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BACHELOR THESIS:

National Identity in Australia
An Analysis of the Anzac Legend

6 MAY 2013

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Abstract

"National Identity in Australia – an Analysis of the Anzac Legend"

The aim of this paper is to investigate how the Anzac legend as a Marshall myth has shaped (and is still shaping) Australian national identity. Thus, through an analysis of four cases related to Anzac, the paper will be able to reach conclusions. The four cases are: Anzac Day, Memorials and honour avenues, Pilgrimage and Rebirth in the media and other discourses. The theories used to conduct the analysis are Benedict Anderson’s Imagined Communities, Eric Hobsbawm’s Invented Traditions and Michael Billig’s Hot and Banal Nationalism. These theorists are all specialists within nationalism and national identity. Furthermore, when handling a topic like the Anzac legend, it is also important to take a look at the historical context and debates. Australia is a rather young nation, albeit with a complex and significant history. That part of the paper lays the groundwork for understanding dynamics of Anzac in the past, present and future.

Anzac Day is an example of an invented tradition because it is a formalisation and ritualisation of a historical event. The event is the landing of Australian soldiers at the Gallipoli Peninsula in 1915. Furthermore, Anzac Day is also an example of hot nationalism because it is emotionally charged and because many people regard the day as Australia’s real national day. The memorials and honour avenues are depicted by many scholars as being holy and sacred – a great deal of religiousness surrounds them. The memorials and honour avenues embrace history in a specific way. They are part of establishing community and solidarity in the population. Also, these places of memory serve as banal nationalism because they are reminders of the story. Pilgrimages to Gallipoli establish a kind of membership of a group and they symbolise social cohesion among those who went, and therefore they are invented traditions. The media plays a huge part in establishing the Anzac legend and keeping it alive. Politicians who are often quoted in the media also show great sympathy towards the concept of Anzac and some even argue that the Anzac legend has been used to legitimise Australian war participation.

The paper concludes that the Anzac legend clearly affects Australian national identity, indeed if looking at the four cases. The paper establishes that such a narrative is important to the population in order for them to understand the history of their nation and to believe in the nation, even though some scholars believe that the Anzac legend should not lay the founda-
tion for national identity in Australia. Within the scopes of the paper, only interpretations of politicians’ rhetoric have been possible. The rhetoric is very praising of nature, however it cannot establish whether Anzac has been used to legitimise contemporary wars.

The analysis of the Anzac legend in Australia can be put into a perspective by looking at Denmark. This nation’s modern military history began by participation in the two coalition wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. Similar to Australian forces, Danish soldiers fight on foreign grounds thousands of kilometres away. Similar to Australian soldiers, Danish soldiers from Armadillo are depicted as heroes in the media. This might signal that the Armadillo story has potential of becoming a modern Marshall myth in Denmark, however in a smaller scale than the Anzac legend.

Key words: Marshall myth, Anzac legend, Australia, National identity

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Introduction

“This is the legend of Anzac, and it belongs to every Australian” (Gillard 2012). This is what Prime Minister of Australia Julia Gillard said in a speech on 25 April 2012. She was standing on Turkish ground at Anzac Cove on the Gallipoli Peninsula while giving a dawn service speech on Anzac Day. The speech generally honoured and glorified the Australian soldiers of the World War 1, the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps, from which the acronym ANZAC is generated. The Anzac legend has great influence on how Australians think about themselves as a nation, and thus on the shaping of their national identity (Macintyre 2004: 158). The Anzac legend can be characterised as a so-called Marshall myth. This is a myth created in connection to a war or wars fought by heroes of the nation and such myth can be a vital part in defining the nation (Clausen 2013). Such myths are interesting in an Australian context, as the wars Australia has participated in most often have taken place in far away places.

This paper will investigate how the Anzac legend has shaped Australian national identity and what have been the most influential factors. The paper will look at different phenomena within the field of the Anzac legend, both the older phenomena Anzac Day and Memorials and honour avenues, and the newer phenomena Pilgrimages and Rebirth in the media. This way I will find out how the legend has impacted (and is impacting) Australian national identity. Finally, the paper will seek to answer the question of why it is important to debate Marshall myths and what significance they might have in forming national identities in other contexts than Australia.

First, the paper will start by giving an outline of its theoretical base: Benedict Anderson’s Imagined Communities, Eric Hobsbawm’s Invention of Tradition and Michael Billig’s Hot and Banal Nationalism. These theories are included in order to be able to understand and define the dynamics of nationalism and national identity. Second, the paper will provide the historical context to lay the groundwork for a deeper understanding of the Anzac legend in Australia. Third, making use of the theories and the historical context the paper will proceed to an academic analysis of the selected cases, based on scholarly work in the field. This will finally help to shed light on in what ways the Anzac legend has shaped (and is shaping) Australian national identity. It will also raise the question to what extent the rebooted Anzac legend in Australia has led to a political militarisation of society as some of the critical scholars argue (Reynolds and Lake 2010: 158). This will be put into perspective by looking at similar trends in Denmark.
Method

The method used is mainly hermeneutic: I do not attempt to reach definitive truths; however, I seek to understand a specific phenomenon in relation to society and the people who live in it. To do this I will make use of the hermeneutic circle: “The hermeneutic circle expresses […] a general view that all understanding is circular. That is, all understanding consists of shedding light on the smaller parts on the ground of the whole, and shedding light on the whole on the grounds of the smaller parts” (Holm 2011: 86-87 – my translation). This method will help me to reach a better and deeper understanding, but at the same time it leaves me with a number of unanswered questions. The paper starts out with a certain understanding of a phenomenon; however, in order to reach a deeper understanding there is a need for investigation of the smaller parts, that is the particular cases. From a philosophy of science point of view this paper can be placed within social constructivism because reality “is something we create together. We do that through our interactions and through the way we talk about reality” (Ibid: 137 – my translation), and that fits very well to the Anzac legend.

Literature and limitations

The literature used in order to write this paper consists of works by highly respected scholars within the field. Mads Clausen, Assistant Professor at Aarhus University, suggested me to look for these scholars in my literature search. Lake’s and Reynolds’ What’s Wrong with Anzac? (2010) has been great inspiration in the writing process, and the book is a good source when discussing the resurgence of the Anzac legend. Moreover, Inglis’ Sacred Places (2005) and Seal’s articles ANZAC: The Sacred in the Secular (2007) and ‘...and in the morning…’: Adapting and Adopting the Dawn Service (2011) have been very useful in parts of the analysis. Also the discussions between McKenna and Ward in ‘It was really moving, mate’: The Gallipoli Pilgrimage and Sentimental Nationalism in Australia (2007) and Scates in The first casualty of war: A reply to McKenna’s and Ward’s ‘Gallipoli Pilgrimage and Sentimental Nationalism’ (2007) have been interesting to involve. Finally, PhD student Jo Hawkins from University of Western Australia advised me to take a look at Stephens (2009) and West (2008), which I also used in my analysis. The rest of the literature I accessed via the State Library in Aarhus and the search databases provided.

Writing a paper with a maximum of 25 pages certainly poses limitations to what can be included. Maurice Halbwachs’ theory on Collective Memory would have been interesting to investigate in depth in connection to the Anzac legend. However, I prioritised to include three
more contemporary theorists, also very relevant to the topic of this paper. Halbwachs is, however, mentioned through West (2008) to shed light on a particular detail in the section on pilgrimages. Also, the aspect of ‘mateship’ would have been interesting to examine, but I estimated that it would be too huge a case that might require one whole paper for itself. Therefore I chose to leave it out to be able to include all four cases mentioned above, which will give a nuanced and deep understanding of the Anzac legend.

**Relevance**

The topic of this paper is highly relevant to the world we live in. What has happened (and is still happening) in Australia is the creation of a Marshall myth. The reason why this is important to people outside of Australia is that similar tendencies can be observed in other countries, such as Denmark. During the last decade Danish troops have participated in the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq after a long tradition of relative neutrality. Just like the Anzacs, Danish troops have been deployed in far away places. It is interesting to examine if and to what extent Danish national identity can possibly be influenced by some kind of Marshall myth like the Anzac legend in the future. Danish soldiers who were stationed at the base Armadillo in Afghanistan have been referred to as heroes and the base itself has emotional significance (Politiken 2012). Therefore, the tendencies we have seen (and are seeing) in Australia in relation to the Anzac legend may also be tendencies we will see in Denmark in the future.

**Definitions**

For the sake of definition and clarification, and even though the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps may be abbreviated as ANZAC I will follow the everyday usage in writing ‘Anzac’ in lower case in order to follow most historians’ and authors’ practices. (E.g. Lake and Reynolds: viii). I will furthermore use ‘Anzac legend’, ‘Anzac myth’ and ‘Anzac’ as synonyms. ‘Anzac spirit’ is another term, which in this paper will denote the relations between soldiers, whereas ‘Anzac legend’ concerns the narrative or story.

**Theory**

**Benedict Anderson**

Benedict Anderson uses the term, imagined communities as a very central one. All communities are imagined in his mind. Anderson ponders on Marxism and its influence on the notion of nation and he says, “since World War II every successful revolution has defined itself in
national terms – the People’s Republic of China […], and so forth” (Anderson 1991: 2). Nationalism has thus been central when fundamental structural changes in a country take places. He argues that the ‘nation’ is something, which has always existed and has had influence on society, but the ‘nation’ is also one of the most difficult notions to define. Also, the ‘nation’ is not something that is vanishing; on the contrary it is “the most universally legitimate value in the political life of our time” (Ibid: 3). Anderson assumes that the ‘nation’ is some kind of a cultural phenomenon understood in a way that it exists on the basis of events and social conditions: “nationality, […] nation-ness, as well as nationalism, are cultural artefacts of a particular kind. To understand them properly we need to consider carefully how they have come into historical being, […] and why, today, they command such profound emotional legitimacy” (Ibid: 4). Therefore, history is very significant and it plays a huge role when working with nationalism. One have to look at what events have taken place in the past and what particular tendencies have been present in the particular country during a longer period of time. This gives better premises in order to understand the dynamics and where the country or nation is moving.

Anderson chooses to define the ‘nation’ as something that “is an imagined political community – and imagined as both inherently, limited and sovereign” (Ibid: 6). The community is imagined because it is something we in solidarity have decided. Anderson finds the fact that the ‘nation’ “is imagined as limited” (Ibid: 7) important, because there are clear-cut limits for where the nation’s boundaries are, that is the borders. Anderson also explains the notion of sovereignty. A nation is sovereign, because “the concept was born in an age in which Enlightenment and Revolution were destroying the legitimacy of the divinely-ordained, hierarchical dynastic realm” (Ibid: 7). This lies well in line with Hobsbawm’s theory of invented traditions, because he argues that a lot of new traditions were invented after the revolutions and the age of the Enlightenment. The paper will examine Hobsbawm below. People needed new ideas and norms to believe in after the power of the church declined in the Enlightenment. Anderson furthermore says that the community is also a community, understood in the way that “the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship” (Ibid: 7), even though a lot of different people belong to it. And this lays the ground for a lot of conflicts around the world – that people are willing to die “for such limited imaginings” (Ibid: 7). The community is imagined, because you cannot know everyone in your nation, you can only imagine that these people believe in the same values as yourself and that they also imagine a
community. Only if the majority are willing to imagine and believe in a particular community, it can exist.

**Eric Hobsbawm**

When talking about how the Anzac legend has influenced national identity in Australia, it is highly relevant to involve Eric Hobsbawm and his theory of inventing traditions. Hobsbawm and Anderson move in the same fields, because they both developed theories that conceptualise something that is created and constructed by humans, i.e. ‘invention’ and ‘imagining’.

Hobsbawm’s focus is that humans invent traditions in order to fill a void created by “the nineteenth-century liberal ideology of social change” (Hobsbawm 1983: 8). These changes provoked inventing new traditions. Hobsbawm defines what exactly is meant by ‘inventing traditions’, and it “is essentially a process of formalization and ritualization, characterized by reference to the past, if only by imposing repetition” (Ibid: 4). The past is thus important, just like Anderson emphasises the importance of history. One might argue that when you refer to the past – that is, events in history – it gives a deeper validity to what is talked about or discussed. Furthermore, this relation to society and history, Hobsbawm notes that the invention of traditions is expected “to occur more frequently when a rapid transformation of society weakens or destroys the social patterns for which ‘old’ traditions had been designed” (Ibid: 4). In connection of the topic of this assignment, the rapid transformation is the World War 1, which was the first war Australia participated in as a new nation.

Hobsbawm identifies three types of invented traditions: (1) “those establishing or symbolizing social cohesion or the membership of groups, real or artificial communities”, (2) “those establishing or legitimizing institutions, status or relations of authority” and (3) “those whose main purpose was socialization, the inculcation of beliefs, value systems and conventions of behaviour” (Ibid: 9). The first type can be said to be the most significant one, because it connects to ‘nation’ or ‘nationality’ the most – it is about identification with a community. Hobsbawm writes about the difference between old and invented traditions and practices. Old traditions are the most binding whereas the invented ones tend to be rather undefined and unclear. However, why do these invented traditions mean so much in society? The answer to this question, according to Hobsbawm, is the use of symbols that connects the people to the nation, as for an example a flag, the national anthem and a national emblem. These are signs created in order to symbol a ‘membership’ of the nation and Hobsbawm says that “(t)heir sig-
Significance lay precisely in their undefined universality” (Ibid: 10-11). Consequently, invented traditions are universal, but still undefined.

Even though some traditions are ill defined or not really as significant as some old traditions are, some of the new and invented traditions are very strong: “There is no real sign of weakening in the neo-traditional practices associated either with bodies of men in the public service (armed forces) [...] or in practices associated with the citizens’ membership of states” (Ibid: 11-12). This means that the theory of invented traditions is particularly relevant to investigate in relation to the topic of this assignment.

Michael Billig

Michael Billig examines two components of nationalism. His main focus is the ‘banal nationalism’ that often leaves the spotlight in favour of the ‘hot nationalism’. Billig looks at nationalism mainly as an ideology: “nationalism is broadened as a concept to cover the ways that established nation-states are routinely reproduced” (Billig 1995: 16). Billig points out through the theories of Bakhtin, that the language plays a significant role for the nation: “forms of consciousness were constituted through language” (Ibid: 17) and to this he uses Belgium as an example. Belgium might be as well three different countries, because three different languages are spoken. The language is therefore a good indicator of the boundaries to the nation. Billig emphasizes through quotes from Gellner, that nationalism has actually emerged after the rise of national states and that all kinds of national feeling and “patriotic loyalty” (Ibid: 19) are phenomena that have arisen recently. For an example in the Middle Ages, no one knew of national states. This is similar to what both Anderson and Hobsbawm talk about – that nationalism is a rather new phenomenon, even though it may be hard to understand for many people in the contemporary world. A national feeling must and can only be created if the majority of the population agree on it.

Billig defines hot and banal nationalism. Hot nationalism is the ‘ordinary’ way to speak of nationalism. This kind of nationalism is “extraordinary, politically charged and emotionally driven” (Ibid: 44) and it emerges when the nation feels threatened, or when it feels proud about being a nation, for instance on national days. Billig finds national days quite significant, because these kinds of days ‘flag’ the nationhood – that is hot nationalism. When we make such a big event out of a specific thing to for an example commemorate fallen soldiers on Anzac Day, it helps remembering the specific event the rest of the year. However, in the 364 other days of the year, the banal nationalism takes over.
Banal nationalism is the nationalism of every day life, and Billig argues that this kind of nationalism is often forgotten when talking about a nation – the hot nationalism generally gets more attention, but he believes that “it would seem more likely that the identity is part of a more banal way of life in the nation-state” (Ibid: 46) and that ‘ waved flags’ are not the only factors that sustain “what is loosely called national identity” (Ibid: 45). It is thus not only on national days that the population are affected by nationalism. The citizens do not forget the nation they live in, just because there is no ‘ waved flags’ around to remind them. The banal nationalism shows in situations and places that we do not really notice. Billig refers to symbols within banal nationalism as ‘ unwaved flags’, which can be symbols such as a national flag on flagpoles in the streets that we see every day, however it can also be a lot of other things reminding the people of the nation they live in. These symbols are “banal reminders of nationhood” (Ibid: 41). According to Billig these symbols are thus more important than earlier anticipated, and national identities are formed both via the hot and the banal nationalism.

**Historical context**

**Australia’s history – an overview**

Compared to other nations, especially in Europe, the history of Australia is rather short. The first British convicts landed in the newly established British colony New South Wales in 1788 in order serve their sentences (Australian Government 2010). Many people forget, though, that the indigenous population of Australia, the Aborigines, is said to be one of the oldest populations and cultures in the world living on the continent we know as Australia for about 75,000 years (Staff, 2011). If looked at it this way, Australian history goes far back. On the face of it, the history from 1788 onwards is not that difficult to uncover. However, that is not the case in Australia. Over the years the famous ‘History Wars’ have dominated the scholarly scene within Australian history (Manne, 2009). These ‘wars’ or debates mainly concern the discussions on the indigenous population and how white settlers treated them. Some argue that the Aborigines were dispossessed and mistreated and others argue that it never happened (Søndergaard 2012: 5). Another area, which has been a source of similar debates and ‘wars’, is the military history of Australia and in particular the area concerning the Anzac legend. That will be the main concern of this paper.
The landing at the Gallipoli Peninsula

The acronym ANZAC was used to describe “the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps soldiers who landed on the Gallipoli Peninsula in Turkey early on the morning of 25 April 1915 during the First World War (1914-1918)” (ANZAC Day Commemoration Committee of Queensland, 2013). The Australian soldiers were sent there to support the British Army during the Gallipoli campaign. This was natural because of the two nations’ connections via the Commonwealth. The fights against the Turks at the landing were bloody, but the Anzac troops held their positions for eight months, after which they had to withdraw. This military defeat, however, ended up becoming a moral victory (West 2008: 258, footnote 1).

The Australian soldiers have come to signify certain qualities of the settler society, which Australia is, such as resourcefulness and willingness and the term ‘digger’ is widely used about these soldiers “harking back to the egalitarian fraternity of the goldfields” (MacIntyre 2004: 158). Thus, a glorifying and praising picture was painted of the Anzac soldiers from the beginning. Anzac Day is one of the most important days in Australia, and therefore it has almost replaced Australia Day, as Australia’s ‘real’ national day and every year on 25 April, thousands of veterans march through the big towns and cities in order to commemorate the heroes of the World War 1, and to commemorate those who fell in all the other wars Australia has taken part in. Anzac Day combines commemoration and celebration “into one great spectacle of nation” (Seal 2011: 50) and to many it makes more sense to celebrate this day Australia Day. The paper will return to this later. The fact that Anzac is a Marshall myth makes it strong and brings the population together. Oppenheimer and Scates note “It [the Gallipoli landing] was once ‘Australia’s baptism of fire’, ‘the birthplace of a nation’ and proof that ‘British stock’ (of dubious convict antecedents for Australia at least) had not altogether degenerated in the colonies” (Oppenheimer and Scates, 2005: 137). The landing was looked upon (and is still looked upon) as being a time in which Australia formed its identity as an independent nation, and a big part of the national narrative in Australia comes from the Anzac legend. Namely because it was the first big military action Australia as a new nation and newly born federation took part in, it is important (Australian War Memorial 2013) and it thus signals strong values and tales of heroic efforts.

C. E. W. Bean and his critics

Macintyre blames the war correspondents of the time of playing up the ‘diggers’ and their qualities. Australia’s main war correspondent was C. E. W. Bean who Macintyre quotes: “the
wild independent pastoral life of Australia, if it makes rather wild men, makes superb soldiers’” (Macintyre 2004: 159-160). There are numerous examples of how Bean portrayed the soldiers in the war – he was very productive. For example when he describes those returning men with severe disabilities. These soldiers were “carrying on their normal civilian occupations, overcoming their handicaps with extraordinary courage and ingenuity; the loss of one or even two limbs made astonishingly little difference in the civil life of some of these determined men” (Bean 1961: 531 – my underlining). Also, Bean emphasizes that Australia earned the status of being a nation through the actions of World War 1, and all this brought confidence into “Australian national undertakings” (Ibid: 535). The fact that the main war correspondent from Australia depicted the Anzacs like this with very little if any criticism is very significant and therefore it is not strange that the Anzac legend arose very quickly among the population.

This view on the Anzac legend and its soldiers has continued in Australian society and remains to many people just as blessed today as it did for Bean almost a century ago. Other contemporary scholars have criticized Bean for being very romantic in describing the Anzac soldiers and bearing a big part of the responsibility for promoting the romantic narrative about Anzac. Marilyn Lake quotes Bean’s idea “that ‘the consciousness of Australian nationhood was born at Gallipoli’ had become the ‘liturgy of Anzac Day’” (Lake 2010: 15). However, Lake’s opinion is that many historians, among others Bean, make a myth out of what the meaning of the Anzac legend is. She writes that perhaps “it was time to move on from such Imperial myths and proclaim ourselves a free and independent republic, enshrining not militarist values, but the civil and political values of equality and justice” (Ibid: 2). Lake believes thus that everything but military accomplishments should form Australian national identity, and particular people with great influence at the right time got to influence the population of the opposite. However, it is worth noting that such myths may be necessary for the people to have and believe in, in order to cope with the loss of their loved ones.

The starting point of a myth

Some scholars argue that what happened at Gallipoli was the starting point of many myths. One must therefore handle material about Anzac with care and look at it with critical eyes. These myths “have been established through history books and other scholarly work” (Oppenheimer and Scates 2005: 137-138) like Bean’s work, but also other scholars and in particular the media has contributed and is still contributing. For instance, Clarke describes that
the withdrawal and thereby British/Australian defeat affected the attitude towards the war in Australia negatively, but at the same time “the bravery, courage, and endurance of the ANZACs had occasioned considerable pride in Australia, and newspapers carried detailed accounts of the exploits of Australian troops” (Clarke 2002: 105). Thus, what the people heard about the courage and the spirit of the soldiers had much more significance to their attitudes than the fact that Australia had lost a battle. It was after all wartime, and it seems likely that it is easier for a people to keep up the spirit if the lines of thought are positive.

Furthermore, an explanation of why the myths of Anzac have this huge significance is a need to replace the, for some people, very unpleasant debates about indigenous Australians. An example is the colonial galleries in the Australian War Memorial in Canberra in which there are displays on “native uprisings’ in the Sudan and New Zealand, China’s Boxer Rebellion and the Boer War in South Africa, but Australia’s own frontier wars are curiously absent” (Oppenheimer and Scates 2005: 138-139). The Anzac ‘myth’ or ‘legend’ is therefore quite convenient for those people who want to forget the fights at the frontier. It tells a more heroic and praiseworthy story of the settler population in Australia. All in all, the military history of Australia is highly debated and the scholars do not always agree on the signification of particular events. In the next part of the paper the analysis and discussion will seek to find out exactly how the Anzac legend has influenced Australian national identity.

Analysis and discussion

Anzac 1.0

In Anzac 1.0 the paper is going to analyse and discuss the first wave of the Anzac legend, and thus the first signs of how the Anzac legend has formed (and is still forming) Australian national identity. The paper will first investigate Anzac Day which some claim has become a new national day in Australia. Second, it will investigate how the vast numbers of memorials and honour avenues have contributed in forming national identity in Australia.

Anzac Day

‘Sacralisation’

Anzac Day is a very important day to many Australians, and this day has become the unofficial national day in Australia. Therefore it seems reasonable to say that this factor has shaped (and is still shaping) Australian national identity. One of the reasons why is because a ‘sacral-
isation’ has taken place around the whole phenomenon of Anzac. Many scholars work in this field and the words ‘sacred’ and ‘holy’ are very common expressions in their research. Inglis, for instance, notes that Anzac Day “shared elements with a service of religious worship or an army church parade” (Inglis 2005: 209). Moreover, Stephens argues that after the wars “Anzac ceremonies were essentially a substitute funeral” (Stephens 2009: 134). Furthermore, Seal argues that the Anzac rhetoric is particularly significant, because it is highly marked by sacred or religiously related words, such as ‘pilgrimage’, ‘ritual’, and ‘sacrilege’ (Seal 2007: 137). The words used by these scholars quickly make one think of Anzac Day as a religious phenomenon. An example of how important the holiness surrounding Anzac Day is showed already in the 1950s in Alan Seymour’s play The one day of the year published in 1959. This play was rejected by the Adelaide Festival “because they thought that it was an offence to the sacred, a kind of blasphemy” (Inglis, 2005, p. 8). Seymour was only criticising society such as playwrights often do. However, it was highly controversial to write a play that critical about Anzac Day, and thus it was an attack to something regarded as holy.

An invented tradition

Graham Seal sees Anzac as a secular phenomenon. He describes how Anzac is perceived in Australia as “a talismanic mythology powerfully associated with dominant concepts of nation and cultural identity” (Seal 2007:135). It is thus nationalism, albeit it is not easily defined, just as most of the theorists argue when discussing nationalism. The religiousness described above contrasts some of the actual actions going on, on Anzac Day – at least according to Seal: no religious officials were officially represented at the Anzac ceremony Seal refers to (Ibid: 137). This discord between the rhetoric and the event itself is interesting, because it makes the phenomenon harder to define and relate to. Therefore Anzac Day is definitely an invented tradition. Anzac Day is clearly a formalisation and ritualisation of an event in the past – the landing at Gallipoli. Also, Anzac Day is repeated every year with no exception, which is a characteristic that also fits well into Hobsbawm’s theory. Seal says, “Anzac is a conflation of history and myth” (Ibid: 136). It all starts with an event in history, in this case the landing at Gallipoli, which is mythicized through for example pre-existing cultural elements in society and imagined aspects of the particular event. This corresponds quite well to what Anderson talks about. Anderson focuses for instance on events that signal that people are willing to die for their country. Because of this signification, a community become imagined if everyone in it agrees that this case is or was worth dying for. The Anzac legend is a
clear example of such an event. There is a lot of emphasis on the bravery of the Australian soldiers in the discourses connected to Anzac Day. Seal argues, that during periods right after the World War 1 and in the 1960s and the 1970s, Anzac Day was not that popular (Ibid: 135). However, the tradition remained popular enough to survive into the twenty-first century and now it is stronger than ever before.

An unofficial national day

According to McKenna Australians “have embraced the Anzac legend as their most powerful myth of nationhood” in the twenty-first century (McKenna 2010: 111). McKenna takes a critical position in the debates about the way the Anzac legend shapes national identity in Australia. He acknowledges that many people feel that Anzac Day is holy, but he cannot understand why “Australia, a modern pluralist democracy in the twenty-first century, still wish to cling to a nineteenth century concept of nationhood: the belief that a nation can only be truly borne through the spilling of the sacrificial blood of its young” (Ibid: 134). In his mind a Marshall myth like the Anzac legend should not form national identity as much as it does. An example of this is Prime Minister Julia Gillard’s Anzac Day address this year in which she said: “If you want to understand Australians, watch us on ANZAC Day” (Gillard 2013). It is an example of how the hot nationalism takes its form. As Prime Minister she is a strong national symbol, and she has a certain amount of influence and many listeners when she makes a statement like that. She recognizes that Anzac shapes Australians a great deal and that it is a vital part of their identities. And according to her, Australian national identity is formed via the Anzac legend, especially on Anzac Day.

McKenna seeks to find out how Anzac Day has become Australia’s new national day and he finds four plausible explanations. The first and most common explanation is an “urgent need for a ‘civil religion’ in a ‘post-Christian society that no longer delivers ancient certainties to young people who are in search of nourishment for the spirit’” (McKenna 2010: 112). The second explanation is that “a new wave of patriotism in twenty-first century Australia emerged out of the politics of nationalism in the 1980s” (Ibid: 112). The third explanation is the lack of support to Australia Day, the original national day. This day has “no grand design, no savior, and no future martyrs to worship” (Ibid: 114). The fourth explanation is that Australia Day, for many has come to symbolise an invasion and “a day that ushered in the dispossession of the ‘First Australians’” (Ibid: 115) instead of a celebration of the birth of a new nation. McKenna furthermore notes that popular culture, that is writers, filmmakers and
journalists, has performed “narrative surgery” and thus been very influential in reinventing Anzac Day (Ibid: 116). Therefore multiple factors have contributed to build up Anzac Day as something important, and contributed to the invention of a new national day that has become very strong tradition.

**Dawn services**

Dawn services, which are held at memorials in Australian towns and cities and in Gallipoli, on 25 April at dawn, are important parts of the Anzac Day program (Seal 2011: p. 50). These Dawn Services have religious implications to them, especially due to the word, ‘service’. The services are not conducted in the same way at every memorial – they are adapted to local needs and traditions, although, the basic meaning of the services remain the same, which is “the commemoration of Australia’s wartime sacrifice since the Gallipoli landings of 25 April 1915” (Ibid: 51). The dawn services on Anzac Day can be analysed as invented traditions. They have “become the defining emotional custom of nationhood, linking and mediating official and unofficial discourses of nation” (Ibid: 59). The dawn service has become necessary and indispensable to many Australians on Anzac Day. This tradition of having a dawn service has also shown to be able to adapt. The concept has been transferred to other events of commemoration, for instance dawn services are held for the victims of the 2002 Bali bombings (Ibid: 60). This shows how a tradition from one kind of commemoration can be transferred to signal another event that might become a new invented tradition.

Michael Billig talks about the fact that a population have to agree on a national feeling. This is the case with the Anzac legend and Anzac Day. The analysis has shown that it is deeply rooted in the population to participate in Anzac Day and dawn services by the memorials. Using Billig’s theory, Anzac Day affects national identity mainly through hot nationalism, because Anzac Day is something that is strongly signalled and emotionally driven. Anzac Day only takes place one time each year and it resembles a national day, which Billig connects with hot nationalism. National identity in Australia can be argued to have evolved through wars fought in other places (Ibid: 59). Thus, those who died in many of these wars did not get to be buried in their homeland, but in foreign grounds. The bereaved had to deal with the losses and the lack of a funeral and Anzac Day and in particular the dawn services could serve as substitutes for the funerals their loved ones never got. Dawn services can also be categorised as hot nationalism, being important and nostalgic ceremonies within the program of An-
zac Day. Thus, Anzac Day is an important event that clearly affects Australians’ national identities.

Memorials and honour avenues

Holy ground

Inglis focuses on the many war memorials that have risen all over the country since the end of World War 1. He argues that these memorials are depicted as sacred ground, and in the same way as Anzac Day they contain a religious character. One example is the Shrine of Remembrance in Melbourne that looks like a small temple. In the inscription it says: “Let all men know that this is holy ground” (Inglis 2005: 1-2). On many other war memorials there are similar inscriptions. The population and especially those left behind have physical places to visit and remember those who sacrificed their life for the nation. The geographical distance to the wars overseas has a big significance. The memorials have become substitutes for those graves family members cannot visit (Stephens 2009: 130). Also, Stephens emphasizes the holiness of war memorials. In the spirit of Anzac “the sacrifice of the soldier was a primary element of his or her importance to the community. In Christian countries the sacrifice of the soldier in battle was aligned with the sacrifice of Christ on the cross” (Ibid: 134).

This was yet another argument used in order to build monuments or plant honour avenues. Honour avenues, groves or trees are frequent kinds of commemoration sites (Ibid: 126). Especially to some people, the planting of a tree as part of an honour avenue consisting of trees symbolizing other lost soldiers can replace a burial and symbol resurrection. The reason why trees has become a very popular way of commemorating soldiers lost in war is the natural aspect. Stephens cites Jones and Cloke who says that trees symbolise something living and growing and it can be linked to what “…imaginative interpretations of national cultures” and particular tree types “…have particular national-level cultural associations” (Ibid: 131). Often when planting these avenues every tree symbolises one particular soldier with details of his death and who planted his tree on a plague besides each tree. Thus the bereaved have a personal substitute tomb to visit and mourn by – it is more personal than the stone monuments on which the names of the lost soldiers mostly are listed on one plaque (Ibid: 132-134).

Inglis describes how he, as a child in the 1930s, experienced the Anzac legend and what he was then told was the meaning of it: “Birth and/or baptism of the nation; sacrifice; rallying

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1 See Appendix 1
2 See Appendix 2
“to the empire; holding on against impossible odds; fighting to defend the right, and being prepared to do it again” (Inglis 2005: 3). Indeed, if this is what the children were told in school about Anzac at the time, it is no wonder that this phenomenon in Australian history is regarded as holy, magnificent and something people honor and respect deeply given that these children taught their children and grand children about the legend.

Almost in every Australian town and city you will find a war memorial, either a stone memorial, an honour avenue, or both. These monuments are created in order to honour both those who died and those who survived. Not every Australian connects the memorials with joy, glory and honour. Some people think that the memorials serve to bless militarism and the act of war, not the bravery of the soldiers (Ibid: 6). Inglis argues that the perception about war memorials and the World War 1 in general has changed. Since the 1980s literature about the World War 1 and other twentieth century wars have increased on the bookshelves. This is because the time has passed and scholars’ interests changes over time (Ibid: 7). The monuments are important parts of Australian history, and they have been (and are still) regarded as sacred.

**Embracement of history**

According to Anderson, national identity is formed by culture and history and the Anzac phenomenon or legend fits well into this perspective. The landing on the Gallipoli Peninsula happened almost a hundred years ago and it can well be said to be an important event in history – especially to many Australians. The reason it has become important is that it has passed into history as something glorious from generation to generation. And from this, a cultural harmony has developed around the whole concept of Anzac and everything within, for instance the memorials and honour avenues. Australians have held on to this culture and given it significance through the way they talk about the legend and how they act around artefacts such as the memorials and honour avenues. They embrace history and because there are so many of them, Australians will never forget what happened at Gallipoli in 1915. Anderson puts great emphasis on the importance of history when working with nationalism. The history provides the legitimacy for the cultural phenomena that surrounds Anzac and therefore it is important. The memorials and honour avenues stand as symbols for the survival of the legend and they, more than anything, enclose what the Anzac legend is about. However, you cannot avoid the fact that the memorials at the same time are constant reminders of wars Australia has participated in.
Using Billig’s theory of hot and banal nationalism, the memorials and honour avenues can be interpreted as representing the banal nationalism, opposite Anzac Day, which represents the hot nationalism. The memorials and honour avenues represent the banal nationalism because they are symbols, which are present every day in the everyday life of many people, whether they pass a memorial on the way to work or take a jog in Hyde Park in Sydney where the Sydney memorial stands. People are influenced by the banal nationalism in another way than the hot one. Anzac Day, as hot nationalism, is much more emotional via the parades and the dawn services. Of course, the memorials play another part being the background of the dawn services on Anzac Day, but all the other days of the year, they play the more silent part. Therefore, the monuments and honour avenues are symbols of the banal nationalism and thus daily reminders of nationhood, which are important for the people to imagine. They play a significant part in forming national identity in Australia.

**Anzac 2.0**

In Anzac 2.0 the paper is going to analyse and discuss newer waves of nationalism in Australian history of the Anzac legend. First, the paper will look at pilgrimages. Many contemporary Australians make pilgrimages to the Gallipoli Peninsula to see with their own eyes where the troops landed in 1915. The pilgrimages are distinct phenomena that affect national identity in Australia. Second, the paper will analyse the Anzac legend’s rebirth in the media and also how prominent politicians have talked about Anzac.

**Pilgrimage**

**Sacredness and collective memory**

Pilgrimages to the Gallipoli Peninsula are not completely new phenomena. However, they have become a particularly popular ‘must do’ for backpackers over the last couple of decades in what Scates calls “an age of compulsive global travel” (Scates 2007: 316). Young people in general travel to see the rest of the world, and this is not only an Australian phenomenon. According to West, the pilgrimages to Gallipoli are just one of many cases where foreign fields of war “become sanctified in national history as places where ancestors’ blood was spilt, as in the case of the world wars, where many of their remains reside” (West 2008: 258). Moreover, through Halbwachs, West chooses to define pilgrimage as “the act of visiting a distant site that is held sacred by the traveller’s own society” (Ibid: 259). McKenna and Ward make a
point quite similar to West when stating, “these meanings are ‘made in Australia’ and unpacked in Turkey, not embedded in the landscape […] Pilgrims carry the sacred within” (McKenna and Ward 2007: 146). Therefore, the sacredness related to the geographical spot, Gallipoli does not actually have something to do with the spot itself, even though battles actually took place there. The sacredness is something imagined and invented by Australians.

A small bit of Halbwachs’s analyses might make it easier to understand. Halbwachs’ theory stems from studies of the Middle Age crusaders. Christian crusaders travelled to the Holy Land, but experienced anomalies to what they expected. They wanted to resolve the anomalies by reconstructing Jerusalem in order for the city to be consistent with those accounts they knew from history, but also those collective memories and conceptions they had about the city (West 2008: 260). It might be the same mechanism happening around the pilgrimages to Gallipoli. Australians possess a specific collective memory about the spot as sacred and holy in many regards passed down from generation to generation and through other activities and events connected to Anzac. It is thus not the specific place the pilgrims travel to that is important, it is the collective memory or idea in the pilgrims’ home nation’s mind set that this place has a special meaning. What the pilgrims experience when visiting the battlefields might as well be the Australian reconstruction or reinvention of the legend born at Gallipoli in 1915. Thus, the pilgrimage only makes sense if made by an Australian who believes in the legend and who has been raised with all the emotion and national pride that surrounds Anzac.

A strong invented tradition

Due to the discussion above, the pilgrimages are clearly invented traditions seen in the light of Hobsbawm’s theory. Similar to the circumstances surrounding Anzac Day, pilgrimages have been necessary for many to go on, because the war never really physically came to Australia. Australians grow up with the Anzac legend, which McKenna and Ward among other things say consist of Anzac Day marches, Anzac Day TV specials and the newspapers’ emotional discourses on the legend. The legend has thus become a key national narrative in Australia (McKenna and Ward 2007: 142). In connection to Hobsbawm’s theory, the pilgrimages fit well into the first type of invented traditions, which for example establishes membership of a group and symbolise social cohesion. We have established that many Australians travel to Gallipoli; some maybe more committed pilgrims in the sacred sense than others. Nevertheless, they become a part of a social group of Australians – a kind of community – together in a
far away place and they are accepted and respected back home for having visited Gallipoli. This reinforces the national feeling according to Scates, and that is exactly what Hobsbawm also talks about: identification with a community. Hobsbawm also talks about new invented traditions as being quite strong. The number of people going on pilgrimages has increased during the past couple of decades (West 2008: 261). That, if anything, is a proof of the strength of the tradition. He also mentions that traditions associated with armed forces are very strong. That is a very good match a Marshall myth like the Anzac legend.

**Debates on pilgrimages**

Scates compares the pilgrimage debate with the classic History Wars, albeit in this case, the lines in the disputes are much more fluid (Scates 2007: 312). In one case of disagreement Scates stands on one side while McKenna and Ward stand on the other. McKenna and Ward have written a thorough critique of Scates’ book *Return to Gallipoli*. One of the main critique points made by McKenna and Ward is that Scates identifies too much and gets very emotional with those Anzac pilgrims he has surveyed (McKenna and Ward 2007: 143-144). Furthermore, they describe this as sentimental nationalism, and they believe that Scates is “equating the documentation (and validation) of human feeling with historical understanding” (Ibid: 144).

They afterwards argue that they believe pilgrimages have less to do with history and more to do with commerce and politics of nationalism with a reference to former Prime Minister John Howard (Ibid: 144). Scates admits that sentimental nationalism does have a significant position in connection to the Anzac legend, but that is not the only factor, such as he believes McKenna and Ward find it. He emphasizes that people tend to feel a higher sense of nationalism when they are far away from home: “For travellers like these Gallipoli was a chance to identify again as Australian, a statement of national identity in a confusingly globalised world, a potent mix of pride and patriotism, homesickness and nostalgia” (Scates 2007: 317). For many people who have been away from home for a longer period of time, it is always a special feeling when you meet someone of the same nationality or you have an experience closely related to your home country. What Scates says is that people therefore tend to be more aware of they national identity abroad. Therefore the evidence of the surveys had to leave some kind of emotional impression.
Emotional experiences

The pilgrimages in their classic form may be characterised as hot nationalism within Billig’s theory. To many people they are for sure extraordinary and emotionally driven. However, those young backpackers who take a trip to Gallipoli because they might as well do it while doing their big Europe trip or Round the World trip, a pilgrimage might serve as banal nationalism, because they are not that aware of the emotional significance it can have. Their visit might be interesting and maybe they get to understand Australian war history better, even though having grown up with the stories and the parades on 25 April. Another possibility is that the banal nationalism might turn into hot nationalism when they get there and maybe even witness a Dawn service, and get carried away with other travellers or pilgrims present.

West argues that visiting Gallipoli is an emotive experience to many travellers and such a trip often results in “a renewed sense of being Australian” (West 2008: 262). The pilgrimages keep the legend alive and encourage younger generations to actively keep commemorating by coming home to recount for their experiences (Ibid: 261). If the Anzac legend was only based on veterans, military marches and other ‘boring’ events difficult to relate to, many young people might get lost. However, the ‘pilgrimages’ undertaken by young backpackers doing their grand tour of travels around the world, contribute in forming the Marshall myth and thereby influencing national identity. The legend is kept alive through the travels and the travellers will keep passing on the legend to coming generations. This kind of adaptation is very important for an invented tradition such as the Anzac legend to be kept alive.

Rebirth in the media and other discourses

Resurgence

Over a significant amount of years the Anzac legend has seen a rebirth in the media. Many writers agree that the support for events related to the Anzac legend has been through the waves in level of popularity among the population. The “marches of the 1960s and 1970s were cluttered by protesters angered by what they saw as militarism” (Carlyon 2007) and Anzac Day as a day that was mocked to be a “glorification of war” (Mackay 2006). However, that is not how Anzac is depicted anymore. When you read a wide selection of newspaper articles in various Australian newspapers, it is clear that there is almost no critique of Anzac as being glorification of war or anything that looks like it. This change of discourse, as many journalists also point out themselves, is probably quite a significant element to how the population grasp the meaning of Anzac. The media are part of inventing traditions about Anzac.
and thereby keeping the legend alive and give the population a we-feeling and a sense of being part of a community. The sources from which the examples in this paper come mainly from broadsheets such as the Sydney Morning Herald and The Australian, which are widely read newspapers all over Australia.

Establishment of social cohesion
The media and in this case discourses in newspapers are part of establishing some kind of social cohesion and a feeling of membership of groups for those who read the articles. Quotes such as: “Australia, of convict origins and patronised by Britain, proved itself to the world and to itself” (Kelly 2011) and “It [Anzac] does not celebrate war, but honours courage and sacrifice” (Sydney Morning Herald 2002) are very common and many examples of the like are easy to come across when reading articles about Anzac. This way the media keep the traditions and nationalistic thoughts alive – they help the people identify with the rest of the population, and the fact that they do, confirms Anderson’s theory on imagined communities. The people cannot for sure tell what the rest of the population think and feel about Anzac, but because the media establishes this we-feeling and solidarity towards the phenomenon of Anzac, the legend can keep on living.

In the time surrounding Anzac Day, the newspapers are flooded with articles and features on Anzac. One example is a piece on how it is a tradition in some Australian families to join the armed forces. In this article three young people are interviewed about Anzac Day. Quotes such as “For me, Anzac Day is the most important day of the year” and “Petty Officer Freeman […] will be almost overcome with emotion when the trumpet sound Last Post today” (Dowling 2013) will only strengthen the national feeling in Australia. Also the photo of the three young people in uniform are intriguing to the reader because it depicts them uphill, elevated and close to the sky, which can symbol sacredness. Moreover, they are looking down on the reader as patriots and protectors of Australia, funnily with a background of traditional Australian landscape.

The continuous writing in the media about Anzac can be analysed as kind of banal nationalism. It is banal nationalism in the sense that it is a huge amount of articles produced. These articles are many and they appear often, albeit not daily. However, they are frequent reminders of nationhood. It can be argued that some of the articles on their own can be char-

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3 See Appendix 3
acterised as hot nationalism due to the high level of emotional words and expressions used by the author. These articles and features contain both banal and hot nationalism if looking at the whole. This combination is according to Billig what forms national identity. Therefore we can establish that the broad selection of writings in the media definitely has a major influence on how the population feel about Anzac and thus how their national identity is formed and maintained.

Politicians and academic scholars

Taking the rhetoric of politicians into account, often also present in the media, they also take part in keeping the legend alive. When scrolling down the lists of newspaper articles you often come across transcriptions of Prime Ministers’ dawn service speeches or quotes from those. Two examples are John Howard’s\(^4\) speech from 2005 and Julia Gillard’s\(^5\) speech from 2012. They both use very emotionally loaded expressions in their speeches, which only put wood to the fire: “It [the spirit of Anzac] lives on through a nation’s easy familiarity, through Australians looking out for each other, through courage and compassion” (Howard 2005) and “All of us remember, because all of us inhabit the freedom the Anzacs won for us” (Gillard 2012). In those speeches there is little difference of mentality towards the Anzac legend. The fact that the two Prime Ministers come from opposite parties and difference in their attitudes towards Anzac is non-existing means that Anzac is not a phenomenon that divides the waters politically.

Of course there are also critical voices in the media, however they have until recently remained few. Geoff Strong, for instance, argues that Anzac is merely a myth and “much of the mythology was created by the official war historian Charles Bean” (Strong 2012). Like other critics, Strong blames Bean for creating a myth around the story of the Anzacs. Strong cites Professor Marilyn Lake who says that Australian national identity was not formed at Gallipoli in 1915, but from the “advanced social democracy, including minimum wages and women’s equality” (Ibid) that she believes were visible in Australia since Federation in 1901. Furthermore he cites Lake and Stockings for saying that the myth about Anzac has been used in Australia to legitimise other military actions such as the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq.

\(^4\) John Howard (Liberal Party of Australia) served as the 25\(^{th}\) Prime Minister of Australia from March 1996 until December 2007 (The National Archives Australia’s Prime Ministers (2013)

\(^5\) Julia Gillard (Labour Party) was sworn in as the 27\(^{th}\) Prime Minister of Australia first in June 2010 and again in September 2010 following the federal election same year. She continues to be Prime Minister today (Prime Minister of Australia 2013).
(Ibid). This can be said to be a quite controversial viewpoint, but there is a chance that there is some truth to it. McKenna for instance points out how John Howard turned the ‘Anzac spirit’ in a more celebrative direction and therefore turned war into something worth celebrating. This was important because of the many operations Australian troops participated in during his time as Prime Minister: “Howard went great lengths to place the fight against terrorism in ‘the Anzac tradition’” (McKenna 2010: 127). Stockings cited by Strong above, also has a strong voice in Australian media. He acknowledges that the Anzac legend has grown stronger in Australian cultural life since the World War 1, even though all of the living links are to the war are dead. Stockings, furthermore compares the Anzac legend to the conflict between religion and science – that military and nationhood should not be mixed (Stockings 2012). So if it is looked at that way, the Marshall myth of Anzac has meant that military history and the concept of nationhood has become inseparable from each other in contemporary Australia and therefore it affects national identity.

**Conclusion**

The Anzac legend as a Marshall myth is definitely significant when talking about how Australian national identity is formed. The theory has assisted the analysis of the above cases by shedding light on the most important elements in order to prove that there is a correlation of national identity and a Marshall myth such as the Anzac legend.

**A rebooted Anzac legend**

This paper clearly finds that the Anzac legend has been rebooted in Australian society. The resistance towards Anzac in the 1960s and 1970s seems logical due to the hippie movement and the general resistance against war in the US and Europe. However, you cannot just take a myth or legend like Anzac away from a population and degrade it, like Reynolds and Lake to some extent seek to. The four cases examined in this paper also clearly establish that the Anzac legend is here to stay.

The invented tradition of Anzac Day is strong due to high participation and the high rate of emotions connected to this day. This and also the fact that it seems to be Australia’s real national day categorises this day as an example of hot nationalism. Moreover, Anzac Day signals the willingness of people to die for their country, which is an important sign of national solidarity. The memorials and honour avenues are constant reminders of the legend and those who died in the wars. They serve as symbols of banal nationalism, which are important for
people to imagine. Moving on to the newer wave of the Anzac legend, the pilgrimages to Gallipoli can be analysed as invented traditions and these too are increasing in numbers. This way people are able to come close to a ‘sacred’ spot and to experience where Australia was born a nation. Both hot and banal nationalism characterises the pilgrimages. The media discourse and Australian politicians display the legend in ways that make the population feel like a common community – that all Australians have something in common – which is necessary for them in order to stay a united nation. Moreover, the media discourses can be analysed as banal nationalism because of the constant stream of writings that affect the population. All these factors are thus part in forming national identity in Australia.

**Political militarisation**

The discussion on political militarisation of Australian history via the Anzac legend was shortly touched upon above. Lake and Reynolds are pioneers in this field of argumentation. They believe that Australians have forgotten that there has been resistance towards the meaning of the Anzac legend, and that there was a time when the “emphasis of Australian history was [...] on political and social reform and the shaping of a vision of a new society” (Reynolds and Lake 2010: 157-158). They also believe that war historian C. E. W. Bean has been misinterpreted and misused. Bean did not say that the Anzac spirit developed in Turkey through military actions. What Bean emphasized was the special personal characters of the ‘diggers’, and that this came from colonial society and thus from pioneering the bush and backcountry. This character was carried with the soldiers into battle (Ibid: 160). Even though contemporary politicians might have misinterpreted Bean and (mis)used his reports, the Anzac legend would probably not exist in the format it does today if it was not for his accounts.

The so-called political militarisation of contemporary Australia has happened over a vast period of time. It has been outside the scope of this paper to deeply investigate if there are any direct proves of an Australian government using the Anzac legend to legitimise recent Australian war participation. The findings are based on interpretations of what politicians say and to some extent what the media writes and broadcasts. The two Prime Ministers touched upon in this paper have never spoken critically of war participation and have always talked of this in praising terms. Gillard for instance said in connection to this year’s Anzac Day that the Australian soldiers "are there [in Afghanistan] in the Anzac tradition doing such important and dangerous work for our nation" (The Australian 2013). In order for the Australian population to allow high participation in overseas wars and operations, “politicians need the Anzac
myth, or they would never be able to convince soldiers to go to war” (Reynolds and Lake 2010: 165). At least that is what Lake and Reynolds argue. In line of their analysis, Gillard is continuing the celebration of Australian soldiers fighting in wars abroad. An example of that is that Gillard believes that true Australian-ness appear on Anzac Day – that the nation is built on this narrative of what the brave ‘diggers’ achieved at Gallipoli almost a century ago.

A Danish Marshall myth?

Danish soldiers have participated in wars and operations in far away places just as the Australian soldiers. Denmark’s war participation in modern time, however, did not begin until the 1990s and initially the two coalition wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. Thus Danish military history until 2001 is quite different from that of Australia. We cannot talk about Denmark and Australia as having completely similar histories, which give rise to a Marshall myth in the same ways. However, it can be argued that the contemporary coalition wars and especially Afghanistan might become a starting point of a Marshall myth in Denmark. Increasing debate has surrounded the story of the Danish base Armadillo in the Helmand Province in Afghanistan. It was opened in 2008 and closed down in 2010, even though the base had lost its military significance already in 2009 (Politiken 2012).

The fact that Armadillo was kept operational can signify that the symbolic and emotional significance of the base was too big at the national level in Denmark. A military psychologist says “the many feelings connected to the base, made it difficult to close it down” (Vestergaard 2012 – my translation). These feelings were related to the Danish major, Anders Storrud, who lost his life during the establishment of Armadillo. The base was afterwards named after his lucky animal, the American armadillo, and the base became a symbol of his heroism (Politiken 2012). The psychologist furthermore explains: “Because a base is named after a fallen soldier, who was highly appreciated, a symbol, a myth, and a story is created. Therefore the people in command were reluctant to close it down” (Vestergaard 2012 – my translation). These statements signify that the story of Armadillo could eventually become a Marshall myth similar to the Anzac legend, however probably in a smaller scale. The documentary Armadillo directed by Janus Metz and filmed by Lars Skree describes Danish soldiers’ brutal reality inside and outside the Armadillo base (Jyllands-Posten 2010). The fact that this is the only documentary or film made about recent Danish war participation also indicates that, when the war in Afghanistan becomes more distant, Armadillo can possibly turn into a narrative that defines Danish national identity.
The soldiers’ mentalities and characters are points where the debates on Armadillo and the Anzac legend are similar. The Danish soldiers in the documentary are portrayed as “sons of the nation” (Ibid) similar to how the Anzacs were described. Such focus on personalities and characters can be observed from Bean to Gillard in Australia. Portraying soldiers like that is part of keeping a legend alive. However, an Armadillo legend has not yet been established as clearly as the Anzac legend, but we do not know what the future will bring.
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Appendices

Appendix 1

Appendix 2

Figure 1. Lovekin Drive Honour Avenue in Kings Park, Perth.

Figure 2. Plaque to fallen serviceman.

Appendix 3