

SYNOPSIS OF THE CURRENT SITUATION OF COMPARATIVE HUMANITIES IN THE U.S. AND EUROPE

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Abstract || This article is a description of the situation of comparative humanities in the Western hemisphere with attention to the discipline of comparative literature and the fields of world literature, cultural studies, and comparative cultural studies. With brief discussions of the said fields, the authors propose that to make the study of literature and culture as a socially relevant activity of scholarship today humanities scholars must turn to contextual and evidence-based work parallel with attention to and responsibility with regard to humanities graduates' employment. This does not mean that the traditional study of literature including close-text study would be relegated to lesser value; rather, the objective ought to be to perform both and in a parallel fashion. Their final analysis is that comparative cultural studies as based on tenets of the comparative approach and thought in comparative literature, world literature, and cultural studies practiced in interdisciplinarity, and employing the advantages of new media technology could achieve a global presence and social relevance of which comparative humanities would prove a relevant component.

Keywords || Comparative Cultural Studies | Comparative Literature | Interdisciplinarity | Comparative Humanities | World Literature | Cultural Studies.

0. Introduction

The perspective and use of comparison in scholarship have been and are widely employed in various disciplines and one of the most recent argumentation with regard to the comparative in the humanities and social sciences is put forward by historian Marcel Detienne in his *Comparing the Incomparable* (2008: 36-39; *Comparer l'incomparable* [2000]; see also — another historian — George M. Fredrickson's, 1997). To begin with the discipline of comparative literature, it is no secret that it has a history of insecurity and battles with regard to its lack of definition and the lack of a theoretical framework and methodology. These lacunae — acknowledged repeatedly in the discipline since its inception in the nineteenth century — are among others a result of the discipline's borrowing from other disciplines for the analysis of literature. In terms of institutional presence, the discipline gained currency most widely spread in the U.S. and in Europe (albeit in the latter to a lesser extent) and in both regions it is undergoing a diminishing presence since the interest in and adoption of literary and culture theory in departments of English and because of comparative literature's entrenched Eurocentrism (see, e.g., Pireddu, 2009; Tötösy de Zepetnek, 1998, 2007, 2010; Witt, 2007). A further shortcoming of comparative literature remains its construction (theoretical and applied) based on national literatures at a time when the paradigm of the global has gained currency in many disciplines and approaches. Further, since the 1980s the discipline has been under pressure to justify its institutional validity owing to the arrival of cultural studies. Despite these developments, with regard to the U.S., Haun Saussy makes the claim that "Comparative Literature has, in a sense, won its battles. It has never been better received in the American university. [...] Our conclusions have become other people's assumptions" (2006: 3; see also Finney, 2008). While Saussy's analysis that comparative literature's aims and scope have gained currency in literary study is well argued and a welcome positive view, what is missing in his assessment is attention to the discipline's institutional constriction in the U.S., as well as in Europe. His positive view of the new status quo represents an adjustment to such opinions as Susan Bassnett's in her *Introduction to Comparative Literature* that the discipline is dead (1993: 3), Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's (2003) similar suggestion with the title of her book *Death of a Discipline* (i.e., comparative literature), or the negative prognosis in the entry "Comparative Literature" in the *Routledge Dictionary of Literary Terms* (GMH). Altogether the two opposing views — that the idea of comparative literature conquered literary study and that the discipline is dead — refer to the U.S. and Europe and while both may be correct assessments depending on whether one considers the discipline's intellectual content or its institutional status, they continue with a Euro-USAmerican-centric view and do not take

into account the emergence of the discipline in Asia (Mainland China, Korea, India, the Arab world) and Latin America, or even developments in countries such as Greece, Italy, Portugal, Spain, etc. (on this, see, e.g., Tötösy de Zepetnek and Mukherjee, 2012). In the following, in order to provide a synopsis of the current state of affairs of comparative humanities in the West, we present brief descriptions of the discipline of comparative literature and the fields of world literature, cultural studies, and comparative cultural studies.

1. The Discipline of Comparative Literature and the Concept of World Literature

In order to discuss the situation of the discipline of comparative literature in relation to the field of world literature we posit the following definition of comparative literature:

The discipline of Comparative Literature is in toto a method in the study of literature in at least two ways. First, Comparative Literatures means the knowledge of more than one national language and literature, and/or it means the knowledge and application of other disciplines in and for the study of literature and second, Comparative Literature has an ideology of inclusion of the Other, be that a marginal literature in its several meanings of marginality, a genre, various text types, etc. [...] Comparative Literature has intrinsically a content and form, which facilitate the cross-cultural and interdisciplinary study of literature and it has a history that substantiated this content and form. Predicated on the borrowing of methods from other disciplines and on the application of the appropriated method to areas of study that single-language literary study more often than not tends to neglect, the discipline is difficult to define because thus it is fragmented and pluralistic (Tötösy de Zepetnek, 1998: 13; for bibliographies of comparative literature books and articles see Tötösy de Zepetnek, 2009 and 2011).

The concept of world literature originates in Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's proposal of *Weltliteratur* where he developed, among other ideas, the relevance and importance of translation and argued against the national conception of literature (for examples of the current understanding of the relevance of Goethe's concept, see, e.g., Birus, 1999; Sturm-Trigonakis, 2007). While Goethe's proposal did not gain presence as a structure in institutional settings (i.e., university departments of world literature), the concept itself has been — at least *in nomine* — a standard in the discipline of comparative literature as an intellectual and pedagogical approach, although in practice resulting in Eurocentrism and the national approach. In recent years perhaps against the said shortfalls of comparative literature — i.e., Eurocentrism, the loss of its locus of literary and culture theory, and its insistence on the national approach — the earlier concept of world literature has gained renewed interest not only as a theoretical

construct but also as an institutional structure, particularly in US-American and Canadian university departments and a good number of scholarly books have been published with the approach (see, e.g., Damrosch, 2003; 2009; Gallagher, 2008; Lawall, 1994; Pizer, 2006; Prendergast, 2004 and 2008; Simonsen and Stougard-Nielsen, 2008; Sturm-Trigonakis, 2007). Although in the U.S. and Canada there is a development towards the establishing of departments and professorships specifically designated as “world literature”, it remains to be seen whether the concept will develop as degree granting units, thus according it an institutional base. While courses in world literature exist everywhere, the difference is that while such courses are taught, there are few and in-between departments of such. Regardless of the diminishing presence of comparative literature as a degree granting field in the West, the matter of the institutional and administrative presence of world literature or that of comparative cultural studies (see below) remain questionable. At the same time, the intellectual relevance of comparative literature, world literature, cultural studies, and comparative cultural studies remain attractive owing to globalization and its impact worldwide. A definition, then, of world literature, as distinct from comparative literature is as follows: “World literature is not an infinite, ungraspable canon of works but rather a mode of circulation and of reading, a mode that is as applicable to individual works as to bodies of material, available for reading established classics and new discoveries alike” (Damrosch, 2003: 5; see also Pizer, 2006 for an extensive discussion of world literature). Interestingly, Damrosch’s concept of world literature with regard to literary production, publication, and circulation is similar to the microsystem approach to literature as proposed and practiced by Siegfried J. Schmidt’s *Empirische Literaturwissenschaft* (1994) and Itamar Even-Zohar’s polysystem theory (see Schmidt, e.g., 2010; Even-Zohar, e.g., 1990).

Comparative literature as a discipline remains, while embattled particularly with regard to its institutional presence, an established field in the U.S., Canada, Australia (and even in England where the discipline has not had a strong presence, the discipline has gained in interest recently), in Latin America, and in many European countries. However, as suggested above, what is remarkable is that both the concept of the discipline, as well as its institutional presence are advancing in so-called “peripheral” regions including in European countries such as Spain, Portugal, Greece, etc. Here, we caution against the “period” approach to gauge the gains which are observed in the said “peripheral” regions. In other words, the suggestion that these advances are to be viewed as “catching up” similar to how, for example, modernity has appeared in “peripheral” regions following Europe (and even within Europe later in the East and following West Europe). Such a view, based on the said Eurocentric concept and practice of comparative literature, would not be surprising. Instead,

we argue that the advances of the discipline are a result of the impact of globalization and thus of a sophisticated construct and practice of significant relevance (more on this, see, in particular, Krishnaswamy, 2010; see also Caruth and Culler, 2010).

2. The Field of Cultural Studies

Cultural studies is practiced as a hybrid field of scholarship, that is, not located in a specific and established discipline but grounded in critical humanities and social sciences theories which, instead of any unifying disciplinary theory and methodology of its own, embraces a broad range of theoretical approaches and methodologies. In contrast to traditional disciplines, the strength of cultural studies resides precisely in its theoretical heterogeneity, richness, plurality, and the flexibility of its borders. It aims to reconfigure the boundaries of humanities and social sciences scholarship around new paradigms in theory and in application. Because of its diversity of methods, cultural studies can perhaps be best defined as a metadisciplinary idea across disciplines rather than as a unitary discipline. It can also be described as inter-, multi-, and even counter- or anti-disciplinary, taking its agenda and mode of analysis from shared concerns and methods, (re)combining numerous traditional and new disciplines to effect the critical study of cultural phenomena in various societies, always with an emphasis on the cultural and social context and with an aim of understanding the metamorphosis of the notion of culture itself. Rather than privileging canonical works or quantitative data and reproducing established lines of authority, cultural studies includes work on culture and culture products aiming to articulate the unsaid, the suppressed, and the concealed by dominant modes of knowing, not only of texts and signifying practices but also of theories in traditional disciplines. At its best cultural studies is a cultural critique that extols the virtues of eclecticism and embraces a holistic and democratic view of culture through a spectrum of theoretical approaches and methodologies, seeking to make explicit connections between various cultural forms and between culture and society and politics, with the aim not merely to be analytical but to promote change. Cultural studies is always potentially controversial, with at least in its origins claiming for itself a radical political commitment and a practice of social change. Thus, unlike traditional philological scholarship that strives to be “objective”, cultural studies is explicitly ideological. Although in some of its later versions cultural studies has become less avowedly political, it continues to represent a challenge both to the atrophied elitism of traditional academic disciplines and to hegemonic power structures more broadly. The term “culture” in cultural studies refers to an anthropological and narrative conception of the term to study ordinary features of life, while it aims simultaneously to dismantle the

aesthetic-textual and hierarchical conception of “culture”. At the same time this means also that cultural studies can be applied to the study of the traditional, the canonical, and the hegemonic. Cultural studies can produce more relevant knowledge than established scholarly discourses in its readiness to address everyday life, in, for example, the study of marginalized and popular cultures or in investigating culture and media interest in the creative role of its audience (see, e.g., Bathrick, 1992; Berubé, 2005; Franco, 2007; Grossberg, 1998; Grossberg, Nelson and Treichler, 1992; Hall, 2001; Prow, 2007; Rojek, 2007; specifically on method in cultural studies, see, e.g., Ferguson and Golding, 1997; Lee and Poynton, 2000; Lee, 2003; White and Schwoch, 2006; McCarthy *et al.*, 2007).

Cultural studies can draw on and/or be worked into a large number of established disciplines in the humanities and social sciences including literary studies and literary theory, the sociology of culture, social theory, media studies, communication studies, cultural anthropology, cultural history/geography, ethnography, sociolinguistics, translation studies, folklore, philosophy, law, cultural policy studies, pedagogy, history, museum studies, audience studies, art history and criticism, political science, gender studies, etc. In the area of thematics, too, cultural studies can be applied to such as gender and sexuality, nationhood and (post)national identities, colonialism and postcolonialism, race and ethnicity, popular culture, the formation of social subjectivities, consumer culture, science and ecology, identity politics, the politics of aesthetics and disciplinarity, cultural institutions, discourse and textuality, (sub)culture(s) in various societies, popular culture and its audience, (global) culture in a postmodern age, the politics of aesthetics, culture and its institutions, language, cultural politics of the city, science, culture and the ecosystems, postcolonial studies, feminist, gender, and queer studies, ethnic studies, (im)migration studies, urban studies, publishing, metaprofessional concerns, such as the job market, academic publishing, and tenure, etc.

With regard to its background in thought and institutional presence, cultural studies began in Britain in the 1950s with Marxist-based critical analysis of culture by Richard Hoggart, Raymond Williams, Edward P. Thompson, Stuart Hall, etc., in the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies. The Centre issued a series of influential politically engaged studies, some later combined into books, on mass media and popular culture. The earliest publications questioned literary production of what had come to be canonized as “English literature”, the influence of the cultural industry on the masses, and proposed that popular and working class productions and their audience were worthy of study. British cultural studies underwent exportation by the move of expatriate Britons pushed out under the Thatcher government who obtained faculty positions in the U.S. and other Anglophone countries. Thus the most widespread

success of cultural studies has naturally been in the English-speaking world, with British, North American (U.S. and Canada), and Australian and New Zealand cultural studies (see, e.g., Turner, 2003; Frow and Morris, 1993; Prow, 2007). A parallel school of thought evolved in Germany with the Marxist critical analysis based Frankfurt school with the difference that while the Birmingham school studied popular culture, the Frankfurt school argued for the importance of high culture and against the impact of popular culture and based mostly in antipositivist sociology, psychology, and existential philosophy (e.g., Theodor W. Adorno, Jürgen Habermas, Max Horkheimer, Leo Löwenthal, Herbert Marcuse). A further framework for the study of culture is *Kulturwissenschaft* — a framework developed since the 1920s in Germany and in many aspects rooted in nineteenth-century thought — based on the fields of philosophy of culture (e.g., Georg Simmel and Ernst Cassirer), history of culture (e.g., Wilhelm Dilthey), historical and philosophical anthropology (e.g., Johann Friedrich Blumenbach), sociology (e.g., Max Weber), and history of art (e.g., Aby Warburg). While since the 1980s *Kulturwissenschaft* has adopted some aspects of cultural studies, it remains a specific field and discipline rooted in German historical and philosophical thought and in its history and current practice different from cultural studies (see, e.g., Böhme and Scherpe, 1996; Böhme, Matussek and Müller, 2000; Kittler, 2001).

Cultural studies has continued to undergo significant fragmentation and development in areas such as globalization, the critical analysis of race, ethnographic field work, and gender studies, among others. It should also be noted that many aspects and perspectives of cultural studies have been available and exist(ed) in the discipline of comparative literature where many of cultural studies' themes and topics have been studied before the rise of cultural studies and continue to happen today. In the U.S., in addition to the field's prominence in departments of English, it has also been welcomed increasingly in departments of history, sociology, anthropology, and other fields of the humanities and social sciences. Cultural studies has also had influence in Southeast Asia, particularly in Taiwan and South Korea, where many of its practitioners returned after having studied in Anglophone countries. Chinese cultural studies disassociates itself from nationalistic and political implications, favoring "Chineseness" (including overseas Chinese) as a cultural rather than ethnic, national, or political reference point, a kind of "Chinese culturalism" that attempts to transcend geopolitical borders (see Cheng, Wang and Tötösy de Zepetnek, 2009). The influence of cultural studies worldwide is partly owing to the hegemony of English and to its status as the world's *lingua franca* today, US-American hegemony and the spread of popular culture which, in turn, gave the initial impetus in the U.S. to develop the Birmingham School's theoretical foci and apply them in and for the study of US-American

culture.

With regard to cultural studies in Europe, Paul Moore suggests that the critique of received cultural worth is hindered by Eurocentrism, the (nostalgic) belief that Europe is the repository of “high” culture, a conservative defense of which then becomes a critical value in European self-enunciation. Similarly, Roman Horak (1999) identifies the same prejudice against cultural studies and popular culture in Germany and Austria specifically, as well as the impact of the Frankfurt School, among other factors, along with the fear and disdain for the popular linked closely to a fear of US-American culture and the threat of “Americanization.” Yet, the impact of cultural studies is apparent (although most publications in cultural studies appear in the U.S., Canada, or Australia, and this is the case with articles in the volumes published by Oxford University Press on Spanish, German, French, Italian, and Russian cultural studies whose authors begin with an introduction that set out the breadth of the task involved in developing an identifiable cultural studies dimension within the established cultural histories and traditions in scholarship of the various nations (see, e.g., Graham and Labanyi, 1996; Denham, Kacandes, and Petropoulos, 1997; Forbes and Kelly, 1996; Kelly and Shepherd, 1998; Kennedy, 1994; see also Le Hir and Strand, 2000; Reynolds and Kidd, 2000; Jordan and Morgan-Tamosunas, 2000; Forgacs and Lumley, 1996). Of interest is that in European scholarship it is in France — in addition to Central and East Europe as we explain below — where cultural studies has acquired the least interest (see, e.g., Chalard-Fillaudeau, 2010). Of interest is also that the range of cultural studies topics is ever broadening, including oral history, politics and history, critical concepts of class, ethnicity, and community, as well as related issues of the politics of standard language versus dialect, and a few gender and queer studies, working toward what Josephine Gattuso Hendin has called a “more inclusive ethnic discourse” (2001: 57; on various aspects of this, see also Birnbaum, 1993; Carnevale, 2009; Jeffries Miceli, 1994; Reich, 2004).

Marjorie Ferguson and Peter Golding (1997), in the introduction to their collected volume *Cultural Studies in Question*, critique the failure to deal empirically with the structural changes in national and global political, economic, and media systems after the collapse of the former Soviet empire, the consequences of globalization, and the process of democratization (interestingly, this view is parallel to Tötösy de Zepetnek’s framework and methodology — the “contextual” and the “empirical” — in comparative cultural studies, see below). In the same volume, John D.H. Downing (1997) proposes to examine the capacity of cultural studies to illuminate the economic, political, and cultural transitions in Central and East Europe and in Russia and, conversely, to investigate the implications of those transitions

as being a major test for scholars for the evaluation of the utility of cultural studies. He underlines the necessity for scholarship to integrate society and power, conflict and change into the analysis of communication and, in particular, to acknowledge the power of other agents than the elite ones, that is, the role that popular culture has played in bringing about internal pressure for political change. Dowling also argues that South Africa, South Korea, Taiwan, and Latin America, as well as Southern Europe, which have undergone some analogous transitions, might offer terms of comparison. In a volume entitled *Cultural Discourse in Taiwan* the editors comment that Taiwan — owing to its colonial past and diversity of cultural heritage — “represents the dynamics of cultural processes where East and West meet in a specific and extraordinary locus” (Cheng, Wang, Tötösy de Zepetnek, 2009: 1). With regard to South Korea Myungkoo Kang (2004a) examines in her article “East Asian Modernities” the situation of cultural studies and her analysis suggests parallels which would be applicable — similar to Taiwan cultural studies — to the study of Central and East European culture(s) (see also Kang’s, 2004b; on Central and East Europe, see, e.g., Guran, 2006; Tötösy de Zepetnek, 2002). Kang outlines how South Korea has adopted, appropriated, and utilized Western theories of cultural studies beginning in the 1980s and underlines the need for a cultural studies in the twenty-first century. She also describes how in Taiwan, where cultural studies has begun to be institutionalized since 1993, it has provided the Taiwan democratic movement with a theoretical foundation to carry out significant research on identity politics, minority and gender issues, and on Japanese and US-American colonization, as well as relations between Native Taiwanese and immigrants from Mainland China. With regard to the situation of cultural studies in other parts of the world, one particular example is worth noting: Latin American cultural studies whose development has been consubstantial with a struggle for emancipation against the cultural hegemony of Europe and later of the United States, often focuses its agenda on issues similar to postcommunist Central and East Europe, such as the phenomenon of cultural penetration, censorship and self-censorship, and the symbolic manner in which popular resistance was expressed, definition of national cultures, and analyses of discourses of power (see, e.g., McClennen and Fitz, 2004; McRobbie, 2005; Moreiras, 2001; Jordan and Morgan-Tomasunas, 2000).

Recent developments in cultural studies include attention to cognitive science, emotion, communication, media, memory (see, e.g., Zunshine, 2009; Highmore, 2009; Nalbatian *et al.*, 2010). Cultural studies also shows promising developments in both theoretical and applied work in digital humanities, with regard to the application of new media in research, as well as in publishing (see, e.g., Landow, 2006; McCarty, 2010; Schreibman, Siemens and Unsworth, 2004; Tötösy de Zepetnek, 2007, 2010; Van Dijck; Van Peer, 2010; Van

Peer, Asimakopoulou and Bessis, 2010).

3. The Field of Comparative Cultural Studies

Cultural studies, while innovative and an essential field in the humanities and social sciences, retains one drawback and this is its monolingual construction as it is a field developed and practiced primarily in the Anglophone world by scholars who in general at best work with two languages. Hence the notion that what has been a trademark of comparative literature, namely working in multiple languages, ought, ideally, be carried over into “comparative cultural studies”. Developed since the late 1980s by Steven Tötösy de Zepetnek, the conceptualization of comparative cultural studies is a “merger” of tenets of the discipline of comparative literature — minus the discipline’s Eurocentrism and nation-orientation, as discussed above — with those of cultural studies including the latter’s explicit ideological perspective. Additional tenets of comparative cultural studies include that attention is paid the “how” of cultural processes, following radical constructivism (see, e.g., Riegler (<<http://www.radicalconstructivism.com>>); Schmidt, 1994 and 2010; see also the journal *CLCWeb: Comparative Literature and Culture* <<http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/clcweb>> and the print monograph series of Books in Comparative Cultural Studies, both published by Purdue University Press and the Shaker Press print monograph series of Books in Culture, Media, and Communication Studies). Hence the objective of study is often not a cultural product as such, but its processes within the micro- and macro-system(s) which are interesting for the study of culture (on the macro-system see, e.g., Wallerstein, 1982; on the micro-system see, e.g., Schmidt, 1994 and 2010; Even-Zohar, 1994; Tötösy de Zepetnek, 1992). To “compare” does not — and must not — imply hierarchy, that is, in a comparative and contextual analysis it is the method in use rather than the studied matter that is of importance. Attention to other cultures is a basic and founding element and factor of the framework of comparative cultural studies. This principle encourages an intercultural and interdisciplinary dialogue, expressly ideological, and thus in this aspect identical with cultural studies. Dialogue is understood as inclusion, which extends to all Other, marginal, minority, and all that has been and often still is considered peripheral. It is optimal for scholars working in the field of comparative cultural studies to have the working knowledge of several languages, disciplines, and cultures before moving on to the study of theory and methodology.

Comparative cultural studies focuses on the study of culture both in parts (e.g., literature, film, popular culture, the visual arts, television, new media, etc.) and as a whole in relation to other forms of human

expression and activity, as well as in relation to other disciplines in the humanities and social sciences. Such an approach enables a thorough contextual cultural analysis. Comparative cultural studies focuses on English as the contemporary *lingua franca* of scholarship, communication, business, technology, etc.; however, the use of English in published scholarship, itself a subject of much theoretical discussion, does not mean European and US-American centrality (see, e.g., Ramanathan, 2005; Rubdy and Saraceni, 2006; Prendergast, 2004 and 2008; Young, 2009). On the contrary, the broad use of English as the international language of scholarship allows scholars from outside the Anglophone world and continental Europe to present their works on an international forum and be understood by their colleagues in other countries. Importantly, comparative cultural studies focuses on evidence-based research and analysis, for which “contextual” (i.e., the systemic and empirical) approach presents the most advantageous methodologies and framework (on this, see, e.g., Ferguson’s and Golding’s (1997) argument for the empirical, see above; see also Schmidt (1994, 2010) in particular). Comparative cultural studies insists on a methodology involving interdisciplinary study with three main types of methodological precision: intra-disciplinarity (analysis and research within the disciplines in the humanities), multi-disciplinarity (analysis and research by one scholar employing any other discipline), and pluri-disciplinarity (analysis and research by team-work with participants from several disciplines) (Tötösy de Zepetnek, 1998: 79-120). Comparative cultural studies is an inclusive discipline of global humanities and, as such, acts against the paradox of globalization versus localization (of note is that the designation and practice of “comparative cultural studies” is also receiving much attention in sociology via cultural anthropology (see e.g. Pinxton) although in most instances without a theoretical and/or methodological definition and that since the 2000s comparative cultural studies programs are established in many places globally). And last but not least, comparative cultural studies attempts to reverse the intellectual and institutional decline of the humanities and their marginalization, thus arguing towards the relevance of humanities and social sciences scholarship. A summary definition of comparative cultural studies is as follows:

comparative cultural studies is the theoretical, as well as methodological postulate to move and dialogue between cultures, languages, literatures, and disciplines. This is a crucial aspect of the framework, the approach as a whole, and its methodology. In other words, attention to other cultures — that is, the comparative perspective — is a basic and founding element and factor of the framework. The claim of emotional and intellectual primacy and subsequent institutional power of national cultures is untenable in this perspective. In sum, 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. This inclusion extends to all Other, all marginal,

minority, border, and peripheral entities, and encompasses both form and substance. However, attention must be paid to the “how” of any inclusionary approach, attestation, methodology, and ideology so as not to repeat the mistakes of Eurocentrism and “universalization” from a “superior” Eurocentric point of view. Dialogue is the only solution (Tötösy de Zepetnek, 2003: 259; see also Tötösy de Zepetnek, 2007; on further development of the concept including media and communication studies, see, e.g., Lisiak, 2010; Tötösy de Zepetnek and López-Varela Azcárate, 2010).

While the humanities have a difficult stand with regard to funding and social relevance everywhere and historically so, since the arrival of new media and the internet and thus the development of the frequency and expansion of communication new possibilities have emerged for scholarship. And while the humanities in general are slow in the incorporation of new media in their use in scholarship and pedagogy, comparative literature — because of its intrinsic character of interdisciplinarity — would be a natural locus of contravening the trend of constriction and the diminishing presence of the humanities. In cultural studies digital humanities is considered an important development in both theory and application and thus also comparative cultural studies includes attention to digital humanities as one of its principal tenets (see, e.g., Tötösy de Zepetnek and López-Varela Azcárate 2010, López-Varela Azcárate and Tötösy de Zepetnek 2010 [in this article, see also a discussion about the situation of cultural studies in France]; see also Tötösy de Zepetnek, 1998, 2007a, 2007b, 2010). A corollary matter, the negative attitude to online publishing by scholars in the humanities is surprising and there is little reflection in print on this: a notable exception is George P. Landow, who discusses this curious and misguided situation in his *Hypertext 03: Critical Theory and New Media in an Era of Globalization*:

By and large, the humanities have been preoccupied with the impact of technology from a quasi-outsider’s perspective, as if society and technology can still be separated (*Dark Fiber*, 13). This resistance by humanities scholars appears in two characteristic reactions to the proposition that information technology constitutes a crucial cultural force. First, one encounters a tendency among many humanists contemplating the possibility that information technology influences culture to assume that before now, before computing, our intellectual culture existed in some pastoral non-technological realm. *Technology*, in the lexicon of many humanists, generally means “only that *technology* of which I am frightened” have frequently heard humanists use the word technology to mean “some intrusive, alien force like computing,” as if pencils, paper, typewriters, and printing presses were in some way *natural* (Lovink, qtd. In Landow, 2006: 46).

In the current landscape of the humanities it is the young generation of scholars and junior faculty who understand the importance of new media technology in the study of culture and literature — to date

without the support of too many tenured and established scholars — and it appears only in the future will the humanities arrive at an appreciation and full support of publishing online in journals with peer review, in full text, and — and this is the clincher — in open-access journals. Indeed, if anything it would could be scholarship published online that could and would put comparative humanities back on the map, and so globally. A further area of comparative cultural studies of importance is translation studies, a still neglected field on the landscape of scholarship in general (on this, see, e.g., Tötösy de Zepetnek, 1995 and 2002).

In sum, we believe that to make the study of literature and culture as a socially relevant activity of scholarship today we must turn to contextual and evidence-based work parallel with pragmatics in responsibility for graduates in the context of employment. This does not mean that the traditional study of literature including close-text study would be relegated to lesser value; rather, we must do both and in a parallel fashion. Comparative literature and comparative cultural studies as based on the basic tenets of the comparative approach, practiced in interdisciplinarity, and employing the advantages of new media technology could and would achieve a global presence and social relevance.

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