrade who had fallen on No-man’s-land” (p. 166), something that he had never dreamt of doing before the war.

Shirley Blythe is the last but not the least to enlist in the Blythe family. He will be a flyer, “the king of the air.” As Eksteins says, flying was something where “individual effort still counted” and he adds that “flying was associated with freedom and independence.”⁵⁴ According to Eksteins, in the air the traditional values still counted and one was even able to respect one’s enemy (p. 355). The way Shirley leaves for Europe is different from others: “... Shirley went – not radiantly, as to a high adventure, like Jem, not in a white flame of sacrifice, like Walter, but in a cool, business-like mood, as of one doing something, rather dirty and disagreeable, that had just had to be done” (p. 207). This shows people’s changing attitudes during the long war.

Faith Meredith longs to go and fight like a man. Indeed, she does leave for Europe; she is the only woman in Glen St. Mary that does this as the Blythe twins Nan and Di only leave for the Red Cross in Kingsport. The only way for Faith to leave is as a nurse. As stated by Condell & Liddiard, “middle- and upper-class women desired as much as their menfolk to share in the patriotic excitement of wartime activity.... Care of the sick ... was recognized as central to the role of women.... The work was voluntary and unpaid, which clearly excluded women who had to support themselves or others...”⁵⁵ Watson says that these VADs

⁵⁴ Eksteins, Modris. *Rites of Spring. The Great War and the Birth of the Modern Age*. London: Black Swan, 1990. (p. 355).

⁵⁵ Condell, Diana & Liddiard, Jean. *Working for Victory? Images of Women in the First World War, 1914-18*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1987. (p. 13).

(Voluntary Aid Detachments) even “saw themselves as the female counterparts to soldiers” because they, too, were “serving the country as volunteers.”⁵⁶ Chambers points out that “what attracted VADs ... was the prospect of a coherent and authoritative identity, an entrance on to the world stage, a chance to follow in their brothers’ and lovers’ footsteps.”⁵⁷

Jim Anderson, the father of Rilla’s “war baby”, is a soldier that immediately rushes over the Atlantic to defend his native soil. Jim Anderson is said to be “an Englishman by birth” and “desperately poor” (p. 60). He is also a very careless husband. Without prior notice, he leaves his pregnant wife – who is supposed to give birth in any day – without any help or money. Jim is said to leave “without coming home or sending much hard cash to represent him” (p. 60). Obviously, he does not care much about his wife or the coming baby; he seems to regard the war as much more important than the birth of his first child and the wellbeing of his wife. Jim’s wife dies shortly after he is gone and the newborn is left at the mercy of a drunken woman – until Rilla arrives: “... she’s been pining ever since that worthless Jim lit out for England.... It’s my belief she was took for death when she heard the news. That young un there was born a fortnight ago and since then she’s just gone down and today she up and died” (pp. 61-62). During the war, Jim Anderson never shows any signs of being alive and in only one or two sentences in *Rilla* he is being criticized to some extent: “... no word came from Jim Anderson, who had never been heard from since he sailed from Halifax, and to whom the fate of wife and child seemed a matter of indifference” (p. 77). Otherwise, Jim’s irresponsible behavior is never much disapproved of. Even, at the end of the novel, when he simply comes back safe and sound – and just married – to fetch his son

⁵⁶ Watson, S. K. Janet. *Fighting Different Wars. Experience, Memory and the First World War in Britain*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004. (p. 86).

⁵⁷ Chambers, Helen. *Women’s Writing and the First World War. The Boundary Experience of War*. Unpublished MA thesis: the University of Tampere, 1998. (pp. 66-67).

from Rilla, he is not criticized or condemned for his early behavior. It seems that – in accordance with the myth – even very irresponsible people were forgiven easily as long they went to the war and did their share of defending their mother country.

When the war was ended, Canada had to welcome not only the soldiers coming back home but their fresh British brides – many a Canadian soldier had – if not yet a married wife – at least a fiancée with him. Mary Vance tells her Miller not to “fall in love with a French girl” because “you never can tell about those fascinating foreign hussies” (p. 126). The phenomenon of marrying a soldier seems to have been common, as it is in all wars. Also, James Anderson – Jims’ father – brings home a new wife from England. A contemporary war bride Esme Tuck says that “English brides of the rank and file did not get the preferential treatment accorded to those of World War II”⁵⁸ and this meant that they often had to arrange their own trip over the ocean – they could not travel with their husbands. However, in *Rilla*, Anderson’s wife seems to come together with him.

The reasons for enlisting were of course numerous. The pressure of society must have been one reason. Pike says that “the soldiers fighting on the side of France” were “defending the safety of women, particularly women of the upper classes, who are not expected to have significant responsibilities outside their own households” (p. 8). In *Rilla*, the reasons for going and being in the wet trenches are depicted to be very ideal and moral. Jem is said to be fighting for the future generations, for the children of tomorrow: “There’s something across from us here that has got to be wiped out of the world... an emanation of evil that would otherwise poison life for ever. It’s got to be done... however long it takes, and whatever it costs.... There were gardens over here... and what are they now? Mangled, desecrated things! We are fighting to make those dear old places... safe for other boys and girls – fighting for the preservation and safety of all sweet, wholesome things” (p. 98).

⁵⁸ Story by Esme Tuck, Glenbow-Alberta Institute Archives, in Light & Parr, p. 129.

Walter goes to defend women and girls and he even hints at the rapes of the French and Belgian girls by the German soldiers (something that has been deleted in the Finnish translation, by the way): “Rilla-my-Rilla, there were girls as sweet and pure as you in Belgium and Flanders. You – even you – know what their fate was. We must make it impossible for such things to happen again while the world lasts” (p. 119). Walter is said to be fighting “for a land that bore daughters like this” (p. 127), referring to his “pure and sweet” little sister Rilla. However, in spite of his high morals towards others, Walter goes not so much because of his country but because of his own sake, for his own self-respect, the other motives seem after all only a kind of disguise. He says: “I’m going for my own sake – to save my soul alive. It will shrink to something small and mean and lifeless if I don’t go. That would be worse than blindness or mutilation or any of the things I’ve feared. ... There’s so much *hideousness* in this war – I’ve got to go and help wipe it out of the world. I’m going to fight for the *beauty* of life... that is *my* duty. ... I owe life and Canada *that*, and I’ve got to pay it” (p. 118). According to Walter, the happiness they will have after the war will be “a better happiness” and “a happiness we’ve *earned*” – he continues that life can “never take away the happiness we win for ourselves in the way of duty” (p. 124).

The violence of the battles and death is not described very much in *Rilla*, only on few occasions: “One boy ... was killed right beside me yesterday. A shell burst near us and when the mess cleared away he was lying dead...” (p. 97). However, the soldiers’ fears are described – which is a little surprising as in accordance with the myth, the soldiers were supposed to go to the front most fearlessly and cheerfully – that Montgomery included these depictions actually seems a little contradictory as to the pure myth. Surprisingly, even Jem is said to have been afraid at the front: “Afraid! I was afraid scores of times – sick with fear – I who used to laugh at Walter when he was frightened” (p. 275). Jerry Meredith tells about the German gas attack in a letter to Nan Blythe:

I came back to consciousness at dawn. Couldn't tell what had happened to me but thought I was done for. I was all alone and *afraid* – terribly afraid. Dead men were all around me, lying on the horrible grey, slimy fields. I was woefully thirsty ... and I thought it was all over with me. And I didn't care. Honestly, I didn't care. I just felt a dreadful childish fear of the *loneliness* and of those dead men around me, and a sort of wonder how this could have happened to *me*. (p. 104)

However, Walter's death is said to be painless and fast, with no ugliness in it, which is significant: "... he had been killed instantly by a bullet during the charge at Courcellette" (p. 190). He is also said to have been "the bravest man in the regiment" (p. 275).

Despite their passing fears and melancholy thoughts, no one is ever said to regret that they came, quite the opposite, which is again a sign of the myth's existence. Everybody seems glad that they came and can help with the destroying of the evilness in the world. In the trenches and during the war, it was not uncommon for the soldiers to pass their free time by for example drinking, gambling, meeting local girls, etc. These things are naturally never mentioned in *Rilla* – Jem, Walter and others are always behaving in prudent and sensible ways. It seems to be important that all the sons of Anne will go to the front as volunteers. Not until some time after the youngest, Shirley, has left for the air force, Canada's conscription crisis is mentioned in the novel – so he, too, "managed" to leave as a volunteer, not as a conscript, which again stresses the respectability of Anne's family. When Jem has left and people feel sorry for the Blythes, Anne Blythe answers: "It might have been worse.... I might have had to urge him to go" (p. 56). Rilla, too, "flung up her head", thinking "her brother did not have to be urged to go" (p. 56). Because the women could not go themselves, at least they had given something connected to them, a significant fact as to the myth. Vance says that it was the role of the parent to revel in the child's enlistment, "in whom the fateful telegram produced sorrow but an even stronger rush of pride" (p. 125). Some women even

paraded in cars in Canadian streets to show their pride, as a contemporary photograph shows.⁵⁹

4.4. Women and War

It's a pill for Mr. Kaiser,
And sadly him it vexes
When he full well knows
That his toughest foes
Win war by BOTH the sexes.

A patient at the First Eastern Hospital

The men must take the swords,
And we must take the ploughs,
Our Front is where the wheat grows fair,
Our colours, orchard boughs.

An extract of a Land Army Song

The usual hypothesis is that when a nation is at war and most of the men at the front, women have new kind of chances in life and they can participate more in the war society than they are allowed in normal circumstances. In war time, everybody, including women, have to do things that they have “never done before.” Women even seem to reach a new stage of equality. According to Dombrowski, “the First World War marked women’s definitive entry into the war machine.”⁶⁰ This was also the case in the war-faring European countries as regards the European “sisters” of Canadian women during WWI. Women were also needed by society in Canada and they formed an important labor unit. As Kealey states, “through the last two years of the war, an economic boom was in full swing, and as more

⁵⁹ A photo, Pringle & Booth (NAC), in Vance, p. 126.

⁶⁰ Dombrowski, Nicole Ann. *Women and War in the Twentieth Century. Enlisted with or without Consent*. New York: Garland Publishing Incorporation, 1999. (p. 7).

men enlisted, or were conscripted, women's labour became increasingly necessary and more extensive, despite the reluctance of employers and unions."⁶¹ Kealey points out that women worked both in traditional areas of women and in some areas typical for men. There were a lot of women working with clothing and clerical work, manufacturing and hotels and restaurants, laundries and stores (p. 152). According to Kealey, working class women were expected to "shoulder the burden of maintaining the family without complaint and in a spirit of patriotism that complemented what their men were doing at the front" (p. 202). But was it the same also for middle-class Canadian women and what is the position of women in *Rilla*? How does the war change their life compared to the time before the war?

After the outbreak, the women of Ingleside immediately start working for the country at war with the help of a local Red Cross. They start sewing sheets and bandages and raising money. The younger generation has its own Junior Red Cross with Rilla as its leader and main organizer. As a coordinator and planner, Rilla even seems to have male characteristics. Pike claims that in war time, the women of Ingleside "perform the roles expected of them by their family and community" but that "they rarely change their activities in kind, but only in intensity" (p. 2) and that they have "a class and gender based obligation to provide support" (p. 5). She continues that wartime life is simply "an emotionally intensified version of normal life rather than a different type of life" (p. 2). Thus, according to this view, for example Rilla's money raising is ordinary and just an extension of normal duties. Pike also claims that Montgomery wants to suggest that "the war does not change the social life and structures of the village" in Glen St. Mary (p. 1). She adds that "the work performed by women in Canada during the war is merely an extension or intensification of their pre-war activities" and that the women in Glen St. Mary "come to regard the activities

⁶¹ Kealey, Linda. *Enlisting Women for the Cause. Women, Labour, and the Left in Canada, 1890-1920*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998. (p. 152).

as ‘normal’” very easily and very fast (p. 1). Rose Henderson, a contemporary, comments on the middle-class life in the war society:

For the women of the middle and ruling classes ... war exists for them in conversations, military balls, reviews, anniversary banquets, organizing and raising patriotic funds, kindred activities. Their husbands and sons go to war, but keep well away from the danger zones... For the women of the masses ... who supply 93 per cent of the army, the story is a different one. While the blood of their men folk was being coined into profits on the battle fields, their labor, sex and necessities were the object of profit, extortion, and barter at home.⁶²

The above-mentioned depiction seems to fit *Rilla of Ingleside*, too, but not in one respect: it is true that the sons go to war, but they do not keep away from the danger zones. All the sons of Anne are in an equal position as to the other soldiers and one of them does die in combat.

Pike asserts that the social position of the Ingleside women – that of Mrs. Doctor and her daughter – is very significant when thinking of what they do during the war and how they behave (p. 4). Both Blythe women run Red Crosses in the village and take care of others in need (Rilla’s war baby is a good example) and function in leadership partly because they are one of the better-off folks in Glen St. Mary and this is exactly what they are expected to do as women during the war – in the words of Pike, “the Blythes would be regarded as natural guardians of an orphaned child with no relatives” (p. 4). Rationing and ploughing up the Ingleside lawn for potatoes are only temporary matters and cannot thus be compared to the total losses of houses and homes in Europe. Pike adds that “the Red Cross work done by the women of Glen St. Mary is a safe and mild version of the work” done near the fighting fronts (p. 6). Still, while many men are away, even women in Glen St. Mary have to do chores that they normally do not do. Harvesting is one of the things mentioned in *Rilla*. Susan is very proud of her work in the fields, so is Mary Vance who proudly says: “It’s up to us girls to see that the harvest is got in, since the boys are so scarce. I’ve got overalls and I can tell you they’re real becoming” (p. 216). This seems to me more than an extension as for

⁶² Henderson, Rose. *Woman and War*, N.p. 1924, in Kealey, p. 192.

example Susan was not a farm woman but a servant. On the other hand, Rilla – or her mother – do not go and work in the fields – this is due to their social position in the village and society. Rilla – the future wife of Captain Ford – cannot work in the fields.

The working class and its fates and sacrifices during the war are not much – hardly at all – described or mentioned in *Rilla*. Susan Baker is the only representative of this class. This was the group that faced the war in the hardest way and also working class women suffered more than middle or upper class women. The life of working class women also changed more than other's during the war. Prince Edward Island had a lot of canning industry (for example lobster factories) and many of the workers were women – especially during the war – as depicted for example in a drawing by Robert Harris.⁶³ This fact is totally ignored in *Rilla* and Montgomery only concentrates on portraying her own class, middle class. However, it is important to notice that the “insignificant” house maid Susan has an important leadership role in *Rilla*, especially inside the family but also in the village life to some extent. Montgomery makes a woman of lower classes a very important figure in her novel. Åhmansson argues that Susan Baker is raised “to a position of a female hero” in *Rilla* (p. 152).

At the beginning of the novel, Rilla is not a typical female figure, on the contrary, she is quite unconventional – this is something that she has in common with her mother: Anne used to be an unconventional girl in her childhood. According to Sheckels, “she was doing things few girls, especially from rural Prince Edward Island, did; she was making choices few would think to make”, however, “Anne ... always did what she did without rocking the social structure of her community; her iconoclasm was of a restrained sort” (p. 25). Sheckels states that Anne represents “social protest against various constraints imposed upon girls and women, but her protest is quiet, and it is conducted largely within the social

⁶³ A drawing by Robert Harris, 1880. Public Archives of Prince Edward Island. (in Light & Parr, p. 82).

structures established by the patriarchy” (p.4). However, he adds that Anne does reject the status which the norms have allocated to women and this can be seen in her use of language, too (p. 23). The coquetting Rilla is not interested in career or studying, but neither is she interested in domestic chores or fond of children. Rilla simply cannot stand sewing or other typical household chores of women – and no one does make her do them. Basically, Rilla loathes children – she does save Jims out of duty, but she does not love him. She calls her war baby “detestable little animal” (p. 67), “that little Monkey” (p. 82) or “lizard” (p. 68).

At the end of *Rilla* the happiness seems to be restored and many loving couples are reunited. It is hinted that Rilla is going to be married to Kenneth and assumably sooner or later going to have a family of her own (which, actually is proved to be true in *Road to Yesterday*, where their son is going to WWII – that means he must have been born quite soon after WWI). She is, after all, going to have a similar life as did the generations before her – a life of a housewife and mother. The relationship between Walter loses some of its significance when Rilla secretly gets engaged to Ken. It is suddenly Ken that is calling Rilla “Rilla-my-Rilla” and Walter seems to fade to the background. It seems that Walter has to die so that he is able to become a “real” man and Rilla can fall for Ken and be a proper woman. With Jims, the war baby, Rilla has secretly been trained to the role of a mother. Susan says of Rilla: “... you see what has happened and it is making a woman of her” (p. 77). The rebelling Rilla becomes slowly but surely a mother figure: “Something delightful and yearning and brooding seemed to have taken possession of her. She had never felt like this before” (p.94). She also starts to refer to Jims as “you dear little thing” and “darling” (p. 94). Instead of becoming a modern woman, the war makes Rilla a traditional woman: “The body grows slowly and steadily but the soul grows by leaps and bounds. It may come to its full stature in an hour. From that night Rilla Blythe’s soul was the soul of a woman in its capacity for suffering, for strength, for endurance” (pp. 119-120). The war seems such an experience that

Rilla does not need education, the war is her education. As Light & Parr state, “the proportions of Canadian women who devoted their lives to child-bearing, child-rearing and homemaking did not decline, despite a fall in the birth rate, a parallel decrease in the percentage of the population under fourteen... and the waning of household production” (p. 109). Already before the war, studying had been considered as essential for the girls at least to some extent but also their future as wives and mothers was still regarded as important.

Montgomery was never very satisfied with the traditional fate of Anne. She had a little feminist inside her; it seems that she would have wanted a different fate for Anne if possible but the surrounding society and the readers decided otherwise. She writes in her journal: “I must at least engage Anne for I’ll never be given any rest until I do. So it’s rather a hopeless prospect and I feel as if I were going to waste all the time I shall put on the book. I might be doing something so much more worthwhile” (SJ II, p. 133). As to Rilla, she does not even try to shape another fate for her and in this respect, the novel seems even more old-fashioned than the other *Anne* books – but of course in accordance with the myth. Pike contends that in *Rilla*, there is “continuity with an innocent, idealistic prewar world” (p. 3). Rilla continues faithfully the role of Victorian women, described by Braybon: “they were the guardians of the race, the homekeepers, those who nurtured children and kept their husbands on the straight and narrow path...”⁶⁴ Even the name of the village, Glen St. Mary seems to hint at the future of Rilla and other women, because it is “a name that aligns them with Christian maternal tradition” (Rothwell, p. 136).

It seems that the war did not change the traditional roles and codes of feminine behavior during the war; actually it seems that they were only highlighted more. When the soldiers were leaving to the front – usually at railway stations – women were expected to behave as if nothing unusual was happening. Women had to be smiling when boys were

⁶⁴ Braybon, Gail. *Women Workers in the First World War*. London: Groom Helm, 1981. (p. 131).

leaving for the war. Women were supposed to encourage and inspire men. Anne asks: “When our women fail in courage, shall our men be fearless still?” (p. 116). Women needed to continue living and not to give up, not to “break faith.” Pike states that “Montgomery depicts her women characters making a point of being composed and as cheerful as possible when seeing the soldiers off at the station, fulfilling the expectation that the women be as brave as the men and mask their emotional responses” (p. 7). It was, however, only a mask but it was a part of women’s role. Anne Blythe says: “... I will send my boy off tomorrow with a smile. He shall not carry away with him the remembrance of a weak mother who had not the courage to send when he had the courage to go” (p. 54). As shown by a photograph,⁶⁵ women even paraded in car with posters saying “These four mothers gave to their country 28 brave sons” to show the number of their sons at the front, to show off their sacrifices. According to Susan Baker, women had to “tarry by the stuff and keep a stiff upper lip” (p. 58). Hiding feelings was not always possible: “Her face changed and she gave a queer little choked cry. Most of the time mother is so spunky and gay and you would never guess what she feels inside; but now and then some little thing is too much for her and we see under the surface” (p.100). Rilla, too, feels rebellious: “*Our* sacrifice is greater than *his*. Our boys give only *themselves*. *We* give them” (p. 120).

The traditional image of women as Madonna also seems to continue despite the war. Montgomery romanticizes the war time and adds the love story between Rilla and Ken in her war novel (Pike, p. 1). When Jims says his first words in the lap of Rilla, Rilla is described as a Madonna, pure and conventional: “Kenneth sat very still and silent, looking at Rilla – at delicate, girlish silhouette of her, her long lashes, her dented lip, her adorable chin. In the dim moonlight, as she sat with her head bent a little over Jims, the lamplight glinting on her pearls until they glistened like a slender nimbus, he thought she looked exactly like

⁶⁵ A photo, Pringle & Booth (NAC), in Vance, p. 126.

the Madonna that hung over his mother's desk at home. He carried that picture of her in his heart to the horror of the battlefields of France" (pp. 133-134). There are also other romances (Miranda Pryor and Joe Milgrave, Mary Vance and Miller Douglas) in *Rilla* but they differ from Rilla and Ken's love story in that they are presented comically whereas Rilla and Ken are never laughed at but presented as a holy couple: "The spicy odour hung round them like a soundless, invisible benediction" (p. 138).

Despite what Pike claims in her article, the war still seems to change the everyday life as to the learning of new things and as to the themes of discussion. The change in women's lives is not only emotional as discussed in chapter 4.1 but also mental. Miss Oliver says that only a short time ago they used to think of nothing but the happenings in Glen St. Mary, but that now they "think and talk in terms of military tactics and diplomatic intrigue" (p. 80). Women at Ingleside learned a lot during the war. They learned about geography and politics and foreign languages more than ever before. The war let women learn, if they had not been allowed to do it before. Even older women – such as Susan's cousin Sophia – were enthusiastically trying to gain knowledge of new things: "Cousin Sophia had taken to reading the newspapers and had learned more about the geography of northern France ... in her seventy-first year than she had ever known in her schooldays" (p. 73). Women even develop tactics of fighting as Miss Oliver reports: "We study the maps and nip the whole Hun army in a few well-directed strategic moves. But Papa Joffre hasn't the benefit of our advice... (p. 73). Not only the older generation is learning new things but also the younger generation. Miss Oliver states: "This war is at least extending my knowledge of geography. Schoolma'am though I am, three months ago I didn't know there was such a place in the world such as Lodz. Had I heard it mentioned I would have known nothing about it and cared as little. I know all about it now – its size, its standing, its military significance" (p. 83). It is not enough that one reads the newspapers with strange names, it is also

important to learn to pronounce them right: “Can you tell me ... how to pronounce M-l-a-w-a and B-z-u-r-a and P-r-z-e-m-y-s-l?” (p. 83). Women turn out to be more violent than ever before in the *Anne* books. Susan passes “the moments by torturing the Kaiser to death” and one night, she for example “fried him in boiling oil”, it being “a great comfort” to her (p. 83). “Huns” are the enemies and only their negative characteristics are ever mentioned. It is as if “Huns” were some kind of wild animals from the pre-historical era. Germany was not, however, an underdeveloped country at the time, quite the opposite. The high development of Germany is never mentioned in the novel.

5. Montgomery as a Mythmaker: the Hidden Meanings of *Rilla*

After publishing, *Rilla* was said to capture “the essence of small-town Canada during the war” (Vance, p. 176) and it was said by various critics that it gave a very credible picture of the war time in Canada and of the soul of Canadians. The book sold 27 000 copies in the interwar years. Vance, however, claims: “... these reviewers universalized Montgomery’s view of the war. Glen St. Mary became Anytown, and each character was deemed to have its counterpart in villages across the country. By praising the novel’s verisimilitude, reviewers shifted *Rilla of Ingleside* from fiction to history: it became a ‘true’ record of Canada’s war, and the fictionalization was merely an artistic device that only served to accentuate the book’s authenticity” (Vance, p. 176). None of the critics paid attention to the fact that the book was not as authentic as it seemed. Even Tector says: “Montgomery’s determination to express the ‘soul of the Canadian people’ makes *Rilla* a valuable record of the events and attitudes of the day, especially concerning the heroic role of the women in wartime” (p. 79). In this chapter, *Rilla* is analyzed more thoroughly than in the previous chapters as to the various aspects of the myth presented in chapter 3.3. It will be shown that instead of being a “true record” of Canadian history, it is one representation of it, a representation that uses the mythical memories of the war time as its main theme and idea and that it is one of the many different pieces of art propagating the war myth. At the end of this chapter special attention will be paid to the aim of the myth, the national consciousness, as well as to the new society that the war was claimed to bring with it.

5.1. WWI as a Progenitor of Good and Just - Memories Overlaid with Gold

Nothing is here for tears, nothing to wail
Or knock the breast; no weakness, no contempt,
Dispraise, or blame; nothing but well and fair,
And what may quiet us in a death so noble.

Milton, "Samson Agonistes"

It was seen that "the duty of every Christian" was "to be ready to defend sacred principles like freedom, justice, and truth" (Vance, p. 31). According to the Canadian war myth, "the mythicized version of the war ... proved that pacifism was a bankrupt philosophy, because only those people who were willing to fight for peace and freedom would be able to secure it" (Vance, p. 33) – Vance continues that "the soldier became the foremost advocate for peace ... he was the ultimate pacifist" (p. 33). The idea of a just war and the idea that the war had been very worth all sacrifices keeps reappearing on the pages of *Rilla*. Everybody in Glen St. Mary keeps repeating right from the start that it is a question of a just war; the evil simply must be destroyed from the world and it is the duty of Canadian boys to become "princes of peace." When Walter dies, his sacrifice is regarded as something of very great significance – the fact that he publishes a poem that is read and praised all over the world makes him the emblem of the importance of all the dead soldiers of WWI. It is repeated time after time that one must not "break faith" because of his heroic sacrifice. One must not forget, one must keep faith, one must not give up. Contemporaries realized that there was no guarantee that there would not be another war, that such a grapple might well have to be fought again (where they were right). This, in accordance with the myth, led to the despising and ridiculing of pacifists, because the peace could only be achieved by fighting, by defeating those who well deserved it. *Rilla* herself, too, participates to the war propaganda and declares that this war has to be fought. *Rilla* recites for the war in patriotic societies, with

the result that “more than one recruit joined up because Rilla’s eyes seemed to look right at *him* when she passionately demanded how could men die better than fighting for the ashes of their fathers and the temples of their gods, or assured her audience with thrilling intensity that one crowded hour of glorious life was worth an age without a name” (p. 93).

The only pacifist in *Rilla* is a villager called Mr. Pryor, nicknamed Whiskers-on-the-Moon, and he certainly is ridiculed and even loathed in the novel. He is regarded as “the lover of Germans” although he only says he is a pacifist. He is not on the side of anyone – this is only the imagination of other villagers. Throughout the novel he is for example teased by school boys, his windows are broken, his crop ruined and when he meets some sort of a misfortune he is always laughed at. The rumor has it that he is always seen smiling when something bad happens at the front; this is also the case when the “Lusitania” is sunk. According to Tector, Montgomery might also be using Whiskers to another cause in her novel: “through the persecution of Whiskers” she suggests “the narrowness of public opinion concerning pacifists” (p. 79) is portrayed. To be quite exact, another “pacifist” is also mentioned in *Rilla*. When Jem is leaving for the front, a stranger from the shore hotel says the war is “not worth one drop of good Canadian blood” (p. 56). It is significant that he is kept anonymous and he does not seem to be one of the Islanders. Mr. Pryor’s daughter, Miranda Pryor, secretly gets married – with the help of Rilla – to a soldier from the village, Joe Milgrave, because her father does not accept their marriage plans. Surprisingly, at the end of the novel, Mr. Pryor seems to change somewhat and is said to be quite happy living with his daughter and his son-in-law that comes back from the war – but then he gets a stroke and is “finished.”

The idea of soldiers fighting *for* Christ and *as* Christ also seems to reappear in *Rilla of Ingleside*. The fact that the church was in favor of the Canadian war efforts shines through the pages: Mr. Meredith is the reverend of the village and both his sons, Jerry and Carl, go to

the front eagerly, to the holy war against the pagans of Europe to defend the values of Christianity. In *Rilla*, Germans are said to be men "who have forgotten God" (p. 123). As was usual at the time, the Blythes and other villagers are religious people and go to church every Sunday and live according to Christian principles that they all regard as worth defending. The reverend is very proud of his sons and speaks for the war enthusiastically, especially at the beginning of the novel. Everybody – no matter from which class they came – could be considered equal to Christ. One of the paintings that shows this idea of unity well is James Clark's "The Great Sacrifice"⁶⁶ where the crucified Christ looks down at the dead soldier lying on the ground. Vance argues: "Each Canadian who died for the cause could be assured of eternal life. Just as Christ's crucifixion had been followed by his resurrection ... so too was the death of a Canadian infantryman understood as his elevation to immortality" (p. 44).

Walter Blythe is a good example of a mythical soldier fighting as Christ. In the same way as Jesus, he – from his free will – sacrifices himself for humanity and the result of this is redemption. This consoles his family in sorrow and makes the war more sensible for them. Walter also leaves something behind, a poem, whose message should guide and help the generations after him in "keeping faith." Walter along with his poem is guaranteed an eternal life (He is also guaranteed a small role in the following *Anne* books, in which he and his fate are mentioned several times.) After his death, Rilla receives a letter from him. The resurrection is clearly hinted at:

It is a strange thing to read a letter after the writer is dead – a bitter-sweet thing, in which pain and comfort are strangely mingled. For the first time since the blow had fallen Rilla *felt* – a different thing from tremulous hope and faith – that Walter, of the glorious gift and the splendid ideals, *still lived*, with just the same gift and just the same ideals. *That* could not be destroyed – *these* could suffer no eclipse. The personality that had expressed itself in that last letter, written on the eve of

⁶⁶ A painting by James Clark, "The Great Sacrifice" (Collection Unknown) (in Vance, p. 90).

Courcelette, could not be snuffed out by a German bullet. It must carry on, though the earthly link with things of earth were broken. (p. 190) (italics in the original)

When soldiers were depicted in literature or in other forms of art during the war and also after the war certain imagery were very often used, as was found out by Vance in his investigations. Montgomery, too, uses these same mythical images that refer to death and salvation and to the role of soldiers as Jesus. Soldiers are often pictured going through or over something, for example an arch or a hill. The National War Memorial in Ottawa⁶⁷ is a good example of a monument depicting the idea how the soldiers – through an arch – move on to another world, to salvation. Another example could be a painting by John Byam Shaw called “The Flag”⁶⁸ where the dead soldier lies peacefully on a pedestal in the paws of a huge lion (a symbol of Britain) and is surrounded by calmly mourning people, one of whom has her hands in the air as though a sign of resurrection. Walter, too, is said to move on to another world. He is said to be “going over the top tomorrow” – and he also knows what this means to him: “the Piper will pipe me ‘west’ tomorrow” (pp. 190-191). That he should die in the morning is also a significant symbol, it is a promise of goodness as dawn symbolizes a new beginning, a resurrection. After his death, Walter will be immortal. It is significant that Montgomery does not forget to hint at Walter’s ideal sacrifice in the sequels, either. In *Anne of Ingleside*, written after *Rilla* but telling stories of Walter and other children’s childhood, the following discussion on poppies can be found:

‘Look at that wave of poppies breaking against the garden wall, Miss Cornelia. Susan and I are very proud of our poppies this year, though we hadn’t a single thing to do with them. Walter spilt a packet of seed there by accident in the spring and this is the result. Every year we have some delightful surprise like that.’

‘I’m partial to poppies,’ admitted Miss Cornelia, ‘though they don’t last long.’

⁶⁷ A photo of the National War Memorial in Ottawa, unveiled 1939 (picture taken by J.P. Vance) (in Vance, p. 45).

⁶⁸ A painting by John Byam Shaw, “The Flag” (Canadian War Museum) (in Vance, p. 109).

‘They have only a day to live’ admitted Anne, ‘but how imperially, how gorgeously they live it! Isn’t that better than being a stiff, horrible zinnia, that lasts practically for ever? We have no zinnias at Ingleside. They’re the only flowers we are not friends with. Susan won’t even speak to them.’”⁶⁹

According to the myth, the war purified soldiers, it revealed their true nature. The war transforms the timid and sensitive “Miss Walter” to a courageous soldier that writes to Rilla about his new self: “I’ve won my own freedom here – freedom from all fear. I shall never be afraid of anything again – not of death – not of life, if, after all, I am to go on living. ... But whether it’s life or death, I’m not afraid, Rilla-my-Rilla, and I am not sorry that I came. I’m *satisfied*” (p. 191). Vance says:

It was the rectitude of the cause that allowed the happy warriors to die with a smile on their lips; according to the myth, they died in the comforting certainty that the words of the Latin epigram were still valid. ‘Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori,’ the poet Horace had written in 27 BC to instruct the youth of Augustan Rome in their duty to the state: it is sweet and seemly to die for one’s country. ... the Latin maxim lost none of its resonance in postwar Canada. (p. 99)

Walter, too, is depicted in *Rilla* as the carrier of the above-mentioned ideal. Nevertheless, when Walter dies, the tension seems to have gone and the novel somewhat changes. The death of a family member/friend has been feared for so long that when it finally happens, there is no longer any worse fate to expect. Steffler says that “what holds our attention in ... novels ... is tension” and that “once the tension or conflict disappears from the text, the ... appeal vanishes.”⁷⁰ After Walter’s death, the tragedy is “fulfilled” and the shadow has fallen. But, as to the myth, the death of Anne’s middle son, Walter, is very central and his request to “keep faith” is also fundamental.

There is, however, one scene in the novel, which does not quite fit the pure myth of sacrifice and soldiers. It is the scene where Bruce Meredith – the little neighbor of the

⁶⁹ Montgomery, Lucy Maud. *Anne of Ingleside*. (1939) London: Penguin Books, 1994. (p. 112).

⁷⁰ Steffler, Margaret. “‘This has been a day in hell’: Montgomery, Popular Literature, Life Writing.” In Gammel, pp. 72-83.

Blythes – drowns his dear cat, Stripey, in order to get Jem back home; he tries to barter with God. This happens when Jem’s fate is unclear and no one knows if he is alive or not (later it is found out that he has been a German prisoner of war). He sacrifices the cat to God, in order to get Jem back instead. This seems to be some kind of hidden criticism of all the sacrifices that people had to make during WWI. The scene with the cat makes sacrificing seem very cruel and useless. This is the only occasion when Montgomery seems to criticize the sacrifices of the war. Tector mentions the scene as “Montgomery’s willingness to question the value of the slaughter of so many young men” and goes on that “Montgomery acknowledges the possibility that the sacrifice of a generation of Canadian men may have been futile” (p. 77).

As to the mourning, it was not proper to grieve the fallen members of the family very much – at least not in public – as it did not make sense with the myth’s principles and ideals. Rilla does not put on mourning after her brother’s death. In public, she only says of Walter: “He was just one of many fine and splendid boys who have given everything for their country” (p. 194). She is said to have “a pact to keep and a work to do” and “through the long hard days and weeks of that disastrous autumn” she is said to be “faithful to her task” (p. 195). On the other hand, Rilla’s mother, a heroine of the pre-war era, does not succeed as well as her daughter: “Mrs. Blythe’s return to health was slow...” (p. 194).

Veterans of the war were described and were supposed to live in accordance with the high ideals of the myth. Vance writes: “The soldier could not have been coarsened by war because the cause was righteous: it was unthinkable that the twentieth-century crusader could have been transformed into an animal or an empty shell by fighting God’s battles in Europe. ... The soldier’s soul ... was remade in a finer form. If death had freed the fallen ... the simple act of enlistment did the same” (pp. 53-54). Montgomery seems to include this side of the myth in *Rilla*, too. In the novel, we never hear of the much mangled or totally blind

veterans or there is no hint of the future unemployed veterans begging in street corners, either. Most boys coming back only have a few scars and a little older faces than before. No one is alcoholic or mentally “unbalanced” and every one seems to have work or seems to be able to continue their studies without any problems after settling down in Glen St. Mary again. Although Mary Vance’s fiancé loses his leg in the war, it does not seem to be anything disastrous for anyone in society, not even to himself, quite the opposite: “Miller was brisk and beaming in spite of his wooden leg; he had developed into a broad-shouldered, imposing looking fellow and the D.C. Medal⁷¹ he wore reconciled Miss Cornelia to the shortcomings of his pedigree to such a degree that she tacitly recognized his engagement to Mary” (p. 272). Losing a leg does not seem to matter at all to the future wife of the man, either; Mary Vance is just as efficient and optimistic as always: “Of course farming’s out of the question for us now but Miller thinks he’ll like storekeeping fine once he gets used to a quiet life again.... We’re going to be married in the fall and live in the old Mead house.... I’ve always thought that the handsomest house in the Glen.... ... Miller’s real ambitious and he’ll have a wife that will back him up” (p. 272). Mary Vance makes a huge leap into another class and her socialization into the adopting community is more than perfect: she used to be an orphan of poor drunkards and she ends up with a man in a middle-class position. The fact that the man is a veteran will make her status even higher. Jem Blythe, too, will continue his studies at the University of Redmond right after the war – almost as if nothing had happened. Carl Meredith does lose one eye in a battle but only says cheerfully: “One eye is enough to watch bugs with” (p. 259). In only one sentence of the novel, Montgomery hints that perhaps everything is not as unproblematic as it seems: “None of them came back just as they went away, not even those who had been so fortunate as to escape any injury” (p. 273).

⁷¹ The Distinguished Conduct Medal was the second highest award for gallantry in action after the Victoria Cross and it was awarded for distinguished conduct in the field.

The secular, humorous approach on the war can also be found in the novel. Thus, Montgomery seems to be determined to remember mainly the happy moments of the war time, at least to some extent, as many of her contemporaries were doing. But then again, it is also typical for Montgomery's books to be humorous. It was a part of the myth that the life at the front should resemble as much as possible the life at the home front. Jem is even eating Susan's delicious cakes in the trenches and joking in his letters as usual. Of course, there was censorship and even self-censorship at the front as to the letters but sometimes it all seems a little too cheerful. But as Vance writes: "... such trivialization could never entirely ease the pain of the war; the very real horrors of the trenches could never be wished away with a humorous ditty or a flippant joke. A confectionary vaudeville song could not erase the blight of Passchendaele. Celebrations of victory, even in a just cause, could not fill the vacant chairs at the kitchen table..." (p. 89). Montgomery does not completely forget the fact that in spite of humor, the war really left its marks on people. She depicts Rilla's pain of losing Walter: "... at last tears were all wept out and the little patient ache that was to be in her heart until she died took their place" (p. 189). On the other hand, people of Glen St. Mary are fairly religious as was usual at the time and religion in some form is a normal, regular part of their lives (for example going to church, praying). This fact makes the humorous part of the myth smaller and the religious ideas of the war, such as soldiers as Jesus, appear more strongly in *Rilla*. In fact, the war seems to make villagers even more religious than they have been. Miss Oliver says: "I believe in Him now – I *have* to – there's nothing else to fall back on but God – humbly, starkly, unconditionally" (p. 126). Susan and others are also described to find much comfort in religion.

As Canadians were determined to remember only the happy moments of the war time, the public seemed to long for entertainment and diversion that were based on the brighter side of the war. During the last years of the war and after the war, a new positive

view of the war was reconstructed for example by musicals, plays, films, literature, all kinds of gatherings and even advertisements. According to Pike, *Rilla of Ingleside* owes “a great deal to two war memoirs that she⁷² had read and a war movie she had seen” (p. 1). The novels meant are *My Home in the Field of Honor* by Frances Wilson Huard and *A Hilltop on the Marne* by Mildred Aldrich. The movie that Pike refers to is called “Hearts of the World” and it depicts the battle of Courcellette (where Walter is said to have fallen). Montgomery is said to have “liked” all these three productions. It is interesting that Montgomery uses the above-mentioned film in *Rilla*. Rilla Blythe and her mother go and see this film in town. It is war and they suffer because of it, but still they want to go and see a film on war after Walter’s death. It seems significant that Montgomery wants to use one of the violent scenes of the film in *Rilla*: a young girl fights with a German soldier who is trying to rape her and the girl stabs him with a knife. The dangerous and agonizing setting is made humorous, because Rilla starts to scream in the cinema and give advices to the girl (this is actually what Montgomery’s friend is said to have done when watching the film). *Rilla* itself is not only a representation of the war myth; its characters also cherish the war myth by wanting to watch films on the war.

The almost idyllic comradeship between the soldiers at the front and the view that in the trenches everyone was equal are emphasized in *Rilla*, too. Many different kinds of young men leave for Europe in *Rilla*. They come from different classes and from various backgrounds but in the novel, they are one group, together they melt into one, they are all highly respected citizen-soldiers fighting for the values of Christianity. In the novel, no conscripts are mentioned; all the soldiers discussed are volunteers. All Anne’s childhood friends (note the fact that they ALL happened to have sons of military age!) also seem to be affected by the war: ““Even Billy Andrews’ boy is going – and Jane’s only son – and Diana’s

⁷² Montgomery

little Jack,' said Mrs. Blythe. 'Priscilla's son has gone from Japan and Stella's from Vancouver – and both the Rev. Jo's boys. Philippa writes that her boys 'went right away, not being afflicted with her indecision'" (p. 76). All these boys come from very different circumstances – for example Jane's son is the son of a millionaire, whereas Billy Andrew's son comes from a fairly penniless farm – but here, too, they are regarded as one group representing Canada and willing to sacrifice themselves immediately. In the previous chapter, the case of Jim Anderson was mentioned. He, too, is regarded as "one of them" although he deserts his family – being a soldier brings with it a valuable status for any man.

In accordance with the myth, soldiers were supposed to be happy and proud that they had been there and made history. This aspect can be found in the novel, too, no one ever regrets that they went there. The war achievements of individual citizen-soldiers are stressed in *Rilla*, not the new technology with the help of which these achievements actually were made. No matter from which class the soldiers come, they are regarded as "perfect" and they are not capable of such atrocities as the Germans (which, again, was not quite true, there were recorded cases when Canadians were found to be bayoneting Germans "just for fun"). There is also strong comradeship between the women at home. All kinds of women try to co-operate for the same aim, to work together for the nation, in spite of their disagreements. Rilla and her former friend, Irene Howard, make a good example of this: in spite of their quarrels they co-operate.

As was usual in wartime depictions, the news of the war normally reached people and especially the men who were going to enlist in the middle of nature, for example in woods or in the field. In *Rilla*, too, the situation is similar and the setting very natural, depicted in more detail already in chapter 4.1. There is the seashore and lighthouse, the proximity of woods and willows. Many of the youngsters at the seashore party (for example Jem, Jerry and Ken) are very enthusiastic about the news that arrives there during the evening

and in their minds, they immediately decide to enlist, to take part in this new adventure offered for them. To some extent, *Rilla* is also linking past heroic histories to WWI and therefore stressing the continuity and linearity of historical events. Already in *Rainbow Valley*, Walter and others read about past battles and dream about the life of heroic knights and their great deeds. The most popular mythical images of soldiers, “the rugged backwoodsman” and “the sensitive intellectual” can be found among the soldiers of Glen St. Mary. Jem and many others, for example Jerry and Carl, seem to represent “backwoodsmen” whereas Walter seems to be the only one representing “sensitive intellectual”, which, actually was not so popular a figure than “backwoodsman.” It is interesting that Montgomery included in one family all central and heroic figures of soldier: Jem Blythe as “backwoodsman”, Walter Blythe as “sensitive intellectual” and Shirley Blythe as “knight of the air.”

Mother symbolism is included in *Rilla* as well. Mothers (and other women) form the pillar that everything rests on during the war; their strength decides whether or not soldiers can leave in high spirits and succeed in their important mission. This soldier-mother connection was also common in postcards and propaganda posters. In a contemporary postcard,⁷³ right at the foreground, there is a mother lovingly embracing her son who is leaving for the front, she seems to represent the durability, continuity, love and strength of the home front. In the background a few men are watching the marching troops. Anne and her role as a soldier’s mother have already been dealt with in chapter 4.4. but it is worth mentioning that this scene from the postcard could be straight from the pages of *Rilla*. When soldiers were coming nearer their end, the myth required that their last thoughts were of their mother or of the sceneries of their childhood. Walter, when he suspects he will die, is also thinking of his home and Rainbow Valley which he had always loved:

⁷³ A postcard (William H. Wiley) (in Vance, p. 148).

You and Ingleside seem strangely *near* me tonight. It's the first time I've felt this since I came. Always home has seemed so far away – so *hopelessly* far away from this hideous welter of filth and blood. But tonight it is quite close to me – it seems to me I can almost *see* you – hear you speak. And I can see the moonlight shining white and still on the old hills of home. ... tonight somehow, all the beautiful things I have always loved seem to have become possible again – and this is good, and makes me feel a deep, certain, exquisite happiness. It must be autumn at home now ... our old 'farewell-summers.' (pp. 190-191)

He had already written to her mother the night before but in his last evening alive, he wrote – instead of his mother – to his little sister, Rilla. Nevertheless, this fact seems to correspond to the myth and its meanings, too, as women were regarded as the “producers of future” and soldiers also stood for the future of their country. Walter writes to a future mother, who perhaps was even more close to him than his own mother. Walter knows that Rilla will soon be a mother (which she according to the sequel did, as her son was going to WWII): “I've a premonition about you, Rilla.... I think Ken will go back to you – and that there are long years of happiness for you by-and-by. And you will tell your children of the *Idea* we fought and died for – teach them it must be *lived* for as well as died for, else the price paid for it will have been given for nought. This will be part of *your* work, Rilla” (p. 192).

Stressing the role of citizen-soldiers led to the enthusiasm for example schools, universities, institutions, communities, churches and all kinds of societies to record clearly all the names of their members that had left for the front. As the exact names were written down, the individual sacrifices were also remembered eternally. Vance lists some ways that he thinks were part of the remembering and “writing down.” Naming things after the war was one way. Another way was building great memorials and monuments: “the interwar era saw a burst of memorialization that was unparalleled in the nation's history” (p. 202). Memorials could also be schools, hospitals etc. A third way of honoring was to remember the dead annually; this meant the creation of Armistice Day – later Remembrance Day – with its celebrations. This day, according to Vance, “became a public statement of the myth of

Canada's war" (p. 216). The fourth way was to build a better nation in accordance with the values the soldiers had fought for. The contemporary Reverend S. Buchanan-Carey speaks for this: "... if from their deaths ... we get a new vision of life, a view of sacrifice that inspires us to a nobler living, then their deaths were not in vain ... They have become a part of the splendor of the race ... telling us that life is to be lived in utter selflessness."⁷⁴

In *Rilla*, no special recording of "who goes and when" is mentioned, but it is certain that all the villagers knew whose son left and whose did not. They also did know what happened to them at the front, who died and who came back and in what condition. "Keeping faith" is a phrase mentioned dozens of times in the novel. Montgomery had obviously learned her "Flanders Fields" well and shows it. Naming things after the war was also a way to honor the deeds of people in *Rilla*. Susan Baker stubbornly calls little Jims "Kitchener" from the start. However, it is not the boy's official name (but if Susan could have decided it would have been). The British Lord Kitchener was appointed Secretary of State for War when WWI started but he died already in 1916 in a battle. His face was used in many propaganda posters to increase enlisting. Also, a baby in the village of Glen St. Mary is named "Douglas Haig": "The doctor had arrived home, tired but triumphant, little Douglas Haig having made a safe landing on the shores of time" (p. 238). Haig was a Commander-in-Chief of the British Expeditionary Force between 1915-1918 (Westwell, p. 119). On the other hand, Whiskers' – the pacifist's – dog is called "Sir Wilfrid Laurier", according to the man who was famous for opposing conscription. In the church of Glen St. Mary, on the wall above the pew of the Blythes, there is also said to be a memorial tablet to the memory of Walter Blythe: the sacrifices are "written down."

⁷⁴ Speech by Reverend S. Buchanan-Carey (in Vance, p. 219).

There were also other ways to “keep faith”. We do not know if great memorials were to be build in Montgomery’s Glen St. Mary or how the village would have celebrated Remembrance Day if Montgomery had decided to write more about the aftermath of the war or to continue the story of Rilla and others (in *Road to Yesterday* that functions as some sort of sequel to *Rilla* none of these is mentioned). But, after Walter’s death, the theme of “keeping faith” is repeated over and over again. It is not explained closer in the novel what it actually means but it must – in accordance with the myth – mean that Canadians ought to respect the values their men had fought for and behave accordingly for the rest of their lives. They ought to build a better, peaceful nation for the future generations and never forget what happened. Montgomery seems to underline women’s role in this process.

As we have seen, *Rilla of Ingleside* seems to be a good example of a novel that propagated the mythic memories of WWI in Canada. The foremost aim of the different parts of the myth is said to be the unification of the nation at the emotional level but the myth also had other aspirations and needs. The war must not have been a vain one – this was the basic requirement for the construction of the myth. No one should be able to claim that the war had been a waste of time and that the poor Canadians and the boys of other nations had died in vain. Vance emphasizes:

It was not just the bereaved, however, who craved an explanation for the four years of agony that the country had endured. Any one who lived through the war or its immediate aftermath looked for a way to give meaning to something that demanded explanation. To suggest that the four years of upheaval had meant nothing was... to surrender oneself to desolation. But it was also to turn one’s back on a version of the past that could satisfy the craving for comprehension. One only had to accept the myth for the trials of 1914-18 to make sense. Canada’s memory of the war conferred upon those four years a legacy, not of despair, aimlessness, and futility, but of promise, certainty, and goodness. It assured Canadians that the war had been a just one, fought to defend Christianity and Western civilization, and that Canada’s sons and daughters had done well by their country and would not be forgotten for their sacrifices. To these great gifts, the myth added the nation-building thesis. By encouraging people to focus their thoughts on a time when the nation appeared to be united in a common cause, the memory of the war could prove that the twentieth century did indeed belong to Canada. (p. 266)

5.2. A New Society, a New Nation, a New Identity?

Sometimes I'm not even sure that I have a country.

But I know they stood there at Ypres
the first time the Germans used gas,
that they were almost the only troops
in that section of the front
who did not break and run...

And that's ridiculous, too, and nothing
on which to found a country.

Still
it makes me feel good, knowing
that in some obscure, conclusive way
they were connected with me
and me with them.

Alden Nowlan, "Ypres", 1915

Before drawing this work to a close, I would still like to ponder whether the war brought with it a new society in Canada and what kinds of marks the war left on the people in Glen St. Mary, especially the women. The novel ends in the spring/summer of 1919, thus, some time passes after the armistice and there are also some prospects of the future. Did people start a new, better life as the myth wanted to declare? Or did they go back to the old life, to as large extent as possible, in all spheres of life? And the last but not the least question that I am going to deal with: did something happen to the national spirit of Canadians?

Pike's opinion is that at the end of *Rilla*, the village of Glen St. Mary goes back to its "ordinary pre-war life" and "its old ways", "with the end of the war being a restoration of what was rather than the new world Montgomery hoped for" (p. 8). In Pike's view, Montgomery is giving an idea about "continuity and stability" and she asserts that "in making her war novel a village love story Montgomery creates a version of the war that allows her female characters to appear heroic simply by meeting the expectations of their communities, thus ensuring a post-war world that is essentially unchanged" (p. 8). *Rilla's*

lipping in the final sentence of the novel could also be seen as a symbol of the return to the old world with its old ways. Rilla had lisped before the war but never during the war. When Ken after the war asks her the meaningful question she has been waiting for the past few years, her answer is: “Yeth” (p. 277). As already mentioned in chapter 4.4, the women and men of Glen St. Mary go back to what they had been doing before the war, even Carl Meredith who became half blind – the only exception being Mary Vance’s legless husband, who, instead of being a farmer, takes a step forward in society and ends up a shopkeeper. In real life, it was not so simple. Many women who would have wanted to continue working lost their jobs and were pushed back to the private sphere after the war. In *Rilla*, however, women do not seem to have any more ambition for career than before. Presumably, all the daughters of Anne are going to get married and have a family, as their mother had done years ago. In the spring of 1919, there is no longer anything to criticize, either, people seem to be very satisfied with their pre-war society and its politics and politicians – even Susan.

But everything is perhaps not quite as it seems. The war was an important and decisive phase for many. Condell & Liddiard state: “By 1918 the restrictive Victorian image of womanhood – physically frail, sheltered, leisured, private – had been undermined by the wartime experience of both sexes. It was now permissible for women to be physically courageous, enduring, responsible, conscientious, cheerful and outgoing” (p. 157). The best example of this in *Rilla* is perhaps Susan Baker and her “honeymoon.” At the beginning of the novel, Susan is very ashamed of her old age and of the fact that she was never proposed to by anyone when she was young. During the war, she rejects Whiskers’ proposal and works in the fields as efficiently as younger people and after the war, she decides to have a “honeymoon” of her own: “I shall never be able to get a husband but I am not going to be cheated out of everything and a honeymoon I intend to have” (p. 271). She is no longer ashamed of anything, she is proud of what she is and what she has done. Tector says that

Susan “is no longer a household drudge, but a dignified woman with a right to rest” (p. 82). Chambers mentions the guilt of women after the war: “Women could not escape the myth that the war was fought for them, their protection and future, and that they were essentially to blame for the loss of life” (p. 140). However, this idea does not appear in *Rilla* in any way, quite the opposite. According to Epperly, *Rilla* is “Montgomery’s celebration of the female” (p. 112). Hynes, on the other hand, points out an interesting detail:

Middle-class and upper-class girls had also escaped, into volunteer work in hospitals and into the auxiliary services, where they were continually in the company of men in circumstances that their mothers would never have approved in peacetime – bathing the wounded, dressing their wounds, working with men, driving them about. At the war’s end there were 61 000 women in the VAD and the forces. They knew more about men than pre-war young ladies had been allowed to know, and the idea of chaperoned innocence could not be revived.⁷⁵

This is a fact worthy of note and can be applied to Faith Meredith in *Rilla*. She was a VAD and took care of the wounded. Actually, it is interesting to notice how before the war, Jem and Faith are said to be “only friends” and “only children” and suddenly at the end of the book, without any prior notice, they are going to get married. As if the work as a VAD had made Faith suddenly a woman. Also, it seems significant that after the war keeping a household is regarded as “a science.” Una Meredith is said to be leaving for a course in “Household Science” (p. 276).

The novel is also to some extent a celebration of the nation. The Canadian war myth stresses that “somewhere in France”, a nation was born that was no longer so dedicated to the mainland, instead, people were happy to be Canadian. This mythical belief has survived to our day in some form and it has been that part of the myth that even historians sometimes have wanted to accept as true: that WWI was the war that formed new nations and changed the world, including Canada. The myth has it that Canada had entered the war as a

⁷⁵ Hynes, Samuel. *A War Imagined. The First World War and English Culture*. London: Botley Head, 1990. (p. 363)

meaningless colony but returned home with a new kind of pride and satisfaction and above all, with a new national consciousness of what they were, what they wanted to be and what they were not. Soldiers had taught the nation how to live; they “held the guiding light.” It was believed: “If the courage and selflessness that soldiers had shown on the battlefield could be shown by the civilians every day of their lives, the nation would indeed be worthy of the men and women who had given their lives in the crusade. If the mythicized version of Canada’s war ... remained at the forefront of the public consciousness, the nation’s future knew no bounds” (Vance, p. 225). The aim of the myth was to form a nation that was united and with equal opportunities for all. The war was seen as a unique once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to unite the country and also a good way of Canadianization. It was seen that also the minorities such as Indians, immigrants and Quebecois were miraculously melting into one nation because of the war. It was believed that “the myth could turn everyone into better Canadians and make them worthy of the country for which 60 000 men and women had given their lives” (Vance, p. 256). However, the claim of the myth that the war was seen as a unique opportunity to unite the nation and also a good way of to canadianize for example Indians, immigrants and Quebecois is hardly present in *Rilla*. The French-speaking Canadians are hardly ever mentioned, nor immigrants or Indians or other minority groups. Only Wilfrid Laurier is mentioned in connection with the elections and he is disliked by all.

My opinion is that the rise of some kind of national consciousness among the islanders and some kind of mental birth of the Canadian nation are implicitly depicted on a local, personal and emotional level in *Rilla*. At the beginning of *Rilla*, the villagers seem to have a total confidence in Britain and its abilities to win the war. Foreigners are not regarded as very efficient soldiers. The British troops and their leaders, on the other hand, are valued very highly. Canada is seen as a part of “Old Grey Mother” and people think it is only fair to go and help her when she calls her “cubs.” At this stage their “country” still seems to mean

Britain, the Empire. Canada does exist, but not without Britain. Especially in the beginning, *Rilla* is full of names of British wartime politicians, leaders and generals and usually they are respected and their doings are admired. Some examples could be Kitchener and the British Prime Minister Lloyd George. Mary Vance even announces that Lloyd George is the only man that she might want to marry, if she had not Miller. The strange thing is that the names of Canadian leaders are not at all so common. Robert Borden is mentioned hardly ever and General Haig only a few times.

Little by little it all starts to change. Expressions such as “we Canadians” and “our Canadian boys” start to appear more and more often. Susan, for example, declares: “We Canadians mean to have peace *and* victory, too” (p. 203). Rilla, too, writes in her diary: “Our Canadian troops have won another great victory – they have stormed the Passchendaele Ridge and held it in the face of all counter attacks” (p. 224). The Canadian Corps is soon regarded as the best troops by the Ingleside people: “The Germans would never have got back Passchendaele if the Canadians had been left there; and it was bad business trusting to those Portuguese at the Lys River” (p. 240). Montgomery mentions in her novel all the central battles where the Canadian Corps was fighting in real life. Often, some one of the village is wounded in these battles. She is very exact with the dates and places of the battles and there seems to have a clear reason for the using of these battles in *Rilla*: Montgomery shows the slow but sure rise of national spirit.

In the spring of 1915 Canadians fought in Ypres where the Germans used the gas weapons for the first time and in this battle Jerry is wounded but Jem comes through “without a scratch”, not knowing “how I or any of us did” manage to come through (p. 104). In the battle of the Somme the Canadians distinguished themselves at Courcellette: in this battle Walter Blythe dies. In the article “More about Anne”, it is said that “the most notable

achievement of the Canadian forces was their capture of Vimy Ridge.”⁷⁶ Jerry Meredith is wounded again in this battle. Then there is the battle of Vimy Ridge. After the Canadian troops had won a hard battle there, a Canadian General is said to have said of the battle: "It was Canada from the Atlantic to the Pacific on parade. I thought then . . . that in those few minutes I witnessed the birth of a nation."⁷⁷ The battle of Vimy Ridge is said to have been the battle that “united Canada.” It was fought in April in 1917 by exclusively Canadian forces. All previous attempts to capture the hill from the Germans had failed since 1914. However, Canadian army managed to claim the hill. The number of casualties of this fight was 3 000 – 4000 (Kerr & Davidson, p. 138-139). Montgomery, too, stresses this battle more than others: “Vimy Ridge is a name written in crimson and gold on the Canadian annals of the Great War. ‘The British couldn’t take it and the French couldn’t take it,’ said a German prisoner to his captors, ‘but you Canadians are such fools that you don’t know when a place can’t be taken!’ So the fools took it and paid the price” (p. 208).

One of the important battles for Canadians was the capturing of Hill 70, where, again, one of the villagers is wounded. This time it is Miller Douglas who loses his leg. In the article “More about Anne”, it is said that “the Canadians were put on the defensive during the spring of 1918 when Jem Blythe is reported wounded and missing.” The battle of Amiens – which starts the row of victories for the allies – is where Carl Meredith loses his eye. Carl’s sacrifice has not been in vain – the Blythes also notice the sudden turning of the tide: “The war news has been good right along. . . . after nearly four years of disasters one has a feeling that this constant success is unbelievable. . . . Susan keeps the flag up but we go softly. The price paid has been too high for jubilation. We are just thankful that it has not been paid in vain” (p. 259).

⁷⁶ *L.M. Montgomery: Chapter 4 More about Anne 1919-1939*. <http://galenet.galegroup.com> (LRC) (Accessed 2.10.2007)

⁷⁷ <http://www.talkingproud.us/HistoryVimyRidge.html>

The using of all the important battles in *Rilla* seems to hint that she is showing the rise of the nationhood, at least to some extent she seems to believe that Canada became Canada “by way of Flanders.” Tector contends: “... for Canadians such as the Blythe family, the turmoil and loss of the war years diminish the old imperial connection, replacing it with a new sense of national pride” (p. 83). The fact that the Blythes are so tense at the time of the elections, is also a sign of the new position of their country: Canada’s doings suddenly are very important at the international level. Had Laurier been elected, the Blythes would have been very ashamed of their nation. Tector adds that “the war is no longer about saving the ‘old grey mother’; it has become a mission to honour those who have died and to prevent conflict from occurring” (p. 84). Dying and living for Canada, not for Britain, is what counts at the end of the novel. Actually, there are some parallels in the fate of Rilla and the developing of Canada, according to Tector: “Like Canada, which cannot become a nation until she has suffered ‘storm and stress,’ Rilla cannot become a woman until she has earned her maturity through the ordeal of war” (p. 84).

Not only is the rising national spirit depicted by the soldiers at the front but also by the women and their accomplishments at home. The following portrayal of harvesting is a clear hint at the new identity: “Susan, standing on a load of grain, her grey hair whipping in the breeze and her skirt kilted up to her knees for safety and convenience ... was neither a beautiful nor a romantic figure; but the spirit that animated her gaunt arms was the self-same one that captured Vimy Ridge and held the German legions back from Verdun” (p. 217). At the end of the novel, after many decisive victories of the allies in 1918, Susan hoists the Union Jack at Ingleside. It is not said explicitly but at this stage, the flag seems to symbolize a different thing than at the beginning. Before, the Union Jack and hoisting it had clearly been a symbol of the Empire, of Britain, but now it was only a symbol of Canada:

Nevertheless she went out and ran up the flag ... As it caught the breeze and swelled gallantly out above her, Susan lifted her hand and saluted it, as she had seen

Shirley do. ‘We’ve all given something to keep you flying,’ she said. ‘Four hundred thousand of our boys gone overseas – fifty thousand of them killed. But – you are worth it!’ The wind whipped her grey hair about her face and the gingham apron that shrouded her from head to foot was cut on lines of economy, not of grace; yet, somehow, just then Susan made an imposing figure. She was one of the women – courageous, unquailing, patient, heroic – who had made victory possible. In her, they saluted the symbol for which their dearest had fought. Something of this was in the doctor’s mind as he watched her from the door. (p. 247)

It cannot be denied that WWI had not had some marks on national awareness in Canada. After the war, many organizations were created and publications published that wanted to deal with Canadian issues only and contribute to the “new feeling of unity” and nationalism. McNaught claims that “the size of the sacrifice deepened Canada’s determination to move more distinctly towards autonomy” (p. 214). On the other hand, Hynes points out that “all wars divide – divide not only *our* side and *theirs*, but soldiers from civilians, men from women, one generation from another, war-lovers from war-haters. These divisions don’t end with the war’s last shot: they continue into the following years, and constitute those other conflicts, the wars after the war” (p. 337). To be exact, this was the case in Canada after the war, too. French-speaking Canada still felt not a part of Canada. It is true that the war did unite people to some extent: across social, political, religious and ethnic divisions. It cannot be denied. But not so much as people wished for. The thought of the uniting power of the memory of the war was too optimistic and the myth promised much more than it could achieve in reality (Vance, p. 258). Vance even claims that Walter Blythe’s words in *Rilla*, how he had “helped to make Canada safe for the poets of the future – for the workers of the future ... if no man dreams, there will be nothing for the workers to fulfill” (p. 192) implicitly mean that “dreamers should not work and workers should not dream” (p. 261). It is interesting that in Canada, there is still no Independence Day as in many other countries. Canada Day (formerly Dominion Day) marks the establishment of Canada as a new

federation with its own constitution on July 1, 1867. But Canada Day does not commemorate a clear-cut date of complete independence.

6. Conclusion

In the war time and after it, the war theme became popular in all forms of art – often propagating the war or stressing the positive sides of it – and many novels were published and films made as one of their goals to give people some sort of amusement or consolation based on the war. Montgomery's *Rilla of Ingleside* was published during this time, too, and *Rilla* seems fairly clearly a part of this traditional “happy” war literature. As this thesis has tried to prove, WWI had an effect on Montgomery's writing. In her “ordinary children's books” written during and after the war, one can find many traces of warfare and a different kind of atmosphere from those that were written before the war. The final culmination of Montgomery's “war novels” is *Rilla of Ingleside*. However, it seems to me now that the novels before *Rilla* were more violent than the actual war novel, for example the depiction of Kenneth Moore's death mentioned in chapter 2.2. is much more hideous compared to the painless and “tidy” death of Walter Blythe in a battle of WWI. This must be due to the war myth.

From the very start, Montgomery was very much in favor of the war and this can be seen throughout her novel. *Rilla of Ingleside* is a very special novel because it is a contemporary and many-sided representation of WWI, seen mostly through the home front. As this thesis has shown, my hypothesis was right and all the important aspects of the mythical memory of the war were found in it in some form. On the other hand, some other features were found in it that do not quite fit the “purest” myth, features that show that Montgomery differed to some extent from other propagating artists of the time. It is strange that her war literature seems to reveal more about her actual thoughts of the war than her war journals.

It is significant that Montgomery's novel contains many important events of the time, such as the sinking of the "Lusitania" and the elections in Canada, showing average people's reactions to them. What also makes *Rilla* an important representation of the experiences of WWI is the author's most perfect accuracy with the dates, places and people of the time. The novel is also unique because it includes a hint of John McCrae in the shape of Walter Blythe. Thus, in some respects, one might even call it a "true record" of the time. Nevertheless, when reading *Rilla*, one does not for example get the right idea of the percentage of the volunteers and their origins, as Montgomery highlights too much the proportion of volunteers born in Canada or in the rural Prince Edward Island. Some distortions also occur as to the occupations of the soldiers.

In my paper, I tried to discover "what is there is to be found in *Rilla*", but I also tried to find out "why" and as already stated, I found out that the novel is a little contradictory as to the pure myth. As has been proved, *Rilla* contains all six aspects of the war myth: the idea of a just war, the idea of soldiers fighting *for* Christ and *as* Christ, the construction of a positive, humorous version of the war, the war as a raiser of status, the idea of soldiers as Canada and the idea of "keeping faith." The soldiers of *Rilla* are all foremost advocates for peace – even Walter finally – and they go to the front to defend women, the children of tomorrow, Christianity and Western values – whatever the latter means. According to the principles of the "Golden Summer", the soldiers also go to defend the gifts and innocence of their home. The evil simply must be destroyed from the world and it is the duty of Canadian boys, the sacred "princes of peace." The soldiers' boyishness, innocence, youth and optimism are highlighted.

Walter Blythe makes an excellent example of a soldier elevated to immortality and of a soldier purified by the war and "remade in a finer form." No matter where the soldiers come from in *Rilla*, they are regarded as one group representing Canada and willing to

sacrifice themselves. In a way, the war time was the time of equality, both in the sacrifices of the trenches and in the sorrow of the home front, which Montgomery is able to prove nicely. On the other hand, Walter is an “unmythical” figure because together with Jerry Meredith and Jem they are depicted to abhor war occasionally and be afraid of it. Walter is very horrified at the war and especially the pain, which does contradict the myth very much. The humorous aspect of the myth is also found in *Rilla*, but it is also typical for Montgomery’s books to be humorous, thus, it is hard to say which humor she uses on which page. Furthermore, the war seems to make villagers even more religious than they have been, which again contradicts with the humorous aspect.

The war is depicted at the emotional level in *Rilla* and the lives and feelings of the villagers are turned upside down because of the war. Even if Rilla says they can never be happy in the same way as before the war, what people experience in Canada cannot, however, be totally compared to the losses of homes in Europe. Women form the strong pillar that everything rests on during the war; this is a part of their mythical role. Rilla’s mother, however, among others, does not completely succeed in hiding her feelings or in being a “strong pillar” as required by the pure myth. The women of Glen St. Mary have new kind of chances in life and they can participate more in society than before the war as the traditionally opposed discourses become tangled – although in some respects, their work is only an emotionally intensified version of normal life rather than a totally different type of life – this is due to the middle-class status of many characters. The main character Rilla as well as other young women in the novel are going to have a similar life as did the generations before them – a life of a housewife and mother. Instead of becoming a modern woman, the war makes Rilla a traditional woman, which fits the pure myth. Rilla and others do not want to “break faith”, they want to help to build a better nation in accordance with the values the soldiers had fought for, which is a central aspect of the myth.

Above all, the mythical memory of WWI was “invented” to fill various human needs that the war had brought with it: consolatory needs, explanatory needs, etc. The myth was a way to give meaning to something that had shaken the life of so many people. As the myth explained the past, it also offered a prospect of a better future. *Rilla* is a part of this need-filling process in its own special way. There was also the hope of the unification of the nation at the emotional level. In her own way, Montgomery is safeguarding the past with *Rilla* and to some extent showing her pride of her country, Canada, showing the rise of the national spirit. While reading *Rilla*, one notices that the war is no longer about saving the ‘old grey mother’, it has become a duty towards Canada and its future. This change is also what I wanted to express with the help of the two pictures I enclosed before my Introduction: first, it is a question of helping “the lioness” but in the end, it is a question of safeguarding the memories of the fallen, of concentrating on the future of Canada, not of Britain.

The myth had little basis in fact but it did not matter. It was not relevant if the mythical memories were true as long as they were positive and made the war seem worth while. It was considered a challenge of a lifetime to take part in the war and to be able to defend important values and this could not be questioned by any one or anything: the myth never criticized anything. But here one might ask if it is possible to criticize war without criticizing the fallen? As the fallen are always to be honored in war societies, it seems almost impossible to criticize the war or at least one must find special ways to do this.

However, it seems that sometimes, although very implicitly, Montgomery is criticizing the war and Canada’s sacrifices in it. Rilla’s “too happy” reaction to Walter’s enlistment shows the changed values of the war society, whereas the continuing ridicule of Whiskers suggests the narrowness of public opinion. In addition, the scene with Bruce and the cat makes sacrificing seem very cruel and useless. After all, Walter also seems a very contradictory person. He proves to himself and others that he – after all – is a “man”, but he

is destroyed in doing this. And, the fact that he had always been an atypical male – some critics have even suggested that he was a homosexual – cannot be forgotten, in spite of his final sacrifice. Thus, it seems that Montgomery with her *Rilla* is not a perfectly “pure” mythmaker.

In my Introduction, I raised the question “why did Montgomery write *Rilla* and what did she want with it?” In addition to earning money with it and fulfilling the dreams of the *Anne* fans all over the world of yet another sequel, one can only guess at Montgomery’s purposes and intentions as she does not reveal them much in her journals, either. When *Rilla* was published, Montgomery was very satisfied. She did not expect much from the book, though: “*Rilla of Ingleside* came today – my eleventh book! It looks very well. I don’t suppose it will be much of a success, for the public are said to be sick of anything connected with the war. But at least I did my best to reflect the life we lived in Canada during those four years. ... It is the first one I have written with a purpose” (SJ III, p. 17). It is said by Edwards & Litster that “Montgomery’s primary motive was to inspire the courage of her Canadian readers for an actual war, where her exemplars had merely encouraged theirs for a potential one” (p. 37). Pike claims that with *Rilla* and its characters, Montgomery wanted to express her own hopes and wishes for changes that were to last (p.2). Pike’s claim seems the most credible to me, as the novel’s characters always speak with the very words of Montgomery.

Montgomery always wanted to write a book that “would live.” I think *Rilla* might be the one. It is not and it will never be a “world classic” but it is a significant book as it is based on the Great War, a significant event in human history – and although it is a part of the mythical memory of the war and in that sense not a “true record”, it succeeds in describing the contemporary reality and world view because the myth was a central part of peoples’ reality back then. Montgomery herself wrote about her war novel in her journal in 1936: “I have been reading all my own books over again and today I finished *Rilla of Ingleside*. I have

decided it is the best book I wrote. I laughed and cried over it – especially the scene where ‘Rilla’ says good-bye to Walter. ... Yes, I did a good piece of work in *Rilla*.”⁷⁸ This statement might prove that Montgomery wanted to believe in what she was writing; she wanted to believe and console herself, too, with the help of the myth; to write to prove to herself that the war had not been in vain.

As WWI had been a shock and a cause of great distress for Montgomery, all the more terrible it was for her to witness the beginning of another great war, WWII. Sometimes it is said that WWII killed Montgomery, she was so unhappy about it, saying that everything she had worked for had been destroyed. We can only guess what kind of book she would have written if she had still been capable of writing during WWII or after it. She had once written about a war, so it is possible that she may have wanted to write about it again. Because she links the Blythes again with WWII in *Road to Yesterday*, the idea that she had thought about writing another war novel immediately pops into mind: “And now another war was going on and they said several of his grandsons were going – especially Gilbert Ford, who was in the Air Force.”⁷⁹ Gilbert Ford is of course Ken and Rilla’s son. But we will never know for sure what she had in mind, as many short stories including the Blythes were deleted by her son Stuart Montgomery from *Road to Yesterday* before it was published.

When pondering whether or not Montgomery was consistently and intentionally writing according to the myth, one also has to remember the pressures coming from her publisher. She writes in her diary: “... a letter had come from Stokes complaining that ‘*Ingleside*’ was ‘too gloomy’, and wanting me to omit and tone down some of the shadows. *Also*, subtly intimating that I had not ‘taffied up’ the U.S. enough in regard to the war – this last being the real fault though they did not like to say so bluntly” (SJ II, p. 404). It is not

⁷⁸ *The Selected Journals of L.M. Montgomery. Volume V: 1935-1942* Ed. Mary Rubio & Elizabeth Waterston. Toronto: Oxford University Press, 2004. (pp. 80-81).

⁷⁹ Montgomery, Lucy Maud. *The Road to Yesterday*. (1974) New York: Random House, 2003. (p. 371).

known what she changed or did she change anything because her reaction to that was: “Well, I didn’t and I won’t! I wrote of Canada at war – not of the U.S.” (SJ II, p. 404). If she, however, decided or was compelled to change something, we can only guess how “gloomy” – and “unmythical” – the “original” *Rilla* was.

I think *Rilla* is worth studying more and I hope I have been able to create some new views on *Rilla*. There is still much to discover in this book. It might also be worth looking at other countries of the Empire and investigating their possible myths of war and literature produced after the war or during it and compare them to *Rilla*. It might help to create new ideas of the past, the past that we can no longer reach ourselves but which keeps fascinating and mesmerizing many people.

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