Commemorative Days and the Negotiation of National Identity

David Charles Milazzo

The University of Adelaide,

School of Humanities, Department of History,

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Abstract

It is broadly accepted in the scholarly community that nationalism is dependent on the telling and retelling of national stories about the past. What these stories say is never a complete, historically accurate summary of past events. It is limited to those events, individuals, interpretations, and values considered of importance to the "nation". This means that the experiences of certain individuals or social groups may be left out. However, in some countries, including Russia, Australia, and the European Union, there have been attempts to negotiate a more inclusive national narrative. This process has often encountered conflict as different actors compete to express their personal identity. In this thesis, I aim to use commemorative days as a focus through which to explore this process of national narratives negotiation. I will study three separate commemorative events in three geographical regions: Victory Day in Russia, Anzac Day in Australia, and the European Day of Remembrance for the Victims of Nazism and Stalinism. In doing this, I will view the structural limitations of nationalist narratives and explore the nature of the conflicts that arise when different interpretations of national identity come into conflict. Overall, I explore the potential of nationalism to be tolerant, inclusive, and democratic.

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Signed: David Milazzo

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Introduction

I was born in the mid-1990s, at time when the ethnic tensions and violence in the former Yugoslavia brought the study of nationalism back into prominence. Since then, despite predictions of its impending decline in the face of globalisation, the resurgence of nationalism has continued. At the end of 2018, the President of the United States of America, Donald Trump, openly declared that he was a nationalist and encouraged his followers to embrace the term.[1] Across Europe, nationalist political parties have continued to gain ground, often expressing exclusionary anti-immigrant and Eurosceptic rhetoric in the process. It is often claimed that nationalism is also the impetus behind the rise of authoritarian leaders such as Vladimir Putin in Russia, Recep Erdogan in Turkey, Narendra Modi in India, and Xi Jinping in China. In this context, it seems that the study of nationalism continues to be of importance.

In 1992, two years before I was born, Liah Greenfeld wrote the book *Nationalism: Five Roads to Modernity*, in which she made the point that 'Nationalism is not necessarily a form of particularism … A nation coextensive with humanity is in no way a contradiction in terms'.[2] She was arguing that nationalism did not necessarily have to be exclusionary or divisive. Furthermore, in Greenfeld's view, nationalism in the purest sense was fundamentally linked to concepts of democracy, and at the core of modern nationalism was a compelling, inclusive image of a sovereign community of equal members. This view of nationalism may be extremely optimistic, but over the years other academics have made similar claims. Hans Kohn, writing in the 1940s, at a time when Nazism and Fascism were exploiting nationalism for destructive ends, was keen to show how the *idea* of nationalism

[1] Peter Baker, '"Use that Word!": Trump Embraces the "Nationalist" Label' *The New York Times* (Oct. 24, 2018), A12.
[2] Liah Greenfeld, *Nationalism: Five Roads to* Modernity (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992), 7.

could be liberal and progressive.[3] A similar assertion was made in 1997 by Richard Rorty, who claimed that it was essential for the political left to adopt a pragmatic form of patriotism in their fight against economic inequality.[4]

The ideas expressed by Greenfeld and others raise a question of vital importance to those of us living at the end of the second decade of the twenty-first century: can nationalism be deployed as a force for good? More specifically, can nationalism be divorced from the language of exclusion and ethnic divisions, and be used instead to defend concepts of individual civil liberties, inclusivity, and democracy? That is the question that this thesis seeks to answer.

To this end, I will study three separate commemorative events in three geographical regions: Victory Day in Russia, Anzac Day in Australia, and the European Day of Remembrance for the Victims of Nazism and Stalinism in the European Union. The link between nationalism and commemorative days is very strong, as commemorative days provide an annual opportunity for people to reflect upon key events in national history. When people talk, write, or act on these days, they engage with fundamental questions about national identity—questions about who we are, and who we are not.

The thesis consists of four chapters, the first of which summarises the various scholarly interpretations and debates about the historical origins and key cultural features of nationalism. It also lays out the theoretical concepts that have shaped this thesis and explains the selection of case studies. The second chapter discusses Victory Day in Russia, and the interplay between the official Red Square Military Parade and the semi-official commemoration of the 'Immortal Regiment'. It explores the expression and suppression of individuality in nationalist commemorations. The third chapter examines Anzac Day in

[3] Hans Kohn, *The Idea of Nationalism: A Study in its Origins and Background*, (New York: Macmillan, 1946), 10.
[4] Richard Rorty, *Achieving our Country*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997), 14-15.

Australia and the conflicts that arise between different interpretive communities within a civic nationalist context. The inflexible nature of nationalist plot-structures is also explored. The fourth chapter discusses the European Union's attempts to create a supra-national narrative about the 'European Day of Remembrance for the Victims of Nazism and Stalinism'. This in turn leads to a discussion of the difficulties encountered when negotiating national narratives. The thesis concludes by drawing all the threads and themes together in order to explore the potential of nationalism to be tolerant, inclusive, and democratic.

Chapter 1: Theories of Nationalism and Primary Sources

Nationality is the foremost identity of the modern world. For at least the past 200 years, nationalist movements and ideologies have done their best to reshape modern descriptions and categories of human identities. In this, they have been remarkably successful. The drive to categorise humanity by way of nationality has spread across every continent. It has intersected and merged with other ideologies and beliefs such as liberalism, conservatism, and communism. Today, every state in the world justifies its existence by referring to the right of national self-determination. Equally, separatist movements justify their claim to independence on the grounds that they form a distinct national community with its own cultural and historical tradition, and therefore have the right to self-determination. Modern humans encounter references to nations and national identity in almost all aspects of their personal and private lives. Whether during election campaigns, news reports, sporting events, tax payments, grant applications, descriptions of cuisines, or family relationships, references to national communities are everywhere.[5]

However, despite its ubiquity, a comprehensive definition of nationalism continues to elude academics. In the most general terms, nationalism can be said to be 'the belief that a group of people share distinctive cultural and historical traditions and have the right to live in an independent political space.'[6] However, this definition is very broad and not universally accepted. There is also little consensus among scholars regarding the answers to some key questions about nationalism's nature. What are its origins? Who or what has shaped the expressions of national identity over the years? How does it maintain its temporal continuity across time and from one generation to another? What is nationalism's future trajectory and,

[5] Michael Billig, *Banal nationalism*, (London: Sage publishing, 1995), 6.
[6] Lloyd Kramer, *Nationalism in Europe and America: Politics, Cultures, and Identities since 1775*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011), 1.

in an age of multiculturalism, can it evolve to become more liberal and inclusive? Countless authors have written about nationalism, and answers to these questions are many and varied. Synthesising the concepts of and ideas about nationalism into one all-encompassing analysis is therefore remarkably difficult.

Sociologist Anthony D. Smith provides a typology to group the key ideas in the various theoretical approaches to the study of nationalism. He divides these approaches into four categories: primordialists, perenialists, modernists, and ethno-symbolists.[7] Smith notes the existence of a fifth category—post-modernists—but argues that they do not constitute a distinct explanatory group. Instead he states that they argue the modernist case using a constructivist, rather than a materialist, approach. As such, they are a sub-group of the modernists.[8] Smith's typology is useful but flawed. He does provide useful groupings to explore the main ideas and strands of thought in the study of nationalism. However, the distinctions between Smith's categories are not as sharp as his typology might initially connote and the divisions between academics from the same school of thought are downplayed in this model.[9] He also gives too much credit to the primordialists and the perenialists, who do not have a significant following among serious academics.[10] This is problematic because it obfuscates key points for which there is consensus.

Modernists, ethno-symbolists and post-modernists all agree on the socially constructed nature of national identity.[11] It is broadly accepted that nationalism is dependent on the telling and retelling of national stories about the past. However, these stories are not static, but change over time. The meaning of national identity can therefore also change over

[7] Anthony D. Smith, 'The Nation: Invented, Imagined, Reconstructed?' *Millennium – Journal of International Studies* Vol 20(3) (1999), 353 – 367.
[8] Smith, 'The Nation: Invented, Imagined, Reconstructed?', 22.
[9] Duncan Bell, 'Mythscapes: memory, mythology, and national identity' *British Journal of Sociology* Vol 54(1) (March 2003), 67.
[10] Ibid., 67.
[11] Ibid., 68.

time alongside shifts in the national narrative. National narratives are told largely through symbols and public rituals, of which commemorative days are an important example. Commemorative days provide an annual opportunity for people to reflect on the identity of the collective to which they think they belong.[12] Commemorative days are also moments when individuals can debate and negotiate their national history and change the meaning of their national identity. When these days are uncontentious, concepts of national identity simmer quietly in the background. On the other hand, periods of conflict, contestation, or transformation often bring discussions about the national narrative to the fore. When people talk, argue, write, or protest about commemorative days, they contribute to the construction of their collective identity.

The formation and transformation of national identity on commemorative days is directly relevant to questions about the inclusive, liberal potential of nationalism as a whole. What is represented on commemorative days is never a complete, historically accurate summary of past events. Instead, it is a limited story based on the past which focuses on those events, individuals, interpretations, and values considered of importance to the nation. This means that the experiences of certain individuals or social groups may be left out. Exactly why certain experiences are excluded can differ depending on the context. Regardless, the fact that some experiences are prioritized over others demonstrates a certain level of inequality between social groups. Indeed, those who are excluded from the national narrative often face discrimination in other aspects of their social life. The attempt to create a more liberal national identity typically involves attempts to broaden the national story to incorporate the experiences of those who were previously excluded. The ability to broaden or shape the narrative depends partly on the structures of nationalism, but also on the

[12] Karen Gammelgaard and Ljiljana Šarić 'Discursive construction of national holidays in West and South Slavic countries after the fall of communism,' in *Transforming National Holidays*, ed. Ljiljana Šarić, Karen Gammelgaard, and Kjetil Rå Hauge, (Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2012), 6.

involvement of different actors. In the literature on nationalism, scholars have emphasised the role in this process of political and social elites, artists, historians, political commentators, and everyday people. Different scholars place more or less emphasis on the involvement of various social groups. They therefore have different opinions on the potential for nationalism to incorporate marginalised people.

The aim of this thesis is to use commemorative days as a focus through which to view the structural limitations of nationalist narratives and the conflicts that arise when different interpretations of national identity come into conflict. In doing this, the thesis will engage with the question posed in the introduction: can nationalism be divorced from the language of exclusion and ethnic divisions and be used instead to defend concepts of individual civil liberties and democracy? It is therefore necessary to explore arguments of key theorists in the study of nationalism regarding the construction of national narratives. Although the list is by no means exhaustive, it covers those theorists who most influenced my thesis. In the following chapter, I first explore the key ideas in the study of nationalism by discussing the arguments of several key individuals in the modernist, ethno-symbolist, and post-modernist schools. I look particularly at their exploration of the key social groups or cultural and political conditions that shape the expression of the national narrative and of national identity. I also explore the various interpretations of the role of national commemorative days and the limitations to the negotiation of national identity. In the second half of this chapter, I discuss the methodology and sources used in this thesis.

The Modern Construction of Nations

Modernists, such as Hans Kohn, Carlton Hayes, Ernest Gellner, Liah Greenfeld, and Eric Hobsbawm, emphasise the constructed nature of national identity. They regard the nation and the idea of national identity as a product of modernisation. They seek to explain nationalism

by focusing on its origins during the political and social revolutions and upheavals of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Modernists therefore see the nation as a recent construct. They typically regard nationalism as a political ideology and see references to supposedly ancient cultural symbols and traditions as having been invented during the modern era. Much of the discourse about the shaping of national identities tends to focus on political and intellectual elites. Commemorative days, seen through this lens, are regarded as having been constructed to provide legitimacy to the concept of the nation.[13]

Many modernists see nationalism's origins in the ideas of key Enlightenment thinkers. Historian Hans Kohn, for instance, notes that the modern concept of the 'nation' first arose in Europe in response to various intellectual and political crises during the eighteenth century.[14] According to Kohn, the Enlightenment created a great deal of social anxiety by questioning the authority of the divinely appointed monarch, and thus threatened the political legitimacy of the state. Kohn then argues that Jean Jacques Rousseau found the solution to this social and political problem by arguing that free individuals could pledge their allegiance to the 'sacred collective personality of the nation'.[15] Kohn, along with historian Carlton Hayes, argues that the French Revolution (1789-1799) had carried the idea of the 'nation' into political practice for the first time. The French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars spread the idea across Europe, and European colonialism then exported nationalism to the rest of the world. Both Kohn and Hayes believe that nationalism, at least in its early conception, was civic and individualist in form and function.[16] They claim that, during the early days of modern nationalism, national membership did not require adherence to a specific ethnic identity; it was simply a social contract between a free individual and the state to which he or she belonged.

[13] Kramer, *Nationalism in Europe and America,* 10 – 16.
[14] Hans Kohn, *The idea of Nationalism,* 237.
[15] Ibid., 237.
[16] Carlton Hayes, *Historical Evolution of Modern Nationalism,* (New York: Richard R. Smith Inc, 1931), 13.

Ernest Gellner disagrees with Kohn and Hayes. Gellner sees nationalism as having emerged from the institutions of modernity rather than the ideas of specific thinkers. Gellner argues that nationalism was an ideological system designed primarily to facilitate the development of modern national economies. Modern economies require large numbers of people who read the same language, follow the same regulations, and use the same technology.[17] Nationalism provided the required rationale and institutions for this to occur. Gellner does not believe that 'nationalism imposes homogeneity', but rather that 'a homogeneity imposed by objective, inescapable imperative eventually appears on the surface in the form of nationalism'.[18] Gellner's theories influenced many subsequent scholars of nationalism, including Liah Greenfeld. She agrees that nationalism was an ideological system linked to the development of modern economies. However, she places much greater emphasis on the role of individuals. She also argues that 'the emergence of nationalism predated the development of every significant component of modernisation'.[19] In other words, nationalism was not simply a reaction to modern social and political institutions, but an essential precursor to the establishment of these institutions.

Kohn, Hayes, Gellner, and Greenfeld, agree that nationalism was actively constructed as part of a wider process of political, intellectual, and economic development. Nationalism provided legitimacy to the massive political, social and economic changes that occurred during the Enlightenment and the Industrial Revolution. Appeals to a common national culture or history were a useful way to mobilise the population in pursuit of economic or political goals. However, the population needed to be taught their national identity before they could be mobilised in support of their nation. National identity had to be developed and disseminated. One of the ways this was achieved was through national commemorative days.

[17] Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, (New York: Blackwell, 2006), 35.
[18] Ibid., 39.
[19] Greenfeld, *Nationalism: Five Roads to Modernity*, 21.

French Revolutionaries, for instance, created numerous festivals to express the meaning of their new French national identity. Kramer argues that 'Revolutionary festivals … were designed to provide continuing political education for people who now had to learn the new national catechism.'[20] Similarly, historians Warwick Frost and Jennifer Laing argue that the hundredth anniversary of the Signing of the Declaration of Independence in the USA was used to recreate a sense of national unity following the Civil War.[21] In turn, national pride, brought about by reflections on the 'nation's past', dampened dissent regarding the consequences of rapid industrialisation and population growth in the USA. Commemorative days were therefore an active component in the creation of national identity throughout the process of modernisation.[22]

Of course, ideas regarding the heritage, values, and meaning of the nation, as presented on commemorative days, had to be created. Greenfeld highlights the role of intellectuals in this process. She argues that they were resentful because they felt that they lacked the social influence that they thought they deserved.[23] They therefore sought to establish national identity as a cause to defend and develop. In this way, intellectuals carved out a place of public importance for themselves.

Other scholars have subsequently expanded on the relationship between intellectuals and nationalism by exploring the role of academics in establishing myths about national cultures, and languages. Historian Stefan Berger, for instance, describes how historians in the nineteenth century saw it as their duty to serve the nation by writing its 'history'. He points out that these historians helped establish national myths and foundational stories on a

[20] Kramer, *Nationalism in Europe and America*, 46.
[21] Warwick Frost and Jennifer Laing, *Commemorative Events: Memory, Identities, Conflicts,* (London: Routledge, 2013), 22.
[22] David Lowenthal, *The past is a foreign country,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 319 – 321.
[23] Liah Greenfeld, 'Nationalism and the Mind,' *Nations and Nationalism* Vol 11(3) (2006), 325 – 341.

'scientific basis', despite the fact that they rarely corresponded to reality.[24] Historian Roland Suny also points out that 'history as a discipline helped to constitute the nation'.[25] The intellectual construction of 'national history' was solidified in the public imagination through state-sponsored activities such as national commemorative days. The collaboration between historians and the state during the construction of the national narrative will be explored further in chapter four, where I discuss the Latvian government's support for Latvian Legion Day. In short, historians helped construct and disseminate particular narratives that reinforced the concept of the nation in all states. Greenfeld, Berger, and Suny all ascribe intellectuals a central role in the creation of nationalism.

Similarly, historians Eric Hobsbawm and Terrance Ranger, in *The Invention of Tradition* (1983), seek to show that many supposedly 'ancient' national traditions were invented by elites in the modern era. Indeed, they argue that social changes that occurred as a result of modernity probably destroyed the old customs which thus required the establishment of new traditions. According to Hobsbawm, this was done for the purpose of establishing authority, social control, and solidarity. These invented traditions imprinted certain values, beliefs and norms that created social identities. The traditions also created continuity with a mythical past and provided the rituals and symbols that were used by nationalists to unite and energise sections of modern society.[26] We encounter an example of this in chapter two, in which I describe the Russian government's use of invented rituals and traditions in the Red Square military parade.

Carlton Hayes shows how academics were responsible for the incorporation of ethnic and cultural elements into nationalism in the first place. Hayes argues that German academics

[24] Stefan Berger, 'On the Role of Myths and History in the Construction of National Identity in Modern Europe,' *European History Quarterly* Vol 39(3) (July 2009), 491 – 492.
[25] Roland Suny, 'History and the Making of Nations', *Harvard Ukrainian Research Institute* Vol 22(1) (1998), 569.
[26] Eric Hobsawm, 'Introduction: Inventing Traditions,' in *The Invention of Tradition,* ed. Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 2.

Johann Gottlieb Fichte and Johann Gottfried von Herder were especially important in this regard.[27] According to Hayes, Herder was the first to argue that all nations had a distinctive historical tradition and an 'appropriate language, literature, education, manner, and [set of] customs' which formed 'a kind of "national soul"'. Hayes claims that Herder also believed that every individual was marked by the character of their nationality which they inherited from their ancestors. Therefore, to Herder, nationality was not a matter of political loyalty but part of one's ethnic heritage. Fichte, building on Herder's work, went further by arguing that all individuals had a duty to protect their national language and culture from outside influences. Hayes claims that the work of Fichte and Herder together resulted in the development, in nineteenth-century Germany, of a new kind of ethnic nationalism. This variant emphasised common ethnic traditions and religious sensibilities as the foundation of social unity.[28]

As a result, some scholars resort to an ethnic/civic dichotomy in order to describe the different methods by which nationalism was constructed. 'Civic Nationalism', which based the unity of the nation on a shared commitment to a political ideal, had developed out of Rousseau's enlightenment ideals. It is inherently individualistic and opposed to authoritarianism. In the words of Greenfeld, the national 'principle that emerged was individualistic: sovereignty of the people was the implication of the actual sovereignty of individuals; it was because these individuals (of the people) exercised sovereignty that they were members of a nation.'[29] Thus, civic nationalism was supposedly inherently supportive of both individual identity and human diversity. On the other hand, 'ethnic nationalism' was reactionary and reinforced traditional social divisions on the grounds of the national good. It was also a closed form of nationalism. One can only inherit national membership via birth; it

[27] Hayes, *Historical Evolution of Modern Nationalism,* 13.
[28] Ibid., 84.
[29] Greenfeld, *Nationalism, Five Roads to Modernity*, 11.

cannot be acquired if one does not already have it nor can it be changed if one does.[30] Where civic nationalism was associated by some historians with western Europe and post-revolution America, ethnic nationalism was associated with the national identities of pre-1945 Germany and Eastern Europe.[31] Greenfeld most firmly establishes the distinctions between civic and ethnic nationalism in *Nationalism: Five Roads to Modernity*, but similar ideas can be found in the works of Hans Kohn, Carlton Hayes, and Peter Alter.

This ethnic/civic dichotomy tends to inform the views of some academics when it comes to categorisations of nationalism as either liberal or illiberal. Historians such as Kohn, Hayes, and Greenfeld, are under no illusions regarding nationalism's potential for xenophobia, authoritarianism and militarism—after all, both Kohn and Hayes were living and writing during the Nazis' rise to power. Yet these tendencies are often passed off as features of ethnic nationalism, rather than of nationalism per se. Civic nationalism can therefore be separated from, and defined in opposition to, the genocides and war crimes caused by ethnic nationalism in the twentieth century. As stated in my introduction, Greenfeld argues that if nationalism returns to its civic roots, it could become a powerful force for the development of a liberal world order.[32] Subsequently, these scholars argue that a transition from ethnic to civic nationalism is seen to be a good thing which will improve stability, economics, and democracy.[33] Whether this claims is accurate or not is an ongoing theme in this thesis. Particularly in chapter two, the ability of civic nationalism to incorporate divergent minority views from the LGBT and non-Anglo-Australian communities will be explored. However, this theme is explored in all three of the following chapters.

[30] Ibid., 11.
[31] Kramer, *Nationalism in Europe and America*, 24.
[32] Greenfeld, *Nationalism: Five Roads to* Modernity, 7.
[33] Harold Robert Isaacs, *the Idols of the Tribe: Group identity and Political Change*, (New York: Harper and Row, 1975), 178.

Nations and Collective Memory

The claim that nationalism is simply an expression of the need to create a modernised economic workforce, or a post-enlightenment political society, does not fully explain the powerful emotional passions that nationalism inflames. Furthermore, the cultural meanings of nationalism generally go far beyond the economic and political. Nationalism engages with history and memory in a way that often have little or no economic or political value. This has caused some scholars to incorporate the study of collective memories and identities into the study of nationalism. Collective memory emphasises the central position of history in national identity. From this perspective, commemorative days are best understood as an expression of the common identity of a memory community.

The discourse on collective memory essentially began with nineteenth-century sociologist Emile Durkheim, who argued that societies required a sense of connection and continuity with the past. In studying religious traditions, Durkheim came to the conclusion that certain symbols and rituals provided individuals with a sense of collective unity, or 'collective effervescence'. To Durkheim, proper collective thought exists only during a physical gathering of the community. Over time, however, groups develop a method through which the unity of the group could be maintained even after the group was disbanded. This method involved the use of 'totems', which were special items that were deemed to be sacred. Durkheim suggested that totems provide individuals with a device through which they could remember the unity of the effervescent group experience, and thus maintain that unity within their own minds. Although Durkheim claimed that the collective effervescence provided the transmittal of the past to the present, his emphasis was essentially based on the individual memories that comprise the larger collective memory. Durkheim's collective

effervescence could not pass down through generations to individuals who had not participated in that group's unity.[34]

Sociologist Maurice Halbwachs built on Durkheim's work by arguing that the memories of all individuals are constructed within the social structures and institutions into which they are born. He claimed that private individual memory can only be understood within a group context. Similarly, because individuals organise knowledge about the world within a social context, they order memory of the past through these same social categories. Halbwachs stated that collective memory depends on specific groups that are constrained by place and time. The social group constructs the memory and the individuals do the work of remembering. Halbwachs also expanded on Durkheim's theory of totems. He suggested that temporal commemorative events, such as commemorative days, were also important 'totems' that served as a reminder of a collective memory. Halbwachs argued that commemorative events are important in reinforcing memories that would normally fade with time. Commemorative events encourage a periodic reinforcement of memory, so an event that occurred one hundred years ago could still be remembered by a generation temporally removed from its impact.[35]

Ethno-symbolists, of whom sociologist Anthony D. Smith is the most influential and relevant, incorporate many of the ideas expressed in the study of collective memory into the study of nationalism. Smith accepts that the *political* concept of the nation-state is a modern phenomenon. However, he argues that national identities depended on long developing 'patterns of values, symbols, memories, myths and traditions that form the distinctive heritage of the nation'.[36] According to Smith, national identities are rooted in an 'enduring

[34] Emile Durkheim, *The elementary forms of the religious life: A study in religious sociology,* trans. Joseph Swain (New York: Macmillan, 1915)
[35] Maurice Halbwachs, *On collective memory,* trans. Lewis A. Coser (Chicago: University of Chicago Press), 1992.
[36] Anthony D. Smith, *Chosen Peoples*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 24-25.

base of ethnic ties and sentiments' and that 'ethnicity forms an element of culture and social structure which persists over time'.[37] These symbols and myths developed out of the real collective memory of an actually existing ethnic community. This, according to Smith, is the reason for nationalism's powerful emotional appeal. To him, nations are social communities dependent on common, enduring memories of a shared past that are handed down from generation to generation, which Smith referred to as 'ethnohistories'. Commemorative days are one of the vectors by which these stories are passed through the generations. They are a mechanism to encourage remembering and reflection on the national 'ethnohistory'.[38]

Smith opposes the modernists' emphasis on 'invented traditions'. He points out, perceptively I think, that politicians and cultural elites cannot simply invent stories or myths of the past to suit their purposes in the present.[39] They rely on pre-existing stories. Thus, Smith places limits on the ability of intellectuals or politicians to shape national narratives. There is room for subjectivity and manipulation, but not total freedom to invent any story that suits the purposes of political elites. From Smith's perspective, therefore, commemorative days are culturally constructed, but are established on the basis of an enduring ethnohistorical reality. Smith's assertions implicitly lead to a less negative view of nationalism, which accepts it as the evolution of ethnic culture. Questions of liberal and illiberal nationalism are somewhat irrelevant in this analysis. Nationalism simply is. Whether it fits a liberal or illiberal narrative will depend on the pre-existing stories upon which the nation was formed.

Although many of Smith's claims are useful, I believe he is mistaken in supposing the nation has deep roots. He accurately points out that many of the stories that nationalism depends on must conform to some historical reality. However, he confuses myth and memory, and he glosses over the malleable nature of narratives. 'Ethnohistory' cannot truly

[37] Ibid., 25
[38] Smith, 'The Nation: Invented, Imagined, Reconstructed?', 15-16.
[39] Anthony D. Smith, *Myths and Memories of the Nation*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 1-19. and Anthony D. Smith *The Ethnic origins of Nationalism,* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1986).

exist because the meaning and moral of narratives are easily shaped and often rewritten through omissions or alternative interpretations. The 'ancient' symbols of a nation are not enduring. They go through a constant process of reinterpretation and reinvention. This is especially relevant when studying commemorative days, which change and evolve overtime alongside changes in the national narrative. The contested nature of these narratives is a key theme in this thesis. Both chapters two and three demonstrate the ways in which the Russian and the Australian national narratives have morphed overtime in accordance with social and political aims and needs.

Contested Narratives

Influenced by post-modernist thought, several scholars—most notably political scientist Benedict Anderson and critical theorist Homi Bhabha—argue that narrative is at the core of national identity.[40] They argue that the nation is nothing more or less than a society bound together by a story of common unity, heritage, and traditions. However, in contrast to Smith's claims, these theorists claim that the community is in fact imagined. Nations are not based on the *reality* of actually existing ethnic or cultural ties within a community, but rather on the *idea* that a particular group of people had certain ethnic and cultural ties. Stories of nationhood, therefore, are what made the nation. Such claims place the study of cultural rituals in a spotlight. Commemorative Days are important because they present the story of the nation. In so doing, they actively create and recreate the nation.

In his influential work on the nature of nationalism, Benedict Anderson argues that modern nations are imagined communities. Like Gellner, Anderson understands nationalism to be a product of modernity. He stresses the importance of modern capitalist systems, particularly communications technologies, in shaping the cultural context in which nations

[40] Bell, *Mythscape: memory, mythology, and national identity*, 68.

emerged. Nationalism depended on the 'convergence of capitalism and print technology on the fatal diversity of human language'.[41] However, Anderson's key point is that nations are '*imagined* because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion.'[42] Anderson points out that the national community is significantly larger than previous traditional communities (families, villages, geographical localities), but that it is possible to conceive it through the stories of commonality. These stories can take many different forms, from national history books, to national newspapers, or even national maps. National commemorative days are another way in which the story of national unity was told. The act of common commemoration helps embed the narrative of a common historical origin and of common values in the minds of the national people. These narratives of communion in turn contribute to the creation of a common national memory which reinforces the imagining of the nation.

Homi Bhabha's edited collection, *Nation and Narration* (1990), further develops the idea of the nation as a constructed historical narrative. Like many other scholars of nationalism, Bhabha emphasises the important role played by language, communication, and writers, in the construction of national identities. Yet, influenced by post-structuralist theory, he did not see any significant difference between national narratives and other kinds of discourse about the world. Like every other cultural practice (politics, literature, religion) Bhabha felt that the nation was a 'text', the meaning of which was constructed through narrative processes that resembled and included the narrative constructions of novels, films, and history books. However, the authors of these narratives strove for a level of internal order and coherence that could never be fully achieved because of the existence of contradictions

[41] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, (London: Verso, 2006), 6-7.
[42] Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 6.

and ‘alien supplements’ that could not be integrated into the master narrative.[43] A nation must therefore rely on assumptions and unacknowledged sources while simultaneously repressing or excluding those ideas, people, or issues that might call the nation’s assumptions into question. However, Bhabha also noted that nations depended on difference and thus required other nations to exist outside their borders. The complication was that these nations had their own historical narratives, which were often incompatible with the narratives told by other nations. Hence, these alternative narratives were an existential threat to the assumptions of one’s own national narrative. The end result is a level of internal anxiety as nationalist writers try to overcome this contradiction. The inevitable obstacles to coherence give nationalism a never-ending cultural campaign and a constant need to write and rewrite the story of the nation. However, it can never truly reach the totalising national unity that they seek.[44] Modern nations are created by constant processes of writing that can never fully overcome their own internal tensions. This theory will be explored in more detail in my fourth chapter on Anzac Day.

By regarding nationalism as a complex and contested narrative, the influence of collective memory can be incorporated into the analysis of national identity. Sociologist Duncan Bell sees memory as an important influence in the shaping of national identity. However, he argues that Smith and others confuse myth and memory, which leads to inaccurate conclusions about the nature of national identity. Indeed, Bell finds the entire phrase ‘collective memory’ to be misleading. Bell points out that memory is an individual, neurological process. It cannot be genetically passed down. ‘Memory’ cannot therefore be ‘collective’.[45] However, individual memories, in collaboration with similar memories of others, do contribute to the creation of mythical *narratives*, that *are* passed down through

[43] Homi K. Bhabha, ‘DissemiNation: Time, Narrative, and the Margins of the Modern Nation,” in *Nation and Narration*, ed. Homi K. Bhabha, (London: Routledge, 1990), 297.
[44] Ibid., 297-9.
[45] Bell, ‘Mythscapes: memory, mythology, and national identity,’ 73.

generations. These narratives by their nature are a homogenised conglomeration of the different individual memories that comprise it. Yet they are also shaped by external influences, such as the writings of certain historians and the opinions of certain powerful elites. However, not all memories conform to the same narrative. Bell speaks of a narrative 'mythscape' in which many different and competing narratives exist. Bell explains that there is often a single 'governing narrative', which is held by a dominant group in society and which tend to be enforced by those in power. Yet, there are also 'counter-narratives' that can vary from, challenge, or even displace, the prevailing governing narrative. Memory, to Bell, is in a constant state of conflict as the dominant narrative struggles against challengers within groups who hold a different interpretation of the past. National identity is often formed, Bell argues, out of particular mythic narratives, but this can cause tensions when they are challenged by counter-narratives. The tensions that one sees during commemorative days, therefore, are often due to differences between the state-sponsored national governing-narrative and the divergent stories of counter-narratives. We encounter examples of the interaction between governing-narratives and counter-narratives throughout the whole of this thesis.

National identity, from this perspective, is created out of a negotiation between various different parties, with more or less power to act. Anderson points to the role of intellectuals. He states that all national narratives are influenced by intellectuals and that the emergence of an intellectual class precedes the emergence of nationalist ideologies. In nationalism outside of Europe, Anderson argues that 'to an unprecedented extent the key spokesmen for colonial nationalism were lonely, bilingual intelligentsias unattached to sturdy local bourgeoisies'.[46] However, Bell shows that the role of common people cannot be underestimated. It is, after all, the mass convergence of individual memories, however

[46] Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 6.

selective, which forms the foundation upon which the governing narrative can be built. The interpretation of nationalism as a narrative demonstrates that national identity is constructed by both top-down and bottom-up forces. These forces mingle together to create a nationalism that is not monolithic but comprised of many different threads woven together into a larger tapestry of nationalism. In the words of Lloyd Kramer: 'Nationalism comes to be understood as an ongoing political-cultural exchange and conflict among different people who develop contending accounts of the nation in which they live'.[47] Expressions of nationalism in the public sphere, including on commemorative days, are comprised of many diverse stories, which are sometimes contradictory and often in conflict.

National narratives can therefore try to be liberal and inclusive in certain contexts, but there will always be underlying illiberal and divisive elements. All expressions of nationalism are limited by the constraints of the narrative and of the idea of the nation. As Bhabha points about, the nation must always write itself in opposition to others and define itself by its difference to them.[48] However, by doing so it places limits on the inclusiveness of national identity. One cannot identify as both British and French, if a key part of being British involves being different from the French.[49] Similarly, while national identity formation involves the interplay of many different and competing narratives, only one of those narratives can be the governing narrative. This naturally involves a level of domination. Therefore, while some nationalism may be more tolerant of alternative identities than others, all ultimately divide humanity into national units and therefore depend on divisions.

[47] Kramer, *Nationalism in Europe and America,* 16.
[48] Bhabha, 'DissemiNation: Time, Narrative, and the Margins of the Modern Nation,' 297, 299 – 300.
[49] Kramer, *Nationalism in Europe and America,* 21.

Sources and Methodology

While all the theoretical literature is highly important, it is the work by Anderson, Bhabha, and Bell that most influences this thesis. This is for two reasons. First, the focus on narrative best incorporates the involvement of commemorative days in the creation and replication of national identities. Kohn, Hayes, Gellner, and Greenfeld explore commemorative days with regards to its use by elites to shape memory. Smith, in my view erroneously, sees commemorative days as enduring symbols of actually existing memory. Anderson, Bhabha, and Bell see commemorative days as an active component in the writing and rewriting of the nation's story. In this way, their theories provide greater scope to analyse the tensions when different groups come into conflict regarding the narrative expression of national identity. Second, the theories of Bell and Bhabha best describe the complex interactions between top-down and bottom-up forces that are seen on commemorative days. In their view, the nation is a negotiated, rather than an imposed, narrative. In the following chapters, therefore, I will explore the negotiation of national narratives on commemorative days. By exploring the limits to these negotiations, I will demonstrate that nationalism is inherently limited in its ability to express a liberal outlook on the world.

I will use three case studies to explore the tensions present during the negotiation of national narratives. These commemorations are Victory Day (9 May) in Russia, Anzac Day (25 April) in Australia, and the European Day of Remembrance for the Victims of Nazism and Stalinism (23 August) in the European Union. These days were chosen to give this study depth and geographical breadth, along with a sense of connection. All three days deal with war commemorations. Two of the days—Victory Day and the European Day of Remembrance for the Victims of Nazism and Stalinism—are directly concerned with the commemoration of World War II. However, these two days have contradictory messages about the lessons and consequences of that war. Meanwhile, Anzac Day commemorates

World War I, although it has evolved to become a much broader commemoration of both war and of Australian nationhood. Therefore, Anzac Day and Victory Day share distinct similarities in that they are both unofficial national days. Furthermore, both Anzac Day and Victory Day incorporate the commemoration of the armed forces. The European Day of Remembrance for the Victims of Nazism and Stalinism, on the other hand, is not a national day, but rather an attempt to create a supra-national narrative. Yet, it has so far failed to embed itself in European public memory culture due to competing national narrative in East and West Europe. Finally, Australia and most of the members of the European Union are liberal democracies. The governments of these states are keen to present their national narratives as liberal and inclusive. This allows me to explore how far they have succeeded on this front.

This thesis draws on research from three kinds of primary sources. All three of them relate to commemorative days. However, each source presents a different perspective on the meaning and narrative of these commemorative days. Furthermore, it could be argued that each comes from a different social class. Therefore, in utilizing all three, this thesis cannot simply be said to be a 'top-down' or 'bottom-up' interpretation of commemorative days. Across each chapter I will incorporate all three primary sources, and contrast them with each other. The three kinds of primary sources were selected due to the fact that all three contribute significantly to the public discourse surrounding the negotiation of national commemorative days.

Transcripts and videos of political speeches presented by important politicians form one of my three core primary sources. Each chapter draws on a different series of political speeches. Chapter two draws heavily on the political speeches given by Vladimir Putin was part of the 9 May Victory Day celebrations in Red Square, Moscow. The speeches span the years 2012 to 2018. These speeches were translated directly by the Kremlin and made

available through the official website of the President of Russia. Video footage of the speeches was also captured by various media outlets, most prominently *Russia Today*. This footage provides visual context to many of the statements made by President Putin on the day. In Chapter three, most of the speeches were presented by major Australian politicians on the occasion of Anzac Day. Additionally, transcripts or video of political statements made at press conferences in response to issues relating to Anzac Day were also referred to. Chapter four draws on the political speeches made by Members of the European Parliament and delivered to the European Parliament. These speeches were made during discussion over the establishment of the European Day of Remembrance for the Victims of Nazism and Stalinism. Despite the fact that the speeches were delivered in numerous European languages, they were all translated into English by official European Union translators, and it is the English translations to which I refer. Because these sources deal mostly with the perspectives of governing regimes or of high political elites, these sources provide what might traditionally be called a 'top-down' perspective. In other words, taken at face value, these sources generally present the nation's 'governing narrative'. However, as I seek to show, much of what is said in these speeches are informed and influenced by popular opinion, even as they seek to shape popular opinion themselves.

This thesis also draws heavily on newspaper articles. Generally speaking, these articles were accessed through online news sites. However, in the case of Chapter three, I also accessed print newspapers. In Chapter two, most newspaper articles came from Russian news sources directed at English-language readers. Articles from *Russia Today*, and *SputnikNews* formed the core of this research. These news sites have occasionally been referred to as propaganda outlets for the Kremlin. There are also potential problems in that Russian news media has a tendency to report one thing in English language articles and another in Russian

language articles.[50] However, this thesis is concerned with the way history is constructed and presented in a nationalist framework. Therefore, the ways in which these Kremlin-backed newspapers present narratives of the past serves as an excellent focus for analysis. Chapter three draws on newspaper articles from several major Australian newspapers—namely the *Australian Broadcasting Corporation*, the *Guardian* (Australia), the *Sydney Morning Herald*, the *Australian*, and the *Daily Telegraph*. This wide cross section of newspapers provides a spread of political perspectives across the left-right spectrum. This is important, as part of the aim of chapter three is to compare the narratives of the past between 'progressive' and 'conservative' commentators. Chapter four refers in only a limited fashion to newspaper sources, generally as a method of cross-referencing statements made by politicians.

My final set of primary sources is less traditional, namely, comments left by internet users on online public forms. This includes comments left on YouTube videos, comments on online newspaper articles, and comments on the 'Talk' page of Wikipedia articles. All of these comments should be treated with caution due to the nature of internet discourse.[51] However, as Seth Bernstein pointed out, historians should not shy away from them, but rather regard them in the same way one might view letters to the editor. As Bernstein says:

> scholars using digital sources must acknowledge the limitations of these materials and corroborate finds with other evidence. However, the Internet is the site of vibrant commemorative efforts that researchers must engage to understand contemporary historical memory.[52]

[50] Martin Kragh and Sebastian Åsberg, 'Russia's strategy for influence through public diplomacy and active measures: the Swedish case,' *Journal of Strategic Studies* Vol 40(6) (2017), 775-777.
[51] Particular problems stem from so-called 'trolling' or from anonymous messages.
[52] Seth Bernstein, 'Remembering War, Remaining Soviet: Digital commemoration of World War II in Putin's Russia,' *Memory Studies* Vol 9:4 (2016), 423-124.

These messages contribute in a meaningful way to the wider discourse on commemorative days and to avoid them would be problematic. In chapter two I draw mostly on YouTube comments posted on several Russia Today videos of the 2015 and 2016 Victory Day military parades in Red Square. These comments were coalesced into a database and assigned keywords to allow for some quantitative, as well as, qualitative analysis. Chapter four delves into Wikipedia comments on the 'Talk' pages of the European Day of Remembrance for the Victims of Nazism and Stalinism and other related articles. My specific intention here is to explore the relationship between public and academic discourse. Chapter three relies on online comments to explore the kinds of accusations made against those who go against the dominant national narrative. These comments were drawn from online newspaper articles and from social media comments.

Chapter 2: Victory Day in Russia

On 9 May 2012, in Russia, the 67th anniversary of the defeat of Nazism was marked by two very different commemorative events. The first was the Moscow Red Square Military Parade, presided over by the newly re-inaugurated president Vladimir Putin. In a tradition stretching back to the 1940s, more than 14,000 servicemen marched through Red Square in dress uniform, while tanks, armoured cars, missile launchers, and other pieces of military hardware drove in their wake. The parade, which took place in the shadow of Saint Basil's Cathedral, was rich in ethnic, religious, and cultural imagery. The parade was a symbol of the military might of the Russian state and the national prestige of the country.

Meanwhile, over 3,000 kilometres away in Tomsk, Siberia, nearly 6,000 people marched through the city carrying photographs of family members who had fought in, lived through, or died during the Great Patriotic War. This procession, which was called the 'Immortal Regiment', had been organized at a grassroots level independently of official commemorations. It was the first time the Immortal Regiment had been held, but it would become a staple of Victory Day commemorations in the years to come. These two events together represented the key events of the 2012 Victory Day which would continue to influence World War II commemorations in Russia in the future.

Although these two commemorations were very different, both were based on a very similar interpretation of the events of World War II. This interpretation was that the Nazis had invaded the Soviet Union in 1941 and had committed horrible, unprovoked atrocities against the Soviet people. In self-defence, the Soviet people had waged a bloody war which claimed the lives of millions and inflicted immense hardship on the population. At immeasurable cost, the Soviet people drove the Nazis back and ultimately triumphed in 1945. They thereby saved future generations from the horrors of National Socialism.

Though the official commemoration and the Immortal Regiment were similar in terms of narrative, they differed in terms of the way in which the past was remembered. The military parade had long been organised and controlled by Putin's increasingly authoritarian government. It was cynically seen by some news media, such as the Moscow Times, as a symbol of loyalty to Putin and his nationalist agenda.[53] The Immortal Regiment, on the other hand, represented an attempt by citizens to articulate their own relationship with Victory in 1945 in a manner that was distinct from the governing narrative of the Kremlin. Where the Military Parade attempted to subsume all experiences into an homogenous national narrative, the Immortal Regiment gave voice to many diverse individual experiences.

The aim of this chapter is to explore the complex interactions between personal identity, individual memories, national identity, and governing narratives. In order to do this, I first explore theory regarding the potential for political and social elites to control commemorative memory. I then explore the history of the Red Square Military parade and its current use by the Russian government. In this section, I explore the extent to which Victory Day has been used by the authorities to legitimise their rule. This will be followed by a section on the Immortal Regiment, in which I investigate the tug-of-war between official and private memories. I conclude the chapter with a discussion of the interplay between individualising personal memory and homogenising national identity.

Memory, Commemoration, and Political control

Since the collapse of the Soviet Bloc, there has been a revival of interest in the study of commemorative events and rituals in former-communist, Eastern European states. In the case of Russia, this literature has tended to focus on the government's use and abuse of

[53] Andrei Kolesnikov, 'Victory Day: Remembering the Fallen or Propaganda for Putin,' *The Moscow Times*, May 8, 2019, https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2019/05/08/victory-day-remembering-the-fallen-or-propaganda-for-putin-a65510.

commemorative practises in order to reinforce its own political legitimacy. This is especially the case regarding the scholarship that examines Victory Day on 9 May. For instance, in 2011, Olga Procevska, Vita Zelče, and Klinta Ločmele explored the Russian government's policies vis-à-vis national holidays and commemorations.[54] In particular, the authors investigated the ways in which Victory Day was used as propaganda for President Putin in the context of Russo-Latvian relations. Similar explorations of Putin's manipulation of Victory Day commemorations for his own personal gain can be seen in the work of Valerie Sperling and Elizabeth A. Wood.[55] In 2017, Julie Fedor published a study of the Russian government's attempts to appropriate the Immortal Regiment by imposing a nationalist 'nation-as-family' framework on commemorative proceedings.[56] As I discuss later in the section on the Red Square Military Parade, the claim that Putin uses Victory Day to reinforce his own legitimacy is perfectly valid. Authoritarian leaders habitually use commemorative days to impose their vision of the world upon their subjects. However, the complexities of collective memory imply that this process is more complex than a top-down exploration of memory might suggest.

It is widely accepted that the celebration of public holidays and commemorative dates help establish group unity and social order. In ordinary life, people exist as individuals. As Amitai Etzioni argues: 'Profane (secular), routine, daily life, the conduct of instrumental activities at work, and carrying out household chores, tend to weaken shared commitments to beliefs and social bonds, and to enhance centrifugal individualism.'[57] Therefore, without

[54] Olga Procevska, Vitz Zelče, and Klinta Ločmele, *Celebrations, Commemorative Dates and Related Rituals: Soviet Experiences, its transformation and contemporary Victory Day Celebrations in Russia and Latvia*, (Riga: Academic Press of the University of Lativa, 2011), 109.
[55] Valerie Sperling, 'The last Refuge of a Scoundrel: patriotism, militarism and the Russian national idea,' *Nations and Nationalism* Vol 9(2) (2003), 235-253. Elizabeth A. Wood, 'Performing Memory: Vladimir Putin and the Celebration of WWII in Russia,' *The Soviet and Post-Soviet Review* Vol 38 (2011), 172-200.
[56] Julie Fedor, 'Memory, Kinship, and the Mobilisation of the Dead: The Russian State and the "Immortal Regiment" Movement,' in *War and Memory in Russia, Ukraine and Belarus*, ed. Julie Fedor, Markku Kangaspuro, Jussi Lassila, and Tatiana Zhurzhenko, (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2017)
[57] Amitai Etziobi, 'Toward a theory of public ritual,' *Sociological Theory* Vol 18(1) (2000), 45.

periodic reinforcement, group identity eventually breaks down. As Etzioni states: 'For societies to survive these centrifugal, individualistic tendencies, they must continuously recreate themselves by shoring up commitments to one shared ('common') set of beliefs and practices.'[58] Holidays and mass public rituals provide a way for a social group to reaffirm its own existence.[59] During public holidays, individuals get together, both in the physical and the abstract sense. They celebrate their connections, relationships, shared ideals, and moral principles through familial and national social rituals. They may attend parades together, sing patriotic songs, or just spend time in each other's company. Whether consciously or not, this process reaffirms group bonds and ideals and helps to establish emotional solidarity between individuals.[60]

The celebration of commemorative rituals are also performative. As Peter Burke argues, they use 'the language of the past to say something about the present'.[61] The act of commemoration and of remembering is therefore an active process which makes claims about how a social group views itself in the present using the framework of memory. Erll and Rigney note that remembering is 'as much a matter of acting out a relationship to the past from a particular point in the present as it is a matter of preserving and retrieving earlier stories'.[62] It follows from this that commemorative rituals play an important role in the shaping of group identity. By remembering certain events through particular interpretations and by drawing attention to specific individual experiences and narrative tropes, commemorative days establish a broader framework through which group members are encouraged to examine their own personal or familial memories. Because personal memories

[58] Ibid., 45.
[59] Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life,* 287.
[60] Ločmele, Procevska, and Zelče, *Celebrations, Commemorative Dates and Related Rituals,* 110.
[61] Peter Burke, 'Co-memorations. Performing the Past,' in *Performing the Past: Memory, History, and Identity in Modern Europe,* ed. K. Tilmans, F. van Vree, and J. Winter, (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2010), 105 – 106.
[62] A Erll and A Rigney, 'Introduction: Cultural Memory and its Dynamics' in *Mediation, Remediation and the Dynamics of Cultural Memory*, ed. A Erll and A Rigney, (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2009), 2.

are an integral part of individual identity, personal identity is linked to group identity in this process. Yet, the broader interpretative framework establishes certain key tropes and normative value judgements in both the personal and group narrative which construct a larger system of ideas about the world and the social group's place within it. The result is that commemorative rituals contributes to a blending of private and public memories alongside a blending of individual and group values.

As Klinta Ločmele, Olga Procevska, and Vita Zelče suggest, holidays and mass rituals are particularly useful for political elites, who can use them to legitimise their power. As rituals provide a sense of group solidarity by linking group identity to a set of common values, politicians will often attempt to manipulate rituals in order to link those values with their own political ideology.[63] They do this through the use of symbols. According to David Kertzer, political actors intentionally or unintentionally manipulate symbols during the political process. These symbols form the material basis of political power and help disseminate political myths. Public rituals on commemorative days are a vectors by which these political symbols are presented to the public.[64] Thus, as Ločmele, Procevska, and Zelče argue, 'Holidays are "invented" so as to create social cohesion, to establish and legitimize institutions of power and authorities, as well as to ensure the improvement of value systems and conventions of behaviour.'[65] Furthermore, because public holidays and rituals must be given official status by politicians, it can be assumed that only those rituals which support the legitimacy of the governing regime are given space to be expressed. This is perhaps why radical changes to a country's political system invariably result in changes to a country's symbolic system and commemorative calendar.[66] The new symbols reflect and represent the

[63] Ločmele, Procevska, and Zelče, *Celebrations, Commemorative Dates and Related Rituals,* 111.
[64] David Kertzer, *Rituals, Politics, and Power*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), 1-13.
[65] Ločmele, Procevska, and Zelče, *Celebrations, Commemorative Dates and Related Rituals,* 110.
[66] Ibid., 111.

new ideology of the political force that has taken power. They are identifiers of the new system.[67]

These claims are fairly uncontroversial, but, as Anthony Smith suggests, politicians are not the only actors who shape group identity on commemorative days. Smith places great weight on the role of memory in the creation of group identity. He notes that the 'relationship of shared memories to collective cultural identity, and the cultivation of shared memory, almost by definition, is integral to cultural identity and the cultivation of shared memories is essential to the survival and destiny of such collective identities'.[68] Indeed, 'one might almost say: no memory, no identity'.[69] Smith's claims are of use here, for they suggest that politicians are constrained by the memories of the masses that they wish to manipulate. In general, politicians cannot simply invent new memories or commemorative regimes to fit their ideology. In the words of historian Heonik Kwon, official national history as written by social and political elites 'only have meaning for the local people when they are integrated with local history'.[70] The history of commemorative days is littered with the cadavers of dead symbols which held no real emotional resonance. This was the fate of many Soviet commemorative days which were quickly discarded following the collapse of the USSR.

However, as Duncan Bell notes, memory mythscapes contain a complicated ecosystem of competing narratives. The government may construct a dominant, governing narrative which is dependent on the memories of a wide section of society. However, there will invariably be counter-narratives which call into question elements of the official governing narrative. In some cases, there may even be tensions between competing memories contained within the same narrative strand within the mythscape. Commemorative symbols

[67] Ibid., 111.
[68] Smith, *Myths and Memories of the Nation,* 10.
[69] Anthony D. Smith, 'Memory and Modernity: Reflections on Ernest Gellner's Theory of Nationalism,' Vol 2(3) (1996), 383.
[70] Heonik Kwon, *After the Massacre: Commemoration and Consolation in Ha My and My Lai,* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2006), 117.

thus have the potential to cause significant dissonance between the government and the population over which they rule. This is true even under authoritarian states. In the case of Victory Day, it is certainly true that Putin and the Russian government use it to legitimise their current rule. However, the memories at the core of Victory Day celebrations have the potential to destabilise elements of the official Russian governing narrative.

There are two themes which are worth drawing out before proceeding further. The first is the tension that arises between memory and memory mythscapes. Memories, while shaped in a social environment, are individual. Mythscapes, while built on an amalgamation of individual memories, are collective. For a memory mythscape to appeal as widely as possible, however, it must simplify and homogenise the individual memories that comprise it. Yet, because memories are individual, they have the potential to contradict the larger governing narrative by introducing alternative interpretations of historical events. Memory mythscapes thus depend on individual memory while also seeking to dominate and subsume them. There is, therefore, a perpetual tug-of-war between individualising memory and homogenising mythscapes. The second theme is that, while it is possible for authoritarian leaders to shape the broader national narrative or narrative mythscape, it is more difficult for them to influence individual personal memories. That is not to say that social forces have no influence on individual memory. However, personal memory appears to be remarkably resilient against forceful attempts to mould it. Both these themes are directly linked to the core question of this thesis. Whether or not memory mythscapes or governing-national narratives can incorporate divergent memories is central to the question regarding nationalism's potential to be inclusive.

The History of the Red Square Parade

In the following section, I will explore the history of Victory Day in the USSR and in Russia. Ever since it was first celebrated in 1945, the commemoration of Victory Day has held a great deal of meaning for the people of Russia and the Soviet Union. It has also routinely been used by the Soviet and the Russian governments as a source of political legitimacy. The precise focus given by respective governments to the commemoration of Victory Day has shifted over the years. Yet, victory over Nazism in World War II has always played a key role in the governing narrative of the post-war Soviet and Russian states. Because no state, no matter how authoritarian, can entirely dominate the mythscape, the commemorations of Victory Day have therefore often been a site of tension between unofficial private memories and official, governing narratives.

The very first Victory Day parade was held shortly after the end of World War II in Europe on 24 June 1945. Georgii Zhukov, the Red Army's most esteemed general, rode across Red Square astride a white horse, while Soviet soldiers threw Nazi banners at Stalin's feet.[71] In this first parade, Victory Day was used to turn triumph in the war into Stalin's personal accomplishment. *Pravda*, the state-run newspaper, stated: 'here today, the nation met Stalin'.[72] The celebrations served as a chance for 'the Soviet people [to] celebrate the soldiers of the valiant army, the army of victors, and celebrate the work of the great Stalin'.[73] Despite these attempts to marry victory in World War II to Stalin's personality cult, Stalin himself demoted Victory Day from a state holiday to a working one. Academics disagree over exactly why he chose to do this. Some speculate that he was afraid the greatness of the

[71] Stephan Norris, 'Memory for Sale: Victory Day 2010 and Russian Remembrance,' *The Soviet and Post-Soviet Review* Vol 38(2) (2011), 205.
[72] Ibid., 205.
[73] Ibid., 206.

victory would eclipse his own.[74] Others claim that Stalin was paranoid that Zhukov could become a rival through the celebration of the war. Either way, after 1947 Victory Day was swept under the rug by the Soviet government. Yet, it appears that many veterans and citizens continued to commemorate the day in private.[75] Nonetheless, these early commemorative events by the Soviet state were clearly an attempt to associate personal identity and memory with loyalty to Stalin.

After Stalin died, the official approach to Victory Day varied according to the political agenda of the leader of the USSR. Nikita Khrushchev, for instance, denounced Stalin's use of victory in World War II as part of his personality cult.[76] Although Khrushchev did not attempt to restore celebration of Victory Day, he did try to break the link between Stalin and victory in World War II. Victory Day was restored as a public holiday in 1965. After having removed Khrushchev from office, Leonid Brezhnev appears to have turned to Victory Day as a way of consolidating his regime's legitimacy. Historian Maria Ferretti argues that personal memories of World War II were highly meaningful to the Soviet population in the 60s. Brezhnev tapped into it in order to promote Soviet patriotism and to reinvigorate support for the communist regime.[77] Brezhnev re-established the parade on 9 May and, for the next 20 years, the 9 May Victory Day parade served as a state performance of Communist power and national unity. Brezhnev did not try to rehabilitate Stalin after he had been denounced by Khrushchev. Instead, victory in 1945 became the 'Great Victory of the Soviet people' and the Communist Party.[78] Brezhnev died in 1982 and was replaced briefly by Yuri Andropov (1982-1984), who was in turn replaced by Konstantin Chernenko

[74] Thomas Wolfe, 'Past as Present, Myth, or History? Discourses of Time and the Great Fatherland War,' in *The Politics of Memory in Postwar Europe,* ed. Richard Ned Lebow, Wulf Kansteiner, and Claudio Fogu (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006), 262.
[75] Maria Ferretti, 'Memory Disorder: Russia and Stalinism,' *Russian Politics & Law* Vol 41(6) (2003), 39 – 43.
[76] Norris, 'Memory for Sale,' 207.
[77] Ferretti, 'Memory Disorder,' 57.
[78] Norris, 'Memory for Sale,' 207 – 208.

(1984-1985). Neither Andropov nor Chernenko made any meaningful changes to the Victory Day celebrations. All four of these leaders used Victory Day to encourage the Soviet people to nest their personal experiences within a governing narrative dominated by the Communist government.

Then, in March 1985, Mikhail Gorbachev came to power. Although his initial Victory Day speeches as General Secretary followed Brezhnev's rhetoric, the policy of *glasnost* weakened the state's control over the memory of Victory Day. As a result, other groups were able publicly to articulate their relationship with the past and with World War II.[79] In 1990, Gorbachev oversaw a heavily toned-down Victory Day parade that focused on overcoming the Soviet people's current difficulties, while remembering the lessons and tragedies of war.[80] Gorbachev's decision was an attempt to develop a new political identity. However, this new identity was supposed to be more individualistic and less state-oriented. In other words, it was an attempt to develop a more democratic, Western, civic nationalism. This focus on individual identity, however, coincided with a collapse of state power.

As official government control over public memory culture slackened, dissident voices—which had hitherto been suppressed—began to be heard. Hanging over the 1990 Victory Day celebration was a newspaper article entitled 'Stolen Victory' publish in *Literaturnaia gazeta* (Literary Newspaper). The article included a quote from a veteran that claimed that 'they've stolen our Victory'. 'They' referred to the Soviet governments—both Stalin's and the others'—that had commandeered the holiday for political purposes.[81] The veterans also accused the government of having built a myth of victory rather than taking care of those who had won it. The article opened the floodgates of memory, and differing interpretations of World War II (and the party's role in it) came into conflict. In turn, the

[79] Wolfe, 'Past as Present, Myth, or History?,' 272 – 273.
[80] Norris, 'Memory for Sale,' 208.
[81] Quoted in Nina Tumarkin, *The Living and the Dead: The Rise and Fall of the Cult of World War II in Russia*, (New York: Basic Books, 1994), 202.

official narrative was destabilised. Some even argued for the return of Stalin to the Victory Day narrative. Members of the newly reformed Communist Party in particular argued that Soviet citizens had fought for both Stalin and the motherland.[82] The conflict here between private memory and collective memory would be echoed later in the conflict between the Red Square military parade and the Immortal Regiment. It also goes some way to explaining the fervour with which the current Russian government defends the state narrative of Victory Day.

As the conflict and confusion over Victory Day's memory increased amid the breakdown of the USSR, Russia's new President, Boris Yeltsin, decided to cancel the official Red Square parade in 1992. Instead, he supported private, informal celebrations. Yeltsin's opponents consequently held a Victory Day rally in 1993, complete with a picture of Stalin.[83] As Yeltsin's approval ratings plummeted, he reintroduced the Red Square parade in 1995. He allowed many Soviet symbols to be displayed in the parade alongside the Russian tricolour. He also used the traditional Victory Day speech to try to create continuity between the struggles of World War II and the struggles of the present. By using these symbols, Yeltsin's intention was no doubt to try to recover some of his lost popularity. It did not work. Liberal newspapers condemned the return of Soviet symbolism. Meanwhile, the Communist Party and its supporters held their own Victory Day commemorations, in which Stalin's image was front and centre as the Great Leader of the great Victory.[84] In the face of falling popularity, Yeltsin ultimately resigned on New Year's Eve, 1999. His successor was Vladimir Putin.

Before we explore the contemporary Russian government's governing narrative as it is presented on Victory Day, I wish to reflect on some implications that can be drawn from the history of World War II commemorations. First, it is clear that the memory of Victory

[82] Kathleen Smith, *Mythmaking in the New Russia: Politics and Memory in the Yeltsin Era*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2002), 87.
[83] Valeria Korchagin, 'Veterans Come Out for Their Victory Day' *Moscow Times*, (May 12, 1998)
[84] Smith, *Mythmaking in the New Russia: Politics and Memory in the Yeltsin Era*, 89.

Day is a very powerful tool which can be utilised by the government in power. This stems from the strength of the individual memories of Soviet and Russian citizens who experienced the horrors of war from 1941 to 1945. It is for this reason that both Brezhnev and Yeltsin turned to Victory Day while they were trying to legitimise their respective regimes. However, in each case the government only ever manipulates the governing narrative of World War II. Individual memories potentially remain discordant. Even Stalin's notoriously oppressive regime was not able to succeed in permanently modifying individual memories into a larger pro-Stalinist framework. Finally, it is worth noting that, at many points in the history of Victory Day, these divergent memories have threatened the governing narrative of the state. In Stalin's time, the role of Zhukov called into question Stalin's position as the chief architect of Soviet victory. In the time of Gorbachev and Yeltsin, the question of Stalin's role in the war created difficulties for the governing narrative which wanted to downplay his contribution. Therefore, so long as the memories of World War II as expressed on Victory Day are kept under control, they can be extremely powerful for the government. But, the reality of existing divergent experiences and memories in the larger World War II mythscape have the potential to cause significant societal upheaval if they are turned against the governing regime.

Putin's Red Square Parade

The contemporary Russian government has used the memory of World War II as a source of state legitimacy and a focal point for national unity to an even greater extent than its predecessors. Putin's governing narrative of Victory Day now dominates public memory culture in Russia. The governing narrative attempts to subsume the memories and experiences of Soviet citizens in World War II in a narrative that focuses on the achievements of the Soviet and Russian armed forces. It articulates a world view that emphasises the

importance of military strength, sacrifice for the nation, and national unity in the face of external threats. The means by which the Russian government disseminates this narrative does not give space to the expression of more personal narratives.

Academics have noted the focus on the history of the military in nationalist Russian discourse since the early 2000s. Valerie Sperling postulated in 2003 that the Russian state leadership was using a form of militaristic patriotism as a means to generate popular support.[85] This trend has continued into the 2010s, particularly after Putin's controversial return to the presidency in 2012. The central focus on the armed forces as a symbol of national unity was a logical choice, as it was one of the few institutions in which the people of Russia held faith during the transition from Yeltsin to Putin. In a number of surveys conducted in 1993, the army was the only state institution trusted by more than 60 per cent of the population.[86] This made it the most trusted of all government organisations at the time.[87] The Russian armed forces were one of the only institutions that could embrace its Soviet lineage without tarnishing its reputation. Victory in 1945 is one of the few moments from the Soviet period in which contemporary Russian citizens feel unambiguous pride.[88] Moreover, the armed forces are also not explicitly linked to any particular ethnic group, and Russian citizenship who are not of Russian ethnicity can also identify with the Red Army soldiers of World War II. This appeases Russian nationalists without excluding non-Russian minorities and makes it an effective rallying point for popular support.

Yet there is also nationalist logic behind the celebration of the military as a symbol of national unity. The armed forces, as an institution, have always embodied key nationalist ideals. Soldiers, for instance, are taught to put the needs of the nation or national community

[85] Sperling, 'The last Refuge of a Scoundrel,' 235.
[86] Richard Rose, 'Rethinking Civil Society: Postcommunism and the Problem of Trust,' *Journal of Democracy* Vol 5(3) (1994): 26.
[87] Ibid., 27.
[88] Mark Edele, 'Fighting Russia's History Wars: Vladimir Putin and the Codification of World War II,' *History and Memory* Vol 29(2) (2017), 93.

above their own personal wants or desires. It is their duty, they are told, to ensure the survival of the nation through their willingness to fight and potentially sacrifice their lives.[89] Disunity, both in the armed forces and in the wider national community, is a weakness for the military which is to be discouraged. Likewise, as Kramer points out, nationalists believe that 'No matter how much a nation might disagree or differ between themselves … their essential unity [is] necessary in the face of external threats.' Links between nationalism and warfare have therefore always been strong, and nationalist culture in most countries has often contained strong military elements, including in art, flags, parades, uniforms, and national anthems.[90] Indeed, as Eugene Weber points out, conscription and martial education was an important part of the nation-building projects of nineteenth century states.[91] As we shall see in the following chapter, celebration of martial prowess is also a core feature of the governing narrative in Australian public memory culture. The explicit celebration of the military on national days, therefore, serves to strengthen these ties between national identity and the armed forces. It also highlights militaristic values to the wider society and implicitly idealises them as the ultimate expression of love for one's country.

The commemoration of the military on Victory Day is not unique to Putin's Russia, but the contemporary Russian government has, in recent years, increased the prominence of the armed forces during commemorations. This can partly be seen in the increasing numbers of military personal and hardware on display during the Red Square parade. In 1997, under Yeltsin, 5,000 servicemen participated in the Red Square parade. By 2008, this number had nearly doubled to 11,000 servicemen. The years 2012 and 2015 featured even larger numbers. Around 14,000 servicemen marched in 2012 and over 16,000 marched in 2015. As 2015 was the 70th anniversary of the defeat of Nazism, the large size of the parade was not unexpected.

[89] Kramer, *Nationalism in Europe and America*, 95 – 99.
[90] Ibid., 97-99.
[91] Eugen Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1976), 292 – 302.

The reason for the large numbers at the 2012 parade, on the other hand, is not immediately clear. It might have been related to Putin's return to the Russian presidency two days earlier, but this is speculation. Military vehicles and other pieces of military hardware also made a notable return. In 2008, the parade featured military vehicles for the first time since the collapse of the USSR. By 2017, 114 units of military equipment rumbled through Red Square. At the head of the column was a T-34 tank, a symbol of Soviet fighting prowess during World War II. Modern technology, such as the Iskander-M missile system and the 'cutting-edge' Yars missile systems, were also on display in order to emphasise Russia's contemporary military strength.[92]

The focus on the armed forces can also be seen in the rhetoric of high-ranking government officials, who envisage the parade as an expression of Russian military strength. In 2017, for example, the parade incorporated an inspection of troops by Minister for Defence General, Sergey Shoygu. During the inspection, Shoygu spoke of Russia's military capabilities during the inspection and emphasised that 'Russia's armed forces … demonstrated a high level of combat skills' and that '[the] officers and soldiers [of Russia] are ready to complete any mission.' He drew attention to the new items of military hardware procured by the armed forces, including 'more than 6,000 new items of hardware, including more than 470 armoured vehicles, 130 aircraft, and 40 Navy vessels.'[93] Shoygu's speech formed part of a broader discourse that occurs on Victory Day which seeks to place in parallel Russian military prowess and Russian national strength. For instance, on Victory Day in 2008, Dmitry Medvedev had stated that 'our Armed Forces are growing stronger, like

[92] 'Military parade on Red Square,' President of Russia, Kremlin Official Website, May 9, 2017, http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/54467.
[93] 'Victory Day Parade on Red Square 2017 (FULL VIDEO),' YouTube, RT News, May 9, 2017, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6MGj7CdLDds.

Russia itself'.[94] More tellingly, Vladimir Putin had stated in 2001 that 'the strength of Russia depends on the strength of the army'. [95]

The imagery of marching servicemen in the Red Square parade, alongside the rhetoric of officials, is a performative act that leads to a narrative which emphasises continuity between the memories of World War II and the experiences of contemporary soldiers. Putin himself explicitly emphasises a connection between the current generation of soldiers and what he consistently refers to as the 'generation of victors'. According to Putin, while the military veterans are 'the main heroes of the Great Victory Day', the 'soldiers and commanders [of today] have proven that they are worthy successors of the Great Patriotic War heroes'. In his words, this is because they continue to 'honourably protect the interests of Russia'[96]. Medvedev, in his turn, references continuity between past and present by stating that the current strength of the Russian Armed forces 'continues the glorious history of Russia's military, carrying on the victorious traditions and high morale of our army'.[97] Language such as this sets the tone for the official commemorations of World War II in Russia. What is emphasised is a sense of connection to the past through the actions of the contemporary armed forces. By doing this, soldiers and the memories of past soldiers, are given a privilege position in the national narrative.

The narrative of continuity which focuses on military experience is underscored in much of the performative practices and symbolism present on the day. For instance, in 2007 President Putin passed a law that allowed replicas of the Soviet 'Victory Banner', complete with the hammer and sickle, to be used by any individual or organisation honouring the

[94] 'Speech at the Military Parade marking the 63rd Anniversary of Victory in the Great Patriotic War', President of Russia, Kremlin official website, May 9, 2008, http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/30.
[95] 'Putin argues need for strong army', Newsline, Radio Free Europe, February 26, 2001, https://www.rferl.org/a/1142349.html.
[96] 'Military parade on Red Square', President of Russia, Kremlin official website, May 9, 2016, http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/51888.
[97] 'Speech at the Military Parade', May 9, 2008.

memory of World War II. The Victory Banner is flown on Victory Day in unison with replica Soviet military uniforms worn by some regiments during the Victory Day parade. As Jenny Thompson has noted, these artefacts allow those who display them to claim authenticity for their nationalist narrative. The potency of the 'Victory Banner' also allows the presentation of the Russian World War II experience as a 'Glorious Victory'. At a deeper level, however, the replicas on display make a link between past and present and establish continuity between the victory of the past and contemporary military pride. Part of this can be seen in the fact that it is considered to be performativity proper for Russian Children to wear replica uniforms on Victory Day as part of the celebrations. By doing so, they prioritise the governing narrative of military strength over family memories which may not be as focused on the military experience. These links between past and present generations encourage a feeling of continuity and national lineage that is essential to all forms of nationalism.

The focus given to the military on Victory Day contributes to a deeper embedding of individual Russian memory in a broader governing narrative of Russian history. The fact that the Russian government puts a central focus on the military during Victory Day, both through official rhetoric and the centrality of the military parade, demonstrates the predominance of the military experience in the Russian governing narrative. Indeed, Putin explicitly emphasises that, to the Russian government, 'main heroes of Victory Day' are the soldiers and veterans of Russia and the Soviet Union.[98] This claim would be innocuous enough if Victory Day were purely a day for the recognition of the sacrifices of soldiers past and present. However, because Victory Day is also Russia's main national day, it becomes part of a broader interpretive framework which links military experience to national experience.

[98] 'We pay tribute to all who fought to the bitter for every street, every house and every frontier of our Motherland', President of Russia, Kremlin official website, May 9, 2015, http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/49438.

Individuals are therefore encouraged to nest their personal memories and identities into a larger narrative of Russian military supremacy.

Looming over this narrative is the sense that military identity is inherently anti-individualist. The military depends on the suppression of individual identity in order to create soldiers who are loyal to their unit, who respect authority, and who are willing to obey orders unquestioningly. In the army this fosters a strict hierarchy which is considered necessary for winning wars. The military achieves this through the regulation of specific behaviours: individuals are referred to by rank rather than first name, uniforms are worn, personal grooming and presentation is highly regulated, and specific forms of conduct are enforced. All of this contributes to the formation of a social identity which suppresses individualism in order to best support military functions. Putin and the Russian government, by emphasising the importance of military identity and military strength for Russian national strength and security, are linking and mixing military identity with national identity. This implicitly encourages civic society to emulate the military in the suppression of individualism for the national good. It is not surprising that Medvedev stated: 'Dear veterans, it is from you that we learn to live and be victorious in the name of our Fatherland.'[99] Indeed, at every level of the Red Square military parade, one can see the homogenization of individual identities and their subordination to the collective national identity. Just as the military must suppress individual identity in order for those soldiers to survive in combat situations, so too must the citizens of Russia suppress individual identity in order to defend the motherland.

The attempt to replace personal memory with homogenised national memory is complicated, however, when discussing suffering and loss in World War II. Victory Day raises a complex question for the people of Russia: Should World War II commemorations be a celebration of victory or an expression of mourning for those who suffered or died during

[99] Speech at the Military Parade', May 9, 2008.

the war? This is a question which accompanies almost all rituals of war commemoration across the world,[100] but it is particularly pertinent in post-Soviet Russia.[101] Technically, Victory Day is the day when victory in 1945 is celebrated and the 22 June (the Day of Memory and Mourning) is the day for solemn remembrance. In reality, these two experiences—victory and suffering—cannot be separated in the memories of individuals. Hence, Victory Day pulls double duty and represents, in Putin's words, the day 'in which joy, memory, and mourning are merged together as one'.[102] Yet, while Putin and Russian government recognise the 'millions killed in that ruthless war … who remain forever on the battlefield',[103] the exploration of personal suffering does not go particularly deep. Suffering is talked of largely in general terms without reference to specific cases or experiences. This is partly because an exploration of personal wartime hardship would raise difficult questions regarding the culpability of the Red Army and the Soviet government for, among other things, the USSR's extremely high casualty rate. It might also once again raise the issue of the Soviet state's post-war neglect of veterans and the war dead as happened during Gorbachev's time.[104] Perhaps most problematically of all, however, a focus on personal suffering draws attention to the diversity of wartime experiences, individualises people, and hence detracts from the emphasis on Russian national unity.

Therefore, the commemoration of suffering in World War II in official terms is situated within a narrative of historic national suffering at the hands of western invaders. In the words of Maria Ferretti, victory over Nazism in 1945 is reduced to 'one more manifestation of the eternal heroism of the Russian people, fighting for the liberation of their

[100] A. Confino, 'Rmembering the Second World War, 1945 – 1965: Narratives of Victimhood and Genocide,' *Cultural Analysis* Vol 4 (2005), 46 – 75. Jay Winter, *Remembering War: The Great War between Memory and History in the Twentieth Century* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006).
[101] Fedor, 'Memory, Kinship, and the Mobilization of the Dead,' 214.
[102] 'Military parade on Red Square', May 9, 2016.
[103] 'Reception Marking the 67th anniversary of Victory in the Great Patriotic War', President of Russia, Kremlin official website, May 9, 2012, http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/15272.
[104] Fedor, 'Memory, Kinship, and the Mobilization of the Dead,' 314.

country from … the last in a chain of various conquerors'.[105] The clear resonance of this interpretation of Russian history can be seen most overtly in the popularity of the YouTube video 'Russian Occupant', an independent Russian propaganda film which went viral in 2015.[106] Here, the victory over the Nazis in 1945 is located alongside the 'atrocities of the Polish invaders during the Time of Troubles' and the burning of Moscow in order to defeat Napoleon in 1812. Throughout this narrative, the army is given the central role as the defender of the Russian nation from these threats. Putin's take away message is therefore that: 'Life itself demands from us that we must increase our defence potential.'[107] The experience of suffering is here expunged of its individual character. Hardship, loss of life, and the intrusion of war on everyday life in this framework are worth experiencing if it will ultimately protect the nation.

At the core of the official Victory Day celebrations is a homogenising governing narrative. The central point of reference in these commemorations is the nation, and the role of soldiers in protecting it. The experience of the soldier is elevated in official commemorations and presented as the universal war experience. Alternative experience, such as the role of women, or children, are not exactly suppressed, but it is certainly not given much space for expression. The governing narrative is fundamentally homogenising and ignores the realities of individual experiences.

The Immortal Regiment

While the Red Square Military parade is an expression of national unity that seeks to homogenise historical memory, the Immortal Regiment restores individual memory and representation to the commemoration of World War II. In order to commemorate the

[105] Ferretti, 'Memory Disorder, 67.
[106] 'I'm Russian Occupant (ENG Sub)', YouTube, published Feb 27, 2015, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o01nS_M3PQY.
[107] 'Military parade on Red Square,' May 9, 2017.

Immortal Regiment, individuals march through the streets carrying portraits of family members who were involved in the Great Patriotic War. The event is hugely popular in Russia partly because so many people have parents, grandparents or great-grandparents who fought in the war. However, as we shall see, the Immortal Regiment has also successfully spread to other countries. By 2018, Russian newspapers were referring to it as a 'Victory Day tradition in Russia, where the war left almost no family untouched'.[108]

To those who participate in the Immortal Regiment, the march represents a chance to articulate their personal or familial connections to those who fought, suffered, and died in the fight against Nazism. The portraits that are held up by marchers are not just images of veterans. They are representative of intimate family stories which hold deep personal meaning to those who express them. In many cases these connections are exceptionally close. For instance, one woman interviewed by the video news agency *Ruptly* was carrying a picture of her father, Gorin Ivan Petrovich. During the interview, she shared a little about his history. He was 'a veteran of the Great Patriotic War. He served in Belorussia, Poland, and Germany. He was badly wounded in action but nonetheless survived the war. He died in 2003.'[109] In other cases, the individuals who are commemorated are more distantly related, but are clearly still part of a family's mythology. For instance, one young woman who was interviewed revealed what she was carrying a portrait of her great-grandfather who 'was a partisan in Kuban. He survived the war [but] I do not remember him. I was little when he died but from what I've heard about him in stories, I love him and am very proud of him.'[110]

It is also noteworthy that the family stories which are remembered during the march are not always consistent with the official narrative of the Russian government. In one case, a

[108] 'Hunderds of thousands join Immortal Regiment march in Moscow to honor WWII heroes (PHOTO, VIDEO),' RT News, published May 9, 2019, https://www.rt.com/russia/458887-immortal-regiment-moscow-putin/.
[109] 'Russia: One million join Immortal Regiment march in Moscow', YouTube, Ruptly News, May 9, 2018, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AvfDOJUPbaY.
[110] Ibid.

woman who was carrying a portrait of her grandfather noted that 'in 1943 he was captured and was sent to a concentration camp in Germany until 1945'. Very little is said in the official narrative about the vast numbers of Soviet citizens who were captured by the German army or deported to the Third Reich as slave workers. The fact that many soldiers were captured and imprisoned by the Wehrmacht does not reflect or develop the narrative of heroism and martial strength expressed in official commemorations of World War II. Stalin himself equated surrender with treason and, as a result, those Soviet POWs and deportees who survived the war were of subject to persecution once they returned to the USSR.[111] The poor treatment of former POWs and deportees is completely absent from official narratives, but it is still remembered in families. The fact that this woman was still reflecting on the memory of her grandfather because 'he was a very nice grandfather' is demonstrative of this.[112] Other examples include a man commemorating his grandfather who 'survived a POW camp after being captured in 1944'.[113]

The individual element was, from the very beginning, central to the Immortal Regiment. According to most accounts, the Immortal Regiment started in the Siberian Town of Tomsk in 2012. The initiators, Sergei Lapenkov, Sergei Kolotovkin, and Igor Dmitriyev, stated that they felt the official Victory Day commemorations had become too militarised and triumphal and had begun to lose its truth.[114] This was exacerbated by the fact that many of the World War II veterans who had once marched in the parade were dying out or getting too old to participate. The initiators decided that they 'wanted to return the holiday to the main hero—to the person who experience the war and to whom we are ultimately grateful for the

[111] Richard Evans, *The Third Reich at War*, (London: Allen Lane, 2008), 186.
[112] 'Russia: One million join Immortal Regiment march in Moscow,' May 9, 2018. (Own translation)
[113] Ibid.
[114] Svetlana Prokopeva, 'Russia's Immortal Regiment: From Grassroots To 'Quasi-Religious Cult,'' *RadioFreeEurope*, May 12, 2017, https://www.rferl.org/a/russia-immortal-regiment-grassroots-to-quasi-religious-cult/28482905.html.

fact that we are alive today'.[115] They used an independent, local radio station to spread the idea before Victory Day. On the day, 6,000 people apparently turned out to march with pictures of their family members who had fought in the war. The idea proved to be infectious and quickly spread throughout Russia. In 2013, the Immortal Regiment paraded through over 100 different Russian towns. In 2014, Immortal Regiment parades were reported in 500 different towns. By 2016, Immortal Regiment parade had spread abroad, with marches reported in Australia, Canada, China, Estonia, France, Germany, Israel, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Lebanon, Spain, Ukraine, the United Kingdom and the United States of America. This was achieved mostly through copycat movements, which were encouraged by the initiators.[116]

The Immortal Regiment was subversive in its early years for several reasons. First, the central focus on individual stories and individual rights threatened the official nationalist narrative, which prioritised the experiences of male Russian soldiers above all others. It did this by introducing personal narratives which often ran counter to the governing narrative. By exploring these individual stories, the vast differences in war experience could be expressed and the government's homogenised story called into question. This could be via the expression of experiences which were not highlighted in the government's version of events, such as that described by the woman whose grandfather was captured by the German army. However, it could also highlight the involvement of groups in society whose role the government downplayed, such as women, workers, partisans, or non-Russian minorities. Second, the international spread of Victory Day, especially to Western countries such as Germany, the United Kingdom and the United States of America, reveal certain tensions. Immortal Regiment marches in other countries are approved of by the Russian state and are positively reported in Russian media. However, these Immortal Regiment marches are

[115] Ibid.
[116] Mischa Gabowitsch, 'Are Copycots Subversive? Strategy-31, the Russian Runs, the Immortal Regiment, and the Transformative Potential of Non-Hierarchical Movements,' *Problems of Post-Communism*, Vol 65 (5) (2018), 300.

outside Russia and are therefore not under the control of the Kremlin. This makes them somewhat unpredictable for the Kremlin in terms of the narratives which are presented and represented. Finally, as Gabowitch argues, the fact that the initiative was initially created by liberals and spread by independent media and grassroots organisations was, and remains, an ideological thorn in the government's side considering their opposition to such initiatives.[117] In light of their desire to demand unity and loyalty to the government, any organisation with such mass popularity outside of the control of the governments is threatening.

With its growing popularity and subversive undertones, the Immortal Regiment attracted the government's attention. The government quickly appropriated the initiative, while trying to discrediting the initiators. In May 2015, state-run newspapers accused Lapenkov, Kolotovkin, and Dmitriyev of having stolen the idea from a retired policeman in Tyumen, who claimed to have come up with the idea in 2007.[118] Subsequently, *Russia Today* and other government-run media outlets insisted that the Immortal Regiment began in 2007, rather than in 2012. According to Gabowitch, such attacks follow an established Russian government tradition and are designed to conceal the subversive origins of the Immortal Regiment's history.[119] Additionally, due to the decentralised nature of the Immortal Regiment, government authorities have been able to infiltrate many of the copycat movements responsible for organising the parade in key towns and cities. For instance, in 2015 Nikolai Zemtsov—the organiser in Moscow and a Communist Party deputy in Moscow's local parliament—allowed Russian state and para-state organisations to appropriate the initiative against the will of the initiators. Zemtsov eventually set up his own, parallel organisation called 'The Immortal Regiment of Russia', which organises events in

[117] Ibid., 308 – 309.
[118] Elena Rykovtseva, 'Son Gennadiia Ivanova,' *Radio Svoboda,* 2015, https://www.svoboda.org/a/27400447.html.
[119] Gabowitsch, 'Are Copycots Subversive?,' 308.

Moscow. [120]The event is incorporated into official commemorations and Putin himself now marches with the crowd carrying a portrait of his father. However, the Russian news media does not make it clear that these parallel organisations exist. Contradictory reports in different newspapers claim that the movement is under the control of the initiators, Zemtsov, the government, and the para-government organisation the All-Russia People's Front, whose leader is Vladimir Putin.[121]

The three founders have criticised the state co-option of the Immortal Regiment in several liberal Russian newspapers. They argue that the movement has been subjected to a 'soft takeover' by Kremlin authorities, and point to the fact that children are forced to attend the processions as part of school projects.[122] In 2015, liberal critics took photos of stacks of portraits apparently thrown away after the march as evidence that state authorities had coerced random people into the parade to boost numbers.[123] Critics of the Immortal Regiment, especially in the West, argue that movement has lost its initial meaning. To them, it is no longer a commemoration of private individuals mourning private memories. An article in the *Washington Post* in 2017, for instance, stated that 'the [Immortal Regiment] has been appropriated by Putin's government and … have become as much a part of official celebrations as tanks and nuclear missiles'.[124] In the same article, Andrei Kolesnikov, a senior associate at the Carnegie Moscow Center, argued that 'The administration has nationalised a private memorial, and intercepted its agenda. Now it's officious, mandatory, something

[120] Ibid., 309
[121] Ibid., 308 – 309.
[122] Aleksandr Litoi and Robert Coalson, 'Russian Students Resist Order to Join Immortal Regiment March,' *RadioFreeEurope,* April 24, 2018, https://www.rferl.org/a/russia-student-resists-order-to-join-immortal-regiment-march/29189034.html.
[123] Claire Bigg, 'Dumped Veterans' Photos Mar Moscow V-Day March,' *RadioFreeEurope,* May 11, 2015, https://www.rferl.org/a/dumped-veterans-photos-mars-moscow-war-march/27010068.html.
[124] David Filipov, 'Putin uses the Soviet defeat of Hitler to show why Russia needs him today,' *Washington Post,* May 8, 2017, https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/europe/putin-is-using-the-soviet-defeat-of-hitler-to-show-why-russia-needs-him-today/2017/05/07/1c390338-2e9e-11e7-a335-fa0ae1940305_story.html?fbclid=IwAR0BXkMEU-sweAhE0DSlHsM53Nxs2x7BaI_RVJlofwaOJww2nHSlfawYZdo&utm_term=.daf347e23068.

imposed from above.'[125] Meanwhile, *Euromaidan Press* denounced the spread of the Immortal Regiment to Toronto as 'Putin propaganda, planned and executed in the best traditions of the Soviet times'.[126]

Yet these interpretations of the Immortal Regiment are overly cynical. While it is important to note that the Immortal Regiment initiative has been infiltrated by authorities, it still retains subversive elements due to the liberal ideals embedded in it by Lapenkov, Kolotovkin, and Dmitriyev. The success of the original idea and the efficacy of its spread is due to the fact that it provides a framework through which individuals can express their personal connections to the war generation. While it is possible that the Russian government coerces random people into marching in order to boost numbers, most people seem to turn out for the same reason as those who marched in 2012. Personal narratives are still an integral part of the Immortal Regiment. This is most notable when marches occur in those places where the Russian government does not hold sway and where any sign that could be interpreted as loyalty to Russia is politically disadvantageous, such as in Ukraine or the Baltic states. Furthermore, by incorporating the Immortal Regiment into official state commemorations, Putin and his supporters are implicitly accepting the fact that the military parade does not fully satisfy the desire of individuals and families to commemorate individual people. At a certain level, the popularity of the Immortal Regiment demonstrates the reality that the government's official commemorations are limited in their popular appeal. Finally, by incorporating the Immortal Regiment into official proceedings, time and focus has been taken away from the military parade, and thus from the government's preferred

[125] Filipov, 'Putin uses the Soviet defeat of Hitler.'
[126] Antonina Kumka, '"Immortal regiment" march in Toronto—shameful display of Russian propaganda,' *Euromaidan Press,* May 9, 2017, http://euromaidanpress.com/2017/05/09/immortal-regiment-march-in-toronto-shameful-display-of-russian-propaganda/?fbclid=IwAR3GKND8KFqvPDjsHgICS2KebjF1KHvaqnhaoMyoyWJDFLTToBQPG9FHOto

narrative framework of commemoration. The Regiment still therefore prioritises the memories of the people over the memories of elites or the state.

The fact that the government has chosen to embrace the Immortal Regiment is all the more noteworthy when one considers its subversive core. There are at least three reasons why the government has not cracked down on Immortal Regiment. First, because Putin has put such emphasis on World War II memory as a symbol of Russian national identity, it would be impossible for the government to justify overt hostility towards any commemoration of it. The Immortal Regiment, though potentially subversive in its methods of commemoration, still commemorates the same narrative of World War II that is propagated by the state. Second, the Immortal Regiment is potentially very useful to the government if it can be controlled. With Victory Day commemorations at the core of Putin's official nationalism, the perception that the people support his version of history is propaganda gold. Finally, even in an authoritarian country like Russia, the government cannot simply dictate collective memory. As Smith's theories point out, individual experiences place limits on the extent to which the government can shape the collective narrative. The narrative must still conform to a foundation of memory. There must therefore instead be negotiation. The Immortal Regiment represents the Russian government's attempts to appease the public's desire for individual commemoration, whilst attempting to remove its subversive content.

The partial absorption of the Immortal Regiment into the Russian government's official commemorations demonstrates the conflict between private individualising memories and the homogenising state-sponsored narrative. Where the official government commemoration seeks to incorporate all experience into a single narrative of Russian unity, the Immortal Regiment revels in the complexity and diversity of historical experiences. This makes it a protest movement in disguise. Those who march probably do not perceive themselves as protesters. Yet by marching they are implicitly emphasising the importance of

private individual memories to war commemoration. In turn, they are implicitly rejecting what Liah Greenfeld would refer to as the attempt to 'interpret the collective will … by the select few [who] dictate to the masses'.[127] Thus, despite commemorating the same interpretation of the events of history as the Russian state, it is not surprising that the Russian government would quickly seek to co-opt and control the Immortal Regiment. In the context of official Russian, expressions of individuality are potentially an existential threat to the supposed unity of the nation.

Conclusion

The Victory Day Red Square Parade and the Immortal Regiment March demonstrates several points that are already well known to scholars of nationalism and memory. First, as has been argued by other scholars, the Red Square Parade is a sharp example of the tendency for ruling regimes to manipulate historical memory in service to the politics of the present. In the case of Russia, this has been expressed through the militarisation of World War II memory. The experiences of the male, Russian soldier are given primacy in official commemorations to the extent where alternative memories are sidelined and devalued. These actions are in service to the Kremlin's contemporary national narrative of Russia as a strong, military state with a long history of success in glorious combat. It also contributes to a narrative of Russian hardiness in the face of adversity imposed on the nation by external forces.

On the other hand, the case of the Immortal Regiment demonstrates that, as Duncan Bell argues, there are always tensions in the mythscape, not just between rival narrative strands, but also within narrative strands. The Immortal Regiment was formed in response to the failure of official commemorations to adequately engaged with people's desire for the personal memorialisation of their loved ones. The event that was introduced in order to

[127] Greenfeld, *Nationalism, Five roads to modernity,* 11.

rectify this problem therefore placed those personal stories at the heart of its commemorative rituals. By doing so, however, the Immortal Regiment turned over the rock of official narrative to reveal thousands of wriggling individual stories, some incompatible with the governing myth.

This reality demonstrates a number of core inconsistencies at the heart of national narrative which ultimately call into question Liah Greenfeld's assertions about the potential for nationalism to be liberal and inclusive. As already stated, the Red Square Parade revels a homogenising impetus at the core of the official narrative, which stems from a need to create an image of a unified nation. An inescapable consequence of this is that particular memories are suppressed or excluded when the national narrative is presented during commemorations. Yet, as the Immortal Regiment reveals, national narrative must incorporate personal memory in order to remain relevant. If they do not, individuals will engage in alternative memoralisation that threatens to overturn the official narrative. There is therefore a strong tug-of-war between the need to present a narrative of national unity and the requirement that memory be presented in a way that is meaningful to those who do the work of remembering. Ultimately, these contradictions cannot be resolved. But this raises the question: how can the core of nationalism be linked to a compelling, inclusive image of a sovereign community of equal members if the individual memories of that community are not given equal status?

Of course, this is simply one case study. Indeed, it is a case study of nationalism in a country that does not claim to be liberal. The assertions made in this chapter are not strong enough to refute completely the possibility of an inclusive nationalism. For that reason, in the following chapter I will continue to explore these themes in a country which does position itself as a liberal democracy.

Chapter 3: ANZAC Day in Australia

In March 2011, the National Commission on the Commemoration of the Anzac Centenary published a report for government consideration entitled *How Australia may commemorate the Anzac Centenary*. As the title suggests, the report provided recommendations regarding the best ways to commemorate the centenary of the landing of Anzac troops at Gallipoli on 25 April 1915. This day—Anzac Day—had long been an important date in the commemorative calendar of the Australian state. In the words of the Australian War Memorial, Anzac Day is 'the day on which we remember all Australians who served and died in war and on operational service past and present'.[128] However, it also serves as an unofficial national day of Australia. Conservative commentator Andrew Bolt describes the day as 'the most important day in our calendar for reminding ourselves that we are one people, joined by a love of this country'.[129] Indeed, the National Commission's report noted that 'the Anzac tradition has undeniably shaped the development of Australia since the First World War'.[130] However, it also suggested that the focus on Australia's military history was 'something of a double-edged sword'. It noted that, while the centenary might provide opportunities for a sense of national unity, it might also become a 'potential area of divisiveness'. Anzac Day commemorations should therefore be 'culturally sensitive and inclusive' so as to not alienate Australia's many ethnic communities.

[128] 'Commemoration,' Australian War Memorial, accessed December 23, 2018, https://www.awm.gov.au/commemoration.
[129] Andrew Bolt, 'Anzac Day betrayed by RSL itself,' *Herald Sun,* April 26, 2017, https://thewest.com.au/opinion/andrew-bolt-anzac-day-betrayed-by-rsl-itself-ng-bb916fb9b5cfed36f673e9fe723e61cc.
[130] Malcolm Fraser, Bob Hawke, Ken Doolan, Warren Brown, Matina Jewell, and Kylie Russell, *How Australia may commemorate the Anzac Centenary: The National Commission on the Commemoration of the Anzac Centenary,* (Canberra: Australian Government Department of Veterans' Affairs, 2011), vi.

The report noted a potential issue with the commemorative day. As the *de facto* national day of modern, multi-cultural Australia, Anzac Day is expected to be inclusive and meaningful for all 'Australians'. Yet, the story of Anzac Day has historically focused on the experiences of Anglo-Celtic men in a way that excludes the memories of the country's other ethnic groups. In response, there have been a number of arguments in public discourse about the best ways to interpret the Anzac legend. Some groups have tried to raise awareness about the service at Gallipoli of minority groups, such as Indigenous Australians, Italian-Australians, and even Chinese-Australians.[131] Others have tried to reframe the message of Anzac Day so that it focuses on certain 'Australian values'. On the other hand, some insist that Australia's 'core culture' is based on an Anglo-Celtic heritage which the Anzac story should reflect.[132] These different interpretations are often in conflict with one another. None are hegemonic. In this context, the national story of the Anzacs as presented on 25 April has become a tapestry of contested narratives. However, all have in common the idea that there is an 'Australian Anzac story' which can, and should, be used to represent 'us'.

The following chapter will explore the narrative conflicts between these interacting strands as they discuss what is appropriate and what is inappropriate to commemorate on 25 April. I will begin with a discussion of theory regarding interpretative communities and narrative plot structures. I will then turn to a brief discussion regarding the development of the 'Anzac story' and its historical negotiation and renegotiation in the face of contestation regarding its meaning. This will be followed by an analysis of several recent Anzac Day controversies and the conflicts between interpretive communities that arose in their wake. I will conclude with an analysis that explains the difficulties in creating an inclusive national

[131] Peter Cochrana, 'The past is not sacred: the 'history wars' over Anzac,' *The Conversation,* April 25, 2015, https://theconversation.com/the-past-is-not-sacred-the-history-wars-over-anzac-38596.
[132] Tony Abbott, 'The Religion of Islam must reform,' *The Daily Telegraph,* December 9, 2015, http://www.dailytelegraph.com.au/news/opinion/the-religion-of-islam-must-reform/news-story/2b47f4da93b4f286ba5afe48e3b5de27. And Paul Barry, 'Anzac Day outrage,' *Australian Broadcasting Corporation,* May 1, 2017, https://www.abc.net.au/mediawatch/episodes/anzac-day-outrage/9972690.

story in the face of these contested narratives. In so doing, I hope to explore the potential for nationalism to be divorced from the language of exclusion and ethnic divisions and be used instead to defend concepts of individual civil liberties and democracy in the Australian context.

Anzac Day in public memory discourse and narrative emplotment

The foundation of Anzac Day is the so-called 'Anzac Legend'. This is a story about the historical experiences and character of the members of the Australian armed forces from the landings at Gallipoli in 1915 to the present day. However, the Anzac legend is more than just a dry repetition of the events of the past. It is an emotional narrative that claims to incorporate personal and collective identities, individual and national memories, and academic and popular history. Each of these components shape each other and influence the ways in which individuals interpret the Anzac legend. As a result, there are a several different versions of the Anzac legend which influence the way certain groups regard Anzac Day.

The Anzac Legend is a story and, like all stories, it cannot encompass all events and viewpoints. 'The idea of an exhaustive narrative', as Ricœur points out, 'is a performatively impossible idea.'[133] If one were to incorporate all the events of the past into a story, the story would be impossibly long and, in many places, irrelevant or even incoherent. All narratives, therefore, are selective. As Khoury points out, historical narratives in particular consciously 'select, organise, and prioritise events taken from the raw, unprocessed and potentially endless list of past and present events' in order to make sense of them.[134] The process of ignoring perspectives and events is therefore an essential element in the telling of narratives. As Roland Barthes says, all the 'static' is cut out, and every event is carefully crafted to

[133] Paul Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting,* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 448.
[134] Nadim Khoury, 'The Negotiation of National Narratives,' (PhD diss., University of Virginia, 2012), 8.

further the plot or the character development.[135] Therefore, according to Ernst Renan, the process of 'forgetting' is as important as the process of remembering in the construction of a national narrative.[136]

Being a historical narrative, the Anzac legend must make reference to the memories of the national collective. However, collective memory is simultaneously a reflection of, and reflected by, collective identity. Identities, whether personal, collective, or national, are narrative constructions. They need to be mentally conceived by individuals who construct that identity as a part of their past in a narrative format. An individual who cannot remember, cannot construct an identity of themselves. This has been suggested as one of the reasons dementia patients begin to lose their personality as their memories deteriorate.[137] As John Gillis explains: 'The core meaning of any individual or group identity [is] … a sense of sameness over time [and this] is sustained by remembering.'[138] Gillis goes on to explain that 'what is remembered is defined by the assumed identity'. What he means by this is that present identity and past memories are mutually constitutive. Perceptions of oneself in the present shape how one remembers the past. But, similarly, what one chooses to remember about the past reinforces or reshapes one's identity in the present. Collective identity depends on narratives based on commonality, shared experiences, and shared memories. These collective memories must be maintained by individuals who are obliged to do the remembering,[139] but the memories of those individuals are moulded to fit the collective narrative. Thus, the events remembered in historical narratives like the Anzac Legend are often shaped by the identities of individuals in the present.

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[135] Roland Barthes, 'An Introduction to the Structural Analysis of Narrative,' *New Literary History* Vol. 6 (2) (1975), 237 – 272.
[136] Ernest Renan, *Qu'est-ce qu'une nation?,* trans. Ethan Rundell, (Paris, Presses-Pocket, 1992), 3.
[137] Simon Walker and John McMillan, 'Memory, Identity and Dementia,' in *Handbook of the Philosophy of Medicine*, ed. Thomas Schramme and Steven Edwards, (Dordrecht: Springer Netherlands, 2017), *359* – 61.
[138] John R. Gillis, *Commemorations: the Politics of National Identity,* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 3.
[139] Pierre Nora, 'Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Memoire,' *Representations* Vol 1 (26) (1989), 16.

The experiences of individuals within a collective group are shaped by a common interpretive code. Two important parts of this code are the *Script* and the *Schema*. The script is composed of the existing preconceptions and opinions on certain issues. The schema is the wider temporal narrative in which individuals place their personal memories.[140] These two elements combine to highlight specific events in an individual's memory and to imbue them with themes. For instance, the script may promote the idea that a certain ethnic group is mistreated due to racism, which would sensitise individual members of that group to experiences of discrimination. Meanwhile, the schema could be a broader narrative which provides context for the individual's experiences of racism.[141] The script and schema have significant power over collective memory, and therefore collective identity, but they are not always an accurate reflection of historical events. Indeed, they rely heavily on the selective interpretation of a small number of events in their creation.

Personal memories, therefore, can be modified in order to conform to the script, schema, and selectivity of the collective narrative. Brewer et al. argue that a need for social acceptance causes the 'self-stereotyping' of identity, that is, the suppression of all individual traits and the attendant cultivation of socially approved ones.[142] Moreover, 'the individual's own mental processes are transformed as the inter-psychological processes and meditational tools are internalized',[143] so it is altogether more probable that individuals will produce memories that are highly compatible with the collective memory. This can certainly be seen in the construction of the Anzac myth over the years. In his study of Australian First World War veterans, Alistair Thomson notes that demobilised Anzac soldiers often suppressed

[140] Emmanuel Sivan and Jay Winter, *War and Remembrance in the Twentieth Century*, (Cambridge: Press Syndicate of the University of Cambridge, 1999), 13.
[141] Ibid., 13.
[142] Marilynn B. Brewer and Wendi Gardner, 'Who is this 'We'? Levels of Collective identity and Self Representations,' *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* Vol 71. (1) (2000), 86.
[143] Mary S. Weldon, 'Remembering as a social process,' in *The psychology of learning and motivation*, ed. D.L. Medin, (San Diego: Academic Press, 2001), 74.

personal memories that did not conform to the dominant patriotic discourse in the post-war period.[144] I will explore this phenomenon to a greater degree below, but for now it is worth bearing in mind that, because people are socially constituted, they are predisposed to adopting the dominant memory of the society in which they live. Thus, individuals will remember specific events in their lives which mimic the wider act of selection in 'national history'.

The wider process of historical selectivity, and the personal viewing of the world through an interpretative code, leads to the establishment of plot structures which are applied to broader history. Hayden White refers to this process as emplotment—the process by which the unprocessed historical dots are connected into an analytical narrative.[145] White argued that there are four basic plot structures which historians apply to the historical record in order to explain the past. Building on literary critic Northrop Frye's categorisations, White declared that these four essential plot structures were romantic, tragic, comic, and satiric. One should note that these plot-structures are ideal types and are not necessarily mutually exclusive. The different plot structures can be combined in some cases. At the time, White applied these literary tropes specifically to the work of historians, and as such his theory was controversial. However, it should be less controversial to apply White's theory to public narratives of the past. After all, public narratives tend to be less concerned with historical accuracy than the construction of a workable historical narrative with a unifying script and schema to convey moral, or national themes.

In the words of Hayden White, the romantic plot is 'a drama of self-identification symbolised by the hero's transcendence of the world of experience, his victory over it, and his final liberation from it. … It is the drama of the triumph of good over evil, of virtue over

[144] Alistair Thomson, *Anzac Memories: Living with the legend*, (Clayton: Monash University Publishing, 2013)
[145] Hayden White, *Metahistory: the historical imagination in nineteenth-century Europe*, (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1973), 3.

vice, of light over darkness, and of the ultimate transcendence of man over the world in which he was imprisoned by the Fall.'[146] From start to finish, the romantic plot is a story of progress. The protagonist might go through periods of difficulty. However, these dark periods are rarely of the hero's own making, but instead they are usually forced on them by some insidious outside force. Ultimately, however, the hero will triumph and, at the end of the narrative arc, they will be in a better position than when they started their journey.

The romantic plot is the structure of choice for most national narratives. This is because the romantic plot represents an ethos that is directed at national unity and heroism. To tell the past in a way that does not conform to the romantic plot would, as memory scholar James E. Young states, 'undermine the very foundations of national legitimacy, of the state's seemingly natural right to exist'.[147] The romantic plot structure, therefore, helps order a national narrative in a way such that the perspectives of victims are forgotten. When victimhood is raised in a romantic narrative, it is always the protagonist who has suffered some injustice. The romantic plot is the plot structure of more conservative interpretations of Anzac Day. This plot focuses on the heroism of the Australian armed forces and actively ignores the suffering of Aboriginal peoples or the war crimes committed by the soldiers of the Australian Imperial Force (AIF). This emplotment strategy is a powerful tool in the construction of national identity, but poor at acknowledging dark pages of the past.

The tragic plot is thematically opposed to the romantic plot. Tragic plots begin as a story of progress, but end in regression. High ideals expressed during the inaugural moment crumble under pressure and humanity is forced to learn to live with limitations. 'Tragedy has no festive occasions', White writes, 'except false or illusionary ones.'[148] The divisions and conflicts between the characters of the narrative are often more terrible than the conflict

[146] Ibid., 8 – 9.
[147] James E. Young "The Counter-Monument: Memory against Itself in Germany Today," *Critical Inquiry*, Vol. 18 (2) (1992), 270.
[148] White, *Metahistory*, 9.

which initiated the drama. Tragic plots also typically include a moment during which the protagonist recognises his or her crimes and failings, and becomes aware of his status as a tragic hero. From this point there can be no return to glory. In almost all cases, therefore, the tragic plot is antithetical to the national narrative. The tragic plot not only recognises the victimisation of others, it recognises the internal self-failings that led to it. A tragic plot is inherently self-doubting and self-critical, and thus makes a poor choice for a national narrative that aims to unite. Indeed, it is far more common to see one group accuse another of wanting to transform the national narrative into a tragic plot, than it is to see that tragic plot in action.

The comic plot takes the opposite trajectory from the tragic plot. Where tragedy moves from progressive to regressive, comedy travels from regressive to progressive.[149] The comedic plot begins with the moral and material failures of the hero. As in a tragic plot, there is a moment when the hero recognises his past failings. Unlike in a tragic plot, however, the hero reforms and begins his return to glory. A comic plot, at a certain level, recognises that no hero is perfect. All humans are vulnerable to wrong-doing, but, at the same time, no human is absolutely evil, just as they are also never absolutely good. The comic plot is often used in national narrative to incorporate previously forgotten or mistreated national groups. Consider the following passage by Indigenous Australian journalist Stan Grant:

> As Indigenous people we mark these solemn moments with our own memories … They are the memories of people who served and fought but came home to a still segregated land. I think of those black diggers and their white comrades. I think of

[149] Ibid., 9.

> their sacrifice and the mateship they forged. And I see the better Australia they fought for.[150]

Grant's narrative attempts to incorporate the experiences of Indigenous Australian soldiers who have traditionally been neglected in the Anzac narrative. However, Grant does not shy away from the past failings of the Australian nation. Indeed, he draws attention to the fact that Australia was a segregated and unjust society in the 1910s. But he balances it by referencing comradery between black and white diggers and by envisioning a better present/future. Comic plots often argue for compromise between divergent groups in this way.

The satiric plot is one in which there is little deeper meaning in history beyond the fact, as White puts it, that 'man is ultimately a captive of the world rather than its master'.[151] Satire, therefore, is characterised by a lack of agency. The protagonists of a satiric plot are dominated by the forces of nature and the powers of destiny. While the protagonists may attempt to change the overall trajectory of the story, the reality is that greater forces beyond their control will determine the outcome. One common feature of the satiric plot is the use of the passive voice, which conceals the active agents. Khoury demonstrates this by using an example from a 1960s German textbook in which the outbreak of World War One is explained:

> The war between Germany and France followed inevitably from the conflict with Russia. France was bound by its alliance with Russia, and Germany by its treaty with

[150] Stan Grant, 'On Anzac Day, we need to recognise the role of Aboriginal diggers,' *Australian Broadcasting Corporation,* April 25, 2017, https://www.abc.net.au/news/2017-04-25/stan-grant-on-recognising-aboriginal-diggers-in-the-anzac-story/8470252.
[151] White, *Metahistory*, 9.

> Austria. (…) The entanglement of European alliances is what led to the conflict between Germany and France.[152]

The satiric plot can be used in national narratives to imply a lack of responsibility. This in turn can be used to justify crimes of the past and make events seem inevitable. For instance, in the example above, the German government's active decision to go to war in 1914 can be overlooked and thus their role in the outbreak of war downplayed. However, it can also be used to reconcile two competing narratives. In this example, despite the fact that they were on opposite sides, neither the French nor Germany governments are blamed for the outbreak of war. Instead, both are portrayed as having been forced into it by similar external factors.

As I have already suggested, however, not all social groups interpret the Anzac legend in the same way. Sometimes different groups will select different events to commemorate or they will ascribe different plot structures to the same sequence of events. Reader-response theory explains this by arguing that different people can interpret the same narratives differently due to ambiguities in the text. What we think a text is saying is actually a result of our own interpretations as we actively fill in those ambiguities. In the words of Stanley Fish, we are writing the text as we read it.[153] As a result, narrative meaning is different for different people. However, people do not have entirely unique readings of a text. Instead, they naturally fall into camps with other people who have come to the same conclusion. Fish called these camps, 'interpretive communities', which are 'made up of those who share interpretive strategies not for reading … but for writing a text, for constituting their properties and assigning their intentions'.[154] An interpretive community is predisposed to come to the

[152] Khoury, 'The Negotiation of National Narratives,' 101.
[153] Stanley Fish, 'Interpreting the "Variorum"' *Critical Inquiry* Vol. 2 (3) (1976), 842
[154] Ibid., 843.

same conclusions about a text because they have used the same methods to analyse it. This bears some similarity to Duncan Bell's concept of mythscapes. For the members of a particular interpretive community, challenges to their group's plot structure are perceived as being factually wrong. This makes them an existential threat to the identity which they have built around their chosen narrative plot structure. Getting divergent interpretive communities to find common ground is immensely difficult as they have built the narrative around different interpretive techniques.

The Dominant Anzac Narrative

While there are many different interpretations of the Anzac Legend in Australia, there is an official narrative. This narrative has always held a strong influence over the commemorative culture of Australia. Having said this, the exact meaning of the narrative has changed over time. Yet, it has always maintained a core mythology about the actions and character of the Anzac soldiers in 1915. These interpretations are not always based on fact, but rather specifically moulded memories. What is clear is that this narrative is largely romantic in plot structure and strongly influences the present public discourse on Anzac Day

The members of the Australian Imperial Force (AIF) who fought at Gallipoli were a diverse group of people. They ranged from thugs, gamblers and heavy drinkers, to poets and teetotallers. Some were motivated by religious or patriotic impulses, while others were crude and cynical.[155] The soldiers came from many different backgrounds. For instance, a significant minority had been born in Britain. Over one third of the enlisted men had emigrated to Australia from Great Britain in the preceding decades before World War I.[156] Indigenous Australian people were present at Gallipoli, despite the fact that the Australian

[155] E.M. Andrews, *The Anzac Illusion*, (Cambridge: The Press Syndicate of the University of Cambridge, 1993), 215.
[156] Ibid., 44.

government did not recognise them as proper citizens.[157] The soldiers came both from rural and urban backgrounds, although those from the city far outnumbered those from the bush.[158] The soldiers served in a wide variety of roles and thus their experience of the war varied considerably. Many fought directly on the frontlines as privates and non-commissioned officers in the infantry. Others acted as officers, or as support staff. Women, too, experienced the war at Gallipoli, for instance as nurses on hospital ships.[159]

These people joined the War for a variety of different motives. Some enlisted out of a desire for adventure, others due to a sense of patriotism or imperial loyalty, more simply out of peer pressure or because their friends had been recruited.[160] Their experiences and opinions differed after the war as well. Many did not return at all. Of those who did, a large number were deeply traumatised by their experiences and became pacifists in later life. On the other hand, a small minority came to despise civil society and joined paramilitary or fascist organisations like the 'New Guard', led by Lieutenant Colonel Eric Campbell.[161] There was no standard 'Australian' who went to war in 1915. The war experiences, personal character, and later impact on life was diverse. Yet, despite this reality, the Australian narrative of war has often been subsumed into a governing narrative which homogenises the experiences of those involved.

Almost immediately after the landing of AIF troops at Gallipoli, the Australian war experience was narrativized in the form of the Anzac legend. This narrative emphasised Australian martial superiority, mateship, loyalty, physical courage, masculinity, and so forth.[162] The two men most responsible for the initiation of this legend were Ellis Ashmead-

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[157] Michael Bell, 'Aboriginal presence on Gallipoli grows,' *Australian War Memorial,* accessed January 4, 2019, https://www.awm.gov.au/articles/blog/aboriginal-presence-on-gallipoli-grows.
[158] Andrews, *The Anzac Illusion,* 62.
[159] Susanna De Vries, *Heroic Australian Women in War: Astonishing tales of bravery from Gallipoli to Kokoda,* (Sydney: Harper Collins, 2004), 2.
[160] Andrews, *The Anzac Illusion,* 44 – 45.
[161] Robert Darlington, *Eric Campbell and the New Guard,* (Sydney: Kangaroo Press, 1983), 5.
[162] Martin Crotty and Craig Stockings, 'the Minefield of Australian Military History,' *Australian Journal of Politics and History,* Vol. 60 (4) (2014), 581 – 582.

Bartlett and Charles E.W. Bean. On 8 May 1915, an article by Ashmead-Bartlett appeared in the *Sydney Morning Herald,* in which he described the Australian soldiers as natural combatants. He reported that, during the landings at Gallipoli: 'The Australians rose to the occasion. Not waiting for orders or for the boats to reach the beach, they sprang into the sea … then this race of athletes proceeded to scale the cliffs.'[163] As one cynical commentator remarked, Ashmead-Bartlett's eyesight 'must have been brilliant' as, during the landings, he had been aboard a battleship out at sea.[164] However, Ashmead-Bartlett's writings set the tone for the subsequent reporting of the Anzac exploits.

Charles E.W. Bean, the official war correspondent to the Australian Imperial Force, developed a legend of Australian exceptionalism in the same heroic vein as Ashmead-Bartlett. Bean wanted to demonstrate how 'the Australian people—and the Australian character, if there is one—come through the universally recognised test of this, their first great war'.[165] In 1916, he published the so-called *Anzac Book,* in which incorporated contributions from Australian Anzac soldiers. However, *The Anzac Book* was Bean's own creation, and he strove to present the Australian soldiers within the framework of his own personal vision. According to Kevin Fewster: 'The characteristic [Bean] perceived in the soldiers tallied with that which had so impressed him in earlier years with the men of the outback.'[166] Indeed, after only a few days at Gallipoli, Bean was writing that 'the wild pastoral life of Australia, if it makes rather wild men, makes superb soldiers'.[167] His assertion

[163] Ellis Ashmead-Bartlett, 'Australasians Glorious Entry into War. Historic Charge. Brilliant feat at Gaba Tepe' *Sydney Morning Herald,* May 8, 1915.
[164] Andrews, *The Anzac Illusion*, 57.
[165] C. E. W. Bean, 'The Writing of the Australian Official History of the Great War: Sources, Methods and Some Conclusions,' *Royal Australian Historical Society, Journals and Proceedings,* (1938), 91. Quoted in E.M. Andrews, *The Anzac Illusion,* 214.
[166] Kevin Fewster, *Gallipoli correspondent: The Frontline Diary of C. E. W. Bean,* (Sydney: George Allen and Unwin, 1983), 12 – 20.
[167] Ibid., 12 – 20.

is difficult to reconcile with the fact that, in 1915, only 17 percent of the AIF had been bush workers before the war.[168]

Therefore, for Bean's image of the Anzac soldier as a 'bushman in disguise' to persist, a great deal of information had to be supressed or excluded from the narrative. The contributions from soldiers that Bean deployed in his book were both limited and extensively censored. Only 150 responses from a force of 36,000 – 41,000 Australian soldiers were recorded and, even then, Bean excluded those which did not fit his vision. In the words of E. M. Andrews: 'Pieces which illustrated the grim reality of war, or mentioned cowardice, malingering, longing for beer, bitterness at officers or cynicism were rigorously excluded.'[169] Bean also had to deal with the fact that the Gallipoli campaign had ended in a military defeat for the Australian troops. This fact made claims of Australian martial superiority relatively disingenuous. As such, Bean wrote the narrative so that Australia's triumph lay in:

> the mettle of the men themselves. To be the sort of man who would give way when his mates were trusting to his firmness … to live the rest of his life haunted by the knowledge that he had set his hand to a soldier's task and had lacked the grit to carry it through—that was the prospect which these men could not face. Life was very dear, but life was not worth living unless they could be true to their idea of Australian manhood.[170]

Although Bean's narrative was highly selective, it became the foundation of the Anzac legend that was presented to the Australian public during early Anzac commemorations in the 1920s. By 1927, all the Australian states observed some form of

[168] Andrews, *The Anzac Illusion*, 61.
[169] Andrews, *The Anzac Illusion*, 61.
[170] Quoted in KS Inglis, 'The Anzac tradition,' *Meanjin* Vol. 1 (100) (1965), 26.

public holiday on Anzac Day. These commemorations invariably glorified the deeds of the Australian soldiers who were increasingly being established as the pride of Australia. The glorification of these soldiers continued in the interwar years, aided in no small part by the veterans themselves through the Returned Sailors and Soldier's Imperial League of Australia (RSSILA), as well as by politicians, right-wing 'patriots', and bereaved relatives who sought comfort in the Anzac myth.[171]

The legend, however, was based on a limited understanding of the Anzac experience. Its plot structure was fundamentally romantic in that it focused on the heroism of the Anzac soldiers to the exclusion of all else. The official narrative that dominated public discourse in the interwar period excluded those who did not fit the narrative of Anzac as presented in Bean's *The Anzac Book*.[172] Indigenous soldiers, women, and those who served behind the lines, were forgotten. Also removed were the Australian officers who, being responsible for several military blunders, did not fit Bean's narrative of superior Australian military capabilities.[173]

As a result, many individual soldiers became critical of, and cynical about, their status as Anzac heroes. Their individual experiences of war simply did not match up with the narrative of the state. Others had become pacifists due to their war experiences and used Anzac Day as an occasion for grief rather than as a celebration of Australian manhood. As Marilyn Lake and Carina Donaldson point out, some returned soldiers 'felt neither adequately compensated nor at all consoled by Anzac mythology'.[174]

The mythology and symbolism of the Anzac legend was deeply embedded into Australian social and cultural life following the interwar period. In 1941 the Australian War

[171] Crotty and Stockings, 'The Minefield of Australian Military History,' 582.
[172] Marilyn Lake, Henry Reynolds, Mark McKenna, and Joi Damousi, *What's Wrong with* Anzac, (Sydney: University of New South Wales Press Ltd, 2010), 116 – 117.
[173] Andrews, *The Anzac Illusion*, 145.
[174] Lake et all, *What's Wrong with Anzac?,* 75.

Memorial was unveiled in Canberra. Planned by Charles Bean, the Memorial was designed to ritually honour returned servicemen and memorialise the dead and missing. The Memorial served as the heart of the Anzac legend. Children were exposed to stories of Anzac and were, in the words of Martin Crotty and Craig Stockings, 'visited by veterans and regaled with stories of Australian martial valour'.[175] Even the word "Anzac" itself became legally protected by the *War Precautions and Protection of the Word Anzac Act* of 1920.[176] There were challenges to the Anzac legend, in particular from pacifists, peace activists, historians, feminists, disenchanted veterans and others (particularly during the Vietnam War).[177] Yet it was continually championed by veterans' associations and, though it sometimes waned in prominence, it never disappeared. While Anzac Day held significance for Australian national identity during this time, it remained largely a day for war commemoration.

In the 1990s, however, Anzac Day was reinvented as a day of national celebration in addition to a day of mourning. Mark McKenna argues that this was due to the need for a new national day in light of increasing Australian nationalism and the decreasing popularity of Australia Day.[178] But, in order to become a national day, the official meaning of the Anzac Legend had to both more inclusive and more 'Australian'. Before this, in the words of Frank Bongiorno, 'when Anzac was a less inclusive tradition, those who were most responsible for policing its boundaries and regulating its rituals essentially courted—and often received—criticism from other citizens and groups.'[179] In order to avoid the divisions that plagued Australia Day, the Anzac Legend had to appeal to the many diverse cultures which had developed in Australia following the waves of post-World War II immigration. The old

[175] Crotty and Stockings, 'The Minefield of Australian Military History,' 582.
[176] Ibid., 582.
[177] Ibid., 582.
[178] Lake et al, *What's Wrong with Anzac?,* 110 – 134.
[179] Frank Bongiorno, 'Anzac and the Politics of Inclusion', in *Nation, Memory, and Great War Commemoration Mobilising the Past in Europe, Australia, and New Zealand,* ed. Shanti Sumartojo and Ben Wellings (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2014), 86.

custodians of the Anzac tradition (like the RSL) were increasing displaced by the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Australian War Memorial. For new migrants, by 'the 1990s these groups [which had previously been excluded from the narrative] accepted Anzac Day's renewed prominence as a national day and wanted to prove their Australianness through claiming a part of the Anzac legend.'[180] Indeed, in 1974, in Canberra, the Anzac Day march was led by Vietnam veterans, women, and immigrants, including Turkish immigrants, whose ancestors had fought on the opposite side.[181] The imperial character of Anzac Day, which had been prominent in earlier commemorations, was stripped as nationalist republican sentiments strengthened in public discourse. The 1981 film *Gallipoli* presented the war as a coming of age moment for the Australian nation. The film also presented an adversarial relationship between the Australian soldiers and the British high command. In *Gallipoli* the Anzacs were seen to be 'victims' of British incompetence and arrogance. At the same time, those Australian officers who had been excluded from the legend in Bean's narrative were now reintroduced as inept and disdainful English officers instead.

During the premiership of John Howard in the late 1990s and early 2000s, Anzac Day exploded in popularity. During his first Anzac Day as Prime Minister, Howard identified Anzac Day as the focal point of a new and more traditional nationalism.

> It is particularly gratifying that some vestige of cynicism over Anzac Day a generation ago appears to have evaporated with young Australians taking more interest than ever before in Anzac Day and what it means for our national identity.[182]

[180] Noah J. Riseman, '"Just another start to the denigration of Australia Day": Evolving Commemorations of Australian LGBTI Military Service' *Australian Historical Studies* Vol. 48 (1) (Jan 2017), 38.
[181] Lake et al, *What's Wrong with Anzac,* 117.
[182] Ibid., 124.

According to several scholars, including historians Mark McKenna and Romain Fathi, Anzac Day served to help Howard divert attention from the history of Aboriginal dispossession and frontier massacres.[183] By reframing the origin story of Australian history to the Gallipoli landings, Anzac Day could serve as the focal point of a celebratory national narrative in place of Australia Day. The Australian national story could now focus on the sacrifice and service of the Australian soldiers and their role in shaping the nation. By bringing the origin of the Australian nation forward 100 years, generations of Indigenous dispossession could be cut from the story. The central role of frontier violence and discrimination in the establishment of Australia as a nation could be safely ignored. This allowed for the inclusion of Indigenous Australian peoples into the Anzac legend as equal members of the national community. Memorials and services were established to emphasis this. For instance, in 1993, in Canberra, a memorial was established to remember "the Aboriginal people who served in the Australian forces".[184] The Anzac legend now emphasised unity by focus on the sacrifice and service of all Australian soldiers, regardless of their ethnic background. Thus, Anzac Day could represent the experiences of Indigenous people while ignoring their hardships in a settler society. Through this act of selectivity, the official narrative could retain a romantic plot structure that focused on heroism rather than exploring internal self-failings.

There is no question that the Anzac legend has become more inclusive ever since the 1980s. In the 2000s, growing awareness of the involvement of the 'black diggers' at Gallipoli has led to greater inclusion of Indigenous Australians on Anzac Day.[185] The ABC television series *ANZAC Girls*, which aired in 2014, was part of a wider trend that restored the experiences of women in the war. The Anzac Spirit is now said to be 'more to do with

[183] Ibid., 134 – 134.
[184] 'Memorials', *Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies,* Accessed January 4, 2019, https://aiatsis.gov.au/collections/collections-online/digitised-collections/indigenous-australians-war/memorials.
[185] Cochrane, 'The past is not sacred.'

mateship and sacrifice than conquest and power … bloodlust was not the mark of the Anzacs.'[186] This is in stark contrast to Ashmead-Bartlett's description of the AIF forces as soldiers 'whose blood was up … rushing northwards and eastwards, searching for fresh enemies to bayonet'.[187] Yet, the official narrative remains focused on the Anzacs of Gallipoli in 1915. Perhaps in response to this, certain sectors of society have developed their version of Australian identity around their understanding of the Anzac legend. This has led to conflict when alternative interpretations call aspects of the Anzac legend into question or attempt to broaden the Anzac narrative to incorporate additional material. These conflicts will be explored in the section below.

Anzac Day Controversies

While Australian politicians claim to embrace a multicultural and civic nationalism, controversies still arise on Anzac Day when certain individuals or groups engage with the history of Anzac in specific ways. These groups still believe that there is an 'Australian story' and are genuinely attempting to express their identity within an 'Australian' narrative. But, in order to do so, these individuals or groups introduce new material to the Anzac story which undermine the assumptions or the plot structures of certain other interpretive communities. This sometimes results in quite vocal backlashes from certain sections of the population, such as conservative politicians or right-wing radio-provocateurs. Thus, what we see in the public discourse is a variety of narrative strands interacting with one another as they debate the Australian story. No one strand is hegemonic, but some voices are more strident and aggressive than others, and seem to dominate public discourse.

[186] Quoted in Lake et al, *What's wrong with Anzac,* 119.
[187] Ashmead-Bartlett, 'Australasians Glorious Entry into War.'

On Anzac Day 2017, for example, outspoken Sudanese-Australian activist Yassmin Abdel-Magied posted the words 'LEST.WE.FORGET. (Manus, Nauru, Syria, Palestine…)' on her personal Facebook page.[188] The words in parentheses referenced the plight of refugees held by the Australian government in detention on Manus Island and Nauru, as well as the suffering of those caught up in the Syrian Civil War and the various injustices suffered by Palestinians. Shortly after posting these words, Abdel-Magied deleted the section in parentheses and posted an apology which read: 'It was brought to my attention that my last post was disrespectful, and for that, I apologise unreservedly.' However, the damage was done, and what followed was a veritable storm of criticism levelled at Abdel-Magied. The criticisms came from many quarters of society, including journalists, conservative commentators, politicians, and the general public via social media and letters to the editor. The Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC), one of Abdel-Magied's employers, distanced themselves from her comments. An ABC spokesman stated that 'Ms Abdel-Magied is … engaged in a range of other activities and work that is not related to the ABC. Her views and opinions in that capacity are her own and do not represent those of the ABC.'[189] One month later, the ABC cancelled the television program that Abdel-Magied hosted. An ABC spokeswoman argued that 'This decision … was not to do with any controversy over presenter Yassmin Abdel-Magied'.[190] Yet the *Sydney Moring Herald* claimed that, at a certain level, this decision was influence by Abdel-Magied's Anzac Day comments. [191]

[188] Yassmin Abdel-Magied, 'LEST.WE.FORGET.,' Facebook, April 25, 2017, https://www.facebook.com/YassminAbdelMagied/.
[189] Broede Carmody, 'ABC stands by Yassmin Abdel-Magied after Facebook post sparks Anzac Day outrage,' *The Sydney Morning Herald,* April 26, 2017, https://www.smh.com.au/entertainment/tv-and-radio/abc-stands-by-yassmin-abdelmagied-after-facebook-post-sparks-anzac-day-outrage-20170426-gvsehn.html.
[190] Broede Carmody, 'ABC axes Yassmin Abdel-Magied's Australia Wide program,' *The Sydney Morning Herald,* May 24, 2017, https://www.smh.com.au/entertainment/tv-and-radio/abc-axes-yassmin-abdelmagieds-australia-wide-program-20170524-gwc3ot.html.
[191] Ibid.,

This was not the first time a controversy of this nature had occurred on Anzac Day. In 2015, Scott McIntyre, a sports reporter for the Special Broadcasting Service (SBS), posted several comments via his twitter account late on Anzac Day. The tweets read:

- The cultification of an imperialist invasion of a foreign nation that Australia had no quarrel with is against all ideals of modern society.
- Wonder if the poorly-read, largely white, nationalist drinkers and gamblers pause today to consider the horror that all mankind suffered.
- Remembering the summary execution, widespread rape and theft committed by these 'brave' Anzacs in Egypt, Palestine and Japan.
- Not forgetting that the largest single-day terrorist attacks in history were committed by this nation & their allies in Hiroshima & Nagasaki.[192]

McIntyre's comments were described by the SBS as 'highly inappropriate and disrespectful' and he was subsequently fired. Malcolm Turnbull, the Communications Minister at the time, responded on Twitter and called McIntyre's comments 'Despicable remarks which deserve to be condemned.'[193] Some did try to defend McIntyre. Several reporters, including Channel Ten's Hugh Riminton, Fairfax Media's Geoff Winestock and the *Sydney Morning Herald*'s Dominic Bossi, pointed out that McIntyre was within his rights to criticise Anzac Day via his personal Twitter account.[194] Afterall, in Riminton's words, 'Our Diggers also died for free speech'.[195] However, these opinions were shot down. Conservative commentator Chris

[192] Scott McIntyre (@mcintinhos), 'The cultification of an imperialist invasion…,' *Twitter,* April 25, 2015, https://twitter.com/mcintinhos.
[193] Malcolm Turnbull (@TurnbullMalcolm), 'Difficult to think of more offensive or inappropriate comments …,' *Twitter,* April 25, 2015, https://twitter.com/TurnbullMalcolm.
[194] Hugh Riminton (@hughriminton), 'Untimely inmature and in once case offensively wrong…', *Twitter,* April 26, 2015, https://twitter.com/hughriminton. Geoff Winestock, 'Ridiculous. Frightening. I also think Anzacs…,' *Twitter,* April 26, 2015, https://twitter.com/GeoffWinestock. Dominic Bossi (@DomBossi), 'The sacking of @mcintinhos is a low point …,' *Twitter,* April 26, 2015.
[195] Riminton, 'Untimely inmature and in once case offensively wrong…'

Kenny took aim at them through an article in the *Advertiser* in which he wrote: 'Apparently they think it's OK for someone … to erroneously insult the public, smear our heritage, slander our forebears, demean the nation and offend anyone with a rudimentary knowledge of history or national values.'[196]

Compared to McIntyre's comments, Abdel-Magied's Facebook post was mild. She did not criticise Australian soldiers, past or present. Nor did she denigrate those who attended Anzac commemorations in the way MacIntyre did. Yet, the reaction to Abdel-Magied's comments was either comparable to, or far outstripped, the reaction to McIntyre's. Particularly online, many people seemed to take offence and posted comments indicating their displeasure. By the end of 2017, Abdel-Magied's 'Lest.We.Forget' post had approximately 9,700 comments. Some of these simply expressed annoyance that Abdel-Magied was being 'so shameful and disrespectful' on the day 'over 100 years ago that many people died to make this country safe for you to … freely express an opinion'. Other comments had xenophobic undertones, such as one which stated 'More reason not to let people like her to live in Western, civilised country!' Admittedly not all comments were negative. However, in a sample of 100 responses to Abdel-Magied's apology message, nearly 36% of comments were negative while only 22% of comments were supportive. Shortly after Abdel-Magied posted her Facebook comment, a Change.Org petition was established which had the stated aim of encouraging the 'ABC to fire Yassmin Abdel-Magied over disgusting ANZAC Day posts'.[197] By the time the petition closed it had been signed by over 48,000 people. In the comments section, supporters posted their motives for signing. These comments include statements such as: 'How dare a Muslim activist disrespect our ANZAC'S

[196] https://www.adelaidenow.com.au/news/opinion/chris-kenny-those-who-support-sacked-sbs-journalist-scott-mcintyre-over-anzac-slurs-are-as-deluded-as-him/news-story/ab5c8171c5db88d106b43f024a352f0a
[197] 'ABC to fire Yassmin Abdel-Magied over disgusting ANZAC DAY posts & Pro Sharia Law comments,' *Change.org*, accessed June 24, 2018, https://www.change.org/p/abc-to-fire-yassmin-abdul-magied-over-disgusting-anzac-day-posts-pro-sharia-law-comments-abc-to-publicly-fire-yassmin-abdel-magied-over-pro-sharia-propaganda

by bringing into play refugees or refugees by choice,' and 'Im Australian & want all other Australians … made here or imported to embrace & live within OUR laws & OUR cultural beliefs.'

As in the McIntyre case, politicians, especially those from right-wing and conservative parties, joined the public outcry. Unsurprisingly, Pauline Hanson, leader of the nationalist, anti-immigration One Nation Party, took aim at Abdel-Magied, and declared that she was 'disgusted to hear about Yassmin Abdel-Magied's comments'. According to Hanson: 'Yesterday means so much to all Australians. She has no understanding, no idea.'[198] Hanson's statement that Abdel-Magied has no understanding about a day that means 'so much to all Australians' implies that Abdel-Magied is not a true Australian. This is a common ethnic nationalist position which links respect for cultural practices to national belonging and was hardly surprising coming from the leader of One Nation. However, ministers from the right-wing ruling Liberal-National Coalition joined the attack. Immigration Minister Peter Dutton stated: 'It is a disgrace that on our most significant national day … this advocate seeks to make political mileage'.[199] The then Acting Prime Minister Barnaby Joyce supported calls for the ABC to take action against Abdel-Magied. Although not as overt as Hanson, Joyce made a similar appeal to national culture, stating that the 'ABC is, in some instances, at odds with the culture of Australia'.[200] On the other hand, former Prime Minister Tony Abbott was much more explicit when, in response to a question about Abdel-Magied, he argued that 'you've got to join Team Australia, you've got to accept

[198] Pauline Hanson, 'I'm disgusted with the social media comments made by Yassmin Abdel-Magied,' *Facebook,* April 25, 2017, https://www.facebook.com/PaulineHansonAu/videos/pauline-hanson-responds-to-yassmin-abdel-magied-comments-from-/609163872621262/.
[199] Quoted in Duncan Fine, 'We should celebrate Yassmin Abdel-Magied, not attack her,' *The Sydney Morning Herald,* April 26, 2017, https://www.smh.com.au/opinion/we-should-celebrate-yassmin-abdelmagied-not-attack-her-20170426-gvsp1k.html.
[200] Quoted in Kylar Loussikian, Miles Godfrey, and Sally Rawsthorne, 'Yassmin Abdel-Magied: ABC activist's vile anti-Diggers remark slammed as 'deeply reprehensible,'' *The Daily Telegraph,* April 26, 2017, https://www.dailytelegraph.com.au/news/nsw/yassmin-abdelmagied-abc-activists-vile-antidiggers-remark-slammed-as-deeply-reprehensible/news-story/a8707ae6efecff24806637eec5fc41a6.

our core culture, you've got to accept our fundamental values'.[201] The response from the left-wing of Australian politics was muted, but still present. Bill Shorten, leader of the Australian Labor Party said that the comments were 'very insensitive' but that she should not lose her position with the ABC.[202]

The commercial media helped to fuel the outrage. Often these attacks on Abdel-Magied were linked to wider political points. The *Daily Telegraph* devoted most of its front page to the controversy. 'Two Finger Salute' the headline screamed, with the line over it, 'ABC host's ultimate insult to Anzac legend.' The line under the heading read: 'Un-Australian Broadcasting Corporation backs activist who demeans our war heroes.'[203] These explicit attacks against the ABC through Abdel-Magied were a major part of the media's criticism. One-time Labor minister turned political commentator for Sky News Live Graham Richardson, appeared on a wide variety of radio shows and podcasts. On the Bolt Report, Richardson spoke with Andrew Bolt and complained that the 'ABC must do something about [Abdel-Magied] sooner or later' and that 'at some point, because they are Australians at the ABC … it's gotta start to act like it.'[204] To the 'George and Paul' podcast, Richardson argued that 'this has hit Australia at its core' and that he had 'rarely seen the nation come together as one to condemn someone. Everyone's condemning her except … the ABC'.[205] Richardson was selective in his own personal narrative here. He conveniently ignored the fact that criticisms of Abdel-Magied were not in fact universal, and that the Australian Greens, the

[201] Quoted in Andrew Bolt, 'Abdel-Magied's defenders are brainless on free speech,' *Herald Sun,* April 27, 2017, https://www.heraldsun.com.au/blogs/andrew-bolt/abdelmagieds-defenders-are-brainless-on-free-speech/news-story/44885a77f9b1516c043ad38ed85b9fb9.
[202] Quoted in Kelly Burke, 'Bishop under pressure to sack Yassmin Abdel-Magied from advisory role,' *The Daily Telegraph,* April 27, 2017, https://www.dailytelegraph.com.au/news/nsw/bishop-under-pressure-to-sack-yassmin-abdelmagied-from-advisory-role/news-story/d4a930723d3e3c4a7ed8363f461d0576.
[203] Barry, 'Anzac Day outrage.'
[204] The Bolt Report, 'Graham Richardson says ABC presenter Yassmin Abdel-Magied…,' *Facebook,* April 25, 2017, https://www.facebook.com/theboltreport/videos/graham-richardson-says-abc-presenter/428585417499593/.
[205] George Moore and Paul Kidd, 'Graham Richardson—Yassmin Abdel-Magied and people who try to politicise ANZAC day,' *George and Paul Podcast,* April 29, 2017, https://omny.fm/shows/george-and-paul/graham-richardson-yassmin-abdel-magied-and-people.

Guardian Australia, the *Griffith Review* magazine, and several academics, had all defended her. Regardless, Richardson's point—that the ABC had failed to live up to 'Australian values' by failing to condemn someone who had attacked a sacred day—was taken up by others. Andrew Bolt argued that 'Anzac Day is perhaps the last remaining national day when we take pride in our past and honour what we hope are our finest qualities', while also arguing that it was being 'white-anted and drowned in guilt by our schools and the ABC.'[206]

The response to Abdel-Magied comparatively innocuous comments from some politicians, the commercial media, and sections of the general public seems like a massive over-reaction. However, it makes some sense if viewed as a product of nationalist collective narcissism. Narcissists are individuals with an inflated sense of personal superiority and entitlement. Yet, narcissists are dependent on continuous external validation and they respond with anger or aggression to any perceived personal insult, criticism, or humiliation.[207] The concept of collective narcissism takes these characteristics of personal narcissism and applies them on a group level.[208] The emotional investment in an unrealistic belief about in-group greatness leads, as Golec de Zavala et al suggests, to hostility against those 'who insult or criticise their in-group.'[209] The trouble is that collective narcissists see insult where others do not. For instance, in a study by Golec de Zavala et al, a transgression as petty as a joke made by a celebrity about the government of a country was enough for collective narcissists to advocate physical punishment against the 'offender'.[210] The reaction to Abdel-Magied's comments somewhat fits these conditions. The petition designed to encourage the ABC to

[206] Bolt, 'Anzac Day betrayed by RSL itself.'
[207] Carolyn C. Morf and Frederick Rhodewalt, 'Unraveling the Paradoxes of Narcissism: A Dynamic Self-Regulatory Processing Model', *Psychological Inquiry* 12:4 (2001), 177.
[208] Agnieszka Golec de Zavala, Aleksandra Cichocka, Roy Eidelson, and Nuwan Jayawickreme, 'Collective Narcissism and its Social Consequences,' *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* Vol 97 (6) (2009), 1074.
[209] Ibid., 1078.
[210] Agnieszka Golec de Zavala, Müjde Peker, Rita Guerra, Tomasz Baran, 'Collective Narcissism Predicts Hypersensitivity to In-group Insult and Direct and Indirect Retaliatory Intergroup Hostility,' *European Journal of Personality* Vol 10. (1) (2016), 534.

fire Abdel-Magied was clearly predicated on the belief that she should be punished for expressing her views. In the words of one petition signatory, she should be fired for having 'absolutely no respect whatsoever in a country that nurtures and supports her.' Although collective narcissism goes some way towards explain the extreme reaction to Abdel-Magied's comments, it does not engage with the question as to why these particular comments were conceived as being insulting.

Those who defended Abdel-Magied tended to argue that she was unfairly attacked because of her identification as an Islamic woman. Jane Gilmore wrote an opinion piece for the *Sydney Morning Herald* two days after the controversy with the title 'Hysteria over Yassmin Abdel-Magied's Anzac Day post cannot be separated from racism'.[211] Gilmore pointed out that Abdel-Magied was hardly the only person to post a comment calling for us to 'remember, in addition to past lives lost, the people fleeing, dying and lost in wars being fought today'. Gilmore then listed several white, male news-reporters who had done the same without any comparable backlashing, such as Andrew P. Street, and Jeff Sparrow. She also pointed out that Indigenous Australian reporter Stan Grant had written an article on 26 April about the horrors experienced by Aboriginal soldiers in World War I without facing any backlash. Abdel-Magied also seemed to take this perspective. Her 'crime' he suggested was that she stopped trying to be a model migrant and 'imagine[d] [she] was Australian enough to be able to criticise Australia or contribute to public discussion on [her] own terms.'[212]

Abdel-Magied and her defenders probably have a point when one considers the volume of criticism levelled at her when compared with that aimed at McIntyre. Having said this, Abdel-Magied probably would not have been attacked had she had simply posted 'lest

[211] Jane Gilmore, 'Hysteria over Yassmin Abdel-Magied's Anzac Day post cannot be separated from Racism,' *The Sydney Morning Herald*, April 27, 2017, https://www.smh.com.au/lifestyle/hysteria-over-yassmin-abdelmagieds-anzac-day-post-cannot-be-separated-from-racism-20170427-gvtjdj.html.
[212] Yassmin Abdel-Magied, 'I tried to fight racism by being a 'Model Minority"—and then it Backfired,' *TeenVogue*, September 28, 2017, https://www.teenvogue.com/story/fight-racism-model-minority-yassmin-abdel-magied.

we forget' or laid a wreath at a memorial. Furthermore, if it was simply a matter of identity, one has to question how Stan Grant was able to celebrate his identity as an Indigenous Australian through his piece on Australian Aboriginal soldiers without backlash. Abdel-Magied's identity, therefore, appears to have been an amplifier of criticism rather than a cause.

Abdel-Magied's crime was that her post called into question a number of key assumptions at the core of her critic's beliefs about the Anzac legend. Her comments included a number of implicit points that threatened the selectivity and emplotment of the Australian national narrative. For instance, she demonstrated the fact that, despite the efforts of the Australian armed forces past and present, asylum seekers and refugees continue to flee, individuals continue to suffer in war, and peace continues to elude us. Furthermore, her mention of Manus, Nauru, and Palestine appeared to suggest that, by failing to extend empathy or recognition to those who suffered due to war, Australia had in fact forgotten the horrors of war. These points fundamentally threaten the romantic notion of the Australian story held by a wide section of the population. They question the extent to which Australian armed intervention over the years has truly been an effective force for good. Such a politically charged comment was always going to cause controversy. However, by posting them on a day when some Australians centre their personal identity in a larger narrative of Australian progress, the comments were destined provoke mass feelings of personal insult.

Similar controversies have arisen around the open memorialisation of Gay and Lesbian Australian Defence Force (ADF) members in Anzac commemorations. Around the same time as the Abdel-Magied controversy, conservative commentator Miranda Devine argued in the *Daily Telegraph* that the 'ADF's Defence Gay and Lesbian Information Service (DEFGLIS) … laid rainbow wreaths yesterday in an attempt to co-opt Anzac Day for the

LGBTI agenda.'[213] Devine's article reflected a long-standing hostility towards LGBTIQ commemorations, which could be traced back to the 1980s. Famously, on Anzac Day 1982, five members of the Gay Ex-Services Association (GESA) tried to lay a wreath at Melbourne's Shrine of Remembrance. In so doing, according to Noah Riseman, GESA was attempting to position gays and lesbians as part of the wider Australian legend.[214] Their attempt to lay the wreath was, at the time, prevented by the infamous President of the Victorian RSL, Bruce Ruxton. However, by the latter half of the 2010s the LGBTIQ community, led by DEFGALIS, had been afforded opportunities to commemorate past and present queer service people on Anzac Day. In other words, they had, within limits, been able to express their identity both as queer individuals and as members of the Australian Defence Force. There had been some backlash though. On Anzac Day in 2011, Christian lobbyist Jim Wallace tweeted: 'Just hope that as we remember servicemen and women today we remember the Australia they fought for—wasn't gay marriage and Islamic!'[215] He later apologised for his comments and said that he had nothing against gay people or Muslims 'but was making a statement about Australia's Judeo Christian heritage'.[216] Unlike the comments of Abdel-Magied, however, neither Devine's nor Jim Wallace's comments provoked a storm of criticism. Whether this implies tacit approval from those who so extensively criticised Abdel-Magied is impossible to say. However, the silence was noteworthy.

The criticism of queer involvement on Anzac Day tends to revolve around the assumption that LGBTIQ service people were not part of the initial Anzac experience. This can be seen in Ruxton's opposition to GESA in 1982, when he stated: 'I don't know where all these queers and poofters have come from. I don't remember a single poofter from World

[213] Miranda Devine, 'Anzac Day isn't time for politics,' *The Daily Telegraph,* April 26, 2017, 13.
[214] Riseman, '"Just another start to the denigration of Australia Day,"' 35 – 36.
[215] Jim Wallace (@JimWallace) 'Just hope that as we remember servicemen and women…' *Twitter,* April 25, 2011, https://twitter.com/jimwallaceacl?lang=en.
[216] Quoted in Glenda Kwek, 'Christian leader sorry for Anzac tweets,' *The Sydney Morning Herald,* April 25, 2011, https://www.smh.com.au/technology/christian-leader-sorry-for-anzac-tweets-20110425-1dtof.html.

War II'.[217] Similarly, some thirty years later, in 2015, an online comment on *Gay News Network* read: 'What if I was to drop a bombshell? There were no gay Anzacs lol. There weren't any "homosexuals", sodomy is a behaviour haha. Keep your fantasies in house and stop defaming the Australian Army'.[218] Wallace's claims also demonstrate a rejection of LGBTIQ involvement in the Australian war experience. By arguing that World War I Australian soldiers did not fight for gay-rights, he is implying that gay servicemen were either absent from the AIF or, if they were present, they did not aspire to improve their rights. These comments are demonstrative of the selectivity central to these controversies regarding national myth-making. Ruxton, Wallace and Devine, all reject the concept of LGBTIQ defence personnel as protagonists, or even beneficiaries, in the Australian Anzac story. Queer involvement, through the laying of wreaths and expressions of LGBTIQ identity, conflicts with Wallace's and other's perceived notions regarding the Anzac War experience.

Part of the rejections of queer involvement may also come from the fact that queer identity threatens the dominant masculine interpretation of the Anzac soldier. Australian historian Noah Riseman and sociologists Katerina Agostino and Ben Wadham have argued that the Australian Defence Force has always been a hegemonic masculine institution.[219] Its 'power structures, hierarchy, traditions, and culture favour expressions of martial masculinity over traits associated with femininity.'[220] These hegemonic masculine values contained within the ADF are then 're-presented back to Australian Society on Anzac Day, in our history curricula and, in an overriding way, [shape] our versions of citizenship and national identity.'[221] The presence of current and former service personnel who identify as queer

[217] Quoted in Risemen, '"Just another start to the denigration of Australia Day,"' 41.
[218] Anthony, 'DEFGLIS to Commemorate LGBTI Service,' *Gay News Network,* April 10, 2015, http:// gaynewsnetwork.com.au/news/national/defglis-to-commemorate-lgbti-service-17250.html.
[219] Riseman, '"Just another start to the denigration of Australia Day."' 35 – 36. Ben Wadham, 'Brotherhood: Homosociality, Totality and Military Subjectivity,' *Australian Feminist Studies* Vol. 28 (76) (2013), 212 – 235. Katerina Agostino, 'Men, Identity, and Military Culture', in *Male Trouble: Looking at Australian Masculinities* ed. Stephen Tomsen and Mike Donaldson (Melbourne: Pluto Press, 2013), 108 – 31.
[220] Riseman, '"Just another start to the denigration of Australia Day,"' 35 – 36.
[221] Wadham, 'Brotherhood,' 216.

counters this masculine hierarchy. Gay men, in particular, confront stereotypes of what it means to be a 'man' and could therefore undermine the historical masculine construction of diggers in the Anzac Legend. The linking of national identity and sexual normativity in this way is well established in the discourse of nationalists. As George Mosse pointed out, fears about the existential threat posed by gay and lesbian identities to the martial strength of the nation has existed in some forms of nationalism since the nineteenth century.[222] The open expression of queer identity on Anzac Day, therefore, threatens the underlying masculine narrative of the Anzac story as envisioned by Devine, Wallace, and those in their interpretive community. Open representation of LGBTIQ service personal on Anzac Day simply does not fit within their understanding of the history, meaning, or commemoration of the Anzac Legend.

Finally, the commemoration of LGBTIQ service people can potentially challenge the romantic narrative of Anzac Day. Although DEFGALIS is very forward-looking and positive in its activism, LGBTIQ commemorations tend to contain an awareness of the past suffering and discrimination experienced by queer service people. The fact that queer service people, both in the past and in the present, have often felt the need to hide their sexuality, is seen as a tragedy. Indeed, many of the initiatives pushed by DEFGALIS aim to rectify this. This reality, however, is not entirely compatible with the assumptions of the romantic narrative. The assertion that the Australian Army has always been a force for good is tested when one considers its past tendency towards homophobia. Instead, LGBTIQ commemorations tend more towards a comedic narrative. In it, the failures of past governments with regards to queer service people are recognised, and as a result concrete steps are taken in the present to improve LGBTIQ rights. While this comedic narrative may be a suitable compromise for

[222] George Mosse, 'Nationalism and Sexuality in Nineteenth-Century Europe', *Culture and Society* 73 (1) (July/August 1983), 75 – 84.

some, for others, like Devine, the loss of the romantic narrative is abhorred. Thus, 'an attempt to co-opt Anzac Day for the LGBTI agenda' is perceived to be totally unacceptable.

Expressions of Indigenous Australian identity on Anzac Day faced almost identical criticism to that experienced by DEFGALIS from many of the same people who criticised Abdel-Magied. Andrew Bolt made it clear, in an article for the *Herald Sun* titled 'Anzac Day Betrayed by RSL itself', that he was opposed to any expression of alternate identities on Anzac Day.[223] He referred to it as tribalism and declared that the RSL had 'let services in two capitals be hijacked by activists pushing tribal divisions'.[224] Specifically, in this case, he was referring to the fact that, in Canberra, Indigenous Australian veterans were allowed to march together under the Aboriginal flag as an expression of Indigenous Australian identity. For Bolt, as Australians first and foremost, the veterans should have marched with their units under the Australian flag. Bolt also complained that in Adelaide the dawn service started with a Welcome to Country.[225] Graham Richardson made the same complaint, clearly resentful that he was being 'welcomed to his own country'.[226]

Discussion about the appropriate way to commemorate Indigenous Australian war dead intensified after the *Herald Sun* published an article titled 'State government asks if Anzac Day should recognise Aborigines attacked by early settlers'.[227] The article revealed that the Victorian Department of Premier and Cabinet had carried out a survey which had sought to determine if people supported the commemoration of Indigenous Australians killed during the Frontier Wars as part of official Anzac Day events.[228] More than 500 Victorians

[223] Bolt 'Anzac Day Betrayed by RSL itself.'
[224] Andrew Bolt, 'Beware enemy within – RSL betrayed Anzac Day' *The Advertiser* (Adelaide: NewsCorp, 27 April, 2017) 13.
[225] A Welcome to Country is where an Aboriginal or Torres Strait islander traditional owner, custodian, or Elder welcomes people to their land. This usually occurs at the beginning of an official ceremony or event.
[226] Moore and Kidd, 'Graham Richardson—Yassmin Abdel-Magied…'
[227] John Masanauskas, 'Anzac Day twist,' *Herald Sun*, February 4, 2018, 4.
[228] The Australian Frontier Wars is a term applied by some historians to the many violent conflicts and confrontations between Indigenous Australians and white settlers during the British colonisation of Australia. The Frontier Wars is perceived by some as the start of Indigenous dispossession. However, others reject the term.

had responded to the survey, almost one third of whom supported the idea, while 19 percent disagreed. Almost half had no opinion either way. The survey had been part of a wider a report commissioned by the Premier's department canvassing 'the social value of war commemorative events'.[229] The newspaper article noted discontent from the RSL and from the right-wing think tank The Institute of Public Affairs. In response, the Victorian Government said that 'there will be no changes to expand Anzac Day commemorations to include Aboriginal people who were killed by white settlers'.[230] Despite the government's backdown, public comments and letters to the editor expressed deep disapproval. This was exemplified by a comment which stated:

> Don't ruin this day. It is absolutely outrageous to discuss including the "frontier" conflicts of Aborigines and early settlers with Anzac Day remembrance ceremonies around Australia. As the daughter of a Military Cross-awarded army father (World War II), I say no, no, and no.[231]

The controversy around the inclusion of Indigenous Australian soldiers in Anzac commemorations revolved around two claims. First, some commentators disputed the very idea that the Frontier Wars had occurred. Carolyn Franklin's letter to the *Herald Sun* laid this out in plain detail: 'Is there no one there with a modicum of knowledge of Australian history … Australia did not have—ever—"frontier wars".'[232] Second, Indigenous people were considered by some to already be included in the national story. In the words of Robin Bowles '[Indigenous Australians] courageous contribution is already acknowledged in the

[229] Masanauskas, 'Anzac Day twist,' 4.
[230] Ibid., 4.
[231] Robin Bowles, letter to the editor, *Herald Sun,* February 11, 2018, 50.
[232] Carolyn Franklyn, letter to the editor, *Herald Sun,* February 11, 2018, 50.

Anzac Day commemorations held around Australia and New Zealand.'[233] As such, activity that highlighted the Indigenous experience was seen as an attempt to claim additional recognition beyond what was due. Indeed, the 2018 report commissioned by the Victorian Government had noted the possibility that people will disapprove of changes to Anzac commemorations due to their dislike of Indigenous Australians 'getting more'.[234] Public comments confirmed this possibility. A letter to the editor published in the Brisbane Courier Mail stated that, regarding Anzac Day: 'The Aborigines now say they want to be included, but they do everything possible to be regarded as a separate, privileged race.'[235] This was also partly the reason for Andrew Bolt's opposition to Indigenous Australian veterans marching together under the Aboriginal flag.[236]

Both of these claims reveal a desire to be selective about the inclusion of Indigenous Australian people in the Anzac legend. The logic behind including Aboriginal people who were killed in the Frontier Wars makes sense if one believes that Anzac Day is, as the Australian War Memorial says, 'the day on which we remember all Australians who served and died in war and on operational service past and present'.[237] If we accept that Indigenous Australians are and were 'Australian', then their deaths during the Frontier Wars ought to be commemorated on Anzac Day. However, those opposed to its inclusion fundamentally reject the notion that the Frontier Wars form a part of the Australian national narrative. Either they did not happen at all and were simply 'frontier conflicts', or they occurred before Australia existed as a 'nation' and thus should not be commemorated. Additionally, opposition on the grounds that Indigenous Australian people are already included in the Anzac Narrative contains the implicit assumption that the past and present hardships of Indigenous Australians

[233] Bowles, letter to the editor, *Herald Sun,* 50.
[234] Masanauskas, 'Anzac Day twist,' 4.
[235] David Kendall, letter to the editor, *The Courier Mail,* April 28, 2017, 30.
[236] Bolt, 'Beware enemy within – RSL betrayed Anzac Day,' 13.
[237] 'Commemoration,' Australian War Memorial.

do not need to be highlighted. In both cases, these expressions of Indigenous Australian identity and history represent the inclusion of unwanted or inaccurate historical material to the Australian narrative.

Furthermore, the inclusion of the Frontier Wars or the highlighting of the Indigenous war experience during Anzac commemorations threatens the dominant romantic plot structure. In this case, it threatens the concept of unity that is central to a romantic national narrative. The idea that there should be a level of pride and unity on Anzac Day was a common expression among those who found issues with both the commemoration of the Frontier Wars and the march by Indigenous veterans. Bill Hutton, for instance, declared that 'little by little, the "progressives" are undermining and destroying everything that is good and worthwhile about our heritage, culture, values and traditions'.[238] This theme was also prevalent in Bolt's articles. He expressed the view that both the Abdel-Magied controversy and the Indigenous Australian march were part of a wider trend towards disunity that threaten Anzac Day. For Bolt, unity on Anzac Day was sacrosanct and the attempts to express what Jay Winter calls a 'hyphen identity' (i.e. Indigenous-Australian or Muslim-Australian identity) threatened that unity. In other words, exploring the tragic experience of Indigenous Australian peoples introduces historical material that calls the romantic narrative of unity into question. Instead, a tragic plot structure is established in which the 'conflicts between the characters of the narrative are often more terrible than the conflict which initiated the drama'. The self-doubting nature of the tragic plot-structure is an anathema to people like Bolt, for whom the romantic narrative is central to his Australian identity.

[238] Bill Hutton, letter to the editor, *Herald Sun*, February 11, 2018, 50.

Challenging Narrative Structures

The best way to explain the controversies surrounding Abdel-Magied's comments, the wreath laying ceremony by DEFGALIS and the attempted inclusion of the Frontier Wars is to examine it through the lens of competing interpretive communities with conflicting narrative structures. The people who criticise Abdel-Magied, DEfGALIS, and the Frontier Wars belong to a specific interpretive community which views Anzac Day within a romantic plot structure. When faced with commemorative practices that threaten that structure, their response is to lash out and decry such practices as historically inaccurate or 'un-Australian'. The controversy should not be understood purely as a conflict of identity but also a conflict of narrative.

Historical selectivity is central to ANZAC Day and it always has been. When the Anzac legend was constructed during World War I by Bean, it was explicitly established to create a sense of Australian national identity. Only that material which was supported Bean's romantic image of the wild, yet noble Australian soldier was incorporated into the Australian legend.[239] All else was rigorously censored. This naturally led to the establishment of a romantic plot, which soon came to be the narrative at the core of a dominant strand of Australian nationalism. As time went on, new material was incorporated into the Anzac national narrative, but only to the extent that it ensured the continuation of the romantic plot line. Especially to conservative individuals like Bolt, Devine, Richardson and others who criticised Abdel-Magied, Anzac Day is a story of unity and heroism. In the words of Andrew Bolt: 'Anzac Day is perhaps the last remaining national day when we take pride in our past and honour what we hope are our finest qualities—self, sacrifice, mateship and courage'.[240] References to unity and heroism can also be found among the various letters to the editor and

[239] Andrews, *Anzac Illusion*, 62.
[240] Bolt, 'Anzac Day betrayed by RSL itself.'

online public comments. Among the comments posted on Abdel-Magied Facebook post, one stated that '[Anzac Day] is the most sacred day of the year to millions of Australians including the families of those who died … that you might have the freedoms you enjoy today.'[241] Meanwhile, another commenter argued: 'Anzac Day is a Day of unity, not just commemoration, to honour all who have gone off to war since Gallipoli, regardless of their skin colour.'[242] For this interpretive community, calling into question concepts of national unity and heroism on Anzac Day is to call into question the very legitimacy of Australian history.

As a result, anything that does challenges the Australian romantic plot is seen as a threat and is attacked. Abdel-Magied's comments challenged the romantic plot structure by introducing plot points that contradict the narrative of Australian progress. By raising the fact that refugees suffer in detention at the hands of the Australian government, Abdel-Magied was attempting to shape the narrative in order to encourage 'Australia' to do better in the future.[243] However, pointing out the internal failings of Australian government policy, Abdel-Magied was deviating from the normal romantic plot structure expressed on Anzac Day. Similarly, the quiet wreath-laying ceremony by DEFGALIS and the march of Indigenous service personnel under the Aboriginal Flag demonstrated the degree to which certain groups continue to feel marginalised in Australian society. Their separation from the mainstream body of commemoration demonstrates this. Not only does this call into question notions of 'Australian national unity' which are central to the romantic plot structure, it also reveals the extent to which Australia still suffers internal conflict. The actions of these individuals, by highlighting events that are normally ignored on Anzac Day, emplot a narrative which bears more resemblance to the comedic or tragic plot structure than the traditional romantic one.

[241] Comment on Yassmin Abdel-Magied, 'LEST.WE.FORGET.,' 2017.
[242] Ibid.
[243] Abdel-Magied, 'I tried to fight racism by being a "Model Minority"'.

The concept of a tragic Australian national story is one those in the dominant interpretive community regularly rail against. This is the 'white-anting' to which Andrew Bolt refers. The result, therefore, is to attack those who raise it as un-Australian.

While minority groups are given the chance to superficially express their identity on Anzac Day, they are prevented from demanding any fundamental change to the narrative. Stan Grant's celebration of his Aboriginality, for instance, fitted within an overarching romantic plot structure and did not invite criticism. He incorporated the experience of Indigenous Australian soldiers within an overarching concept of Australian mateship, heroism, and unity on the frontlines—if not back home. Grant's expression of his Aboriginal identity therefore did not threaten the dominant romantic plot structure commemorated on Anzac Day. Commenters seemed willing to engage with this kind of multicultural romantic narrative. One letter to the editor published in The Courier Mail argued that Anzac Day was 'not a day for divisive activism' but also pointed out that 'indigenous war veterans who fought for Australia continue to be unrecognised'.[244] On the other hand, discussion about the Frontier Wars complicate the romantic narrative. It does this by engaging with the history of dispossession and genocide, brought about by European settlement and the establishment of a white Australian nation in 1901. In this way, the Australian narrative is able ignore the history of the Frontier Wars and avoid taking responsibility for its impacts in the present. It is easier to simply reject the very existence of the Frontier Wars and to attack those who suggest commemorating it, than it is to explore its consequences. Especially, because this may potentially force one to re-evaluate the romantic structure of the Australian national narrative.

However, what is noteworthy that, unlike in Russia, the government is not predominately responsible for defending the national narrative. While politicians do have something to say on issues regarding national identity, it is largely maintained by social

[244] Tim Badrick, letter to the editor, *The Courier Mail,* April 28, 2017, 30.

commentators and private individuals using social media. This suggests that Australian national identity is so strongly rooted in personal identity that the government does not need activity to defend it. Ironically, this makes it as difficult to express alternative interpretations of history or identity in the Australian context as it is in the Russian context. The idea that Australian civic nationalism is somehow more tolerant than Russian nationalism is therefore problematic.

Chapter 4: The European Day of Remembrance for the Victims of Nazism and Stalinism

In 2008, the Parliament of the European Union (EU) established a commemorative day on the 23 August called 'the European day of Remembrance for the Victims of Nazism and Stalinism'.[245] In theory, the new commemorative day was designed to reconcile the divergent national narratives of eastern and western EU states regarding the history of World War II. The national narratives of western states typically regarded the Nazis as the primary antagonists of the war, while the national narratives of states in the East placed a much greater focus on the crimes of the Soviet Union. This cleavage in European memory was seen by some scholars and politicians to be a significant barrier to European integration. In 2009, Member of the European Parliament (MEP) Zita Pleštinská argued that 'Europe will never be united if it does not manage to achieve a united view on its own history.'[246] Therefore, by jointly commemorating the victims of Nazism and Stalinism together on 23 August, it was argued that eastern and western memories of World War II could be reframed in a pan-European supra-national narrative.

The concept of totalitarianism provided the theoretical basis by which the joint commemoration of the victims of Nazism and Stalinism was justified. According to totalitarian theorists, such as Hannah Arendt, Joachim Friedrich and Zbigniew Brzezinski, the Nazi and Soviet regimes were both totalitarian states which shared certain essential features.

[245] Declaration of the European Parliament on the Proclamation of 23 August as European Day of Remembrance for Victims of Stalinism and Nazism, European Union, P6 TA(2008)0439, September 23, 2008, http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+TA+P6-TA-2008-0439+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN.

[246] European Union, European Parliament, 'Motion for a Resolution (European conscience and totalitarianism)' *Parliamentary Debate: Explanation of Votes,* Zita Pleštinská, April 2, 2009, http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+CRE+20090402+ITEM-010+DOC+XML+V0//EN

For instance, totalitarian theory claims that neither regime set limits on governmental authority, and both used terror, personality cults, and concentration camps to maintain their political power.[247] The centrality of totalitarian theory to 23 August as a commemorative day is reflected in the date, which was chosen to coincide with the anniversary of the signing of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact. This was a non-aggression pact signed in 1939 between Nazi Germany and the USSR. In the words of the European Parliament's president, Jerzy Buzek, the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact symbolised 'the collusion of the two worst forms of totalitarianism in the history of humanity'.[248]

The creation of a new commemorative day on 23 August, however, did not bring about a unification of eastern and western national narratives. This was due to several factors. First, the majority of people in western Europe remained indifferent to any attempt to interpret World War II within a totalitarian paradigm. Second, although western EU politicians supported the creation of 23 August as a commemorative day, western political elites remained committed to their original interpretation of World War II history. The unwillingness of liberal western elites to engage with totalitarian theory may have been related to the reluctance of many modern academics in the west to draw equivalence between the Nazi and Stalinist states. Meanwhile, some Jewish and human rights activists saw commemoration of 23 August as being disrespectful towards the victims of the Holocaust. It has even been claimed that the attempt to place totalitarian theory at the heart of EU memory culture was part of a broader attempt by Eastern European Nationalists to obfuscate the true history of the Holocaust.[249] A potential third factor for the failures of 23 August stems from

[247] Ian Kershaw, *The Nazi Dictatorship: Problems and Perspective of Interpretation,* (London: Edward Arnold Publishers, 1993), 31-32.
[248] European Union, European Parliament, 'President Jerzy Buzek on the European Day of Remembrance for victims of Nazism and Stalinism,' *Press Release,* Jerzy Buzek, August 23, 2010, http://www.europarl.europa.eu/former_ep_presidents/president-buzek/en/press/press_release/2010/2010-August/press_release-2010-August-10.html.
[249] Dovid Katz, 'The Extraordinary Recent History of Holocaust Studies in Lithuania,' *Daoim: Studies on the Holocuast,* Vol. 31(3) (2017), 285-286.

the assertion that this day was designed to legitimise problematic elements in the national narratives of eastern European states. In this context, it is perhaps unsurprising that a European supra-national narrative built around the joint commemoration of Nazi and Soviet victims failed to materialise.

In the following chapter, I explore what these failures to create a European supra-national narrative tell us about the potential for national narratives to be inclusive. My focus in this chapter is generally on official discourse and political elites, rather than the general public. I do not focus on the public out of a desire to limit the scope of my research. I have also already explored the complex interactions between elites, official discourse, and the general public in my previous chapters.

The chapter consists of four sections. First, I explore the concept of 'narrative negotiation' and explain why it is relevant to this theme. Second, I discuss the aims and objectives of Eastern European politicians during the process of the creation of 23 August as a day of commemoration. Third, I identify the successes and failures of 23 August as a supra-national narrative. Finally, I explain the failures of 23 August with reference to narrative negotiation.

Narrative Negotiation

The efforts to establish a common supra-national narrative at the heart of EU memory is perhaps best understood as part of a wider reconciliation process between East and West Europe. Political reconciliation depends on the reconciliation of historical narratives. This in turn requires that historical narratives be negotiated between conflicting parties. This process is sometimes referred to as 'narrative negotiation'.[250]

[250] Khoury, 'The Negotiation of National Narratives,' 8.

Narrative negotiation is a process of dealing with historical pains or injustices through the negotiation and revision of historical narratives. It involves a process of give-and-take, whereby parties negotiate a common narrative by giving up certain aspects of their collective stories while incorporating new elements from the other's narrative into their own. Narrative negotiation can often be most clearly seen in the public and political sphere during periods when there is public debate about the appropriateness of monuments, or the contents of national museums and history textbooks. Other examples of narrative negotiation include the issuing of formal apologies by politicians, the payment of reparations, or the establishment of truth commissions.[251] Specific examples will be explored later in this chapter.

The process of narrative negotiation takes place across multiple levels of society. Cultural and political elites cannot simply revise the story, but are in a constant process of negotiation with other members of their own group.[252] Again, one can make reference to Duncan Bell's theory of mythscapes, in which he reminds us that official narratives are constantly competing and negotiating with the narratives of other groups in society.[253] John Torpey calls narrative negotiation a 'communitive history' due to this democratic element.[254] Having said that, narrative negotiation can be difficult when some sections of society are unwilling to surrender certain narratives. This may cause tensions to flare, both between different groups within society and between different national groups.

In order to illustrate narrative negotiation, I am going to give a hypothetical example before proceeding to a historical one. Imagine two countries: Country A and Country B. Country A was once an imperial power which ruled over Country B, until Country B gained independence following a brief but bloody war. In Country A's official narrative, its

[251] Ibid., 10.
[252] Bell, 'Mythscapes: memory, mythology, and national identity,' 72.
[253] Ibid., 73-74.
[254] John Torpey, '"Making Whole What Has Been Smashed": Reflections on Reparations,' *The Journal of Modern History* 73:2 (2001): 333-358.

imperialist past is justified by claiming that the empire brought with it democracy, the rule of law, and better standards of living to those who lived within it. The fact that Country B committed war crimes during the war of independence is highlighted in the official story. This is used to demonise the revolutionaries and further justify Country A's imperial rule. On the other hand, in Country B's official narrative, Country A's empire is represented as having been racist, authoritarian, and exploitative. This is used as justification for Country B's eventual war of independence. The extra-legal punitive actions that occurred during that war are seen as having been necessary in response to Country A's brutal regime. Furthermore, the fact that Country A does not officially recognise the destructive nature of its past imperial rule is used to demonise the contemporary citizens of the country. Present relations between Country A and Country B are frosty, due in part to their contradictory national narratives.

In order for these two hypothetical countries to establish a more peaceful working relationship, it might be necessary for them to go through a process of narrative negotiation. To do this, the governments of both Country A and Country B would have to give up elements of their official narrative. Country A's government, for instance, might have to recognise that its imperial rule was not wholly positive. Country B's government, on the other hand, might have to accept that some of the actions taken in pursuit of national independence were illegal and immoral. Supporting this process, Country A might pay reparations to Country B for damages done during the imperial regime. Meanwhile, in Country B, war criminals might be arrested and brought to justice. Museums in both countries might be reorganised and history textbooks rewritten so that neither side demonises the other. However, these efforts undertaken by the governments of both countries could be stymied by the general public. Individuals in Country B who have memories of mistreatment at the hands of Country A might be unwilling to forgive so easily. On the other hand, particularly patriotic individuals in Country A might abhor the idea that the empire was not

necessarily a force for good. Should these voices be loud enough, it is possible that the process of narrative negotiation might stall.

Narrative negotiation is not always an easy process. In the words of Nadim Bassem Khoury, it is 'identity-costly and identity-changing for *both* parties'.[255] In the case of national identity this can be particularly difficult. Homi Bhabha tells us that the nation is a narration. Like every cultural practice, the meaning of the 'nation' is constructed through narrative processes that resemble and include the narrative constructions of novels, films, and history books.[256] It is a story about a community: a story of which every member of that community is a part. The past, the present, and the future of individuals who believe that they comprise the nation see themselves as linked to the past, the present, and the future of the nation itself.[257] This makes the nation more than just a political community. It is a core part of an individual's identity. Precisely because narrative negotiation aims at disrupting long-held narratives about the past, the narrative negotiation process can be seen as a direct threat to the identity of certain national groups.[258]

Giving up aspects of the national narrative while incorporating elements from an alternative group's narrative can change the way people view their group in the past, and subsequently their group in the present. For instance, it might force individuals to re-evaluate stories about their nation's good intentions or their enemies' past transgressions. In turn, this might force individuals to re-evaluate the lessons they thought they had learnt from the past. This makes narrative negotiation especially costly and difficult for communities whose members hold strongly onto their nationalist accounts. By the same token, this makes narrative negotiation identity-changing. By altering the narratives central to many peoples'

[255] Khoury, 'The Negotiation of National Narratives,' 19.
[256] Homi K. Bhabha, 'Introduction: Narrating the Nation', in *Nation and Narration* ed. Homi K. Bhabha, (London: Routledge, 1990), 1.
[257] Kramer, *Nationalism in Europe and America,* 11.
[258] Nadim Rouhana, 'Group Identity and Power Asymmetry in Reconciliation Processes: The Israeli-Palestinian Case,' *Peace and Conflict: Journal of Peace Psychology* Vol 10(1) (2004), 38.

identity, that identity is itself challenged and changed. On the other hand, narrative negotiation does not mean that both parties will agree on a shared narrative. Indeed, in many cases this is impossible. However, as Andrew Schaap points out, 'a reconciliatory movement is not construed as a final shared understanding or convergence of world views, but as disclosures of a world in common from diverse and possibly irreconcilable perspectives'.[259]

The small South Australian town of Elliston provides an excellent micro-study of the highly fraught nature of narrative negotiation. In the local community there circulates a number of local legends about Indigenous Australian people being driven over a cliff to their deaths as payback for the murder of several white settlers.[260] Over the years, these legends have ignited a great deal of community debate about what did or did not happen in and around Elliston in the mid nineteenth century. For some members of the community, especially those descended from the early settlers, there has been a reluctance to admit that any large-scale massacres occurred.[261] Other members of the community accept that there were killings, but reject the idea that Indigenous Australian peoples were run off the cliffs at Waterloo bay. On the other hand, John Moriaty, the deputy president of the South Australian Aborigines Progress Association, stated that 'The Elliston massacre was part of the history of the West Coast Aboriginal population, despite strenuous efforts by the relatives of the whites involved to discredit what is a well-known fact.'[262]

Attempts to restore unity to the community regarding the massacre has required bringing together the memories of local, predominantly white, settlers with the oral histories

[259] Andrew Schaap, 'Guilty Subjects and Political Responsibility: Arendt, Jaspers and the Resonance of the "German Question" in Politics of Reconciliation,' *Political Studies* Vol 49(4) (2001), 762.
[260] Robert Foster, Rick Hosking, and Amanda Nettelbeck, *Fatal Collisions: The South Australian frontier and the violence of memory,* (Adelaide: Wakefield Press, 2000), 44.
[261] Nicola Gage, 'Waterloo Bay massacre commemorated 170 years later with memorial,' *ABC News,* May 19, 2017, https://www.abc.net.au/news/2017-05-19/waterloo-bay-massacre-commemorated-170-years-later-with-memorial/8539416.
[262] Foster, Hosking, and Nettelbeck, *Fatal Collisions,* 69-70.

of Indigenous Australian peoples. In 2017 a memorial was unveiled at Elliston. The memorial plaque stated that:

> This monument commemorates an incident referred to by the traditional owners of this land as "The Massacre of Waterloo Bay". A number of Aboriginal people were killed near this site in May, 1849 by a party of settlers.
> Waterloo Bay is a significant site in the history of frontier conflict between traditional owners and settlers, often resulting in the destruction of traditional family life.
> This memorial promotes a new spirit of reconciliation, helping to forge a renewed and healing sense of community through tolerance and understanding.[263]

The wording of this plaque was much debated in Elliston. It reflects not one story but an attempt to meld several different narratives. It is noteworthy that the plaque does not commemorate a massacre but 'an *incident referred* to *by the traditional owners* … as "The Massacre of Waterloo Bay"'.[264] The hedging of the word massacre acknowledges the traditional Indigenous narrative without contradicting the belief held by other members of the community who do not accept that numerous Indigenous people were actually driven to their deaths over the cliffs. Another point to note is that exact numbers—a point of contention in the community—are left out of the memorial. The memorial also finishes on a forward-looking note, perhaps in the hope that the past can be left behind and a new common communal identity be built.

[263] Elliston, District Council of Elliston, 'Reports from Officers', *Ordinary Council Meeting*, Julie Allchurch, October 11, 2017, http://www.elliston.sa.gov.au/webdata/resources/files/Pages%20from%20Minutes%2017%20October%20%202017.pdf.
[264] Ibid.

Narrative negotiation is an historical enterprise. Historians are therefore central to the process. Considering their importance in the construction of national narratives in the first place, it is not surprising that historians are involved in their re-negotiation. Historians add an air of expert authority which contributes to the perceived authenticity of the negotiated narrative. Having said that, the historians who engage in these narrative negotiations generally still work within the bounds of historical research. A chief concern, therefore, for historians engaged in this process is to ensure that the common conventions of historical research are still observed, despite the divisive nature of the narratives that are being negotiated. Indeed, according to historian Elazar Barkan, bilateral historical commissions are often able to keep nationalist assumptions in check by bringing together historians of different nationalities in the joint writing of history. This, Barken claims, is also more likely to produce accurate research.[265] In this way, it is hoped the nationalist myths that create and reproduce conflict can be debunked and reconciliation achieved. However, simply melding the nationalist narratives of two competing countries does not always result in more accurate historical research. The idea that the truth must be found as a compromise between two opposite positions is a well-known fallacy. For this reason, the interests of historians are not always aligned with the interests of politicians engaged in narrative negotiation.[266]

Narrative negotiation is most commonly applied to peace negotiations between conflicting powers, or reconciliation between historically dominant and historically persecuted ethnic groups. Examples of events aimed at narrative reconciliation include: German reparations for, and memorials to, the Holocaust; the Australian Prime Minister's apology to the Stolen Generation; and the South African Truth and Reconciliation

[265] Elazar Barkan, 'Engaging History: Managing Conflict and Reconciliation,' *History Workshop Journal* Vol. 59(1) (2005), 235.
[266] Khoury, *The Negotiation of National Narratives,* 22.

Commission.[267] There have also been attempts at narrative negotiation between Israel and Palestine in order to foster a lasting peace. However, these attempts have largely failed.[268]

The concept of narrative negotiation may not immediately seem relevant to the establishment of the European Day of Remembrance for the victims of Nazism and Stalinism. The states involved are not in direct conflict with one another and officially no EU member state is dominant over the others. The supra-national narrative created by the European Day of Remembrance for the Victims of Nazism and Stalin does not aim to bring to light crimes committed by western states against eastern states. However, as I demonstrate below, there was a perception among many Eastern European nationalists that their historical experiences were excluded from the memory discourse of the EU. A key aspect of the European Day of Remembrance for the Victims of Nazism and Stalinism was the recognition of the historical persecution of Eastern European states. This naturally involves a level of narrative negotiation between the dominant memory discourse of East and West Europe. The need to re-negotiate the narratives of World War II to incorporate totalitarian theory might best be seen as a form of attempted reconciliation between the memory communities of east and west.

The Creation, Aims, and Objectives of 23 August

Any attempt to understand the logic behind the development of 23 August as a supra-national commemorative day has to incorporate an investigation of the history of official EU memory culture. From the beginning of its existence as the European Coal and Steel Community in 1951, the EU's commitment to European peace and cooperation was defined by reference to the destruction wrought during World War II.[269] Yet, as has already been stated, there existed

[267] Ibid., 5.
[268] Ibid., 5.
[269] Aline Sierp, '1939 versus 1989—A Missed Opportunity to Create a European *Lieu de Mémoire?*,' East European Politics and Societes and Cultures Vol 31(3) (2017), 442.

a divide in the way World War II was remembered and commemorated in the national narratives of member states in east and west Europe. Prior to the creation of the European Day of Remembrance for the Victims of Nazism and Stalinism, the dominant overarching EU narrative of World War II was at odds with the dominant national narratives in many eastern European countries. This memory divide had caused friction between east and west European EU states. In 2009, Maria Mälksoo, a researcher at the University of Tartu in Estonia, argued that the subaltern status of eastern European collective memory meant that eastern European countries had a 'persistent sense of "liminal Europeanness" in the enlarged EU'.[270] Over the years this sense had not dissipated and, as Aleida Assmann suggests, 'there is as yet no end in sight … [to the] contestations along national borders when it comes to interpreting, representing, and commemorating the European past.'[271] A common narrative was seen by these researchers as a solution to the divide in memory.[272]

Prior to 2004, the European Union reflected the official memory culture of most western European states in that it held the Holocaust to be the ultimate crime of the twentieth century.[273] Yet the centrality of the Holocaust in EU memory culture did not come about until fairly recently. During the early stages of the Cold War, little attention was paid to the Jewish nature of the Holocaust. Instead, a myth of national resistance and a claimed victimhood status permeated the national narratives of the states of western Europe. Only after a series of war-crime trials in the 1960s and 1970s, along with an academic re-evaluation of wartime resistance and collaboration, did the Shoah come to the forefront of official western European memory. It is debatable how far the general population adopted the experiences of the Holocaust into their understanding of national history. However, at the official level western

[270] Maria Mälksoo, 'The Memory Politics of Becoming European: The East European Subalterns and the Collective Memory of Europe,' *European Journal of International Relations* Vol 15(4) (2009), 655.
[271] Aleida Assmann, 'Transnational Memories', *European Review* Vol 22(4) (2014), 552.
[272] Ibid., 552.
[273] Tony Judt, *Postwar. A History of Europe since 1945*, (Penguin Press: London, 2005), 820.

politicians began to engage with and address its historical importance. By the end of the twentieth century, historian Tony Judt argued, the centrality of the Holocaust in western European identity and memory seemed secure.[274]

Reflecting the evolution of its member states, the EU progressively adopted several policies that recognised the Holocaust as the 'ultimate evil' against which the identity of a united Europe could be defined. In 2000, the European Parliament called for the commemoration of Holocaust Memorial Day on 27 January.[275] This date was chosen on the grounds that it was the anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz by the Red Army. One year later, in a written declaration, the European Parliament argued that the 'Holocaust must be forever seared in the collective memory of all peoples'.[276] The prominent role that the Holocaust had acquired in western European memory discourse contradicted totalitarian theory. By holding the Holocaust as a unique crime that could not be compared to other genocides, the EU was implicitly recognising Nazism as a uniquely destructive ideology. Indeed, the commemoration of the liberation of Aushwitz only made sense while the soldiers of the Soviet Union were regarded as potential 'liberators'. If the events of 27 January are explored through the lens of totalitarian theory, then the arrival of the Red Army at the gates of Auschwitz did not signify liberation from the Nazi dictatorship. Rather, it represented a simple transfer of management between two totalitarian powers.

Following the 2004 Eastern enlargement, however, a competing memory framework arose to challenge this dominant western interpretation of World War II. As a condition of membership, the ten new central and eastern European countries (CEECs) were pressured to 'document and clarify' the crimes against humanity committed on their territory during

[274] Judt, *Postwar,* 820.
[275] 'European Parliament Resolution on countering racism and xenophobia in the European Union,' European Union, OJ C 377/366, December 29, 2000.
[276] 'European Parliament Written Declaration on the remembrance of the Holocaust,' European Union, OJ C 121/503, April 24, 2001.

World War II.[277] The pressure came from an unstated assumption that a recognition of uniqueness of the Holocaust was a non-negotiable prerequisite for accession to the EU.[278] Western scholars had already documented examples of eastern European Nazi collaboration and there was an expectation that the new states would take steps to expose the involvement of local collaborators in the Holocaust.[279] In other words, the CEECs were expected to adopt the official memory culture of the EU. However, the governments of the CEECs regarded this imposition of western European memory to be insensitive to the experiences of eastern European populations during World War II. In the official discourse of these countries, 1945 did not represent the end of the Holocaust and the Nazi dictatorship but rather the start of a new period of Soviet repression.[280] Furthermore, the history of the Holocaust had largely been neglected in the CEECs and so it did not hold the same prominent position as it did in the west.[281] As a result, although most CEECs supported the overarching EU memory culture in official discourse, MEPs from these countries began seriously to question the established World War II narrative.

The frustration of MEPs from CEECs regarding the dominance of west European memory culture came to a head on 3 June 2008, when the Czech government hosted a conference on 'European Conscience and Communism'. The so-called Prague declaration, which was drafted during the conference, demanded that the European Union 'equally evaluate totalitarian regimes'.[282] The declaration was signed by politicians from numerous CEECs and nationalist European parties. Signatories included former President of Czechoslovakia, Vaclav Havel, former Lithuanian Head of State and conservative politician,

[277] Christopher Hale, *Hitler's Foreign Executioners: Europe's dirty secret*, (Stroud: The History Press, 2014): 11
[278] Ibid., 11.
[279] Ibid., 11.
[280] Assmann, '1939 versus 1989,' 443.
[281] Emmanuel Droit, 'The Gulag and the Holocaust in Opposition: Official Memories and Memory Culture in an Enlarged Europe,' *Revue d'histoire* Vol 94(2) (2007), 114.
[282] 'Prague Declaration on European Conscience and Communism,' Senate of the Parliament of the Czech Republic, June 3, 2008, https://www.praguedeclaration.eu/.

Vytautas Landsbergis, and East German anti-communist civil rights activist and future German President, Joachim Gauck. The declaration was also signed by conservative UK politician Christopher Beazley and received letters of support from conservative former UK Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher and developer of totalitarian theory, Zbigniew Brzezinski. The main focus of the declaration was the condemnation of the crimes of the Soviet Union. Yet, the crimes of the USSR were presented in the framework of totalitarian theory and were regarded as being as equal to those of the Nazi regime. The declaration argued that western Europe was not adequately educated about the crimes of communism and that a common approach regarding the crimes of both Soviet and Nazi regimes had to be established.[283] To this end, it made a wide range of suggestions, including:

> 5. 'Ensuring the principle of equal treatment and non-discrimination of victims of all the totalitarian regimes,'
>
> 9. 'establishment of 23 August, the day of signing of the Hitler-Stalin Pact ..., as a day of remembrance of the victims of both Nazi and Communist totalitarian regimes, in the same way Europe remembers the victims of the Holocaust on 27 January,'
>
> 15. 'establishment of an Institute of European Memory and Conscience which would be both, A) a European research institute for totalitarianism studies, developing scientific and educational projects and providing support to networking of national research institutes specialising in the subject of totalitarian experience, B) and a pan-European museum/memorial of victims of all totalitarian regimes, with an aim to memorialise victims of these regimes and raise awareness of the crimes committed by them,'

[283] 'Prague Declaration on European Conscience and Communism,' 2008.

17. ‘adjustment and overhaul of European history textbooks so that children could learn and be warned about Communism and its crimes in the same way as they have been taught to assess the Nazi crimes,’[284]

After the Prague Declaration, MEPs from CEECs began to actively campaign for the re-evaluation of official EU memory culture which would incorporate an equal condemnation of Nazism and Stalinism. The Reconciliation of European Histories Group was established shortly after the 3 June as an informal, multiparty working group with the aim of promoting the Prague Declaration in the European Union. Only a few months later, five members of the European Parliament (from Estonia, Latvia, Hungary, Germany, and the United Kingdom)[285] put forward a declaration on the proclamation of 23 August as the European Day of Remembrance for the Victims of Nazism and Stalinism.[286] This declaration was signed by 409 members of the European Parliament. As a result, 23 August was officially recognised by the EU as a day of commemoration.

However, while the European Union officially observed 23 August, very few European Member States staged commemorative events. Official commemorations occurred only in Sweden, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Bulgaria, Croatia, Poland, Hungary, and Slovenia. Therefore, with the sole exception of Sweden, the commemorative day did not spread into western Europe and a supra-national narrative based on totalitarian theory did not emerge. As a result, a resolution was introduced to the European Parliament on 2 April 2009 which called on its member states to implement the Europe Day of Remembrance for Victims of Nazism and Stalinism. The resolution was passed by a vote of 533 to 44, with 33

[284] ‘Prague Declaration on European Conscience and Communism,’ 2008.
[285] The member from the UK was Christopher Beazley, who had signed the Prague Declaration in June.
[286] ‘Declaration of the European Parliament on the Proclamation of 23 August…,’ 2008.

abstentions.[287] Following the resolution of 2009, the president of the European Parliament, Hans-Gert Pöttering, thanked the Baltic states for their efforts to better inform western Europe on the totalitarianism of the Soviet Union. He also referenced academic Hannah Arendt who developed 'criteria to describe totalitarianism' and concluded that 'both totalitarianism systems (Stalinism and Nazism) are comparable and terrible'.[288]

During the debates leading up to the declaration of 23 August, several prominent MEPs from eastern Europe attempted to encourage the integration of totalitarian theory into EU memory culture by framing it within the context of European integration. During the Explanation of Votes following the 2 April 2009 resolution on totalitarianism, Slovakian MEP Zita Pleštinská argued that 'we must acknowledge communism and Nazism as a common inheritance and hold a specialist debate on all of the crimes committed by totalitarian regimes in the last century.'[289] On the same day, Estonian MEP Edite Estrela stated that 'Europe will not be united unless it is able to reach a common view of its history and conduct an honest and thorough debate on the crimes committed by Nazism, [and] Stalinism'.[290] The language of integration and European unity was linked to a dichotomy between totalitarian and democratic systems which was frequently employed in support of the resolution. For instance, Jozef Pinior of Poland argued that

> the unity of Europe, the Charter of Fundamental rights, the rule of law prevailing all over the world, no acceptance of torture—this is our response stemming from the

[287] European Union, European Parliament, 'European conscience and totalitarianism', *Vote*, April 2, 2009, http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=PV&reference=20090402&secondRef=ITEM-009-20&language=EN&ring=P6-RC-2009-0165.
[288] 'Baltic States opened Western Europe's eyes on Soviet Union totalitarianism – EP chairman in Vilnius' *Baltic News Service*, 2009, http://www.euro.lt/en/news/lithuanias-membership-in-the-eu/news/5537/?print=1, Achieved at https://web.archive.org/web/20110722150204 on 22/6/2011.
[289] 'Motion for a Resolution (European conscience and totalitarianism,' Pleštinská.
[290] European Union, European Parliament, 'Motion for a Resolution (European conscience and totalitarianism)' *Parliamentary Debate: Explanation of Votes*, Edite Estrela, April 2, 2009, http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+CRE+20090402+ITEM-010+DOC+XML+V0//EN.

> legacy of the 20th century: the struggle for democracy, the struggle against all manner of dictatorships and against totalitarian regimes.[291]

This dichotomy between totalitarianism and liberalism achieved two things. First, it aligned support for totalitarian theory with support for the EU. Second, it encouraged the idea that the acceptance of totalitarian theory in European memory culture entailed support for international human rights. The rejection of totalitarian theory, on the other hand, represented the whitewashing of the crimes of authoritarian governments.

MEPs from the CEECs also started to call for a greater recognition of eastern European suffering during World War II and the Cold War. Many of the eastern European MEPs expressed dismay at what they saw as western Europe's failure to understand the crimes of communism. Pleštinská bemoaned the fact that 'even today many people do not know about the regimes that terrorised their fellow citizens in Central and Eastern Europe of 40 years and divided them from democratic Europe with the Iron Curtain and the Berlin Wall'.[292] Similarly, Estonian MEP Katrin Saks of the Estonian Social Democratic Party claimed that 'a large part of the history of Eastern Europe is unwritten, or at least few are aware of it'.[293] Saks argued that it was a 'moral obligation' that the parliament of the European Union should speak out about what happened in eastern Europe.[294] Some MEPs from the CEECs even argued that Western Europe should learn more about specific 'heroes'.

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[291] European Union, European Parliament, 'Proposed hearing of the Commission on crimes of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes committed by totalitarian regimes,' *Parliamentary Debate,* Jozef Pinior, April 21, 2008, http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-%2F%2FEP%2F%2FTEXT%2BCRE%2B20080421%2BITEM-015%2BDOC%2BXML%2BV0%2F%2FEN&language=EN.

[292] 'Motion for a Resolution (European conscience and totalitarianism),' Pleštinská.

[293] European Union, European Parliament, 'Motion for a Resolution (European conscience and totalitarianism)' *Parliamentary Debate: Explanation of Votes,* Katrin Saks, April 2, 2009, http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+CRE+20090402+ITEM-010+DOC+XML+V0//EN.

[294] 'Motion for a Resolution (European conscience and totalitarianism),' Saks.

For instance, Polish MEP Adam Bielan expressed a desire that 'European society ... know more about Polish heroes, such as Cavalry Captain Witold Pilecki'.[295] In 1940, Pilecki had voluntarily entered Auschwitz to gather information for the Polish resistance, but after the war he was arrested and executed by the Communist Polish Ministry of Security. His story thereby symbolically represented the brutality of both Nazi and Soviet totalitarianism. The desire for recognition regarding the suffering of eastern European peoples was a common topic in the debates leading up to the vote on the resolution of 23 August. On 25 March 2009, member of the European commission Ján Fingeľ explicitly stated that 'the member states in western Europe need to be more aware of the tragic history of the member states in the east, which is part of our shared, common, European history'.[296] Not only did this underline the idea that western Europe needed to be taught more about communism, but it emphasised the idea that the adoption of totalitarian theory was an essential element in European integration.

The attempt to reframe the overarching dominant memory culture of the EU within a totalitarian paradigm officially resolved the commemorative divide between eastern and western member states. However, the 'equal evaluation' of the crimes of Nazi Germany and the USSR served a purpose beyond the creation of a pan-European supra-national narrative. Unbeknownst to some MEPs in west European states, the incorporation of totalitarian theory into the history of World War II legitimised some of the more contentious elements present in the national narratives of CEECs. In particular, it allowed for a more favourable re-evaluation of local wartime support for the Nazi regime, supposedly in response to the actions and crimes of the Soviet Union.

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[295]European Union, European Parliament, 'Motion for a Resolution (European conscience and totalitarianism)' *Parliamentary Debate: Explanation of Votes,* Adam Bielan, April 2, 2009, http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+CRE+20090402+ITEM-010+DOC+XML+V0//EN.

[296] European Union, European Parliament, 'European Conscience and Totalitarianism, *Debate,* Ján Fingeľ, March 25, 2009, http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+CRE+20090325+ITEM-010+DOC+XML+V0//EN.

During World War II, the Nazi regime had depended on both military and economic alliances with other sovereign states, as well as the collaboration of local individuals in countries overrun by German armies. The German state occupied Poland, the three Baltic states, parts of Czechoslovakia, parts of France, and parts of Yugoslavia. Collaborationist regimes were established in France, Greece, Norway, Slovakia, Croatia, and Serbia. Alliances were established between the German government and Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania, and Italy. Individuals and institutions from all of these countries helped to establish the German domination of Europe. In some instances, these collaborators were directly involved in the implementation of Nazi war crimes. In Ukraine, for instance, Ukrainian auxiliary militia helped the German *Einsatzgruppen* (Action Groups) to round up and murder local Jewish people. A notorious example of this collaboration was the Babi Yar massacres, when around 35,000 Jews were killed on 29 and 30 September 1941 by German troops and Ukrainian militiamen.[297] A similar situation occurred in the Baltic states. According to Ruth Bettina Birn: 'While occupied by the Germans, [the three Baltic states] were allowed to maintain forms of self-government in which native collaborators participated and became instrumental in implementing the most heinous German policies.'[298] Many non-German individuals served in German-sponsored military formations, which not only fought against the USSR, but played an important role in the implementation of the Holocaust.

Following the incorporation of totalitarian theory into the memory culture of the EU, it became increasingly common for politicians and public elites in CEECs to imply that wartime collaboration with the Nazi regime was not a moral failure. Instead, some of those who collaborated are now regarded as heroes in the dominant national narratives espoused by governments and nationalists. On 21 June 2017, in Hungary, for instance, Prime Minister

[297] Richard C. Hall, *Consumed by War*, (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 2010), 187.
[298] Ruth Bettina Birn, 'Collaboration with Nazi Germany in Eastern Europe: the Case of the Estonian Security Police', *Contemporary European History* Vol. 10(2) (2001), 181.

Viktor Orbán asserted that the Hungarian nation was only able to survive because of 'some exceptional statesmen like Regent Miklos Horthy'.[299] In 1941, Horthy had sent Hungary troops to support the *Wehrmacht*'s invasion of the Soviet Union. Horthy was also a self-declared anti-Semite, who deported over 400,000 Hungarian Jews to German death camps between 15 May and 9 June 1944.[300] However, in the historical narrative of nationalists like Orbán, collaboration with the Nazis has been reinterpreted as an unpalatable but necessary means of opposing the USSR.

The theory of totalitarianism thus allows those who fought alongside the Germany Army to be reframed as anti-Soviet patriots. If Nazi Germany and Stalinist Russia were equally totalitarian, then there was no moral difference between those who sided with the USSR to fight Germany and those who sided with Germany to fight the USSR. From the nationalist perspective, therefore, the foreign policy decisions made by the Hungarian and Romanian governments in the 1930s and 1940s to ally with the Nazis should be seen in the same light as the decision of the British and American governments to join forces with the USSR. The tens of thousands of eastern European men who volunteered to serve Nazi occupiers as policemen and soldiers could be viewed as heroic nationalists, rather than as participants in a genocide. For many nationalists in eastern European states, aligning with the Nazis does not necessarily imply support for Hitler's racial reordering of Europe. Instead it was a logical geopolitical choice during a complex time.[301]

The re-evaluation of local pro-German collaborators as anti-Communist freedom fighters was central to the national narratives that formed in several post-Soviet states following the collapse of the USSR. In Latvia, for instance, the Latvian collaborators who

[299] United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, 'Museum Condemns Attempts to Rehabilitate Hungarian Fascist Leader,' *Press Release,* June 28, 2017, https://www.ushmm.org/information/press/press-releases/museum-condemns-attempts-to-rehabilitate-hungarian-fascist-leader.
[300] United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, 'Museum Condemns Attempts to Rehabilitate Hungarian Fascist Leader,' 2017.
[301] Hale, *Hitler's Foreign Executioners,* 11.

fought in the Waffen SS 'Latvian Legion' are commemorated every year on 16 March. Latvian Legion Day, as it is called, memorialises the day in 1944 when two Latvian divisions of the Waffen SS participated in combat operations against an advancing Soviet offensive. In the Latvian nationalist narrative, the soldiers of the Latvian Legion had not fought for Hitler or National Socialism. Instead, as the Latvian Ministry of Foreign Affairs states, they had joined in 'the crusade against Bolshevism' and 'The Germans were needed as allies in the fight against the detested Soviet Union.'[302] The day was officially commemorated by the Latvian government between 1998 and 2000, but international pressure meant the day's official status was revoked in January 2000. Nonetheless, processions of legionaries and their supporters continue to take place every year. While the Latvian government does not officially endorse these commemorations, government ministers have attended in a private capacity. Furthermore, the Latvian government does officially support the right of nationalists to commemorate Latvian Legion Day.[303] The government also continues to deny that the Legion was a collaborationist organisation or that it had any association with war crimes. As of 1 January 2019, five out of seventeen articles on the Latvian Foreign Affairs Ministry's 'Latvian History' page relate directly to the Latvian Legion. All five articles defend its legacy and right to commemorate it.[304]

However, the Latvian government's defence of the Legion tends to reply on the manipulation of certain historical facts. For example, the government supports its claim that the Latvian Legion was not involved in the Holocaust by pointing out that it was not formed until 1943, by which time the vast majority of Latvian Jews were already dead. Therefore, in the words of the Latvian Ministry of Foreign Affairs: 'There is absolutely no reason to claim that there were any direct links between the Latvian Legion … and the war crimes that were

[302] 'Information on the History of Latvia,' Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Latvia, Accessed January 1, 2019, http://www.mfa.gov.lv/en/policy/information-on-the-history-of-latvia.
[303] 'Information on the History of Latvia.'
[304] 'Information on the History of Latvia.'

previously committed by military or paramilitary organisations.'[305] However, as several western scholars, journalists, and documentary makers point out, the core of the Legion had been comprised of men who had previously served the Nazis as police auxiliaries. These police units had unquestionably been involved in the Holocaust. Therefore, the claim that there were no direct links between the Legion and the implementation of the Holocaust is simply false.[306] Furthermore, an article by Leanid Kazyrytski, published in *Criminal Law Forum* in 2016, linked the Legion to several crimes against humanity committed during the anti-partisan movement in Belarus.[307]

With the incorporation of totalitarian theory into official EU memory discourse, MEPs and political elites in CEECs were able to defend their support for commemorative events like the Latvian Legion without contradicting official EU memory culture. The pressure that the EU placed on the countries of Eastern Europe prior to 2004 to 'document and clarify' World War II crimes against humanity threatened to expose many of the myths and half-truths that had developed around collaborationist organizations like the Latvian Legion. This would have made their status as heroes in the national narrative untenable. However, the moral relativism inherent in the concept of totalitarianism allowed CEECs to argue that these collaborators simply chose to fight another equally evil totalitarian regime. The Holocaust, in this context, was incorporated into a complex narrative of competing totalitarian crimes against humanity. In the words of the Latvian Foreign Ministry: 'The chapters of history are not only written in black and white.'[308]

[305] 'The Volunteer SS Legion in Latvia,' Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Latvia, Accessed January 1, 2019, https://www.mfa.gov.lv/en/policy/information-on-the-history-of-latvia/the-volunteer-ss-legion-in-latvia.
[306] Hale, *Hitler's Foreign Executioners,* 160.
[307] Leanid Kazyrytski, 'Latvian SS-Legion: Past and Present. Some Issues Regarding the Modern Glorification of Nazism,' *Criminal Law Forum* Vol. 26(3) (2016), 361 – 385.
[308] 'The Latvian Government's position on 16 March events,' Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Latvia, Accessed January 1, 2019, https://www.mfa.gov.lv/en/policy/information-on-the-history-of-latvia/the-latvian-government-s-position-on-16-march-events.

The development of the European Day of Remembrance for the Victims of Nazism and Stalinism was therefore undoubtably an attempt to reconcile the competing national narratives of states in east and west Europe. Yet 23 August also served to reframe the overarching memory culture of the EU in a way that provided legitimacy to some of the more problematic aspects of the national narratives of the CEECs. In order to achieve this, the MEPs from the CEECs were highly selective in the arguments they deployed. Totalitarianism was discussed largely in reference to the suffering of eastern European populations during and after World War II, or as part of a dichotomy with western Liberalism. The fact that the incorporation of totalitarian theory called into question the centrality of the Holocaust in EU memory culture was not acknowledged by MEPs from members states of the CEECs during the debates in the lead-up to the establishment of 23 August. The fact that this discussion did not go ahead suggests that western MEPs may have voted for 23 Augustout of ignorance regarding its broader impact on a common EU memory. Therefore, the underlying tension between the memory culture of western and eastern EU member states was not actually resolved.

The successes and failures of 23 August

The establishment of 23 August as the European Day of Remembrance for the Victims of Nazism and Stalinism encouraged several EU initiatives which took totalitarian theory from political discourse to the public sphere. Of these, the most influential was the Platform of European Memory and Conscience. The Platform was an educational project which brought together 55 public and private institutions and organisations from 19 countries, including member and non-member states of the EU. One of its stated goals was ‘to increase public

awareness about European history and the crimes committed by totalitarian regimes'.[309] Another stated aim was 'to support initiatives at the European level with a view to giving indiscriminate treatment to all crimes of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes, as well as to their victims'.[310] Both of these goals not only took totalitarian theory as an accepted model of viewing the past, but also sought to establish totalitarian theory as the accepted model of history in the discursive paradigms of the public. The Platform further drew on several eastern European government-affiliated research institutions. These included the Institute of National Remembrance in Poland and the Institute for the Study of Totalitarian Regimes in the Czech Republic. Both institutions promoted historical research within a framework of totalitarian theory. Museums have also played a part in establishing totalitarian theory within public discourse. The House of Terror Museum in Hungary, and the Museum of the Occupation of Latvia, for instance, placed the story of the Soviet and Nazi eras side by side. They made direct comparisons between them, and implicitly judged them to be equivalent. Yet, while these museums made a theoretical equivalence between Nazism and Communism, they concentrate in practice on Communist crimes and say little about Nazi ones.[311]

The efforts to spread totalitarian theory into the public sphere have been partially successful online. For example, in 2017 the *Wikipedia* article on 'Comparisons of Nazism and Stalinism' was written within the framework of totalitarian theory.[312] The article implied that Nazism and Stalinism were equal forms of rule which committed equally destructive

[309] 'About the Platform,' Platform of European Memory and Conscience, accessed January 1, 2019, https://www.memoryandconscience.eu/about-the-platfor/about-the-platform/.
[310] *Ibid.*
[311] Michael Kelleher, 'Review: The Museum of the Occupation of Latvia,' *The Public Historian,* Vol. 30 (4) (2008), 167 – 165. Amy Sodaro 'Haunted by the Spectre of Communism, Spectacle and Silence in Hungary's House of Terror', in *Silence, Screen, and Spectacle: Rethinking Social Memory in the Age of Information,* ed. Lindsey A. Freeman, Benjamin Nienass, and Rachel Daniell, (New York: Berghahn Books, 2014), 18.
[312] 'Comparisons of Nazism and Stalinism,' Wikipedia, Accessed 6 May, 2018, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Comparison_of_Nazism_and_Stalinism.

crimes against humanity.[313] This can be observed most sharply in the section titled 'Anti-Semitism and Genocide'. The entire section was written by a single user on 1 June 2017.[314] Until 2 June 2018, the only change to the section was the capitalisation of the word 'Genocide' in the title, which was edited by an anonymous user. The entire section was disproportionally focused on the Soviet Union's anti-Semitism. Four (arguably five) of the five paragraphs that comprised the section were dedicated to the condemnation of communism. The first paragraph discussed the Soviet Union's suppression of Jewish culture. The second focused on Stalin's personal anti-Semitism. The third paragraph declared that Hitler stated: 'since we are socialists, we must necessarily also be anti-Semites',[315] and compared Hitler's statements to works by Friedrich Engels. The fourth paragraph argued that the 'policies of both the Nazis and Stalinists culminated in a campaign of ethnic cleansing and persecution'.[316] The final paragraph argued that Stalin's regime was an accomplice in Hitler's Holocaust.

Admittedly, with a few exceptions, a lot of what was stated in the section on anti-Semitism is not untrue. Both Nazi and Soviet regimes pursued anti-Semitic policies. For instance, during the 1940 Soviet Occupation of Latvia, Jewish education was prohibited, Jewish people were forced to work on Shabbos (religious days of rest), and any indication of Zionism could result in deportation.[317] Furthermore, Jewish citizens were disproportionally targeted by Soviet deportations. In Latvia, 20 percent of those deported in the 1940s were Jewish, even though Jews only made up 7.5 percent of the Latvian population. However,

[313] By 17 May 2018 the Wikipedia page on 'Comparisons of Nazism and Stalinism' had been complete re-written. The user responsible claimed it was necessary as the article did not reference credible sources, had elements of 'original research', and did not conform to a 'neutral point of view'. It now more closely resembles a literature review, where the views of prominent academics about the similarities or differences of Nazism and Stalinism are explained. Not all contributors on the talk page are happy with this re-write.
[314] 'Talk: Comparisons of Nazism and Stalinism,' Wikipedia, Accessed 6 May, 2018, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Talk:Comparison_of_Nazism_and_Stalinism/Archive_2.
[315] 'Comparisons of Nazism and Stalinism.'
[316] 'Comparisons of Nazism and Stalinism.'
[317] Don Levin, 'On the relations between the Baltic peoples and their Jewish neighbours before, during, and after World War II', *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* Vol 5(1) (1990), 55.

there was a significant difference between the anti-Semitism of Stalin's and Hitler's regimes. The Soviet Union's policies were generally assimilationist, whereas those of the Nazis were eliminationist. Stalin's anti-Semitic intentions never reached the global scale of the Nazis'.[318] There was no Soviet equivalent of the Final Solution. By addressing Nazi anti-Semitism almost entirely in the context of Hitler's 'socialism' and by drawing rhetorical parallels with the anti-Semitism of Stalin's regime, the editors of Wikipedia distract attention from what was unique about the Nazis' extermination of Jewish people. As Richard Evans points out: 'There was something peculiarly sadistic in the Nazis' desire not just to torture, maim and kill the Jews, but also to humiliate them in public'.[319] For the Nazis, Jewish people were not a regional obstacle to be removed, but a 'world enemy' who had to be eliminated from every corner of the earth. It was these intentions that marked out the Holocaust from other mass exterminations of the period, or indeed of any period. On the Wikipedia page these essential points are not acknowledged. The anti-Semitism of Nazism and Stalinism are implied to be equivalent.

The totalitarian perspective presented on the 'Comparisons of Nazism and Stalinism' Wikipedia article was justified by some editors because of the existence of political initiatives like the Prague Declaration. For instance, in 2011, an individual who went by the username 'Spitfire3000' argued that the article on Comparisons of Nazism and Stalinism did not present a 'neutral point of view'. In a discussion about the contents of the article, Spitfire3000 stated that 'the "equivalence" of Nazism and Stalinism is being pushed in a one-sided way by this article'.[320] The implied equivalence was achieved, he argued, by 'cherrypicked sources' and 'facts which are not fully explained to the uninitiated reader'.[321]

[318] Richard Evans, *The Third Reich in History and Memory*, (London: Little, Brown and Company, 2015), 395-396.
[319] *Ibid.*, 396.
[320] 'Talk: Comparisons of Nazism and Stalinism.'
[321] 'Talk: Comparisons of Nazism and Stalinism.'

However, when Spitfire3000 attempted to institute a change in the article's perspective he encountered opposition from another user. This individual, who went by the username 'Tataral', disagreed with Spitfire3000's assertion that the comparison of Nazism and Stalinism presented on the Wikipedia page was unbalanced. She argued that 'the mainstream view is that both Stalinism and Nazism were totalitarian ideologies that were responsible for a large number of crimes against humanity'.[322] She supported her claim by pointed to the existence of the Prague Declaration and the official EU support for 23 August as the European Day of Remembrance for the Victims of Nazism and Stalinism. Tataral had clearly, therefore, been influenced by the narrative of Soviet-Nazi totalitarianism present in these declarations. In this instance, the attempt by MEPs from the CEECs to develop a narrative of World War II framed around totalitarian theory had entered public discourse. However, it is noteworthy that Tataral had to rely on political declarations in order to make her point, rather than the work of historians.

Tataral's inability directly to quote western historians to support her argument was demonstrative of the fact that the western narrative of World War II had not been changed at an academic level by the introduction of totalitarian theory into official EU memory discourse. In the west, the dominant academic perspective was that totalitarian theory is generally seen as having limited value as a tool of analytical comparison. Prominent western scholars, such as Sheila Fitzpatrick, Martin Broszat, and Hans Mommsen, demonstrated flaws in the totalitarian model during the 1970s and 1980s. These academics argued that totalitarian theory did not accurately describe the nuances of either the Stalinist or the Nazi regimes.[323] For instance, Mommsen argued that the Nazi Party and the Communist Party were different in both organisational structure and in political function. To refer to both

[322] 'Talk: Comparisons of Nazism and Stalinism.'
[323] Kershaw, *The Nazi Dictatorship,* 31 – 33. And Shelia Fitzpatrick, *Everyday Stalinism: Ordinary Life in Extraordinary Times: Soviet Russia in the 1930s,* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999).

simply as 'totalitarian' was therefore misleading.[324] Totalitarian theory was further undermined during the *Historikerstreit* in the 1980s in West Germany. More recent scholarship on the regimes of Hitler and Stalin typically moved away from the totalitarian approach. This can be seen in *Beyond Totalitarianism* by Michael Geyer and Shelia Fitzpatrick and in *The Dictators* by Richard Overy.[325] Furthermore, many western academics, including prominent World War II historian Richard Evans, continued to argue that Nazism was a unique phenomenon in history. The Holocaust, they note, was the only example to date of a deliberate policy aimed at the destruction of *every* member of an ethnic group and carried out through industrial means.[326]

The fact that western scholarly literature continued to reject the assertion that Nazism and Stalinism were equivalent following the proclamation of 23 August represented a serious failure for MEPs looking to reframe official EU memory culture. The views of historians hold particular epistemic authority regarding memory culture and are central to any process of narrative negotiation. Indeed, one of the stated aims of the Prague Declaration was the establishment of 'a European research institute for totalitarianism studies'. Research institutions based on the principles of totalitarian theory were established only in CEECs where the concept of totalitarianism was already central to the national narrative. In the west, by contrast, the totalitarian paradigm continued to be widely rejected at a scholarly level. Those western academics who did write history books that implied equivalence between the crimes of Hitler and Stalin found their work heavily criticised by their peers. For instance, *Europe: A History* by Norman Davies, *The Devils' Alliance: Hitler's Pact with Stalin, 1939 – 1941* by Richard Moorhouse, and *Bloodlands* by Timothy Snyder, were deeply controversial

[324] Ibid., 32.
[325] Michael Geyer and Shelia Fitzpatrick, *Beyond Totalitarianism: Stalinism and Nazism Compared*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008). And Richard Overy, *The Dictators: Hitler's Germany and Stalin's Russia*, (London: Allen Lane, 2004).
[326] Evans, *The Third Reich in History and Memory*, 385.

in western academic spheres. They were criticised by prominent academics such as Richard Evans, Omer Bartov, and Dovid Katz.[327] Evans even stated that 'Synder's book is of no use. Instead, it forms part of a post-Cold War narrative that homogenises the history of mass murder by equating Hitler's policies with those of Stalin.'[328] The inability to bring western academics into line behind totalitarian theory would have serious consequences for the negotiation of an EU supra-national narrative.

The fact that historians did not support the underlying memory framework present in the European Day of Remembrance for the Victims of Nazism and Stalinism caused some difficulties for MEPs during their attempt to implement the day. Approximately half of the politicians who rejected the 2 April 2009 Resolution did so because they argued that the interpretation of history was the job of historians. During the explanation of votes in the European Parliament, MEPs would explain their abstention or rejection of the proposal on these grounds. This is best encapsulated by the words of Ioannis Varvitsiotis, Greek MEP of the liberal-conservative New Democracy Group, who stated that:

> we believe that majority decisions by Parliament are not competent to interpret historical facts. The evaluation of historical facts is the job of historians and historians alone.[329]

[327] See: Evans, *The Third Reich in History and Memory,* 380 – 385. Omer Bartov, 'Bloodlands: Europe between Hitler and Stalin (Book Review),' *Slavic Review* Vol. 70 (2) (1 July, 2011), 424 – 428. And Dovid Katz, 'The detonation of the Holocaust in 1941: a tale of two books,' *East European Jewish Affairs* Vol 41 (3) (2011), 207 – 221.
[328] Evans, *The Third Reich in History and Memory,* 398.
[329] European Union, European Parliament, 'Motion for a Resolution (European conscience and totalitarianism)' *Parliamentary Debate: Explanation of Votes,* Ioannis Varvitsiotis, April 2, 2009, http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+CRE+20090402+ITEM-010+DOC+XML+V0//EN.

It was a position echoed by MEPs like Jens Holm and Eva-Britt Svensson of the European United Left-Nordic Green Left who were 'deeply concerned about all direct or indirect efforts by politicians or parliaments trying to influence the general perception of historical events'.[330] Similar arguments were presented by Maria Eleni Koppa of the Panhellenic Socialist Movement and others.[331] Almost all of these politicians belonged to either Nordic, Western, or Southern European states.

MEPs from CEECs did not draw on the works of historians in order to counter these arguments. This may have been because a discussion of academic perspectives on comparisons of Nazism and Stalinism would have revealed the ongoing opposition from some areas of western academia to totalitarian theory. Instead, these MEPs argued that parliament did have a role in creating history. Katrin Saks referred to it as a 'moral obligation' of politicians to take a stand on history, and thus she could not 'support the approach that we should let historians decide what happened'.[332] Estonian MEP Siiri Oviir also felt that parliament had an 'obligation to prevent the recurrence of what we have discussed,' and thus parliament had a role in maintaining 'truth and memory'.[333] While this approach successfully obfuscated the academic debates regarding the history of World War II, it also revealed divisions between eastern and western European approaches to history. It

[330] European Union, European Parliament, 'Motion for a Resolution (European conscience and totalitarianism)' *Parliamentary Debate: Explanation of Votes,* Jens Holm and Eva-Britt Svensson, April 2, 2009, http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+CRE+20090402+ITEM-010+DOC+XML+V0//EN.
[331] European Union, European Parliament, 'Motion for a Resolution (European conscience and totalitarianism)' *Parliamentary Debate: Explanation of Votes,* Maria Eleni Koppa, April 2, 2009, http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+CRE+20090402+ITEM-010+DOC+XML+V0//EN.
[332] 'Motion for a Resolution (European conscience and totalitarianism),' Saks.
[333] European Union, European Parliament, 'Motion for a Resolution (European conscience and totalitarianism)' *Parliamentary Debate: Explanation of Votes,* Siiri Oviir, April 2, 2009, http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+CRE+20090402+ITEM-010+DOC+XML+V0//EN.

did relatively little for the negotiation of a pan-European narrative which, as has already been stated, often relied on the support of historians as 'expert witnesses'.[334]

The attempt to create a pan-European supra-national narrative using the European Day of Remembrance for the Victims of Nazism and Stalinism encountered further obstacles when it failed to incorporate several noteworthy social and political groups. The majority of MEPs who explicitly rejected incorporating totalitarian theory into EU memory culture were members of communist political parties. During the 2 April 2009 explanation of votes, Athanasios Pafilis, MEP for the Communist Party of Greece, stated in hyperbolic fashion that 'no parliament, no parliamentary majority comprising the representatives and servants of the barbaric capitalist system can use slander, lies and forgery to wipe out the history of social revolution, written and signed by the people with their blood'.[335] Pedro Guerreiro, of the Portuguese Communist Party, also opposed the establishment of 23 August, although he was slightly more restrained in his rhetoric. He pointed out that:

> this shameful resolution approved by Parliament is part of the operation to distort historical truth that is being undertaken by reactionaries and those seeking revenge... They are the same people who are rehabilitating in their own countries those who collaborated with the barbarism of the Nazis.[336]

Coming from the mouths of avowed communists, these efforts to expose the motives of those who equate Nazism and Stalinism came across as somewhat disingenuous.

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[334] Khoury, *The Negotiation of National Narratives*, 22.
[335] European Union, European Parliament, 'Motion for a Resolution (European conscience and totalitarianism)' *Parliamentary Debate: Explanation of Votes,* Athanasios Pafilis, April 2, 2009, http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+CRE+20090402+ITEM-010+DOC+XML+V0//EN.
[336] European Union, European Parliament, 'Motion for a Resolution (European conscience and totalitarianism)' *Parliamentary Debate: Explanation of Votes,* Pedro Guerreiro, April 2, 2009, http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+CRE+20090402+ITEM-010+DOC+XML+V0//EN.

Furthermore, it provided ammunition for those who supported the resolution to tar those opposed as apologists for the Soviet Union. For instance, Flemish nationalist MEP, Frank Vanhecke, derided the fact that 'very many left-wing politicians actively supported these Communist regimes, even though they play the holy innocent today, even in this Parliament'.[337]

However, more problematic than the objections of the communists was the opposition of Jewish groups, who felt the declaration minimised the experiences of Jewish people in the Holocaust. Jewish activists linked the Prague Declaration to growing anti-Semitic trends in the CEECs. Historian Efraim Zuroff repeatedly criticised the Prague Declaration,[338] and the Simon Wiesenthal Centre accused some signatories of having 'anti-Semitic, racist and Holocaust distortionist motives.'[339] Academic, political, and Jewish criticisms culminated in 2012 when academics Dovid Katz and Danny Ben-Moshe initiated the Seventy Years Declaration on 20 January, which was signed by 70 members of the European Parliament. Among other things, the Seventy Years Declaration rejected 'attempts to obfuscate the Holocaust by diminishing its uniqueness and deeming it to be equal, similar or equivalent to Communism as suggested by the 2008 Prague Declaration.'[340] The Seventy Years declaration was, at the time, criticised by Lithuania's incumbent foreign minister Audronius Ažubalis, who stated 'It is not possible to find a difference between Hitler and Stalin except in their moustaches'.[341] These comments did little to bridge the memory cleavage between Jewish

[337] European Union, European Parliament, 'Motion for a Resolution (European conscience and totalitarianism)' *Parliamentary Debate: Explanation of Votes*, Frank Vanhecke, April 2, 2009, http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+CRE+20090402+ITEM-010+DOC+XML+V0//EN.
[338] Efraim Zuroff, 'Zuroff: Lithuania is Unchanged' (Arutz Sheva, 26/12/10) http://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/141355
[339] Rokas Grajauskas, 'Is There as Chance for a Common European Culture of Remembrance,' Foreign Policy Research Center. 2010.
[340] 'The Seventy Years Declaration on the Anniversary of the Final Solution Conference at Wannsee,' Defending History, January 20, 2012, http://defendinghistory.com/70-years-declaration/29230.
[341] 'Lithuanian Foreign Minister Beretes his Countriy's Parliamentarians who Signed '70 Years Declaration,'' Defending History, January 22, 2012, http://defendinghistory.com/lithuanian-foreign-minister-attacks-his-nations-social-democrats-who-signed-the-seventy-years-declaration/29402. Gianpaolo Pagni, 'The Suffering

groups and the dominant memory culture of CEECs regarding World War II. The position of many towards this new pan-European national narrative was summarized by historian and documentary maker Christopher Hale, who stated:

> The authors of the Prague Declaration grossly distort the historical record and seek ultimately to tear down the unique moral status of the Holocaust. The concept of 'double genocide' lumps together heinous Soviet practices such as summary execution, deportation, imprisonment and loss of employment with the deliberate and planned attempt to liquidate an entire human group.[342]

Finally, it would therefore be incorrect to assume that the narrative of Nazi-Soviet equivalence had become dominant in the official memory culture of western Europe following the declarations of 23 August as a commemorative day. For instance, while British and Germany MEPs signed the declaration on the proclamation of 23 August as European Day of Remembrance for Victims of Stalinism and Nazism, neither the German nor the British governments have ever marked the day with commemorations. Perhaps because of this, the day is practically unknown among the general population of these countries. On the other hand, both Germany and Britain still officially commemorate International Holocaust Memorial Day on 27 January.[343] In the UK, financial support has been provided to the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust since 2005.[344] Meanwhile, in 2015, the heir to the British throne, Prince Charles, stated that 'the Holocaust is an unparalleled human tragedy and an act

Olympics,' *New York Times,* January 30, 2012, https://www.nytimes.com/2012/01/31/opinion/the-suffering-olympics.html.
[342] Hale, *Hitler's Foreign Executioners,* 9.
[343] 'About us,' Holocaust Memorial Day Trust, Accessed January 1, 2019, https://www.hmd.org.uk/about-us/.
[344] 'About us.'

of evil unique in history'.[345] Similarly, during a visit to Israel's national Holocaust memorial in 2018, German Chancellor Angela Merkel stated that the Shoah was an unprecedented crime against humanity.[346] At an official level, liberal political elites in western Europe continue to support the assertion that the Holocaust was the central crime of the twentieth century. Whether these west political elites realise it or not, this continued belief in the uniqueness of the Holocaust is fundamentally incompatible with the totalitarian narrative being push by MEPs from CEECs.

It seems that western European MEPs voted to pass 23 August out of ignorance regarding its challenge to the centrality of the Holocaust in EU memory culture. Dutch MEP Erik Meijer even stated that his party[347] deemed the resolution on European Conscience and Totalitarianism to be 'superfluous'.[348] It is fair to say, therefore, that the European Day of Remembrance for the Victims of Nazism and Stalinism has achieved limited success regarding the reconciliation of eastern and western European memory culture. It has initiated the establishment of some institutions of memory, but these are largely located in countries where the totalitarian narrative was already part of that country's national narratives. Attempts to spread the supra-national narrative into official western European discourse have generally failed. Western European historians do not support totalitarian theory, and the

[345] Charles, Prince of Wales, 'A speech by HRH The Prince of Wales at the Holocaust Memorial Day ceremony 2015,' The Prince of Wales and The Duchess of Cornwall, January 27, 2015, https://www.princeofwales.gov.uk/speech/speech-hrh-prince-wales-holocaust-memorial-day-ceremony-2015.
[346] Jeffrey Heller, 'Germany's Merkel visits Holocaust memorial in Jerusalem, vows to fight anti-Semitism,' *Reuters,* October 4, 2018, https://www.reuters.com/article/us-israel-germany/germanys-merkel-visits-holocaust-memorial-in-jerusalem-vows-to-fight-anti-semitism-idUSKCN1ME0RT.
[347] It is unclear whether Meijer is referring here to his personal political party (Socialist Party [of the Netherlands]) or to his political group (the European United Left-Nordic Green Left). However, most members of the European United Left-Nordic Green Left either abstained or rejected the resolution on Conscience and Totalitarianism.
[348] European Union, European Parliament, 'Motion for a Resolution (European conscience and totalitarianism)' *Parliamentary Debate: Explanation of Votes*, Erik Meijer, April 2, 2009, http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+CRE+20090402+ITEM-010+DOC+XML+V0//EN.

supra-national narrative continues to be criticised by key groups—most notably Jewish people.

Why the failures?

The attempts by MEPs in CEECs to renegotiate the broader European narrative of World War II was largely unsuccessful. These MEPs wanted to reconfigure the collective, pan-European narrative of World War II to make it more consistent with the national narratives that are being promoted in their own countries. However, by attempting to engage in a process of narrative negotiation without examining or modifying the national narratives of their own states, these MEPs doomed the process to failure.

As Herbert Kelmen has pointed out, national narratives are limited to members of the nation and are therefore antithetical to the idea of negotiation. Kelman notes:

> At its core, national identity is clearly non-negotiable: indeed, the very idea of negotiating identity sounds like an oxymoron. National identity is a collective psychological conception, which cannot be dictated or prescribed by outsiders ... It [does not] make sense to tell them how to draw the boundaries of the group: whom to include and whom to exclude.[349]

National narratives, therefore, are highly resistant to outside dictation. From a nationalist mindset, no one has the right to tell another nation how to teach its history or to pass moral judgement on their national heroes. The sovereign right for a 'nation' to teach its 'own' history is therefore deeply ingrained in the psyche of nationalists. This is one of

[349] Herbet Kelman, 'National Identity and the Role of the "other" in Existential Conflicts: The Israeli-Palestinian Case,' Keynote address presented at the conference on Transformation of Intercultural Conflicts, University of Amsterdam, Netherlands, 7 October, 2005. Quoted in: Khoury, 'the Negotiation of National Narratives,' 195.

reasons nationalists in the CEECs reacted poorly to the EU's expectation that collaboration in the Holocaust be incorporated into official history.

In some ways narrative negotiation poses an existential threat to national narratives. Narrative negotiation encourages people to examine many different narratives of the past without succumbing to ideas of separation or exclusion. Therefore, narrative negotiation presupposes a willingness on the part of actors to recognise that their version of the past may not be entirely accurate. Since identity is based on these narratives, negotiation requires of actors a willingness to rethink their own identities. As Homi Bhabha notes, alternate narratives are an existential threat to a country's national narrative. National narratives construct stories of the past by selectively deploying events to create a consistent and continuous history of the nation. As these narratives are selective and rarely accurate, the text of the nation relies on unacknowledged sources or assumptions and represses issues, ideas or people who would call those assertions into question. Alternative narratives have the potential to introduce, as Bhabha says, 'contradictions and alien supplements that can never be fully accommodated within the master narrative that seeks to construct a fully coherent nation.'[350] Alternative narratives pose a danger to the narrative of the nation. They present these 'alien supplements' which call into question those unacknowledged sources or assumptions. The very fact that the process of narrative negotiation aims to transform national identity is deeply disturbing to nationalists.

Therefore, when nationalist MEPs from CEECs sought to reconcile eastern and western memory culture regarding World War II, they did so in a way that would reinforce rather than question their national narratives. The process that led to 23 August was less about narrative negotiation than it was an attempt to seek recognition from western European politicians regarding the eastern nationalist interpretation of World War II. The difficulty for

[350] Bhabha, 'DissemiNation', 297.

MEPs from CEECs was that liberal political elites in western Europe remained committed to the centrality of the Holocaust in World War II. Many scholars and intellectuals continued argue that Holocaust was unique. In the words of Richard Evans:

> although the Nazi 'Final Solution' was one genocide among many, it had features that made it stand out from all the rest as well. Unlike all the others it was bounded neither by space nor by time. It was launched not against a local or regional obstacle but at a world-enemy seen as operating on a global scale. It was bound to an even larger plan of racial reordering and reconstruction involving further genocidal killing on an almost unimaginable scale, aimed, however, at clearing the way in a particular region—Eastern Europe—for a further struggle against the Jews and those the Nazis regarded as their puppets. It was set in motion by ideologues who saw world history in racial terms. It was, in part, carried out by industrial methods. These things all make it unique.[351]

Despite an increasing move towards the far right among the general population in recent years, the recognition of the Holocaust has remained central to the narrative of western liberal political elites. For instance, in 2017, French President Emanuel Macron denounced attempts by French far-right leaders to gloss over French involvement in the deportation of Jewish people to Nazi death camps. The uniqueness of the Holocaust is at the centre of several key west European political ideals. Many people argue that the creation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was inspired by Rene Cassin's personal experience of losing Jewish relatives in the Holocaust and his involvement in Jewish organisations that

[351] Evans, *The Third Reich in History and Memory*, 385.

provided aid to Holocaust survivors.[352] Similarly, in Germany, the Holocaust and its legacy has held a central place in the German national narrative since at least the *Historikerstreit*. In 2015, Angela Merkel officially stated the Germany was responsible for the Holocaust and for the destruction it caused.[353] The centrality of these events are not about to change any time soon.

However, the government in the CEECs were unable to accept the unique position of the Holocaust due to the fact that it would weaken their own narratives of victimhood and would potentially tear down the mythical position of their national heroes. For instance, an honest engagement with the history of the Latvian Legion would undoubtedly raise awkward questions about the involvement of Legion personnel in the Holocaust prior to 1943. Accepting the position that the Holocaust was not just one of many genocides would demolish the core premise on which the historical narrative of Latvian nationalists is based: that the Soviets were just as bad as the Nazis. Many other nationalist narratives in the CEECs face the same problem. The narrative of heroic nationalists during World War II is a central part of the continuity of the national plot. To question that would weaken their national narrative. For this reason, the proponents of 23 August are more preoccupied with competitive victimhood than reconciliation.

In his discussion of the Israel-Palestine conflict, Edward Said argued that, put in the hands of politicians, a mutual recognition of the other's suffering was bound to fall in the realm of the tactical and the competitive. One tragedy would be measured against another for political gain. This would only lead to a competition over victimhood and narrative antagonism. Said was opposed to such a competition of victimhood. Speaking of the conflict

[352] Jay Winter and Antoine Prost, *Rene Cassin and Human Rights: From the Great War to the Universal Declaration*, (Cambridge University Press, 2013), 346.
[353] 'Angela Merkel: Germany stands by Holocaust responsibility – video,' *The Guardian*, October 21, 2015, https://www.theguardian.com/world/video/2015/oct/21/angela-merkel-germany-stands-by-holocaust-responsibility-video.

of victimhood created when Israelis and Palestinians compared the Holocaust to the Nakbah, Said stated: 'Who would morally want to equate mass extermination with mass deportation? It would be foolish to even try. But they are connected—a different thing altogether—in the struggle of Palestine which has been so intransigent, its elements so irreconcilable.'[354] Said's message was that narratives of victimhood should be used to encourage empathy and understanding between two sides. 'Understanding what happened to the Jews in Europe under the Nazis means understanding what is universal about human experience under calamitous conditions.' However, the European Day of Remembrance for the Victims of Nazism and Stalinism falls much more heavily on the side of victimhood competition rather than reconciliation. By simultaneously placing the crimes of the Soviet Union on an equal footing with the Holocaust, while also rehabilitating Nazi collaborators, the day trivialises the experiences of Holocaust victims. This understandably contributed to the rejection of 23 August by Jewish and western European activists.

It might well be possible for Europe to develop a pan-European supra-narrative, but not through the lens of the European Day of Remembrance for the Victims of Nazism and Stalinism. This day was constructed to defend the national narratives of states in east and central Europe, and it is fundamentally divisive. This is partly a reflection of the oppositional and incompatible nature of national narratives.

[354] Edward Said, 'Bases for Coexistence,' *Al-Ahram Weekly*, November 15, 1997.

Conclusion

This thesis has ranged across three countries and explored several themes relating to nationalism, yet its focus has generally been on the impact of narratives and of narrative communities on expressions of national identity. This is because, as Anderson, Bell, Bhabha, and White have suggested, narrative lies at the core of nationalism as a political force. It is therefore necessary to explore narrative in order to answer the question set out in the introduction: can nationalism be divorced from the language of exclusion and ethnic divisions and be used instead to defend concepts of individual civil liberties, inclusivity, and democracy? This thesis suggests that, while perhaps not impossible, any attempt to deploy nationalism in an inclusive, liberal way is extremely difficult in practice owing to the conflicts that arise between divergent stories of the nation. There are three levels of narrative conflict explored in this thesis.

The first level of narrative competition, as explored in Chapter 2, involve the tensions that occur when personal, individual stories conflict with the official, governing narrative of the state. In exploring this tension, we necessarily have to the complex interactions between memory and national narrative. As Duncan Bell's concept of 'mythscapes' suggests, these personal memories have the potential to bring to light historical events which the governing narrative would prefer remained in the dark. National narratives, therefore, are engaged in a constant tug of war with the memories of the members who comprise the nation. On the one hand, personal memory must be nested within a national narrative in order for that national narrative to have emotional resonance. On the other hand, the national narrative typically seeks to homogenise personal memory in order to present a particular experience as common to all members of the national memory community. In Russia, this can be seen in the activities of the Immortal Regiment, which often incorporates the memorialisation of women,

workers, prisoners-of-war, and victims of Soviet cruelty or incompetence, alongside the traditional masculine, military heroes of the Russian war effort.

The tensions between the personalised Immortal Regiment and the homogenising Red Square Parade has caused the Russian government to attempt to incorporate the Immortal Regiment into official commemorations. The direct memorialisation of individual stories is one way in which states may attempt to resolve the narrative conflict between personal memory and official national narrative. Yet the incorporation of diverse personal experiences does not solve the underlying issue in this situation, which is that personal memory undermines and destabilises the assumptions, stereotypes, and limited focus, which forms the foundation on which the national narrative is built. The Russian government's solution to this issue has been to attempt to co-opt the energy of the Immortal Regiment and the personal stories that it represents, whilst also presented it within a larger homogenising national narrative. This process has occurred alongside attempts to remove the more subversive elements of the march. It is debatable whether the Russian state's attempt to subsume the Immortal Regiment in the governing narrative has been entirely successful. What is beyond question is that Putin's attempt to homogenise memory is fundamentally illiberal. A liberal society ought to respect individual narratives, which raise awkward questions for liberal nationalist when those individual narrative come into conflict with the governing narrative.

The second level of narrative competition, as explored in Chapter 3, is the tendency for conflict to arise when separate interpretive communities within a nation interpret the past in incompatible ways. Hayden White demonstrated to us that the past is written in the form of an historical narrative. If we combine this theory with Stanley Fish's work on interpretive communities, it is logical to assume that groups of individuals who use similar methods of historical narrative interpretation will form historical interpretive communities. The individuals who comprise these interpretive communities will have come to the same

conclusions about the value and meaning of the national story and will regard alternative interpretations of the past as being historically inaccurate. In Australia, the conflict between interpretive communities can be observed on Anzac Day, when different communities debate what is performatively appropriate to say or to do during official commemorations. The debates stem from different understandings of the meaning of Australian nationalism. Attempts to reconcile these perspectives ultimately fail because it is impossible to resolve the differences that exist between the underlying narratives which form the heart of the different interpretive communities. The result is that attempts to express national identity in a personal way become entwined with intergroup conflict over the national story. Under these conditions, national days become sites of interpretive contestation rather than of national unity. Attempting to incorporate divergent interpretive communities into a narrative of unity simply reveals the extent to which a society is disunited.

The third level of narrative competition, as explored in Chapter 4, involves the competition of rival narratives at the level of international relations. Of the various forms of narrative conflict discussed in this thesis, competition between incompatible national narratives is a topic that is well covered in the wider scholarly literature. As Homi Bhabha suggests, narrative conflict is a central element in all national narratives. They simultaneously rely on the existence of nations outside their borders while also feeling threatened by the alternative interpretations of history presented in those nations' own national narratives. Crucially, these narrative conflicts occur even been nations bound together in mutually supportive supra-national organisations, such as the European Union. The ongoing debates in the EU regarding the history, nature, impact, and comparison of Soviet and Nazi crimes is demonstrative of these narrative tensions. Here the divergent narratives regarding the history of the twentieth century succeed only in highlighting the continuing tensions that exist between the states of eastern and western Europe.

Attempts to resolve these memory conflicts through a process of narrative negotiation ultimately failed when forced to accommodate nationalist pride. Indeed, the process of narrative negotiation in the European Union was initiated in order to defend the dominant narrative mythscapes of some eastern European states. The governing narratives in many eastern European countries idealise Nazi collaborators and so attempted to rewrite the history of Europe in order to reframe them as Soviet resisters. But when narrative negotiation is undertaken with this nationalist mindset, it leaves very little room for the necessary degree of compromise. The nationalist rejection of external dictation with regard to memory severely limits the potential for the national story to be shaped within a process of narrative negotiation. Further problems arise when historians are rejected as arbiters in the narrative negotiation process because their findings shed light on nationalist assumptions and mistruths. Both elements, however, are a component of a deeper problem at the heart of nationalist narrative negotiation. The process of narrative negotiation can only achieve be successful when the commonalities of human experience are acknowledged. Such an acknowledgement implicitly threatens the very foundation of national identity.

Thus, nationalist thinking and nationalist narratives cause conflict while also standing in the way of potential solutions. Nationalists seek to develop stories of national unity which homogenise both the individuals within the nation and the distinct communities within the nation. Yet they also claim that their national experience is unique, for without its uniqueness the nation can no longer be said to exist. In this context, it is hard to support Liah Greenfeld's claim that there can be a liberal and inclusive nationalism. Perhaps, therefore, it is time we stopped trying to reform nationalism and looked instead to trying to create a narrative which embraces universal human individuality.

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