

Mouvances Francophones

Volume 1

Number 1 *Echos de la Francophonie et de l'Institut
africain de UW(O)*

Article 8

2016

Introduction

Servanne Woodward

The University of Western Ontario, swoodwar@uwo.ca

Follow this and additional works at: <https://ir.lib.uwo.ca/mf>



Part of the [African Languages and Societies Commons](#), [Bilingual, Multilingual, and Multicultural Education Commons](#), and the [French and Francophone Literature Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Woodward, Servanne (2016) "Introduction," *Mouvances Francophones*: Vol. 1 : No. 1 , Article 8.

Available at: <https://ir.lib.uwo.ca/mf/vol1/iss1/8>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by Scholarship@Western. It has been accepted for inclusion in *Mouvances Francophones* by an authorized editor of Scholarship@Western. For more information, please contact tadam@uwo.ca, wlsadmin@uwo.ca.

Introduction: Global history *versus* Immediate Goals

by the General Editor, Servanne Woodward

Global history and immediate contemporary goals are the two poles of interest shaping this first issue of *Mouvances Francophones*. The first one engages personal curiosity relating to otherness (a previous stage of society alien to oneself); the second one, a partial involvement subsuming most considerations under a militant politico-economic and immediate gain among local targets that may or may not weigh on international relations. Those gains may be mutually beneficial or not. They vary in degree of generosity. International relations concerns the fleeting interests occasionally molding history in the making, while epic literature makes sense of the fate of humanity from the perspective of a looming past. This temporality can be dismissed as alien esthetic construct and the rhetorical musings of any given poet, or it can impact the reader's sense of belonging to a global and fragile humanity of universal aspirations and woes. The exemplary life of common beings or heroes of past strands of people relates to us all with the same degree of appropriation and distance, while current individual interests address us unevenly even though, at least nominally, we are collectively potential drivers in their investments.

Two critical articles focus on narrative techniques adapted from the oral traditional storytelling performed by the Sub-Sahara "griot": Elhadji Mustapha Diop focuses on "transmission" as interpreted by Dani Kouyaté. Filmic translation can be characterized as the transfer of content from one format to another -- a process sharing in the orality of the literal to mark the transposition of oral practices of recording to written French. Elhadji Camara reflects on *L'enfant noir* by Camara Laye and *Le devoir de violence* by Yambo Ouologuem. Camara Laye coalesces authorial, narrative and the characters' interventions as one voice, to portray one happy life basking in the mysteries of blacksmiths and the honorable virtuous values of countryside dwellers; Yambo Ouologuem imports a written source to format his consternating historical report on pre-colonial Africa, thereby countering the laudatory oral form traditionally adopted by Griot in their treatment of the people's memory confided to their safekeeping. Thus Yambo Ouologuem finds himself embroiled in a controversy of plagiarism and treason while Camara Laye's idyllic portrayal of pre-colonial Africa earns him the merit of redeeming a culture vilified by design when colonizers needed to justify their enterprise. Yambo Ouologuem chose a multiauthored narrative repeating the same events to join to textual appropriation in order to present an unbroken chain of violent governance from pre- to post-colonial Africa.

Ahmed Bencherif offers a precious authorial insight to enlighten us on the creative process of his three volume saga of *Marguerite*. For instance, the author explains how he blended reports of daily life to the in-depth study of the colonial period concerning Algeria of the between 1871 and 1919. He made use of materials by the French historian Charles-Robert Ageron (1923-2008) and consulted archives. Marguerite refers to a village founded next to an iron mine in 1880, a general who died at Sedan in 1870, and a legal case following an insurrection. Although he does not select a single character to demonstrate the ills of colonization because it would have looked as if caricature or fates were involved, his central hero witnesses its destructive powers while remaining untouched. His name (Hazma) designates him as a glorious invincible character. The eight-hundred page novel is to be completed by a new volume dedicated to the women of Montpellier active in the Marguerite legal case. He categorizes himself as an author "fascinated by history" and his post as president of Naama

writers indicates that he plays a role in what the eighteenth-century called the “Republic of Letters”.

The classroom experience of “The Money order” and its film version (both by Sembène Ousmane) shows how socio-realism of the 1950’s in Senegal may be received in the multicultural classroom of North America in 2016. Even with contextualizing efforts, the reception is contemporary and dictated by personal community. It would be a mistake to dismiss this phenomenon as anecdotal episode and common “misprision”, since the reception of the students find strong echoes in professional criticism of this work. Intercultural perception involves universals, and it is in keeping with the 2006 movements of francophone writers who want to be categorized in “World literature” instead of being assigned national borders. If French is a tool to reach an international audience, English translation may fulfill the same goal and perhaps the linguistic means of communication become minor. Immediately, two problems arise from this positioning: 1. We know that form is not independent from content and vice versa – and Sembène Ousmane resorted to several linguistic codes. He used Wolof in his film (interspersed with French) with French subtitles, and the English version has English subtitles throughout, just as his novela is entirely written in French. 2. The anti-colonial message does not have the same traction in the commonwealth or in established colonies such as United States as in Senegal under colonial rule or post-independence. The questions raised by Elhadji Camara as to the targeted public, the occasional *versus* the long-lasting piece of artistic expression would need to be addressed, and the pedagogical experience by Peter Saiz and his students shows an awareness that francophone theory is still lacking in this regard.

If the four previous articles negotiated history and contemporary interests, the next piece is an interview of Philippe Zeller, French ambassador to Canada, and it reflects on current international interplay. His discussion was downloaded about seven times per month since it was posted: it is more obviously connected to current and future interests of international relations. The contributions by Annick Mac Askill, Serena Virani and Raksha Sule report on campus activities including the very active Africa Institute of the university of Western [Ontario]. Lately, it sought inspiration from the United Nation guidelines “The Global Goals for Sustainable Development”.