

TRANSNATIONAL IDENTITY IN ROBYN ROWLAND'S AUSTRALIAN/TURKISH POEMS: THIS INTIMATE WAR: GALLIPOLI/ÇANAKKALE 1915 - İÇLİ DİŐLİ BİR SAVAŐ: GELIBOLU/ÇANAKKALE 1915

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Abstract

World War I was a cataclysm. Such global carnage, devastation and waste could not but result in international, intranational and individual change. One of the premises upon which war is sustained is the “otherness” of the enemy, attributed to various national, ethnic, geographical, social or cultural factors. This presupposes that the opposing force perceives its own identity as different from that of the enemy in some crucial way, sufficient to negate any variety in group affiliations within its own ranks, and to obscure the significance of characteristics held in common with the antagonist. The intensity of the experience of war, the need to validate the sacrifice involved, political imperatives and contingent propaganda all tend to reinforce perceptions of self-identity and “otherness” during the conflict, and in its aftermath. Where war is international, issues of national identity will predominate. During WWI, the Gallipoli Campaign set Allied invaders against Ottoman Turks. Between 1915 and the evacuation of the Allied troops in January 1916, both sides sustained terrible casualties and horrendous loss of life. The history, memories, commemoration and mythologisation of the Anzac troops, from Australia and New Zealand, and of the Turks at Gallipoli were to contribute to the forging of the post-war national identities of their respective countries. However, identity is both a multi-faceted construct and a process in flux, in which the present interacts with the past. Imperatives change, perspectives too. Cultural identity, the sense of belonging to a particular group, may transcend national boundaries; myths may be reworked. A century after the Gallipoli campaign, this paper examines poems from Robyn Rowland's *This Intimate War: Gallipoli/Çanakkale 1915*, in the light of the contemporary trend to move away from the mythologizing of the Gallipoli story on a national basis towards a more inclusive transnational approach based on shared experience and values.

Key Words: Gallipoli, Anzac, Turkey, Identity, Rowland, Poetry

War pits human against human at horrific human cost, yet it is most often underpinned by notions of “otherness”. Rightly or wrongly, the foe is portrayed as alien and therefore threatening. Combatants may be differentiated on various national, ethnic, geographical, social or cultural grounds. In warfare on an international scale, whatever its cause or justification, the concept of national identity, with its associated distinguishing features and values, frequently idealised under the pressure of circumstances or as a result of political propaganda, often serves to unite and motivate the military and civilians alike. This is what Guibernau (2004) defined as the psychological dimension of national identity, a “felt’ closeness uniting those who belong to the nation,” when their “unique character” and “qualities” (p. 135) are threatened by an enemy. Thus, in his sonnet “The Soldier,” written at the outset of the First World War, Rupert Brooke (who was to die of septicaemia en route to Gallipoli), depicted a paradiscal England and a notion of “Englishness” worth fighting and dying for:

... *There shall be*
In that rich earth a richer dust concealed;
A dust whom England bore, shaped, made aware,
Gave, once, her flowers to love, her ways to roam,
A body of England’s, breathing English air,
Washed by the rivers, blest by suns of home. (3-8)

There are no grey skies or smoking chimneystacks, no battlefield slaughter here.

However, no matter how important a role the concept of national identity may play, or be made to play, where conflict is on a global scale the reality remains much more complex. For instance, on the one hand, international warfare promotes alliances between peoples, which are driven by strategic or moral imperatives, and which transcend differences in national or cultural identity, at least for the duration. Yet, on the other hand, paradoxically, there may be as many similarities as differences between antagonists. For instance, in his poem “The Man He Killed”, Thomas Hardy conveyed the bewilderment of a soldier who, after shooting his “enemy” to save his own life, reflects:

Yes; quaint and curious war is!
You shoot a fellow down
You’d treat, if met where any bar is,
Or help to half a crown. (17-20)

Here, the focus has shifted from national differences to class similarities.

Nonetheless, regardless of this complexity, the intensity of the experience of war, the need to validate the sacrifice involved, political imperatives and contingent propaganda all tend to reinforce perceptions of self-identity and “otherness” during a conflict, to the extent that one force perceives itself as different from its enemy in some crucial way, sufficient to negate any variety in group affiliations within its own ranks, and to obscure the significance of characteristics held in common with the antagonist. Returning to the relationship between national identity and warfare, it should be noted that this may be reciprocal. While nationalistic feelings clearly contribute to warfare, conflict itself may influence the dynamics of national identity. This process may run contiguous with a conflict, or it may develop and continue over time, as experiences, reports, analyses, accounts, impressions and memories of the period are transposed into histories or assimilated into works of culture. Thus, Kendall (2013), in discussing the poetry written by British and Irish poets during and following the First World War, described how the conflict continues to pervade “the language and culture – our deepest sense of ourselves as a nation” (p. xxx), even though the Great War is no longer a living memory. The impact of warfare upon the dynamics of national identity became apparent at a more fundamental level in the Gallipoli/ Çanakkale arena of the Great War, where the conflict and its subsequent memorialisation, and indeed mythologisation, contributed to the forging of a new national identity for three of the combatant nations: Australia, New Zealand and Turkey. In parenthesis, it is also interesting to note here a link with the Irish desire to achieve nationhood. The high mortality rate among Irish troops, who fought as part of the British Army in the Gallipoli Campaign, inspired the following lines in “The Foggy Dew,” a ballad written in 1919 by Canon Charles O’Neill, which recounted the 1916 Irish Rebellion against British rule:

*Right proudly high over Dublin town
They flung out the flag of war.
'Twas far better to die 'neath an Irish sky,
Than at Suvla or Sud el Bar. (9-12)*

In brief, the Gallipoli/Çanakkale conflict unfolded as follows. The Gallipoli Peninsula lies on the northern bank of the Dardanelles Strait, which provides maritime access to the Sea of Marmara and Istanbul and, beyond, through the Bosphorus Strait to the Black Sea. In February, 1915, British and French ships starts bombarding Turkish defensive positions along the Dardanelles, with the aim of forcing a way through to Istanbul, and ultimately opening up a route through the Black Sea to the Russian Empire. On 18th March, 1915 the full Anglo-French force of 18 battleships and support vessels carried out its main attack on the strait, but was repelled by the Turks who inflicted severe losses

upon their enemy, in the renowned victory of Çanakkale (“World War 1”, n.d.). Over the next five weeks, allied commanders made preparations for a land campaign to neutralise the Turkish defences along the Dardanelles Strait. On 25th April, 2015 French and British troops began to land at Cape Helles (Seddülbahir), suffering terrible losses in the process. Likewise, many of the Australian and New Zealander (Anzac) troops, who disembarked under fire at Anzac Cove (Arıburnu), on the same date, were killed or wounded in their landing craft or on shore. The Anzac landing was made further north than planned, so that those soldiers who came ashore were confronted by steep cliffs rather than a flat beach. Evacuation from the peninsula was considered, but rejected as unfeasible. On the opposing side, the Turkish defenders lacked strength in numbers and had limited ammunition. The Turkish position was saved by the foresight of the commander of the 19th division, Mustafa Kemal (later Atatürk), who ordered the troops of the 57th Regiment “to die” (as cited in Cameron, 2013, p. 10), rather than yield up the high ground at Chunuk Bair (Conk Bayırı), which he perceived as crucial to the defence of the area. Stalemate ensued, with the attackers unable to advance and the defenders unable to repel them. Trench warfare, with ferocious hand-to-hand fighting, continued through eight months of searing summer heat and freezing winter cold. Terrible sanitation compounded the battlefield losses with deaths from disease. Deteriorating conditions finally led Britain to order evacuation of the peninsula, which was completed between December, 1915 and January, 2016 (Fighting Australasia, 1917; “The Gallipoli Campaign,” n.d.).

In the course of the Gallipoli Campaign, both sides suffered horrendous losses, estimated at a total of around 150,000 deaths and a total of up to 500,000 casualties. More than 80,000 Turks are believed to have perished. The casualty rate was at its highest among Anzac troops, at 80% for both Australian and New Zealand combatants (“Gallipoli Casualties,” n.d.; Slade, 2003; “The Gallipoli Campaign,” n.d.). As alluded to previously, new concepts of Australian, New Zealand and Turkish identity took shape in the aftermath of the Gallipoli/Çanakkale battles. Gallipoli, albeit in reality a distant locus of death and defeat, came to represent “the psychological birthplace of both Australia and New Zealand as nations” (Slade, 2003, p. 780); and thus, for the people of both countries, became a place of secular pilgrimage to “a source of core identity” (Hyde & Harman, 2011, p. 1343). In 1991, Anthony D. Smith asserted that nationhood and cultural identity involve, inter alia, “a named human population sharing an historic territory, common myths and historical memories ...” (as cited in Guibernau, 2004, p. 127). Slade (2003) has observed that the word “myth,” as associated with Gallipoli, follows Barthes’ usage of the term: “Myth is a system of communication ... a message ... a type of speech chosen by history ...” (Barthes, 1957/1972, pp. 107-108). Myth “makes us understand something and it imposes it upon us” (p. 115). “Myth does not deny things, on the contrary,

its function is to talk about them; simply, it purifies them, it makes them innocent, it gives them a natural and eternal justification, it gives them a clarity which is not that of an explanation but that of a statement of fact" (p. 143). Used in this sense, myth is not incompatible with history in its contribution to the formation of cultural identity. Thus, out of the carnage of Gallipoli emerged the cultural construct of "Anzac", described by Seal (2007) as "a conflation of history and myth" (p. 136).

The Great War was the first war in which Australian and New Zealand troops participated as citizens of self-governing nations within the British Empire (Slade, 2003). Contemporary eye-witness accounts described the valour and other qualities of these troops in terms which shaped the Anzac myth. The novelist and counter-espionage agent Compton Mackenzie depicted the Australian troops in language which associated them with the mythical heroes of ancient Greece, a comparison reinforced by the proximity of Gallipoli to Troy: "There was not one of those glorious young men I saw that day who might not himself have been Ajax or Diomed, Hector or Achilles" (as cited in Pringle, 1997, p. 97). The commander of the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force, Sir Ian Hamilton, made the same comparison, and further described the Anzacs as "a radiant force of camaraderie in action" (as cited in Pringle, pp. 97-98). One of the earliest propagators of the Anzac myth, the Australian war correspondent and historian C.E.W. Bean, directly associated the Australian Gallipoli campaign with the birth of a modern nation and characterised the Anzacs as different from the other troops (Slade, 2003). For instance, in *Anzac to Amiens* (1946), Bean wrote that: "Anzac stood, and still stands, for reckless valour in a good cause, for enterprise, resourcefulness, fidelity, comradeship, and endurance that will never own defeat" (as cited in "Anzac Spirit," n.d.).

In the aftermath of the Great War, the development of the Anzac myth, through historical accounts, cultural artefacts and the media (Broadbent, 2009), in turn, led to the assimilation of the aforesaid characteristics into the Australian and New Zealand constructs of national identity. The enduring impact of Gallipoli upon the national consciousness is made explicit, for instance, in the programme commemorating Anzac Day in 2006: "The spirit of ANZAC, with its human qualities of courage, mateship and sacrifice, continues to have meaning and relevance for our sense of national identity" (as cited in Seal, 2007, p. 137).

Taylor (1987) highlighted a difference in emphasis between two collections of Australian poetry about the Great War, which is illustrative of the ways in which cultural memory may be shaped, and of the process of purification by myth which Barthes (1957/1972) describes. The poems in the anthologies were written at an interval of 50 years apart. The poetry written by Australian soldiers

at the time of the War “displays ... a profound disillusionment with war, with politics, with patriotism and with authority” (p. 58). In contrast the later poems, all written after 1970, reinforce the Anzac myth by depicting the Australian soldiers as innocents led to the slaughter, naively obedient to the call of Britain, the old colonial authority, which proved to be unworthy of their sacrifice (Taylor, 1987).

This notion of Australian innocence, already a part of the Anzac myth, was considerably strengthened by Peter Weir’s 1981 film *Gallipoli*, much influenced by the official history written by C.E.W. Bean. The film emphasized the separateness of Australian identity from British identity, which it portrayed negatively, and focused on egalitarianism and mateship as the distinguishing features of the former (Haltof, 1993). Interestingly, the historical enemy, Turkey, played no prominent role in *Gallipoli*. The film is a prime example of the role cultural artefacts may play in the shaping of cultural memory, and thus in the evolution of a nation’s sense of identity. Mersin (2011) has shown how the same phenomenon is observable in Turkish films about the War of Independence and national heroism, in which certain motifs, such as the value of being Turkish and the elevated character of the Turks, were promoted in the interests of reconstructing national identity. Amongst many examples, Mersin cited the 1951 film *Allahıs-marladık*, in which the enemy General Thompson, veteran of Gallipoli, characterised the Turks as an honourable, brave and heroic people (Mersin, 2011).

As with Anzac, the qualities of bravery, resilience and determination displayed by the Turks at Çanakkale and Gallipoli quickly achieved mythic status. Within a few short years, the same characteristics, by now explicitly associated in the mind of the populace with being Turkish, inspired the Turks to further sacrifice and heroism in the struggle to overcome the forces of imperialism and forge a new national identity. Under the leadership of Atatürk, a legend in his own right, the Turkish War of Independence (1919-1923) was fought to a successful conclusion, culminating in the founding of the modern Republic of Turkey on 29th October, 1923. The Gallipoli/Çanakkale battles now lie at the limits of living memory, but the spirit of Çanakkale has long since passed into legend and continues to pervade the Turkish cultural memory and the national consciousness.

According to Barthes (1957/1972), mythical concepts “can come into being, alter, disintegrate, disappear completely” (p. 119). Köroğlu (2007) discussed the phenomenon of “belatedness” (xvi-xvii), whereby writers are affected by the political, socio-cultural and psychological climate of their own period, which influences their interpretation of war, and thus may change how it is remembered. Indeed, in recent years, the traditional Anzac myth has begun to take new shape.

The original emphasis on values associated with national identity has begun to be replaced, in some quarters, by a new approach to the experience of Gallipoli from the perspective of transnationalism. In a cinematic context, Hjort has defined “affinitive transnationalism” as “a history of interaction giving rise to shared core values, common practices” (as cited in Hillman, 2011, p. 25). An example of a work which adopted such a perspective is the Turkish director Tolga Örnek’s 2005 documentary film, *Gallipoli: the Frontline Experience*, which Simpson (2007) described as breaking new ground “in its attempts to abandon the baggage of national myth-making on both sides of the trenches in favour of a more experiential approach to the battle” (p. 86). Örnek achieved this by using the diaries, letters and photographs of ten ordinary soldiers from opposing sides of the battlefield - British and Anzac, as well as Turkish. Through its rendering of their shared experience of trauma and tragedy, of the valour displayed by both sides, and of the mutual respect generated, the film exemplifies what Hjort has called the “deep transnational belonging” that may occur when “elements of deep national belonging ... overlap with aspects of other national identities” (as cited in Hillman, 2011, p. 35). Hillman has also highlighted a number of other literary and cinematic works which adopt a similar transnational perspective, including Louis de Bernières novel *Birds Without Wings* (2004) and Wain Fimeri’s TV documentary *Revealing Gallipoli* (2005). Similarly, Fewster, Başarın and Başarın (2003) have explored changing perspectives on the relationship between Australians and Turks, arguing that where the original Anzac myth was selective in its approach to history, the legend has now been redefined to include Turkish soldiers, with a new emphasis on the shared fate of the soldiers as “fellow sufferers rather than sworn enemies” (p. 11). The sociologist Brad West has shown how the increasingly popular annual Anzac pilgrimage to Gallipoli has opened the eyes of the visitors to the realities of Turkish bravery, to the Turkish side of the story and to Turkish culture. In West’s view, “a new dialogic mythology” has emerged out of these encounters between Turks and Australians, grounded in “the collective memory of the two nations as innocent martyrs” (as cited in McKenna & Ward, 2007, pp.148-149). The same notion of transnational belonging is encapsulated in the words of Atatürk, which are inscribed on a Turkish monument to the Allied fallen at Gallipoli, as well as on the memorial to Atatürk in Canberra:

... There is no difference between the Johnnies and the Mehments to us where they lie side by side here in this country of ours ... You, the mothers who sent their sons from faraway countries, wipe away your tears; your sons are now lying in our bosom and are in peace. After having lost their lives on this land they have become our sons as well. (as cited in “Atatürk”, n.d.)

Elsewhere, Bennett (2014) has highlighted a growing trend in historical scholarship

to adopt a transnational approach to the Gallipoli Campaign, characterised by an “anti-war tone ... and ... emphasis on the universal experience of war, supported by the unvarnished words of the common man revealed through letters and diaries” (pp. 642-643). D.W. Cameron’s book *Shadows of Anzac. An Intimate History of Gallipoli* (2013), incorporating diaries and letters written by both Allied and Turkish troops is one example of this. The current shift in emphasis in relation to the Gallipoli story, away from the cultural nationalism associated with the traditional Anzac myth towards transnationalism, provides further evidence that conceptions of identity evolve dynamically, as the present interacts with the past. Imperatives change, perspectives too. Cultural identity, the sense of belonging to a particular group, may transcend national boundaries; myths may be reworked.

This Intimate War: Gallipoli/Çanakkale 1915 - İçli Dışlı Bir Savaş: Gelibolu/Çanakkale 1915 is a collection of poems by the Irish-Australian poet Robyn Rowland (2015). In launching the collection, Gorton asserted that Rowland “has taken on the role of shaping how we perceive the past” (2015, para. 2). The emotional force generated by the poems works at a level which transcends the national by evoking what Scartes (as cited in McKenna & Ward, 2007) has called “the community of suffering” (p. 148) of the ordinary individuals involved on both sides in the Gallipoli/Çanakkale conflict. In other words, Rowland’s poems address aspects of deep transnational belonging. The remainder of this paper will examine *This Intimate War*, from this perspective. It is worth noting, in passing, that the transnational focus of the collection is sharpened by the presence of the Mehmet Ali Çelikel’s Turkish translation of the poems, juxtaposed with the English on alternate pages of the volume.

Robyn Rowland is an Australian, of Irish origin, with a Turkish sister-in-law. Although this background may have inspired, to some degree, the transnational perspective in *This Intimate War*, the sense of affinitive transnationalism which pervades the work seems rather to reflect the writer’s ability to empathize, her humanity and a fine poetic sensibility.

The belief that the Anzacs, although part of the aggressor force, went innocently to war at Gallipoli – a notion which permeates the traditional Anzac myth – is maintained by Rowland in this work. However, this attitude reflects her condemnation of the British imperialistic ambitions which culminated in the carnage at Gallipoli/Çanakkale, rather than any nationalistic sentiment. Indeed, Rowland absolves all of the colonial troops of responsibility in “The Folly of Myth: Prologue, 1915” (pp. 20-29): The British “... carried their empire with them – the defeated, the colonised, / the unaware ...” (p.22, I, 31-32). Moreover, in “Children of Gallipoli,” (pp. 42-45), she proves the validity of her position, by quoting the contemporary

recruitment posters which betrayed the naive into signing up for a war in which they would have to invade another's soil: "Posters told the colonies it was to stop the, Germans. / 'Free trip to Europe,' they blared, 'full of adventure and interest'" (5-6).

Thus in "Green Road" (pp. 68-73), the speaker is not an Anzac. Rather, the voice heard is that of an Irish soldier, who had hoped to be granted freedom and nationhood in return for fighting honourably for Britain at Gallipoli, but emerges disillusioned and enraged by the poor planning: "there must have been clear springs somewhere - / if anyone in charge had a map" (44-45); by the loss of so many comrades: "Most of us were dead in the many ways of war. / Most of us wearing the green never got back" (56-57); and, ultimately, by a sense of betrayal: "Will they pay that honour-price now? / do you think? Will I have my own country / when I get back to it? The Turks have theirs" (74-76).

As the previous quotation illustrates, Rowland's work acknowledges the relationship between Gallipoli/Çanakkale and national consciousness, but does so from a transnational standpoint. For instance, "Anybody Left? Anybody Left? No?" (pp.80-85) refers to impact of the conflict upon the evolution of both Anzac and Turkish national identities. The poem deals with the evacuation of the Gallipoli peninsula. Its title works on two levels, reflecting the logistics of the withdrawal, while at the same time evoking the horrible truth that a generation of young men was wiped out by the Great War, in Gallipoli and elsewhere. Part of the poem describes how, as they reach ship, the surviving Anzac soldiers contemplate, in anguish, the scene "... where friends, brothers, sons and fathers / are buried or dusted to vapour in ways too cruel for memory / Yet they take away a sense of knowing who they are – Anzacs" (p. 82, 48-50). These lines hint at the way in which the purifying force of myth would, over time, process the horrors of the defeat at Gallipoli out of the collective cultural memory, particularly in Australia, allowing the emergent national consciousness to focus primarily upon the qualities of the Anzac troops and, eventually, to adopt these characteristics as its own. With respect to cultural identity, in the same poem, Rowland also documents the invidious position of the indigenous Australian aborigines. Denied all rights of citizenship, they even had to claim to be half-caste in order to be able to sign up; but, as bodies were needed at the front, the recruiters turned a blind eye to their colour and enlisted them: "for a country that gives them no vote, / no citizenship, no rights over their children, / only equality here in sharing death" (p. 82, 35-37). Maintaining its transnational perspective, the poem also links Gallipoli with Atatürk's vision of an independent Turkey, thus acknowledging the Turkish version of the spirit of Çanakkale/Gallipoli and its importance in the foundation of the modern Republic of Turkey. Moreover, by paraphrasing Atatürk's words, Rowland reminds her international reader that Turkish soldiers too fought bravely at Çanakkale and Gallipoli, under conditions

of great hardship and, importantly, that the Turks were not the aggressors there:

*He speaks of the honour of his men, so ill-equipped
except with valour, who took a second victory from invaders.
Out of the dust of Gelibolu, out of its blood-black soil,
his vision of a new country flowers, a freer order,
a modern Turkey, stronger, that one day he will raise,
phoenix from the flames. (p. 84, 76-81)*

The same, typically transnational, respect for the bravery and determination of the Turks, and for Turkish culture, with a further acknowledgement that the Turks were the innocent party, appears in “The Folly of Myth: Prologue, 1915” “Yet still they misunderstood a deep culture - / soldiers ill-resourced but clever, dedicated, / who would lie down and die to defend their homeland” (p.22, II, 2-4).

If one had to select but a single poem to illustrate the transnational qualities of This Intimate War, “Close” (pp.36-41) would be a fine candidate. The poem conveys the physical proximity of the soldiers – close enough to throw notes and food to one another in the trenches, to share dark humour: “... you are too, weak to advance, too strong / to retire, and we are the same, so what shall we do about it?” (p. 36, 17-18); close enough to kill one another hand-to-hand, by the “upward lunge of a bayonet driven home” (13); so close that that they could look into one another’s eyes, making it harder to kill; so close that their dead were “shared” (21). Out of this interaction, comes the epiphany: “that’s when we know them, suddenly, smooth hands, / voices, smiles, they are boys, like us, young” (24-25). Rowland does not articulate the nationality of the speaker, nor does she need to, for here she is concerned to convey the truth that the horrors of Gallipoli were experienced by all of the young men there. So, she reveals how they shared the same fundamental emotions and values – the languages might have been different, but the laughter, the music, and the longing for home were the same. To demonstrate that the combatants shared the same basic humanity, she retells the real story of the soldier who left his trench to carry a wounded enemy back to his own lines, despite the odds on their survival:

*... and he will probably
be shot returning and our soldier die anyway

and still he does it because
bravery isn't to do with this but with finding
himself again in some small act, some care. (p. 38, 29-33)*

Though her powerful imagery, Rowland shows how the soldiers from either side

were united in hardship, in injury, in sickness, and in fate: "... now i know him in the trenches best, / his ribs thin like mine, his bandaged foot, / that cough at night, the black sleepless shape of his death" (43-45). She shows how they shared the same fears, the same perplexity and the same obedience to command, and how this created a bond that went deeper than mere camaraderie: "i love him now, my enemy. i know him" (52). On a technical note, the use of lower case letters here and throughout the poem, including for the first person pronoun, reinforces the impression of homogeneity created. By the end of the poem, the reader has been brought to realise that even the adjective "close" is redundant. The intertwining of the soldiers' experiences – above all their experience of death – transcends everything else, nationality and enmity included: "... we have no boundaries anymore. / we are killing ourselves in this intimate war" (p.40, 59-60).

Gallipoli was part of a global war, in which politicians pursued policies and nations held stakes. However, throughout this collection, Rowland gives the "intimate" perspective of the ordinary individuals brought into terrible proximity by the war, whom Gorton (2015) has described as vulnerable in the face of history. Thus, in several of the poems, as in "Close," the voice is that of a trooper, who might be Anzac or Turk or Irish, but whose nationality loses definition in the charnel house of Gallipoli, where death is an indiscriminate leveller, a place of "bodies heaped so you couldn't tell / what country they were from, scattered about, / half-buried..." ("Green Road", p. 72, 61-63). In "thank heavens" (p.18), for example, which describes with breathless urgency, the moment of a charge from the trenches, to kill or be killed, and the shock of the killing, the charging soldier is a composite figure of indeterminate nationality and fate. His cry of "*sweet jesus, allahu akbar, mary mother of god*" (3) reflects both the diversity of faiths present and, more significantly, reveals how the universal instinct to turn to "god" at moments of great crisis reduces religious differences to irrelevancy. Once again, the use of the lower case throughout the poem assists its meaning, by heightening the sensation of urgency. At the same time, in "no god, No!" (14), the lack of capitalization not only reinforces the impression of transnational religious expression, but is also consistent with the desecration of faith - "faith is everywhere like bloodied green grass" (1) - by a level of carnage which has rendered it redundant, except as a battlefield cry, screamed out until the crisis has passed or, from the alternate perspective, until the soldier has been slain: "*sweet jesus, allahu akbar, mary mother of god / it wasn't needed for long*" (19-20). Then again, in this poem of conflated perspectives, faith seems to operate on another level too, that of faith in authority: "*sweet jesus, allahu akbar, mary mother of god / yes sir, sergeant, commander, captain, lieutenant, / necessary as breath when the voice screams attack! /obey, obey, obey ...*" (3-6). Rowland addresses this issue more explicitly in "Luck" (pp. 86-89),

where an Anzac survivor describes how blind faith in authority filled the void left by the loss of spiritual belief and kept him going when all around seemed senseless:

*... Kept the faith. Lost something /
deep that never restored itself. But faith –
that had to go with you. Belief in command,
that they know the purpose. This gives you strength. (2-5)*

The impact of the Gallipoli conflict upon religious belief is also addressed in “The Dead” (pp 78-79). Here, Rowland demonstrates how even the representatives of religion were reduced to helplessness, when confronted with “the brutal harvest” (4) of thousands of young men they could not minister to, could not bury. Again, the perspective is transnational. Core values are shaken on both sides of the battle line. In this poem, Rowland employs a technique of narration in parallel, which she uses frequently in *This Intimate War* to convey the mutuality of various deep emotions generated in individuals, on all sides of the conflict, who were exposed to the same circumstances:

*... The Imam sighed –
surely it was not intended,
so many children of God dead.
.....
...It hurt his very bones.
.....
... the priest.....
... watched Chaplain, Hindu, Jew, bewildered.
It pained him in the chest. A knife there.
It simply cannot have been meant by God,
This wasteful slaughter.... (6-8, 17, 19, 30-33)*

Through the technique of parallel narration, the practical differences between people of different nationalities emerge as matters of detail, whereas in much that really matters they are revealed to be fundamentally the same.

Another powerful example of Rowland’s use of this technique in *This Intimate War* occurs in “Children of Gallipoli” (pp. 42-45), which deals with the loss of childhood innocence, with the sacrifice and the sacrificing of youth. In consecutive stanzas, Rowland tells tales of the English, Australian and Turkish boy soldiers, some as young as 13, who fought and were maimed or, more often, died at Gallipoli (and on the Somme). Most went naively into battle, seduced by tales of heroism and dreams of adventure, expecting to return home. Only the Turkish were pre-

pared for reality: "We came to die for our country" (40). Here, as is the case with many of the poems in the collection, Rowland draws inspiration from the narratives of those who fought in the campaign, from contemporary photographs and from newsreels too, sometimes quoting directly, sometimes reproducing a picture in words. This produces an effect of historical veracity, and renders the tragedies of the past more immediate. Jim Martin died at 14 from typhoid and heart failure; İsmail Hassan's mother dyed his hair with henna, like a sacrificial goat, offering him up to death for the sake of their homeland; the corpses of the chubby-cheeked schoolboys, who had charged out of the trenches into machine-gun fire, fell back into the lap of drill sergeant Azman, who had had but one night to train them, and whose words are quoted: "I couldn't forget the images of their rosy faces ... / Everyone was crying" (51-52). There is terrible poignancy in the fact that the photos which the poem describes are all of the future that many of the children in them would ever have. Dedicating her poem to all the child soldiers, Rowland reminds the reader that this was a tragedy played out across all of the nations involved at Gallipoli. The final stanza draws all of the individual stories from all of the separate nations together into a single harrowing image of human tragedy:

*Every country had them. They left no wills,
no children to grandchildren, no mark on the earth
but some fading photo ...*

.....
*... Just the image of a boy
dead in the trenches. Not humped like an older man.
The boy still flings himself down as if to sleep on his back,
hands thrown back like a baby, head lolling a little
tucked into the trench. In his hand where a rattle might be,
a grenade. (53-55, 57-62)*

For C.E.W. Bean (as cited in Pringle, 1997) the Anzac soldiers were heroic figures, men of special prowess, great courage and distinctive character, who represented the ideal of Australian manhood. Thus, the traditional Anzac myth took root in the national consciousness as principally a masculine construct. In parenthesis, it should be observed that is less true of Turkey, where from the outset, the Çanakkale narrative gave more prominence to accounts of the role played by women in the national defence (Yazıcı, 2011). In *This Intimate War*, Rowland acknowledges that the desire to be a hero is part of the masculine psyche, and that this played a part in leading young men of all nations to war: from the British, who "...longed for ancient valour. / Bred on the classics, lusting for another Troy" ("The Folly of Myth: Prologue, 1915, I, 24-25), to the colonial boys who signed up for adventure

(“Children of Gallipoli”), to the Turks urgent for “... some idea of history, some vision of a hero / ... / ... Men full of the strange energy / they call ‘war’” (“when he was young, once,” pp. 90-93, 7, 31-32). As previously discussed, Rowland’s poems convey the reality of the universal male experience at Gallipoli: the fighting, the horror, the suffering, the incomprehension, the killing and the dying. On the other hand, she gives equal prominence to the contribution of woman to Çanakkale/Gallipoli, and to the female perspective, which is lacking in the traditional Anzac myth.

In “when he was young, once,” the speaker is a woman whose husband has returned from Gallipoli as a psychologically scarred amputee. Through the poem, with its terrible refrain - “Not this ... Not this ... Not this” - Rowland shows how his tragedy is hers too. The woman remembers their courtship and marriage, “her happiness, certainty of a future,” (24) and sets them against the reality of the present: “everything had gone now that she knew. / Everything changed. / She didn’t want this / Not this” (27-30). Here, the female voice is that of a wife and lover. Elsewhere, again using the technique of parallel narration, Rowland evokes the mothers, sisters, wives and lovers, from all of the countries involved in the conflict, who supported the war effort: from behind the lines, as munitions workers or on farms; or at the front, by carrying ammunition; or as nurses tending to the wounded and dying (“Production Lines, pp.54-57; “Mopping Up”, pp. 46-53). Again, the poetry is underpinned and validated by memories and words drawn from the diaries and letters of named women who experienced these aspects of the war directly. For instance “Mopping Up” is preceded by a quote from nurse Ellen Newbold La Motte (1873-1961): “*Thus the science of healing stood baffled before the science of destroying*” (p. 46). Her words resonate throughout the poem and are echoed in the final stanza:

*They learned a deeper pain in nursing – not for health,
but to refit an armed force with patched-up husbands and sons,
knowing that though ripped apart in body and mind, as soon as
flesh was
repaired they’d shrug up their rifles and packs, strap their faces
into the resignation of obedience, and go back to be
shattered again. (101-105)*

In terms of the female perspective, perhaps the strongest images of all are those Rowland creates of a mother, suspended in the agony of grief for a dead son; remembering the child; powerless to help, comfort or resurrect the man:

*Plum jam – his favourite – rests thickly in the spoon
she holds, has been holding now for two hours.*

It slips along her hands, her veins, dripping.

.....
... *She wants to go there,
look up at the impossible height and shiver,
dig like an animal among the rough cliffs
with her bitten nails and bare teeth,
among the bones on the sandy beach in the shallows,
find him and stick him back together.*

.....
*'We couldn't find enough of Charlie to bury him.'
The thought of his fear pierced her, cut her throat,
took her voice and she doesn't want it back.
(“Second skin, pp. 94-97, 3-5, 9-14, 26-28)*

Typically, these poems emphasize the universality of the female experience of Gallipoli/Çanakkale and how the deep emotions aroused in women by the conflict transcended differences in nationality. By depicting their self-sacrifice, their guilt at surviving, their bravery, their compassion, their dread, their loneliness and, above all, their grief, Rowland shows how women on both sides belonged to the same “community of suffering.” Moreover, she depicts how such depth of emotion might lead ordinary women to question and to challenge the rationale of war, at least inwardly, in contrast to the soldiers who were conditioned and driven by circumstances to place their faith in command:

*What if they'd all stopped the production line of death,
left filling-factories empty, stayed unskilled with munitions,
stopped birthing the shredded bones of young men?
What if they had – at that point in history – said ‘no’?
(“Production lines”, 59-62)*

*One day we will trade with them again, marry their sons
that are left, and will it somehow have been right?
(Second skin, 31-32)*

Of course, it is Rowland herself who asks these rhetorical questions from her perspective as a woman looking back at Gallipoli. No matter that the Allied and Turkish troops shared their breath across the trenches (“Close”, p.38), no matter that their fates were closely intertwined, or that there was deeply felt empathy and respect between them, the slaughter continued brutal and unrelenting until the evacuation – for this was war and they were enemies, and a soldier had to kill

or be killed. No matter how much a woman might have questioned or grieved, she would have screamed her protest silently, for her country was at war and she could not deny her men the munitions that might keep them alive. This was the contemporary reality of Gallipoli. It is not possible to change history but, over time, it is possible to alter perceptions by hearing and transmitting all sides of a story, and showing that the truth is multi-faceted. The evolution of the Anzac myth to include the Turks as fellow heroes and fellow sufferers, rather than enemies, is evidence of this. Rowland prefaced *This Intimate War* with the words of a Gallipoli veteran: “We’re friends until the day we die and not just that – our families, our sons, grandsons ... it was a long time ago”. The spirit here is transnational, inclusive, and cognizant that shared experiences, deep emotions and fundamental values may draw people together, at a time and on a level where national differences have become unimportant. This does not mean that the carnage at Gallipoli has “somehow become right”. Rowland’s collection is not about changing the past, but about shaping the future. “The Folly of Myth: Prologue, 1915 (pp.20-29) makes this clear.

The poem, in three sections, gives an historical account of the naval battle at Çanakkale and the eight months war at Gallipoli, within the framework of a visit to the Naval Museum in Çimenlik Kalesi, repository of the spirit of Çanakkale, with three ten year old boys. The poem draws together many of the issues that have already been discussed in this paper in relation to other works in the collection. Rowland shows how myth can drive history, but how ignorance of the history of another culture can produce catastrophe. She evokes the classical education of the officers of the British imperial naval force, which had gathered at Tenedos, ready to sail into the Dardanelles Strait. She describes how they conceived of their expedition as a second Trojan War and of themselves as proudly following in the wake of the ancient Greek heroes. Then, she depicts the landings on the Gallipoli Peninsula, after the debacle of Çanakkale, and compares the *River Clyde*, from which the troops were disembarked, to the Trojan horse. There follows “a blaze of scarlet loss, a shredding wind of bullets” (p. 28, III, 24-25) – and eight months of carnage which provide devastating evidence of the folly of myth. In contemplating this narrative, and given that Rowland prefaces her collection with the following quotation from John Berger - “... *the past is not for living in*; it is a well of conclusions from which we draw in order to act” - the reader is drawn to make a connexion with the traditional Anzac myth, with its emphasis on masculine prowess and heroism and its classical referencing, and to perceive the dangers it might hold. This interpretation is further strengthened by the framework around the historical narrative. The three small boys are already drawn to the masculine vision of heroism. As they play in the grounds of the Castle and pose for photographs, the minds of the ten year olds, only a year or two younger than some of the child soldiers of Gallipoli, turn to: “...wars and heroic deeds. / Troy

is just down the road. Bone-house of heroes. / When my boy stood there he saw Achilles and Hector, / armies over a hundred thousand, blood on their spears” (p. 20, I, 12-15) On the other hand, the speaker, parent of sons; probably - given the emotions expressed - but not explicitly, a woman; probably, but not explicitly, Rowland herself, had reacted quite differently to the visit to Troy “.. At that crumbled gate / Priam watched his son’s body dragged ragged behind horses. / I prayed to any god that my sons navigate manhood without war” (16-18). Similarly, at the end of the poem, the speaker, watching the small boys play on the grass, answers, from the future, the question posed in “Second skin” by the bereaved mothers of Gallipoli (p.96): - No, the conflict will never prove to have been right – “...You think of waste. And you know - / there never was a need for another Troy” (p. 28, III, 49-50). Towards the end of the collection, in “Ways of Seeing” (pp. 98-111), Rowland takes as her subject the Gallipoli sketches and paintings of L.F.S. Hore, Sidney Nolan and Fehmi Kokut Uluğ, artists of British, Australian and Turkish nationality respectively, which helped to inspire *This Intimate War*. She prefaces this haunting series of poems with another quote from John Berger which, as the above discussion has sought to illustrate, may be applied equally well to her own work: “*The strange power of art is sometimes it can show that what people have in common is more urgent than what differentiates them*” (p. 98).

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