"Women Worth Fighting For": Revaluing Gender and War in *Rilla of Ingleside*

A Thesis Submitted

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By

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To my loved ones on the home front who understand the value of love, loyalty, and courage:

Bernie, André, Jean-Luc, David, Benoit,

Jonathan, Aimee, Chloé, Naomie, Isolde, and Theodore

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Abstract

The objective of this thesis is to examine expectations of gender and war during World War One that Lucy Maud Montgomery subtly challenged in *Rilla of Ingleside* by suggesting that the majority of Canadian women were not only worthy of male sacrifice, but that women's sacrifices, although different, were equal to that of the combatants and merited recognition and celebration. Montgomery's maternal feminist philosophy shapes the lives of the women portrayed in her war novel as the author focuses on the importance traditional domestic roles played in supporting Canada's war effort. Throughout the novel, Montgomery emphasizes the characterizations of worth as defined by Victorian norms preserved in pre-war rural Canada, national ideals of citizenship, and organized religion. By measuring her female characters against her perceptions of feminine worth, Montgomery highlights the value of traditional domestic roles and suggests a revaluing of gendered labour. By juxtaposing differing points of view in *Rilla*, Montgomery also challenges her readers to examine gender and war from conflicting perspectives. In *Rilla*, Montgomery enthusiastically creates a Canadian ideology of women's place in the war effort and also defines, through Rilla and other characters, what makes a "good" or "worthy" woman. Although much research has been done on Montgomery and her work, relatively little has focused on her war novel that accurately portrays the war fought by Canadians on the home front. With reference to Montgomery's war diaries, personal correspondence, and close readings of her and contemporaries' writings, as well as war anthologies, documented histories and firsthand accounts, this study of *Rilla of Ingleside* helps complete an understanding of Canada's home front during the war by portraying the lives of Canadian women as they learn to revalue traditional gender roles and the complicated moral and religious issues of a nation at war.

Dissertation Keywords/ Search Tags: Lucy Maud Montgomery, Great War, First World War, gender roles, characterizations of worth, religion's role in war, home front.

Résumé

L'objectif de cette thèse consiste à examiner les enjeux hommes-femmes pendant la Première Guerre mondiale et les attentes qu'avait la société de l'époque par rapport aux femmes et à la guerre – une perspective contre laquelle s'insurge subtilement Lucy Maud Montgomery dans *Rilla of Ingleside*, ouvrage qui laisse entendre non seulement que la majorité des femmes canadiennes étaient dignes des sacrifices des hommes, mais aussi que leurs propres sacrifices, bien que de nature différente, étaient comparables à ceux des combattants et méritaient tout au tant d'être reconnus et célébrés. Bien que les études sur Montgomery et son œuvre ne manquent pas, il en existe relativement peu au sujet de ce roman de guerre qui dresse un portrait authentique de la guerre menée par les Canadiens sur le front intérieur. Fondée sur les journaux de guerre et la correspondance personnelle de Montgomery, sur la lecture minutieuse de ses écrits et de ceux de ses contemporains, ainsi que sur des anthologies, des ouvrages d'histoire documentés et des récits de première main, cette analyse de *Rilla of Ingleside* aide à mieux comprendre ce qu'était le front intérieur du Canada pendant la guerre en montrant comment vivaient les Canadiennes et comment elles ont appris à réévaluer les rôles traditionnels de l'homme et de la femme, et en mettant en évidence les enjeux moraux et religieux complexes d'une nation en guerre.

Mots-clés/clés de recherche pour la dissertation : Lucy Maud Montgomery, rôle de la femme, caractérisation du mérite, rôle de la religion dans la guerre, front intérieur.

List of Abbreviations

RI	*Rilla of Ingleside*
RV	*Rainbow Valley*
SJ	*The Selected Journals of L. M. Montgomery*

Curriculum Vitae

Debra Childs DeGagné wrote for her high school paper and won the Lieutenant Governor of Nova Scotia's Medal for poetry published in *Such a Neat Idea* while she attended Acadia University. Debra graduated from Acadia in 1999 with a B.A. in English. As a military spouse, Debra has held many positions in the education field, finding new jobs as her husband was posted and the family relocated. She has worked for many Military Family Resource Centres as a day care director and ESL teacher. As a graduate student in War Studies at the Royal Military College of Canada, she worked as a RA for Dr. Robinson and researched Lucy Maud Montgomery's journals. This inspired her to read Montgomery's novels for the first time. Debra felt particularly connected to *Rilla of Ingleside* and Montgomery's depiction of Canadian life on the home front during the Great War. As a military spouse and mother of four sons, two of whom serve in the Canadian Army, Debra is in accord with Montgomery that families supporting military members should be recognized and celebrated.

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The Complexities and Contradictions of Worth

Lucy Maud Montgomery's (1874-1942) novels, particularly *Anne of Green Gables* (1908), have captured the hearts of Canadians and the world. She was a respected contemporary of Mark Twain's and John McCrae's; the Governor General of Canada, Earl Grey, was such an avid fan of Montgomery's that he organized a special trip to Prince Edward Island so he could meet and personally thank her for her books. While many people have read or heard of "Anne", not as many know of Montgomery's war literature. Montgomery's novel, *Rilla of Ingleside* (1921) merits inclusion in Canadian studies of the Great War because the novel vividly represents war and its impact on the home front. Unfortunately, the fact that *Rilla* was written by a woman prevented the novel from publication in some anthologies of war literature. For many years Paul Fussell's *The Great War and Modern Memory* was considered the authority on war literature and only included novels depicting the battlefield, such as Robert Grave's *Goodbye to All That* and Anthony Powell's *A Subaltern's War*. Fussell's text excluded women's fiction, citing in the Foreword that his book focused on British men and "the trench experience itself."[1] Recent critics, however, such as Patrick Quinn and Steven Trout, counter Fussell's argument that women's writings do not belong in collections of war literature. Quinn and Trout argue in *The Literature of the Great War Reconsidered* that a "far more complex, varied and contradictory assemblage of works confronts us, as the designation 'war literature' has moved beyond the battlefield to include the creative expressions ... of anyone, soldier or civilian, man or woman, who struggled to interpret the unthinkable."[2] *Rilla of Ingleside* helps complete the study of Canada's homefront during the Great War by portraying the lives of Canadian women as they

learned to revalue traditional gender roles and the complicated moral and religious issues of a nation at war.

Montgomery believed that the majority of Canadian women had worked hard to support the war effort, and suggests that feminine sacrifices, although different, equaled those of the combatants and merited recognition and celebration in her war novel, *Rilla of Ingleside*. My thesis focuses on Montgomery's consistent use of contradictions in *Rilla* and in her life; working within the parameters of a maternal feminist philosophy to define women's worth in war, Montgomery constructed *Rilla* to celebrate Canadian women's contributions to the war effort, while her inevitable contradictions encourage readers to reconsider their thoughts on gender and war. By juxtaposing points of view in *Rilla*, Montgomery challenges her readers to examine gender and war from divergent perspectives. One of Montgomery's greatest incongruities is her belief in Canadian women's significance in the war effort juxtaposed with her own personal feelings of worthlessness. Her personal self-doubts arguably drove her to rewrite other girls' and women's possibilities. By making the main character, Rilla, emerge as an esteemed and accomplished young woman, Montgomery enthusiastically creates a Canadian ideology of women's place in the war effort and also defines, through Rilla and other characters, what makes a "good" or "worthy" woman.

Montgomery began writing *Rilla of Ingleside* just months after the Treaty of Versailles ended the Great War, in March, 1919. Although happy the war was over, it was a low point in Montgomery's life. She was devastated by the death of her beloved cousin, Frederica Campbell MacFarlane, who died in the post-war flu-epidemic. She was also tired of writing about her internationally-acclaimed character, "Anne," and longed to create new personalities. Montgomery's publisher, and her countless readers, however, insisted on another "Anne" book.

Montgomery appeased her public and publisher with *Rilla*, a work she vowed would be her final book featuring red-headed Anne Blythe. This novel is the eighth in the Anne of Green Gables narrative and focuses on Anne's youngest child, Rilla, as she matures from an irresponsible and self-centred adolescent into a compassionate and capable young woman during the Great War.

Montgomery wrote over one hundred pages in her journals about the war, and integrated many of her experiences and emotions in *Rilla*, attributing her personal feelings to various characters throughout the novel. Like many Canadians, Montgomery avidly waited daily for war news, through newspapers, or letters from friends and family at the front. She incorporates her obsession with war news in *Rilla*, including more than seventy-five references to battle locations on the eastern and western front. As the Presbyterian minister's wife who comforted parishioners in distress or mourning, she came, like the Blythe family, to dread telegraphs or telephone calls announcing the news that a loved one was injured, missing, or dead.

Rilla of Ingleside, published in 1921, is one of the few contemporary Canadian depictions of women on the home front during the Great War. Rilla Blythe, the main character, is the youngest of Dr. and Mrs. Gilbert Blythe. Her older siblings, including her sisters, are studying at university; a feat Rilla has no intention of emulating. The Blythes are an upper-middle class family and therefore have a housekeeper, Susan Baker, who is an important character in the novel. The novel opens with hard-working Susan taking a well deserved break to read the local paper. The headline informs of Archduke Ferdinand's assassination in an unpronounceable place overseas, an article Susan ignores as irrelevant as she searches for loved ones' names in the gossipy Glen "Notes." Montgomery introduces and describes the prominent characters of the novel through Susan's reading of the "Notes," and thereby presents a picture of a happy, loving family that the reader knows is about to be torn apart by war.

Pretty and naively young, Rilla is undisturbed by the international news, and is instead obsessed with her first up-coming dance. She plans every detail of the evening carefully, and when her friend, teacher Gertrude Oliver shares her dream of red waves of blood consuming the village, Rilla's only concern is that the dream foretells a storm that might ruin her first adult party. The news of war does disrupt the dance and distracts Rilla's romantic interest, Kenneth Ford. Just days after the dance, Rilla's oldest brother, Jem, and his best friend Jerry, have enlisted and are subsequently sent for training and action overseas. Rilla's petulant response to the unromantic end to the dance is quickly replaced with responsibility when she adopts an orphaned war baby. Rilla does not like babies, and the constant care of a newborn infant is a sacrifice that her older brother Walter acknowledges.

Walter, a sensitive poet, has been ill with typhoid, and so family and community members do not expect him to enlist with Jem and Jerry. Rilla's love interest, dashing Kenneth Ford, has had a broken ankle, but enlists as soon as medically possible. Rilla learns that Walter's classmates at university believe him to be a coward, and are sending him white feathers anonymously. When Walter confides in Rilla, she becomes his rescuer through her strength and faith in him. Montgomery intertwines "worthy" and despicable characters throughout the novel, such as when Walter secretly enlists and Rilla's former friend, Irene Howard, gleefully tells Rilla the news before the fund raising concert. Rilla gathers her courage and continues with the program, but is overwhelmed that her favourite brother has become a soldier.

When Jem, Jerry, and Kenneth enlist, Rilla decides she wants to do something to help her brothers and friends at the front. Like Montgomery, Rilla organizes and leads her local Red Cross group. When Walter is killed in battle, Rilla takes over most of the domestic duties in the home when her mother collapses. She cares for her war baby, the Red Cross group, organizes

fund-raisers and even manages to disrupt patriarchal authority by arranging a war wedding. Pacifist Whiskers-on-the-moon, father of the bride, as he is contemptuously known in spite of his position as deacon in the village Presbyterian Church, is against his daughter marrying a soldier. Whiskers informs the enthusiastically patriotic villagers when war is declared that he is against the war, and locals ostracize, vandalize, and even attack him in church because of his beliefs.

Walter, unlike Whiskers, gains approval for his courageous death as well as for writing a poem that quickly becomes a recruitment tool. Jem's dog, Dog Monday, who patiently waits at the train station for his master's return for four and a half years, howls all night when Walter is killed at Courcelette. When Jem is reported missing, though, Dog Monday remains silent, a fact that Susan uses to comfort the stricken family when they hear the news. Jem, Jerry, and Kenneth return, but Montgomery makes it clear that life will never be the same as it was the night of Rilla's first dance.

Montgomery's construction of a war novel focused on women and their worth directly contrasts with her personal experiences. Incidents early in Montgomery's childhood left her with life-long feelings of insecurity and doubts of her own importance that were never satisfied despite her eventual literary success and celebrity status. Early in her life, Montgomery developed barriers that ensured the separation of her private emotions from her public persona in order to survive her often-overwhelming anxiety and lack of self-confidence. In public, Montgomery portrayed lady-like charm overlaid with an invitingly humourous personality in the realization that the public would assess her worth as a famous writer and a Presbyterian minister's wife by contemporary expectations that shaped womanhood.[3] Montgomery's private life, however, as recorded in her journals, describes a very lonely and angry woman who feels

imposed upon by public and domestic expectations and who questions her self-worth. Not surprisingly, given her contradictions, the usually intensely private Montgomery chose to re-inscribe large sections of her diary in *Rilla*,[4] attributing some of her innermost feelings about the war to various characters in her novel.[5]

The perception that Montgomery's literature may be "sentimental" [6] or "sugary"[7] establishes another inconsistency when her works are closely analyzed. Montgomery realized early in her career that in order to be financially successful she would have to shape her writing to the market's demand for "happy endings." In fact, Paul and Hildi Tiessen point out in *After Green Gables: L. M. Montgomery's Letters to Ephraim Weber, 1916-1941* that Montgomery wrote to her decades-long correspondent that the "public *want* the happy ending. The world *must* have its fairy tales. There is enough sorrow – enough of 'sad endings' in human life – one doesn't want it in literature, too."[8] Montgomery also understood the economic consequences of not giving her public what they wanted: "I can't give up my profitable 'series' until I have enough money salted down to give the boys a fair start in life – for my 'real' novel will not likely be a 'best seller.'[9] In some respects, *Rilla* follows this pattern of "happy endings" as the subplot of Rilla and Kenneth's romance interlaces with war reports and family anxieties. Montgomery achieved financial independence with her "happy ending" style and eventually earned six times her husband's salary as a minister.[10] Superficially, her work appears cheerful and carefree, focused on romances and weddings, such as the comical war wedding in *Rilla*: "Miranda Pryor is going to marry Joe Milgrave tomorrow afternoon while her father is away in town. A war wedding, Susan – isn't that thrilling and romantic?"[11] However, close examination shows that Montgomery managed to introduce subtle shadows that reflect the darkness of her private

depression and that challenge convention without disrupting the *status quo*; for example, the fact that Rilla encourages Miranda to marry against her father's wishes disrupts patriarchal authority. Benjamin Lefebvre and Irene Gammel suggest in *Anne's World* that Montgomery's literary worth rests on her successful application "of subversive, double-voiced narration and satire" combined with "her layers of subtexts and narrative subtlety." [12]

Although Montgomery held strong views on women's worth, she did not see the need for women in the public sphere as symbolized by the vote, which exposes another of her contradictions. She did not publicly endorse the suffragette cause like her contemporary, Nellie McClung, and yet she often seemed to support a female franchise. In her journals, she happily writes that she has the vote thanks to her half-brother Carl serving overseas. Furthermore, in *Rilla*, Montgomery points out the injustice to patriotic single women who work to support the war effort, like Susan Baker and Gertrude Oliver, who are passionately "furious" to be excluded from voting.[13] While Montgomery's fiction expresses the injustice of some women being excluded from the franchise, she wrote in her journal that she did not feel the vote, a public symbol of status and voice in society, inspired any personal "especial desire"[14] or would change women's lives or alter the world to any great extent. Although Montgomery wrote *Rilla* to celebrate Canadian women's efforts to support the war, her maternal feminist philosophy shapes, and limits, her representation of women's war work, which betrays a further inconstancy. Montgomery portrays women's war efforts through traditionally-accepted domestic roles like sewing, baking, and caring for others. She does not refer to the hardships of women working in dangerous munitions plants, and the only mention of Voluntary Aid Detachment (V.A.D.) nurses is Faith Meredith, who never serves near the front like many actual V.A.D.s[15]

Montgomery expressed similarly mixed attitudes towards war. In 1928, she wrote that *Rilla* was written not to glorify war but "to glorify the courage and patriotism and self-sacrifice it evoked."[16] In the same passage she wrote that there was a difference between offensive and defensive wars, implying that the Allies were irreproachable as they had been the ones attacked. Although expressing regret for the destruction of life and countryside, Montgomery paradoxically concluded this journal entry by writing that the termination of wars may not be a good thing. While wars were horrific, she writes, they seemed necessary for the creation of great art and literature that were either the gods' reward for suffering or else "they are growths that have to be fertilized with blood." [17] This belief that artistic masterpieces were often inspired by war was not Montgomery's only reason to support the war in 1914. She was also a strong patriot and believed Canada had no choice but to support England. She was fiercely proud of Canada's contribution to the war and refused to be intimidated by *Rilla*'s publisher when he complained that she had not "'taffied up' the U. S. enough in regard to the war."[18] Montgomery argued that she would not change her novel because she had written about Canada, and not the U.S., at war. Conversely, though, Montgomery also questions the actions of a nation's unfettered patriotism by inserting incidents that involve the pacifist Whiskers and Rilla's yet un-enlisted brother Walter. Each character receives rough treatment, scathing insults, and social exclusion. Rilla's brother is humiliated when he receives a letter with a white feather enclosed, the symbol of cowardice, while Whiskers has property vandalised and is physically assaulted.

Montgomery's view on the role of organized religion and spiritual beliefs in wartime is equally paradoxical. As a well-brought-up Presbyterian, who was also a minister's wife, Montgomery was very familiar with the Bible. In *Rilla* she includes more than forty Judeo-Christian references which imply that "the call to 'keep faith' has both patriotic and religious

dimensions" for soldiers and civilians in war. [19] Patriotically, keeping faith suggests believing in military victory, while religiously it denotes faith in a higher being. Montgomery believed that God was "on the Allies' side," yet gives her character Walter voice to express the opinion that war is a "hell upon earth which men who have forgotten God have made."[20] Throughout her diary and *Rilla*, Montgomery details the comfort and support Canadians and the villagers of Glen St. Mary find in God, while still managing to convey the pettiness and vindictiveness Christians at war hypocritically hold towards their enemies.

In four chapters, and a conclusion, I will show that Montgomery's writing suggests that a person's worth could be characterized by specific ideals that were not exclusive to one gender. Montgomery held that by living these ideals Canadian men and women would "keep faith" with the dead, and thereby prove their worthiness of the fallen soldiers' sacrifice as they built a better future. Chapter One, "Montgomery's View of Women's Worth in War," discusses Montgomery's and her husband Ewan's personal experiences of war and how the war infiltrated their lives. This chapter details Montgomery's convictions in the justness of the First World War and her volunteer work for the community and church during the war. This chapter also discusses the foundation of my thesis: Montgomery's journal quotation that "women [were] worth fighting for."[21] Montgomery believed the work that many Canadian women performed in support of the war established their worth as citizens and merited recognition and social equality. Because Montgomery was a maternal feminist and her female characters' war work mirrors her own values, she overturned conventional war literature and made *Rilla*'s heroes feminine.

Chapter Two, "an insignificant person, of no importance to anybody," provides a background to Montgomery's life and suggests that her lifetime of examining her own insecurities enabled her to see worth in others. Montgomery was a complex and contradictory

woman. She held many ideas on women's worth, even though her own sense of importance had been eroded by negative experiences in her childhood. On one hand, she categorised worth according to contemporary society's traditional values for women, as a wife and mother. Montgomery lived according to the governing principles of Victorian womanhood that believed men should provide for their families, yet, at the same time, she was comfortable earning more money than her husband. Montgomery also saw beyond this narrow scope of traditional beliefs and reconfigured women's war contributions on the home front as equal to those of the men fighting overseas. Montgomery's complex thoughts on the duality of her public and private life, and the details of her extensive duties that often interfered with her writing, suggest she often felt pulled in divergent directions. This chapter establishes, as well, how Montgomery uses subversive shadows and contradictions in *Rilla*, such as her depiction of Susan who comes to oppose the traditional limitations that constrict women while appearing to perpetuate pre-war gender roles, and her portrayal of Irene Howard's devious and mean-spirited manipulations during volunteer and fund-raising events in support of the war. In illustrations such as these, Montgomery subtly challenges, without overturning, the *status quo* that quietly shaped her maternal feminist philosophy.[22]

Chapter Three, "Montgomery on Canadian Worth: Loyalty, Industry, and Courage," illustrates how Montgomery creates characters that supersede expectations and thereby establish their worth as individuals and as supporters of the war effort, while discreetly inspiring the reader to re-examine personal opinions of gender and war. Montgomery measures her characters against a high moral standard in order to assess their value and decide if they are worthy of the soldiers' sacrifices. But she also implies that there are dark sides to characteristics like loyalty, and provides opportunities to reconsider accepted norms. Another of Montgomery's

contradictions is that, although she believed character, not gender, defined a person's worth, she limited her feminine characters in *Rilla* to war work that maintained women's gender roles. On the other hand, in spite of these limitations she placed on women's war work, she thought worthiness could be defined by character traits that crossed gender lines: loyalty, industry, and courage.[23] Montgomery's creation of characters such as Rilla and Susan, who meet Montgomery's requirements as worthy, as well as those she depicts as falling short and failing Canada, such as Whiskers-on-the-moon or Irene Howard, suggest Montgomery juxtaposed contradictory personalities to highlight those positive characteristics she felt worthy of celebration. This chapter points out Montgomery's technique of emphasizing contradictions to allow the reader to make decisions on characters' natures, while contemplating the changing gender roles and characteristics necessary in an overseas' war and at home.

The final chapter, "Worth Defined by Religion: Montgomery, Blood Sacrifice, and Religion as Crusade" examines how worth is represented in organized religion in Montgomery's life and reflected in the lives of the citizens of fictional Glen St. Mary during the Great War. This chapter examines some of Montgomery's numerous Judeo-Christian references that she believes justify the war and that she uses to help comfort herself and her characters. Montgomery's contradictory attitudes to the role of religion in war reflects the power religion holds over the community and how it was used in real life and in fiction as a recruiting tool. This chapter also examines Montgomery and Gertrude Oliver's beliefs in dreams as omens and the supernatural as a means of expressing spirituality and its appeal in wartime. The use of the supernatural suggests Montgomery believes organized religion does not have all the spiritual answers; Montgomery's subtle use of irony to highlight numerous scenes of petty vindictiveness and the duplicity of Christians towards their enemies exposes her contempt towards so-called believers claiming their

actions are based in religion. The conclusion, "Montgomery and Canadian Women's Significance in War," unites the discussion of worth in its complexities in the thesis that Montgomery uses the parameters of maternal feminism to champion women's worth in war. Montgomery accomplishes this thesis by using contradictions to encourage readers to question perceptions about middle- and upper-class women's shifting focus from traditional domestic roles carried out in private to volunteer and paid positions in the public sphere as they worked to support the war.

Chapter One

Montgomery's View of Women's Worth in War

Although Montgomery revealed significant self-doubt in her journals as she compared herself to Victorian ideals of womanhood, she still believed that women deserved recognition and equality. This belief was strengthened during the Great War when she viewed the tremendous sacrifices made by women as they supported the war effort. Montgomery wrote *Rilla of Ingleside* as a tribute to women's suffering and their undeniable sacrifice that was overshadowed by the combatants' return. Andrea McKenzie emphasizes in "Women at War: L. M. Montgomery, the Great War, and Canadian Cultural Memory" that Montgomery wrote *Rilla* as a Canadian version of the British war myth depicting male sacrifice as the purge required to eliminate the Empire's pre-war decadence.

Samuel Hynes points out in *A War Imagined: The First World War and English Culture* that Britain was undergoing a "civil war, a sex war, and a class war: in the spring of 1914 these were all seen in England's immediate future."[1] Hynes quotes British author Edmond Gosse's belief, written in autumn 1914, that "War...is the sovereign disinfectant, and its red stream of blood is the Condy's Fluid that cleans out the stagnant pools and clotted channels of the intellect" (qtd. in Hynes 12). Gosse wrote that war erupted because of over-indulgence, a laxity of manners, and a denial of personal inconvenience that represented "the spectres of national decay...."[2] McKenzie writes that, in *Rilla*, Montgomery includes this myth that Hynes calls "decadence and purgation" (12), but by creating female heroes for her war story Montgomery focuses on "the concepts of motherhood and maturity, thus upholding the war-created myth of the valorized mother....the war-mother's voice of experience therefore becomes legitimate, equal to, and placed alongside the voices of soldiers to create a community of disparate voices working

towards the same end: an independent Canada cleansed and matured by the sacrifices of both women and men."[3]

According to McKenzie, *Rilla* presents a distinctively Canadian view of war as Montgomery takes control of the topic of war strategy and politics, issues her contemporaries believed were exclusively male: "Montgomery's Canadian version is based on *female* sacrifice during wartime, the forging of a new nation based on *shared* sacrifice and *shared* suffering, with women as the representatives of the nation-in-the-making [original italics]."[4] McKenzie points out that Montgomery made war feminine by rewriting the gender of her war novel's hero, thereby countering traditional war literature that focused on "male-combatant, British-based myths."[5] *Rilla* editors McKenzie and Benjamin Lefebvre write in their Introduction that Montgomery's war novel is "one of the few books that talk about the impact of war on those at home."[6]

For instance, in *Rilla*, Montgomery shows that previously taboo subjects invaded middle-and-upper-class homes. *Rilla* discusses traditionally "masculine" topics concerning the stark nature of the world, such as rape by combatants, although indirectly and by implication: Walter delicately tells Rilla that "there were girls as sweet and pure as you in Belgium and Flanders. You – even you – know what their fate was."[7] The women in *Rilla* openly discuss current affairs and the connection between war's reported atrocities and enlistment: "'This *Lusitania* business was too much for me,' said Mary brusquely. 'When the Kaiser takes to drowning innocent babies it's high time somebody told him where he gets off at.... So I up and told Miller he could go as far as I was concerned.'"[8] Female characters also confront the fearful and life-altering realities of casualty lists: Rilla writes in her diary that,

> The casualty lists are coming out in the papers every day – oh, there are so many of them. I can't bear to read them for fear I'd find Jem's name – for there *have* been cases where people have seen their boys' names in the casualty lists *before* the official telegram came. As for the telephone, for a day or two I just refused to answer it, because I thought I could not endure the horrible response....always dreading to hear 'There is a telegram for Dr. Blythe.'[9]

The women also voice their awareness of governmental propaganda: "'I read that dispatch, too, and it has encouraged me immensely,' said Gertrude. 'I knew then and I know now that it was a lie from beginning to end. But I am in that state of mind where even a lie is a comfort, providing it is a cheerful lie.'"[10] The women also acknowledge the changing face of warfare that is accelerated by the development of technology; the women speak frankly about the newest innovations in combat: "poison gas," "fire-swept trenches," "No-man's-land," and aeroplanes as "a military necessity."[11] They also confidently discuss politics and war strategy, as Susan does:

> Mrs. Dr. dear, Lloyd George is at the helm at last. I have been praying for this for many a day. *Now* we shall soon see a blessed change. It took the Roumanian disaster to bring it about, no less, and that is the meaning of *it*, though I could not see it before. There will be no more shilly-shallying. I consider the war is as good as won, and that I shall tie to, whether Bucharest falls or not. [12]

Rilla emphasises the significance Montgomery believed women played in war. Montgomery portrays women as helpmates, such as when Walter seeks Rilla's support after enlisting, and as the ones who provide comfort through care packages of fruit cake and 'vermin shirts'. On the other hand, she also characterizes women as active catalysts for recruitment, such as when Mary encourages her boyfriend Miller Douglas to enlist. Montgomery also highlights women's ability to inspire men's urge to protect a loved one, as Ken Ford feels when he says goodbye to Rilla and thinks "she looked exactly like 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."[13] A close study of Montgomery's depiction of women, however, reveals that the female characters are far savvier than readers might expect. Montgomery courageously creates women

who feel that they have enough political and military awareness that they may challenge politicians, such as Susan does with her ongoing complaints against American President Woodrow Wilson's reluctance to enter the war.[14] Montgomery encourages readers to revalue Canadian women's roles in the war by illuminating the depth and quality of feminine responses to the traditionally male arena of war.

Montgomery's strong sense of women's significance in Canada's war efforts permeated her life during the years of conflict. This chapter discusses Montgomery's opinions of women and war in a chronological order that follows events in Montgomery's life during the war years. Montgomery's confidence in women's abilities began with her personal war work and formed her portrayal of women as capable of heroic acts and enduring courage. Montgomery challenges her readers to re-evaluate their pre-conceptions pertaining to gender and war by using contradictions to raise questions; she suggests that values should be based in merit and moral characteristics as opposed to traditionally unquestioned beliefs that dictated specific roles for women and men, particularly in war. Montgomery's opinion of feminine value in war was shaped by her white middle-class views, her maternal feminist philosophy, and her concepts and expectations of class. Holly Pike writes in "A Woman's War" that the version of the home front experience Montgomery produces in *Rilla of Ingleside* "draws on ... her own experience as recorded in her journals...which show that during the war, women, whether near the battlefield or distant from it, perform the roles expected of them by their family and community ... based on class and gender...."[15]

The last phrase of Pike's quotation, "based on class and gender," highlights one of Montgomery's major contradictions. Although Montgomery claimed character was more important in determining worth than gender, she adhered to a philosophy of maternal feminism

that promoted women's issues by working within the accepted boundaries of separate spheres. In other words, as Alan Hunt points out in *Governing Morals: a Social History of Moral Regulation*, maternal feminism moderated instead of challenged the delineation of traditional gender roles or changed society's perception of the values associated with gendered activities.[16] Montgomery believed in women's equality and was politically aware and up-to-date with current affairs, particularly during the war, although she did not join the public suffragette movement. Amy Tector writes in "A Righteous War? L. M. Montgomery's Depiction of the First World War in *Rilla of Ingleside*" that "Through Rilla and Susan, Montgomery clearly indicates the possibilities the war has brought for women."[17] Montgomery may not have been as politically active and optimistic as fellow author Nellie McClung, but she suggests in her journal that she understood the advantages of having a political voice in deciding serious matters like war. As I will discuss shortly, maternal feminism shaped her politics. On December 3rd, during the December 1917 election, Montgomery gave a speech to the Daughters of the Empire and the Sherbourne Club in Toronto, titled "The Responsibility of Women in the Future: "I dislike trying to speak in public but I did it today and tried to say as simply as possible some things that are very near my heart – especially in regard to the future of the children of the future."[18]

Montgomery's War

Montgomery's thinking was often contradictory, but publicly she did support social norms and international propaganda campaigns during the Great War. These campaigns persuaded many citizens it was a masculine duty to defend women from a murderous enemy as Margaret Mead describes in *War: the Anthology of Armed Conflict and Aggression.*[19] Similarly, Susan Grayzel writes in "Mothers, Marraines, and Prostitutes," that virtuous women were expected to be equal to the men's sacrifice by representing Christian ideals as they fulfilled their

"proper role of women in wartime ... [caring for] hearth, the spouse, the child."[20] Ironically, while Montgomery was volunteering with the Red Cross in an altruistic environment of sacrifice and compassion, she saw several incidents involving vindictive and petty behaviour. Montgomery's contempt for women who slandered others working hard to support the war persuaded her that some women were contemptible and not worthy of celebration, deference, or recognition because they did not fulfill this ideal. Feminists might argue that Montgomery's position reflects the chivalrous notion of putting women on a pedestal but must remember that Montgomery was a maternal feminist and a patriot who believed women's efforts to support the war, although different, equalled the men's contributions. Montgomery saw Canadian soldiers as making the ultimate sacrifice and suggests that the women must be of highest merit in order to be worthy of the men's surrendering of freedom and life on their behalf.

Montgomery and her husband, Reverend Ewan Macdonald, were patriotic Canadians and actively volunteered in many projects that supported the war. These experiences shaped her attitudes. One of Montgomery's major contributions to the war effort was her organization of a local unit of the Red Cross in her husband's Presbyterian parish in Leaskdale, Ontario. By November 1915, forty-one-year-old Montgomery was elected president, a position she wrote in her journal that she felt obligated to fulfill.[21] Montgomery's friend and neighbour, Effie Lapp, was simultaneously elected treasurer of their local association, organized and directed by women. During the winter of 1918, however, some of the Red Cross members started whispering that they suspected Mrs. Lapp of stealing branch funds for her own use, a petty gossip campaign that Montgomery managed to censor by threatening to resign. Montgomery feared that hostile accusations would break out at the Annual Business meeting that would crush Mrs. Lapp, a Memorial Cross mother still recovering from her son's death in France in January 1917. Effie

was a special friend of Montgomery's, who was quite certain Effie had been unjustly suspected. Since the armistice had already been signed, Montgomery cleverly decided to disband the group before a confrontational meeting transpired. The experience, however, fiercely offended Montgomery:

> It is disgusting to think that while our boys are fighting and dying at the front our women cannot work for them at home without quarrelling. And the woman against whom all this outburst of spite has been directed has had a son killed at the front. None of those who organized the cabal against her has anyone there. Gods, are such women worth fighting for? [22]

Montgomery decided that, while these trouble-making women were not "worth fighting for," many other examples of praiseworthy womanhood did exist in Canada and deserved commemoration and national acknowledgment for their sacrifices, as she highlighted in *Rilla*. Through her character Rilla, Montgomery controversially implies that Canadian women had made the greatest sacrifice. As Rilla says, "*Our* sacrifice is greater.... Our boys give only *themselves*. *We* give them."[23]

Montgomery's conviction that women's sacrifices are equal to, or more significant than, the men's helps shape her war novel. In *Rilla of Ingleside*, Montgomery explores both the battle against what she perceived as German tyranny and the lack of recognition for Canadian women who had supported the war effort. Tim Cook writes in his article, "Quill and Canon: Writing the Great War in Canada," that "The canon of first-generation history was written by veterans, journalists, and amateur historians trying to find meaning within Canada's Great War experience,"[24] all of whom were men. Montgomery offers an alternative view to male chronicles and suggests that women have stories about war that are equally important. Montgomery's belief that women were capable of acts of courage and endurance equal to men's was not the only characteristic that separated her from her contemporaries. Unlike many of her generation, she

believed the Great War was not the "war to end all wars." Mary Rubio points out that Montgomery confided in a 1915 interview with *Everywoman's World* magazine that

> I am not one of those who believe this war will put an end to war. War is horrible, but there are things that are more horrible still, just as there are fates worse than death. Moral degradation, low ideas, sordid devotion to money-getting, are worse evils than war, and history shows us that these evils invariably overtake a nation which is for a long time at peace. Nothing short of so awful a calamity as a great war can awaken to remembrance a nation that has forgotten God and sold its birthright of aspiration for a mess of potage....[25]

Montgomery and her husband Ewan believed that the allied cause was just and therefore God was on their side. They organized and participated in recruiting rallies, volunteered for Red Cross leadership and functions, participated in church and government-endorsed activities, or comforted the grieving families of parishioners. In August 1916, Ewan assisted in founding "a War Resources Committee, partly to aid bereaved families,"[26] as Mary Rubio observes in *Lucy Maud Montgomery: the Gift of Wings.* Ewan was the regional Deputy Registrar as well and registered locals with the Canada Registration Board whose purpose, as Jonathan Kalmakoff emphasizes in "1918 National Registration," was "to provide an inventory of manpower available for military service and essential industries."[27] In "The Canadian Protestant Tradition 1914-1945" Robert Wright supports the reality that many Canadian clergymen, similar to Ewan, actively supported the war and preached from their pulpits:

> To an extent that many churchmen later regretted, the pulpit became a centre of recruitment...Spokesmen for the churches gave in to the prevailing view of the "Hun" as the embodiment of evil, the "butcher" and the "rapist" of the civilized world...the case was clear: Germany's moral failure lay in its abandonment of the God of the Bible and the divinity of Christ.[28]

Ewan appears to be one of the clergymen that came to regret his decision. Montgomery wrote in her journal in August 1917 that when war was declared Ewan had believed it would "be over by Christmas."[29] According to Rubio and Waterston, Ewan had actively participated in recruitment

as president of the Scott Township League on Resources Committee and was authorized to raise 45 men.[30] When battle killed local young men, however, it was Ewan's duty as a minister to visit and comfort the grieving families, accompanied by Montgomery. Ewan's active recruiting, like that of many respected leaders in communities on both sides, did become an issue for some soldiers on the front. Erich Remarque, a German soldier, writes in *All Quiet on the Western Front* that community elders in positions of authority were:

> supposed to be the ones who would help us eighteen-year-olds to make the transition, who would guide us into adult life, into a world of work, of responsibilities, of civilized behaviour and progress—into the future. Quite often we ridiculed them and played tricks on them, but basically we believed in them. In our minds the idea of authority—which is what they represented—implied deeper insights and a more humane wisdom. But the first dead man that we saw shattered this conviction. We were forced to recognise that our generation was more honourable than theirs; they only had the advantage of us in phase-making and in cleverness.[31]

In *The Fighting Canadians*, David Bercuson reports that when the Canadians arrived at the front "the brutal reality of this 'war to end all wars' was that when they did, memories of the cheering crowds and waving banners quickly fades against the backdrop of mud, disease, and violent death in many forms."[32] At some level Ewan appeared conscious of his responsibility in encouraging young men to enlist. His mental state rapidly deteriorated during the war, and by January 1915 Montgomery wrote: "Ewan refuses to talk about it [the war]. He claims it unsettles him and he cannot do his work properly. No doubt this is so...."[33] Rubio agrees with Montgomery's assessment of Ewan's condition and suggests that Ewan was a more sensitive man than many people realized. She writes, in addition "to the guilt he may have felt over persuading young men to join the war, he felt greater pressures resulting from the Church's waning influence."[34]

Montgomery recorded Canada and the allies' battles in more than one hundred pages of her war-time journals and often transcribed extensive extracts from her journals *verbatim* into the text of *Rilla*. When war broke out, Montgomery wrote in her journal that war had been a possibility ever since the shooting of the Archduke of Austria and his duchess in June. She believed that it was "'the shot heard round the world'- to be echoed and re-echoed by the death shriek of millions and the wails of heart-broken women." [35] Although Montgomery's son was too young to go to war, she personalized the community's involvement by creating a gallery of local soldiers' photos in the manse that she called "khaki row."[36] Montgomery's own anguish over the outbreak of war was exacerbated by the stillborn death of her second son, Hugh, on August 13, 1914, a death she feared would soon be mirrored in many local homes because she knew many parishioners and friends' sons who had swiftly enlisted. Her fears were well-founded, as Elizabeth Waterston points out: "There were only twelve families in Leaskdale, but there were twenty-one names of those on active duty ... six of them killed in action .... *Rilla of Ingleside* would recapture that experience of a country raising 'crosses, row on row.' "[37] In addition to knowing villagers who enlisted, Montgomery was also tied to the war through family. Her half-brother, Carl, also joined up. Like her character Walter, Carl fought in the battle of Courcelette[38] and "had his leg blown off above the knee at Vimy Ridge"[39] and may have provided Montgomery's inspiration for the setting of Walter's death.

Like her characters in *Rilla* and her fellow Canadians, Montgomery became obsessed with war news, and according to her wartime journals, read multiple daily newspapers such as the Toronto *Globe*, the *Mail and Empire*, and the *Star* when at home, and the Charlottetown *Guardian* or Montreal *Star* when visiting these cities.[40] Montgomery described her anxiety in her journal, emphasizing that her mood was determined according to the positive or negative war

news,[41] and further confiding that the relentless stress affected her, as well as Ewan, and caused her to take veronal powder to sleep.[42] Montgomery often prayed the articles were not factual for they "harrow my soul."[43] Her war-involvement transcended everyday life and also became part of her writing in work that preceded *Rilla*. She dedicated *Rainbow Valley* (1919), the seventh book in the "Anne" series and the prequel to *Rilla*, to her friend Effie's son, Lance-Corporal Goldwin Lapp, alongside Sergeant Robert Brooks, and Second Lieutenant Morley Shier with the inscription "Who made the supreme sacrifice that the happy valleys of their home land might be kept sacred from the ravage of the invader."[44]

Wartime Voices: Women as Mothers, Men as Soldiers

Montgomery's concept that girls and women are as courageous as men is extraordinary for several reasons when *Rilla* is published in 1921. John Morrow quotes Susan Grayzel's argument in *The Great War: An Imperial History* that traditionally "wartime rhetoric...linked women with mothers and men with soldiers."[45] Joshua Goldstein agrees with Morrow's analysis and elaborates on this theme, stating in *War and Gender: How Gender Shapes the War System and Vice Versa* that "with few exceptions, cultures create a male-female duality that forces individuals into categories....what had been only a potential in biology becomes a mandate in culture."[46] Mark Moss would agree as he argues that gender played a significant role in Canada in his discussion about the education of young Ontarian boys before the war, and he supports Grayzel and Goldstein's conclusions in *Manliness and Militarism: Educating Young Boys in Ontario for War*. Moss develops the theme of the Great War's division of genders and illustrates that, after the 1870s, all levels of Canadian society were focused on developing masculine boys and feminine girls:[47] "being a manly soldier meant taking charge, being a doer, and, most important, showing courage – an attribute defined in one instance as 'contempt for safety and

ease.'"[48] Montgomery acknowledged that society expected to see these characteristics in its men when war was declared and makes it very clear in *Rilla* that those men who do not immediately correspond to this definition of "manly" courageousness represented by immediate enlistment, like Walter, or pacifist Whiskers-on-the-moon, are belittled, shamed, and branded as cowards[49] or traitorous "Hunnish scum."[50] By contrasting Walter's reticence with Rilla's courage and Whiskers' pacifism with Susan's passionate patriotism, Montgomery emphasises the importance of revaluing women's strength through these examples.

Montgomery grew up in a society that divided the world according to gender and this reality was exacerbated in war. Although women were expected to fill hitherto traditionally "masculine" roles, they were also expected to retain their femininity by performing "men's" work without becoming manly. Montgomery realized that war was considered an exclusively male activity and that bravery was not considered a characteristic of young girls. Many of Montgomery's contemporaries believed that women had no significance or place in war. Margaret Higonnet, Jane Jenson, Sonya Michel and Margaret Weitz, the editors of *Behind the Lines: Gender and the Two World Wars*, quote Margaret Mitchell's line from *Gone with the Wind* that reflects this conviction: "War is men's business, not ladies'."[51] Joshua Goldstein provides further foundation for Mitchell's quotation, adding that throughout history many cultures reflect the belief that courage is solely masculine and therefore in times of conflict only men are designated to combat roles.[52] In *War: The Anthropology of Armed Conflict and Aggression*, Margaret Mead would agree with Goldstein's observation, stating that groups who allocate warrior roles as masculine are also reluctant to arm women.[53] The editors of *Behind the Lines:* similarly argue that "female dependency is almost always presented as "natural," as in the

state of peace. War appears...warranted, in part, by men's need to protect and defend women and families."[54]

Goldstein points out that this masculine need to protect depends on a feminine "other" that supports war, either willingly or not, in traditional non-combatant functions "such as mothers, nurses, prostitutes, camp followers, rape victims, and even peace activists."[55] Contemporary Canadian propaganda posters of the Great War accepted this premise and created posters like the 73rd Royal Highlanders' that stated "Mothers, wives and sweethearts expect you to protect them,"[56] as well as "The Happy Man Today is the Man at the Front."[57] Although Montgomery linked women with motherhood and men with soldiery in *Rilla*, she created female characters that showed bravery in wartime is not exclusive to one gender and thus revalues women's role in the war effort.

Rilla: Through the Lenses of Maternal Feminism and Class

Montgomery portrayed female war efforts in *Rilla* through the lens of maternal feminism, illustrated by female characters who manifest courage while maintaining traditionally-accepted feminine domestic roles. Alan Hunt defines maternal feminism in *Governing Morals: A Social History of Moral Regulation*:

> maternal feminism ... advocated the interests of women based on an acceptance of the primacy of sexual reproduction and the culturally stipulated maternal and domestic functions. Maternal feminism thus sought to advance the interests of women within an acceptance of an ideology of separate spheres that modified rather than challenged the delineation of male and female roles and, more importantly, sought to change the social values attached to these gendered activities.[58]

Montgomery acknowledged that war provided many opportunities for middle- and upper-class white Canadian women to leave the private spheres of their homes. However, she confined her character Rilla's expectations to the traditional roles endorsed by maternal feminists, those of wife and mother.[59] Montgomery had definite opinions on women's worth and their place in society that could sometimes oppose her maternal feminist philosophy. Although she wished to find her own love that resulted in marriage and children and the financial support of a husband, she did, on occasion, believe that she could defy small-town conventions and support herself without a husband. In 1900, she took stock in her journal after her father's death:

> Well, I must henceforth face the world alone. Let me see what my equipment for such a struggle is. I am young; I have a scanty and superficial education ... I have three hundred dollars.... I have no training for anything save teaching, which I cannot at present do; I have no influence of any kind in that quarter. Is that all? It seems a meagre list. Yes, there is something else – my knack of scribbling.... we shall see. I have forgotten to mention another asset and a very valuable one – a belief in my power to succeed.[60]

Montgomery elaborated on her beliefs in correspondence with long-time pen pal, Ephraim Weber:

> As for "spheres," I believe anyone's sphere – whether man or woman – is where they can be happiest and do the best work. The majority of women are happiest and best placed at home, just as the majority of men are in the world. But there are exceptions to *both*...And each has a right to fulfill the purpose of their birth. Sex seems to me to enter very little into the question.[61]

Historian Clarence Karr would agree that Montgomery was not an outspoken suffragette. Karr writes that Montgomery "was no modern, radical feminist. She believed that a woman's place was in the home."[62] Karr adds that although Montgomery could see "a need for public-spirited women, [she] preferred to devote her time and energy to home and family."[63] Karr acknowledges Montgomery's contradictory nature, suggesting that, although Montgomery was not always a feminist in public, she had "a modern understanding of childhood"[64] and advocated

the rights of children.[65] In *Engendering the State: family, work, and welfare in Canada*, Nancy Christie suggests many women separated the issues of women as persons and the rights of children:

> Between 1900 and 1920 the National Council of Women sought to have their maternalist vision of the family incorporated into law and government policy.... In an attempt to appeal more strongly to the more conservative male interests in the government, rather than campaigning for women's rights based solely on the individual rights of the mothers, maternal feminists stressed the importance of children.[66]

It hardly needs to be pointed out that Montgomery underlines the importance of children in many of her novels. Moreover, *Rilla* is such an example of Montgomery's ability to subtly create characters and situations that revalue tradition. By creating a war novel that, unlike regimental histories or defence records, highlights the lives of girls and women during war, Montgomery suggests the reader reconsider socially-imposed gender limitations and suggests women's war efforts equal those of Canadian men.

Montgomery's representation of women in *Rilla* illustrates the writer's ever-present sense of contradiction, as the female protagonists counter Montgomery's contemporaries' view that courage only existed in male spheres. Citing Mark Moss, Terry Copp describes the dominant pre-war outlook:

> A recent study of ideals current in Ontario before the war argues that the rush to enlist in 1914 was due to cultural influences which "worked together to inculcate in young boys the notions of masculinity and militarism that would create soldiers." War was presented as a "masculine event" and a "romantic commitment to war had entrenched itself as a pseudo-religion in the province indoctrinating young boys with a glamorized notion of sacrifice."[67]

When war was declared in 1914, it was considered a "masculine event." Montgomery, however, disagreed and considered the war a Canadian event that involved equally men and women. Montgomery defined these women's roles in *Rilla* not as physically courageous, but as morally

brave. Benjamin Lefebvre and Andrea McKenzie point out in their Introduction to *Rilla of Ingleside* that Montgomery transposes the war work she did as a white, Protestant, middle-class woman into the female characters in *Rilla*.[68] Montgomery understood that gender and class were important to many of her contemporaries, so she subtly questioned the *status quo* in her work while avoiding direct confrontation. This is particularly clear in *Rilla* as Montgomery portrayed female volunteers who worked to support the war by pushing boundaries without openly antagonizing her readers and critics. As a maternal feminist, Montgomery believed women's role was essential in healing the country and repopulating the nation post-war. Because she was a minister's wife, Montgomery's readers, particularly her husband's parishioners, expected her writing to reflect high moral standards. To safeguard her more sensitive readers' sensibilities, Montgomery established that Rilla would be a good mother post-war without compromising Rilla's character and scandalizing readers with an illegitimate baby.

Montgomery cleverly accomplishes this goal by creating a humorous scene about adopting a "war baby"[69] who is left without parents when his mother dies in childbirth following the father's enlistment and subsequent deployment. *Rilla* highlights the unfortunate fate of orphaned and/or abandoned Canadian children in the early 1900s while providing Rilla with a morally-acceptable means of achieving motherhood. Montgomery's awareness of the limitations society imposed on women, even during war, soon became a concern throughout the empire. In "Khaki Girls, VADs and Tommy's Sisters," Janet Watson emphasizes how perceptions of a woman's class and social status were maintained in war:

> Perceptions of class and social status played a crucial role in determining how different types of war work were viewed for different groups of women. Women who wore military-style uniforms, whether upper-and middle-class volunteers who joined paramilitary organizations at the beginning of the war or the mainly working–class women who filled the ranks of the official service corps founded towards the end of it,

> were often criticized. Some working women, who found better pay, more interesting work, shorter hours, and better living conditions in the munitions factories than they were used to in domestic service, aroused mixed responses; sometimes they were equated with soldiers, sometimes condemned for lack of patriotism. Ideas about gender were as influential as class, as both criticism of and support for war work were rooted in deeply held convictions about the need to preserve the existing social order.[70]

Montgomery's subtle challenge is evident in her assignment of volunteer and paid positions in *Rilla.* The Blythe women's volunteer work is ladylike and rarely defies community expectations associated with their status as female members of the local doctor's family. Anne and her daughter Rilla each establish Red Cross Societies. Rilla also organizes social events and fund-raising concerts to benefit Belgian refugees and takes on the job of raising a motherless baby while his father serves overseas. Although large numbers of women worked outside their homes in jobs that supported the war, Montgomery does not include many in *Rilla.* Montgomery's exclusion is oddly unreflective of circumstances that Michael Duffy documents in *Women and WW1—Women in the Workforce: Temporary Men.* Duffy explains that approximately "1,600,000 women joined the workforce between 1914 and 1918 in government departments, public transport, the post office, and as clerks in business, in land workers on farms, and in factories, especially in the dangerous munitions factories, which were employing 950,000 women by Armistice Day (as compared to 700,000 in Germany)."[71] Although women replaced men in many fields as staffing shortages increased, Montgomery did not write about the 750 women working as mechanics for the Royal Flying Corp,[72] women driving ambulances, or those working overseas for the Canadian government as clerks and stenographers that Barbara Dundas records in *A History of the Canadian Military.*

Strangely, Montgomery did not highlight these jobs, particularly the dangerous ones, in a novel she wrote to acknowledge feminine courage. As a maternal feminist who believed women were happiest in the home, and as a closely-watched minister's wife, neither did Montgomery

elaborate on the character Faith Meredith who signs up as one of 90, 000 V.A.D.s (Voluntary Aid Detachment) who assisted qualified nurses. V.A.D.s were memorialized by Vera Brittain in *Testament of Youth*,[73] and although Faith was the only female character who somewhat mirrored the men's adventure by leaving Canada and heading towards war, Montgomery never uses the character to elaborate on women's more dangerous war-work. Montgomery writes that Faith Meredith was "on her way across the Atlantic as a V.A.D.,"[74] but does not provide details other than to inform the reader that Di Blythe was denied permission to accompany Faith "for her mother's sake."[75] Neither does Montgomery include the fact, revealed by Brittain, that many V.A.D.s experienced the same danger as the soldiers because they were often stationed near the front or aboard transport ships.[76] The Joint War Committee's 1921 statement, *Report on Voluntary Aid rendered to the Sick and Wounded at Home and to British prisoners of war, 1914-1918* states that V.A.D.s nursed in extremely hazardous locations that required physical as well as moral fortitude, such as the 8,000 who served overseas in France, Malta, Serbia, Salonika, Egypt, and Mesopotamia.[77] Nor does Montgomery make Rilla old enough to be a V.A.D., even though some contemporary women, according to Watson believed "there is nothing a woman could help the country more in doing than mending its men."[78] It is not because of class that Rilla does not join the V.A.D.s. Sue Light argues in "VADs, British Nurses and the Great War" that most V.A.D.s "as a group...were very much defined by being middle or upper middle-class; the daughters of local gentry, landowners, army officers, the clergy, and professional men, and also women of aristocratic background."[79]

Montgomery had reasons to keep her character, Rilla, out of any organizations that may have coloured her readers' perceptions of Rilla's moral integrity. As a maternal feminist, Montgomery recreated women's prewar status as wives and mothers and revalued the domestic

sphere in a nation disillusioned by death and destruction. Rilla is Montgomery's symbol of young Canadian womanhood ready to help the post-war world recover by producing the next generation. Rilla, though, like the Madonna that Kenneth Ford compares her to when he first realizes he loves her,[80] must remain pure and untainted for Montgomery to recreate prewar domesticity and values successfully. Watson writes that, generally, civilians and military personnel praised V.A.D.s with "almost universal approval"[81] and that V.A.D.s "were explicitly equated with soldiers: only a joint effort would lead to victory..."[82] Behind the accolades, though, Brittain describes the duties that these young, single women faced, duties that would shock those at home, such as undressing men, changing gangrenous bandages, being exposed to missing body parts and mental instability, or treating men with sexually transmitted diseases like syphilis.[83]

Hugh Small writes in *Florence Nightingale: Avenging Angel* that Brittain's belief that the public would be shocked by details of nurses' work was not without cause. Florence Nightingale raised nurses' reputations from her contemporaries' perception that nurses were poor, dirty, and little better than prostitutes. Small emphasizes that this is why Nightingale's upper-class mother and sister "fainted and had to be revised with smelling-salts" when Nightingale expressed her wish to nurse.[84] In the Boer War, nurses had further enhanced their professional reputations, although Anne Summers points out in *Angels and Citizens* that officials still worried about exposing women to sexual danger:

> The conflict with the Boers differed from all others in which Britain had been involved since the Crimea in being primarily one between white men. Other races, it was thought, might indulge in rapine, and the slaughter of prisoners; Europeans, whether or not formally bound by the Geneva Convention, could be expected to abide by its terms.[85]

In her subtle fashion, Montgomery challenges adherence to Victorian social restrictions that sheltered middle-and-upper-class women from many baser realities of life, maintained by some even during war. By using the Blythe housekeeper Susan Baker to express public horror in learning about the realities of trench warfare, like "cooties,"[86] Montgomery acknowledges some readers' shock that the trenches on the battlefront were not hygienic. Toby Clark suggests a reason behind the use of this kind of understatement in *Art and Propaganda in the Twentieth Century: The Political Image in the Age of Mass Culture*. Clark argues that reminding citizens of war's stark realities is counter-productive to recruitment and morale. Montgomery realizes that by excluding many of the overwhelming realities of war, the writer could "create an impression that was positive enough to encourage further recruitment, while showing just enough of the soldier's hardship to maintain commitment in the domestic war effort."[87] Although *Rilla* is written after the war and therefore may not be considered a recruitment tool, Montgomery was constructing a novel that justified and celebrated women's role in war. Offending her readers might have prevented Montgomery from achieving her goal of re-valuing women's involvement in the war effort.

Montgomery's safely conservative outlook reflects the reality of many patriotic women at the time. Watson observes that women who wore uniforms in voluntary organizations like the Women's Legion, Women's Volunteer Reserve (WVR), or in official organizations such as the Women's Auxiliary Army Corps (WAAC), Women's Royal Naval Services (WRNS) or the later Women's Royal Air Force (WRAF), were treated with resistance and suspicion:[88]

> the idea of women wearing military-style uniforms was generally unpopular... women in uniform provoked fears of a sexual challenge; a woman dressed in men's clothing moved from the private to the public world, and 'public women' was a term long associated with prostitution.[89]

In fact, an official Commission of Inquiry was formed in 1917 to establish that women serving with the WAAC were honourable despite vicious rumours deriding their character. The Commission discovered that the source behind the lies was initiated by enlisted soldiers in correspondence with relatives in England: "Our attention was frequently drawn to the point that certain men dislodged from noncombatant tasks in the bases by the substitution of women had in some cases shown jealousy and hostility towards the WAAC."[90] Montgomery created Rilla as a symbol of Canada's future, and she refused to have this symbol questioned by dressing her in an official uniform that may have been perceived as a sexual challenge. In Montgomery's non-confrontational style, she creates a character who is too young to consider joining a group that wears uniforms; thus, Montgomery can express the heroine's patriotism without a uniform or war's dirty work clouding her readers' judgement of Rilla's character (as appropriate for motherhood).

Montgomery further placates traditionalists in *Rilla* by writing that the women help out because "the boys are so scarce,"[91] but Lefebvre and McKenzie point out that Montgomery consciously divides these extra obligations according to class.[92] Montgomery juxtaposes Rilla with Susan and makes it clear that Rilla accepts her status in the village as the doctor's daughter and therefore removes herself from physical labour. Montgomery, though, is very careful to explain there is nothing wrong with others of lesser social status getting dirty in the fields. Rilla says: "I don't think I'd be much use in a harvest field myself – though lots of girls are – but I can set Jack [clerk in local store] free while I do his work."[93] Montgomery infers that there are expectations that accompany each class when she has Rilla's father question how much she will like working in the local store, yet makes no comment or expression of concern for his aging housekeeper physically toiling on the farm:

> So Rilla went behind Mr. Flagg's counter for a month; and Susan went into Albert Crawford's oat fields. "I am as good as any of them yet," she said proudly. "Not a man of them can beat me when it comes to building a stack. When I offered to help Albert looked doubtful. 'I am afraid the work will be too hard for you,' he said. 'Try me for a day and see,' said I. 'I will do my darnedest.'" [94]

Montgomery's juxtaposition of middle-class Rilla and working-class Susan's wartime work suggests that class intersects with gender and still dictates what is acceptable, even in war time.

The character Mary Vance is Montgomery's represents women doing "men's" work. As an adopted runaway, Mary's social standing is beneath that of Rilla, the doctor's daughter, and therefore she can shock the village by building grain stacks in masculine overalls: as Mary explained, "I've got overalls and I can tell you they're real becoming. Mrs. Alec Davis says they're indecent and shouldn't be allowed, and even Mrs. Elliott kinder looks askance at them. But bless you, the world moves, and anyhow there's no fun for me like shocking Kitty Alec."[95] Although Montgomery confronts social norms, such as the issue of "acceptable" feminine clothing, she appeases critics by including the character Mrs. Alec Davis' criticism that the apparel is "indecent."[96] Readers who might be scandalized by Mary's behaviour and/or attire might be placated by Mrs. Davis' disapproval and accept it as Montgomery's personal condemnation. Susan, the doctor's aging housekeeper, is also allocated a job working in the fields alongside Mary. Montgomery follows Mary's scandalous field-hand attire with Susan's compromise of her skirt "kilted up to her knees for safety and convenience."[97] Susan, while working class like Mary, is older and closely connected to the Blythe family, so Montgomery represents her with more decorum. Montgomery, however, jabs at constrictive limitations of class and gender by concluding that Susan's spirit is "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."[98] Montgomery shapes her characters according to

her maternal feminist philosophy and perceptions of class, and, by dismantling cultural assumptions, thus conveys that the women's spirit is equal to the men's courage at Vimy Ridge and Verdun.

Women's Roles in War as Depicted in *Rilla*

Maintaining her maternal feminist philosophy and preconceptions of class narrowed the possibilities for Montgomery's depiction of her female characters' capacity to support the war. Thus, Montgomery turns to such contemporary expectations of women's roles in war described by historian Linda De Pauw in *Battle Cries and Lullabies: Women in War from Prehistory to the Present*. De Pauw writes that four roles have typically been allocated to women during war; she argues that women have been victims and/or instigators of war, or have performed combat support roles as viragos, or warriors.[99] Montgomery's female protagonists can be more fully understood by using De Pauw's four characterizations. De Pauw writes that female victims of war face "rape, forced marriage, torture, mutilation, and death during wars without violating gender norms."[100] Victims are often victimized twice, once by the attacking armies and then again by their own governments as their tragedies are widely publicized to stimulate enlistment. Like the government agencies that exploit victims for official purposes, Montgomery also repeats stories in *Rilla* that had circulated throughout Canada and helped "Satanize" the Germans, such as the story Mary Vance believes after the sinking of *Lusitania*: "the Kaiser...drowning innocent babies...."[101] Montgomery is concerned about the fate of the children. As a writer who avoids direct confrontation, she casts aspersions against the Germans without shocking readers with direct accusations of rape:

> "They tell me the Germans have about ruined the church there," sighed Cousin Sophia. "I always thought the Germans were Christians." "A church is bad enough but their

> doings in Belgium are far worse," said Susan grimly. "When I heard about them bayoneting the babies...I just felt that if I could have lifted that saucepan full of that boiling soup and thrown it at the Kaiser I would not have lived in vain." [102]

Although evasive on the issue of rape, Montgomery does surreptitiously include incidents of Germans killing women, such as when Rilla and her mother go to the moving pictures in Charlottetown to see *Hearts of the World.* Rilla tells Anne that "it all seemed so horribly *real* – and I was so intensely interested..."[103] Rilla's comment that "it all seemed so *real*" is telling. As Tim Lussier points out in *D.W. Griffith's 'Hearts of the World,'* this silent movie was made at the request of the British Government as a propaganda piece to encourage America to join the war. The film's female star, Lillian Gish, who fights off rape by German soldiers, later stated that "The film inflamed audiences. Its depiction of German brutality bordered on the absurd."[104] During the war, the Canadian government's propaganda unit encouraged these fears and used the image of women as victims to urge men to enlist to protect their loved ones of "the weaker sex." Montgomery also wove this theme of Germans as murderous aggressors who slaughtered innocent victims by including the sinking of *Lusitania.* In fact, Montgomery used the tragedy as Walter's catalyst to enlist. As he says, "I had to do it....When I pictured those dead women and children floating about in that pitiless, ice-cold water."[105] Montgomery's forthright discussion of the killing of women and children while avoiding a direct dialogue about women's sexual violation by soldiers, challenges society's hypocritical views about war and what news may, or may not, be reported at home.

Linda De Pauw explains that the instigator is a victim who acts, "the one who calls on men to fight or to continue fighting in her defence or for her pleasure."[106] As instigators, women were seen and used by the government in their national propaganda campaigns to pressure reluctant men into combat. Some women fulfilled the role of instigator by giving out white

feathers to men they believed were cowards, such as Walter receives in *Rilla*: "Walter wrote that some one had sent him an envelope containing a white feather. 'I deserved it, Rilla. I felt that I ought to put it on and wear it – proclaiming myself to all Redmond [University] the coward I know I am.'" [107]

The Canadian government printed and posted many depictions of women as instigators, such as "Women of Canada Say - Go!" or posters of a woman in profile walking alongside a soldier who states, "I could not love thee dear, so much, loved I not honour more."[108] This poster implies patriotic women will suppress personal fears and wants and use their feminine wiles to encourage men to enlist. Women who read this poster and ignored it could be considered unpatriotic and selfish for not encouraging their men to enlist. Ever contradictory, Montgomery defies convention and does not portray mother Anne Blythe as imitating the woman illustrated in the recruiting poster. When Anne's eldest son Jem eagerly prepares to enlist, Anne cries "brokenly."[109] Montgomery reshapes contemporary stereotypes by making Jem's father the instigator: "Would you have him stay, Anne – when the others are going – when he thinks it is his duty – would you have him so selfish and small-souled?"[110] Although Anne and Susan do not accept the role of instigator as Jem enlists, Rilla appears to accept the role as she is proudly swept away by the romance of Jem in his uniform:

> Rilla, after the first shock, reacted to the romance of it all, in spite of her heartache. It *was* splendid to think of the lads of Canada answering so speedily and fearlessly and uncalculatingly to the call of their country. Rilla carried her head high among the girls whose brothers had not so responded.[111]

Rilla's sentiments fit De Pauw's definition of instigators as women "likely to admire their [men's] valor and gallantry and speed them off to war."[112] Tellingly, Montgomery highlights Rilla's contradictions as Rilla is relieved that her favourite brother Walter does not enlist with

Jem.[113] Montgomery resists convention again by not portraying Rilla with traditional tears when she says goodbye to her fiancé, Kenneth Ford. Rilla does not express great sorrow or fear, even within the privacy of her diary, but only writes "perhaps I will *never* see him again."[114] Rilla might not be as unconventional as she first appears. Nadine Gingrich emphasizes in "Every Man Who Dies, Dies for You and Me" that during the Great War the press

> paid close attention to the home front, to women who suddenly found themselves in unfamiliar and often contradictory roles. Women had to be "women"; they had to represent home and hearth so that men knew what they were fighting for. But simultaneously women were asked to redefine their personal, domestic concerns in political, public terms. Women still had to be "the weaker sex," but they were expected to face the daily realities of wartime with courage and "pluck," not with womanly tears.[115]

Susan is another character that Montgomery represents as an intermittent instigator. When Susan attends the Victory Loan Campaign meeting and is upset at attendees' apathetic donations, she spontaneously gives a speech that expresses her patriotism and contempt for those who cannot match it:

> Susan always vows she is no suffragette, but she gave womanhood its due that night, and literally made those men cringe. When she finished with them they were ready to eat out of her hand. She wound up by ordering them – yes, ordering them – to march up to the platform forthwith and subscribe for Victory Bonds.[116]

Montgomery ensures her readers will not be offended by Susan's daring behaviour and feel the housekeeper has too openly confronted norms by having Susan later confess "that she had been 'rather unladylike."[117]

Although Montgomery's female characters react differently to their men's enlistment, all the women unite to support their loved ones once they are overseas. De Pauw argues that this is another facet of the instigator's role: "Praying for soldiers...is a related form of womanly support that helped keep up morale; so is writing letters from home and sending cookies."[118] Throughout

Rilla, Montgomery's female characters pray for their loved ones and their cause in private and at church,[119] knit socks and other items for the soldiers' comfort,[120] write letters[121] and bake and send food parcels.[122] While some critics may consider the role of instigator to be negative, during war governments depend on instigators to encourage military enlistment and to support combatants. Montgomery's subtle depiction of women as instigators in her war novel is a challenge to contemporary perceptions of women as the weaker sex. In *Rilla*, Montgomery illustrates the power women held as perpetrators of men fighting in wars, a power that challenges norms concerning the importance of their roles.

Montgomery also adapts De Pauw's third type of traditional roles for women in war: "virago." De Pauw defines viragos as "women performing acts requiring 'male' boldness and daring without challenging gender construction."[123] As an expert at challenging while not offending her readers, Montgomery uses Rilla to represent women's war role of "virago." Montgomery contrasts Walter, a victim of the white feather campaign,[124] with Rilla to point out her "male" boldness. As Walter says to Rilla when she adopts the war baby, "'It took more courage for you to tackle that five pounds of new infant, Rilla-my-Rilla, than it would be for Jem to face a mile of Germans. I wish I had half your pluck,' he said ruefully."[125] Montgomery denies Rilla a more active role, such as place with the V.A.D.s, but, while Rilla writes in her diary that she wants to join the V.A.D.s, she realizes her work "is here at home."[126] Montgomery highlights Rilla's courage by pointing out the strength required to raise a child alone. By doing so, Montgomery challenges contemporary expectations of courage and revalues the domestic sphere.

Montgomery's ostensible conservatism eliminates the possibility of her female protagonists fulfilling DePauw's fourth role for women in war, that of warriors. For the female characters in *Rilla* to become warriors they would have had to become "a man among men"[127]

and that would require Montgomery directly confront her society's norms. Montgomery makes certain that the characters in her books never cross the line completely, even though they consistently, but subtly, challenge the *status quo*. Discovering the depth of Montgomery's subtlety requires knowledge of one of her favourite writers and poets, Sir Walter Scott. Montgomery enjoyed the work of Scott and included lines from his 1810 *The Lady of the Lake* in *Rilla* to build on the readers' perception of Rilla's courage. In Scott's poem, young Ellen Douglas courageously instigates peace between her warring father and King James V. Montgomery connects Rilla's courage with Scott's heroine by including a journal entry of Rilla's that states she would join if "*Douglas' daughter had been his son*" and was sure she meant it."[128] In other words, Rilla is just as brave as Scott's heroine and the men fighting overseas. There is no indication in Montgomery's narration of *Rilla* that Rilla's father, like Ellen's, is expected to enlist. Montgomery might be using her character Rilla to compensate for her brother Walter, who is too sensitive and compassionate for war. Three pages earlier Montgomery has Faith dramatically cry, "Oh, if I were only a man, to go too!"[129] Montgomery's juxtaposition of the two passages subtly raises questions about courage and patriotism as exclusively masculine traits as the two young women exhibit characteristics that are not as apparent in Walter as they are in Jem and Jerry. On the other hand, it might be argued that these boys show less courage than Walter, for they leave for the front believing they are going off to a game much like those played in their childhood.

Although Montgomery makes it clear that neither Rilla nor Faith will be taken seriously as warriors, she does create situations where the reader could easily imagine housekeeper Susan as a warrior. Susan tells her pessimistic cousin Sophia that the Germans will never take Canada: "'The Huns shall never set foot in Prince Edward Island as long as I can handle a pitchfork,'

declared Susan, looking and feeling quite equal to routing the entire German army single-handed."[130] Later in the novel, Montgomery creates a scene in which Susan actually uses violence to confront her pacifist enemy when he audaciously asks her to marry him as a means for him to secure a free housekeeper. Susan's outright rejection flabbergasts Whiskers who states he believed she would be anxious to marry him. Susan tells Anne her response: "'Go,' I thundered, and I just caught up that iron pot ... I suppose he considered an iron pot full of boiling dye was a dangerous weapon in the hands of a lunatic."[131] Montgomery allows these female characters to demonstrate their bravery and national pride; however, she prevents them from being considered serious warriors. For instance, she does not represent them as androgynous, a prerequisite according to DePauw's definition of female warriors. Instead, Montgomery emphasizes their femininity; even Susan does farm labour in a dress.[132] Montgomery's non-confrontational style suggests that she understood the conservative nature of some of her readers and, though she challenges her readers' assumptions about women's role in war, she does so without directly confronting their sensibilities.

Montgomery, the Military Service Act, and the Vote

Although Montgomery shaped her female characters in *Rilla* according to her maternal feminist philosophy, her juxtaposition of contradictory characters and situations allowed her to examine gender and war without openly challenging traditional norms. Despite her usual conservatism, Montgomery tackled the issue of women's franchise in *Rilla* even though it was a controversial subject for the empire, and at home in Canada. British Liberal Party politician John Massie informed British Prime Minister Asquith that British women did not merit a vote as they did not go to war: "we still have to maintain that the full power of citizenship cannot be given to a sex which is by nature debarred from fulfilling some of the crucial duties of citizenship –

enforcement of the law, of treaties, and of national rights, national defence, and all the rougher work of Empire."[133] In Canada, the issue of full citizenship for women began in earnest after Prime Minister Borden attended an overseas meeting of First Ministers in 1917 where he had met with many Canadian wounded and amputee soldiers who had fought at Vimy Ridge.

Borden was disturbed to learn that many of these soldiers had been wounded two or three times yet returned to the front as there were insufficient reinforcements.[134] Donald Creighton notes in *Canada's First Century: 186-1967* that Canada lost 10,602 soldiers in the month of April 1917, and voluntary enlistments for the same month were only 4,761 men.[135] Borden promised to find new recruits to replace the battle-worn Canadians at the front, but recruitment was down. Creighton points out that Borden recognized that Great Britain and New Zealand were facing the same shortage of voluntary enlistment and had resolved the issue with conscription.[136] According to Desmond Morton and J. L. Granatstein, Borden, with the encouragement of Canadian Corps Commander General Sir Arthur Currie, organized a Unionist Party and initiated the Military Service Act in May 1917.[137]

Borden had unsuccessfully tried to create an alliance with Sir Wilfred Laurier's Liberal Party. Morton and Granatstein show that Laurier believed voters in Quebec, the majority of whom did not share a historical or cultural foundation with Britain and therefore thought they need not enlist, would turn against the Liberals and vote for Henri Bourassa who opposed conscription. Tim Cook explains in *Shock Troops: Canadians Fighting the Great War, 1917-1919* that Laurier was correct and that the issue of conscription quickly divided the country along "linguistic, cultural, and regional divides."[138] The linguistic split occurred between English and French-speaking Canadians for, as Béatrice Richard points out in *Henri Bourassa and Conscription*, many English-speaking Canadians had strong ties to England and believed "the

Great War was a kind of purifying firestorm from which the British Empire would be strengthened." [139]

The Military Service Act was passed, but Borden realized that his party must win the December election in order for him to keep his promise of reinforcements. Borden wisely decided to extend the vote to all groups who would be in favour of conscription measures to replace voluntary recruits at the front, and extended the vote to overseas soldiers, serving nurses, and all women with a close relative who was serving. Montgomery herself qualified for a vote "by the grace of my brother Carl"[140] and in the election voted for Borden's party in support of conscription on December 19, 1917.[141] Montgomery wrote in her journal that she realized the national vote was "the most momentous ever held in Canada...because it will or will not show Quebec that her long day of domination is over."[142] Despite casting her first vote and having a personal acquaintance and extended conversations with many suffragettes like Emily Murphy,[143] Nellie McClung,[144] Emmeline Pankhurst,[145] and Lady Byng,[146] Montgomery still cynically recorded in her journal that she doubted "whether it will make as much change in things as its advocates hope or its opponents fear."[147]

Women without male military relatives were disenfranchised no matter how devotedly they worked or volunteered, or how much property they owned. Montgomery's character Rilla fumes over what she considers a grave injustice:

> Conscription is the real issue at stake and it will be the most exciting election we have ever had. All the women 'who have got de age' – to quote Jo Poirier, and who have husbands, sons, and brothers at the front, can vote. Oh, if I were only twenty-one! Gertrude and Susan are both furious because they can't vote." 'It is not fair,' Gertrude says passionately. 'There is Agnes Carr who can vote because her husband went. She did everything she could to prevent him from going, and now she is going to vote *against* the Union Government. Yet *I* have no vote, because my man at the front is only my

> sweetheart and not my husband! As for Susan, when she reflects that *she* cannot vote, while a rank old pacifist like Mr. Pryor can—and *will*—her comments are sulphurous.[148]

Unlike many suffragettes of her day, Montgomery supported the franchise, but was realistic about the difference it might provide in women's lives. Mary Rubio illustrates how Montgomery articulated both her sense of realism and her hopes for women after the war in a 1915 article published in *Everywoman's World*:

> In regard to women, I do not expect that the war and its outcome will affect their interests, apart from the general influence upon the race. But I do hope that it will in some measure open the eyes of humanity to the truth that the women who bear and train the nation's sons should have some voice in the political issues that may send those sons to die on battlefields.[149]

Morton and Granatstein argue that, although the First World War granted some women the vote and the possibility of work outside their homes, the price of the vote was government expectations that women would pressure male relatives to enlist. [150] Rilla's objections to a limited female franchise echo Montgomery's belief, expressed to pen pal Ephriam Weber in 1909, that women with "property of their own should have a voice in making the laws."[151] Montgomery went on to write to correspondent G.B. Macmillan that, although unhopeful the franchise would change women's lives, she was "so infected ...with the prevailing excitement that I actually 'took the stump' and made two speeches in Toronto on 'Women's Responsibility in the Election.'"[152] Montgomery believed some single women or married women with property should be given the vote, but, as a maternal feminist, she focused on the rights of mothers who she believed worthy of a political voice to help determine their children's future. Montgomery subtly criticizes single women not getting the vote; however, while publicly appearing conservative, she also might not have been as conventional on the issue of women's right to vote as some critics argue.

"appear heroic...essentially unchanged"

Many scholars, fascinated by Montgomery's perceptions of women's eligibility to vote, have examined her consistent use of contradictions. Holly Pike is such a scholar; in "A Woman's War," Pike discusses *Rilla* and Montgomery's expectations of changes in women's lives post-franchise. Pike suggests that, in *Rilla*, Montgomery's belief that women's lives would not be greatly enhanced by the vote establishes that there was little change for women after the war. Lines like Susan's comment after a stressful evening waiting at home for election results might be interpreted as supportive of Pike's view: "'Mrs. Dr. dear, I think politics are too strenuous for women."[153] Pike goes on to assert that *Rilla* does not portray traditional heroes. Pike argues that, because Montgomery centred *Rilla's* plot on "a village love story," Montgomery created "a version of 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."[154] I strongly disagree with Pike's assessment that the women depicted in *Rilla* are not heroic, but merely "appear heroic," because they are only meeting community expectations. A logical extension of Pike's argument would be that soldiers could never be recognized as heroes either, for they are only meeting the expectations of their communities and their country.

Community and national expectations are arguably heightened in times of crisis to a degree that demands Herculean efforts from both genders and the ability to adapt. Chronicles of the efforts of citizens fighting and working to support the war effort are often portrayed in histories, stories, and film. The producers of the film *Passchendaele* write in the article, "The Economic Impact" that through the financial, physical, and emotional hardships of its citizens, Canada was rapidly transformed from a

> rural economy to an industrialized nation....The Great War had a tremendous economic impact on Canada and the world. It is estimated that the war cost almost $340 billion dollars with more than half of that going to the direct cost of waging it. For Canada, paying for the war changed the economy and taxation structure of the country forever. Before the First World War, Canada had no income tax and the then minister of finance thought it would be necessary to institute a tax to pay for the soaring costs of the war effort.[155]

These rapid changes resulted in inflation and higher prices during a period when many families were experiencing increased financial hardship as their primary earners left to fight overseas. In Montgomery's time, only men were expected to risk life, limb, and mental health to protect their country and its ideals. Despite the fact that women knew they would not face combat, they were also pushed into roles by their government and society that demanded as much courage to face the unknown as their male counterparts. Middle- and upper-class women, like Montgomery, who had been conditioned in Victorian times to lives their lives within the privacy of their homes, were suddenly propelled into the public sphere with little or no training or experience.

This sheltered class of women, used to cloaking natural conditions such as pregnancy in terms like "confinement," were thrust overnight into the shocking realities of the "total war," a term created during the war by German General Erich Ludendorff. Williamson Murray and Alvin Bernstein argue in The *Making of Strategy: Rulers, States and War* that Ludendorff 's vision of total war was "an extreme picture on industrialized war requiring a nation's entire resources as well as comprehensive planning and preparation in peace: in effect, a militarized society."[156] Total war was supported by technology: poisonous gas, quick-firing rifled cannons, breech-loading magazine rifles, machine guns, telegraph, telephone, barbed wire, railway development, tanks, submarines, and airplanes. Rapidly developing technology created to kill or maim as many military personnel as possible overwhelmed middle-and-upper-class women's previously sheltered lives. Women who had been protected from many of the world's stark

realities before the war were now exposed to vivid details of trench warfare. Previously taboo subjects now daily inundated these women's lives through newspapers or letters from the front, such as details of illnesses, injuries, or unsanitary conditions in the trenches. Jerry Meredith writes to Rilla's sister Nan about his life at the front:

> I came back to consciousness at dawn....I was all alone and *afraid* - terribly afraid. Dead men all around me, lying on the horrible grey, slimy fields. I was woefully thirsty.... 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 all those dead men around me, and a sort of wonder how this could have happened to *me*. [157]

Women were also expected to remain stoic, to encourage and support without fear their male loved ones as they departed for war. Women were expected to wave goodbye without tears or making a scene, and with few methods of communication to maintain contact with their loved ones. Although Montgomery's portrayal of Rilla's goodbye to Kenneth is tearless, Montgomery might have not been rewriting tradition as much as she was supporting stoicism. Few social security programs were in place as a safeguard if their male provider was killed, or physically or mentally wounded. Montgomery's characters on the home front, reflective of Canadian women, fight despair, the agony of not knowing where or when their loved ones fight, or even if they are still alive. Anne tries to preserve normalcy in the home but fights despair: "All the forenoon I preserved rhubarb with my hands and waited for war news with my soul. When it came I shrivelled."[158] Susan is "awake most of the preceding night thinking of Little Jem far out on the Atlantic, where the great fleet was carrying Canada's first army across the ocean."[159] Letters home describe the stark truths of trench warfare, inspiring Faith Meredith to mourn that "Laughter is gone out of the world...." [160] Minutes are elongated into hours, a fact Rilla recognizes when Jem goes missing: "Oh, Miss Oliver – must we go on for weeks and months, - not knowing whether Jem is alive or dead? Perhaps we will never know. I – I *cannot* bear it. I

cannot. Walter – and now Jem. This will kill mother...."[161] In spite of their suffering, the women bravely wait for news and try to fill the void with activities that will benefit the soldiers. Pike argues that Rilla and the other female characters in Montgomery's *Rilla of Ingleside* are not heroic because they are merely meeting community expectations. I argue that in *Rilla* the majority of the villagers participate in supporting the war effort, and although meeting community expectations as Pike points out, meeting expectations was an endeavour demanding heroic resolve from both sexes.

Pike also writes that conditions did not change for women in post-war Canada because women were expected to return to their homes once the men returned from war. Initially, Montgomery conveys the same sentiment as Pike in the early passages of *Rilla,*[162] through a yet untried Rilla who rebelliously defies her elder sister's belief that everything will change because of the war. By the novel's conclusion, however, Montgomery uses Rilla's brother Jem to convince her readers nothing will ever be the same. Her wounded brother Jem remarks after his escape from a prisoner of war camp and arrival home, "The old world is destroyed and we must build up a new one."[163] Jem's sentiments are reflected by the editors of *Behind the Lines: Gender and the Two World Wars*, who would also disagree with Pike's assessment. They paraphrase Mollie Panter-Downs, who wrote in 1946 that while the two world wars had resulted in few permanent changes for women, "the momentary experience of sexual disruption granted them an ironic view of gender that they passed on to their daughters. Turned critical, the irony of one generation became the feminism of the next."[164]

By 1932, Montgomery wrote in her journal that she believed her generation's beliefs had been irrevocably changed: "All our old standards and beliefs swept away – our whole world turned upside down and stirred up – before us nothing but a welter of doubt and confusion and

uncertainty."[165] Montgomery would agree with Pike that Canadian women's social position had been reversed with the soldiers' homecoming and women returned to their traditional roles at home. But circumstances had forever changed for many women and families. Although the limited franchise was a small step towards female equality, it was a beginning. Middle-and upper-class women, used to living apart from the stark realities of the world, were no longer isolated. Working class women's horizons broadened as they learned skills and trades during the war. And for all the real and fictional families, like the Blythes, who lost a loved one or saw a physically or mentally transformed person return home, their former lives, shaped by an occasionally hated, yet familiar, framework of gender norms and restrictions, was permanently altered. The Canadian War Museum's website lists the overwhelming numbers of Canadian dead and injured who represent countless families and loved ones grieving at home: 59, 544 dead, not including those who served with the Royal Navy or British Army; 1,388 Canadians who died as volunteers with the British flying services; 172, 000 wounded; and over 9, 000 cases of shell shock.[166] Montgomery's maternal feminist philosophy shaped her search for women's worth in war, and her female characters in *Rilla* reflect these values. Despite Montgomery's beliefs that women deserved a political voice, she believed women's value during and after the war would be found in their traditional feminine roles of wives as mothers and constructed the character Rilla to embody maternal feminist values as the best hope for Canada post-war.

Chapter Two

"an insignificant person, of no importance to anybody"

Montgomery believed that women's wartime sacrifices equalled their male counterparts. Ironically, Montgomery's overwhelming personal sense of worthlessness is belied by her premise that women's sacrifices deserved celebration in *Rilla of Ingleside*; perhaps her own well-documented feelings of worthlessness inspired her to recognise possibilities for other Canadian girls and women. Arguably, *Rilla* mirrors Montgomery's life. Rilla is a pretty, hard-working, and beloved young woman who, despite all her positive qualities, is insecure and full of self-doubts concerning her character and worth. Rilla writes in her journal that "days of discouragement come upon me, in which I feel that I am vain and selfish and weak and that there is no good thing in me." [1] Montgomery's own self doubts, however, were stronger and more permanent than fictional Rilla's adolescent worries. During her 1910 visit to Boston to meet her publisher, Lewis Coues Page, Montgomery confided in her journal:

> But my subjective mind, long inured, even from the earliest dawn of memory, to believing that I was an insignificant person, of no importance to anybody, refused to be convinced and went on telling me that the good people who made a fuss over me must be taking me for somebody else – or were making fun of me![2]

Montgomery was tormented by inner conflicts that often left her questioning the nature of her character, particularly when she examined her self-worth. The source of Montgomery's feelings of worthlessness might have been depression. Janice Fiamengo writes in "'...the refuge of my sick spirit...': L.M. Montgomery and the Shadows of Depression" that

> Montgomery recorded periods of debilitating sadness and anxiety. During these times, she had trouble reading and working; at the worst, she could not sleep or eat and had 'a morbid horror of seeing anyone' (*SJ* 1:342). Feeling trapped, hopeless, and restless, she dreaded the future and even longed for death, recording on one particularly miserable day

> in March 1904, 'I just wish I could die! I hate the thought of living – of the miserable night before me – of getting up tomorrow to another dull lonely day' (*SJ* 1:294).[3]

Margaret Doody points out in "L. M. Montgomery: the Darker Side" that, throughout her life, Montgomery often felt betrayed and let down by those she believed should be the closest and most supportive.[4] Her dark feelings of betrayal and profound disappointment reinforced her doubts about her significance as a person. This chapter examines the sequential events in Montgomery's life that thwarted the development of strong self-worth, beginning with childhood bereavement and what she perceived as a lack of emotional support, followed by the loss of her "true" love, her unhappy marriage and motherhood, and concludes with her method of coping by severing her private from her public life. Montgomery's ongoing search for validation in her own life may have provided her with an impetus to celebrate the lives of other Canadian women, such as those in *Rilla*.

Montgomery's Childhood: Negative Internalizations

Montgomery's sense of self-worth was stunted by several unfortunate events in her childhood. Her most overwhelming experience was when her mother died with tuberculosis when she was only twenty-one months old. Her maternal grandparents, Alexander and Lucy Macneill took her in as they believed that Montgomery's father was not capable of raising his daughter. Montgomery found life on their farm stressful both because of their generation's ideology towards child rearing and because of personality conflicts. Montgomery had a complex and thin-skinned temperament that often conflicted with her grandparents' expectations of proper behaviour for children, and neither grandparent seemed to understand Montgomery's imagination or need for nurture and reassurance after the loss of her mother and the absence of her father. Following his wife's death, Montgomery's father was rarely present, so

Montgomery's early interactions with men were with her grandfathers. While Montgomery was growing up, her Grandfather Macneill often belittled the sensitive Montgomery. Mary Rubio writes that he "could be a sharp and irascible man. His erratic behaviour (which ranged from general irritability through raging tempers to 'arbitrary kindness') made her feel highly insecure, particularly given his tendency towards barbed sarcasm."[5] Montgomery was aware that Grandfather Macneill was a successful man who looked down on her father because of his failed business ventures, and Montgomery believed Macneill's rejection of her father extended to her as well. Montgomery's concern about parental rejection emerges in her young heroine Rilla. Rilla similarly worries about her standing in her father's eyes. Dr. Blythe "coolly"[6] asks Rilla what she is going to do with the war baby she rescues from drunken Meg Conover, informing the fourteen-year-old that if she does not want to return the baby to Conover or place him in an orphanage, she must "attend to it yourself."[7] Like Montgomery, Rilla seeks approval and love from the male members of her family. In a superficial version of Montgomery's feelings of isolation and hopelessness, Rilla reflects "rather bitterly that father was very considerate of mother's and Susan's health, but what about hers? ... She would get a book on baby hygiene and be beholden to nobody. She would *never* go to father for advice...."[8]

Montgomery also recognized her paternal grandfather Senator Donald Montgomery's preferential treatment and praise of his grandsons which did not extend to his perceptive granddaughter. Montgomery felt that her exclusion from both grandfathers' wills demonstrated that she was not important to either man. Both men passed away before Montgomery had become successful enough as a writer to be financially independent, yet Rubio emphasizes that neither named her as a beneficiary in their wills.[9] Her guardian, grandfather Macneill's lack of compassion and concern for Montgomery, however, left her essentially homeless when he

bequeathed the family home to his estranged son John instead of his wife, Montgomery's grandmother, Lucy. As Rubio explains:

> John F. decided to claim the house, given that the will had not specified Lucy Macneill's residence in it for the rest of her life. John F. saw no reason why his mother could not do what a widow often did, which was to go to live with a married child – not with him, but with daughter Annie at the Campbell farm, or with Emily, now a widow with a partly grown family at Malpeque. There was one problem: Lucy Macneill did not want to be pushed out of her own home in which she had raised all her children. She was a very respected member of the community and the church. She also wanted to provide a home for Maud.[10]

Montgomery strikes back in *Rilla*, however, through the character Miss Gertrude Oliver, Rilla's former teacher and close friend. Through Miss Oliver, Montgomery suggests that it is better for women to have an education and thereby the opportunity to take care of themselves instead of relying on fickle male relatives. On the other hand, Rilla denies any desire to continue her education (in a self-derogatory fashion), but also rejects domesticity, raising further questions about traditional gender roles:

> I never cared for all those ologies and isms Nan and Di are so crazy about. And there's five of us going to college already. Surely that's enough. There's bound to be one dunce in every family. I'm quite willing to be a dunce if I can be a pretty, popular, delightful one. I can't be clever. I have no talent at all, and you can't imagine how comfortable it is. Nobody expects me to do anything so I'm never pestered to do it. And I can't be a housewifely, cookly creature, either. I hate sewing and dusting, and when Susan couldn't teach me to make biscuits nobody could. Father says I toil not neither do I spin. Therefore, I must be a lily of the field...[11]

Montgomery longed for a father who would love her unconditionally, like the father she creates for Rilla who loves her despite her lack of ambition or domestic skills. Her father, Hugh John, though, was a weak man who appears to have done little to alleviate his daughter's insecure financial or emotional status. Montgomery's father lived thousands of miles away in Saskatchewan, was preoccupied with raising a second family and rarely acknowledged his daughter with financial or emotional support. Montgomery's closest male relatives left her

without resources or a home in a society in which women often were not able to gain an education or support themselves financially, further undermining her sense of worth and importance.

Montgomery wanted to believe her grandfather Macneill's contempt for her father was misplaced, but unfortunately, Macneill's perceptions of his son-in-law were accurate. Hugh John allowed his second wife, who came from a well-to-do family, to control him and the household. Rubio reports that Hugh never sent money to help Montgomery's grandparents raise her, a fact Montgomery was constantly reminded of by her fiscally-responsible grandfather.[12] He had little to do with his daughter until she was fifteen when he invited her to stay with him and his new wife in Prince Albert. Montgomery's dream of a happy reunion was quickly destroyed by the realization that she was expected to leave school and help her step-mother with the children and home. Montgomery's darker side emerged on August 26, 1890, when she wrote in her journal that she believed her step-mother was a constant nag who alternately criticized or snubbed her father. [13] After a year of housekeeping and baby-minding, Montgomery decided her grandparents' stressful home life was better than working as a drudge in Prince Albert. Montgomery's father had disappointed her each time he refused to stand up to his belligerent wife and support Montgomery. His weak character and lack of fore-thought, had firmly cemented Montgomery's feelings of worthlessness. Montgomery's belief that she was not important was painfully clear when her father failed to provide her with an escort for the return trip. Rubio points out:

> ...shockingly, Hugh John allowed his sixteen–year-old daughter to travel across the continent without the protection of a chaperone. Respectable young women simply did not make such long journeys alone. An unaccompanied woman was at risk, both to her person and to her reputation, and one so young was particularly vulnerable. Maud's

> unchaperoned return was an extraordinary breach of custom and propriety. Worse, it was downright unsafe.[14]

Unhappily for Montgomery, her return to Prince Edward Island did not change her feelings of inadequacy and her lack of self-worth. Although Montgomery's Grandmother Macneill gave her some money to further her education, she expected Montgomery to conform to Victorian norms that dictated appropriate behaviour for white middle-class women in return. Lucy Macneill believed women must be seen as ladies in the eyes of the church and of the community. Lucy knew gossip would brand her granddaughter if Montgomery did not adhere to religious and community expectations. She feared that any implied taint would follow Montgomery into adulthood and possibly damage her chances of marriage in their small, gossipy community. Rubio highlights Lucy's concerns:

> But as she approached puberty, her grandmother could see that a budding young woman with such an impulsive temperament might make mistakes. When young girls were candidates for scandal by virtue of family history, or class, the entire community watched them carefully. A girl who got herself "talked about" compromised her chances of a decent marriage. Her misbehaviour could also lower a family's standing in the community, and the Macneills had great pride of family....The Macneills watched closely, prepared to clamp down if too much "hot" Montgomery blood began to appear....on three separate occasions when she [Montgomery] admits she was deeply attracted to certain men, she vigorously denies in each case that she gave in to her sexual impulses. The very force of her denial – probably written into her journals after 1919 when she began recopying them – suggests that she wanted to counter gossip that she feared might linger years later when she was world-famous and expected her life to be scrutinized.[15]

Lucy's fears that Montgomery's reputation would be tarnished by bucking social expectations may provide the reasoning behind Montgomery's conservative treatment of Rilla's role in war. Rubio writes that, although Lucy believed that Montgomery was attractive, she felt Montgomery would never be as striking as her mother, and so would need a spotless character to enhance her appearance if she wished to attract a man for matrimony.[16] Mollie Gillen observes in *The Wheel of Things* that Montgomery appears to have agreed with her grandmother's critique of her looks,

for she writes of herself, perhaps with contemporary feminine modesty, "I am a petite person with very delicate features." [17] Perhaps Montgomery's self-assessment was not based in modesty, but actuality, if we believe a Boston *Republic* reporter who used the word pretty only to describe Montgomery's pink dress in his 1910 interview.[18] Unlike Montgomery, Rilla transforms from a plump roly-poly into an attractive young woman "nearly as pretty as Susan believed her to be."[19]

According to Rubio, Lucy was particularly worried that Montgomery's moody personality would become public knowledge and stain her public persona and changes for matrimony: "Sensible, self-contained Lucy was determined to teach her granddaughter to conduct herself with discipline, self-control, and dignity, and to consider in advance the consequences of her impulsive tendencies."[20] Montgomery's strict Presbyterian grandparents believed the best way to subdue their impulsive granddaughter and to ensure she did not misbehave and ruin her reputation was to restrict her social activities to church functions. Although unsuccessful in an attempt to rein in Montgomery's active imagination, they also tried to limit their granddaughter's ardent love of reading to church doctrine. Montgomery's rebellion towards the limitations imposed by her strict grandparents, combined with narrow-minded community expectations emerge in her creation of a novel that challenged readers to reconsider the rigid sex roles maintained during the war.

"His little diamond solitaire on my left hand!"

Regrettably, as she matured, Montgomery failed to find a sense of worth in either her romances or eventual marriage. Although Montgomery wrote about happy endings that usually concluded in marriage, she was privately realistic about the realities of single women without the

protection and financial support of a husband. Although Montgomery followed her grandmother's beliefs and publicly guarded her reputation, according to her private journals she had a secret history of past romances when she agreed to marry Presbyterian minister Ewan Macdonald on October 12, 1906, that some contemporaries would view as sinful. Irene Gammel points out some of Montgomery's indiscretions in "Staging the Bad Girl," such as her collaboration with friend, teacher Nora Lefurgey, to "indulge the joys of 'man(i)curing,' teasing and titillating the local bachelors."[21]

A private person, Montgomery confined her most personal thoughts to her journals, but even within these pages she recreated and reshaped her story to frame herself in a favorable light. Rubio points out that Montgomery was

> a person of many moods, and the mood she was in when she recopied an old diary entry into her journal could affect its retelling. She often looked back on things recorded long ago and saw them in a different light. Sometimes she would even change her take on certain events already recorded in her finished journals....She began her recopying with the month of September 1889, when she was not quite fifteen. ...all the journal entries (which are the reconstruction of material from her earlier notebooks and notes) are written in retrospect, by a woman in her mid-forties. Her journals may *appear* to be seamless, continuous narrative of a life, written easily in dated entries, as her life unfolds, but her process is far more subtle than one of making artless jottings that miraculously transform themselves into an engrossing narrative.[22]

Montgomery finished transcribing her earlier diaries into her recognized journals in April 1922, and then made notes she later edited into her official journal, re-shaping her diaries into ten identical volumes during her lifetime. Montgomery's treatment of Rilla's diary entries, however, contradicts Montgomery's own reshaping of events; Rilla bares her soul in her diary and does not recreate situations to in order to place herself in a positive light, such as her outburst after Irene maligns Walter's courage:

> I just exploded. 'How dare you come here and repeat such a thing to me about my brother, Irene Howard?' I exclaimed. 'I shall never forgive you – never. *Your* brother hasn't enlisted – hasn't any idea of enlisting.'
>
> "'Why Rilla, *dear*, I didn't say it,' said Irene. 'I told you it was Mrs. George Burr. And I told *her* –'
>
> "'I don't want to hear what you told her. Don't you *ever* speak to me again, Irene Howard.' Of course, I shouldn't have said that. But it just seemed to say itself.[23]

Elizabeth Epperly writes in "Visual Drama: Capturing Life in L. M. Montgomery's Scrapbooks" that "It can be argued that Montgomery is always telling and reshaping her own story, whether she is writing letters, journal entries, or indeed poetry or fiction."[24]

According to her journals, Montgomery had broken one engagement with her well-educated and handsome cousin Edwin Simpson. Although Montgomery herself sometimes questioned the validity of some of her diary's details,[25] they also affirm her desire to have a home and family of her own. Rubio writes that Montgomery understood that single women had little social status, and she felt she had to marry for financial security, children, and emotional and physical intimacy.[26] She had always wanted her own children, which necessitated marriage. Montgomery was physically repulsed by Simpson, and when the relationship failed to appease her loneliness, she chose to be unfaithful with Herman Leard.

Montgomery wrote in her diary that she had developed an intimate relationship with Herman, son of the farming family she boarded with while teaching in Lower Bedeque. [27] Montgomery denied in her journals that their relationship was ever consummated, although she claimed he was the love of her life.[28] She further absolved herself by stating that he had sneaked into her bedroom. In this same entry, dated April 8, 1898, Montgomery also stated she could never marry him for she regarded him "as my inferior."[29] Rubio points out that Montgomery was careful never to write that he asked her to marry him, which is particularly relevant as, according to family and friends, he was already engaged to a wealthy local farmer's daughter. [30]

Montgomery implies in her journal that she rejected Herman although, according to Rubio, locals claim he never seemed overly interested in his sisters' teacher.[31] Montgomery's affair with Herman was carried on secretly behind closed bedroom doors:

> [Herman] came to my room with the mail....I felt Herman's burning breath on my face, his burning kiss on my lips. And then I heard him making the same request he had made before, veiled, half inaudible, but unmistakable....The most horrible temptation swept over me – I remember to this minute its awful power – to *yield* – to let him stay where he was – to be his body and soul if that one night at least![32]

In 1898, this unhappy situation was left behind in Lower Bedeque when Montgomery returned home to care for her recently-widowed grandmother, fulfilling another restrictive obligation imposed by society's expectations that a single woman had a duty to care for her elders even when she had a job and life elsewhere.

Rilla's public courtship with Ken Ford that results in engagement after one quick chaste kiss while Susan's back was turned,[33] rewrites Montgomery's romances with Simpson and Herman. Unlike Montgomery who, while engaged to Simpson, began a physical relationship with Herman Leard, Rilla refuses to kiss her friend Fred Arnold goodbye because of a promise:

> "'But oh, mother,' I sobbed, 'he wanted me to kiss him good-bye – and I couldn't – and that hurt me worse than all the rest.'
> "'Well, why didn't you kiss him?' asked mother coolly. 'Considering the circumstances, I think you might have.'
> "'But I couldn't, mother – I promised Ken when he went away that I wouldn't kiss *anybody* else until he came back.'[34]

Montgomery's complicated romantic relationships were not her only concern when she returned to live with her now widowed grandmother. Montgomery's journal confirms she realized that her grandfather Macneill's will stipulated the family home went to her uncle when her grandmother passed away, and Montgomery knew she would be left without a place to live.[35] This situation weighed heavily on her, for she still had not been successful enough to make a

living by writing, and, as she aged, Montgomery worried she would soon be too old for marriage and motherhood. In 1903, Ewan Macdonald became Cavendish's new minister, and ironically, although he was mentioned in her humorous journal co-written with Nora Lefurgey,[36] he was not mentioned again in Montgomery's journal until October 12, 1906. This date not only marks Ewan's reappearance in Montgomery's private journal, but also the date of her engagement to this local minister: "I am sitting here with his little diamond solitaire on my left hand!"[37] According to her biography, *The Alpine Path*, Montgomery had seen herself as an aging spinster with little financial security and doubtful about her abilities and success as a writer.[38] So, while the engagement is startling, as Ewan does not merit mention in three years, after consideration, it becomes obvious Montgomery did not feel she had many other matrimonial options. Montgomery's dramatic nature often led to the impulsiveness her grandmother had tried to eradicate, and although Ewan and Montgomery had a long engagement, the sudden reality of the wedding may account for her rapid transition from despair to acceptance of her up-coming nuptials. Margaret Steffler emphasises Montgomery's contradictory mood swings about her marriage:

> Maud's panicky reaction, which comes over her like a wave after the marriage ceremony with Ewan, is intense, but temporary. The 'sudden horrid inrush of *rebellion* and *despair*' (*SJ* 2: 68) is preceded by having felt 'contented all the morning' and is followed by feeling 'again [her] contented self' (*SJ* 2: 68) by four o' clock. The amazing aspect of the experience is not the intensity itself but the way in which a reaction of such intensity can engulf and then leave her so quickly and easily.[39]

In her October 12, 1906, journal entry she wrote that she initially did not find Ewan attractive, but has come to find him attractive.[40] In the same entry she also confides that she believes minister's wives are slaves and "must ... be a failure, from an 'official' point of view."[41] After her engagement to Ewan, Montgomery wrote "I shall never know the fullness of life – to love absolutely and give myself to the man I so loved, knowing he loved me as well."[42] She wrote as

a woman without financial security or close relatives to provide comfort and protection in a world without a safety net of social programs.

Montgomery's mood swings are represented in *Rilla* by the character Miss Gertrude Oliver, after the teacher learns that her fiancé has been killed in action:

> 'You ain't as bad off as some, Miss Oliver,' she [Susan's cousin Sophia] said, 'and you shouldn't take it so hard. There are some as has lost their husbands; that's a hard blow; and there's some as has lost their sons. You haven't lost either husband or son.' 'No,' said Gertrude, more bitterly still. 'It's true I haven't lost a husband – I have only lost the man who would have been my husband. I have lost no son – only the sons and daughters who might have been born to me – who will never be born to me now.' 'It isn't ladylike to talk like that,' said Cousin Sophia in a shocked tone; and then Gertrude laughed right out, so wildly that Cousin Sophia was really frightened.[43]

Some readers may see Montgomery's oscillating moods as similar to Gertrude Oliver's. As a single woman who believed she had no financial or emotional security or support, it is understandable that Montgomery accepted a marriage proposal and married a man whom she confided in her journals she never loved,[44] as opposed to Miss Oliver who loved her fiancé and anxiously awaited their marriage. It is important to note, as well, that Montgomery accepted Ewan's proposal before she became internationally famous and financially independent with *Anne of Green Gables* in 1908. Montgomery, unlike Miss Oliver who has a teaching position, had no financial support when she accepted Ewan's proposal; Montgomery's frustrations with a society that dictated women's financial means according to gender and class might have well pushed her to write a novel that highlighted women's ability to take care of themselves, as well as others.

Montgomery's Ideas of Worth in Marriage and Motherhood

Montgomery's "happy endings" fiction in contrast to the state of her own marriage is one of her deepest contradictions. Montgomery's marriage was not one of the "happily-ever-after" affairs she created in her novels and short stories, such as Una and Eric's in *Una of the Garden.*[45] Montgomery's pre-wedding jitters foreshadowed the often heart-rending state of her marriage. Paradoxically, although Montgomery and Ewan shared a Scottish Presbyterian background, Mary Rubio observes they were divided by deep "social and cultural gaps."[46] Montgomery recorded her thoughts about marriage in her journal in 1897, years before her marriage to Ewan as "something more or less inevitable...I have at last realized what a *hell* it would be with a man I did not love – and yes, what a *heaven* with one I did!"[47] Marie Campbell suggests in "Wedding Bells and Death Knells" that Montgomery's fiction was deliberately written in opposition to the reality of her married life. Campbell argues that Montgomery was a "market-driven writer... required to capitulate, at least overtly, to narrative and social norms" that demanded her "popular romantic literature" conclude with "happily-ever-after weddings."[48] Campbell adds, though, that Montgomery also provided "her reader with whispered hints that marriage is, in fact, tantamount to death for the female 'artist in words,'" such as in *Emily of New Moon.*[49]

Unfortunately for Montgomery, her polarized representation of marriage as heaven or hell was prophetic, as she wrote in 1917 that, although fond of Ewan, she had never been "in love with him."[50] Even though Montgomery often questioned her marriage to Ewan, she was overjoyed to discover she was to be a mother at age thirty-seven: "But I am glad – so glad. It has always seemed to me that a childless marriage is a tragedy— especially in such a marriage as mine."[51] Montgomery was pregnant with her eldest son, Chester.

Montgomery's sons represent yet another contradiction in her life. Chester's birth was followed by a stillborn son, Hugh, born just after war was announced in 1914. Montgomery was devastated by Hugh's death and wrote in her journal that she felt denied of "the reward for which I had suffered through long months and faced death..."[52] Montgomery also felt guilt and shame that Hugh's death might mean that Chester would never have a little brother because she was a delicate and little woman of thirty-seven and confessed in her journal that she also feared that "the same hideous thing would happen again"[53] if there were subsequent pregnancies. Montgomery's status as a mother (like many other women who did not end a pregnancy with a live birth) was challenged by contemporary standards. Allison Crawford writes in *Born Still: Euphemism and the Double-Taboo of Women's Bodies and Death* that early 20th-century society often blamed stillborns or miscarriages on the mother.[54] Montgomery felt that by not giving birth to a healthy child she was a failure in a society that valued women primarily as mothers. It is, therefore, not surprising that Montgomery was very thankful in her third pregnancy and wrote in her journal that God was "pitiful and gave me the chance of being a mother."[55]

Unfortunately for Montgomery, her unhappy marriage and her disappointments with her children challenged her already tenuous sense of security and self-esteem. While Chester studied law, Montgomery's third son, Stuart, became an obstetrician and served as the medical doctor on the Canadian destroyer *Huron* during the Second World War. Rubio emphasizes that Montgomery accurately considered Chester a morally-challenged young man with a tendency towards lying, and stealing, and a highly-sexed nature that often lead to faithlessness.[56] In fact, as Rubio points out, Chester's shocking behaviour eventually resulted in both his divorce and imprisonment for embezzling money from the provincial Office of the Public Trustee in 1955.[57] Montgomery's mistrust of Chester was countered by her trust in Stuart. She not only trusted

Stuart, but chose him over his elder brother to become her literary executor. Rubio observes that as each son matured he came to represent a distinct dichotomy. Stuart "had been both repelled and fascinated by his brother's lack of conscience, just as Chester had apparently been mystified by his brother's ability to attract loyal and devoted friends without effort."[58] Montgomery's exhausting pace of life as she struggled to write, raise her children, run the home, and fulfill her responsibilities as a minister's wife and parish volunteer, often left her feeling overwhelmed. It is incredible that Montgomery had enough energy and time to write. Her journals reveal that in addition to her public speaking appointments, she was also involved with numerous parish activities: leading the Home Missions Society and Mission Band, teaching Sunday school, participating in the Women's Foreign Mission Society and the Young People's Guild.[59] Although Montgomery had longed for children, in 1934 her conflicting emotions in regard to her sons led her to write in her diary that she could no longer find "compensation for everything in my children."[60]

According to her private journals, Montgomery did not marry for love and any emotional or financial compensation that marriage could have provided was swiftly shattered. Her loveless marriage was quickly undermined by Ewan's mental illness, a pre-existing condition according to her journals, and he had not informed Montgomery of this prior to their marriage.[61] She wrote that Ewan suffered from "religious melancholy,"[62] which first presented as severe headaches and insomnia and swiftly led from "agitation to a catatonic, glassy-eyed state."[63] Ewan experienced progressive and lingering episodes that resulted in a nervous breakdown and the consultation of a Boston nerve specialist in July 1919.[64] The doctor diagnosed Ewan as a "religious melancholic" for he feared he was "*eternally lost*... [and believed that there was] no hope for him in the next life."[65] Montgomery wrote that she was horrified to learn that Ewan had

knowingly "brought children into the world who might inherit the taint."[66] This diagnosis overwhelmed Montgomery, and she confessed privately in her journal that she was overcome with "...unutterable horror."[67]

Montgomery's horror reflected the contemporary stigma of mental illness, and she developed elaborate manoeuvres to camouflage Ewan's condition from his parishioners. As a dutiful wife, Montgomery's intricate campaign to hide Ewan's condition evolved not only from her personal need to present an image of the perfect family to the world, but also from the fact that Ewan would have quickly lost his job. Part of Montgomery's complicated scheme to hide Ewan's condition was hiding his true state from local doctors, even if it meant she had to prescribe remedies herself without professional advice. During one of Ewan's episodes, Montgomery had given him medicine that had had an adverse affect. However, Montgomery's response must be noted. Montgomery wrote in her journal that she had been afraid that she had "innocently" poisoned Ewan, which "would be dreadful beyond words. And not only that, but all the horror and publicity of an inquest!"[68] Her journal entry suggests the depth of her concern about appearances first and foremost. In addition to this added stress of protecting Ewan's prospects, Montgomery felt, as a wife and mother that she had to maintain as normal a life as possible for both her husband and children.

Montgomery never found a sense of worth in the contemporary expectations of motherhood or marriage. According to Rubio, even her writing success (that provided her with financial success and countless letters from adoring fans every week that she patiently answered) failed to inspire self-confidence.[69] Montgomery's insecurities and questions of self-worth never diminished, even after she was internationally famous. Just days after completing *Rilla*, Montgomery wrote in her journal on December 11, 1920,

> At heart I am still the snubbed little girl of years ago who was constantly made to feel by all the grown-up-denizens of her small world that she was of no importance whatever to any living creature. The impression made on me then can never be effaced – I can never lose my "inferiority complex." That little girl can never believe in the reality of any demonstration in her honour.[70]

Finding Value: Private Versus Public Life

Montgomery's deliberate separation of her private from her public life did not begin after her unhappy marriage. Montgomery had always been sensitive and writes in her journals that she had spent her childhood constructing walls to protect herself from her opinionated grandparents who believed affection did not merit verbal or physically-demonstrative expression.[71] Montgomery's diary reveals that she had been educated early in ways to guard her susceptible and lonely heart from her Calvinistic grandparents: "...if I could ask my friends here occasionally my life and my outlook on life would be so much more normal and wholesome. But that I cannot do. My friends, even those of my own sex, have never been welcome here."[72] Montgomery continued to contrive means to separate her deepest emotions from prying public eyes, particularly when her only confidante, her beloved and trusted cousin, Frederica Campbell Macfarlane (Frede) passed away unexpectedly. Montgomery's closest confidantes were always women. Like Anne with Diana Barry in *Anne of Green Gables*, Montgomery found importance in her strong connection with her closest friend, her cousin Frede, to whom she dedicated *Rilla*: "To the memory of FREDERICA CAMPBELL MACFARLANE who went away from me when the dawn broke on January 25th, 1919 – a true friend, a rare personality, a loyal and courageous soul."[73]

Montgomery wrote in her journal that she began to write *Rilla* two months after her beloved cousin Frederica passed away from the post-war "flu-pneumonia" epidemic in January 1919.[74] Frede's loss haunted Montgomery for the rest of her life; in fact, Rubio reports that

Montgomery felt that "half my life has been wrenched away, leaving me torn and bleeding."[75] Montgomery often felt disappointed or betrayed by the people around her and was, in fact, in Boston testifying against her fraudulent publisher, L. C. Page, when she received a telegram from Frede's friends in Montreal, begging her to come quickly before Frede died. Montgomery hastily left, only to arrive as Frede died.[76] *Rilla*, begun just after Frede's death, reflects Montgomery's life with its theme of war and death. It is also striking that Montgomery does not provide Rilla with a best friend, a reflection of Montgomery's loneliness and sense of isolation since Frede's death. Rilla is close with Gertrude Oliver, a teacher who boarded with the family for a year, but Miss Oliver is twice Rilla's age at twenty-eight.[77] Gertrude much resembles a young Montgomery: "She has had a sad life, with much bitterness in it, and she feels things with a terrible keenness. Her first youth is gone and she is practically alone in the world."[78]

Feeling isolated and alone, it is not surprising that Montgomery replicates her condition in Rilla's character, as if deliberately creating situations that sustain Rilla's lack of close friends. Age is not the only deterrent Montgomery uses to eliminate female characters as possible intimate friends for Rilla. Montgomery makes Mary Vance unsuitable for the role of Rilla's best friend for several reasons. Montgomery makes it clear that Mary is not from the same class and the girls have few interests in common. Rilla states she has always disliked Mary since she humiliated Rilla by chasing her through the village with a codfish when they were children.[79] Rilla does change her mind about Mary, however, when she saves Jims' life, but the two never become bosom friends:

> [Mary] saved Jims from a horrible death. It didn't matter any more that she had once chased me through the Glen with a codfish – it didn't matter that she had smeared goose grease all over my dream of romance the night of the lighthouse dance – it didn't matter that she thought she knew more than anybody else and always rubbed it in, – I would never dislike Mary Vance again.[80]

As Rilla's first party begins, it appears, however, that Montgomery has given Rilla a possible best friend in nineteen-year-old Irene Howard who

> seemed to like the society of the younger girls – spiteful friends said because she could queen it over them without rivalry. But Rilla thought Irene quite wonderful and loved her.... Irene was pretty and stylish; she sang *divinely* and spent every winter in Charlottetown taking music lessons.[81]

Once again, though, Montgomery strips Rilla of a best friend when Rilla learns of Irene's true nature that, unlike loyal Frede's character, is jealous and revengeful: "Irene kept giving me little digs all the time. The girls have always said she was revengeful like that if she were peeved about anything; but I never believed it before"....[82]

It is not a coincidence that Montgomery mirrors her loss of a beloved confident through Rilla. Montgomery eliminates all female possibilities for the role of best friend, which leaves Walter to fill the position. Rilla wants Walter to love her most of all his siblings, as she does him: " She would have *died* for Walter if it would have done him any good.... Oh, I just live in the hope that someday I shall be to Walter what Wordsworth's sister Dorothy was to him."[83] Walter becomes Rilla's best friend, who needs her love and support as much as she needs his closeness.[84] Frede and Walter's deaths leave Montgomery and Rilla alone; their feelings of loss and isolation challenge social restrictions that imply friendships between the sexes is impossible, perhaps even unnatural. Montgomery deconstructs this premise in *Rilla* and suggests that friendships are best characterized by personalities, not gender, particularly during the overwhelming stress of war.

Montgomery's personal despair in the loss of Frede, however, was not her only anxiety. She accurately felt she had to guard her financial gains from a greedy and amoral publisher. Although Montgomery won her case against Page's "fraudulent withholding of royalties,"[85]

Mary Rubio and Elizabeth Waterston argue in *Writing a Life* that she lost her fight concerning "resale of print rights"[86] because before the trial she had accepted cheques from the company now holding her copyrights. Rubio and Waterston assert that Montgomery, exhausted and mentally tormented by Frede's death, the trial and its publicity, and Ewan's deteriorating mental health, accepted $18, 0000 from Page in exchange for copyrights to all the Montgomery books Page had published:

> It was a good sum at the time, but in the long run Montgomery proved to have made a terrible bargain. Over the years she had to watch Page reap enormous rewards. Not only did the *Anne* series increase in worldwide popularity, but the profits from all movie and stage adaptations went to Page – a great financial loss to Montgomery. (In fact, after paying her $18,000, Page immediately sold the first motion-picture rights for $40,000.)[87]

Montgomery's confidence and self-worth as a successful business woman were shattered by the trial and the impossibility of confiding in Frede. Montgomery wrote in her 1924 journal that: "Both Frede and I hated to wear our hearts on our sleeves – to take the world into our confidence. It was part of our code that we must always present a front of laughter and satisfaction."[88]

Montgomery did have two pen pals whom she confided in during her adult life. Both, however, lived far away. Canadian Ephraim Weber's home was on the prairies, and George Boyd MacMillan's in distant Scotland. As the war went on, though, Montgomery wrote in her diary that she found little comfort in MacMillan's letters that "seemed to belong to a world and a day gone by."[89] Weber also proved himself an unsatisfying replacement for the gap left by Frede's death. When, after thirty years of correspondence, Montgomery met Weber in person, she confided in her journal: " We had never met before – and I do not feel that we have really met yet. We met more fully in our letters, where our real selves are expressed without fear of

conventions."[90]

Montgomery's misery and pride combined to create her habit of separating her private feelings from her public persona. Editor Jean Mitchell writes in *Storm and Dissonance: L. M. Montgomery and Conflict* that Montgomery's life was one of "Public enchantment and private discontent."[91] Similarly, Rubio writes in *The Gift of Wings* that she and fellow Montgomery journal editor, Elizabeth Waterston, were astonished to discover the "...disjunction (of her public and private) ... bifurcated life."[92] Montgomery was extremely conscious of dividing her public persona from her private life. She realized that the public would assess her by contemporary expectations of womanhood. Montgomery was so aware that her stark honesty would disturb her readers that on September 21, 1889, she wrote that she would keep her journal locked up as it had become the "personal confidant in whom I can repose absolute trust."[93] Rubio and Waterston argue that the journals are not the full picture or the "true self" either. The entries emphasize Montgomery's belief that she must always keep her judgments hidden from the world and that this constant suppression often left her feeling exhausted[94] and smothered by the "unbroken repression" of her exterior facade.[95]

Montgomery was extremely successful in hiding her tormented inner feelings. Her public performances completely masked her inner turmoil and were so convincing that she was surprised when parishioner Hattie Harrison praised her for her dedication to church work and for her constant bright happiness. Montgomery confides in her journal that she nearly broke into hysterical internal laughter:

> Happy! With my heart wrung as it is! With a constant ache of loneliness in my being. With no one to help me guide and control my sons! With my husband at that very moment lying on his bed, gazing at the ceiling and worrying over having committed the unpardonable sin! Well, I must be a good actress. I wonder

> how many other women I know, who seem "bright and happy," have likewise a closet full of skeletons. Plenty of them, I daresay.[96]

Montgomery's private journals were such an antithesis to her cheerful novels and her public guise of a gracious and helpfully optimistic community worker that they even disturbed her youngest son Stuart when he read her private thoughts.[97] Rubio writes in "A Dusting Off: An Anecdotal Account of Editing the L. M. Montgomery Journals" that Stuart, as Montgomery's literary executor, warned Rubio as she prepared to edit the private journals that the public would be "shocked" by the judgemental revelations released within the diaries' pages.[98] Rubio adds that Stuart was also concerned that the woman Montgomery exposed in the journals was "not in fact the personality whom people in her circle had known."[99] His greater concern, according to Rubio, however, was that the diaries' "unfair" disclosures would hurt family and friends of those criticised who were deceased,[100] and humiliate and anger journal victims still living.[101] Rubio also points out that no one knows how much of her past Montgomery may have re-written as she re-copied her journals, for she destroyed the originals as they were transcribed.[102]

The immediate accuracy of Stuart's concerns regarding the public's response to the journals' publication, though, was quickly proven. The journals revealed an aspect of Montgomery that directly opposed the beloved persona many readers cherished. While the majority of the people condemned in Volume I were deceased, numerous others written about in Volume II were alive when the journal was published in 1987. Rubio writes in "A Dusting Off" that many of the parishioners of Montgomery's husband's former parish of Leaskdale-Zephyr "were disappointed to learn that Montgomery had found some of her endless responsibilities as minister's wife quite tedious. A gracious, indefatigable community worker in life, she seemed to some to have turned into a monster in death."[103] The publication of Montgomery's journals opened a Pandora's Box. Montgomery's readers no longer knew if she should be identified as a

monster or considered a miracle worker for being able to write uplifting fiction from the depths of despair. As Mary Rubio points out:

> Women's lives and women's words were too heady. Too long silenced, too long angry, women like Montgomery broke forth like an explosive. A living text like Montgomery's journals had too much power to disturb people.[104]

Montgomery's insecurities might have been formed by a combination of negative experiences in her early years as well as her self-perceived failures as a wife, mother and successful business woman. These same feelings of worthlessness, though, might also have helped her create a novel that celebrated the worth of Canadian girls and women during war, while challenging society's expectations for women to silently maintain the *status quo*.

Chapter Three

Montgomery on Canadian Worth: Loyalty, Industry, and Courage

Montgomery was aware that her opinion influenced Canadians and the media when she wrote *Rilla of Ingleside*, as Elizabeth Epperly and Irene Gammel point out in "L. M. Montgomery and the Shaping of Canadian Culture:" "she exported Canada into an international scene with translations of her novels into seventeen languages, while at home and abroad carefully cultivating her public image for her country and her era."[1] As a well-known international author, Montgomery's novels potentially shape Canadian identity. Epperly and Gammel observe that Montgomery's ideals included "loyalty, industry, [and] ... courage...."[2] Montgomery's early life, strong connections to her family's heritage, and Presbyterian Church doctrine structured the way in which she measured people's worth and she forms characters in *Rilla* to represent qualities that demonstrate worth. Characters in *Rilla* represent ideals that are particularly evident in Montgomery's development of Rilla from a self-centred adolescent to a compassionate young woman. Montgomery's novel suggests that both genders made sacrifices during the war, and subtly challenges stereotypes by representing men and women's contributions as equal. Montgomery constructs her characters to represent her ideals, and even transfers traditional male roles to female characters, a reflection of her own transformation as a best-selling writer of what she disparagingly called "simple little tales"[3] in 1908 to one with the authority to write about the war. Montgomery accomplishes her representation of gender equality by examining male and female characters against a standard of practical values she felt distinctly defined Canadians, and completes the modeling of her characters with an element of self-sacrifice connected to the war.

Montgomery's fiction reflects her contradictions as she measures her characters in ways that often challenge the traditional ideologies of gender and war. However, Montgomery adds complexity by making it obvious that there are dark sides to ideals, and that some characters pay a high price for adhering to their beliefs. Although Montgomery wrote in her journal in 1928 that "War is a hellish thing,"[4] she defended the First World War as "a righteous war" to her correspondent Ephraim Weber, when he wrote to her that he believed the war was fuelled by commercialism and not to protect lives or values.[5] In her journal Montgomery suggests that the First World War was the necessary catalyst for the creation of great literature or great art: "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."[6] Years before the First World War, in 1910, Montgomery wrote about her views on Canadian literature to an editor she did not identify in her journal. Montgomery had written to this editor that she did not believe Canada would produce a real national literature until the country "fused her varying elements into a harmonious whole....welded together by some great crisis of storm and stress....the great Canadian novel or poem will [not] ever be written until we have had some kind of baptism by fire to purge away all our petty superficialities and lay bare the primal passions of humanity."[7] In 1919, Montgomery wrote that important Canadian literature "will come from the generation born of this conflict not from the generation that fought through it."[8] Before *Rilla*, though, in 1910, Montgomery suggests that the war would create a strong sense of national identity in Canadians. Montgomery mirrors this belief in *Rilla* through Reverend Mr. Meredith:

> "Without shedding of blood there is no *anything*," said Mr. Meredith, in the gently dreamy way which had an unexpected trick of convincing his hearers. "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. No, Mrs.

> Crawford, I don't think the war was 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 live to see but which our children's children will inherit."[9]

In *Rilla of Ingleside*, Montgomery represents abstract qualities that she suggests establish worth, loyalty, followed by industry and courage in order to show that character, not gender, determines worth.

Loyalty

Loyalty was important to Montgomery. Although *Rilla* is the only novel that Montgomery sets during the war, and its predecessor, *Rainbow Valley* (begun January 19, 1917 and completed December 24, 1918), prepares the reader for the imminent sacrifices and suffering that are depicted in *Rilla*. Montgomery suggests in *Rilla* that the test of loyalty is conduct she expresses in two ways: masculine loyalty is characterized as patriotism and manifested in enlistment, while feminine loyalty is represented as faithfulness to loved ones serving in the military. In *Rilla*, neither sex escapes paying for their loyalties to country, family, and friends. Montgomery suggests that Canadians should strive to personify lofty ideals such as loyalty, but that this is not achieved without each gender's self-sacrifice.

Although Montgomery implies that character is more important in determining worth than gender, she represents loyalty as gendered. Montgomery's consistent juxtaposition of opposing views ensures her readers are regularly re-examining their estimations of gender and war. In *Rainbow Valley*, Montgomery represents Walter and Jem Blythe with the same characteristics and values they held in their youth as they do as young men when war erupts in *Rilla*. Montgomery represents her character Walter as dreamy and not athletic. Walter is described by Jerry Meredith, the minister's son, in *Rainbow Valley*, as capable as praying as well

as the minister, implying he prefers peace and religion over the physical roughness enjoyed by neighbourhood boys.[10] In contrast, Jem and his friend Jerry are confident leaders, used to bossing the younger children into compliance. According to Owen Dudley and Jennifer Lister in "L. M. Montgomery and the First World War," Jem and Jerry's behaviour in *Rainbow Valley* provides "witness and prophecy of the rise of a Canadian officer class,"[11] which had foundations and ideals similar to that of Britain. Dudley and Lister emphasize the similarities between the Good-Conduct Club that Jem creates to help discipline his siblings and the motherless Reverend Meredith's children with his mission as a young military officer. The club's goal is to help the impulsive children bring themselves up to be good at all times, and, when required, to punish themselves "in some way that really *hurt*, or it wouldn't be any good."[12] Jem organizes the club with military precision and strict rules that must be obeyed. His best friend, Jerry Meredith, insists that the punishments must be carried out with no shirking and insists that there's "going to be fun in this."[13] Dudley and Lister find Jem's warlike tendencies and fierce sense of commitment to a cause too severe and criticize Jem by comparing him with Field-Marshal Haig:

> Jem Blythe plays the role of the general behind the lines who formulates the imbecile strategies to start with – it is he who devises the regime of self-accusation and punishment ('The Good Conduct Club') that proves so dangerous to the mental and physical health of the Meredith children....Jem shows not the faintest trace of responsibility for inaugurating such a dangerous policy. At the end of the book he is lusting to be 'a great, triumphant general. I'd give *everything* to see a battle' (*RV* 224). And *everyone* too, no doubt. It might be a vision of the youth of Field-Marshal Douglas Haig, whose big battle – the Somme – ended with 60,000 casualties in one day (1 July 1916).[14]

Her portrayal of Jem and Jerry Meredith in *Rainbow Valley* suggests that characteristics Montgomery considers harmful during peace are regarded as positive traits during war. She depicts them as both insensitive, dangerous glory-mongers in *Rilla*'s precursor, *Rainbow Valley*, yet they are characterized as devoted patriots eager to enlist and "follow the Piper" in *Rilla*.[15]

Although the reader knows the boys are misguided and that the war will not be a great game, Montgomery conveys to the reader the perception of Jem and Jerry's transition from insensitive and dangerous youth whose previous actions are inappropriate, to men whose characteristics are now valued in wartime. Montgomery suggests Jem's insensitivity in the opening chapters with comments about the possibility of a war with Germany as exciting and gay.[16] And Montgomery further encourages her readers to see Jem's insensitivity by including Jem's lurid description to Faith of a doctor in the Balkan war on their walk to Rilla's first dance. Jem describes the doctor who loses both his legs yet crawls "about from man to man, to all the wounded men around him, as long as he could, and did everything possible to relieve their sufferings ... Some hero, wasn't he, Faith?"[17] By highlighting their transition, Montgomery suggests their zeal might be unrealistic and difficult to maintain. But she also illustrates how characteristics looked down on in times of peace are re-valued as important, even patriotic, in war. When the two return after enlistment in their khaki uniforms as looking "like a man,"[18]

Montgomery also cleverly contrasts Jem and Jerry's fervour to enlist with Walter's reluctance, thereby presenting the "binary opposition engendered by the war that invaded even small communities at home,"[19] as pointed out by Lefebvre and McKenzie in *Rilla*'s introduction. The binary opposition is created by the conflict between Canadians who oppose the war versus those who support it. While most of the physically capable young men of Glen St. Mary hurry to enlist, Montgomery uses Walter Blythe and Mr. Pryor to illustrate the contempt and ostracism shown to those who do not immediately, and whole-heartedly, conform to national and social expectations of men as warriors during war. She includes incidents in *Rilla* that reflect contemporary Canadian attitudes towards men who appear healthy yet are not in uniform, like Kenneth Ford. He writes to Rilla that his broken ankle has healed sufficiently that he walks

without a limp, and that he feels people who do not know his medical history are secretly calling him "Slacker!"[20]

Unlike Ken, who, because of his obvious injury, is never publicly labelled a slacker, Walter is considered a coward by villagers and fellow students. Montgomery, however, takes deliberate care to ensure that the reader does not question Walter's patriotism by making him a recovering typhoid patient, an issue she reinforces four times in the first three chapters to explain his reason for not enlisting.[21] Montgomery's persistent references to Walter's medical condition encourage the reader's realization that this is not the true reason for Walter's reluctance to enlist. Unlike Kenneth, Walter is still judged by his classmates as a coward and disloyal to his country and his fear is publicly recognized when he receives a white feather in the mail while at Redmond.[22] Montgomery uses Walter's fear to expose a more realistic response to war, but his fear is also juxtaposed with act of heroism that is awarded with "a D. C. Medal."[23] By highlighting the fact that bravery might be found in improbable characters, like sensitive-hearted Walter, Montgomery introduces the possibility of finding courage in what many of her contemporaries would believe the impossible, a woman. Shortly after Walter enlists, however, Montgomery allows Rilla to admit "an odd feeling of relief in some hidden part of her soul, where a little dull, unacknowledged soreness had been lurking all winter." [24] Through Rilla's admission, Montgomery encourages the reader to question his or her own values about preconceived gender expectations, as the reader might also be judging Walter as unsympathetically as the villagers and his classmates.

Montgomery concludes Walter's transformation to "worthiness" by establishing his unquestionable loyalty when he creates a poem he titles "The Piper." Montgomery thus suggests

that some people are not cut out for war, but might still use their abilities to support their nation in war. Montgomery suggests that Walter's gift was not the ability to engage in hand-to-hand combat, but to fight with persuasive words that encourage others. Montgomery makes "The Piper" the patriotic call to arms that "was a classic from its first printing":

> Everywhere it was copied – in metropolitan dailies and little village weeklies, in profound reviews and "agony columns," in Red Cross appeals and Government recruiting propaganda. Mothers and sisters wept over it, young lads thrilled to it, the whole great heart of humanity caught it up as an epitome of all the pain and hope and pity and purpose of the mighty conflict, crystallized in three brief immortal verses. A Canadian lad in the Flanders trenches had written the one great poem of the war. [25]

Through Walter's progression, from one who saw war as the destruction of beauty and life to the creator of the definitive recruiting poem, Montgomery restores Walter's reputation and worth through sacrifice and death. However, Montgomery also challenges the reader to question the sort of world that would force a sensitive poet to go to war. Either possibility, though, absolves Walter of cowardice and leaves unsympathetic Whiskers as the embodiment of Canadian pacifism. Montgomery's depiction of Walter's transformation, though, is more than an endorsement of unquestioning patriotism. Walter's changing attitude troubles the reader and raises questions about gender expectations and their relationship to war.

Loyalty: the Dark Side

From the opening chapter of *Rilla*, Montgomery indicates Whiskers (Mr. Pryor) does not belong. Whiskers was not born in the village, but is from a nearby village called Lowbridge. Whiskers might have eventually been accepted by the people of Glen St. Mary, but even prior to the outbreak of war he is a trouble-maker, one who is also a Presbyterian church elder in spite of his "unpopularity."[26] Susan believes his appointment is a mistake, and she is smugly proven

correct when Whiskers insists that if the girls decorate the church with flowers (he claims they are messing 'up the pulpit with weeds') he will no longer come to church.[27] Montgomery uses the character Susan to persuade the reader that Whiskers' unpopularity, even before war breaks out and he claims to be a pacifist, is merited:

> "Who in the world ever gave him that ridiculous nickname?" asked Mrs. Blythe.
> "Why, the Lowbridge boys have called him that ever since I can remember...I suppose because his face is so round and red, with that fringe of sandy whisker about it.... But worse than his whiskers, Mrs. Dr. dear, he is a very unreasonable man and has a great many queer ideas. He is an elder now and they say he is very religious; but *I* can remember the time, Mrs. Dr. dear, twenty years ago, when he was caught pasturing his cow in the Lowbridge graveyard. Yes, indeed, I have not forgotten that, and I always think of it when he is praying in meeting.[28]

By undermining Whiskers' reputation, Montgomery encourages the reader to question his worth. "Whiskers-on-the-moon," as locals call him behind his back, is unredeemed by good looks, a strong contrast to Walter who is known as "the handsomest of the Ingleside boys."[29] Montgomery provides further reason to dislike him when Susan informs Anne and Miss Oliver that Whiskers-on-the-moon doubts "the stories of German atrocities"[30] and that he thinks "that it is a good thing that Rangs Cathedral has been destroyed because it was a Roman Catholic church."[31] By contrasting Susan's criticism of Whiskers' religious prejudice with Susan's own demonstrates political intolerance, Montgomery points out the irony and hypocrisy asserted by people during war. By linking pacifist Whiskers with patriotic Susan, though, Montgomery emphasises each character's strengths and weaknesses while leaving the reader free to decide his or her own values on citizen's morale and political responsibilities in wartime.

By pairing incidents of Pryor's pacifism with mention of allied losses,[32] or having Susan connect Pryor's rare smile with the news of the *Lusitania*'s sinking,[33] Montgomery seduces readers into believing it is not only acceptable but patriotic to wish violence on him and his

property. Again, Montgomery uses Susan as the vehicle to relate Pryor's views of the war: "I am told that he says England went into it just because she was jealous of Germany and that she did not really care in the least what happened to Belgium."[34] Later in the novel, the locals outrightly accuse Whiskers of being pro-German. Susan reports that Pryor denies the charge, "but calls himself a pacifist, whatever that may be.... It is nothing proper or Whiskers would not be it, and that you may tie to."[35]Susan adds that Whiskers believes the New Chapelle victory cost too many lives,[36] which Tim Cook explains that many Canadians considered unpatriotic to question in March 1915 as the Canadians fought their first battle.[37]

Unfortunately for Whiskers, he is unlikeable and quickly becomes a local target as the villagers' common enemy. Villagers question his loyalties, judge him a spy,[38] vandalize his home,[39] punish him with physical assault when he gives a pacifist prayer at a "khaki prayer-meeting,"[40] attempt to destroy his crops,[41] and consider it a divine judgement when he suffers a paralytic stroke just as the armistice is signed.[42] Whiskers-on-the-moon learns that, during war, conscientious objectors are usually reviled and often denounced. Whiskers states that he is not pro-German (126), but considers the war "unholy ... [fought by] deluded armies being driven to slaughter on the western front...."[43] Montgomery's inclusion of a pacifist character, however, is deeper than simply providing a humourous antagonist. A close-reading pushes readers' acceptance, and perhaps previously unquestioned conceptions, of what is tolerable, in peace, and in war.

This questioning of citizens' behaviour in war might leave readers conflicted in their response to the treatment of Whiskers, a treatment Montgomery portrays accurately according to historical accounts. Desmond Morton and J. L. Granatstein argue in *Marching to Armageddon: Canadians and the Great War 1914-1919* that many Canadian pacifists' fates were excessive.

After the Supreme Court decided the War Measures Act took precedence over the Military Service Act, actions against conscientious objectors were extreme:

> Egged on by local Protestant clergy, military police raided the Jesuit Novitiate at Guelph. Edward Grey, whose case the Supreme Court had decided, was sentenced with nine other conscientious objectors to life in prison. Another man, J. E. Plant, was sentenced to be shot. The sentences were commuted to ten and fifteen years. In Winnipeg, Jehovah Witnesses were beaten and soaked in icy water to make them submit. One went insane. By the war's end, 117 conscientious objectors were serving prison terms.[44]

Montgomery's depiction of Whisker's life as a non-conformist in the village reflects the realities faced by those who dared to defy the majority and remain loyal to their personal principles. Montgomery's representation of Whiskers as an unlikeable man, however, is interesting. Montgomery's characterization of Whiskers as an unlikeable man suggests that doing what is morally right is not always easy, particularly when the character represents an unpopular point of view that contradicts the majority. Rumours and gossip circulate quickly in small towns, particularly when they reinforce previously-held beliefs, such as Susan expresses after a local barn burns down: "Whiskers-on-the-moon was there that very day. The fire broke out half an hour after he was gone. So much is a fact – but *I* shall not accuse a Presbyterian elder of burning anybody's barn until I have proof. However, everybody knows, Dr. dear, that both Uncle Mark's boys have enlisted, and that Uncle Mark himself makes speeches at all the recruiting meetings. So no doubt Germany is anxious to get square with him."[45] By making Whiskers detestable, Montgomery subtly challenges the reader to see beyond the surface and focus on real issues such as what is morally correct. If Whiskers were likeable, the reader would not see the real issue, the dark side of mass loyalty. Focusing on the propagandistic characters and incidents, Peter Webb in "'A righteous cause': war propaganda and Canadian fiction, 1915-1921," argues that

Montgomery had to ostracize Whiskers because her war novel is propaganda. Webb has failed to see, or understand, the complexity in Montgomery's literature that encourages readers to query the *status quo*, including unquestioning patriotism. Webb writes that Montgomery's *Rilla* "reflected the rhetoric of imperialism, total victory and Germanophobia that effective propaganda had made an intrinsic part of any wartime discourse in Canada;"[46] he only seems to take one type of character or incident into account. Webb, admittedly, later acknowledges that Montgomery's *Rilla* did include other characters, like Gertrude Oliver,[47] who does not always agree with the 'jingoistic' Susan Baker, yet who remains welcome in the community. I believe Webb has missed the subtleties of Montgomery's war novel that, while containing much of the expected propagandistic material, still challenges readers to question what is right. Montgomery troubles both sides of loyalty: the expected patriotism and the dark consequences of opposing society's accepted norms. Montgomery's consistent placing of contrasting characters and their reflected values, exposes the deleterious effects of questioning accepted norms and non-compliance.

Women's Loyalty: Support through Emotional Repression

Montgomery portrays a complex picture of masculine worth through patriotism represented by the touchstone of military enlistment. Her depiction of feminine worth (as expressed through loyalty), however, is characterized by staunch support of loved ones who have signed up. The women in *Rilla* first show their patriotism by not outwardly expressing their fear and anguish as loved ones enlist, and at their departures from the local train station, and in their letters once loved ones are overseas. This emotional repression is, in the world of *Rilla*, a sacrifice to benefit another. Montgomery suggests that loyalty must be tested by conduct, and her female characters in *Rilla* remain committed to their mission of restraining emotions, even when

it proves disadvantageous to their health. Unaware of the possible physical complications, Anne vows to hide her emotions when Jem leaves: "Susan, I am determined that 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. I hope none of us will cry."[48]

Susan agrees and provides further support typically shown to soldiers by their families, the stocking of provisions by packing fruit cake, short-bread, and mince pie.[49] Anne, however, does suffer physically from her emotional suppression. The narrator describes her as "pale," with a "spirit [that] failed her a little," and as lying for weeks "ill from grief and shock" when the family learns Walter has been killed, wondering "if she could bear any more."[50] Later in the novel, the narrator describes Anne from Dr. Blythe's point of view: "the starry eyes he loved – the eyes that had once been so full of laughter, and now seemed always full of unshed tears."[51] Walter's death leaves Anne prostrate in bed, and Rilla maturely decides to help Susan around the house by assuming Anne's former role even though she, too, spends night after night weeping.[52] Montgomery's depiction of the women's introverted suffering exposes the detrimental effect of repressing emotions.

In contrast, as Anne diminishes into a pale shadow of her former vibrant self, Rilla blossoms into young womanhood and the chatelaine of the home. Immature and self-centred in the book's opening chapters when the women make their vow of stoic suppression, Rilla nonetheless resolves to be a heroine and also suppresses her intense feelings when Jem leaves. The young woman who once worried more about her appearance and number of dance partners than the coming fight the night war was declared, now stifles her own suffering and thinks about making the situation better for her departing brother and her family.[53] Rilla's admirer, Kenneth Ford, calls her feigned emotional indifference "the brave-smiling-sister-stunt" at Jem's

farewell.[54] Incredibly, Rilla replicates her performance when her favourite brother Walter prepares to leave for the front.

As Anne's role fades, Rilla grows in strength and character even though she represses her emotions in the same way. When Rilla learns Walter has enlisted, she comforts herself with her mother Anne's words when Jem left: "when our women fail in courage shall our men be fearless still?"[55] At the station, Walter tells Rilla that her "patient and changeless...loving, *believing* heart" sustained him as he laboured with his decision and would help him in the trenches.[56] Montgomery rewrites the tradition of men as women's rescuers by having Rilla become Walter's saviour. While Rilla could be seen as the "angel in the house," Montgomery instead rewrites the tradition and makes Rilla the rescuer and ascertains her worth through the quality of loyalty when she vows to maintain her promise to Walter to "keep faith."[57]

Montgomery's theme of repressing emotions transcends gender; Montgomery has created two characters, central to the novel's romance, who are mutually voiceless in order to illustrate the need to bridge genders. Rilla's acts of emotional repression are not limited to her brothers. Rilla also suppresses her emotions when she spends time with Kenneth Ford. Elizabeth Waterston argues in *Magic Island: The Fictions of L. M. Montgomery* that the relationship is not a passionate one because Montgomery deliberately portrays Rilla as childish with a slight lisp that betrays her shyness and apprehension.[58] Waterston claims that Rilla, unlike her articulate mother, is silenced by her lisp. Waterston is correct; Rilla does have a tendency to lisp when she is feeling shy or nervous. Montgomery describes this mannerism on many occasions in *Rilla*. Montgomery writes that Rilla had lisped in childhood but has grown out of it except "on occasions of stress and strain."[59] Although Rilla has not lisped in a year, her anxiety to appear sophisticated and mature when she meets Kenneth again at her first dance provokes the

mortifying "Yeth."[60]Rilla's next lisp happens when she overcomes her fear and recites several times in a week at patriotic recitations during recruiting meetings.[61] The next stressful occasion that provides the trigger to Rilla's lisp takes place while she is apologizing to Irene Howard and asking her to substitute for Mrs. Channing and sing at the Red Cross concert.[62] Rilla lisps again when Kenneth calls to set up a *rendezvous* to say goodbye,[63] and the final time is when Kenneth returns, at the end of the novel, and asks if she is still "*my* Rilla?"[64]

Waterston fails to look beyond the lisp she claims makes Rilla appear childish and inarticulate. A close examination of each of Rilla's occasions to lisp establishes that Rilla is never silenced. Though mortified and humiliated by her speech disorder, she remains articulate. In each of these circumstances Rilla deliberately overcomes her inability to speak clearly and expressively achieves her goal. Rilla does manage to say yes to Kenneth's request to dance; she does suppress her fear and recite at the recruitment meetings. She does stumble through her humbling apology to Irene and successfully convinces her to sing at the concert. Despite the humiliating beginning to her date with Kenneth, Rilla manages to convey her feelings to Kenneth and ends the encounter, she thinks, engaged. While Waterston examines Rilla's lisp, she overlooks Kenneth's inability to communicate. Unlike Rilla, Kenneth has no speech problems. In fact, the narrator describes him as

> a tall lad, very good looking, with a certain careless grace of bearing that somehow made all the other boys seem stiff and awkward by contrast. He was reported to be awesomely clever, with the glamour of a faraway city and a big university hanging around him. He had also the reputation of being a bit of a lady-killer. But that probably accrued to him from his possession of a laughing, velvety voice which no girl could hear without a heartbeat, and a dangerous way of listening as if she were saying something that he had longed all his life to hear.[65]

Kenneth has all the requirements for good communication with his "velvety voice" and ability to listen.

Yet Waterston's assertion of Rilla's inarticulateness may also be accurately applied to Kenneth. Despite his glib surface and reputation as a "lady-killer,"[66] and after realizing he loves her, Kenneth is unable to clearly express his feelings for Rilla. Although Kenneth has a reputation as "awesomely clever" and he believed communicative because he is the son of a well-known writer, even his letters to Rilla do not usually express his feelings as Rilla laments in her journal: "He has got a lieutenant's commission and expects to go overseas in mid-summer, so he wrote me. There wasn't much else in the letter – he seemed to be thinking of nothing *but* going overseas."[67] The opening paragraph and conclusion of another of Kenneth's letters make Rilla happy, however: "Between the beginning and ending the letter was just such a jolly, newsy epistle as Ken might have written to anyone...."[68] He leaves for the front without directly asking Rilla to wait and marry him when he returns.[69] Although he does kiss her, he is not able to ask her, and instead asks Rilla to promise she will not let anyone else kiss her until he comes home.[70] Rilla is left trying to decipher exactly what Kenneth meant and closes the chapter by wondering "if I am, or not engaged to Kenneth Ford."[71] Even when Kenneth returns from war as a man scarred in battle, he still does not ask Rilla directly to marry him.[72]

Montgomery suggests that while loyalty is not characterized by gender when determining worth, it might be difficult to untangle gender from Victorian norms pertaining to romance. Kenneth's inarticulateness causes Rilla some grief. Rilla is facing the uncertainty of her future with Kenneth when Fred Arnold comes to say goodbye before he leaves for training. Fred asks for a kiss, which Rilla denies because of her promise to Kenneth. After Fred leaves, Rilla regrets denying Fred his wish, but later writes in her diary: "I can't tell him about Ken – because, after all, what is there to tell?"[73] Eventually Rilla confides in her mother, and between the two of them they interpret Kenneth's promise to mean engagement.[74] Ironically, in a novel full of gossip and

news, Rilla and her mother remain quiet about the happy news of the engagement, and no further mention is made of it. Montgomery has created two characters who appear inarticulate, yet manage to connect with others in social situations and create a romantic relationship despite Victorian norms that discourage communication between genders. Montgomery's depiction of Rilla and Kenneth's romance suggests that loyalty remains steadfast even when challenged by external forces.

Montgomery's use of suppression, or the results of not suppressing emotions, was not born in imagination. Montgomery was not oblivious to the sheer force of will required to maintain a cheerful facade when saying good-bye to loved ones departing for war. She had seen inconsolable parishioners in her husband Ewan's church. Montgomery described the realities of heartbroken families in correspondence with Weber: "The church is full of stifled sobs as my husband prays for the boys at the front and in training."[75] Unlike the women in Montgomery's letter, Rilla takes Mary Vance's words to heart:

> "The main thing is to smile and act as if nothing was happening," [Mary] informed the Ingleside group. "The boys all hate the sob act like poison. Miller told me I wasn't to come near the station if I couldn't keep from bawling. So I got through with my crying beforehand and at last I said to him, 'Good luck, Miller....[76]

Rilla holds back her tears, and Walter leaves, believing "it was not a hard thing to fight for a land that bore daughters like this."[77]

Loyalty: Commitment to the Cause

Montgomery illustrates masculine commitment to the cause through military service, and represents unofficial personal feminine commitment to the war effort by care packages and letters to loved ones, as well as through the Red Cross work that mirrors her personal war work. Mollie Gillen describes Montgomery's Red Cross sewing and knitting in *The Wheel of Things* as

filling "every available chink and cranny of time."[78] Gillen reports that when Montgomery was not sewing or knitting for the Red Cross, she was "helping pack huge bales of supplies."[79] Like Montgomery, Anne begins the war by organizing a Red Cross group. She also encourages Rilla to create a Junior Red Cross when Rilla feels the need to do something to help from the home front.[80] Rilla's Red Cross work involves hemming sheets and making bandages,[81] collecting supplies,[82] learning how to knit socks,[83]sewing Red Cross shirts for hours at a time,[84]organizing and directing Red Cross fundraisers, even when emotions threaten to overwhelm her,[85]canvassing for Victory Loans,[86] and proving her maturity and courage by acting as club peacemaker and preserving the group "a dozen times."[87] Rilla, like Montgomery, also attends recruiting meetings and gives recitations for the Patriotic Society.[88] Montgomery establishes Rilla's worth by proving her loyalty through enduring support, even during times of personal distress, and emphasizing throughout the novel Rilla's dedication to the cause. Like Rilla, Montgomery also found her efforts to support the war overwhelming:

> We organized a Red Cross Branch here this month. I am President. I could not refuse for the need is urgent; but I felt and still feel that I had neither the time nor the strength for this, in addition to all my church societies. Nevertheless it is a demand that must be met and I must not shrink from a little sacrifice. What is it compared to that which some women have to make? But I do *not* shrink from it. Only, I must not neglect other duties for it and I do not honestly know whether I have sufficient strength to do all that seems expected of me. Household, literary and family interests – missionary societies, Guilds and Red Cross, endless visits – all seem to pile up before me and every night I feel so tired I can hardly drag myself upstairs.[89]

Loyalty: Faithfulness to Another

Throughout *Rilla*, Montgomery provides numerous examples of people expressing faithfulness to another, suggesting that faithfulness readily endures sacrifice for the betterment of the other person in the relationship. Montgomery has Rilla characterize loyalty through sexual

fidelity. When Rilla falls in love with Kenneth Ford, she embodies the promise of thousands of women to remain devotedly faithful while "their men held the western front."[90]

Waterston believes that Montgomery's pallid depiction of the romance reflects not only Montgomery's increasing cynicism but also "her realistic vision of the relation of the sexes during war time."[91] Jem is passionate when he talks about enlisting,[92] and Montgomery ensures passion is not exclusive to one gender by including Susan's passionate appeal for money at the Victory Loan campaign.[93] Rilla herself is passionate about issues that do not include her love life, particularly the raising of baby Jims through strict adherence to Morgan's book of baby advice.[94] Rilla is also passionate about growing up. Rilla, in fact, is so enthusiastic at being nearly fifteen that Gertrude Oliver remarks sarcastically that she had also spoken in "italics and superlatives" when she was fifteen.[95] Rilla's growing maturity as well as her observations of what is important, however, tamps down her excessiveness and allows her to see the foolishness of her previous self-centredness in the opening chapters. By using "innocent and naive" to describe their romance, Waterston implies that Rilla and Ken's relationship is immature. I disagree. While Rilla is immature and self-absorbed when war is declared, she grows up quickly and becomes a young adult capable of understanding the implications of giving a promise and keeping that promise even when it causes pain. Montgomery suggests that Rilla's ability to keep a promise establishes her capacity to remain faithful to another, a characteristic of loyalty; the fact that Rilla's loyalty also brings her pain suggests that although Montgomery supported the ideal of loyalty in relationships, she also understood that keeping ideals involved personal sacrifice.

In addition to Rilla's loyalty, Susan's is all-encompassing for the Blythe family and later fervently includes political leaders of the day. Susan never marries or speaks of a beau (she does

not consider Whiskers as such), but her faithfulness to the Blythe family provides the foundation of her devotion and exceeds that of an employee. In fact, when Shirley leaves to enlist, he kisses her "for the first time since he was five years old, and said "'Good-bye, Susan, – *mother* Susan.'"[96] When war is declared, Susan's loyalty expands in correlation to her new knowledge of politics, geography, and international affairs. Susan's faithfulness quickly extends beyond the family to incorporate an English politician she had never heard of before the war. Susan's faithfulness to Lloyd George is nearly as profound as her steadfast attachment to Shirley. When the public appeal at the Victory Loan Campaign fails to inspire donors, Susan inspires the audience with a speech and the narrator claims it is the "likes of her, millions of her, that *did* stand behind Lloyd George, and *did* hearten him up" to fight for victory.[97]

Montgomery's best example of devotion woven throughout *Rilla*, however, is not even human. Dog Monday's devotion to Jem is religious in its depth of sacrifice and pain. Despite old age and rheumatism Dog Monday spends the entire war, from Jem's departure in 1914 until his return from the trenches and prison camp four and a half years later, patiently waiting for his master at the train station.[98] Dog Monday's steadfast nature endows him with other-worldly connections to his loved ones at the front, evident in his tormented howling at the time of Walter's death:

> "When a dog cries like that the Angel of Death is passing." Rilla listened with a curdling fear at her heart. It *was* Dog Monday – she felt sure of it....He was sitting all alone in the moonlight out there at the end of the platform, and every few minutes the poor lonely little beggar'd lift his nose and howl as if his heart was breaking.[99]

Dog Monday's anguish is soon reflected by the Blythe family when they learn that Walter will never return. Dog Monday's faithful vigil, though, ends happily when Jem returns unannounced

and tightly hugs his loyal companion. Dog Monday responds by laying his head on Jem's shoulder while licking his neck and "making queer sounds between barks and sobs."[100] Dog Monday refuses to be separated from Jem, and follows him into church where Mr. Meredith allows him to stay recognizing the small dog's faith and love as treasure.[101] Montgomery illustrates that faithfulness, wherever found, is an essential and valuable quality even when it creates sacrifice and pain.

Industry

Montgomery suggests that citizens' worth is reflected in the amount of effort they put into the war effort. Montgomery's portrayal of industry in *Rilla* illustrates the depth of sacrifice such work demanded from people on the home front, symbolized particularly by Susan Baker. Montgomery's depiction of the women's numerous efforts and sacrifices to support the war effort might suggest that *Rilla* is a propaganda novel as Peter Webb has stated, but propaganda is mass persuasion that forecloses questioning, and *Rilla* consistently challenges the reader to question.

Industry is a trait that Montgomery suggests establishes worth, personified by Susan in *Rilla*. Montgomery makes it clear that Susan is the backbone that runs the home, even in the opening pages of the book, long before all the females in the house become occupied with war-work; Montgomery characterizes Susan as worthy through her industry. In the opening paragraph, we learn that Susan "had been working incessantly since six that morning" and finally decides to take a break at four o'clock in the afternoon.[102] Susan believes her relentless labour makes her indispensible to the Blythe family. Montgomery suggests that Susan feels being indispensible is crucial to keeping her position, a subtle reminder that in the Blythe residence,

there are two classes of people: the middle-class family and Susan, their working class housekeeper. The narrator informs the reader that Susan has a "haunting dread that people might come to think her too old to work;" this fear is not only a frightening financial prospect in an age before pension cheques but an emotional calamity as well if she must leave the family she has helped to raise.[103] Susan is a woman who expresses love through actions and often bakes the family's special treats as a comfort when times are hard. She is a woman with "knotted old hands that had grown warped and twisted working for the Ingleside children."[104] Montgomery establishes Susan's worth through her hard work. Thoroughly involved in her private domestic world, Susan is offended when war intrudes. In fact, six days after war is declared, Susan comments that she considers it indecent that "an honest, hard-working, Presbyterian old maid" should be disturbed by foreign wars.[105]

Throughout the novel, Montgomery suggests that industry is a positive trait necessary to win the war. She makes it clear that Susan's domestic vigour provides nourishment and comfort to her loved ones at home and overseas.[106] Soon the other women of the household join in Susan's industriousness. They begin by patriotic knitting socks for soldiers in the trenches or baking for care packages. Their work, however, quickly progresses to a state of obsession in their efforts to occupy their hands and distract their anxious thoughts. Susan, a staunch Presbyterian, even uses work as a cure for despair in a chapter Montgomery names "Black Sunday." Black Sunday was the German offensive under General Erich Ludendorff begun Psalm Sunday in March 1918 that saw the Germans break through Allied lines, capture 21,000 soldiers, and arrive within shelling distance of Paris. The Germans, and many of the allies, believed the war would soon be over, with a German victory.[107] Susan's despair reflects that of many Canadians: "Mrs. Dr. Dear, I *must* knit on Sunday at last. I have never dreamed of doing it before for, say what

might be said, I have considered it was a violation of the third commandment. But whether it is or whether it is not I must knit today or I shall go mad."[108] Just prior to Black Sunday Rilla also expresses a need to be constantly occupied so she will not have time to think of Walter's recent death.[109]

Rilla is Montgomery's most visible transformation of idle self-indulgence to patriotic and hard-working war supporter. Montgomery reworks Rilla's self-centred behaviour through her reluctant adoption of a war baby transported home in a borrowed soup tureen.[110] Montgomery believed young women, like Rilla, would help heal the post-war world by giving birth to the next generation and raising them to "keep faith" with those who fought to protect "the fate of mankind."[111] Rilla represents both women who raised children alone while their fathers fought overseas and young women who would birth the post-war generation:

> She bathed and fed and dressed it [the baby] as skilfully as if she had been doing it all her life. She liked neither her job nor the baby any the better; she still handled it as gingerly as if it were some kind of small lizard, and a breakable lizard at that: but she did her work thoroughly and there was not a cleaner, better-cared-for infant in Glen St. Mary.[112]

Perhaps at odds with her maternal feminist philosophy, Montgomery emphasises Rilla's lack of instinctive maternal emotions or abilities. This lack of natural mothering intuition, however, highlights Rilla's industry as the self-proclaimed unmotivated girl takes on a serious duty which she initially accomplishes by studying obeying the baby book Walter refers to as "the gospel of Morgan."[113]

As a maternal feminist, Montgomery chooses to represent Rilla's wartime industry through motherhood. Walter's letter to Rilla, received posthumously, presents the idea of women's maternal feminist role:

> 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 naught. This will be part of *your* work, Rilla. And if you girls back in the homeland – do it, then we who don't come back will know that you have not 'broken faith' with us.[114]

Montgomery's maternal feminist philosophy that shapes many aspects of *Rilla* is not always well-received or understood as Andrea McKenzie points out in "Women and War." McKenzie states that critics such as Margery Fee and Ruth Cawker claim that "*Rilla* degenerates into a chauvinist tract for Canadian support of Britain in World War 1."[115] Fee and Cawker fail to see that, in Montgomery's subtle way, she suggests that women have proven their worth through equal, but different work that is essential to the future of the country and deserving of national recognition.

Courage

Montgomery also defined Canadians, both men and women, as having courage, a necessary ideal in a vast nation with few citizens and encroaching danger in isolation, illness, crop failures, wild animals, and severe weather conditions. A descendant of Scottish pioneers in Prince Edward Island, Montgomery grew up immersed in the stories of her ancestors and the courage they displayed while settling in Canada. In her public speaking engagements, Montgomery often repeated her family's legend of one of the first Montgomery woman's arrival in the new world. According to the myth, Montgomery's ancestor, severely seasick Mary McShannon Montgomery bribed the ship's captain with whiskey to let her off in Prince Edward Island, and then refused to board the ship for its destination in Upper Canada.[116] Mary courageously formatted a plan and according to family narration, carried it out, despite repeated attempts to persuade her to re-embark. Courage like that of Montgomery's ancestor, Elizabeth

Thompson defines as "the ability to act decisively and quickly in cases of emergency, and the strength to accept adverse circumstances on the frontier, combined with the courage to attempt an improvement of these frontier conditions."[117] Thompson argues that Montgomery used the myth of a pioneer woman as the ideal in her creation of heroines Anne Shirley and Emily Starr. Both characters are metaphors of articulate women settlers "who were not only able to cope with their new environment but also to provide suggestions for others."[118] Thompson's definition could also define Rilla and her contemporaries who exist on Canada's newest frontiers of global war and nation-building.[119] She attains an ability to act positively and swiftly in times of crisis, a capacity to adapt to difficult conditions, and a representation of their courage as she copes with war and its unyielding physical and emotional demands. By establishing Rilla's courage Montgomery, suggests that such qualities are not exclusive to men in times of war.

Montgomery suggests that courage is not exclusively male by depicting female courage throughout *Rilla*, particularly the ability to act decisively and quickly. Montgomery represents Rilla this way when she rescues newborn Jims from his drunken apathetic aunt. Rilla's decision is described as a "sudden, desperate, impulsive resolution."[120] Through Walter's world, Montgomery implies through that Rilla's courage surpasses his and Jem's when he learns she has tackled "five pounds of new infant."[121] Montgomery carefully chooses Walter's words: Rilla has "more courage ... than it would be for Jem to face a mile of Germans" and "pluck."[122] She also selects a masculine voice to deliver praise for the women's bravery. For Montgomery, moral courage equals physical daring. Rilla again displays the ability to decide, and respond quickly, when her former friend, Irene Howard, deliberately shocks Rilla with the devastating news of Walter's enlistment just before Rilla's part in the fund-raising concert. Rilla perseveres by asking herself what would Jem and Jerry think if she "shirked her little duty here – the humble duty of

carrying the program through for her Red Cross?"[123] Rilla understands the burden of constant fear but chooses to persevere and finds comfort and strength in Walter's picture and a framed copy of *The Piper*.[124]

Montgomery represents valour in many of the female characters in *Rilla* in order to show that character and not gender defines courage. Montgomery uses Susan to depict women's courage as the ability to think and act quickly, particularly clear when Susan makes her inspirational speech at the Victory Loan Campaign. Montgomery illustrates Susan's actions in Rilla's journal as spontaneous, Rilla says Susan "just 'sailed in' as she puts it, and 'said her say.'"[125] Through Anne, Montgomery depicts the courage of mothers who swiftly decide to make their sons' departures as painless as possible.[126] Montgomery illustrates Susan and Rilla's decisive natures when the housekeeper volunteers to work for a month in Albert Crawford's oat fields while Rilla takes Jack Flagg's place in the store.[127] Susan also represents a woman capable of thinking and acting quickly, when she chases Whiskers-on-the-moon out of her kitchen with a pot of boiling dye after his marriage proposal.[128] With all of these portrayals, Montgomery suggests that the women in the Blythe household represent courage that equals their male counterparts, even though their trials are not the same.

Montgomery highlights her thesis that character is more important than sex in establishing worth by using the most timid characters to prove her point. Montgomery uses fearful little newly-wed Miranda to express fortitude when Rilla worries about Whisker's reaction to the war wedding. Miranda has found the courage and confidence to stand up to her overpowering father and explains to Rilla that "[a] soldier's wife can't be a coward."[129] Rilla's determination creates what "should have been a romantic wedding but it was not."[130] The expected romance of a war wedding dissolves into a comic farce, but Montgomery conveys the

idea that the wedding ceremony itself is not as important as the courage and faith expressed by Miranda and other Canadian women: "All that mattered was that rapt, sacrificial look in her eyes – that ever burning, sacred fire of devotion and loyalty and fine courage that she was mutely promising Joe she and thousands of other women would keep alive at home while their men held the western front."[131]

Montgomery shapes *Rilla's* heroines with the strength to acknowledge adverse conditions, and yet endure, as Thompson suggests. Throughout the novel, men and women support one another and thereby create intertwined war stories where each gender is equal when measuring the quality of courage and fortitude.[132] Benjamin Lefebvre and Andrea McKenzie write in *Rilla*'s Introduction that Rilla depicts the courage required to "carry on."[133] Rilla is mature enough to recognize her mother's patience and courage "What spirit and endurance Mother had!"[134] Anne explains to Rilla that she has had more time to get used to the idea of Walter's enlistment and that she has previously rebelled against and grown reconciled with the reality and learned to "give him up."[135] Walter praises Rilla's spirit as "plucky and patient" and informs his little sister he is not afraid for her resilience "*no matter* what happens."[136]

Montgomery suggests that another characteristic of courage is stoicism when facing adversity. Susan symbolizes the courage necessary to remain optimistic despite extreme reversals. She reassures the family after every set-back, such as reassuring Anne after the fall of Liége, Namur, and Brussels to not lose heart as "they were just defended by foreigners....Wait you till the Germans come against the British; there will be a very different story...."[137] She even manages to persevere without tears when Jem comes home in uniform after enlisting.[138] Susan is recognized by the doctor as a brick: "She was one of the women – courageous, unquailing, patient, heroic – who had made victory possible. In her, they all saluted the symbol for which

their dearest had fought."[139] Montgomery highlights Susan's steadfastness by contrasting it with Gertrude and Anne's wavering fortitude. Gertrude Oliver's courage fails her when the family waits for news of Serbia and Gallipoli, and Anne looks at her "reproachfully" and shortly after Gertrude rallies and carries on.[140] Montgomery portrays Anne's fading endurance, however, shortly after Gertrude's slump. When Walter dies, Anne wishes for a magic sleeping draught that would last until Armageddon was over.[141]

Montgomery presents Rilla's evolving sense of courage and compassion as the war continues. Rilla recognizes the strength of Gertrude's fortitude when the teacher is mistakenly informed of her fiancé's death: "I have had some glimpses of things I never realized before – of how fine and brave people can be even in the midst of horrible suffering. I am sure I could never be as splendid as Miss Oliver."[142] By New Year's 1917, Rilla records in her journal that they are all trying to find the courage required to face another year of war.[143] Rilla is most down-hearted, though, when the family receives news that Jem is missing and "it seemed impossible to go on even one more day."[144] Yet, once again, the family helps one another through times of darkness and despair, and together they rebuild their collective fortitude. Rilla voices the belief that it requires great courage to be resilient for the sake of others, when her favourite brother enlists late in the war: "'*Our* sacrifice is greater than *his*,'" cried Rilla passionately. "'Our boys give only *themselves*. *We* give them.'"[145] Montgomery writes this passage about women's sacrifice being greater than their male counterparts for several reasons. She is known for her overly sensitive nature, a state that allows her to imagine, too vividly, the long, lonely, and unrelenting despair that women at home would endure for many years to come. As a mother, and one who had delivered a stillborn baby, she understands the pain of losing a child. She had lost her son before he had a personality, and could easily imagine the depth of suffering war mothers must have

when they learned of their son's deaths, long after baby characters had developed into men with distinct personalities.[146]

Walter reminds the reader that "it must be a horrible thing to be a mother in this war – the mothers and sisters and wives and sweethearts have the hardest times."[147]As a minister's wife, Montgomery was also aware of the financial losses occurred when a male provider abandoned his family or died. For these reasons, Montgomery surely means that, while men may be killed in battle, their pain and suffering was probably counted in hours or days, while the women left behind have to suffer for years. Men maimed in battle certainly suffered, but Montgomery underscores the effects of those injuries and deaths on women at home. After "a big Allied victory in the west,"[148]for example, Miss Oliver comments: "'Good news!'" said Miss Oliver bitterly. "'I wonder if the women whose men have been killed for it will call it good news. Just because our men are not on that part of the front we are rejoicing as if the victory had cost no lives.'"[149] Montgomery highlights this point of view with Rilla's acknowledgement of her mother's strength as she repeats Anne's words said earlier with "white lips and stricken eyes" that the women must be brave: "*When our women* fail *in courage, Shall our men be fearless still?*"[150]

Montgomery also suggests that courage does not come without cost. Once war is declared, Rilla strives to make life easier for her mother, even though she is now also an adoptive mother by taking on Jims. As she grows into a responsible and compassionate young woman, she gradually takes Anne's place as the home's chatelaine. Montgomery illustrates Rilla's growth through Walter. The night before he leaves, he confides to Rilla that he finds her "patient and changeless... [and bearing] the heart of a good woman."[151] Rilla also tries to make life better for Kenneth by promising to remain faithful to him, even though he does not have the courage to ask

Rilla outright to marry him. Rilla also helps promote romances that make peoples' lives better, such as Miranda's and Mary's. Throughout *Rilla*, Montgomery measures her characters against the qualities she believed defined Canadians and their self-sacrifices during the war: loyalty, industry and pioneering courage. Although *Rilla* is not war propaganda as it was written post war and raises many questions about Canadians and war, it is propagandistic as Montgomery systematically propagates her views concerning women and the value of their role in war. Her depiction raises public awareness of Canadian womanhood's contributions that, while different from men's, were equal in intensity and effort.

Chapter Four

Worth defined by Religion: Montgomery, Blood Sacrifice, and Religion as Crusade

Montgomery characterized individual worth through ideals that expressed loyalty, industry and courage, but she also believed worth could be categorized worth by organized religion and spirituality. In these beliefs, she reflected the contemporary view that women must emulate Christian values and teach them to their children. In *Rilla of Ingleside*, Montgomery illustrates women's sense of worth as shaped by organized religion and spirituality. Montgomery's preoccupation with the issue of religion and war is pointed out by Benjamin Lefebvre and Andrea McKenzie, who emphasize in their Introduction to *Rilla* that Montgomery included more than "forty allusions to the Judeo-Christian Bible and the Book of Common Prayer."[1] Montgomery also confronted what she saw as the incompatibility of organized religion and war. As a minister's wife, Montgomery encountered the contradictions of organized religion supporting patriotism. At first glance, some readers might label *Rilla* as jingoistic, blindly supporting Christian dogma. But they have missed Montgomery's subtle hints that organized religion's role in war is not an easy subject, even when the war is publicly supported by the government and one's own church. Montgomery uses understated censure and humour to challenge the idea of society's manipulation of religion to support the war effort.

According to Carlos Romulo, religion plays an important part in warrior's lives. Romulo's book, *I Saw the Fall of the Philippines*, quotes military chaplain Father William Cummings who preached "There are no atheists in foxholes."[2] In fact, A. J. Hoover argues in *God, Germany, and Britain in the Great War* that "The nature of war makes it easy for the soldier to understand the essence of Christianity: heroism, love, sacrifice, devotion to duty. As Patton said, soldiers understand the Cross because they have borne a cross themselves. They

know instinctively what Jesus meant when he said, 'Greater love has no man than to lay down his life for his friends.'"[3] Some soldiers, however, despite church-supported recruitment and the military's provision of padres, reject faith and come to believe in superstition, luck, and fatalism. Desmond Morton documents soldiers' fatalism in *When Your Number's Up: The Canadian Soldier in the First World War* as a Canadian subaltern explains in a letter to his sister after his recent arrival on the Somme: "Whether it be a shell or a machine gun bullet ... if your number is on it no matter how you avoid it, your time's up."[4] Soldiers' struggles to find a belief system that worked for them, either founded in religion or superstition, was reflected by citizens at home. Montgomery also struggled to find a belief system that accommodated her fluctuating beliefs during the war, which is understandable considering that church doctrine was often contradictory.

Through subtle criticism, Montgomery suggests in *Rilla* how religion may be exploited to encourage parishioners to actively support the war, either by enlistment or supporting those who enlist. Montgomery suggests that organized religion linked the Great War to the Crusades so parishioners felt the war was a religious crusade, and thereby the churches created feelings of worth in their followers. Religious and spiritual beliefs provided Montgomery's foundation for defining inner worth in *Rilla*, as well as in her daily life. Montgomery was reared in the Presbyterian Church, and although disillusioned with organized religion as an adult, as a well-known minister's wife, she included religious beliefs in her work as readers expected. Privately, however, Montgomery turned to spiritualism and dreams as an expression of spirituality in her life and incorporated her opinions in *Rilla.* Montgomery's subtle juxtaposition in *Rilla* of two means to perceive the divine and explain the meaning of life suggests that women's wartime

religious and spiritual sacrifices, as well as their practical sacrifices, are as complicated as their male counterparts.

God as a National Deity

According to many Great War politicians and clergymen, God was the first one to choose sides. British and German soldiers alike believed that their cause was just and therefore believed their side was blessed with God's undivided support, interpreted by many soldiers as a guarantee they would prevail. According to the National Defence and Canadian Forces website, in 1914 the Canadian Expeditionary Force maintained the importance of religion for military personnel at war by expanding the role chaplains had performed during the 1885 North West Rebellion and the South African War (1899-1902).[5] Duff Crerar explains the significance the Canadian Expeditionary Force accorded to religion in *Padres in No Man's Land: Canadian Chaplains and the Great War*. Crerar writes that 447 military padres were sent overseas from 1914-1918, representing each major denomination as guardians of the troops' spiritual and moral wellbeing.[6]

After censoring his men's letters, Lieutenant Eric Marchant of the 7th Battalion, London Regiment reaffirmed the importance of religion when writing home in February 1917:

> I suppose there is no better way of getting an idea of the spirit of the men and I won't deny that I was surprised at the tone of practically in all the letters. The percentage that showed a realisation of religious truths and faith in God, was tremendously bigger than I ever suspected, and such phrases as "we must go on trusting in God" were in dozens of the letters I read.[7]

Lieutenant Marchant's men's beliefs reflected those taught in Christian churches in Canada, and echoed all the way up the line to General Douglas Haig, Commander-in-Chief of the British Army on the Western Front. Haig even stated that the Allied soldiers' faith indicated their superior moral fibre to the Germans in his *Final Despatch, 21 March 1919*: "our soldiers

established over the German soldiers a moral superiority which they held in an ever-increasing degree until the end of the war, even in the difficult days of March and April 1918."[8] On Canada's home front, clergymen like Montgomery's husband Ewan and Reverend Thomas Eakin, helped shaped Canadian Christians' believes of organized religion's role in war. Eakin was Senior Minister of St. Andrew's in Toronto during the Great War. St. Andrew's was one of the most important Presbyterian parishes in Canada; 166 men and women enlisted in the military from his congregation of 581. In *Lucy Maud Montgomery: The Gift of Wings*, Mary Rubio highlights how ministers "urged patriotism as a means to save Christian values from the 'forces of Evil'....To the clergy, the war now provided a way of demonstrating the materiality of evil: it was embodied in the German Kaiser."[9] Eakin espoused these beliefs, preaching in his January 6, 1917 sermon that parishioners could rest assured that God was indeed on the side of Britain and her allies because they were more Christian than Germany's citizens:

> In a conflict primarily fought between nations which claimed to be 'Christian,' the problem emerged as to how Britain and her allies could be certain God was indeed on their side. While acknowledging that Germany and Austria were also praying to God for victory, Eakin argued that Canadians could be sure that God was on their side because "God is on the side of humanity and only those prayers that have in them some of the blood of sacrifice for impersonal good can be answered." God, although not a national deity, was on the allies' side in this "holy war," a war in which "spiritual issues as well as material" ones were at stake.[10]

By 1918, nineteen of Eakin's parishioners had been killed. Of course, like many allied soldiers, many Germans soldiers also put their trust in religion while on the front lines, as Werner Liebert reported in a letter to his parents in December, 1914: "It is a joy to see how fundamentally religious the general frame of mind is and how, if one regards religion as the connecting link, one can feel the respect and awe inspired by perfect serenity. One hardly ever hears frivolous remarks now. They all seem imbued with a new life."[11]

While clergymen worked hard on the home front to eradicate parishioners' doubts concerning the contradictory marriage of Christianity and war, soldiers in the trenches were reminded daily of the irony of religions that preached peace and brotherly love in bloody war zones. Like many soldiers overseas, Montgomery initially looked at religion as a way to explain good and evil in her experience of the war. In her youth, before her future disillusionment with organized religion, she turned to the Presbyterian Church in a quest for answers, particularly during difficult and confusing times. She also reflected the Victorian tendency to use religious morality as a measurement of worth: the more pious and "Christian-like" a woman was, the higher her merit in the eyes of the church and community. Rubio writes that Montgomery "had access to her grandmother's monthly *Godey's Lady's Book*"[12] that promoted the image of the difference between the moral nature of the sexes while forecasting a degraded social status for "fast women":

> And thus it happens that these fast young women do not marry quite as fast as they dance. In the hymeneal race, we must find them lagging behind; and as their speed is all gotten up expressly for the hymeneal race, it must be exceedingly mortifying to them to find themselves beaten by dozens of quiet, genteel girls who never danced a polka in their lives. It is the old fable of the hare and the tortoise. We would advise them not to be quite so fast.[13]

Montgomery continues this tendency for women to emulate Christian ideals of virtue in *Rilla.* When Rilla's friend, Betty Mead, defends Rilla against a sly Irene Howard, Montgomery lists all Rilla's virtuous qualities, thereby establishing her heroine's worthiness. After belittling Rilla as being unfeeling because of her ongoing volunteerism following Walter's death, Irene sarcastically responds that Rilla "is the embodiment of *all* the virtues."[14] Montgomery has already established Irene's contemptuous behaviour, though, so the reader knows her spiteful

comments are invalid, although they serve to catalogue Rilla's worth in the eyes of the community. Montgomery understood that it was crucial to establish Rilla's character as virtuous.

Montgomery realizes that Rilla's character must be without sexual blemish because, like Biblical sacrifices, only the best are offered as sacrifices. Rilla's sacrifice is her adoption of a war baby, a role Walter praises as courageous because it is not natural for Rilla. Like many of her contemporaries, Montgomery constructs womanly virtue as essential to the concept of war as a religious sacrifice to justify the extent of men's sacrifices. Montgomery suggests that she saw many examples of women doing 'their bit' to live up to the sacrifices that government propaganda programs, religion institutions, and newspaper reports declared were being made on their behalf. As she wrote in her journal in November 1915 "I must not shrink from a little sacrifice. What is it compared to that which some women have had to make?'[15] She could not accept that men had been maimed and killed in vain, and therefore, to validate masculine hardships, women had to counter their sacrifices by being worthy. As a minister's wife, Montgomery also saw many Canadians connecting the concept of sacrifice to religion, as well as using religion as a source of comfort, support, and hope. When war was declared, she saw clergymen like Eakin deploy religion to justify the rightness of the allied cause and the churches' involvement in the war. In fact, Montgomery wrote that she saw death in the war against Germany as automatic entry to Paradise. Paul Tiessen highlights Montgomery's position in "Opposing Pacifism," quoting one of her letters to long-time correspondent Ephriam Weber:

> But there was one sentence in your letter I can not believe you really meant. You *must* have been joking grimly. You say "It is a commercial war and utterly unworthy of one drop of Canadian blood being spilt for it." Surely, surely you can not so have missed the very meaning of this war – that it is a death grapple between freedom and tyranny, between modern and medieaval ideals...between the principles of democracy and militarism. I believe that it is the most righteous war that England ever waged and worthy of every drop of Canadian blood. If my son were old enough to go I truly believe that I

> could and would say to him "Go", though it would break my heart. And if he fell I would believe that he perished as millions have done, cementing with his blood the long path to that "far-off divine event" we all in one way or another believe in![16]

Although Tiessen also points out that, by 1933, Montgomery believed that war must be eliminated,[17] in *Rilla*, Montgomery fully supports and accepts society's insistence that war and religion are intertwined. In *Rilla*, Montgomery uses Parson Meredith to espouse the belief that God has abandoned the Germans and is exclusively on the allies' side; he tells the Blythe family and Norman Douglas that, even if his son Jerry is killed, he will not waver in his beliefs: "Whatever I felt, it could not alter my belief – my *assurance* that a country whose sons are ready to lay down their lives in her defence will win a new vision because of their sacrifice."[18] Through this speech, the parson does not seem to understand that Germany's sons are now making the same sacrifice for their homeland, contrasting the religious convictions supported in allied and enemy nations and challenging the reader to determine whose side, if any, God is supporting. Montgomery suggests in her December 1914 journal entry that she was aware of the contradiction:

> Coming after the long strain of the recent series of Russian reverses I rather went off my head. I waved the paper wildly in the air as I danced around the dining room table and hurrahed. Yet hundreds of men were killed in the fight and hundreds of women's hearts will break because of it. Is that a cause for dancing and laughing? Oh, war makes us all very crude and selfish and primitive![19]

Rilla also emphasizes the parson's belief that God fights only for Britain and her allies. She writes in her diary: "I say that verse Susan read over and over again to myself. The Lord of Hosts *is* with us and the spirits of all just men made perfect – and even the legions and guns that Germany is massing on the western front *must* break against such a barrier."[20] Like Montgomery,

Rilla has been raised in the Presbyterian Church and believes she must define self-worth through strong faith as preached by Parson Meredith.

However, Montgomery subtly conveys that full acceptance of religious dogma is only for the very young or incredibly naive, and several characters, Miss Gertrude Oliver, Susan, and Walter demonstrate this point. Montgomery juxtaposes Miss Oliver, a character who mirrors many of Montgomery's characteristics, with Rilla, to contrast unquestioning acceptance of dogma with persistent scepticism. Montgomery suggests that Miss Oliver is an antithesis to Rilla's fresh childishness, as Miss Oliver's "first youth is gone."[21] Miss Oliver and Montgomery share several qualities; both are teachers who have had a "sad life, with much bitterness in it, and feels things with a terrible keenness;"[22] both are constantly haunted by fears the Germans will defeat the allies;[23] both see through the Christian platitudes expressed throughout the novel that God is the allies' national deity and therefore Germany's defeat is assured:

> "We know that the Germans are shelling Paris," said Miss Oliver bitterly. "In that case they must have smashed through everywhere and be at the very gates. No, we have lost – let us face the fact as other people in the past have had to face it. Other nations with right on their side have given their best and bravest – and have gone down to defeat in spite of it. Ours is
>
> '*but one more*
> *To baffled millions who have gone before.*'"[24]

Montgomery uses Susan's humour and "down home"[25] ways in *Rilla* to counter Miss Oliver's often despairing views, as Elizabeth Epperly suggests in *The Fragrance of Sweet-grass*. By using humour, such as the maidenly housekeeper lamenting the death of men overseas as she looks for a husband ("they are scarce enough as it is"[26]), Montgomery suggests alternative ways of thinking that challenge official discourse about the role of God. When the family hears that Serbia is about to fall, Susan sees no hypocrisy in making recourse to an omnipresent God, who, according to the Bible, loves all people:

> Cousin Sophia said awhile ago that Serbia was done for, but I told her there was still such a thing as an over-ruling Providence, doubt it who might. It says here that the slaughter is terrible. For all they were foreigners it is awful to think of so many men being killed, Mrs. Dr. Dear – for they are scarce enough as it is.[27]

Through Walter, Montgomery confronts the contemporary view that God initiated the war, as expressed by Cousin Sophia who says that she is "much afraid that this war has been sent as a punishment for our sins...."[28] Walter contradicts Cousin Sophia yet tells Rilla on his last night at home that the war is "that hell upon earth which men who have forgotten God have made."[29] Walter's perceptions emulate Montgomery's search for answers to spiritual questions during the war. As she writes in her journal:

> Stella recently wrote me that somebody she had met had said to her, 'This war is the greatest tragedy since the crucifixion.' Will some great blessing, great enough for the price, be the meed of it? Is the agony in which the world is shuddering the birth of some wondrous new era? Or is it all merely a futile 'struggle of ants/In the gleam of a million million of suns?'[30]

In *Rilla*, Walter embodies Montgomery's gradual cynicism with the global disillusionment with religion. Montgomery's argument seems contradictory: on one hand she is disillusioned with religion; on the other, she seems to see the problem resting with those who are disillusioned with religion. Montgomery's contradictions suggest that she, like many in Canada and around the post-war world, were trying to find value and a sense of purpose in beliefs they had found comforting before, and during the war.

The women of *Rilla* have strong connections the church. Walter, however, most closely expresses Montgomery's intimate spiritual beliefs. War time beliefs, as expressed by organized religion, are consistently questioned in *Rilla,* particularly the belief that God is exclusive to only one country during combat; Rilla suggests that the world, not just Canada and her allies, is suffering: "all humanity seemed nailed to the cross...."[31] Montgomery deliberately includes "all

humanity" as she challenges readers to question how an all-loving God would restrict love and salvation to one side in war. Montgomery's subtle inclusion in *Rilla* of phrases like this skilfully challenges the *status quo* which assigns citizenship to a universal God, who, according to Canada and her allies, and the Germans, backs their respective efforts as they fight in His name to establish their religious worth.

Montgomery's Religion in *Rilla* and in Life

In *Rilla*, Montgomery perpetuates the belief that religion is a comfort in harrowing times. A superficial reading of the novel would assure Montgomery's readers, particularly those who knew she was a Presbyterian minister's wife that religion was a central theme reflective of the support and comfort it provided for many Canadian families during the war. Montgomery lulls these readers into accepting religion's role in *Rilla* at face value with passages like Gertrude Oliver's:

> We all come back to God in these days of soul-sifting....There have been many days in the past when I didn't believe in God – not as God – only as the impersonal great First Cause of the scientists. I believe in Him now – I have to – there's nothing else to fall back on but God.[32]

Montgomery, however, also challenges religion by undermining passages like Gertrude's profession of faith. One circumstance is when Norman Douglas questions the Parson's use of Hebrews 9: 22 in a sermon preached shortly before his son and Jem Blythe depart. Norman argues he disagrees with the Parson's text, stating that clergyman's words, "Without shedding of blood there is no remission of sins"[33] does not make sense. Montgomery gets away with Douglas' criticism of the ordained reverend's message by her clever use of character; the reader already knows that the locals consider Norman an "old pagan,"[34] so readers, who choose to do so, may ignore Norman's attack on the minister's theology. And yet, savvy readers see that

Montgomery still manages to criticise a well-established belief that bloodshed may not absolve sins but create more sins in the violence of the bloodletting.

Like many of the soldiers and their families in the early 1900s, Montgomery lived while "modern intellectual and cultural forces"[35] overwhelmed organized religion, as Robert Fuller suggests in *Spiritual, but not religious*. During this period, religion's rigid social control was eroded by secularization. Mary Rubio emphasizes the church's pre-war decline in *Lucy Maud Montgomery: The Gift of Wings*:

> Religion had been losing its hold on people in the first part of the twentieth century. By World War 1, the power of the ministry was already in decline, even in rural parishes like Leaskdale. Religion had always provided a source of shared assumptions about social order that located and bonded people in time and space. ....To the clergy, the war now provided a way of demonstrating the materiality of evil: it was embodied in the German Kaiser....Those who fought against Germany were soldiers of the Lord saving the world for future generations.[36]

In *Rilla*, the character Susan emphasizes the importance of attending church on a regular basis. Church attendance is a pre-war tradition that is so entrenched that it is inconceivable for any of the Blythe household to miss church unless they are ill. War changes everything, though. During the battles in March 1918, Susan decides to stay home and pray hard, "a rare decision for Susan."[37] She does so, not because of illness, but because she fears she will hurl a Bible at Whiskers, assuming he will be smug because the Germans appear to be winning. In *Religion, Family, and Community in Victorian Canada,* Marguerite Van Die reaffirms the importance of church attendance before modernism and secularization emptied many churches. R. Albert Mohler defines secularization in "The Secularization of the Church" as "the process by which a society becomes more and more distant from its Christian roots.... the essence of secularization is the fact that the culture no longer depends upon Christian symbols, morals, or principles, or practices."[38] Before secularization, though, Van Die emphasizes that in small communities

everyone not only knew one another, but knew each other's denomination and expected to see them in church every Sunday: "Church attendance reinforced one's identity....The absence and reappearance of community members were a matter of general interest during Sunday services – sufficiently noteworthy to receive commentary."[39] Highlighting Susan's absence from church and the reason behind her absence (fear of defiling God's house with violence), encourages readers to question obvious contradictions, such as how a religion that emphasizes loving one's neighbour and turning the other cheek can be used to support hating an enemy enough to kill. Montgomery's journals, as well, support Rubio and Van Die's assertions on the importance of religion in a small community. In a 1925 journal entry, Montgomery makes it clear that which church one belonged to was just as significant as regular attendance; she suggests that her community had a rigid social hierarchy determined according to financial influence, family history, and church membership. After attending a non-Presbyterian Church, Montgomery wrote in her journal:

> This evening we went to St. Peter's Church – the "highest" of the "high" – Roman Catholic in all but name. I felt devoutly thankful that I was Presbyterian. If I went to that church a year I'd have nervous prostration – that is, if they always go through all the kididoes they went through tonight.[40]

Intertwining her feelings expressed in her journals, Montgomery constructs an incongruity in Susan's absence from a well-known and familiar church where the housekeeper feels safe and accepted because of her fears of becoming physically violent in a place consecrated for peace and prayer. Susan wants to respect the non-violence of church. By juxtaposing violence and religion, Montgomery criticizes religion's involvement in war.

An understanding of Montgomery's grandparents' beliefs is necessary in order to understand how their religious convictions affected their granddaughter's feelings of spiritual

Gregg states that a major tenet of Presbyterian faith is to "maintain the doctrines of original guilt and depravity,"[i] based on Biblical passages like Acts 13: 48 which states that some are "marked out for eternal life."[ii] The contrast, however, is that some are justifiably singled out for eternal damnation. Loraine Boettner writes in *The Reformed Doctrine of Predestination* that salvation is formed by "an immediate and irresistible operation of the Holy Spirit prior to and apart from any action on their part."[iii] This concept of Predestination, Gregg writes, is mitigated by the doctrines of grace through Christ's love and invitation to mercy.[iv] Montgomery wrote in her journal that when she was eight or nine she had already begun questioning her grandparents' Presbyterian doctrines because her "theology was very primitive and I took everything literally,"[v] which led to disillusionment. As early as April 1891, Montgomery denied the doctrine of predestination, telling ardent suitor Mr. Mustard (her teacher and a future minister) that she refused to accept "that God ordains any of his creatures to eternal torture for 'his own good-will and pleasure.'"[vi] Montgomery particularly despised what she saw as fear-mongering in the church. Montgomery strongly disagreed with William Gregg's emphasis on the "eternal duration of rewards and punishments"[vii] in his *History of the Presbyterian Church in the Dominion of Canada*. This was one of the doctrines that had caused Montgomery such trepidation as a child. In January 1910, four years after her engagement to Presbyterian minister, Ewan Macdonald, whom she married in 1911, she wrote in her journal that: "When one comes to think of it, it was a hideous thing to teach children the doctrines of "election" and "predestination." What a conception of God to implant in a child's mind."[viii] Ever contradictory, though, Montgomery wrote in her journal on March 16, 1917, that she had now become a "fatalist. I believe that all is planned out in the councils of Eternity – yea, in the words of the old theology, foreordained."[ix]

March 16, 1917, that she had now become a "fatalist. I believe that all is planned out in the councils of Eternity – yea, in the words of the old theology, foreordained."[49]

Montgomery resented the hypocrisy and the pettiness she found in church, long before church union was first mentioned. According to Phyllis Airhart in "The Founding of the United Church of Canada," church union that integrated the Methodist Churches, the Congregational Union Churches of Canada, and two-thirds of the Presbyterian Churches of Canada in 1925 "was accomplished only after a long and bitter round of negotiations drawn out over a period of nearly three decades."[50] In 1907, four years before she married Ewan and became truly intimate with the finely-balanced intricacies of running a parish, she wrote in her journal that she was already exasperated with church politics and the egocentric personalities she found in her local parish: "I am sick of trying to keep the peace and soothe down ruffled plumage. I detest these petty affairs for raising money anyhow. Religion ought to be above such sordid things."[51] Her distaste for church policies quickly expanded to include the Presbyterian ministers she knew best. In 1917 she wrote of her former fiancé, Rev. Ed Simpson, who told her that he preached doctrines in which he no longer believed. According to Montgomery's journal, Simpson confided that he did not believe that Jesus was divine, "and when I asked him why he preached it then, he replied he thought '*e*luding the people was not *de*luding them.'[52]

Montgomery's faith in organized religion's clergymen was shattered further by her husband's belief he was outside God's love and forgiveness. Montgomery was disillusioned by Ewan's mental illness, his religious melancholy; she wrote in her journal that she found his behaviour "repulsive and abhorrent. And yet to this personality I must be a wife.... I feel degraded and unclean."[53] Montgomery perceived the contradiction Ewan lived as a man of God, preaching God's love and offer of salvation in his churches, yet refusing to accept he would also

be redeemed. According to her journal, Montgomery felt as isolated and disconnected from Ewan as he did from everlasting life: "His attitude was 'You do not believe that I am to be damned or that you are so I do not see why you should worry.' I was absolutely alone in my despair."[54] Ewan's mental illness characterized by petty jealousies and vindictiveness countered church teachings and forged Montgomery's belief that many Christians were hypocrites. She cleverly weaves this sense of hypocrisy in *Rilla* in the villagers' gossip and attempts to victimize and hurt others. In *Rilla*, Montgomery highlights this conviction of salvation reserved only for church members when Miss Sarah Clow "comforts" the family after Walter's death. Miss Clow assures the family it is better Walter died and not Jem, because "Walter was a member of the church, and Jem wasn't."[55] In *Rilla*, Montgomery inserts other examples of the strict doctrines she was held to by her religious grandparents. Rilla worries about having dancing partners, because "of course Carl and Jerry can't dance because they're the minister's sons, or else I could depend on them to save me from *utter* disgrace."[56] And as the family anxiously awaits war news in March 1918, Susan shockingly breaks the third commandment of rest on the Sabbath and knits on a Sunday.[57] Montgomery's inclusion of multiple examples of religion's rigid insistence on maintaining petty convictions in the face of overwhelming issues such as life and death suggests she saw the hypocrisy of organized religion's role in the war.

Ironically, none of the qualities identified by Joan Gray and Joyce Tucker in *Presbyterian Polity for Church Officers* are found in Montgomery's description of church elder, Whiskers. Gray and Tucker write that church elders must be called by God, and voted into office and recognised by church members for such qualities as

> leadership abilities, sensitivity to the needs of others, dependability, enthusiasm, theological awareness, and administrative skills.... the congregation further indicates

> its desire to have certain persons as its officers by actually electing them to office in a regularly called congregational meeting.[58]

In *Rilla of Ingleside*, Montgomery embodies the hypocrisy of church leaders through the church elder, Whiskers. Whisker's lack of leadership abilities (such as when Mr. Arnold asks him to lead the congregation at the khaki prayer-meeting in prayer[59]) and his extreme insensitivity to others' needs (such as when he asks Susan to marry him so he will not need to pay a housekeeper[60]) lead the reader to question Montgomery's motivation in portraying such a character as an official in the local church. The criticism is softened by humour, but Montgomery's comments through Susan's words encourage readers to question the sincerity of church officials: "they say he is very religious; but *I* can well remember when, Mrs. Dr. dear, twenty years ago, when he was caught pasturing his cows in the Lowbridge graveyard. Yes, indeed, I have not forgotten that, and I always think of it when he is praying in meeting."[61] Through Susan, Montgomery establishes that Whisker's religion may be opportunist and shallow, thereby undermining the reader's faith in the sincerity of Whisker's prayer for peace during the Khaki Prayer Service. Montgomery also highlights the hypocrisy of some parishioners in *Rilla.* When parishioners gather at the Blythe home to pay their condolences following Walter's death, Montgomery emphasizes the insincerity expressed by church members particularly that of Mrs. William Reese, who has three healthy adult sons who have still not enlisted. Mrs. Reese cheerfully informs the family: "You'll get over it in time."[62] Montgomery, once again, uses Susan as a vehicle to articulate her personal frustration with insincerity and church-created platitudes. Susan protests indignantly when Mrs. Reese calls Walter "pore":

> He was *not* poor. He was richer than any of you. It is you who stay at home and will not let your sons go who are poor – poor and naked and mean and small – pisen poor, and so are your sons, with all their prosperous farms and fat cattle

and their souls no bigger than a flea's – if as big.[63]

Although she embodies her opinion in her fiction, Montgomery could not publicly voice her opinions as Susan does and often felt unable to turn down frequent requests to volunteer over and beyond the duties she was expected to perform as the minister's wife.

Montgomery's representation of the cruel and thoughtless things people say is particularly evident at the train station as the village sees Jem and Jerry off to war:

> What on earth had Ethel to cry about? None of the Reeses were in khaki. Rilla wanted to cry, too – but she would *not*. What was that horrid old Mrs. Drew saying to mother, in that melancholy whine of hers? "I don't see how you can stand this, Mrs. Blythe. *I* couldn't if it was *my* pore boy."[64]

Montgomery captures the mean-spiritedness and lack of empathy of some parishioners in characters like Mrs. William Reese, Mrs. Drew, Kate Drew, and Irene Howard. Montgomery had had strong attachments to religion through the Presbyterian ties established in her youth and through her marriage to a Presbyterian minister. By 1924, however, within the pages of her journal, she wondered if, after church union, "it would be such a terrible thing if 'the church' ceased to influence people at all. I do not think so. The Spirit of God no longer works through the church for humanity."[65] Montgomery suggests that, for many, it was no longer easy to keep faith.

Montgomery's Alternative Spirituality

Church politics, hypocrisy, pettiness, and fear-mongering were the reasons Montgomery turned away from organized religion. Montgomery had long valued the spiritual, however, and in an 1897 journal entry, articulated her beliefs:

> Looking back on my past life I think I have had a rather peculiar spiritual experience. I am not "religiously inclined," as the phrase goes, but I have always possessed

> a deep *curiosity* about things "spiritual and eternal." I want to *find out* – to *know* – and hence I am always poking and probing into creeds and religions, dead and alive, wanting to know for knowledge's sake what vital spark of immortal truth might be buried among all the verbiage of theologies and systems.[66]

As a minister's wife, however, Montgomery continued to attend church and followed through with all the responsibilities her parish expected. Following her best friend Frede's death, though, Montgomery became even more involved in the practice of alternative spirituality, relying on dreams and omens as she tried to reconnect with her beloved cousin. Montgomery writes in her journal on Feb. 7, 1919, shortly after Frede's death on January 25th of flu-pneumonia:

> We had made a compact. When in the course of years, few or many, one of us died that one was to come back and appear to the survivor *if* it were possible to cross the gulf.... But oh Frede, you have not come yet. The dead *cannot* return or you *would* have come. I cannot – I *cannot* bear it.[67]

In the days following Frede's cremation, Montgomery's journal emphasizes how she desperately asked where Frede was now, refusing to accept that her cousin's vibrant personality and wit were now beyond her reach.[68]

For the rest of her life, Montgomery yearned for Frede and repeatedly attempted to use spiritualism to contact her departed cousin. Montgomery had found self-worth and validation in her relationship with Frede, who, unlike many other intimates of Montgomery, fully understood and accepted the author: "In Frede I find both emotional and intellectual companionship. Very rarely found in one person. Apart from Frede...I know it not. The people I have loved best have not measured up to my standard of intellectual companionship."[69] According to Montgomery's journals, she never recaptured her feelings of value through a loved one's acceptance after Frede's death. In a May 1919 journal entry, Montgomery writes that she tried to use her beloved cat, Daffy, as a medium to connect with Frede:

> If Frede were with me could she make Daff do something which would prove her presence to me? ...I would ask for some unlikely thing – something that Daffy would never think of doing normally. "Frede," I whispered pleadingly, "if you are here *make Daff come over to me and kiss me.*" Daff *never* offers any caresses or seeks or enjoys petting. Yet it is the actual truth that hardly had I spoken when Daff walked gravely across the floor to me, lifted his forepaws and placed them on my shoulders, touched my cheek with his mouth. Moreover, he did it twice.[70]

Painfully lonely and doubting her significance in the eyes of her husband, his parish, or her former double-crossing publisher, L. C. Page, Montgomery writes in her diary that she briefly found comfort, strength, and a feeling of calmness after her "reconnection" with Frede.[71] Rilla, like Montgomery, endures the war in a sense of disconnect and isolation, until she finds comfort, strength, and a sense of purpose in Walter's posthumous letter. Like Montgomery, Rilla gains peace, not through the living, but by reconnecting with the dead.

Spirituality and "Speaking of Dreams"

Montgomery subtly contradicts organized religion's Biblical stories of men's dreams predicting the future by switching the prophets' gender in *Rilla* and voicing dreams of prophesy through women. Dreams are one of the facets of spirituality that Montgomery used to comfort herself after her disillusionment with organized religion. Dreams also play a significant part in *Rilla of Ingleside*. Miss Gertrude Oliver, for example, a teacher who has had to postpone marriage, has dreams that predict the future. From the first pages of the novel, Montgomery prepares her readers for Miss Oliver's role as a prophetess. We learn, through Anne's gossip with Mrs. Marshall Elliott, that Miss Oliver has a "little mystic streak in her – I suppose some people would call her superstitious."[72] Miss Oliver also distrusts fate because her new love is so wonderful "she hardly dares believe in its permanence."[73] This phrase, introduced as the ladies are reading the local August newspaper in 1914, is a foreshadowing of the terrible events to come. Anne reluctantly accepts that Gertrude's dreams do seem to have a tendency to predict the

future: "She has an odd belief in dreams and we have not been able to laugh it out of her. I must own, too, that some of her dreams – but there, it would not do to let Gilbert hear me hinting such heresy."[74] By replacing the masculine prophets of the Bible with women in *Rilla*, Montgomery suggests that women's spirituality is equal to men's and merits recognition and consideration by church leaders.

Early in the text, Miss Oliver confides her harrowing dream of waves of blood to young, vain, fun-obsessed Rilla who fails to see the significance of it, ironically hoping that the dream is not predicting a storm that will spoil her first adult party:

> The Glen was being swallowed up. I thought, 'Surely the waves will not come near Ingleside' – but they came nearer and nearer – so rapidly – before I could move or call they were breaking at my feet – and *everything* was gone – there was nothing but a waste of stormy water where the Glen had been. I tried to draw back – and I saw that the edge of my dress was wet *with blood* – and I woke – shivering.[75]

Miss Oliver tries to warn Rilla that her "vivid" dreams come true, and that there is "some sinister significance" in her dream.[76] Rilla chooses to ignore Miss Oliver's ominous prediction in favour of her adolescent obsession with the evening's upcoming dance, but gradually the young girl matures sufficiently to understand the stark reality of her teacher's dream that predicts the impending war and countless deaths.

Miss Oliver has another disturbing dream in February 1916 that also foretells the future. Gertrude confides her dream to Rilla when they are alone in Rilla's bedroom. But soon the entire family hears of it, and Dr. Blythe mocks Miss Oliver's psychic abilities for the last time when her dream accurately predicts the beginning of the Verdun offensive:

> Then the storm broke – and it was a dreadful storm – blinding flash after flash and deafening peal after peal, driving torrents of rain. I turned in panic and tried to run for shelter, and as I did so a man – a soldier in the uniform of a French army officer – dashed up the steps and stood beside me on the threshold of the door. His clothes

> were soaked with blood from a wound in his breast, he seemed spent and exhausted; but his white face was set and his eyes blazed in his hollow face. 'They shall not pass,' he said, in low, passionate tones which I heard distinctly amid all the turmoil of the storm.[77]

Miss Oliver's dream frightens her, but before long she forgets about her dream prophesy and believes France will fall. Susan validates Miss Oliver's prophesies, despite the teacher's self-doubts, telling the teacher that she believes in her abilities, and, when the teacher's prediction comes true, Susan confirms Miss Oliver's importance as a prophet by relaying that she "went cold all over with awe."[78] When Miss Oliver tries to tell Rilla her third significant dream, Rilla recoils with trepidation. Miss Oliver quickly assures her that this is a good dream, foretelling the beginning of the end:

> I dreamed just as I did four years ago, that I stood on the veranda steps and looked down the Glen. And it was still covered by waves that lapped about my feet. But as I looked the waves began to ebb – and they ebbed as swiftly as, four years ago, they rolled in – ebbed out and out, to the gulf; and the Glen lay before me, beautiful and green, with a rainbow spanning Rainbow Valley – a rainbow of such splendid colour that it dazzled me – and I woke. Rilla – Rilla Blythe – the tide has turned.[79]

Montgomery's inclusion of a rainbow in a prediction of the war's end has significant symbolic implications. The Bible states that a rainbow represents the promise God made to Noah after the global flood that He would never again wipe out the entire world by flood, and the rainbow would be His reminder of the covenant.[80] Miss Oliver's vision of a rainbow proves to bring her happiness as well, for her major returns and they plan to marry in the near future; Montgomery suggests that Miss Oliver's dream reflects the same promise as God's post flood sign to Noah, that global destruction by flood will never again recur: "Then will I remember the covenant which I have made between myself and you and living things of every kind. Never again shall the waters become a flood to destroy all living creatures."[81] By inserting Biblical symbols such

as the rainbow in *Rilla*, Montgomery suggests spiritual dreams are as important as Biblical texts in determining piety and shaping a spiritual way of life.

War as Religious Sacrifice in *Rilla*

War and religion are paradoxical in the sense that the former thrives in death and destruction while the latter is founded in love, yet war can still be perceived as a religious act. In *Weber and the Persistence of Religion: Social Theory, Capitalism and the Sublime*, Joseph Lough argues that influential twentieth-century social scientist Max Weber's work emphasizes some of the reasons war and religion may have become intertwined:

> in so far as both war and religion produce and draw upon the same or similar emotions, they could easily find themselves in competition with one another. But, who is to say that the practicing Lutheran, Baptist or Catholic, the devout Presbyterian, Jew, Muslim or Hindu who finds himself drawn to the battlefield to sacrifice his body for sublime values is not, at the moment of sacrifice, engaging in a supremely religious act, an act no less religious and spiritual than prayer, meditation, or giving alms? Indeed, as Weber himself must have known, this question could not be avoided, particularly in light of the fact that so many of those who most eagerly supported military action in August 1914 were also deeply and profoundly religious.[82]

Lough's comments help explain the union of what would, at first, appear to be two contradictory human beliefs. Christianity stresses the importance of sacrifice for the betterment of others, such as Jesus' death on the cross to save humanity. Max Weber writes in *Religious Rejections of the World and Their Directions* that dying in war replicates Jesus' sacrifice and grants significance to meaningless chaos: "in this massiveness *only* in war, the individual can *believe* that he knows he is dying 'for' something...."[83] [original italics].

During the Great War, organized religions in Canada played a significant role, and even though Montgomery's religious beliefs had wavered, she was still surrounded by structured religion's philosophy on the war in her daily involvement with the parish. Clergymen not only

permitted their houses of worship to be used for recruitment centres, but many also organized groups that actively supported Canada's war effort. Clergyman General Sir W. H. Horne wrote in a 1917 article, entitled "The Army Chaplain's Conference," for the *Presbyterian and Westminster* that many chaplains believed the Great War was a religious crusade and encouraged parishioners to do their part. Horne wrote that "it rests with the chaplain to inspire men with the conviction that this is a crusade and not simply a contest among nations, that God is with us and, like Cromwell's ironsides, we cannot fail."[84] Organized religion in Canada, for the most part, was not only swept up in the nation's propaganda campaign, but became a vital component of the government's recruiting process. After the war, organized religion consoled congregations that all the suffering had made the world a better place where war would never again erupt. Many religious believers accepted religion's role in war so completely that they did not see the irony in their anger against the Pope, leader of the Roman Catholic Church, when he proposed peace talks that could end the war. This attitude is reflected through Susan in *Rilla of Ingleside.* Throughout the novel, Montgomery uses Susan to deride the American president's ongoing refusals to declare war. Susan's opinion of President Woodrow Wilson, however, is transformed when the president rejects the Pope's proposal. Susan is elated and now feels she "can forgive Wilson everything."[85] By highlighting the suddenness of Susan's change in opinion of President Wilson after he refuses the Pope's proposal for peace talks, Montgomery challenges the reader to reconsider the role of religion in war rather than an organization for manipulating a sense of Christian duty to encourage enlistment and hatred, suggest it should adhere to its tenets of peace and loving one's neighbour.

Post-war, many Canadians could not accept that their fellow citizens had sacrificed their lives pointlessly in a war overseas; soldiers' deaths must have meaning, and many people

convinced themselves that the sacrifices had enhanced the world's chances for a lasting peace. In *Rilla*, Montgomery convinces herself, as well as others, that the soldiers' sacrifices and those of their generation had, to use a religious metaphor, washed away the world's sins with their blood.

Long before recruits filled out enlistment papers, met their fellow soldiers, or sacrificed their lives, organized religion had prepared congregations to accept religion's role in war. Presbyterian minister, Reverend Charles W. Gordon, who wrote *The Major* (1917) under the pseudonym of Ralph Connor after returning from the front as a chaplain, captured the power clergymen held over their parishioners. In his novel, Gordon depicts many ministers' behaviour once Canada declared war:

> That little Welch preacher at Wolf Willow – Rhye, his name, isn't it? By George, you should hear him flaming in the pulpit. He's the limit. There won't be a man in that parish will dare hold back. He will just have to go to war or quit the church. The churches are a mighty force in Canada, you know, even a political force.[86]

Gordon was not alone in his endorsement of the war. While many Canadian Churches backed the war, the focus of this chapter is Montgomery's affiliation, the Presbyterian Church. Although the Presbyterian Church's General Assembly passed a resolution against war in its 1913 Assembly,[87] the attitude quickly changed. Stuart Macdonald (not Montgomery's son) observes the changes in Eakin's religious philosophy in *From Just War to Crusade: The War-time Sermons of the Rev. Thomas Eakin*:

> The major change in Eakin's thought and preaching through the course of the war was a movement from what might be best described as a 'just war' view of the conflict to a belief that this particular conflict was a crusade – indeed a "holy war," and that God, being on the side of right, was on the side of Great Britain and her allies. Ultimately, Eakin identified the earthly victory of the allies with the eternal triumph of God, and in an effort to achieve this victory encouraged recruiting, conscription, and all other efforts deemed necessary to win the war. The war became a purging fire through which individuals and the church were moving to a brighter day beyond. It was within this context that the theological issues raised by war, issues as how an omnipotent God

could allow suffering on such a scale, were understood and discussed.[88]

Macdonald points out that the Canadian Presbyterian General Assemblies' *Acts and Proceedings* of 1916 and 1917 overturned the 1913 *Acts and Proceedings* promoting global peace, and now actively encouraged recruitment and conscription.[89]

One reason behind Montgomery's confusion in trying to reconcile war and religion is articulated by Carolyn Marvin and David Ingle who argue in "Blood Sacrifice and the Nation: Revisiting Civil Religion" that the ethical formulas associated with organized religions counter religious followers' engagement in violence:

> In the moral world shared by many readers, these prescriptions deplore violence and regard any use of it as *prima facie* profane. Where religious devotees unapologetically embrace violence, the faiths to which they subscribe may be considered morally flawed. Alternatively, it may be claimed that practitioners of violence who act in the name of religion have mistaken the true prescriptions of their faith.[90]

Many Canadian churches, however, suppressed this conflict by representing the war as one of good versus evil, by casting the German Kaiser as the Anti-Christ. Montgomery embodies this philosophy in *Rilla*, once again expressed by Susan:

> "The only thing that I find much comfort in reading nowadays is the Bible," remarked Susan, whisking her biscuits into the oven. "There are so many passages in it that seem to me exactly descriptive of the Huns. Old Highland Sandy declares that there is no doubt that the Kaiser is the Anti-Christ spoken of in Revelations, but I do not go as far as that. It would, in my humble opinion, Mrs. Dr. dear, be too great an honour."[91]

Clergymen continued the analogy by equating the soldiers' personal sacrifices with Jesus on the cross, an outlook expressed by Montgomery's narrator in *Rilla* describing the beginning of the Germans' big offensive towards Paris in March 1918: "And in that week there was one day when

all humanity seemed nailed to the cross; on that day the whole planet must have been agroan with universal convulsion; everywhere the hearts of men were failing them for fear.[92]

The generation who survived the Great War, though, were not the first to believe in the inviolability of blood as an appeasement or religious offering which sanctified the dead. In the Old Testament, blood sacrifice plays an important part in the story of Abraham and Isaac's covenant with God; in the New Testament Jesus is often symbolised as a sacrificial lamb who died painfully in order to save others from eternal damnation. In *Rilla*, Montgomery suggests that Walter's death is religious appeasement in the sense he went reluctantly and with great fear, but overcame his dread in order to help innocent women and children after the sinking of the *Lusitania*. Montgomery connects Walter's death to religious sacrifice by referring after Shirley joined: Shirley's entry into the war was not "in a white flame of sacrifice, like Walter...."[93]

The ancient conviction of washing in blood to purge sins was metaphorically revived in Presbyterian Churches by Rev. Horatius Bonar in his theological tract, *God's Way to Peace* (1878). The Editor's Preface states that the book was adopted by the Presbyterian Publishing Committee for pastors and laymen. According to the *Chapel Library Literature Catolog*, Bonar's numerous books and tracts became popular Christian Classics and have been in continued use since their first publication.[94] In accordance with Montgomery's grandparents' propensity to purchase religious tracts and insist their granddaughter read, it is probable Montgomery read Bonar's books detailing his religious philosophy of blood purging sins. Bonar explains the relationship between blood and the cleansing of sins to fellow Presbyterians in Chapter V: "The Blood of Sprinkling":

> But an inquirer asks, what is the special meaning of the blood, of which we read so much? How does it speak peace? How does it "purge the conscience from dead

> works?....The "sprinkling of the blood," was the making use of the death, by putting it upon certain persons or things, so that those persons were counted to be dead, and, therefore, to have paid the law's penalty....That blood represents death; it is God's expression for death. It is then sprinkled on us, and thus death, which is the law's penalty, passes on us. We die. We undergo the sentence; and thus the guilt passes away. We are cleansed![95]

Montgomery presents the Presbyterian Bonar's philosophy of blood in *Rilla* through Rev. Meredith, who suggests that great blessings require blood sacrifices:

> *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. No, Mrs. Crawford, 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.[96]

In *Boys and Girls in No Man's Land: English-Canadian Children and the First World War* Susan Fisher points out that during *Rilla*'s "morally problematic event,"[97] which was the khaki prayer meeting held in the church before the troops' departure, when Whiskers (Mr. Pryor) prays for peace, the congregation rebels and he is physically attacked by Norman Douglas. Douglas' verbal assault that accompanies his physical shaking includes cries of "sedition and treason."[98] Fisher interprets this scene as validation of Montgomery's approval of the necessity of blood sacrifices because Montgomery punishes Whiskers.

Montgomery's presentation of this event, however, is complex. She clouds the reader's judgement of how she really feels about invoking religion to support war. Montgomery describes the combined Methodist and Presbyterian prayer-meeting in *Rilla* as properly "fitting"[99] as a interdomination gathering to pray for soldiers heading overseas, yet challenges the reader to examine the contradiction of deploying organized religion to support war by including Whisker's prayer for peace in a church filled with troops heading for the front. Fisher suggests that the fact Montgomery included Whisker's prayer might have been because Montgomery was troubled by

the churches' role in recruitment and ongoing support of the war.[100] The rhetoric Montgomery puts in Whisker's mouth is controversial, particularly when the incident takes place during war and in a building full of enthusiastic soldiers. Montgomery inserts words in Whisker's prayer like "unholy war...deluded armies...that the poor young men present in khaki who had been hounded into a path of murder and militarism, should be rescued."[101] If she had used Rev. Meredith or Dr. Blythe, instead of Whiskers, who has already been discredited by Susan, the reader might be readier to accept Whisker's words as Montgomery's subtle, but sincere, stand against religion's role in the Great War. In this way, Montgomery is able to articulate dissent without seeming to endorse that position.

By using humour, Montgomery subtly challenges the reader's perspectives. Throughout *Rilla*, Montgomery uses Susan, usually comically, to test contemporary ideas about patriotism and religion. Montgomery often pairs Susan with the serious Dr. Blythe to emphasize the juxtaposition: "We are told to love our enemies, Susan," said the doctor solemnly. "Yes, *our* enemies, but not King George's enemies, doctor dear," retorted Susan crushingly."[102] On another occasion, Susan, in her role of most faithful believer, tells pessimistic Miss Oliver that she knows they will win the war despite "the trouble and expense of it all ... we must trust in God and make big guns."[103] Susan is particularly indignant when Cousin Sophia, amidst much moaning, observes that the Huns are the "instruments in the hand of the Almighty, to purge the garner...."[104] Susan quickly retorts that the Almighty would never use the Huns in any capacity because they are: "such dirty instruments...for any purpose whatever, and that I did not consider it decent for her to be using the words of Holy Writ as glibly as she was doing in ordinary conversation."[105] Furthermore, Susan condemns Sophia for using scripture when she is not "a minister or even an elder."[106]

Fisher argues that Montgomery's "strongest counterweight"[107] to patriotism fed by blood sacrifices is when Rev. Meredith's youngest son, Bruce, performs an actual sacrifice. He drowns his beloved kitten, Stripey, in a pact he makes with God to return his hero, Jem, who has been reported as missing in action. Readers of Montgomery's journals know how much she loved her cats, and the depth such a sacrifice would signify. Rilla writes in her diary of Bruce's faith that his sacrifice will save Jem, but also reflects on the role of sacrifices in religion. Rilla writes that Bruce tells his mother he has drowned his pet:

> 'To bring Jem back,' sobbed Bruce. 'I thought if I sacrificed Stripey God would send Jem back. So I drownded him – and, oh mother, it was *awful* hard – but surely God will send Jem back now, 'cause Stripey was the dearest thing I had. I just told God I would give Him Stripey if He would send Jem back. And He will, won't He, mother?'[108]

By highlighting Bruce's sacrifice, Montgomery suggests that God does not make bargains, even bargains made as blood sacrifices. Fisher quotes Owen Dudley Edwards, who has suggested "that Montgomery put this 'subversive' passage into her novel 'in spite of herself.'[109] As Fisher argues, Montgomery did not ever really reconcile her pacifism and patriotic belief that the war was fought between good and evil. Fisher writes that Montgomery:

> imploded, to use Edwards's term, building into her novel scenes and allusions that undermined the very justification of the war. Montgomery's problem, of course, was not unique. A whole generation of Canadians were similarly tormented by the contradiction between their detestation of the war and their reluctant conviction that this one must be fought. That such conflicts and questions are even adumbrated in a girls' story is in itself a remarkable accomplishment.[110]

Montgomery's contradictory nature reflects her inner confusion as she tried to reconcile complicated issues such as religion's role in war. It is also a window into her struggle to define her incompatible beliefs about beauty, peace, and Canada, with her role as a Presbyterian

minister's wife expected to implement church doctrine that saw war as a means of expressing religious sacrifice.

"Keeping faith"

Despite her conflicting journal entries regarding faith, Montgomery includes numerous allusions in *Rilla of Ingleside* to "the Judeo-Christian Bible and the Book of Common Prayer, implying that the call to "keep faith" has both patriotic and religious dimensions,"[111] according to Benjamin Lefebvre and Andrea McKenzie's Introduction to *Rilla*. Montgomery conveys the belief that some principles are worth fighting for, and the way to win is by remaining devoted one's ideals. In *Rilla*, this premise becomes known as "The *Idea*" and is presented by Rev. Meredith as the Blythe and Meredith families anxiously await news of the Battle of Verdun. Mr. Meredith is emphatic in his convictions, telling the families:

> The *Idea* cannot be conquered. France is certainly very wonderful. It seems to me that in her I see the white form of civilization making a determined stand against the black powers of barbarism. I think the whole world realizes this and that is why we all await the issue so breathlessly. It isn't merely the question of a few forts changing hands or a few miles of blood-soaked ground lost and won.[112]

Rilla personalizes Mr. Meredith's words when she receives Walter's final letter which arrives posthumously. Rilla now feels, for the first time since Walter's death, a sense of hope and faith and believes that "the splendid ideals, *still lived*....could not be destroyed...It must carry on, though the earthly link with things of earth were broken."[113] Rilla, the girl, espouses Montgomery's maternal feminist philosophy as much of her work focuses on the domestic, despite the potentially problematic situation of encouraging women to return to their pre-war private spheres in a novel celebrating their success in the public sphere during the war. By

highlighting this contradiction Montgomery makes readers aware that contradictions merit reconsideration in a world transformed by war.

Walter's letter builds on Mr. Meredith's theme of fighting for an Idea. Walter writes to Rilla that the Idea is "the fate of mankind. That is what we're fighting for. And we shall win – never for a moment doubt that, Rilla. For it isn't only the *living* who are fighting – the *dead* are fighting too. Such an army *cannot* be defeated."[114] Walter even leaves instructions for Rilla to follow, in order to preserve the Idea. According to Walter, by following his instructions, Rilla will be "keeping faith" with the dead. Walter tells his sister that he believes Ken will return to her, and that they will marry and have children. Walter explicitly explains that it is by having children, thereby ensuring Canada's future as the nation struggles to heal and replace the tens of thousands killed in the war, that Rilla will be doing her part to "keep faith":

> 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 naught. This will be part of *your* work, Rilla. And if you – all you girls back in the homeland – do it, then we, who don't come back will know that you have not 'broken faith'....[115]

And so, through her deceased brother, Rilla learns her role in the nation's rebuilding process. She is to marry and have children, and raise her children according to the stipulations laid out in the *Idea.* As a maternal feminist, Montgomery creates a novel that supports women finding their sense of worth through traditional roles; by highlighting traditional domestic roles, such as Rilla raising a child though not married, or Miranda Pryor's marriage to a soldier after her father has forbidden the union, however, she also challenges readers to question a submissive return to private spheres.

Rilla comes to embody Walter's last wish, and every time she feels doubt or fear she admonishes herself to suppress it, interpreting her promise to Walter to imply that succumbing to negative emotions is to "break faith.'[116] By the novel's conclusion, Rilla understands the difficulty and sacrifice of always striving to "keep faith."[117] Montgomery makes it clear that Walter's sacrifice has helped establish Rilla's confidence and a role in repopulating Canada. But Walter's last wish also costs Rilla. Her brother has willed her the significant role of re-populating the earth, emulating the Bible's original Eve. Montgomery shows that Rilla loves Ken and does hope to marry him after the war. Rilla's sacrifice lies in her proposed role of motherhood, an un-natural role for Rilla when she initially, and reluctantly, becomes baby Jims' substitute mother. Montgomery has made it clear that Rilla is "a self-confessed hater of babies"[118] and believes the baby a "detestable little animal."[119] By surrendering her aversion to babies, Rilla frees baby Jims' father to fight overseas without worrying about his son when he learns of Jims' existence; by this act Rilla contributes her sacrifice for the war effort as she nurtures a baby she first found "detestable." Unlike many of her contemporaries in the Junior Red Cross, Rilla has no experience, desire, or maternal instincts to guide her reluctant transition to motherhood. Rilla relies instead on a clinical approach, using the baby book *Morgan on Infants* as her child-rearing guide. Rilla is not even sure if she will ever be able to love Jims. Walter does not ask his sister to have children without understanding the depth of her sacrifice; in fact when Rilla reluctantly agrees to keep the baby, Walter tells Rilla her decision is as brave as Jem's "to face a mile of Germans."[120] Montgomery's use of contradiction is evident in Walter's stipulations to his younger sister to marry and have children of her own. Montgomery, at first, seems to suggest marriage and motherhood are the ultimate and desirable goals for women; yet, on the other hand,

she suggests these roles as true sacrifices because Rilla does not naturally take to motherhood. Montgomery thus problematizes an easy reading of the novel.

Rilla's post-war role reflects Montgomery's maternal feminism, as well as the reality of women who lost their jobs working outside their homes once the men returned from war. Even during the war and its consequential loss of men in the work place, there was substantial protest against women replacing men. For example, the cotton spinners in the Preston Operative Spinners Association used a lack of proper changing rooms and washing facilities in an attempt to exclude women from their work place during the war. Gail Braydon cites other examples:

> 'We think a woman's place is at home, looking after the home, husband and family; and if she is a young woman, unmarried, she ought to be learning something better than pit work,' said John Wadsworth, General Secretary of the Yorkshire Miner's Association when faced with the proposal for women to work on the surface, while the Amalgamated Society of Tramway and Vehicle Workers opposed women's employment as drivers 'on the grounds that the work was highly injurious to women and threatened the welfare of the future generation, while in many districts driving by women was dangerous to the public.'[121]

If women replacing men in the workplace created such uproar during the war when there was a dire need, it does not require much imagination to foresee that many employers, government officials, and family members were determined that women return to their homes after the war ended. In "Soldier's Heart," Sandra Gilbert suggests that many women found it a sacrifice to return to traditional responsibilities:

> It is not surprising, then, that, repressed by what was still after all a male-dominated community and reproached by their own consciences, many women retreated into embittered unemployment or guilt-stricken domesticity after World War 1. "Generally speaking, we war women are a failure," confesses a character in Evadne Price's *Women of the Aftermath*. "We had a chance to make ourselves solid in the working market ... and came a hell of a cropper in most cases [meaning a sudden failure]."[122]

After so many soldiers had given and lost so much, most women did not want to prove themselves unworthy of the selflessness of those overseas and suppressed their own desires and returned quietly to their traditional roles. Like Rilla, with her regressive lisp at the novel's close, they deliberately chose to conform without disturbing the soldiers' homecomings. The fact that Rilla's lisp is regressive, however, suggests that Montgomery is calling her own ending into question.

Montgomery establishes the character of women's post-war roles throughout *Rilla*, and subtly suggests some of the underlying causes behind women's choices to quietly return to domesticity. In the chapter, "Black Sunday," Montgomery juxtaposes the hope of new life against the starkness of death, as Dr. Blythe misses church to help a "little war bride...fighting gallantly on her own battle-ground to give life, not death, to the world."[123] When Jem finally returns home, he and Rilla discuss the future and their roles in building a new world. Jem argues that the ethos of the Prussian state symbolised by militarism is not yet defeated: "Prussianism... isn't dead yet....It isn't enough to drive out the old spirit – we've got to bring in the new."[124] Susan Fisher writes about this trend in "The Study of War" as a generation's certainty in instilling values in order to ensure future generations would be ready to protect the world against future militaristic endeavours. Fisher writes that these values included a commitment "to maintaining civil order, contributing to the common good,"[125] and a readiness to preserve Canadian patrimony. Fisher adds that the purpose behind encouraging ideals was to remember to "cherish peace and a quiet life, and to forget neither the men nor women who died nor the human folly that caused their deaths."[126] This generation, scarred by war, "believed unshakeably in the importance of this duty to the fallen. They believed too that remembrance would ensure a lasting peace,"[127] or preserve, as Montgomery described it, the Idea.

Sacrifice is an underlying theme in Montgomery's novel created to celebrate Canadian women's efforts to support the Great War. The men's sacrifices were obvious, but Montgomery suggests through *Rilla* that she felt women's sacrifices were unsung. Rilla accepts her sacrificial role and comes to love Jims.[128] Gertrude Oliver reminds Rilla on the afternoon that the family hears the news of peace that no price is too high for freedom. Rilla replies, echoing Montgomery's belief that the living must be worthy of the dead: "No – not if those of us who live will show ourselves worthy of it – if we 'keep faith.'"[129] Montgomery allows the reader to construe "keeping faith" as either a patriotic or religious action, or as a complicated combination of the two positions. Montgomery was a fiercely patriotic Canadian and did believe, like many of her contemporaries, that the war would unite Canadians. Montgomery, though, precedes Rilla's remarks with Rilla's vision of the Christian symbol of "a white cross on a battlefield in France."[130] By imaging all of the white crosses, Rilla reminds the reader of the ultimate sacrifice made by many. Religion asks for sacrifice and Montgomery, through Rilla's fulfillment of Walter's wish, establishes Rilla's value through her role of motherhood as a way of "keeping faith." By doing so, Montgomery emphasizes Rilla's contribution as she strives to maintain her vow to Canada's war dead, highlighting Montgomery's philosophy as a maternal feminist by making Rilla's post-war role as a wife and mother as one of sacrifice.[123]

Conclusion

Montgomery and Canadian Women's Significance in War

Lucy Maud Montgomery's *Rilla of Ingleside* is one of the few works of fiction written by Canadian female contemporaries of the Great War that vividly portrays the significant role women played in support of the war. Only by including works from both genders, and civilian as well as military writers, can we come to understand the overwhelming magnitude of war for a nation and its citizens. When war was declared, Canada's participation made Montgomery examine issues that she had not previously faced, particularly the issue of gender roles, and her own attitudes to war. She did so in *Rilla of Ingleside*.

Montgomery's views of Canadian women's worth in war are shaped by her maternal feminist philosophy; she defined women's significance according to traditionally-held gender roles of women as mothers and nurturers. However, while creating female characters in *Rilla* that mirror Montgomery's own war work, she also subtly challenges these roles without overtly upsetting the *status quo*. Montgomery's choice of war as the topic in *Rilla*, for example, counters her contemporaries' belief that war was an exclusively male domain. Montgomery also calls convention into question by including political and strategic discussions in *Rilla* that would not have been viewed as appropriate for women before the war. Although Montgomery subtly questions many traditions, she also preserves the contemporary belief that class defines position as she assigns her characters war work; upper class women like Rilla, Anne, and Miss Oliver replace men in non-physical posts, while lower class housekeeper Susan and Mary Vance do manual work on the farm. Unlike other Canadian women writers like Nellie McClung who actively campaigned for suffrage, Montgomery did not believe women's franchise would change much for women's political status although she did believe Canadian women, as wives and

mothers, had the right to help decide the fate of the men they loved or had brought into the world. Montgomery's scepticism that the franchise would not drastically change women's lives post-war is reflected in her depiction of women leaving jobs and returning to domestic lives when the men returned.

Montgomery's views of feminine worth were formed long before war's outbreak or the granting of franchise. Her own sense of negative self-worth was shaped during her childhood when she went to live with her strict Presbyterian grandparents after her mother died and her father went west looking for work. Montgomery's feelings of abandonment led to pessimistic internalizations and self-doubts that followed her all of her life. As a maternal feminist, Montgomery measured her significance as a wife and mother, and according to her journals, believed that she had failed to measure up when she compared herself to these traditionally feminine roles. Montgomery's grandmother had instilled a fear of what others thought that Montgomery accepted as a personal parameter, and Montgomery devised a contrived half life in her divulged the "unacceptable" to journals in order to hide her inner torments and feelings of worthlessness from both prying parishioners and curious admirers.

Although Montgomery doubted her self-worth and hid her private self in her journals, she constructed worthy Canadian women who merited male sacrifice through their role in supporting the war. Throughout *Rilla*, Montgomery establishes the value of Canadian women in war. Montgomery accomplishes this by constructing characters with practical values: loyalty, industry, and courage. In *Rilla*, Montgomery emphasizes that there are many ways to characterize loyalty (through emotional suppression, as commitment to a cause, as faithfulness to another), but contradicts herself to suggest that loyalty has a dark side as well. Montgomery also measures women's value through their commitment to the nation and their support to the men,

symbolized by women's industry in the war effort which establishes their practical importance. Montgomery quietly challenges established gender norms through her emphasis on pioneering courage, pointing out that, although the women face different threats than the men fighting overseas, their courage is equal.

Montgomery believed virtues such as courage were equally shared by men and women, and also felt that religion and spirituality were similarly valuable means to find one's inner spirit. Religion and spirituality played a large role in Montgomery's life, and through these Montgomery examines her characters' inner worth through unseen values. As in many other aspects of her life, Montgomery also held contradictory beliefs concerning the role of organized religion in war. As a minister's wife, she was aware of the church's role in recruitment and clergymen's' portrayal of soldiers' sacrifices as a reflection of Jesus on the cross. Montgomery suggests there is inconsistency in the belief that war is a religious sacrifice. Her depiction of God as a national deity and her subtle questioning of organized religion throughout *Rilla* suggests that she felt organized religion was decayed and restricted by its dogma. Montgomery had turned away from organized religion, but, as a minister's wife, continued to perform her expected duties publicly in her husband's parishes. Privately, however, she had come to believe in spirituality and dreams as omens that predicted the future. These beliefs intensified after the death of her cousin Frede left her feeling completely alone in the universe, emotions she embodies in Rilla following the death of her brother who is killed in action at the battle of Courcelette. Through *Rilla*, Montgomery suggests that keeping faith is not limited to church attendance, but is also found in ordinary people's vocations who strive to improve others' lives.

Montgomery's private cynicism about organized religion left her with an inner metaphysical void that she replaced with spirituality. Mysticism and the importance of dreams as

portents of the future became the framework for Montgomery's inner life, particularly during the war and after Frede's death. Montgomery conveys the importance she attributed to the other-worldly by including spirituality and dreams in *Rilla* as a means to validate the worth of Miss Oliver, a lonely character who closely resembles Montgomery. Through spiritual avenues and organized religion, Montgomery examines the meaning of keeping faith in *Rilla*, for those fighting and dying overseas, as well as for those at home, particularly the women who must also make sacrifices to keep faith alive for future generations. Montgomery believes in keeping faith with the living and the dead as the Idea, the concept that women must continue to make sacrifices after the war in order to ensure the continuation of the race and of civilization. Arguably, Montgomery's own sense of insignificance drives her to rewrite other girls' and women's potential in *Rilla of Ingleside,* a novel celebrating Canadian women's worth in war and the sacrifices women made to support the men at the front.

Throughout *Rilla of Ingleside*, Montgomery uses contradiction to challenge readers to revalue their positions on women's and men's roles in, and after, war. She also challenges preconceived perceptions of organized religion's position in war. By examining the work that takes place in the domestic sphere, work that is often overlooked, Montgomery celebrates Canadian women's participation in the war, and carefully realizes the effects of war on the home front, an achievement that merits the inclusion of *Rilla of Ingleside* in studies of the Great War.

Notes

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