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THE REFLECTIONS OF ANZAC SPIRIT AND NATIONAL IDENTITY IN BRUCE SCATES'S NOVEL: ON DANGEROUS GROUND, A GALLIPOLI STORY

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ABSTRACT

This paper is part of a research project entitled "Fictional History Writing: Gallipoli Campaign in Contemporary British Commonwealth Novel" funded by The Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey (TUBITAK, 2015). The aim of the project is to study representations of Gallipoli Campaign in contemporary British, Australian and New Zealander novels written between 1915 and 2015, in which the history of the Gallipoli Campaign is recreated. Gallipoli War, one of the bloody battles of World War I, was a milestone for both Turkish and Australian histories. Australia became independent in 1901 and its first battle was the Second Boer War in South Africa as a dominion of the Great Britain. However, Gallipoli War was the founding moment of Anzac Spirit and national identity for Australia and New Zealand. As a result of the call of the motherland-Great Britain- and in order to prove herself to the big states of that period, Australia sent their sons with no experience of war to the other edge of the world- to death- voluntarily. Although the war ended with a certain victory of Turks and they left their beloved sons in the carnage of Gallipoli, courage, bravery, mateship, loyalty, endurance, good humour and sacrifice became the characteristics of being an Anzac and inherited to every Australian. In this article, *On Dangerous Ground, A Gallipoli Story* by Bruce Scates was examined in terms of National Identity and Anzac Spirit. It should be noted that the novel takes place in three different times (1915, 1919 and 2015) and was written under the lights of New Historicism.

Key Words: Anzac Spirit, National Identity, Gallipoli Campaign, World War I, New Historicism

1. INTRODUCTION

Nations are commonly perceived as the organized communities with the particular aspects associated with them. In addition, these features unite and connect people, and they normally have multiple things in common (McCrone and Bechhofer, 2015: 11). They might include a common language, culture, and similar opinions on certain phenomena. National identity specifically implies the concept or behaviors that are usually associated with people from a certain country (Elder, 2007: 96). The most frequent element of national identity is culture, which unites individuals and associates them with specific behaviors (Allan, 2016). There are many incidents in the novel *On Dangerous Ground, A Gallipoli Story* where the author describes the roles played by people from different countries, especially the soldiers that fought in the World War I (Tucker and Roberts, 2005: 39). The conduct and culture of the war participants were influenced in different ways by the battles, and the newly acquired customs are currently used for national identity (Arthur, 2018: 124).

The Anzac spirit that is rooted in the events of the First World War, especially in Gallipoli Campaign is one of the most significant aspects of the book *On Dangerous Ground, A Gallipoli Story* by Bruce Scates. The experiences have continued to shape the people's culture and how they perceive the issues

related to the political matters (Duinen, 2018: 21). The Anzac is, for instance, the central element of the collective memory in Australians and it has had a drastic influence on their national perception (Blackburn, 2016a: 112). Like other countries, Australia played a key role in World War I, especially in Gallipoli Campaign and the aftermaths of the menace have since affected many aspects that characterize the state (Crowe, 2011: 139). In the novel, Bruce Scates analyzes the effects of war on people and their general behavior. It usually has a great impact on the individuals, especially those who directly participate in it as it is the main element of national identity (McKernan, 2014: 44). The effects chant the issues that people consider as significant events and the ways they memorize them (Allen, 2003: 77).

According to the novel, the most common ways in which the events are remembered in the countries that participated is the availability of national occasions that are dedicated to honoring the past occurrences (West and Aarons, 2016: 593). In Australia, the Anzac spirit is reflected through the Anzac Day that is considered as the most commemorated holiday of the state (Keren, 2004: 12). The ceremony has become a part of the country's national identity and offers people an opportunity to contemplate about the events that happened during the war and how they have affected them (Packer, Ballantyne and Uzzell, 2019:110). The Anzac spirit has been deeply incorporated into the national identity of Australia because it has assumed a quasi-religious status within the collective memory (Martin Hobbs, 2018: 491).

The events of the war, especially the Anzac experience, lays the foundation for such nations as Australia since it concerns the happenings that are currently considered as the fundamental parts of the integrity (Donoghue and Tranter, 2018: 23). The spirit ushered in the modern republics since most of the participants, for example, America, France, and Australia, experienced the menaces that urged them to acknowledge the qualities that made them distinct (Furniss, 2001: 281). The political and economic revolutions that later happened in France and America were greatly influenced by the Anzac spirit, which is considered as the most significant aspect that changes the modern republics (Seal, 2004: 26).

The novel *On Dangerous Ground, A Gallipoli Story* by Bruce Scates is mainly rooted in the events of the war and reflects on how they have resulted in shaping the nations that were either directly or indirectly affected by the vicious (Sagona, Atabay, Mackie, McGibbon and Reid, 2016:45). The author presents the Gallipoli campaign as a basis for the creation of a state (Johns, 2008: 14). Despite the destruction caused by the war, the novel outlines how the occurrences and experiences contributed to many future nations (Keane and Keane, 2018: 56).

The Anzac myth that has become part of the Australian culture implies the exploits of the brave young soldiers that were committed to proving themselves as the representatives of an inexperienced nation with a discomfiting convict past (Holden, 2014: 11). The book offers a clear description of the heroic acts that were accomplished by the Australian combats who were by that time representing a country that had recently been formed (Blackburn, 2016b: 44). The novel suggests that the Australian soldiers were fighting under the title of the British since the majority of them were identifying themselves with Britain. Nonetheless, the heroic roles of the Australian troops have been clearly outlined in the novel, and the author presents the scenes that help comprehend the function of the Anzac Spirit in creating a national identity (Reynaud, 2010: 40).

Understanding the role of Anzac in building a perception as described in the novel depends on the attitudes or feelings that the contemporary Australians have over the Anzacs (Sandy, 2014: 18). The basic requirement for the national identity is the availability of a referent state, over which people's common myths, territories, historical memories, public culture, and other elements that connect them are attached (Porter and Smith, 2013: 49). The influence of the Anzac spirit in the construction of national identity is linked to the sacrifices that soldiers made in the war and how they influenced the birth of the community (Davis, 2019: 27). Just like other countries that participated in the World War I value the soldiers who sacrificed their lives, the Anzacs are by far considered as the most prominent historical figures regarding the Australian identity (Howe, 2019: 40). The majority of people in the country regard the Anzacs as the historical figures and major players who have shaped how the state is perceived by its citizens as well as the rest of the world (McKenna, 2009: 10). The Anzacs is an integral part of what it implies being an Australian, and most of them are proud of being associated with the heroic acts (Nelson, 2015: 343). The citizens of a particular nation feel proud when being connected with a specific move that reflects the positivity of their country. The soldiers that fought and inflicted

the highest number of casualties on their enemies are regarded as national heroes that should be continuously celebrated. In Australia, the holidays are held every year, and individuals feel proud and honor their heroes.

A country needs to boast of a glorious past or what it considers as a golden age and give meaning to its promise of re-establishment and dignity. The Anzacs are the highly ranked historical figures concerning the key contributions that they have done to shape their country from different perspectives (Holbrook, 2018: 622). In relation to the national identity, the majority of the Australians think the Anzac spirit claims what is realistically theirs and draws on the achievements made by the heroes to establish the identity of their own (McCreanor, Wetherell, McConville, Moewaka Barnes and Moewaka Barnes, 2019: 980). Associating oneself with the Anzacs reflects the courage and what most Australians consider themselves to be (Gladwin, 2016: 7). Heroism is a significant element of the culture since most people think that it is a key factor that has led to the birth of the Australian nation.

Moreover, the novel identifies the crucial changes that were experienced by the countries that participated in the war and how they shaped their contemporary nature (Scates, 2002: 8). The states are currently linked to certain things that the war has resulted in. Equality is a fundamental element of national identity for many countries, and it is specifically associated with Australia (Scates, 2002: 12). According to the novel, the war brought the key changes in the countries that had their troops in the battles. Bruce Scates reiterates that the impacts are still evident in the modern days. One of such change that has played a key role in shaping the national identity in Australia is equality (Strachan and Burgess, 2002: 51). Moreover, it is defined in different perspectives, for instance, on the basis of color and gender.

The novel is mainly based on the events that occurred in the World War I and the roles that soldiers and nurses played in the combats. It is known that the war not only involves the armies consist of males but also the females who are the mothers, wives or beloved ones.

The fundamental aspect that emanates from the story is the national identity and how it is created. In the novel, the Anzac spirit plays a significant part in shaping the identity, particularly in Australia. The celebration in remembrance of the Anzacs has become a fragment of the Australian culture, and it is valued equally by all people that regard the heroic acts committed by the soldiers as a source of their pride.

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