

News from Vilnius. Vytautas from web magazine [Balsas](#) informed me that they published a Lithuanian [translation](#) remix of my Blogging, the Nihilist Impulse essay.

Also, in the full color magazine of the Italian daily La Repubblica of February 17 2007 there is a short piece that I wrote which summarizes my blogging theory. Here is the original piece in English that I compiled together with Barbara Casavecchia, an art and architecture editor. Thanks, Barbara, for the great collaboration!

Ni Microsoft, Ni Google

There is an ancient anarchist slogan, ni dieu, ni maitre. In fact it was the name of a magazine founded in 1880 by Auguste Blanqui. How could we translate this saying into our 21st century? We in the (former) West no longer believe in God nor have to subscribe to the opinions of our boss. Do our managers have a conviction anyway? There is no a higher authority that sanctions the Truth, but the Media. Since World War II the mass media have taken over the position of the Church and the Party. With the rise of 'new media' this post-war system of legitimacy is beginning to show cracks: there's an growing uncertainty caused by the proliferation of news and entertainment sources. What press and television can do well is to give the impression of a global consensus. They manage the performance of micro-opinions, as voiced by the evergrowing army of celebrities. But that cultural hegemony is now coming to an end.

With the establishment of the Internet as the new mass medium, the closed world in which 'public opinion' can be manufactured, dissipates. The army of media consumers got a sense that the handful of newsagents and their affiliated opinion makers are no longer in charge. There is an overproduction of scandals. It is in this void that we see the appearance of the blogging amateur. The blogger is not really producing news facts, but is the one who expresses the mood of the crowds. Unlike the public perception it is not true that bloggers do investigative journalism. Their role is one of responding. Alex Bruns came up with this beautiful term 'gate watching', which got this interesting mix of active and passive.

Commenting on mainstream culture, its values and products, should be read as a sabotage of the dominant attention economy in which prices for ads are set. The eyeballs that once patiently looked at all the reports and ads have gone on strike. According to the utopian blog philosophy, mass media

are doomed with the rise of 'participatory culture'. Blogs have been around since 1997 and according to the consultancy PR firm Gartner, they will reach their peak in 2007. Around 10% of Internet users are involved in blogging: at best that's a 100 million. We should not mystify blogs as if they are something special. The secret is that they are so damned easy to use, but also limited. Funny enough, blogs have not changed all that much over the past years. The diary form is still dominant and so is the interface with which one has to scroll down. In terms of visualisation, blogs are not built in an intelligent way. In the end it's a log in which you record what happened. The software is simple and its simplicity also limited. Blogs replaced handwritten HTML and the 'homepage' and will soon be pushed aside by something more persuasive, most likely audio-visual and less diary-like.

Reflection and introspection are good things but they have turned the blogosphere into a narcissistic cave. What users seem to like most is the social aspect, not the urge to produce ego documents, and that's where corporate-controlled social networking sites like MySpace and YouTube step in, a nightmare for parents and record companies. Instead of once again preaching the Decline of the West or the coming of Satan I see it as a task of the next generation of cultural critics to dig deep into these virtual spaces. We can be engaged while not closing our eyes for manipulated search engines. Ni Microsoft, ni Google!