



Eurozine Review

L'Espill calls for the "Third Culture"; *Merkur* finds an answer to why poor countries are poor on a bumpy road; *Revolver Revue* seeks Europe in the Roman alphabet; *Le Monde diplomatique* (Berlin) prescribes a remedy for Serbia's phantom pain; *Mittelweg 36* sees Algeria through Bourdieu's lens; *Akadeemia* brings back Althusser; *NZ* discusses security politics in Russia; *Cogito* delves into esoteric thought; *Dialogi* laments the power of public libraries; *du* reveals the myths of St. Moritz.

L'Espill 22 (2006)



The contents of Catalan journal *L'Espill*, a new Eurozine partner, fulfil philosopher Fernández Buey's wish for a crossover between the sciences and the humanities — the project known as the "Third Culture". "Humanists need scientific culture to overcome reactionary attitudes based exclusively on literary tradition," writes Buey. "Nor is there any doubt that scientists need a humanist training [...] in order to overcome the old scientism that still tends to consider human progress as a simple derivative of scientific–technical progress."

From the side of science, biochemist Juli Peretó delivers a [rebuke](#) to the variety of creationism increasingly gaining a foothold in education in the US and worldwide: the theory of intelligent design: "If we admit that an impregnable wall closes natural phenomena to their scientific explanations, then we abandon the reign of reason forever and fall into the arms of blind faith or fanaticism."

From the side of culture, author Sergio Vila Sanjuán discusses the impact of globalization on quality publishing. While commentators including André Schiffrin have pointed out the negative impact of conglomerate publishing on quality, Sanjuán argues that the tendency has been corrected from within, with big companies increasingly playing the literary card. Nevertheless, he writes, the existence of independents remains a prerequisite for cultural publishing.

Also to look out for: information scientist Miquel Baraceló on why Al-Qaeda is a modern creature. Islamic anti-Westernism first appeared at the end of the nineteenth century with the foundation of pan-Islamism and the ideas of Jamal ad-Din al-Afghani, writes Baraceló. The contemporary diaspora, which has produced an Islamic discourse free of local reference that can be communicated globally, has been the unforeseeable continuation of this process.

The [full table of contents](#) of *L'Espill* 22(2006).

Merkur 7/2006



Even at times when everybody seems to be occupied with the religious, politics is, as Berlin-based philosopher Volker Gerhardt shows, on the side of secularization. And this is a good thing, he says. Though conceding that religion did have some "anti-totalitarian power of erosion" during the collapse of the socialist systems, this in no way bothered any critical minds. It was only after September 11 that intellectuals who had previously ignored religion suddenly grew interested in the subject.

Terrorism and the organized mass hysteria outside Western embassies, Gerhardt claims, are signs of a postcolonial aftershock of the ideologies of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Only a politics founded on individual human rights is able to face this. "The luck of secularization", he says, is that politics — as it evolved in Europe from Ancient Greece and Rome through the codification of human rights in the eighteenth century up to today — is a self-monitoring system based on the rule of law in a constitutional state.

Financial Times columnist Tim Harford shows that the lack of the rule of law is also "Why Poor Countries Are Poor". He finds an answer to his question "on a bumpy road leading to the world's worst library", which he discovered in Cameroon. In an absorbing article on the corruption there, the author of *The Undercover Economist: Exposing Why the Rich Are Rich, the Poor Are Poor — and Why You Can Never Buy a Decent Used Car!* shows how "kleptocracy at the top stunts the growth of poor countries. Having a thief for president doesn't necessarily spell doom; the president might prefer to boost the economy and then take a slice of a bigger pie. But in general, looting will be widespread either because the dictator is not confident of his tenure or because he needs to allow others to steal in order to keep their support."

Also to look out for: Hans-Martin Gauger on "Europe and its languages". The most important characteristic of good old Europe is that it is made up of many languages and within these languages many dialects. Although English is the dominant language, this might not be so bad, he claims. One could see English as a sort of "natural" Esperanto, a Germano-Romanic language-mix that has exceeded all other languages in its intake of Latin and Greek elements.

The full table of contents of Merkur 7/2006. The [full table of contents](#) of *Merkur* 7/2006.

Revolver Revue 63 (2006)



One of Eurozine's newest partners, Czech journal *Revolver Revue*, features translations of poems by one of Ukraine's rising stars, Andriy Bondar. His poem, "The Roman alphabet", is an ironic view of what it would mean to stop using Cyrillic script:

I've long had
the urge
to write at least one poem
using the roman alphabet

one of my friends thinks
that if we switch to the roman alphabet
our people will steal less
and immediately
our messy byzantinisms
our obnoxious sovietisms our endless ugro–finnisms
(sorry ugrics, sorry finns)
will disappear and something will snap in our heads
— and "voilà!" we are part of europe

Editor Marek Vajchr presents "Seven encounters with Robert Walser", a compilation of translations of the Swiss author's works as well as comments on it by major authors, including Hermann Hesse, Franz Kafka, Robert Musil, and Elias Canetti. The section commemorates the fiftieth anniversary of Walser's death and includes excerpts from Carl Seelig's book on Walser's years in an asylum. It concludes with an essay by Veronika Tuckerová on the current state of research on Walser.

The issue is filled with artwork and photography by Czech artists, including Jan Cumlivski's interpretation of Russian trash design in words and pictures: "Many things seem very familiar to me in Russia. You can find the products there that used to be available in our country: the Charkov electric shaver with rotating blades in the shape of a fan and above all the Zhiguli, Gaz, Vaz–Volga, Uaz, Paz, and Lada cars. They not only look familiar, but also have widely known social connotations." Colourful illustrations include Russian cigarette packaging, ticket stubs, and newspaper ads.

The [full table of contents](#) of *Revolver Revue* 63 (2006).

Le Monde diplomatique 7/2006



Serbia's "phantom pain" comes from the struggle to cope with present–day reality, write Jean–Arnault Dérens and Laurent Geslin. The vision of "Great Serbia" during the 1990s was forced to give way to the gradual loss of territory — the separation of Montenegro on 5 June 2006 being the latest but not the last drawing of boundaries.

Serbia being one of the few countries to have attained independence without having any ambition to do so, Serbians are distributed as minorities across various states. At the same time, the country is worried about the number of refugees that will flee to the country after the UN ends its minority protection for Serbians in Kosovo. All this could lead to a rise in rightwing nationalism in Serbia, say Dérens and Geslin.

To deal with the region's vicious cycle of border making, Serbia must account for its multiethnic character and border–crossing nationalities. A long–term perspective lies in the integration of the region into the EU; the fighting over national boundaries would lose its importance and give way to politics of

decentralization.

In Northern Ireland, says Cédric Gouverneur, the fighting between Protestants and Catholics, once political, has turned into an ethnically motivated "civil war" in which the enemy is defined not in terms of nationalism or loyalism but in terms of origin. As such, the conflict becomes almost unsolvable; democratic discussion is made impossible by the pure will "to defeat the other side". This will cast a shadow over next year's election.

A "new form of apartheid", based on religious identity, means that especially the younger generation have completely stopped communicating with "the other side" — the fear of violence results in an "excessive myth of community". Is there a way out? Yes, says Gouverneur, but only if the peace treaty of 1998 finally succeeds in turning enemies into political opponents.

Also: Amos Elon shows how the wrong political decisions (and the right decisions at the wrong time) in "Israel's small, ugly empire" over the past decades have turned a local conflict into a "global battle of cultures". The [full table of contents](#) of *Le Monde diplomatique* 7/2006.

Mittelweg 36 3/2006



"Pierre Bourdieu in Algeria" forms the centrepiece of the latest issue of *Mittelweg 36* and coincides with an exhibition of Bourdieu's Algerian photographs showing at the University of Lüneburg. Bourdieu served as an ethnologist in the French army in the Algerian War of Independence, during which time he took several thousand photographs of life in the country; these were recently made public after more than forty years

and are reproduced in part in *Mittelweg 36*.

Berthold Vogel writes about the impact of Bourdieu's Algerian period on his later thought. According to Vogel, Bourdieu's witnessing of the transition from a rural to an industrial society in Algeria led him to emphasize the significance of time in social life. "While agricultural societies live out of the past and contemporize the past via particular, cyclical, repeated forms of labour and ritualized social action, the modern economy lives solely with an eye to the future. The past is something to be overcome and destroyed, the present is interesting only as the starting point of the future."

This insight was to lay the foundation for Bourdieu's later analysis of the "precariat". Vogel writes: "There appears in the new vocabulary of social inequality of the precariat [...] the unavoidable necessity to make the best of a bad present. In Bourdieu's terms, a society dominated by the precariat would be a stagnating society that no longer had any confidence in a future for itself, that was too little aware of its own past and too much preoccupied by the present. 'Precarity is everywhere' doesn't mean, then, that sooner or later we will all be employed too precariously, but that a large part of society has fallen out of step, without having established for itself a new form of social rhythm."

Also to look out for: author and literary critic Thomas Medicus on the recent publishing trend in Germany (set by Wibke Bruhns's 2004 bestseller, *Meines Vaters Land*) for books written by daughters about their fathers' wartime involvement. "To write oneself free of one's father means to write oneself into one's father. This takes place in a hyper-communicative flow of intimate

public confessions that replace the communicative silence of the family [...] The reader becomes involved as a talking cure that sets free an automatic speech beyond the restraint of the symbolic."

And: Tom Lampert in [conversation](#) with Thomas Medicus and Heinz Bude on his semi-documentary book *One Life*, eight stories based on archive material from the Nazi period that defy clear-cut moral and formal distinction-making.

The [full table of contents](#) of *Mittelweg 36i* 3/2006.

Akadeemia 7/2006



Nationalist ideologies are on the rise in Europe. Time for Estonian journal *Akadeemia* to republish Luis Althusser's influential 1969 text "Ideology and state apparatuses". The big question for Althusser is "how a society that proclaims the ideas of freedom and equality still incessantly reproduces relations of domination?" Althusser succeeds in overcoming the vulgar-Marxian approach to ideology by integrating the cultural aspects of it, thereby offering a forceful and original theoretical provocation.

Again ideology: Andreas Ventsel takes a closer look at Estonian history under Stalin and the construction of the "people". He identifies an ideological U-turn in the withdrawal from orthodox materialistic ideology to boundless trust in Stalin. Referring to Laclau and Beneviste, he suggests that the subjectivity of the "Soviet people" created by Stalin was negated by Stalin's "I".

In embracing as many academic disciplines as possible, *Akadeemia* takes a closer look at technological change. Jürgen Preden writes that the future promises a change that will make computers a part of our environment. This means that these devices will not only respond to commands given by humans, but could perform tasks autonomously, based on their conception of the world and their goal function. "Smart dust" will enable autonomous sensing and communication in a cubic millimetre. Applications range from monitoring of citizens to military uses. Technological revolution or a big step towards a surveillance state?

Also to look out for: Richard A. L. Jones on the future of radical nanotechnology; Algo Rämmer about cultural contacts between Estonia and Latvia; Indrek Martinson on the moving story of fifty displaced Estonian researchers in Sweden; and Mare Koiva reflecting on the changes in Estonian museum culture.

The [full table of contents](#) of *Akadeemia* 7/2006.

Neprikosnovennij Zapas (NZ) 45 (1/2006)



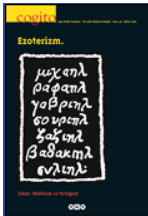
"What exactly are human rights activists defending when they insist on protecting the human rights of those charged with terrorism?" asks Aleksandr Verkhovsky (SOVA Centre, Moscow) in the lead article of *NZ*'s focus entitled "Between civil rights and the right to security". In response to Verkhovsky's essay, human rights activist Sergei Smirnov and political scientist Denis Dragunsky discuss the uneasy relationship between activists, society, and the state facing a security threat. The section is rounded off by Nikolay Mitrokhin's article on "Non-Islamic extremism in modern Russia".

In a focus on youth movements in modern Russia, *NZ* questions a group of leaders and active participants of youth movements — which have attracted growing interest from "adult" politics. Issues discussed include the level of political and civil activity among young people, the internal motivation of the movement members, and state policies on working with youth. To create an analytical framework for these questions, sociologist Elena Omelchenko writes on "Pop-cultural revolution or a perestroika remake? The modern context of the youth question."

Also of interest: Larisa Zakharova's article on Soviet fashion during the "Thaw" followed by a debate between costume historian Maria Bast and cultural scientist Olga Vainshtein.

The [full table of contents](#) of *NZ* 45 (1/2006).

Cogito 46 (2006)



The Turkish journal of philosophy focuses on a very special kind of thought: esotericism. Tracing the history of the term, Jean-Pierre Laurant describes how it became common in France in the beginning of the nineteenth century as a product of the "crisis of European consciousness" following the dramas of the French Revolution and the imperial wars. The concept, which was to signify a "new science" for new times, was used to denote a space of freedom for spiritual speculation outside the burden of dogma and the established rules of religious exegesis. But the term had already been coined in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, when it first appeared in the *Encyclopédie*, and was later used by a freemason author. In both cases, reference was made to the existence of a knowledge hidden to ordinary people and transmitted from master to student for an exclusive elite.

Thierry Zarcone, Turkologist, Sufi expert at CNRS, and co-editor of the issue, presents the crossover between European and Ottoman esotericism in the twentieth century through the figure of Rudolf von Sebottendorf. Sebottendorf, freemason and practitioner of Sufi meditation, astrology, numerology, and alchemy, moved from Germany to Turkey in 1901 and published two books on the subject. Back in Germany, he was involved in the Thule Society, a political organization that was a precursor of the NSDAP. He wrote about these experiences in 1933; the book was banned and Sebottendorf was arrested. In 1934 he returned to Turkey.

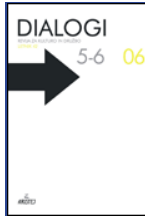
Xavier Accart looks at René Guénon, one of the principal figures of contemporary esotericism. Although he always refused to take in students and denied having the least bit of originality, the vibrancy of his work produced

what is now known as *l'école "traditionnelle"*.

Also to look out for: Antoine Faivre and Karen–Claire Voss on "Western Esotericism and the Science of Religions"; Idris Sah on "The Fakirs and Their Doctrines"; and Pier–Luigi Zocattelli on "Esoterism and New Age Today". And: a special focus on occultism and photography.

The [full table of contents](#) of *Cogito* 46 (2006).

Dialogi 5–6/2006



Emica Antoncic, *Dialogi's* editor–in–chief, is anxious about the latest developments in the Slovenian book market. It is one of Europe's smallest, despite a long tradition of state support for the production of books and public libraries setting last year's European lending record. Recently, literary and scientific publications have been published almost exclusively in non–profit publishing houses that depend heavily on state

support.

Libraries, which have enormous influence as buyers on the Slovenian market, increasingly replace these kinds of books by highly commercialized literature, writes Antoncic. As a result of the libraries' insistence that they continue to receive discounts from commercial publishers, the government has overruled the law on the uniform pricing of books, thus opening the way for the free market. "Public libraries have given way to the pressures of commercialization in the purchasing of books, and buy substantially more commercially produced titles than specialist ones in order to maximize lending rates."

Good and bad sides of democracy are discussed in a section on "Hate speech in Slovenia". Editor Boris Vezjak, coordinator of the discussion, looks at recent examples of public hate speech by Slovene politicians. The purpose of the focus is to clarify the blurred border between freedom of expression and hate speech. What can we do to preserve freedom of speech while at the same time allowing the prosecution of those who abuse this freedom for problematic purposes, to spread xenophobia, discrimination, and racism? In addition to Vezjak, sociologists Sreco Dragos and Vesna Leskosek, human rights ombudsman for Slovenia Matjaz Hanzek, and lawyer Ales Završnik offer their positions.

Also: *Dialogi* publishes the poems of all the finalists of Maribor's 6th Poetry tournament, part of the Maribor annual celebration of the World Book Day.

The [full table of contents](#) of *Dialogi* 5–6/2006.

du 6/2006



How did winter tourism start in legendary jet–set paradise St. Moritz? With a bet by a clever hotelier, writes Cordula Seger in *du's* focus on the famous village in the Swiss Alps. Five English travellers were invited to spend the winter of 1864 in the (now celebrated) Hotel Kulm for free. If the winter were really as eerie as they thought, the hotelier would pay for their trips.

This summer issue on a winter landscape uncovers further myths about the illustrious place at 1856 meters above sea level. Vincent Barras, professor of medical history in Lausanne, writes about the "benefits of mountain air" — advertised in many "wellness" catalogues as well as in "Heidi", which was filmed there — and warns of its dangers. "The parallels between the formation of the great tourist centres and the emergence of climate therapy, between the development of tourist concepts, hygiene, and preventive health measures, are remarkable."

However, St. Moritz lost its quality as a magic mountain for patients with lung diseases long ago. Famous guests such as Marcel Proust, Friedrich Nietzsche, Rainer Maria Rilke, Thomas Mann, and in the second half of the last century, the Persian Shah, Alfred Hitchcock, and German playboy Gunter Sachs came here to rest, write, or party.

The most touching article is by Thomas Hettche, who, like many of his fellow authors, chose to investigate St. Moritz from a safe distance, from the small village of Sils Maria. This was where Nietzsche spent eight productive summers before he broke down, writing, among other things, his Zarathustra. Beautiful photographs of isolated and ice-cold landscapes by Martin Wiesli and of the overlap between nature and tourist backdrop by Marc Latzel complement the issue.

Also to look out for: an interview with filmmaker Oskar Roehler, who filmed Houellebecq's *Atomised* and counts as one of the most important German film directors.

The [full table of contents](#) of *du* 6/2006.

This is just a selection of the more than 50 Eurozine partners published in 32 countries. For current tables of contents, self-descriptions, and subscription and contact details of all Eurozine partners, please see the [partner section](#).

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