

The Three Faces of Europe

excerpts from a book project: Mnemosophy....

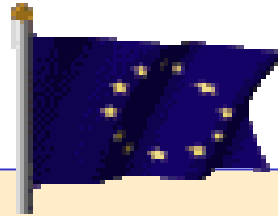


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Museums, Museology and Heritage in the 21st Century

International Cultural Centre, Krakow, 2006

The basis of my discourse



- Convinced European from decades ago
- Coming from Croatia (never behind the Iron curtain, war experience, dramatic transition)
- Practical and theoretical experience in the domain of museums and heritage (curatorship, professorship, consultancy, NGO)
- Trying to be an honest intellectual: guided by universal values and professionalism, wrong-sided and doubting the mainstream...
- Interests in the meaning and mission of collective memory, in ideology of freedom, in metaphore of bridges, in ideas of quality....
- Not speaking "pro domo mea"

What other faces of Europe ?



The Mother Europe

- the good Europe, - a caring mother embracing her lost children, ever ready for sacrifice and love that she equally distributes to all her children. That is the Europe of culture. The one *WE* think is the only.

The Aunt Europe

- political Europe, - a kind, concerned, somewhat confused but and never fully trusting its straggled nephews. Deep inside she cherishes the dreams of welfare super-state, but, alas, she is deeper and deeper in love with a ruffian by the name of Sam.

The Step-mother Europe

- the avaricious and ruthless step-mother Europe, - that of economy. The creature is an immoral morganatic bride with no nationality or cultural background.

That is the Europe of **corporate trans-national monsters** feverishly after profit. They are INC. i.e. hunting in packs. With instructions and assistance from politicians, they are finding easy, legitimate ways to get into the shattered pens of transitional, let alone third world countries.

Some think we would have done better without Europe

or: Why the Mother Europe fails?

"Freedom of press"- as legitimizing political and social rubbish

- The European press owners immorally pursue political and social sensationalism, poisoning further the traumatized and impoverished transition/war ridden countries.

Freedom of speech and political organising as the rise of extreme rightist ideology

Freedom in economy as wild capitalism, a free plundering from inside and outside

- speculation and over-exploitation of resources
- excessive, uncontrollable privatization
- worsening of social situation
- Terror of Greed instead of terror of Party: extra profit at any cost.
- Insecurity of citizens

New Poverty

- Is Europe a coloniser or a mother? Will population pay the cost of the forced march to the EU standards by poverty? Wild capitalism is inconvenience in the West, and a menace in the East.

New Despair and disillusionment

- The obscene capitalism is devouring majority. It proposes a dream of sudden fortune "earned" at Big Brother's house or by a miraculous business they will start with money borrowed from felonious banks.

Foreign measures of evil

- When European West declares red star equal to swastika it boosts fascism in its Eastern provinces and degrades what was correct in former 60 years.

Some dilemma and questions



- Why does a telephone impulse of T-Com cost six times more in Croatia than in domicile Germany? Is this fact totally separate from any cultural impact?
- EU Statutes is not the picture of reality; nice declarations are just an icing to the cake hiding offensive tastes: opportunism of the strong, frailty of the weak, new oppressiveness and new subordinations.
- The respectable plan is meant as "all different and all equal" but the rightful worry is whether we have true conditions of the fair-play
- I believe culture should be correcting the rules.
- Is Europe of culture the one we discuss or there are other faces of Europe that make our reality?
- The newcomers are exhausted and fragile: will they care for the culture enough trying to catch up economically with veteran countries in the Union?
- Will the newcomers succumb to the parallel process of dis-culturation and become less European than before?

The free circulation of capital, goods, people and ideas: what are the directions of this circulation?

- If capital moves South-East, is the profit moving only North West?
- If goods are moving South-East is there an exchange flow going in opposite direction?
- Are the people from the former Eastern Europe working and travelling as much in/to the West and North as the citizens of those in their parts?
- Who owns the banks in the East and South and do those banks really consider the host countries as THEIR countries? Do they care about local prosperity?

Were we choosing our politicians for Europe too?

- Many a citizen, from the East perceives EU as just another secure sinecure for their politicians, **a safe heaven for the eternal, selfpromoting oligarchy.**
- **Quite some EU politicians are ventrilocutors**, the talent we have known well in communism. Their discourse is dull, lacking any emotional engagement and true devotion. Do they believe in Europe?
- **They acquire disarming linguaggio of some unattainable caste** speaking to uneducated pariahs as they constantly relate to the convention "x", article "y", memorandum this, agenda that, declaration of this, amendment to that, protocol of there and agenda from somewhere... The public perception is that they are self-promoting oligarchy: **too much show off and red carpet psychology.**

Is Europe different enough from a huge Monopoly game?

...our tests indicate that your little Robert is a vain, ruthless and devious opportunist without empathy or imagination and we suggest that he pursue a career serving his country as a politician.



Leung

Civil society or European Court?

- If some industries have as many as two hundred permanent lobbyists in EU headquarters, to assure beneficial deals and arrangements, than it is a shameful deviation which reveals the corrupt ways of the central administration.
- Is it quality arguments or Court intrigues and conspiracies that count?





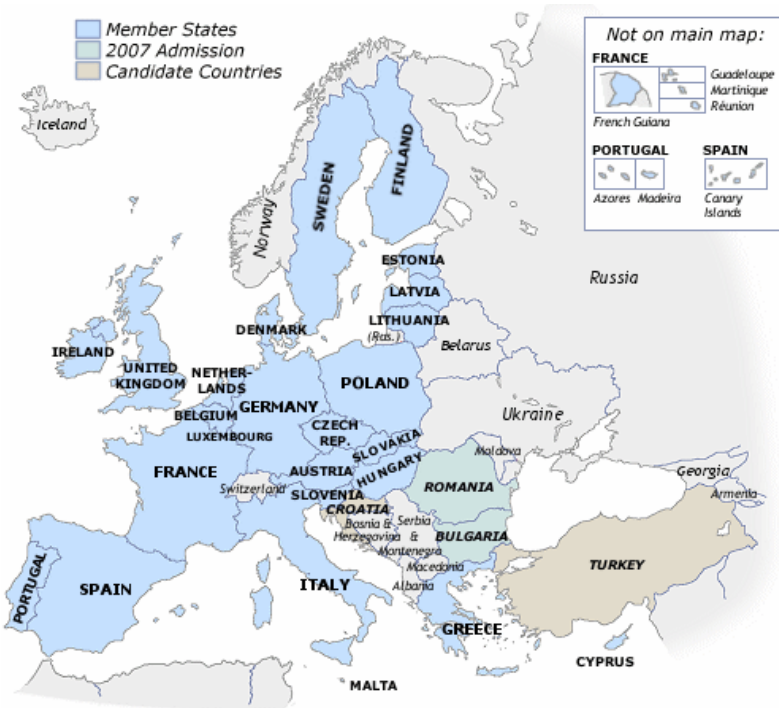
Is Europe really independent from USA ?



"OH, THERE YOU ARE! JUST IN TIME TO CLEAN UP THE MESS!"

The latest news: Iran and N. Korea anti missile shield in Poland

Europe of Politics and economy & Culture and identity



The Europe of Culture

- **Mother Europe is the poorest of the three:** Its direct budget for culture is 35 million of Euro a year for all its members. Exactly the budget of the Opera House in Bruxelles. The aunt is mighty and influential, but the rich, tight-fisted step-father writes the rules and dictates the solutions.
- **The Europe of culture is the one of democracy and rule of law,** the one of security and common wealth. For the other two Europes these qualities are luxuries they support selectively.
- **Humanist sector often unperceptibly limits its European discussions to the Europe of culture,** creating self-congratulatory circle of the like minded.
- **All Europes except the one of culture are just temporary constructions,** ultimately doomed to sophistry and quibbling instead of welfare super-state, based on giving and solidarity.

Europe looks best in Bruxelles and from Bruxelles.

Can Europe survive the mere economic integration?

- Can Europe of culture, the intellectual Europe do something? Why is culture still paid a lip service only? Intellectual courage and ethics are retreating making intellectuals the endangered species. The Eros is gone and the sterile mutants prevail by far. They are either obediently servicing the Machine or engage in harmless armchair radicalism. They are often indignant but carefully avoid displeasing anybody.
- Europe of culture is the one composed of citizens sharing consciously the European values. This membership is not founded upon mere selfish calculations. If opposite is the case, if banal pragmatism creates Europe it will be also able to dismount it when interests and advantages change.
- Fragmented interests as promoted by globalisation in fact cannot guarantee any stability to any structure in face of changing economic interests. Ideological blocks gone and the political ones expiring, only the cultural ones stand some chance. NATO is not about defense, but about the loyalty to the leading political power and its economic bosses.

Shall the S-E newcomers
to Europe
possesses more,
but live worse?

Public memory institutions

A reminder: from from prevalent scientific concern to communicational

- The institutions dealing with the past and the collective memory changed in the contemporary world: **sectorial and social inclusion, participation in the market, mission, professionalisation, participation in the real time.**
- **Convergence is forming networks, new creative clusters and will form a mega-profession.**
- Heritage occupations, be them museums, archives, libraries or different hybrid institutions, - are turning themselves into a **communicational business of particular sort and importance.**
- From ambition to provide knowledge about heritage, memory institutions now want to share, to impart and provide **the joy and benefit of profound understanding.**
- **Following the needs of the society,** they want to serve the better quality of life for the members of their communities and provide basis for their harmonious development.
- Communication is giving.
- By communicating heritage we finally **talk the language of users** with all the difficulties this brings, but also with the incomparable advantages of making science and culture effectively present in their daily lives.
- **We all want the world to become a better place.** There is no better way to do so but by building bridges instead of walls. That is what communication of heritage is about.
- **Intangible heritage is finally important and so are the intangible objects.**

Helping the Mother Europe to impose itself

- Political vision in global terms of some uniting **quality**
- Researching, teaching and sharing the **European values**
- Reinforcing political, economic and **cultural fairness and solidarity**
- Creating quality mechanism of unity: less administration and court, - **more civil, common action**
- Permeating the **entire collective memory** with contents and activities of European concern
- Re-writing the history and **communicating it as the "new" heritage(s) of Europe**

Can Europe become or remain(?),

the place:

- where quality is kept and nourished
- of balanced judgement, reliable, unbiased information
- where arts are cherished
- where culture is lived
- where human work is respected
- where solidarity is highly valued
- where politicians are after the welfare state and not the mere servants to corporations
- where the trade is fair
- where difference is taken as richness
- where individual liberty is highest priority
- where all institutions are serving citizens
- of excellent administration, citizens-politicians and powerful positive elites
- of the open, civil, secular society

Things to do, or do more, in culture and heritage to help Europe flourish?

- most politicians do not understand culture let alone heritage: they do not see it high enough at their agenda, and tend to support the superficiality of it
- having little money calls for better use of resources, strategy, networking...
- purporting heritage as linking economic and cultural domains
- more recognition to creative individuals and organisations
- Letting the creative earn the money by good practice and obvious succes and beneficial impacts, not by good negotiation, by vicinity to decision makers or, allas, good connections
- encouraging true creators instead of administration, pretentious activities and project jugglers
- coercing/reminding national governments to encourage more creative and european concerned individuals and organisations, not so much the national or nationalist, or local conformists
- EU cultural activities and European cultural organisations are too fragmented: a good way to lose money on overlapping and do little
- common peril: bad effects of globalisation and americanisation; politicians prefer soft game of yielding to economic, military or political pressures
- security and solidarity: all diferent all equal, it seems, never decended to ordinary people
- insist upon cultural standards for joining: the citizens in the East have less time to enjoy culture, to know the other or the own one;
- help European and international projects of european origin, image etc.

The open society of Europe

- Direct participation of European citizens through the network of non-governmental organizations
- More resources for culture
- Accountable and reliable independence of Europe
- Moral and social state: development pertaining to the domaine of culture
- Founding a Network of European Identity Interpretation Centres (NEIIC)

Sorry, is criticizing allowed?

- Convinced European and a future European citizen.
- Europe cannot afford any likeness to the proverbial naked Emperor.
- I assume that citizens and aspirants are allowed to criticize the emperors in whatever shape history brings them.
- Shall we again be rebuked for I like to believe that I will be neither reproached or looked upon for that. Whom do I represent? Quite possibly some 50 million people in the European waiting room.

The Best in Heritage

Dubrovnik, 21-23 Sept. 2006



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Literature

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