



Eurozine Review

Let unity blossom!

Blätter doubts the existence of the informed investor; *The Hungarian Quarterly* recommends laying down the quill; *Edinburgh Review* talks to Tracey Emin; *Lettera internazionale* endorses Mediterranean union; *Mittelweg 36* misses emotion in Habermas; *Merkur* explores the political semantics of trust; *Reset* puts citizens at the centre of climate politics; *Ord&Bild* talks to Mike Davis; *dérive* follows the traces of invisible work; *Kulturos barai* goes green in the face of urban development; *Dialogi* thinks culture is more than a song and a dance; and *Gegenworte* turns to the visual.

Blätter für deutsche und internationale Politik 1/2009



Blätter continues its focus on the financial crisis: Albert Statz suggests overcoming the crisis by consistently implementing a politics of sustainability. And sensationally, Thomas L. Friedman, the apologist of neoliberalism in the 1990s, now agrees. *Blätter* publishes an extract from the forthcoming German translation of his book, *Hot, Flat, and Crowded. Why we need a green revolution*.

Andreas Fisahn and Lars Niggemeyer, meanwhile, are none too optimistic when it comes to Europe's handling of the financial crisis. So far, all the emergency measures taken have stayed well within the logic of neoliberalism. This is mainly due to European law; because the Maastricht Treaty liberalized the free movement of capital almost completely, there is no control of capital flows between OECD countries. More transparency of the credit and securities business is widely believed to be the solution — in order to persuade the informed investor to abstain from risky investments.

Fisahn and Niggemeyer disagree: "The greed of shareholders cannot be fought by transparency alone. It is not the irrationality of the players, but the irrationality of the logic of financial markets that lead to crisis — a logic the protagonists cannot free themselves from."

But while the European Court of Justice continues to safeguard the free movement of capital, the European Commission seems to interpret state aid law fairly loosely: Germany was permitted to underwrite banks' debts, and banks in the UK and Benelux were allowed to be partially nationalized. Therefore Fisahn and Niggemeyer think that a debate is already underway on regulatory measures such as bans on speculation and the implementation of the Tobin Tax — measures Weed, Attac or Die Linke have been claiming all along.

Nazi crimes: On the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the Centre for the Investigation of National Socialist Crimes, Joachim Perels praises its work. Still, despite its efforts, it was helpless in the face of the legal practice in postwar Germany, where more than 80 per cent of violent Nazi criminals were condemned as accessories, not as murderers.

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The Hungarian Quarterly 192 (2008)



"The global economic crisis is not necessarily an enemy of the Hungarian writer", says László Darvasi. Why not? Because there wasn't a chance for them to earn any money anyway. Darvasi suggests setting up a literary prize entitled "I've Laid Down My Quill, Haven't I!", awarded to a writer who does exactly that. Moreover, he recommends members of that profession — "there are anyway more Hungarian writers than the country needs" — to refrain as politicians or country priests.

"The global economic crisis demonstrates that literature, and hence writers, can be of no help to the world in its woes; scandals and misery are jumbled together just the same."

Contemporary music: Hungarian composer–conductor [Péter Eötvös](#) [describes](#) in interview how he wholeheartedly participates in the world of music: as a composer of contemporary music, as a conductor, as a supporter of young musicians and as a mediator of musical education. In contemporary music, it has always been typical for innovators such as Eötvös' teacher Karlheinz Stockhausen "to set about deliberately constructing the future, and at the same time constantly having to contend with opposition".

"In philosophy, literature, the theatre, painting, you name it, the new is seen as a positive, indeed it is expected, whereas in music it constantly has to be justified in the teeth of opposition."

1968: [György Dalos](#) writes about "that curious leap year" when "major events in my life flashed by as in high–speed cinematography":

"I was going through pretty serious mood swings. On the one hand, there was the intoxicating, liberating feeling of having deviated from the career that had been laid down for me and of having drifted to the fringes of the world of the intelligentsia, while on the other hand the conspiracy charge cast a romantic aura around me."

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Edinburgh Review 125 (2009)



For its latest issue, on Turkey, *Edinburgh Review* interviews Young British Artist Tracey Emin about her Turkish background and how it has influenced her work.

"My dad's great–great–great grandfather, someone from the seventeenth century or whatever, he was a slave in the Ottoman Empire. When he was given his freedom he was allowed to be a wool farmer in Cyprus. My granddad was black and my dad doesn't look Turkish at all. He's the only Turk I know that speaks with a Greek accent — he's from the Greek part of the island. There's something about Cyprus that's unique. You have the most beautiful wild flowers in the whole world, some that don't exist anywhere else. You have hummingbirds, bees that start buzzing before anywhere else in Europe."

In her autobiography *Strangeworld* (2005) Emin recalls being entranced by her father's storytelling; her own work is also highly autobiographical. So does Emin see herself as a storyteller? "Not so much a storyteller, but I am a raconteur. I talk a lot, I'm chatty, I'm friendly. I'm one of these people that if I was found dead in some river, people would say, 'She was very friendly.'" *Tracey Emin: Twenty Years* showed at the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art in 2008 and begins a tour of Europe this year.

Ottoman poetry: The first advocate of a Turkish language reform was a Scotsman, writes Christopher Ferrard. At a time when anti–Ottoman bigotry abounded, Elias John Wilkinson Gibb (1857–1900), author of *Ottoman Poems Translated into English Verse* (1882) and the posthumously published *History of Ottoman Poetry* (1909), was a sympathetic interpreter of Islam to the Christian West. Yet Gibb was the first to admit the shortcomings of Ottoman verse. There was, Ferrard notes, "something of the tradition of the Scottish democratic intellect exemplified in Gibb's critique of Ottoman poetry for its 'affectation, pedantry, and artificiality', 'obsolete phraseology' and consequent lack of relevance to the ordinary Turk".

Also: [Orhan Pamuk's](#) speech at the Frankfurt Book Fair 2008; translations of Turkish poets and novelists including Cemil Kavukcu, Perihan Magden, and Enis Batur; and photographs by Alp Sime.

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Lettera internazionale 97 (2008)



The underlying theme of the new issue of *Lettera internazionale* is the encounter with the Other. Difference, understood as the prerequisite for dialogue, is the common thread, drawing together discussions about the borders of the EU, a dossier on women and society, and the thematic focus on historical, cultural and political aspects of the Mediterranean space. Analytical articles stand alongside essayistic and literary observations by renowned authors and theorists such as Hélène Cixous or Federico García Lorca.

Journalist Defne Gürsoy explains the causes and effects of the deep divides in Turkish society. The incompatibility between Islamists and secularists, the "Two Turkeys" the only common feature of which is nationalism, again and again leads the country to the brink of chaos. Today, advancing Islamization as well as diminishing trust towards the entire EU is palpable. Nevertheless, Turkey has a dynamic and active civil society that will sooner or later force politicians to constitutionalize principles such as the rule of law and the right of free speech, hopes Gürsoy.

Mediterranean union: Against the backdrop of the Barcelona Process and the newly founded Mediterranean Union, political scientist Giuseppe Sacco advocates a "Mediterranean way". Sacco demonstrates how the Mediterranean space could function as a link between North and South, between the western and Muslim worlds, and how the region's potential lies in emphasizing "Mediterranean cultural unity". The Mediterranean region can only exist, writes Sacco, as "a space of pluralism and religious, political and cultural tolerance". Whether such a project is possible will be determined not least by environmental factors such as climate change, which render a coordinated approach in this geopolitical space unavoidable.

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Mittelweg 36 6/2008



Mittelweg 36 illustrates the "68er's culture of conflict" by publishing pictures of Jürgen Habermas debating intensely with students at Frankfurt University. Habermas had been the mentor of the SDS, one of Germany's most radical student organisations, but fell out with students over whether scientific analysis can be directly applied to political action. [Wolfgang Kraushaar](#) describes how this dispute turned into open conflict.

European identity: Identity discourses are a sign of crisis, [writes Jens Hacke](#); "collective identity" is always a construct, as the term "identity politics" suggests. "A society generates its own identity in a certain way", he writes, quoting Habermas: "It is thanks to its own efforts that a society does not lose its identity." In his concept of "reasonable identity", Habermas rejects tradition and history as constitutive for collective identity and suggests a notion of identity that is oriented on the present and on universal morality — on norms and a clear constitutional framework. Habermas, criticizes Hacke, does not take into account the strong effects of non-rational, emotional identification that remain essential to any political or social process of identity formation.

Habermas' writing on European unification emphasizes political identity and the shaping of political awareness. But if the constitution was the only symbol of collective European identity, it could only be communicated among the elites, argues Hacke. Collective identity needs more than norms: "Quite probably, functional constraints such as economic and monetary integration and every day experiences such as open borders are more powerful contributions to a collective European identity than debates on constitutions and democracy."

Is there a plan? Ulrich Bröckling analyzes debates about political planning in West Germany in the 1960s. He considers how planning in the 1980s turned into market- and competition-driven processes and how the current economic

crisis makes it obsolete. Nevertheless: "Everyone plans, even those who don't plan. No one plans, even those who plan."

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Merkur 1/2009



In politics as in private life, "trust" and "mistrust" play a central role, writes Ute Frevert in *Merkur*. As former German chancellor Helmut Schmidt recently commented, politicians are in the awkward position of being dependent on the trust of the electorate, yet of forfeiting this trust as soon as they are seen to be making an effort to solicit it. And indeed, "today's political scientists commonly refer to parliamentary democracy as a system of institutionalized mistrust".

Frevert traces the notion of trust from its appearance during the March Revolution of 1848 (as an alternative to monarchial "loyalty"); through the Weimar constitution (whose architects neither trusted the people nor relied on their trust); and into National Socialism, which "saturated society with the semantics of trust" yet simultaneously encouraged distrust of "anti-social elements". National Socialism talked of trust but meant loyalty, writes Frevert: "Trust's retractable and oppositional strength was robbed".

The GDR government notoriously harboured a deep mistrust of its citizens. After the uprising of 17 June 1953, Kurt Barthel, head of the Writers' Association, wrote that the demonstrators had betrayed the trust placed in them by the socialist state, prompting Brecht's famous comment: "Wouldn't it be easier for the government to dissolve the people and vote for another one?" And the West German government, too, suspecting its citizens of an authority complex, drafted a constitution that tended against referenda and plebiscites.

Magnum opus: The fifth and final volume of Hans-Ulrich Wehler's *Social History of Germany*, covering 1945–1990, has been widely criticized for its author's bias. Stephan Schlak agrees: "Whether applauding the robust mentality of the 'achievement fanaticism' of the 1950s, railing against the crude Marxism and hedonism of the '68ers, or defending the great statesman Helmut Schmidt [...], Wehler continually seems to be wanting to outdo the familiar conservative pride in democracy's success."

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Reset 110 (2008)



In its new issue, *Reset* discusses the various aspects of climate change and its effects. Contributions range from discussions of the scientific significance of alternative energy to assessments of critical documentaries such as *An Inconvenient Truth*, from scientific findings and demands to the consequences for democratic politics. As Giancarlo Bosetti writes in the editorial, the issue aims to enquire into the most important theories and approaches circulating today. A special role falls to public awareness: unless appropriate efforts are made to utilize the resource of "public opinion" and to convince people of the necessity of environmental

measures, political intentions and international treaties will come to nothing.

Filippo Giorgi shows that there is no doubt within science that the climate is changing. The question is more how the unavoidable effects of climate change

can be alleviated, so that we can live with them. This question in particular necessitates political responses; workable scientific–technological solutions already exist. Giorgi emphasizes that citizens play the decisive role here. Only when people become aware of the factuality of the problem and are clear that climate change affects the whole world, themselves included, can their demands for action make politicians rethink.

[Zygmunt Bauman](#) has a more pessimistic argument. In an interview with Alessandro Lanni, the sociologist underlines that nationally oriented governments will fail with respect to global problems. Today, it is liberalized markets whose form accords more to the distribution of diminishing resources — and this leads to the inexorable growth of poverty and inequality. Only international legal and political institutions (that until now have been lacking) can curb deregulated forces and get to the roots of global insecurity.

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Ord&Bild 4/2008



In *Ord&Bild*, urban theorist and social activist [Mike Davis](#) talks [in interview](#) about the evolution of the neoliberal city.

"No one saw some decades ago that such a large portion of the world's population would live in big city areas entirely without connection to the world economy. The people of the slums are of a social class that does not fit into our prevalent description of social stratification. They lack, for instance, the social power that the working class possessed at the beginning of the twentieth century. [...] The labour movement had strength since it could halt production; industrialization had a tendency to unite people. Yet the logic of informal economy appears to be the opposite. The informal economy drives people to exploit each other, in the worst case yielding to nihilistic violence, like the street gangs in Los Angeles."

It's easy for people in power to turn their back on people living in the slums, says Davis. From a neoliberal perspective, they are superfluous. But to ignore the urban development is dangerous: "Global epidemics and global terrorism are two problems that principally emanated from the slums. When one talks about 'failed states' one often means 'failed cities', such as Gaza, Sadr City or the slums of Port-au-Prince."

Theological atheism: In the first issue of last year, *Ord&Bild*'s editors asked their readers to respond to [Sven-Eric Liedman's](#) attempt to find an alternative to both de–secularist social tendencies and the militant atheism of Michel Onfray and Richard Dawkins: a positive and "enchanted" form of atheism. Among those who answered the call was theologian [Mattias Martinsson](#), who instead pleads for a new type of "theological" atheism.

Martinsson is sympathetic to Liedman's strategy but finds his defence of the "relative value" of religion "undialectic", thus "risking the expulsion of the theologian and religious voice from the discussion about the secular". Failing

to acknowledge the borders of reason, Liedman's "calm" and Onfray's "combative" attitudes are based on the same type of traditional humanism. Leaning on Gianni Vattimo, Martinsson instead holds that there is no other secular point of view than the Christian; "to not deny its own deepest logic, any type of atheism must dare to engage in a struggle with the same theological motives as those represented by religion".

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dérive 34 (2008)



"Architecture has always marked out and organized spaces of production, has formulated both structural and symbolic orders that work inwardly as well as outwardly," writes [Andreas Rumpfhuber](#) in his [introductory article](#) to the latest issue of *dérive*.

Consequently, private life and *vita activa* mix, as Vienna-based architect and urbanist Gabu Heindl describes in her article "Life in cells". The repetition of the identical workplace in the form of small office cells was a creation of functionalism. Today, some workplaces resemble leisure facilities in their concern with space for relaxation. The general mobility of workers leads to "new typologies of living: boarding houses, rental offices, short-term stay housing projects". Or to the "sheep boxes" in Tokyo Internet cafés, the so-called "Manga Kissa", that for a small fee offer room-cells with computer, online access, desk, fold-down chair, refreshments and a shower.

"As an alternative to hotels, they are temporary sleeping places for mobile workers. For some, Internet cafés become [...] substitutes for a flat: Japanese newspapers refer to 'Net Café refugees'. A sheep box in a Manga Kissa has become the living space for an increasing number of the new working poor in Japan, who earn wages so low that they can no longer afford a small flat."

The invisible workforce: In her article "Benevolent spirits", Christina Linortner uncovers the traces of invisible work in Los Angeles. It includes the "army of carpenters, gardeners, floor tilers, hedge shearers, house maids and *au pairs*", often Latino immigrants without documents, who every morning invade LA's well-off hilly suburbs, which during the day appear dead. Then there is another phenomenon: the ghostwriters who live with their clients in their villas in order to identify with them, to get to know them inside out. When the book is finished they leave this second-hand life behind and go looking for a new client, a new identity.

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Kulturos barai 12/2008



Green spaces are vanishing from Lithuanian cities, a process that has been triggered by urban development, writes [Almantas Samalavicius](#). Vilnius receives the bulk of financial funding in the country, attracting ever more people and making it an increasingly expensive place to live. Former public areas are becoming building sites. Tauras Hill — one of the seven hills surrounding Vilnius — is the most vivid example of this race for financial gain. Now the target of business developers, it is rapidly losing its former standing as a historical beauty spot and tourist destination.

Culture and psychosis: Egotism, greed and vanity are simultaneously condemned and held up as values, writes Audrius Dauksa. One can "heal" economy or politics, says Dauksa, but how can one heal a culture that has become schizophrenic?

On a different note: *Kultūros barai* celebrates the 150th anniversary of the birth of Vincas Kudirka, one of the heroic personalities of national movements of the nineteenth century and the creator of the Lithuanian national anthem, the last line of which is "And for the sake of our country, let unity blossom!"

Literary perspectives: While the Northern Irish literary tradition is closely bound up with the experience of sectarian violence, contemporary Northern Irish poets and prose writers defy the assumption that "the troubles" are all there is to the country's literature. [Matt McGuire](#) writes that the attempt to deal in literary form with the ideological baggage of Northern Ireland's past is combined with an exploration of identity in the twenty-first century. This is part of the Eurozine series [Literary perspectives](#).

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Dialogi 11–12/2008



As Maribor prepares to become the European Capital of Culture 2012 [Boris Vezjak](#) finds the Maribor city council's definition of culture too narrow. It excludes the avant-garde and unconventional and narrows culture to what he deems to be established and elitist art-forms. Vezjak wonders if the council even knows what alternative culture is. When asked to define the term, a council representative replied that she did not have to answer the question as she already had a degree in cultural studies!

Vezjak outlines the present media climate which leans towards the general dumbing down of the cultural scene, mainly for financial reasons, and as a result dictates tastes into a one-dimensional state. But he is unwilling to lay the entire blame on the media when the local authorities are all too willing to support the one-dimensional view of the arts. In a blatant display of double standards, they cut funding to anything that does not suit their mould while at the same time boasting about becoming European Capital of Culture.

City of women: Jasmina Zaloznik is the producer of the annual festival City of Women which takes place in Ljubljana. It opens up a space in which women artists, theorists and activists from all over the world present their creations and achievements to a wider audience.

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Gegenworte 20 (2008)



Images are increasingly defining our world and everyday life, write the editors of *Gegenworte* in an issue entitled "Visualization or vision?".

"In order to come to terms with a swelling 'iconoclasm', there is a need for visual competence, which our culture of the written word lacks. We have more or less overcome illiteracy in this country, yet the problem of 'aniconism', the inability to interpret images appropriately, has not even entered public awareness."

Doris Bachmann–Medik asks what the iconic/visual turn actually means; although we still think in words, not in images, the image has become a means of scientific insight. The issue discusses how the current trend of visualization changes the fields of biomedicine, mathematics, engineering and criminology.

Thomas Hensel detects a close relationship between arts and sciences, namely the "power of the former to form the latter":

"Pyramids, cathedrals and rockets exist not because of geometry, theory of structures, or thermodynamics, but because they were first a picture — literally a vision — in the minds of those who built them", writes Hensel, quoting the historian of science E.S. Ferguson.

Still, the philologist Conrad Wiedemann remains sceptical of all the recent interest in the visual:

"The one who reads turns signs into pictures. The one who reads pictures wants them to speak. [Theorists of the visual] instinctively seek for the support of philology, of rhetoric, of linguistic theory [...] There is no need for a turn, but for continuity."

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