

BOOKS THAT RESONATE WITH US | Editorial

This year, 2016, *Kritika & Kontext* celebrates its 20th anniversary. Although 20 years is a relatively short period, ours is one of the few journals in this environment founded since 1989 to have survived. That is no small feat in a world possessed by politics and continual crises, where culture has become a lesser commodity, limping along next to more buoyant mass and commercial entertainment.

How is the 20th birthday of *Kritika* reflected in the content of this edition? We approached several friends in Slovakia and abroad, and asked them to recommend an excerpt from an essay, novel, short story, play, interview or poem that has had a major impact on their thinking and still resonates with them today. We also asked for a brief commentary, and stressed that this should reflect their reason for the selection rather than offer an analysis of the text. The result is an extraordinary array of texts and personal revelations. What is more, we received a large amount of these contributions and so will gladly publish them in future issues of *Kritika & Kontext*.

As I flipped through back issues of *K & K* (available at www.kritika.sk), I realized that the thoughts and arguments stated in many texts are still relevant today – even ominously so. Perhaps this indicates that we made some good selections. More likely, it indicates that many problems and dilemmas of our world discussed in the past reflect an unchanging human nature meshed with noble thoughts but also prejudices, emotions and irrationality. It seems that the recent political events in the USA and Europe again require analysis that does not focus on day-to-day, often ominous, happenings, but puts the events in their wider historical *context*. We will try to do this again.

In those 20 years, I have worked with numerous language editors, graphic designers, and many translators. Unfortunately, some are no longer with us – language editors J. Heroldová-Znášiková and Karen Ballentine. Zuzana Szatmáry helped me to design the logo of *K & K*, and advised that the name chosen for a journal should be one that can be shouted in public. I am also thankful to Eva Piovarcsy, who has read carefully every issue since 1996. Also to Jana Lokšenincová, with whom we started the journal and who set a high standard for graphic design that was later taken up by Alexandra Gráčová, Ondrej Gajdoš and now Eva Kovačevićová-Fudala. There have been several fine assistants during these years: Jana Hanulová, Slavena Pavlásková, Jozef Tancer, Igor André and now Andrej Čierny.

Some of the issues were edited by external editors, my close friends Egon Gál and Béla Egyed. Also, the Board of Advisors represents a great group of people who provide *Kritika* with respect and prestige. Arranging each issue, I had them in mind so that I would not fall below the standard that their intellectual capacity represents. Finally, I want to thank my wife Darina, who provided invaluable suggestions, comment and corrections.

Kritika has lasted this long also thanks to its connection with people whom I have met annually during European editors' meetings and with whom we created, in 1998, an internet journal – www.eurozine.com. Klaus Nellen from the IWM, where I had a stipend for six months in 1995, invited me to one such conference in 1996, even before the first issue of *Kritika* was published. Finally, if the wonderful and selfless Czech-Dutch Vera Ebels-Dolanová from *The Fund for Central and Eastern European Project* had not sent me a letter with the words: "You applied too late, it is a great project and I am sending you 7,000 guilders to start publishing!", *Kritika* might never have existed.

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