



Eurozine Review

Le Monde diplomatique (Berlin) can't wait for consensus over climate change; *Esprit* looks into Sarkozy's intentions for Church and State; *Springerin* doesn't recommend playing the lottery; *Kulturos barai* faces up to Lithuania's migration problem; *Le Monde diplomatique* (Oslo) warns of the erosion of human rights; *Revista Crítica* looks into the abyss and beyond; Reset puts its faith in atheism; and *Kritika&Kontext* searches for the liberal in Nietzsche.

Le Monde diplomatique (Berlin) 2/2008



It is time some countries adopted a pioneering role in tackling climate change instead of waiting for a turnaround in the environmental policies of others, write Philippe Bovet and Agnès Sinaï in *Le Monde diplomatique*. On the international arena, the primacy of economic growth is never questioned; pro-environmental measures are accepted only if they do not contradict the principle of growth.

Energy generation is responsible for 49 per cent of global CO₂ emissions. "Specialists on renewable energy know that it isn't technical problems that present the obstacles but political and bureaucratic ones." This has been amply demonstrated in the recent regional elections in Hessen, Germany. The SPD's model for renewable energy generation after the closure of the Biblis nuclear power plant in 2010 was written off by opponents as wishful thinking.

Yet, writes [Matthias Greffrath](#), the SPD's energy concept "isn't just an ultra-modern pilot programme for the transition into a post-fossil society, but simultaneously [...] a massive growth project for the middle class. It would lead the way for the whole country into energy independence, introduce regional autonomy in energy supply, and thus strengthen democracy at the local level. [In Germany] there's a narrow majority in favour of a modernization that sees beyond fossil-fuel industrialism and growth-oriented consumerism."

End of an idyll: Geographer Augustin Berque describes how city dwellers' search for a rural environment, a tendency in wealthy countries since the 1970s, destroys its own object. "The detached home, coupled with the car, has become the leitmotif of a lifestyle whose ecological footprint in the long term leads to an overstraining of natural resources. The implications for city planning are very clear. The ecological footprint is far smaller when one lives in an apartment block and uses public transport."

Also to look out for: Algerian novelist [Assia Djebar's speech](#) on being accepted to the Académie Française in 2006.

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Esprit 2/2008



In the latest issue of *Esprit*, Jean-Louis Schlegel analyses Nicolas Sarkozy's recent declarations about religion that alarmed intellectuals attached to the principle of *laïcité*. Sarkozy had said that, "In teaching the difference between Good and Evil, the schoolteacher can never replace the priest or the pastor". Does he wish to abolish the division between Church and State? Then why is he talking about religion?

Schlegel addresses such questions by demonstrating the continuity between Sarkozy's comments and his policy, while still minister of the interior, to establish an official Muslim representative body.

Banlieues revisited: A dialogue between ethnologist Jean Monod and sociologist Michel Kokoreff provides an opportunity to analyze the way young people from the suburbs are perceived by academics. Using a structuralist methodology, Monod did field work among juvenile delinquents in the mid-1960s. This approach, he argues, is still effective in studying new forms of delinquency, drug abuse, immigration, and ethnicity.

Governing cities: Two years after the riots in the suburbs of Paris and shortly before local elections in March, *Esprit* presents a special focus on the "government of cities". New State agencies such as the National Agency for Urban Renovation redistribute the money that before was directly allocated to cities, engendering new forms of competition.

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Springerin 1/2008



The French have an acronym for the homeless: SDF (*Les sans domicile fixe*), of which there are currently around one million in France. On account of its sheer frequency, such poverty has been rendered normal — as evidenced by a comment by Germany's former minister for employment and social affairs, Franz Müntefering. According to the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, he recommended

pensioners play the lottery and take up busking.

Jochen Becker notes that the causes and effects of poverty were already being discussed in the 1920s; today the social housing of "Red Vienna" and the advances of architects such as Walter Gropius are proudly counted as cultural achievements. However, daily politics forget what British philanthropist Charles Booth proclaimed over a century ago: "Reforms based on knowledge transform the world [...] and not charity."

Artistic autonomy in Russia? Between an openly repressive state apparatus and a no less brutal market is where Herwig G. Holler positions contemporary Russian art. The organs of state power intercede when it is a case of protecting Russia's image — which, in the case of a photograph of two policemen snogging in a forest, ensured the work publicity. While fear or a sense of intimidation does not exist among prominent Russian artists, writes Höller,

artistic autonomy in this intersection between state power and market mechanisms is still a matter for concern.

Review: Why internet theoretician [Geert Lovink](#) recommends that "media art" abandon its label, give up attending festivals, and instead seek "local partners" can be read in Roman Schmidt's discussion of Lovink's new book *Zero comments. Elements of critical internet culture*.

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Kultūros barai 1/2008



In the last few years, as many as half a million Lithuanians have left the new EU member state for an insecure future in the UK, Ireland, Spain and elsewhere in the West. For a country of 3.5 million inhabitants, this is a tremendous challenge and Lithuania is already facing an acute lack of skilled workers. In a letter to the editors of *Kultūros barai*, Karolis Paulavicius points out that the problem not only has to do with emigration. Politicians have failed to reflect on what happens when the gaps left by young people seeking their fortune elsewhere are filled by people coming to Lithuania from countries further east. Lithuania, writes Paulavicius, not only needs a policy for emigration but also one for immigration.

Simulated cities: Shopping malls simulate the buzz of city centres and create an atmosphere appropriate for consuming, [writes Robert Misik](#). Everything is planned in advance and controlled; appropriation or adaptation of the space by passers-by is both impossible and forbidden. This rebounds on city centres: prettified, scrubbed, and tidied, they increasingly adopt the mall aesthetic. And in a final twist, malls have begun building reconstructions of city streets.

Also: [Almantas Samalavicius](#) writes a fictitious diary of a journey to South East Asia — an essayistic account of Thai cultural heritage and the architecture of Buddhist sanctuaries; [Richard Noyce](#) [appreciates](#) the finer points of print art; and [Jérôme Sgard](#) [compares](#) Sarkozy with Gramsci.

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Le Monde diplomatique (Oslo) 2/2008



Le Monde diplomatique (Oslo) heads with an overview of Al-Qaeda's history and present foothold in Lebanon. Last year the Lebanese army besieged the Palestinian camp of Nahr al-Bared, where a previously unknown organisation, Fatah al-Islam, was dug in. These events, like attacks on the UN Interim Force in Lebanon, reflect the appearance of radical Sunni Islamist networks, some of them linked to al-Qaeda, which is now treating Lebanon as a key base.

Universal human rights? Presented as universal, the history of human rights is full of random incidents, avoidance, and compromises. Yet human rights are radical, writes François Julien: they acknowledge the individual at its most basic level. Simultaneously, they have been watered down and made politically manageable to a point where they are about to lose their ethical legitimacy and

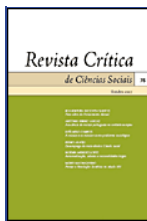
political radicalism.

Abortion rights: In eastern Europe and the US, the religious Right and "pro-life" movements are on the march, and in England the service has low priority. Though the right to abortion is still taken for granted by the majority of western European women, "nothing is achieved once and for all" writes Anne Daguerre.

Turkish constitution: The Turkish government's move to lift the ban on headscarves in universities is part of an ongoing discussion on a new constitution that has the potential to decide the country's future, writes Niels Kadritzke. With a view to EU membership, too, the constitution must find a post-Kemalist form.

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Revista Crítica de Ciências Sociais 78 (2007)



Articles in the new issue of Portuguese social sciences journal *Revista Crítica* include an analysis of state intervention following redundancies made at a ceramics factory in Coimbra. Pedro Araújo argues that state compensation in fact compromises former-employees' ability to ensure their financial autonomy. And Noémia Mendes Lopes's analysis of lay people's appropriation of expert knowledge in self-medication practices leads into a general discussion of different types of lay-knowledge in modern societies.

Beyond the abyss: Modern Western thinking continues to operate along abyssal lines that divide the human from the sub-human, writes Boaventura de Sousa Santos. One side of this line is ruled by a dichotomy of regulation and emancipation, the other by appropriation and violence. In order to succeed, the struggle for global social justice requires a new kind of "post-abyssal thinking".

Music: An analysis of the historical processes that have led to the absence of Portuguese music in the European classical music canon (António Pinho Vargas) and a debate on issues to be addressed when taking music as an object of sociological analysis (Luís Melo Campos).

The full table of contents of *Revista Crítica de Ciências Sociais* 78 (2007)

Reset 105 (2008)



In a time of religious upheaval, *Reset* asks philosophers and scientists what the role of atheism should be today. If it is to be more involved in society it may have to accept comparison and confrontation with the beliefs presently dominating the world arena. Alongside questions regarding atheism, *Reset* asks philosophers and historians what is left of secularism in an age that has been defined as post-secular.

With politics in Italy facing a crisis, *Reset* wonders if literature can help describe and interpret the chaos of Italian society. Alfonso Berardinelli, Andrea Cortellessa, and Giulio Ferroni agree that they should ask more of their

writers, but that it may be necessary to distinguish between narrative and journalism.

Journalism itself has become a victim in the US. After 9/11, its credibility has taken a nosedive. Chris Lehmann tells the story of the FOX–CNN duel, looking at how the news picture is made up of "scandals, scoops, and overpaid stars". "The political barycentre is moving to the right, at the cost of quality and accuracy in news broadcasts".

Pragmatism after Rorty: Articles by Carlo Sini, Aldo Gargani, Mario De Caro, Susanna Marietti, and [Giancarlo Bosetti](#) look at the viability of pragmatic thinking today.

Also: Joanne Barkan laments that Lyndon B. Jonson's affirmative action to integrate the Afro–American population into American society has failed.

The [full table of contents](#) of *Reset* 105 (2008)

Kritika&Kontext 35 (2007)



Anti–liberal and irrelevant or prescient and misunderstood? The latest issue of *Kritika&Kontext* shows that Nietzsche still divides opinion. Six contemporary philosophers [answer](#) questions about Nietzsche, the first of which is: "What do you take to be the morally and politically most offensive passages in Nietzsche's writings?"

For [Richard Rorty](#), they are those "in which Nietzsche expresses contempt for weakness"; for [Paul Patton](#) they are those in which he fails "to divorce female affect, intelligence and corporeal capacities from a supposed 'essential' relation to child–bearing"; for [Teodor Münz](#), they are those that emphasize "physical violence, ruthlessness, lies, systematic selection of humanity".

Yet without these passages, writes [Frantisek Novosád](#), "we wouldn't have the others where Nietzsche brings to the surface long hidden truths". Nietzsche "strives to arouse the reader to think for himself", says [Jan Sokol](#), "we cannot hold him responsible for what we know today". And [Leslie Paul Thiele](#): "As a consistent perspectivist, he felt no need to corral all of his opinions and sensibilities into an enduring, coherent, and homogenous moral stance or political platform."

Nietzsche the liberal? [Béla Egyed](#) sets out to show that despite Nietzsche's harsh criticism of liberal institutions, he was a liberal. Nietzsche's "aristocratic radicalism" was indeed elitist, yet in late nineteenth century Central European politics, "monarchists were much closer to liberalism than were their democratic opponents [...] Nietzsche's most vitriolic attacks were against forms of populism, and his general criticism of 'the democratic idea' was motivated mostly by his mistrust of the new 'idols', political imposters seeking to take the place left vacant by the death of God."

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