Literature in World War I is generally thought to include poems, novels and drama; diaries, letters, and memoirs are often included in this category as well. Although the canon continues to be challenged, the texts most frequently taught in schools and universities are lyrics by Siegfried Sassoon and Wilfred Owen; poems by Ivor Gurney, Edward Thomas, Charles Sorley, David Jones and Isaac Rosenberg are also widely anthologised. Many of the works during and about the war were written by men because of Post-War English Literature 1945-1990. Thatcher’s successful lightning war in the Falklands (1982) elevated Britain’s morale for a while. This victory helped her to stay in power for two more terms of office, during which her liberal politics brought about the illusion of the recovery of a lost economic splendour. In fact, the gap between rich and poor grew, while Thatcher’s alliance with Reagan’s America jeopardised Britain’s position in Europe. 1) the intensive commercialisation of the book market, 2) the expansion of literary criticism and literary theory, brought about by the departments of English of the universities, old and new. Her second novel finally arrived this summer, but Harper Lee’s first did enough alone to secure her lasting fame, and remains a truly popular classic.

This article examines sixteen works of girls’ literature published in Germany, Great Britain, the United States and Canada during or immediately after the First World War. When examined together, these books reveal much about expectations and opportunities for girls at a time when gender roles were in flux. Their overriding message, however, is contradictory, for even as a girl is exhorted to serve her country, her gender places clear limits on what she can achieve.