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Abstracts

Jean d'Ormesson
Fifty is a Good Age for a Journal

This is a transcription of Jean d'Ormesson's speech at UNESCO at the 50th anniversary celebrations of *Diogenes* in 2003. He describes the journal's origins, inspirations and editors, and the unique place it occupies in the promotion of international, interdisciplinary scholarship.

Denis Sinor
Rediscovering Central Asia

The term 'Central Asia' has been in use for 150 years, yet it is only since the collapse of the Soviet Union and, more recently, growth in awareness and concern about international terrorism, particularly in the USA, that the countries of Central Asia have become significant players on the international political stage. Denis Sinor describes the historical, cultural and linguistic backgrounds of the newly independent republics of the area: Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan and Kirgizstan.

Marlène Laruelle
The Discipline of Culturology: A New 'Ready-Made Thought' for Russia

'Culturology' is an integral, often compulsory, part of Russian university courses; the discipline has largely replaced chairs in Marxist-Leninism and dialectical materialism, and bookshops are full of texts on the subject. This article is based on analysis of more than ten university textbooks recommended to first-year students. Marlène Laruelle examines why culturology has become so important, the place claimed for it within the human sciences, and what it means for changing Russian ideas of identity and nation.

Remo Bodei
On the Logics of Delusion

Delusion is an exceptional test case for the principal categories of common sense and philosophical thought such as 'reason', 'truth' and 'reality'. Via an engagement with

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the legacy of Freud and the most remarkable results of 20th-century psychiatry, the author's aim is to analyse the paradoxical forms of delusion and to shed light on the logics that underlie and orient its specific modalities of temporalization, conceptualization and argumentation.

Michael Löwy
Paper Chains: Bureaucratic Despotism and Voluntary Servitude in Franz Kafka's *The Castle*

This article is an attempt at a 'political' reading of Kafka's *The Castle*, as an ironical, radical critique – from a libertarian perspective – of the despotism of the modern bureaucratic apparatus. This reading is not self-evident. Like all Kafka's unfinished novels, *Das Schloss* is a strange and fascinating literary document that creates perplexity and inspires various contradictory and/or dissonant interpretations. And like *The Trial* it has been the object of very many religious and theological readings. Michael Löwy concludes by arguing that commentators have neglected the character of Amalia, one of the most impressive female figures in Kafka's work, who is at the heart of the libertarian individualism of the Prague writer.

Giorgio Levi Della Vida
***Remembered Ghosts* (Extracts), introduced by Luca Maria Scarantino**

Giorgio Levi Della Vida (1886–1967) was not only an eminent Islamologist, he was also a man with solid roots in his own time. He taught in Naples and Rome, then for the ten years 1939–1948 at the University of Pennsylvania. He was one of the few university teachers who, when the oath of loyalty to the Italian fascist regime was introduced in October 1931, opted not to accept that act of submission. His memoirs, *Fantasmi ritrovati*, were published in 1966; the book, now out of print, conjures up a *tableau vivant* of half a century of intellectual encounters in Italy and Europe between the wars. Among the portraits he paints there is the astounding story of those crucial days in June 1924 when the fascist government became a full-blown regime. This article presents extended extracts from that story.

Alfonso Berardinelli
Do Intellectuals Still Exist? The Case of Italy

It has never been easy to understand what intellectuals are, whether they still exist, or whether they are vanishing into a huge 'cultural middle class' where high culture and mass culture meld into one another. With particular reference to Italy, Alfonso Berardinelli looks back at the undisputed intellectuals of the past, suggesting that they were their own critics and most determined detractors at the same time, yet full of confidence in their capacity to lay down laws for organizing and developing society. In contrast, today's intellectuals seem to embrace anonymity, and in a context defined as postmodern, they have given up being an elite that judges, whose duty is not only to produce knowledge but also to propose values and social models.

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