



Eurozine Review

Le Monde diplomatique (Berlin) anatomizes respect; *Rigas Laiks* takes on the sticky subject of pornography; *Esprit* crosses the Sahara; *Varlik* discloses the vacation habits of Turkish writers; *Nuori Voima* is lovestruck; *Vikerkaar* talks South Estonian; and *Critique & Humanism* judges war.

Le Monde diplomatique (Berlin) 8/2005



Headlining the August edition of the German *Le Monde diplomatique*, Jan Philipp Reemtsma, director of the Hamburg Institute for Social Research, asks: "Must one respect religiousness?" His answer is an analysis of the place of religion in secular society, and a fine example of enlightenment rationalism:

"I respect the way in which [the religious person] wishes to give his life meaning - he will not see this meaning, however, as one that he has given himself. That is something we see differently, and I can't demand from him that he adopts my way of seeing things. What I am allowed to demand, though, is that what emerges as the result of the attitude of the religious person is the same as that which emerges as the result of mine. He will be thinking something different, nonetheless he will respect me internally, because he will think that, in the part of me that he respects, he has recognized something which I know nothing about. He respects this part, because in it he wants to recognize something that concerns him. He respects me as a potential bearer of the faith, I respect him as a fellow citizen. It's like oil and water."

According to Denis Duclos, sociologist at the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, the French data protection agency, in vetoing the introduction of the compulsory ID card, has refused to allow the individual's right to privacy and anonymity to be subordinated to the influence of private companies.

"Under the pretext of an unpredictable danger, a worldwide security armada has formed, whose rapid growth arouses the suspicion that a new form of capitalism is evolving: the capitalism of fear." The public budget that supports the market for biometry will soon equal that formerly spent on the welfare state. "Will fear win out over politics? In that case, the terrorists will have achieved their aims: they will have transformed the great democracies into paranoid fortresses that suffocate their citizens."

Writing before this week's developments, "Ha'aretz" journalist Meron Rapoport reports on the orange movement opposing the evacuation of Jewish settlements. Jewish settlers and their supporters have only gone so far in

opposing withdrawal from the Gaza Strip: in return, they hope to secure the settlements in the West Bank. Rapoport assesses whether potential exists for national-religious elements from the Orthodox regiments to form a militant opposition. If so, it will be difficult for the Israeli government to deploy troops for "phase II" of the withdrawals. Time will tell if Israel is facing its own Algeria.

Also in this issue: Philip S. Golub, "Power is more powerful than profit. The re-nationalization of world politics and the end of the liberal era in international relations"; Carolin Emcke, "A doctor, a translator, a photographer, and a soldier. The issue and reception of commands in Abu Ghraib"; Richard Gott, "The body of Che. The end of the leader of the revolution - an eye-witness account"; and abstract paintings by Iranian artist Mojé Assefjah.

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Rigas Laiks 8/2005



The latest issue of Latvian monthly *Rigas Laiks* has focused its attention on code-breaking in Paris, pornography, and life after Joseph Brodsky.

Sergio Benvenuto, the Italian philosopher and columnist for the German edition of *Lettre Internationale*, looks at the mysterious codes of Paris. He finds a correlation between entrance into Parisian apartment buildings and into Parisian culture — both of which are "codified". Benvenuto finds the Parisian to be neither racist, nationalistic, nor ethnocentric, but instead "glottocentric". Fluency in French is essential to fitting in to Parisian culture — if one can speak French properly, then one can think like the French. But he finds the true key to acceptance in Paris in the word "résistance", a word that every Parisian loves.

In "One or two words on the sticky subject of pornography", Riga-based journalist Tim Ochser [looks](#) at the "genuineness" of pornography as opposed to flesh and word. Pornography serves as the ever-receding attempt to overcome desire through the idea of sex. Ochser finds that in many ways, life has come to imitate pornography "in an almost grotesque parody". In the end, Ochser declares, "I am tired of this debilitating and exhausting obsession with sex that reveals nothing more than our self-disgust rather than the self-satisfaction it purports to. I am tired of this insipid mirage of desire that poses as reality."

Other articles: Lev Loseff, Guggenheim fellow, Professor of Russian, and Chair of the Department of Russian at Dartmouth University, gives editor Uldis Tirons his views on life after Russian-American poet laureate Joseph Brodsky. Arnis Ritups talks to German philosopher Dieter Henrich: "There is meaning in conscious life only; the world as such is meaningless."

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Esprit 8-9/2005



The summer issue of the French monthly casts its gaze across the Sahara and beyond. Articles in "Views of Africa" address cultural, religious, political, and economic aspects of contemporary Africa. "Study of images of Africa is more fashionable than ever," writes Jean-Pierre Chrétien in his introduction. He advocates a revival of the French African Studies of the first half of the nineteenth century, before the "clear colonial conscience" reached its apogee.

"It is still necessary to consider the African peoples as the actors of their own history," writes Chrétien, "and to cease to perceive their continent as another planet. In fact, the trajectory of our relations with Africa reflects the course of the past century more than one thinks. This cannot be reduced to the caricatures found in writings from 1860–1930. Our aim is not to retrace that history, but to ask that today it is not based on assumptions, whether unconscious or indirect, arising from a fundamentally unequal exchange, of words as much as of things."

Of special interest among articles on culture is Bernard Magnier's essay on the African book — "A book like any other". Magnier, an expert on African poetry, discusses how African writing, from being seen at the beginning of the twentieth century as an ethnological curiosity, has come to be regarded as a vital manifestation of a "universal literature".

Other articles on African arts include a presentation by Bernard Salvaing of African writers, an insight into the diversity of African literature today; Jean-Pierre Chrétien on melancholy, determination, and humour in African cinema; Yacouba Konaté on "MASA", the biennial festival of the performing arts in Abidjan; and Christophe Roy on how the categorization of African pop into "world music" prevents African artists from penetrating the western market.

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Varlık 8/2005



Following up last month's issue dedicated to laziness, *Varlık* looks into the vacation activities of Turkish authors. It turns out that laziness is only part of the story.

"What did you say? Vacation?" Artists and authors do not go on vacation, says Sulhi Dölek. Writers write. If they don't write, then they take notes. And if they can't take notes, then they at least register and save things in some part of their memory, for future use. In other words, shutting up shop isn't an option.

Novelist and copywriter Ibrahim Yildirim goes even further when he claims that vacation is a dangerous thing. "No matter how brief, no matter how much it is associated with nice things like having fun, sunbathing, freedom, exuberance, and sex, vacation is still a dangerous act of dislocation and escape. Don't go on vacation! Just dream about it!"

Enis Batur, one of Turkey's most famous authors and intellectuals, looks at the writer putting down his pen, instead picking up herbs (like Rousseau) or a book to read, playing with his rosary beads (like Ekrem Isin), or just standing there with empty hands. One can call it the writer's vacation, says Batur. "I call

it the vacation of writing, putting down the last full stop, preparing to look at my hands without a pen."

Hulki Aktunç captures this characteristic combination of doing and not doing, working while not working, in his poem "Yazar Yazın Yazmaz" ("The Writer Does Not Write [Literature] During Summer"):

This summer I relapsed
into my childhood sickness.
I have been painting
since April.

Other articles of note: Feridun Andaç on how to make literary criticism indispensable; and interviews with translator and editor Oruç Arouba, who points to the relation between philosophy and poetry, and linguist Necmiye Alpay, who recently published a much-discussed study on changes in the contemporary Turkish language.

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Nuori Voima 4/2005



Love is in the air in this issue of Helsinki-based *Nuori Voima*, which looks at love in theatre, poetry, philosophy, and opera.

Finnish playwright Aina Bergroth looks at the plays of Sarah Kane (1971–1999), where love involves power, manipulation, and submission. Bergroth places Kane in the tradition of the theatre of cruelty and of the absurd, represented by playwrights such as Artaud, Genet, Beckett, and Pinter. In Kane's plays, love is something characters most desire, but at the same time their destructive urges make it unattainable: "Have you ever thought, thought your heart would break? Wished you could cut open your chest, tear it out to stop the pain?" (*Phaedra's Love*). In the end, love kills.

Love duets first appeared in seventeenth-century Venetian opera, but the love in these duets was complicated by certain practices of the time, notes Finnish composer Juha T. Koskinen. The use of castrati for the male parts made both voices of the duet feminine — a reference to love's origins in narcissism. Sexual roles are blurred further by other similar conventions, such as "travestimento", or changing one's (sexual) identity with a disguise.

On love in poetry: Ville Sultinen uses Roland Barthes' *A Lover's Discourse* as a starting point to discuss the mad lover in the work of young Finnish poets since 2000.

On mathematics in love: A Finnish translation of French philosopher Alain Badiou's famous article "What is love?", discussing the phenomenon of love in the context of "mathematical ontology".

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Vikerkaar 8/2005



Within the Estonian language, there are two main dialects: North Estonian (Tallinn) and South Estonian (Tartu). Within these main dialects, there exist a number of variants, such as the Mulgi dialects in the southwest and the Võro and Seto dialects in the southeast.

The latest issue of Estonian journal *Vikerkaar* is devoted to the cultural and linguistic revival of South Estonian.

Between the seventeenth and the nineteenth centuries, there were two literary languages in the Estonian territory. The New Testament was first published in South Estonian (in 1686), but by the beginning of the twentieth century, North Estonian prevailed. Kristiina Ross, researcher at the Institute of Estonian Language, looks at the administrative, ecclesiastic, and geographic reasons behind the demise of the south Estonian literary language.

There is a growing reluctance among many of the Estonian political and cultural elite to grant language status to South Estonian. Kaido Kama, director of the Võro Institute, established in 1995 to advance south Estonian culture and language, describes the present state and future aims of the movement: developing a literary language; enhancing its prestige using electronic media, education, and literature; and gaining recognition as a regional language protected by the European Charter of Regional and Minority Languages.

This issue also features: Heiki Valk, archaeologist at the University of Tartu, giving an overview of the historical reasons for the cultural and linguistic differences between north and south Estonia; authors writing in South Estonian; and visual artists of south Estonian descent.

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Critique & Humanism 2/2004



The latest issue of Bulgarian journal *Critique & Humanism*, backdated to 2004, addresses questions of "The just war - traditional and present", "The reality of war transformed", and "New challenges, new justifications".

Antony Todorov, professor of contemporary history at the New Bulgarian University, outlines the development of arguments for the *jus bellum* from the clear-cut distinction in WWII between victim and aggressor, through attempts during the Cold War to justify the use of nuclear weapons, to post-Cold War conflicts in which military intervention has been understood as policing.

Anyu Angelov, former Chairman of the Bulgarian Centre for the Study of National Security, discusses changes in Bulgarian defence policy since joining Nato. Angelov puts forward suggestions for organizational and constitutional restructuring in response to the new geo-strategic situation in southeastern Europe.

Other authors in translation writing about war in this issue include: Michael Walzer, Mary Kaldor, Lawrence Freedman, and Jean Baudrillard. An essay by Alexander Gangov, of the University of Sofia, "An attempt to apply Kant's teaching to contemporary propaganda", is published in commemoration of the 200th anniversary of Kant's death.

The [full table of contents](#) of *Critique & Humanism* 2/2004.

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