



Eurozine Review

Ready... steady... pray!

Cogito talks to Will Kymlicka about multiculturalism and democracy; *New Humanist* questions the importance of cultural identity; *Fronesis* says free movement is limited; *Le monde diplomatique* (Berlin) charts the rocky road to a unified Cyprus; *Blätter* raises questions over Brzezinski's role as Obama advisor; *Res Publica Nowa* debates the new republicanism; *Esprit* sits down with a Manga comic; *Merkur* recalls how the cult of belles-lettres met its end in '68; *Le monde diplomatique* (Oslo) watches free speech on the silver screen; and *Gegenworte* asks whether there can be such a thing as popular science.

Cogito (Greece) 8 (2008)



"Too many countries still cling to the hope that once societies democratize, modernize, and develop economically, then ethnic politics will disappear", says multiculturalism theorist [Will Kymlicka](#) in conversation with [Filimon Peonidis](#). There is no alternative to multiculturalism, yet many see it as a threat to basic liberal-democratic values, such as solidarity, democratic participation, or simply peace and stability.

The question, says Kymlicka, is how to describe "the nature of 'multicultural citizenship'":

Once a country embraces multiculturalism, what are the bonds of citizenship that unite people from different ethnic groups, what is the source of solidarity, how do people engage in democratic deliberation? [...] In many newly democratizing countries, the worries about multiculturalism are less to do with individual autonomy and more to do with how to create sustainable democratic forms of citizenship.

Ethnic politics are an enduring part of democratic life, but do not have to result in conflict, Kymlicka concludes. It can "become a normal part of day-to-day democratic politics, not a uniquely explosive or destabilizing issue. The long-term goal, therefore, shouldn't be to extinguish or to solve ethnic politics once and for all, but rather to 'normalize' it."

No laughing matter: "We have all heard about the archaic smile and we have seen it in museums on Kouroi and Korai. Yet we very rarely see laughter depicted in ancient Greek sculpture, while in other cultures we come across laughing representations of gods, such as the laughing Buddha", writes *Cogito* Editor-in-Chief Vasso Kindi. Why didn't the Greeks laugh, at least not when sculpted in marble?

The question was originally posed by Yannis Tsvividis, professor of electrical engineering at Columbia University. *Cogito* now publishes answers from numerous international scholars ranging from art historian Ada Cohen (an open-mouth laugh was not noble enough) to historian Quentin Skinner ("I really don't know").

As Georges Bataille once noted: the history of the philosophical study of laughter seems to show that it is the history of an insoluble problem...

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New Humanist 4/2008



The greatest Western cultural export is not Disney or Starbucks. It is the idea of local culture itself, a notion which today has the whole world in its grip, writes Kenan Malikin *New Humanist*. "At the heart of most multicultural philosophies is the belief that an individual's cultural background frames their identity and helps define who they are." Therefore, one can only treat individuals with dignity and respect if one also treats the group to which they belong equally. "One expression of such equal treatment is the growing tendency in some Western nations for religious law to take precedence over national secular law in civil, and occasionally criminal, cases."

Malik defines part of the problem as the idea of humans as culture-bearing creatures vs. the idea that humans are bearers of a *particular* culture. "To view humans as culture-bearing is to view them as social beings, and hence as transformative beings"; restricting this to specific cultures is to deny the capacity for transformation. Malik points out that Will Kymlika distinguishes between the existence of a culture and its character at any given moment. The character of a culture can change but such changes are only acceptable if the existence of that culture is not threatened. But how can a culture exist if that existence is not embodied in its character, challenges Malik.

The Olympics: "Sport has always lent itself to political hijacking", notes Paul Sims and outlines the destiny of the Olympics from 1936 and its increasingly close links with politics. Today, China is attempting to legitimize itself through the games. Sport is now so big, so popular it has taken on the characteristics of a modern, secular religion. Even religious groups see it as a way to reach the masses. But in spite of all the use and abuse of various sporting events, in the heat of the moment both politics and money is forgotten. When the starting gun is fired "no one can be absolutely sure who will be the first to breast the tape".

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Fronesis 27 (2008)



The fall of the Berlin Wall and the globalization of business trips, tourism, and migration flows are often used to show that we live in an era characterized by "the democratization of movement". Yet the possibilities of mobility are unequally distributed, stress the editors of *Fronesis*. While sixty per cent of Swedes travel abroad as tourists, the figure for the world's population is twelve per cent. More migrants move from the South to the North than in the opposite direction. While tourists from the North travel with documents that give them access to almost every country in the world, poor or persecuted migrants from the South have to take dangerous and illegal routes to get to where they want. In a themed issue on migration, *Fronesis* discusses this new geography of inequality from a multitude of perspectives, ranging from tourists and businessmen to "mail-order brides" and paperless working migrants.

ID: Sociologist John Torpey explores the increased power of nation-states over their borders, examining the role of the passport, the ID card, and different techniques of surveillance, which all play a decisive role in directing migration flows. Political scientist Aristide Zolberg discusses the "unholy alliances" created when different political forces and interests try to shape immigration policies to their advantage.

Is migration a lever for union renewal? [Olle Sahlström](#) has visited trade union organizations in Europe and interviewed American activist Triana Silton. The trade union is at a crossroad, [writes Sahlström](#):

Either one chooses to try new or revived classic methods of organizing migrant labour, methods which, according to the North American experience, or the Italian and Spanish, also require and imply a transformation of the trade union as a whole. Or one chooses entirely new directions and thereby risks consolidating and widening the distance between [...] the white and male dominated worker aristocracy and the poor, brutally exploited migrant worker.

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Le monde diplomatique (Berlin) 7/2008



On 3 September, negotiations will begin between Greek and Turkish Cypriots over the re-unification of the country. In the German edition of *Le monde diplomatique*, [Niels Kadritzke](#) [observes](#) that both sides have partners that could stand in the way of a solution. While the president of Greek Cyprus has the "no bloc" in his government, Turkish Cyprus has "a political partner breathing down its neck that it can neither influence nor get rid of" — Turkey.

As the "guarantor" of the North, Turkey has a constitutional responsibility to secure the independence of Turkish Cyprus. Ultimately, the Kemalist military has the final say in the Cyprus question. The power struggle between the ruling AKP and the Kemalist camp will be decisive, given that both camps have contrary positions regarding Kofi Annan's plan for reunification.

There is also the question as to what kind of state should arise. Turkey prefers a confederation of two states, each with a separate right to self-determination. Both the EU and the UN reject this model, since in the case of Turkish Cyprus "this 'guarantee' would in practice be exercised by an army whose lack of civil accountability is one of the main reasons for Turkey still being seen as unfit to join the EU".

Central Europe: According to Gábor Papp, Central Europe is on one hand a global village with the usual chain stores and on the other a relic of the early twentieth century, with bumper stickers showing Hungary's borders pre-Trianon and Slovakian banknotes bearing the image of the nationalist Hlinka. "Time seems to be racing in two separate directions — forwards into the globalization of the twenty-first century and backwards into the worst years of the 1920s and the build-up to WWII."

Also: Joost Hiltermann considers what the Kurds can gain from political compromises within Iraq; and George Korn believes that European Mediterranean policy is bypassing reality.

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Blätter für deutsche und internationale Politik 7/2008



In his book *A Second Chance* (2007), Cold War veteran Zbigniew Brzezinski criticizes the last three US presidents for failing to establish permanent US dominance after the collapse of the USSR. Now, as advisor to Barak Obama, Brzezinski may once again steer US geopolitics, writes Hauke Ritz in *Blätter*. Though religious motives are foreign to him, there's nothing to distinguish Brzezinski from the neo-cons when it comes to the wish to establish US hegemony.

While the latter attempted to realize this via military control over Middle Eastern oil reserves, an Obama foreign policy influenced by Brzezinski would concentrate on blocking relations between Russia and China and campaigning for the eastern expansion of Nato. Here, writes Brzezinski in *A Second Chance*, Europe plays a major role as "bridgehead" to the Eurasian continent and as "cornerstone of a US dominated Eurasian security structure".

As the controversy over the missile shield in the Czech Republic and Poland has shown, this means direct confrontation with Russia:

It is in Europe's interest to pursue a policy oriented both towards the West and the East. The US is attempting to prevent an eastwards orientation of this kind via a new Cold War. [...] Should the other EU states as well as Brussels fail to persuade Poland and the Czech Republic to reject the defence shield, the question would arise as to what political purpose the EU actually continues to serve.

What happens to wealth? As illustrated by a recent report by the German government on poverty, worldwide wealth discrepancies continue to deepen. Dieter Klein describes how the wealth generated by increased productivity, education, and knowledge is redistributed upwards, inappropriately invested, or simply destroyed. "Projects aimed at an alternative course of

socio-ecological development will only be successful under a common denominator: if they oppose the process of privatization and expropriation with the appropriation or re-appropriation of their own living conditions via individual or collective action."

Also to look out for: Mischa Hansel [highlights](#) the strategic importance of today's satellite technology and warns about a new arms race; and Manfred Lauerermann describes how for the '68ers theory went from being an aid to understanding reality to being a compensation for it.

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Res Publica Nowa spring/summer 2008



In the 1980s, alternatives for democratic reform in Poland were sought in communitarian ideas, Elzbieta Cizewska writes in the latest, re-designed issue of Polish quarterly *Res Publica Nowa*. Today, this has been replaced by a growing interest in classical republicanism.

Contributors debate a range of questions relating to notions of republican government. Does republicanism challenge the failures of liberalism? Can it offer a solution to perennial issues of *ethnie* and group identity, representing a viable alternative to nationalist thinking? Is it founded on enlightened self-interest, or does its value reside in a view of shared interests and the common good?

With reference to the writings of Carl Schmitt, Giovanni Sartori, Max Weber, Machiavelli, and Hanna Arendt, Marcin Król assesses the meaning of politics and considers whether conflict, the will to power, and the "banality of evil" can be contained within a republican model of government.

Lonely and broken: Wojciech Przybylski observes that Polish society is deeply fragmented. "We have to accept that only forgotten issues, quarrels buried in ash, will give us a brief illusion of consensus. Our politicians do battle like Don Quixote. They have failed to keep up with the public experience of change." Szymon Wróbel is similarly pessimistic: "I fear that we shall be left with our solitude. In the wake of a communality of poverty and a communality of fear, we are looking at a communality of those alone."

Two Ukraines? Reviewing the idea that Ukraine is geographically and historically split between western and eastern European political cultures, Anastasiya Ryabchuk argues that supposed divisions often shroud underlying political interests. "Politicians raise questions of nationalism and regional identity to cover up a lack of professionalism and detract attention from real issues. The Ukrainian political arena lacks parties willing to take responsibility for local problems rather than blaming foreigners, or people on the other side of the Dnieper, for Ukraine's weaknesses."

Also: Lukasz Mikolajewski considers dentistry and the new Polish smile; Tomasz Kaspruwicz exposes the flaws of Polish economic discourse; Marcin Baba introduces George Santayana's views on religion and the poetic

imagination; and Maciej Melon reviews selected papers from Eurozine's 2007 conference "Changing places".

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Esprit 7/2008



Science, individualism, and a touch of the apocalyptic: that's what sells manga, according to Jean-Marie Bouissou's account in *Esprit* of how Japanese comics conquered France. Today's French manga readers are a generation raised in the Mitterrand years, when dreams of social unity faded and postmodernism pulled apart intellectual certainties. Seeing the world in darker hues than their parents had, and sceptical both of loyalty and rebellion, they were a perfect market for the self-interested heroes of *Akira*, the first apocalyptic manga bestseller to hit France.

Akira and its cousins defused despair with a fast-paced melange of anti-Americanism, anti-militarism, Buddhism, and whatever New Age dreams could paper over the holes in their culture. These dystopian visions were matched by an equally nightmarish view of science. Formerly imagined as an ordered, progressive force, science now became the realm of the mad, evil scientist, writes Bouissou. This fitted the world of pollution and genetic engineering. Taking aim at those who explain manga's global success as a mere side-effect of Japan's economic power, Bouissou argues that manga is simply ideally suited to the cultural obsessions of the early twenty-first century.

Axel Honneth: Are legal and economic rights enough to make a society function? Many would say not. Feminists and anti-racists; conservative proponents of "respect"; the socially excluded and those who claim to represent them: all have emphasised the need for tolerance, acceptance, and inclusion in personal relationships. Frankfurt-based philosopher [Axel Honneth](#), in a special feature on recognition theory, explains in interview how these concerns span the boundaries separating the private from the public.

Psychologically, we need self-confidence, self-respect, and self-esteem. Personal relationships can go some way to satisfying these needs, but relationships are themselves determined by the social institutions in which we live, says Honneth. Moreover, we need recognition not just from friends, but from society as a whole — and this must be mutual recognition, for how can we value respect given by somebody we do not ourselves respect? The idea of recognition leads to a broader conception of society than we are able to obtain from current politics, bound as it is to ideals of prosperity and legal rights.

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Merkur 7/2008



In *Merkur*, Michael Rutschky describes how "the cult of belles-lettres" in German literature came to an end in 1968. Whether it was the objective yet artificial prose of Uwe Johnson (*Mutmaßungen über Jakob*, 1959) or the distorted language of Helmut Heißenbüttel (*Das Textbuch*, 1960–67), "every sentence, every word, said before anything else: 'I am literature'". And so it was with the avant-garde literature of the postwar period as a whole. [...] It prevented us speaking about the really important things openly and directly. It was as if one was walled in — and the wall, that was language itself."

The change came with the undercover reportages of Günter Wallraff (e.g. *Industriereportagen*, 1970); the "real life" monologues transcribed by Erika Runge in *Bottroper Protokolle* (1968); and the autobiographical, "chatty" novels of the Swede Lars Gustafsson (*Der eigentliche Bericht über Herrn Arenander*, German translation 1969). These forerunners of the "new subjectivity" (*neue Innerlichkeit*) of the 1970s culminated in Fritz Zorn's posthumous *Mars* (1977). In it, the Swiss author described his advancing cancer as a symptom of social degeneration, for which literature acted as a kind of therapy.

"Texts such as the *Bottroper Protokolle* or *Mars*, said our professor of literature, who was gradually transforming into a professor of media history, lead in due course to talk shows, even to the talk shows of so-called lower class television, with their exhibitionism and compulsive need to confess. Why not? Belles-lettres, as practised by the middle classes, demonstrated something that today occupies the lower classes. Serving the people. Hans Magnus Enzensberger, who in 1970 published his famous *Baukasten zu einer Theorie der Medien*, didn't take part in such experiments. For that we had Alexander Kluge."

The ur-history of Pop: Bodo Mrozek on the so-called "Halbstarken" (young, leather-jacketed bikers) of the 1950s. "Unlike the self-celebration of the '68ers, the fifty-year jubilee of the *Halbstarken* has gone unnoticed. They left behind no manifestos, even less so a political legacy. [...] Nevertheless, the *Halbstarken* were the first generation that formed worldwide under the sign of a new era. [...] Subsequent generations, whether they were mods, rockers, or punks, merely acted out, in the name of Pop, variations on this transnational identity concept first established in the 1950s."

Also to look out for: [Heinz Schlaffer goes back](#) to Theocritus to learn how people truly deal with art.

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Le monde diplomatique (Oslo) 7/2008



Using your right to free speech can get you killed, writes [Truls Lie](#) in the Norwegian edition of *Le monde diplomatique*. At the short film festival in Grimstad free speech in its various forms was a common denominator. In the Israeli film *To See If I'm Smiling*, about six women who have done their army service, our notion that women are less ruthless than men is crushed. In a twist on the Abu Ghraib case, one of the women has her picture smilingly taken with the naked body of a dead

Palestinian man. When her humanity later returns to her, she cries at this and wonders if she should have spoken out about the atrocities.

In the Norwegian documentary *Dømt til å bli voldtatt* ("Sentenced to be raped") about an honour case in Pakistan, the culprit's sister is sentenced to be raped by four men, witnessed by one hundred, including her own father. Her subsequent fight to change Pakistani law and cultivate a few critical voices is ongoing "unless she is killed for the 'disgrace' she has brought upon the country. Such is the freedom of speech in Pakistan", writes Lie.

Andrei Nekrasov's film *Rebellion: The Litvinenko Case* is about the Russian dissident who was poisoned with polonium-210 in London after his escape from Russia. "Litvinenko — and Nekrasov — stubbornly claim that the Russian state's constant reminders of the importance of nationalism and the fight against terror is nothing more than a guise the rich use to gain further wealth."

Iraq: Steffen Moestrup has seen *Mark of Cain*, a low-budget anti-war film following a group of British soldiers stationed in Iraq. In a reflection of the Israeli short film *To See If I'm Smiling*, *Mark of Cain* details the dehumanizing effects of being in a warzone. Their need to distance themselves is illustrated by one soldier's mechanical listing of football scores while firmly pressing the trigger of his gun.

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Gegenworte 19 (2008)



"Occult science has had its day", writes editor Wolfert von Rahden. Science's public no longer consists just of scientists; today, it has broad exposure in the public sphere, with more and more people taking an interest in matters of science. But, wonders Ernst Peter Fischer, is Max Planck right in saying that "Science can never be popular in the true sense of the word"?

As Novalis said: "In so far as I give the everyday a higher meaning, the commonplace secret significance, the familiar the dignity of the unfamiliar, the finite the appearance of the infinite, I am romanticizing." That is what science can and does do: give the natural world a mystical explanation and thus romanticize it. In this way, writes Fischer, science can become popular.

Science in the media: For Jürgen Kaube, the media is the only way to make an increasingly specialized science known to the public. While the natural sciences can already be found in the feuilletons (often to the disapproval of scientists themselves), the humanities and social sciences are under-represented. Here, three questions arise: Does sufficient interest exist on the part of the public? Do social scientists have the time and inclination to popularize their findings? Would they be put off from approaching subjects that are discussed in the public sphere?

Also: Dieter Simon explains the fourth virtue of every scientist — self-promotion; Barbara Witte investigates the difference between theory and practice, science and journalism; and Carsten Hucho explains why Power Point isn't evil.

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