



Eurozine Review

Le Monde diplomatique (Berlin) unmasks Scotophobia; *Le Monde diplomatique* (Oslo) protests the EU's war on Hollywood; *Reset* reveals Pope Benedict XVI's tactics; *Dialogi* exposes press censorship in Slovenia; *Mittelweg 36* theorizes war and media; *Esprit* puts the judiciary on trial; *FA-art* ponders the question of what literature really is; and *dérive* watches privatization take hold of the city.

Le Monde diplomatique (Berlin) 8/2007



Even before Gordon Brown became prime minister, writes Neal Ascherson in the German edition of *Le Monde diplomatique*, London-based media had been trumpeting a rise of Scotophobia, a waning sense of Britishness, and the imminent emancipation of the Scots.

"All three propositions are misunderstandings: some of them wilful deceptions, others defects of political imagination."

However, even though it's unlikely that the 300-year union will be torn apart under the current leadership, argues Ascherson, "a truly ambitious, coldly clear-sighted leader — once in power — could bring about a situation in which the Union would unravel and it could be made to seem all the fault of the Scots."

He compares the situation in the UK to the dissolution of Czechoslovakia, managed by Czech politician Vaclav Klaus. In the present climate, "The resemblances between us and Czechoslovakia in the 1990s are striking", writes Ascherson. "From now on, the real strain will begin to bear down on the devolution settlement after its first easy decade. The stage will be set. And all it will then lack is an actor, a politician ruthless enough to divide in order to rule."

Chomsky in interview: Noam Chomsky talks about the tyranny of big corporations, the success of anarchism, the power of the media, and the brainwashing effects of PR: "The PR industry produces, in the true sense of the term, concept, acceptance, and submission. It controls people's minds and ideas. It is a major advance on totalitarian rule, as it is much more agreeable to be subjected to advertising than to torture."

Also to look out for: [Wendy Kristianasen](#) on what will happen in Morocco after the elections in September. Will the moderate Islamists manage to keep radicalism in check?

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Le Monde diplomatique (Oslo) 8/2007



EU cultural policy has for a long time been enlisted in the war against "American cultural imperialism" and Brussels has dubbed Hollywood the worst enemy of European cultural expression. In a harsh critique of EU film policy, Hans Erik Nss claims that European funding programmes such as MEDIA 2007, which will support European films with 755 million euro between 2007 and 2013 and which focuses on "European cultural identity and cultural heritage", are totally misguided.

The problem, writes Nss, is that the EU equates national and cultural borders. Now is the time to redefine the old concept of a pan-European cultural heritage and develop "a cosmopolitan cultural policy". The attempts to break the dominance of Hollywood cannot be based on an analysis that reduces complex phenomena to instances of one all-decisive struggle: the EU versus the US. Instead, the problem has to be interpreted as "the relation of one transnational network to other transnational networks -- economic as well as artistic".

Documenta 12: Art historian and critic Jan Bäcklund's long essay on documenta 12 must be one of the most interesting accounts of the Kassel exhibition published to date. Curators Roger M. Buergel and Ruth Noack obviously try to reconfigure the Eurocentric history of art, writes Bäcklund. But they do this not by shifting the emphasis from the West to the rest of the world and not by trying to achieve a more just representation of skin colour and sex. They do it by undermining "the idea of the Great Artist as a privileged actor, working directly under the Wings of History, focusing instead on the many -- more or less anonymous -- artists that have tried to find an artistic-visual language for the global age".

Bäcklund's conclusion: "A history for art that is not the history of art. Documenta 12 will not succeed in writing a new grand narrative for art, since we, the audience, who are the most important actors in the art world, do not want this to succeed. But the exhibition is still the best attempt and the boldest venture to achieve such a contra-factual and retroactive reconfiguration that has ever come from within the art world itself."

Also in this issue: Norwegian *diplo* publishes Daniel Mermet's interview with Noam Chomsky (see the German edition of *Le Monde diplomatique* in this Eurozine Review) under the title "Frivillig hjernevask" ("Voluntary brainwashing").

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Reset 102 (2007)



"If France, the 'eldest daughter of the Church', is crying, then Italy, the 'mother of all Catholic Churches', is certainly not laughing", writes Francesco Margiotta Broglio in a section in *Reset* on the declining number of Catholics in Europe.

The Catholic Church is relying on Pope Benedict XVI to restore its authority, writes sociologist Enzo Pace. "The path that Benedict XVI has chosen to develop could be described as follows: how to reinvest the capital of consensus, of the 'heart' — earned by Wojtyła's charisma — into rational adherence, of the 'mind', to the authority of the magisterium."

The two true enemies of the Catholic Church, in the eyes of Benedict XVI, are ethical relativism and religious individualism, observes Pace. France is probably the place where the fight between individualism and the Catholic Church is most evident.

"When Benedict XVI, looking out upon St Peter's Square, repeats in anguish that God no longer has a place in European public life, he is certainly not thinking of Italy, where not one day goes by (sometimes less than a day) without the words of the Pope, bishops, and priests evoking questions in the media and among politicians and opinion-makers about religion, ethics, technology, and so on. [...] France must appear to him as a bad model. Not only have Catholics become a minority there, but also the Catholic discourse is no longer central, no longer a relevant cultural reference point. It has ceased to function as an archive of collective symbolism."

Richard Rorty: *Reset* dedicates a section to [Richard Rorty](#), including an interview with [Charles Taylor](#) and an obituary by [Ramin Jahanbegloo](#).

The [full table of contents](#) of *Reset* (102) 2007.

Dialogi 7–8/2007



After fifteen years of a new democratic constitutional order, in which politicians did not intervene directly in the media or did so very subtly, it now suddenly appears that freedom of the press in Slovenia is no longer a given, writes *Dialogi* editor [Boris Vezjak](#). In an exposé of press censorship, *Dialogi* presents the topic from three sides: that of the journalists, or those who are supposedly censored; that of the editors, or

those who are assumed to do the censoring; and that of independent professional analysts, or those who follow and observe the events.

The accounts confirm that there has been a major shift of editorial policy in the majority of the media, but given the small size of the media space in Slovenia, dissatisfied journalists have nowhere to go and little chance of changing jobs. For this reason, it appears that self-censorship is common, and the professional stance of journalists is contradictory and unstable. The state has also taken on a role of dominance in a variety of fields: "employer, regulator, cultivator, and manager in the public sector, both producer and consumer of products (especially military), entrepreneur and investor".

From a historical point of view, such were not the intentions of those who more than a quarter of a century ago demanded changes in the former socialist countries, write the editors of *Dialogi*. "The enthusiasm for the new political values and a democratic society was tremendous, as were expectations, but when the public space was occupied by political parties instead of civil society institutions [...] it turned out that in the new practices of former socialist countries, the media failed to achieve greater autonomy."

Also to look out for: *Dialogi* theatre editor [Primoz Jesensko](#) on [nepotism in the Slovenian art scene](#): "What is it that so mysteriously holds the nation together? The tenacious and diverse incestuous connections within society appear to be a point of bizarre homogeneity and a constant. [...] What happens to art in an age when one's last name and social connections are more important than the quality of the artist's works?"

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Mittelweg 36 4/2007



"The act of violence is always an act of communication", writes Thorsten Loch in an issue of *Mittelweg 36* on media and war. Both sides in today's "asymmetric" conflicts make use of global channels of information: for the stronger side, legitimation of war through the media becomes paramount, while for the weaker side, the aim is to beat Western democracies at their own game via those very same channels.

The US and its allies have learned the lessons of Vietnam, when the media was instrumental in turning public opinion against the war. During the first Gulf War, coverage was heavily restricted; now, in Afghanistan and Iraq, observation of and influence over the media, both at home and abroad, is central to military strategy. The "embedded journalist", "information operations", and the "battle for the hearts and minds" are all products of this new paradigm.

Terrorists must also find means by which to take part in this process -- hence attacks during prime time that exploit the public appetite for images of terror and the media's willingness to cater to it. "Since victory cannot be achieved via classical military means, asymmetry means sidestepping military strength with a 'blow to the soft underbelly'. In Western democracies, this is the free press and its influence over processes of political decision making."

Multilingual propaganda: Among the interesting details thrown up by Jan Süsselbeck's review of scientific literature on media and war is the fact that the Nazi propaganda magazine *Signal*, published between 1940 and 1945, was published in 25 different languages. *Signal* also sold well in countries not under German occupation, including Sweden, Spain, and Switzerland, and one British journalist writing for the *Daily Mail* gushed that it had "some of the best colour printing I have ever seen". *Signal* was the forerunner of *Quick*, published in Germany until 1992, one of whose advertising slogans used to be "The world belongs to the *Quick* reader".

Also to look out for: Hans Joachim Lenger on *Predator* as a lesson in Lacanian psychoanalysis and metaphor for the unrepresentability of contemporary warfare.

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Esprit 8–9/2007



In a bulging summer issue, *Esprit* puts the judiciary on trial. A good half dozen authors appear as witnesses, covering a wide range of topics, from Biblical tribunals and Joan of Arc to Dostoevsky and Paul Ricœur.

François Ost goes back to the cradle of the objective "third party". In ancient Athens, Aeschylus and his plays came at a time of wholesale legal upheaval: this was the end of private vindication, the importance of deliberation was recognized, and impartial magistrates became the norm. Revisiting the origins of the "third-party function", Ost suggests, will allow us to understand why, in modern tragedy (Kafka!), the fact that this function cannot be maintained has become so important.

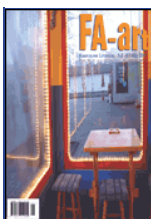
Making judiciary decisions based on nothing but law will always lead to claims of injustice, writes Fabien Bouly. This concern lies at the heart of Alfred Hitchcock's films, which all establish a close link to the legal system. Hitchcock's works dramatize those stages in trials that revolve around the antagonism between the desire for justice and the rationality of law.

That is why Hitchcock is closer to reality than Aeschylus, writes Jean-Noël Dumont in his introduction to the theme. You never leave a trial innocent. When society sentences a culprit, it also passes judgment on itself, and when transcendence is replaced by the unfathomable depths of the psyche, then we will all find ourselves culpable.

The good life: In a compelling article outside the theme section, philosopher Christian Descamps pleads for a revival of the ultimate rationale of social existence and politics: the good life. As today's transnational, de-territorialized economy does away with the frameworks installed as part of the welfare state, a fresh reading of the classics of political economy might help us to map out operational frameworks in tune with globalization.

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FA-art 1–2/2007



In the new issue of Polish literary journal FA-art, editor-in-chief Konrad C. Keder uses a recently published novel by Krzysztof Varga (*Nagrobek z Lastryko* [Terrazzo Tombstone]) to ponder the question of what literature really is. His answer: a symmetry between its subject and reality.

"Literature usually turns out to be something utterly abstract, comprising little more than written words even though these words might stand for the fear of death. Literature, if it should be anything at all, is rather a multiple and complex symmetry (to create and to discover; or, in a more narrow sense, to

write and to read). And this symmetry has to 'manifest itself' in the three-dimensional world, or at least in a world whose existence is generally acknowledged. The more complex the symmetry and the better it 'manifests itself' in the world, the better the literature."

Engaged literature? Agnieszka Necka is also occupied with the relation between literature and "the world" in noticing that the expression "engaged literature" has been reactivated in the Polish literary debate. However, the revival seems to have taken place under very special conditions. This new "engagement", Necka argues, exists on a metaliterary level rather than in the sphere of the represented world. The allegedly engaged Polish writers of the 1990s preferred to transform literary conventions feigning engagement instead of actually bearing testimony to reality.

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dérive 28 (2007)



Writing in *dérive*, [Henrik Lebuhn](#) outlines the features of New Public Management (NPM), the buzzword for local authorities that has been around since the mid-1980s in the US, UK, and Scandinavia. NPM is the "answer" to the crisis in financing the welfare state and means introducing models used in private enterprise into public authorities: internal competition, bidding for government contracts, global budgets, performance controls, and the commodification of services.

Now NPM has conquered Berlin, writes Lebuhn, where its impact is felt mostly in the property sector. The city's local authorities are penalized for the cost of maintaining empty properties and the only way to avoid budget cuts is to sell them off to the private sector. The most high profile of such properties is the *Kunstlerhaus Bethanien* in Kreuzberg, a former hospital turned squat turned studio complex and library. So far, citizens' initiatives have staved off the sale of the *Bethanien*, but how long can this last?

Deregulated cities: Contemporary urban "planning" is an oxymoron, writes Robert Temel. All too often, residential needs come second to the profit-based interests of a deregulated property sector. Deregulation did not come from outer space, writes Temel, but should be understood as the result of the self-disempowerment of politics. The "suburbanization" of the city space, for example, has little to do with residents' desire for suburbaninity, but with the fact that required living standards in the city are simply too costly. Politics has rendered itself helpless to intervene here.

Also to look out for: "The beauty we pursue arises from harmony among individuals, society, and nature to move the hearts of all, spanning nations and generations." This piece of New Age twaddle is the slogan of the Tokyu group, an umbrella organization of property, transport, and retail companies that is carrying out the "soft gentrification" of districts of Tokyo. If the Tokyu group has its way, writes Christian Teckert, the residents of its districts will be caught up in soap opera existences, living and breathing the corporate identity.

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