

EDITORIAL INTRODUCTION

Comparative Studies, borrowing from Steven Tötösy de Zepetnek's perspectives on what most comparat(iv)ists call new Comparative Literature, is on the rise in Third World countries as well as in the emerging economies of Asia. The stake is not literary any longer; it is culture-specific in that Euro-American globalization has led to the secretion of a gamut of reactions aiming at unearthing peoples and cultures formerly pushed to the margins. If it is agreed that Comparative Literature aimed initially at exploding the center of all things assumed to be in the West, then that the discipline is emerging in the other parts of the world where self-consciousness is becoming the norm should not be surprising.

As we claimed in the previous issue of the *Cahiers Ivoiriens d'Etudes Comparées (CIEC) / Ivorian Journal of Comparative Studies (IJCS)*, in order not to miss the bandwagon of inclusive globalizing planetary village (what our world should be), comparative literature as a discipline must jettison its monolingual leanings that accentuate ethnocentrism or particularisms that stymie attempts to approach the Other. No one is not without knowing that the world, due to the excessive (neo-)imperial dispositions, Euro-America is increasingly becoming Euro-Americanized. Fears in that regard are legitimate, and answers to this are expected. The effort to decenter the ethnocentric/ Eurocentric juggernaut both in our treasured discipline and the power centers influencing our quotidian life must be concerted and constant. Thus, the operators of *CIEC/IJCS* in West Africa's Côte d'Ivoire seek to depart from the Eurocentered tendencies of comparative literature in Francophone Africa where, in this day and age,

some scholars find their references in the cultural sites of Europe and France in particular. For those who operate CIEC/IJCS, the center is everywhere in the world. No wonder, publications come in various languages to reflect multiculturalism and polyvocality, which are the only identifiers of our world.

When he published his *Comparative Literature: Theory, Method, Application* in 1998, Tötösy delineated what his understanding of an expanded Comparative Literature was. He writes, “(...) the built-in notions of exclusion and self-referentiality of single-culture study, and their result of rigidly-defined disciplinary boundaries, are notions against which comparative cultural studies offers an alternative as well as a parallel field of study” (Tötösy 1998: 259). No doubt, this is a proposal to supplant and substitute the word “literature” with its attending ideological and ethnocentric charge by “culture” with the implication of going beyond study of cultures within one single language or national bound. This is our approach to the discipline and the *raison d’être* of our journal. We are acting pursuant to a wish: “(...) only the young generation of scholars and junior faculty understand the importance of new media technology in the study of culture and literature and value such; but without the strong support of tenured and established scholars, only in the future will the humanities arrive at an appreciation and full support of publishing in online journals with peer review, in full text, and—and this is the clincher—in journals with open access” (Totosy 2005: 62). We can reasonably assume that the future referred to in the above lines is here. The aim of this second issue of *CIEC/IJCS* is no different from the previous inasmuch as it continues to interrogate (in the same of calling into question) old Comparative Literature (referring to Spivak’s numerous hinting at what need to be remodeled in the field). Here again, we seek to disavow and dethrone (not in the sense of creating another power seat) essentialist and exclusivistic ideas and

conceptions of the discipline. Thus, more than ever, this issue stands by its ground: Comparative Literature is not dead; rather, it has morphed into a new state espousing the contours of our world.

The present issue comprises four (04) article contributions and a review essay in three different languages. They are exercise in comparative studies in our age. They all deal with interculturality and intertextuality in the global age. Thus the first text is authored by Theodore Bouabre. It is titled “Mythopoesis, childhood and history in Ben Okri’s *The Famished Road* and Emmanuel Dongala’s *Les Petits garçons naissent aussi des étoiles*.” According to Bouabre, in their works both authors “adopt a mythopoetic mode by using African myths to shape the characters of Azaro and Matapari, their protagonists.” The second text, “Regards croisés sur les traditions littéraires africaines et africaine-américaines: entre héritage, influence et dépendance,” is a comparative study steeped into intertextuality and on the development of African and African-American literatures in view of determining if they had been made possible by way of African and African-American people’s contact with Western traditions or if they are tributary to the cultural heritage of their own people. The paper reaches the conclusion that one has to look for African and African-American heritage behind the literatures of these people. “The Past as Revenant”: Cynicism, Memory and Trauma in Fanta Régina Nacro’s *The Night of Truth*,” the third contribution is a filmic study. First and foremost, it shows that literary and cultural studies, or Comparative Cultural Studies as advocated here, must be inclusive of areas of study like painting, sculpture, film among others, in order to debunk the purist conception considering them as genres that are unworthy of standing on equal ground with literature. The author employs implements of Trauma Studies as well as film theories to delve into the memory of the traumatized people of a fictitious nation struck

by a harrowing war as is known to be the case in post-colonial Africa. It is a denunciation of conditions that make genocidal violence possible.

Kpao Sarè's article, "Yes, We Can': Sprechende Afrikanische Figuren in Hans Christoph Buchs Roman *Sansibar Blues*", builds on Spivak's seminal article "Can the Subaltern Studies" and interrogates Hans Buch's *Sansibar Blues* so as to find a possible voice among the African characters, and by extension Africans, who are obliterated in historiography because of their dehumanization by slave traders like Tippu Tip in East Africa.

This issue would not be complete if it did not include at least a book review dealing with the way comparative literature traveled and what it morphed into today. The review essay here is a study on Steven Tötösy de Zepetnek and Tutun Mukherejee's volume on *A Companion to Comparative Literature, World Literatures and Comparative Cultural Studies*. This book is an additional link to Tötösy de Zepetnek and Mukherejee's tireless efforts at impressing new directions on the discipline of Comparative Literature.

Once again, our journal contributions are endeavors to offer a palette of works showcasing new directions and approaches in the discipline of Comparative Literature where literature is being decentered on behalf of culture, culture being inclusive of the former. *CIEC/IJCS* thus aims to bring diversity forth to a wider readership and partake in the dynamic and changing world of Comparative Studies. We therefore invite readers, editors and writers to join with us and break the walls of mistrust, distrust, extremism and intolerance towards difference in our world.

WORKS CITED

Tötösy de Zepetnek, Steven. 1998. *Comparative Literature: Theory, Method, Application*. Amsterdam/Atlanta: Rodopi.

-----, 2007. "The New Humanities: The Intercultural, The Comparative and the Interdisciplinary." *The Global South* 1.2, 45-69.

Siendou Konaté
*Université Félix Houphouët-Boigny,
Côte d'Ivoire*