

This work has been submitted to **NECTAR**, the **Northampton Electronic Collection of Theses and Research**.

Article

Title: 'Colonize. Pioneer. Bash and slash': Once on Chunuk Bair and the Anzac myth

Creator: Wilson, J. M.

Example citation: Wilson, J. M. (2016) 'Colonize. Pioneer. Bash and slash': Once on Chunuk Bair and the Anzac myth. *Journal of New Zealand Literature*. **34**(1), pp. 27-53. 0112-1227.

It is advisable to refer to the publisher's version if you intend to cite from this work.

Version: Accepted version

Official URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/90000545>

<http://nectar.northampton.ac.uk/8774/>



‘Colonize. Pioneer. Bash and slash’:¹ *Once on Chunuk Bair* and the Anzac Myth

Janet Wilson

I. The Reception of *Once on Chunuk Bair*

Once on Chunuk Bair, Maurice Shadbolt’s play about the fatal events involving the New Zealand Infantry Brigade in the disastrous Gallipoli campaign of 1915, premiered in April 1982 with publication of the script the same year, almost 70 years after this catastrophe. The play’s setting is Chunuk Bair, the crest of the Sari Bair ridge, the highest point on the peninsula that was the gateway to the Dardanelles, and so one of the keys to the campaign; its focus is on the Wellington Infantry Battalion’s brave assault, and brief moment of glory in holding the ridge on 8 August 1915, awaiting promised reinforcements from British troops in Suvla Bay which never arrived. This disastrous miscalculation was well known, but not in a form likely to appeal to the public imagination. Shadbolt’s dramatization of the pointless but heroic sacrifice by the famous commander, Lieutenant-Colonel William G. Malone (called Connolly in the play) and his men, the Wellingtons, who held the ridge, and the play’s contention, drawn from the Anzac myth, that this marked the birth of the nation freed from the shackles of British colonialism, was widely acclaimed by critics. At its first production at the Mercury Theatre in Auckland on Anzac weekend, 1982, it was praised for its ‘monumental’ stature

¹ Maurice Shadbolt, *Once on Chunuk Bair* (Hodder and Stoughton: Auckland, 1982), p. 86. This article was first presented to the New Zealand Studies Network conference on World War I held at Birkbeck, University of London in July 2014. The proceedings of this conference were published as a special issue of the *Journal of New Zealand Literature* 33.2 (2015), *New Zealand and the First World War*.

and ‘architectonic power’, while Shadbolt’s revival of the legend that New Zealand came of age that day on Chunuk Bair was considered a ‘belated act of restitution’.²

Shadbolt’s claims that Chunuk Bair ‘has been seen as New Zealand’s cruelest and finest, hour’ and that ‘8th August was the day that New Zealanders lost their innocence’,³ and his objectives — to mythologise the tragedy and revive the Anzac legend from the unpopularity into which it had fallen between the 1950s and 1970s — were widely appreciated.⁴ The play provided a New Zealand counterpart to the more nationally entrenched and acclaimed Australian version of the Gallipoli myth about the identity of the nation and its coming of age through separation from England; it was ‘our answer to the Australians’ magnificent debacle at Lone Pine and The Nek’.⁵ In the 1960s and 70s in Australia as well as New Zealand, Gallipoli and the Anzac legend had been largely excluded from the new nationalism that was partly associated with the anti-Vietnam protest movement, because of their continued association with imperial conservatism.⁶ Peter Weir’s hugely popular film *Gallipoli* (1981), demonstrating a strong anti-Britishness like other films of the Australian revival, and seen on release in Australia as ‘an event of profound national significance’, suggested a turning point.⁷ Shadbolt’s interpretation, supported by his collaboration with the military historian Christopher Pugsley, whose *Gallipoli: The New Zealand Story*,

² Excerpts of reviews by Robert H. Leek in *The New Zealand Times*, and Michael Neill in *ACT Magazine*, and Robert Goodman, *NZBC radio review*, reprinted in the published version of the play, *Once on Chunuk Bair*, p. 2.

³ Maurice Shadbolt, *Voices of Gallipoli* (Auckland: Hodder and Stoughton, 1988), pp. 9, 10.

⁴ Jenny McLeod, *Gallipoli* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), pp. 118-19; on Shadbolt’s intention to regenerate public memory of the event and create a ‘living memorial’ to the fallen Anzacs, see James Bennett, ‘Men Alone and Men Together: Maurice Shadbolt, William Malone and Chunuk Bair’, *Journal of New Zealand Studies* 13 (2012), 49, 53.

⁵ Michael Neill, ‘Introduction: Getting Out From Under’ to Maurice Shadbolt, *Once on Chunuk Bair* (Auckland: Hodder and Stoughton, 1982), p. 11.

⁶ McLeod, *Gallipoli*, pp. 86-89; James Curran and Stuart Ward, *The Unknown Nation: Australia After Empire* (Melbourne University Press: Melbourne, 2010), pp. 246-47.

⁷ Stuart Ward ‘“A War Memorial in Celluloid”: The Gallipoli Legend in Australian Cinema 1940s -1980s’, *Gallipoli: Making History*, ed. by Jenny Macleod (London and New York: Frank Cass, 2004), p. 60.

published in 1984, was the first scholarly study of the campaign and initiated a new historiography, undoubtedly drew on these trans-Tasman cultural developments and helped springboard a revived parallel understanding of the myth in New Zealand.

Although it touched a nerve among the informed theatre-going public and critics in 1982, however, *Once on Chunuk Bair* has not been widely produced subsequently,⁸ and the screen version made in 1991 by first-time director Dale L. Bradley, was disappointing;⁹ nevertheless the play was popular in universities and schools for a number of years, and is still taught and performed in schools in the same way that screenings of *Gallipoli* are part of the educational experience in Australian schools.¹⁰ In 2014, the centennial year of the beginning of the Gallipoli campaign and World War One, it was revived by the Auckland Theatre Company. Reviewers of the play's first professional production for 25 years were less impressed by Shadbolt's mythological ambitions and restorative intentions than in 1982: the transparency of his aspirations to be national mythmaker were noted,¹¹ although the play's suggestion that New Zealand came of age in Gallipoli was seen as of continuing relevance to the World War One mythology, and the 'coarse, soldierly banter and bicker' was enjoyed as 'natural, easy and real';¹² the production was

⁸ Maurice Shadbolt, interview with Philip Mann on Anzac Day, April 1987, 'The First Production of *Once on Chunuk Bair*', published in *Illusions*, 11 (1989), 15.

⁹ See David Dowling, 'War and Peace: On the Beach with Bruce and Maurice', *Illusions*, 20 (1992), 16-17.

¹⁰ Charles Ferrall, 'Maurice Shadbolt's Gallipoli Myth', in *How We Remember: New Zealanders and the First World War*, ed. by Charles Ferrall and Harry Ricketts (Wellington; Victoria University Press, 2014), p. 94; Ward, "'A War Memorial in Celluloid'", *Gallipoli: Making History*, p. 60.

¹¹ Nick Grant in *The Listener*, 16 June 2014.

<<http://www.listener.co.nz/culture/theatre/theatre-review-once-on-chunuk-bair/>> [accessed 10 December 2015]

¹² Janet McAllister in the New Zealand Herald, 16 June 2014;

http://www.nzherald.co.nz/entertainment/news/article.cfm?c_id=1501119&objectid=11274565 ; Frances Edmond in Metro, 16 June 2014. <http://www.metromag.co.nz/culture/stage/once-on-chunuk-bair-review/> [accessed 10 December 2015].

appreciated by two reviewers as a ‘visceral theatrical experience’ and a ‘fitting way to remember the death of so many men’.¹³

Critical evaluations of the place of *Once on Chunuk Bair* in the national imaginary have, however, been more reserved than the 1982 reception. Michael Neill’s comment in 1982 — ‘the worst thing about the legend of *Once on Chunuk Bair* is that it can be of no real use to us now’ — sets the tone of postcolonial scepticism towards celebration of imperial wars.¹⁴ Even though masculinity and heroism were no longer the sole arbiters of national identity in the 1980s, the play’s compelling recreation of a moment of ambiguous military ‘glory’ as a source of national pride meant that questions about issues such as its hierarchy of gender were overshadowed at first. Critics have subsequently commented on the exclusions and omissions from the national picture, asking whether the ‘gendered symbolism of war’ and a remasculinised nationalism was ever appropriate for the 1980s or indeed subsequently.¹⁵ How representative is a national identity that focused exclusively on the masculinised heroics of battle as symbolised by Malone/Connolly, whose military values are that ‘We’re damn fine killers. bred to it.’?/ And who exhorts his soldiers, to ‘Colonise. Pioneer. Bash and slash’?¹⁶ If the play were to be seen as offering an imaging a unified nationhood, then it is a highly selective one. Its function as an historic

¹³ Nick Grant in *The Listener*, 16 June 2014.

<<http://www.listener.co.nz/culture/theatre/theatre-review-once-on-chunuk-bair/>>;

Frances Edmond in *Metro*, 16 June 2014 .

<http://www.metromag.co.nz/culture/stage/once-on-chunuk-bair-review/> [both accessed 10 December 2015].

¹⁴ Neill, ‘Introduction’, p. 16.

¹⁵ Annabel Cooper, ‘Nation of Heroes, Nation of Men: Masculinity in Maurice Shadbolt’s *Once on Chunuk Bair*’, *Masculinities in Aotearoa/New Zealand*, ed. by Robin Law, Hugh Campbell and John Dolan (Dunmore Press: Palmerston North, 1999), p. 86, citing Jensen, *Whole Men: The Masculine Tradition in New Zealand Literature* (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 1996), p. 154; Bennett, ‘Men Alone and Men Together’, pp. 56-57.

¹⁶ Philip Mann, ‘Maurice Shadbolt the Dramatist: On the Dramaturgy of *Once on Chunuk Bair*’, *Ending the Silences: Critical Essays on the Works of Maurice Shadbolt*, ed. by Ralph Crane (Auckland: Hodder Moa Beckett, 1995), pp. 130-146, comments that ‘a male myth must not be confused with a national myth’ (p. 145); Shadbolt, *Once on Chunuk Bair*, pp. 58, 86. All subsequent references will be included parenthetically in the text.

commemoration associated with Anzac has been considered in light of Shadbolt's aim to revive a moribund myth, despite the conclusion's ambivalence about the glories of war and heroic sacrifice, 'that 'all is desolation and death' (p. 101), which seems to undercut this ambition.¹⁷

Others have examined the play's mythological constructedness, pointing out that Shadbolt departed from historical veracity and the facts. His sources have been critically reexamined: these include the diaries and letters of Lieutenant-Colonel William G. Malone, to which he had access in the 1980s, and oral sources from interviews with Gallipoli veterans that he conducted with Christopher Pugsley between 1982 and 1983, for a TVZ documentary, *Gallipoli: The New Zealand Story*, some of which he published in *Voices of Gallipoli* in 1988.¹⁸

Such interpretations, referring to the historical accounts and contexts, underline the often fraught and confusing relationship between history and myth, between the 'truth' as conveyed by the facts, and fictions as developed from the fabrications and distortions that inhere in collective memory and meet the social needs of a group.¹⁹ Whether the artist's social vision is constructed in relation to historical record and so helps reaffirm collective memory, or whether it remains in the service of personal mythmaking and creative impulses which may or may not coincide with the ideological needs of the social group, has been identified as an issue in Shadbolt's novels, and indeed debated publicly.²⁰ The polarized responses to *Once on Chunuk Bair*, between historians or

¹⁷ Bennett, 'Men Alone and Men Together', p. 49; J.C. Ross, 'Once on Chunuk Bair', *Landfall*, 37.2 (1983), 240-42; cited by Cooper, 'Nation of Heroes, Nation of Men', p. 86; Helen Robinson, 'Remembering the Past, Thinking of the Present: Historic Commemorations in New Zealand and Northern Ireland, 1940-1990' (PhD thesis, University of Auckland, 2009), pp. 268-76.

¹⁸ *Voices of Gallipoli*, p. 19; Cooper, 'Nation of Heroes, Nation of Men', pp. 95-96; Ferrall, 'Maurice Shadbolt's Gallipoli Myth', pp. 94-103. Malone's writings are published as *No Better Death: The Great War Diaries and Letters of William G. Malone*, ed. by John Crawford with Peter Cooke (Reed Books: Auckland, 2005).

¹⁹ See Jenny McLeod, 'Introduction' in *Gallipoli: Making History*, ed. by Jenny McLeod (London and New York: Frank Cass, 2004), pp. 2-3.

²⁰ Alan Riach, 'The Gothic Search: Maurice Shadbolt and The Lovelock Version', *Ending the Silences*, p. 83; the Malone family criticized Shadbolt's portrait of Malone in *The Lovelock Version*, catalyzing a debate on the use of history in writing fiction; *The*

textual critics and dramatists or theatre critics, point to the various purposes drama serves according to different disciplinary values and frameworks. Praise for the play as artefact has come from playwrights and reviewers who undoubtedly subscribe to the view that personal mythmaking is inevitable in historical reconstruction: Mervyn Thompson, who acclaimed Shadbolt's 'magnificent grasp of the essentials of drama', and Philip Mann, who still asserts it is the best New Zealand play ever written.²¹ By contrast are more ambivalent, critical responses from historians and literary scholars about Shadbolt's licence with history and his exaggerated claims about the campaign.²²

In the three decades since the play's first production, the historical and cultural contexts of the two periods to which it refers — the 1915 setting and the 1980s era that informs its ideology — have been amplified by research into the play's production and reception, and the nationalism of the 1980s which sheds new light on the relationship between history, nationalism and war in the play. New historical accounts of the Chunuk Bair episode and its place in the Gallipoli campaign have offered more balanced interpretations than were available in the early 1980s; they have also pointed out the blind spots of the myth that Shadbolt followed which can be traced to C.E.W. Bean's official history of the Australian part in the campaign, about how the nation came of age in Gallipoli.²³ They question the polarized British/Anzac view in which blame is apportioned to the British military leadership, and beliefs such as the crucial importance to the campaign of the seizure of Chunuk Bair and hence its centrality to the New Zealand experience at Gallipoli. Christopher Pugsley and Australian historian Robin Prior both claim that the British Suvla Bay

NZ Listener, 7 June 1980, p. 11; 26 July 1980, p. 12; 16 August 1980, pp. 10-11 (see also 24 May 1980, p. 10; 5 July, 1980, p. 11).

²¹ Mann, review of *Once on Chunuk Bair*, *Australasian Drama Studies* 2 (1983-84): 118-19; and in email correspondence.

²² Cooper, 'Nation of Heroes, Nation of Men'; Ferrall, 'Maurice Shadbolt's Gallipoli Myth'; Jenny McLeod, *Gallipoli* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), pp. 119-120.

²³ These are summarised by Glyn Harper, 'Introduction' to *Letters from Gallipoli: New Zealand Soldiers Write Home*, ed. by Glyn Harper (Auckland University Press, Auckland, 2011), pp. 19-23.

landings ‘were never intended to be coordinated with the Anzac assault on Chunuk Bair’.²⁴ There is widespread dismissal of the ‘near miss’ view of the August offensive which also informs the play’s orientation; this is now seen as over-ambitious in conception; John Tonkin-Covell, for example, argues that the Sari Bair ridge could never have been held and that operations were ‘doomed from the start’.²⁵

This article considers the shifts in public consciousness both in New Zealand and Australia after the myth was revived on Gallipoli’s 75th anniversary in 1990, and it takes into account the growth of popular reflection and observance, and new types of commemoration in the forms of newspaper supplements, television specials, museum exhibitions and military histories. Of particular influence has been the promotion of the myth by politicians like Australia’s Bob Hawke (Prime Minister 1983-91), on the 75th anniversary of Gallipoli, and Paul Keating (Prime Minister 1991-96) and Helen Clark (New Zealand Prime Minister 1999-2008), in annual speeches at Anzac Cove. Registering the current centennial memorializations of Gallipoli, it returns to Shadbolt’s procedures and practices in writing his play and his literary and cultural influences and contexts in order to reassess his reconstruction of the Gallipoli myth. It asks whether it either serves the needs of the present moment or indeed those of the future, given that the current resurgence of memorialization suggests that other forms of mourning and commemoration are available and perhaps more desirable for the (post)-centennial marking of this event.²⁶

²⁴ Pugsley, ‘Stories of Anzac’, *Gallipoli: Making History*, p. 57; Robin Prior, ‘The Hand of History’, *Gallipoli: A Ridge Too Far*, ed. by Ashley Ekins (Wollombi and Auckland: Exisle Publishing, 2013), p. 50; see also Bennett, ‘Men Alone and Men Together’, p. 61, footnote 90.

²⁵ Robin Prior, *Gallipoli: The End of the Myth* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2009), p. 185, and ‘The Hand of History’, pp. 48-49; John Tonkin-Covell, “‘From the Uttermost Ends of the Earth’: the New Zealand Battle for Chunuk Bair”, both published in *Gallipoli: A Ridge Too Far*, pp. 155-56; Pugsley, *Gallipoli: The New Zealand Story* (Auckland: Reed, 1998), p. 269.

²⁶ Philip Mann identifies this as the challenge facing the play in ‘Maurice Shadbolt the Dramatist’, *Ending the Silences*, p. 145.

II. Sources, influences and contexts of *Once on Chunuk Bair*

Evidence of the influences on Shadbolt's writing in the 1980s, and in particular his own accounts, show he was inspired to mythologize the core Anzac story through the medium of drama although he had never written a play before. After climbing to the hilltop of Chunuk Bair in 1977, followed by a visit to the ruins of a Greek theatre on the site of the ancient city of Troy, he mused:

No poem, no song, no novel, no symphony — nothing in our national culture — enshrines the experience of Gallipoli; and this despite the fact that ANZAC Day remains conspicuous in our calendars. Was the experience just too traumatic? Or is it that we still lack a Homer to process tribal memory? It was in that theatre in Troy that *Once on Chunuk Bair* was conceived.²⁷

Shadbolt's determination to appropriate a foundational myth that remained in cultural memory, however buried, was catalyzed by the masculine tenor and raw energy of contemporary New Zealand theatre, in particular, *Foreskin's Lament*, the ground-breaking play by Greg McGee in which New Zealand rugby was a metaphor for New Zealand society.²⁸ Shadbolt was assisted in the processes of revision and production in 1982 by Christopher Pugsley, whom he met after completing a first draft of the play in April 1981, a collaboration that continued with the interviews with Gallipoli veterans for the *Voices of Gallipoli* project in the 1980s. Finally the play's production followed closely upon the release in 1981 of Peter Weir's *Gallipoli*, about the Australian attacks on Lone Pine and The Nek in August 1915, whose interpretation of the Gallipoli myth, that Australian diggers were sacrificial victims of British high command bungling, is one that Shadbolt's confirms. There was also the publication of *The Story of Gallipoli*, which includes David Williamson's screenplay by Peter Weir and chapters from the history of Bill Gammage, *The Broken Years* (1974), military advisor to the film.²⁹

²⁷ Cited by Philip Mann, 'Maurice Shadbolt the Dramatist', *Ending the Silences*, p.131. See also Shadbolt, *Voices of Gallipoli*, pp. 8-9.

²⁸ Shadbolt, interview with Philip Mann, *Illusions*, 11 (1989), 15.

²⁹ One of Williamson's scriptwriters/advisors, Jonathan Hardy, was Production Assistant/ Director of the Mercury Theatre 1982 production (information from Murray Edmond).

For Shadbolt, the Anzac myth was one to rival the earlier Puritan myth of New Zealand colonial society about which he had written in his epic novel, *Strangers and Journeys* (1972), and it led him to think that he could ‘process tribal memory’; it was further dignified by the classical predecessors of Agamemnon and Troy. Upon climbing the slopes of Sari Bair in 1977 he entertained an ambition to write a ‘large, rather panoramic novel based on the Gallipoli campaign in 1977’.³⁰ This was partly realized in *The Lovelock Version* (1980), ‘a tragi-comic version of our native mythology’,³¹ a 19th-century saga that ‘draws most of the historical myths of New Zealand into the story of one fictional family’, the Lovelocks.³² He devotes a chapter to the Gallipoli landings, the fleeting capture of Chunuk Bair under the leadership of Colonel Malone, and the Anzac’s defeat by the Turks. For this reconstruction Shadbolt draws upon the core Anzac mythology as dramatized in Weir’s *Gallipoli*: the contrasting fates of two young privates, the scholarly, romantic Peach and the down-to-earth, soldierly Daniel Lovelock, the sacrifice of life, the imperial betrayal of colonial innocence, and the birth of the new nation. Like Weir and the playwright Williamson, who collaborated on the play-script with him, Shadbolt points up the symbolic contrast in the death of one protagonist (Peach) and the survival of the other (Daniel), to act as witness and tell the story. The comic-epic dimension of this episode comes from capturing the infantryman’s point of view through a slangy vernacular and foregrounding it, and as elsewhere in the novel Shadbolt gains a critical distance from his subject matter by employing an historical perspective and the technique of an omniscient narrator. When writing the stage dialogue of *Once on Chunuk Bair* Shadbolt achieves the impersonality that comes from the novel’s use of the historical present tense, following his characters rather than controlling them, introducing self-conscious play and metafictional devices, and absenting the narrator from the

³⁰ Cited by Philip Mann, ‘Maurice Shadbolt the Dramatist’, *Ending the Silences*, p. 131.

³¹ Shadbolt, Letter to the *NZ Listener*, 16 August 1980, p. 11.

³² Lawrence Jones, *Barbed Wire and Mirrors: Essays on New Zealand Prose*, 2nd ed. (University of Otago Press, Dunedin, 1990 [1977]), p. 149.

scene.³³ Finally, features of his novel's two soldiers are distributed among the play's larger cast of characters — Peach's classical knowledge is shared by Lieutenant Harkness and Colonel Connolly in the later text, while Sergeant Frank, like Daniel, is the sole survivor of the battle — suggesting that the novel provided a template for the play's characters as well as the action.

The Lovelock Version has been acclaimed as among the best of Shadbolt's fiction partly because of its 'ironic distancing mode', and *Once on Chunuk Bair* can be seen as belonging to this period when he was at the height of his powers in writing melodrama and farcical tragedy.³⁴ Incidents, narrative details and idiomatic turns of phrase in handling the tragedy are adapted in his expanded treatment of the novel: the play introduces ambitiously a wide cast of Fernleaves characters, concentrates the action into a single day and place (obeying the Aristotelian unities of time and place) to provide a self-conscious, artificial creation; in fact, the play's persistent strand of dramatic irony can be read as a reprise of the ironic detachment and black humour that runs throughout the episode as told in the novel.³⁵ Its very theatricality bears comparison with that of the film *Gallipoli*, which Jonathan Rayner describes as 'a reappraisal of completed but re-created events which have undergone a transformation into folklore, and which are now dramatized in a form combining the historic and poetic, the emotive and the reflexive'.³⁶

Among the mock-heroic details adapted from novel to play is the scatological attitude to heroism — the novel's 'Glory sounds like too much farting about'³⁷ is developed into the play's encomium on farting: 'It's a sore arse that never rejoices' (p. 46). The idiomatic dialogue is sharpened with local references: Chunuk Bair, which in the novel is 'a miserable tit of a hill' (p.

³³ Riach, 'The Gothic Search', *Ending the Silences*, pp. 87, 95.

³⁴ *The Oxford Companion to New Zealand Literature*, ed. by Roger Robinson and Nelson Wattie (Auckland: Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 312; Riach, 'The Gothic Search'; Lawrence Jones, 'Out of the Rut and into the Swamp: the Paradoxical Progress of Maurice Shadbolt', both in *Ending the Silences*, pp. 83, 95 and 25.

³⁵ See Mann, 'Maurice Shadbolt the Dramatist', *Ending the Silences*, p. 132.

³⁶ Jonathan Rayner, *The Films of Peter Weir* (London: Cassells, 1998), p. 103.

³⁷ Maurice Shadbolt, *The Lovelock Version* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1980), p. 505. All future references will be included parenthetically in the text.

505), is described in the play's commemorative style: 'in a few years [...] this might as well be a tit of a hill outside Taihape' (p. 24). There is gritty realism such as the dispatching of a sniper in the novel — Daniel 'hears for the first time the sucking sound produced by a bayonet departing a body' — paralleled in the play by Porky's off-stage act, then wiping of the bayonet, saying 'It's going to be another hot old day' (p. 23); the belief in play and novel that reaching the summit would give them command of the Dardanelles as well as an excellent view; the enteric fever, dysentery, blue-bottle flies, foul bully beef and lice which madden more than the bullets (p. 511), foreshadowing the privates' frequent references to these miseries; their scratching for lice; and comic cases of 'Gallipoli gallop' (p. 21).

The play's metafictional sleights, emphasizing the weightiness of the moment, can also be traced to *The Lovelock Version*'s fictional game-playing, as events are overlaid by a sense of destiny. In the novel, Daniel's belief that 'soldiers don't get into books' (p. 512), followed by Malone's riposte, 'there's a chance for you to write history here' (p. 512), develops in the play into the characters' contemplation of their posterity: private Smiler asks of Porky, 'How do you know we won't get into the books?' (p. 23), then playing on words: 'General Sir Ian Hamilton says we are all writing history here. Imperishably' (p. 24). This punning mock heroic exchange implies that the verdict of history will revalue their ordinariness. Smiler, trying to relieve himself behind a bush and being fired at by a sniper while his trousers are down, asks:

How do you tell the gallant buggers from other buggers?
Porky: If you read the books you'd bloody know. They don't have to shit and scratch. Heroes, mate. (p. 24)

As his heroic stature grows, Malone's speech becomes more self-reflexive. The novel's 'History humbles us all [...]. Destiny makes all men equal' (p. 512), becomes Connolly's triumphant claim in the play: 'We seem to have [...] History by the balls' (p. 68). After the British command to hold Chunuk Bair forever, he speaks as if, like the author, determining the men's legend: 'We make ourselves matter. With our own miracle [...]. Our own story. Our own legend' (p. 96). Like the

novel, the play moves between different time-frames: the desperation of the present moment is offset against the soldiers' reminiscences of their New Zealand past, and their fantasy of an improbable future in which Chunuk Bair is held, Germany overcome, Russia saved and the war is over by the end of 1915.³⁸ In both novel and play, then, Shadbolt draws on vital elements of the legend to shape his reconstruction.

For the play's moral fulcrum, the Anzac betrayal by British military high command, Shadbolt relied upon the precedent of Australian versions of the myth which had become entrenched through the legendary, folkloric status of the Anzac digger as hero, often associated with being anti-authoritarian and anti-British.³⁹ He alludes to the British ignorance and indifference that features in Weir's *Gallipoli*, that the generals stopped for tea at Suvla Bay while Anzacs were being slaughtered; in both novel (p. 516) and play (p. 71) he adds that they were seen through binoculars to be swimming and sunbathing although visibility from such a distance has since been dismissed as a physical impossibility.⁴⁰ For historical accounts of this and other components of the myth Shadbolt turned to Robert Rhodes James's history, *Gallipoli*, published in 1965. Connolly's attack on General Stopford's decision to secure Suvla Bay as a base, rather than go ashore (p. 96), can be traced to his revised instructions from Hamilton, cited by James, saying that helping the Anzacs was the second priority.⁴¹ James's comment on how the forces on the boat

³⁸ Shadbolt, *The Lovelock Version*, pp. 512, 516; *Once on Chunuk Bair*, pp. 49, 38; *Voices of Gallipoli*, p. 114 (quoted by McLeod, *Gallipoli*, p. 120, and Harper, 'Introduction' to *Letters from Gallipoli*, p. 21, as an 'extreme version' of the myth).

³⁹ Graham Seal, *Inventing Anzac: The Digger and National Mythology* (St Lucia; Queensland University Press, 2004), pp. 15-16; Pugsley, 'Stories of Anzac', *Gallipoli: Making History*, pp. 44-58 (47-48);

⁴⁰ Shadbolt, *The Lovelock Version*, p. 516; *Once on Chunuk Bair*, p. 71; Gammage and Weir, 'Gallipoli, The Screenplay', *The Story of Gallipoli* (Penguin, 1981), p. 144. Pugsley, 'Stories of Anzac', *Gallipoli: Making History*, pp. 48, 57, argues that the terrain made such a sighting impossible, but Kevin Fewster, Veichi Basarin and Hatice Huromuz Basarin claim in *Gallipoli: The Turkish Story* (Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 2003 [1985]), p. 113, that English troops could clearly be seen from trenches at the Nek, cooking breakfast.

⁴¹ Robert Rhodes James, *Gallipoli* (London: Batsford Ltd., 1965), pp. 245-46.

from Egypt were ‘chilled’ when they read the ‘highly coloured and dramatic’⁴² prose of the dispatches of the disastrous April landings by General Sir Ian Hamilton, Commander of the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force, may have led Shadbolt to Hamilton’s Gallipoli diaries; from them he quotes the General’s heroic-romantic sentiments that ‘God has begun his celestial spring cleaning, and our star is to be scrubbed bright with the blood of our bravest men’, omitting the opening, darker reflections of his meditation: ‘Death grins at my elbow. I cannot get him out of my thoughts. He is fed up with the old and sick — only the flower of the flock will serve him now’.⁴³ Hamilton is further targeted through the dramatic irony of his misunderstanding of the Anzac identity: he is reported as rejoicing ‘in the shining triumph upon Chunuk Bair by [...] the magnificent Australians’ (p. 76).⁴⁴

In his aim to present nothing less than a Homeric version of the tragedy of Chunuk Bair, seeing the incident as heroism in the making, shaping his characters larger than life, implying that their remarkable deeds warrant celebration of their deaths, and so creating drama as monument, Shadbolt moves beyond the narrative technique of *The Lovelock Version*. He introduces into the speech of the infantrymen a doubled perception in which their bawdy exchanges and raw language also articulate awareness of what lies ahead as disillusionment sets in; the discomfort and anxieties of the present moment are underpinned by recognition of its historical importance. The technique is one of transposition or deliberate anachronism, the misplacing of categories of cultural knowledge through transferring one era’s reference points or understanding to that of another. Thus the time frame of the play’s setting in 1915 intersects with that of its telling 70 years later. By writing back into the action the interpretation of later generations Shadbolt represents the men

⁴² James, *Gallipoli*, p. 251.

⁴³ Sir Ian Hamilton, *Gallipoli Diary*, 2 vols (London: Edward Arnold, 1920), I, p. 125; cited by Shadbolt in *The Lovelock Version*, p. 506; *Once on Chunuk Bair*, pp. 76, 77, and Gallipoli Voices, p. 104; on the romantic-heroics of Hamilton’s war diaries see Jenny McLeod, *Reconsidering Gallipoli* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004), pp. 176-208 (183-87).

⁴⁴ Hamilton’s comment, ‘Chunuk Bair will do! With that we will win’, led to the myth that holding the crest was vital to the campaign’s success; see *Gallipoli Diary*, II, p. 57.

as simultaneously discussing their current circumstances and memorializing themselves: the language points to a synthesis of cultural knowledge. In redefining his inherited myths through this process of retrospective interference he gives added weight to the melodramatic stand-off between Connolly and the Fernleaves and their British commanders rather than the nameless Turks. This contextualizes the infantrymen's seditious digs against the British general, Connolly's rage as they reject his request for support, and it culminates in Major Frank South's cry as sole survivor: 'The Turks couldn't do for us. Only *they* could' (p. 100). This contrastive antiheroic/heroic mode, which intensifies as the men's situation worsens, depends on the binary moral structure of the British versus the Fernleaves. The play's dark humour contrasts to the gilded myth-making of Weir's *Gallipoli*, which emphasizes the twin themes of lost innocence and mateship by removing background references to the war, and presents an allegorical framework of 'isolated male heroes' unaware of the realities of war.⁴⁵

In developing his mythological interpretation Shadbolt also expands the character of Malone from the novel where he is a minor, less assertive figure, into his renamed counterpart, Connolly.⁴⁶ He is the fulcrum around whom the heroic apparatus develops and whose encomium links the foreign land of Turkey to New Zealand, making the battle for Chunuk Bair symbolic of the nation's severance from Britain. Connolly represents the voice of Kiwi independence, as he takes stock of the day and urges self-belief:

Connolly: August the eighth, 1915. Today's the day we got out from under. Not a general in sight. Good. Not an ally up here. Good. Chunuk Bair's our show. Good. We do it ourselves. Believe in ourselves. If anyone's going to win anything out of this war, we are. (p. 56)

⁴⁵ Rayner, *The Films of Peter Weir*, p. 105.

⁴⁶ Shadbolt changed the name to Connolly in both the play and the film at the request of the Malone family; see the *NZ Listener*, 7 June 1980, p. 11; the entry on *Once on Chunuk Bair*, the film in Sam Edward and Helen Martin, *New Zealand Film: 1912-1996* (Oxford University Press: Melbourne, 1997), p. 158.

Shadbolt changed facts about Malone's identity and command in order to further exaggerate the stand-off between the British command and the Fernleaves: by contrast to Malone, who was English-born with an Irish father, Connolly is identified as an Irishman in order to be more easily aligned with anti-British sentiment.⁴⁷ He implies a hostile relationship between Connolly and the British General Stopfort in preference to the real one with Malone's New Zealand-born Brigadier General Johnston, who commanded the New Zealand Infantry Brigade's operations at Gallipoli and was responsible for the attack on Chunuk Bair. Malone had refused to obey orders from Johnston in sending his men in to take the heights during the daytime, for which he earned their undivided loyalty; in the play this conflict is underplayed, although the film version makes more of it.⁴⁸ Finally, there is the controversial detail that the British were responsible for his hero's death, that a misdirected salvo from a British destroyer in the harbour hit Connolly's trench. Shadbolt also turns to James's history for this vital fact, that the coup de grace is delivered by the allies, not the New Zealand artillery battery (as Pugsley claims), nor the nameless Turks from their positions on Hill Q and Battleship Hill. James quotes the eyewitness, General Hastings, saying that he saw 'a warship approach the shore, "at a great pace", turn and open fire'.⁴⁹ Shadbolt's dialogue echoes this:

SMILER: That British warship, colonel.

CONNOLLY: Let it bloody sink.

SMILER: It's swung around. Side on.

[...]

CONNOLLY: Token show. Typical. No Turks in sight. There it goes. The flash. First salvo. There. (p. 99)

⁴⁷ Cooper, 'Nation of Heroes, Nation of Men', p. 91-2.

⁴⁸ The hostile relations between Malone and Johnston and Malone's superior officer, A.C. Temperley, who discredited him for allegedly siting his trenches on the reverse (not the front) side of the hill, are well documented; see Jock Vennell, *Man of Iron: the Extraordinary Story of New Zealand WWI Hero Lieutenant-Colonel Malone* (Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 2015), pp. 165-72, 185-91; John Tonkin-Covell, 'The New Zealand Battle for Chunuk Bair', pp. 145-47; Bennett, 'Men Alone and Men Together', pp. 52-53, points out that Shadbolt aimed to rehabilitate Malone's reputation.

⁴⁹ James, *Gallipoli*, p. 286; Pugsley, *Gallipoli*, p. 300; cf David W. Cameron, *The August Offensive at Anzac 1915* (Big Sky Publishing: Canberra, 2011), p. 102, who agrees with James.

In adapting this version to his script Shadbolt emphatically redefines the enemy and the arena of conflict.

Shadbolt broadens and diversifies his heroic recreation of Malone's patriotism with a debate on the merits of pacifism versus war, familiar from the anti-Vietnam protests of the 1970s, and so likely to appeal to members of his audience who had lived through that era, complicating this with political and class tensions. The character Frank South is a political radical who has refused a commission because he believes war is part of a capitalist conspiracy, but he enlists in order to support his younger, inexperienced brother Fred.⁵⁰ In confessing that he was not enough of a hero to stay at home and face that reality, and in his drive to get off the hilltop when the men's fate becomes apparent, Frank represents an alternative 'pacifist' ideology to the glorious sacrifice of war. A second debate, stemming from Malone's manifesto of self-sufficiency, between whether to opt for national independence or continue supporting international alliances, was one that would reverberate later in the 1980s over New Zealand's rejection of the Australian and New Zealand and United States (ANZUS) Security Treaty: Shadbolt perceived this coincidence when commenting in 1987 that the play is about 'New Zealand being bullied by larger nations and finally left in the lurch'.⁵¹ The voice of political conservatism in the play is that of Lieutenant Harkness, whose classical learning speaks of a private education (Christ's College) and of being out of touch with the reality of war. His loyal but misguided belief that empire has a civilizing mission and that the motherland will remember the colonial sacrifice — 'They won't leave us in the lurch sir, they can't let the Empire down, sir. They would never forgive themselves' (p. 58) —

⁵⁰ Shadbolt developed this episode from the family history of the actor Terence Bayler, whose uncle was killed in the Chunuk Bair campaign, and whose father, inspired by Bayler's uncle's efforts, also joined up. In the April 2005 'Digger and Larrikin' Conference held by the Menzies Centre of Australian Studies, Kings College, University of London, The New Zealand Studies Association and Morley College, London, at the Imperial War Museum in London (at which an earlier version of this paper was given), Bayler spoke about this.

⁵¹ Shadbolt, Interview with Philip Mann, *Illusions*, p. 15; on ANZUS see Robinson, 'Remembering the Past', pp. 270-76.

contrasts with Connolly's assertions of national independence which can be read in terms of subsequent political events leading to Prime Minister Lange's breaking of the ANZUS pact in 1985 and New Zealand's decision to take an independent anti-nuclear stance in the South Pacific.⁵²

The play's reassertion of a 'heroic' nationalism, therefore, can be mapped onto contemporary and later developments in New Zealand foreign policy and national responses to New Zealand's newly independent position on the world stage. It is dramatized by the soldiers' demotic vernacular, their seditious comments and anti-imperialism, and acted out through Harkness's shift of attitude. Like a weather vane, upon witnessing the men's courage, Harkness is persuaded to Connolly's patriotic view that failure creates a new nobility, so anticipating future generations' acclaim of their heroic sacrifice. This leads to Shadbolt's second symbolic coup, Connolly's renaming of Chunuk Bair as New Zealand: this anticipates Australasian claims that Anzac Cove is a sacred space of 'home' because of the buried (often anonymous) dead:

HARKNESS: It was the men, sir. They wouldn't give up. Even the badly wounded. They tried not to cry out, so we... No other word sir. Heroes.

CONNOLLY: Whoever loved a land without them, eh?

HARKNESS: (*only half comprehending*). Yes, sir.

CONNOLLY: We'll call this New Zealand. (p. 83)

III. *Once on Chunuk Bair: A Play for Our Times?*

Shadbolt's comment that *Once on Chunuk Bair* 'is only ostensibly about New Zealand's fatal day on Chunuk Bair on August 8, 1915. It was really about New Zealanders — and New Zealand — seventy years on', has found general agreement: the play speaks more to its contemporary moment than to the events it commemorates.⁵³ The 1970s was an era in which the Anzac mythology was in abeyance due to the rise of anti-Vietnam protest, widespread hostility to war in general and New

⁵² Shadbolt, *Once on Chunuk Bair*, p. 58; Philippa Mein Smith, *A Concise History of New Zealand*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), pp. 226-36.

⁵³ McLeod, *Gallipoli*, 120; Robinson, 'Remembering the Past', p. 269; Shadbolt, Interview with Philip Mann, *Illusions*, p. 15.

Zealand's decolonisation, the latter following the severing of economic and political ties of empire after Britain joined the European Economic Community in 1973. This betrayal is hinted at in the play by Connolly's image of 'Mother' England prostituting herself, as 'whoring off after the highest price' (pp. 84-5).⁵⁴ As in Australia, the nation was still searching for appropriate new symbols and images to identify its changed status, ones that would have an enduring stamp. The revisionary scholarship, reinvestigation of military history, and publication of soldiers' written experiences in the war that might have provided a stronger academic infrastructure in developing national responses to Anzac during this transition did not emerge until the mid 1980s with the vanguard study by Pugsley.⁵⁵ Yet it is indicative of the power of the national myth that other cultural representations had been so potent: the experimental play, *Gallipoli*, performed nationally and in Europe in 1974-75, was the most compelling of the seven-year repertoire of the Wellington-based theatre company, Amamus. Written by Paul Maunder, the play challenged the received Gallipoli mythology, revealing the Kiwi soldier, allegorized as an image of the nation, as a vulnerable victim figure, while also reflecting the contemporary interests of the actors and, in its orientation, the pacifist leanings of that era.⁵⁶

Shadbolt's heroic glorification of Gallipoli as the birthplace of the new nation and source of national pride offered a more robust and independent version of New Zealand identity than Maunders' *Gallipoli* in relation to the spectacular failure of the campaign. *Once on Chunuk Bair* has subsequently been a reference point for politicians, historians and educators. It struck a chord

⁵⁴ Cooper, 'Nation of Heroes, Nation of Men', p. 94; see the discussion in Judith Dale, 'Interrogating Identity in New Zealand Stage Plays' in *Postcolonial Cultures and Literatures: Modernity and the (un)Commonwealth* (New York: Peter Lang, 2002), pp. 322-23.

⁵⁵ See, for example, Jock Phillips, Nicholas Boyack and E.P. Malone, *The Great Adventure: New Zealand Soldiers Describe the Great War* (Allen and Unwin: Wellington, 1988).

⁵⁶ Bennett, 'Men Alone and Together', pp. 51-52; Murray Edmond, 'Re-membering the Remembering Body: "Autonomous Theatre" in New Zealand', *Performing Aotearoa: New Zealand Theatre and Drama in an Age of Transition*, ed. Marc Mauford and David O'Donnell (Peter Lang: Brussels, 2009), pp. 45-68 (58-63).

at a time of swelling nationalism in the 1980s, an era of social dissent, national tensions and uprisings, as small circles and organisations that had been nascent in the 1960s and 1970s — women’s anti-war groups, religious and faith groups, the anti-nuclear protest movement, politically active Maori, and numbers of middle-class Pakeha sympathisers — emerged, uniting against the status quo and the conservative politics associated with political and economic protectionism. Heightened social tensions over the 1981 Springbok Tour at home were followed by other controversies and assertions of national independence. In particular the growing protest movement against French bomb-testing in the Pacific gained greater force in the mid-1980s following the French sinking of the Greenpeace vessel *The Rainbow Warrior*; seen as an act of international terrorism after revelations of foul play by French spies, this event and its consequences affected international relations. Fuelling the Lange government’s hostility to American nuclear intervention it contributed to New Zealand’s increasing alienation from the USA over nuclear imperialism in the Pacific and its eventual breaking of the ANZUS Treaty.

In the centennial year of the tragedy of *Chunuk Bair*, however, the question becomes not so much whether the play can be read only as a product of its era — of New Zealand’s emergent nationalism of the 1980s — but how its future life will depend on new understandings and interpretations of the Anzac myth as a dominant myth of nationhood. The foundational importance of the myth, reasserted in the 1980s, has acquired greater impact in the new millennium. Re-evaluations of Anzac by historians as a white settler creation myth for Australia (and by extension New Zealand), include for many the recognition of Anzac Day as both countries’ national day — superseding Australia Day and Waitangi Day;⁵⁷ this suggests that the play’s dramatisation of this illustrious mythology will always guarantee it a canonical place. Yet the ambivalence, hierarchies and exclusions in Shadbolt’s handling of the myth remain: those who see Anzac as *the* nationally defining myth—in the current wave of commemoration and memorialisation —might conclude

⁵⁷ Mein Smith, *A Concise History of New Zealand*, pp. 133, 134; Jenny McLeod, *Gallipoli*, p. 4. On the myth’s different meanings see Harper, pp. 27-33.

that his version is little more than propaganda for a nationalism that reduces the founding concept of New Zealand identity to a few hours on a hill. For although the play suggests that every nation needs its heroes, the anti-war message of the ending that undercuts Malone's heroics—'we see all, not monumentally, not in the light of legend [...] we see all as desolation and death' (p. 101)—implicitly asks whether Connolly and his comrades, sacrifices to war, are the *only* heroes we need. Connolly's conviction that the Fernleaves will become legends of the new nation, couched in the divisive rhetoric of battle—'Can't you see? We're not doing it for them [i.e. the British]. Not any more. We're doing it for ourselves' (p. 81)—implies that the imperial war had become the New Zealanders' private struggle for self-definition.

Furthermore the play's exclusions besides those of gender, the fate of British troops—the 8th Welsh, who were slaughtered on an adjacent hill on the Wellington's southern right flank, the 7th Gloucesters, left leaderless on the left side of the Wellington Battalion—and the Australians who were cut to ribbons at Lone Pine and the Nek, are more stark when examined from the vantage point of new historical analyses and recently published accounts of soldiers' diaries and letters. That the one campaign which failed, allegedly due to the tragic miscalculations of British high command, should be considered as representative of a dawning of the nation's identity, might have been of limited appeal even in the 1980s. A more fitting social vision for that era, one that initiated Pakeha reflection on and reassessment of the colonial past as well as a radical reconstruction of race relations, appeared in Keri Hulme's *the bone people* published only two years after *Once on Chunuk Bair*. Hulme's novel was at first acclaimed for its inclusive vision as heralding the new bicultural society of Aotearoa/New Zealand; the first two print runs quickly sold out, although Hulme was later criticized by C.K. Stead for accepting the Pegasus Award for Maori Writers, and the scenes of child abuse were problematic to other readers. Today when so many other strands to the country's nationalism are recognized than in 1982, the question is, Will the play endure the test of new and different interpretations of the myth?

Shadbolt reproduces the tensions and contestations of national identity within New Zealand while alluding to myths and legends of heroic endeavor. His social microcosm shows different positions on the social spectrum correlated to various mythological and historical pasts: the imperially-inclined Harkness, inspired by the view of the Dardanelles from the top of the ridge, like Peach in *The Lovelock Version* (p. 515), recalls the Persian Xerxes and his bridge of boats marching out of Asia (p. 37); Malone is associated with colonial history and breaking in the land, but as the end approaches increasingly with the Greek heroes, Achilles and Hector; the Maori, Otaki George, who has touches base with the Otagos, Canterburys, and Aucklanders before finding his way to the Wellingtons, and so is a representative figure of the nation, is a descendant of Te Rauparaha, leader of Ngati Toa, legendary warriors of the 19th-century New Zealand Wars. As in *The Lovelock Version* Shadbolt draws together different mythological strands into his new myth based on the communal endeavor of fighting for a cause, and the men's social, ethnic and political differences are subsumed in the democratic embrace of death. Otaki George's comments on the institution of racism are relegated to the past, the Marxist, imperial, and pacifist tensions represented by Frank South, Harkness and Connolly, are resolved in Harkness's conversion and Frank's decision to stay on; while the fraternal ties between Fred and Frank are severed with the younger man's liberation into independence and death in the final shared moments of comradeship and sacrifice.

In his arrival at this communal vision the possibility cannot be dismissed that Shadbolt, inspired by the Gallipoli mythology, turned to *The Lovelock Version* with its embrace of many New Zealand myths, as a springboard, expanded the novel's episode with a wider cast of characters and introduced contemporary debates about the status and meaning of war, commemoration and nationalism; he sharpened the dialogue, developed Malone's heroic stature, and used melodrama and catharsis; he drew on an earlier history of Gallipoli, one that suited his ambition to retell the myth; and was able to justify the approximations of his legend-making by

the Australian heritage of yarns and anecdotes, and the enormous popularity of Weir's *Gallipoli*: all of this enabled him to establish the critical distance needed for a 'living memorial'. Certainly the play's tightly developed, binary framework, terse dialogue, pathos and memorializing effects all benefit from the stark moral structure provided by Shadbolt's interpretation of the myth.

Once on Chunuk Bair, as one of the few late 20th-century recreations of the Gallipoli campaign, has undoubtedly been seen as a key text, and hence Shadbolt himself has been seen as intervening in New Zealand's history of the early 1980s; that is, in developing a dramatized enactment of a little-known episode in New Zealand's military history he acted as an agent of communal cultural memory, creating and answering an imagined need by fostering a new commemorative mode of cultural nationalism.⁵⁸ The play, therefore, might be seen as providing continuity between the 1970s, the period of the myth's unpopularity, and the revival of Anzac's core meaning since the 1990s.⁵⁹ Furthermore, like the film *Gallipoli*, it suggests that the growth of national identity related to a tract of land in another hemisphere is not as disjunctive as it seems;⁶⁰ Connolly's proclamation of a new sacred site for the nation anticipates the Turkish renaming of Ari Burnu beach as Anzac Cove in 1985, and the current revival of the Gallipoli myth as central to an 'off shore' expansion of New Zealand's nationalism, marked by younger generations of New Zealanders travelling to Turkey for the Anzac Dawn services there each year and the forging of closer ties with the Turks.

Finally, how Shadbolt's play might be read in today's climate of remembrance may be influenced by the different understandings of the place of the Anzac myth in the national imaginary. To some historians this has involved a distortion of the bigger picture, namely that of New Zealand's prolonged dependence on Britain, sustained by participation in the Second World War with Australia, and the traumatic period of readjustment following Britain's departure in

⁵⁸ Bennett, 'Men Alone and Men Together', p. 53.

⁵⁹ McLeod, *Gallipoli*, p. 123.

⁶⁰ Dale, 'Interrogating Identity in New Zealand Stage Plays', p. 325.

1973. The perception of distance and difference from Britain that emerged in 1915 did not amount to a collective sense of national independence; for although criticism, if not hostility, was voiced by many Kiwi soldiers towards the perceived failures of the British handling of the Gallipoli campaign such dissent never filtered through to the public. According to Nicholas Boyack opposition remained contained within a colonial framework and did not amount to cultural independence.⁶¹ Robin Prior has pointed out the risk of over-mythologizing, moreover, in arguing that the only country to emerge as a nation from the World War One battles was Turkey and this took a decade, and that the sentimental attribution of national identity to deeds on the battlefield has stood in the way of reaching a proper understanding of why the campaign failed so disastrously.⁶² Nevertheless, Shadbolt's monumental drama was first performed at another crucial time in the development of national identity and very likely triggered growth of sentiment about Gallipoli.⁶³ Its recreation of the tragedy and voicing of national feeling during the 1980s underpin the success of the first production, while the play's renewed relevance in the current commemorations of World War One has made it worthy of further attention. Along with Christopher Pugsley's 1984 history, the TVNZ documentary *Gallipoli: the New Zealand Story*, the *Voices of Gallipoli* project and the 1991 film, *Once on Chunuk Bair*, it has increased public understanding of what the campaign was actually about, confirming the Gallipoli myth's place as

⁶¹ Nicholas Boyack, *Behind the Lines: The Lives of New Zealand Soldiers in the First World War* (Wellington and Sydney: Allen and Unwin and Port Nicholson Press, 1989), pp. 58-61. For a range of Gallipoli soldiers' memories see Christopher Pugsley and Charles Ferrall, *Remembering Gallipoli: Interviews with New Zealand Gallipoli Veterans* (Victoria University Press: Wellington, 2015), pp. 205-08.

⁶² Robin Prior, *Gallipoli, The End of the Myth* (Harvard, 2009), p. xvi.

⁶³ Robinson, 'Remembering the Past, Thinking of the Present', pp. 275-76, says the revival of the Gallipoli myth was led by elites before the popular resurgence from 1990; Harry Ricketts and Charles Ferrall, 'Introduction', *How We Remember: New Zealanders and the First World War*, p. 13.

a cornerstone of the national identity, to be told and retold according to every generation's need for myths that bind people together and to their past.

