

Abstract

The 1950s were marked by the anticolonial novel movement inspired by social realism. The decade saw the appearance of sub-Saharan novelists who became pillars, of sub-Saharan literatures written in French, later considered classics. These authors were all published in Paris, like their predecessors. In their novels, they describe the daily situation in the French colonies in Africa. They represent the first generation of sub-Saharan writers who, in a complex and systematic way, depicted the relations between colonizers and the colonized, relations disturbed and misbalanced by the strict and categorical practice of domination by the Occident. The prominent authors of this crucial period are: the Congolese Jean Malonga (1907–1985), the Ivoirians Bernard Binlin Dadié (1916–2019) and Aké Loba (1927–2012), the Senegalese Ousmane Socé Diop (1911–1973), Ousmane Sembène (1923–2007) and Cheikh Hamidou Kane (1928), the Guinean Camara Laye (1928–1980), two Cameroonians Ferdinand Oyono (1929–2010) and Mongo Beti (1932–2001). These authors, who I explore in my paper, do not belong, as we can see, to the same generation, but their first novels were written and published in the decade before decolonization (except *Ambiguous Adventure* by Cheikh Hamidou Kane, which was not published until 1961). Moreover, these authors pursued their university education in France with the exception of Ousmane Sembène who studied in Moscow, but all attended French colonial schools where they learned the language of the colonizer. They lived in a certain way the cultural encounter that became the main theme of their anti-colonial prose. In this work, I will analyze how they represented their reality and how their fictional Africa perceived the colonial system and its practices. I will also describe the identity alienation of their main characters caused by the forced encounter with Western culture and thus my literary analyses focus on the representation of the estrangement lived by the protagonist from his native country and its diverse societies.