

Sara Del Rossi, *Where does the folktale go? Transcultural dynamics of contemporary Haitian « oraliture »* (*Dokąd zmierza opowieść ? Dynamika transkulturowa ustnej literatury ludowej na Haiti / Où va le conte? Dynamique transculturelle de l'oraliture haïtienne*)

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The purpose of my thesis is to analyze the evolution of the Haitian folktale of French expression, in particular its transition, at the turn of the 20th and 21st centuries, from the traditional oral forms to the written text published in Haiti and in the Haitian Diaspora (France, Quebec and United States). The research aims to show the dynamics of the evolution of Haitian folk literature (“oraliture”) as a carrier of collective memory, a record of experiences, and a particular form to ensure social cohesion.

The main research hypothesis was that the transformation of the Haitian folktale, in the structural and fictional dimension, can be best described by exploring its contemporary forms of expression. We analyzed the genres belonging to the Haitian diaspora oraliture, in particular the folktale. Because of their “exotopic” position (Bakhtin), the storytellers have to face new issues and propose new values adapted to various intercultural contexts. Therefore, the diasporic folktales have to open up to phenomena such as the situation of refugees and emigrants, adaptation issues, the role of women, new educational challenges, and civic engagement.

Based on these assumptions, and applied to a large corpus, this research explores the transformations of Haitian folklore, especially the reconstruction of an Haitian cultural identity by the author himself after the migration, and the way in which his/her stay in a new community has influenced the traditional Haitian narratives. The analyses examine various issues (narrative, thematic, discursive, ideological, and editorial) to show how the new contexts influence the contemporary rewritings of Haitian traditional oral genres. In this way, the study of the aesthetic innovations within the written version of the oral folktales and tales show how they are today creatively used in Haiti and in the Diaspora.

My research is interdisciplinary. The starting point was the use of ethnological and anthropological works on Haitian folklore. In addition, the use of Caribbean and Haitian sociopoetic theories (Édouard Glissant, Jacques Stephen Alexis and Maximilien Laroche) has provided not only terminology but, above all, adequate tools to outline the intercultural references and new identities in the Haitian tales created in the Diaspora. The analytical part of the project has combined the structural analysis (Denise Paulme and Algirdas J. Greimas), the sociology of the literary field (Pierre Bourdieu) and socio-criticism (Mikhail Bakhtin).

My investigation wants to fill the research gaps on the current situation of Haitian “oraliture”, chiefly tales and folktales, in Haiti and in the Diaspora. In addition, there are no studies about the present state of tales, folktales and fairy-tales written by Haitian authors within the country and in the Diaspora, and about the evolution and mutations in the process that leads to literary creation. This thesis aims to broaden the research area in modern and contemporary Francophone culture and literature. The issues concerning the transformation of the Haitian folk literature have remained so far marginal to the Academics specialized in French, Francophone and (inter)American Studies. This research aims to contribute to a better understanding, in Poland and abroad, of the multicultural cultural heritage, as well as of the ideological and aesthetic challenges of Francophone “minor” literature (Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari) in the American continent (Caribbean, Quebec and United States) and in France, the second multicultural context of the diasporic migration.