

“The Clock Is Dead”: Temporality and Trauma in *Rilla of Ingleside*

L. M. Montgomery’s First World War novel, *Rilla of Ingleside* (1921), is a text preoccupied with time: with characters’ growth through time, with their sense of temporality and duration, and with their attempts to organize their experience of time in narrative form, via diaries, letters, and oral narratives.¹ Montgomery charts the experience of modernity through the industrial warfare of the Great War and through modern interventions into the pastoral Prince Edward Island community of Glen St. Mary. The Blythe family buys a motor car, observes planes flying overhead, and feels the impact of their own situatedness within a transitional historical moment. One of the most explicit interventions into their experience of time is the Canadian federal government’s introduction of Daylight Saving Time in the spring of 1918, which occurs toward the end of the novel. Susan Baker, the housekeeper at Ingleside, argues the matter theologically with Dr. Blythe, wondering whether he thinks it proper to “meddle with the arrangements of the Almighty,” and she insists to “Mrs. Dr. dear” that her own personal clock “shall go on God’s time and not [Prime Minister Robert] Borden’s time” (Montgomery, *Rilla* 309). Susan’s faith in “God’s time” belies the history of the development of Coordinated Universal Time, a system that is implicated in nineteenth-century imperialism, enmeshed as it is with “national ambitions, war, industry, science, and conquest” (Galison 38).² However, Susan’s resistance to Daylight Saving Time reminds us that if time is political, it is also experienced as profoundly personal.

Rilla of Ingleside paces through the harrowing years of war along a horizontal axis, chronologically following its young heroine from youth to maturity. Its structure, though, illustrates the gap between two modes of experiencing and representing time: standard time (which includes calendar time and clock time), a system of measurement that is external and objective, and autobiographical time, which is wrapped up in the personality and perceptions of the experiencing subject. Adam Barrows notes that while time was "intrinsically politicized" in the modernist period, "bound up . . . with the problematics of imperial control and global conceptualization" (263), novelists like Joseph Conrad, James Joyce, and Virginia Woolf "resituat[e] temporal processes within more meaningful, contextually determined, and variable social patterns" (263). In *Rilla of Ingleside*, the tension between the chronological imperative of Rilla's narrative of maturation and the novel's exploration of autobiographical time challenges the form of the *Bildungsroman*.³ The novel's shifts between third-person and first-person narration, presented in the excerpts from Rilla's diary, emphasize multiple temporal registers. The omniscient narrator possesses the historical long view, and the knowledge of the war's outcome that the implied reader of the text also shares,⁴ while Rilla's diary, produced and embedded in its specific historical moment, maps an autobiographical experience of time as personal, subjective, and limited. The diary, as a site of self-fashioning, marks its author's individual experience of time through its treatment of event, sequence, and duration, and through its strategies of narrative compression and omission. Montgomery's novel juxtaposes standard time and autobiographical time to capture the individual, subjective experience of war, and to reflect the war's private traumatic impact.

The disjunction between public and private time in *Rilla of Ingleside* demonstrates the slipperiness of temporality as a human experience, emphasizing its abstract, individualized nature in the context of wartime trauma. Examining *Rilla of Ingleside* in relation to contemporary texts like Virginia Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway* (1925) and Katherine Mansfield's "The Garden Party" (1922)—narratives that engage either directly or obliquely with the trauma of war—frames Montgomery's representation of time, memory, and trauma comparatively, and illuminates patterns across the texts that speak to the imperative to create meaning out of the chaos of violent death. Locating

Montgomery in relation to her contemporaries invites a consideration of her engagement with modernist themes (including temporality and mortality), and of her formal strategies that challenge the constraints of the *Bildungsroman*. I argue that through characters' processes of organizing and understanding time in *Rilla of Ingleside*, we witness their ongoing battle to make meaning out of the war.

“Cut in two by the chasm of the war”: Temporality and Rupture

In Montgomery's journal entry for March 11, 1919, she describes commencing work on the book that would become *Rilla of Ingleside*, which she intended at the time as the final instalment in the *Anne* series.⁵ Montgomery expresses a keen desire to “end *Anne*—and properly,” knowing that Anne “belongs” to a different world—the “green, untroubled pastures and still waters of the world before the war” (*CJ* 1918-21 128). Her sense that Anne belongs to a world that has disappeared is echoed in the character's own reflection in *Rilla* that “[i]t seems hundreds of years since those Green Gables days. . . . They belonged to another world altogether” (199). The trauma of war has produced a subjective experience of temporal rupture, leading Anne to assert that “[l]ife has been cut in two by the chasm of the war. What is ahead I don't know—but it can't be a bit like the past” (199). Even the form of Anne's sentence—with its dash midway through—syntactically represents fragmentation. For Anne, existence is split along a temporal axis: the time before the war and an after-time that can only be imagined. Wondering whether “those of us who have lived half our lives in the old world will ever feel wholly at home in the new” (199), Anne echoes Montgomery's own reflection in a journal entry from June 17, 1916 that the “old world is passed away forever,” and her “fear that those . . . who have lived half our [life] span” in the old world “will never feel wholly at home in the new” (*CJ* 1911-17 231).⁶ Anne opens up speculative space in which she imagines herself and her contemporaries as chronotopic castaways, straddling two irreconcilable worlds.⁷ Her interlocutors in this scene are the older generation of Ingleside—Gilbert, Susan, and Gertrude Oliver⁸—and their regular visitor, Susan's dour Cousin Sophia; none of the younger generation are present to witness the conversation.⁹ Indeed, the youthful family members who come of age during the war could be imagined, in Anne's construction, as immune to the trauma of the adults

who feel their expulsion from the charmed "pastures and still waters" (Montgomery, *CJ 1918-21* 128) of the old days. Anne's image of a "life . . . cut in two" (*Rilla* 199) stresses discontinuity and the subjective experience of time. While the public world is governed by the stable registers of calendar and clock time, Anne expresses a private sense of autobiographical temporal fragmentation that reflects her traumatic experience of the war.

Despite Anne's sense of the remoteness of the garden-like world before the war from the world of wartime, *Rilla of Ingleside* is filled with references to that earlier life which convey its continuing significance and its capacity to generate meaning through contrast and juxtaposition. E. Holly Pike notes that the *Anne* series is "recalled" (81) throughout *Rilla of Ingleside*, as characters remember and reflect upon their pasts, and as plot details recall to readers' minds episodes from earlier books in the series.¹⁰ For example, Anne recalls incidents from her youthful days at Green Gables, such as when she broke her ankle after Josie Pye "dared [her]" to walk the ridge-pole of the Barrys' kitchen roof (*Rilla* 11) and when she disastrously dyed her hair green (198). Both of these episodes from Anne's past are raised in the context of her awareness of her own aging—the ache in her ankle "when the wind is east" (11) and the discovery of her first grey hair (198). Characters' acts of recollection produce deep structures of connection; however, the novel complicates any simple relationship between the past and the present. For example, as Cousin Sophia complains about the weather towards the end of *Rilla*, she remarks, "I'm afeared we're going to have an airy winter. . . . The muskrats are building awful big houses around the pond, and that's a sign that never fails" (336). This sense of the significance of the "sign" confirms her belief in the meaning and experience of all her lived winters. But the reliability of the "sign that never fails" is cast into doubt as she then equivocates, noting "the seasons is altogether different now from what they used to be" (337). Whether Cousin Sophia is correct and the seasons are "altogether different now," or whether it is her perception of the seasons that has changed, both scenarios emphasize flux and transition. The past is no bellwether for the future.

Montgomery's structures of recollection in *Rilla* invite comparison with Virginia Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway* (1925), the great single-day novel of the postwar milieu. Woolf's novel possesses a similar sense of the chasm that

looms between the prewar and postwar worlds. Woolf creates complex temporal effects through Clarissa Dalloway's repeated return to memories of her youth at Bourton, which break upon her in waves, juxtaposed against the chiming of Big Ben (and assorted other clocks), which marks the passage of the hours on that Wednesday in June of 1923 as Clarissa prepares for her evening party. Just as the image of Big Ben looms over Clarissa's London, the house of Ingleside is regulated by its clockworks—not simply the habits, routines, and rituals of the household, but the literal clocks that are wound on schedule and that set the pace for family life and work.¹¹ The presence of personal alarm clocks in *Rilla of Ingleside* (both Susan's and Rilla's are mentioned) reflects their affordability and ubiquity. Rilla records in her diary the reaction of her young ward, Jims, who awakens on a Wednesday in November of 1917 to the sight of Rilla's stopped alarm clock: "Jims bounded out of his crib and ran across to me, his face quite aghast above his little blue flannel pajamas. 'The clock is dead,' he gasped, 'oh Willa [he lisps], the clock is dead'" (288).¹² The mechanism has stopped, as Rilla records, because she "had forgotten to wind it up" (288), but the three-year-old Jims captures an almost uncanny quality of dread that time itself could be stopped if the clockworks ground to a halt. In *The Culture of Time and Space, 1880-1918*, Stephen Kern observes that "as every child quickly learns, there is only one time" (11), flowing incessantly in a single direction. Jims has yet to learn the lesson of time's inexorable forward march, independent of the functioning or failing of little personal alarm clocks. However, in the shelter of his protected toddlerhood, some dawning realization has reached him that time is beyond human control. In the same diary entry, Rilla records little Jims plaintively wondering, "Why can't yesterday come back, Willa?" (288). Jims grapples with time in a way that recalls the elegiac treatment of time past offered by the adults at Ingleside. Yet he also unwittingly leads the reader into a philosophical morass as it becomes clear that although clock and calendar time move on, there are critical ways in which the Blythe family will be stranded in the timescape of the war years forever.

In Woolf's novel, Clarissa Dalloway constructs a simple, factual claim and then freights it with contingency when she reflects,

The War was over, except for some one like Mrs. Foxcroft at the Embassy last night eating her heart out because that nice boy was killed and now the old Manor House

must go to a cousin; or Lady Bexborough who opened a bazaar, they said, with the telegram in her hand, John, her favourite, killed; but it was over; thank Heaven—over. (*Dalloway* 4)

Even as she insists that the war "was over," her parenthetical insertions undermine her claim, as those whose lives have been irrevocably altered by the wreckage of the Great War find themselves living within its long shadow. Similarly, as Anne and Susan prepare to set the table for Christmas six weeks after the Armistice of November 1918, the Great War is officially over; however, for these chronotopic castaways, the war is never over. Setting empty chairs for all the boys who will not be home in time for the holiday, as well as for the middle son of Ingleside, Walter, who was killed in action at Courcelette in 1916, Anne proclaims, "We'll set chairs for all, Susan, as you did our first war Christmas,—yes, for *all*—for my dear lad whose chair must always be vacant, as well as for the others" (343, emphasis original). The empty place at the table is a visual articulation of the presence of loss; the space marks an absence that will continue to be felt in the long years after the war. The gesture links space and time, and also speaks to meaning-making: in order for the survivors of the catastrophe of war to experience consolation, loss must be made meaningful.

The longing to attribute meaning and coherence to untimely death links *Rilla of Ingleside* with another contemporary text, Katherine Mansfield's 1922 short story "The Garden Party." Mansfield, writing about her narrative in a March 11, 1922 letter to the novelist William Gerhardi, describes her teenage protagonist Laura Sheridan's desire to make sense of the collision of life and death on the day of her family's party. Mansfield proposes:

The diversity of life and how we try to fit in everything, Death included . . . is bewildering for a person Laura's age. She feels things ought to happen differently. First one and then another. But life isn't like that. We haven't the ordering of it. Laura says, "But all these things must not happen at once" and Life answers "Why not? How are they divided from each other." And they *do* all happen, it is inevitable. And it seems to me that there is beauty in that inevitability. (*Collected Letters* 101, emphasis original)

Like "The Garden Party," *Rilla of Ingleside* emphasizes mutability, change, and the imperative to make meaning, as a teenage protagonist is initiated into the special knowledge of violent death. While Mansfield's story is set in

the bucolic New Zealand of her youth before the war, “The Garden Party” has been read in relation to the author’s traumatic experience of the loss of her brother, Leslie Beauchamp, during the First World War (Darrohn 519). Christine Darrohn posits that the body of the lost brother, destroyed when a grenade accidentally exploded in his hand, is reconstituted through the narrative, both in Laura’s warm, empathic, idealized brother, Laurie, and in the body of Mr. Scott, the dead carter. Scott’s body is made profoundly meaningful for Laura in its beauty and integrity, a figure of sublime “happ[iness],” “content[ment],” and “peaceful[ness]” (Mansfield, “The Garden Party” 51). Similarly, Clarissa Dalloway ascribes meaning to the death by suicide of Septimus Warren Smith: “The clock began striking. The young man had killed himself; but she did not pity him; with the clock striking the hour, one, two, three, she did not pity him, with all this going on. . . . She felt somehow very like him—the young man who had killed himself” (Woolf, *Dalloway* 158). His death becomes a source of affinity and meaning-making, timed to the tolling of a clock. As Rilla’s beloved brother Walter prepares to board the train that will spirit him away to war, the narrator uses temporal metaphors to describe the anguish of parting: Rilla “would not see him again until the day broke and the shadows vanished—and she knew not if that daybreak would be on this side of the grave or beyond it” (Montgomery, *Rilla* 164-65). In the aftermath of Walter’s death, he is an absence: an empty chair; a body consecrated to burial overseas; a figure outside of time, perpetually young while others age; a blank space in which meaning must be inscribed. In these stories written in the aftermath of the war, Woolf, Mansfield, and Montgomery foreground the process of making meaning out of traumatic death. The processual gestures of grieving emphasize the links between time and trauma.¹³ “We haven’t the ordering of it” says Mansfield of life and death, but a diary is a space to exercise control over the narrative representation of lived experience.

Building Temporal Structures

The *Bildungsroman* is a diachronic narrative mode that emphasizes the protagonist’s development through time; however, *Rilla* is not only a novel of maturation but is also presented, in part, as a proto-autobiography as expressed through Rilla’s diary entries. The novel shifts frequently from

the third-person omniscient narration of the extra-diegetic narrator to the first-person narration of Rilla in her diary. Colin Hill describes Rilla as a "compulsive diarist," and notes that her diary entries increasingly "reflect the intellectual seriousness and practicality she has acquired as a result of her war experience" (66). Rilla's emerging identity is being formalized through her diary, allowing us to approach the embedded text as both a dynamic record of her maturation across the years of war and as a writerly apprenticeship, as Rilla the diarist gives narrative shape to her lived experience. H. Porter Abbott contrasts "clock time," which "always relates to itself," and "narrative time," which "relates to events or incidents" (4-5), noting that "[i]n narrative . . . it is the incidents that give shape and that dominate our sense of time" (5). While Rilla's diary is not marked by editorial retrospection—she does not return to earlier entries to edit, revise, or recopy—her writing over the four years of war is informed by her developing awareness of her representational capacity. For example, in the early winter of 1916, Rilla notes in her diary that she has "got into the habit of giving things a comical twist" in her letter-writing, hoping "to make [her readers] laugh" (Montgomery, *Rilla* 195), and has replicated the comedic mode in her diary account of Miranda Pryor's amatory frustrations with Joe Milgrave. Like her poet-brother Walter, Rilla creates (not simply records) her narrative world, peoples it with characters, controls the incidents included or excluded, and builds temporal structures. Rilla's diary becomes a staging ground for self-representation that privileges the individually meaningful experience of autobiographical time.

Montgomery infuses her novel with references to texts, readers, and writers: newspapers arrive filled with war news and are devoured and debated by eager readers; letters from the war, written by the boys of Ingleside and the Manse, are "read to pieces" (333); overseas cables bring news of good or ill; Walter's poem, "The Piper," is published in "the London *Spectator*" and sent home to Rilla (215), and through it all, Rilla keeps a diary. Her diary predates the start of the war, and is initially evidence of her youthful immaturity. Callow fourteen-year-old Rilla laments to Miss Oliver early in the novel that Walter "thinks I'm not grown up enough to understand" his secrets and notes that she "tell[s] *him* everything—I even show him my diary" (20, emphasis original). The diary reinforces the *Bildung*

structure of the novel, becoming a space in which Rilla's maturation is signalled. Montgomery emphasizes the diary's therapeutic function for Rilla during the early days of the war, as Rilla "reliev[es]" her "feelings" (79, 110) through the act of writing; however, as the war continues, Rilla's thinking about the diary transforms as she anticipates its future function as an archival document of the war years. In "Stories to Remember: Narrative and the Time of Memory," Jens Brockmeier proposes that "[n]arrative discourse is our most advanced way to shape complex temporal experiences, including remembering" (118). Rilla's diary, as her written record of her war experience, offers a prescription for how these events will be remembered in the future.

Rilla's diary entries provide calendar dates, the names of battles, and references to newspaper accounts that correspond to the war's real timelines. Indeed, Susan R. Fisher observes that Montgomery's novel is unusual among other "girls' stories" (213) about the war in its attentiveness to dating, a feature that is reflective of Montgomery's own meticulous diaries of the war years. Elizabeth Epperly notes that "Montgomery used passages from her own diaries to recreate in *Rilla of Ingleside* the impact of European news on those who waited at home" ("The Fragrance" 113). Rilla's diary conveys a clear awareness of the external world, with its measurable dates and times, in contrast to the inner world of the character, in which time and event are experienced more subjectively. On August 4, 1918, Rilla reflects on the years that have passed since the war began, writing in her diary, "It is four years tonight since the dance at the lighthouse—four years of war. It seems like three times four" (327). Here, Rilla's experience of time appears to stretch out; four years feels like a dozen. This is not simply youthful hyperbole; it is the language of autobiographical time used to express her "meaningful" and "contextually determined" (Barrows 263) sense of the passage of time and of the meaning of this time. Rilla's experience of the disjunction between standard time and the autobiographical experience of time echoes a moment early in the novel, in which the erstwhile Anne Shirley expresses surprise that her children are grown up: "When I look at those two tall sons of mine," she says to Miss Cornelia—still called so by her "old friends" (Montgomery, *Rainbow Valley* 1) in stubborn resistance to the fact that she has been Mrs. Marshall Elliott for many years—"I wonder if they can possibly be the fat, sweet, dimpled babies I kissed and cuddled and sang to slumber the other

day—only the other day” (Montgomery, *Rilla* 11). Repetition here heightens Anne’s sense of temporal estrangement; time feels loose, slippery, and subjective. In one example, the years stretch; in another, the years seem to telescope or foreshorten. Not bound by clock time but rather by autobiographical time, memory reflects the individual’s sense that temporality and duration are elastic, variable, and subjective. As Rilla records her experiences in her diary, the dated entries signal the standard measures of time; however, her representation of time breaks from the objectivity of standard time to explore the individuality and temporal eccentricities of autobiographical time.

Rilla’s diary is her life shaped into narrative form, and events are elaborated upon or elided at her discretion. The diary’s selection of events is another way in which the variability of autobiographical time and experience is flagged. While attending to the major developments in the war effort over a period of four years, Rilla also uses her diary as a space in which to reflect on the small experiences of domestic life. Virginia Woolf makes the case for the value of the everyday in her essay “Modern Fiction” (1921), celebrating the achievement of writers like James Joyce who “come closer to life” (9) in their fiction. She proposes, “Let us not take it for granted that life exists more fully in what is commonly thought big than in what is commonly thought small” (9). In the same spirit, Montgomery’s narrator in *Anne of Green Gables* reminds the reader that “[a]ll things great are wound up with all things little” (115). Montgomery’s contrapuntal structure in *Rilla*, contrasting the quotidian details of childrearing and housekeeping against the larger tide of geopolitics and currents of national feeling, locates within the diary a space of authentic, individual creative production. The significance of a diary as a textual object of historical value and interest is rooted in a sense of the importance of the small details of ordinary people’s lives. Rilla’s diary privileges the personal and the daily, particularly in the context of her initiatory experiences as a teenager managing complex social relationships, and her synchronous experiences of adoptive mothering, as the food, clothing, and care of her war baby, Jims, are all detailed here. Jims himself epitomizes the novel’s emphasis on small things: the minute, the insignificant, and the undersized are all reflected in the newborn infant who is carried back to Ingleside in a soup tureen after the death of his mother in

August 1914.¹⁴ Rilla's process of organizing time through the events she records in her diary suggests some measure of agency and control. As a daughter of Ingleside, Rilla is consigned to the task of waiting on the home front as the war rages on at a distance; in her exercise of autobiographical agency, Rilla claims the power of the writer to shape how that story of waiting is told.

Early in the novel, Rilla imagines a para-literary role for herself, enthusing to Miss Oliver her ardent wish that "some day I shall be to Walter what Wordsworth's sister Dorothy was to him" (21). Her diary takes her beyond this literary-adjacent role, into the realm of creation. Indeed, Melanie J. Fishbane positions Rilla as "the observer, the record keeper, of grief" (135), drawing attention to Rilla's agency as a writer. Rilla writes with an awareness that her diary may be a valuable personal archive, citing her father's opinion that "a diary of the years of the war should be a very interesting thing to hand down to one's children" (227). While Dr. Blythe and Rilla conceive of a limited domestic audience for Rilla's diary, Emily Woster notes Montgomery's consciousness of the "certain literary value" (Montgomery qtd. in Woster 151) of her own diaries, which is reflected in "the care with which she copies and types them" (Woster 151).¹⁵ Rilla's sense of her own diary's archival value is not undermined by its focus upon the daily details of life at Ingleside. At the same time, the diary is marked out as a space of private self-discovery and authorial self-creation. Rilla's war diary reminds us that "identity is a diachronic construction" (Brockmeier, *Autobiographical* 53). Through her acts of "autobiographical remembering" and "retrospective reconstruction" (Brockmeier 52), she reflects upon her subjective experience of living through the war years and shapes this experience in narrative form. Rilla's autobiography is bound by timetables, and Coordinated Universal Time provides the date-stamp; but the linear form of the *Bildungsroman* is challenged by the idiosyncrasies of autobiographical time.

Montgomery's narrator notes that Rilla's diary is marked by deliberate acts of omission. Indeed, Rilla's strategies of recalcitrance or withholding mark the diary as a partial or fragmentary record. After Walter departs for the front, the narrator notes that "Rilla spent an hour in Rainbow Valley that morning about which she never said a word to any one; she did not even write in her diary about it; when it was over she went home and made

rompers for Jims during the rest of the day; in the evening she went to a Junior Red Cross committee meeting and was severely business-like" (165). The impactful event of Walter's departure and Rilla's non-narration of it result in a representational lacuna—the diary does not simply document or record, but rather is shaped by both what the writer shares and what the writer withholds. Her traumatic experience of parting from Walter evades narration, and it is left to the third-person narrator to supply the details that Rilla cannot record in her diary, emphasizing both the unspeakability of traumatic experience and its existence outside of standard temporal registers.

Return to the Past

Trauma and time are inextricably linked, as Cathy Caruth argues, because "the impact of the traumatic event lies . . . in its belatedness, in its refusal to be simply located" (Introduction 9). Similarly, James Berger proposes that "the effects of [a traumatic] event may be dispersed and manifested in many forms not obviously associated with the event. Moreover, this dispersal occurs across time, so that an event experienced as shattering may actually produce its full impact only years later" (572). If Rilla's diary, and the novel's form as a *Bildungsroman*, emphasizes the diachronic mode, in which Rilla's development is traced along a single axis, the language of trauma reconceptualizes the dynamics of temporality. In place of the diachronic, we have the achronic, in which trauma is experienced as timeless in its intensity and irremediable grief. Caruth describes the "paradox" of trauma: "that the most direct seeing of a violent event may occur as an absolute inability to know it; that immediacy, paradoxically, may take the form of belatedness" (*Unclaimed Experience* 94). In death, Walter steps outside of time, and for the friends and family who survive him, grappling with the reality of Walter's loss necessitates repetition and return to the past, a burrowing into time.

Rilla of Ingleside emphasizes its heroine's maturation and growth across the long years of the war, but the final scene of the novel, in which Rilla is reunited with her sweetheart Kenneth Ford, tracks backwards to remind us of a moment that precedes the novel's own chronological starting point: Rilla's earliest childhood. Kenneth asks her, "Is it Rilla-my-Rilla?", and Rilla, after a pause in which she experiences "[j]oy—happiness—sorrow—fear—every passion that had wrung her heart in those four long years," lisps her

affirmative, “Yeth” (350, emphasis original).¹⁶ The novel’s closing anachronism, the resurrection of Rilla’s childhood lisp, is associated as we learn earlier in the novel with “stress and strain” (41), yet the return of Kenneth Ford from the battlefields of France and his declaration of devotion seems to set Rilla’s future life upon a happy course. Paul Ricoeur suggests that “[r]ather than being predictable, a narrative’s conclusion has to be *acceptable*” (150, emphasis original), inviting us to consider in what sense Rilla’s lisped “Yeth” may be “acceptable” or fitting for the conclusion of the female *Bildungsroman*. Susan’s earlier resistance to Daylight Saving Time reminds us that while standard time regulates, conventionalizes, and makes homogenous the time shared by a community, the experience of autobiographical time is capricious, unequal, variable, and inherently individual. The novel’s chronological organization belies its complex thematic treatment of time. Montgomery invests Rilla’s *Bildungsroman* with tension through her temporal strategies of fragmentation, the most disruptive of which is her reversal of the conventional romance structure; in Rilla, she reverses the ordering of the roles of wife and mother, allowing Rilla to become first a mother and then a wife. Elizabeth Abel proposes that Virginia Woolf “evade[s] the tyranny of sequence by reshaping time as depth” (xvi). Montgomery, too, “reshap[es]” time, continuing her disruption of the romance chronology by tunnelling back to Rilla’s childhood and to those earlier moments in the text in which her lisp reasserted itself. At the end of a novel that concludes conventionally with a romantic resolution, Rilla’s lisp can be read as an articulation of her separateness from Kenneth—a separateness that is informed by the characters’ individual experiences of trauma. The tension between Rilla’s maturation and the resurrection of her childhood lisp may be a final reminder of the novel’s temporal discontinuities and subversions.

While *Rilla* focuses upon the war years, ending with Kenneth’s return in the spring of 1919, the romance structure of the ending also gestures towards the years that come after. Walter predicts Rilla’s future happiness before his death in the fall of 1916, writing:

I’ve a premonition about you, Rilla, as well as about myself. 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.
(246, emphasis original)

Walter's prediction anticipates the romance resolution of *Rilla of Ingleside*, looking to a future in which Rilla's work and happiness will be found in domesticity, marriage, motherhood, and making meaning out of the sacrifice of the Great War; but Walter cannot adequately anticipate the lingering trauma resulting from his own death. While the tone at the end of the novel is optimistic, Walter's seat at the table remains unfilled. The trauma of the Blythe family's wartime experience will be marked in the after-time.

Conclusion: "As if there were never a clock in the world"

For eighty-eight years, *Rilla of Ingleside* stood as the chronological final text in the *Anne* series, until the 2009 publication of Montgomery's last completed text, *The Blythes Are Quoted*. This generically experimental text is woven out of short stories, poetry (ostensibly written by Anne and Walter), and vignettes featuring the commentaries, critical interpretations, and private thoughts of Anne and her family that are formally presented as dramatic verse, with speech acts indicated and without a narrator. The book is divided into two parts: before the war and after the war. The formal division of the novel echoes the language in *Rilla of Ingleside* of lives divided in two by the upheaval and trauma of the Great War. Strategies of fragmentation, polyvocality, and recalcitrance in *The Blythes Are Quoted* connect the form of the book to the theme of postwar trauma.

Montgomery's final text can be considered an example of what Philip D. Beidler calls "the literature of aftermath" (1). The term describes the "spectral presence of the war, its continuing role in the memory culture of everyday life" (3) in the literature of the interwar period.¹⁷ Beidler notes that "the landscape of popular memory" in modernist novels like *Mrs Dalloway* and *The Great Gatsby* is "haunted by the wandering ghosts of Flanders, Gallipoli, the Isonzo, the Argonne" (4). Similarly, the after-war Part Two of *The Blythes Are Quoted* is haunted by Walter, the "wandering ghost" of Courcelette, who is bidden to walk again through his poetry and through his family's memories of him. Walter's final poem in *The Blythes Are Quoted*, titled "The Aftermath," is a visceral description of the burden of memory. The speaker of the poem recalls a moment of moral horror: the exuberant killing in battle of

an enemy soldier—a “boy” who “might have been my brother” (509). The speaker thinks with envy of the “forgetfulness” (509) of the dead who, in dying, “have purged their memory” (509). His insistence that “*We must remember always*” (510, emphasis original) conveys the inescapability of traumatic remembrance.¹⁸ In the vignette that follows, Jem positions Walter as a witness of violence rather than an agent of violence (“he saw . . . he saw . . .” [510, ellipsis original]) but then pivots away quickly from a biographical reading of the poem.¹⁹ In the closing lines of the book, Jem urges his mother, “let us talk of something else. Who was it said, ‘We forget because we must’? He was right” (510). Jem’s reflection on the necessity of forgetfulness returns the reader to a moment from the prewar Part One of *The Blythes Are Quoted*, in which Dr. Blythe notes that people “forget because they have to. The world couldn’t go on if they didn’t” (93). Yet memory persists.

Walter’s “spectral presence” (Beidler 3) makes clear that while the war, to return to Woolf, “was over; thank Heaven—over” (*Dalloway* 4), for the Blythe family the trauma of the war remains open and unresolved. Walter’s poem “A June Day,” read aloud by his mother early in Part Two, celebrates the spirit of “June-time adventurers” who cast aside worldly cares, schemes, and duties in pursuit of “dreaming,” “wander[ing],” and “loiter[ing],” “as if there were never a clock in the world” (*Blythes* 369). In the vignette that follows, Susan Baker privately observes, “I wish, too, that there was never a clock in the world” (370), while Jem Blythe, and his wife, Faith, reflect on literature as therapy as Faith constructs Anne’s act of rereading as “help[ing] an old ache” (370). Throughout Part Two of *The Blythes Are Quoted*, it is clear that the autobiographical timescape of the Blythe family continues to be impacted by loss and by imaginative acts of reconstruction that continue a long-term process of coming to terms with, and making meaning out of, the ravages of the war. Christine Darrohn, reflecting on Katherine Mansfield’s process of meaning-making in “The Garden Party,” proposes that “we can think about the ways survivors of war employ imagination and language to represent and recuperate from the costs of war” (517). The reflections of the Blythe family members throughout *The Blythes Are Quoted* emphasize this dual process of representation and recuperation as necessarily partial and incomplete. Susan reflects to herself, “I do not often question the purposes of the Almighty. But I should like to know why He makes a brain that can write

things like that and then lets it be crushed to death" (Montgomery, *Blythes* 374), while Dr. Blythe thinks of Anne's writing as "some outlet for the pain we feel when we think of [Walter]" (375). These private thoughts reflect the failures of temporal synchronization. Left behind by standard time, and by a world that has moved on from the Great War, Susan Baker and the Blythe family exist in their individual, autobiographical timescapes where the trauma of Walter's death continues to reverberate. In her last work, Montgomery extends the elegiac mode of the adults' reflections in *Rilla of Ingleside* through acts of incorporation; the young people who were imagined as immune to the trauma of a life divided in two are shown not to be exempt. There is dignity, privacy, and necessity in the family's ongoing and individual processes of mourning and meaning-making that locates them both in and outside of time.

NOTES

- 1 "Time," notes Paul Huebener in *Timing Canada: The Shifting Politics of Time in Canadian Literary Culture*, "is the most frequently used noun in the English language, relegating the word 'person' to second place, and the words 'year,' 'day,' and 'week' all make the top twenty" (7). The word "time" (or "times") appears approximately 230 times in *Rilla of Ingleside* (not including its appearance as part of compound words like "sometimes").
- 2 Huebener summarizes the development of standard time, noting that it

was not a single event, but a process that occurred gradually, first through a national standardized time system in England in 1848, then through a partial system of 'time belts' created by railroad companies in North America in 1883, and finally through the slow adoption around the world of the familiar twenty-four global time zones in the years and decades following the 1884 Prime Meridian Conference in Washington, DC, which established Greenwich as the prime meridian of the world. (42)

Huebener observes the central role of standardized time as "a landmark in the shaping of modern time consciousness, as well as a source of significant controversy" (42).

- 3 As Gregory Castle argues, "it is precisely the breakdown of traditional forms of identity and of normative, harmonious socialization that gives the *Bildungsroman* a new sense of purpose" (5) in the early decades of the twentieth century.
- 4 Montgomery bridges the gap between the temporal omniscience of her narrator and the limitations of her characters by presenting several characters with prophetic ability. Walter's vision of the Piper, leading the boys away at the end of Montgomery's *Rainbow Valley* (1919), is revisited in *Rilla of Ingleside*, lending credence to his predictions about the outcome of the war and Rilla's future life. Gertrude Oliver experiences a series of symbolic dreams that become increasingly uncanny as her friends realize that her dreams have predicted future events.

- 5 In his introduction to *The Blythes Are Quoted*, Benjamin Lefebvre notes that *Rilla* was “in the planning stages as early as 1917,” although Montgomery did not begin writing it “until four months after the Armistice was signed, meaning that, as she wrote, Montgomery had full knowledge of the war’s outcome” (xiii).
- 6 Montgomery reiterates this idea in a journal entry from February 7, 1919, which focuses on the life and death of her beloved cousin, Frederica (Frede) Campbell MacFarlane, to whom *Rilla of Ingleside* is dedicated: “I have lived one life in those seemingly far-off years before the war. Now there is another to be lived, in a totally new world where I think I shall never feel quite at home. I shall always feel as if I belonged ‘back there’—back there with Frede and laughter and years of peace” (122-23).
- 7 Mikhail Bakhtin uses the term “chronotope” (“literally, ‘time space’”) to describe “the intrinsic connectedness of temporal and spatial relationships that are artistically expressed in literature” (15).
- 8 Gertrude Oliver is twenty-eight years old at the beginning of the novel. While closer in age to the young generation, her private “struggle[s]” (Montgomery, *Rilla* 19) have given her a gravity that links her to the older generation.
- 9 It is possible to date the conversation with precision, as Gilbert bursts into the peaceful kitchen at Ingleside with news of “the burning of the Parliament buildings in Ottawa” (Montgomery, *Rilla* 196), which occurred on February 3, 1916.
- 10 Readers are invited to recognize narrative patterns that link the series across its chronology. For example, Miss Cornelia’s adopted daughter, Mary Vance (first introduced in *Rainbow Valley* as an orphan taken in by the Meredith children) arrives in time to save Jims from a potentially lethal attack of croup, recalling young Anne’s gallant rescue of Minnie May Barry in *Anne of Green Gables*. It is a case of repetition with variation, however; the episode in *Anne* unfolds with narrative suspense, and the resourceful orphan is treated with esteem by the doctor who declares to the Barrys that Anne “saved that baby’s life” (119), while the episode in *Rilla* is narrated retrospectively in Rilla’s diary, with the opening assurance that “Jims had got better” (252), and with Dr. Blythe undercutting Mary’s resourcefulness by “scornful[ly]” dismissing what he calls “old wives’ remedies” (258).
- 11 In contrast, Joy Alexander notes that “[c]locks scarcely feature in *Anne of Green Gables*, and the story does not go by ‘clock time’” (45).
- 12 Jims’ lisping pronunciation of Rilla’s name echoes Rilla’s own childhood lisp that recurs throughout the novel at times of “stress and strain” (Montgomery, *Rilla* 41).
- 13 There are a number of other resonances between *Rilla of Ingleside*, *Mrs Dalloway*, and “The Garden Party,” including a preoccupation with inappropriate hats. Clarissa feels “oddly conscious . . . of her hat” when chatting with Hugh Whitbread (Woolf, *Dalloway* 5); Laura declares, “Forgive my hat” to the body of Mr. Scott (Mansfield, “The Garden Party” 51); and Rilla, too, has hat problems after buying an expensive and “conspicuous” (Montgomery, *Rilla* 111) green velvet hat, which she vows to her mother she will wear for “for three years or for the duration of the war if it lasts longer than that” (112).
- 14 The upbringing of Jims also dovetails with the novel’s attention to timetables. Rilla begins by raising him according to a guidebook called “Morgan on the Care of Infants” (Montgomery, *Rilla* 114) and is concerned when Jims doesn’t reach certain milestones on time (the phrase “schedule time” recurs twice in the novel in reference to Jims’ care [89] development [134]).
- 15 In the introduction to *L. M. Montgomery’s Complete Journals: The Ontario Years, 1918-1921*, Epperly notes that Montgomery “had begun re-copying her old journals into uniform-

- sized ledgers" (x) after her beloved cousin Frede's death on 25 January 1919, a period that coincides with her composition of *Rilla of Ingleside* (begun in March 1919).
- 16 Laura Robinson notes the "deliberation that went into that one small word," as the manuscript reveals that Montgomery "scrawled the 'th' over the 's' of the original 'yes'" (123).
- 17 *The Blythes Are Quoted* was completed in the early years of the Second World War. In his introduction, Benjamin Lefebvre notes that "Montgomery included the term 'Great War' on the title page, but crossed out 'Great' and added 'First World' in ink, almost a reluctant, last-minute admission that the new world she had once predicted would emerge out of the ashes of the Great War would not materialize after all" (xvi).
- 18 Lefebvre notes that Montgomery "crossed out ['The Aftermath'] and omitted the final pages of dialogue in the copy that she submitted to McClelland & Stewart, but she retained those pages in her personal copy" (xvii), suggesting her "ambivalen[ce]" (xvii) about the ending.
- 19 The poem's punning reference to the "blithe" (510) wind of yesterday gestures towards Walter Blythe's surname, inviting the very biographical reading that Jem rejects.

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