

## EDITORS' NOTE

We are pleased to present the fourteenth issue of *LEF-E*. As always, we thank our referees for their diligent work and our contributors for sharing their expertise, helping to make this issue appealing and stimulating.

In this issue, you will find engaging analyses of diverse narratives shaped by several cultures (including Spain, France, Senegal, and Congo) and epochs, spanning from early modern Europe to contemporary Africa. To different extents, these articles share the common thread of violence and also take an interest in gender issues and specific forms of viciousness against women.

The opening article on María de Zayas y Sotomayor's *La inocencia castigada*, an early modern novella, reveals issues of gender and beyond (Prendergast). It draws on Spanish Old Christians' centuries-long project to construct discourses of disgust and uncleanness attributed to Spain's Jewish and Muslim subjects, placing them outside the Catholic norm and designating them as inherently polluted.

Moving forward in time and heading north in geography, the next article explores female mentorship in several French novels during the Belle Époque (Christiansen). These works unveil the crucial role of women helping women to achieve professional success in areas that had traditionally been the purview of men alone. The following piece also questions stereotyped roles and discourses in the late twentieth-century French novel *Mes nuits sont plus belles que vos jours* by Marie Billetdoux (Hayman). This fiction reflects on the nature of romantic relationships while exposing the disturbing messages that hide in children's books and shape the lives of women and men. Moreover, it senses the extent to which learning romantic literature undermines the notions of love.

Further south in contemporary Francophone Africa, Ken Bugul's story depicts a craving for freedom (El Nossery). In *La folie et la mort*, madness is both a discursive and social liberation as well as an aesthetic exploration that goes beyond the limits of gender. These ideas are the two strands of the writing of oneself and the text that challenge the constraints imposed on it by outdated and atavistic societal traditions. The last contribution stays on the same continent with *Congo Inc. : Le testament de Bismarck* by In Koli Jean Bofane (Ndi). It recounts the Congolese saga of economic and gender violence while interrogating the nature of postcolonial politics as well as global geopolitics, creating what can be considered a new narrative genre, the coltan novel.

Happy reading!

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