

The Politics of Cultural Memory

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Editorial Note:

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*Upon her spoon this motto
wonderfully designed:
"Violence completes the partial mind." [0]*

Identity, Belonging and Necessity

A visit I made to Tirana (Albania) in April 1998 marked the start of a personal investigation. An investigation into a complicated field, somewhere between cultural memory and politics. What I wanted to do is to sketch out and map a territory of identity, memory, politics, and media. The need for this was primarily of a personal nature. There was no expectation that I would be able to get any kind of complete understanding of what the relationship of politics and cultural memory entails. Certainly not beyond the excellent writings that have been produced already in this area, most of whom I am quite ignorant of. Yet, feeling the need to do this, if only for myself, seemed enough of an incentive. Since everyone's experience is always different and specific, my findings might even be useful for others grappling with the same questions I wanted to map out.

My need for this investigation originated from an unresolved dilemma. Writing this in July 1999, the dilemma, obviously, remains unresolved, though it still strikes me as something dramatic. One of those crucial experiences you would have gladly dispensed with.

This particular story starts in Tallinn in 1995. I was invited to help put together a conference on the social and cultural impact of digital media and networking technologies on the Baltic states, called *"Interstanding - Understanding Interactivity"*. The aim of the event was to go beyond the economic and technological perspectives, and develop something of a critical cultural and social point of view.

We were at the end of the second day of the three-day conference. The topic was *"Community and Identity in the Global Infosphere"*, and a host of speakers was dealing with ways of reconstructing identity and the social sphere in the realm of digital media. At some point the sys-op of the ZAMIR peace network from the former Yugoslavia (who happened to be present in the audience) grabbed the microphone and made a short, clear, and rather devastating comment:

"We've been talking all day about identity issues now, and their value. Our recent experiences, however, have taught us that nothing sets people more apart than identity!"

I had, as I still have, no answer to this objection. It couldn't have pinpointed the dilemma more clearly. The idea we had started from was to question what two simultaneous extraordinary transformations, meant for a country like Estonia. On the one hand Estonia was contained in a process of re-inventing its national identity, a few years after breaking free from the former Soviet Empire and Russian rule. At the same time Estonia had entered the information era overnight, depending for its economic survival on a networked international economy that undermined the very notions of national sovereignty it had just retained. The notion of a national Estonian identity is deeply problematic, if only because of the large Russian minority within its borders, which comprises one third of the overall population of the country.

The reconstitution of national identity is a fundamental dilemma that pops up again and again in the aftermath of the revolutionary changes that have taken places in the former 'East'. Identity is belonging, and a basic sense of belonging to me seems indispensable for any kind of social structure to be able to function, for any kind of social cohesion to emerge. The refusal of the identity question in name of a universal ideology (modernism) or materialist system (neo-liberalism), inevitably leads to a reactionary response. Identity forges connection, but it is simultaneously also a principle of separation. This principle of separation is at the heart of the dilemma we suddenly saw ourselves faced with that afternoon in Tallinn.

Deep Europe

Europe is a container of identities. A sedimental layering of cultures past and present, in permanent flux between moments of crisis and tragic sublimity. In this shifting landscape the dilemmas of identity can turn into drama, especially in those regions where Europe is at its '*deepest*', i.e. where most identities overlap (and collide). This sedimentary image of the cultural map of Europe derives from the concept of Deep Europe, as put forward by the Bulgarian artist Luchezar Boyadiev. Boyadiev provides a highly original reading of post-wall Europe.

In Boyadiev's explanation of '**Deep Europe**', *"the notion is a metaphor which could be problematic. In the logic of this metaphor, deepness or depth is where there are a lot of overlapping identities of various people. Overlapping in terms of claims over certain historical past, or certain events or certain historical figures or even territories in some cases. It could also be claims over language or alphabet, it could be anything. Europe is deepest, where there are a lot of overlapping identities."*

The formation of identity is a fundamentally dynamic process. It is also subject to manipulation. The construction of identity refers to a reading of the past that can be subjective, incomplete. Sometimes it is linked to clear interests of a group. It is often difficult to fully substantiate the claims made in this formation process. Identity, therefore, is not just belonging, it is clearly also politics.

Identity and memory are connected. Identity at the very least means to remember one's origins. If memory belongs to a group, a time, a region, a nation or any other larger structure, it immediately becomes deeply political. Cultural memory is crucial in the formation of an identity that transcends the merely personal. Cultural memory is not just museums, books and monuments. Cultural Memory rather is politics pur sang!

Cultural Memory and Collective Identity

The Estonian philosopher Hasso Krull once remarked in one of his lectures that "*history is a machine going nowhere*". Though he might be right, the idea does not seem very useful to the formation of any particular kind of social order (such as a nation state). Krull's contention will therefore not be likely to gain much approval amongst politicians, whatever their sign may be. It is more interesting for any kind of politics to create a meaningful context, both for the present as well as the past.

This meaningful context can best be understood as a narrative, a way in which material objects, events, documents and descriptions are linked together into a coherent narration of past and present. This narration conveys to its audience how the present derives from the past, and how the signs that structure and signify the world around them, bear witness to this inextricable connection between past and present. What the objects of the past tell their audience is the necessary state of things in the present. A society doesn't just exist, it is an emergent property of a multitude of events that have shaped its current state. Its members are never alone or alienated, rather, they are interwoven in the very historical fabric of that society, which shapes their perceptions and values as much as their immediate physical and social environment.

The objects belonging to the cultural heritage of a given society are never isolated bodies in a decontextualised hyperspace, nor are they self-contained objects in a post-historical era. Their symbolic significance is not contained so much in their artistic or aesthetic qualities as such, but rather in the degree to which they are part of a convincing narrative that binds the object and the viewer together in a shared system of beliefs. What the object and the audience tell each other is that their inalienable connection testifies to a continuity, which transcends the limitations of the merely individual, in time (history) as well as in space (a people).

That is, if you believe in it.

There are various ways to describe this function. The Egyptologist Jan Assmann speaks of cultural memory as a connective structure founding group identity through ritual and a textual coherence [1]. He explains that the past is never remembered for its own sake. Its main functions are to create a sense of continuity and to act as a motor for development. The present is situated at the end of a collective path as meaningful, necessary and unalterable. Assmann defines such cultural narratives as '*mytho-motivics*'. They motivate development and change by presenting the present as a deficient reflection of a heroic mythological past. A past which should be restored for the future.

What this view implies is that cultural memory acts beyond the founding of group identity and continuity of present and past, into the future. It presents a particular view of the future as necessary, and provides direction for collective action in the present to move towards it. The goal is to recapture and restore the ideals which have been lost in the deficient imperfections of present day-life. Ideals that can be retained through collective action, whether this be in the form of ritual or rather through revolutionary change.

Cultural memory in a living culture is never fixed. It involves a constant reinterpretation of the present in terms of the past to decide on possible actions for the future. Meaning can shift and rituals can take on different forms. Rather than being fixed in an anthropological text book, the cultural memory of living cultures is suspect to manipulation. Since the definition

of cultural memory depends on a continuous exchange between the memory objects of a given culture and their interpretation by its members, it is however difficult to reveal the outcome as fraud. Cultural memory simply is the outcome of this interplay. It is the process that counts, and not its arbitrary fixation.

The definition of identity that results from this memory construction, therefore is deeply imaginary. Benedict Anderson has convincingly argued that "*all communities larger than primordial villages of face-to-face contact are imagined.*" Imagined because they deal with how people imagine themselves and one another. Today almost all communities people belong to, are too large to allow for direct face to face contact between all its members. Therefore the modes of imagination employed to imagine one's community must somehow be organised via an inbetween mechanism or apparatus (i.e. media in the broadest sense of the word).

The set of values and ideas that binds people together in a community necessarily have to become mediated values and ideas. There is nothing new in this, nor is it something pertaining specifically to the formation of the nation state. Someone argued with me after a lecture about this topic that if you would have asked a random inhabitant of Western Europe in the late medieval times to define her or his identity, the most likely response would have been; "*Christian*", clearly illustrating a grand transnational identity-structure. Even more so, the measure of control over the media that dominated identity discourse then and now is probably quite comparable. The era of electronic media does, however, introduce a new dimension of speed to this process; a fatal acceleration towards the immediate.

Location of Memory

Where is the memory of a culture, of a society located?

Principally in the memory objects that hold the traces of the past. As noted before, in a living culture this location is fluid and dynamic. Memory is stored both in material and immaterial forms.

A seemingly stable container of cultural memory is the built environment. The streets of cities and villages, the architecture of the buildings, the artefacts that inhabit the living space, they all testify to the persistence of a culture's and a societies' memory. It was hardly a surprise, in retrospect, that an ahistorical, or maybe better anti-historical, cultural movement such as the Italian Futurists hailed the virtues of war to destroy the stifling remains of moulded, bankrupt and corrupted cultural history. The explosive beauty of the modern war machine, ecstatically embraced as a relentlessly powerful tool to break the chains of a suffocating cultural past.

The monument as a physical embodiment of community memory, has, of course, always been a focal point for the struggles over cultural memory.

Cultural memory is also contained in immaterial form. First of all in language, both in spoken language as well as in its written forms. Orality and speech seem to be imbued with a much more subtle connection to history. Speech, through accent and choice of words is usually connected to a regional origin. Accent and dialect are the regional containers of cultural memory par excellence, they are as much part of the narration of past and present, as the stories they convey. It would be interesting to question if the concept of a nation state is conceivable at all without a writing system?

Like the monument, language is an embodiment of community memory, albeit an immaterial one. Language has often become the battle ground for cultural and political conflicts. In part these conflicts revolve around the suppression of a local language or dialect to facilitate the superimposition of a new dominant cultural system. There are also other more hidden forms of assimilation and resistance that can become the object of such clashes.

In Estonia, for instance, the suppression of the Estonian language was quite overt during the Soviet occupation of the country. The Estonian language was stripped of its official use-value and relegated to the personal realm. Russian as the new state language (i.e. the language of bureaucracy) took its place. But exactly through this shift from public life to the personal sphere, the threatened national identity and the personal identification of the Estonians became deeply associated with the use of the Estonian language. For them it was particularly shocking that Estonian officials of the Soviet system started to '*Russify*' the Estonian language by importing alien language structures from the Russian language into Estonian. One such example was the introductory phrase most Russians would use, saying "*I am X, son of Y*", which was then also used by these officials when they introduced themselves in Estonian. By most Estonians these subtle modifications of their native language, were felt as a particularly direct assault on the sovereignty of this last personal sphere.

Music is another strong container of culturally specific memory structures, like rhyme, its formal characteristics ensure a pertinence from one generation to the next beyond and outside of a writing system. In a larger sense, aesthetic and formal design principles are the immaterial principles that structure the awareness of the viewer about the cultural significance of individual objects, even if no explicit story is connected to them. Obviously there are countless art objects and use objects that physically embody these principles, but it seems that their "*narration*" determines their meaning in a living culture. Cultural memory in these instances is located principally in our heads, rather than in the memory objects themselves.

Today, this memory function is increasingly organised via the media system, of print, electric, electronic and digital media. This media system has become increasingly integrated, both through technological developments (such as digitalisation), and because of economic integration (mergers and concentration in the media-industries). This integrated media system internalises the main functions of cultural memory, it becomes its principal 'location'. It acts as a documentation system, of current as well as past events. The latter by making use of continuous references to that past with historical media documents. The integrated media-space also acts as a system of symbolic representation; of individuals that represent power (political leadership) or spiritual values (religious leaders), or simply by setting an artistic or interpretative agenda.

What the media system is particularly good at is the creation of collective narratives. TV so far champions this function as Marshall McLuhan already rightfully observed in the mid-sixties, reflecting on the TV coverage of the Kennedy funeral.

McLuhan writes: "*Kennedy was an excellent TV image. With TV, Kennedy found it natural to involve the nation in the office of the Presidency, both as an operation and as an image. TV reaches out for the corporate attributes of office. Potentially, it can transform the Presidency into a monarchistic dynasty. A merely elective Presidency scarcely affords the depth of dedication and commitment demanded by the TV form.*"[2]

(...) "*Perhaps it was the Kennedy funeral that most strongly impressed the audience with the power of TV to invest an occasion with the character of corporate participation. No national event except in sports has ever had such coverage or such an audience. It revealed the unrivalled power of TV to achieve involvement in a complex process. The funeral as a corporate process caused even the image of sport to pale and dwindle into punny proportions. The Kennedy funeral, in short, manifested the power of TV to involve an entire population in a ritual process.*" [3]

Quite recently this enormous power of TV to integrate a public of billions into a collective act of cognitive processing in depth was again strikingly illustrated. First by the televised wedding of Princess Diana, but most of all by the almost global live coverage of her funeral, following her tragic death. In the process of the televisual rendition of a royal fairy tale-turned-nightmare, Princess Di became a purely symbolical embodiment of community values and aspirations, making her no more real than Delacroix's liberty, leading the people.

Commodification of cultural memory in the information age

The European Union has identified Europe's cultural heritage as its greatest '*info-asset*' for the information economy of the future. It has engaged in a scheme for offering multimedia access to Europe's cultural heritage as a business opportunity. Given that the core of the future information economy is information goods, and given that there is a particular interest in rich "*content*" for the information and communication structures of the "*emerging information society*", the EU has declared the commercial exploitation of multi-media access to the cultural heritage of Europe the highest aim of its funding programs in this field.

Through a "*Memorandum of Understanding*" and the establishment of "*co-operation frameworks*" such as MEDICI (Multi Media Access to Europe's Cultural Heritage), this new market sector (cultural content industries) is actively encouraged. The notion of culture as public domain does not seem to have been a consideration when these policies were developed. Even less so does this policy-framework open up any spaces for critical debate.

This failed opportunity may in part be understood as a reluctance on the part of the European Union to give itself a cultural definition, given the great diversity of cultural identities within its (expanding) territory. It is, however, problematic that in a period of European integration, the EU is not willing or able to create a space for critical debate about the urgent questions of the new cultural formations in Europe. Together with the lack of democratic substance the European Union has become an abstract and alienated technocratic and bureaucratic structure, that affords little opportunity for identification to its '*citizens*'.

Uncritical Regionalism

Boris Groys has pointed out a more subtle form of commodification of cultural memory. It starts with a strong anti-modern resentment, which is particularly notable in the countries of the "*former East*" of Europe. Groys notes that modern art does indeed negate the old cultural identities and their perceived historical unicity, originality and authenticity. The defenders of national identity do not appreciate that, but also the "*international visitor of the virtual museum of identities*", who has no wish to be confused by ambiguous signs, has no appreciation for it.

This postmodern cultural tourist, lost in the decontextualised societies of spectacles and ubiquitous consumerism, is looking for a lost cultural authenticity which she/he hopes to find in the revival of pre-modern identity and sentiment, particularly in 'the former East'. *"The global, postmodern, flâneur, lacking a clear definition of identity, is certainly sceptical about any claim to a universal truth. But it is exactly this fundamental scepticism that allows the acceptance of any other point of view, as long as it understands itself as regional and does not claim universal validity"*, Groys writes. This attitude results in an unpleasant complicity of a reactionary regionalism and the international cultural tourist industry, where even certain cultural fundamentalisms are uncritically accepted, as long as they manifest their claims to an absolute truth on a regional plane.[3]

Although Groys acknowledges the museum as a typically modern institution, isolating objects from the specific historical and socio-political context in which they operate, the *"museified gaze"* of the repressive politics of identity and the international cultural tourist are for him bound together with the museum into a single system. Certain specified memory-objects are charged with meaning by these actors, much in the same way as the museum carefully enacts their display into a coherent narration, to create the deeply desired illusion of a stable identity. The regional fundamentalist' dictator is thus seen as a somewhat hyper active, but nonetheless sympathetic kind of curator.[4] A last defence outpost of difference in an ocean of negated signs.

Perversion of memory

"Nobody, either now or in the future, has the right to beat you!"

In the Balkans, where Europe is at its deepest, the battles over identity and memory are the most severe. The clashes over history, territory, belonging, language and religious identity have a traditionally violent character and are linked with some of most tragic chapters of European history. In the wake of European integration and the emergence of globalisation the regional fundamentalist wars seem to have reached an unprecedented level of intensity and destructiveness.

In March 1989, the Slovenian art collective NSK (Neue Slovenische Kunst) / Laibach staged a chilling performance in Belgrade, called *"Lecture"*, which was to pre-figure the terrible events to follow. The performance also revealed the dangerous character of one of the most sad perversions of cultural memory of recent history. In the NSK *'lecture'* parts of appropriated speeches by the nationalist Serb leader Slobodan Milosevic, Nazi propaganda minister Joseph Goebbels, and the architect of British pre-worldwar II appeasement politics Richard Chamberlain, provided the elements of an explosive mixture.

Two years before, Slobodan Milosevic spoke in almost the exact same words on Kosovo Polje, the Field of Black Birds. At this occasion Milosevic used his famous words *'nobody has the right to beat you'*, referring to the growing animosities between the Serb and Albanian population of Kosovo. Three months after NSK's performance he spoke again in the same place commemorating the 600th anniversary of the Serbs' defeat at the hands of the Ottoman Turk Empire in 1389 on that very *"field of black birds"*[6]. This time to prepare the ground for armed fights, by linking Serbia's present to this historical battle.

Both ethnic groups disputed their contesting historical claims over the territory of Kosovo. The Serbs stressed their long lived cultural roots in the Kosovar soil, exemplified by the many cultural heritage sites consisting of medieval churches, monasteries and Serbian dominated cities and villages. The Albanians on their part stressed their decendance of the ancient Illyrians, a people who are believed to have occupied the Balkans some time before the ancient Greeks – and 1,000 years before the Slavs.

In the nationalist rhetoric of the Milosevic regime the cultural heritage sites of Kosovo, such as the famous monastries of Zica, Decani, and Vansjka, were functionalised to serve a sinister political program. Kosovo was declared the cradle of Serbian culture and the Serbian nation, a theory that had been very popular since the days of the Serbian nationalist movement of the late 19th century. It had been this nationalist movement that managed to shake of Ottoman rule finally in 1878, after 500 years of occupation. By portraying the cradle of the proud Serbian nation under threat, the right and the need for its territorial defence and ethnic purification was created by the Milosevic regime.

In the ten years this regime has ruled the remains of the former Yugoslavia, it never failed to recognise the importance of the media and the TV in particular. Perhaps Milosevic had read McLuhan with more than an absent minded interest. He and his advisors knew very well how the TV could be employed to create the collective narratives needed to justify his nationalist and ethnically hyper-violent politics, and how to motivate the Serbian people to engage in action.

TV according to McLuhan is a cold medium, it involves in deep cognitive processing, but does not excite the viewer. If this is true, then the motivation of the viewer towards action of required more than the simple exposure to a blatant political message. Goebbels already noted that propaganda requires the creation of an '*optimum anxiety level*'; a feeling of threat and unrest that should, however, not transgress the boundaries of panic.

In Serbia the feeling of constant threat was created by the Milosevic regime in various ways. On state-television a relentless campaign, using the horrific images of forced baptism of orthodox Serbs in Croatian worldwar II death camps hammered home the message of the luring dangers next door. The reports of international criticism reinforced the feelings of being under siege of practically the rest of the world, while mythic stories of the partisan achievements helped to boost moral. In this gruesome media-mix the evening news became the focal point of a national mania, a nation wide brainwash that slowly but surely prepared the grounds for war.

When considering the various contesting claims about history, territory, language and religion, within the terrain of the former Yugoslavia, the current two dimensional maps of the international '*peace*' brokering agencies seem hopelessly beside the point. When these claims, Croatian, Serbian, Muslim, (or possibly even Austro Hungarian), are projected individually onto this terrain, virtually identical maps emerge. Each of these maps would more or less cover the entire terrain of the former Yugoslavia. This layering of contesting claims and identities over the disputed territory is what constitutes the depth of the Balkans and marks its tragedy. Only a three-dimensional map of the terrain of the former Yugoslavia can therefore properly explain the complexity of its cultural history. It is also clear, therefore, that within the current two-dimensional logic of the international peace-brokering agencies, the conflicts on the Balkans cannot be resolved.

Access to cultural memory and participatory identity construction

In his book *"The Rise of the Network Society"*, Manuel Castells, analyses the rise of two diverging spatial logics. One of these spatial logics is close to what we customarily think of when considering the concept of physical space. Castells calls it the '*space of place*'. In this spatial logic, experience is located in an embodied existence, here and now. But this experience is heightened, and to some extent estranged, by the emergence of a second spatial logic, which, although connected to the first, seems to evolve outside of the control of the vast majority of the earth's inhabitants; the '*space of flows*'. The space of flows consists of the countless disembodied informational and economic interactions within the world's information and communication networks, and is quickly becoming the prime locus of economic power and material wealth.

Given the profound impact the new configurations of the space of flows increasingly will have on most peoples lives, Castells is deeply concerned about the divergence of these two spatial logics. During the preparatory discussions for the program of the third Next 5 Minutes conference on Tactical Media in Amsterdam (march 1999), David Garcia, one of the co-editors on our team felt the need to respond to Castells' call for action.

Garcia: (...) I believe we must create a more consciously dialectical relationship between these two realms, (which Manuel Castells describes as the Space of Flows and the Space of Place) because (with Castells) if they are allowed to diverge to widely, if cultural and physical bridges are not built between these two spatial logic's we may be heading (we may already be there) towards life in two parallel universes "whose times cannot meet because they are warped into different dimensions of hyper space".

(...) I believe that one such bridge or entry point may lie in notions of reclaiming memory through re-imagining the public monument. I still believe that any broad discussion about the public domain can not be separated from the physical embodiments of community memory in the form of public monuments. "The model here is that of the city (the polis) in classical antiquity, and the stress is the memorable action of the citizen, as it publicly endures in narrative".

Public narrative is an activating principle. Memory is never constructed solely for its own sake: It structures the relationship between past and present to formulate a plan for future action. Disputes about public narratives, in the Space of Place are traditionally negotiated non-violently through democratic participation, both in the act of creating memory and the formulation of plans for future action, as well as their continuous revision. The new networked space of flows requires a similar democratic participation, or public access.

More importantly, the new space of networked communications still holds a promise and a more profound potential for public participation than the accustomed modes of participatory decision making. It transcends the limitations of the regional focus of the embodied space of place, but it also decenters the media control over the completely centralised structures of broadcast media (radio and TV). Paradoxically the new Space of Flows simultaneously holds the potential of absolute transparency, making every single operation within the informational environment perfectly traceable. At which point it threatens to become a space of absolute control and observation - the ultimate instrument of authoritarianism.

The decentralised media and communications model that the Internet introduced in the beginning of the nineties, is dissipating quickly under the pressures of commercialisation, and

(even worse) government control over *'harmful content'*. Still the best chance for avoiding the dangerous manipulation of memory by an increasingly sophisticated medialised propaganda machine, is the radical opening of the media-landscape for a multiplicity of uses. This consciously opened mediascape will constitute an integrated electronic space of flows, where countless people will engage in the participatory construction of memories and identities, simply by creating their own heterogeneous messages...

Momentarily, three competing models for the future media landscape circulate; a model of complete centralised control, countered by the model of complete privatisation and market regulation, and thirdly the model of the networked public sphere. None of these models are self-evident or inevitable outcomes of the current phase of transformation the networked communication system is going through. Their instigation is a matter of choice, of clear real-world interests, and of policy. These choices are part of a fundamental political struggle, whose outcome will determine whether the new space of flows will be as experientially empty as the technocratic structures of the EU, or whether it can offer the spaces of identification and multiplicity that Europe as a whole at least, so blatantly lacks at the moment.

Epilogue: Liberate the wires - Free the ether - Give us Bandwidth!

Bandwidth is a technical term. It refers to the information transfer rate of an electronic communications system. In social and political terms it embodies the question of access to the international communications networks, in particular to digital networks such as the Internet.

The Bandwidth Campaign, which was held as part of the Hybrid Workspace temporary media laboratory at documenta X in Kassel, centred on the demand for a more equal distribution of bandwidth across the earth and within society. It made a radical demand for the creation of structures for public bandwidth to accommodate a host of participatory functions. In the best traditions of the modern art of political propaganda a set of unambiguous slogans was created. A selection of these slogans completes my journey for now...

Bandwidth is the power to speak

Bandwidth is the ability to assert yourself

Bandwidth is the Power of Access

Access to information and communication should be a fundamental democratic right, for all citizens of the world

We want bandwidth now!

Eric Kluitenberg,
Amsterdam, July 1999.

Notes:

0 - distilled from the song "War" by Henry Cow (Anthony Moore / Peter Belgvad), 1974

1 - I paraphrase Volker Grassmuck here from his text "The Living Museum", which has been an invaluable source of references. The text can be found at:

<http://www.race.u-tokyo.ac.jp/RACE/TGM/Texts/Museum/museum.html>

Grassmuck refers in his text to: Jan Assmann, "Das kulturelle Gedächtnis. Schrift, Erinnerung und politische Identität in frühen Hochkulturen", Beck, München, 1997.

2 - Marshall McLuhan, "Understanding Media - The Extensions of Man", 1964, cited from Routledge, London, 1994, p. 336

3 - *ibid*, p. 337

4 - Boris Groys, "Logik der Sammlung", Carl Hanser Verlag, München, 1997, pp. 52-53.

5 - *ibid*, p. 54

6 - "Kosovo" in Serbian means "black bird"

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Since 1988 he has been involved as an organiser in important media culture events such as the First and Second International Symposium on Electronic Art (SISEA), Interstanding I, II, & III (Tallinn, Estonia), The P2P - New Media Culture in Europe conference (Amsterdam / Rotterdam), the third and fourth edition of "The Next 5 Minutes", international festival of tactical media (1999 / 2003), "Tulipomania DotCom - A Critique of the New Economy", "net.congestion - International Festival of Streaming Media" (2000), and more recently the Dutch / Russian project "Debates & Credits - Media Art in the Public Domain" in Moscow, Amsterdam and Ekaterinburg (2002), the Amsterdam edition of World-Information.Org (2002), the mini-festival "An Archaeology of Imaginary Media" (2004), and most recently the "Economies of the Commons" conference (2008)

links:

Reclaiming Cultural Diversity

<http://www.debalie.nl/dossierpagina.jsp?dossierid=14988>

http://www.medialounge.net/lounge/workspace/deep_europe/

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