

This project aims to trace the status of literature as one of the cultural fields in the intellectual discourse of congresses and festivals devoted to the art of the Black people from 1956 until today. It encompasses a series of events such as the Congresses of Black Writers and Artists (Paris, 1956 and Rome, 1959), through a series of Black and Pan-African art festivals held in 1960 and 1970, to one of the largest literary festivals in the French-speaking world, Étonnants Voyageurs (and its non-European editions in 2000-2013). The project involves an analysis of the place and role of literature in the various concepts of culture and art of post-colonial countries (or, depending on the historical moment, of those fighting for independence), which were presented at the congresses themselves or, in case of festivals, at conferences accompanying the main festival events. The planned work will analyze the contributions of such writers and intellectuals as Aimé Césaire, Léopold Sedar Senghor, Richard Wright, Jacques Stephen Alexis, René Depestre, Frantz Fanon, Stanislas Spero Adotevi, Henri Lopes, Sékou Touré, Albert Memmi, Lamine Niang, Michel Le Bris and Alain Mabanckou.

The research, situated in the field of sociocriticism, assumes an in-depth embedding of individual events in the socio-political context characteristic of each of them, a detailed analysis of the accompanying discourse as well as confrontation of the results of these stages with individual testimonies of congresses and festival participants. The project therefore assumes working in an interdisciplinary manner, while focusing on postulates and programs directly related to literature.

Some of the events that fall within the scope of the planned research have celebrated their jubilees quite recently, and some of them have become a subject of renewed interest for researchers (we are thinking mainly of the Second Congress of Black Writers and Artists held in Rome, 1959) or have been commemorated by contemporary editions (the Second Pan-African Festival, held in 2009 in Algiers and the World Festival of Black Arts, whose third edition was held in 2010 in Dakar). Chronology is therefore one of the motives behind the planned theme. Thus, the main reason behind the project is the desire for an in-depth and holistic examination of the intellectual metaliterary discourse accompanying the selected events, which has not yet been done, or is only partly within the framework of scattered research work. An additional goal will be to draw attention to the diversity of the discussed concepts, which translates into ambiguity of individual ideas and demands.

The project aims to capture the interrelationships and transfers of ideas between individual events in the context of their socio-political conditions. This will allow us to present a more complete picture of literature as one of the areas of artistic expression of postcolonial societies. Focusing on the statements of writers and texts that take literature as their main point of reference, we shall attempt to demonstrate how aesthetic-social literary programs move from post-colonial disalienation to the body of work that proclaims full ideological independence, passing through stages such as breaking away with racial reductionism, nationalistic affirmation and the utopian concepts pan-African in their nature, all this while remaining sensitive to mutual borrowings and interferences between the various concepts and programs as well as to the side currents, which are expressed as if on the margins of the main demands.