

Laudatory Speech for Professor Dominique Combe

Professor Dominique Combe is an internationally acknowledged practitioner of research in French literary studies, Full-professor of École Normale Supérieure in Paris and Sorbonne 3. He has been teaching classes and giving lectures at a number of universities abroad in his capacity of Visiting Professor. The list of the places where he has taught in academia includes Cairo (1983-1987), Fribourg (1993-1997), and Oxford (2007-2010). Since 2010, has been both lecturer and researcher of “Littérature et Langues” [Literature and Languages] of École Normale Supérieure in Ulm Street.

Professor Combe’s publication history is extremely diverse. He has authored and co-authored several individual and joint works of literary studies whose foci represent unusual depths and richness: his analytical works in literary theory are concerned with the history of poetics and the theory of genres (*Poétique et récit, une rhétorique des genres*, 1989 [Poetics and the récit, the rhetoric of genres], *Les Genres Littéraire*, 1993 [The literary genres], but he has also conducted research in various topics related to modern and contemporary French poetry, stylistics, rhetoric, and poetics. He examines almost all the prominent French-speaking authors of the 19th, 20th and 21st centuries; his essays and monographs subject to scrutiny the poetry of Mallarmé, Rimbaud, Yves Bonnefoy, and Lorand Gaspar.

Over the last two decades, Professor Combe has significantly contributed to the examination of what is termed as “Francophone literatures.” It had been approached earlier from a postcolonial and geopolitical perspective, chiefly characteristic of the Anglo-American traditions, and also dominant in French critical thinking from ideological and socio-critical vantage grounds. Professor Combe has done the lion’s share of the work to disseminate these critical viewpoints in France. His primary aims have been to reach beyond the examination of the Francophone literary phenomenon, which had predominantly concerned itself with the interrelatedness of geographical and socio-historical specificities and questions related to national identity, collective imagination and the particularities of language. In addition to the massive amounts of already existing linguistic, historical, political and sociological interpretations, Professor Combe has studied – while *not* failing to acknowledge the validity of these interpretations – the phenomenology of Francophone literatures by using comparative poetic methods (*Les Littératures francophones, Questions, débats, polémiques*, 2010 [Francophone literatures, questions, debates and polemics]). In addition to eight monographs under the authorship of Professor Combe, over 120 individual publications have been put into print in various French and international journals.

Aside from his capacity as professor and researcher, Professor Combe also plays an instrumental role in the shaping of science policy as an elected member of *Conceil National des Universités* (CNU), that is, the National Council of Universities. In recent years, he has been member of the Board of Directors of Sorbonne University (*Conseil d’Administration*) and President of the Committee of Academic Affairs of the institution (*Comission de Spécialistes Paris III*). Besides these positions, Professor Combe acted as Special

Representative to the Rector of Sorbonne throughout many years, in charge of nurturing relations with the Francophone world and foreign countries.

Professor Combe has a more than two-decade-long relationship with the Department of French Studies of Eötvös Loránd University. In the early 1990s, as an instructor of the University of Fribourg, he paid several visits to our University, and our colleagues also taught courses in Fribourg as Visiting Lecturers. Following his return to Paris, the intensity of our cooperation remained undiminished. Professor Combe gave several intensive master courses at the Doctoral School of French Literature. He was appointed Head of ENS last year, which, together with the introduction of new strategic directives at École Normale Supérieure (the accreditation of the Institute's own Master Programs and that of the Doctoral School) represents excellent opportunities for an even more fruitful and beneficial prospective cooperation.

Professor Dominique Combe's academic accomplishments, his open-mindedness and humane attitude have all become a source of inspiration over the past decades and emblemize the scholarly and human excellence that generations of students and instructors at Eötvös Loránd University have followed – qualities which made him worthy to be bestowed upon the title of *doctor honoris causa* during the festive occasion.

Budapest, 10th May 2013

Translation: Rudolf Sárdi, Head of International Operations, Faculty of Humanities of ELTE