



Negritude

Isabelle Constant

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Doit-on considerer la Negritude comme un mouvement ancre dans la fin de la periode coloniale et sur lequel il n'y a plus lieu de revenir? C'est une des questions que le colloque qui s'est tenu a l'Universite des West Indies a la Barbade en l'honneur du centenaire de la naissance de Senghor s'efforce d'explorer. Lylian Kesteloot nous rappelle encore recemment dans son etude Cesaire et Senghor un pont sur l'Atlantique l'importance de ce mouvement qui entre les annees trente et soixante a participe a la naissance de la litterature africaine. La question du particularisme que le mot Negritude implique et de son oppose l'universel sera largement debattue dans les pages de cet ouvrage. Les articles de cet essai discutent les defauts essentialistes de la Negritude senghorienne, mais egalement le fait que dans les termes de Senghor 'la Negritude est un mythe', donc une construction identitaire, l'expression d'une invention. Il envisageait par exemple l'avenement d'un socialisme africain, dans une interpretation unique du marxisme. En tant que mouvement poetique, philosophique, litteraire, ou en tant que reponse ideologique a une oppression, les auteurs africains et antillais etudies ici et qui traitent de themes tres contemporains, demontrent la vivacite d'une Negritude toujours d'actualite dans sa presentation des cultures. Il faut bien entendu depasser la notion raciale contenue dans le terme et insister sur le culturel, le philosophique et l'esthetique, pour accepter que la Negritude ait une pertinence actuelle. Notamment nous verrons que la Negritude s'est metamorphosee aux Antilles ou au Bresil en d'originaux projets ideologiques et esthetiques. Should Negritude be seen as a movement that originated at the end of the colonial era and merits no further study in this contemporary world? This is one of the questions explored in the Colloquium held at the University of the West Indies, Barbados, to mark the centenary of the birth of Leopold Sedar Senghor. In a recent study, 'Cesaire et Senghor: Un pont sur l'Atlantique', Lylian Kesteloot reminds her readers of the importance of Negritude which contributed to the emergence of African literature between 1930 and 1960. The idea of essentialism which the word Negritude implies, as well as the opposite idea of universalism, will be widely discussed in the pages of this work. This collection of essays acknowledges the essential shortcomings of Senghor's Negritude, but, at the same time, underlines the fact that in Senghor's words, 'Negritude is a myth' and therefore has to do with the construction of (an) identity and is the expression of an imaginary creation. It envisaged, for example, the creation of an African form of socialism within a unique interpretation of Marxism. In this volume, African and Caribbean writers who are concerned with contemporary issues, demonstrate the vitality of Negritude as a poetic, philosophical and literary movement and as an ideological response to oppression that is still relevant in its presentation of cultures. Clearly, it is necessary to go beyond the notion of race implied in the term and to focus on the cultural, philosophical and aesthetic elements in order to appreciate the relevance of Negritude today. Most notably in the Caribbean or Brazil, Negritude has been transformed into original ideological and aesthetic projects.

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