

# SUMMARY

## **From the Shores of the Others**

New Narratives, New Aesthetics: Contemporary Authors of Subsaharan Francophone Africa from the Perspective of Migrations, Hybridity and World Globalization

This monograph addresses issues in the literature of sub-Saharan Africa from the point of view of hybridity, migration and globalization. It presents both current and contemporary theory dealing with these phenomena, as well as offering analyses of selected works by authors such as Alain Mabanckou, Sami Tchak, In Koli Jean Bofane, Fatou Diome, Léonora Miano or Véronique Tadjo.

The first chapter attempts to explain how French-language literature and African literature written in French can be of interest to a Western reader, to a reader in general. These texts come from a continent considered to be the cradle of humanity. Paradoxically, despite this fact, and although Africa represents an incredible wealth of peoples, cultures and languages, as well as of infinitely long oral traditions linked to a wisdom handed down from generation to generation, the written literature of Africa was born relatively recently. Therefore, it shows all the strengths as well as shortcomings of its youth, little known and explored, mixing oral traditions with the Western canon. Indeed, literature written in French is a golden door to enter Africa from our continent. French literature itself has a very long tradition from the point of view of human life and is rightly regarded as one of the most important national literatures. Issues concerning francophone literatures in general do not directly relate to those of contemporary sub-Saharan authors writing in French, but are important for understanding the entire context of colonial and anti-colonial literature in colonized Africa.

The second chapter, on migration, reflects the theory of migrant literature and exile. The popularity of these migrant writers is often linked to the fact that these authors have something original to tell us. The theme of a narrator or a literary character, an observer of our otherness and the bearer of their own, someone

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who finds themselves in a foreign and unknown environment, at the center of different cultural references that they may comment on critically or humorously, is really nothing new to literature. These writers use the subject to socially and politically criticize their own society from a social or political point of view, in a satirical vein. It therefore offers a range of perspectives and possibilities, from satirical and ironic pastiche in the mode of Bessora, a Swiss-Gabonese author, through humorous accounts of the daily life of migrants by Alain Mabanckou, to novels exhibiting the acerbic social criticism of Daniel Biyaoula or Jean-Roger Essomba. Each reader finds in this variety of literary destinies and themes what they seek, be it entertainment, education or social criticism.

Another great major theme, shaping the third chapter, is closely related to that of the second. This theme concerns interbreeding (*métissage*) and hybridity. As one can read in the opening reflection of this chapter, mixture and hybridity are not only the basis of genetics and all of life, but they also seem, from a cultural and literary point of view, to be crucial to enriching World Heritage by supporting genres, texts and models from other regions and areas, often creating something new and original that is not simply the sum of its individual parts. In terms of self-representation and hybrid identity, there is a probably rather unknown community of Congolese dandies, who call themselves *sapeurs*. In postmodern cultural theories, we discuss third spaces or border identities. These identities are universally enriching, but they become even more fascinating when we have the opportunity to reflect on individual authors and their texts.

The fourth chapter is the most extensive, as it touches on a creative artistic and literary theme, that of novelty and originality. Related themes of verbal creativity, humor, comedy and irony are associated with this theme in all their forms. It is well known that despite the many sufferings and tragedies of life, not only in Africa, we can better overcome these thanks to the distance that humor provides us. Humor and comedy are, it seems, universal. In the chapter devoted to novelty and to the new perspectives thrown on an old continent, we focus on the theoretical and philosophical aspects of novelty, but also on the humorous and the comic, which are in their way incarnations of originality. One can rarely entertain a reader without moments of surprise and creativity, without something new. A repeated joke ceases to be a joke, they say. The original view of the world is mainly that associated with children, because life contains a lot of novelty for them. They see and perceive a great number of things for the first time, so that even their reactions can often be original and humorous. This is why we have combined novelty and humor, as well as childhood in French-speaking sub-Saharan literature, into one chapter in the hope that they fit together logically.

The last chapter concludes the book and also relates to a phenomenon that we experience daily without being too aware of all its indirect and hidden consequences. This is globalization and all that this phenomenon means, both positive-

ly and negatively, for humanity. Although the opinions of experts on globalization and its indirect impacts vary widely, no one can deny that our planet is more and more interconnected or that it is getting smaller, physically and symbolically. In reality, globalization is accompanied by many negative circumstances such as pandemics, climate change, and global terrorism. As we know, globalization is not only a political or economic phenomenon, it is also a social and cultural one, and therefore it is closely linked to literature, including African literature. We can follow in the footsteps of the prophecy of Edouard Glissant, who calls literature-world (*littérature-monde*) our literary world, as well as our globalized world. We therefore focus in the last chapter on globalization in general, while attempting also to take a closer look at some selected works by sub-Saharan authors precisely through the prism of world-literature and of the whole world, after having duly defined these terms as well as the issues associated with them. Rightly, we can also ask ourselves what will happen after globalization. From this point of view, we have tried to open the question of African literatures in new, perhaps unexplored directions, where we have focused on some trends in post-humanity and in the manifestations of ecocriticism and eco-poetics in this literature.

