Forgotten Voices: The Female ANZAC and Male National Identity

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Abstract:

This essay analyses in how far modern, female-centred, Australian productions in the wake of the 2015 centenary of the Gallipoli landing in WWI deal with the legacy of this landing and the ANZAC myth. It starts with an examination of what the ANZAC legend has become in contemporary Australia and its status as a cultural memory based on male ideals. The second part is devoted to a close reading of two examples which take as their focus the stories of Australian nurses in WWI, *ANZAC Girls* and *Through These Lines*. With the help of these examples, the essay shows that modern productions are highly indebted to the post-memory of Peter Weir's *Gallipoli* instead of to original accounts and that those which take a female-centred focus do not challenge the male ideal promoted in *Gallipoli* but rather strive to be included in the very same context.

1 2015 marks the centenary of the landing of the A.I.F, the Australian Imperial Force, at Gallipoli, a landing which has been hailed as "the baptism of fire [that] has proven the young nation" (Schuler 15). Subsequently styled ANZAC, Australian and New Zealand Corps, it became a legend and founding myth of Australia – "*the* central Australian mythology of the twentieth century" (Seal vii; emphasis mine). Ever since, ANZAC has become part and parcel of a national consciousness, its content varying only slightly over the generations. In the years leading up to this centenary, Australia was preoccupied with research into the history of the Great War, focusing on personal memories in order to piece together a fuller picture of the Australian involvement in that war than had previously been done. Partly, this research was performed for public audiences in the form of theatre, TV and cinematic productions as well as exhibitions. Examples are Sir Wesley Enoch's *Black Diggers*, which premiered at the Sydney Festival in 2014 and tells the story of Australia's Indigenous soldiers in WWI and their experiences after their return, the 2010 movie *Beneath Hill 60*, by Australian director Jeremy Sims, which also features a black Australian soldier, into whose past the crew did a lot of research, and the miniseries *Gallipoli*, produced by Channel 9 and aired in early 2015. Other examples focus on the stories of women's, or, more precisely, nurses' experiences in WWI, such as the play *Through These Lines*, "[a]n original Australian play based on the letters and diaries of Australian army nurses serving in WWI" which is now in its third Sydney season and has also spawned an exhibition (throughtheselines.com.au). One of the best-advertised works was the five-part ABC miniseries *ANZAC Girls*, which is based on Peter Rees's book *The Other ANZACs* and screened in August and September 2014. All of these examples have in common that they set out to tell a different story of WWI, one which

includes minority voices and experiences much neglected in the official discourse of ANZAC since its first commemoration in 1916.

2 In my paper, I will address the female voices and the role they play in relation to the idea of a white male ANZAC legend as present in today's consciousness. For this, I will give a brief introduction into the history of ANZAC and how it has become an influential element of Australian national identity. As I will argue, the shape ANZAC has taken on in the collective memory of contemporary Australia is nothing but a myth derived from already post-memorial versions of it, most notably Peter Weir's *Gallipoli* of 1981, which glorifies the courageous male Australian soldier willing to sacrifice himself for his mate(s). Yet instead of criticizing this one-sided representation of Australian involvement in WWI through bringing to light the forgotten female stories, productions like *ANZAC Girls* confirm, as I will show, the established ANZAC myth and help to perpetuate an interpretation of the ANZAC legend or spirit which is based on post-memory only. Remembering the ANZAC legend thus reveals in how far the mechanics of this particular cultural memory have worked, and still work, to 'invent Australia' and with it a collectively shared identity.

3 First, however, it is necessary to define what exactly is meant by ANZAC. In 1993, the remains of an unknown Australian soldier were brought from an unmarked grave in France to be buried at the Australian War Memorial in Canberra. For this event, then Prime Minister Paul Keating delivered a eulogy in which he outlines what ANZAC has come to mean for Australians:

> On all sides they were the heroes of that war; not the generals and the politicians but the soldiers and sailors and nurses – those who taught us to endure hardship, to show courage, to be bold as well as resilient, to believe in ourselves, to stick together. […]
> That is surely at the heart of the ANZAC story, the Australian legend which emerged from the war. It is a legend […] of […] triumphs against the odds, of courage and ingenuity in adversity. It is a legend of free and independent spirits whose discipline derived less from military formalities and customs than from the bonds of mateship and the demands of necessity. (n. pag.)

In this speech, Keating blends two different traditions of Australian national identity to describe the ANZAC legend, which are, according to Graham Seal, the official history of ANZAC as can be found in historical records and the informal folklore of the Australian digger (vii). This image has its origin in the representations of ANZAC soldiers in the coverage of the landing at Gallipoli by English war correspondent Ellis Ashmead-Bartlett, whose report of the landing was the first to reach Australia and who thus summarizes the actions of the Australian and New Zealand soldiers:

> No finer feat has happened in this war than this sudden landing in the dark, and the storming of the heights, and, above all, the holding on whilst the reinforcements were landing. These raw colonial troops, in these desperate hours, proved worthy to fight side by side with the heroes of the battles of Mons, the Aisne, Ypres, and Neuve-Chapelle. (5)

On the other hand, there is the tradition of the digger, which was the official "title [...] of the volunteer civilian members of the First AIF" (Seal 3). As Seal writes, the male-dominated image of the digger was already heavily influenced by the image of the bushman and showed aspects such as

> anti-authoritarianism, particularly directed against officers, especially British officers; mateship; irreverence and larrikinism; swaggering arrogance; an aggressively nationalistic and, by later standards, blatantly racist stance; sardonic, even cynical humour; and a nonchalant attitude to death and injury. (3)

Similarly, Daniel Reynaud sees the ANZAC soldier as a blend of various "earlier national mythic archetypes such as the convict, squatter, selector, bushranger, gold digger and sportsman" (289). Thus strongly reminiscent of Russel Ward's description of the "typical Australian", who Ward himself styles a "myth" (16) but who has nevertheless influenced Australian identity both home and abroad, the digger figure seems to be a memory shared by a majority of Australians.

4 An important aspect of collective memory according to Maurice Halbwachs, who first introduced the term in the 1920s, is that it is a group memory made up of the totality of the individual memories of single members of this particular group (*The Collective Memory* 48). Jan Assmann, however, has identified shortcomings in Halbwachs's concept, as "it lives in everyday interaction and communication and, for this very reason, has only a limited time depth which normally reaches no farther back than eighty years, the time span of three interacting generations" ("Communicative and Cultural Memory" 111). Even though for Halbwachs himself collective memory is not a preservation of the past but rather a reconstruction of it with the help of the present (*On Collective Memory* 119), it is still limited to the lived and embodied memory of a group and is based on social aspects. What he neglects, according to Assmann, are the symbolic and cultural frameworks of memory (*Religion and Cultural Memory* 8). Instead, Halbwachs sharply distinguishes lived memory from both history, which, according to him, is an impartial archival storage "of the most notable facts in the memory of man" (Halbwachs, *The Collective Memory* 78), and tradition, which is the ritualized and canonized fixation of memory (Assmann, *Das kulturelle Gedächtnis* 64). In order to overcome this limitation, Assmann proposes to extend the

theoretical ideas of collective memory to include cultural aspects of memory, as for him the transition between what Halbwachs calls lived memory and tradition is rather smooth than sudden (*Religion and Cultural Memory* 8). He therefore suggests distinguishing between communicative memory, "a synchronic memory space", i.e., the time span of three generations, or eighty years already mentioned, and cultural memory, which "forms the diachronic axis," i.e., a time span measured in centuries and millennia (*Religion and Cultural Memory* 8). This cultural memory still is "a form of collective memory, in the sense that it is shared by a number of people and that it conveys to these people a collective, that is, cultural identity" but he adds the aspect of institutionalization to it ("Communicative and Cultural Memory" 110) – and thus longevity.

5 At this point, the classification of the ANZAC legend and the traditions which underlie it in terms of memory gets complicated. Unfortunately, in his essay Assmann only briefly touches on "the transition from autobiographical and communicative memory into cultural memory" and the structural implications of this ("Communicative and Cultural Memory" 117). This, now, is the crucial point when it comes to the ANZAC legend: it has been institutionalized within less than a year through numerous monuments, a national holiday, the Australian War Memorial as a centralized archive or even shrine, and other institutions and it claims historical accuracy while it also still contains elements of a folkloristic tradition. Moreover, the institutionalized version of ANZAC allegedly has its origins in autobiographical memories and is the official custodian of these. It is both lived memory and tradition and already constitutes what Assmann calls cultural memory while at the same time purports to stem from and include communicative memory. The role of cultural memory, Assmann writes, is to create identity, as culture is a "Komplex identitätssichernden Wissens", i.e., a body of knowledge which ensures a group of its identity (*Das kulturelle Gedächtnis* 89). This is exactly the meaning ANZAC has for Australia: it has created national identity.

6 Just as every idea of the past has its frame of reference in the present, the cultural memory of ANZAC and thus of the national identity it embodies is not solely based on the original accounts of the First World War but also on later interpretations of these. I even suggest that later versions of the ANZAC story, most notably Peter Weir's film *Gallipoli*, have become the only basis for contemporary understandings of ANZAC. In his essay on Australian ANZAC cinema, Daniel Reynaud shows that the modern form of the ANZAC myth is only a far cry from its origin, which celebrated an imperial ideal instead of Australian characters (289-90). According to Reynaud, it was only in the 1930s and due to Government censorship that "a resourceful, comic, irreverent, unsophisticated but fundamentally decent

and loyal mate" came to embody the ANZAC soldier on the screen – yet still within imperial ideologies (290-1). With the advent of the period film in the 1970s and, more importantly, the male ensemble film in the 1980s, the ANZAC legend in cinemas took on a different turn. Reynaud mentions "a relative invisibility over previous decades" and "the rapid removal through death of Great War veterans' living memory" as reasons for facilitating this turn in representation (291). For Jonathan Rayner, the 1980s saw the representation of a "national character through images of masculinity" and concentrated "on historical examples of male martyrdom" (110). This is a prime example of what Halbwachs refers to in his *The Collective Memory*, that "remembrance is in very large measure a reconstruction of the past achieved with data borrowed from the present, a reconstruction prepared, furthermore, by reconstructions of earlier periods wherein past images had already been altered" (69). As I would argue, the case of the ANZAC legend also includes another of Halbwachs's assumptions about collective memory, that the group which shares such a collective memory "most frequently distort[s] that past in the act of reconstructing it" (*On Collective Memory* 182).

7 What is significant here, however, is that the reconstruction of the past seems to have stopped at this point in 1981 and has become tradition and took the form of cultural memory from this time onwards. The image of a male-centred national identity as embodied in the patriotic stockman Archie from Western Australia and the larrikin[1] character of Frank seems to have frozen in time and to still constitute both the collective and cultural memory of the ANZAC legend without any further reconstructions. This becomes most obvious in a recent comic book aimed at a young-adult audience, *An ANZAC Tale* of 2013, illustrated by Greg Holfeld and written by Ruth Starke, in which some of the panels strongly resemble scenes of *Gallipoli*. The following scenes, three of which take place during the training in Egypt and one which shows the actual landing at Gallipoli, demonstrate this:

[1] Even though a larrikin is, according to the OED, "[a] (usually juvenile) street rowdy; the Australian equivalent of the 'hoodlum' or 'hooligan'," it is positively connoted in Australia and has become an icon figure.

Figure 1: Mocking the British (54:36 mins)

Figure 2: At the Bazaar (57:15 mins)

Figure 3: Running up that hill (1:05:44 mins)

These stills taken from *Gallipoli* are examples of the larrikin behaviour of Australian soldiers while they were stationed in Egypt for training. They illustrate how the infantry group around Frank mocks the British, behaves towards the Egyptians, and how the Australian soldiers

show no respect for the ancient Egyptian culture. In Holfeld and Starke's comic book, the very same scenes are depicted in three consecutive panels:

Figure 4: Iconic scenes in *An ANZAC Tale* (12)

While the stills from *Gallipoli* are imbedded in the broader context of life and training in Egypt and are part of longer scenes, the panels from *An ANZAC Tale* have condensed those scenes into iconic images. Here, they stand as synechdoches for what *Gallipoli* has first, quite literally, imagined and thus show a direct connection to their visual ancestor. Through this, they continue the nationalist stance of ANZAC which has developed in the 1970s and which is in stark contrast to the imperial ideal promoted in earlier versions.

Another example is the actual landing at Gallipoli, which at first sight resembles the description Ashmead-Bartlett gives of the landing: “At 4.53 came a sharp burst of rifle fire from the beach” (5).

Figure 5: The landing in *Gallipoli* (1:13:54 mins)

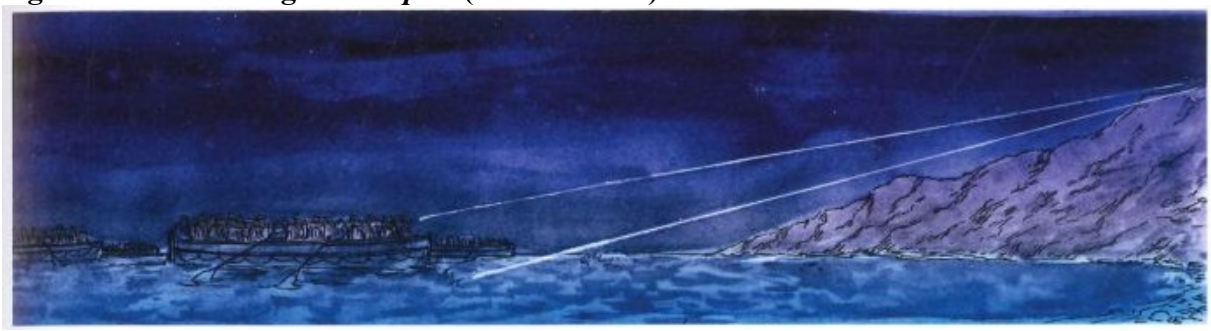

Figure 6: The landing in *An ANZAC Tale* (17)

8 Like the Egyptian scenes, however, this also only superficially resembles the original, as the fire from the beach in Ashmead-Bartlett’s report was only received by those who had already landed. The boats, on the other hand, were able to approach the beach without being seen, let alone being fired at: “Not a sound was heard, not a light seen, and it appeared as if the enemy had been surprised” (5). Phillip Schuler in his *Australia in Arms* gives a similar, though somewhat more colourful account of this: “So the men jumped from the boats into the icy Ægean, up to their armpits sometimes, their rifles held above their heads, and slowly facing the stream of lead, waded to the shore. [...] So the Turks found the attack on them before they realized its proximity and strength” (104). Again, the comic version relies on the more suspenseful rendering of events found in the movie and not on the original accounts of the landing, thus promoting the iconic status of a post-memory and perpetuating this even for the youngest readers. This becomes even more obvious through the use of endemic and thus archetypal Australian animals such as kangaroos, koalas, or wombats. Contemporary productions thus still refer to an overtly nationalist and rather sanitized version of the ANZAC

experience which in the 1970s and early 1980s, "for the first time in its history, ha[d] achieved a stable form [...]," as Daniel Reynaud writes (298).

9 As I have written in the beginning, a number of recent theatre and movie productions, however, aim at including minority voices, such as women's and Aboriginal voices. They do not rely on official historical records but turn to personal memoirs for their fictional accounts of WWI in order to introduce points of view which are different to traditional ANZAC storytelling. In the remainder of my paper, I will concentrate on the ABC miniseries *ANZAC Girls* and also refer to the photographs taken in the wake of producing the play *Through These Lines*, first screened and performed, respectively, in 2014. Instead of following the by now canonized tradition of ANZAC, they seem to criticize exactly this canonized nature by confronting it with the forgotten memories of the Great War. Focusing on the nurses' experiences in the war, they form a stark contrast to the depiction of nurses in, for example, Peter Weir's *Gallipoli*, in which nurses solely feature as props and are only shown on screen in some Egyptian scenes. By concentrating on the female perspective and featuring a group of nurses as protagonists, both *Through These Lines* and *ANZAC Girls* seemingly challenge the male-centred national identity as promoted through the ANZAC tradition. Thus, they would also disrupt the structures and mechanics of Halbwachs's and Assmann's ideas on communicative memory and tradition.

10 Those productions featuring female voices, however, share the same approach as the official ANZAC tradition. First and foremost, they claim historical accuracy and take as their starting point the history of The Australian Army Nursing Services (AANS), which has been investigated in academic studies since the 1980s. Their rootedness in historical research shows, e.g., on the website of *Through These Lines*, where there is a link which leads to a "Research website" where visitors may perform their own research into the history of individual nurses and the history of nurses in WWI in general. Similarly, the official media kit for *ANZAC Girls* starts, after a brief promotional line, with giving historical detail about the valour of the nurses serving in WWI and even includes a quotation from a contemporary, i.e. 1915, newspaper, before it goes into production details (2-3). Even though the production boasts of "the creation of historically accurate features, environments and landscapes" (5), *ANZAC Girls* takes its main inspiration not from history books but

> [d]raw[s] on the diaries, letters, photographs and historical achievements of many women who witnessed the brutality of war [and] honours the Centenary of World War One with the unique and rarely told history of the war through the nurses who served amidst bombing raids, poison gas and terrible disease – saving lives and transforming the spirits of the soldiers. (Media Kit 4)

The historical accuracy to which both *ANZAC Girls* and *Through These Lines* are indebted shows in the use of pictures, which, in the case of *ANZAC Girls*, are used for promotional purposes and, in the case of *Through These Lines*, as accompanying pieces and form an exhibition of its own. Although they may simply be read as instances of historical storytelling, which establishes the illusion of history but always reminds its audience of its contemporaneousness, both *ANZAC Girls* and *Through These Lines* try hard to disguise this kind of fabrication. Instead of acknowledging their status as post-memory reworkings, they claim authenticity and thus legitimacy. This is illustrated in the main piece of the official website of *ANZAC Girls*, for which ABC has chosen a close up of the five nurses the series focuses on in front of a sepia-coloured photograph of marching soldiers:

Figure 7: *ANZAC Girls* promotional

The background of this photograph shows wrinkles, spots, and other signs of old age, but research reveals that those signs as well as the sepia colouring originally do not derive from the photo with the marching soldiers, but from the background of the nurses' photograph, who stand in front of an old brown brick wall. This shows that it was not the nurses' picture which was superimposed onto an original picture of WWI, but rather that the marching soldiers and the front landscape were inter-imposed between the wall and the nurses in order to create the impression of historical accuracy. Here, *ANZAC Girls* presents itself as autobiographical/communicative memory while actually already being a piece of collective memory and tradition. The same illusion is achieved by the nurses' constant writing of journals, which features prominently in the series.

11 Similarly, one of the official trailers for *ANZAC Girls* features the staging of a photograph:

Figure 8: Photograph in colour (00:32 mins)

This still shows how a picture of four of the protagonists is taken within the storyline of the series. Then, a jump cut drains the scene of all colour and instead of featuring the sound of clicking the shutter-release button, the score features a gun discharging:

Figure 9: Photograph in black and white (00:33)

Whereas the fully coloured first still denotes the zeal and jingoism with which Australia entered the war and still shows traces of its being part of a historical TV drama, the second still brings the audience immediately to the war in an act of staged authenticity.

12 The photographic exhibition which accompanies *Through These Lines* and which can partly be accessed on Flickr works along very similar lines in order to let its audience take the part of immediate onlooker during the Great War and to establish an illusion of original memory. For these photographs, the writer of *Through These Lines*, Cheryl Ward, went to Lemnos and Gallipoli with original pictures in her bag and searched for the original sites those picture were taken at. She then chose the very same spot as the original photographer and took her contemporary pictures. In an act of meticulous editing, she combined both original and "cover" and thus created an eerily mixed reproduction of the original:

Figure 10: ***Sisters: Then and Now***

Figure 11: ***Sisters: Composite***

Even though the album on Flickr is entitled "Then and Now", the pictures it contains are rather an instance of "then *in* now" or "now *in* then," and the combination of black-and-white before a coloured background firmly situates autobiographical memories of the past within the present. Furthermore, the audience who views these pictures is put in the same perspective as if looking at an original picture from WWI. Here, the editing process is used to conceal the fictitiousness of the photographs.

13 Marzena Sokołowska-Paryż and Martin Löschnigg in their collection of essays *The Great War in Post-Memory Literature and Film* suggest using the term post-memory with a hyphen to approach contemporary renderings of the First World War. They regard post-memory as an "'after memory,' indicating the absence of a first-hand empirical connection to the war" and as an extension of the term postmemory as used by Marianne Hirsch (1). Both *ANZAC Girls* and *Through These Lines* fit the definition of post-memory as being detached from the original memory of the war, but through their visual deception they deny their status as post-memory. Instead, they promote the authenticity of their forged memories and thus re-open the tradition/cultural memory of the Great War for new distortions of the past by present knowledge.

14 In the case of *ANZAC Girls*, this happens through the neglected stories of the AANS nurses, a storyline which emphasizes the fact that a new perspective is being told and at the same time shows in how far this perspective does not resemble well-known representations of

WWI, as it centres on nurture and caretaking, qualities commonly associated with women. Furthermore, key words like "friendship", "romance", and "love" are used to describe the personal stories of the nurses (Media Kit 5, 7):

> Our nurses' world may be dominated by the war, by the army and by the hospitals, but they are bright, beautiful and lively young women in the prime of their lives. They have come to do their bit and serve their country, but they have also come seeking adventure and love. (7)

On the one hand, this quotation hints at the domination of a male-centred perspective when it comes to the experience of war, but on the other hand shows how the storyline does not challenge this dominance but rather tries to make itself comfortable within this male-dominated field – like its protagonists, it "adjust[s]" (Media Kit 10).

15 Despite the depiction of women as caretakers and romantic individuals, there are, however, instances of feminist criticism in *ANZAC Girls*. In episode two, "Duty", the protagonists are sent to Lemnos, the hospital island off the Greek coast, in order to take care of those soldiers wounded at Gallipoli. Throughout the whole episode, their commanding officer, Colonel Thomas Fiaschi, makes it clear that women do not matter in a war, nor do they belong close to the front: "Nurses do little toward the actual saving of life in war, though they may promote a more rapid recovery" ("Duty," 47:55-47:59). Another prominent role plays the official direction that only those women qualify for enrolling with the AANS who are either single or widowed, but that those who are married cannot enrol ("Women's Work" 7). Already in episode one, this issue is being broached when it is revealed that Elsie Cook has joined even though she is married. In this case, she is able to convince the matron in charge to let her stay. Later, in episode three, when Elsie has to deal with the male Australian officials, there is no way for her to stay a nurse in the AANS – instead, she has to turn to the Croix Rouge in order to return to the war theatres. Moreover, in episode six, Elsie, now stationed at Amiens with the Red Cross, has to face her husband's wish that she leaves the front. In a moment of female independence, however, Elsie decides to stay in Amiens. Through this, *ANZAC Girls* criticizes the patriarchal perspective of Australian authorities and soldiers. Another reading of this last episode, however, would be that it is not a moment of female independence but rather her sense of duty which makes Elsie decide to carry on as a nurse at the Western front.

16 Here, *ANZAC Girls* is at the crossroads – is it to be read as a feminist critique of the male-centred national identity as expressed in the ANZAC myth, or is it to be read as a perpetuation of this very myth? As I will show, *ANZAC Girls* is far from challenging the representation of ANZAC in cultural memory as shaped by male-centred nationalist attitudes.

The instances of feminist criticism shown in the examples mentioned above are rather directed against patriarchal hierarchies and positions in general, as they do not target the ANZAC ideal but military and societal standards. Furthermore, one of the official trailers features as score the ballad "Forever Young," originally composed by German pop-group Alphaville, which can be read as an anti-war ballad. The use of this kind of music also supports the reading of the miniseries as a more general criticism of war.

17 As far as the treatment of ANZAC is concerned, already the episode list of the series reads like a summary of ANZAC characteristics infused with a stereotypical feminine touch: "Adventure", "Duty", "Endurance", "Love", "Mateship", and "Courage". *ANZAC Girls* thus tells the very same story of hardship, valour, and mateship – which, by the way, is a genuinely masculine concept – as interpretations of the ANZAC involvement in WWI such as *Gallipoli* and other examples of the eras of the male-centred nationalist cinema of the 1970s and 1980s. The plights the nurses are confronted with which are expressly related to ANZAC are also modelled very closely on common notions of asserting a national identity. The episode summaries contained in the official media kit, for example, refer to the first mission of the protagonists at Port Said as "a baptism of fire" (10) – which are the exact same words Philip Schuler used with reference to the national identity formed through the landing at Gallipoli (15).

18 Like the ANZAC legend in general, the different episodes of *ANZAC Girls* focus on matters of the Gallipoli campaign and of a national identity which was supposedly forged by the landing on 25 April 1915. The only marked difference is that those topics are being broached through a female perspective. In episode three, for example, the futility of the fighting at Gallipoli is at the centre, but whereas Peter Weir's *Gallipoli* is interested in the military details of the battle at Lone Pine and the charge of The Nek, *ANZAC Girls* shows the aftermath of the battle in the field hospitals. Unlike their male counterparts, the nurses are even "allowed to admit that it's hard" (Media Kit 12). Thus, the series both conforms to the ANZAC tradition and stays within clearly defined gender boundaries: men fight, women take care of the wounded; men are made of steel, women may show emotions.

19 Issues of national identity, which lie at the heart of both the ANZAC myth and cultural memory in general, also play a prominent part in *ANZAC Girls*, especially in episode four, "Love", in which the nurses have "to reflect on their own national identity" (Media Kit 13). Faced with British nurses, the protagonists on their very own battlefields act out the same ideological conflicts as their male counterparts. True to the larrikin tradition, which forms part of the modern understanding of the ANZAC soldier, the Australian nurses are portrayed as

rejecting the strict and nonsensical rules of their British superiors, as, e.g., when tea is being prepared for the patients at the hospital at three p.m. sharp. In this scene, British nurse Ward Sister Bullus snaps at Hilda for not having arranged the cup handles in the same direction:

> BULLUS: Is this your idea of a joke?
>
> HILDA [stammering]: Ah, I, I beg your pardon?
> BULLUS: The Handles! I'll do it myself [turns handles to face into the same direction]. [...] You colonials lack any sense of what's right and proper!
>
> ("Love", 13:05-13:37)

As the media kit puts it: "lots of Imperial rules and regulations that the Australian and Kiwi nurses chafe against" (13). This scene gains even more weight when one takes into account the fact that it was especially Hilda who had been "delighted to be so close to the 'Mother Country' and at the thought of working with English nurses" (Media Kit 13). Both the reference to Britain as the imperial power in contrast to the Australian nation as former colony and the reference to the New Zealand nurses as Kiwis shows the strong focus on national identity in both the dialogue and the quotation. Both the scenes and the media kit make it clear that British regulations and the adherence to rituals such as tea-time are the opposite of the hands-on mentality of the Australian nurses, which, and that also becomes very clear in the series, is better suited for the needs of army hospitals.

20 Another case in point is the representation of the first ANZAC Day of 1916 within the series, which is once again acted out by British Ward Sister Bullus and Australian Sister Hilda Steele. After a cut from the sisters' tent during the night, where the nurses were preparing little gifts for the soldiers, Hilda is seen cutting mistletoe, when Ward Sister Bullus arrives in the company of another British nurse:

> BULLUS [in a demanding tone of voice]: Have you commission to be cutting those?
> HILDA [stammering]: I, ah, I asked the, the court master and he told me it... would be alright.
> BULLUS [holds out her hand to be passed on a wreath]: Nice work, sister, but, though, a little early for Christmas [turns to her company, both are chuckling condescendingly].
> HILDA: It's, ehm, for ANZAC Day.
> BULLUS: ANZAC Day? We never heard of it.
> HILDA: No. Well, today, it's a year since the [exhales] start of the campaign at the Dardanelles.
> BULLUS: Did something special happen there?
> HILDA [left speechless]: [Long pause, she exhales resignedly] Yes. [Pause] It did. [Pause] Excuse me [takes her basket and leaves].
>
> ("Love", 21:44-22:15)

This dialogue on the one hand shows both the ignorance of the British nurses of anything non-British, but colonial, and the patronizing attitude towards the Australian and New Zealand nurses. On the other hand, it also shows the nascent identification with an Australian nationality, to which the Gallipoli landing gave rise, as Hilda no longer attempts to justify her doing to the imperial power, but rather leaves the scene fully aware of her own national identity. Here, it is the lived/communicative memory which creates a sense of group identity already in the form of a ritualized memory.

21 Furthermore, *ANZAC Girls* also illustrates the way in which this lived/communicative memory is turned into tradition/cultural memory, as it shows how the women want to honour the anniversary of the Gallipoli landing "for the boys" ("Love", 18:23). Therefore, they set out to put together little parcels for the ANZAC soldiers while establishing a national holiday in passing:

> OLIVE: You know? We should put one [gumleaf, sent over from Australia by her father] with each gift and write ANZAC 1916 on each of them. Make a real commemoration!
>
> ("Love", 19:12-19:20)

Olive's idea is thus presented as the single moment in which ANZAC became part of the Australian cultural memory while it was still alive in the communicative memory of the participants. It seems, though, as if the ongoing realities of the war have already far removed the lived memory of Gallipoli:

> HILDA: [...] Next Tuesday is April 25th. A year since the Gallipoli landing.
> OLIVE: A year? Already?
> HILDA: Miss Wilson was saying that CO was organizing a special service for those of us ... who feel would like one.
> [Pan-shot from close-up of Hilda over patients, following the gaze of Alice, with voice-over]
> ALICE: A lot of the patients will want to be there.
> OLIVE: A lot of them *were* there.
> ALICE: And now they're here. [Camera cuts back to a close-up of Alice] As are we.
>
> ("Love", 17:49-18:15)

The void the trauma of the Great War seems to have left has since the first anniversary in 1916 been replaced by a shared cultural memory. Thus room was made for a ritualized commemoration of the founding moment, which also, in the face of the British nurses' patronizing behaviour, gave way to a self-confident assertion of a national Australian identity.

22 By focusing on the nurses of the First World War, both *ANZAC Girls* and *Through These Lines* emphasize the female perspective and let the forgotten voices speak of their

experiences on the battlefields. Yet it is not a counter narrative to established ideas of the male ANZAC myth, it rather only tries to blend into that myth without questioning its origins, authenticity, or status. As I have shown, Jan Assmann's concept of cultural memory is a useful tool for understanding the mechanisms and structure of modern conceptions of ANZAC: even though communicative memory of the Australian involvement in WWI had already been turned into cultural memory through Government policies in the 1920s and the establishment of the Australian War Memorial in 1929, it was Peter Weir's film *Gallipoli* of 1981 which finalized the contemporary idea of ANZAC as a male-dominated anti-imperial and nationalistic version. In the lead-up to the Gallipoli centenary in 2015, TV and theatre productions such as *ANZAC Girls* have taken to telling the lost voices of the war, yet they tell the same kind of story as older productions. Instead of challenging the remarkably persistent image of "the ANZAC," they rather strive to be part of it, to be included into an already existent and quite rigid cultural memory of the Australian participation in WWI. They seem to have internalized the image and iconic status of ANZAC promoted by various post-memory retellings of the Great War. Despite the professed authenticity *ANZAC Girls* claims through the use of real-live nurses' diaries and letters, it, too, fails to offer a critical point of view to the male-dominated ANZAC myth, as it does not take WWI as its only point of reference but rather puts itself in the position of a post-memory to a cultural memory which itself is already post-memory. Thus, the myth of ANZAC is caught in an infinite loop, and it begs the question if new productions, such as the mini-series *Gallipoli* in early 2015, will offer new ways of remembering the ANZAC legend.

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