A Trojan Horse in the Citadel of Stories?
Storytelling and the Creation of the Polity – From Göbekli Tepe to Gallipoli.

John Hartley[1]
Curtin University, Australia and Cardiff University, Wales

ABSTRACT

Digital storytelling is an international movement for self-representation and advocacy, especially in educational, arts, and therapeutic communities. It has begun to attract a significant body of scholarship including publications and conferences. Australia has been an important player in all of these developments. In this presentation I explore some of the issues that have emerged for activists and scholars, including the problem of how to 'scale up' from self-expression to communication (i.e. self-marketing), and the question of the role that stories play in constituting 'we'-communities (or 'demes').

The paper pursues the relationship between storytelling and political narrative over the extreme long term (*longue durée*), using well known and lesser-known connections between Australia and Turkey to tell the tale. It considers how digital self-representation intersects with that political process, and what activists need to know in order to intervene more effectively.

The paper is in five parts: (1) Gevinson; (2) Gallipoli; (3) Granddad; (4) Göbekli Tepe; (5) Gotcha? It seeks to place digital storytelling within a larger framework that links storytelling with the evolution of the polity. The analysis ultimately points to a looming problem for the digital storytelling movement – and possibly for human socio-cultural evolution too. In the crisis of 'we' communities that arises with the possibility of a globally networked polity, we need new guides to storytelling action, not the old (Trojan) warhorses of mainstream media. Events such as the centenary of World War I present unexpected opportunities for this kind of exploration.

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[1]John Hartley is John Curtin Distinguished Professor at Curtin University, Western Australia (http://humanities.curtin.edu.au/about/humstaff/research.cfm/John.A.Hartley), where he is director of the Centre for Culture & Technology (http://ccat-lab.org/). He is professor of Journalism, Media and Cultural Studies at Cardiff University, Wales (www.cardiff.ac.uk/jomec/contactsandpeople/profiles/hartley-john.html). His research interests are in cultural science, user-created culture, and digital citizenship. He can be contacted at john.a.hartley [at] curtin.edu.au

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'It is fairly certain that future historians will teach that Australia was discovered not by Captain Cook, explorer, but by Mr. Ashmead Bartlett, war correspondent.'

(*The Anzac Book*, 1916)

This paper was written in the shadow of what is known in Australia as Armistice Day (Remembrance Day in the UK; Veterans Day in the USA – November 11), and in the lead-up to the centenary of World War I (2014-18). It is about the celebration of war as the test of national character, or more exactly the use of political narrative to establish that idea. Its focus is on storytelling rather than warfare as such. It pivots about the international digital storytelling movement, which uses facilitated workshops to enable ordinary people to tell their own stories using digital means of production, editing, archiving and distribution (Lambert 2006; Meadows et al 2006; Hartley & McWilliam 2009; Lundby 2009). Digital storytelling has taken hold in various educational, therapeutic and screen-culture contexts, although early experiments designed to integrate it with broadcasting have not continued (Meadows & Kidd 2009).

In this paper, my concern is with the use of *storytelling* more generally for what may be called '*user-created citizenship*'; not simply for self-expression but also for the creation of a 'we'-group or *deme* around activism of some kind. I am borrowing the term 'deme' from Ancient Greek, where a deme was a population group within Attica, upon which Athenian citizenship was based (Hornblower & Spawforth 2005). A deme is also a term in bioscience, where it refers to an interbreeding subpopulation of a given species, in this case *H. sapiens*. The word thus links the political 'demos' with bio-evolutionary population groups that may found distinct cultures (Hartley & Potts forthcoming).

This leverages a much broader discussion around the role of stories in creating human polities. Like any pivot, this one allows the paper to swing around in quite a wide arc … from 12,000 years ago up to Rupert Murdoch in 2015. The paper calls for digital storytelling to *challenge incumbent stories*, which may occupy the sort of position in our civic headspace as did a certain horse for the Trojans, and hence to challenge the very constitution of polities based on aggressive parochialism or 'universal adversarialism'.

There is a growing body of scholarship on digital storytelling and self-representation (Thumim 2012; Chouliaraki 2012; Couldry et al), and a long-running international conference series that has been held in Wales, Australia, Norway and Turkey. This paper draws on that scholarship, seeking in particular to honour the occasion that first sparked its own narrative

arc – the 5th International Digital Storytelling Conference ('Create, Act, Change') at Hacettepe University in Ankara, Turkey, convened by Dr Burcu Şimşek in 2013.[1]

My presentation to the Ankara conference was inevitably bound up with Turkey. My paper was designed to raise pressing questions for the digital storytelling movement, about how workshop-facilitated digital stories can win attention within the competitive context of digital media more generally, and how self-mediation can contribute to wider aims than simple self-expression – for instance, activism among 'minority' identities, citizen science or 'citizen documentary' (e.g. see Salazar 2013) and 'do-it-yourself citizenship'. Burcu Şimşek herself introduced digital storytelling into Turkey as a part of her work with women's groups, seeking to link private life with public action via storytelling that may have its own origins 'on the kitchen table' (Simsek 2012: 46; 69).

In order to think through these issues of how the polity is constituted in stories, and how these are communicated within groups, so creating distinct 'demes', this paper too returns more than once to Turkey: from the early pre-pottery Neolithic past at Göbekli Tepe, via the Iron Age at Troy, to the modern agonistics of World War I at Gallipoli.

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[1] See: www.digitalstorytelling2013.hacettepe.edu.tr/

1. Gevinson
-The creation of the self

Digital storytelling promotes *self-expression*, and the digital storytelling movement is largely organised around the identity, authenticity and experience of the teller. It often sets its own work in opposition to the stories told in 'mainstream' media. Storytelling is also *political*, not in the current sense of party-politics and a professionalised political process, but in the older civic sense of 'creating a polity' (what Anderson 1991 calls an 'imagined community') among those who form its social 'story circle' – the audience. The causal chain that I propose is that social groups of larger scale than kin require a mechanism for constituting themselves as one group (a deme or demos), and storytelling is one such mechanism. Thus 'the audience' comes logically – and historically too, as I hope to show below – *before* 'the citizen.' The storytelling I have in mind here is not devoted to winning votes or deciding the issues of the day, but to answering more fundamental questions of how we know that we are a 'we'; and what 'we' are like. [2]

Stories create meaningful identities for a given 'we'-community by setting the social world into a diegetic story-world, rendering social values into character, action and plot. 'We' and 'they' identities are personified into heroes and adversaries. These are tested in action, and at the end are either confirmed (comedy/marriage) or modified (tragedy/death). Semiotic and social structures are mutually constituted, which means that stories are necessarily about society as well as self; the two linked together are a 'polity', a social group with a semiotic identity, organised for action and survival under conditions of uncertainty or adversity. The 'we'-community or 'deme' may be as small as a family, 'hunting party' or 'danwei' (单位: 'work unit' in Mao's China), or it may be of societal or global scale – it is, in the mathematical jargon, scale free.

Mediatised or storytelling demes and polities are not coterminous with political governments. The 'institution' of storytelling can place protagonists and their deme into much smaller units than that of city, province or nation, or much larger ones, right up to species, planet or cosmos. Digital storytelling activities to date seem to be clustered around the small-scale end of this gradient. Broadcast media compete in the middle- to large-scale, typically at the level of the nation, now expanding to global networks. The 'outer limits' are explored by sci-fi, fantasy, and utopian/dystopian imagination. Like stories themselves, 'new media' (Hartley, Burgess & Bruns 2013) and their 'story circle' communities range from one extreme (the bedroom) to the other (the cosmos), such that polities or demes can form around many kinds of affiliation other than traditional ethno-territorial co-presence. This kind of 'long-tail' informal or user-created polity is the semiotic space where digital storytelling thrives.

Storytelling as an evolved 'institution of language'
In the field of evolutionary bioscience, 'costly signalling' is a hot topic. The theory goes that for the purposes of sexual reproduction, competing males can assure sceptical females of the underlying quality of their genes if they are able to sustain some outward sign – antlers,

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[2] 'Storytelling' is loosely defined – the term may incorporate elements of 'show' as well as 'tell' – ceremony, dance and song as well as character, plot and action; it is social as well as semiotic, and visual as well as aural/textual.

showy plumage, a Rolex – that clearly costs them dearly in energy and risk, without possibility of deceit.

Among humans, some evolutionary social scientists think a prime function of language (i.e. an explanation for its evolution) is for monitoring the *honesty of others' utterances*, in order to sustain cooperative groups. This is what brings storytelling (language) and citizenship (large groups) together. E.A. Smith (2010: 232) explains the underlying theory thus:

> *Language facilitates complex coordination and is essential for establishing norms governing production efforts and distribution of collective goods that motivate people to cooperate voluntarily in large groups. Language also significantly lowers the cost of detecting and punishing 'free riders,' thus greatly enhancing the scope and power of standard conditional reciprocity. In addition, symbolic communication encourages new forms of collectively beneficial displays and reputation management.*

Like Smith, Herbert Gintis emphasises the importance of punishment to guarantee large-scale group cooperation (Bowles & Gintis 2011).

But language is itself a duplicitous medium. Anything that can be used to tell the truth can also be used to lie (Eco 1976). *Humans have to learn how to tell the difference between truth and 'free-riders' in speech as well as in genes*, and have evolved codes in language and 'institutions of language' (e.g. text conventions, genres, registers, jargon; and also institutional 'languages', e.g. the law, sciences, romance, with specialist functions and features) to automate the process. Thus, language-in-use, as a social system and not just as an abstract set of rules, must develop institutions to 'improve the efficiency and accuracy of communication' (Smith 2010: 242).

One such institution is storytelling. *Storytelling shifts 'costly signalling' from the individual level to that of the group or deme*. Groups that can build mutual knowledge and trust for solving 'group action problems' will prosper compared with others. As Eric Beinhocker has argued, storytelling is how humans think, using inductive reasoning:

> *Stories are vital to us because the primary way we process information is through induction. Induction is essentially reasoning by pattern recognition. ... We like stories because they feed our induction thinking machine, they give us material to find patterns in – stories are a way in which we learn. (Beinhocker 2006: 126-7).*

But note that this kind of 'thinking machine' is 'external' and social, not a feature of 'the' brain but of *linked* brains, requiring at least two parties. Stories and storytelling forms are how humans store and distribute acquired knowledge – they are a kind of oral/aural library system, promoting social learning in the act of using the format and its store (Ong 2012; Lord 1960). Selective and competitive pressures would tend to improve the means by which humans determine the trustworthiness of others (non-kin), how they determine causal sequence in phenomena (inductive reasoning; also plot), and how they preserve knowledge across time, distance, generations and even languages (social learning). Such improvements in the efficiency and accuracy of communication, such that communicative duplicity can be detected and punished for the benefit of group action, explain both the ubiquity and the formalisation

of storytelling, and its appeal. It is an 'institution of language' not an invention of individuals, and even as we tell stories, stories tell us.

To the extent that a good story, well told, may reveal the underlying qualities of protagonists (personifications of groups) as well as the teller, storytelling itself is a form of costly signalling, and may be evolutionarily advantageous:

> *We show that honest signaling of underlying quality by providing a benefit to group members can be evolutionarily stable, and may proliferate when rare as long as high-quality individuals are neither too common nor too rare, and the cost of signaling is sufficiently greater for low than for high-quality players. (Gintis et al 2001)*

As Gintis and his colleagues assert, not everyone is 'high quality' (some signals are lying); and not every story is trustworthy. To sort the wheat from the chaff, stories carry *within them* signs of 'honest signalling', and such signs are competitively advantageous. Among the most important is that of 'being there' – the eyewitness or participant who can relate the story from first experience.

Since scars are hard-to-fake evidence of honesty, the more scarred (mentally or physically) the eyewitness is, in the effort of bringing you the story, the better. Many fictional characters are visibly damaged by the time they achieve the goal of their story – think of Coleridge's *Ancient Mariner* or Arnold Schwarzenegger's character in *Terminator 2*. The cost to them of telling it seems to guarantee the honesty of their tale. Such stories pack an emotional and identification punch that overrides our knowledge that they are in fact fiction (i.e. lies). The beaten-up character is a device for signalling a deeper truth in the story: that of 'demic' identity.

Because both tellers and the told can attend only to one narrative at a time, individual stories are also mutually competitive. This too results in an evolutionary arms race to improve storytelling as a form, to attract attention to specific tales, and to codify tried and tested fomulae. A chief test of truth is authenticity (but authenticity is signalled using conventional signs and codes). The authenticity of the observing and narrating self is crucial, unless this is a Trickster's tale (Hyde 2008), in which case the story itself, through generic, poetic and meta-discursive signs, will signal that it is to be 'read' differently. Hearers can discern what it cost a teller, and a protagonist, to bring a particular story to their attention, and humans seem well attuned to the difference between glib assertion and hard-won ('costly') authentic experience.

This means that all stories are also 'about' *storytelling*, carrying with them signs (or 'metadata') that speak to *their* believability, which is presumably why so many plots are about defeating duplicity, confronting liars, and revealing hidden truths. This is why storytelling is a competitive arms race. Cutting through to attract people's attention is not a simple matter; knowledge of how to do it convincingly is encoded in narrative forms and conventions, and as the saying goes, even crazy listeners 'know a hawk from a handsaw',[3] so scepticism and inattention are built in; and all stories are combinatorial, reflexive and recursive, building and reflecting on existing components known to the demic 'story circle'.

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[3] Shakespeare, Hamlet II, ii, 273-4: www.bartleby.com/70/4222.html.

Power law distribution

As far as a story's reach and impact go, storytelling production is distributed along a power law curve, from a 'winner-takes-all' head to the 'long tail' (Anderson 2008). There are a few stories that catch everyone's attention; and many stories that catch a few. Clustered around the head are stories about the polity (how our group came to be and why it matters), and stories about religion (outsourcing group-identity to the supernatural, to punish deceivers and free-riders). Clustered at this extreme too are high-investment social institutions and corporations, especially the media, schooling, and the law, all of which legitimate themselves with foundation stories that seem to coincide with those of the nation, polity or deme. They produce the small number of stories that *everyone* knows or sees (sacred texts; blockbusters).

At the other extreme of the 'long tail', stories tend to be about the self (identity in conflict), about locality (our place; peasants' tales), or travel (the world; sailors' tales) (Buonanno 2005). And here too is where we usually find digital storytelling.

This power law distribution is worthy of mention because stories told by global media corporations are not opposed, adversarially, to stories told by persons; they are on a gradient in which the players can change places. The difference between 'mainstream' and 'marginal' is not antagonistic, because different types of story serve different functions for different scales of group. In short, digital storytelling is not *opposed to* mainstream media narrative; it is on a continuum with it.

Thus, it is important not to dismiss storytelling emanating from global corporations, even if it seems to outcompete local or individual efforts in terms of investment, airtime and popular attention. It is true that commercial media production is competition for digital storytelling, but that doesn't make it an adversary or 'they' identity. The digital storytelling movement can compete, by mastering not only the trick of authenticity ('costly signalling'), but also the requirements of inductive reasoning and social learning, for the solution of a significant group action problem, among a specific 'we'-group or story circle.

Inevitably, even in advocacy or educational work that may reject commercial or marketing values, *self-expression* is not enough to achieve *communication* with others. To create a 'we'-community, digital storytelling needs to be political and competitive, and open to the logics and potentiality of social networks and 'social network markets' (Potts et al 2008). Digital storytellers need to know enough about the 'costly signalling' game to be able to use their messages for the 'creation of a polity' around their advocacy.

This is not necessarily welcome news for activist agencies, because the strong asymmetry between high-investment commercial media and community-based self-expression is exactly why such agencies are active in the first place – they want to take mediation 'back' from industry and relocate it in the community.

But the very community they invoke is suffused with the model of commercial media narration, which is a kind of *cultural technology* that contemporary citizens carry around in their heads. 'Everyone knows' how stories work because their forms are reiterated countless times in media, and these models are unselfconsciously rehearsed in everyday talk, play and the like. The arrow of time cannot be reversed: '*we' are mediated selves*. 'Self-expression' needs to compete with the media of which it is a differentiated part.

The problem remains, whether competing takes the spontaneous form of informal and untutored popular culture, e.g. 'selfies' (Nelson 2013), where a few randomly lucky signals may 'go viral' while most don't, or the more elaborately facilitated and edited forms of digital storytelling. Both storytellers and their audiences live within a semiotic environment where stories must compete to gain attention. Hence, those who wish to use stories and digital media for self-expression and community advocacy must go beyond the identity and authenticity of the maker, to embrace communication and outreach (a.k.a. marketing).

Stories need some distinctive quality, which facilitated workshops are there to teach, because although everyone is familiar with a good story, technique has to be learned. In a competitive environment, 'authenticity' is another ploy, so stories have to outsmart scepticism. Daniel Meadows argues:

> *If citizens are to make their own TV on the kitchen table – as it were – then it is imperative that Big Media provides them with forms which can be readily learned, elegant forms which allow for an articulate contribution. We should make good Digital Stories, not bad television. … Digital Stories are indeed multimedia sonnets from the people but let's not kid ourselves that they grow on trees.* (Meadows et al 2006: 3)

The 'oracle of girl world' [4]

An example of someone who took self-mediation from the blog-in-the-bedroom to global media presence, very much by using '*elegant forms which allow for an articulate contribution*', is Tavi Gevinson. The question she poses for the digital storytelling movement – for theorists, facilitators and practitioners alike – is this: Where and how did she learn her 'technique'? Who 'taught' her? How come an otherwise anonymous teenager can command global attention in the name of an authentic but critical 'take' on 'girl world,' and so help to redefine it, simply by telling her own stories among her own 'demographic'?

Tavi Gevinson commenced with a home-based fashion-fan blog at age 11 (*thestylerookie.com*). Owing to its appealing authenticity and identity, plus her editorial and fashion style, not to mention her very young age, the blog attracted millions of hits and thence attention within the fashion world, which she was able to absorb and rework into further ventures. She learned how to deal with her own appearance and appearances, fame and other celebrities, without falling into the pitfalls that can go with publicity, marketing, and fashion-centred media. As one Canadian style magazine observed:

> *Gevinson is riding the woven wave of her cult fashion credentials to promote and popularise feminism and teen empowerment, but her public appearances and TV interviews are not arrogant, self-congratulatory reality stunts, far from them* (Herman 2013: 47).

Gevinson went on to use her own story to develop a powerful voice for girls, At 14, she launched an online magazine (*Rookiemag.com*), which she edited after school (still using the

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[4] Michael Schulman (27 July 2012) 'The Oracle of Girl World.' *New York Times*: www.nytimes.com/2012/07/29/fashion/tavi-gevinson-the-oracle-of-girl-world.html.

domestic bedroom as office and factory floor, marshalling the efforts of more than 50 contributors). At 15, she gave a high-rating TEDxTeen Talk,[5] and at 16 undertook a national US tour that achieved intense levels of participation among her peers. At 17 she spoke at the Sydney Opera House and Melbourne Writer's Festival.[6]

Tavi Gevinson is not much discussed in the digital storytelling movement, although she excels at 'multimedia sonnets' and is prominent in style magazines with extensive popular and commercial reach. But digital storytelling *as a movement* has much to learn from her ability to combine self-representation with scaled up digital communication in a good cause (see Gevinson 2012; 2013). It seems to me that her success is more than random luck; it attends to someone whose talent is authentic, well managed and current, making use of the storytelling institutions and communicative technologies to hand, in exactly the same cause – feminism for girls – that many digital storytelling advocacy groups espouse, including Burcu Şimşek's. Here is where copying may be seen not as derivative but as part of the process of social learning; a prompt to innovation. Although many in the digital storytelling movement are highly astute, even avant garde, in their social, cultural and political 'nous', they may nevertheless have much to learn – and to copy – from someone who reaches millions from her kitchen table.

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[5] 'Still figuring it out' (April 2012), had over half a million views at last count: www.youtube.com/watch?v=6osiBvQ-RRg.
[6] Sources: www.drawnandquarterly.com/newsList.php?item=a5230864510be8; http://ideas.sydneyoperahouse.com/2013/tavi-gevinson-tavis-big-big-world-at-17/ and http://tickets.mwf.com.au/session2_mwf.asp?s=532.

2. Gallipoli
– The creation of national character

I turn now from the *communication* element of storytelling to the *political* aspect – the role of storytelling in 'creating the polity.' I argue that this has been a prime function of storytelling since *before there were polities*; and that it remains an important element of any attempt to create a 'we'-community in the digital era – a 'digital deme'. As mentioned, the stories that 'constitute the polity' cluster at the head of a long-tail distribution curve of stories circulating in a given society. As a result, they're not the sort of stories that generally crop up in the digital storytelling movement, although as we will see later on there's a connection between 'polity' and 'personal' that digital storytelling does seek to encompass.

My starting point is that the most important political narrative is the one that *constitutes* the polity. These stories are common in foundation myths, from Adam and Eve in the Bible's *Genesis* to Romulus and Remus in Virgil's *Aeneid*; or from the Trojan War for the Greeks to the Punic Wars for the Romans, they supply a reason or cause for the origin of humans in general or of a particular city or nation.

Interestingly (for our Turkish connection), an early foundation myth for Britain asserts that it was founded by Brutus of Troy, grandson of Aeneas, and that the British nation descends from Trojans. That story that was current throughout the medieval period (e.g. in Chaucer and *Gawain and the Green Knight*). It was still accepted by Shakespeare as a historical source (*Holinshed's Chronicles,* 1577).[7]

Despite their own ancient and mythological origins, *etiological* (causation) *stories* are commonplace still, ascribing reason and meaningfulness to events and places that then explain the character of a nation. Even the US Constitution has one such story, deriving 'natural law' from the supposed natural state of humanity, prior to civilisation and government (and therefore taking priority over it). Causation stories are repeated continuously, achieving thereby the status of law (lore), in school, in journalism and in fiction, all the way from Homer and Virgil to the nightly news and movies, making the polity (or 'imagined community') anew each day by recreating the story of who 'we' are.

One prominent genre of etiological stories is associated with national day celebrations. These are staged by both media and public authorities, with high production values and showy symbolic content, especially in modern nation-states born out of popular revolutions (France; Russia; China) or settler-based social experiments (the USA; Australia). Settler nations don't have mythical origins, except among their Indigenous populations, who were typically excluded from their modern constitutions. All the more reason, therefore, to provide themselves with modern myths and legends, and to make these the subject of exorbitant display.

In Australia's case the official national day (January 26), commemorates the landing of the fleet that established the British penal colony at Botany Bay in 1788. As a foundation event, it is contested. It's called 'Invasion Day' among Indigenous groups.[8] As a summertime public

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[7] See: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brutus_of_Troy.
[8] See for instance: www.australiaday.com.au/studentresources/indigenous.aspx; and:

holiday, it is associated with beach culture rather than constitutional reverence. As the 'Cronulla riots' of 2005 demonstrated, Aussie beach culture can suddenly erupt into political prominence as a stage for conflict about national identity, including racist and flag-flaunting versions that seek to exclude migrant cultures (Hartley & Green 2006). It is widely ignored by non-English-speaking communities, among whom it has low salience. Constitutionally, moreover, Australia Day is on the 'wrong' day in January. The 'Commonwealth of Australia' was founded in 1901, by Act of Parliament and Royal Proclamation, after referenda in the six colonies, on *January 1st* (not 26th).

Small wonder that Australians gain a rather confused and impoverished sense of national origin from Australia Day. In recent years, its significance in this respect is being eclipsed by Anzac Day (April 25). Here, a strong sense of a DIY ('do-it-yourself') myth of national origin has built up since the 1990s. One popular highlight is the annual 'pilgrimage' to Gallipoli.[9]

Their destination is a peninsula in Turkey that was unsuccessfully invaded by French and British Empire forces, including Australians, New Zealanders and Indians, as well as British troops, in April 1915. They withdrew eight months later with high casualties on all sides, defeated by Ottoman forces under the command of Mustafa Kemal, later Atatürk, founder of the modern Turkish republic.[10] Over recent decades this unlikely setting has become the place of origin of Australian and New Zealand national consciousness, and Anzac Day the most important day of national memorialisation. Just as it is eclipsing Australia Day, so it also eclipses Armistice Day as a memorialisation of national war service. Unlike Armistice Day, Anzac Day is a public holiday, marked by dawn services at war memorials around the country and at Gallipoli. More popular now than when veterans still lived, these gatherings attract many thousands of attendees of all ages.

The trek to Gallipoli is especially popular among backpackers and other young travellers, for whom it seems to function as a place of passage in their own process of self-realisation. It attracts a music-festival sized crowd, who camp nearby and gather, many flag-clad, for dawn ceremonies. One historian has criticised the event for resembling a 'Big Day Out' (i.e. an annual summertime rock concert).[11] He complained that 'official presentations [at the 90th anniversary in 2005] included pop music which inspired dancing and couples were seen canoodling near graves' (King 2013). He dreads the 'prospect of a memorial service packed with excitable fans instead of mourners' at the forthcoming 2015 centenary.

The only explanation for this popular behaviour is political narrative – the story, internalised by many, of how a distinctive national consciousness was forged in the crucible of war, despite the facts that the campaign was a failed sideshow, that more Australians died at the Western Front,[12] and that nationhood was established in 1901. The narrative (about character)

Peter Gebhardt (2013) 'A national day of shame.' *Sydney Morning Herald*, January 24. Online: www.smh.com.au/federal-politics/society-and-culture/a-national-day-of-shame-20130123-2d7b3.html.
[9] There was no such thing as an Australian citizen till 1949, only British subjects. Aboriginal people were not citizens until 1967.
[10] See: www.anzacsite.gov.au.
[11] See: www.bigdayout.com.
[12] The Australian War Memorial at Villers-Bretonneux lists 10,000 Australian dead with no known grave:
www.dva.gov.au/commems_oawg/OAWG/war_memorials/overseas_memorials/france/Pages/villers%20bretonneux.aspx.

has trumped the realities (military, legal and political).[13]

Naturally, the Australian news media are eagerly on hand each year, at Gallipoli and elsewhere, disseminating the story to a wider public and celebrating the purported national character through the apparently self-staged rituals of ordinary people at a widely distributed but simultaneous national corroboree. *The Australian* plays a prominent role in promoting Anzac day activities at home and in Turkey. This may be connected with the fact that the proprietor of *The Australian*, Rupert Murdoch, has a family connection with the original events. His father, Keith Murdoch, a young journalist, reported the campaign's failings back to Australian and British government officials, despite the efforts of military censorship (Fewster 1982). His story established crucial elements of the enduring legend: specifically, the charge of British incompetence (among the general staff) and Aussie heroism (among the diggers). As a recent story in the UK press put it:

> *Keith Murdoch's role at Gallipoli is not without controversy, given that the information he smuggled out was mostly second-hand and provided to him by the Daily Telegraph journalist Ellis Ashmead-Bartlett, an arch critic of the campaign. When Murdoch's ruse to smuggle Ashmead-Bartlett's report from the theatre of war was betrayed, he sat down in the office of the Australian High Commissioner in London and dictated his recollection of the report's contents into an 8,000-word letter to Australian Prime Minister Andrew Fisher. 'It was an amazing document, a mixture of error, fact, exaggeration, prejudice, and the most sentimental patriotism, which made highly damaging charges against the British general staff…many of them untrue,' said the Australian writer Phillip Knightley. 'But the basis of the charges – that the Gallipoli expedition was in danger of disaster – was correct'* (Burrell 2013).

This version of Gallipoli – Murdoch Senior as brave whistleblowing war correspondent circumventing censorship to tell the truth – is an essential part of its meaning. The other major influence on the creation of the legend was another Australian, Charles Bean (Seal 2004). It was he who first claimed – and through his later monumental histories established – that 'the consciousness of Australian nationhood was born' on Anzac day 1915.[14] Bean was determined to report what he saw, but what he saw was coloured by what he was looking for. He posed this quest as a question:

> *How did this nation, bred in complete peace, largely undisciplined except for a strongly British tradition and the self-discipline necessary for men who grapple with nature … react to what still has to be recognized as the supreme test for fitness to exist?*[15]

The answer was already clear to Bean: 'fitness to exist' was bestowed by '*character*'. He wrote in 1918:

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[13] Former Prime Minister Paul Keating, speaking in 2008, criticized this trend, saying: 'we still go on as though the nation was born again or even, redeemed there. An utter and complete nonsense.' www.abc.net.au/news/2008-10-30/anzac-gallipoli-gatherings-misguided-keating-says/188086.

[14] *The Story of Anzac (1921),* cited in the *Australian Dictionary of National Biography* (1979) http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/bean-charles-edwin-5166; and in in the Australian government's official ANZAC website: www.anzacsite.gov.au/1landing/beanbio.html.

[15] *As previous note.*

> *… 'the big thing in the war for Australia was the discovery of the character of Australian men. It was character which rushed the hills at Gallipoli and held on there.'[16]*

Bean went on to found the Australian War Memorial, and is himself remembered as the first Australian War Correspondent at Gallipoli and later on at the Western Front. But it was not Bean who established the meaning of Gallipoli. That honour went to Ellis Ashmead Bartlett, the *English journalist* who first broke the story in the British and Australian press.[17] Bean is referring to Bartlett here:

> *The war correspondent is responsible for most of the ideas of battle which the public possesses … I can't write that it occurred if I know that it did not, even if by painting it that way I can rouse the blood and make the pulse beat faster – and undoubtedly these men here deserve that people's pulses shall beat for them. But War Correspondents have so habitually exaggerated the heroism of battles that people don't realise that real actions are heroic.[18]*

Bartlett, who worked for the London *Daily Telegraph*, was the doyen of the Allied press gallery covering the campaign (Fewster 1982). As well as scooping the story, he also shot the only movie film taken of action in the campaign. Later in the war he toured the USA, Australia and Britain with his story and movie. It seems that the Anzac legend was created by him, as has long been recognised by historians:

> *Undoubtedly [the] more important influence that [Bartlett] exerted over the legend is that he probably more than any other person determined how the tale was told. The feat of securing a foothold on inhospitable ground against stern resistance from well prepared defenders was a most praiseworthy achievement. But the troops were by no means assured of a glorious immortality by their efforts alone. It required gifted observers to pass the story on to the outside world if the landing were to receive the recognition it so richly deserved. … The essence of any legend lies as much in the related story as in the events it purports to describe. Ellis Ashmead Bartlett, by his efforts with pen, picture and speech was instrumental in first shaping then institutionalizing a legend which has, and will continue to be passed on for generations* (Fewster 1982: 30).

Contemporary Australians gathering at Gallipoli have likely never heard of Bartlett, but it is his story they come to honour, unwittingly fulfilling a prophecy about his 'bardic' role (Hartley 2009) that came from an authentic eyewitness – one of the diggers who contributed to *The Anzac Book* (edited by Bean and published in London in 1916).[19] This soldier, under

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[16] *In Your Hands, Australians* (London, 1918), cited in the *Australian Dictionary of National Biography* (1979) http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/bean-charles-edwin-5166.

[17] Bartlett's story, as published in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, May 8 1915, is reproduced in full in Seal (2013), 23-30.

[18] Charles Bean, personal records, 'Ashmead Bartlett and a crisis', item 892, 3DRL/6673, Australian War Memorial 38, cited in: www.anzacsite.gov.au/1landing/beanbio.html.

[19] 1st edn, edited by C.E.W. Bean, published by Cassell, London, 1916; 2nd edn, published by Sun Books, Melbourne, 1975; 3rd edn, edited and published by the Australian War Memorial: www.awm.gov.au/shop/item/9781742231341/#.UnGrZiRhNdg

the ambiguous nom-de-plume (nom-de-guerre?) of 'Pat Riot', was moved to write:

> *'It is fairly certain that future historians will teach that Australia was discovered not by Captain Cook, explorer, but by Mr. Ashmead Bartlett, war correspondent'.*[20]

Australian national character may have been tested for fitness in 1915, and this may or may not have revealed its authentic character; but no-one would have known anything about it without a narrator. It's the story that carried the knowledge, not the deed; and the communicator who 'creates the polity', not the acts of members of the deme, however authentic or courageous.

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[20] 'The Raid on London,' by Private Pat Riot, 9th Battalion. *The Anzac Book*, 143-5.

3. Granddad
– On not having a story …

Granddad

It took me many decades to realise that I had a personal relationship with Gallipoli, not least because in my part of the world, and in my early years, it was known as 'the Dardanelles'. In the UK popular imagination it was connected less with the Anzacs than with the name of Winston Churchill (First Lord of the Admiralty in 1915), whose bold conjecture it had been, and who therefore took the political blame for its eventual failure.

My grandfather was there. Of course he wasn't an Anzac – he fought for the 'other side', as it were, i.e. the British. He wasn't the type of 'British' that so upset the likes of Bartlett and Murdoch, i.e. an incompetent upper-class officer. He was strictly 'other ranks' (a Quartermaster Sergeant, although later promoted, in the tradition of the Army Service Corps, to Captain). He must have had some connection with the Anzacs, because he kept a 1916 copy of *The Anzac Book*, which I now have.

Josiah Arthur Barnes came from 'the Borough' (Southwark, where Shakespeare's Globe Theatre was situated and has been reconstructed). He worked at Mount Pleasant, the biggest postal sorting office in the Empire. Before the war he'd been in the Post Office Rifles (Territorial Army), and afterwards he returned to the Post Office, eventually to become Secretary of the E.C. [East Central] Sorters Branch of the Union of Postal Workers, which was founded in 1919. He was, and remained, solidly working class, but of the aspirational type. When I became aware of him, in his seventies, he played lawn bowls (I have the cups he won), still drank his tea out of the saucer not the cup ('to cool it'), and blew his nose on a military-looking khaki handkerchief.

To say he 'fought' may give the wrong impression of this latter-day scion of Brutus of Troy, because he served in the Army Service Corps, which was responsible for transport, food supplies, logistics – and the mail. According to a *1914-18* website:

> *At peak, the ASC numbered an incredible 10,547 officers and 315,334 men. In addition were tens of thousands of Indian, Egyptian, Chinese and other native labourers, carriers and stores men, under orders of the ASC. Yet this vast, sprawling organisation – so vital to enabling the army to fight – merits just four mentions in the Official History of the war.* [21]

It seems there is no 'nation-forming' story attached to the coordination of armies; neither the military itself nor its historians remember the contribution of a third of a million of its soldiers.
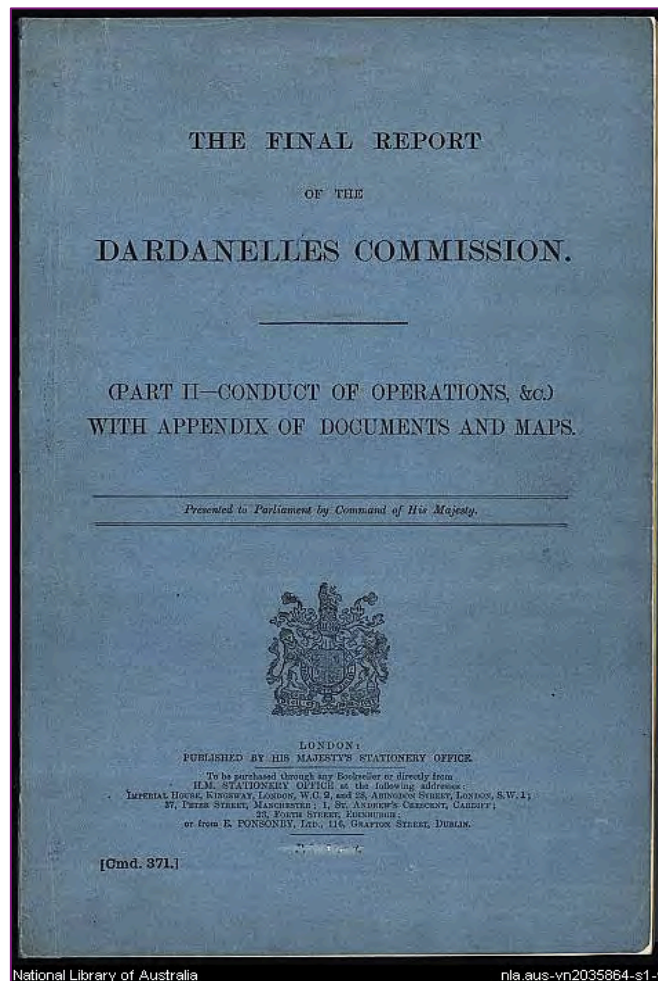
Although armies can't fight without organisation, transport, logistics, food and communications, those who provide them are available to take the blame for what goes wrong. My grandfather kept a copy of the *Final Report of the Dardanelles Commission* (1917-19: 81-2), the official government inquiry into the debacle. I found it forgotten on top of a cupboard long after his death. I wondered why he kept it for so long. Would it reveal anything about him? Looking through it, I found a chapter on 'Postal Arrangements'.[22] After excoriating the 'negligence or stupidity of some postal clerk' (was this him?), the report mentions that 'there was a good deal of looting of parcels' sent via the Army Service Corps Parcel Transit Service (was this him?).

The *Report* relates various scandalous stories of mails damaged, not delivered, delayed or sent astray (81). Noting, however, that the 'amount of letters is stated to have grown to 1,000,000 a week', and the number of parcels up to 90,000 a week, the *Report* finally concludes that both the Post Office and Army Service Corps Parcel Transit Service bore responsibility for the 'miscarriages', but that 'we are of the opinion that, on the whole, no blame attaches to those who had the organization and conduct of the service' (82) (was this him?).

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[21] The Long, Long Trail: www.1914-1918.net/asc.htm.
[22] www.nla.gov.au/apps/cdview/?pi=nla.aus-vn2035864-s83-e and www.nla.gov.au/apps/cdview/?pi=nla.aus-vn2035864-s84-e.

THE FINAL REPORT

OF THE

DARDANELLES COMMISSION.

(PART II—CONDUCT OF OPERATIONS, &c.)
WITH APPENDIX OF DOCUMENTS AND MAPS.

Presented to Parliament by Command of His Majesty.

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[Cmd. 371.]

The Dardanelles Report
Source: National Library of Australia: http://nla.gov.au/nla.aus-vn2035864

Doubtless there are some amazing stories here, but the heroes who managed to deliver over 30 million items to troops so far from their various homes in Britain, France, Australia, New Zealand, Egypt and India, not to mention those serving the Turkish army, have remained unsung from that day to this, at least officially: apparently, 'There is no memorial to the Army Service Corps'.[23]

But in *The Anzac Book* (1916) it is clear that the fighting men felt very differently:

> *Mails, too, are an anodyne. Their arrival eclipses considerations of life and death – of fighting and the landing of rations. The mail-barge coming in somehow looms larger than a barge of supplies. Mails have been arriving weekly for six months, yet no one is callous to them.*[24]

The writer singles out letters first, 'they put a man at home for an hour.' But then he mentions local newspapers, sent from home: 'Intimate associations hang about the reading of the local sheet – domestic and parochial associations almost as powerful as are brought by letters' (p.

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[23] The Long, Long Trail: www.1914-1918.net/asc.htm.
[24] 'Glimpses of Anzac', by Hector Dinning, Aust. ASC. *The Anzac Book*, 17-23.

22). Finally, there are parcels, objects of an 'intensity of gloating expectation.' Most prized were tobacco and food, but clothes, toiletries, and writing paper were also mentioned.

Of course, not all the parcels got through, and many that did were damaged. A 'digger's alphabet' gives us some idea of what the troops thought of quartermasters: 'Q is for … the Quarter-bloke, dodging the line'; 'R is for … the Rum that the Quarter-bloke pinched' (quoted in Seal 2013: 250-1). They were shirkers and looters.

In fact, the only memorabilia I have of my Grandfather are 'spoils of war'. He kept – over the fireplace – a set of murderous looking shells (which I now have), allegedly captured from the Turks and 'proving' that the enemy used 'dum-dum' rounds (lead-tipped, designed to flatten on impact). He also sported a collection of 'trench art', including shell-cases converted into cigarette boxes, powder-puff boxes etc., some with British silver sixpences (the king's head) let into the base, overlaying the German or Turkish script that indicated whence the shells originated. One such is dated 'APR 15'). There's also a Turkish artillery shell fuse, and, had he not handed it in to the British Government in the 1950s during an amnesty, there would have been a captured Turkish revolver too. Instead, I have the amnesty receipt for it.

Trench art, a Turkish fuse and "dum-dums"

User-created citizenship: a "cigarette box" made from two shell-cases and a fuse

April 1915 ordnance (the underside of the cigarette box, above) and the King's Head (sixpence)

These bizarre objects are all I have of my grandfather; a clutter of memorabilia-without-memories. He died while I was away at the orphanage. My mother wrote and told me to pray for him – a tricky task, for he was C of E and a Freemason, my mother was Catholic convert, and I was at a Protestant orphanage 250 miles away. Would praying for him in the wrong religion be OK? Evidently my mother didn't think it mattered, for she buried him in the same grave as my non-religious father, both of them in the Catholic bit of Margate cemetery.

As the only surviving male in the family I was always going to inherit the memorabilia of war … and his masonic apron. I don't like them much but can't chuck them out, so there they stay, souvenirs of an unknown life, transmitted through time without any story attached to them, and almost completely meaningless, certainly to my daughters, who will no doubt have to decide what to do with them one day.

I barely knew him as a person. I can't remember much affection on either side; only rules. The only present I remember having from him was a parcel that mysteriously but excitingly arrived at the orphanage one year when I was about 10. It proved to contain a pair of boxing gloves. I immediately read the 'present' as a rebuke. He was encouraging me to make a man of myself (a sure sign that I had already failed in that endeavour).

Neither my mother nor my grandmother told stories about him after he died. We discovered decades later that he had two sisters. Who knew? What did he do in the war? No-one knew, despite the pictures of him on a camel by the Great Pyramid and wearing his officer's uniform so proudly. Was he brave? Did he perform herculean service? Was he on the take? Was his a war of 'negligence and stupidity'?

We'll never know, although I don't think so, because he called every house he lived in to the end of his life 'Rafa', referring to the city of that name in Palestine, where his war took him after the Dardanelles and Egypt. I don't know if he was at the Battle of Rafa in January 1917, which prominently featured the Anzacs and Chauvel's Light Horsemen. It was a difficult battle, plagued by ammunition shortages, but it marked the entry of the Empire Expeditionary Forces into Palestine. Maybe that was the time of his life. But none of his family knows, because there's no story. [25]

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[25] Stories *were* told. Here's one, featuring the British (Scottish), the Anzacs, and some 'hot and blasphemous Quartermaster-Sergeants' outside Rafa in 1917, from: *Highland Light Infantry in the War 1914-1918*, by Officers of the Battalion. Published in Glasgow, 1921. www.gutenberg.org/files/20250/20250-h/20250-h.htm:

> Within the next few days they [the Anzacs] attacked the Turks at Maghdaba and Rafa—each thirty miles from el Arish—inflicting heavy defeats and capturing many prisoners in each case. The story of all this has been well told by Mr. Massy in *The Desert Campaigns*. But the unhappy infantry had of necessity to be left out. One great service the cavalry invasion did render us. The Australian light horseman has the bump of acquisitiveness even better developed than the Lowland infantryman, and having a horse on which he can hang his trophies he can give this penchant greater scope. But when he is going into action—or believes himself to be—he unhesitatingly sacrifices all that will incommode him in the serious business of war. In consequence the ground recently vacated appeared at dawn to our astonished eyes covered with a litter of discarded possessions. When *we* moved camp it was our honourable custom to pick up and burn or bury every tin, every fragment of paper and every match and cigarette end and to leave the desert swept and garnished as we found it—or better. So our first thought was one of scandalised amazement at the extreme untidiness of the business. Our next was less disinterested. We were on mobile rations, bully, biscuit, milk and jam. Vegetables and the "wee piece ham" had disappeared. Surely Australians did not live like that. Nor were we disappointed. Foraging parties returned laden with sides of bacon, cheese, bread, Maconochies, sacks of onions and dessicated vegetables, enough to make us quite certain of a full meal on Christmas Day, so long as we did not move in the interval. Nor was this all. Folding benches and tables, matting and bivouac poles, frying pans and canvas buckets, books and tobacco, a watch and even a real live horse were discovered—all the things which stand for wealth among such a primitive tribe as we then were. It is rumoured that hot and blasphemous Australian Quartermaster-Sergeants rode back that evening to retrieve some of their property. Well, they did not find it all. People who like bacon shouldn't leave it lying in deserts in front of hungry Scotchmen.

'Rafa' (image © Google Maps 2012)

I could make this into a digital story (that's it's structural place in this paper), but such an indeterminate tale would go against the grain of the genre. The story would be telling you that there is no story. My grandfather's tale may have expressed the *British* 'national character' ('a nation of shopkeepers') but not in ways that follow the accepted script, which doesn't associate glory with complex systems and logistics, or making sure that letters got through from home.

There are many digital stories about Anzacs, and they generally do follow the script. Some are made by school students doing oral history projects about veterans from their local area. Others are made by veterans themselves, or their widows or descendants. None that I can find has been made by the backpacking pilgrims to Gallipoli's Dawn Service.

It does seem from my research that when it comes to digital storytelling about Gallipoli, there is a *pre-scripted story* that people differentially populate with their own identities, experiences and families.[26] The individual experience may be unique but the template is copied. I can't tell you my Granddad's Gallipoli story because it's the other way round; the individual was commonplace but there is no template for this story. On the evidence of Gallipoli stories, it's the copy that wins the day; people want their story to fit in with the meanings that have already been scripted; it's a kind of votary offering to the ancestors. What they actually did or what they thought about it may be of less significance than what their descendants need for them to mean.

Original stories, on the other hand, seem to require a higher level of narrative investment than digital storytelling typically commands, and so it is at the national and corporate end of the spectrum where new stories about Gallipoli are still actively created. This may intensify in the run-up to the forthcoming centenary (April 2015). What will the new story be? It's a pretty safe bet that it won't include my Granddad; but there are indications, to which I'll return later on, that a very particular ancestor will feature prominently.

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[26] See, for instance: http://museumvictoria.com.au/discoverycentre/websites/making-history/student-uploads/; http://www.dpc.vic.gov.au/index.php/veterans/victorian-veterans-virtual-museum/digital-stories-in-our-words; https://open.abc.net.au/openregions/qld-tropical-north-93gv1ap/posts/remembering-billy-26wn8wx; http://generator.acmi.net.au/gallery/category/conflict-australians-war; https://www.raiseaglass.com.au/ (click on 'Your Stories'); www.au.dk/en/about/news/single/artikel/cultural-memory-more-relevant-than-ever/.

4. Göbekli Tepe
– Gordon Childe and the creation of the polity

Unbeknownst to the thousands gathering annually at Gallipoli's Lone Pine memorial, there is another lonely hill in Turkey where a much deeper myth of human political origin is beginning to be undermined and reordered. The place is Göbekli Tepe (Potbelly Hill), site of impressive ancient stone monuments that were erected before human settlement and before farming, predating Stonehenge and the Egyptian pyramids by *seven thousand years*.

The deeper 'myth' that its discovery challenges is the accepted story of the 'Neolithic Revolution.' That theory was first synthesised by an Australian archaeologist, V. Gordon Childe (1925; 1936). His theory states that human civilisation 'dawned' with the invention of farming, which required hunter-gatherers to settle and thus enabled the development of cities. In other words, after a rapid domesticating 'revolution,' the economy (agriculture) and politics (cities) determined culture (civilisation).[27] It is a strongly Marxist political narrative, following the base/superstructure model (Williams 1973), which is not surprising as Childe was a convinced Marxist, political activist, and lifelong supporter of Stalin.[28]

Vere Gordon Childe is widely forgotten in his native Australia, except by 'Rampaging Roy Slaven', whose new play *Vere [Faith]* was inspired by playwright John Doyle's discovery of his existence.[29]

But Childe ranks as one of the most important archaeologists of the 20th century: if not Indiana Jones then certainly his teacher.[30] He was reputed to loathe actual digging (no 'digger', he), although he excavated Skara Brae in the Orkney Islands. His strength was synthesis. He performed for archaeology the 'modern synthesis' that Julian Huxley achieved for the biosciences, at about the same time. He was able to gather piecemeal discoveries and sites across Eurasia into a coherent story: the story of the Neolithic Revolution.

The *story* of the Neolithic Revolution (if not the science) has held sway ever since. As Egyptologist John Romer has recently put it:

> The 'Neolithic Revolution' … that most useful phrase, was concocted by the Australian archaeologist Vere Gordon Childe in the 1920s … specifically to combat the then current climate of ethnic stereotyping in European archaeology … Not surprisingly, perhaps, given the contemporary climate, Childe's newly invented Neolithic Revolution, a two-word adventure story in itself, soon became part of Western history (Romer 2012: 32-3).

Childe's story – that 'material prosperity … brought social and artistic progress in its wake' (as Romer summarises it) – exerted its own powerful influence on scientific thought. The

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[27] But, for a contrary view, see: www.telegraph.co.uk/science/science-news/5604296/Is-farming-the-root-of-all-evil.html.

[28] The Wikipedia entry on Childe is a good place to get a flavor of the man, his times, his work and its impact: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/V._Gordon_Childe.

[29] Story at: www.sydneytheatre.com.au/magazine/posts/2012/september/feature-vere-gordon-childe.aspx.

[30] http://indianajones.wikia.com/wiki/Vere_Gordon_Childe.

science may be 'tricked out with fashionable neo-evolutionary economics', but as Romer points out, 'the very language of the inquiry' determines what will be found: the story precedes and determines the evidence, which is largely a work of the imagination, ascribing causal sequence to 'the relics of the past'.

Thus, for many decades there has been no need to argue that economics was primary and culture was dragged along 'in its wake' … until the discoveries at Göbekli Tepe. Now, it seems, we may need to reverse the flow of causation, because the monument-builders there were hunter-gathers, who neither farmed nor settled. It turns out that symbolic ritual, including gathering, dancing, feasting and possibly worship, was staged in massive, elaborate stone-built circles that have no economic or residential function. They may resemble ancestors, who may be gathered in a ceremonial (story) circle, perhaps linking the living and the dead.[31] They are constructions of the *polity* – an expression of meaningfulness for the groups that built them. More important, they offer intriguing evidence that our standard formula has it wrong; it is not the economic base that determines the cultural and political superstructure, but culture that determines the polity, and the expression of the resultant facts (in organisation and logistics, as well as stone and story), precipitates economic change.

These feats of construction both organised and represented what can be described as the earliest known political narrative. They predated and likely precipitated both farming and settlement. Klaus Schmidt, lead excavator of the Göbekli Tepe site, has concluded:

> *The evolution of modern humanity involved a fundamental change from small-scale, mobile hunter-gatherer bands to large, permanently co-resident communities. The factor that allowed the formation of large, permanent communities was the facility to use symbolic culture, a kind of pre-literate capacity for producing and 'reading' symbolic material culture, that enabled communities to formulate their shared identities, and their cosmos* (Schmidt 2010: 253-4).

What Schmidt calls 'shared identity' was *performed* here: in the monuments themselves, in the work needed to make them, and in the attendant ceremonies. Göbekli Tepe was an improbably early site of *mediation*, and in terms of causal sequence, it suggests that culture produced the polity and economy, not the other way round.

Schmidt told *National Geographic*, which itself was excited by the revision of Childe's theory: 'Twenty years ago everyone believed civilization was driven by ecological forces. I think what we are learning is that civilization is a product of the human mind.' (quoted in Mann 2011). The *National Geographic* (June 2011) wanted the story to be about the 'birth of *religion*', calling Göbekli Tepe 'the world's oldest temple'. Other archaeological publications have been content to follow this lead (Scham 2008). Klaus Schmidt himself is not so sure about that: 'we can not say with certitude if concepts of god existed at this time' (2010: 254).

I'm not following *National Geographic* in its own 'political narrative': 'We used to think agriculture gave rise to cities and later to writing, art, and religion. Now the world's oldest

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[31] 'Pillars at the temple of Göbekli Tepe—11,600 years old and up to 18 feet tall—may represent priestly dancers at a gathering.' *National Geographic*:
http://ngm.nationalgeographic.com/2011/06/gobekli-tepe/musi-photography

temple suggests *the urge to worship sparked civilization*' (June 2011). Göbekli Tepe certainly challenges the notion of the Neolithic Revolution, but 'the urge to worship' is not needed as a causal mechanism, since 'worship,' 'religion' and 'temple' are such loaded terms, saying more about now than then. There's no need to impose such interpretations, but the very existence of such monuments, made before farming and settlement had been 'invented', does call attention to the direction of causation:

- Culture and technology (shared desire, purpose and capacity to build)
    → Politics (organisation of a complex cooperative community)
        → Economy (intensive organisation of food supplies, materials and logistics).

Narrative creates the polity

That Göbekli Tepe represents a cultural (rather than economic or civic) story doesn't seem to be in doubt. It externalises and performs the identity and knowledge of a 'deme' at an unprecedented level of ambition and complexity, and it does seem reasonable to assume that the builders told each other a motivating story as to their intentions when they built it: they were working to a purposeful 'script'.

The monument itself may be regarded as a 'media platform' or 'institution of language' – the first ever 'mass medium' if you like – for storytelling on the grand scale. So my proposition is that Göbekli Tepe is a relic of *political narrative* – a story that called together a deme to common purpose, and so constituted the polity that needed to support that giant enterprise by inventing agriculture, husbandry, and settlement.

What Schmidt calls 'the human mind' that produces civilisation is of course a network of externally linked minds, which connect with one another and interact with circumstances, natural and political (demic), via storytelling. The oldest recorded story in the world is *The Epic of Gilgamesh*, originating in the Fertile Crescent not far from where Göbekli Tepe stands. King Gilgamesh may have existed, around 2600 BCE (about 7000 years after Göbekli Tepe). A celebrated version of his story is preserved on the so-called Flood Tablet, from the library of Assyrian king Ashurbanipal at Nineveh (Iraq), seventh century BCE (nearly 9000 years after Göbekli Tepe). Its decipherment in the decade following Darwin's *Origin of Species* caused a sensation (MacGregor 2011), because on one of his adventures Gilgamesh is told the story of a flood in terms that bear an uncanny resemblance to the Biblical (Noah's) flood story, thereby challenging the latter's divine provenance even as it confirmed its historical plausibility. It re-projected the story of human civilisation back from the supernatural to the political: it wasn't divine intervention that caused the Flood; it was a traveller's tale.

As a political narrative the *Epic of Gilgamesh* still resonates, for its plot remains familiar, even in the news media. Christopher Booker (2004) has identified seven basic plots that are structural transformations of ancient tales, continuing in contemporary stories, in literature and on screen. They are: Overcoming the Monster; Rags to Riches; The Quest; Voyage and Return; Rebirth; Comedy; Tragedy. Booker includes *Gilgamesh* among stories with the most basic plot, 'overcoming the monster,' along with the story of Perseus (the Gorgon), Theseus (the Minotaur), Beowulf (Grendel), Little Red Riding Hood (the wolf); and, more recently, Dracula, HG Wells' *War of the Worlds*, *The Seven Samurai/Magnificent Seven*, *Jaws*, *Alien*, *Dr No* and *Star Wars–A New Hope*.

Applying this model to political communication, we can readily see the basic plots reiterated on the nightly news. A telling example was George W Bush's 'Mission Accomplished' speech, delivered aboard USS Abraham Lincoln on May 1 2003, immediately after the initial open combat phase of the Iraq invasion. Instantly controversial, as victory in the so-called War on Terror was far from 'accomplished,' the speech was also notable for the biblical rhetoric that Bush invoked to celebrate how US forces had 'overcome the monster' unleashed at 9/11. The President concluded:

> *All of you—all in this generation of our military—have taken up the highest calling of history. You are defending your country, and protecting the innocent from harm. And wherever you go, you carry a message of hope—a message that is ancient, and ever new. In the words of the prophet Isaiah: 'To the captives, Come out! and to those in darkness, Be free!'.*[32]

Using the full resources of the modern 'warfare state' (Edgerton 2006; Sparrow 2011), and in the face of monstrous unseen adversaries, Bush invoked an ancient story to *reconstitute* the polity.

Evolution Creates the Narrative

Something along the lines of a story that brings a 'deme' together to overcome unknown adversaries, uncertainty and death, may explain the findings at Göbekli Tepe. Gilgamesh, Ashurbanipal, Isaiah and Bush indicate that stories like that survive more or less unchanged in form and function over millennia, with successive political leaders using the same words for the same purposes. This *longue durée* suggests that it is time to consider whether (despite John Romer's scepticism) what we are looking at has something to do with the cultural-evolutionary adaptation of humans, explaining one of the mechanisms by which '*Homo narans*' (Fisher 1984) maintains large, complex 'demes' of non-kin in cooperative, albeit competitive, polities.

Here, recent work of evolutionary scientist Mark Pagel (2012a; 2012b) is instructive.[33] Like the archaeologist Klaus Schmidt, he too sees culture as primary, where knowledge, technology, meaningfulness, identity and sociality produce the economy, politics and civilisation. He calls culture the 'survival vehicle' for the survival of human groups or demes, much as the human body is the survival vehicle for genes. In both cases, individual persons and their physical bodies are but carriers for the mechanism of survival, which is information codes – genes (individuals) and culture (demes) respectively. As a survival vehicle, culture is characterised not so much by aesthetics as by allegiance of individuals to their deme. Pagel argues:

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[32] Text at: www.cbsnews.com/stories/2003/05/01/iraq/main551946.shtml. Isaiah's 'captives' were held by the Assyrian king Sennacherib. The next king of Assyria but one was Ashurbanipal, so the link to Gilgamesh is not so far fetched.

[33] See also a useful review of Pagel 2012a here: www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/books/reviews/wired-for-culture-the-natural-history-of-human-cooperation-by-mark-pagel-7573966.html.

The fact that cultural allegiance is most vividly expressed not in ethical behaviour but aggressive parochialism suggests it has been instrumental in protecting human beings throughout their evolution (Pagel 2012b).

Culture is the group-making mechanism that humans evolved for survival *in groups* (Hartley & Potts forthcoming); Göbekli Tepe is the earliest surviving representation of that mechanism; 'polities' are culture's abstracted and formalised continuing form.

5. Gotcha? [34]
– The big guns of storytelling … fall silent?

When it comes to telling stories, that 'aggressive parochialism' is what I have called a 'universal-adversarial' stance in journalism (Hartley 1992a; 1992b). The 'we' group is taken to be universal (it includes everyone in the deme); 'they' groups are taken to be adversarial (enemy, threat, deviant, dissident, deranged).[35] My research has found that universal-adversarialism is a chief characteristic of modern journalism. 'We' (say, Americans), represent all humans; 'they' (others; the othered) are out to get us.

There is, then, no better way to express who 'we' are than in what Charles Bean called 'the supreme test for fitness to exist': *warfare*. This structural characteristic of stories about cultural identity permeates many types of discourse across many domains of life. It is not confined to actual wars or international politics, but crops up wherever what Thorstein Veblen once called 'invidious comparison' is called for. In short, we're not just 'wired for culture', as Pagel puts it; our stories are 'wired' for universal-adversarialism – for deme-creation.

Storytelling can be characterised as a carrier of information codes. As such they are designed for imitation, copying, sharing, emulation. They are a distribution mechanism for *how* to think and *what* to think. As mentioned, they are a resource for inductive reasoning. Stories also store lessons, allowing social learning to cross generational, language and geospatial boundaries, reproducing the sequence of inductive logic that teaches us not only what to fear but what to do about it: how to outwit duplicitous adversaries, how to test unknown characters for truthfulness, how to signal prowess to enemies and lovers, how to behave courageously … and so on. Culture is the 'survival vehicle' for groups (demes); stories are the survival vehicle for culture.

Stories like *The Epic of Gilgamesh* reflect archetypally on personal fear of death. The plot brings a realisation of death's inevitability for the hero, but hope for reproduction through family, followers and 'our' strong city. Individuals may die, but their actions benefit the group, which thereby survives. So it was too with 'Mission Accomplished.' President Bush said: 'Those we lost were last seen on duty. Their final act on this earth was to fight a great evil, and bring liberty to others.' The dead made us free (so the story goes).

Culture and stories are mechanisms for transmitting cooperation and social learning (Thomas & Seely Brown 2011), and for developing externalised forms of shared knowledge (e.g. language, customs, institutions, technologies, tools etc.) that help to promote the survival of the group across time and place, even against the interests of individuals within the group, who die for unrelated genes, as it were. Cooperation overcomes 'selfish' genes (Dawkins 2006) by casting members of the same tribe or deme as 'honorary relatives' (Pagel 2012),

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[34] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:The_Sun_%28Gotcha%29.png

[35] Note that the names of many pre-modern nations, e.g. Nyungar (Western Australia) or Cymru (Wales), simply mean 'human being' or 'compatriot'. Conversely, many languages use pejorative terms for outsiders – all non-Ancient Greeks were 'barbarians'; the Hebrew for 'opposite,' adversary, accuser is 'satan'; Wales is derived from the Norman-French word for 'foreigner'. The Apaches evidently have a bet each way: 'The word "apache" comes from the Yuma word for "fighting-men" and from the Zuni word meaning "enemy"' (www.greatdreams.com/apache/apache-tribe.htm).

who look out for other members of the group, even though no genes are shared between them, and who, through acts of 'costly signalling,' seek to impress strangers, even though they'll never meet them (Gintis & Bowles 2011; Miller 2009).

This is how cooperative trustworthiness is *tested*, allowing onlookers to judge what a given claim has cost the speaker; hard-won experience scoring higher than braggadocio, and it explains why *truth, trust, troth, and truce* have the same etymological roots (Hartley 1992b: 48). In this sense, all storytelling is political, constituting the 'we'-community, seeking to create polities of trust, to expound the costs of cooperation for characters and deliver its symbolic rewards (Boyd 2009).

Culture demands high levels of altruism towards the group and high levels of trust for insiders. Concomitantly, it instils distrust for outsiders or strangers. In contemporary news media, universal-adversarial journalism (Hartley 1992a) creates a 'they' identity, not only for direct enemies (monsters) but also for Tricksters (Hyde 2008), who may be masquerading as 'honorary relatives' to gain advantage of our deme's knowledge systems and information codes – to steal our semiotic cattle. Evolved mechanisms to counteract this kind of theft may include *different languages* (the 'tower of Babel'), which may be reassessed as an early form of intellectual property protection, perhaps; and secret, arcane, cabbalistic or hermeneutic knowledge, including secret men's and women's business among Indigenous demes. Modern nation-state genres of we/they exclusionary tactics include the differentiation of 'our' publicity from 'their' propaganda (Hartley 2006).

Storytelling seems to be universal among humans, but stories themselves have evolved only within specific 'we'-communities, often quite small or tribal demes. It is only in the past century or so that communications media, economic development and social network markets have expanded sufficiently to reach global scale. With organised or coordinated global media and networks comes the possibility that the differentiation of 'we' from 'they' – friends, family and lovers from strangers and enemies – may not be so easy any more, as stories themselves become universal in scope. Movies, music, and publishing all aspire to global audiences and readerships; stories do well that appeal across previously impermeable demographic boundaries (viz. JK Rowling). 'We' identities become much more abstract and distributed across complex networks.

How has storytelling kept pace with these changes? The most important change is that informal 'polities' can now be self-created, using the long-tail characteristics of large-scale social networks, where like-minded affinity or identity groups gather from among otherwise heterogeneous populations and communities of interest co-create their own political narrative, inaugurating an era of user-created citizenship.

When 'we' become 'they'
With the emergence of global communication networks with billions of users, the universal-adversarial formula that has been a primary feature of stories that 'produce' a polity for 'we'-communities in national media and journalism, now gets in the way. How can an adversarial sense of 'we,' of trust for us but fear of 'they' identities, be shared across the community when that group begins to approximate to the entire species? In mainstream politics,

narratives are emerging where humanity is both 'we' and 'they' at once – stories about climate change and environmental sustainability, for instance, or those about 'man's inhumanity to man' in war, displacement and refugee migration. Humanity at large is seen as the causal agent of those problems, and thus 'our' own adversary. We have literally become our own worst enemies. The monster our heroes must overcome is … ourselves.

Human culture and technology seem to have evolved rather faster than human storytelling formats, so the universal-adversarial pattern no longer fits the facts. Demes are no longer 'tribal' or even nation-states. With contemporary digital media, we live in a semiosphere that is manifestly global and local at once. 'Our' deme may be organised around quite different rules of association among strangers than the ones that govern national citizenship.

Young Australasians camping out on the hills surrounding Anzac Cove are associating themselves with a political narrative of national origins, but they are also members of many other networks, complexly interconnected and of global extent, intensely meaningful for those involved but not necessarily shared by the people in the next tent, such that the distinction between 'we' and 'they' is as meaningless as a distinction between Australasian and Turkish graves on the peninsula,[36] or between heroes and postmen.

However, there seem to be no digital stories about this form of consciousness; only dutiful prayers to the ancestors, following a script written generations ago by War Correspondents. So maybe digital storytelling isn't as radical and progressive as its commitment to self-expression for the ordinary person seems to suggest. Maybe it needs to copy more forward-facing models; Tavi Gevinson, perhaps. A further question for the digital storytelling movement is this: What kinds of storytelling organisations might take up a new, experimental agenda?

While the large scale public service broadcasting (PSB) experiments such as the BBC's 'Capture Wales' have not continued, there is still smaller scale experimentation going on, for example, in the context of the Australian Broadcasting Corporation's ABC Open. The processes and products of ABC Open are very different to those of orthodox digital storytelling advocates and practitioners, but we also get a hint here of how orthodox digital storytelling practices are also being very rapidly dispersed and evolved. The thing about ABC Open is that it also operates in the 'long tail' of storytelling. Nonetheless, it is an interesting question as to whether new scripts/ plots/ narratives/ polities could be enabled through an organisation such as ABC Open.

The lesson of Tavi Gevinson (for example) is that digital storytelling activists need to be open to any and all such possibilities too. Trying to avoid the pitfalls of mainstream and commercial media does not exempt any 'alternative' from the need to use scaled-up communicative systems. 'We' need new ways to organise, distribute and communicate new senses of virtual 'we' communities that are not founded on universal-adversarialism.

Perhaps the PSB organisations around the world can be recruited to this new social function?

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[36] See Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's words about this when he visited Gallipoli in 1934 as President of Turkey: www.awm.gov.au/encyclopedia/ataturk.asp.

'The legacy of my father'

The alternative is that it will end up copying commercial media unwittingly, again, because the 'big guns' are preparing, as we speak, for the 2015 centenary of Gallipoli. However, it may already be too late to invoke PSBs as a clear-cut radical storytelling alternative, because their strategy for gearing up for the Great War centenary is to *gang up* with commercial media, in an alliance of opposites that is as surprising as any.

The most surprising one is between Rupert Murdoch and the BBC. That there is no love lost between these titans of storytelling is well known. However, the 'star' of 'one of the most important programmes' in the BBC's coverage of the centenary of the Great War has been announced: Rupert Murdoch himself, who is being interviewed for a BBC film that will 'tell the tragedy of Gallipoli.' *The Independent* had the story:

> *In an hour-long interview with the BBC, conducted at the New York headquarters of his global business News Corp, the media mogul has talked of his pride in his late father's actions and how they inspired him to begin a career in newspapers. ... He said he was anxious to keep the memory of his father's achievements alive. 'I have always kept in mind very much the, if you like, legacy of my father and the influence he had on me and I have his picture prominently on the wall of my study at home. We do feel – I feel – that's a family obligation.'[37]*

What was his father's legacy? According to this story, 'Keith Arthur Murdoch was a young Australian war correspondent who changed the direction of the war by exposing the 1915 Gallipoli campaign as a disaster.' The BBC filmmaker, Denys Blakeway, told *The Independent* that 'the 60-minute film, due to be screened on BBC2 in 2015, "will hinge on Rupert Murdoch's father's action".'

Clearly, the narrative die is already cast. Rupert Murdoch's father 'changed the direction of the war', and *Gallipoli* (2015) will 'hinge' on his action. The BBC media release dutifully recycles this 'fact' as an axiom.

Murdoch himself already has form in this respect. He bankrolled Peter Weir's 1981 movie *Gallipoli* (starring Mel Gibson).[38] That film, to Weir's later 'regret', falsified the event for purposes of national pride:

> *The charge at The Nek on August 7, 1915, which provides the film's climax, did take place but an Australian, rather than a British officer, ordered the final charge. The film gives the opposite impression, something Peter Weir has said he regrets. 'The implication was that we were Pom bashing' he told David Stratton...[39]*

Thus, through the heroics of Rupert Murdoch's father, Australians 'overcame the monster' – *not the Turks* (with whom friendly relations were established by Ataturk as early as 1934) *but*

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[37] This and related quotations from here: www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/bbc-unveils-the-star-of-its-first-world-war-anniversary-coverage--rupert-murdoch-8884028.html.

[38] See: wwwmcc.murdoch.edu.au/ReadingRoom/film/dbase/2002/gallipoli2.htm, with details of Murdoch's funding (through Associated R&R).

[39] Paul Byrnes, at: http://aso.gov.au/titles/features/gallipoli/notes/.

the Colonial Power – and founded a nation based on white egalitarian mateship. As the Minister for Veterans Affairs and Minister Assisting the Prime Minister on the Centenary of ANZAC put it, speaking at the Dawn Service at Gallipoli in 2013:

> *Although it was so dreadful, it has become central to our nation's story. A hallmark in defining our nationhood and what we see as important in terms of mateship, service, sacrifice, courage and commitment'.[40]*

Australian mateship being what it is, Anzac day is now sponsored by VB beer (CUB). Their 'Raise a Glass' campaign is fronted by retired army general Peter Cosgrove, who says: 'Wherever you are, whatever you're drinking, raise a glass to those who serve'. VB will even arrange for General Cosgrove, AC, MC, to phone you with a wake-up call for the Dawn Service.[41] This seems to be the political narrative that has already been marshalled to 'inspire a new generation to understand what happened', as the BBC's Director General put it at the launch of that broadcaster's plans for WWI centenary coverage.[42]

Digital Stories to constitute a new polity

Finally we should return to digital storytelling. Can it do better than this? The *form* of digital storytelling has been well established, and its *purpose*, to open up the storytelling capabilities of digital media to everyone, remains laudable. But the *content* of vernacular, unrehearsed stories unwittingly reproduce the political narrative that 'constitutes the polity' by mythologizing 'our' origins – unless conscious effort is made by digital storytelling activists and agencies to try something new.

If a 'new generation' needs to be inspired to 'understand what happened', would it not be better to develop an alternative approach, based on the example of people from that generation, such as Tavi Gevinson, rather than relying on big-gun War Correspondents and mythmakers like the Murdochs, Weir, Bean, Bartlett and Cosgrove – even the BBC. If we truly want to honour our Granddads, and find new ways to constitute the globally networked polity, where foe-creation is self-destruction, we must find room for stories that do not go 'over the top', but, rather, understand how the very concept of 'we' is as much of a threat to ordinary people's understanding, well-being and peace as any monster.

As a Greek user called 'eleni b' wisely noted, on the photo-sharing site Pinterest:

> *The metaphor behind the Trojan Horse: The audience accepts the story because, for a human, a good story always seems like a gift. But the story is actually just a delivery*

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[40] Warren Snowdon speaking on April 25 2013: www.theaustralian.com.au/in-depth/anzac-day/gallipoli-calamity-defined-a-nation-warren-snowdon-told-dawn-service-at-anzac-cove/story-e6frgdaf-1226629387147#sthash.fhqgofsJ.dpuf.

[41] https://www.raiseaglass.com.au/. And see: Pete Mitcham, aka Prof Pilsner (April 25, 2013) 'Raise a glass – of scepticism', *Brewsnews*: www.brewsnews.com.au/2013/04/raise-a-glass-of-scepticism/. Wake-up call: https://www.victoriabitter.com.au/2013/04/this-anzac-day-theres-no-excuse/.

[42] www.radiotimes.com/news/2013-10-16/bbc-to-create-digital-cenotaph-for-ww1-anniversary-with-biggest-ever-broadcasting-season.

system for the teller's agenda. A story is a trick for sneaking a message into the fortified citadel of the human mind.[43]

"A delivery system for the teller's agenda"

As the citizens of another legendary city in Turkey discovered long ago, it's always wise to beware of Greeks bearing gifts. Is there a Trojan Horse in the citadel of stories? This paper has been driven by an interest in the potential for digital media and social networks to democratise storytelling, in the hope that non-professional people may learn to tell a wider range of stories than the few that dominate national politics, the movies, journalism and education. The hope is that 'user-created citizenship' will *revise* not *reproduce* our understanding of 'who we are as a people' (as British PM David Cameron said about WWI commemorations).[44]

The indications are not altogether positive. Digital storytelling in the context of Gallipoli seems to have been captured by institutional agencies that use it to disseminate existing meanings, while the generative journalistic story goes unchallenged (even when aspects are known not to be true).

If digital storytelling is to play a corrective role in the forthcoming centenary of World War I, it will face powerful competition from the pros,[45] so it needs to develop much sharper self-

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[43] See: www.pinterest.com/elenired/digital-storytelling/; also source of the picture: www.pinterest.com/pin/254383078925276152/.

[44] Quoted here: www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/jeremy-paxman-blasts-david-cameron-over-wwi-centenary-comments-8866630.html.

[45] As well as allowing Keith Murdoch pride of place in the Gallipoli story, the BBC plans to do exactly what digital storytelling is good at: 'we will tell well-known stories from fresh perspectives and original stories so far untold.' (Adrian Van Klaveren, controller for the BBC's World War One Centenary): www.mirror.co.uk/tv/tv-news/rupert-murdoch-joins-bbc-digital-2459368

consciousness about the importance of storytelling as a whole, and a much more sophisticated understanding of the generative role that narrative plays in constituting who 'we' are. Given that digital media and social networks have already made what constitutes 'our' deme more risky, complex, open, uncertain and multivalent than ever before, it is urgent for progressive innovations like the digital storytelling movement to catch up.

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