

DOING WITHOUT THE ELDERLY. An indecent proposal

by **Régis Debray**

Marsilio Editori, Venice, 2005.

73 pages. € 7.50

In the western world, the increasingly heated debate on euthanasia and on the lack of resources to be allocated to caring for the elderly and to protecting society's less fortunate members, is often fomented by opposing ideological, cultural and religious stances. Against this backdrop, Debray makes the strikingly indecent proposal of assigning a place, a supranational home, a sort of mini-state called *Bioland*, to an entire population of elders, ancestors, veterans, senior citizens in diaspora, as yet oblivious to being a newly formed people. As Debray points out, we wrinkle later and later with sleeker and sleeker names. And society absolves itself by simply sweetening the terminology.

With irony, sarcasm and a touch of dark pessimism, Debray poses the following questions: How far will society goad medical irresponsibility and economic arbitrariness? How can poverty and strife be contained when death comes later and later? In an era whose youth culture would have bewildered our predecessors, whose worth enhanced with age.

Debray places the onus on four factors: the transition from a transmitting society to a society based on real-time communications; from a working to an idle culture; from an age of hope to one of impatience; accompanied by the transition from the graphosphere to the videosphere.

On this premise, we should realize, in concert with Philippe Meirieu, that, "in the end we symbolically or physically kill those we do not recognize as having the right to citizenship and ultimately those we do not recognize as having the right to global citizenship".

Paolo Scocco