Letteratura e società: diaspore e negoziazioni identitarie nel romanzo black British contemporaneo

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Abstract

Abstract – This chapter focuses on relevant novels by contemporary black British writers, novels which represent the condition of exile, uprootedness and 'in-betweenness' experienced by the first and the second generation of migrants who arrived in Great Britain from colonized or once colonized-countries in the second half of the 20th century. Creative writing presents itself as a privileged area of investigation of the problematic question of belonging and of identity negotiations. The new fluid and hybrid identities which emerge out of the inevitable processes of contamination between different worlds and cultures – identities 'positioned' by the interaction of different historical, political and cultural factors – challenge the binary dichotomies at the very roots of Western civilization dismantling the myth of a homogeneous and static Englishness based on the traditional opposition between Self and Other. Through the novels taken into examination mostly by writers born and/or bred in England whose identities are enriched by different ethnic roots, the chapter will reflect upon the concept of cultural diversity and on the problematic issue of multiculturalism: a model which has undoubtedly revealed its flaws. The question of cultural identity stands out as a relevant common thread and is explored in its most different declinations, from the suffered sense of uprootedness and alienation to the celebration of hybridism, from generational conflicts to adherence to forms of fundamentalism, from the attempt to assimilate to the enthusiastic celebration of diversity. All the novels selected for analysis reveal both in narrative form and content a diasporic connotation and a dialogic afflatus which is aimed at prefiguring a ‘new world order’ whose objective is a more equitable and caring society ready not simply to accept and tolerate but to appreciate and cultivate its fruitful, precious diversity.

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