

PLAYING DIGITAL — DrDC game

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

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1 Culture as Narrative

Cultural memory of the human society exists and is preserved/presented to the next generation in different languages of one narrative. Mythology, cosmology, art, social/moral systems, and especially games during the ages are in their essence — storytelling: a story about the world, God, Self and the Other, a story told by stones, paints, toys, and many abstract, language driven, concepts. The Greeks told their story in fables; for the Romans the most powerful, i.e. everyday, barbarian language had to be used (Giambattisto Vico, *The New Science*, Cornell University Press, [1744] 1968). Educational aspect of these narratives necessarily presupposes particular moral system, attached to it.

2 (Digital) Image as Narrative

In short, in the Digital (re)-Discovery of Culture, the crucial role is given to the story told, to the message of a particular digitized "image". (Graham Clarke, *The Photograph*, Oxford University Press, 1977)

[REF2. We use the word "image" here in the sense of complex presentation of cultural artefact, i.e., digital image, the metadata attached to it, so that it could be searchable in the WWW and especially the Semantic Web, and in some cases text/description of the original object].

Since today everything can be digitized in a standardised way, such an image could be any single element of human cultural / scientific heritage: a mediæval manuscript, a book, stone monument, art. Digitizing music and dance, and presenting them in WWW, requires more technology tools, in comparison with manuscript, for example.

I will give an example with the *Riverdance* concert I attended on 8th of June, in Dublin [REF3]. If I have to digitize the music, the dance, the lighting, all intercultural links, included in the performance as a whole, and the experience of the audience, filming by digital camera will NOT be enough. This was NOT an Irish performance. The same is valid for "Two Worlds" music-dance performance of Neshka Robeva (Bulgaria). Both representing mixture nature of post-modern art and culture. They both are deriving their message(s) for the world of today from the roots of yesterday. [REF4] And these roots are cultural, i.e. based on textual/visual memories of the past, starting from ancient times and even before. But in the spreading of our story of the (culture of the) Past, we have to stay open for the Other stories and still to be/discover/live in the present.

3 Digital Games as Narrative. Why Games?

The digital way in which we present our culture should give enough information to fill all the "slots" in the "syntactic, semantic, and narrative frames" of thinking and perception process. (REF5 For more about frame-theory in human and artificial intelligence see: THINKING, Frame-Theory. Minsky, 343p., 355-377pp.)

Playing as main human activity seems to be good digital way to do this. Edutainment, and especially the DrDC game, can be regarded as an educational "tool" for presenting the culture of the Self and of the Other in serious, but playful way.

Why presenting cultural heritage through Edutainment (entertaining education)?

When I tried to clarify for myself the real goal/meaning of digitization of culture (in the frame of KT-DigiCULT-BG project [REF5. www.math.bas.bg/digicult] and in general), I faced many sad examples of perfectly digitised cultural memory, presented in a manipulative way. This is always the case when "resurrected roots of the past" (see point 2) are used for narrow-focused, chaining purposes. Therefore interdisciplinary, and better, international team is needed to build good, educational example of digitised heritage. The point I want to make by this is that digitization of culture could not be thought as merely scanning the artifact, attaching some scholarly text to it and putting them on a CD (and/or the WWW). It is intended to have a personal (re-)discovering nature — personal (re-)Discovery of the Self and of the Other, by digitised textual and visual background of the roots resurrected.

Digitization should not be mummification of cultural artifacts. The concept of digital library/museum is great in principle, but will stay useless, if people are not personally interested in visiting it. The DrDC game emerged as a way to provoke such motivation, to

create an interest for personal cultural discovery of the player. After a year's personal experience I can say that it is edutaining game, because its goal is to reveal hidden meanings, to recall history and to educate on the gaming-board of the WWW.

4 DrDC Game (to be presented and played in the First SEEDI Conference, September 2005, Ohrid)

Digital Re-discovery of Culture through images, text etc., resulting at its physical experience is at the core of the initial concept of DrDC game. The playing is in fact capturing "images" (text, audio, video material in a size, that can be send by e-mail to the other player) from WWW board and creating a Challenge for the Other. The Other has to discover/answer to the challenge in a creative way. What happens meanwhile is real re-discovery of culture at educational play. This is what DrDC game is all about.

And one always plays as representative of his/her own culture.

APPENDIX A

DrDC game rules [to be further developed] (edited by Micheal Mac an Airchinnigh and with comments added]

- 1] * TIME-PERIOD. A game will last at most 7 days.
- 2] * WWW TOOL: GOOGLE search engine
- 3] * MEDIUM: The moves will be sent by E-MAIL only.
- 4] * ORDER OF PLAY. Players follow one other in giving a key word (or key phrase). In addition, one url may accompany a key word or phrase.
- 5] * CONDITION for acceptance/rejection of the key-word given by the partner [a dialogue at the initial level of playing]: A short introduction (of up to 70 words). Its start and its end to be marked by < and > (e.g. by <quote> and </quote>). It is intended to be an explanation of the physical and psychological environment for choosing the challenge given. The key words must have their ORIGIN in something interesting/challenging, which is seen/heard during the previous 7 days. Introduction is NOT a hint, nor interpretation, but facts only, a short STORY.
- 6] * OPENNESS. New players can be included at any stage of the process, depending on the GOAL the key-word-giver has in mind. For example, Kalina Sotirova can be included in a game that Michael O'Rahilly starts on Friday.
- 7] Game Transcript (OWL, Semantic WEB)

8] Formal acknowledgement of receipt of e-mail

APPENDIX B

DrDC Game Example (with notes)

AUTHOR: XYZ

DATE of sending: 2005-05-16.

DATE of receiving: [to be filled in the confirmation receipt by player]

DEADLINE: 2005-05-25

KEYWORD: song

Now the keyword has ontological significance. In this game we are looking for a very specific song as the end-goal..

URL: <http://www.users.bigpond.com/garrysmith/location.htm>

The web page shows a map which gives the location of a place in Australia called Botany Bay.

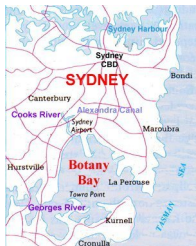


IMAGE:



This image of a Famine memorial is referred to in the text below.

Background Story

<quote>

I sit here all alone, in the Pagoda,

at the centre of the world¹, like a Buddha².

I face in the direction of Sofia³.
To my right is a poet⁴ and washing women⁵.
In front of me is an Irish Volunteer and Dublin⁶ Fusilier⁷.
Behind me is a poet and playwright⁸.
To my left are the blind⁹.

Above me there are clouds
of many shades of white, none black.
There are wonderful shades of blue, all forms of black.

Beneath me are stones,
reddish brown to match the seat,
set in place by the Unknown Worker.
[Why isn't there a perpetual flame somewhere here
in the centre of the world in memory of him/her?]

In the North Eastern corner of the Green¹⁰ there is a Famine memorial
[see image]
and it brings to mind a very famous song about the Famine.

I was very surprised to learn that this famous song
will be sung¹¹ in Istanbul on 25th May 2005
but with very different words.
</quote>

Short [up to 70 words] introduction. Its start and its end to be marked by <quote> and </quote>. It is an explanation of the physical and psychological environment for choosing the challenge given. The key words have to have their ORIGIN in something interesting/challenging, which is seen/heard during common work. Introduction is NOT a hint, nor interpretation, but facts only, short STORY.

GOAL: find the name and the music of the song about the Famine

¹Le centre du monde est partout.

<http://www.leplaisirdapprendre.com/formaprof/stages/ateliers/tv5.php>

²The Buddha observes.

³An exact physical location.

⁴James Clarence Mangan

⁵The Magdalen Laundry

⁶An exact physical location.

⁷Kettle

⁸William Butler Yeats

⁹A seating area for the Blind.

¹⁰An exact physical location.

¹¹By the Liverpool football team in the European Cup.