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DIGITAL RE-DISCOVERY OF CULTURE GAME OF INQUIRY & THE PHYSICALITY OF SOUL

Abstract: Politics and Religion are both by nature sociological phenomena. That is to say, both bind communities together. And both divide communities from one another. Both emerge from and colour the Culture of the community. In this paper we focus on culture and religious issues in the South-Eastern part of Europe (SEE), paying particular attention to Bulgaria and Macedonia. The religions in question are, on the one hand Orthodox, and on the other Islam. Issues of conflict which we consider, are schism and its resolution or at least cohabitation, and coercion by the State to give a common identity to all its citizens based on common language or common religion.

A digital re-discovery of culture game of inquiry is chosen as the means by which to conduct an investigation into these issues. For this purpose we introduce the avatar, an American of Turkish background from Chicago who wishes to find out more about grandfather Habib Ismail who emigrated from Debre, Macedonia in 1923 CE. This kind of game of the digital re-discovery of culture often begins with a personal narrative called a Backstory. Being played out on the World-wide Web (WWW), the playing needs physical grounding, a physicality of soul. The game was designed and played, and Macedonia experienced as outcome. Following the search of the avatar we are led to discover positive surprises that bode well for religious issues on the Internet.

Keywords: crabwalking, game of inquiry, ontology, playing, religious culture, semantic web

1. Prologue

“Seek and ye shall find.” [27]. To seek is to search. To search is to inquire. To inquire is to google. We seek to explore the theme of “Religion on the Internet” with a particular focus on the “People of the Book” [95]: the Tanakh [110] of Jews, the New Testament [90] of Christians and the Qur’an [98] of Muslims. We further restrict ourselves to Christian and Muslim viewpoints, grounded around Ohrid, Macedonia. Our way of seeking is through the Digital re-Discovery of Culture (DrDC) game, an example of which is detailed in [33].

Religion and Community go hand in hand. To ground our findings we have chosen specific sociological and anthropological lenses through which we look on the World and we will discuss our *playful* method of sociological research later. Here we signal our use of *online resources as primary*. Trusting such resources is a matter of fallible faith. Individual people, places, events and so on, are ontologically tagged by

reference to Wikipedia articles in English (W en), Bulgarian (W en), Macedonian (W mk) and Turkish (W tk).

We include original images in the paper to illustrate key aspects. All images are copyright the authors, save for the Map of Rumelia (1801) (Figure 6) which is in the public domain.

Religion divides as well as unites. In our analysis of conflict, dialogue, and transformation, we choose to focus on the Republic of Macedonia [99], a name laden with rich deadly serious political [80] and cultural disagreement. “Greece and Macedonia have had tenuous and delicate relations since time immemorial ... Macedonians were viewed (even in the time of Aleksandar of Macedon) by the Greeks as barbarians from the north, and they were not allowed to take part in the Olympics in Athens.” [16]. Our view of Macedonia is deliberately centred in Ohrid [91], the great lake of which touches intimately on religious (Christian Orthodox, Muslim...) and linguistic communities (Bulgarian, Macedonian, Turkish, Greek, Albanian...). We choose to forego Greek and Albanian resources and to confine ourselves to the use of Bulgarian, Turkish and Macedonian World-Wide Web (WWW) resources, in addition to the usual English WWW resources. In developing our thoughts on religion in terms of this multi-cultural multi-linguistic framework, we hope to appeal to the non-religious such as Richard Dawkins [100], reputedly enthusiastic about the folly of religion. If successful in presenting our case to him then surely it will appeal to the religious also? Geertz’s [75] contextualizing of “Religion as Cultural System” [18], suggests that the focus “on the system of meanings embodied in the symbols which make up the religion proper” (p.125) will lead us to the cultural narratives to be “found” on the WWW pages of the “natives” of the “religious culture” in question. We will imagine, therefore, that the pages are discovered, disclosed as the result of “playing a game” on the WWW. We will call this the Digital re-Discovery of Culture (DrDC), a particular form of a **game of inquiry**. Omission of “religion” from DrDC is deliberate.

2. Game of Inquiry

The general concept of a **game of inquiry** is much like that used by Lyotard [32] to typify that Wittgensteinian language game [117] which lies at the heart of the “social bond”. Both “inquiry” and the French “enquête” [45] stem from the Latin “inquirere” to “search for among”. The “religious” words “inquisitor” and “inquisition” derives from the same source [51]. Such a game may be a personal one-player game from point of view of the action of self-identification: “who am I?” A multiplayer version of a game of inquiry is advocated by Keeler & Pfeiffer [29] in a proposal for collaborative scholarship over the internet.

Sometimes the best way to approach a serious problem is indirectly like the movement of a crab. Günther Grass's Crabwalk (Im Krebsgang) [21] is a beautiful practical literary example which we have adopted for the DrDC game of inquiry. Therein he deals with an aspect of suffering of Germans during World War II, the sinking of the “refugee” ship *Wilhelm Gustloff* [44].

Let us design a game of inquiry, the *Habib Game*, by which to crabwalk [76] into “Religion on the Internet.” By playing the game the reader is invited to participate in our sociological method. First, we set the scene with a **Backstory** [70], a personal narrative that directs the search.

- “I am an American of Turkish background living in Chicago. I know from family history that great grandfather Habib Ismail left his home in Debre, Macedonia about 1923. I often wonder if there are relatives of mine still living there.”



Figure 1 Debre, Macedonia

The Backstory is illuminated with key **Web pages** (3 of which seems to be a reasonable choice) augmented by **Images** (3). Let us imagine an image suggestive of the great grandfather’s home (Figure 1) in Debre (2005). This serves to **ground** the game in reality. Although unstated, one might infer that the speaker and the great grandfather are Muslim. One might also ask what kind of family history is involved. Is it a traditional oral history? Or is it a written one? It is natural for an American of a certain age to wonder if one has relatives in “the old world.” In addition to the religion (or lack of it), the gender of the speaker is not known from the Backstory. Finally, let us note that the speaker uses the Turkish name **Debre** for what is also known as Debar [78] in Macedonian. For convenience of recognition, we mark the text of the American of Turkish background with • .

A careful analysis of the Wikipedia article on Debar reveals dominant images and texts on Christianity. In the same article, percentage ethnic populations are given as Macedonians (20%), Albanians (58%) and Turks (13%). Therefore, in all likelihood at least 70% of the people of **Debre** are Muslim. We conclude very strong Christian bias in this particular Wikipedia article.

In summary, the Backstory with Web pages and images is a carefully constructed narrative (usually in the first person) in order to seem natural and not to reveal everything.

This DrDC game of inquiry, to be played by some Other, will assist the narrator in her/his **Goal** to find relatives in the area of Debre. The final element of the game is to provide some assistance in getting started. This might be a sort of **Keyword** or clue. For this game we propose “renaming.”

The purpose of this DrDC game is to encourage this Other in her/his search and in so doing to discover the sacred and the profane, and to find out for themselves the many stories of 1923, of which one story is the ending of the Ottoman Empire.

3. Key Concepts

The board of the DrDC game is the WWW, a virtual network (the Internet is the physical carrier network) overlaid with a Semantic Web [65]. The language we use is **formally** ontologically grounded in order to be encodable and accessible digitally. We choose key concepts in the spirit of Quine [53] written in terms of the Semantic Web Ontology Language (OWL) [66]. We limit ourselves to the Description Logic (DL) subset [6] which is decidable. The formality is essential for computer encoding, to record the moves of the DrDC game for re-play. For pragmatic reasons we ground the ontology within the 12 upper ontology categories of Sowa [52]. A brief account of the latter is accessible on the WWW [54]. At the time of writing, our emerging ontology is only available in English and Bulgarian.

In practice, localized ontology construction follows the playing of a DrDC game of inquiry. With experience, one chooses words to match the concepts in the ontology. Some of the most important concepts are not even given verbalization in the Backstory itself. One expects the missing to be constructible from the playing. This is the process of bootstrapping [72].

Playing. Our *first* key concept is “*playing*.” We agree with Huizinga [85] that “culture emerges from play” [23]. A similar argument is based on Geertz’s observation that “Physically men come and go, ... the masks they wear, the stage they occupy, the parts they play, ... the spectacle they mount remain, and comprise ... the substance of things, not least the self.” [19]. One seeks oneself through playing. One becomes through playing. From a formal ontological viewpoint, the *concept* of playing, denoted Playing is a kind of Process_IPO [52], where I denotes an Independent concept, i.e., a primitive concept which is given and not defined in terms of anything else. The P denotes a Physical concept, in contrast to one which is Abstract. Finally, the O denotes an Occurrent concept, a something which endures for a “short” period of time, relative to the “enduring” concepts called Continuant which do not change over the same time-span.

Play(ing) as method is also grounded in the “Rhetorics of the Imaginary” formulated by Sutton-Smith who paraphrases Geertz: “play and games are presented as ways of thinking about culture or as texts to be interpreted” [56].

In our design of the Habib Game we noted *en passant* the existence of encyclopaedic web sites such as Religion Online [17]. We checked for **bias**, in the formal sense of the term. Who is Fore? [4]. No pun (4, four, Fore) intended! The orientation is Protestant. Where to turn for the equivalent Catholic?, the Christian Orthodox? To counterbalance this pointedly specific Christian orientation we might choose to oppose Islam Online [26] and seek a third partner of the three: a comprehensive Jewish Site, say Judaism 101 [46].

But how can we arrange for a DrDC player to visit the sites of the (religious) culture of the Other? Culture and civilization emerge from playing (games) [23]. How can there be religion without language? Much of the public practice of religion is stylized remembering in words and performance that typifies physicality of soul. If playing (games) is so fundamentally rooted in our humanity then why not *re-generate* or *re-create* religion, and culture and even language by designing and playing games? We play conservatively and fall back to the weaker concept of *re-discovery*. Such playing coincides nicely with the de-schooling of society [84], [25]. The De-schooling of Illich is cited by [2] in justifying their architectural proposal for a Network of Learning in society: “In a society which emphasizes teaching, children and students — and adults—become passive and unable to think or act for themselves. Creative, active

individuals can only grow up in a society which emphasizes learning instead of teaching.” From Network to WWW is a matter of historical fact. Like the poor, schooling will always be with us. But we expect the DrDC game of inquiry to be a tool of de-schooling for our times.

Physicality of Soul. Our *second* key concept, “*physicality of soul*” is taken from a recent conference in Ohrid, Macedonia: “Culture arises pre-eminently out of playing ... In addition to “playing digital” through the WWW, the actual presence and practical outcome (the “physicality of soul”) is also necessary to breathe life into culture and civilization” [49].

Working backwards from PhysicalityOfSoul, we infer that it is related to the experiences of playing in general, of which dancing, singing, etc., are manifestations. The concept of Soul (in the English language) is problematical. In Greek (Psyche) it is both Butterfly and Soul. A broader synonym for PhysicalityOfSoul is the French word *habitus* [83]. We will, for the present, declare Soul to be a primitive concept of type Schema_IAC which characterizes an Object_IPC, the PhysicalityOfSoul.

Religion and culture are inseparable. Even the irreligious are culturally “religious” viz., the “basic axiom underlying... the “religious perspective” [which] is everywhere the same: he who would know must first believe” [18]. This belief is richer and more elemental than any associated with religions such as Islam [115], Christianity [74], or Judaism [86]. Is it not the case that belief acknowledges the authenticity of the belief of the Other, no matter how different or strange it might seem? Is this not a *raison d'être* of the newly adopted convention (on physicality of soul) by UNESCO? “The protection and promotion of the diversity of cultural expressions presuppose recognition of equal dignity of and respect for all cultures, including the cultures of persons belonging to minorities and indigenous peoples” [63]. An indicator of cultural promotion of the other will clearly be through the language of the other. We will use this pointedly in our study of Orthodoxy [92] in the Greater Ohrid Region, Macedonia.

Practical Sense. Our *third* key concept is “*practical sense*”, in the original French “*sens pratique*”. The sociological and philosophical underpinnings are directly due to Pierre Bourdieu [96], via works such as “The Logic of Practice” [7] and “Practical Reason” [8]. “The body believes in what it plays at: it weeps if it mimes grief. It does not represent what it performs, it does not memorize the past, it enacts the past, bringing it back to life” [7].

The individual’s PracticalSense seems to relate directly and symbiotically to the physicality of soul, the *habitus*. And the practical sense of Bourdieu complements nicely Geertz’s community view of common sense (as a Cultural System) [19], which might fruitfully be labeled as “community sense”.

To illustrate briefly the power of the “practical sense”, we note that the body learns the practical sense of 3-dimensional space, from infant in the womb to the first enduring upright stance. In Science there is still the unexplained mysterious force called “gravity” (wave or particle?). Gravity works, and for most people is a matter of belief (lacking the sense of the mathematical support), usually called “fact”. But the body **knows** about gravity from the “weightlessness in the womb”, the motions due to acceleration of the mother (in a gravitational field), and those inbuilt calcium stones on the little hairs in the 3-dimensional ear canals pre-designed in the genetic code. If such an obvious truth is very rarely known intellectually, but known universally bodily, how difficult is our task in the religious and cultural domain?

4. Thought Experiment, Imagination, Game Playing

“Having the feel for the game... is to master in a practical way the future of the game; it is to have a sense of the history of the game” [8].

What then is this DrDC Game of Inquiry that we propose? Let us apply practical sense? Let us continue our development of the **Habib Game** of inquiry? Lets us act.

Let us imagine that you are directed to a WWW page, which contains an annotated digiFoto revealing the 900 year old *çinar* (plane tree) in the *meydan* (public square) of Ohrid, Macedonia (Figure 2)? The primary use of Ottoman (Turkish) words is deliberate.

This classical Ottoman space, the meydan [93] between two Mosques in the heart of a small town on the shore of a great lake, is that town which is famed for its Slavic Christian community, the birthplace of Slavic Christianity. There is the lake, shared by Greece, Albania and Macedonia. There is that Ohrid, treasured by Bulgarians and by all those whose written language is Cyrillic [77]! There is that Ohrid, spared the recent (within last 15 years) Balkan atrocities. To be in Ohrid and to see the *çinar* in the *meydan* then you will know. Such seeing/being/recalling is an aspect of *physicality of soul*. To be a woman in the meydan unaccompanied by a man or a female companion, of certain stature, is noteworthy.



Figure 2 The *çinar* in the *meydan* of Ohrid.

Let us focus on the two young women with backpacks on the left in the image. Let us imagine that one of them says:

“I am a tourist, a Bulgarian woman, of Macedonian background. I wonder what Ohrid lake thinks about the mapping of the world around it? Digital or on paper – it does not matter. It is question of ownership. And no one owns the language, just as no-one owns the bread. We have a saying ‘no-one is bigger than the bread.’ (Никой не е по-голям от хляба).

Now, let us imagine that the other woman, her companion, is an American from Chicago. She is looking for information on great grandfather Habib Ismail:

- *“Great Grandfather Habib often visited Ohrid. The first time in 1852ce he was age 12. The last time in 1923ce he was 83. He saw this çinar in the meydan many times. He visited all the great Mosques. He liked especially the Conqueror Mehmed Mosque. I wonder where it is?”*

Now we know more about the narrator. She is a young woman, not dressed in “standard Muslim” fashion. There is no evidence that she is Muslim; only that she comes from a Muslim family stretching back at least 150 years.

Now let us imagine that we arrange for another WWW page where the great Ohrid lake speaks for herself:

“Who/Why are these human beings constantly wandering around, too busy dividing, keeping the division lines? Maybe they are just not willing to understand my language? It is language of remembering, of bridging as well. Living among them, and speaking my own language, I feel whole and complete, sharing several faces — those of Macedonians, those of Albanians, those of Greeks, those of strangers whom I have never known, ... and I am in agreement with my own colourful identity. I am. And my fish are dying.”

The purpose of this *playful* text of the speaking lake is to focus on the centrality of Ohrid lake as environmental support for those who need it and around which much of their culture is built. The “fish are dying” is a crabwalk directive, a deliberate provocation to find out why. We leave it to the caring reader to explore.

Let us now set up a particular religious context, one of conflict, one which takes place internally to the Christian Orthodox Community in Macedonia. Our purpose is to set up a modern-day conflict as a foreground scene of the play(ing) against which the current modern game of inquiry is to be acted out. One will notice that this scene has its historical roots in the breakup of the Ottoman Empire and hence joins today with the past of Grandfather Habib Ismail, so long ago.

5. Schism in Macedonia

A great schism of Christianity is taking place now in Macedonia. And it is taking place in Ohrid. It is a battle for identity, both national and spiritual. The Orthodox Church in Ohrid is the key that they will hold “forever” in search for the(ir) own answers. Macedonia is a “newborn state.” They seek the answer to the crucial question “Who are we?” Bulgaria itself broke away from the Greek Patriarchate and declared Church independence in 1870 CE [36]. Macedonia wants the same of the Serbian Patriarchate.

“The Macedonian Orthodox Church, Ohrid Archdiocese, is facing a new, possibly the greatest ever challenge for her and her pastoral activity in the Republic of Macedonia.” [34]

The Macedonian Orthodox Church [106], unrecognized by other Orthodox Churches, uses its website to give constant updates on the news that has an impact for its struggle to become autocephalous [69] from the Serbian Orthodox Church. On April 13, 2006 CE they charge the latter with holding the entire Orthodox Community of Macedonia in a “spiritual prison” and accuse them of “spiritual genocide” [35].

“In 1966 the relations with the Serbian Church got worse again... At the formal session in the Ohrid church of St. Clement, the Holy Synod proclaimed the Macedonian Orthodox Church as AUTOCEPHALOUS... on July 19, 1967, or

exactly on the second centennial after it had been banned by the Ottoman authorities.” [34]

On the other hand, there is still a certain presence of the Serbian Orthodox Church [106] to whom Archbishop John belongs:

“It has been 181 days since His Beatitude the Archbishop of Ohrid... Jovan (John) is imprisoned in the prison Idrizovo, near Skopje [24]... The Archbishop John... was accused by the schismatics for praying on his private property, for participating in the ordination of orthodox Bishops and for "writing" a theological text, which they found to be offensive on their behalf.” [40].

On March 3, 2006 “His Beatitude the Archbishop of Ohrid and Metropolitan of Skopje Jovan (John) VI” was released from prison [58].

It does not take much time to crabwalk into the Serbian Orthodox Church and to discover other more recent (March 2004) destruction of Churches in Kosovo and Metohija [50]. The recent independence (2006) of Montenegro from Serbia will exhibit corresponding tensions to establish a national Montenegrin Orthodox Church [88].



Figure 3 Synagogue, Catholic Church & Mosque in Centre of Sofia

6. Regions/States of Conflict

In the search for Muslim identity we could not avoid identity of the Other. We began our crabwalk in Macedonia: Debre and Ohrid. From Macedonia we now slide sideways into Bulgaria, first stop the capital Sofia [108].

We know grandfather Habib’s full name was Habib Ismail. Surely, to find the relatives, one needs at least this much? What is in a name? The keyword of the game is “renaming.” Let us explore this with the Renaming Campaigns of Pomaks [97] [67] (1972–74) and Ethnic Turks (1984–1985) within Bulgaria. The significance of the renaming is that “within the context of the Muslim religion, renaming is a dramatic act of sacrilege... Without his proper name, the Muslim cannot introduce himself to Allah after his death, since Allah calls people by their names and only then decides whether to take them to Paradise...” [118]. See also [13] and [62]. Renaming eventually provoked the extraordinary modern exodus of Bulgarian Turks in 1989. There is a scholarly account of these Bulgarian “Turks” in Turkey [119]. A Turkish view of recent demographics is available at [42].



Figure 4 K&M in Ohrid

It is hard to find out to what extent “The Renaming Campaign” was influenced by the Bulgarian Orthodox Church at the time. What is certain, is that a major part of what we now call Macedonia, was once considered part of “Greater Bulgaria” [1] and therefore under its Orthodox Church. Was there a Renaming Campaign in Macedonia?

We said that the Slavic Church is grounded in Ohrid. It was founded by the two brothers known as Kiril [102] and Methodius [103] abbreviated **K&M**, the former being the one after whom the Cyrillic alphabet is named. Even the juxtaposition of the different forms of the same name, Cyril and Кирил, points to another kind of renaming. In our seeking to understand Bulgarian Orthodoxy [73], we found that the “[The Official Web-Site of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church](#)” [31] might not be official at all. This raises a fundamental question for the neophyte. How can one “trust” the truth of the site one visits? Let us explore the world of Bulgarian Orthodoxy online.

The starting point is [Православие](#) [120]. (No English version was available at the time of writing). Picking [църквата](#) from the menu on the left one then chooses [По света](#) to arrive at the **Official** world of **Orthodoxy** – the Patriarchates; Choosing [В България](#) and then [Западно-и Средноевропейска](#) and finally [официална страница](#) one arrives at the “Bulgarian Diocese of Europe.” The opening page is garish with black background, “orange” coloured font, many Bulgarian “flaglets” and ill-placed images, all combining to present “poor taste”. It does not create a sense of the religious. However, braving this interface, one does find elegance, a sample of which we propose to be found at the [Church in The Hague, Netherlands](#) [10] presented in Dutch and Bulgarian.

We end this Bulgarian crabwalk with the discovery of a **schism** within the Bulgarian Orthodox Church. “The split... between those who support Patriarch Maksim and those who view him as illegitimate because he was selected in 1971 under Communist rule..., the new law recognizes Patriarch Maksim as the sole representative of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church. ...” [64].

Googling Patriarch+Maksim+Bulgaria leads to a surprise and some unresolved confusion. The surprise is the [picture of Patriarch Maksim](#) hosted on the Web site of [59] and on the same page, the information:

Oboriste 4, Sofia 1090, Bulgaria. Office: 359-2-98-75-611. Fax: 359-2-989-76-00. Web: <http://bulch.tripod.com/boc/mainpage.htm>

The latter brings us right back to “The Official Web-Site of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church” [31] last updated 1998.

We note that the two Schisms within Orthodoxy (Macedonia and Bulgaria) seem to be typical (and human). Within Islam, the most prominent Schism is between Sunni (majority) and Shia (minority), most of the latter adherents happening to reside in a small area centred on Irak and Iran.

Let us continue crabwalking. It is time to slip back into Macedonia, where the great Lake Ohrid lies.

The search for Habib Ismail’s relatives brings us back again to the greater Ohrid region. Instead of focus on Schism, we look at direct Christian/Muslim conflict. There are physical indications in the landscape, for example huge (stone/metal) crosses (Figure 5), newly repainted white minarets of Mosques, indicators of simmering problems between Christian and Muslim about to boil over.



Figure 5 Huge Prespa Cross in the Village of Kurbinovo, Opstina Resen

One reason given for the Huge crosses was the enthusiasm over the celebration of 2000 years of Christianity. Did this happen elsewhere in the world?

The Greater Ohrid Region, like much of Macedonia, is re-constructed from a (hi)story that belies its Ottoman background and even more recently its Communist background. Studied ignorance, Noam Chomsky uses the phrase *intentional ignorance* [47], often blinds one to these historical realities.

- “Great Grandfather Habib told us about joining the Young Turks [114] in Resen/Resne [39]. He recalls a young lad, Mustafa Kemal [89], who went to school in Manastir [71]. He turned out later to become the Father of his country, Turkey.”



Figure 6 Rumelia 1801 [101]

Manastır [116] was the **principal** town of the Ottoman region then known as Rumelia [101]. “It was not the Balkans but ‘Rumeli’ that the Ottomans ruled, the formerly ‘Roman’ lands that they had conquered from Constantinople” [36]. It is also worth noting linguistically that Bitola is 19th century Bulgarian for Obitel (Monastery). For the designer of the DrDC game of inquiry, our Turkish narrator, one fact stood out **starkly**: Atatürk was born in Salonika [104] [11], that very place in which **K&M**, the Apostles to the Slavs were born. Atatürk was plain Mustafa Kemal then.

“My father Ahmet Bey kept a sweetshop in the Cinarli district of Salonika, near the house of Mustafa Kemal. My best playmate there was a Greek girl called Tarasia who died in childhood.” Mukaddes Bayri in [11] p.158.

There also in Salonika, until the Holocaust of the Second World War, survived the great culture of Sephardic Jews [105], who settled there after the great expulsion from their homeland, around 1492 CE, in the emerging Spain [109].

7. Armchair Travellers & Bloggers

“It is not shameful not to know. It is shameful not to ask.” Turkish Proverb [9]
 We have spoken about the empowering of the Internet by which one chooses (freely?) to be independent of broadcasting. We have spoken about the Internet as if it contained nothing more than the presentation of information. Now it is time to speak finally about that other “democratic” phenomenon, the **web log** (abbreviated to **blog** and then upon reflection, sloganizing it to the ultimate democratic “**We Blog**”). **Googling blog+Ohrid** turns up many surprises. It was reported in August 2005 that there is one blog created every second [3]. At that time it was estimated that there were approximately 14.2 million blogs in existence. We did not count the seconds since then. The approach to understanding religion on the Internet can only ever really be the experience of a personal journey of one who is willing to ask questions, to inquire, and consequently, to experience that physicality of soul.

Blogs like Web pages often contain advertisements, sometimes extremely distasteful and distracting. “The Official Web-Site of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church” [31] is significant in this respect. For a religious site, it contains, in our opinion, inappropriate advertisements. But perhaps in personal blogs it is possible to add “appropriate” advertisements?

For example, one can imagine using the GoogleAdsense [20] to facilitate the possibility of linking through advertisement to sights/sites that **might** be relevant in the course of a DrDC game of inquiry. One does not have any control over what is advertised. However, the advertising is not random. From blog content “concepts” may be harvested. Imagine a blog on Ohrid. Mention of Ohrid is sufficient to suggest advertisements directly related to Ohrid, such as tourism, or property. Just as one has no control over advertisements in one's own community, it seems proper to consider allowing open doors into the WWW in this way. This is potentially like emergent (game)play [79] [48].

We can imagine bloggers begin to comment on the official Church web sites and in this manner begin a truly “democratic” discourse with the officially sacred. To test this idea we tried some simple experiments:

1. **Google blog+Orthodox:** St. Stephen’s Musings [60]. We discover the existence of OrthodoxWiki [41] and a long list of other Orthodox bloggers, from which we choose one because of its title “Notes from a Common-place Book” [28]. This first blog “St. Stephen’s Musings” proved to be extraordinarily fruitful. A second blog we chose from the Google results list was also of considerable interest “Conciliar Press blog – The Orthodox Way” with the stated goal of communicating historic Orthodox Christianity to today’s world [12].
2. Go to the Blogger Site [5] and search. We chose “Schism Macedonia” and picked [22].

What other possible methods (ways) of inquiry might we choose to aid us in our game? Why not search on the basis of language?

8. Multicultural/multilinguistic inquiry

What is in a name? Ohrid in Macedonia has also been known by the name Achrida and Lychnidios. Our Turkish narrator might search through Google using Ohrid site.tr or even site.mk and language Turkish. The following is a brief account of what she might have found when playing the game of inquiry.

- *“I began googling on November 14, 2005 looking for web pages with Turkish content originating from Macedonia only (“site:.mk” and language Turkish). Google returned 260. I tried again on August 9, 2006 and retrieved 711.”*

Here is her brief description of a few unique web sites containing Turkish (or multilingual) content on Macedonian Turks.

The Macedonian Turkish Democratic Party (TDP): an official web site which contains information on its by-laws, programs and activities [57].

NEKSAD: A web site prepared by the youth of Resen in the name of Niyazi Bey. Born in Resen, Niyazi Bey was an officer in the Ottoman Army and took part in the uprising against Ottoman Empire in the early 20th century as a “Young Turk.” The web site [38] is maintained by the Niyazi Bey Education, Culture, Arts and Sports Association of Resen and contains information about the Association and its activities.



Figure 7 Residence of the Young Turk Niyazi Bey in Resen

The Turkish Media Organization (TMO). Established in 2001 as a non-governmental organization, to improve the conditions of the Turkish media in Macedonia. The web site [61] offers several pages of news and information in Turkish on culture, history, literature, civic society, and the Turks in Macedonia. It is noteworthy that in addition to Turkish, both Macedonian and Albanian languages are catered for.

Enough is Enough: This is a grassroots civic action started by more than 100 NGOs [15] in Macedonia. Members of the initiative believe in taking a more active part in the civic decisions in order to improve the living conditions of the community and achieve a social and economic progress.

“Köprü” (The Bridge): The Organization for Culture, Art and Education: The bridge referred to here is the Old Bridge in Skopje that was built by the Ottomans when they ruled the land for five centuries. A journal bearing the same name “Köprü” (The Bridge) is published by the Organization [30].

- *“I also wanted to know how the Turkish peoples of the old Ottoman Empire, that is to say roughly in the time of my great grandfather, had fared and I wanted to learn more about the modern Turkish culture in the cities around Debre/Debar. I looked at Ohri/Ohrid, Resne/Resen, and Üsküp/Skopje, the capital of Macedonia.”*

Our Turkish narrator soon discovered that today the Turkish population is mainly concentrated in cities like Skopje [107], Gostivar [81], Tetovo [111] and Debar [78]. As noted earlier for Debre/Debar, together with the Albanian population, this suggests a percentage of Muslims in these places in excess of 60%.

As elsewhere in the Balkans, the Turkish people experienced a “sort of renaming.” In the 1950s, they constituted 16% of the overall population of Macedonia. The percentage went down to 6% in the 1970s due to people migrating to Turkey. The percentage of Turks living in Macedonia could have risen from 19% to 23% had this migration not taken place then. Currently, Turks constitute less than 4% of the population [43].

- *“When I went in 2005 to see the Conqueror Mehmed Mosque in Ohrid which my great grandfather Habib loved to visit first as a child and then as an adult, I was shocked. It was gone! After five centuries of history it was levelled down along with*

its İmaret (where the poor got fed) and the madrassa [87] (theological school) buildings in order to build the new St. Clement's Church in the early 2000s. The tourist guide showed me the foundations of the old mosque within the church and explained its history."



Figure 8 St. Clement's Orthodox Church, Ohrid

The Nation Building Process tends to be painful, everywhere. Countries usually prefer to identify their citizens either by their language or by their religions rather than by their civic or human duties and rights. This dichotomy divides the peoples of the land and creates tension among them. Once the identity of the nation is decided on the basis of language, ethnic background or religion, tolerance for the other (i.e., minorities) diminishes. A destructive process usually takes place against the heritage or doings of the other. The language and the history of the other gets denied, their schools, monuments or worship places levelled down, and so on. This is hardly an enriching experience for the dominant identity or culture. The destructive process usually takes its toll and leaves the nation much poorer in terms of language, culture, religion, customs, etc. The fact that this is not an enriching experience is barely acknowledged by the dominant identity. The recent publication (2006) of "Twice a Stranger" [11] is a salutary reminder of "how we got into the mess we are in now" in this part of the world that we call Europe. And perhaps we can also see why there is a real need for the recent UNESCO declaration on protection and promotion of the cultural expression of minorities [63]?

- *"Great grandfather Habib was a Torbesh Turk [112] of the old Turkic Pechenegs [94], many of whom stil live around Skopje, Macedonia. They have now lost their language (Turkish), yet kept their (Muslim) faith."*

These Macedonian Muslims identified themselves in **five** different ways in the last Macedonian census (2002): Macedonian Slavs, Albanians, Turks, Bosniaks, and Muslims. Further investigation by the Turkish narrator revealed the kinds of difficulties in the actual taking of the census in Macedonia [14].

The Turkish narrator in Chicago learned much about the background of the great grandfather, learned about the histories of emigration, about the horrors of the Balkan wars, about the “final great upheaval” that led to the “forced” migrations resulting from the Greco-Turkish war of 1919-22 and the foundation of the secular state called Turkey (1923). One final thing the Turkish narrator observed about the modern Balkan background: the state of Christianity (and indirectly Islam) in Macedonia in the 21st century.

Need we say any more? The player of the game of inquiry has all that they now need to pursue their own (re)search for ... What? Truth? Enlightenment? Understanding? What indeed is the end goal (telos) of such a game? We answer: physicality of soul, the life experienced for oneself after all this digitalized encounter.

9. Epilogue

It is time to summarize and draw conclusions:

- 1) No Surprises, 2) Surprises, 3) Ontology.

The Turkish narrator from Chicago found her great grandfather. She killed herself in the horror of despair, not for the past but for where she found herself. The practical sense of what she had done in the design of the game in 2005 and in the subsequent playing thereof, informed her of method by which to reveal the discovered. We regret her death. That is **one** ending of the DrDC game of inquiry.

We did emphasize the *playful* nature of this text at the outset. There is an alternative ending. She returned home to Chicago and began to design other DrDC games of inquiry, hoping to help others find their own truth.

The reader is invited to imagine their own alternative ending of the game.

Finally, there is at least one “answer” to the Habib Game that can now be revealed. Habib Ismail was named after his father Ismail. Ismail’s full name was Ismail Mustafa. Mustafa’s... *Sons were named after their fathers*. After the foundation of the Republic of Turkey in 1923, the Surname Law was enacted in 1934 [55]. The narrator needed to know this to trace her existing relatives. Did the reader know this? Is this not a “good” surprise?

The Republic of Cyprus provides the board for another version of the Habib Game [37].

The DrDC game of inquiry enlisted the volunteers of Wikipedia to provide so many possible paths of playing. This appears to us now to be more significant than raw inquiry engines like Google, precisely because of the personal nature of the often anonymous Wikipedia contributors. But such contributors in English are necessarily partisan. They must be counterbalanced.

No Surprises. Churches are conservative. It is their nature. They are “apostolic.” Believing in a truth, they must reach out to others. In our times this also translates to digital outreach. No surprise then to find Web pages of the Churches to the Faithful online. They can reach out to the “unconverted” only by accident, or the tuned-in ones. Most are unconcerned with the archaic ways of the old, and the about to be archaic ways of the new. They do not “do internet”! They do not connect! They can not reach out to the “faithful” unless they are digitally connected and few “real people” are. It is unlikely that most of the faithful will be connected in the short term and even then perhaps not so interested in connecting to their Church site. The DrDC game of inquiry is intended to be another way.

Surprises. The “**We Blog**” phenomenon offers real potential for the “apostolic.” That the phrase should become a sort of “battle cry” of the “ordinary” person in the digital world of

the Web was surprising. Googling “we blog” revealed about 1,400,000 hits (April 18, 2006). Here is a truly democratic Internet force. But like everything else it can be used for good or evil. We have only just begun to examine what it does in the context of culture and religion. We have ignored deliberately all the other (actual and potential) modes of “Internet communication” such as Webcasts (which cover also Web TV and Radio), Podcasts, Peer to Peer, and whatever else we might imagine.

Ontology. Apostle, Evangelist, Guru, Teacher... These are classical English religious words which point to fundamental concepts. One speaks of Guy Kawasaki [82] as an Apple Evangelist [68], the first Computer Evangelist. Vinton Cerf [113] is currently a Google Evangelist. There seems to be a lot of Evangelists in our Internet world. Googling evangelist gives 24 million hits. Let us add the concept Evangelist to the inquiry game ontology. The question that now arises is “What are the <insert own choice of natural language> religious words that have found their way into the ordinary language of Internauts?” Ontologizing the corresponding concepts will give a better feeling for the development of “Internet religion.” But more excitingly, it seems plausible that the Internauts may “discover religion” through the new computing terminology.

Narrator, Speaker, Player, Inquirer, Blogger... Every game of inquiry will have a player. In our own idea of the game as Digital re-Discovery of Culture we have insisted on the Backstory as the personal beginning of any such game. The Narrator of the Backstory is the Designer, the Creator, ... of the game. Ontologizing the concepts behind the simple game will lead to automatic Web services to record and track progress of games of inquiry on the Semantic Web. One might imagine how these games of inquiry will crabwalk to enrichment of “Internet religion.”

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