

Na úvod po piatich rokoch / Editorial - Five Years Later

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Za to, že *Kritika & Kontext* vychádza piaty rok, patrí najväčšia vďaka Vám, milý čitateľ. Bez Vašej priazne a odozvy by bola všetka naša snaha márna. Pokúsím sa o malú reflexiu toho, kde *Kritika* dnes stojí, a ktorým smerom by sa mala uberať.

Čo tých päť rokov znamenalo pre mňa osobne. V prvom rade to bol a je príjemný pocit z toho, koľkých múdrych a milých ľudí som na tejto ceste mal česť stretnúť, koľkých skvelých autorov sme mali možnosť prezentovať a koľkých zaujímavých prispievateľov z rôznych kútov sveta sme dokázali osloviť.

Keď som niekedy v roku 1995 po návrate z Kanady po prvýkrát formuloval koncepciu *Kritiky* u Zuzany Szatmáry, ešte som netušil, čo všetko si vyžaduje tvorba takého časopisu. Dnes mi je jasné, že bez nevšednej osobnej angažovanosti Very Ebels-Dolanovej z *Fund for Central and East European Book Projects* (CEEBP) sídliaceho v Amsterdame, by projekt *K&K* asi zostal v rade zaujímavých, no nerealizovateľných projektov. Pamätám sa na telefonát s Verou, na jej úprimné nadšenie z celej idey a ako bola ochotná podporiť prvé číslo už po uzávierke grantov CEEBP. Od začiatku až podnes táto nadácia finančne podporuje *Kritiku* a dodáva jej punc ocenenia, ktorý nie je ľahostajný ani iným sponzorom. Výsledkom dlhých rozhovorov s touto mimoriadnou osobnosťou o vydávaní, distribúcii a obsahu časopisov na Slovensku bolo založenie distribučnej spoločnosti *Index*. Bola to opäť Vera Ebels-Dolanova, narodená v Československu, ktorá presvedčila holandské ministerstvo zahraničia, aby podporilo túto činnosť nezávislej knižnej a periodickej kultúry na Slovensku.

Keďže som v roku 1996 o vydavateľskej branži nič nevedel, ďalšiou úlohou bolo nájsť niekoho, kto by dokázal dostať myšlienky a plány do

That *Kritika & Kontext* has endured for five years owes a great deal to our loyal readers. Without your interest and attention, all our efforts would have been in vain. Let me briefly reflect on where *Kritika* has been and which direction we believe it might creatively develop in the future.

From my perspective as Editor-in-Chief, the past five years have been intensely rewarding. Above all, I would have to say, that I have derived the greatest personal gratification from being in the company of so many learned and generous-spirited individuals, from the great books that we have had the privilege to present to our readers, and from the many superb contributions that we have received from all over the world.

When, upon my return from Canada in 1995, I first formulated my ideas about starting this journal to Zuzana Szatmáry, I had little clue what publishing a journal would require. Now, I can say from experience that it requires much skill and effort, and a no small amount of stamina and perseverance. Without the generous help and personal engagement of Czech-born Vera Ebels-Dolanova of the *Fund for Central and East European Book Projects* (CEEBP), the *Kritika* enterprise would have been just one more in a long series of potentially interesting proposals that never got off the ground. I will never forget that seminal telephone conversation with Vera, in which she enthusiastically endorsed the concept of *K&K* and offered to provide start-up funds from CEEBP. Until today, the support of this foundation has been indispensable to *Kritika*, not only financially but also reputationally – as their support has directly contributed to our success with other foundations. One result of the many long conversations I had with Vera about the challenges of publishing in Slovakia, the pre-

podoby, aká *Kritiku* už päť rokov definuje. Jana Lokšenincová je nielen skvelá grafička, ale je aj motorom celej produkcie. Keďže *Kritika* je aj jej dieťa, postupne držali často celý proces nad vodou jej názory a pripomienky, keď sa nad nami schyľovali mraky finančné či invenčné.

Chcel by som tiež spomenúť osoby, ktoré pomáhajú pri produkcii *Kritiky*. Eva Piovarcsyová a Jozefa Heroldová-Znášiková sú ako jazykové redaktorky vlastne prvé kritičky každého čísla a od začiatku sa starajú o to, aby niekedy zložité texty boli prezentované v zrozumiteľnej slovenčine. Kvalitu angličtiny sleduje Karen Ballentine z New Yorku, pôvodcom z Kanady, ktorú poznám z čias svojho štúdia na Carletonskej univerzite v Ottave, kde sme koncom osemdesiatych rokov spolu študovali vývoj a pád komunistického systému. Od roku 1997, keď strávila rok na Slovensku v rámci výskumu na svoju dizertačnú prácu, Karen nielen redigovala preklady do angličtiny, ale aj prispievala článkami a štúdiami do *Kritiky*. Bola aj spoluautorkou niekoľkých úvodníkov, keďže ako skvelá redaktorka a analytická myseľ často vylepšila a takmer vždy rozšírila môj úvodník. Spolupráca s Karen vyvrátila všeobecne akceptované presvedčenie, že v preklade sa všetko stratí; niekedy pri redigovaní sa pôvodný text ešte vycibří. Nakoniec by som rád poďakoval svojej manželke Darinke, ktorá mi od začiatku pri tvorbe každého čísla pomáha a radí.

Na konci každého čísla *K&K* ste si iste všimli časť *Artes Liberales*, ktorá vychádza už druhý rok ako príloha združenia vzdelávacích inštitúcií v strednej a východnej Európe. Ich snahou je presadzovať v našom regióne liberálne vzdelávanie, v ktorom sa kladie dôraz na interdisciplinaritu, intelektuálny rozlet, otvorenosť a dialóg medzi študentom a učiteľom. Ako píše Nikolaj Kuposov vo svojej eseji, ktorú predniesol na Konferencii *Artes Liberales* vo Varšave, liberálne vzdelávanie je okrem iného „štúdiom histórie a filozofie ako spôsob kultivovania kritického myslenia a občianskych hodnôt“. Teda výučba, ktorá vychováva nielen odborníkov, ale aj občanov, a to nie je málo.

dicament faced by our specialized journals, and the barriers to reaching an audience was the creation of distribution network *Index Slovakia*. Again, it was Vera, who helped to convince the Dutch Foreign Ministry of the need and value of supporting the publication of independent books and journals in Slovakia.

As I was a novice to the publishing business, not to mention the technical intricacies of editing and producing a journal, the next step for me was to find someone who could help give concepts and ideas a graphic and aesthetic shape that would appeal to our – then still inchoate – readership, while doing justice to the confidence our funders had placed in us. Jana Lokšenincová is not only a superb graphic designer but has proven, time and again, to be the very master of the complex, often incomprehensible, logistics of production. The existence, and endurance, of what we now recognize as *Kritika & Kontext* is indebted to her tireless efforts and creativity. More than once, her wise advice and inexhaustible energy provided the needed stimulus to keep us going in the face of financial crises, low subscription rates, and even my own flagging enthusiasm.

I would like also to mention a few other individuals whose efforts have proven indispensable to the continued production of *Kritika*. Eva Piovarcsyová and Jozefa Heroldová-Znášiková, the editors of our Slovak-language articles, have helped to ensure that the quality of submissions consistently has exceeded, and we hope, improved upon the quality of Slovak writing and intellectual discourse. Our English-language editor is Karen Ballentine of New York, a Canadian whom I have known since my years in Ottawa, where we both studied the intricacies of the Communist system at Carleton University. Since 1997, when she made Bratislava home-base for her dissertation field research, Karen has not only been the primary editor of articles translated from Slovak to English but also has contributed articles of her own and co-authored with me the introductions

Do tohto medzinárodného zoskupenia vzdelávacích inštitúcií patrí aj *Výberový vzdelávací spolok* (VVS), ktorý spoluvydáva *K&K*. Študenti a spolupracovníci VVS pravidelne píšú do *Kritiky* a aj v tomto jubilejnom čísle nájdete podnetné príspevky študentov Dušany Rybárovej, Kamily Štullerovej či Juraja Hvoreckého ako aj Františka Novosáda, Miroslava Marcelliho a Martina Kanovského, ktorí s VVS úzko pedagogicky a poradensky spolupracovali alebo spolupracujú.

Keď už som spomenul CEEBP z Holandska, nemôžem opomenúť *Christian A. Johnson Foundation* z New Yorku, ktorá cez svoju nadáciu *Educational Leadership Program* pomohla založiť *Artes Liberales* a podporuje *Kritiku & Kontext* a Výberový vzdelávací spolok. Bohužiaľ toto nemôžem napísať o Ministerstve kultúry SR, ktoré *K&K* nepovažuje za hodnú svojej podpory...

Číslo, ktoré držíte v ruke, je výnimočné svojou formou a obsahom. Oslovili sme okruh svojich prispievateľov listom (str. 8) a vyzvali ich, aby sa zamysleli nad našou spoločnosťou, stavom nášho vzdelávania, nad tým, ako a či je potrebné nadviazať dialóg medzi generáciami a ako by *Kritika* mohla osloviť väčší okruh čitateľov. Príspevky sú vskutku rôznorodé a budú pre Vás, dúfame, podnetné. Keďže sme presvedčení, že nepatríte do kategórie čitateľa-pozerateľa (ako túto kategóriu výstižne zadefinoval vo svojom príspevku František Novosád), veríme, že na niektoré z našich článkov budete reagovať a spolu s nami dáte novú tvár *Kritike* na začiatku tretieho tisícročia.

Kritika chce byť od začiatku fórom pre diskusiu nielen v rámci Slovenska, no oslovuje aj medzinárodné publikum, a preto vychádza v slovensko-anglickej mutácii. Snaží sa o dialóg medzi Západom a tým, čo sa predtým nazývalo Východ. Hoci železná opona padla, civilizačná vzdialenosť so všetkými jej atribútmi sa len pomaly znižuje. Dôvodov je niekoľko, jeden popisuje Conor Cruise O'Brien v eseji z roku 1994 o stave sveta na konci milénia. Vybral som tento článok

to several issues. Time and again, I found that her editorial skill clarified and otherwise improved my thinking about the subject at hand, very often to the point where I had to revisit and revise my Slovak original to bring it in line with the English version that together we had produced. Contrary to popular belief, not everything gets lost in translation; sometimes, there is much to be gained. Finally, I would like to thank my wife, Darina. From the beginning, and with every issue of *Kritika*, she has been a patient counsel and thoughtful advisor on both the substantive and technical aspects of the journal.

For the past two years, those of our readers who have read through to the last few pages of *Kritika* might have noticed a supplement devoted to *Artes Liberales* – an association of educational institutions in central and eastern Europe. The aim of this association is to help promote throughout Central and Eastern Europe the development of liberal education – that is, an education that fosters critical thinking and intellectual curiosity through broad interdisciplinary exchange and sustained dialogue among mentors and students. As Nikolai Koposov stressed at a recent *Artes Liberales* meeting, held in Warsaw in October 2000, liberal education is, among other things, an approach to “studying history or philosophy [as] a way of cultivating critical thinking and civic values“. A liberal education is not about promoting narrow technical competence but about education in the broadest sense, so that young people are exposed to the many ways of thinking as well as to the broader value of critical thinking for good citizenship.

The Society for Higher Learning (SHL), which has been a co-publisher of *Kritika & Kontext* since its founding, belongs to this group of liberal arts institutions. And this collaboration is not a mere formality; it forms the very substance of intellectual and professional exchange. Both the students and the associates of SHL are regular contributors to *K&K*; indeed, in this anniversary issue, one will find stimulating contributions by

ako jeden z kľúčových príspevkov do diskusie o našej, teda európskej, budúcnosti. O'Brien lamentuje a zároveň varuje: „Rozvinutý svet možno prirovnať... k uzavretému a stráženému palácu v meste postihnutom morom. Útok na palác z mesta postihnutého morom sa má iba začať, ale my už pociťujeme jeho bezprostredné nebezpečenstvo.“ Dôsledky sú desivé a O'Brien pokračuje: „Tradičná etika si bude vyžadovať stále väčšie dávky svojej tradičnej neodmysliteľnej protilátky - značného pokrytectva a kultivovanej ľahostajnosti s istým penzom dobročinnosti.“

Keďže *Kritika* aj naďalej chce zostať „časopisom kritického myslenia“, nesmie na jej stránkach chýbať otvorená diskusia na túto tému. V našich končinách jednoducho absentuje zmysluplný dialóg o tejto stránke krízy Západu medzi tými, ktorí sa úprimne snažia o integráciu do Európskej únie. Doteraz na dôsledky tohto stavu reagovali, bez patričnej odozvy, rôzne typy xenofóbov a nedemokratov. Nesnažia sa o dialóg, ale často sú motivovaní iba svojím protizápadným postojom. Nemôžeme si dovoliť prenechať túto diskusiu im - v budúcnosti by sme mohli za to draho platiť. Našou snahou nemôže byť dostať sa na vlak blahobytu a prosperity a zostať ľahostajní voči ľudskej mizérii, ktorá nás obklopuje. Pevne dúfam, že O'Brienov článok bude rovnako podnetný a otvorí diskusiu ako pri článku Fareeda Zakariu o ne-liberálnych demokraciách (*K&K 1/98*).

V tomto tematickom okruhu sa bude diskutovať na stretnutí vydavateľov a šéfredaktorov z celej Európy vo Viedni a Bratislave 9. - 12. novembra 2000. Hlavná téma diskusie, ktorá trápi vydavateľov malých kultúrnych časopisov od Lisabonu cez Tiranu, Viedeň až po Moskvu, je: *Politika a kultúra v Európe: nove vízie, nové dezilúzie*. *Kritika & Kontext* je spoluorganizátorom tejto pre Bratislavu výnimočnej udalosti a najzaujímavejšie príspevky z tohto stretnutia Vám ponúkame v nasledujúcich číslach. •

SHL students, Dušana Rybárová, Kamila Štullerová, and Juraj Hvorecký, as well as associates, František Novosád, Miroslav Marcelli and Martin Kanovský, all of whom have worked as instructors and academic advisors and have made their own invaluable contribution to SHL's educational mission.

I would also like to thank the *Christian A. Johnson Endeavor Foundation* of New York. Through its *Educational Leadership Program*, it helped us to establish *Artes Liberales* and has provided continuing support for both *Kritika & Kontext* and *The Society for Higher Learning*. Unfortunately, I could not say the same of the Slovak Ministry of Culture - for whom, it seems, K&K is not worthy of support.

This issue is unique in both form and content. To mark our fifth anniversary, we decided to invite contributors to reflect upon the general state of society, the condition of higher education, and, more specifically, the challenge of ensuring the reproduction and advancement of knowledge among the younger generation. Admittedly, there is an aspect to this thematic approach that is self-serving, and deliberately so; for as we take stock of how this journal has developed, we are also looking to ensure its future relevance and vitality. And with any publication, this means discovering how best to maintain and enlarge our readership.

The resulting responses reflect a wide array of ideas and views, unified only by their authors' shared commitment to intellectual advancement and their concern for the fate of learning in society today. Given *Kritika's* abiding commitment to critical thinking, we would be disappointed if our readers were no more than "reader-voyeurs" - as conceptualized by František Novosád in his contribution to this issue. Far from being a passive exercise, critical reading implies action, advocacy, and engagement in on-going deliberation with others. It is, therefore, our hope that these thoughtful reflections will stimulate you, the

thoughtful reader, to formulate your own ideas and views on these issues. And, as has been *Kritika's* practice over the last five years, we invite readers to share their reactions and comments with us and, in so doing, to assist us to set the tone of *Kritika* for the years ahead.

From the moment of this journal's inception, we have aspired to make *Kritika* a forum for informed and ongoing discussion, not only within Slovakia proper but also beyond. For this reason we publish in English as well as Slovak. Our efforts to transcend parochial boundaries have been two-fold: first, to introduce readers in our region of Europe to the many seminal works that have shaped intellectual understanding elsewhere and that were inaccessible to us for so long; and, second, to find our place in the international community of thinkers by encouraging dialogue between those two entities that were formerly called the "west" and the "east". Although it has been a decade since the iron curtain fell, the civilization gap that this curtain perpetuated for five decades has been slower to disappear.

The reasons for the persistence of this gap are several. One possible explanation was offered by Conor Cruise O'Brien in an essay he wrote in 1994 on the state of the world on the eve of the Millennium. In place of the forcibly imposed divisions of ideological and military superpower rivalry, he asserts that the problem today rests with the self-imposed xenophobia of the developed world. As he put it, "...the advanced world may well be like, and feel like, a closed and guarded palace in a city gripped by the plague. The assault on the palace, out of the plague-gripped city, has yet to begin, but we can already sense its imminence." The consequences are predictably dismal – both for those ensconced in the safety of the palace and the less lucky outsiders who seek refuge within. O'Brien adds that, in such a situation, "... [Western] traditional ethics will require larger and larger doses of its traditional built-in antidotes - the forces of hypocrisy and cultivated inattention combined with a certain minimum of alms".

Our readers may take it as a given that we at *Kritika* seek to preserve our commitment to both "critical thinking" and international exchange. But if we are to do so, a discussion of these important issues must not be absent on these pages. In our part of the world, with its understandable preoccupation with European integration, a constructive dialogue on the problematic features of the Western world has been entirely absent. So far, we have left such discussion about the shortcomings of the "advanced world" to various types of xenophobes and non-democrats. But they encourage neither dialogue nor rapprochement. Instead, they are strictly motivated by their anti-Western position. We cannot afford to allow them to monopolize this discussion; and continued indifference could cost us all dearly. Our aim cannot simply be to join the world of prosperity and well-being and at the same time remain blind to the human misery that surrounds us. I strongly believe and hope that O'Brien's article will be equally inspiring and will initiate discussion as was the case with Fareed Zakaria's article on illiberal democracies reprinted previously in *Kritika* (1/98).

Not surprisingly, in a similar vein the debate will be held at the meeting of publishers and editors from all over the Europe that will take part in Vienna and Bratislava on November 9-12, 2000. The main topic of the discussion concerning the publishers of cultural journals coming from Lisbon, Paris, Tirana, Vienna or Moscow is: *Politics and Culture in Europe: New Visions, New divisions*. *Kritika & Kontext* co-organizes this extraordinary gathering in Vienna and Bratislava and will publish the most insightful contributions in the upcoming issues. •