**Call for Papers**

**UNILU College of Arts and Sciences International Conference**

**Organized by the Departments of French and English**

**Violence, Identity and Nation Building**

**Lubumbashi, October 28-31, 2020**

Violence currently elicits a lot of discussions. M. Marzano, Severine Autessere, Nancy Rose Hunt, Rene Marchand, Lisa Jackson, Eve Ensler and Dennis Mukwege have explored, particularly on Congo (DR), the roots and nature of violence. Indeed, when speaking of violence within the African space, Congo (DR) is most certainly the metaphor for all continental violence. Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie and Wole Soyinka conceive the Congolese army as the source of violence in their literary works.

Narratives of Congo’s recent traumatic conflicts, frequently dubbed “Heart of Darkness,” not only highlight the violence and horrendous rapes of both men and women but also those of children (as young as three months old babies) and the elderly (even older than 80 years). Rape has not only been physically used as a weapon of war but also mentally to the extent that mothers are coerced to sleep with their sons and fathers with their daughters. These transgressions and humiliations have violently assaulted and destroyed the social fabric of eastern Congo and have impacted the Congolese nation.

Congo (DR) is not the only country to deal with issues of violence, rape, national identity and nationhood, for Sierra Leone, Angola, Sudan, Rwanda, Kosovo, to solely mention these countries, have had to deal with similar problems. These countries have also been mentally, physically and economically impacted by violence.

What is the nature of this violence and why is Congo (DR), called the capital of rape, considered the site of violence *per excellence*? Why do Congolese perpetuate violence, and how does one explain the mutilation of bodies in the south east of the country? How does one explain the abductions and rape of children and the vicious rapes of women? Is this a continuum of colonial army practices or are these the psychotic results of years of dehumanization and violence? How does one explain this “heroization of criminal violence and its spectacularization” (Michela Marzano)?

Moreover, how does a nation identify itself when it is perceived as the “capital of rape”? How does one construe the Congolese male when he is represented as a rapist of women? How does one understand the nature of rape and violence when global opinion condemns the rape of women but not that of men by both men and women? How does one reconstruct the self and re-establish prior pride and selfhood? How does one renovate national identity and reform the nation? How does a nation proceed to reconstruct itself on the basis of defiance?

Workshops, seminars, films, popular and religious music, newspaper articles, media reports, literature, history, genocide studies books and scholarly essays have all highlighted rape and violence in Congo (DR) or Africa. They might have been written to defend women and the Congolese population, yet they have all condemned the irresponsibility and collapse of the state. Certainly, seminars organized by the state and humanitarian organizations have discussed violence and rape, but the proposed arguments remain superficial because political authorities dismissed and trivialized the very notion of rape and women themselves, at times, embraced the official narratives of rape.

This international, multidisciplinary conference invites researchers to focus–through literature, history, medicine, philosophy, sociology, anthropology, psychiatry, law, etc.—the concept, nature and causes of this violence; its relationship to identity and nation building; social, cultural, historical, economic or social roots; use as political power and weapon of war; and the means and strategies of reshaping national identity so as to restructure the nation within an African context and Congolese, in particular.

**Research Topics**

Abstracts-- in English or French from various academic disciplines and human rights activists-- of 300 words--focusing on the themes here below-- should be submitted by June 30, 2020 to the following email address: lubumbvin@gmail.

Violence and rape in literature

Violence and rape in conflicts

Paradigms of diversity in African societies

Violence, identity and nation building

Violence, rape and religious identity

Violence and ethnic, racist and homophobic identity

Violence in child soldier narratives

Militarism, masculinity and violence

Economic conflicts and violence

Human rights narratives and violence

History and the writing of violence

Trauma and violence in the languages and literatures of Africa

Trauma and violence in Anglophone African literatures

**Organisation Committee**

1. Maurice Amuri Mpala-Lutebele, Université de Lubumbashi, Congo (DR).
2. Jean-Paul Biruru Rucinagiza, Université de Lubumbashi, Congo (DR).
3. Justin Bisanswa Kalulu, Université de Lubumbashi, Congo (DR) / Université Laval, Canada.
4. Chiwengo Ngwarsungu, Creighton University, USA/ University of Lubumbashi, Congo (DR).
5. Kasereka Kavwahirehi, University d’Ottawa, Canada.
6. Michaël Kasombo Tshibanda, Université de Lubumbashi, Congo (DR).
7. Kasongo Kapanga, Richmond University, USA.
8. Lokangaka Losambe, University of Vermont, USA.
9. Joseph Lunjwire Lw’engombe, Université de Lubumbashi, Congo (DR).
10. Marcel Ngandu Mutombo, Université de Lubumbashi, Congo (DR).

**Scientific Committee**

1. Maurice Amuri Mpala-Lutebele, Université de Lubumbashi, Congo (DR).
2. Justin Bisanswa Kalulu, Université de Lubumbashi, Congo (DR)/Université Laval, Canada.
3. Buata B. Malela, Centre Universitaire de Mayotte.
4. Chiwengo Ngwarsungu, Creighton University (USA)/ Université de Lubumbashi.
5. Bernadette Desorbay, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin (Allemagne).
6. Donatien Dibwe dia Mwembu, Université de Lubumbashi, Congo (DR).
7. Suzanne Gehrmann, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, Allemagne.
8. Kasereka Kavwahirehi, Université d’Ottawa, Canada.
9. Kasongo Kapanga, Richmond University, USA.
10. Kazadi Kimbu, Université de Lubumbashi, Congo (DR).
11. Lokangaka Losambe, University of Vermont, USA.
12. Sabrina Parent, Université libre de Bruxelles, Belgique.

**Participation Modality**

Abstracts in English or French, from various academic disciplines and human rights activists, and of 300 words-- excluding the name of the author, the institution, e-mail and telephone number-- should be submitted by June 30, 2020, to the following email address: lubumbvin@gmail. com. Confirmation of acceptances will be issued by July 30, 2020. Papers on violence and other issues pertaining to violence are also welcome. The above deadlines and Colloquium dates are contingent on the evolution of the fight against COVID-19.

Registration fees are US $100 for international teaching scholars and activists, US $50 for African teaching scholars and activists, US $20 for graduate instructors and students. Travel, accommodation and some meals are at the expense of the participants. For inquiries regarding the conference, email your questions to the following e-mail addresses: chiwengo@creighton.edu; amurcle33@gmail.com; or/and michelkasombo@gmail.com. Information pertaining hotels will be provided later. In addition to plenary sessions and panels, there will be a roundtable of authors and filmmakers.